

**THE FACTS OF LIFE:  
THE SEX INSTRUCTION OF ONTARIO PUBLIC SCHOOL CHILDREN,  
1900-1950**

by

**Christabelle Laura Sethna**

**A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
Graduate Department of Education  
University of Toronto**

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## **ABSTRACT**

**The Facts of Life: The Sex Instruction of Ontario Public School Children, 1900-1950**

**Christabelle Sethna**

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**Graduate Department of Education**

**University of Toronto**

**1995**

During 1900 to 1950 a broad and uneasy coalition of sex reformers—educators, physicians, feminists, sexologists, social workers and public health officials—who identified themselves with the social purity movement prior to the First World War and then with the social hygiene movement after 1918 raised their voices in favour of incorporating sex instruction into Ontario public elementary and secondary schools. The impetus for children's school-based sex instruction was the moral and medical threat posed by what was perceived to be the dreaded corollary of prostitution and the double standard of sexual morality: venereal disease. Sex reformers' discourse on incorporating sex instruction into Ontario public elementary and secondary schools would peak in intensity as venereal disease rates in the civilian and military populations rose co-incident with the First and Second World Wars.

This study argues that first, children's sex instruction—variously labelled purity education, sex hygiene, social hygiene, sex education, eugenical instruction and family life education—was heavily influenced by the paternalism, classism and racism of the social purity movement as it came to be constituted after 1885. Second, even when supervised by the social hygiene movement after the Great War, children's sex instruction was predicated upon the post-1885 social purity movement's emphasis on the moral approach to sex reform. This moral approach involved a two-fold undertaking: training the child's will in favour of sexual self-control and imparting

rudimentary information on sexual physiology. Third, children's sex instruction was rationalized by the post-1885 social purity movement's invoking of three spectres of child-life familiar to middle-class child savers: the child ignorant of sexual matters, the feeble-minded child and the juvenile delinquent. Classed, gendered, racialized and sexualized, these spectres served as "poison containers" or receptacles into which sex reformers poured their anxieties over venereal disease, thus allowing them to conveniently ignore the societal inequalities which contributed to the spread of the malady. As such, between 1900 and 1950, sex instruction, or what British sexologist Havelock Ellis termed "the instruction of children in the essential facts of life," had less to do with teaching children about sexual anatomy, biology, physiology and psychology and much more to do with channelling Canadians toward compulsory heterosexuality, reproducing the patriarchal nuclear family, maintaining the hegemony of the Anglo-Saxon race, building a healthy, patriotic citizenry and protecting the nation state from harm.



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**For Laura and her daughters—  
Connie, Antoinette, Gloria and Philomena**

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## INTRODUCTION

### "The Instruction of Children in the Essential Facts of Life"<sup>1</sup>

When the press got wind of the Family Life Education curriculum for grades 7 and 8 outlined in the "Report of the Teachers' Committee on 'Family Life Education'" submitted to the Toronto Board of Education in November, 1948, one daily newspaper trumpeted: "The 'hush-hush' complex toward sex education might shortly be abolished in schools if the Ontario Department of Education agrees with the recommendations made by a special committee of the Toronto Board of Education."<sup>2</sup> The hope expressed in the press was short-lived. By 1950, the Family Life Education curriculum had been debated, defeated and shelved by the Board. These actions put an effective end to the institutionalization of formal sex instruction curricula in Ontario public schools for virtually the next twenty years.

The unhappy fate met by the Family Life Education curriculum at the Toronto Board of Education represented the final denouement of the convoluted history of public school-based sex instruction in Ontario between 1900 and 1950. During this fifty-year period under investigation a broad and uneasy coalition of sex reformers—educators, physicians, feminists, sexologists, social workers and public health officials—who identified themselves with the social purity movement prior to the First World War and then with the social hygiene movement after 1918<sup>3</sup> raised their voices in favour of incorporating sex instruction into Ontario public elementary and secondary schools. The impetus for children's school-based sex instruction was the moral and medical threat

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<sup>1</sup> Havelock Ellis, *The Task of Social Hygiene* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1916 [1913]), p. 244.

<sup>2</sup> "Sex Education Plan Favoured by Committee," *Evening Telegram*, November 23, 1948.

<sup>3</sup> Frank Mort makes the same point in his *Dangerous Sexualities: Medico-Moral Politics in England Since 1830* (London and New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987), pp. 153-209.

posed by what was perceived to be the dreaded corollary of prostitution and the double standard of sexual morality: venereal disease. Sex reformers' discourse on incorporating sex instruction into Ontario public elementary and secondary schools would peak in intensity as venereal disease rates in the civilian and military populations rose co-incident with the First and Second World Wars. A third peak in the demand for school-based sex instruction, triggered mainly by a rise in "illegitimate" pregnancies amongst teenage girls, occurred during the late 1960s and deserves a separate investigation.<sup>4</sup>

Feminist scholars who have studied the contemporary discourse on public elementary and secondary school-based sex instruction have exposed the existence of a "hidden curriculum."<sup>5</sup> The historical discourse on children's public school-based sex instruction in Ontario between 1900 and 1950 can be put to the same test. Ostensibly, sex reformers believed that children's school-based sex instruction could serve as an efficacious moral and medical prophylaxis against venereal disease. Yet when unearthed by a feminist analysis sensitive to the interaction of gender, race and class, the hidden curriculum underlying sex reformers' historical discourse during these fifty years gives the lie to the progressive mantle often donned by supporters of public school-based sex instruction.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See Christabelle Sethna, "Compromising Positions: The Toronto Board of Education's Response to the Demand for School-Based Sex Education, 1960-1990," forthcoming SSHRC post-doctoral study.

<sup>5</sup> AnnMarie Wolpe, "Sex In Schools: Back to the Future," *Feminist Review* 27 (September 1987): 37-47; Michelle Fine, "Sexuality, Schooling, and Adolescent Females: The Missing Discourse of Desire," *Harvard Educational Review* 58, 1 (February 1988): 29-53; Lesley Holly (ed.), *Girls and Sexuality: Teaching and Learning* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1989); Helen Lenskyj, "Beyond Plumbing and Prevention: Feminist approaches to sex education," *Gender and Education* 2, 2 (1990): 217-230; Deborah L. Tolman, "Adolescent Girls, Women and Sexuality: Discerning Dilemmas of Desire," in Carol Gilligan, Annie G. Rogers and Deborah L. Tolman (eds.), *Women, Girls and Psychotherapy: Reframing Resistance* (New York: The Haworth Press, 1991), pp. 55-69; Susan Shurberg Klein (ed.), *Sex Equity and Sexuality in Education* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1992); James T. Sears (ed.), *Sexuality and the Curriculum: The Politics and Practices of Sexuality Education* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1992).

<sup>6</sup> Michael Barrett makes this point about turn-of-the-century school-based sex instruction in his "Selected Observations on Sex Education in Canada," *SIECCAN Journal* 5, 1 (Spring 1990), p. 21. For an example of the historical glorification of school-based sex instruction's apparent progressiveness, see Lester A. Kirkendall, "Sex Education in the United States: A Historical Perspective," in Lorna Brown (ed.), *Sex Education in the Eighties: The Challenge of Healthy Sexual Evolution* (New York and London: Plenum Press, 1981), pp. 1-17.

The hidden curriculum reveals that, first, children's sex instruction—variously labelled purity education, sex hygiene, social hygiene, sex-education, eugenical instruction, and family life education—was heavily influenced by the paternalism, classism and racism of the social purity movement as it came to be constituted after 1885. Second, even when supervised by the social hygiene movement after the Great War, children's sex instruction was predicated upon the post-1885 social purity movement's emphasis on the moral approach to sex reform. This moral approach involved a two-fold undertaking: inculcating in the child the sexual self-control necessary to maintain celibacy before marriage and imparting rudimentary information on sexual physiology. Third, children's sex instruction was rationalized by the post-1885 social purity movement's invoking of three spectres of child-life familiar to middle-class child savers: the child ignorant of sexual matters, the feeble-minded child, and the juvenile delinquent. Classed, gendered, racialized and always sexualized, these spectres served as "poison containers" or receptacles into which sex reformers poured their anxieties over venereal disease, thus allowing them to conveniently ignore the societal inequalities which contributed to the spread of the malady.<sup>7</sup> As such, between 1900 and 1950, sex instruction, or what British sexologist Havelock Ellis termed "the instruction of children in the essential facts of life,"<sup>8</sup> had less to do with teaching children about sexual anatomy, biology, physiology and psychology and much more to do with channelling Canadians toward compulsory heterosexuality, reproducing the patriarchal nuclear family, maintaining the hegemony of the Anglo-Saxon race, building a healthy, patriotic citizenry, and protecting the nation state from harm.

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<sup>7</sup> The term, "poison container," appears in Lloyd de Mause, *Foundations of Psychohistory* (New York: Creative Roots, 1982), p. 10, and in Lloyd de Mause, "The History of Child Assault," *Journal of Psychohistory* 18, 1 (Summer 1990): 1-29. For a case study analysis on how certain spectres were used in the discourse of Scottish child saving between 1850 and 1940, see Linda Mahood and Barbara Littlewood, "The 'Vicious' Girl and the 'Street-Corner' Boy: Sexuality and the Gendered Delinquent in Scottish Child-Saving," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 4, 4 (April 1994): 549-578.

<sup>8</sup> Ellis, *The Task of Social Hygiene*, p. 244.

This dissertation, which focuses on the province of Ontario, is the first comprehensive study done on the history of children's sex instruction in Canada between 1900 and 1950. I situate my study within the body of historical scholarship which recognizes that the threat of venereal disease served as the impetus for children's school-based sex instruction during the first half of the twentieth century. While some British and numerous American historians have fully explored the link between venereal disease and children's sex instruction, very few Canadian scholars have done the same.<sup>9</sup> Jay Cassel briefly delineates the impact of the threat of venereal disease on Canadian children's school-based sex instruction during the First and Second World Wars. Mary Louise Adams touches upon the connection between the anxiety over rising venereal disease rates during the Second World War and the support some Toronto Board of Education trustees showed for teaching pupils about social hygiene.<sup>10</sup>

My study has also been influenced by Canadian scholarship which identifies the impact the post-1885 social purity movement had on children's school-based sex instruction prior to 1930. This published research is limited to a few articles on early twentieth-century sex lecturers as well as to sections and/or chapters in books on first-wave feminism, the social purity movement, the history of sexual regulation and the history of eugenics.<sup>11</sup> The paucity of published research on the

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<sup>9</sup> Mort, *Dangerous Sexualities*, pp. 153-209; Bryan Strong, "Ideas of the Early Sex Education Movement in America, 1890-1920," *History of Education Quarterly* 12, 1 (Spring 1972), pp. 129-161; James Frank Gardner Jr., "Microbes and Morals: The Social Hygiene Crusade in New York City, 1892-1917," unpublished PhD dissertation, Indiana University, 1974; Glen Davis, *Childhood and History in America* (New York: Psychohistory Press, 1974); Michael Imber, "Toward A Theory of Curriculum Reform: An Analysis of the First Campaign for Sex Education," *Curriculum Inquiry* 12, 4 (1982): 339-361; Michael Imber, "The First World War, Sex Education, and the American Social Hygiene Association's Campaign Against Venereal Disease," *Journal of Administration and History* 16, 1 (January 1984): 47-56; Bonnie K. Trudell, "The First Organized Campaign for School Sex Education: A Source of Critical Questions About Current Efforts," *Journal of Sex Education and Therapy* 11, 1 (Spring/Summer 1985): 10-15; Allan M. Brandt, *No Magic Bullet: A Social History of Venereal Disease in the United States Since 1880* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987 [1985]).

<sup>10</sup> Jay Cassel, *The Secret Plague: Venereal Disease in Canada, 1838-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987); Jay Cassel, "Making Canada Safe for Sex: Government and the Problem of Sexually Transmitted Disease in the Twentieth Century," in David Naylor (ed.), *Canadian Health Care and the State: A Century of Evolution* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), pp. 141-192; Mary Louise Adams, "The Trouble With Normal: Postwar Youth and the Construction of Heterosexuality," unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Toronto, 1994.

<sup>11</sup> Michael Bliss, "Pure Books on Impure Subjects: Pre-Freudian Sexual Ideas in Canada," in Michael Horn and Ronald Sabourin (eds.), *Studies in Canadian Social History* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), pp. 326-



history of children's school-based sex instruction after 1930 possibly results from the conviction, held by many Canadian historians, that the social purity movement waned in influence after this point in time. Although Cassel and Adams have done research on children's school-based sex instruction after 1930, they have not investigated the impact the social purity movement continued to have on that instruction. Cassel is more concerned with pointing out the "conservatism" of children's school-based sex instruction during the Second World War. And in her look at the regulation of teenage sexuality after the Second World War, Adams concentrates on analyzing the heterosexual hegemonic aspects of that regulation.<sup>12</sup>

A few British and American historians have recognized, however, that the impact of the social purity movement on children's school-based sex instruction continued well after its apparent demise.<sup>13</sup> This study will make clear that while the social purity movement may have experienced a formal decline prior to 1930, its influence on the discourse on children's school-based sex instruction in Ontario was still in evidence some twenty years later.

The discourse on children's school-based sex instruction in Ontario between 1900-1950 was shaped, to a considerable extent, by an international medico-moral coalition of social purists and social hygienists. The coalition originated in Britain during the late 1880s and was cemented in the United States prior to the Great War as the deleterious effects of venereal disease on the individual, the family, the race and the nation were perceived increasingly to be a grave public health threat. Many Canadian educators, physicians, feminists, sexologists, social workers and

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346; Michael Bliss, "How We Used To Learn About Sex," *Maclean's*, March 1974; Carol Bacchi, *Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1819* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983); Gary Kinsman, *The Regulation of Desire: Sexuality in Canada* (Montréal: Black Rose Books, 1987); Cassel, *The Secret Plague*; Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991); Angus McLaren, *Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada, 1885-1945* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1990), pp. 71-72.

<sup>12</sup> Two exceptions are Cassel, "Making Canada Safe for Sex;" and Adams, "The Trouble With Normal."

<sup>13</sup> Edward J. Bristow, *Vice and Vigilance: Purity Movements in Britain since 1700* (Eden Quay, Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1977), p. 153; David J. Pivar, *Purity Crusade: Sexual Morality and Social Control, 1868-1900* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1973), p. 259.

public health officials were, in various ways, connected with and influenced by this changing international sex reform movement.

The term "venereal disease" encompasses three separate contagious diseases—syphilis, gonorrhoea and chancroid—caused, respectively, by the bacteria *Neisseria gonorrhoea*, *Treponema pallidum* and *Hemophilus ducreyi*, and transmitted almost exclusively by sexual contact. Gonorrhoeal infection lodges in the genito-urinary system and manifests itself two to eight days after exposure. Left untreated the infection in both women and men spreads to the joints and to the reproductive organs resulting in pain and often, sterility. Eyes can be gravely damaged should gonorrhoeal discharge contact them. One of the most prevalent types of eye damage occurs when the gonorrhoeal discharge from an infected mother's vaginal canal contacts her infant's eyes during labour. This causes ophthalmia neonatorum, or blindness, in the child.

Syphilitic infection is divided into three stages. The primary stage is signalled by the appearance of a small chancre. The very infectious secondary stage is characterized by lesions or rashes on the skin and on the mucous membranes. These rashes may clear up spontaneously during a long period of latency. Most often, syphilis proceeds to the tertiary stage in which skin and bone tumours, cardiovascular dysfunction and disorders of the nervous system figure prominently. Disorders of the nervous system manifest themselves in motor difficulties (locomotor ataxia), paralysis (general paresis), and insanity. Syphilis can be transmitted from mother to fetus congenitally, producing miscarriage, stillbirth, the appearance of secondary lesions and deformities of the teeth, eyes, ears and brain apparent during infancy or at puberty.

Chancroid gives rise to a local sore three to five days after exposure. Chancroid causes extensive damage at the site of the ulcer, the spread of the sore to other parts of the body or the painful swelling of the lymph nodes. Possibly because the *Hemophilus ducreyi* bacterium is far less destructive an organism than either the *Neisseria gonorrhoea* or the *Treponema pallidum*

bacteria and because it cannot be transmitted from infected parent to child, gonorrhoea and syphilis were most often identified as *the* venereal diseases from the late nineteenth century onward.

There was little effective treatment for any of the forms of venereal disease until 1910, when Paul Erlich and his assistant, Sahachiro Hata, discovered the drug Salvarsan. Repeated injections of the drug were found to be effective against primary and secondary stage syphilis. Penicillin, the definitive anti-venereal drug, would not come into use until the early 1940s. It was also only in the early 1940s that physicians concluded that venereal disease was transmitted almost exclusively by sexual contact. Previously, venereal disease was thought to have been transmitted, in a good minority of cases, by "mediate contagion"—coming into contact with objects the infected individual had handled.<sup>14</sup>

The British government's anxiety over the spread of venereal disease amongst enlisted men led to the passage of the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864, 1866 and 1869. The extremely repressive legislation triggered, in England, a massive campaign geared to their repeal. Canada had no experience of a similar repeal campaign. The 1864 Contagious Diseases Act passed by the British Parliament was replicated that year in Upper and Lower Canada as the "Act for the prevention of contagious diseases at certain Military and Naval Stations in this Province." The Act expired in post-Confederation Canada in 1870 and was never reintroduced.<sup>15</sup> The CD Acts attempted to control the spread of venereal disease amongst military personnel stationed in garrison towns and ports in Britain and the colonies by regulating prostitution. The CD Acts cemented an association first made in Britain in the 1820s between venereal disease, prostitution and lower-class women. It allowed plain clothes policemen to arrest any woman they suspected of being a "common prostitute." The woman would be forced to undergo a fortnightly compulsory medical

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<sup>14</sup> Cassel, *The Secret Plague*.

<sup>15</sup> Constance Backhouse, "Canadian Prostitution Law, 1839-1972," in Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women/Conseil Consultatif Canadien De La Situation De La Femme, *Prostitution in Canada*, March 1984, pp. 7-18.

internal examination. If the physician determined the woman was infected with venereal disease, she would be placed in a venereal ward of a certified lock hospital, treated for a maximum period of nine months and then released. Any woman who resisted the authorities bore the burden of proving to the local magistrates she was a virtuous woman. Should she fail, she could be sentenced to one month in prison.<sup>16</sup>

Ironically, the enactment of the CD legislation occurred at a time when the medical diagnosis and successful treatment of venereal disease were highly questionable. However inefficient the medical goals of the legislation, many politicians, military authorities and physicians upheld the CD Acts because they considered prostitution, or the "social evil," to be a necessity for men. They argued that because men were, in general, physiologically more sexually active than women, men had to resort to prostitutes for sexual release. Organized attempts to repeal the CD Acts had been sporadic until 1869. In that year the male-only National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts was formed. The exclusion of women resulted in the formation of the Ladies National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts (LNA). In December, 1869, the charismatic Josephine Butler accepted the leadership of the LNA. The LNA's interpretation of the Acts was heavily influenced by evangelical Christianity and by a sense of feminist solidarity. The LNA issued a "Ladies' Manifesto" which criticized the CD Acts as an example of class and gender discrimination. The manifesto argued that the CD Acts violated the civil rights of lower-class women and made vice "safe" for men. The legislation thereby perpetuated a double standard of sexual morality which permitted men to engage in extra-marital sexual activity with impunity but which penalized women who did.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Judith R. Walkowitz, *Prostitution in Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988 [1980]).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*; Nancy Boyd, *Three Victorian Women: Josephine Butler, Octavia Hill, Florence Nightingale* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 40-52; Philippa Levine, *Victorian Feminism, 1850-1900* (London: Hutchinson, 1987), pp. 145-150; Janet Lyon, "Militant Discourse, Strange Bedfellows: Suffragettes and Vorticists before the War," *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 4, 2 (1992): 100-133.

Despite years of organized protest spearheaded by the LNA, British politicians refused to budge until dramatic evidence of child prostitution surfaced in 1885. Newspaper exposés alleged that rich aristocrats drugged and raped young working-class virgin girls and procurers kidnapped and forced unsuspecting girls into "white slavery" overseas. The term "white slavery" was intended to distinguish the sexual slavery of women, regardless of skin colour, from the black slave trade.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, reports that white British females were entrapped in licensed brothels overseas racialized the expression. After 1885, child prostitution and the traffic in young girls was portrayed as a social problem of international proportions. The outrage expressed over child prostitution and white slavery forced the British Parliament to act. The CD legislation was repealed domestically in 1886.<sup>19</sup> In British India, however, an even wider and more restrictive application of the Acts remained in force after 1886 due largely to racist assumptions of "Eastern" women's immorality.<sup>20</sup>

By the time the CD Acts had been repealed, Butler's nearly 20-year feminist crusade, which stressed the unity of all women in fighting against state-sanctioned male sexual exploitation, had been virtually eclipsed by the mainly middle-class, Christian evangelical social purity movement. The rise of the social purity movement in the early 1880s resulted in a shift in attention from the protection of poor adult women prostitutes from state-sanctioned male sexual exploitation to the protection of hapless young girls from sexual abuse. Increasingly sensationalized accounts of procurers kidnapping, coercing and tricking girls and young women to work as prostitutes became the hallmark of the social purity movement. Fuelled by a combination of fantasy and racial bigotry, the wily procurer was almost always characterized as the continental European, the Jew or

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<sup>18</sup> Florence Rush, *The Best Kept Secret: Sexual Abuse of Children* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1980), p. 64.

<sup>19</sup> Deborah Gorham, "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon' Re-Examined: Child Prostitution and the Idea of Childhood in Late-Victorian England." *Victorian Studies* 21, 3 (Spring 1978): 353-379.

<sup>20</sup> Vron Ware, *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism and History* (London: Verso, 1992), pp. 150-166; Philippa Levine, "Venereal Disease, Prostitution, and the Politics of Empire: The Case of British India," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 4, 4 (April 1994): 579-602.

the dark-skinned foreigner. And the less sweet, innocent, young and white the female prostitute was, the less likely was she to be perceived as a legitimate victim of male sexual aggression.<sup>21</sup>

The social purity movement's main aim was to eliminate the byproducts of male sexual vice: prostitution and the double standard of sexual morality. In contrast to the Butlerites who stressed the unity of all women in fighting against state-sanctioned male sexual exploitation, social purists were hostile to the working-classes and eager to use the state to enforce repressive sexual codes. The main focus of the social purity movement was not the sexual "repression" of the young<sup>22</sup> but rather the *control* of youthful sexuality. Social purists glorified human sexuality as God-given and asserted that the sexual instinct, which manifested itself in childhood, was intended primarily for the reproduction of the race. Social purists hoped to control the manifestations of this instinct in order to steer children firmly in the direction of monogamous marriage and reproduction. The increasing scrutiny of children's sexuality in the late nineteenth century was the result of the coalescence of several historical developments such as the consolidation of heterosexual monogamy; the prolongation of childhood due to more extensive schooling; the growing significance of the child to the nation state and the "discovery" of children's sexuality.<sup>23</sup>

Middle-class women continued to play a key role in the post-1885 social purity movement. On the one hand, women active in the social purity movement were able to attack prostitution and the double standard publicly as the end result of an insistent male sexuality. The sexual threat posed by men familiar and unfamiliar to women was clearly illustrated by the predatory husband

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<sup>21</sup> Kathleen Barry, *Female Sexual Slavery* (New York: Avon Books, 1979), pp. 31-32; John P. S. McLaren, "Chasing the Social Evil: Moral Fervour and the Evolution of Canada's Prostitution Laws, 1867-1917," *Canadian Journal of Law and Society/Revue Canadienne de droit et société* 1 (1986): 125-165.

<sup>22</sup> Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, p. 246.

<sup>23</sup> John Gillis, *Youth and History: Tradition and Change in European Age Relations, 1770-present* (New York: Academic Press, 1974); Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* Vol. I: *An Introduction* trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1980 [1976]); Jacques Donzelot, *The Policing of Families*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979); Stephen Kern, "Freud and the Discovery of Child Sexuality," *History of Childhood Quarterly: The Journal of Psychohistory* 1, 1 (Summer 1973): 117-141.

who infected his wife and children with venereal disease and by the predatory killer, epitomized by Jack the Ripper, who sexually mutilated and butchered prostitutes.<sup>24</sup> A number of scholars of the social purity movement have denigrated the feminist contribution women made to the social purity movement. These women have been traditionally mocked as prudes, spinsters and puritans who were backward and repressive in their attitude to sexual pleasure.<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, it is true that while the feminist contribution to the social purity movement, particularly in the area of child and wife abuse, has been substantial, the gender analysis made by women social purists was seriously limited by the division they maintained between an active male sexuality and a passive female sexuality and was grossly constrained by their class and race prejudices. It was within this context that women social purists were assigned and took charge of regulating the flow of moral pollution into and out of the apertures of individuals, families, nations and Empires.<sup>26</sup>

After 1885, the social purists' international attack on sexual immorality, loosely represented as the individual exercise of sexual desire which spilled promiscuously outside channels bordered by heterosexual attraction, marriage and reproduction, took two main routes—the legal and the educational. Like their British and American counterparts, Canadians enacted legislation intended to protect young girls and women from procurers. The Canadian Criminal Code of 1892 and the amendment to the Code in 1913 established strict penalties for the procurement of women and girls. Unfortunately, this complex of laws designed to protect females from male sexual aggression was used to harass and victimize prostitutes. Influenced by British legislation, Canadian law also penalized homosexual activity. Homosexual activity was placed

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<sup>24</sup> For an excellent analysis of the linkages between prostitution, venereal disease and Jack the Ripper see Sander Gilman, "I'm Down on Whores": Race and Gender in Victorian London," in David Theo Goldberg (ed.), *Anatomy of Racism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), pp. 146-170. My thanks to Carole Ann Reed for this reference.

<sup>25</sup> Sheila Jeffreys, *The Spinster and Her Enemies: Feminism and Sexuality, 1880-1930* (London: Pandora Press, 1985).

<sup>26</sup> I am indebted to Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1973 [1970]), for the link she makes between individual and social bodies.

under the section on "Offences Against Morality" in the 1892 Code and remained there until the 1950s.<sup>27</sup>

Towards 1900, as venereal disease came to be portrayed as a grave public health problem and as children came to be seen as the linch pin of a morally perfectible society, British, American and Canadian social purists began to insist that home-based sex instruction for children would provide an efficacious moral prophylaxis against venereal disease. Social purists accorded sex instruction for children an important place amidst a constellation of "social gospel" reforms perceived as progressive: the rehabilitation of prostitutes, child rescue, animal welfare, temperance, woman suffrage, voluntary motherhood, dress reform, the assimilation of immigrants and eugenically sound reproduction.<sup>28</sup>

The main educational avenue taken by social purists in their campaign against sexual immorality was early home-based sex instruction for children. Canadian social purists' promotion of what was termed "purity education" was advanced by a "new literary genre" authored primarily by British and American social purity reformers during the 1890s and aimed at teaching young children about sex.<sup>29</sup> Sex instruction texts diverged in content from the typical adventure stories and animal tales produced in English Canada for children during the 1800s, but like much of writing for children, they were tools "for bending the child's mind to the adult will."<sup>30</sup> Purity

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<sup>27</sup> Backhouse, "Nineteenth-Century Canadian Prostitution Law: Reflection of a Discriminatory Society," *Social History/Histoire sociale* 18, 36 (November/novembre 1985): 387-423; McLaren, "Chasing the Social Evil"; Graham Parker, "The Origins of the Canadian Criminal Code," in David H. Flattery (ed.), *Essays in the History of Canadian Law* Vol. I (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), pp. 249-280; Kinsman, *The Regulation of Desire*, pp. 92-93.

<sup>28</sup> Richard Allen, *The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada, 1914-1928* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971); Patricia Anne Vertinsky, "Education for Sexual Morality: Moral Reform and the Regulation of American Sexual Behavior in the Nineteenth Century," EdD. Dissertation, University of British Columbia, 1975; Neil Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth-Century Consensus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976); Andrew Jones and Leonard Rutman, *In the Children's Aid: J. J. Kelso and Child Welfare in Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1981); Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water*.

<sup>29</sup> Patricia J. Campbell, *Sex Education Books for Young Adults, 1892-1979* (New York and London: R. R. Bowker Company, 1979).

<sup>30</sup> Sheila Egoff and Judith Saltman, *The New Republic of Childhood: A Critical Guide to Canadian Children's Literature in English* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 3.



education, which invoked notions of Christian sexual chastity, cleanliness and sinlessness, was conceived of as much more than a personal project. It was a positive, divine, multi-level undertaking, simultaneously familial, national and international in scope.<sup>31</sup> Purity education was a comprehensive attempt to inculcate in children the importance of sexual self-control and to introduce them to the wonders of sexual chastity, marriage and parenthood before the sexual storm and stress of adolescence.

For social purists the individual, like the home, the family and the nation to which he or she was intimately connected, was conceptualized as a porous biological structure, a fragile fort vulnerable to the onslaught of the moral and medical pollution resulting from male sexual licence. This conceptualization of the body was reinforced not only by Christian teachings about the wages of sin but by vitalist theories which held that the body's energy stores were easily exhausted. The expenditure of sexual energy, particularly during rapid periods of growth in childhood and adolescence, was thought to deplete the body of the vital force needed to achieve full physical and mental maturity. Sexual continence, or the exercise of sexuality within the confines of monogamous marriage and reproduction, was, therefore, broadcast as the ideal moral and medical solution to sexual immorality. Social purists believed that sex instruction based solidly on a moral framework would avert the possibility of arousing the child's sexual instinct. The fear of arousing children's sexual instincts undoubtedly contributed to social purists' penchant for either eliding human anatomical, reproductive and sexual detail or couching it in oblique terms.<sup>32</sup>

Home-based sex instruction proved, however, to be a troublesome project. Indeed, by 1900, many social purists began to despair that parents would ever fulfill their educational responsibilities.<sup>33</sup> This apparent parental failure to provide children with purity education gave way

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<sup>31</sup> The gist of this argument is made in Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap and Water*.

<sup>32</sup> Vertinsky, "Education for Sexual Morality."

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, p. 17.

to a number of troubling "jurisdictional questions." These included: who should instruct children? Who would instruct the instructors? Where should sex instruction take place? Should boys and girls be instructed differently? What methods were best to introduce a child to sex instruction?<sup>34</sup> Some social purists and physicians were growing increasingly convinced that school-based sex instruction provided the answer to parents' failure to inform their children about sexual matters.

Ironically, the influence of the social purity movement upon school-based sex instruction was facilitated by the rise of the social hygiene movement. Whereas social purists had repeatedly turned to medicine to substantiate their moral claims, medicine itself was now becoming moralized within the emerging social hygiene movement. The term "social hygiene" was coined by British sexologist Havelock Ellis.<sup>35</sup> At the same time that public schools were becoming more receptive to the individual child's needs, some physicians began advocating that youths be educated about sex in order to deter promiscuity and venereal disease.<sup>36</sup> Physicians' involvement with children's school-based sex instruction occurred as the medical profession began to acknowledge, at the close of the nineteenth century, that the CD Acts had been a failure in controlling venereal disease and began to admit that there was a moral as well as a medical solution to the scourge.<sup>37</sup>

Bolstered by the support shown by physician delegates who favoured teaching children and youths about sexual physiology and venereal disease at the 1899 and 1902 International Congresses on the Prevention of Venereal Disease in Brussels, Dr. Prince Morrow returned to his native United States to publish the highly influential *Social Diseases and Marriage: Social Prophylaxis* (1904).<sup>38</sup> Morrow admitted that there had been traditionally an "irreconcilable

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<sup>34</sup> Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water*, p. 74.

<sup>35</sup> Ellis, *The Task of Social Hygiene*, pp. viii-ix.

<sup>36</sup> Vertinsky, "Education for Sexual Morality."

<sup>37</sup> Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, pp. 254-255; Lucy Bland, "Cleansing the portals of life: the venereal disease campaign in the early twentieth century," in Mary Langan and Bill Schwarz (eds.), *Crises in the British State, 1880-1930* (London: Hutchinson, 1985), pp. 198-201.

<sup>38</sup> Prince Morrow, *Social Diseases and Marriage: Social Prophylaxis* (New York and Philadelphia: Lea Brothers and Co., 1904).

conflict" between the "moralists" who opposed the regulation of prostitution and the "hygienists" who supported it. Morrow insisted that although moralists could no longer consider vice more dangerous than the hygienic aspects of venereal disease, hygienists should not ignore the moral aspects of venereal disease by focusing exclusively on its sanitary dangers. He maintained that medicine and morality had to work together because, "[w]hatever may be said of the practical unwisdom of attempting to mix morals and medicine, it cannot be denied that in the causation of sexual vice two factors, one a physical the other an immoral impulse, are intimately involved."<sup>39</sup> Morrow suggested that youths in high school and college receive some form of moral *and* hygienic education. Canadian physicians would have been aware of Morrow's exploits. Upon his death in 1913, the *Canadian Public Health Journal* carried an article which praised Morrow for raising the public alarm over venereal disease and for insisting that the main point of attack against prostitution and venereal disease was "the education of the young."<sup>40</sup>

The two forms of education—moral and hygienic—would soon be embraced by the term "sex hygiene." In early 1905, Morrow and about 20 physicians founded the American Society of Sanitary and Moral Prophylaxis (ASSMP), an organization which favoured public school-based sex instruction. The founding of the ASSMP marked the birth of the American social hygiene movement.<sup>41</sup> From now on social hygienists portrayed the fight against the spread of venereal disease as a public health problem and rationalized sex instruction for children as a public health issue. Yet it is clear that social hygienists' ultimate concern did not lie with public health but with public morality and their main target was not venereal disease but the immoral sexual behaviour said to contribute to the spread of disease.<sup>42</sup> In 1910 the ASSMP was re-named the American

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 363.

<sup>40</sup> "Education in Sex Hygiene and Prophylaxis," *Canadian Public Health Journal* 4, 5 (May 1913), p. 340.

<sup>41</sup> Imber, "Toward A Theory of Curriculum Reform," p. 343.

<sup>42</sup> Strong, "Ideas of the Early Sex Education Movement in America," pp. 146-147.

Federation of Sex Hygiene (AFSH). Its express purpose was public education in sexual physiology and hygiene.

In 1913, the AFSH merged with the American Vigilance Society, an organization dedicated to fighting white slavery, to form the American Social Hygiene Association (ASHA). The ASHA upheld the notion that public school-based children's sex instruction could be an effective prophylaxis against venereal disease and solidified the medico-moral connection between social purity and social hygiene professionals in the United States.<sup>43</sup> In Canada, no similar organizational mergers occurred but individuals shifted their alliance with the social purity movement to the social hygiene movement with ease, making it difficult to make a sharp distinction between Canadian social purists and hygienists.<sup>44</sup> In contrast to the American experience, the Canadian social hygiene movement got underway after the end of the Great War. The organization most closely resembling the ASHA, the Canadian National Council for Combatting Venereal Disease (CNCCVD), was established in 1919 and headquartered in Toronto, Ontario. Renamed the Canadian Social Hygiene Council (CSHC) in 1921 and then the Health League of Canada (HLC) in 1936, the organization was reluctant to support school-based sex instruction. Despite the many links which were established between the CSHC/HLC and the ASHA, leading social hygienists in Canada were not inclined to support school-based sex instruction.<sup>45</sup> The Canadian social hygiene movement remained more in favour of training parents to teach their children about sexual matters until the halfway through the Second World War. Skyrocketing venereal disease rates in the civilian and military population forced the leadership of the HLC to come out in favour of school-based sex instruction in 1943.

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<sup>43</sup> Imber, "The First World War," p. 47.

<sup>44</sup> Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap and Water*, p. 51.

<sup>45</sup> NAC MG 28 I 332 Vol. 80 File: Education—Sex Education—Correspondence 1935-40, letter to Dr. J. H. Elliot from Dr. Gordon Bates, October 19, 1940.

Despite the vast amount of overlap in the philosophy and personnel in the medico-moral alliance between social purists and hygienists, some social hygienists like Maurice Bigelow insisted on placing some distance between themselves and the social purists, particularly in the area of children's sex instruction. Acknowledged as one of the leading lights of the American social hygiene movement after Morrow's death in 1913, Bigelow was highly regarded by Canadian social hygienists and educators well into the 1940s. Bigelow attempted to write off social purists as hopelessly old-fashioned<sup>46</sup> but ironically adopted much of what the post-1885 social purists had argued for and against in regard to children's sex instruction.

It was also in the interests of the emerging discipline of sexology to dismiss the social purity movement as a vestige of a sexually repressive past. While sexologists cannot be credited with the "discovery" of child sexuality, they did document conclusively the large number of sexual encounters prepubertal children experienced and theorized about the variety of sexual feelings children acted out.<sup>47</sup> In many instances sexologists uncovered evidence of the prevalence of child sexual abuse by strangers as well as by family members. Yet examples of child-adult sexual contact, particularly when this occurred within families, was interpreted as proof of children's sexual precocity, was theorized away or, was said to be extremely rare.<sup>48</sup> Despite the differences in their theoretical approaches to child sexuality, sexologists from Ellis to Sigmund Freud to Edward Carpenter were united in advocating that children required some form of sex instruction in the home and/or in the school.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap and Water*, p. 67.

<sup>47</sup> Kern, "Freud and the Discovery of Child Sexuality."

<sup>48</sup> Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson, *The Assault on Truth: Freud's Suppression of the Seduction Theory* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1984); Linda Gordon, *Heroes of their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence, Boston 1880-1960* (New York: Penguin Books, 1989), pp. 207-209.

<sup>49</sup> Havelock Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* Vol. 2 (New York: Random House, 1936 [1906]), pp. 33-94; Sigmund Freud, "On the Sexual Theories of Children" in Sigmund Freud, *On Sexuality: Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality and Other Works* Vol. 7 trans. James Strachey comp. Angela Richards (London: Penguin Books, 1987), p. 189; Edward Carpenter, *Love's Coming-of-Age: A Series of Papers on the Relation of the Sexes* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1930 [1896]). See also Iwan Bloch, *The Sexual Life of Our Time in its Relations to Modern Civilization* trans. Eden Paul (New York: Rebman Co., 1906?), p. 690; August Forel, *The Sexual Question: A Scientific, Psychological, Hygienic and Sociological Study for the Cultured Classes* trans. C.

Bigelow also attempted to dismiss the terms "sex hygiene" and "social hygiene." Bigelow objected to both terms because he maintained that educationalists had related them too narrowly to individual physical health and to the common occurrence of pathological conditions like venereal disease. Bigelow suggested using the term, "sex-education" instead.<sup>50</sup> Bigelow's wish to see the term sex-education replace the terms sex hygiene and social hygiene was not fulfilled. After the First World War, when the social hygiene movement assumed a preeminent place in the discourse on children's public school-based sex instruction, sex-education and social hygiene were often used interchangeably, a terminological collapse to which even Bigelow succumbed.<sup>51</sup>

There were, however, two main differences between social purists and social hygienists which were mirrored in the dissimilarities between purity education and sex-education. First, unlike social purists, social hygienists turned to "science" rather than to Christianity to condemn sexual immorality. For example, the social hygienists dismissed social purists' claims that masturbation in childhood resulted in insanity because there was no scientific basis for supporting such a connection. Nevertheless, social hygienists warned against masturbation and erotic reverie or "mental masturbation" because they believed such sexual activity weakened the nervous system. Second, social hygienists generally ignored or scorned feminist social purists' contribution to sex reform by invoking a one-dimensional censorious caricature—the spinsterish feminist—whose misguided attack on male vice sprang from her prudish—and possibly lesbian—esthetic dislike of sexual relations with men.<sup>52</sup>

Social hygiene's antagonism toward the feminist wing of the social purity movement signalled the existence of a sharper break between the social hygienists and the feminists than

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F. Marshall (New York: Rebman Co, 1908), pp. 470-488; Albert Moll, *The Sexual Life of the Child* trans. Eden Paul (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1924).

<sup>50</sup> Maurice Bigelow, *Sex-Education: A Series of Lectures Concerning Knowledge of Sex in its Relation to Human Life* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1916).

<sup>51</sup> Maurice Bigelow, "The Established Points in Social Hygiene Education, 1905-1924," *Journal of Social Hygiene* 10, 1 (January 1924): 2-11.

<sup>52</sup> Bigelow, *Sex-Education*, pp. 199-200.

between the social hygienists and the social purists. Yet the cracks which appeared in Canada amongst the social purists, social hygienists and feminists were filled in with the common adhesive of eugenics and smoothed over by the language of science. Ironically eugenics, with its stress on the need for the "better sort" of woman to reproduce at a rate which ensured the middle classes would not be swamped by the rabble, was inherently anti-feminist. Before and after the Great War, school-based sex instruction in Canada took on sex reformers' preoccupation with hereditarian concerns and racist and classist fears of "degenerates." Criminals, immigrants, prostitutes, juvenile delinquents, the poor and the physically and mentally handicapped were stigmatized as degenerates who were thought to inherit a propensity for sexual licence and, hence, venereal infection. Drawn to the study of eugenics in the hope of promoting race betterment, sex reformers were convinced that sex instruction for children was synonymous with eugenical instruction.<sup>53</sup>

By the late 1930s, a number of American social hygienists who had been preoccupied with the putative eugenical decline of the Anglo-Saxon race came out in favour of incorporating sex instruction via family life education in schools. Family life education was perceived as a broadly-based sex instruction which did away with social hygiene's central focus on venereal disease. Family life education was intended to steer children safely toward compulsory heterosexuality, marriage and child-rearing. The Canadian social hygiene movement would embrace family life education and call for its implementation into schools towards the end of the Second World War.

My dissertation makes a contribution to a number of historical fields. As it deals with the history of school-based sex instruction in Ontario, it fits neatly into the history of sexuality and the history of education in Canada. Because it focuses on the way in which sexuality in childhood and adolescence is conceptualized, the dissertation is indebted to the work done by Canadian scholars on the history of childhood. Finally, because the dissertation explores women's participation in the

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<sup>53</sup> McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, 68-88.

push for sex instruction, it is in keeping with feminist-inspired scholarship on Canadian women's history.

Through the six chapters which make up this dissertation, I will trace the residual impact that the post-1885 social purity movement's moral approach to children's sex instruction had on the philosophy, aim, message and technique of children's school-based sex instruction in Ontario between 1900 and 1950. In Chapter One, I explore the way in which early twentieth century Canadian social purists, at the height of the white slavery panic, raised the spectre of the ignorant child. Social purists argued that home-based sex instruction, taught prior to the sexual storm and stress of adolescence, could vanquish ignorance about sexual matters and, therefore, curtail the spread of venereal disease. Dissatisfaction with the ability of parents to instruct their children about sexual matters, combined with the distress over rising rates of venereal disease in the civilian and military populations during the Great War, led some Canadian educators active within the emerging social hygiene movement to call for school-based sex instruction. These educators recommended using the same technique to introduce elementary school children to school-based sex instruction which social purists had recommended in home-based sex instruction: the study of the reproductive lives of flora and fauna. In Chapter Two I look at the involvement of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) in children's school-based sex instruction in Ontario. Whereas Canadian physicians prior to the Great War were disunited on the subject of school-based sex instruction, the WCTU stood firmly behind the need for both home-based and school-based sex instruction for children. The WCTU played a key role in bringing purity education to the pupils of Ontario elementary, secondary and collegiate educational institutions by hiring special lecturer, Arthur Beall, in 1900 to be their purity missionary. In 1912, Beall was hired by the Ontario Department of Education to be its "Lecturer on Eugenics and Personal Hygiene in High and Public Schools." I maintain that throughout his career as a public school lecturer, Beall's lectures reproduced the argument made by the feminist wing of the social purity movement. This argument



held that sexually incontinent men, who were primarily responsible for the spread of moral and hygienic pollution to the race, were morally disenfranchised from Canadian citizenship.

Chapters Three and Four deal with the spectre of the feeble-minded child and the relationship Ontario social purists and hygienists drew between mental defectiveness and the spread of venereal disease. I show that both social purists and hygienists were united in proposing, during the interwar years, that the birth of mentally defective children could be curtailed by sterilization on the one hand, and by sex instruction on the other. Yet the Canadian social hygiene organization rejected any involvement with school-based sex instruction and threw its weight behind teaching parents how to instruct their children about sexual matters. Even when the CNCCVD decided to expand its narrow focus on venereal disease when it changed its name to the CSHC, and then to the HLC, the organization maintained its support for strengthening home-based sex instruction until 1943. In keeping with the social hygiene movement's concern with racial degeneration, training for parents was infused with the need to inculcate in their children a sense of racial responsibility.

Chapter Five investigates the link military, governmental and educational officials established between the spectre of the juvenile delinquent and the spread of venereal disease during the Second World War. As skyrocketing venereal infection in the military and civilian population was portrayed as a menace to the allied nations, Ontario educators maintained that sex instruction was one of the best ways to prevent venereal disease and thus preserve democracy. Faced with the venereal disease emergency and with growing public support for school-based sex instruction, the HLC was forced to swing its support behind school-based sex instruction. Towards the end of the war a number of spokespeople connected with the HLC came out in favour of a broadly-based sex instruction that validated the importance of the patriarchal nuclear family: family life education. In Chapter Six I explore the impact the medical triumph over venereal disease had on school-based sex instruction in Ontario within the context of the post-war search for national security. I look at the connections post-war Ontario educators perceived to exist between juvenile delinquency,

homosexuality and fifth-column Communist activity. I trace and analyze the attempt made by a group of teachers, appointed by the Toronto Board of Education, to investigate the feasibility of implementing a Family Life Education curriculum in grades 7 and 8. Influenced by literature produced by the ASHA, by American and British family life education theorists and by Canadian "experts" on sexual delinquency, the curriculum was ultimately defeated because it was perceived as too heavily dependent on straightforward physiological information for children, i.e., as insufficiently infused with the moral lessons first espoused by the post-1885 social purity movement.

## CHAPTER ONE

### "Taken Hold of at the Right Time"<sup>1</sup>

On June 28, 1914, Serbian revolutionary Gabriel Prinzip jumped onto the running board of a car carrying Austro-Hungarian Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife on a state visit to Sarajevo, Bosnia, and tossed a bomb into the window. The assassination of the royal couple resulted in a series of diplomatic crises leading Britain to declare war on Germany on August 4, 1914. As a colony within the British Empire, Canada automatically followed Britain's lead. In October 33,000 men of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) sailed to Britain. By the end of the war a total of 620,000 Canadian men had volunteered for or were conscripted into the armed forces; 425,000 of these men went overseas. While Canadian troops drew attention to themselves by performing bravely in battle at Ypres, Vimy Ridge and the Somme, they also distinguished themselves for another shocking reason. The CEF had the highest rate of venereal disease amongst troops in western Europe.<sup>2</sup> Colonel J. G. Adami, who oversaw the Army Medical Records in the Canadian Army Medical Corps in Britain, drew an interesting conclusion about the incidence of venereal disease in the armed forces and its relation to the ignorance of sexual matters. Canadians, Adami lamented, had long stuck their heads in the sand, training children to regard any discussion of sex as taboo. Adami's singling out of the "policy of the ostrich" spoke to turn-of-the-century sex reformers' concerns that children's sexual ignorance was a major cause of the spread of venereal disease. This policy had cost the nation and the Empire an awful amount in four years of

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<sup>1</sup> Synopsis of a speech by J. J. Kelso, *Ontario Educational Association Yearbook*, 1900, p. 353. A version of this chapter was presented as a paper entitled, "Nature, Natural, Naturalist: Nature Study and the Teaching of Biological Reproduction in Ontario, 1900-1930," at the Australian and New Zealand History of Education Society and the Canadian History of Education Association/Association Canadienne d'histoire de l'éducation, Ormond College, University of Melbourne, December 9-12, 1993.

<sup>2</sup> Jay Cassel, *The Secret Plague: Venereal Disease in Canada, 1838-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), p. 122.

war. Battalions of soldiers needed on the front had been sidelined in hospitals, suffering with venereal disease.<sup>3</sup>

Adami's singling out of the "policy of the ostrich" spoke to the emerging social hygiene movement's concerns that children's sexual ignorance was a major cause of the spread of venereal disease in the civilian and military population. The threat of contagion was heightened by scientific confirmation that gonorrhoea and syphilis caused an array of mental and physical disabilities in children and by the erroneous medical belief, maintained until mid-way through the Second World War, that venereal disease could be transmitted apart from sexual contact. The non-sexual transmission of venereal disease was said to result in vast numbers of "innocent" infections amongst doctors, nurses, wet nurses, women and children. It is true that the First World War enabled the physician-driven social hygiene movement to "remove the shroud from social diseases."<sup>4</sup> It is equally true that social hygienists were responsible for important medical, legal and organizational reforms dealing with venereal disease.<sup>5</sup> Yet the causal relationship between children's sexual ignorance, the spread of venereal disease and the educational attempts to combat that ignorance was established by social purists during the white slavery panic<sup>6</sup> prior to the Great War. Raised by the social purity movement and later adopted by social hygienists, the fearsome spectre of the ignorant child promised to wreak havoc on the patriarchal nuclear family, the community and the nation. Social purists advocated that children had a right to a knowledge about sex; and the mother, as "God's moral agent" on earth, was best suited to teach her children about sexual matters.<sup>7</sup> Social purists charged mothers with training the child's will in favour of sexual

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<sup>3</sup> J. G. Adami. "The Policy of the Ostrich." *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 9, 4 (April 1918), pp. 289-301.

<sup>4</sup> Suzann Buckley and Janice Dickin McGinnis, "Venereal Disease and Public Health Reform in Canada," *Canadian Historical Review* 68, 3 (September 1982), p. 338.

<sup>5</sup> OSP Vol. L Part IX Report 74 "Interim Report on Venereal Disease and Copy of An Act for the Prevention of Venereal Disease," 1918; Cassel, 160-164.

<sup>6</sup> Edward J. Bristow, *Vice and Vigilance: Purity Movements in Britain* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1977), pp. 154-199; Ruth Rosen, *The Lost Sisterhood: Prostitution in America, 1900-1918* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), pp. 112-138; Marianna Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991), pp. 77-103.

<sup>7</sup> Patricia Vertinsky. "Education for Sexual Morality: Moral Reform and the Regulation of American Sexual Behavior in the Nineteenth Century." Ed.D. dissertation, University of British Columbia, 1975, p. 195.

self-control and imparting information on sexual physiology in order to vanquish, as it were, the policy of the ostrich. The training of the child's will required that the mother manage the flow of pollution into and out of the child's orifices. The imparting of information on sexual physiology required that the mother introduce her child to the reproductive life of flora and fauna in nature study.

By the advent of the First World War, many individuals aligned with the social purity and the emerging social hygiene movement grew increasingly frustrated by what they believed to be the inadequacies of home-based sex instruction. Mothers bore the larger share of the blame for this state of affairs. "The inadequate mother"<sup>8</sup> was often disparaged for her inability to answer her children's curious questions, to tell her children the truth about reproduction, to prepare her daughter for menarche or to notice the signs of masturbation in her sons and daughters. Social purists and hygienists turned their attention increasingly to school-based sex instruction. The sex reformers were plagued, however, with the problem of just how to incorporate sex instruction into the curriculum. By the end of the First World War, when the threat of venereal disease to the civilian and military population was made clear, many Canadian educators were convinced that the subject of nature study held the key to introducing pre-pubescent children to school-based sex instruction.

## I

During the pre-War white slavery panic, the city came to be represented by urban reformers as a "painted whore" whose sordid attractions camouflaged the fact that she was exploited by pimps and riddled with venereal disease.<sup>9</sup> Although the term "white slavery" was used by

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<sup>8</sup> Joan Jacobs Brumberg, "Something Happens to Girls: Menarche and the Emergence of the Modern American Hygienic Imperative," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 4, 1 (July 1993): 99-127; Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "From Puberty to Menopause" in Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 182-196; Wendy Mitchinson, *The Nature of Their Bodies: Women and Their Doctors in Victorian Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), pp. 75-98.

<sup>9</sup> Lori Rotenberg, "The Wayward Worker: Toronto's Prostitute at the Turn of the Century," in Janice Acton et al. (eds.), *Women at Work, Ontario, 1850-1930* (Toronto: Canadian Women's Educational Press, 1974), pp. 33-70.

Canadian social purity reformers to indicate the type of organized sexual exploitation to which girls and young women of all backgrounds were vulnerable on an international scale. white slavers' French-Canadian, Chinese, African-Canadian and Jewish origins were given prominent mention by social purists, particularly when their prey was white.<sup>10</sup> One of the founders the Moral and Social Reform Council of Canada and the leader of the Council's subcommittee, the National Committee for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic, the Rev. John G. Shearer,<sup>11</sup> pinned the cause of white slavery on six factors related almost exclusively to the immorality of the metropolis. The first of these was ignorance—on the part of children about the "purposes, problems and perils of sex," on the part of parents about their unchaperoned daughters' vulnerability to earning a livelihood in the city and on the part of a public loathe to believe in the prevalence of the traffic in young women. The remaining five factors were the double standard of morals, immoral literature, immoral amusements, low wages for women and the toleration of prostitution.<sup>12</sup>

Whereas low wages for women headed most Canadian left-wing reformers' analyses of white slavery,<sup>13</sup> children's ignorance of sex topped middle-class reformers' list of reasons for the traffic in women. Middle-class reformers' belief that the ignorant child was a moral and hygienic detriment to society originated in conceptualization of children's sexuality common among social purists at the turn of the century. Although it was commonly believed that the sexual instinct usually manifested itself at puberty along with the maturation of the reproductive organs, turn-of-

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Diana Pedersen, "Keeping Our Good Girls Good: The YWCA and the 'Girl Problem,' 1870-1930," *Canadian Woman Studies/Les Cahiers de la femme* 7, 4 (Winter 1986): 20-24; Carolyn Strange, "From Modern Babylon to a City Upon a Hill: The Toronto Social Survey Commission of 1915 and the Search for Sexual Order in the City," in Roger Hall, William Westfall and Laurel Sefton MacDowell (eds.), *Patterns of the Past: Interpreting Ontario's History* (Toronto and Oxford: Dundurn Press, 1988), pp. 255-277; Valverde, pp. 78-79.

<sup>10</sup> John G. Shearer, "The Canadian Crusade," in Ernest A. Bell (ed.), *Fighting the Traffic in Young Girls or War on the White Slave Trade* (n. p.: G. S. Ball, 1911), pp. 336, 342-343; R. B. St. Clair, "Recent Canadian Happenings," in Bell (ed.), pp. 354, 356.

<sup>11</sup> For more information on Shearer see Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water*, pp. 54-58.

<sup>12</sup> J. G. Shearer, "Introduction," in Clifford G. Roe and B. S. Steadwell (eds.), *The Great War on White Slavery or Fighting for the Protection of Our Girls* (n. p.: 1911), pp. 19-26.

<sup>13</sup> Janice Newton, "From Wage Slave to White Slave: The Prostitution Controversy and the Early Canadian Left," in Linda Kealey and Joan Sangster (eds.), *Beyond the Vote: Canadian Women and Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), pp. 217-236.

the-century social purity reformers acknowledged the existence of the pre-pubertal manifestations of children's sexuality. Children's questions about their own bodies, about the anatomical difference between boys and girls and about the origin of life around them, were considered benign examples of children's curiosity. Unfortunately, the child who was curious about reproduction and apt to ask his or her parents questions about the origin of life was shunned, denounced as bad or deliberately misinformed about cabbages and storks. The child turned from the sanctity of the home to learn about sex elsewhere. Thus began the vicious spiral of children's ignorance.<sup>14</sup> Troublesome manifestations of children's sexual manifestations included the transmission of sexual knowledge to peers, sexual encounters with peers and adults, the contraction of venereal infection and, most important, the practice of masturbation.

Boys' and girls' ignorance was perceived very differently. For social purists, the fearsome spectre of the ignorant child was an apparition bifurcated into the masturbating boy and the innocent girl. The masturbating boy and the innocent girl made their appearance in best-selling sex instruction texts intended for children,<sup>15</sup> loomed large at public lectures,<sup>16</sup> showed up in German and British sexologists' qualitative and quantitative studies on child sexuality,<sup>17</sup> and hovered in the background of pre-War reports into the prevalence of the white slave traffic in major cities in the United States and Canada.<sup>18</sup> The young boy was thought to be possessed of a strong sexual

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<sup>14</sup> Bryan Strong, "Ideas of the Early Sex Education Movement in America, 1890-1920," *History of Education Quarterly* 12, 1 (Spring 1972): 129-161.

<sup>15</sup> Sylvanus Stall, *What A Young Boy Ought To Know* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1897) and Mary Wood-Allen, *What A Young Girl Ought To Know* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1897).

<sup>16</sup> George Douglas, *Thou Art the Man!* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1895).

<sup>17</sup> Iwan Bloch, *The Sexual Life of Our Time: In Its Relation to Modern Civilizations*, 6th. ed. trans. M. Eden Paul (New York: Rebman Co., 1906?); Albert Moll, *The Sexual Life of the Child* trans. Eden Paul (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1924); Havelock Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* Vol. 2 (New York: Random House, 1936 [1906]), pp. 53-60.

<sup>18</sup> *The Social Evil: With Special Reference to Conditions Existing in the City of New York. A Report Prepared Under the Direction of the Committee of Fifteen* (New York: Arno Press, 1979 [1902]); *The Social Evil in Chicago: A Study of Existing Conditions with Recommendations by the Vice Commission of Chicago* (Chicago: Gunthrop-Warren Printing Co., 1911); *Prostitution in America: Three Investigations, 1902-1914* (New York: Arno Press, 1976); Shearer, "The Canadian Crusade," pp. 333-352; St. Clair, "Recent Canadian Happenings," pp. 352-363; Lucy W. Booking, "Conditions in Toronto," in Bell (ed.), pp. 364-381; *Report of the Social Survey Commission, Toronto. Presented to the City Council October 4th, 1915* (Toronto: The Carswell Co., 1915).

instinct. It remained relatively dormant until approximately age 14, when the reproductive organs sprang to life at the beginning of puberty. Two reasons given by social purists for the manifestation of the sexual instinct in boys prior to puberty—the temptations of sexually stimulating amusements and the dangers posed by contact with sexually intemperate acquaintances—were related to the fear of sexual corruption.<sup>19</sup> Lurid novels, sensational newspaper stories, sexually suggestive advertisements, lewd theatre shows, dance-hall entertainment and the saloon bar—gave boys the idea that sexual continence was an impossible ideal. Suspicious individuals such as servants who masturbated boys to sleep, men who sexually assaulted boys and children who passed on false stories of reproduction to their peers, taught others how to masturbate, or circulated pornographic pictures, made it impossible for boys to remain chaste of mind and body. Sexual corruption prematurely aroused the sexual instinct in boys, leading to the practice of the most prevalent form of pre-pubertal sexual activity in boys: masturbation, mental masturbation and mutual masturbation.

## II

Social purists' attack on boyhood masturbation has been attributed to the late eighteenth-century vitalist discourse on the detrimental physiological consequences of the loss of sperm in the male, to the relationship drawn in the nineteenth century between Victorian gentlemanly thrift and the spermatic economy, to the late-nineteenth century discomfort with the manifestation of sexuality in childhood, to the confusion between masturbation and homosexuality and to the social purity movement's singling out of male vice.<sup>20</sup> The boy's ability to develop self-control over his

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<sup>19</sup> Jeffrey Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality Since 1800* (Longman, New York, 1981), p. 48.

<sup>20</sup> E. H. Hare, "Masturbatory Insanity: The History of an Idea," *Journal of Mental Science* 108, 452 (1965): 2-123; Peter Cominos, "Late Victorian Sexual Respectability and the Social System," *International Review of Social History* 8 (1963): 18-48; 216-250; R. P. Newman, "Masturbation, Madness, and the Modern Concepts of Childhood and Adolescence," *Journal of Social History* 8 (Spring 1975): 1-27; Vern L. Bullough and Martha Voght, "Homosexuality and Its Confusion with the 'Secret Sin' in Pre-Freudian America," *Journal of the History of Medicine*, 28 (1973): 143-155; John D' Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), pp. 203-206; Lesley A. Hall, "Forbidden by God,



masturbation was thought to be crucial to a sexually continent life. For social purists, a direct path was laid between the practice of the "solitary vice" in boyhood and participation in the "social evil" in adolescence and adulthood. The masturbating boy became the sexually incontinent man who scorned the single standard, frequented white slaves in brothels, became infected with venereal disease and sexually transmitted the malady to his innocent wife who, in turn, passed the disease on congenitally to their offspring.

The young normal girl was thought to be virtually devoid of sexual feeling until adolescence. While there was clear evidence that girls masturbated and were vigorously punished for masturbating,<sup>21</sup> it was widely accepted that girls' desire for sexual expression was principally awakened in connection with the desire for maternity. Not all medical authorities linked female sexual desire to maternity. But once female sexual desire was aroused apart from the desire for maternity, it was generally considered even more aggressive than the male version and was accorded the status of a malady.<sup>22</sup> This twist explained the existence of what social purists called the "occasional" prostitute—young unmarried women who engaged in sexual encounters with men for pleasure or in exchange for dinners and gifts<sup>23</sup>—and allowed social purists to maintain that close affection between girls could become "abnormal...a sort of perversion, a sex mania, needing immediate and perhaps severe measures."<sup>24</sup> Emphasis on female asexuality simultaneously underlined the reformers' need to channel women's sexuality toward compulsory heterosexuality, marriage and child-bearing while posing that women were responsible for controlling their own as well as men's sexuality. On the one hand, this agenda restricted the legitimate exercise of

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Despised by Men: Masturbation, Medical Warnings, Moral Panic, and Manhood in Great Britain, 1850-1950." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 2, 3 (January 1992): 365-387.

<sup>21</sup> Mary S. Hartman, *Victorian Murderesses* (New York: Schocken Books, 1977), pp. 85-129.

<sup>22</sup> Mitchinson, *The Nature of Their Bodies*, pp. 105-115.

<sup>23</sup> Alice Klein and Wayne Roberts, "Besieged Innocence: The 'Problem' and the Problems of Working Women—Toronto, 1896-1914," in Acton et al. (eds.), pp. 211-253; Strange, "From Modern Babylon;" Kathy Peiss, "Charity Girls' and City Pleasures: Historical Notes on Working-Class Sexuality, 1880-1920," in Kathy Peiss and Christina Simmons with Robert A. Padgug (eds.), *Passion and Power: Sexuality in History* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), pp. 57-69.

<sup>24</sup> Mary Wood-Allen, *What A Young Woman Ought To Know* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1913 [1899]), p. 178.

women's sexuality to motherhood and continued to divide women into sexually pure and impure categories. On the other hand, it permitted women, at least in theory, the power to assume the role of sexual gatekeeper on the basis of their moral superiority to men.<sup>25</sup> Girls were clearly told that because boys' sex drive was stronger they had to assume responsibility for their own as well as for boys' sexuality.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, the responsibility for controlling their own and men's sexuality was difficult to exercise for, as social purists themselves charged, the young girl was kept deliberately ignorant of sex not realizing, until it was too late, that her body was a holy temple consecrated to reproduction.

While the boy struggled with his sexual urges, the girl had to contend with her lack of knowledge about sex. The innocent girl heard untrue stories about reproduction, was taught how to masturbate by her peers, felt terror or resentment upon menarche, developed close crushes on other girls or older women, allowed boys to smoke and drink in her presence, flirted with men and thought nothing of keeping the company of a man who did not respect the single standard. A girl's innocence was particularly burdensome if she were a village girl or an immigrant searching for work in the city. The village girl was sheltered, the immigrant vulnerable. Oblivious to the wiles of procurers, the innocent girl was sweet-talked, forced, drugged or kidnapped into white slavery. Unaware of sexual danger, she risked becoming the prey of the sexually incontinent man. Seduced, she turned to prostitution. Unapprised of the need to marry a man who adhered to the single standard, she married a disreputable man who infected her and her children with venereal disease.

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<sup>25</sup> Carol Christ, "Victorian Masculinity and the Angel in the House," in Martha Vicinus (ed.), *A Widening Sphere: Changing Roles of Victorian Women* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1980), pp. 146-181; Deborah Gorham, *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1982); Carol Bacchi, *Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1918* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), pp. 104-116; Mitchinson, *The Nature of their Bodies*, pp. 99-124.

<sup>26</sup> Constance Nathanson, *Dangerous Passage: The Social Control of Sexuality in Women's Adolescence* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), pp. 82-83.

Whereas sexual corruption was thought to threaten children from outside the boundaries of the good—i.e., respectable, white, Christian, middle-class—home, children from non-Anglo-Saxon, immigrant and working-class families were themselves considered corrupt. Some children were held to be cursed as a result of their heredity. Many children were thought to inherit their parents' feeble-mindedness and/or their penchant for sexual promiscuity. Feeble-mindedness and sexual promiscuity were thought to be endemic in parents of "foreign" origin. While some children burdened with unfavourable heredity were considered sexually promiscuous for want of self-control, other children were thought to begin participating in sexual activity because too much of the wrong kind of knowledge about sex made chastity unlikely. Environmental conditions were often blamed for some children's sexual impropriety. Children living in crowded tenement dwellings with adults witnessed sexual acts between their parents. Those who lived near brothels saw men go to and fro. Others spent time on the city streets shining shoes or delivering newspapers and were easily accosted by adults. These were the "incorrigible" children who filled the boys' and girls' reformatories established explicitly for juvenile reform. Yet it was far more likely that girls, rather than boys, were incarcerated for sexual acting out.<sup>27</sup>

In the same way that images of white women trapped by foreign men "took attention away from the real problems of intra-racial gender domination and of cross-gender racial domination,"<sup>28</sup> images of children portrayed as sexually corrupt obfuscated social purity reformers' gender, class and race prejudices and ignored the dynamics of the sexual abuse of children by adults. Social purists, sexologists and social hygienists left unchallenged the power differential between adults and children; dismissed the prevalence of child sexual abuse perpetrated by males in positions of trust outside the family; and focused their scrutinizing gaze on the bad home, rejecting the

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<sup>27</sup> Susan Houston, "Victorian Origins of Juvenile Delinquency: A Canadian Experience," *History of Education Quarterly* 13, 3 (Fall 1972): 254-279; Barbara Brenzel, "Domestication as Reform: A Study of the Socialization of Wayward Girls, 1856-1905," *Harvard Educational Review* 50, 2 (May 1980): 196-213; Paul Bennett, "Taming 'Bad Boys' of the Dangerous Class: Child Rescue and Restraint at the Victoria Industrial School, 1887-1935," *Social History/Histoire sociale* 21, 4 (May 1988): 71-96.

<sup>28</sup> Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water*, p. 86.

possibility that the "good" home was not always a haven for children in general or for girls in particular.<sup>29</sup> Evidence of the sexual assault of children did come before the courts. Yet despite medical evidence of trauma to the genitals, convictions were obtained rarely.<sup>30</sup> Children's ignorance of sexual matters was constructed in accordance with the child's race, class and gender. Girls from "bad" homes were flirts; the boys were vandals. Girls were rarely treated as sexual innocents. As in the case of adult females, young girls were expected to have resisted the attack and to have been previously of chaste character. Their modesty was questioned if they were able to describe parts of the body in too much detail. In contrast, assaulted boys were taken seriously, not subjected to shaming questions, not asked about their past experiences, never placed in the position of seducer and not condemned for exchanging money for sex. Incest was handily constructed as a geographical concern, resulting in the creation of moral and immoral zones. Incest was correlated with overcrowding and sexual depravity in cities. In small towns and villages poverty and isolation were said to contribute to the prevalence of incest.<sup>31</sup>

Although some Canadian physicians would claim in the 1930s that "[f]urther investigation" was needed to explain the high rate of non-congenital syphilis in children under age 14,<sup>32</sup> a number of social purists prior to the First World War recognized that the existence of non-congenital venereal disease in children could be evidence of sexual assault. Non-congenital venereal disease in children—gonococcal vaginitis and urethritis, condyloma acuminata (venereal

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<sup>29</sup> Linda Gordon, *Heroes of their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence, Boston 1880-1960* (New York: Penguin Books, 1989).

<sup>30</sup> Terry L. Chapman, "Inquiring Minds Want to Know: The Handling of Children in Sex Assault Cases in the Canadian West, 1890-1920," in Russell Smandych, Gordon Douks and Alvin Essau (eds.), *Dimensions of Childhood: Essays on the History of Children and Youth in Canada* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Legal Research Institute, 1991), pp. 183-204.

<sup>31</sup> Karen Dubinsky, *Improper Advances: Rape and Heterosexual Conflict in Ontario, 1880-1929* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Adam M. Givertz, "Bad Families/Bad Men: Reading Incest in Turn-of-the-Century Ontario," paper presented at the Second Carleton Conference on the History of the Family, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada, May 11-14, 1994.

<sup>32</sup> Gordon Bates, "A Survey of the Incidence of Venereal Diseases in Toronto in 1937," *Canadian Public Health Journal* 28, 12 (December 1937), p. 577. My thanks to Neil Sutherland for directing my attention to this reference.

warts) and syphilis—has been acknowledged as an important indicator of sexual abuse.<sup>33</sup> Despite the prevalent belief that venereal disease could be transmitted non-sexually, court cases show that the transmission of venereal disease to the child victim, rather than the sexual assault itself, was more of a factor in convicting the accused when he was similarly infected.<sup>34</sup> In general, however, non-congenital venereal infection in children was attributed to accidental mediate transmission and to the larger problem of immoral environmental conditions and/or degenerate heredity. While some American investigations into white slavery found that approximately one quarter of children with venereal disease had been assaulted by venereally diseased men, the children's immoral homes were said to contribute to their loss of "moral sense."<sup>35</sup> Venereal infection in African-American girls was considered a perfect example of the hereditary immorality of the black race. Many white American physicians were convinced that statistics showing high rates of venereal infection in African American girls over age 6 affirmed that "sexual irregularities occur at an early age in the negro race."<sup>36</sup>

For social purists, the end result of the girl's and boy's ignorance was all too clear. The cry of the anguished adolescent and adult burdened with the detritus of childhood sexual ignorance would ring out from "hospitals, foundling homes, homes for the friendless, syphilitic wards and refuge homes... 'Oh, if I had only known! If any one had only told me some things, I need not have been there.'"<sup>37</sup> Based on statistics drawn from American and British sources, the Toronto Social Service Survey enumerated the cost of venereal infection to the family, the community and the nation in more practical terms. "[F]ully one-eighth of all human disease and suffering" sprang from syphilis and gonorrhoea which attacked young men and women during the prime of their

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<sup>33</sup> Lawrence S. Neinstein, John Goldenring and Sarah Carpenter, "Nonsexual Transmission of Sexually Transmitted Diseases: An Infrequent Occurrence," *Pediatrics* 74, 1 (July 1984): 67-76. My thanks to Dr. Marcella Mian of the Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect unit at the Toronto Hospital for Sick Children for her assistance on this subject. See also Antonietta C. Rouget, Reuban A. Lang, Michel R. Joffres, "Sexually Transmitted Diseases in Abused Children and Adolescents," *Annals of Sex Research* 1, 1 (1988): 95-114.

<sup>34</sup> Chapman, "Inquiring Minds Want to Know," pp. 201-202.

<sup>35</sup> *The Social Evil in Chicago*, pp. 241-245.

<sup>36</sup> Edward B. Vedder, *Syphilis and Public Health* (Philadelphia and New York: Lea and Febinger, 1918), p. 93.

<sup>37</sup> Della Thompson Lutes, "The Child's Right to a Knowledge of Sex," in Roe and Steadwell (eds.), pp. 420-421.

reproductive and working lives.<sup>38</sup> Syphilis caused paralysis, insanity and death. Gonorrhoea caused sterility in women and blindness in infants. Congenitally acquired, venereal disease caused stillbirth, mental and physical retardation. Canada was not immune to the scourge. One hundred and eighty out of 412 patients at one Toronto hospital between August and December, 1913, tested positive for syphilis; those in the business and labouring classes had the highest incidence of the disease.<sup>39</sup>

### III

The belief in the causal connection between children's ignorance of sexual matters and venereal disease led many social purists to conclude that sex instruction could serve as a moral and medical prophylaxis against venereal disease. The advocacy of purity education for children was predicated upon social purists' conceptualizations of the child's pliability prior to adolescence, the mother's morality and the unspoiled beauty of the natural world, the polar opposite of the blighted urban landscape.

Social purists' conceptualization of the young child's malleability prior to adolescence was heavily influenced by the teachings of Friedrich Froebel, the founder of the kindergarten movement. The well-known Toronto school inspector, James L. Hughes, and his wife, Ada Marean, eagerly promoted Froebelian ideas from the 1880s onward. Froebelian societies devoted to child study were established in three major Ontario cities—Toronto, Ottawa and London.<sup>40</sup> Froebelian teachings held that children were neither good nor evil. Rather, children were born with certain instincts which manifested themselves during their early years. These instincts could be developed for better or for worse by their environment. In *The Education of Man* (1885) Froebel

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<sup>38</sup> *Report of the Social Survey Commission, Toronto*, p. 64.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>40</sup> Neil Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth-Century Consensus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), p. 18.

compared children to plants. Like plants, children had to be carefully nurtured, guided and encouraged toward maturity. The child who was not raised in such a loving environment would be damaged: "if the buds of the future tree of his [sic] life are injured, then will the child, only with the greatest difficulty and the most extreme effort, grow into strong, mature life; only with the greatest difficulty will he insure himself from being stunted, or at least from becoming one-sided. in the course of development and training."<sup>41</sup> Belief in the young child's malleability was firmly held by child savers such as J. J. Kelso. When he spoke about the necessity for the establishment of Children's Aid Societies to the annual gathering of the Ontario Educational Association (OEA) in 1900, Kelso elaborated upon a number of instances when a child who had grown up in ignorance and vice was beyond reclamation after a certain point. But "if taken hold of at the right time" the child could be saved from living a worthless life.<sup>42</sup> The right time of which Kelso spoke was acknowledged to be the period prior to adolescence.

Social purists were convinced of the connection between between sexual danger and adolescence<sup>43</sup> but G. Stanley Hall, the president of Clark University, won international recognition for confirming its existence in his two-volume tome, *Adolescence: Its Psychology and its Relation to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion and Education* (1904).<sup>44</sup> For Hall adolescence or, the period between the ages of 14 to 19, was a precarious sexual flash point, a time "strewn with wreckage of body, mind and morals. There is not only arrest, but perversion, at every stage, and hoodlumism, juvenile crime, and secret vice seem not only increasing, but develop in earlier years in every civilized land."<sup>45</sup> According to Hall, recapitulation theory explained the storm and stress of adolescence. Recapitulation theory became the thematic core for

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<sup>41</sup> Friedrich Froebel, *The Education of Man*, trans. Josephine Jarvis (New York: A. Lovell and Co., 1885), p. 31.

<sup>42</sup> Kelso, *Ontario Educational Association Yearbook*, 1900, p. 353.

<sup>43</sup> For example, see R. Swinburne Clymer, *The Mystery of Sex and Race Regeneration* (Quarkertown, Pennsylvania: The Philosophical Publishing Co., 1902), pp. 57-66.

<sup>44</sup> G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence: Its Psychology and its Relation to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion and Education* Vols. 1 and 2 (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1908 (1904).

<sup>45</sup> Hall, *Adolescence* Vol. 1, pp. xiv-xv.

anthropology, psychology and child study well into the twentieth century. Predicated on late nineteenth-century romanticized and racist conceptualizations of non-white races, the theory maintained that as the developing human embryo repeats the physical stages of remote ancestors, so the child re-lives the mental history of more recent primitives. Adolescents' playfulness, passion and lack of moral sense, characteristics thought to be the hallmark of non-whites, were attributed to the belief that the child was reliving the adult stage of aboriginal savagery in a state of nature. Hall posited that because Caucasian boys matured sexually at a slower rate than did women, criminals and aboriginal peoples, they were able to scale the phyletic ladder of Charles Darwin's great chain of being most successfully. Thus recapitulation theory ensured that all groups restricted to the margins of the "charmed circle of Caucasian male adulthood"<sup>46</sup> remained stuck on the lower rungs of evolutionary ascent and adolescence, for women, criminals and aboriginal peoples, represented nothing more than a state of developmental arrest.<sup>47</sup>

Historians have confirmed that like childhood, adolescence was an "invention" closely connected to a number of factors such as the drop in child mortality, the interest in secondary education for boys and girls and the growing distaste for child labour. These factors left youths aged 14 to 19, especially amongst the middle classes, subject to an extended period of economic dependence upon their parents.<sup>48</sup> The period of adolescence was further complicated by two factors. One, height, weight and age of menarche statistics indicate that children matured faster at the turn of the century than they had in the mid-nineteenth century. Two, marriages at the turn of

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<sup>46</sup> Cynthia Eagle Russett, *Sexual Science: The Victorian Construction of Womanhood* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 51.

<sup>47</sup> Stephen Jay Gould, *Ontogeny and Phylogeny* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of the Harvard University Press, 1977), pp. 135-147; Hugh Cunningham, *The Children of the Poor: Representations of Childhood Since the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1991), pp. 97-132; Robert J. Richards, *The Meaning of Evolution: The Morphological Construction and Ideological Reconstruction of Darwin's Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

<sup>48</sup> John Gillis, *Youth and History: Tradition and Change in European Age Relations, 1770-present* (New York: Academic Press, 1974); David Macleod, "A Live Vaccine: The YMCA and Male Adolescence in the United States and Canada, 1870-1920," *Social History/Histoire sociale* 5, 25 (May 1978): 5-24; Viviana A. Zelizer, *Pricing the Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1985); Steven Mintz and Susan Kellogg, *Domestic Revolutions: A Social History of American Family Life* (New York: The Free Press, 1988).



the century occurred later in life than they had in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>49</sup> This meant that at the turn of the century, sexually mature individuals considered neither children nor adults were now living with their parents for longer periods of time than ever before in history. It is not surprising, therefore, that adolescence was observed to be a sexually tumultuous period.

Given the link said to exist between adolescence and sexual danger, social purists insisted that children receive instruction in sexual matters prior to adolescence in order to equip them to ride out the storm and stress of the period. While it is true that parents were charged with the "sacred trust"<sup>50</sup> of sex instruction, social purists turned to the mothers in particular to vanquish the spectre of the ignorant child.<sup>51</sup> Information about sexuality learned at the mother's knee can be viewed as part and parcel of the physical, mental and moral education of children with which mothers were charged from the mid-nineteenth century onward.<sup>52</sup> Considered spiritually superior to men because of her inherent asexuality, the mother was viewed as the perfect teacher who could maintain her children's confidence, tell her children the truth about sex without arousing their sexual instincts prematurely and inculcate in them the message that human sexuality was meant for reproduction within marriage.

Mothers were first encouraged to train the child in sexual self-control by managing strictly the flow of pollution into and out of the child's orifices. Sexual self-control was thought to be

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<sup>49</sup> Roderick Floud, Kenneth Wachter and Annabel Gregory, *Height, Health and History: Nutritional Status in the United Kingdom, 1750-1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), Robert W. Fogel et al., "Secular Changes in American and British Stature and Nutrition," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 14, 2 (Autumn 1983): 445-481; Laura Oren, "The Welfare of Women in Laboring Families: England, 1860-1950," in Mary Hartman and Lois W. Banner (eds.), *Clio's Consciousness Raised: New Perspectives on the History of Women* (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1974), pp. 226-244; Carol J. Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory* (New York: Continuum, 1990); Brumberg, "Something Happens to Girls," pp. 99-127.

<sup>50</sup> Clymer, *The Mystery of Sex and Race Regeneration*, p. 28.

<sup>51</sup> Vertinsky, "Education for Sexual Morality," p. 16; Strong, "Ideas of the Early Sex Education Movement in America," p. 139.

<sup>52</sup> Anna Davin, "Imperialism and Motherhood," *History Workshop* 5 (Spring 1978): 9-65; Christina Hardiment, *Dream Babies: Child Care from Locke to Spock* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1983), pp. 33-72; Mintz and Kellogg, *Domestic Revolutions*, pp. 107-132.

crucial to avoiding the troublesome manifestations of children's sexual manifestations—the transmission of sexual knowledge to peers, sexual encounters with peers and adults, the contraction of venereal infection and masturbation. The mother would bar children from associating with children or adults if she suspected they whispered dirty stories in their ears. She would censor all pornographic literature from passing by her children's eyes. She would prevent all sexually substances thought to be sexually stimulating—tea, coffee, meat, cigarettes, alcohol and opium—from entering her children's mouths. She would insist her children had regular bowel movements, wear loose clothing and sleep with their hands above the bed covers so as to prevent the child from rubbing his or her irritated genitals. She would prescribe fresh air, exercise and cold water bathing to check the emergence of sexual manifestations. Shortly before puberty she would explain to her son that nocturnal emissions were nature's way of eliminating excess fluid and inform her daughter that the menstrual flow, regardless of its discomfort and inconvenience, should be welcomed as a preparation for motherhood.

The mother was also held responsible for managing the benign manifestations of children's sexual instinct—questions concerning their own bodies, the anatomical difference between boys and girls and the origin of life around them. Mothers were warned that although their answers to these questions were to be truthful, the information they imparted had to be graded to the child's cognitive development and emotional sensibilities. The graduated study of what was, in effect, human sexual physiology, was thought to be best accomplished by providing children with lessons in the reproductive life of flora and fauna via nature study. Originally intended to give children a practical approach to science, nature study was an off-shoot of the middle-class popularization of natural history.<sup>53</sup> The study of human sexual physiology via nature study began at the lowest end of Darwinian evolution with an investigation into the reproductive nature of uni-cellular creatures. It progressed upward toward plant life, continued ascending in the direction of amphibious

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<sup>53</sup> David Elliston Allen, *The Naturalist in Britain: A Social History* (London: Allen Lane, 1976); Carl Berger, *Science, God and Nature in Victorian Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1893), pp. 5-13.

creatures, birds and mammals and finally came to rest at the apparent pinnacle of evolutionary progress: the middle-class, Christian, Anglo-Saxon family.

The mother's presumed ability to incorporate children's sex instruction into nature study was in keeping with mid-nineteenth century developments. Although membership in the most influential natural history organizations were restricted to men, women were allowed to engage in the amateur study of natural history. Women made numerous important contributions to natural history, particularly in field of botany.<sup>54</sup> Women wrote instructional handbooks for women and children on natural history, encouraging mothers to teach their children the rudiments of flora and fauna.<sup>55</sup> Arabella Buckley's lectures to British children on cohesion, gravitation, crystallization and chemical action in sunbeams, beehives, primroses and coal were published in Canada as *The Fairy-Land of Science* (1898).<sup>56</sup> It was believed that through the study of natural history, children could not only amuse and instruct themselves but learn something of the laws of God's creation. The pursuit of natural history was considered, therefore, an overtly moral and uplifting past time which led the mind away, as one Canadian naturalist wrote, "from vicious associations."<sup>57</sup>

Recapitulation theory validated children's affinity to nature. Mothers' competency in regard to managing the benign manifestations of children's sexual instinct by teaching them about the reproductive life of flora and fauna was consistent with the presumption of women's asexuality and their contributions to natural history. The presumed purity of the natural world also figured prominently in social purists' investment in nature study. Social purists saw the promise of

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<sup>54</sup> Lynn Barber, *The Heyday of Natural History, 1820-1870* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1980); Ann Moyal, *A Bright and Savage Land* (Victoria, Australia: Penguin Books, 1986); Jennifer Bennett, *Lilies of the Hearth: The Historical Relationship Between Women and Plants* (Altona, Manitoba: Camden House, 1991), pp. 83-92; TFRBL, "Women Artists and botanical illustration in the nineteenth-century: a guide to the exhibition cases," August 16-October 1, 1993. For one Canadian woman's contributions to botany see Catherine Parr Traill, *The Backwoods of Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986 [1966]).

<sup>55</sup> Barber, *The Heyday of Natural History*, p. 136.

<sup>56</sup> Arabella Buckley, *The Fairy-Land of Science* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1898).

<sup>57</sup> William Cooper, cited in Berger, *Science, God and Nature*, p. 47.

responsible parenthood reflected in the natural world. The natural world represented the paradisiacal garden before the advent of sin and disease. The natural world was most closely allied with the rural countryside and, as such, was conceptualized as the moral antithesis of urban immorality. Social purists' anxieties over sexually corrupt urban life were fuelled by exposés of the sexual subcultures of big cities. For example, Canadian journalist C. S. Clark claimed to have unearthed in Toronto the widespread existence of child prostitutes, newsboys who had sex with men, and young couples who fornicated in darkened parks.<sup>58</sup> By the advent of the Great War, social purists had bought into the well-worn view which held that the city was the locus of sexual danger and the rural countryside was *the* site of unspoiled sexual purity.<sup>59</sup>

It is possible that such regionalized sexual polarizations arose because of the association sex reformers made between the city and the whore and between the countryside and the maiden. Sex was central to each metaphor. As Karen Dubinsky cleverly puts it: "one had it, one did not."<sup>60</sup> The city also may have been decried as immoral because of its link to disease and death while the wilderness was praised as restorative and uplifting. Studies on late nineteenth-century differentials in urban and rural death rates do confirm that larger numbers of urban dwellers died of diseases which are more easily transmitted by close contact than did rural dwellers.<sup>61</sup> The city was considered so inimical to health that city dwellers were encouraged to flee, albeit temporarily, to the wilderness, the countryside and to suburban parks and glens to boost their health.<sup>62</sup> As well, the rapid industrialization of the early twentieth century which pitted urban consumers against rural producers may have given way to a perception of country folk as the authentic salt of the land

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<sup>58</sup> C. S. Clark, *Of Toronto the Good* (Montréal: The Toronto Publishing Co., 1898).

<sup>59</sup> Sander Gilman, "Sexology, Psychoanalysis, and Degeneration: From a Theory of Race to a Race to Theory," in J. Edward Chamberlain and Sander Gilman (eds.), *Degeneration: The Dark Side of Progress* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), p. 88.

<sup>60</sup> Dubinsky, *Improper Advances*, p. 151.

<sup>61</sup> Gretchen A. Condran and Eileen Crimmins, "Mortality differentials between rural and urban areas of states in the northeastern United States, 1890-1900," *Journal of Historical Geography* 6, 2 (1980): 179-202.

<sup>62</sup> Kenneth Thompson, "Wilderness and health in the nineteenth century," *Journal of Historical Geography* 2, 2 (1976): 145-161.

while city dwellers—immigrants, homosexuals, Jews, pimps, prostitutes, gamblers and drunks—were portrayed as cancerous scum.<sup>63</sup>

Canadian historians who have mentioned social purity reformers' use of nature study to instruct children about sex usually dismiss it.<sup>64</sup> This is unfortunate because social purists clearly intended to enlist nature study in the fight against extra-marital sexual activity and its dreaded corollary, venereal disease. British and American historians who have recognized the importance social purists invested in nature study in regard to children's sex instruction attribute that investment to three turn-of-the-century trends: the shift from negative to positive sex instruction, the move toward the "scientific" study of sex and the need to provide children with knowledge which inculcated high moral values, combatted any precocious manifestation of the child's sexual instinct and safeguarded the child against corruption.

Whereas negative images of sexuality had triumphed in the late nineteenth-century social purity campaigns against prostitution, by the turn of the century many social purists came to the conclusion that sex instruction had to offer children positive images of the sexual instinct. An "affirmatory approach" for children emphasized healthy and responsible parenthood as the *raison d'être* of sex. The study of plant and animal reproduction was said to provide examples of healthy and responsible parenthood. The study of reproduction in flora and fauna gave sex instruction a

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<sup>63</sup> David C. Jones, "There Is Some Power About the Land'—The Western Agrarian Press and Country Life Ideology," *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'études canadiennes* 17, 3 (Fall/Automne 1982): 96-108; George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994).

<sup>64</sup> Michael Bliss, "Pure Books on Impure Subjects': Pre-Freudian Sexual Ideas in Canada," in Michael Horn and Ronald Sabourin (eds.) *Studies in Canadian Social History* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), p. 327, dismisses the opening chapters of the two best-selling books intended for children's sex education as "a few pages on plants and fishes." Similarly, Angus McLaren, *Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada, 1885-1945* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1990), p. 69, briefly mentions the comments made by one Canadian woman doctor on the necessity of training children about the "birds and the bees." No mention of nature study is made in Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water; Cassel, The Secret Plague;* or in Jay Cassell, "Making Canada Safe for Sex: Government and the Problem of Sexually Transmitted Disease in the Twentieth Century," in David Naylor (ed.), *Canadian Health Care and the State: A Century of Evolution* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), pp. 141-192.

scientific gloss which conveniently reflected certain biological "facts" such as that reproduction was natural to all species, that the mother-father bond was an inevitable sign of higher evolutionary development and that in creating and nurturing healthy offspring the human family represented the culmination of evolutionary ascension. These facts were assumed to be so self-evident, that children would adopt the goal of healthy and responsible parenthood for themselves, understand the basics of reproduction without having their sexual instincts prematurely aroused and be able to armour themselves with this knowledge when faced with the possibility of sexual corruption in word or in deed.<sup>65</sup>

Introducing the child to nature study before puberty was thought to be in keeping with the child's evolutionary development. Once children began asking questions about the world around them, it was time to begin their nature study lessons. Annie Sullivan, Helen Keller's famous teacher, resorted to elaborating upon plant and animal life when a curious Helen asked how things were born. "I told her she could call the egg the cradle of life," wrote Sullivan, after she had told Helen about corn, beans, water-melon seeds, hens, fish, dogs and cows. Echoing the tenets of recapitulation theory, Sullivan noted that the readiness with which Helen comprehended biological reproduction "confirmed in me that the child has dormant within him [sic], when he comes into the world, all the experiences of the race."<sup>66</sup>

Sylvanus Stall's *What A Young Boy Ought to Know* (1897) and Mary Wood-Allen's *What A Young Girl Ought to Know* (1897), two of the best-selling sex instruction books in Canada,<sup>67</sup> scaled the evolutionary ladder, chapter by chapter, beginning with a discussion of the reproductive

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<sup>65</sup> James Frank Gardner, Jr., "Microbes and Morality: The Social Hygiene Crusade in New York City, 1892-1917," unpublished PhD. dissertation, Indiana University, 1974, pp. 365-366; Frank Mort, *Dangerous Sexualities: Medico-Moral Politics in England Since 1830* (London and New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987), pp. 153-209; Vertinsky, "Education for Sexual Morality."

<sup>66</sup> Letter written by Annie Sullivan, August 28, 1887, excerpted in "The Forum," *Journal of Social Hygiene* 9, 6 (June 1923), p. 382.

<sup>67</sup> Bliss, "Pure Books on Impure Subjects." See also Christabelle Sethna, "The Continent Man: The Ideal of 'Pure' Manhood in the Self and Sex Series, 1897-1915," unpublished M. A. thesis, University of Toronto, 1989.

habits of plants, fish, birds, mammals and ending, ultimately, with humans. Stall tells little Harry and Wood-Allen tells little Nina, the boy and girl to whom they address their lectures, that everything in nature has a mamma and a papa. In her discussion of the morning glory, Wood-Allen informs Nina that the flower is the home, the pollen is the father, the ovary the mother and the new growth is the baby plant. Fertilization is elaborated upon when the authors tackled fish. Stall tells Harry that fertilization occurs after "mamma fish" has laid her eggs and "papa fish swims gently over the eggs, at the same time expelling from his body a slimy substance which also resembles the white portion of a raw hen's egg."<sup>68</sup> Wood-Allen tells little Nina the same story about the fish and then reminds her of the two Baltimore orioles she saw sitting in a nest. Nina is told that the birds were better parents than the fish. In turn, birds became better children because both bird parents built a nest, because father bird provided for mother bird while she sat on the eggs, and because once baby birds hatched, their parents cared for them until they learned how to fly. Wood-Allen concludes that "in another form the birds are only repeating the life of flowers."<sup>69</sup>

The authors next tackled fertilization in mammals without once mentioning sexual intercourse. Mammals stored their eggs inside their bodies. The word, "mammal" was similar to the word "mamma;" females nourished their young with milk from the mother's breast. Harry and Nina are reminded of cats, cows and horses. Human babies came from an egg stored in the ovary in the mother's body. The discussion of fertilization in humans was reverent but obscure. Nina learns that when the mother's egg felt the father's touch, "it awoke and began to grow and at length came into the world a little soul in a human body."<sup>70</sup> Possibly overcome by the difficulty in teaching human fertilization without mentioning intercourse, Stall turned to an account authored by Wood-Allen elsewhere and excerpted it for Harry's edification. Harry thus learns that father and

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<sup>68</sup> Stall, *Young Boy*, p. 63.

<sup>69</sup> Wood-Allen, *Young Girl*, p. 67

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80. For a feminist critique of contemporary medical text books' depictions of eggs and sperm, see Emily Martin, "The Egg and the Sperm: How Science has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles," *Signs* 16, 3 (Spring 1991): 485-501.

mother contributed a tiny speck of life invisible without the aid of a microscope. Both children learn that the fertilized egg, warm, safe and loved, would remain in a sac created by the Heavenly father in the mother's body for nine months. The description of the baby's birth was as dim as the explanation of fertilization. Harry and Nina learn only that "the door to the little room" which the baby had occupied for nine months opened "with much pain and suffering to the mother."<sup>71</sup> As the length of time required for maturation increased in the higher animals, the baby's helplessness at birth was a sign of human's evolutionary primacy. This was why two parents were needed to properly love and raise a child.

A home-grown text authored by Reta Grey, *Queer Questions Quaintly Answered; or, Creative Mysteries Made Plain to Children* (1899), and dedicated to mothers, also turned to nature study as a form of sex instruction for children. Grey warned mothers not to confuse ignorance with purity for they had nothing in common: "the one is the offspring of light and truth, the other is the offspring of darkness."<sup>72</sup> Grey firmly identifies the long line of maternal influence on home-based sex instruction, illustrates the awestruck wonder with which a child absorbs the lessons nature study teaches about the glory of parenthood and positions the patriarchal nuclear family at the culmination of evolutionary progress. Grey's first-person advice to mothers is couched within the popular story form of lectures given by a mother to her daughter. Betraying the social purists' concerns with the good home, Grey is a dedicated housewife, living in a comfortable house surrounded by ample grounds. Angelically blond and blue-eyed, daughter Gladys is the stereotypical opposite of the poor/immigrant/child of colour traditionally considered sexually suspect. Like the grand omission of any mention of sexual intercourse, Gladys' father is conspicuously absent; he is referred to by Grey only occasionally.

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<sup>71</sup> Stall, *Young Boy*, p. 78.

<sup>72</sup> Reta Grey, *Queer Questions Quaintly Answered; or, Creative Mysteries Made Plain to Children* (Toronto: J. L. Nichols and Co., 1899), p. ix.



The text opens with Grey's ailing grandmother informing her that she had to begin instructing baby Gladys about sex just as the grandmother had instructed Grey in her youth because "certain things" were taught neither at school nor in books. The grandmother asks ominously: "Will you remember how I have taught you? Will you remember how much a mother owes to her little child? That little mind is soon going to begin to question, and who will answer those questions?" The correct answer, of course, was the mother for "it is the mother's place to satisfy this curiosity."<sup>73</sup> Having passed the matrilinear sex instruction torch to her descendents, Grey's grandmother dies an hour later.

One year after the grandmother's death, Gladys notices birds in a nest outside her window. In a moment which captures both positive parenthood and recapitulation theory, Grey shows Gladys a nest her husband had given her when a young boy. Rampaging through the woods with a group of boys, Grey's future husband steals a nest. Chastised by his mother, the young boy turns the nest over to the young Grey as a promise he would never be cruel again. Grey explains that the building of the nest means preparation for parenthood: "some papa bird sings to some mama bird, and they go off together and gather some little straws and bits of leaves, and build a nest...Then the mamma bird laid some tiny little eggs and sat on them to keep them warm."<sup>74</sup> When Gladys questions the role of the father bird, her mother tells her only that the father bird loves the mother bird and brings her worms so she can continue to sit on the eggs until they hatch. Gladys' fair face is full of adoration. Her blue eyes shine with wonder. She exclaims to her mother: "God made it that way, and I know God wouldn't do it that way if it wasn't all right. I love the little birdies, I love the flowers, and everything God has made, and I love you most of all."<sup>75</sup> By the time Gladys is 6, Grey is satisfied that she is her daughter's confidante because she has told the truth—that everything from flowers to fish to cats has a papa and a mamma.

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<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

Armed with this truth, Gladys can, step by step, hold her own against the corrupting influences of other children once she begins school. She is able to refute peers' stories about babies brought home in a doctor's bag. She is able to understand that human babies grow in a cradle inside their mother and, although born in pain, are much loved. She acquiesces when her mother will not let a girlfriend stay overnight because her mother fears the girl will teach Gladys how to masturbate. When Gladys is 11 years old her mother tells her that she should expect a monthly flow of blood to begin between the ages of 12 and 14. This forewarning helps Gladys avoid the fate of a peer. Unprepared by her mother for menstruation, Gladys' friend becomes terrified at the sight of her own blood, tries to staunch the flow by immersing herself in cold water, catches a terrible cold and dies. This scare story served to indict the mother for her incompetence in sex instruction. Yet it also may have indicated that ignorant girls were traumatized by menarche. Evidence of trauma is supported by some early twentieth-century American women's memories of their first periods.<sup>76</sup> Fully prepared for menarche when it occurs, Gladys is initially resentful about this burden. But with her mother's help, Gladys comes to the comforting conclusion that God made it so.

At approximately age 13, Gladys' mother tells her about conception in humans once the young girl notices classmates snickering at a young unmarried woman wheeling a baby carriage. Again omitting any any mention of sexual intercourse, Grey harks back to her lessons in plant life, informing Gladys that the papa and mamma plant forms contain male and female organs, respectively. These hold the germs of new life. The female germ, or egg, must be laid in order to receive the male life germ. Grey draws the conversation to a close by saying that the lower animals can bring forth life at pleasure but God requires humans to bring forth children in a home crowned by the love of a mother and a father. This was the highest type of life—"the human family." No

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<sup>76</sup> Smith-Rosenberg, "From Puberty to Menopause," pp. 188-189; Brumberg, "Something Happens to Girls," p. 108.

one who is not married should even dream of bring children into the world. Gladys is awestruck, and says:

Doesn't it make you adore God more and more as you discover new wonders and new beauties in His creative plan. How one can calmly think of it all and have one impure thought with regard to the reproduction of life in any of its many forms, is a mystery to me.<sup>77</sup>

Nature study proved to be a popular form of sex instruction well into the Great War. One of the most popular books written to help mothers exercise their responsibility toward their children was *The Way Life Begins* (1917) by Bertha Chapman Cady, a nature-study teacher in California, and Vernon Mosher Cady.<sup>78</sup> The book was praised in *Nature-Study Review*, a journal well-known to its many Canadian subscribers,<sup>79</sup> as one which would help adults place youth on the path of "chastity and righteous living."<sup>80</sup> For the Cadys, that path was paved by a number of stepping stones ascending from lillies and caterpillars, to toads and chicks and ending with human babies. The authors maintained that because pre-pubertal children were situated at the mental stage of the adult savage, Nature Study meant most to pre-pubertal children because the subject could "humanize" and "temper" "the brutalizing tendency in youth." Thus, by adolescence when, as the authors put it, "[s]exual impulses may be turned into depraved and vicious acts, or they may be controlled, adjusted to social life, and made the agents of personal and racial good."<sup>81</sup> the child would have already inferred the lessons nature taught about the importance of containing sexual expression within the family.

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<sup>77</sup> Grey, *Queer Questions*, p. 129.

<sup>78</sup> Bertha Chapman Cady and Vernon Mosher Cady, *The Way Life Begins* (New York: The American Social Hygiene Association, 1917).

<sup>79</sup> "First Directory of Members: American Nature-Study Society, 1908," *Nature-Study Review* 5, 3 (March 1909), p. 91.

<sup>80</sup> "The Way Life Begins, by Bertha C. Cady and Vernon M. Cady," *Nature-Study Review* 13, 3 (March 1917): 125-126.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.

Departures from the birds and bees format used to teach children about sexual matters were few and far between. One notable exception appeared during the last year of the Great War. The American feminist Mary Ware Dennett, who became involved in the movement for birth control in her country, published a pamphlet, *The Sex Side of Life: An Explanation for Young People* (1918), which she wrote originally for her two sons. Dennett understood that children were not always able to make the cognitive leap from plant and animal reproduction to human mating sex reformers required them to make. She was, therefore, extremely forthright about human reproduction in her pamphlet. She informed her young readers that while they may have studied the reproductive life of plants and animals, "what you want to know most of all is just how it is with human beings."<sup>82</sup> Dennett proceeded to tell children exactly how it was, explaining the logistics of sexual intercourse, orgasm, conception, menstruation, seminal emissions, venereal disease. She even hinted at contraception and provided detailed drawings of the human reproductive organs. Dennett was convicted of mailing obscene matter and fined \$300 in 1930.

Had Dennett's pamphlet been available to Marie Stopes before her marriage to Canadian Reginald Ruggles Gates in March, 1911, Stopes might have benefited immensely. Stopes may well have been the most spectacular example of nature study's failure to make the associations between plant and animal reproduction and human mating fully apparent. Despite the fact that she had acquired a doctorate in botany and spent much of her life studying plant reproduction, Stopes appeared unable to "apply the pollination principle to the field of humanity."<sup>83</sup> When she left Gates after three years of marriage, it was because a male confidante explained to Stopes that her troubled union had never been consummated. In despair over her ignorance about sexual relations, Stopes began to research the writings of sexologists such as Havelock Ellis. Her research eventually bore fruit. Stopes' blockbuster pro-birth-control marriage manual, *Married Love* (1918),<sup>84</sup> which

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<sup>82</sup> Mary Ware Dennett, *The Sex Side of Life: An Explanation for Young People* (Author, 1928 [1918]), p. 9.

<sup>83</sup> Ruth Hall, *Marie Stopes: A Biography* (London: Virago, 1978), p. 89.

<sup>84</sup> Marie Carmichael Stopes, *Married Love: A New Contribution to the Solution of Sex Difficulties* (London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, Ltd., 1920 [1918]).

acknowledged the terrible price she paid for sex-ignorance, was published in the same year Dennett's pamphlet appeared.

#### IV

By the advent of the First World War, many individuals aligned with the social purity and/or the emerging social hygiene movement grew increasingly frustrated by what they believed to be the inadequacies of home-based sex instruction. Parents, whose duty it was to teach children about sex, were considered to be too embarrassed, too uneducated or too irresponsible to do the job.<sup>85</sup> This attack on the parents was in keeping with early twentieth-century reformers' sentimentalization of middle-class childhood and their increasing encroachment upon the nuclear family, particularly the poor, immigrant and non-Anglo-Saxon family.<sup>86</sup> Sex reformers admitted that middle-class parents might adequately educate their children about sexual matters. Yet this possibility was given short shrift where immigrant and non-Anglo-Saxon parents were concerned. Sex reformers complained that parents who came from countries believed to have low standards of sexual morality, who were considered feeble-minded, who spoke little or no English, and who lived in crowded quarters devoid of "wholesome" recreational facilities were incapable of properly exercising their sex instruction duties to their children. Ironically, the obscure sexual information dispensed to children in nature study was not considered problematic; mothers were. Increasingly charged by male "experts" with raising and instructing her embryo-citizens at the dawn of the "century of the child,"<sup>87</sup> the mother was disparaged for her inability to teach her children the facts

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<sup>85</sup> Winfield S. Hall, "Social Hygiene: Its Pedagogic Aspects, and its Relation to General Hygiene and Public Health," *Nature-Study Review* 6, 2 (February 1910): 33-39.

<sup>86</sup> Christopher Lasch, *Haven in a Heartless World: The Family Beseiged* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1979 [1977]); Andrew Jones and Leonard Rutman, *In the Children's Aid: J. J. Kelso and Child Welfare in Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981); Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child*; Susan E. Houston, "The 'Waifs and Strays' of a late Victorian City: Juvenile Delinquents in Toronto," in Joy Parr (ed.), *Childhood and Family in Canadian History* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988 [1982]), pp. 129-142.

<sup>87</sup> Ellen Key, *The Century of the Child* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1909).

of life.<sup>88</sup> The disparagement of the mother intensified at the same time that the discourse around sex instruction shifted from "social purity" to "social hygiene." This shift reflected the American and the Canadian medical professions' increasing involvement in defining and treating venereal disease.<sup>89</sup> Bolstered by German and British sexologists who supported some combination of home- and school-based sex instruction via the nature study route,<sup>90</sup> the emerging social hygiene movement's response to the apparent ineffectiveness of home-based sex instruction was to push for the introduction of sex instruction into the nature study curriculum of schools.

The express purpose of nature study, as defined by the Ontario Department of Education at the turn of the century, was to develop in pre-pubescent children a sense of the importance of agriculture, the powers of observation and a love of nature.<sup>91</sup> In his University of Toronto dissertation, completed in 1902, Ontario's Dr. S. Silcox, an avid supporter of nature study in schools, confirmed that the subject had a role to play at each stage of a child's development. Echoing recapitulation theory Silcox explained that "the life of the individual is a repetition in miniature of the life of the race." It was desirable that at each stage of the child's life, the environment replicate the conditions in which the most racial progress was made. Nature study replicated those conditions by aiding boys and girls in conquering nature. In a display of stereotypical anti-aboriginal prejudice in Canada, Silcox asserted that the conquest of nature

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<sup>88</sup> For evidence of the general disparagement of mothers' competency, see T. R. Morrison, "Their Proper Sphere: Feminism, the Family and Child-Centred Social Reform in Ontario, 1875-1900, Part I," *Ontario History* 68, 1 (March 1976): 45-74; Barbara Ehrenreich and Barbara English, *For Her Own Good: 150 Years of the Experts' Advice to Women* (New York: Anchor Press, 1979 [1978]); Davin, "Imperialism and Motherhood," 9-65; Cynthia Comacchio, *Nations Are Built of Babies: Saving Ontario's Mothers and Children, 1900-1940* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993); Katherine Arnup, *Education for Motherhood: Advice for Mothers in Twentieth-Century Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994).

<sup>89</sup> Cassel, *The Secret Plague*, p. 112.

<sup>90</sup> See Bloch, *The Sexual Life of Our Time*, pp. 687-691; Moll, *The Sexual Life of the Child*, 126-130; Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* Vol. 2, pp. 53-60.

<sup>91</sup> *Report of the Minister of Education, Province of Ontario, 1900*, pp. xiii-xiv.

afforded children the opportunity to transcend the primitive thinking of aboriginals like Hiawatha who shrouded nature in superstition and mystery.<sup>92</sup>

Already incorporated in some schools in Nova Scotia and Manitoba, nature study was first established as a subject in the public schools of St. Thomas, Ontario, in 1902.<sup>93</sup> Nature study, along with Manual Training for boys and Domestic Science for girls, was introduced to schools as part of the MacDonald-Robertson reforms. Known as the "New Education," the reforms favoured practical studies more suitable to the needs of a changing society. Teachers were supposed to conduct field studies on local plants, animals and minerals. At first, teachers led students in the lower grades in planting trees on Arbor Day or taking a walk in the woods. Older students memorized the names and functions of plant organs. Most teachers ignored the subject until it was coordinated with the school garden movement. The Ontario Department of Education yoked school gardening to an overt stay-on-the-land agenda; it was hoped that school gardening would be particularly relevant for rural children, thus stemming the flow of youth into the cities. Not surprisingly, the 1903 *Report of the Minister of Education* attempted simultaneously to discourage the exodus and encourage school gardening, claiming that school gardens led many farmers' sons and daughters "to choose a healthy, independent life in the country instead of crowding narrow, unwholesome quarters in cities, or breathing the stifled air of close rooms and factories."<sup>94</sup> By 1924, two-fifths of Ontario public and separate schools had school gardens.<sup>95</sup>

American sex reform organizations attempted to yoke the subject of nature study in schools to a sex instruction agenda very similar to that which had been set out in social purity literature. In 1910, the Rockefeller-funded American Society of Sanitary and Moral Prophylaxis (ASSMP),

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<sup>92</sup> S. Silcox, *Nature Study: Its Psychology Method and Matter* (St. Thomas, Ontario: The Sutherland Printing House, 1902), pp. 15-17. For examples of stereotypical portrayals of aboriginals in Canada see Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992).

<sup>93</sup> S. Silcox, "Nature Study Development in Ontario," *The Nature-Study Review* 3, 4 (April 1907): 95-99.

<sup>94</sup> *Report of the Minister of Education (Ontario) 1903*, p. xxxv.

<sup>95</sup> Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society*, pp. 186-188.

which sprang up in response to the problem of venereal disease in American society, reconstituted itself as the American Federation of Sex Hygiene (AFSH) with Charles Eliot, emeritus president of Harvard, as its president. The AFSH's primary goal was to educate the public about "the physiology and hygiene of sex."<sup>96</sup> It's first step was to elect a three-member committee consisting of Dr. Prince Morrow, Professor Thomas Baillet and Professor Maurice Bigelow to study the issue. The committee members sent out questionnaires to educators and published their conclusions in a report entitled *Matter and Methods of Sex Education* in 1912. Morrow was, perhaps, the best-known member of the trio. He had translated Alfred Fournier's *Syphilis and Marriage* into English in 1880, authored *Social Diseases and Marriage* in 1904, and founded the ASSMP in 1905. Baillet was the dean of New York University School of Pedagogy. Bigelow was a professor of biology at Teachers College, Columbia University, and editor, between 1905 and 1910, of the journal *The Nature Study Review*.<sup>97</sup> After Morrow's death in March, 1913, Bigelow came to be most closely identified with school-based sex instruction in North America.

*Matters and Methods of Sex Education* confirmed that there was widespread support for institutionalized school-based sex instruction. This conclusion may have been more a result of the wording of the questionnaires sent out by Morrow, Baillet and Bigelow than of the actual sentiments of educators,<sup>98</sup> but the report contained a series of important proposals to be incorporated into the development of sex instruction curriculae. These were presented at the Fifteenth International Congress on Hygiene and Demography held in Washington, D. C., in September, 1912. The proposals put forward insisted that the aim of children's sex instruction was the avoidance of immorality and the prevention of venereal disease. Scientific sex instruction undertaken in schools was meant to satisfy rather than arouse children's curiosity. Sex instruction

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<sup>96</sup> Bonnie K. Trudell, "The First Organized Campaign for School Sex Education: A Source of Critical Questions About Current Efforts," *Journal of Sex Education and Therapy*, 11, 1 (Spring/Summer 1985), p. 11.

<sup>97</sup> Prince Morrow, Thomas Baillet and Maurice Bigelow, *Matter and Methods of Sex Education* (New York: American Federation of Sex Hygiene, 1912).

<sup>98</sup> Michael Imber, "Toward a Theory of Curriculum Reform: An Analysis of the First Campaign for Sex Education," *Curriculum Inquiry* 12, 4 (Winter 1982), p. 349.



was not to be given as a separate course but incorporated into the existing curriculum—nature study in elementary school, biology and hygiene in high schools and colleges. The younger students would learn about reproduction in plants and the lower animals while the older students would learn about mammalian and human reproduction, heredity and evolution. The older students should be segregated by sex and taught by a teacher of their own sex. There would be no pictures of human external anatomy and very few depictions of human internal anatomy. Adolescent students would also learn about the physical and emotional changes they were undergoing in relation to the ethical implications. Teachers' colleges should train their students to offer sex instruction.<sup>99</sup> The ASSMP, which presented additional information on the teaching of personal hygiene, adolescent love and healthy amusements, also came out in favour of nature study for elementary schools and biology for high schools. Perhaps because the ASSMP was troubled by the wide range of sexual behaviours and reproductive practices exhibited even by those mammals considered to occupy the top rungs of the evolutionary ladder, the organization suggested that the study of animal reproduction focus on evidence of parental love in animals.

The proposals set forth by Morrow, Baillet and Bigelow and the information imparted by the ASSMP caused a stir amongst educators. When, in late August, 1913, the AFSH organized the main meeting of the Fourth International Congress of School Hygiene in Buffalo on the subject of sex instruction for children, an audience of over 2000 listened to speakers discuss their views. Advance reports concerning the Conference carried in Canada's popular *Public Health Journal*<sup>100</sup> may have contributed to the fact that every province in the Dominion was represented. A number of important educators from Ontario also attended the gathering.<sup>101</sup> Among these were Mr. A. H. O. Colquhoun, the Ontario Education Department's Deputy Minister between 1906-1934, James L.

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<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 349-350.

<sup>100</sup> "Sex Hygiene to be Discussed by Distinguished Speakers at the International School Congress in Buffalo," *Canadian Public Health Journal* 4, 6 (June 1913): 381-382; "Many Public Health Officers on the Programme of the Buffalo School Hygiene Congress," *Canadian Public Health Journal* 4, 7 (July 1913): 430-431; Francis E. Fronczak, "Buffalo Congress to Mark the Greatest Advance Ever Made in School Hygiene," *Canadian Public Health Journal* 4, 8 (August, 1913): 477-478.

<sup>101</sup> "Social Hygiene Meeting," *Canadian Public Health Journal* 4, 4 (April 1913): 263.

Hughes, the Toronto school inspector who followed Froebelian teachings, Dr. Helen MacMurchy, the government-appointed Inspector of the Feeble-Minded who would later write the popular "Little Blue Books" for Canadian mothers, and Dr. A. P. Knight, author of a number of books on temperance and hygiene used in Ontario schools.<sup>102</sup>

Presenters who spoke on the issue of sex instruction were united in identifying white slavery, the double standard and venereal disease as problems requiring serious attention. The speakers were divided, however, on whether school-based sex instruction would dispel the widespread ignorance at the root of these dilemmas. On the one hand, some presenters argued that as parents were incapable of sexually instructing their children because of their own inadequate training, schools should take over the task. On the other hand, it was suggested that sex information should come from parents alone; school-based sex instruction could contribute to the premature development of sexual curiosity in children.<sup>103</sup> Presenter Laura Garrett's solution to these two opposing viewpoints was to recommend that parents and teachers could take young children out for field trips and present them with stellar examples of preparation for parenthood in seed pods, bird nests and rabbit holes. Adults could help children understand that the care of pet animals made for a fine example of motherhood while an illustration of a well-bred animal could lead children to comprehend the dignity and beauty of fatherhood.<sup>104</sup> After the Conference, a spate of articles which supported either home-based or school-based sex instruction appeared in the *Canadian Public Health Journal*. American, British and Canadian authors took different positions on the controversy, repeating many of the same arguments made by the speakers at the August discussion.

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<sup>102</sup> A. P. Knight, *Ontario Public School Hygiene* (Toronto: The Copp Clark Company Ltd., 1910); and *Hygiene for Young People: A Reader for Pupils in Form III of the Public Schools* (Toronto: Copp, Clark Co., 1919 [1909]).

<sup>103</sup> W. Carson Ryan, *School Hygiene: A Report of the Fourth International Congress of School Hygiene Held at Buffalo, N. Y., August 25-30, 1913* (Washington: United States Bureau of Education, 1913), pp. 8-9.

<sup>104</sup> Laura Garrett, "Some Methods of Teaching Sex Hygiene," in *ibid.*, pp. 63-64.

The split between home-based and school-based sex instruction was illustrated by the findings of two Canadian medical committees. Three months after the founding of the American Social Hygiene Association (ASHA), which came out openly in support of school-based sex instruction as a prophylaxis against venereal disease, the Toronto-based Academy of Medicine called a meeting on January 15, 1914, to discuss the topic "Venereal Disease in Relation to Public Health." The members present at the meeting established that venereal diseases were, indeed, a serious public health problem, and suggested three methods of containing their spread: quarantine of those suffering from the contagion; the regulation of prostitution; and public sex instruction. Because there was little agreement on any of the three methods, a four-member Committee consisting of Drs. J. A. Amyot, J. H. Elliot, J. T. Fotheringham and Harley Smith was struck to study the suggestions in more detail. By April 15, 1915, the Committee's Report had taken its final shape and was adopted by the Academy in May. It determined that early moral education in the home would nullify the need for sex instruction in school.<sup>105</sup> The Committee was "unalterably opposed to any form of what has come to be known to the public as the teaching of Sex Hygiene in the schools. This as a regular subject of instruction should find no place on the curriculum of the Public School."<sup>106</sup>

The Toronto's Committee's findings stand in almost complete contrast to the conclusions drawn by the Vancouver Medical Association's Sex Hygiene Committee. Established in 1911, the Vancouver Committee, consisting of Drs. J. M. Pearson, H. W. Riggs and Frederick Brodie, investigated the possibility of institutionalizing sex instruction in the schools. Their report was completed in April, 1916. The three physicians contacted organizations concerned with school-based sex instruction in the United States, Germany, England and Sweden and realized that the whole subject was, as they put it,

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<sup>105</sup> Cassell, *The Secret Plague*, pp. 119-120.

<sup>106</sup> NAC MG 28 I 332 Vol. 80 File: "Education—Sex Education—Correspondence 1935-40, "The Academy of Medicine, Toronto," April 3, 1915, enclosure, p. 3, found in letter to Dr. Gordon Bates from J. H. Elliot, October 18, 1940.

a welter of confusion, opinions differing as to whether the subject should be taught at all, and if so, to whom, and in what manner. Some societies working on other lines for dealing with the social evil [prostitution] condemned such teaching altogether and amongst those who were convinced that the subject should be taught, no two seemed to agree upon the method.<sup>107</sup>

They concluded that "it is impossible to deal with this subject by a course of lectures delivered by a Physician at the close of the High School course."<sup>108</sup> The Committee feared that special lecturers, who were not part of the school's teaching staff and were not always familiar with each pupil's educational background, might isolate the subject too much in the child's mind, be too scientific, or too vague. The child's morbid curiosity about sex could be awakened, and parents could mount fierce opposition to any proposed course of sex hygiene. The solution the Committee proposed was to win the approval of the Provincial Department of Education and incorporate "social hygiene" into nature study taught in elementary schools and into biology taught in high schools. Neither "sex hygiene" nor "social hygiene" could be used, as terms to identify sex instruction. The child, the Committee members believed, could be taught from the earliest school years about biological reproduction beginning with cellular life: "Each cell or cell group will be taken in three stages: firstly, the vegetative stage, during which it is lying dormant; secondly, the reproductive stage in which fertilization occurs and cell division is carried on; and thirdly, the life problem of such cell or cell group."<sup>109</sup> The Committee members concluded rather over-confidently that, "when the application comes to be made to the human race, the perception of the pupil shall have already trained to grasp such application in a natural manner."<sup>110</sup>

Teachers specially trained in biology would have to be hired by the Department of Education to choose suitable textbooks for the elementary school courses, to teach the more advanced courses in high schools, and to oversee the teaching of teachers in Normal Schools.

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<sup>107</sup> VCA, Series 101 File 103-B-1 "Schools: Health Education in Schools, Sex Hygiene 1910-1925, "Report of the Sex Hygiene Committee of the Vancouver, B. C., Medical Association," April 24, 1916.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

Sometime toward the end of high school, the connection between cell life and human reproduction would be affirmed by a series of special lectures delivered by a biologist or physician known to the pupils and undertaken at the discretion of the Department of Education. The Committee members made an allusion to the teaching of venereal disease, suggesting that some "pathological applications" could be discussed at this time.

## V

Wars, notes historian Elizabeth Fee, "have tended to make venereal diseases visible, to bring them out of the private sphere and into the center of public policy discussions; this has highlighted the struggles over their proper definition and treatment."<sup>111</sup> The First World War exacerbated the need for the effective school-based sex instruction of Canadian youth.

One month after the Canada went to war an editorial appearing in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* outlined two unfortunate aspects of the international conflict: contagious diseases in the armed forces would prove to be deadlier than the enemy's bullet and German people who had contributed much to the medical understanding of disease would be considered the enemy.<sup>112</sup> The Boer and Balkan Wars had taught Canadian physicians that contagious diseases like cholera, typhoid and meningitis in the armed forces had to be prevented, treated and cured prior to demobilization or else noncombattants risked becoming infected.<sup>113</sup> World War I would teach Canadian physicians that the greatest threat to the armed forces were the venereal diseases.<sup>114</sup> German discoveries in the area of venereal disease had been outstanding. Albert Neisser identified the gonococcus bacterium in 1879. Fritz Schaudinn and Erich Hoffman identified the Treponema

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<sup>111</sup> Elizabeth Fee, "Venereal Disease: The Wages of Sin?" in Peiss, Simmons with Padug (eds.), pp. 179.

<sup>112</sup> "The War," *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 4, 9 (September 1914): 803-805.

<sup>113</sup> Colonel Guy Carleton, "The Importance of the Balkan Wars to the Medical Profession of Canada," *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 4, 9 (September 1914): 799-802; George Adami, "Medicine and the War," *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 10, 10 (October 1920): 81-900.

<sup>114</sup> Cassel, *The Secret Plague*, pp. 122-144.

pallidum, the virus causing syphilis in 1905. Neisser, Carl Bruck and August von Wasserman developed what came to be known as the Wasserman test for syphilis in 1906. In 1910, Paul Ehrlich and his Japanese assistant, Sahachiro Hata, announced the discovery of Salvarsan, a drug administered by repeated injection against syphilis. These discoveries led to the medical profession's increasing involvement in defining and treating venereal disease after 1900.<sup>115</sup>

Other than Lord Kitchener's warning to remain sexually continent, there were few measures in place to help contain venereal infection in the armed forces. A year after the war had begun, almost 29% of men in the CEF were found to be infected with syphilis and gonorrhoea.<sup>116</sup> In 1916, the British Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases, appointed in 1913, released its final report. The Commissioners perceived venereal disease to be a serious public health threat and a problem of national importance. War would decimate the best of British manhood; syphilis and gonorrhoea would destroy the health of future citizens and workers.<sup>117</sup> The Commissioners recommended a three-pronged attack based on medical advance, legislation and public education. Children's sex instruction at home, school and in voluntary organizations was considered an important part of public education. Not surprisingly, the commissioners recommended that the foundations for a more detailed instruction in sexual matters should be laid in elementary school before "the critical years of adolescence, when the combination of impulse and inexperience may lead to the most harmful results."<sup>118</sup> Although numerous witnesses like Sir V. Horsely had testified that nature study could safely introduce pre-adolescent children to reproduction,<sup>119</sup> the Commissioners did not favour any particular curriculum, insisting that much depended on the individual teacher's suitability for the task. The Commissioners may have been afraid of the

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<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123.

<sup>117</sup> TFRBL, Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases, *Final Report of the Commissioners Vol. II* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode Ltd., 1916), p. 66.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>119</sup> TFRBL, Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases, *First Report of the Commissioners Vol. I* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode Ltd., 1914), Sir V. Horsley, interviewed March 27, 1914, P. 386.

controversy engendered by Miss Outram in Dronfield, England, who not only used nature study to teach her 12-year-old girl pupils about sex, but also informed them of circumcision, infertility, ante-natal care, promiscuity and the forced feeding of suffragettes in prison. Outraged parents called for her expulsion.<sup>120</sup> The Commissioners did state that sex instruction for children had to instill in them a need for self-control, good moral conduct and a chaste life as "the only certain way to avoid infection."<sup>121</sup>

By 1917 statistics showed that syphilis and gonorrhoea accounted for 12% of all illness exclusive of battle injuries in the Canadian military.<sup>122</sup> Military authorities believed that the primary vehicle for the spread of venereal disease was prostitution. Prostitutes and camp followers were accused of enticing Canadian soldiers overseas to immorality resulting in widespread infection. Britain came under fire for not doing enough to protect Canadian soldiers from moral and medical danger. Adami complained that Canadian military authorities received little help from their British counterparts in London in acting against prostitution. As a consequence, each weekend up to one hundred "loose women" from London poured into Salisbury where Canadian troops were stationed. Neither the railway company nor the police nor the magistrates could or would do anything.<sup>123</sup> Given the history of the opposition to the Contagious Disease Acts and the pre-War battles with the suffragettes over the enfranchisement of women, the British National Council for Combatting Venereal Diseases (NCCVD), along with the British Government, were reluctant to regulate prostitution under the Defence of the Realm Act. Adami remarked that the British authorities feared that any action taken against prostitutes would rouse the suffragettes into militancy.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Mort, *Dangerous Sexualities*, pp. 153-159.

<sup>121</sup> *Final Report of the Commissioners Vol. II*, p. 61.

<sup>122</sup> Buckley and McGinnis, "Venereal Disease," p. 338.

<sup>123</sup> Adami, "The Policy of the Ostrich."

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*; Cassel, *The Secret Plague*, p. 124.

At the April 1917 Imperial War Conference, Prime Minister Robert Borden announced that he was in favour of taking legal action against the threat prostitutes posed to Canadian soldiers overseas. Borden commented that venereal disease compromised not only the progress of the War but would inevitably see the "future of our race damaged beyond any comprehension or conception."<sup>125</sup> Some Canadians hoped the British Parliament would empower local authorities to remove prostitutes from streets and public resorts close to the camps but such measures did not come to pass.<sup>126</sup> Public reaction to this state of affairs in Canada was fierce. Rev. Samuel Dwight Chown, appointed Superintendent of the Methodist Church in 1910, objected to the fact that the British military authorities had promised to protect Canadian boys abroad and blamed them for having done very little in reality.<sup>127</sup> In 1917 the United States declared War on Germany. Pressure from the United States and the Dominions—Canada, Australia and New Zealand—on the British government led to the inclusion of a regulation intended to control prostitution under the Defence of the Realm Act. Under the regulation, enacted in March, 1918, any woman with venereal disease in communicable form having intercourse with a member of his Majesty's armed forces was committing an offence. Disagreements over the implementation of the regulation combined with British feminist activism against the regulation itself led to its abandonment in November.

Given the problems in controlling prostitution, Canadian military authorities undertook a widespread sex instruction campaign in the armed forces. Medical officers in the Canadian Army and Medical Corps (CMAC) lectured to troops about the dangers of venereal disease, the benefits of sexual continence and the importance of maintaining a single standard of morality. Every prostitute was said to carry venereal disease. Troops were warned to stay away from alcohol and pornography. Literature bearing these messages was distributed to recruits. Films on venereal disease, most of which were made under the auspices of the ASHA, were shown. Men infected

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<sup>125</sup> Robert Borden quoted in Cassel, *The Secret Plague*, p. 138.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

<sup>127</sup> "Calls on Britain to Protect Boys," *The Globe* September 20, 1917, p. 9.



with venereal disease were instructed in the dangers of disease to themselves and to their future wives and children. They were also isolated until they were no longer contagious or were considered cured. Men who had contact with prostitutes were told to wash immediately after intercourse and were given preventive ointment. There is no evidence to show that condoms were ever distributed to the troops.<sup>128</sup>

By 1917 it had become apparent to military authorities that venereal disease was not only a problem in the military but in the civilian population. In sharp contrast to the social purity feminist argument that men's profligacy was responsible for the spread of venereal disease, the wartime social hygiene discourse implicated prostitutes and loose women for the contagion. Apparently, the great majority of venereal disease cases in the army were found to have been infected prior to enlistment. Dr. Gordon Bates claimed that the amount of venereal disease amongst draftees was ten times what it would be amongst an equal number of enlisted troops.<sup>129</sup> Statistics compiled at the Toronto Base Hospital for No. 2 Military District showed that infected troops in Toronto had "received" their infections from professional and occasional prostitutes. Some doctors asserted that domestics, waitresses, clerks, munitions workers, singers and actresses were "ready to sell themselves at the behest of any stranger" in boarding houses, parks and automobiles.<sup>130</sup> One Toronto newspaper editorial reported that venereal disease was rampant in Canada, a fact of which Canada could not be proud. Prostitutes were held directly responsible for the spread of venereal disease. They were characterized harshly as the "diseased purveyors of the deadliest infections" who were unfortunately allowed "to parade the streets, to spread their virus, and to poison the blood of the unborn generation." The editorial called on those who loved strength and purity, feared God and honoured the King to fight venereal disease to the finish.<sup>131</sup> During that same

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<sup>128</sup> Gordon Bates, "The Venereal Disease Problem," *Canadian Public Health Journal* 9, 8 (August 1918), pp. 355-356; Cassel, *The Secret Plague*, pp. 131-132.

<sup>129</sup> "Interim Report on Venereal Disease," 1918, p. 13.

<sup>130</sup> Bates, "The Venereal Disease Problem," pp. 354-359; Cassel, *The Secret Plague*, pp. 141-143.

<sup>131</sup> "Dr. Chown and His Critics," *The Globe*, September 27, 1917, p. 4.

year, Dr. C. K. Clarke, a professor of psychiatry at the University of Toronto working at the Toronto General Hospital and the Toronto Hospital for the Insane, stated that between 12 and 13% of patients were infected with syphilis. Clarke, along with a delegation of doctors to the Commission of Conservation in Ottawa, drew some exaggerated conclusions about the prevalence of gonorrhoea and its role in causing sterility in women and blindness in children and determined that children born to syphilitic mothers were seriously deformed. Clarke also claimed that the majority of prostitutes who were spreading venereal disease were mentally deficient. Clarke's colleague, Clarence Hincks, a professor at the Psychiatric Clinic at the Toronto General Hospital, linked venereal disease to prostitution, prostitution to feeble-mindedness and feeble-mindedness to pauperism, crime and widespread sexual immorality.<sup>132</sup> In June, 1917, a similar regulation to that included under the Defence of the Realm Act was passed under the Defence of Canada Order. The legislation was not overtly opposed by women's organizations, possibly because they feared that soldiers would pass on venereal infection to their wives.<sup>133</sup>

On November 8, 1917, the Ontario government appointed a Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Defective and Feeble-minded in Ontario to be led by Chief Justice Frank Egerton Hodgins. The Commission was also asked to investigate to what extent venereal disease was responsible for mental incapacity. Before Hodgins presented his final report on feeble-mindedness on October 18, 1919, he published two interim reports on venereal disease dated February 20, 1918, and October 23, 1918, respectively. The first interim report dealt with the need for invasive legislation concerning the treating and reporting of venereal disease cases. The Ontario government passed such legislation on July 1, 1918.<sup>134</sup> Hodgins' second interim report dealt with the role the federal and the provincial governments could play in the war on venereal disease.

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<sup>132</sup> Clarence Hincks, "Vice and the Defectives," *The Globe*, October 1, 1917, p. 6.

<sup>133</sup> Buckley and McGinnis, "Venereal Disease," pp. 341-342; Cassel, *The Secret Plague*, pp. 142-143.

<sup>134</sup> Under the legislation, failure to get treatment was subject to a fine. Anyone who knowingly infected another person would be fined between \$100-500. See "Interim Report on Venereal Disease," 1918; Cassel, *The Secret Plague*, 160-164.

Hodgins recommended the federal government establish a department of health and oversee the manufacture and effective distribution of Salvarsan. On the provincial level, Hodgins recommended that the Lieutenant Governor appoint a social hygiene committee devoted to combatting venereal disease by means of a public education campaign. Hodgins also suggested that the provincial government and local educational authorities cooperate in educating the young at school. It was important that young children should be introduced to social hygiene "by gradual and almost imperceptible steps." Hodgins settled on the subject of nature study arguing that it would be distasteful to neither the parents nor to the pupils. He agreed with the views set out in the 1916 Report of the Sex Hygiene Committee of the Vancouver Medical Association. Elementary school students would learn nature study while high school students would be taught biology. At the end of high school, students would be given special lectures on human reproduction and venereal disease.

To bolster his call for school-based sex instruction for young children, Hodgins included the results of two studies undertaken in Portland, Oregon. In one study, 91.5% of 677 college men claimed they received "their first permanent impressions about sex from unwholesome sources." Seventy-nine per cent of the same men believed that this information had a bad effect on their lives. When 816 college men were questioned, in a second study, the average age at which they received their first impressions about sex was 9.6, whereas the first time they received instruction from wholesome sources—parents, teachers, lecturers—was at 15.5 years. Hodgins suggested that the provincial government and elementary school authorities, with the co-operation of high schools and universities, agree to implement a curriculum, choose the necessary textbooks and decide how teachers should be instructed. Hodgins was not willing to wait for this sex instruction scheme to become more comprehensive. He offered that as an interim measure, teachers could take special courses on sex instruction at night school in order to prepare themselves.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> OSP Vol. LI Part X Report 58 "Interim Report on Venereal Diseases," 1919, pp. 18-20.

Hodgins' call for school-based sex instruction was taken up by Dr. Oswald Withrow, a Toronto physician who had studied venereal diseases in the Canadian army overseas, at the first post-war gathering of the OEA. Withrow was optimistic about school-based sex instruction, stating that because parents rarely knew how to teach their children, the "day is fast coming when sex education will be a definite and distinct part of the educational system of the Province of Ontario."<sup>136</sup> Withrow confirmed that young children needed sex instruction early in life. He believed that opposition to school-based sex instruction was futile and overwrought. He announced that school children talked about sex often; thus it was important that children learned about the facts of life in the very best fashion. He called one principal of his acquaintance who did not believe in school-based sex instruction "blind" because "most of the teachers will tell you that in secondary schools there are a great many tragedies they have to meet. A great many of these things could be corrected if you gave the proper information at the proper time."<sup>137</sup> Referring, perhaps, to the controversy Miss Outram's sex instruction classes had generated in Dronfield, England, Withrow complained that some parents had demanded the expulsion of one school teacher who told pupils that all life came from an egg. Withrow proudly assured his audience that this incident could not have occurred in Canada.

Withrow urged teachers to become familiar with what was fast becoming the most popular method of public sex instruction: the motion picture. Used to great effect to educate soldiers about venereal disease during the Great War, instructional films were understood to be a valuable way "to awaken emotion, to induce some desired mental attitude, or to convey information."<sup>138</sup> Withrow screened "How Life Begins," an American-made motion picture, for his OEA audience and recommended teachers use it in the classroom because very few boys and girls over age 10

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<sup>136</sup> Oswald C. J. Withrow, "Social Hygiene," *Ontario Educational Association Yearbook*, 1919, p. 169.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 174.

<sup>138</sup> Rev. Ernest Thomas, "The Community Use of the Moving Picture," *Social Welfare*, 1 12 (September 1919), p. 278.

were uninterested in the facts of life. Given that sex instruction films were not used in some Ontario classrooms until after the Second World War, this was quite an innovative suggestion.<sup>139</sup> "How Life Begins" was perhaps the first moving picture presentation of the nature study approach to sex instruction. Withrow claimed to have shown the film various times to soldiers stationed in camps across Canada, no doubt as an introduction to his lectures on venereal disease. Replete with pictures of animal eggs, embryos and young, the film was well-received by the soldiers. Withrow recalled that they never failed to applaud the scenes of the "birth" of a butterfly.<sup>140</sup> Not every serviceman was, however, as reverent as Withrow may have desired. One young man exclaimed: "Conscription" when the image of a developing rat embryo was flashed on screen, explaining that one had to go whether one wanted to or not.<sup>141</sup> When a bedraggled and exhausted chick emerged from its egg, another serviceman, in a reference to an alcoholic hangover, cried out: "That picture should be called the morning after."<sup>142</sup>

Withrow lamented that a moving picture of the birth of a butterfly was not considered bothersome but a moving picture of the birth of a human being would be considered obscene. Nevertheless, he believed that the film could be used with children of different ages to introduce them to sexual information. For younger children, the film could be used in conjunction with nature study lessons on gestation. Withrow hoped that Boards of Trustees would be a "little liberal" and permit young children to incubate 21 hens' eggs in the classroom, cut one open each day and study the development of the chick embryo. It would then be easy to explain to young children the development of the very similar-looking human embryo in the uterus. For teenage girls and boys the film could be followed by a lecture on menstruation. Withrow believed that, ultimately, the film presented the charm of mother love. The father's role in human fertilization

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<sup>139</sup> See Christabelle Sethna, "Screening Sex: Films, Family Life Education, and Ontario Public School Children, 1940-1950," a paper presented at the Second Carleton Conference on the History of the Family, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada, May 11-14, 1994.

<sup>140</sup> Withrow, "Social Hygiene," p. 173.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 177.

proved to be a problem even for Withrow, no doubt because of the issue of sexual intercourse. To show that the father had "something to do with it [fertilization]," Withrow noted approvingly that the film showed a man with a child on his shoulder pointing to the sun.<sup>143</sup>

Withrow was not the only speaker who urged the OEA that year to support school-based sex instruction based on the nature study approach. For Dr. Margaret Patterson, sex instruction was the most important force in safeguarding the "vigour, health and stamina of our nation."<sup>144</sup> She illustrated her contention by making a direct connection between sex instruction undertaken in Oregon and that state's low rate of venereal infection. Whereas 300 of 10,000 men called up for military service in other states were afflicted with syphilis and gonorrhoea, only 56 in every 10,000 Oregon men were similarly infected. She considered sex instruction to be parents' patriotic duty which, in ignorance, they unfortunately shirked. Parents' failure meant that teachers had to assume responsibility for children's sex instruction. Patterson confirmed that sex instruction, particularly if it were based in sound moral precepts, was most effective with the pre-adolescent child, the "real point of contact."<sup>145</sup> She suggested the institutionalization of a simple curriculum. Young children should study eggs, plants, fish and flowers in nature study. Hands-on experiments such as incubating and examining hen's eggs were encouraged. Older children should receive factual instruction in physiology, hygiene and biology so that they were able to recognize their place in the "great chain of life." After all, noted Patterson, the "mere facts of sexual reproduction" played a small role in sex instruction.<sup>146</sup>

Established in August, 1917, the Advisory Committee on Venereal Diseases for Military District No. 2 in Toronto (ACVD) was a coalition of army officials, physicians, women's

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<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>144</sup> Margaret Patterson, "What To Teach About Preenhood And How To Teach It," *Ontario Educational Association Yearbook*, 1919, p. 239.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 240.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 241.

organizations, the police and politicians. Captain Bates was appointed the Advisory Committee's secretary. Major J. G. Fitzgerald, also from the CAMC, was appointed the chair. The organization's Sub-committee on Education was organized in November that year. The Sub-Committee was composed of Drs. Bates, Clarke and Patterson as well as a number of prominent Toronto-based women and clergymen. The Sub-Committee deemed that more than any other factor, ignorance had led to venereal disease. Thus, "Prevention must be largely a matter of education."<sup>147</sup> The education of the young was considered crucial. Yet despite Patterson's involvement, and the claim that mothers found it difficult to approach their children about this subject, the Sub-Committee made no mention of school-based sex instruction in their propaganda war against venereal disease. Rather, they recommended promoting public lecturers vetted by the Sub-Committee, the pulpit, the press, the theatre, factory exhibits as well as distributing of literature.

In late 1918, two conferences coinciding with the release of Hodgins' second interim report on venereal diseases and attended by a number of individuals involved with the ACVD came out in support of school-based sex instruction. The International Social Hygiene Conference held in New York agreed on a set of principles very similar to those long held by the social purity movement: the single standard of sexual morality, the importance of sexual continence to good health, the need for women and men to work together in setting moral standards, the requirement that prostitutes not be treated as a class apart from other women, and the equal application of preventive or repressive measures concerned with social morality to both men and women. Similarly the International gathering also agreed on the need to "thoroughly" correlate public health and moral issues. The practical implementation of these principles required working toward decent living

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<sup>147</sup> A. E. Smythe, "The Sub-Committee on Education, *Canadian Public Health Journal* 9, 2 (February 1918), p. 68.

conditions, adequate recreation and "sound sex education...incorporated into our entire educational system in home, school, college, the church and press."<sup>1-48</sup>

The principles adopted at the International Conference were endorsed by the Canadian Social Hygiene Conference in Toronto.<sup>1-49</sup> Many speakers at the Toronto conference made repeated reference to the fact that if young children were not educated about sex at the earliest age, disaster would strike. The mother was lambasted as a hopelessly inadequate teacher. Patterson claimed that although 90% of mothers wanted to do what was best for their children they did not know what knowledge to impart or how to accomplish this. Ottawa-based Mrs. Smillie told the conference that it was a crime to let children grow to age 16 without "purely-taught-knowledge of the source of life." She recommended an extensive fear campaign against venereal disease, similar to the one conducted against tuberculosis. In contrast, Madame Avril de Ste. Croix, President of the International Commission of Women for Unity of Morals, stated that a campaign of fear was insufficient. Rather, from the moment the child began to think, the child should begin to be educated in morality. Ste Croix recommended on the one hand that mothers be taught what they should let their sons and daughters know and, on the other hand, that sex instruction in schools should begin with nature study.

Aiming to prevent prostitution and the spread of venereal disease, the Toronto Conference drew up 11 resolutions of its own. The resolutions supported prohibition, early marriage, the use of educational films on the venereal disease question, legislation to control pernicious films and theatre productions, adequate housing and recreation centres. Although middle-class sex reformers were usually reluctant to speak to the economic bases for prostitution, the Toronto Conference did come out in favour of a living wage for women. Finally, "in view of the great physical, moral,

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<sup>1-48</sup> Cassel, *The Secret Plague*, p. 171. See also "Conference on Social Hygiene," *Canadian Public Health Journal* 9, 12 (December 1918), pp. 558-559.

<sup>1-49</sup> "Conference on Social Hygiene," pp. 552-553.



spiritual and economic damage arising from immorality and its resultant venereal disease a nation-wide campaign of education should be recommended and to this end a national committee for combatting venereal disease should be formed."<sup>150</sup> That national committee would be driven primarily by male physicians. Named the Canadian National Council for Combatting Venereal Disease (CNCCVD) with Bates as its secretary, it was formed at the end of the second Dominion-provincial conference on venereal disease in May, 1919. Chief Justice of the Ontario Supreme Court, William Riddell, was appointed the CNCCVD's president. Dr. J. W. S. McCullough, the chief officer of health for the Ontario Board of Health, served as one of the organization's vice-presidents.

Despite the support for school-based sex instruction galvanized by the war, the CNCCVD constitution did not come out openly in favour of school-based sex instruction. On the administrative, legislative and medical levels the organization agreed to cooperate with existing associations on the subject of venereal disease, support legislative and administrative reform, provide accurate and enlightened information, promote the need for greater facilities for the treatment of venereal disease and increase opportunities for medical students to study venereal disease. On the educational level, the CNCCVD stated only that it would work to "combat Venereal Diseases by whatever means seem desirable" and to "encourage and assist the dissemination of a sound knowledge of the psychological and moral laws of life in order to raise the standard both of health and conduct."<sup>151</sup> By 1921, the momentum which had built up in favour of implementing a sex instruction programme in Ontario schools within the nature study curriculum was dissipated within the post-war social hygiene movement. The CNCCVD's Sub-Committee on Sex Education resolved that sex instruction for children aged 6-12 should be coordinated with elementary science

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<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 558.

<sup>151</sup> Cassel, *The Secret Plague*, p. 172.

and hygiene but that "the ideal place of instruction in sex matters is the home and the ideal teacher—the parent."<sup>152</sup>

This parent, more often than not, was still considered to be the mother. Yet the hostility some Canadian physicians continued to display toward mothers' apparent incompetence in regard to the sex instruction of their children was palpable. Dr. R. H. Patterson asked: "Who is really to blame?" when girls became pregnant and diseased. He replied, "The mother."<sup>153</sup> By 1921, the CNCCVD revealed that its support for sex instruction was limited to teaching mothers what and how they should teach their children about sex. An officially sanctioned expansion of the CNCCVD's mandate that year effected a change in that organization's name—the Canadian Social Hygiene Council (CSHC). Bates explained that due to the CNCCVD's efforts the Canadian public's consciousness about venereal disease had been raised to the point where a social hygiene campaign was now needed: "A movement," noted Bates, "in the direction of organized recreation, better teaching by parents of the facts of life to their children, etc. and general provision of the normal things of life for the people of the community."<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> NAC MG 28 I 332 Vol. 191 File: "Ontario Board of Health (Part II), 1920-27," letter to Dr. McCullough from Dr. Gordon Bates, June 25, 1921.

<sup>153</sup> R. H. Patterson. "Some Social Aspects of the Venereal Disease Problem," *Canadian Public Health Journal* 11, 12 (December 1920), p. 570.

<sup>154</sup> NAC MG 28 I 332 Vol. 191 File: "Ontario Board of Health (Part II), 1920-27," letter to Dr. McCullough from Dr. Gordon Bates, December 20, 1921.

## CHAPTER TWO

### "Better Men, Citizens, Fathers and Husbands"<sup>1</sup>

By the end of the First World War the emerging social hygiene movement—as represented by the American Society for Social and Moral Prophylaxis (ASSMP), the American Federation for Sex Hygiene (ASFH), the American Social Hygiene Association (ASHA), the Vancouver Medical Association's Sex Hygiene Committee and Ontario Chief Justice Frank Egerton Hodgins' Second Ontario Interim Report on Venereal Disease—had made three important assumptions regarding school-based sex instruction. One, school-based sex instruction was necessary because parents, and mothers in particular, had failed to provide their children with sufficient information about sexual matters. Two, school-based sex instruction should not be undertaken by a special lecturer. Three, school-based sex instruction should be introduced via nature study in elementary schools and via biology in high schools. These three assumptions stood in contrast with the most prevalent form of school-based sex instruction in existence in Ontario before and after the First World War. Influenced by a combination of Christian evangelicalism, Anglo-American maternal feminism, eugenical racism and patriotism, the social purity organization, the Ontario Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), took the lead in moving toward school-based sex instruction in an attempt to vanquish the spectre of the ignorant child. In 1900 the provincial organization hired Arthur Beall<sup>2</sup> to give special lectures to Ontario elementary and high school boys about the evils of

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<sup>1</sup> AO "Purity and White Cross Work," *CWRT*, April 1, 1910, p. 1629.

<sup>2</sup> AO *Ontario WCTU Reports*, 1901, pp. 30, 198. This report reveals that Beall was hired in 1900. Confusion about the exact year of Beall's hiring abounds. Michael Bliss, "How We Used To Learn About Sex," *Maclean's*, March, 1974, p. 38, claims it was 1900. Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991), p. 70, and Angus McLaren, *Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada, 1885-1945* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1990), p. 70, both say Beall was hired in 1905. Gary Kinsman, *The Regulation of Desire: Sexuality in Canada* (Montréal: Black Rose Books, 1987), p. 90, claims that Beall was hired in 1905 by the WCTU and then in the 1930s by the Ontario Department of Education.

the double standard and sexual incontinence.<sup>3</sup> Originally from Whitby, Ontario, Beall had worked as a missionary and an English professor in Japan before having a nervous breakdown. In 1912, he left the WCTU's employ and began working directly for the Ontario Board of Education, lecturing primarily to boys until the early 1930s.<sup>4</sup> In 1933 he published a record of his lectures to school children, glowingly introduced by Major-General Sir. A. C. Macdonell of Kingston, Ontario, as a "manual on eugenics for parents and teachers."<sup>5</sup>

Historian Mariana Valverde correctly states that Beall has often been treated as a historical joke.<sup>6</sup> The source of the amusement is Beall's dire warnings against school boy masturbation.<sup>7</sup> Yet it is clear that the Ontario WCTU saw in Beall's public school lectures the potential to vanquish the fearsome spectre of the ignorant child by reforming the masturbating boy and enlightening the innocent girl. Beall's lectures reproduced much of the distinct "anti-male character"<sup>8</sup> prevalent in the argument made by the feminist wing of the social purity movement. This argument held that sexually incontinent men, who were primarily responsible for the spread of moral and hygienic pollution to the race, were morally disenfranchised from Canadian citizenship. Even after terminating his employment with the WCTU, Beall's lectures for the Ontario Department of Education continued to exalt women for the morally healthy example they set boys as mothers of the race and to denounce men for their paternal irresponsibility.

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<sup>3</sup> Beall was hired 12 years before the first school-based sex instruction programme came into effect in the United States. The lecture programme organized by Ella Flagg Young, the first female Superintendent of the Department of Education in Chicago, was physician-dominated. The programme lasted only one year because of vehement opposition. The United States Post Office declared the lectures immoral and barred them from the mails. Michael Imber, "Toward a Theory of Curriculum Reform: An Analysis of the First Campaign for Sex Education," *Curriculum Inquiry* 12, 4 (1982), pp. 355-356.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Bliss, "Pure Books on Avoided Subjects: Pre-Freudian Sexual Ideas in Canada," in Michael Horn and Ronald Sabourin (eds.), *Studies in Canadian Social History* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1974), pp. 326-346.

<sup>5</sup> Arthur Beall, *The Living Temple: A Manual on Eugenics for Parents and Teachers* (Whitby, Ontario: The A. B. Penhale Publishing Company, 1933).

<sup>6</sup> Valverde, *The Age of Light. Soap and Water*, p. 67.

<sup>7</sup> See for evidence of this see Bliss, "How We Used to Learn About Sex" and Bliss, "Pure Books on Avoided Subjects'."

<sup>8</sup> Valverde, *The Age of Light. Soap and Water*, p. 59.

A recognition of the gender politics driving Beall's lectures necessarily involves an acknowledgement of the racism and classism which intersected those politics. Beholden to the motto, "For God and Home and Native Land," the Ontario WCTU considered children's school-based sex instruction integral to the Canadian first-wave maternal feminist drive to morally regenerate not only the individual and the family but the race, the nation and the Empire as well.<sup>9</sup> Beall's lectures were clearly related to first-wave feminists' emphasis on protecting Anglo-Saxon children from the supposed sexual threat posed by immigrant children, assimilating children into the prevailing Anglo-Saxon, Christian sexual ethos and inculcating in children a patriotic love for Canada and the British Empire.

## I

The first local WCTU was formed in Picton, Ontario, in 1874 after Letitia Youmans, a Sunday School teacher with the Methodist Church, had attended the inaugural meeting of the American WCTU in Cleveland, Ohio. The Ontario WCTU was formed in 1877, becoming the most powerful provincial union in the Dominion-wide movement. The Dominion WCTU was formed in 1883. The WCTU's anti-alcohol agitation was related to social purist beliefs that alcohol was a "race poison," engendering deformed children who grew up to be intemperate.<sup>10</sup> Anti-alcohol agitation also provided a way for feminists to indirectly attack men for their financial

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<sup>9</sup> Catherine L. Cleaverdon, *The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974 [1950]); Veronica Strong-Boag, "Setting the Stage: National Organizations and the Women's Movement in the Late 19th Century," in Susan Mann Trofimenkoff and Alison Prentice (eds.), *The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1977), pp. 87-177; Wayne Roberts, "Rocking the Cradle for the World: The New Woman and Maternal Feminism," in Linda Kealey (ed.), *A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada, 1880s-1920s* (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1979); Alison Prentice et al., *Canadian Women: A History* (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988), pp. 169-188; Carol Lee Bacchi, *Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English-Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1918* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983); Margaret Gillett, "Goals of Canadian Women's Organizations: The First Wave," *Canadian and International Education/Education canadienne et internationale* 21, 1 (1992): 5-19.

<sup>10</sup> Linda Gordon, *Woman's Body, Woman's Right: Birth Control In America* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1977 [1974]), p. 123.

irresponsibility, their sexual assaults on women and children and their physical aggression toward their families.<sup>11</sup> The link between the organization's anti-alcohol focus and its social purity campaign was cemented in 1891 when Josephine Butler, the leader of the campaign to repeal the Contagious Diseases Acts in Britain, assumed the post of Superintendent of the Department of Social Purity in the World WCTU (WWCTU).<sup>12</sup> By 1900 the Ontario WCTU had established a Department of Social Purity, had agreed that social purity was fundamental to "healthy, godly, national life" and had passed resolutions condemning the sale of cigarettes, the circulation of pornography, the lowering of the age of consent, the traffic in Chinese women in British Columbia and the unfair journalistic practice of publishing the names of women prostitutes in newspapers while leaving male clients' names out of print.<sup>13</sup>

The WCTU's campaign for social purity reflected first-wave Canadian feminists' opinion that men were responsible for the spread of moral and hygienic pollution and likewise reinforced their racist and classist politics.<sup>14</sup> In general, the membership of the WCTU was white, Christian and middle class; in Ontario the organization drew its real strength from the smaller towns and rural districts and was infused with a conservative evangelism which lasted into the 1930s.<sup>15</sup> The belief

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<sup>11</sup> Wendy Mitchinson, "The WCTU: 'For God, Home and Native Land': A Study in Nineteenth-Century Feminism," in Linda Kealey (ed.), *A Not Unreasonable Claim*, pp. 151-167; Elizabeth Pleck, *Domestic Tyranny: The Making of American Social Policy against Family Violence from Colonial Times to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 88-107; Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water*, pp. 58-61; Ian Tyrrell, *Woman's World Woman's Empire: The Woman's Christian Temperance Union in International Perspective, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991), pp. 191-220; Sharon Anne Cook, "Continued and Perservering Combat: The Ontario Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Evangelicalism and Social Reform, 1874-1916," unpublished PhD. dissertation, Carleton University, 1990; Sharon Anne Cook, "Letitia Youmans: Ontario's Nineteenth-Century Temperance Educator," *Ontario History* 84, 4 (December 1992): 329-342; Sharon Anne Cook, "Do Not...Do Anything That You Cannot Unblushingly Tell Your Mother': The Women's Christian Temperance Union and Social Purity in Canada and New Zealand," a paper presented at the Joint Meeting of the Canadian History of Education Society/ Association canadienne d'histoire de l'education and the Australian and New Zealand History of Education Society, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia, December 9-12, 1993.

<sup>12</sup> Tyrrell, *Woman's World Woman's Empire*, p. 198.

<sup>13</sup> AO *Ontario WCTU Reports*, 1889, p. 20, 1891, p. 78, 1892, p. 77, 1896, p. 156

<sup>14</sup> Mariana Valverde, "'When the Mother of the Race Is Free': Race, Reproduction, and Sexuality in First-Wave Feminism," in Franca Iacovetta and Mariana Valverde (eds.), *Gender Conflicts: New Essays in Women's History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), pp. 3-26.

<sup>15</sup> Sharon Anne Cook, "Do Not...Do Anything'."

that immigrants and non-Anglo-Saxons were more likely to participate in prostitution and perpetuate the double standard of morality was embraced and validated within the WCTU. For example, Mrs. F. Edwards, Superintendent of the Department of Work Among the Indians, was pessimistic about the possibility that Native peoples would adopt social purity ideals. She complained that while drunkenness and tobacco use had declined on some reserves, in most aboriginal communities, "the standards of social purity is [sic] very low in even the best of cases."<sup>16</sup>

Contrary to some historians' findings that Canadian feminist organizations were relatively silent about venereal disease before 1914, the Ontario WCTU's concern with that issue was clearly evident long before the advent of the First World War.<sup>17</sup> Convinced that prostitution and its dreaded corollary, venereal disease, swiftly and surely ruined body, soul and nation, the Ontario WCTU, like the Dominion WCTU, firmly opposed the WWCTU's vice-president's surprising support for the extension of the Contagious Diseases Acts to India in 1897.<sup>18</sup> The provincial union condemned the pro-regulation stand taken by Lady Henry Somerset and resolved that:

Whereas, The laws of God are immutable and cannot be set aside without disaster to both the individual and society, and as the sin of impurity is an infraction of both the spiritual and physical laws of God; therefore, Resolved, that we, as British citizens, utter our indignant protest against the re-introduction into the Indian Empire of the Contagious Diseases Acts under the guise of cantonment regulations.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> AO *Ontario WCTU Reports*, 1902, p. 146.

<sup>17</sup> Suzann Buckley and Janice Dickin McGinnis, "Venereal Disease and Public Health Reform in Canada," *Canadian Historical Review* 68, 3 (September 1982), pp. 337-338. In Australia the WCTU was one of the most vocal organizations on the issue of venereal disease prior to the First World War. See Judith Smart, "The Great War and the 'Scarlet Scourge': Debates about Venereal Diseases in Melbourne during World War I," in Judith Smart and Tony Wood (eds.), *An Anzac Muster: War and Society in Australia and New Zealand, 1914-1918 and 1939-1945: Selected Papers* (Clayton, Australia: Monash Publications in History, 1992), p. 61.

<sup>18</sup> For information about the application of the Contagious Diseases Acts to India see Vron Ware, *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism and History* (London: Verso, 1992) and Philippa Levine, "Venereal Disease, Prostitution, and the Politics of Empire: The Case of British India," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 4, 4 (April 1994): 579-602.

<sup>19</sup> AO *Ontario WCTU Reports*, 1897, p. 182. For the Dominion WCTU's opposition to Somerset see Tyrrell, *Woman's World, Woman's Empire*, pp. 207. The Dominion WCTU's resolution opposing Somerset appears in AO *Dominion WCTU Convention Reports*, 1897, p. 111.

In the face of threats from Canada and a number of other countries to secede from the WWCTU, Somerset retracted her pro-regulationist stance on prostitution the following year.

As medical science confirmed that gonorrhoea and syphilis were responsible for an array of mental and physical disabilities in children, the Ontario WCTU's antagonism to prostitution, the double standard and venereal disease became increasingly embedded in the maternal feminist eugenical perspective which held that women were "mothers of the race." This complex phrase connoted the reproduction of the human race and, simultaneously, the reproduction of Anglo-Saxon evolutionary primacy. Feminists of Anglo-Saxon origin in the United States and in the "white" dominions—Canada, Australia and New Zealand—were to use both these meanings to their advantage. On the one hand, they were able to argue that as women their place in reproducing the race was so important they had the right to enfranchisement in order to extend their influence into the political sphere. On the other hand they were able to argue that women had a right to access higher education, physical fitness and voluntary motherhood, all of which improved the next generation. Canadian feminists of Anglo-Saxon origin who demanded the right to give birth to well-born children were thus able to challenge somewhat the arguments made by those eugenicists who believed that women of the best stock were not reproducing at the speed required to overtake the birth rate of immigrants and mental defectives.

Historians have generally conceded that the result of these feminists' teleological dependence on motherhood was two fold. One, the respectable exercise of women's sexuality was restricted to reproductive heterosexual intercourse within marriage. Two, the racist overtones of maternal feminists' arguments enabled many of them to profit professionally by ministering to or institutionalizing supposedly degenerate men, women and children.<sup>20</sup> A third result is also

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<sup>20</sup> Gordon, *Woman's Body, Woman's Right*; Bacchi, *Liberation Deferred*; 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); Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap and Water*; Valverde, "When the Mother of the Race is Free"; McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*.



discernible. By upholding women's right to conceive and give birth to healthy children maternal feminists were able to attack men for their paternal irresponsibility where venereal disease was concerned. Women were considered fully cognizant of their need to nurture the best germ plasm possible for the sake of future generations. In contrast sexually incontinent men remained unaware or cared little that their sperm, teeming with toxic bacteria, was a deadly offering they could no longer contribute to, and women could no longer accept for, the good of the race. Thus, politically disenfranchised Anglo-American feminists were able to turn the tables on men by staking a claim to a woman-centred citizenship from which sexually incontinent men were morally disenfranchised. Ontario WCTU mothers hoped that Beall's lectures would ensure that their sons lived up ably to the demands of just such a woman-centred citizenship: "we are sure they [the boys] will be better men, citizens, fathers and husbands, because of the information given them in such a clear, straightforward, honest way by Mr. Beall."<sup>21</sup>

As with the social purity movement as a whole, by 1900 the Ontario WCTU's faith in legislation and education as the means to eradicate prostitution and the double standard began to supersede the reformatory approach. Ontario WCTU members' ability to push for the legal reform was complicated by the fact of their federal, provincial and municipal disenfranchisement. WCTU women depended on male allies inside and outside the government who supported their programme of legal reform as well as woman suffrage.<sup>22</sup> Whereas many of the WCTU's legal demands concerning the procurement of women were incorporated into the Criminal Code of 1892 and into an amendment to the Code in 1913, suffrage proved to be a more elusive affair. It would not be until April, 1917, that Ontario Premier William Hurst's Conservative government would give women the right to vote in provincial elections and married women the right to vote in municipal elections. In September, 1917, Prime Minister Robert Borden's Conservative

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<sup>21</sup> AO "Purity and White Cross Work," *CWRT* (April 1, 1910), p. 1629.

<sup>22</sup> Constance Backhouse, "Nineteenth-Century Canadian Rape Law 1800-92," in David H. Flaherty (ed.), *Essays in the History of Canadian Law*, vol. 2 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), pp. 200-247.

government self-servingly accorded a limited federal franchise to women with male relatives serving overseas in the Wartime Elections Act in order to boost support for military conscription. An Act according the right to vote in federal elections to women over age 21, who were British subjects and who had the same qualifications entitling a male person to vote in the province in which they resided, was finally put into effect on January 1, 1919.<sup>23</sup>

The Ontario WCTU's faith in education was directed at children rather than adults. Teaching children about the dangers of alcohol was a prominent feature of English and German literature in the eighteenth century and had been the hallmark of Youmans' approach to temperance reform.<sup>24</sup> Like children's education for temperance reform, the sex instruction of children as a means to eradicate prostitution and the double standard was based on feminist social purity reformers' belief that behaviour was learned and could be unlearned. The Ontario WCTU was galvanized on the issue of children's sex instruction by Dr. Mary Wood-Allen's 1898 visit to Toronto, an event duly noted by the Department of Hygiene and Heredity.<sup>25</sup> Physician, mother and Superintendent of the Department of Social Purity of the American WCTU, Wood-Allen came to represent the fusion of social reform with medicine.<sup>26</sup> She initiated the Mother's Crusade in the United States, the forerunner of the Parent-Teacher Association, became editor of the magazine *American Mother*, and was a guiding force behind the establishment of mothers' meetings to educate mothers to teach their children about sex. A prolific author of social purity books for mothers and children, Wood-Allen, along with her daughter, Rose Wood-Allen Chapman, encouraged WCTUs around the world to disseminate literature aimed at morally educating the young. This dissemination of literature reinforced the American WCTU's cultural imperialism and

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<sup>23</sup> Cleaverdon, *The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada*, pp. 105-136.

<sup>24</sup> Geoffrey J. Giles, "Temperance before the temperance movements: some examples from eighteenth-century children's literature in England and Germany," *Journal of the History of Education* 20, 4 (December 1991): 295-305; Cook, "Letitia Youmans," pp. 329-342.

<sup>25</sup> AO, *Ontario WCTU Reports*, 1898, p. 95.

<sup>26</sup> David Pivar, *Purity Crusade: Sexual Morality and Social Control, 1868-1900* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, Inc., 1973), p. 220.

portrayed the United States as the moral centre of the universe. By the advent of the First World War, the United States had eclipsed Britain as the leader in the international campaign against social impurity.<sup>27</sup>

A few months after Wood-Allen's visit Mrs. A. Lucas, the provincial union's Superintendent for the Department of Social Purity, raised the spectre of the ignorant child in connection with the spread of venereal disease. Her immediate concern was for the innocent girl who, albeit from a respectable home, was led astray by unscrupulous men. Historian Wendy Mitchinson confirms that WCTU members were convinced that young girls ignorant about sex became prey to impurity; men seduced them and the law unfortunately favoured the seducer and not the victim.<sup>28</sup> Lucas chastised mothers for their indifference or false modesty where educating their children was concerned. For Lucas, the dire effects on the race of the lack of home-based sex instruction were blatantly obvious once children went to public school. "I could mention things respecting the conduct and conversation of children of six and eight years," reported Lucas ominously, "that would alarm and shock you, and the evil has assumed such grave proportions that unless a speedy remedy is found we shall e'er long reap a fearful harvest of degeneracy and impurity."<sup>29</sup> That remedy took two forms—home- *and* school-based sex instruction, the one intended to complement and reinforce the other. In 1900 the Ontario WCTU established the Department of Purity and Mothers' Meetings, soon to be re-named the Department of Moral Education and Mothers' Meetings, and hired Beall to be their Purity Missionary to public school boys.

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<sup>27</sup> Tyrrell, *Woman's World, Woman's Empire*, pp. 218-220.

<sup>28</sup> Mitchinson, "The WCTU," p. 162.

<sup>29</sup> AO *Ontario WCTU Reports*, 1898, pp. 96-97.

## II

The Ontario WCTU's emphasis on the importance of mothers' educating children about sex originated in their belief in the malleability of youth and the perfect suitability of mothers for the task of developing the children's characters. Echoing the influence of Friedrich Froebel, Ontario WCTU literature often compared the young child to manipulable natural materials such as clay or plants. Articles in the union's official organ, the *Canadian White Ribbon Tidings*, informed women that there were two fundamental God-ordained laws which had to be understood in building character in children. First, the "plasticity of the mind" and second "the law of fixity in maturity." The two laws of character development gave rise to the saying, "As the twig is bent so the tree inclines."<sup>30</sup> The WCTU considered that mothers had a special duty to satisfy children's early curiosity about sex for only mothers could lay the foundations for chaste ideals and habits.<sup>31</sup> Dr. Amelia Yeomans, vice-president of the Dominion WCTU, warned mothers that when children asked their inevitable questions about the origins of life they were "to answer and to tell nothing but the truth." She argued that if the mother lied or left a child's questions unanswered, the child would feel disappointment at the mother's failure, would associate reproduction with shame and would turn to others who were likely to answer the child's queries inappropriately. This pattern would solidify over the years, forcing the child to remain silent for his or her mother's sake.<sup>32</sup> Or the uneducated child would soon "fall through ignorance of evil," leading one Ontario WCTU member to proclaim that ignorance in the child was sin in the mother.<sup>33</sup>

The environmentalist approach to children's education, which held that positive or negative changes in the environment produced positive or negative physical and mental changes in the

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<sup>30</sup> AO CWRT, (April 1, 1910), p. 1633.

<sup>31</sup> Patricia Anne Vertinsky, "Education for Sexual Morality: Moral Reform and the Regulation of American Sexual Behavior in the Nineteenth-Century," Unpublished EdD. Dissertation, University of British Columbia, 1975, p. 209.

<sup>32</sup> AO CWRT 4, 67 (February 1, 1910), p. 1585.

<sup>33</sup> AO Adelaide Garrett, "Teaching Purity to Children," CWRT 4, 90 (January 1, 1912), p. 2104.

individual transmissible to the next generation, allowed mothers to actively contribute toward socializing their young rather than restricting them solely to the performance of their biological function.<sup>34</sup> The environmentalist approach, however, had its limits. WCTU members recognized that the child's environment was of scant importance where venereal disease was concerned. In an article to *Tidings* entitled "Eugenics," Dr. Mary Thompson noted that "you cannot make a sound normal child of one that is born blind, or deaf, or deformed, or idiotic. Far better for them and the world that none such be born."<sup>35</sup>

At the end of 1902, the Superintendent noticed a 30% increase in the number of mothers' meetings held but the picture was not entirely rosy. Despite the acknowledged importance of the Ontario WCTU's work in this area, some opposition to sex instruction in mothers' meetings did surface. The Superintendent was soon complaining that "prejudice and ignorance make it difficult for us to carry on these meetings, but this only impresses us the more that the work should be pursued."<sup>36</sup> The source of the opposition is unclear. Opposition may have come from some WCTU mothers or it may have come from the community at large. There is evidence to show that some mothers who taught their children about sexual matters antagonized other women in their community. Turn-of-the-century American feminist Charlotte Perkins Gilman recalled that she scandalized many mothers in Pasadena when she taught her daughter "the simple facts of sex." Gilman felt vindicated in her decision to sexually instruct her daughter when "one of the piously brought up little boys [Katherine] played with made proposals which would have been dangerous had they been sixteen instead of six." Katherine did not comply. She immediately told her mother, who calmly praised her daughter for her behaviour.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Bacci, *Liberation Deferred*, pp. 108-111.

<sup>35</sup> AO Mary Thompson, "Eugenics," *CWRT* 5, 4 (April 1, 1913), p. 77.

<sup>36</sup> AO Ontario WCTU Reports, 1903, pp. 94-99.

<sup>37</sup> Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Living of Charlotte Perkins Gilman: An Autobiography* (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1963 [1935]), p. 160.

Opposition aside, the Department of Purity and Mothers' Meetings was strategically ambitious. It was hoped that mothers' meetings could be held by every local WCTU, that these meetings could be addressed by ministers, physicians and/or teachers. Specialists in child study, child culture, social purity and hygiene were also welcome. The placement of question boxes at each meeting, perhaps for those women who were too embarrassed to articulate their concerns, was also suggested. Mothers were to be instructed in training their children to maintain purity of thought and action, and in informing them about the mystery of birth. Mothers' meetings depended heavily on the distribution of literature. By 1903, 823 publications were in circulation. The *Self and Sex Series* was well received. Wood-Allen's publications were especially recommended.<sup>38</sup> Her *Marvels of Our Bodily Dwelling* (1895), *Almost a Man* (1895), *What A Young Girl Ought to Know* (1897) and *What A Young Woman Ought to Know* (1913) were written for girls, boys and mothers alike.<sup>39</sup>

Yeomans was so keen on *What A Young Girl Ought to Know* that her photograph and testimonial appear on the book's front pages. She praised Wood-Allen's work, advising mothers to study it carefully before giving it to their daughters. Yeomans' own attempt to dispel girls' ignorance about sex had come in the form of a pamphlet entitled, "Warning to Girls." Maternal feminist, author and WCTU member Nellie McClung recalled that the pamphlet raised a storm of abuse: "Ministers raged against [the pamphlet] in the pulpit. I remember one brother who was very emphatic in his denunciations who afterwards was put out of the church for indecent conduct. Of course he wanted girls to remain innocent, it suited his purpose."<sup>40</sup> Like most social purists, Wood-Allen believed that whereas boys were exposed to all sorts of sexual information, girls were kept ignorant of sex deliberately. She attempted to safeguard girls from boys' and men's sexual

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<sup>38</sup> AO *Ontario WCTU Reports*, 1903, pp. 94-100.

<sup>39</sup> Mary Wood-Allen, *Marvels of Our Bodily Dwelling* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: The Wood-Allen Publishing Co., 1899 [1895]); Mary Wood-Allen, *Almost a Man* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Mary Wood-Allen, 1895); Mary Wood-Allen, *What A Young Girl Ought To Know* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1897), Mary Wood-Allen, *What A Young Woman Ought To Know* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1898).

<sup>40</sup> Nellie McClung, *In Times Like These* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972 [1915]), p. 84.

aggression by encouraging their mothers to give them pure knowledge. "a most sure and trustworthy safeguard of present innocence and a reliable prophecy of future virtue."<sup>41</sup> Wood-Allen's version of pure knowledge was, however, highly circumscribed, for in keeping with the glorification of motherhood, she called the girl's attention toward her reproductive organs and away from her genitalia, encouraged her to prepare for maternity and discouraged her from associating with boys and men who did not respect women. The girl was neither to masturbate nor to develop overly-friendly relationships with other girls or boys but to concentrate upon improving the magnificent genetic inheritance she could pass on to her children. A firm believer in the environment's ability to mitigate or enhance one's hereditarian make-up, Wood-Allen wanted girls to know that they could improve upon their genetic contribution to future offspring. "Heredity is not fatality," comforted Wood-Allen.<sup>42</sup>

Few Canadian women publicly championed the need for more explicit information for girls than what authors like Wood-Allen offered, possibly because they were afraid of being identified with the small minority of American feminists who supported sex instruction for children as part of the radical "free love" agenda of socialism, trial marriage, the legitimization of children born out of wedlock and birth control. The legal price paid for an association with any agenda in opposition to the expression of sexuality within monogamous marriage, as American feminists and birth control advocates Emma Goldman and Margaret Sanger would discover, was high.<sup>43</sup> Canadian feminist Alice Chown personally believed that sex should be limited to reproduction, but she entertained several open discussions on the "sex question" and its economic underpinnings in her home in Lakeside, Ontario. By 1909, rumours that she supported free love flew, leading a tearful family friend to beg Chown to give up the discussions for her dead mother's sake. "It was useless to try to explain to her," wrote a frustrated Chown in her diary. "She had only one standard, the ten

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<sup>41</sup> Wood-Allen, *Young Girl*, p. 22.

<sup>42</sup> Wood-Allen, *Young Woman*, p. 243.

<sup>43</sup> Gordon, *Woman's Body, Woman's Right*, pp. 212-230; Ellen Chesler, *Woman of Valor: Margaret Sanger and the Birth Control Movement in America* (New York: Anchor Books, 1992).

commandments, and I could not convince her that it was hypocrisy for us to say that we obeyed any one of them."<sup>44</sup> Even Dora Forster who, with her husband, published articles on sexual radicalism in the Chicago-based *Lucifer* between 1898-1906, publicly played the part of a respectable, middle-class wife in British Columbia.<sup>45</sup> Despite her radical leanings, Forster remained convinced that children's sex instruction from the age of fourteen onward was the remedy to two dilemmas: how to exercise the power of sex and how to encourage women to exercise their reproductive functions. Forster also recommended that sixteen year old women could choose sexually experienced older men to deflower them with "surgical precision."<sup>46</sup>

Wood-Allen's advice for the boy reflected first-wave feminists' messianic drive to turn the masturbating boy into the sexually continent man. To this end, boys were advised never to smoke, drink, chew tobacco, take drugs, masturbate or experiment sexually. Wood-Allen encouraged boys to look to their mothers as role models of behaviour. She discouraged mothers from bringing up their sons differently from their daughters. These sentiments were not unusual. One Canadian author advised Ontario WCTU mothers to teach their sons to wash dishes, sew and make beds.<sup>47</sup> Emma F. Angell Drake, another author in the *Self and Sex* Series, referred to a son bound firmly to the mother's side as a "mother-anchored" boy.<sup>48</sup> The mother-anchored boy not only remained respectful of women throughout his life but was always cognizant of the necessity of passing on the best inheritance he could to his offspring. The mother-anchored boy grew up to be a sexually continent man who adhered to the single standard of morals. Imbued with a sense of the important contribution he had to make to future generations, the sexually continent man was perceived to be an excellent prospective husband and father. He would seek out a chaste woman to be his partner

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<sup>44</sup> Alice A. Chown, *The Stairway* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), p. 59.

<sup>45</sup> Angus McLaren, "Sex Radicalism in the Canadian Pacific Northwest, 1890-1920," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 2, 4 (April 1992): 527-546.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 539-540.

<sup>47</sup> AO "Mother's Boy," *The Woman's Journal* 7, 3 (November, 1890), p. 8.

<sup>48</sup> Emma F. Angell Drake, *What A Young Wife Ought To Know* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1902 [1901]), p. 225.



in an egalitarian marriage and agree to sexual relations only if husband and wife were willing to take on the responsibility of raising a child.<sup>49</sup>

The irreparable damage a sexually incontinent man could do to the race was forcibly outlined by Mrs. Thompson of the National Council of Women of Canada (NCW) in a speech in 1907. Thompson complained that for every one known prostitute there were at least ten fallen men. Her moral mathematics were calculated to alarm women about Canadian manhood. Thompson observed: "We may say this will not affect us, our children are pure; but how do we know whether one of our daughters may not marry one of these men! Impurity has become a disease, fastening upon our manhood, and unless we wake up and do something to remedy it, our future generation will be, at the least, a race of weaklings and imbeciles." Thompson appeared to agree with the Ontario WCTU in calling for a combination of home and school-based sex instruction. She believed that if children were to grow up to avoid the pitfalls of prostitution and venereal disease, mothers and schools had to work together. Mothers were to teach children about nature study while "hygiene and physiology should be the chief study in every curriculum from kindergarten to university." She suggested that the medical profession could supply specially trained teachers to tell children the truth. Finally, she urged every woman who heard her message to galvanize public opinion in favour of school-based sex instruction so that school instructors' earnest efforts were not misrepresented, ridiculed or misunderstood.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Christabelle Sethna, "The Continent Man: The Ideal of 'Pure' Manhood in the *Self and Sex Series*, 1897-1915," MA. thesis, University of Toronto, 1989, pp. 119-129.

<sup>50</sup> Mrs. Thompson, "Address," excerpted in Ramsay Cook and Wendy Mitchinson (eds.), *The Proper Sphere: Woman's Place in Canadian Society* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 238-241.

### III

Bolstered by their successes in introducing scientific temperance instruction into the province's public schools during the late 1880s,<sup>51</sup> the WCTU prepared to introduce sex instruction into the schools. Arrangements were made in 1900 to hire Beall to lecture to school boys at approximately \$150-200 per annum on a temporary basis.<sup>52</sup> Two years later the Superintendent was pleased to recommend that Beall's work in the schools be continued and extended.<sup>53</sup> Beall took this to heart. By the end of 1903 he had travelled 1,626 miles in order to lecture to 5,300 collegiate, high and elementary school boys across Ontario on social purity.<sup>54</sup> Beall's hiring was looked upon favourably by Mrs. A. Lucas, now the Dominion WCTU's Superintendent of Department of Purity. She commented partisanly that Ontario "has made a grand beginning" and expressed the desire that all the provinces follow suit.<sup>55</sup>

Beall's hiring was an acknowledgement that home-based sex instruction had at least three major disadvantages: fathers' uninvolved involvement with their sons' sex instruction, the dangers posed by street life and mothers' inability to directly monitor their children for evidence of sexual transgressions once they began school.

While educated mothers were thought fully capable of sexually instructing their young children, it was sometimes acknowledged that fathers could more appropriately tutor their sons, particularly as they approached adolescence, about the wonders and the dangers of sex. Fathers, however, could not be relied upon. The Ontario WCTU had meagre success in organizing fathers'

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<sup>51</sup> Neil Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth-Century Consensus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), pp. 174-178; T. R. Morrison, "Their Proper Sphere' Feminism, The Family, and Child-Centered Social Reform In Ontario, 1875-1900," *Ontario History* 68, 1 (March 1976), pp. 58-60; Robert M. Stamp, *The Schools of Ontario, 1876-1976* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), pp. 68-69.

<sup>52</sup> AO *Ontario WCTU Reports*, 1901, p. 30.

<sup>53</sup> AO *Ontario WCTU Reports*, 1902, p. 100.

<sup>54</sup> AO, *Ontario WCTU Reports*, 1903, p. 177.

<sup>55</sup> AO *Dominion WCTU Convention Reports*, 1903, p. 77.

meetings, a difficulty which was exacerbated by the anxieties rising within the provincial union over prostitution and venereal disease. Mrs. J. W. Garrett, Superintendent of the Department of Moral Education, despaired that sterility in women and blindness in children caused by gonorrhoea made it necessary to direct more attention to fathers' duty to instruct and warn their sons.<sup>56</sup> In addition, the child could not always be protected against sexual corruption coming from outside the boundaries of the "good" home. Some social workers in the United States had sounded the alarm about sexual abuse occurring within "bad" homes. Yet after 1910 sexual abuse, especially if it involved young girls, was obfuscated by the all-encompassing discourse of girls' sex delinquency. This discourse coincided with the fear of sexual attack perpetrated not by a male family member but by a male stranger.<sup>57</sup> Not surprisingly, the city street came to represent a site of sexual danger for WCTU members. Despite the fact that sexual assaults against women and children were more likely to be perpetrated by family members and neighbours and were as likely to occur in the berry patch as in the city street,<sup>58</sup> the WCTU expressed the fear that the child would be led astray by strangers, given misinformation about sex from peers and/or corrupted by the baneful influences of the movie house, the theatre and the saloon. As early as 1900 the Ontario WCTU came to support a children's evening curfew. No child could venture onto the street without a parent or guardian after 9 p.m.

More important, perhaps, was the fear that children, unsupervised by their mothers, would succumb to sexual experimentation at school. Since the 1870s, public schools had been considered ideal sites of physical infection. Schooling itself was thought to be physically unhygienic for children stooped over books in stuffy classrooms which were situated near inadequate toilet facilities. The Canadian branch of the International Congress of School Hygiene was founded in

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<sup>56</sup> AO *Ontario WCTU Reports*, 1913, p. 99.

<sup>57</sup> Linda Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence, Boston, 1880-1960* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), pp. 218-220.

<sup>58</sup> Karen Dubinsky, *Improper Advances: Rape and Heterosexual Conflict in Ontario, 1880-1929* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

1909 and progress was rapid. By 1925, health and physical education were an established part of the public school and Normal school curriculum while hygiene legislation provided Ontario school children with a comprehensive system of medical and dental inspection.<sup>59</sup> The Fourth International Congress of School Hygiene, held in Buffalo in 1913, was the one at which an audience of over 2000 listened to speakers organized by the ASHF discuss their views on children's sex instruction.<sup>60</sup> In that same year W. E. Struthers, the Chief Medical Inspector of Toronto Schools, allowed that sex hygiene, along with nose blowing drills, tonsil and adenoid inspection, shower baths and the care of decayed teeth could be introduced into the elementary school curriculum. Struthers suggested that sex hygiene be taught individually to children in grade 7 at their last medical examination by same-sex physicians.<sup>61</sup>

While it was generally acknowledged that the public school was a locus of physical contagion, for the Ontario WCTU, the public school, like the city street, was also considered a site of sexual danger. The Ontario WCTU's assessment of what they called "public school immorality" stood in complete opposition to Ontario educators' crowing that the school was a moral counterpoint to the inadequate home, the unattended church and the sordid street. At approximately the same time the Superintendent of the Department of Purity and Mothers' Meetings recommended that Beall be "re-engaged for a Purity campaign" in schools because wherever "children congregate in large numbers the evil picture, book, or letter, finds its way and moral degradation is the result."<sup>62</sup> J. G. Elliot was telling the Ontario Educational Association (OEA) that Ontario public

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<sup>59</sup> Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society*; pp. 39-55; Helen Lenskyj, "Raising 'Good Vigorous Animals': Medical Interest in Children's Health in Ontario, 1890-1930," *Scientia Canadensis* 12, 2 (1988): 129-149; J. David Hurst, "Public health and the public elementary schools, 1870-1907," *Journal of the History of Education* 20, 2 (June 1991): 107-118.

<sup>60</sup> "Sex Hygiene to be Discussed by Distinguished Speakers at the International School Congress in Buffalo," *Public Health Journal*, 4, 6 (June 1913): 381-382; "Many Public Health Officers on the Programme of the Buffalo School Hygiene Congress," *Public Health Journal*, 4, 7 (July 1913): 430-431; Francis E. Fronczak, "Buffalo Congress to Mark the Greatest Advance Ever Made in School Hygiene," *Public Health Journal*, 4, 8 (August, 1913): 477-478.

<sup>61</sup> W. E. Struthers, "Medical Inspection of Schools in Toronto," *Canadian Journal of Public Health* 5, 2 (February 1914), p. 75.

<sup>62</sup> AO *Ontario WCTU Reports*, 1901, p. 198.

schools were the guardian of the youth of the land, perfectly suited to build up in pupils a strong, intelligent and patriotic character worthy of Canadian citizenship.<sup>63</sup> Elliot was not alone in promoting public schools as the moral counterpoint to the inadequate home, the unattended church and the sordid street. Dr. A. H. U. Colquhoun, Deputy Minister of Education, seemed to agree. "The school is happily recognized," claimed Colquhoun, "as one of the strongest influences now at work for the moral and religious welfare of this country." For Colquhoun, the school had to take its place beside the home and the Church as the chief influence in moulding the character and conduct of young people.<sup>64</sup>

Providing children with the moral education required to control their sexuality was perceived to be perfectly in keeping with the public school's role of preventing disease and moulding a model citizenry.<sup>65</sup> As early as 1905, Reverend W. T. Wilkins had no qualms about telling the OEA that male and female teachers were needed to give sexual instruction to boys and girls in order to instill in boys "pure, strong, virile manhood" and in girls "maidenly deportment."<sup>66</sup> One year later Dr. T. Campbell suggested to the OEA that male and female hygiene teachers could be trained to provide sex instruction for boys and girls, respectively, in sex-segregated classes. He suggested that the teacher first encourage the friendship and confidence of the child. Thus, as friend and advisor, the teacher could help children approaching "the puberic age" to "preserve them from evil habits; cultivate a pure and temperate life; and establish their feet in the paths of virtue."<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> J. G. Elliot, "Citizen-Making, the Mission of the School," *Ontario Educational Association Yearbook*, 1904, p. 301.

<sup>64</sup> A. H. U. Colquhoun, "Mr. Colquhoun's Address," *Ontario Educational Association Yearbook*, 1909, p. 127.

<sup>65</sup> Bruce Curtis, "'Literary Merrit', 'Useful Knowledge', and the Organization of Township Libraries in Canada West, 1840-1860," *Ontario History* 78, 4 (December 1986): 285-311.

<sup>66</sup> W. T. Wilkins, "Separation of the Sexes in the Public Schools," *Ontario Educational Association Yearbook*, 1905, p. 283.

<sup>67</sup> T. Campbell, "The Training of Teachers in Hygiene," *Ontario Educational Association Yearbook*, 1906, p. 392.

The English historian Jeffrey Weeks argues that social purity reformers used the term "public school immorality" as a synonym for homosexuality. Given the well-publicized accounts of homosexual encounters in sex-segregated private boarding schools known as public schools in England, Weeks' argument is understandable. For the Ontario WCTU public school immorality was a broad term. It referred to a wide array of school children's sexual manifestations and chiefly to the occurrence of sexual experimentation between boys and girls. They believed that this sort of sexual experimentation was exacerbated by provincial public schools. In Canada and the United States, public schools were co-educational elementary-level day schools which, theoretically, welcomed children of all classes, races and religions. There is no doubt, however, that as Weeks maintains, social purists believed that "public school immorality" was closely intertwined with schoolboy masturbation and prostitution.<sup>68</sup>

The supposed existence of immorality between boys and girls in schools garnered much more attention than did the existence of immorality between male teachers and girl students. Evidence of male teachers' sexual assaults against girl pupils between 1840 and 1907 in Ontario has been documented.<sup>69</sup> But the inordinate focus on immorality between school boys and girls was, most likely, the result of what Marjorie Theobald calls the "discourse of danger."<sup>70</sup> Co-education had many supporters but a number of detractors expressed dismay that co-educational classes encouraged the promiscuous intermingling of the sexes.<sup>71</sup> The Ontario WCTU expressed apprehension that the danger would come from schoolboys who were not as mother-anchored as were their sisters. Christine Terhune Herrick reminded mothers reading *Tidings* that they would have to redouble their efforts to keep sons firmly in check once they were off to school for even

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<sup>68</sup> Jeffrey Weeks, *Coming Out* (London: Quartet Books, 1977), pp. 16-17.

<sup>69</sup> Bruce Curtis, "'Illicit' Sexuality and Public Education in Ontario, 1840-1907," *Historical Studies in Education/Revue d'histoire de l'éducation* 1, 1 (Spring/Printemps 1989): 73-94.

<sup>70</sup> Marjorie R. Theobald, "Discourse of Danger: Gender and the History of Elementary Schooling in Australia, 1850-1880," *Historical Studies in Education/Revue d'histoire de l'éducation* 1, 1 (Spring/Printemps 1989): 29-52.

<sup>71</sup> R. D. Gidney and W. P. J. Millar, *Inventing Secondary Education: The Rise of the High School* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), pp. 187-188.

at that young age a boy became inflated with masculine pride. He "feels his sense of importance at going from home rule, and the innate sense of any man's superiority to any woman, which is cherished secretly and often unavowedly by the best of men, is swelling the youthful breast."<sup>72</sup>

Wood-Allen had raised the discourse of danger in her *Almost A Man*, a fictitious account about a boy obviously floating free from any redeeming female influence. In the novel, pre-pubescent Carl sends a note beginning "My darling little sweetheart" to classmate Susie. Instead of punishing Carl, Carl's teacher, Miss Bell, refers him to the town's wise woman physician, Dr. Barrett. The capable doctor shows Carl drawings of the spermatozoon and the ovum and tells Carl about marriage, family and, without mentioning sexual intercourse, informs him of "the most sacred human relation," in which the sperm unites with the ovum to create a new life. Further lectures included the importance of parental love for children and the need for boys to treat all girls as they treat their mothers. Carl is duly reduced to tears and chokes out what is part-confession, part-plan of action:

I don't think I can ever be disobedient again, Dr. Barrett, I did not understand it all as I do now. You know we only hear these things talked of among the boys, and I had come to feel that there was some reason why I ought to be ashamed...I wish you would talk to the other boys as you have to me.<sup>73</sup>

Thanks to Dr. Barrett's lectures and some literature she gives him, Carl is able to take three redemptory steps. He develops a deep regard for all womanhood, sends his male classmates to talk to Dr. Barrett and apologizes to Susie, remarking that "this silly nonsense about lovers and sweethearts is silly rot."<sup>74</sup>

The WCTU's concerns over the immorality of public schools were heightened when it became obvious that co-educational urban and rural public schools permitted the indiscriminate

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<sup>72</sup> AO Christine Terhune Herrick, "You and Your Boy," *CWRT* 12, 2 (February 1916), p. 50.

<sup>73</sup> Wood-Allen, *Almost A Man*, p. 18.

<sup>74</sup> *ibid.*, p. 21.

mixing not only of boys and girls but of Canadian-born and immigrant children. The WCTU's anxieties were triggered by the influx of immigrants into urban and rural areas of the province. Immigrants' moral, mental and physical well-being were repeatedly questioned by Canadian reformers apprehensive about the "decline" of the Anglo-Saxon race.<sup>75</sup> It was feared that Canadian-born children could easily be corrupted by immigrant children believed to have low sexual morals. These racist concerns were captured by one American contributor to *Tidings*. Writing on the importance of children's sex instruction as a prophylaxis against venereal disease, Dr. William Lee Howard informed parents that children who had not been sexually instructed at home ran great moral risks in the schools where children of all races mingled. In the case of public schools, democracy had been carried too far: "We talk blithely about our melting pot, forgetting that in a melting pot into which every kind of anthropological stuff has gone there is bound to be a large amount of dirty slag."<sup>76</sup>

#### IV

Beall shared the Ontario WCTU's belief in moulding young children, making the most of this possibility in articles he wrote for *Tidings*. "Prevention is better than cure," he was fond of noting, "formation better than re-formation."<sup>77</sup> His lecture work was conducted primarily in rural Ontario—in Hastings, Lanark and Renfrew counties—and principally amongst boys of elementary, high and collegiate schools. But it was soon apparent that girls were being left out. Beall noted he occasionally lectured to school girls at the teachers' request but that the question he was most often asked was, "Why isn't there some one doing work similar to yours among the girls?"<sup>78</sup> In 1911, the Ontario WCTU resolved to hire a woman lecturer yet there is no record that they were successful on this score. Although an increasing number of local Unions had been

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<sup>75</sup> McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, pp. 28-45.

<sup>76</sup> AO William Lee Howard, "Parental Talks," *CWRT* 10, 5 (May 1, 1914), p. 406.

<sup>77</sup> AO Arthur Beall, "Our White Cross Work," *CWRT* 4, 44 (April 15, 1908), p. 1144

<sup>78</sup> AO *Ontario WCTU Reports*, 1905, p. 220.



taking a serious interest in the sexual instruction of girls at school, they were unable to duplicate the work of British Columbia's Miss McLeod. McLeod was reported to have lectured to 1,800 girls in 44 schools on "Character and the Body." The girls apparently listened reverently and the teachers cooperated heartily.<sup>79</sup>

By 1904, Beall was being identified as the WCTU's "White Cross Missionary." The White Cross League was an organization founded at the urging of "lifelong spinster" Jane Ellice Hopkins.<sup>80</sup> Hopkins was one of the key figures active in the post-1885 social purity movement in Britain. In keeping with the post-1885 social purity movement's emphasis on eliminating the byproducts of male sexual vice and controlling youthful sexuality, Hopkins envisioned the formation of male chastity leagues as a bulwark against prostitution and venereal disease.<sup>81</sup> In 1883 the Church of England responded to Hopkins' vision by forming two organizations: the Church of England Purity Society and the White Cross Society. By 1900 these two organizations had merged to become the White Cross League. The hallmark of the League was a five-point White Cross Pledge signed by men promising: 1) to treat all women with respect; 2) to protect women from indecent language and coarse jests; 3) to maintain sexual purity; 4) to spread these principles amongst other men; and 5) to keep oneself pure. The League spread to India, Canada, the United States, South Africa and numerous European nations, eventually forming an alliance with the WCTU. Differences amongst the nations emerged. For example, the British White Cross League's literature glorified muscular Christianity while the Canadian literature upheld mothers' "purity and sturdiness, selfless love and her Christly example as the signposts for young men on the path to Social Purity."<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> AO *Ontario WCTU Reports, 1913*, p. 99.

<sup>80</sup> Sheila Jeffreys, *The Spinster and Her Enemies: Feminism and Sexuality, 1880-1930* (London: Pandora Press, 1985), pp. 9-26.

<sup>81</sup> Judith R. Walkowitz, *Prostitution in Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988 [1980]), p. 242.

<sup>82</sup> Cook, "Do Not Do Anything," p. 26.

Although members of local WCTUs found they had to struggle sometimes to get trustees' and principals' permission to let Beall speak,<sup>83</sup> the fear that parents would oppose school-based sex instruction was not borne out in Beall's case for at least three reasons. Beall was careful to portray himself as the mother's partner in purity, encouraging mothers to attend his lectures along with their sons. Beall's lectures were praised for their accuracy. His lectures were considered not only persuasive but morally and medically accurate.<sup>84</sup> Finally, he was admired for his gentlemanly manner with the boys. This assessment is remarkable given Beall's talent for careerist self-promotion. After seven years of work as the WCTU's White Cross Missionary, Beall did not hesitate in proclaiming that thousands of Ontario men would date their conversion from impurity to purity from the day he brought salvation to the boys' souls via their bodies.<sup>85</sup> Press reports fuelled the hyperbole. A Kitchener newspaper noted that Beall's "talks with the boys are pure and sweet to the last degree" while the Belleville daily press labelled him a "prophet of purity" who ought to have a government commission to come to the rescue of all Dominion boys.<sup>86</sup>

Valverde has noted that Beall, heavily influenced by Sylvanus Stall, one of the authors of the *Self and Sex Series*, lectured on two basic themes. One theme upheld the main social purity discourse that the body was the equivalent of a holy temple which could not be defiled. The other theme emphasized that indulgence in tobacco, alcohol and sex was unpatriotic.<sup>87</sup> What has been overlooked is that the two themes underlying Beall's sex instruction were grounded in Wood-Allen's approach to sex instruction. Stall's influence is apparent only when Beall outlined to the older boys the penalties they would pay for masturbating.

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<sup>83</sup> AO "Our White Cross Work," *CWRT* 4, 69 (April 1, 1910), p. 1633.

<sup>84</sup> AO *CWRT* 4, 47 (June 15, 1908), p. 1186.

<sup>85</sup> AO Arthur Beall, "Our White Cross Work," *CWRT*, 4, 44 (April 15 1908), p. 1144.

<sup>86</sup> AO *CWRT* 2, 4 (February 15, 1905), p. 218; *CWRT* 4, 44 (April 15, 1908), p. 1145.

<sup>87</sup> Valverde, *The Age of Light Soap and Water*, pp. 70-71.

Beall followed Wood-Allen in comparing children's bodies to magnificent structures designed by God, the divine architect. Borrowing from a number of well-worn comparisons between the human body and a dwelling, Wood-Allen set out the definitive body/temple analogy in her physiological lessons to children. For Wood-Allen, children's bodies were more marvelous, complicated and exquisite than the Taj Mahal. For Beall, children's bodies were more beautiful, sacred and wonderful than all the churches and cathedrals in Christendom. Wood-Allen's children's bodies were comparable to dwellings aspired to by the upper middle class. The child's cranium was the upper storey or the cupola, the library the memory, the music room the ears, the reception room the mouth and the cells the body's servants. In keeping with social purists' racist fears that Anglo-Saxon children could be stimulated to premature sexual activity by sexually corrupting substances/individuals, Wood-Allen warned children against four dark-complexioned "foreigners" who sneaked insidiously into children's bodies/homes: tea, coffee, cigarettes and opium.<sup>88</sup>

When compared with Wood-Allen's structure, Beall's body/temple analogy was a relatively simple but no less important dwelling. The body was composed of four storeys beginning with the foundation/feet and ending with the roof/hair. The skin was the equivalent of the outer sheeting, marvelously constructed to repair itself. The body's joints were the windows' and doors' delicately constructed locks and hinges. Beall gave children the opportunity to examine their hands by wriggling their fingers and wrists and to discover that they were "supremely wonderful."<sup>89</sup> The child did not own the dwelling; he or she rented it from Jesus Christ, the landlord. Cleanliness or chastity of body and mind was the rent the child as tenant paid to Christ. The child's efforts to remain chaste were assured once he or she acknowledged the superiority of Christ's rule over the rented dwelling. This acknowledgement was symbolized by the child turning over to Him the keys to its tongue, eyes, ears, stomach and brain.

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<sup>88</sup> Wood-Allen, *Marvels*, p. 207.

<sup>89</sup> Beall, *The Living Temple*, p. 26.

The child who broke the God's rules of cleanliness risked seriously damaging the living temple. Beall gave his audience a powerful example. The temple's ventilators—the lungs—and its force pump—the heart—were so sensitive, Beall explained, that they could be damaged irreparably by cigarettes. To illustrate this point graphically, Beall told the story of two brothers from Simcoe County who came down with typhoid fever. The elder boy survived but the younger died. The doctor determined that the reason for the younger boy's death was not typhoid but cigarettes. Beall explained that the boy's nervous system was so undermined by just a few puffs that the fever got the upper hand. Whereas the 16 year old recovered, the 12-year-old boy sank into his grave. The death of the young boy was not only a tragedy for his mother but for Canada: "He sold his life for one cigarette—his first cigarette. And Canada lost a boy—no a man!"<sup>90</sup>

Like Wood-Allen, Beall also encouraged children to consider their monetary value to their country. Wood-Allen reminded children that they were extremely valuable for they were "forming the character and determining the destiny of the nation and the future."<sup>91</sup> Indulging in what Karen Dubinsky has elsewhere termed economic and regional "moral boosterism,"<sup>92</sup> Beall reminded his audience that boys and girls were even more precious than the gold, silver and nickel mined in Ontario, the hub of Canada. Each boy and girl was worth \$50,000 to the country. Canada needed boys and girls to grow up into top-rate men and women teachers, farmers, merchants, doctors and ministers. These "A. I" boys and girls of today were going to be the "cream of the cream" of the country. Beall contrasted A. I boys and girls to "N. G." men. No Good men and the occasional No Good woman came from No Good girls and boys. N. G. boys and girls were the polar opposite of A. I boys and girls. Whereas A. I boys and girls were noble, trustworthy and honourable, N. G.

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<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>91</sup> Wood-Allen, *Young Girl*, p. 145.

<sup>92</sup> Dubinsky, *Improper Advances*, p. 161.

boys and girls were liars, riff raff, lazy bums, boozers, cigarette smokers, frauds, bullies and most of all, unchaste.

For Beall, A.I boys and girls adhered to the single standard of morals. Beall asked boys how many would want to associate with girls who smoked. None did. But when he asked girls how many would want to associate with boys who smoked they became puzzled. When Beall pointed out this discrepancy, the girls responded in the way he wanted them. With a great deal of anger and scorn they turned on the boys and cried: "I wouldn't be seen with them." Beall assured any girl who suspected that she would not get a beau if she was too fastidious in her demands that she did not have to sell her self-respect for a ten-cent cigar. It was up to Canadian girls to set a high standard of morals for boys. No A.I girl would let a boy kiss her and no boy would let an A.I girl kiss him. "Let each of you remember your dignity," reminded Beall, "and keep each other at arm's length."<sup>93</sup>

Beall's discussion of the double standard received additional backing when Beall brought up the issue of motherhood. Beall asked girls and boys if they loved their mothers. Every hand in the classroom went up. Yet Beall was sure that many of the boys who had raised their hands often told lewd stories about girls. Boys' mothers were also girls. No boy who loved his mother could, therefore, tell such stories without being a hypocrite. Mothers were the standard by which purity could be measured. For example, no boy could look at a pornographic picture he would be ashamed to show his mother. Beall then came full circle. Because boys respected their mothers they had to treat every girl they knew with the same respect they showed their mothers. With their right hands on their hearts and their left hands pointing upward to Jesus Christ, Beall asked boys to pledge: "Because this body is God's Living Temple; because my mother is a girl; because every girl lives in God's Living Temple; and because I am a gentleman—these are the highest reasons

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<sup>93</sup> Beall, *The Living Temple*, p. 34.

why I must, and will always, treat every girl clean."<sup>94</sup> Apparently satisfied, Beall told the girls they had no more to fear from these boys.

It appeared, however, that boys had much to fear from themselves. Beall skirted the issue of masturbation with his mixed audience, telling boys and girls that in Biblical times there was a section of a Jewish temple which was called the Holiest of Holies. Under penalty of death, no one but the High Priest had access to this Holy Place and then only once a year. Beall was ostensibly referring to male genitalia but his architectural analogy was probably lost on the younger boys. From this rather garbled religious and historical lesson, Beall launched into a short discussion on male biology. He explained that boys began changing into men at approximately age 13. Moustaches appeared, voices broke and growth was rapid. Beall agreed that adolescence was trying as the "period between thirteen and eighteen is the hardest in a boy's life."<sup>95</sup> Beall then told his audience that all glands in the body secreted fluids such as tears, saliva, sweat and bile. After a few more swipes at N. G. men, the younger boys and the girls were dismissed.

Beall introduced his lecture to the older boys with a discussion on motherhood which culminated in the statement: "Jesus Christ and Canada want you to be as clean as your mother is."<sup>96</sup> As Wood-Allen had done repeatedly in her works, Beall also characterized motherhood as a state of great and loving sacrifice. Beall explained that during birth, a process he never described, mothers risked giving up their lives for their children. But when babies were finally born, mothers clasped them close to their hearts and exclaimed, "Oh my baby, my beautiful baby; how I love you!" To get boys to appreciate the nature of this sacrifice, Beall made them chant: "On the day I was born my mother went down into the Valley of the Shadow of Death, so that I may live." Never again were boys to tell smutty stories about birth or jeer in secret at the women they knew

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 67.

who had given birth. They were to act solicitously toward all pregnant women and enquire in hushed tones as to the health of mother and child.

Having established the importance of motherhood, Beall next endeavoured to establish the reverence needed for fatherhood. Beall referred to the testicles as the "life glands" which belonged most to God because they were responsible for creating life. Beall directly blamed boys' parents for discouraging their questions about their anatomy. He claimed that when boys went to their fathers and mothers and said: "I wish you'd tell me what those two round things are," they were met with the following answer: "Tut-tut, you dirty thing, talking about *those* things."<sup>97</sup> Beall may not have been far off the mark in his assessment of boys' parents. When he lectured to boys in one Ontario school and asked how many of them had not received information on sex hygiene from their parents, their teacher recorded that almost every hand in the class was raised.<sup>98</sup> Boys, according to Beall, acknowledged that they went to "unclean" sources to satisfy their curiosity. Beall was determined to prove he was a clean source of information, telling the boys, for instance, that his names for male sexual organs were "so clean and scientific" they could go home and tell their mothers about them without experiencing fear or embarrassment.

Beall explained that the life glands, like other glands in the body which secreted fluid, secreted the "life fluid." The "male part" or the penis served only as the conduit for the life fluid and urine. The penis "muscle" was unique. While other muscles in the body grew stronger with exercise, Beall assured the boys that the penis muscle grew weaker with use. As Stall had done in his *What A Young Boy Ought to Know* (1897), Beall stated that the life fluid had three main functions: to feed the muscles, to nourish the brain and the nervous system and to create life. The boy who masturbated was wasting, according to Beall, a fluid he claimed was forty times more

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<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>98</sup> N. F. Tomlinson, "The Bad Boy," *The School* 2, 6 (October 1917), p. 145.

powerful than blood. Beall told the story of Henry from Perth County who, at age 15, was initiated into masturbation by an older boy. Henry masturbated so often, he had a nervous breakdown, was incarcerated in the Hospital for the Insane where he continued to masturbate until he was castrated. "Woe to the father," cried Beall, neatly sidestepping the issue of the mother's responsibility for educating her sons, "who so cruelly neglected to train his boy to be INTELLIGENTLY PURE!"<sup>99</sup> Beall noted that asylums in Brockville, Kingston, Whitby, Toronto, Mimico, Hamilton and London were filled with boys such as Henry. Some WCTU mothers who visited the Mimico Asylum in 1909 came away convinced of the continued need for Beall's work. They were told by the Asylum's Superintendent that the "awful wrecks of humanity" they saw were the result of withholding from boys the knowledge of the sacredness of life. It was unlikely that the masturbating boy, depleted of semen and intelligence, could provide Canadian women with the material to "raise up a generation of men who will stand true and strong for God and Home and Native Land."<sup>100</sup>

Beall was certainly on the track well-worn by medical men who adhered to vitalist theory when warning boys against masturbation. Medical doctors maintained that the loss of semen in masturbation was linked to physical and mental debility. Given nineteenth-century medical teaching, there was little Canadian physicians would find objectionable in the *Self and Sex Series*.<sup>101</sup> In fact, a particular kind of "masturbatory insanity" was said to affect victims of self-abuse. It has been suggested that as asylums became more common by the end of the eighteenth century, doctors would have been more likely to see patients masturbating, thereby concluding that masturbation did indeed cause insanity.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Beall, *The Living Temple*, p. 65.

<sup>100</sup> AO "Purity and White Cross Work." *CWRT* 4, 69 (April 1, 1910), p. 1629.

<sup>101</sup> Bliss, "Pure Books," pp. 323-333.

<sup>102</sup> E. H. Hare, "Masturbatory Insanity: The History of an Idea," *Journal of Mental Science* 108, 452 (1965): 2-23.



Beall may not have been exaggerating the drastic measures to which Henry's doctors resorted. Stall, who intoned that neither boy nor man "can toy with the exposed portions of his reproductive system without finally suffering very serious consequences,"<sup>103</sup> spoke of straight-jackets, fastening hands behind the back, tying hands to bedposts and walls by ropes, chains and rings as methods used to prevent masturbation. Some doctors recommended a plaster cast made to fit upon the human male genitals.<sup>104</sup> Yet others recommended blistering the prepuce.<sup>105</sup> Canadian physician Maurice Bucke considered circumcision. A well known social reformer of the late nineteenth century and an ardent admirer of Walt Whitman, Bucke was also the Superintendent for the London Asylum. Likewise accepting that masturbation caused insanity, he eventually tried to cure patients by capitalizing on a technique termed male infibulation. Male infibulation involved piercing the prepuce with wire to prevent its retraction behind the glans penis. Bucke, following the example of the British Dr. Yellowlees, infibulated the prepuces of 15 men in 1877 with silver wire in the hope that erections would be "so painful that it would be practically impossible and emission therefore extremely unlikely."<sup>106</sup> Bucke also placed leather mitts upon his patients hands to prevent them from removing the wire; when this proved futile in one patient, the mitts were tied over his head. Bucke's experiments were ultimately unsuccessful, for the patients continued to masturbate after they healed while others had to have the wires removed due to pain and swelling. In some American cases, castration was performed, but the practice was quickly discontinued.<sup>107</sup>

Besides masturbation, Beall noted that boys had to be aware of two other dangers. Beall told boys that around the age of 16 or 17 they would sometimes experience the loss of the wonderful life fluid during sleep. He compared the event to a tumbler containing more water than it

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<sup>103</sup> Sylvanus Stall, *What A Young Boy Ought to Know* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1909 [1897]), p. 107.

<sup>104</sup> Gail Pat Parsons, "Equal Treatment for All: American Medical Remedies for Male Sexual Problems: 1850-1900," *Journal of the History of Medicine* 32 (January 1977), p. 63.

<sup>105</sup> Hare, "Masturbatory Insanity," p. 10.

<sup>106</sup> Quoted in Wendy Mitchinson, "R. M. Bucke, A Victorian Asylum Superintendent," *Ontario History* 68, 4 (December 1981): 237-254, p. 247.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 247. Parsons, "Equal Treatment," p. 63 cites a specific instance of castration as a cure for masturbation.

could hold. The overflow was normal unless the boy continued to have smutty thoughts about girls. If the loss continued, the boy would meet the same fate as the unfortunate Henry. Beall's advice to boys was to have only pure thoughts about girls. It was obvious to Beall, however, that some boys had smutty thoughts about other boys. In an overt reference to male homosexual activity, Beall claimed that no one had the right to touch the male part except its owner. Beall was disappointed that many boys laughingly grabbed each others' genitalia. He said he knew that some boys even lay in bed with each other, holding onto each others' penises while laughing and telling dirty stories.<sup>108</sup>

Beall drew his lecture to a close by railing against boys' responsibility for illegitimate pregnancy, a "crime" for which he believed men deserved the death penalty. This crime was matched in monstrosity by the crimes of abortion, infanticide and unfit parentage. On this last point, Beall dipped into the eugenical discourse as it related to the moral enfranchisement of sexually continent men favoured by the Ontario WCTU. In a veiled reference to venereal disease, Beall remarked that choosing a chaste woman for marriage and reserving the life fluid for fatherhood was the only way a boy could guarantee he would beget A.1 sons and daughters. Begetting A.1 children was every boy's patriotic duty, a responsibility comparable to that shouldered by the Prairie farmer who raised not low-grade but thoroughbred livestock. Beall told the boys that he expected them to teach their sons the same truths he had just revealed to them. Echoing many Ontario WCTU members' wishes for Canadian manhood, Beall then wrote on the blackboard: "JESUS CHRIST AND CANADA EXPECT ME TO BE AN A.1 BOY A.1 MAN A.1 HUSBAND A.1 FATHER A.1 CITIZEN." In order to see this come to pass, Beall gave each boy at the end of his lecture a five-point pledge card he encouraged him to sign, to treasure and to pass on to his progeny. The pledge was reminiscent of the White Cross resolution and was introduced, in part, by the WCTU motto: "For God and Home and Native Land." In signing the pledge the

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<sup>108</sup> Beall, *The Living Temple*, p. 69.

boy: 1) recognized the divine nature of the human temple; 2) acknowledged the need for keeping it clean; 3) revered all Womanhood; 4) renounced unclean conversation, songs and company; and 5) stood up for making boys and Canada clean.<sup>109</sup> Beall ended his lecture with a rousing exhortation mixing evangelical Christianity, social purity and patriotism: "I see a new Ontario, a new Canada, a new British Empire, a new Earth—in which shall dwell Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Spirit."<sup>110</sup>

According to Beall a few boys always thanked him profusely at the end of his lectures. Like the fictitious Carl who cried when Dr. Barrett told him about the importance of motherhood and fatherhood, some of Beall's boys apparently were so moved by the message of purity that they sobbed bitterly. Others fainted.<sup>111</sup> While these accounts may have been just another example of Beall's talent for self-promotion, it is interesting to note that the boys' reactions were stereotypically feminine. The boys' tears and swoons signalled, perhaps, that the one-time missionary in Japan had succeeded in doing what first-wave feminists were eager to accomplish: colonize the priapic penis, deflate its threat and harness it for egalitarian marriage and responsible fatherhood. Unfortunately for the Ontario WCTU, it was far more likely that boys were not morally enfranchised but, as a result of Beall's lectures, were overcome by the desire to sexually experiment. Historian Michael Bliss has anecdotal evidence that some Canadian boys who were lectured against masturbation in Ontario schools during the 1930s actually began masturbating because their curiosity got the better of them.<sup>112</sup> Bliss' anecdotal evidence gives credence to the suggestion, made in the Vancouver Medical Association's Sex Hygiene Committee's report and in the Second Ontario Interim Report on Venereal Disease, that nature study and biology were to be

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<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 72-76.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>111</sup> AO Arthur Beall, "White Cross Work: Lights and Shadows," *CWRT* 4, 50 (September 15, 1908), p. 1241.

<sup>112</sup> Bliss, "How We Used to Learn About Sex," p. 66.

preferred as introductions to children's school-based sex instruction because special lecturers aroused children's curiosity unduly.<sup>113</sup>

## V

By 1910, Beall's work was being portrayed as integral to the fight against venereal disease. *Tidings* carried an article by David Currie entitled "Immoral Disease." Currie quoted Professor John Heffron, Dean of the College of Medicine, Syracuse University, as saying that venereal disease was all the more shameful to "the human family" because it was preventable. Heffron noted that individuals were victimized by venereal disease because of ignorance and the lack of self-control. In an addendum to Currie's article, the editor of *Tidings* stated that the Ontario union had hired Beall in the cause of moral reform. She maintained that if the provincial Department of Education would hire and endorse Beall's work, "it would confer untold benefits on the Province at large."<sup>114</sup> At the 1910 WCTU Annual Convention the consensus was that the Ontario government should take up the White Cross work and appoint men such as the trail-blazing Beall to be the Department of Education's White Cross Missionary so that boys could be properly instructed in moral and physical health.<sup>115</sup>

A year later, it was clear that the Ontario WCTU viewed their efforts toward incorporating purity education into the schools as proof that they were keeping up with American efforts to introduce social hygiene into schools.<sup>116</sup> The organization perceived its social purity aims to be very similar to those of the emerging social hygiene movement. Superintendent of the Moral Education Department, Adelaide Garrett, noted that the eminent Dr. Charles Eliot of Harvard and

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<sup>113</sup> VCA, Series 101 File 103-B-1 "Schools: Health Education in Schools, Sex Hygiene 1910-1925," Report of the Sex Hygiene Committee of the Vancouver, B. C., Medical Association, April 24, 1916; OSP Vol. LI Part X Report 58 *Report on Venereal Diseases*, 1919, pp. 18-20.

<sup>114</sup> AO "Immoral Disease," *CWRT* 4, 73 (August 1, 1910), p. 1709.

<sup>115</sup> AO *CWRT* 4, 77 (December 1, 1910), p. 1786.

<sup>116</sup> AO "The Neglected Ethics of Sex," *CWRT* 4, 82 (May 1, 1911), p. 1897.

Jane Addams encouraged teachers to teach sex hygiene to students. Garrett noted that as a result, many cities in the United States had these subjects regularly taught in schools and "Canada will no doubt follow."<sup>117</sup> That same year the push for the appointment of a lecturer was on at the OEA's General Meeting in April, 1911. Dr. Watson and Jennie Grey, President and Vice-President, respectively, of the Social Purity Reform Association, along with the Rev. Laurence Skey, told the Trustees Department of the OEA that home-based sex instruction was not being undertaken by the parents. School children were, therefore, either ignorant of sex or learned distorted truths. The end result was vitiated young minds and bodies. Skey claimed he knew 10-year-old school boys who masturbated or who were venereally diseased and 13-year-old girls who were pregnant. The Trustees' Section of the OEA took the speakers seriously, passing the following motion:

That this Section appreciates the desire for purity and morality in our schools and is of the opinion that a carefully considered plan should be provided for the prevention of and instruction on the subject by properly qualified authority.<sup>118</sup>

A Social Purity Committee was struck to consider the proposal. Two notable members of the Committee were Dr. Helen MacMurchy, provincial inspector of the feeble-minded, and Dr. J. E. Hett, who had decried in his *The Sexual Organs: Their Use and Abuse* (1899) the existence of the direct path between the practice of the "solitary vice" in boyhood and participation in the "social evil" in adolescence and adulthood.<sup>119</sup> The Committee suggested that because the OEA was convinced of the necessity of teaching the subject of personal hygiene and moral purity in the schools, the Association should resolve to petition the Honorable Dr. Pyne, Minister of Education, to deal with the matter in pamphlet or book form and to appoint properly qualified teachers to do the educational work required in schools. The Trustees' Department passed the proposal.

Just one month after the OEA meeting the public school immorality issue mushroomed into a provincial scandal. WCTU member May R. Thornley complained publicly that schools in

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<sup>117</sup> AO *Ontario WCTU Reports*, 1912, p. 113.

<sup>118</sup> *Ontario Educational Association Yearbook*, 1911, p. 63.

<sup>119</sup> Joseph Heller Hett, *The Sexual Organs: Their Use and Abuse* (Berlin [now Kitchiner], Ontario: Ritinger and Motz, 1899).

London, Ontario, were dens of inequity. She stated that parental irresponsibility, compounded by educational officials' inaction on the issue of sex instruction resulted in the rapid diffusion of "moral filth" amongst school children.<sup>120</sup> The WCTU's anxiety over public school immorality was exacerbated by the Ontario WCTU's growing panic over venereal disease. Testimonials from educators seemed to give credence to the link the Ontario WCTU made between public school immorality and venereal disease. Dr. William Lee Howard's article on syphilis and gonorrhoea, carried in the May issue of *Tidings*, blasted public schools for their failure to provide children with sex instruction. According to Howard, millions of dollars were being spent in treating venereal disease but nothing was being done to instruct the coming generation. He deemed public schools to be "a menace to the welfare of our nation."<sup>121</sup> Closer to home, the connection between public school children's immorality and venereal disease was made more subtly. "I have yet to see the school, anywhere," wrote Charles Williams, a Kingston teacher with urban and rural school teaching experience,

where some part of the premises is not decorated with foul and disgusting symbols, and fouler attempts at filthy poetic witticisms. I have more than once confiscated notes passed from boys to girls, and vice versa, that have contained the most putrid of filthy imaginings. I have one before me now that I got from a fourth book girl, which I should like very much to show to the mayor of London.<sup>122</sup>

Thomas Wearing of McMaster University complained that in a tour taken of the rural schools districts of Western Ontario that he saw writing on outhouse walls which lacked "moral tone" and charged the teachers and school trustees with moral neglect. John Wallis, principal at Queen Alexandra School in Toronto, expressed the hope that children under age 14 who had fallen into vice were in the minority but conceded that the moral future of those children tainted by the evil suggestions of others was in doubt. Admittedly influenced by literature produced by the ASSMP on prostitution, Wallis asked: "How does it come that such a condition is possible in a so-called

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<sup>120</sup> AO May R. Thornley, "Moral Conditions Amongst Ontario School Children: The Story of the Fight," *CWRT* 4, 82 (May 1, 1911), p. 1910.

<sup>121</sup> AO William Lee Howard, "A Plain Explanation of the Greatest Social Evil," *CWRT* 4, 82 (May 1, 1911), p. 1898.

<sup>122</sup> AO "Extracts From Letters in The Globe, April 13 and 15, 1911," *CWRT* 4, 82 (May 1, 1911), p. 1912.

Christian land?" His answer was firm and unequivocal: children, whether living in slums or in villas, were ignorant of sex due to parental irresponsibility. He complained, however, that parents would "resent any effort on the part of a public school teacher to supply the needed teaching." Wallis counseled that no one interested in combatting the evils of prostitution and venereal disease should give up the struggle. He suggested that adolescent girls and boys who had never received any sex instruction by their parents could still benefit from sex segregated lectures by competent women and men as well as by the spread of suitable literature.<sup>123</sup>

The WCTU and the OEA met with success in 1912. Beall terminated his employment with the WCTU when he accepted the Ontario Department of Education's appointment as "Special Lecturer on Moral Subjects" to elementary and high school boys. His visits to schools were authorized by the local boards but his expenses were paid by the Department.<sup>124</sup> The WCTU bade him a fond farewell, thanking him for the great influence he exerted on Ontario boys and young men "to be citizens of the purest and best type."<sup>125</sup> Despite the fact that the Ontario Department of Education's *Annual Reports* never mentioned Beall's work, news of his school lectures spread unexpectedly far beyond Ontario. Beall was given an esteemed seat on the social hygiene/eugenics bandwagon, a fact which confirms historian Angus McLaren's observation that eugenicists merely parroted old moralistic maxims dressed up in scientific garb.<sup>126</sup>

Beall was now designated "Lecturer on Eugenics and Personal Hygiene in High and Public Schools" for the Ontario Department of Education. He selected the reading list for the section, "Helpful Literature on Intelligent Personal Purity for Parents, Teachers and Trustees," in Dr. Prince Morrow's pamphlet, "The Teaching of Sex Hygiene." Originally published for the AFSH,

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<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1911-1912.

<sup>124</sup> AO RG 2 P3 6-705 Box 3 File 22 "Eugenics," letter to R. Fletcher, Deputy Minister of Education, Saskatchewan, from A. H. U. Colquhoun, Deputy Minister of Education, Ontario, October 2, 1913.

<sup>125</sup> AO CWRT 4, 91 (February 1, 1912), p. 2120.

<sup>126</sup> McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, p. 70.

Morrow's pamphlet was reprinted in *Good Housekeeping* and was then issued separately by the same Toronto publisher of the *Self and Sex Series*, William Briggs.<sup>127</sup> The 15 assorted pamphlets and books Beall recommended were authored by clergymen and physicians from Britain and the United States. Among these were Wood-Allen's *Almost a Man*. When Saskatchewan's Deputy Minister of Education wrote seeking information on the subject of school-based sex instruction to the Ontario Deputy Minister of Education in 1913, he quoted a lengthy resolution passed recently by the Manitoba Conference of the Methodist Church. Based on the example of the "splendid work" on eugenics done in Ontario public schools, the Church resolved to memorialize the Manitoba Legislature to appoint one lady and one gentleman lecturer to bring "wholesome" knowledge contributing to their "highest moral and physical upbuilding."<sup>128</sup> British sexologist Havelock Ellis spoke highly of the principle, adopted in the province of Ontario, of a government-appointed special teacher who instructed children in matters of sex. The appointed teacher, Ellis wrote in 1913,

goes from school to school and teaches the elements of sexual physiology and anatomy, and the duty of treating sexual matters with reverence, to classes of boys and girls from the age of ten. The course is not compulsory, but any School Board may call upon the special teacher to deliver the lectures. This appointment has met with so much approval that it is proposed to appoint further teachers on the same lines, women as well as men.<sup>129</sup>

Ellis' nod in Beall's direction was made in the same year that the English social purity reformer, suffragette and another lifelong spinster Christabel Pankhurst solidified the link many British first-wave feminists made between girls' innocence of sexual matters and their inevitable sexual exploitation. Claiming in *The Great Scourge and How to End It* (1913) that almost 80% of British men were infected with gonorrhoea and a similar number with syphilis,

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<sup>127</sup> Prince A. Morrow, "The Teaching of Sex Hygiene" with an appendix selected by Arthur W. Beall (Toronto: William Briggs, 1912).

<sup>128</sup> AO RG 2 P3 6-705 Box 3 File 22 "Eugenics," letter to A. H. U. Colquhoun, Deputy Minister of Education, Ontario, from R. Fletcher, Deputy Minister of Education, Saskatchewan, October 2, 1913.

<sup>129</sup> Havelock Ellis, *The Task of Social Hygiene* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1916 [1913]), p. 253.



Pankhurst trumpeted that “Votes for Women and Chastity for Men”<sup>130</sup> was the solution to venereal disease. Writing in the Butlerite tradition, Pankhurst held that the reason for the existence of the scourge was the sexual subjection of women to men. And women’s subjection was upheld by two pillars: women’s political disenfranchisement and girls’ sexual ignorance.

The relationship between man and woman, claimed Pankhurst, was that of master and sexual slave. But men were not content to engage only one slave to minister to their sexual lust. They engaged several, giving rise to prostitution and venereal disease. Contrary to popular opinion, men, not prostitutes, were far more dangerous to community health. Men, whether rich or poor, married or single, capitalist or socialist, were directly responsible for the existence of prostitution and the spread of venereal disease to their unsuspecting wives and children. Men’s impossible ideal was to escape the moral and physiological consequences of extra-marital sexual activity. To this end, men and the medical profession formed an alliance which assured that venereal disease was dealt with chiefly from men’s point of view. Proof of the way men had left women out of the public discussion over venereal disease was evident in the composition of the British Royal Commission on Venereal Disease. The Commission was composed of a majority of men and was devoid of any representation from the women’s movement. Women’s minority position on the Commission, stated Pankhurst, was “an intolerable insult.”<sup>131</sup> Pankhurst’s essay received some attention from Mary Scarleib, one of the two women Commissioners. Scarleib, who would make a career out of writing nature study sex instruction texts for girls, expressed her fear that the Pankhurst’s book would turn women against the male sex and could be used as a sex instruction text in classrooms.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, *The Great Scourge and How to End It* (London: E. Pankhurst, 1913), p. vii.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>132</sup> TFRBL, Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases, *First Report of the Commissioners*, Vol. I (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode Ltd.), pp. 384-386.

Pankhurst was convinced that woman suffrage spelled freedom from sexual subjection. And because this freedom would curtail men's access to extra-marital intercourse, the opposition to woman suffrage was fierce: "Those who want to have women as slaves, obviously do not want women to become voters."<sup>133</sup> When women were politically free, the "conspiracy" between men and the medical profession would be smashed; the existence of women's physical ailments, used as an argument against women's enfranchisement, would be exposed as the result of longstanding venereal infection. Women's views on "the sex question" would be accepted by men. Thus "re-educated," men would adhere to the single standard of sexual morality. Women would gain their economic independence from men; prostitution would no longer be the livelihood it was for many women. In a world without prostitution, venereal disease would cease to exist. Turning the social hygienists' arguments about venereal disease being a public health menace on their head, Pankhurst remarked that it was the Prime Minister's repeated opposition to woman suffrage that was "an overwhelming public health danger."<sup>134</sup>

Pankhurst's was also convinced that sexual knowledge for girls spelled freedom from sexual subjection. For Pankhurst, the facts of life for girls were overtly charged with feminist sexual politics. Pankhurst noted in her introduction: "Every young woman who reads these pages will be warned of a great danger, whose existence she may not until now have suspected. It is because of the need that young girls shall have timely warning of this danger that the question is here discussed in very plain and definite terms."<sup>135</sup> The "danger" to which Pankhurst was referring was venereal disease—the great scourge—but this danger was set within the framework of women's sexual subjection to men. Thus, young girls had to be advised that beliefs which commonly held that men had to engage in promiscuous sexual intercourse to safeguard their health were untrue. In fact, men were perfectly capable of maintaining the same level of chastity most

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<sup>133</sup> Pankhurst, *The Great Scourge*, p. x.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xi.

women did, and could rely on nocturnal emissions for sexual relief rather than on "polluting the bodies of white slaves."<sup>136</sup> Young girls had to learn about men's responsibility for the existence of child prostitution. Finally they had to be forewarned about the dangers of marriage:

Never again must young women enter into marriage blindfolded. From now onwards they must be warned of the fact that marriage is intensely dangerous, until such time as men's moral standards are completely changed and they become as chaste and clean-living as women.<sup>137</sup>

As Janet Lyon perceptively argues, Pankhurst incorporated three types of discourse into her essay and inverted them to feminists' advantage. First, she turned physicians' qualms about venereal disease into a tool to be used against the misogynistic state. She conscripted male physicians' warnings against the prevalence of venereal disease into the feminist campaign to smash the conspiracy of silence on venereal disease. Second, she claimed not maternity as the basis of women's power against men's sexual aggression but female chastity, a powerful avenue women at the turn-of-the-century took toward independence and self-control. By extending this power of celibacy to men, Pankhurst threw her support behind the politically active woman and the sexually passive man. Third, Pankhurst avoided any of the rhetoric which sexualized and medicalized women's bodies. Instead, she saturated men's bodies with pathological sexuality. For Pankhurst, it was men's sexuality, not prostitution, which required regulation.<sup>138</sup>

Pankhurst's three-round salvo in the sex war landed with an accuracy Maurice Bigelow of the ASHA tried desperately to deflect. In his popular *Sex-Education: A Series of Lectures Concerning Knowledge of Sex in its Relation to Human Life* (1916), Bigelow shot back at Pankhurst, claiming that the feminist movement's alarming and destructive sex antagonism which held men fully responsible for existing sex problems was now passé. Bigelow patronizingly stated

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<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>138</sup> Janet Lyon, "Militant Discourse, Strange Bedfellows: Suffragettes and Vorticists before the War," *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 4, 2 (1992), pp. 118-119.

that the "advance guards of feminism" were beginning to realize that sex problems could be solved only when men and women cooperated fully. For Bigelow, feminists' advance guards included not Pankhurst but the notable maternal feminists Olive Schreiner and Ellen Key who linked women's power to maternity rather than to chastity.<sup>139</sup> Ironically, both Pankhurst and Bigelow had appealed to the same authority—Dr. Prince Morrow, the acknowledged founder of the American social hygiene movement—to support their contradictory positions. In conscripting male physicians' warnings against the prevalence of venereal disease into the feminist campaign to smash the conspiracy of silence, Pankhurst quoted numerous passages from Morrow's works which showed his sympathy with the innocent wife infected by her diseased husband and duped by her doctor. Bigelow used the late Morrow's photograph to open his book, dedicated it to Morrow's sainted memory, acknowledged Morrow's help in writing the book and pledged to keep the promise he had made to Morrow before his death: devote all royalties from the book to the movement for sex education. For Bigelow, the sexual instruction of girls had to be structured in such a way so as they did not develop "a spirit of sex hostility" towards men but saw the "essential good that is bound up in sexuality." Fearing, perhaps, that hostile women would give up entirely on men by remaining celibate or by choosing to have sexual relations with other women, he advised that girls read works authored by Wood-Allen and by Louise Creighton, the widow of the late Bishop of London, England, and the second woman Commissioner on the British Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases.

## VI

Canada's participation in the Great War initially provided the Ontario WCTU with the opportunity to strengthen its attack on men's responsibility for the spread of venereal disease. The organization's immediate concern was the availability of alcohol to soldiers. Members insisted that

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<sup>139</sup> Maurice Bigelow, *Sex-Education: A Series of Lectures Concerning Knowledge of Sex in its Relation to Human Life* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1916), p. 198.

alcohol was responsible for two problems amongst the armed forces: military inefficiency and sexual incontinence. To bolster their claims, the union contended that the Germans lost the Battle of the Marne because they were drunk on champagne.<sup>140</sup> The connection between alcohol and the soldiers' sexual licence was made by the Ontario WCTU early in the war and was confirmed by the National President of the American WCTU. In 1917 Gordon spoke out on what the WCTU had maintained since 1891—that alcohol, prostitution and venereal disease were inextricably linked.<sup>141</sup>

During the first year of the War, the Ontario WCTU did not waver from its position that men had to be held responsible for poisoning the race. Sara C. Reddon, provincial Superintendent for the Department of Hygiene and Heredity, pulled no punches when she proclaimed that in the vast majority of cases the injustice done to children born with syphilis was the result of fathers' promiscuity. Women, she stated strongly, had a "duty" to see every child born healthy. But this was difficult to exercise when infected men married chaste women. "So we find," complained Reddon, "many innocent women and children suffering from the male portion of humanity."<sup>142</sup> Reddon's complaint was taken up with even greater force by Mrs. A. J. Webbe of the New Zealand WCTU. The possibility that when faced with widespread venereal disease military authorities would move to regulate prostitution once again alarmed many women. Webbe informed the Ontario WCTU that suffragists everywhere should oppose any attempt to legislate the CD Acts into action. Drawing upon the same kind of uncompromising rhetoric used by the Butlerites, Webbe gave five reasons for the need for suffragists' opposition. One, the state regulation of vice kept women's subjection alive. Two, state regulation perpetuated the double standard which in turn fuelled the white slave traffic. Three, state regulation gave credence to the erroneous belief that prostitution for men was a necessity. Four, state regulation allowed military officials to denigrate

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<sup>140</sup> AO *CWRT* 12, 6 (June 1916), p. 141.

<sup>141</sup> AO "Communication from Miss Anna Gordon," *CWRT* 13, 7 (June 1, 1917), p. 125.

<sup>142</sup> AO Sara C. Reddon, "Department of Hygiene and Heredity," *CWRT* 11, 4 (April 1915), p. 82.

women's concerns. Finally and most importantly, state regulation eroded women's right to see her child born healthy. Because men did not understand this right, women had to teach men about the responsibility of fatherhood.<sup>143</sup>

By 1916, when reports of the high rates of venereal infection in the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) reached Canada, the Dominion and the Ontario WCTU attempted to protect Canadian soldiers from the twin evils of intemperance and prostitution in two ways. First, the WCTU encouraged mothers to keep their soldier sons anchored by their sides even when separated by vast distances. The WCTU came out in favour of tea and coffee canteens, chaste entertainment and morally uplifting lectures for Canadian boys overseas. WCTU members were encouraged to pray, knit socks and write regularly to men stationed in Britain and France. This maternal devotion did not go unrewarded. *Tidings* carried numerous reports of fatally wounded soldiers who saw visions of God's face next to their mother's just before they were about to "go West" [die]. The last words they spoke were meant for their mother: "Tell mother I died happy," gasped a dying soldier to a comrade.<sup>144</sup> Some WCTU mothers believed that the mother-son bond could serve as an effective protection against immoral temptation while the boys were still alive. A stellar example of the effectiveness of this bond was provided by a Muskoka mother who counseled one of her sons at the French front against visiting prostitutes. In her letter to him she stated: "You must love goodness in your own heart, and you must help the other fellows who did not have your chances at home. I have learned this one thing, that unselfish and loving service for the help of others makes us strong, and keeps us pure in the fiercest temptations." This mother's example of purity proved to be so powerful that her son sent the letter to his brothers fighting in France, Egypt, South America and to a teenage brother living in Toronto.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> AO A. J. Webbe, "War and the Social Evil," *CWRT* 11, 8 (August 1915), p. 181.

<sup>144</sup> AO Senior Subaltern, "Going West!" *CWRT* 12, 5 (May 1916), pp. 111-112; "Gone West," *CWRT* 14, 5 (May 1, 1918).

<sup>145</sup> "The Thing that Saves the Boy," *The Globe*, September 10, 1917, p. 6.

Second, the Dominion and the Ontario WCTU insisted on the need for the British government to enact legislation to destroy the drink traffic and to protect Canadian soldiers from prostitutes in close proximity to British training camps. The government's refusal to act on both matters led the Dominion and the Ontario WCTU to cast Britain in the role of an irresponsible father. Canada was portrayed as the trusting mother who had delivered her chaste sons to Britain, the father, for safekeeping. And Britain's display of paternal irresponsibility toward Canadian soldiers deserved nothing but Canadian mothers' contempt. Britain's refusal to take the legislative action the WCTU desired was perceived by the organization as an indictment against the father's inability to look after his sons writ large. At the 1916 Dominion WCTU's Annual Convention, the Resolution Committee rallied behind women's maternal responsibilities and came out against rum rations served to Canadian boys and the presence of prostitutes around the camps in Britain:

We have given our husbands and sons in their manhood and purity and we respectfully claim that we have a right to expect that the rural conditions surrounding them both in training camps and on active service shall be such as will conduce [sic] to clean living.<sup>146</sup>

Given the connections the WCTU had long made between alcohol consumption and sexual licence, the organization was perfectly consistent in calling for the prohibition of all liquor rations for Canadian soldiers. But in calling for legislation to outlaw prostitutes near the training camps, the WCTU in Canada walked a fine line between their traditional opposition to the state regulation of prostitution because men, rather than women, were primarily responsible for sexual vice and their fear that soldiers infected with venereal disease would carry the malady back to Canada. The Dominion and the Ontario WCTU's desire to see legislation against prostitutes enacted in Britain reflected the seriousness of the wartime hygienic emergency. The rise in the troops' infection rates revived the focus on venereal disease as a military problem.

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<sup>146</sup> AO *Dominion WCTU Convention Reports*, 1916, p. 139.

Lucy Bland's insightful analysis reveals that the "militarization of venereal disease" temporarily waylaid the fragile medico-moral alliance social hygienists and purists had built up in the pre-War years. The militarization of venereal disease also marginalized first-wave feminists' anger against male sexuality. The patriotic desire to have men fit enough to fight the enemy on foreign soil engulfed most women. But unlike Canadian feminists who supported the enactment of anti-prostitution legislation, British feminists did protest against their government's enactment of regulation 13a of the Defence of the Realm Act. The regulation allowed military authorities to prevent anyone previously convicted of soliciting from residing in or frequenting the vicinity of the camps. Their protests grew even more fierce when the British Parliament, under pressure from the Dominions, introduced a new Criminal Law Amendment Bill in February, 1917, and regulation 40d of the Defence of the Realm Act. Both pieces of legislation attempted to penalize anyone infected with venereal disease who solicited or who had sex with military personnel. According to regulation 40d, any woman so charged would be subject to a medical exam and remanded for a week. British feminists' public protest forced the government to revoke the Defence of the Realm legislation with the Armistice in November, 1918.<sup>147</sup>

With the exception of a few socialist feminists who stuck staunchly to their pacifist beliefs,<sup>148</sup> Canadian women generally threw themselves wholeheartedly into the War, knitting socks, conserving food, collecting scrap, raising money for war equipment, training for the Women's Home Guard, replacing men on farms and in factories. Some went so far as to accost men on the street for not joining the War. Indeed, women's contribution to the War favourably disposed provincial and federal governments to women's enfranchisement.<sup>149</sup> British feminists'

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<sup>147</sup> Lucy Bland, "Cleansing the portals of life: the venereal disease campaign in the early twentieth century," in Mary Langan and Bill Schwarz (eds.), *Crises in the British State, 1880-1930* (London: Hutchinson, 1985), pp. 202-203.

<sup>148</sup> Barbara Roberts, "Why Do Women Do Nothing to End the War? Canadian Feminist-Pacifists and the Great War," *The CRIAW Papers/Les documents de l'ICREF* (Ottawa: CRIAW/ICREF, 1985).

<sup>149</sup> Barbara M. Wilson (ed.), *Ontario and the First World War, 1914-1918: A Collection of Documents* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), pp. lxxxv-xciv.



protests against the Defence of the Realm legislation were not replicated in Canada. In fact, the Ontario WCTU continued to see the British governments' ineffective attempts to legislate against alcohol and prostitution as examples of that country's ongoing paternal irresponsibility. In 1917 when statistics showed that syphilis and gonorrhoea accounted for 12% of all illness exclusive of battle injuries in the Canadian military,<sup>150</sup> *Tidings* carried several articles which illustrated the sense of betrayal Canadian mothers felt over Britain's treatment of their sons. Readers were told that if they knew the full extent of the "depths of depravity" permitted in Britain, "there would be a veritable upheaval. Hundreds and hundreds of Canadian soldiers have never seen France because they were incapacitated by foul disease before they could leave England."<sup>151</sup> Sir Hamar Greenwood, a Canadian official in London, England, was quoted as saying that he had met the parents of Canadian soldiers who had been sent back to Canada debilitated by venereal disease. Greenwood claimed the parents told him that, "We do not mind our boys dying on the battlefields of England [sic], but to think we sent our sons to England to come back ruined in health and a disgrace to us and to them is something the home country should never ask us to bear."<sup>152</sup>

Bland argues that feminists active in the British social purity movement opposed the Defence of the Realm legislation because, in keeping with the medico-moral definition of the venereal disease problem, they wanted the state to act in a public health capacity as a moralizing agency which encouraged responsible sexual relations through moral education.<sup>153</sup> In contrast, the Ontario WCTU saw their support for legislation intended to protect Canadian boys from prostitutes overseas as part and parcel of their social purist efforts to force the state to safeguard women and children from male sexual exploitation and to promote moral education which inculcated in children a reverent respect for motherhood and fatherhood.

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<sup>150</sup> Buckley and McGinnis, "Venereal Disease," p. 338.

<sup>151</sup> AO "The Social Evil," *CWRT* 8, 1 (January 1, 1917), p. 17.

<sup>152</sup> AO "Discreditable Negligence," *CWRT* 13, 5 (May 1917), p. 104.

<sup>153</sup> Bland, "Cleansing the portals of life," p. 204.

Historians have speculated that the lack of Canadian feminist organizing against the enactment of repressive legislation against prostitutes occurred because women feared that soldiers would pass on venereal infection to their wives. When in June, 1917, regulation similar to that included under the Defence of the Realm Act was passed under the Defence of Canada Order, women's organizations did not overtly oppose it.<sup>154</sup> WCTU women certainly felt threatened by the prospect that returning soldiers could flood Canadian soil with venereal infection.<sup>155</sup> The Ontario WCTU's resolution no. 3, passed at its annual convention in 1917, makes this concern obvious. In the resolution the provincial organization managed simultaneously to blast Britain for its paternal irresponsibility where alcohol and prostitution were concerned and to agree to the passage of any legislation which would safeguard Canadian troops from venereal disease. According to the preamble to the resolution, Britain could look for a righteous peace only when the drink traffic was eliminated and the streets were swept clean of prostitutes. The provincial union argued that the conditions in the English camps, which debauched Canadian boys in body and soul, were compounded by the fact that conscription continued to dump young men into unsatisfactory surroundings. In a depressing turn around from the Ontario WCTU's 1897 vociferous refutation of Lady Somerset's pro-regulationist stand, the Ontario WCTU resolved that because the unsatisfactory conditions were of such grave anxiety to Canadians at home,

our government no longer merely contents itself with protesting, but takes action as will remedy the evils complained of and bring about such conditions that our boys may return fit to resepond [sic] to the calls of Christian citizenship.<sup>156</sup>

By 1917, the Ontario WCTU was also aware that venereal disease was considered not only a military but a civilian problem. After Dr. C. K. Clarke, along with a delegation of doctors, claimed exaggeratedly that venereal disease in the civilian population was so prevalent it resulted in widespread feeble-mindedness, the Ontario WCTU's response was to call for an increase in

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<sup>154</sup> Buckley and McGinnis, pp. 341-342; Jay Cassel, *The Secret Plague: Venereal Disease in Canada, 1838-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), pp. 142-143.

<sup>155</sup> OPA "Daily Becomes More Alarming," *CWRT* 13, 7 (June 1917), p. 133.

<sup>156</sup> OPA *Ontario WCTU Reports*, 1917, pp. 168-169.

domestic legislative and educational efforts. Indeed, by the end of 1917, the provincial union's members were treated to an annual address which held that because prostitution and venereal disease were creating greater havoc than alcohol the WCTU had to push even harder for legal reforms and mothers' meetings.<sup>157</sup> To take care of increasing fears about the transmission of venereal disease to women and children at home, the Ontario WCTU passed another resolution which memorialized the federal government to make a medical exam and a blood test a legal requirement for marriage licence.<sup>158</sup> A year later the provincial union resolved that the federal government make adultery and trial marriage illegal, enforce the single standard of morality and raise the age of consent for girls from 14 to 21 years.<sup>159</sup>

Reports of the widespread prevalence of venereal disease in the civilian population led the Ontario WCTU to redouble its educational efforts. This redoubling was occasioned by the organization's concerns with the sexual behaviour of Canadian soldiers overseas as well as that of their sons and daughters at home. Adelaide Garrett, the Superintendent of the Ontario WCTU's Moral Education Department noted that, "During this awful time of world struggle, when so many of our young people are being separated from home influences, it is most important that we relax no effort to safeguard those so near and so dear, and not only those who go but as ever—our boys and girls who stay at home." Her programme of mothers' meetings included hymns, prayers, the presentation of papers on children's sex instruction and readings authored by Wood-Allen and her daughter, Rose Wood-Allen Chapman.<sup>160</sup> The mother was advised that sex instruction, especially for girls, was a patriotic service they could render to Canada.<sup>161</sup> Girls' sex instruction was of particular concern because young teenage girls were said to be sexually misbehaving with soldiers.

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<sup>157</sup> "Mrs. Stevens' 1917 Message," *CWRT* 13, 11 (December 1, 1917).

<sup>158</sup> OPA "Women Citizens! Your Duty to Know," *CWRT* 14, 7 (July 15, 1918), p. 179.

<sup>159</sup> OPA *Ontario WCTU Reports*, 1918, p. 159.

<sup>160</sup> OPA Adelaide Garrett, "Program for Moral Education Department," *CWRT* 12, 2 (February, 1916), p. 54.

<sup>161</sup> AO "A Mother's Duty," *CWRT* 12, 5 (May 1916), p. 126.

In her analysis of the British Royal Commission on Venereal Disease Final Report (1916), Mrs. Henry Fawcett raised the possibility that Canadian soldiers overseas were consorting with hardened harpies as well as with young, inexperienced girls caught up in the excitement of war.<sup>162</sup> It would not be until the Second World War that the prostitute was replaced, in the minds of military authorities, by the amateur as the primary locus of venereal infection.<sup>163</sup> Still, the amateur situation in World War I was thought to be serious enough to warrant concerted action. In fact, the British Defence of the Realm Act and, by extension, the Defence of Canada Order which penalized anyone with venereal disease for soliciting or *having* intercourse with troops, was aimed at both the professional prostitute and the amateur.<sup>164</sup> During the First World War amateurs were both blamed and excused for their behaviour. They were considered active wrongdoers who were morally neglected, most often by their mothers.<sup>165</sup> *Tidings'* readers discovered that teenage girls were considered hero worshippers and fervent patriots who, ignorant of the dangerous aftermath of good times with soldiers, lost their heads over a khaki uniform.<sup>166</sup> One solution to the problem of "gadding girls" aged 14 to 16 was for mothers to clamp down on their daughters, forcing them into plain clothing and giving them housework to do.<sup>167</sup> A similar solution with an eugenical twist characteristic of the WCTU was proposed by the Dominion's President. Sara Rowell told mothers to make their daughters aware that girls who stayed home and knitted socks for soldiers instead of cavorting with men would counter the poisonous hereditarian contribution discharged cowards and cripples would make to the next generation. The daughter who busied herself with needles and wool lived responsibly and dutifully, thereby ensuring that her offspring would have "high insteps, high foreheads and lofty ideals."<sup>168</sup> Not all WCTU members accepted that the mother was fully culpable for her daughter's behaviour. One *Tidings'* reader wrote that mothers could not be

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<sup>162</sup> AO Mrs. Henry Fawcett, "The Problem of Venereal Diseases," *CWRT* 13, 7 (July 1, 1917), pp. 150-153.

<sup>163</sup> Alan Brandt, *No Magic Bullet: A Social History of Venereal Disease In the United States Since 1880* expanded edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 168.

<sup>164</sup> Bland, "Cleansing the portals of life," pp. 202-203.

<sup>165</sup> Gordon, *Heroes*, pp. 136-158.

<sup>166</sup> AO "Facts Beautiful and Otherwise for Pretty Girls," *CWRT* 14, 7 (July 15, 1918), p. 177.

<sup>167</sup> AO "Gadding Girls and What An Editor Has to Say to Their Mothers," *CWRT* 12, 6 (June 1916), p. 148.

<sup>168</sup> Sara Rowell, "Presidential Address," *Dominion Convention Reports*, 1916, p. 53.

held entirely accountable because men, some of whom were fathers themselves, enjoyed the attention girls paid them. The letter writer suggested that men "cease taking liberties which break down a girl's reserve," lead decent lives and become protectors rather than temptors of women.<sup>169</sup>

During the last two years of the war the Ontario WCTU made a valiant attempt to refuse to be subsumed by the emerging social hygiene discourse which blamed the inadequate mother for children's ignorance about sexual matters. Rather, the organization took credit for raising the alarm over venereal disease, for advocating the moral solution to social impurity and for pioneering home- and school-based sex instruction to children. When Dr. C. K. Clarke began lobbying for the passage of a federal bill that would require the compulsory registration of venereal disease cases, *Tidings'* gave the bill its support and assured its readers that physicians and legislators were now attaining the ideals of which the provincial Purity Departments had long approved: "Nonwithstanding approbrium, the WCTU almost from the hour of its inception stood for wise discussion of and education against these great evils whose fatal effects are reaching even to the fourth generation."<sup>170</sup> The Ontario WCTU was proud to proclaim that the Great War had validated the importance of its social purity crusade. It compared itself to a "lonely John the Baptist" who was no longer crying in the wilderness. The organization was now joined by military, pedagogical, religious and medical authorities in the "much belated hue and cry against the social evil."<sup>171</sup>

Mrs. Bolton, Bruce County's Superintendent of Moral Education and Mothers' Meetings, was delighted with the fact that the lime-light thrown by the war upon the social evil had raised the profile of her Department. She insisted that the WCTU had been in the vanguard of the much needed educational and purification work long before it was thought advisable to speak against prostitution, venereal disease and the double standard in "good society." She claimed that WCTU

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<sup>169</sup> AO "Watch Your Girls," *CWRT* 14, 2 (February 1918), p. 37.

<sup>170</sup> "A Check Proposal for Venereal Diseases," *CWRT* 13, 10 (October 1, 1917), p. 235.

<sup>171</sup> "The New Crusade Against Vice," *CWRT* 14, 1 (January 1, 1918), p. 12.

mothers had long realized that where venereal disease was concerned, prevention was better than cure. This principle was now being adopted by the Canadian government in its move to enact legislative reforms against the spread of venereal disease. For Bolton, the civilian venereal disease problem required that mothers become even more vigilant in training their children in the need for modesty, respect for God's laws and "sober and self-controlled citizenship." She encouraged mothers to maintain the confidence of their sons so that they could continue to guide them during that turbulent period of adolescence rather than rely solely upon a wise father or a pure book. She assured mothers that they had to prepare for "a cleaner and safer homeland to welcome our soldier back to."<sup>172</sup>

Mothers' meetings were not the only proof of the WCTU's path-breaking history. Another example was the Ontario WCTU's hiring of Arthur Beall. Beall continued to maintain throughout the Great War that the key to eliminating prostitution and venereal disease was to teach boys and girls that their bodies were the living temples of Jesus Christ. The Ontario WCTU continued to support Beall, claiming that the "harvest of this work grows with the passing years."<sup>173</sup> Interestingly, when Mrs. Wright, Superintendent of the Dominion WCTU's Department of Moral Education and Mothers' Meetings, sent out a questionnaire in 1920 to provincial superintendents she received a numerically poor but telling response to a split within the WCTU concerning home- and school-based sex instruction. The four replies she received in answer to the question, "Do you advocate teaching Sex Hygiene in schools as part of the curriculum," was "No." The suggestion was made that a woman doctor speak to girls and a man to the boys. British Columbia's reply confirmed that sex instruction was the parents' duty and privilege and should not be made a topic of general discussion.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> AO Mrs. Bolton, "Moral Education and Mothers' Meetings," *CWRT* 14, 4 (April 1, 1918), p. 100.

<sup>173</sup> AO Arthur Beall, "Pure in Thought, in Word, and in Deed," *CWRT* 11, 6 (June 1915), p. 134; "No Retrogression for the WCTU," *CWRT* 14, 8 (August 1, 1918), p. 206.

<sup>174</sup> OPA *Dominion WCTU Convention Reports*, 1920, p. 108.

Part of the reason for the dismissal of school-based sex instruction by the four provinces may have stemmed from some Canadian women's growing confusion over the terms sex hygiene and social hygiene. The profusion of terms denoting children's sex instruction was perplexing. For example, one author who opposed school-based sex instruction complained exasperatedly that "sex hygiene or whatever it is called" was no good for the overburdened curriculum.<sup>175</sup> Some women may have been disconcerted by the association of these terms with only the medical aspects of venereal disease control. Despite the attempts Morrow and the ASHA had made to show that the social hygiene movement acknowledged the need for medical *and* moral solutions to the venereal disease problem, both sex hygiene and social hygiene were commonly thought to exclude the moral aspects of venereal disease control. Firmly seated on the social hygiene/eugenics bandwagon by the end of the War, Beall was quick to assure an audience of concerned Ontario mothers that instruction in sex hygiene or social hygiene was not merely a discussion on the medical aspects of sexuality but on the moral as well. When he spoke to some WCTU women in Richmond Hill in 1927, the local union's secretary recorded: "In introducing the subject of social hygiene, Mr. Baele [sic] said that the name often antagonized people who thought that it was merely a means of combatting social diseases, but means the best methods of giving to the community moral and mental health."<sup>176</sup>

No one had the cheek to point out that Beall had been lecturing to Ontario public school boys for 14 years before the war broke out and yet the CEF had the highest rate of venereal infection amongst troops in western Europe.<sup>177</sup> The cagey Beall was quick to deflect any possible criticism of the efficacy of his lectures in vanquishing the spectre of the ignorant child. Between 1917 and 1919, Beall's schedule of lectures was hampered by his bout with diphtheria and by the influenza epidemic which temporarily felled many students. Nevertheless, he managed to address a

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<sup>175</sup> Annie S. Swan, "The Children's Teeth Set On Edge," *Canadian White Ribbon Bulletin* 8, 6 (June 1914), p. 83.

<sup>176</sup> Quoted in Cook, "Do Not...Do Anything," p. 21.

<sup>177</sup> Cassel, *The Secret Plague*, p. 122.

total of 3,475 girls and 3,689 boys. Two thousand, six hundred and sixty of these boys received the lecture on masturbation. Beall reported to his employer, the Honourable Dr. Cody, Minister of Education for Ontario, that if any of these boys—so reverently and scientifically instructed that any woman could attend his address—fell into impurity, "then the responsibility for whatever penalty shall be exacted, must necessarily rest on themselves."<sup>178</sup>

Beall told the Minister that the most satisfying and patriotic purpose of all education was to educate children for parenthood. Still reflecting the WCTU's emphasis on the importance of fatherhood, Beall rhapsodized that hundreds of adolescent boys he instructed were now gripped by a mighty resolve to devote themselves to the most ideal work in which a man could ever engage: producing the highest type of children. Although ideal, this work was admittedly difficult. According to Beall, Ontario's environment was a morally destructive influence on adolescent boys. Cigarettes, dime store novels "of the Jesse James type," sexually suggestive motion pictures, salacious songs and pornography abounded. This immoral miasma was rendered even more poisonous by the existence of the venereal peril, infanticide, abortion and artificial contraception. The blame for these conditions lay with the Home, the Church and the State. Yet teachers struggling valiantly against these diabolical conditions were cruelly and illogically held responsible.

Never short of suggestions, Beall proposed to Cody that the problems of parenthood, combined with the deprivation of thousands of public school children of their "inalienable birthright" to sex instruction and with the widespread conspiracy of silence about venereal disease were of such great magnitude that the Ontario government consider establishing a Department of Eugenics under Cody's control. Only in this way could Ontario "blossom as the rose." Beall was, no doubt, impressed by the fact that the Canadian Parliament had, on April 11, 1919, passed an Act establishing the Dominion Department of Health, comprised of 10 divisions, one of which

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<sup>178</sup> AO RG 2 P-3 6-711 Box 7 File 8 "Arthur Beall," letter to the Honourable Dr. Cody from Arthur Beall. June 30, 1919, p. 2.



dealt specifically with venereal disease.<sup>179</sup> Yet Beall's call for the establishment of a Department of Eugenics, something which he repeated unsuccessfully in his 1921 report to the new Minister of Education, the Honourable R. H. Grant,<sup>180</sup> also reflected the fact that the fearsome spectre of the ignorant child had run out of steam. Gnawing at the heels of the fearsome spectre of the ignorant child was another ghastly conceptualization. The terrifying spectre of the feeble-minded child would be considered responsible for the spread of venereal disease during the inter-war years.

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<sup>179</sup> Cassel, *The Secret Plague*, p. 169.

<sup>180</sup> Arthur Beall, "Personal Hygiene in High and Public Schools," June 30, 1921 (Toronto: Clarkson W. James, 1921). My thanks to Shirley Wigmore for this item.

## CHAPTER THREE

### "Only Thus Can We Reach the Source of Supply"<sup>1</sup>

After four years of hostilities, 35 out of 65 million men fighting for thirty countries in the First World War had been killed or wounded in action. 51,000 Canadian soldiers died in Europe; another 175,000 wounded returned to Canada. Popular sentiment held that the War had had a dysgenic impact on society. Those fit enough to fight had been killed in battle. The unfit stayed at home to reproduce their kind. For Dr. Helen MacMurchy, Ontario Inspector of the Feeble-Minded, the November 11, 1918 Armistice which brought a halt to the international slaughter had an additional, eugenical significance. She insisted Canadians realize that although the First World War had come to an end, the battle against mentally defective individuals was not yet won. MacMurchy noted that November 11 was St. Martin's day, "and St. Martin was the patron saint of defective children."<sup>2</sup>

Believed to be burdened with minds which were damaged as the result of their genetic inheritance, mental defectives were thought to be responsible for the serious problems of illness, poverty and national deterioration. This point of view was enunciated in 1908 in the influential report of the British Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-Minded. The report sorted individuals considered mentally defective, in ascending order of intellectual development, into three categories: idiots, imbeciles and feeble-minded. The feeble-minded were singled out for special attention. Devoid of the physical stigmata which marked idiots and imbeciles as abnormal, the feeble-minded were regarded as particularly dangerous because they were not immediately

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<sup>1</sup> OSP Vol. XLIII Part VI Report 23 *Fifth Annual Report of the Feeble-Minded*, 1910, p. 55. My thanks to Carole Ann Reed for her assistance with this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Helen MacMurchy, "Defective Children," *Social Welfare* 1, 6 (March 1919), p. 135.

recognizable. Despite their normal appearance, they were held to be mentally incapable of managing their affairs without supervision, to be sexually promiscuous and to be capable of reproducing at double the rate of normal individuals. The report further identified three types of feeble-minded individuals: adult men, women and children. Primarily because of the connection the Commissioners made between hereditary feeble-mindedness, sexual immorality and fecundity, a great deal of energy was expended in Canada prior to the First World War on eliminating the threat the feeble-minded woman posed to society.<sup>3</sup> Yet by the end of the War the focus on the feeble-minded woman shifted to the feeble-minded child. Thus was the pre-eminent position occupied by the fearsome spectre of the ignorant child in relation to the spread of venereal disease usurped by the horrifying spectre of the feeble-minded child.

The horrifying spectre of the feeble-minded child was nurtured by social purists, social hygienists, mental hygienists and feminists who adhered to eugenical beliefs. The feeble-minded child was thought to be far more noxious to society than the ignorant child because the former's susceptibility to educational reform was limited. While it was agreed that if identified and trained early on the feeble-minded child could learn to acquire rudimentary manual and mental skills, its inherent immorality in combination with its innate abnormality cast doubt on the possibility that sex instruction could effectively alter its behaviour. The firm alliance Ontario social purists and hygienists made with the eugenicist and mental hygiene movements<sup>4</sup> led to two solutions to vanquishing the horrifying spectre of the feeble-minded child. Negative eugenics, or the prevention of the propagation of inferior stock, culminated in calls for the sterilization of mentally defective women and men in their reproductive years. Positive eugenics, or the encouragement of

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<sup>3</sup> Harvey G. Simmons, *From Asylum To Welfare* (Downsview, Ontario: National Institute on Mental Retardation, 1982).

<sup>4</sup> Simmons, *From Asylum to Welfare*; Daniel J. Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985); Theresa Richardson, *The Century of the Child: The Mental Hygiene Movement and Social Policy in the United States and Canada* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1989); Angus McLaren, *Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada, 1885-1945* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1990).

the propagation of the superior stock, resulted in the attempt to educate parents for parenthood and children about marriage and family life.

## I

According to Michel Foucault's hypothesis, the formulae of exclusion and salvation brought into play by the menace posed by the leper during the Middle Ages were used yet again in the seventeenth century to incarcerate and treat the insane. By the end of the nineteenth century, asylums headed by physicians had become microcosms of middle-class society, reproducing the family-child relationship based on the theme of paternal authority in the doctor-patient dyad.<sup>5</sup> Like children, animals and aboriginal peoples, the insane were thought to be devoid of reason and were, therefore, associated with the indiscriminate exercise of the animal passions. The turn-of-the-century emphasis on the hereditability of feeble-mindedness was grounded in the apparent link between feeble-mindedness and sexual voracity, giving rise to the circularity of so-called scientific investigations into mental deficiency. Sexual immorality was perceived as evidence of feeble-mindedness and feeble-mindedness itself was said to result in sexual immorality. Yet while there may have been some debate over the strength of the sexual appetites of feeble-minded men, the sexual rapaciousness of feeble-minded women was never in doubt. It was the feeble-minded woman's sexuality which turn-of-the-century reformers of all stripes first set out to manage.<sup>6</sup>

At the same time the Ontario Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) was engrossed in developing a programme of home- and school-based sex instruction, another women's social purity organization, the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC), busied itself with attacking the feeble-minded menace. By 1902 the NCWC had established a standing committee on feeble-minded women, had calculated that there were 1,235 feeble-minded women in

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<sup>5</sup> Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* trans. Richard Howard (New York: Vintage Books, 1988 [1961]).

<sup>6</sup> Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, p. 107.

Canada—900 of whom lived in Ontario—and, at the behest of Ontario Premier George Ross, had sent two of its members to tour institutions for the care of the feeble-minded in the United States. The NCWC swung its support behind the illustrious Dr. Helen MacMurchy when she was appointed Inspector of the Feeble-Minded in 1906. Also concerned with public health issues such as maternal health, infant morality and school medical inspection, MacMurchy became so identified with her battle against mental deficiency that she was called "the feeble-minded MacMurchy."<sup>7</sup> Between 1906 and 1919, at which point she left her post to head the Division of Child Welfare in the Federal Ministry of Health, MacMurchy churned out annual reports which held the feeble-minded responsible for \$50 million a year in moral and social damage to Ontario.<sup>8</sup>

Women social purity reformers' attempts to find a solution to the feeble-minded menace were considered an admirable service to society. MacMurchy was proud to note that the pioneers of the movement to control the feeble-minded were women because as guardians and educationalists they were the first to come into contact with the problem.<sup>9</sup> Historians have interpreted women's interventionist approach to the feeble-minded as the result of women's entry into the male-dominated professions, their patriotic zeal, their humanitarian concern for the mentally retarded and their maternal feminist concern with race regeneration, child welfare and education. These interpretations help explain the post-war shift in attention from the feeble-minded woman to the feeble-minded child. Mentally defective individuals would inevitably grow to be adults but, regardless of their age, they remained mentally akin to children. Because of their innate nurturing qualities women were thought to be perfectly suited to tackling the entire scope of child health and welfare. As the feeble-minded individual remained a perpetual child, women were thought to be perfectly suited to dealing with the feeble-minded.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Wayne Roberts, "Six New Women: A Guide to the Mental Map of Women Reformers in Toronto," *Atlantis* 3, 1 (Fall 1977), pp. 157-158.

<sup>8</sup> OSP Vol. XL Part IX Report 62, *Third Annual Report of the Feeble-Minded in Ontario*, 1908, p. 31.

<sup>9</sup> OSP Vol. XLIV Part VIII Report 23, *Sixth Annual Report of the Feeble-Minded in Ontario*, 1911, p. 10.

<sup>10</sup> Veronica Strong-Boag, *The Parliament of Women: The National Council of Women of Canada, 1893-1929* (Ottawa: National Museum of Canada, 1976), p. 318; Roberts, "Six New Women," pp. 157-160; Kathleen

The feeble-minded child, as conceptualized by MacMurchy, was a savage stuck on the lower rungs of the recapitulationist ladder. The feeble-minded child represented, therefore, a moral and mental "reversion to an ancestral type of humanity when on its way up to civilization...In the subnormal individual, the lower animal faculties rule, because the higher powers are scarcely present."<sup>11</sup> Just as the spectre of the ignorant child was an apparition bifurcated into the masturbating boy and the innocent girl, so too was the spectre of the feeble-minded child split into two gender-specific shades. The boy mental defective was destined to become a juvenile delinquent incarcerated for theft, arson and occasionally rape, or the adult ne'er-do-well, pauper or vagrant. The feeble-minded girl was destined to become a sexually promiscuous harlot, a prostitute and a prolific breeder of illegitimate children. In making a hereditarian connection between feeble-mindedness, sexual immorality and fecundity, the British Royal Commission diverged from Robert Dugdale's assertion that mental deficiency resulted from a combination of heredity *and* environment.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, Dugdale's infamous 1877 study of the descendents of the sexually promiscuous Jukes sisters did identify one of them as "Margaret, the mother of criminals." According to Dugdale, Margaret was a harlot before marriage who had an illegitimate son. The son begat, in turn, descendants who were paupers, criminals and prostitutes. Dugdale calculated that the 1,200 members of the Jukes family had cost the United States more than one million dollars over 75 years in almshouse relief, property damage, lives lost, trial expenses and years of imprisonment.<sup>13</sup>

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McConnachie, "Methodology in the Study of Women's History: A Case of Helen MacMurchy, M.D.," *Ontario History* 75, 1 (March 1983): 61-70; Simmons, *From Asylum To Welfare*, p. 89; McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, pp. 37-38. One British historian suggests that some feminists wary of male sexual offenders' aggression toward women may have supported sterilization because they thought it curbed the male sex drive. See John Macniol, "The Voluntary Sterilization Campaign in Britain, 1918-39," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 2, 3 (January 1992), p. 433.

<sup>11</sup> MacMurchy, cited in Simmons, *From Asylum to Welfare*, p. 88.

<sup>12</sup> Eric T. Carlson, "Medicine and Degeneration: Theory and Praxis," in J. Edward Chamberlin and Sander L. Gilman (eds.), *Degeneration: The Dark Side of Progress* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), pp. 132-134.

<sup>13</sup> Robert L. Dugdale, *The Jukes: A Study in Crime, Pauperism, Disease, and Heredity* (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1910 [1877]).

MacMurchy considered the feeble-minded woman dangerous to Canada for the same three reasons cited by the British Royal Commission. First, as the feeble-minded woman did not possess any physical characteristic which set her apart from the rest of society, she sometimes appeared charming and attractive to others who remained unaware of her true nature. Second, the feeble-minded woman's mental incapacity, her lack of self-control and her inability to earn a living led her to become readily involved in casual or paid promiscuous sexual relations with men. Third, the feeble-minded woman was thought to breed faster than the so-called normal woman. The feeble-minded woman would continue to taint Canadian generations to come by rapidly reproducing offspring for whom she could not care and who were, more often than not, illegitimate as well as mentally defective. As a result, she was found most often in maternity homes, refuges, asylums, jails and poor houses.

Regardless of the individual age and circumstances of women branded feeble-minded, MacMurchy repeatedly portrayed every one she came across as a child devoid of sexual self-control. A mother of four illegitimate children would "always remain a child as far as any financial and moral control of herself and her affairs is concerned."<sup>14</sup> A 37-year-old female molested and impregnated by her 55-year-old uncle was "a girl" who did not know how to resist his advances.<sup>15</sup> An institutionalized 22 year old who was apparently excited by the sight of any man, whether black or white, rich or poor, was, simultaneously, sexually aggressive and "incapable of protecting herself."<sup>16</sup> In keeping with the close relationship social purity women established between sexuality and citizenship, MacMurchy claimed that the feeble-minded could never be citizens. Thus, from MacMurchy's point of view, the feeble-minded woman was disenfranchised from Canadian citizenship five times over—twice politically and thrice morally. She was politically disenfranchised because she was a woman and a mental defective. She was morally

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<sup>14</sup> OSP Vol. XXXIV Part IX Report 63, *Second Annual Report on the Feeble-Minded in Ontario*, 1907, p. 4.

<sup>15</sup> OSP Vol. XLIV Part VIII Report 23 *Sixth Annual Report on the Feeble-Minded in Ontario*, 1911, p. 4.

<sup>16</sup> OSP Vol. XLIII Part VI Report 23 *Fifth Annual Report on the Feeble-Minded in Ontario*, 1910, p. 22.

disenfranchised because she was sexually incontinent, a dependent on the state and as incapable of self-control as an untutored child.

Along with the NCWC MacMurchy lobbied the provincial government to provide custodial care for feeble-minded women. This option was considered to be all the more appropriate given the pre-war panic over white slavery. Initially influenced by the British eugenicist movement, MacMurchy soon came under the sway of American physicians like Dr. Fernald, Superintendent of the Massachusetts School for the Feeble-Minded, who touted the benefits of constant supervision. Fernald claimed that untidy, disobedient, willful, incorrigible and unchaste young women committed to his school soon became quiet and well-behaved. Once released, disaster ensued. The young women fell prey to unscrupulous men, or returned to their sexually immoral ways. The end result was an illegitimate pregnancy.<sup>17</sup> Such a scenario was confirmed by Lucy Booking, Superintendent of the Haven and Prison Gate Mission in Toronto, in her account of the white slave traffic in the city. Booking told the story of a feeble-minded woman who came to the Haven with two infant children she later gave up to the Children's Aid Society. The woman left the Haven for a job as a domestic but soon returned as a maternity case. Ironically, because feeble-minded women were thought to be more capable of learning to clean, polish, wash and sew rather than to read or write, domestic work was considered a good employment prospect.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, a rigid regimen of domestic chores was a staple in maternity homes and refuges for women.<sup>19</sup> Yet domestic work placed women, prized as often for their skills as for their submissiveness, in situations where they were vulnerable to sexual assault by their male employers. This vulnerability was compounded because domestics were often poor women and Eastern-European immigrant women whose moral

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<sup>17</sup> OSP Vol. XLII Part VI Report 23 *Fourth Annual Report on the Feeble-Minded in Ontario*, p. 10; Vol. XLIV Part VIII Report 23 *Sixth Annual Report on the Feeble-Minded in Ontario*, 1911, p. 63.

<sup>18</sup> OSP Vol. XXXIV Part IX Report 63 *Second Annual Report on the Feeble-Minded in Ontario*, 1907, p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> Marie-Aimée Cliche, "Morale chrétienne et 'double standard sexuel': Les filles-mères à l'hôpital de la Miséricorde à Québec, 1874-1972," *Social History/Histoire sociale* 24, 47 (May/mai 1991): 85-125; Bette Cahill, *Butterbox Babies* (Toronto: McClelland-Bantam, Inc., 1992), p. 52.



sensibilities were conveniently thought to be unrefined or absent.<sup>20</sup> These prejudices help explain Booking's uncomplicated sentiments where feeble-minded women were concerned: "Physically they are women, mentally they are children, morally they are degenerates."<sup>21</sup>

Just two years into her term as Inspector of the Feeble-Minded MacMurchy asked two important questions which signalled that the shift in attention from the feeble-minded woman to the feeble-minded child was occurring on the practical as well as on the metaphorical level. MacMurchy questioned: "Where were these feeble-minded persons thirty years ago? Where are the children who will fill their places thirty years hence?" Her answer was to the point: "In our schools." The shift in attention from the feeble-minded woman to the feeble-minded child was facilitated by the move toward compulsory schooling and by the growing influence of alienist psychiatry. Alienist psychiatry, a late-nineteenth-century branch of medicine popular with numerous physicians, held that mental disorders were biologically based and were of genetic origin. Compulsory schooling gave reformers an unprecedented opportunity to access large numbers of children in order to study their mental development for evidence of abnormality.<sup>22</sup> In his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905),<sup>23</sup> Sigmund Freud criticized fellow psychiatrists for placing too much emphasis on heredity. C. S. McVicar aptly described in 1913 the "somewhat frigid reception" Freudian psychoanalysis had met with but was overly optimistic in asserting that psychoanalysts' claims were "receiving more encouragement from earnest

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<sup>20</sup> Lori Rotenberg, "The Wayward Worker: Toronto's Prostitute at the Turn of the Century." In Janice Acton et al., *Women at Work: Ontario, 1850-1930* (Toronto: Canadian Women's Educational Press, 1974), p. 41; Genevieve Leslie, "Domestic Service in Canada, 1880-1920," in Acton et al., *Women at Work*, pp. 71-126; Marilyn Barber, *Immigrant Domestic Servants in Canada*, Canadian Historical Association, Booklet No. 16, 1991.

<sup>21</sup> Lucy Booking, "Conditions in Toronto," in Ernest A. Bell (ed.), *Fighting the Traffic in Young Girls or War on the White Slave Traffic* (?; G. S. Ball, 1911), p. 377.

<sup>22</sup> Simmons, *From Asylum To Welfare*; P. Susan Penfold and Gillian A. Walker, *Women and the Psychiatric Paradox* (Montréal: Eden Press, 1983); Elliot S. Valenstein, *Great and Desperate Cures: The Rise and Decline of Psychosurgery and Other Radical Treatments for Mental Illness* (New York: Basic Books, 1986); Peter Gay, *Freud: A Life For Our Time* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1988); Richardson, *The Century of the Child*; McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*.

<sup>23</sup> Sigmund Freud, *On Sexuality: Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality and Other Works* trans. James Strachey (London: Penguin Books, 1977 [1905]).

students."<sup>24</sup> Freud's focus on the psychopathological basis for mental disorders which were sexual in origin drew very few supporters in the Canadian medical profession before and after the Great War.<sup>25</sup> In keeping with alienist psychiatry's pre-war emphasis on remedial solutions to mental disorders, MacMurchy recommended that if mental defectives were tested and identified in school at a young age, segregated in special classes apart from normal school children and then given permanent after care, 60 to 90% of them would be stopped from propagating unemployment, crime and illegitimate children even more degenerate in character than their parents.<sup>26</sup>

A year later, with the help of school officials, MacMurchy identified 135 feeble-minded children in Ontario schools and repeated her message that special classes would cut off 80% of the supply of defectives to the next generation.<sup>27</sup> In 1909, MacMurchy and Mary Denby of the Lancashire and Cheshire Society for the Permanent Care of the Feeble-Minded hastily examined 1,800 Toronto school children and concluded that approximately one percent of non-Jewish children were feeble-minded. Of the 500 Jewish children tested, only 2 were discovered to be feeble-minded.<sup>28</sup> Despite the small numbers of feeble-minded children "discovered" by Denby and MacMurchy, the Toronto Board of Education resolved to ask school Principals to identify mentally defective children in their schools.

In 1910 MacMurchy began serving as a medical inspector for Toronto schools, and in that capacity completed a report for the Board on the prevalence of feeble-minded children in Toronto schools. She found that 117 feeble-minded children were distributed amongst 50 Toronto schools and estimated that there were a total of 1000 such children throughout the Province. She claimed

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<sup>24</sup> C. S. McVicar, "Some Psychiatric Problems From the General Practitioner's Standpoint," *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 3, 2 (November 1913), p. 951.

<sup>25</sup> Thomas E. Brown, "Dr. Ernest Jones, Psychoanalysis, and the Canadian Medical Profession, 1908-1913," in S. E. D. Shortt (ed.), *Medicine in Canadian Society* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1981), pp. 315-360.

<sup>26</sup> OSP Vol. XXXIV Part IX Report 63 *Second Annual Report on the Feeble-Minded in Ontario*, 1907, p. 15.

<sup>27</sup> OSP Vol. XL Part IX Report 62 *Third Annual Report on the Feeble-Minded in Ontario*, 1908, p. 5.

<sup>28</sup> OSP Vol. XLII Part VI Report 23 *Fourth Annual Report on the Feeble-Minded in Ontario*, 1909.

that even one feeble-minded child per class disrupted normal children because feeble-minded children required ten times the care and training of the average child. As a result of her report the Toronto Board established two special classes for mentally retarded children, thereby embracing the late nineteenth-century trend toward special classes apparent in Germany, Switzerland, Austria and the United States. But this development fell far short of what MacMurphy believed needed to be done to wipe out the spectre of the feeble-minded child. Because mentally defective children would always be children destined to propagate their kind, MacMurphy recommended, in addition to special classes, that the provincial government operate a registry listing feeble-minded children throughout the province and that it institutionalize a system of permanent care and control. For MacMurphy, special classes would serve as a first step not in training the feeble-minded but in identifying those children who needed permanent institutional care.<sup>29</sup> "Only thus," wrote MacMurphy, "can we reach the source of supply."<sup>30</sup> On March 21, 1911, the Ontario government passed an Act Respecting Special Classes which empowered boards of education or school trustees to register backward children and which provided funds for the establishment of special classes.

One day after the provincial government put its legislation on special classes into effect, a large delegation headed by G. R. Geary, the Mayor of Toronto, and composed of Toronto's social and political elite, presented itself to the legislature in a show of concern over the problem of the feeble-minded. A number of meetings held by physicians, politicians, educators, feminists and public health officials took place over the following year. The meetings culminated in a one-day conference on the problem of the feeble-minded held in Toronto on November 8, 1912. MacMurphy gave the opening address to 200 delegates from 20 Ontario municipalities. The delegates passed a series of resolutions which called upon the province to provide custodial institutions for the feeble-minded which would be paid for by the municipalities, to make feeble-minded individuals over age 21 wards of the Crown, to amend the Marriage Act in order to prevent

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<sup>29</sup> Simmons, *From Asylum to Welfare*, p. 91.

<sup>30</sup> OSP Vol. XLIII Part VI Report 23 *Fifth Annual Report on the Feeble-Minded in Ontario*, 1910, p. 55.

the marriage of mental defectives and to maintain a permanent executive which would lobby in favour of introducing such legislation. By the end of the day, the delegates had founded the Provincial Association for the Care of the Feeble-Minded (PACFM). Controller J. O. McCarthy was elected president and Mrs. Torrington of the NCWC was elected vice-president.

## II

The founding of the PACFM on the eve of the First World War set the stage for adding another dimension to the problem of the feeble-minded menace: venereal disease. Dugdale's study had made a number of references to venereal infection in the Jukes' descendents but it was not until the white slavery panic that the relationship between feeble-mindedness, sexual immorality and venereal disease overtook in importance the linkage traditionally made between feeble-mindedness, sexual immorality and illegitimate pregnancy.

This new linkage was clearly established in the 1913 Report of the Toronto Social Survey Commission on the white slave traffic in Toronto. The Commissioners concluded that there were two explanations for the existence of occasional and full-fledged prostitution, one environmental and the other hereditarian. The Report's environmental and hereditarian explanations for occasional and full-fledged prostitution played down women's economic inequality and simultaneously wrote off some women's active pursuit of sexual pleasure outside the boundaries of marriage and motherhood drawn up by social purists and social hygienists.

According to the Report, some women were drawn into occasional prostitution because of the city's commercial environment. The authors of the Report maintained that public forms of amusement—dance halls, ice rinks, theatres and dimly lit parks—gave young women many opportunities to meet young men. These women exchanged sex with men for drinks, dinner, gifts

or money. The Report suggested that supervised recreation could cut down on the prevalence of prostitution.<sup>31</sup> Other women were drawn into full-fledged prostitution because of inherited feeble-mindedness. The Commission cited the findings of Dr. Fernald, Chair of the Massachusetts State Commission on the White Slave Traffic, and the same American authority to whom MacMurchy was indebted for much of her information, in order to state that 25 to 50% of prostitutes were feeble-minded. Fernald's findings were confirmed by the New York State Reformatory for Women's Laboratory of Social Hygiene. Over 50% of those women committed for prostitution were said to be feeble-minded. Of those feeble-minded women who were not prostitutes, some had given birth to illegitimate children but almost all suffered from syphilis and/or gonorrhoea. The Commission's solution to the relationship between feeble-mindedness, sexual immorality and venereal disease was to echo MacMurchy in calling for the establishment of special classes for the feeble-minded child. The Commissioners expressed dismay that special classes established by the Toronto Board of Education in 1910 had been cancelled by 1913.<sup>32</sup> Ironically, these classes may have been withdrawn because of too much interference from MacMurchy and/or because parents may have been reluctant to permit their children to attend classes which pointed toward the inevitability of their being institutionalized.<sup>33</sup>

Historian Harvey G. Simmons claims that the feeble-minded were compared with victims of a mysterious plague. Like plague victims, the feeble-minded were considered indistinguishable from the normal population until the disease manifested itself. Like plague victims the feeble-minded needed to be quarantined so as to prevent healthy individuals from contamination. The

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<sup>31</sup> For an elaboration upon the environmental angle see Carolyn Strange, "From Modern Babylon to a City Upon a Hill: The Toronto Social Survey Commission of 1915 and the Search for Sexual Order in the City," in Roger Hall, William Westfall and Laurel Sefton MacDowell (eds.), *Patterns of the Past: Interpreting Ontario's History* (Toronto and Oxford: Dundurn Press, 1988), pp. 255-277; and Kathy Peiss, "Charity Girls' and City Pleasures: Historical Notes on Working-Class-Sexuality, 1880-1920," in Kathy Peiss and Christina Simmons with Robert A. Padgug (eds.), *Passion and Power: Sexuality in History* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), pp. 57-69.

<sup>32</sup> *Report of the Social Survey Commission, Toronto. Presented to the City Council October 4th, 1915* (Toronto: The Carswell Co., 1915), pp. 44-50.

<sup>33</sup> Simmons, *From Asylum to Welfare*, pp. 91-92.

contagion of feeble-mindedness was portrayed in language strikingly similar to that used to describe the contagion of venereal disease.<sup>34</sup> This observation is borne out by the Moral and Social Reform Council of Canada's claim that the feeble-minded "are constantly propagating their kind, and so spreading alike their own low-grade mentality and the contagion of vice."<sup>35</sup> But unlike the ignorant child who was considered responsible for the spread of venereal disease, or the feeble-minded woman who was identified as a reservoir of moral and physical pollution, the feeble-minded child sustained an even closer relationship to venereal contagion. It was rendered identical with *Treponema pallidum*, the bacterium responsible for syphilis.

The feeble-minded child was rendered identical with the bacterium responsible for syphilis for two reasons. First, like the syphilitic bacterium, the feeble-minded child was considered aggressive, physically uncontrollable and morally corrupting. The Toronto Social Service Commissioners had agreed that feeble-minded children displayed abnormal criminal and sexual propensities from an early age. Given the prejudices held against the feeble-minded woman, it is not surprising that feeble-minded girls bore the brunt of this identification with syphilitic bacteria. By 1909 the feeble-minded girl came to be categorized as a mental *and* a moral defective. Moral defectives, according to Dr. James Kerr, Chief Medical Officer to the Educational Committee of the London County Council, could be passive or active. Passive moral defectives had a short temper, were insensible to discipline and performed badly in school. Active moral defectives behaved like lunatics, were cruel to animals and to other children and, characteristically, displayed a precocious interest in the opposite sex. Kerr argued that while such behaviour was sometimes observed in boys, it was most objectionable in girls. Morally defective school girls sexually tempted school boys to the boys' detriment. This sentiment would be echoed by some of the numerous American investigations into the white slave traffic in 1914. The American investigators drew the telling

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 95-96.

<sup>35</sup> OSP Vol. XLIV Part VIII Report 23 *Sixth Annual Report on the Feeble-Minded in Ontario*, 1911, p. 7.

conclusion that the "prostitutes of to-morrow are in our primary schools to-day. The future customers of these prostitutes are to-day innocent boys with infinite possibilities of good as well as of evil."<sup>36</sup> Morally defective girls did not restrict themselves, however, solely to heterosexual activity. Kerr hinted that morally defective girls would corrupt other girls for they constituted "a most vicious element, a leaven of evil among the girls with whom they are compelled to mix."<sup>37</sup> Whereas some critics of public schools, like the Ontario WCTU, attributed public school immorality to children's ignorance about sexual matters, Kerr and his ilk eagerly traced it to feeble-mindedness. Kerr and the Toronto Social Service Commissioners concluded that feeble-minded children had to be isolated rather than educated in order to protect normal children from becoming contaminated with their moral contagion.

Second, the feeble-minded child was rendered identical with syphilitic bacterium because syphilitic infection in parents produced mental deficiency in children. A child infected by his or her parents was considered the physical embodiment of the bacterium. MacMurchy's own portrayal of all categories of mental deficiency grew increasingly reminiscent of the etiological discourse on venereal disease. Like venereal bacteria which had the power to reproduce in the dank darkness of human genitalia, mental defectives seemed to multiply before MacMurchy's eyes in Toronto's crowded tenements: "Going to find out about one mentally defective person, we find out about four instead of one, and all of them living in such physical and moral dirt and degeneracy as to taint the community, and degrade the name of Canada."<sup>38</sup> MacMurchy insisted that venereal disease had to be controlled in order to cut down on the incidence of idiocy, imbecility and feeble-mindedness in children.

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<sup>36</sup> "Report of the Commission for the Investigation of the White Slave Traffic, so-called," in *Prostitution in America: Three Investigations, 1902-1914* (New York: Arno Press, 1976), p. 67.

<sup>37</sup> OSP Vol. XLII Part VI Report, *23 Fourth Annual Report of the Feeble-Minded in Ontario*, 1909, p. 46.

<sup>38</sup> OSP Vol. XLV Part VIII Report *23 Seventh Annual Report of the Feeble-Minded in Ontario*, 1912, p. 12.

Just as adult women were classified as feeble-minded because they did not conform to middle-class social purists' views of female asexuality, children were classified as feeble-minded when they could not be squeezed within the boundaries of an economically and emotionally dependent childhood idealized by the same middle-class reformers. Children who sought to break away from the bosom of the parental home in an attempt to establish some form of economic independence or who challenged the notion of parental authority over their lives were often labelled feeble-minded. In young girls, such "disobedience" was sexualized. In 1914, the same year in which the provincial government passed additional legislation on special classes, Dr. C. K. Clarke, a professor of psychiatry at the University of Toronto and the Superintendent of the Toronto General Hospital, opened the Social Service Clinic at Toronto General. Between April and September he examined 180 patients, many of them referred by the Juvenile Court. Clarke had the opportunity to examine children in order to determine whether they were mentally and/or morally defective. Clarke began routinely administering the Wasserman blood test for syphilis. One 15-year-old girl of English origin referred to the Clinic had run away from home and was discovered working for a Jewish family. Her Wasserman test results were negative, but she was, nevertheless, labelled a mental and moral defective with a mental age of 10 years.<sup>39</sup>

### III

The campaign against the feeble-minded child gathered even more steam during the course of the Great War. Fuelled by reports of widespread venereal infection in the armed forces, MacMurchy hammered away at the connection between feeble-mindedness, sexual immorality, and venereal disease. She insisted that mental defectiveness was no longer an individual misfortune but a destructive social and moral force. MacMurchy rationalized that Canadians had an obligation to honour their victorious dead in Yprès, Festubert and Givenchy. That obligation could be met by eliminating the feeble-minded menace via a concerted programme of special classes, segregation

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<sup>39</sup> OSP Vol. XLVII Part VIII Report 24. *Ninth Annual Report of the Feeble-Minded in Ontario*. 1914. p. 9.



and institutionalization. Only then could Canada be a better nation in 1950 than it was at present.<sup>40</sup> Near the end of the war, MacMurchy was confident that social reformers were united in holding mental deficiency responsible for prostitution and venereal disease and as the single most important impediment to social reform.<sup>41</sup>

In 1916, the Toronto General Hospital's Social Service Clinic was renamed the Psychiatric Clinic. Six hundred and forty-three new patients were examined. Of these, only 110 were classified as normal. Epilepsy and dementia praecox (schizophrenia) were included under the umbrella of mental deficiency. Hoping, perhaps, to establish that hereditary syphilis was a main cause of mental deficiency, Clarke continued to use the Wasserman test on his patients. Eighty-one patients tested positive, 38 of whom were under age 16.<sup>42</sup> That same year, the Toronto branch of the PACFM was also established. MacMurchy served as the honorary president; Clarke as president, Mrs. A. M. Huestis and Dr. O. C. J. Withrow as vice-presidents; T. R. Robinson as treasurer and Dr. Gordon Bates as secretary.

As part of the University of Toronto's delegation to the Commission of Conservation in Ottawa in January, 1917, Clarke claimed that 75% of the venereally-infected prostitutes he examined were mentally deficient. Clarke and Bates became involved in setting up the Advisory Committee on Venereal Diseases for Military District No. 2 in Toronto (ACVD) in August. Bates became this organization's secretary. In October, Clarke's colleague at the Psychiatric Clinic, Dr. Clarence Hincks, sounded the public alarm about the connection between feeble-mindedness and medical and moral contagion. In a letter to one Toronto newspaper Hincks urged that feeble-mindedness was at the root of prostitution *and* public school immorality. Hincks' evidence for the relationship between feeble-mindedness, prostitution and public school immorality came from a survey he completed, possibly for the Psychiatric Clinic. Hincks' self-acknowledged tendency to

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<sup>40</sup> OSP Vol. XLVIII Part VIII Report 23 *Tenth Annual Report on the Feeble-Minded in Ontario*, 1915, p. 106.

<sup>41</sup> OSP Vol. LI Part V *Twelfth Annual Report on the Feeble-Minded in Ontario*, 1917, p. 7.

<sup>42</sup> OSP Vol. XLIX Part V Report 23 *Eleventh Annual Report of the Feeble-Minded in Ontario*, 1916, p. 64.

exaggerate the numbers of feeble-minded<sup>43</sup> may have been evident when he stated that in one Toronto school the ring leaders of 100 children found guilty of immoral practices were a feeble-minded girl and boy.<sup>44</sup> A year later he lowered the number of children involved to 50, asserting that the feeble-minded ringleaders had encouraged their mates to tell obscene stories, to pass objectionable notes and to engage in sexual practices.<sup>45</sup> Clarke and F. J. Conboy, the President of the PACFM, both presented papers at the Ontario Educational Association (OEA) 1917 meeting. Clarke spoke of the sexual threat feeble-minded children posed to their classmates while Conboy discussed a plan to pluck feeble-minded children from the public schools and segregate boys and girls separately in Farm Colonies 10 miles outside Toronto.<sup>46</sup> Their papers caused so much consternation that the Public School Section of the OEA passed a resolution pertinent to both papers. The first resolution stated that, "before people are allowed to marry they should present a certificate from a qualified medical practitioner that they are mentally and physically qualified for the rights of parenthood." The second resolution expressed approval of Conboy's plan and hoped "that provision will be made for the carrying out of such a plan, not only in Toronto, but in other places throughout the Province."<sup>47</sup>

Towards the end of 1917 the provincial government bowed to pressure from a number of individuals and groups concerned with the feeble-minded and appointed Chief Justice Hodgins to be the Commissioner of the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Mentally Defective and Feeble-minded in Ontario. MacMurchy hailed the move as a most important step toward national reconstruction.<sup>48</sup> Hodgins' three-part mandate was to report on the problem of the feeble-

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<sup>43</sup> Simmons, *From Asylum to Welfare*, pp. 80-81.

<sup>44</sup> Clarence Hincks, "Vice and the Defectives," letter to *The Globe*, October 1, 1917, p. 6.

<sup>45</sup> C. M. Hincks, "Feeble-mindedness in Canada a Serious National Problem," *Social Welfare* 1, 2 (November, 1918), pp. 29-30.

<sup>46</sup> C. K. Clark [sic], "The Alarming Problem of the Sub-Normal Child," *Ontario Educational Association Yearbook*, 1917, pp. 180-183; F. J. Conboy, "The Plan Which is Proposed for the Care of the Sub-Normal Children in Toronto," *Ontario Educational Association Yearbook*, 1917, pp. 184-192.

<sup>47</sup> *Ontario Educational Association Yearbook*, 1917, pp. 25-26.

<sup>48</sup> OSP Vol. LI Part V Report 24, *Thirteenth Annual Report of the Feeble-Minded in Ontario*, 1918.

minded in the province, to discover to what extent venereal disease was the cause or the consequence of feeble-mindedness and to report on what measures needed to be adopted in order to check venereal disease.<sup>49</sup> Hodgins' final report, presented to the legislature on October 18, 1919, was preceded by his interim reports on venereal disease, the second of which recommended that sex instruction be incorporated via nature study in elementary schools.<sup>50</sup> A large number of witnesses appeared before Hodgins, among them Booking, Hincks, MacMurchy and every member of the Toronto branch of the PACFM with the exception of Robinson. It appears that Hodgins overlooked a number of contradictory statements made by various authorities who stated that the actual extent of mental deficiency and the nature of the threat it posed were not as great as supposed previously.<sup>51</sup> Thus, he was able at the outset of the report to confirm the existence of a strong relationship between and among feeble-mindedness, sexual immorality and venereal disease to deem that feeble-mindedness posed a virulent moral and medical danger to the state. Feeble-mindedness, wrote Hodgins,

is increasing and multiplying in such a way as to fill our criminal courts, gaols and penitentiaries, and even our charitable institutions, with subjects whose defects are controllable if properly dealt with. Their [mental defectives'] punishment is in no way a corrective, but rather tends towards an increase in the sum total of vice and immorality, while their presence in schools and institutions designed for only normal individuals, degrades their companions and diminishes the efficiency of the work.<sup>52</sup>

Hodgins endorsed nearly every proposal MacMurchy and other social reformers had put forward over the years and added some of his own. His 20 recommendations included surveying, registering and diagnosing all mental defectives in the province; establishing a special board of control; providing special accommodation in orphanages and asylums for infant idiots and

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<sup>49</sup> OSP Vol. LII Part V Report 24, *Royal Commission on The Care and Control of the Mentally Defective and the Feeble-minded in Ontario*, 1920, p. 3.

<sup>50</sup> OSP Vol. LI Part X Report 58 *Report on Venereal Diseases*, 1919, pp. 18-20.

<sup>51</sup> Simmons, *From Asylum to Welfare*, pp. 94-95.

<sup>52</sup> *Royal Commission on The Care and Control of the Mentally Defective and the Feeble-minded in Ontario*, p. 4.

imbeciles; providing for the licensing and inspecting of private residences housing mental defectives; prohibiting the marriage of mentally defective individuals; imprisoning those mentally defectives who knowingly married; imprisoning those who knowingly had intercourse with a mentally defective person; testing prospective immigrants for mental fitness; and deporting immigrants who displayed "anti-social" tendencies. Hodgins most important suggestions affirmed the importance of custodial care for feeble-minded women of child-bearing age, maintained the need for special classes for feeble-minded school children and cemented the hegemony of the medical profession in defining and prescribing treatment for mental retardation. Hodgins recommended that more adequate provisions for the segregation of feeble-minded women of child-bearing age be made based on the Rome, New York, plan for laundry colonies. Special classes should be made compulsory by the Ontario Department of Education and mentally defective children's attendance should be made obligatory. Finally, courses in psychiatry should be made available to medical students, medical advice regarding mental defectiveness should be given in all criminal cases and a Psychopathic Hospital should be erected in Toronto. Hodgins recommendations were never implemented, partly because the new government, headed by the United Farmer of Ontario party, was unsympathetic to the social reformers and partly because the formidable MacMurchy left her post as Inspector of the Feeble-Minded to assume her the leadership of the Division of Child Welfare in the Federal Ministry of Health.<sup>53</sup>

Hodgins' recommendations may have been ignored but social reformers' post-war focus on the hereditary nature of mental deficiency did not waver. For one Dr. Desloges, Germans on the war path offered firm proof of the dangers of hereditary mental deficiency. According to Desloges, an entire nation stricken "with a fit of megalomania" had made war under the direction of an "epileptic and hallucinated" Kaiser.<sup>54</sup> Social reformers maintained that the penalty Canada had paid

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<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 127-132; Simmons, *From Asylum to Welfare*, pp. 92-98.

<sup>54</sup> A. H. Desloges, "Mental Hygiene in Relation to Social Hygiene," *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 9, 12 (December 1919), p. 1061.

in the wastage of life on the battle fields of Europe was increased at home by the high infant death rate and by the entry of feeble-minded immigrants into Canada. Venereal disease was increasingly associated with both problems. Infants were said to sicken and die as a result of venereal disease. Feeble-minded immigrants were said to stream into Canada and flood it with venereal contagion.<sup>55</sup> Within this context the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene (CNCMH) was founded by Hincks on October 18, 1919. The PACFM had dissolved with MacMurchy's departure but MacMurchy, Clarke, Bates, Huestis and an additional number of prominent physicians, educators and politicians joined the CNCMH. Hincks had been influenced by Clifford Beers, founder of the American National Committee for Mental Hygiene (ANCMH). Like Arthur Beall, Beers and Hincks had had nervous breakdowns early in their careers. The CNCMH's focus on mental hygiene was presented as the ideal antidote for the wartime stress Canadians had experienced:

There doubtless has never been a time when the problems of applied psychiatry have been so urgent to the nation. There has never been a time in which the nervous systems of individuals have been so tried, and never have we realized as now in this world struggle the practical importance of the social problem in hygiene, and the need of well-organized consideration of all the factors that concern society.<sup>56</sup>

Mental hygiene, according to Dr. C. A. Porteous, encompassed the psychiatric study of paupers, prostitutes, shell-shocked soldiers, juvenile delinquents, sex perverts, new immigrants and the socially maladjusted; the relationship between puberty, pregnancy and menopause to mental disorders; and the pedagogical problems of feeble-minded children. In its founding statement the CNCMH resolved to work for the conservation of mental health, the improvement in the care and treatment of those suffering from nervous disease or mental deficiency and for the prevention of such disorders. The organization also resolved to conduct surveys of mental

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<sup>55</sup> Suzann Buckley and Janice Dickin McGinnis, "Venereal Disease and Public Health Reform in Canada," *Canadian Historical Review* 63, 3 (September 1982), pp. 345-346.

<sup>56</sup> "Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene," *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 18, 6 (June 1918), p. 551.

defectives, to enlist the aid of the Dominion and Provincial governments and to cooperate with other agencies which deal with mental hygiene.<sup>57</sup> The CNCMH became a launching pad for psychiatry and psychology in Canada, conducted surveys on the extent of mental deficiency, managed to obtain Rockefeller funding for a psychiatric hospital in Toronto and channelled money toward the creation of child study programmes at the University of Toronto and McGill University. In the United States, the mental hygiene movement led to the development of the field of child psychiatry whose hallmark was child pathology. In Canada mental hygiene adherents' focused their attention on studying the development of the so-called normal child. Longitudinal studies of normal child development conducted by Drs. E. A. Bott, one of the founders of the CNCMH, and William Blatz at the University of Toronto became world-famous.<sup>58</sup>

#### IV

The rise of the CNCMH signalled that social reformers' concerns with mental deficiency shifted from the pre-war concern with remedial efforts to the inter-war concern with preventive measures. During the inter-war years these measures would be guided primarily by "experts" in medicine and social welfare. The CNCMH was not the only society which dealt with eugenic concerns during the inter-war years. Formed in late 1930 in Toronto, the Eugenics Society of Canada (ESC) was composed of approximately 100 individuals. Its membership was dominated by professionals involved in medicine and social welfare. The ESC's executive was composed of Dr. William Hutton, the medical health officer for Brantford, Alvin Ratz Kaufman, an industrialist and birth-control advocate from Kitchener, and D. B. Harkness, a judge and welfare expert. The ESC represented the first group of individuals "who unambiguously declared that biological taint was the single most important cause of the nation's social problems."<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> C. A. Porteous, "Some Notes on the Formation of the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene," *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 18, 7 (July 1918), p. 636.

<sup>58</sup> McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, p. 111; Richardson, *The Century of the Child*, pp. 112-119.

<sup>59</sup> McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, p. 107.

Social reformers prior to the war had hoped to prevent the birth of feeble-minded children by making the marriage of mental defectives illegal. Hodgins went so far as to call for penalizing those mental defectives who knowingly married and for incarcerating individuals who knowingly had intercourse with a mental defective. During the inter-war years the battle against all categories of mentally defective children escalated to the point that compulsory sterilization became Canadian social reformers' main weapon of choice. For those who adhered to eugenicist beliefs compulsory sterilization was a much less controversial issue than artificial birth control. Under Section 207c of the Canadian Criminal Code, anyone who sold, circulated, advertised or published an advertisement for an article intended to restore sexual virility, to cure venereal disease, to cause an abortion or miscarriage or to prevent conception was liable to two years' imprisonment unless he or she could prove that "the public good" was served by the alleged acts. Despite legal strictures against birth control, access to contraception information and contraceptive devices for married couples was actively promoted by some feminists and physicians who blamed the poverty of the working classes on the birth of too many children, women's lack of sexual pleasure in marriage on the dread of unwanted pregnancy, and women's ill-health on the strain of births too closely-spaced for full recovery.<sup>60</sup>

On the one hand, many individuals who adhered to eugenicist beliefs were particularly hostile to women in the upper and middle classes who used artificial birth control. Eugenicists feared that upper and middle class women's use of contraception would accentuate the supposed differential between the birth rates of the higher and lower strata of society. This eugenicist

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<sup>60</sup> Linda Gordon, *Woman's Body, Woman's Right: Birth Control In America* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1977 [1974]); Angus McLaren, "Birth Control and Abortion in Canada, 1870-1920," *Canadian Historical Review* 19, 3 (1978): 319-340; Ruth Hall, *Marie Stopes: A Biography* (London: Virago, 1978); Dianne Dodd, "The Hamilton Birth Control Clinic of the 1930s," *Ontario History* 75, 1 (March 1983): 71-86; Angus McLaren, "The First Campaigns for Birth Control in British Columbia," *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'études canadiennes* 19, 3 (Autumn/automne 1984): 50-64; 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); Ellen Chesler, *Woman of Valor: Margaret Sanger and the Birth Control Movement in America* (New York: Anchor Books, 1992).

argument was weighted against the maternal feminist assertion that women had a right to space the birth of their children, happily sacrificing quantity for the superior quality of offspring. Concern over the birth rate differential lay behind MacMurchy's opposition to birth control which she cleverly set within a moral framework. MacMurchy argued that young people should be told the "truth" about birth control. The truth was that birth control was unnatural, unreliable, possibly physically harmful, "contrary to the higher instincts," and hence, inherently immoral.<sup>61</sup>

Religious and legal antagonism to contraception aside, artificial forms of birth control were often associated with sexual promiscuity. Condoms, a relatively effective shield against venereal disease *and* conception, were considered especially suspect. In fact, Canadian army doctors did not distribute condoms to troops during the First World War because they feared this move would encourage even greater sexual immorality.<sup>62</sup> Some Canadian women rejected condoms precisely because they linked them to prostitution.<sup>63</sup> Although MacMurchy allowed that in the event of an emergency, such as the dire ill-health of the mother, a physician could prescribe birth control, the only real solution was to practise sexual abstinence within marriage when children were not desired. Ironically, early in her career, MacMurchy fell in love with Marie Stopes when the latter first visited Canada in 1908 and even attended Stopes' marriage to Reginald Gates in Montréal. MacMurchy and Stopes continued to exchange love letters but the affair had cooled by the time Stopes had become the prime mover and shaker behind the British birth control movement.<sup>64</sup>

On the other hand, some individuals who adhered to eugenicist beliefs acknowledged that access to cheap and effective birth control could help contain a troublesome working class thought

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<sup>61</sup> Helen MacMurchy, *Sterilization? Birth Control? A Book for Family Welfare and Safety* (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Ltd., 1934), pp. 148-151.

<sup>62</sup> Jay Cassel, *The Secret Plague: Venereal Disease in Canada, 1838-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), pp. 129-130.

<sup>63</sup> McLaren and McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State*, p. 106. See also Joshua Gamon, "Rubber Wars: Struggles over the Condom in the United States," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 1, 2 (October 1990): 262-282.

<sup>64</sup> Hall, *Marie Stopes*, pp 78-80, 92, also cited in Simmons, *From Asylum to Welfare*, note 8, p. 274.



to be perpetually on the edge of political ferment.<sup>65</sup> Kaufman of the ESC considered birth control and sterilization complementary practices intended to control the fertility of the poor. Owner of the Kaufman Rubber company in Kitchener, Kaufman encouraged those employees diagnosed as mentally deficient or those employees suffering from physical complaints like syphilis, epilepsy, tuberculosis, congenital blindness and congenital deafness to submit voluntarily to sterilization. By his own admission, Kaufman had arranged for 435 sterilizations by 1937. Impressed by the birth control clinics established by Margaret Sanger in the United States, Kaufman established the Parents' Information Bureau (PIB) in Toronto in 1933 with Alfred Tyrer. Tyrer was a virulently anti-Catholic Anglican minister who would later author the first Canadian marriage manual, *Sex, Marriage and Birth-Control* (1936), a pamphlet intended to help parents to teach their children about sex, "Your Child Needs Your Help" (1939), and a sex instruction booklet for children, *Where Did We Come From, Mother Dear?* (1939).<sup>66</sup>

Kaufman and Tyrer were convinced that poor married couples' use of condoms, jellies, foams and pessaries would prevent the birth of children who would inevitably end up on relief. The Bureau distributed contraceptive devices and information by mail; visiting nurses provided additional assistance. By 1942, the PIB had dealt with 120,000 clients. The Bureau's pamphlets countered that birth control was not only safe and effective but moral as well. Birth control was moral because it gave parents the opportunity to help happy, healthy children turn into useful citizens.<sup>67</sup> In 1936 one of Kaufman's nurses, Dorothea Palmer, was arrested for distributing birth control in the primarily Roman-Catholic town of Eastview, Ontario, where many of the inhabitants

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<sup>65</sup> McLaren and McLaren *The Bedroom and the State*, pp. 104-105; McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, p. 117. See also Donald Avery, *"Dangerous Foreigners": European Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism in Canada, 1896-1932* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1979).

<sup>66</sup> Alfred Henry Tyrer, *Sex, Marriage and Birth-Control: A Guide-book to Sex Health and a Satisfactory Sex Life in Marriage* (Toronto: Marriage Welfare Bureau, 1941 [1936]); Alfred Henry Tyrer, *Your Child Needs Your Help* (Toronto: Marriage Welfare Bureau, 1939?); Alfred Henry Tyrer, *Where Did We Come From Mother Dear?* (Toronto: Marriage Welfare Bureau, 1939). This text was also translated into French as *D'Où Venons-Nous Chère Maman?* (Montréal: Les éditions de la Houle, 1947). I have been able to physically locate only the french version.

<sup>67</sup> NAC MG 28 I 332 Vol. 166 File: Parents' Information Bureau, 1937-38, "Better Babies."

were on relief. Palmer was defended by F. W. Pendegast, a member of the ESC. Although numerous witnesses for the defence testified how important contraception was to women's health and family happiness, W. L. Hutton, the president of the ESC, testified that birth control prevented the socially undesirable stratum of society from reproducing uncontrollably. In acquitting Palmer on the basis of the law's "for the public good" clause, Judge Lester Clayton commented on that stratum's limited mental capabilities. According to Clayton, artificial contraception was preferable to the rhythm method because the latter form of birth control was too complicated a matter for the "poorer classes where intelligence is often below the general level."<sup>68</sup>

Sterilization was synonymous with negative eugenics, defined according to one author who contributed to *Eugenics Review*, the official organ of the British Eugenics Education Society (EES), as the checking of "the deterioration of the human stock owing to the rapid proliferation of what may be called *human weeds*." Sterilization promised to arrest the proliferation of the mentally defective. It was imperative to cope with the mentally defective for if nothing were done to stop their proliferation, "the weeds will impose intolerable burdens upon the more valuable flowers of humanity, and will crowd them out."<sup>69</sup> The actions taken by the German Nazi government in favour of *Rassenhygiene* (racial hygiene) overshadows the fact that by the time the Reichstag passed the Law for the Prevention of Genetically Diseased Offspring on July 14, 1933, 28 American states and two Canadian provinces, Alberta and British Columbia, had enacted sterilization legislation. The state of Indiana passed the first sterilization law in 1907, legalizing the sterilization of the mentally ill and criminally insane. In 1927, a U.S. Supreme Court judgement on sterilization upheld its constitutionality. By 1939 over 30,000 people in 29 states had been sterilized. More than half the operations had taken place in California.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> NAC MG 28 I 332 Vol. 166 File: Parents' Information Bureau 1937-1938, "Birth Control Trial," p. 18; McLaren and McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State*, pp. 116-119; McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, pp. 115-117.

<sup>69</sup> F. C. S. Schiller, "Eugenics as a Moral Ideal," *Eugenics Review*, 22 (April 1930-January 1931), p. 103.

<sup>70</sup> Renate Bridenthal, Atina Grossman and Marion Kaplan (eds.), *When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1984); Claudia Koontz, *Mothers in the Fatherland:*

Feminists in Canada were particularly active in promoting sterilization, the NCWC coming out in favour of the procedure in 1925. MacMurchy appeared to be moving toward sterilization as early as 1913.<sup>71</sup> She maintained that the eugenics movement had one platform which met with universal approval—the proper care and control of the feeble-minded designed to prevent parenthood.<sup>72</sup> MacMurchy would come out unequivocally in favour of compulsory sterilization during the inter-war years, using the arguments she had long made to approve institutionalization and special classes. Mental defectives placed a huge financial burden on the state, were responsible for the spread of moral contagion and increased much faster than did the progeny of "good and capable citizens." She portrayed vasectomy and salpingectomy as humane operations, but admitted that the procedure used to sterilize women was much more invasive than that used for men.<sup>73</sup>

Racist concerns over the influx of large numbers of immigrants conveniently suspected of being mentally defective, fears that Canadians of British origin would be swamped by the burgeoning French Canadian Catholic population in Quebec and anxiety over a severe economic depression all contributed to the fact that support for sterilization was strongest in Western Canada. Western feminists Nellie McClung and Emily Murphy, two of the five women who launched the celebrated campaign to have women declared "persons" under Canadian law, publicly declared sterilization a marvel. Alberta moved steadily toward legalizing sterilization after a CNCMH survey on mental defectives in the province conducted between 1919 and 1921 recorded a high level of feeble-mindedness amongst the immigrant Slavs. Backed by this eugenical study, the United Farmers of Alberta (UFA) and the United Farm Women of Alberta (UFWA) lobbied for a sterilization law, the farm women's president noting "democracy was not meant for degenerates." With the support of the local NCWC, the WCTU and the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the

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*Women, the Family and Nazi Politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987); Robert N. Proctor, *Racial Hygiene: Medicine Under the Nazis* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988).

<sup>71</sup> OSP, Vol. XLVI Part III Report 24, *Eighth Annual Report of the Feeble-Minded in Ontario*, 1913, p. 77.

<sup>72</sup> OSP Vol. XLVII Part VIII Report 24 *Ninth Annual Report on the Feeble-Minded in Ontario*, 1914, p. 16.

<sup>73</sup> MacMurchy, *Sterilization? Birth Control?* pp. 3-5.

Empire (IODE), the UFA government passed the Alberta Sexual Sterilization Act on March 7, 1928. The Act stipulated that mental defectives, with the consent of their guardian, could be sterilized upon the recommendation of an Eugenics Board. Four hundred sterilizations were completed by 1937 when the Social Credit government removed the consent clause.<sup>74</sup>

In British Columbia, Josephine Dauphinée, the supervisor of special classes for mentally defective children in Vancouver, rallied community support for the sterilization of the feeble-minded, many of whom she believed were degenerate immigrants. Mary Ellen Smith, the first woman cabinet member in the British Empire, was a Liberal MLA from South Vancouver. Fearing that the English-speaking peoples of the world would lose their supremacy, Smith pushed for legislation permitting sterilization and restricting immigration in 1925. That same year the legislature appointed a Royal Commission on Mental Hygiene which submitted its final report in 1928. Not every physician who testified before the Commission was entirely convinced of the hereditary nature of mental deficiency. Nevertheless, Hincks and Dr. Paul Popenoe of the Human Betterment Foundation in California, continued to emphasize heredity's role in the transmission of mental defects in their testimony. Popenoe was a prolific author with many ties to the American Social Hygiene Association (ASHA) and the ANCMH. He published articles on sterilization and sex education in the ASHA's official organ, the *Journal of Social Hygiene*, wrote marriage manuals such as *Modern Marriage: A Handbook* (1925) and penned a misogynist, racist, anti-birth control pro-family rant, *The Conservation of the Family* (1926).<sup>75</sup>

Although the Commission also favoured other forms of preventive treatment like child guidance and special classes, sterilization won the day in the Commission's final report. Aided by the local NCWC which lobbied intensively for sterilization, public support for sterilization grew.

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<sup>74</sup> McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, p. 100.

<sup>75</sup> Paul Popenoe, "Social Life for High School Girls and Boys," *Journal of Social Hygiene* 20, 5 (May 1934): 244-248; Paul Popenoe, *Modern Marriage: A Handbook* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1925); Paul Popenoe, *The Conservation of the Family* (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1984 [1926]).

On April 7, 1933, the British Columbia government passed the Sexual Sterilization Act. The legislation called for the sterilization of mental defectives based upon the individual's or the guardian's consent under the recommendation of a Board of Eugenics. A superintendent of any asylum housing adults or juveniles under the Act's jurisdiction had the right to recommend sterilization upon the discharge of any inmate who might beget or bear children with his or her mental defect. Both provinces' sterilization laws remained in effect until 1972.<sup>76</sup>

Post-World War I German racial hygienists had admired American examples of sterilization and restrictive immigration policies, citing and translating American authors on the subject. Dugdale's study on the Jukes family was widely referred to by German racial hygienists who found their own examples of such hereditary degeneracy.<sup>77</sup> Adolf Hitler in *Mein Kampf* (1925) was able to transpose all the characteristics social reformers associated with the feeble-minded woman and child onto his portrayal of the Jew. The Jew was a sexually immoral, physically unclean, abnormally fecund germ carrier who polluted the German race with moral filth. As Hitler put it: "When carefully cutting open such a growth, one could find a little Jew, blinded by the sudden light, like a maggot in a rotting corpse."<sup>78</sup> Hitler rendered syphilis and the Jew identical, conceptualizing Jews as foreign creatures who surreptitiously penetrated into the host nation via its vitals. Jews were both pimps and prostitutes harboured in the scum of big cities like Vienna. Syphilis and Jews blighted the purity of heterosexual Nordic love. And like the feeble-minded, Jews were unrecognizable except to those trained to detect the physical characteristics which set Jews apart from the populace. Jews carried the stigmata of venereal disease on skin darkened with syphilitic infection.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Simmons, *From Asylum to Welfare*, pp. 113-114; McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, pp. 89-106.

<sup>77</sup> Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, pp. 95-101

<sup>78</sup> Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1939 [1925]), p. 75.

<sup>79</sup> Sander Gilman, *The Jew's Body* (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 96-101.

The German sterilization law, which came into effect on January 1, 1934, was part of a three-pronged attack on eugenically unfit individuals, eugenically fit women who resisted reproducing and homosexuals.<sup>80</sup> The Act itself singled out feeble-mindedness, schizophrenia, manic depressive insanity, inherited epilepsy, Huntington's chorea, inherited blindness, inherited deafness, severe malformation and alcoholism as conditions requiring sterilization. All cases were referred to Genetic Health Courts. Consent was not needed if the patient were under 18 or if he or she were mentally incapable of making the decision. One of the clauses permitted the use of force in the case of resistance. In 1935 an ordinance disallowed the sterilization of girls under age 14. Feeble-mindedness, followed by schizophrenia, epilepsy and alcoholism were the most common grounds for sterilization. The majority of persons sterilized were non-institutionalized individuals of German ethnicity. Domestic, unskilled factory workers, jobless housewives, prostitutes and unmarried mothers were sterilized most often, followed by inmates or ex-inmates of psychiatric clinics and hospitals. An average of 50,000 operations were done annually during the first five years of the law's existence. Between 1939 and 1941, 100,000 inmates of psychiatric institutions were not sterilized but killed outright under the notorious "T 4" euthanasia project as "useless eaters." Five thousand "unworthy" children under age 16 were also killed.<sup>81</sup>

A few Canadian eugenicists attempted to distance themselves from the connection the Nazis made between the superiority of the Aryan race and the need for German sterilization legislation. On the eve of the Second World War pro-sterilization advocate Dr. Morris Siegal expressed concern that the "German race fanatics" erroneously believed that the Nordic race had a moral claim to world domination. He expressed the hope that this issue could be resolved at the

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<sup>80</sup> Gisela Bock, "Racism and Sexism in Nazi Germany: Motherhood, Compulsory Sterilization, and the State," in Renate Bridenthal, Atina Grossman, and Marion Kaplan (eds.), *When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany* (New York: Monthly Press, 1984), pp. 271-296; Koonz, *Mothers In the Fatherland*; Erwin J. Haeberle, "Swastika, Pink Triangle, and Yellow Star: The Destruction of Sexology and the Persecution of Homosexuals in Nazi Germany," in Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus and George Chauncey, Jr. (eds.), *Hidden From History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past* (New York: Meridian, 1990 ), pp. 365-379.

<sup>81</sup> Bock, "Racism and Sexism in Nazi Germany."

next International Eugenic Congress, in the interest of science and society. If not, he feared that "honest world opinion will look upon the eugenic movement with fear and suspicion."<sup>82</sup> Despite the fact that the Nazi Germany's sterilization law preceded a barrage of edicts aimed at segregating Jews from all aspects of German cultural and economic life, many Canadian eugenicists flocked to express their respect for the legislation.<sup>83</sup> The ESC in particular admired the steps Germany had taken to purify its society of mental defectives and expressed the hope that Canada could do the same. Even after the end of the Second World War, Popenoe in the States continued to maintain the importance of sterilization given the danger of biological and social decay triggered by a falling marriage and birth rate amongst society's elite. Using the same dysgenic arguments he parlayed after the First World War, Hincks in Canada assured his compatriots of the need to sterilize mental defectives to prevent their multiplication.<sup>84</sup>

Support for sterilization legislation grew in a severely economically depressed Ontario. In 1929 the Royal Commission on Public Welfare, which was appointed to look into provincial asylums, hospitals and other public institutions, endorsed both custodial care and compulsory sterilization. The Commission's opinion was backed by the province's Lieutenant-Governor, Herbert A. Bruce, on at least two public occasions. In his speech to the Canadian Club of Hamilton on April 28, 1933, Bruce calculated that in 25 years the province would spend \$8 million for the maintenance of mental defectives and advised that sterilization was the only remedy to Ontario's looming financial crisis. Bruce's portrayal of mental deficiency drew a direct link between mental deficiency and disease: "the infection transmitted by mental defectives is incurable. Its victims are the unborn generations. Its potency for misery and for suffering is great beyond all powers of description."<sup>85</sup> Three years later Bruce publicly praised Germany for having sterilized

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<sup>82</sup> Morris Siegal, *Population, Race and Eugenics* (Hamilton, Ontario: The Author, 1939), p. 75.

<sup>83</sup> Indifference to and denial of the Nazi government's treatment of its Jewish citizens may have been part and parcel of Canadian anti-Semitism. For evidence of passive and active anti-Semitism, see Cyril H. Levitt and William Shaffir (eds.), *The Riot at Christie Pitts* (Toronto: Lester and Orpen Dennys, 1987).

<sup>84</sup> McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, pp. 107-159.

<sup>85</sup> Quoted in MacMurchy, *Sterilization? Birth Control?* p. 39.

50,000 idiots and assured his audience that eugenics was a religion synonymous with Christianity.<sup>86</sup> A cacophony of influential depression-era voices—among them Dr. H. B. Anderson, a governor of the University of Toronto, H. E. MacDermott, the assistant editor of the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, and Agnes McPhail, the first woman member of Parliament—came out in favour of sterilization legislation. Despite the ESC's pro-sterilization delegations to the provincial government and the recommendation of the 1938 Royal Commission on the Operation of the Mental Act to sterilize women clogging up asylums because they were poor and pregnant, a sterilization law was never enacted in Ontario. The lack of sterilization legislation in Ontario can be attributed to at least two factors. Dr. B. T. McGhie, the deputy minister of health, rejected nearly all of the arguments put forward by social reformers in favour of sterilization and blocked any attempt to put such legislation forward. The possibility of losing Ontario's sizeable Catholic vote may have also figured prominently in politicians' reluctance to put any sterilization legislation into effect.<sup>87</sup>

Very few Canadian physicians and scientists came out against sterilization during the inter-war years. Although Canadian research on immigrant, aboriginal or African-Canadian resistance to sterilization is unavailable, some historians have determined that African-American community leaders opposed sterilization laws because they surmised correctly that such legislation targeted the economically and racially oppressed.<sup>88</sup> Generally, opposition to sterilization came from Catholics who believed that it was tantamount to the destruction of life and from those who considered that sterilization would contribute to a rise in immorality. The Encyclical Letter of Pope Pius XI on Christian Marriage, published on December 31, 1930, acknowledged that measures to protect the health and strength of the future child were admirable but deemed sterilization a "pernicious

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<sup>86</sup> NAC MG 28 I 332 Vol. 166 File: "Parents Information Bureau, 1937-1938" Parents Information Bureau, "Sterilization Notes" p. 5.

<sup>87</sup> McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, pp. 125-126.

<sup>88</sup> Jessie M. Rodrique, "The Black Community and the Birth Control Movement," in Kathy Peiss and Christina Simmons with Robert Padgug (eds.), *Passion and Power: Sexuality and History* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), pp. 144-145.



practice." The Encyclical lashed out at civil authorities for depriving individuals who might bring forth defective offspring from so doing. Eugenacists who supported compulsory sterilization were condemned for losing sight of the fact that the family was far more sacred an entity than the state. They were also lambasted for not understanding that individuals had no power to mutilate their reproductive organs or to render themselves unfit to exercise the natural function of procreation.<sup>89</sup> French Canadian opposition to sterilization was not only understandable because of the Catholic Church's influence in that province but because Quebec nationalists suspected that Anglo-Canadian eugenacists would conclude that the Quebecois were of inferior eugenic quality.<sup>90</sup>

Several critics of sterilization feared that once freed from the risk of unwanted pregnancy, mentally defective women would engage in promiscuous intercourse leading to the spread of venereal disease. In contrast, McClung claimed that sterilization cured promiscuity. She told the story of a farmer's feeble-minded promiscuous daughter who turned happily to feeding chickens and knitting garments for sale after her operation.<sup>91</sup> Murphy similarly held that the unfit could wed but only if sterilized in order to prevent insanity, tuberculosis and venereal disease from spreading.<sup>92</sup> MacMurchy suggested that the point of view which held that sterilization would lead to an increase in promiscuity and venereal disease was passé; it had not been borne out by studies on the post-sterilization sexual behaviour of mental defectives summarized by the 1932 Report of the Departmental Committee of Sterilization appointed by the Ministry of Health in Britain.<sup>93</sup> Ironically, the Brock Report, as the document came to be known, was sceptical of sterilization because it concluded that the fecundity of the feeble-minded had been exaggerated and because it noted that only a small proportion of mental defectives had mentally defective parents.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> "Authorized English Text of the Encyclical Letter of Pius XI on Christian Marriage" excerpted in MacMurchy, *Sterilization? Birth Control?* pp. 15-16.

<sup>90</sup> McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, p. 25.

<sup>91</sup> Nellie McClung, *The Stream Runs Fast: My Own Story* (Toronto: Thomas Allen, 1945), p. 181, cited in McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, p. 100.

<sup>92</sup> McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*, p. 101.

<sup>93</sup> MacMurchy, *Sterilization? Birth Control?* pp.44-46.

<sup>94</sup> Simmons, *From Asylum to Welfare*, p. 116.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### "Lest the Race Should Perish"<sup>1</sup>

Negative eugenics attempted to block the conception of the feeble-minded child, but sterilization was, nevertheless, unable "to improve the human race and lift life to a higher level."<sup>2</sup> Just as sterilization was perceived as the linch pin of negative eugenics, so was the revival of the patriarchal nuclear family viewed as the central focus of positive eugenics. Positive eugenics was said to pave the way for the propagation of superior types of humanity and for the realization of superior ideals. For those who adhered to eugenic beliefs the revival of the family had to be accomplished in the light of modern science; the choice of a mate had to be a systematic affair, monogamous marriage a serious eugenic undertaking and parenthood both a science and an art form.

Shortly after the end of the Great War the push toward reviving the family manifested itself in the social hygiene movement's promotion of "education for parenthood." Broadly defined, education for parenthood encompassed all aspects of child rearing. Social hygienists, however, focused on the sex instruction aspects of education for parenthood. Social hygienists intended to strengthen parents' ability to provide their children with home-based sex instruction. In the late 1920s social hygienists came under increasing attack for their narrow focus on venereal disease. This development forced social hygienists to abandon education for parenthood in favour of incorporating sex instruction into public schools under the rubric of "family life education."

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<sup>1</sup> Alfred Henry Tyrer, *Sex, Marriage and Birth-Control: A Guide-book to Sex Health and a Satisfactory Sex Life in Marriage* (Toronto: Marriage Welfare Bureau, 1941 [1936]), p. xiii.

<sup>2</sup> F. C. S. Schiller, "Eugenics as a Moral Ideal," *Eugenics Review*, 22 (April 1930-January 1931), p. 103.

## I

Whereas the preference of the American social hygiene movement for school-based sex instruction was strengthened after the First World War,<sup>3</sup> the social hygiene movement in Canada turned its back on school-based sex instruction, devoting its energies to bolstering home-based sex instruction. In general, Canadian social hygienists refused to assign public schools direct responsibility for teaching children about their sense of racial responsibility. They preferred to equip parents rather than teachers with the knowledge to instruct children in sexual matters.<sup>4</sup> Social hygienists' attempts to promote education for parenthood in order to inculcate a sense of racial responsibility into children were not revolutionary. Social purists had come out in favour of the very same goal in their prescriptive literature. Couples were encouraged to marry only when they were certain of the fitness of the genetic contribution their loved ones would make to their future offspring. Social purists were especially concerned with the problems posed by sexually incontinent men. They hoped that sexually incontinent men would be immediately disqualified as prospective husbands. Young women were told never to fall in love with or marry profligate men for such men were sure to transmit venereal disease to their wives and children. As even a mere kiss on the lips from profligate men was said spell disaster, women were advised to "shrink from personal contact with them as from a viper."<sup>5</sup>

The emerging social hygiene movement in Canada was spearheaded by Dr. Gordon Bates and headquartered in Toronto. Bates had served as the secretary of the Toronto branch of the

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<sup>3</sup> Michael Imber, "Toward a Theory of Curriculum Reform: An Analysis of the First Campaign for Sex Education," *Curriculum Inquiry* 12, 4 (Winter 1982): 339-361; Michael Imber, "The First World War, Sex Education, and the American Social Hygiene Association's Campaign Against Venereal Disease," *Journal of Administration and History*, 16 1 (January 1984): 47-56.

<sup>4</sup> D. V. Currey, "Social Hygiene in Relation to Public Health," *Canadian Journal of Public Health* 15, 10 (October 1924): 460-467; J. J. Heagerty, "Relative Value of Sex Education," *Canadian Journal of Public Health* 15, 6 (June 1924): 258-262; "Education for Parenthood," *Canadian Journal of Public Health* 18, 2 (February 1927): 99-100.

<sup>5</sup> Mary Wood-Allen, *What A Young Woman Ought to Know* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1913), pp. 237-238.

Provincial Association for the Care of the Feeble-Minded (PACFM) as well as secretary of the Advisory Committee on Venereal Diseases for Military District No. 2 in Toronto (ACVD). After the end of the First World War Bates assumed, once again, the post of secretary at the Canadian National Council for Combatting Venereal Disease (CNCCVD). Formed at the end of the second Dominion-provincial conference on venereal disease in May, 1919, the CNCCVD intended to operate on the local, provincial and federal levels. The Council was made up of five committees on medicine, law enforcement and social investigation, education, business and public information. A Sub-Committee on Sex Education led by Dr. Peter Sandiford, a University of Toronto Professor of Educational Psychology, was also formed in 1919. The Sub-Committee first met in early January, 1920,<sup>6</sup> but its work proceeded too slowly for Bates' liking. In September Bates complained to Sandiford that he had heard little about the Sub-Committee's activities and suggested that a meeting should be held in the near future.<sup>7</sup> Less than a year later the Sub-Committee passed a resolution which stated that a "sound system of sex education should be worked out and utilized by the church, the school, the home and the press." The resolution further recommended that pamphlets should be prepared for the use of parents and teachers and training schemes for lecturers should be worked out.<sup>8</sup>

It has been noted that one aspect of parent education overlooked by historians during the inter-war years was the advice parents received in understanding children's sexuality and in controlling the expression of that sexuality.<sup>9</sup> The crux of the Sub-Committee's work was to strengthen parents' ability to provide their children with sex instruction in the home; the resolution upheld the notion that the ideal teacher was the parent and the ideal site for sex instruction was the

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<sup>6</sup> NAC MG 28 I 332 Vol. 80 File: Sub-Committee on Sex Education, 1920-1921, letter to Peter Sandiford from Gordon Bates, January 8, 1920.

<sup>7</sup> NAC MG 28 I 332 Vol. 80 File: Sex Education—Subcommittee on Sex Education, 1920-21, letter to Peter Sandiford from Dr. Gordon Bates, September 20, 1920.

<sup>8</sup> NAC MG 28 I 332 Vol. 191 File: Ontario Board of Health (Part II), 1920-27, letter to Dr. McCullough from Dr. Gordon Bates, June 25, 1921.

<sup>9</sup> Norah Lewis, "Advising the Parents: Child-Rearing in British Columbia During the Inter-war Years," unpublished EdD. dissertation, University of British Columbia, 1980, pp. 147-148.

home. In June, 1921 the Executive of the Toronto Branch of the CNCCVD held a meeting with a number of Home and School Councils and with the Executive of Teachers' Associations of both public and separate schools. The subject of discussion was the development of specific means for training parents to teach their children about sexual matters. Two major suggestions were brought forward. First, a speaker from the CNCCVD could address parents called together by each school principal on "the dangers to which young people are subject" and on the constructive recreational use of church and school buildings, particularly at night. At this meeting the film "The End of the Road" could be viewed. Second, another lecturer, a biologist or an educator, could speak to parents on how to teach their children about sex and screen the film "How Life Begins."<sup>10</sup>

The films suggested at the meeting were an integral part of what historian Jay Cassel calls "[t]he most spectacular feature of the Canadian VD campaign in the 1920s and 1930s"—public education. The public education campaign was molded by one main message: the need for sexual self-control.<sup>11</sup> Both silent films highlighted the way the early sex instruction of children, led to the development of sexual self-control and to the avoidance of the horrific consequences of venereal disease. The nature study method of sex instruction pioneered by social purists figured prominently in both films. "The End of the Road" was released in 1918 as part of the American armed forces' efforts to combat venereal disease. The film launched the operations of the CNCCVD. It played to packed houses across Canada; by 1921 some 500,000 Canadians had seen it.<sup>12</sup> The film explained to the audience that there were two roads in life; one led toward the "Land of Perfect Love," the other to the "Dark Valley of Despair." It begins with seven-year-old Mary Lee who finds a bird's nest filled with eggs cradled in the branches of a tree in her back yard. Mary's mother says: "You came from an egg too darling...For nine long months you belonged to

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<sup>10</sup> NAC MG 28 I 332 Vol. 191 File: Ontario Board of Health (Part II), 1920-27, letter to Dr. McCullough from Dr. Gordon Bates, June 25, 1921.

<sup>11</sup> Jay Cassel, *The Secret Plague: Venereal Disease in Canada, 1838-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), p. 206.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 209-212.

mother as you belonged to no one else." From this point onward, Mary Lee journeys on the road to Perfect Love. She receives further sex instruction from her mother in adolescence, rejects an early marriage, becomes a nurse in New York who treats venereally diseased patients, refuses a sexual encounter with a former suitor leaving for military duty, goes to France to minister tirelessly to wounded soldiers, and then becomes engaged to the entirely respectable Dr. Bell just as Allied reinforcements march victoriously into their war-torn town. In contrast Vera Wagner, Mary's childhood friend, is never told about sex by her mother. From adolescence onward she is propelled toward the Valley of Despair. Vera goes off to New York to meet a rich man, works as a sales girl, becomes the mistress of a suitor who smokes and drinks, contracts a skin disease which nurse Mary and Dr. Bell suspect is syphilis and is then treated to a tour of a venereal disease ward. The audience sees actual footage of patients suffering horrifically from the advanced stages of venereal infection. After her tour comes to an end Vera is told her test is negative. Her lesson learned, Vera leaves her beau for good and finds a suitable job.<sup>13</sup>

"The Gift of Life" was sponsored by the American Social Hygiene Association (ASHA) and was considered quite a showpiece. It was screened as far away as Egypt.<sup>14</sup> This film is divided into three sections. In the first section a boy, aged about 12, is accompanied by a male scientist on a walk through the woods. They collect water samples. They look at an amoeba under the microscope and eventually graduate to slicing open hen's eggs to view developing chick embryos. The second section of the film is set off from the first by the following ominous warning: "Owing to the nature of the film, the producers insist on the absence of any musical accompaniment during its exhibition." This section detailed the effects of syphilis and gonorrhoea on human reproductive organs. Diagrams showing syphilitic and gonorrheal bacteria represented as black dots invading the male urethra and the female vaginal canal are supplemented by actual footage of human body parts displaying the consequences of venereal infection. In the last section

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<sup>13</sup> NAC 13-0234-2-1, "The End of the Road," 1932 [1918].

<sup>14</sup> Wendell Cleland, "The Gift of Life in Egypt," *Journal of Social Hygiene* 11 (1925), pp. 215-218.

of the film the text informs the audience that, "The best step toward Prevention is to become wise to the danger." A man dressed in a suit walks toward the front steps of a home where a smiling woman with a chubby baby awaits him. Two young boys, presumably his sons, run up to greet the man. Words flash on screen confirming that reproduction in humans and mammals is the same. "but in man [sic], both sex and reproduction become idealized into perfect affection and love. A strong man, happily married to a strong woman, together providing for the upbringing of strong, beautiful children—this is the finest gift of life."<sup>15</sup>

Despite the CNCCVD's attempts at developing a sex instruction programme for parents, it was becoming obvious by late 1921 that the public might construe the CNCCVD's social hygiene campaign to be narrowly restricted to the hygienic rather than to the moral aspects of venereal disease control. The Rev. J. G. Shearer of the Moral and Social Reform Council of Canada warned that if the CNCCVD developed a sex hygiene programme, the public might become prejudiced against sex instruction in general because they would associate sex hygiene with an organization whose main work was combatting venereal disease.<sup>16</sup> A caustic letter that a Mr. Arthur Parsons of Acton, Ontario, sent to the *Mail and Empire* drove home Shearer's point. Parsons expressed his dismay that the CNCCVD would content itself with attending conventions and banquets to propagandize against the venereal peril with not much else to offer half a million adolescent boys and young men other than fear, the admonition "Don't!" and the drug Salvarsan. Parsons insisted that because prevention was always preferable to the cure, reformers should stop their "idle patriotic chatter" and convince the federal government to allot money for a nation-wide educational campaign to teach the young "right knowledge."<sup>17</sup> Dr. J. W. S. McCullough, chief officer of health at the Ontario Board of Health, dismissed Parsons as someone unacquainted with

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<sup>15</sup> LC VBF 07 40. "The Gift of Life." 1920.

<sup>16</sup> NAC MG 28 I 332 Vol. 147 File: S H Tours: Pankhurst-Toronto Talk, 1921-1924. letter to Miss Tate, secretary to Gordon Bates, from J. G. Shearer, July 28, 1921.

<sup>17</sup> NAC MG 28 I 332 Vol. 191 File: Ontario Board of Health (Part II), 1920-1927. clipping of a letter to the editor of *The Mail and Empire* from Mr. Arthur Parsons, December ? 1921.

the true nature of the CNCCVD's work, but Bates was more willing to concede that something had to be done to raise the moral stature of the CNCCVD in the public's eyes.<sup>18</sup> Bates' solution, which was agreed upon by McCullough and by Dr. R. R. McClenahan, the chief of the Ontario Division of Venereal Disease Control, was to change the name of the CNCCVD to the Canadian Social Hygiene Council (CSHC). Bates reasoned that the CNCCVD had been so successful in raising public awareness about venereal disease that there was now a demand for a more widespread social hygiene campaign based on education. The new name of the organization was supposed to reflect the four broadly-based aims of the CSHC. These were: to undertake measures necessary to prevent, reduce or assist in the control of venereal disease; to promote conditions which best protected the family as a social institution; to cooperate with all governmental institutions toward these ends; and to cooperate with other organizations with similar interests.<sup>19</sup> Educating parents to teach "the facts of life to their children" fit neatly with the first two aims of this new and improved social hygiene organization.<sup>20</sup>

## II

The Great War's apparently dysgenic impact on the Canadian populace established the reign of the "experts"—physicians, social workers, teachers and psychologists—over all aspects of healthy child rearing. Canada's high level of infant and maternal morality was considered lamentable and largely preventable. Parent education was, however, a definite misnomer. In a direct attempt to improve the eugenic quality of children, experts deemed that mothers were needful of child care advice. Experts' attack on alleged maternal incompetence during the inter-war years can be traced to the discovery that three out of five British recruits for the Boer War (1899-1902)

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<sup>18</sup> NAC MG 28 I 332 Vol. 191 File: Ontario Board of Health (Part II), 1920-1927, letter to Gordon Bates from John McCullough, December ? 1921.

<sup>19</sup> Cassel, *The Secret Plague*, p. 214.

<sup>20</sup> NAC MG 28 I 332 Vol. 191 File: Ontario Board of Health (Part II), 1920-1927, letter to Dr. McCullough from Dr. Gordon Bates, December 20, 1921.



were physically unfit to serve. Remarkably, poverty was overlooked as factor contributing to the recruits' bad teeth, short stature and weak lungs; mothers' ignorance regarding housework, child care and food preparation was identified as the major cause of the recruits ill-health. Helen MacMurphy, Ontario Inspector of the Feeble-Minded, traced reformers' interest in preventive medicine to the alarming discovery of the poor physical condition of British manhood during the Boer War and, like most individuals sympathetic to eugenics, came to focus on the mother as the only person who could save the child. During the inter-war years parent education classes for upper- and middle-class mothers were organized at the St. George School for Child Study under the aegis of the CNCMH. Toronto's Division of Child Hygiene hired and trained visiting nurses to advise mothers on breast feeding, diapering and discipline. The National Council of Women of Canada sponsored "Little Mother Classes" to encourage young girls to learn the child care skills necessary for the preparation of motherhood. MacMurphy published a very popular series of advice books—the Blue Books—for mothers on household, family and child management. Unable to provide their children with the most basic necessities of survival particularly during the Depression, many immigrant mothers, mothers who came from the lower classes, single mothers and mothers from rural areas bore the brunt of the experts' emphasis on scientific mothering. Instead of working toward economic solutions intended to alleviate these mothers' poverty, experts labelled them neglectful and often placed their children in foster care.<sup>21</sup>

In the inter-war years the growing influence of behaviourist psychology pioneered by John Watson and Ivan Pavlov succeeded the pre-war Froebelian romantic conceptualization of children.

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<sup>21</sup> Anna Davin, "Imperialism and Motherhood," *History Workshop* 5 (Spring 1978): 9-65; Veronica Strong-Boag, "Intruders in the Nursery: Childcare Professionals Reshape the Years One to Five, 1920-1940," in Joy Parr (ed.), *Childhood and Family in Canadian History* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988 [1982]), pp. 160-178; Cynthia R. Abele, "The Infant Soldier: The Great War and the Medical Campaign for Child Welfare," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 5 (1988): 99-119; Cynthia Abele Comacchio, "The Mothers of the Last Must Suffer: Child and Maternal Welfare in Rural and Outpost Ontario, 1918-1940" *Ontario History* 80, 3 (September 1988): 183-205; Cynthia Comacchio, *Nations Are Built of Babies: Saving Ontario's Mothers and Children, 1900-1940* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993); Katherine Arup, *Education For Motherhood: Advice for Mothers in Twentieth-Century Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994).

Children were no longer considered plants which blossomed with loving care but mechanistic creatures requiring the security of rigid schedules and routines. An adherent of Watson's and Pavlov's stimulus-response model of child behaviour, William Blatz held that children were ruled by instincts which parents could transform into good habits via rigorous methodical training. Blatz's categorization of good and bad habits was invariably associated with his understanding of social conformity and non-conformity. Rejecting the Freudian focus on the over-riding nature of the sex instinct, Blatz considered masturbation to be a bad habit no different from bed-wetting or nail-biting. Blatz did accept, however, Freud's emphasis on the important place the child's early years occupied in the development of the personality. For Blatz, children's bad habits were usually the result of maternal incompetence. Thus the first step in habit training children was to educate mothers to deal successfully with children's behaviour problems.<sup>22</sup>

In 1925, the CSHC established an Education Division for the express purpose of providing information for parents on child study and sex instruction. The CSHC took its cue from a pamphlet, "Information for Parents: Teaching of Sex Hygiene to Children," which was produced by the federal Department of Pensions and National Health in 1920. Emblazoned with the motto "Sound education is the foundation of the State," the pamphlet emphasized the danger of venereal infection and promoted the need for children's sex instruction to protect their future well-being. Parents were told that they had a responsibility to provide truthful answers to their young children's questions, to teach their children the principles of modesty and cleanliness, to speak to their teenage boys and girls, respectively, about seminal emissions and menstruation, to emphasize the importance of self-control and to teach that marriage was based on ideals far above animal passion.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Strong-Boag, "Intruders in the Nursery."

<sup>23</sup> "Information for Parents: Teaching of Sex Hygiene to Children," *National Health Publication* no. 26, 1941 [1920].

Sandiford of the CSHC authored a similar booklet, "Tell Your Children the Truth," which combined the behaviourist model of child study with social hygiene's emphasis on racial responsibility. Sandiford repeated much of what his booklet stated over the CKCL radio station as a CSHC broadcast on August 4, 1925.<sup>24</sup> The radio broadcasts and the booklet were clearly directed at an audience of white middle-class parents. Betraying the concern that the public would reject the CSHC's sex instruction programme because of the organization's close association with venereal disease, the booklet assured parents that social hygiene did not deal solely with venereal disease and the threat to public health but embraced personal and social sex hygiene, the biology and physiology of reproduction, heredity and eugenics, euthenics, ethics and sociology of sex, the psychology of sex and the aesthetics of sex. As Maurice Bigelow had done in his *Sex-Education* (1916),<sup>25</sup> the booklet's authors made a distinction between the negative sex attitudes of the past and the positive attitudes of the present. The prevalence of prostitution and venereal disease was proof that the silence of the past on sex issues had to be broken.

Parents were encouraged not to shirk their responsibility and throw it upon the church or the school because parents, unlike pastors and teachers, remained a constant presence in children's lives. Parents were assured that their biggest responsibility was to rear self-reliant, healthy citizens and that sex instruction was of vital importance to their children's health. The aim of sex instruction was to keep the development of the sex instinct within normal channels. This could be accomplished by inculcating good habits in children; developing good attitudes toward sex; and imparting needful information. Parents were encouraged not to despair over the enormity of their task. "Never before in the history of the world," trumpeted Sandiford, "have the researchers of psychology and mental and social hygiene held out greater promise to the parent anxious to avoid

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<sup>24</sup> Peter Sandiford, "Parental Responsibility," *Canadian Journal of Public Health* 16, 8 (August 1925): 386-390.

<sup>25</sup> Maurice Bigelow, *Sex-Education: A Series of Lectures Concerning Knowledge of Sex in its Relation to Human Life* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1916).

the more obvious pitfalls of his or her craft."<sup>26</sup> The booklet's language of triumphant scientific optimism, did not disguise, however, the fact that the new frontier of sex instruction envisioned by the CSHC was territory which had been well-charted by social purists.

Children, according to the booklet, were born with hereditary traits which were fixed. Nevertheless, hereditary traits could be modified by the environment. Sandiford illustrated this point by speculating, in stereotypically racist fashion, that a "normal Canadian child" raised among "savage tribes in the heart of an African forest" would develop few traits Canadian society considered desirable.<sup>27</sup> Behaviour during childhood was attributed to the action of muscles and glands. Muscular and glandular activity also explained the adolescents' heightening consciousness of sex. Mating and parental behaviour were classed alongside walking, laughing and hoarding as instinctive actions. Instinctive actions were the outcome of neural patterns necessary to survival. Neural patterns were responsible for habits and habits were said to be the basis of character. The booklet made no distinction between bad moral and bad physical habits such as lying and constipation. Both were acquired due to inadequate habit training at home. Bad habits could be eliminated by redirecting children's instincts into more desirable channels or by sublimating them.

The booklet assured parents that wholesome food, personal cleanliness, regular bowel movements, rest, exercise and good literature were essential to the physical, mental and moral health of their children. Nature study was the preferred method of teaching young children about reproduction; parents were advised that keeping pets and farm animals would "bring many facts of sex home to children in perfectly natural ways."<sup>28</sup> The booklet gave the nod to the suggestion, made by Bigelow, that the proper scientific names for male and female organs be used by parents

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<sup>26</sup> NAC MG 28 I 332 Vol. 141 File: Kit (Social Hygiene) 1944-1947, "Tell Your Children the Truth." 1925. p. 4.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

when teaching their children about the reproductive anatomy.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, any mention of the clitoris was absent. Parents were urged to maintain a close relationship to their children and to answer all questions about reproduction as truthfully as possible. The most difficult question a child could ask concerned the part the father played in reproduction. The booklet remained mute on the subject of sexual intercourse for it advised parents to turn to cellular biology, plant reproduction and animal fertilization to explain that one male and one female cell were needed to bring life into the world. This method would help prevent the "shock which usually comes" when previously ignorant children learned about reproduction in humans.<sup>30</sup>

Fathers were to explain to their sons that nocturnal emissions in boys were normal. They expelled excess semen. More than two or three emissions a month, however, was considered debilitating. Doctors were to be consulted in such cases of undue frequency. Fathers could help their sons reduce the frequency of nocturnal emissions by encouraging them to exercise in the open air and sleep on a hard bed. Mothers were to explain to their daughters that menstruation was Nature's way of preparing the girl for the joys and responsibilities of motherhood. Mothers were once again warned that girls ignorant of the meaning of the menstrual flow bathed in cold water or sat on snow to prevent their blood loss. By age 16 or before boys and girls left home for college, they were to be warned of the moral and hygienic dangers of venereal disease. This warning was thought to be sufficient to keep "youths and maidens on the straight and narrow path."<sup>31</sup>

The most noticeable difference between the social purity and the social hygiene programmes of sex instruction for children in the Education Division's booklet lay in the understanding of childhood masturbation. Typical social purist literature held that masturbation was more common in boys than in girls and repeatedly warned of the dire consequences of the

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<sup>29</sup> Bigelow, *Sex-Education*.

<sup>30</sup> "Tell Your Children the Truth," p. 20.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

practice. By contrast, social hygienists like Sandiford held that boys and girls were equally susceptible to the practice and rejected the notion, espoused by special lecturer Arthur Beall and his ilk,<sup>32</sup> that masturbation resulted in insanity and death. Sandiford suggested, nevertheless, that masturbation was an unsavoury habit parents could help the child break. With his unshakable faith in habit training, Sandiford argued that the best way to combat masturbation was to "form the habit of not doing it."<sup>33</sup> The firm but gentle warnings parents were to give their children against masturbation were gendered; boys should be told that masturbation stopped them from growing big and strong while girls should know that masturbation made them physically unattractive. The treatment Sandiford advised for masturbation was remarkably similar to that advocated by social purists: clean genitalia, exercise, non-stimulating foods, loose clothing, hard beds and fresh air. Sandiford never advocated, however, the use of physical restraints placed on the child's genitals or hands that some social purists recommended. By the late 1930s, educators looked upon masturbation with even less disapproval than they had in the 1920s. The Rev. Alfred Tyrer's advice to parents conceded that it was natural for children to explore their bodies. Rather than using the term "self-abuse" to refer to masturbation, Tyrer used the term "self-relief" and insisted that moderate self-relief in adolescents of both sexes was prevalent. Tyrer dismissed the possibility that masturbation could do serious physical or mental harm to children; it was the sense of guilt over masturbation implanted by over-zealous teaching which caused problems in children. Tyrer was adamant, however, that too much self-relief could unfit the individual for marriage and recommended the now familiar treatment programme of physical activity, hard beds, loose clothing and the development of a strong will to avoid excess.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Arthur Beall, *The Living Temple: A Manual on Eugenics for Parents and Teachers* (Whitby, Ontario: The A. B. Penhale Publishing Company, 1933).

<sup>33</sup> "Tell Your Children the Truth," p. 21.

<sup>34</sup> Tyrer, *Sex, Marriage and Birth-Control*, pp. 94-95; Alfred Henry Tyrer, *D'Où Venons-Nous Chère Maman?* (Montréal: Les éditions de la Houle, 1947 [English translation 1939]), pp. 64-65.

### III

In October, 1926, A. D. Hardie of the Education Division was approached by the leader of a group of fathers who asked him to conduct a class in child study. Initially reluctant, Hardie consulted with Dr. Clarence Hincks at the CNCMH and then set up a formalized programme of courses in sex instruction for interested parents, teachers and youth leaders at the CSHC's Toronto headquarters, Hygeia House. Hardie took pains to distinguish between the parent education schemes organized by the CNCMH and those managed by the CSHC. The CSHC's parent education programme, as Hardie put it, "leads up to and emphasizes the matter of sex education."<sup>35</sup> Although the CSHC would have been well aware of the Ontario WCTU's Mothers' Meetings and was in possession of material produced by the Women's Co-operative Alliance, a Minneapolis group which devoted its energies to teaching parents about social hygiene,<sup>36</sup> the CSHC did not make any attempt to formally link up with any women's organization. Women were involved in the local committees but were not well-represented at the national level. Only three women served the organization at the national level. They were: Judge Emily Murphy, the Alberta pro-sterilization feminist who sat on the national board; Mrs. A. M. Huestis, who had been one the vice-presidents of the Toronto branch of the PACFM, and now took over the post of national treasurer for CSHC; and Mabel Ferris, Bates' personal secretary.<sup>37</sup>

The CSHC's main concession to feminist involvement in sex reform was to hire Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst, the British suffragette leader of the Women's Social and Political Union

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<sup>35</sup> NAC MG 28 I 332 Vol. 80 File: Parent Education, 1927-28, letter to A. F. C. Fiske from A. D. Hardie, February 22, 1927.

<sup>36</sup> NAC MG 28 I 332 Vol. 147 File: S H Tours—Pankhurst—Toronto, 1921-1924, "Tenth Annual Report, Women's Co-operative Alliance, 1925."

<sup>37</sup> Cassel, *The Secret Plague*, p. 212.

(WSPU) and mother of Christabel and Sylvia Pankhurst, in late 1922 to lecture about the dangers of venereal disease. Pankhurst, along with Bates and J. J. Heagerty, director of the Dominion Venereal Disease Division, lectured across Canada. Pankhurst's Canadian lectures have been characterized by one historian as a "passionate appeal to principles."<sup>38</sup> Now Pankhurst may have appealed to the single standard of sexual purity, but it is apparent that her speeches possessed none of Christabel's Butlerite insistence on men's culpability for the spread of venereal disease.<sup>39</sup> Speaking to large mixed audiences in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Pankhurst urged men and women to work together to solve the venereal disease problem because they were both now politically enfranchised citizens of Canada. Pankhurst appeared almost apologetic for the reputation she had acquired as a "harsh critic of men," assuring her listeners that she could not believe that any man was wicked enough to risk infecting his future wife and begetting a crippled child.<sup>40</sup> Approximately 60,000 people between Ottawa and the Rockies heard Pankhurst speak and several local branches of the CSHC sprang up in Ontario, New Brunswick and Saskatchewan.<sup>41</sup>

Bates took the opportunity during the Pankhurst lecture tour to reiterate that children had to be taught about love and marriage, a matter about which parents were now being educated. By early 1927, the "Committee on Parent Education" consisted of Hardie, Bates and Sandiford, as well as a number of male educators and physicians and one female nurse. Sandiford remained clear that the work of the Education Division was entirely limited to parents and youth teachers. He rejected requests from adults who wanted speakers to lecture to pupils on sexual matters: "We do not believe in giving sex education to boys and girls of the public school except in a very incidental way through the lessons in nature study."<sup>42</sup> The Parent Education Committee continued to adhere

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 214.

<sup>39</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, *The Great Scourge and How to End It* (London: E. Pankhurst, 1913).

<sup>40</sup> NAC MG 28 I 332 Vol. 1 File: S H Tours: Pankhurst Tour-Arrangements, 1921-1923, typed newspaper account from the *Saskatoon Daily Star*, May 29, 1923.

<sup>41</sup> Cassel, *The Secret Plague*, p. 215.

<sup>42</sup> NAC MG 28 I 332 Vol. 80 File: Parent Education, 1927-1928, letter to Dr. Fenwick from Peter Sandiford, March 5, 1928.



to the behaviourist model of child study and to the importance of racial responsibility. It organized courses of lectures for parents on "The Mechanisms of Behaviour," "Health Habits" and "How the Body Works."<sup>43</sup> Parents enrolled in the CSHC's programme could purchase pamphlets such as "Tell Your Children the Truth." Sandiford's own lecture on "The Necessity of Sex Education" elaborated upon the booklet he had authored. He pleaded for building "character" in the young so that future generation's genetic inheritance would allow them to take full advantage of an improved environment. Sandiford made only one concession to Freudian psychology, allowing that the past's repressive attitudes toward speaking out against sex resulted in the mind being burdened with "complexes."<sup>44</sup>

Ironically the CSHC was hostile to Freud precisely because he was perceived as laying all sexual problems at the door of "sex 'repression'." An editorial in *Social Health*, the official organ of the CSHC which was authored by Bates, condemned those who accepted this Freudian thesis at face value. For Bates, the notion that the repression of sexual urges led to the manifestation of sexual difficulties was anathema because it threw the philosophy of sexual continence and, hence, sexual morality into question:

Nothing is to be gained by swallowing the Freudian or any other theory holus bolus and thinking we have "arrived." We can arrive only when we stiffen our moral back bones, enlighten our minds thoroughly and apply both heart and brain to whatever problems confront us. Obsessions with someone else's theories are just about as bad as the obsessions with sex itself.<sup>45</sup>

Not everyone would have agreed with Bates. For Edna Moore, Freudian theory was a boon to social hygienists' and parents' understanding of children while for J. W. Bridges, psychoanalysis

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<sup>43</sup> NAC MG 28 I 332 Vol. 80 File: Parent Education 1927-1928, Minutes, Committee of Parent Education, November 8, 1927.

<sup>44</sup> NAC MG 28 I 332 Vol. 80 File: Parent Education, 1927-1928, Peter Sandiford, "The Necessity of Sex Education," p. 4.

<sup>45</sup> "Too Much Freud?" *Social Health* 1, 10 (May and June 1925), pp. 1-2.

had a great contribution to make toward self-knowledge.<sup>46</sup> Yet expressions of hostility to Freudian psychoanalysis continued to be expressed. One reviewer in *The School*, a popular and influential educational journal for teachers, blasted Anna Freud's *Introduction to Psycho-Analysis for Teachers* (1931) and all those who accepted the thesis that sexual repression potentially caused psychological dangers in individuals. Freudian psychology, the reviewer charged, "grossly over-emphasizes the importance of sex life in the individual." The reviewer condemned psychoanalysis as faddish and confidently predicted that it was "a passing phase of study and even these four lectures of Anna Freud will not prevent it from sinking into oblivion, probably within the span of life of the present generation."<sup>47</sup>

Despite the fact that parent education at the CSHC was primarily the province of professional men, the nurse on the Committee had a very important role to play. Mrs. Agnes Haygarth, a Social Service Nurse at the provincial Department of Health, was an apt choice for parent education. Representing the CSHC and the province's Division of Preventable Diseases, she toured Ontario between 1925-27, giving lectures on health, displaying wax models of human reproductive organs, showing posters on venereal disease and screening "The Gift of Life" to a variety of audiences.<sup>48</sup> While her audience often consisted of doctors and nurses, she also addressed large numbers of teachers, parents and children.<sup>49</sup> As part of the Parent Education Committee, Haygarth lectured to parents on "Habit Formation," and "Some problems in the home." Her comments on the need for social hygiene education for children as well as her tips for children and young adults between the ages of five and twenty succeeded her presentation of "The Gift of Life."<sup>50</sup> When the parent education programme was presented separately to mothers and

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<sup>46</sup> Edna L. Moore, "How Life Begins," *Canadian Journal of Public Health* 13, 4 (April 1922): 158-160; J. W. Bridges, "Psychoanalysis, a Contribution to the New Psychology," *Canadian Journal of Public Health* 14, 5 (May 1923): 205-209 and 14, 6 (June 1923): 272-278.

<sup>47</sup> *Introduction to Psycho-Analysis for Teachers*, by Anna Freud, *The School* 19, 9 (May 1931), p. 978.

<sup>48</sup> For more information see Cassel, *The Secret Plague*, p. 232.

<sup>49</sup> AO, RG 62 Series C-2-b File 467.5 "Reports of the Social Service Nurse."

<sup>50</sup> NAC MG 28 I 332 Vol. 80 File: Parent Education, 1927-1928, untitled, undated (March 1927?) sheet listing Haygarth's lectures.

fathers at a local church as the "Deer Park Parent Course" between February and March, 1927, it was noted that fathers rarely attended, and "mothers turned out well until sex education was dealt with. The film appeared to frighten some, and consequently the lecture on sex education was badly attended." Despite these problems, the church wanted to repeat the programme.<sup>51</sup> In April, this programme was also presented to Home and School Clubs as "a course of lectures for Mothers in Child Management" at the behest of the Toronto Home and School Council Executive.<sup>52</sup>

#### IV

The CSHC's reluctance to implement sex instruction in Ontario schools did not mean that, apart from Beall's lectures, information on childhood sexuality had not already seeped into the curriculum. The authors of textbooks recommended by the Ontario Department of Education from 1900 onward made veiled references to children's sexuality and its management which were generally palatable to both social purists and hygienists.<sup>53</sup> Texts for Normal School teachers dispensed information on the importance of regulating the manifestations of children's sexuality. Texts for pupils dispensed information intended to encourage children to regulate their own sexuality. In both cases this information was shot through with eugenicist advice. Indeed, historian Patricia Vertinsky has discovered that in the United States the histories of families like the Jukes became "the basis for instruction in eugenics in the public schools for many years."<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> NAC MG 28 I 332 Vol. 80 File: Parent Education, 1927-28, "Report on the Deer Park Parent Course."

<sup>52</sup> NAC MG 28 I 332 Vol. 80 File: Parent Education, 1927-28, letter to Mrs. A. B. Silcox from Mr. A. D. Hardie, March 11, 1927.

<sup>53</sup> This has been recognized by Helen Lenskyj, "Femininity First: Sport and Physical Education for Ontario Girls, 1890-1930," *Canadian Journal of the History of Sport* 13, 2 (December 1982): 4-17 and by George S. Tomkins, *A Common Countenance: Stability and Change in the Canadian Curriculum* (Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 1986), p. 127.

<sup>54</sup> Patricia Anne Vertinsky, "Education for Sexual Morality: Moral Reform and the Regulation of American Sexual Behavior in the Nineteenth Century," EdD. Dissertation, University of British Columbia, 1974, p. 240.

Even though both social purists and social hygienists expected parents to assume responsibility for instructing their children in matters relating to sexuality, teachers-in-training at Ontario Normal Schools were given some information concerning children's sexuality in at least one part of their curriculum: the Science of Education. The Science of Education was broken down, in the Normal School Calenders, into Psychology and Child Study. The books recommended under Psychology between 1908 and 1924<sup>55</sup> show that future teachers were given a grounding in the workings of the mind, the central nervous system, psychological testing, and the principles of education. Child Study introduced future teachers to works such as American Edwin A. Kirkpatrick's *Fundamentals of Child Study* (1903).<sup>56</sup> For Kirkpatrick, the sexual instinct was synonymous with the desire to reproduce and care for the young. This "parental instinct" was one of the most powerful human instincts which had to develop along "the right lines." Kirkpatrick held parents responsible for managing this development but admitted that as most found sex instruction so embarrassing, few attempted it.<sup>57</sup> Like many social purists, Kirkpatrick considered that boys were more prone to masturbation than were girls. The masturbating boy defiled his moral, mental and physical health. Kirkpatrick advised that a program very similar to that which social purity advocates proposed be set in motion against masturbation, erotic day dreaming and sexual exploration. Kirkpatrick recommended that "stimulating" food should be avoided, exercise should be taken regularly and idleness shunned.

Kirkpatrick distanced himself, however, from the hereditarian views advanced by many social purists and hygienists. Kirkpatrick made no overt connections between sexual promiscuity and the propagation of mentally, morally and physically damaged descendants. He agreed with

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<sup>55</sup> I have had access to the Ontario Department of Education's *Syllabus of Regulations and Courses for the Normal Schools of Ontario at Hamilton, London, North Bay, Ottawa, Peterborough, Stratford, and Toronto* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1914), from 1908 to 1924. According to Shirley Wigmore, these Normal School Calendars no longer included recommended text book lists after 1924.

<sup>56</sup> Edwin A. Kirkpatrick, *Fundamentals of Child Study: A Discussion of Instincts and Other Factors in Human Development* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1908 [1903]).

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118.

Wisemann's theory of heredity, which held that parents transmit what they inherit, not what they acquire. Kirkpatrick believed human beings required a favourable environment in order to advance. Citing Robert Dugdale's example of the Jukes' family,<sup>58</sup> Kirkpatrick rejected the assertion that "Margaret the mother of criminals" was responsible for descendants who were poor, criminal and/or insane because of their mental inheritance. He reasoned that Margaret's descendants were poor, criminal and insane due to the unfortunate conditions of their social inheritance.

Whereas texts for teachers-in-training dispensed information on the importance of regulating the manifestations of children's sexuality, texts recommended by the Ontario Department of Education for pupils' hygiene lessons after 1900 encouraged children to regulate their own sexuality. Hygiene, along with physical education, nature study, manual training and domestic science, was a major component of the New Education's attempt to educate the whole child.<sup>59</sup> Hygiene and physical education were also two of the preventive health measures adopted by school and public health officials. Hygiene and physical education were made compulsory subjects before the First World War. Physical education's major goals were to inculcate in children discipline, social and moral self-control, military preparedness and patriotism. The intervention of the Dominion Militia Department in 1907 shifted the school's emphasis on physical culture to physical training. By 1913, the military influence on schools' physical training curricula led to the formation of 759 cadet corps across Canada. Cadet corps were phased out during the anti-militaristic 1930s only to re-appear with renewed gusto during the Second World War. The apparent need for military preparedness meant that boys were the main beneficiaries of physical education. Girls were ignored or were subjected to a programme of light gymnastics thought necessary for preparing them for healthy motherhood.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Robert L. Dugdale, *The Jukes: A Study in Crime, Pauperism, Disease, and Heredity* (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1910 [1877]).

<sup>59</sup> Neil Sutherland, *Children in English Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth-Century Consensus* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1976), pp. 182-201; Tomkins, *A Common Countenance*, pp. 123-127.

<sup>60</sup> Neil Sutherland, "To Create a Strong and Healthy Race: School Children in the Public Health Movement, 1880-1914," in S. E. D. Shortt (ed.), *Medicine in Canadian Society* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press,

Hygiene was defined by one early educational manual as "the science which treats of the preservation of life and health by the application of scientific laws to agencies and things in common use."<sup>61</sup> Hygiene was a formal subject for the elementary grades. Due to the public health movement's emphasis on preventive education, teachers were expected to give simple lessons about care of the hair, skin and teeth, the effects of alcohol, tobacco, coffee and tea, the formation of good habits and the removal of waste.<sup>62</sup> Given the perceived connection between sexuality and health, it is not surprising that some sexual information should find its niche in this part of the Ontario public school's curriculum.<sup>63</sup>

The early study of hygiene was first limited to the study of various stimulants' effects on the body and was heavily influenced by the social purity movement. At the behest of the Ontario WCTU, William Nattress' *Public School Physiology and Temperance* (1893) was authorized for use in the province's elementary public schools. Nattress did provide children with some information on the danger of infectious and contagious diseases, and on the importance of cleanliness in dwellings, workshops and kitchens. His main intention, however, was to inform teachers and pupils about the physiologic action and effects of alcoholic stimulants and narcotics on the body's various organs. Nattress' impressed upon pupils the "tremendous risk of tampering with such powerful agents of destruction."<sup>64</sup> He explained to the child just how tobacco, alcohol and various narcotics such as opium adversely affected bones, muscles, skin, digestion, circulation, respiration and the nervous system.

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1981): 361-393; Tomkins, *A Common Countenance*, p. 101; Helen Lenskyj, "Raising 'Good Vigorous Animals': Medical Interest in Children's Health in Ontario, 1890-1930," *Scientia Canadensis* 12, 2 (1988), p. 131.

<sup>61</sup> *Manual of Hygiene for Schools and Colleges. Prepared by the Provincial Board of Health. Authorized by the Minister of Education* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1880), p. 9.

<sup>62</sup> *Public School Courses of Study: Duties of Teachers and Pupils for Use of the Teachers-in-Training in the Faculties of Education and the Normal and Model Schools of Ontario* (Toronto: L. K. Cameron, 1909).

<sup>63</sup> Tomkins, *A Common Countenance*, pp. 123-127.

<sup>64</sup> William Nattress, *Public School Physiology and Temperance* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1893), p. iii.

Like social purists, Nattress wished to eliminate such stimulants from girls' and boys' lives because tobacco, alcohol and narcotics were said to generate too much excitement. Like social purists, Nattress reasoned that because of the effects of these stimulants on the nervous system, the child's ability to control his or her behaviour would be compromised. An enfeebled will would be unable to help the child's reasoning faculty rule over his or her passions. Some of these passions were sexual. Nattress hinted at young children's tendency to masturbate and to engage in erotic reverie. Despite Nattress' attempts to instill the importance of self-surveillance in children, he believed that adult supervision was still required because a child's inactivity and solitude could lead to masturbation and erotic reverie. He warned teachers to be on the look-out for children who isolated themselves from their friends or who suddenly began to sit in "dreamy idleness."<sup>65</sup>

In 1910, Nattress' text was replaced with another—A. P. Knight's *Ontario Public School Hygiene* (1910).<sup>66</sup> This text was recommended for the public school's fourth and fifth forms, roughly the equivalent of today's grades six to eight. Knight's text was revised sometime around 1923, and was recommended by the Ontario Department of Education until 1926. Knight's text was representative of the social hygiene movement's focus on improving public health. Although Knight dealt with the environmental and the hereditary contribution to children's health, the bulk of his text focused on the environment to which children were exposed. Knight outlined the nature, symptoms and treatment of communicable diseases such as diphtheria, small-pox, measles and typhoid. Children were warned about the existence of microbes in sewage, water, milk and garbage and were encouraged to keep their bodies and their surroundings free from disease. Knight had attended the main meeting of the Fourth International Congress of School Hygiene organized by the American Federation of Sex Hygiene (AFSH) on the subject of sex education for children in Buffalo, New York, in late August, 1913. The child's management of his or her

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<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 117-118.

<sup>66</sup> A. P. Knight, *Ontario Public School Hygiene* (Toronto: The Copp Clark Company, Ltd. 1910).

sexuality was important to his understanding of health management. Knight agreed with the prevailing wisdom which was offered by social purists and supported by social hygienists on the ways children could develop self-control over their sexual urges. He advised children to stay away from stimulants such as tea, coffee and alcohol. Physical exercise was highly recommended. Sleep was essential for good health but too much time spent in bed was frowned upon. Fearing that children might masturbate if they lay under the covers for too long, Knight advised children to keep a "fixed hour" for sleeping and waking.

In keeping with the inter-war concern with hereditary feeble-mindedness, Knight admitted heredity played a role equal to that of the environment in determining Canadian children's health, happiness and success. Knight's one chapter on "Family Stock" upheld "Margaret, the mother of criminals," as the reason for the propagation of the 1,200 paupers, criminals and lunatics in the Jukes family. Knight claimed that inherited mental deficiency was said to be the reason why certain number of families were weaklings "diseased in body and impure and depraved in mind and life" because of their genetic inheritance.<sup>67</sup> Knight continued to complain about the Jukes into the 1923 edition, lambasting such families as examples of poor citizenship and racial irresponsibility. He begged boys and girls to consider the destruction waged by this unfortunate family when choosing a life partner for marriage. The information on the importance of families' mental inheritance Knight gave pupils contrasted greatly with the information Kirkpatrick had given teachers-in-training on the importance of families' social inheritance. One reason for the difference in the textual information on feeble-mindedness school children and prospective teachers received may be traced to MacMurchy. MacMurchy appears to have been a tangible influence on Knight's views on feeble-mindedness. She had not only attended the Fourth International Congress of School Hygiene with Knight but had also read the proofs to his text, a service he gratefully acknowledged in his preface.

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 215.



Between 1913-1915, three readers in hygiene were recommended for younger children's use. Beginning in the third form, or today's grades four and five, Ontario public school children were to read *Hygiene Reader* (n. d.) *Hygiene for Young People* (1909) and *The Story of the Human Body* (n. d.) These three texts were also recommended as supplements to the authorized texts in the higher grades. *Hygiene Reader* cannot be located. *Hygiene for Young People* was also authored by Knight.<sup>68</sup> This text provided the same kind of information, in a simpler format, that Knight's text for the older children did. *Hygiene for Young People* was very similar to *The Story of the Human Body*, a text authored by Chalmers Watson.<sup>69</sup> Watson included one entire chapter on self-control. He compared the nervous system to a railway line, thoughts and impulses to railway cars, the boy or girl to the signal operator, and the power of inhibition to the operational levers. Essentially, Watson was suggesting to Ontario school children that inappropriate thoughts and impulses could be stopped in their tracks by self-control. To promote self-control, Chalmers opted for the development of good bodily or mental habits, as he believed brains could be trained by vigilant practice to work in certain ways. Without mentioning masturbation deliberately, Chalmers casually mentioned that other than eating too many sweets, drinking and smoking, there were "other harmful habits we must try to avoid."<sup>70</sup> This sort of advice is yet another example of enlisting the Ontario public school child's help in preventing and/or reducing the incidence of his or her own sexual manifestations.

In 1926, Knight's *Ontario Public School Hygiene* was replaced with Donald T. Fraser's and George D. Porter's *Ontario Public School Health Book* (1925).<sup>71</sup> In contrast to the older texts

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<sup>68</sup> A. P. Knight, *Hygiene for Young People: A Reader for Pupils in Form III of the Public Schools* (Toronto: Copp, Clark Co. Ltd., 1919, first pub. 1909).

<sup>69</sup> Chalmers Watson, *The Story of the Human Body: A Reader in Hygiene for Pupils in Form III of the Public Schools* (Toronto: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., n. d.).

<sup>70</sup> Watson, *The Story of the Human Body*, p. 237.

<sup>71</sup> Donald T. Fraser and George D. Porter, *Ontario Public School Health Book* (Toronto: The Copp Clark Company Ltd., 1925).

aimed at public school pupils, which were influenced by the social purists' and hygienists' moralistic approach to health management, this text portrayed ill-health as an entirely physiological affair. Although the key to health was said to lie in diet, exercise and self-control, this text did not make any noticeable link between the need to put this programme into effect and to control children's sexuality. By exposing children to a historical narrative of the discovery of vaccines against disease, this text clearly established that the environment, rather than heredity was responsible for good or bad health. Rather than explaining that disabled children inherited their defective minds and bodies from their parents, Fraser and Porter insisted that such children were disabled as a result of illness, accident or misfortune. To illustrate the importance of the environment of children's health, the authors turned to the example of Charles Dickens who built up his sickly body and achieved greatness. The authors' programme of diet, exercise and self-control was geared more toward attaining children's freedom from disease rather than preventing and/or reducing the manifestations of children's sexuality.

Whereas elementary public school hygiene texts intended for children's use did make some references to masturbation, no reproductive anatomical information was provided. Despite social purists' and social hygienists' fears that girls were usually ill-prepared for menarche, hygiene texts remained silent on the subject of menstruation. Evidence shows that the school nurse and other women teachers may have served as vital sources of information about menstruation for girls. When the Superintendent of Education at the Toronto Board of Education canvassed a number of school Principals during the late 1930s on "training girl pupils concerning problems peculiar to the age of adolescence," he discovered that the school nurse, the Principal's assistant, a woman teacher of a senior class or the physical education teacher usually handled the matter. Principals were reluctant to appoint one female teacher to deal with all the girls' queries for two reasons. First, they believed that the girls should have a choice of which teacher they wished to confide in. Second, they recognized that parents believed a girl's inquiries should be dealt with by her mother. In one instance a woman teacher's discussion with a girl was resented by the girl and her parents.

The Superintendent recommended, therefore, that the Principal of each school discuss with the women teachers and the school nurse on staff just how far they should go in instructing the girls who came to them.<sup>72</sup>

## V

During 1926, the same year the Ontario Department of Education recommended Fraser's and Porter's text for the hygiene curriculum, Dr. Paul Popenoe, the pro-sterilization anti-birth-control physician who would testify at the Royal Commission on Mental Hygiene in British Columbia in 1926, published an attack on the physician-driven social hygiene movement. According to Popenoe, parents continued to be extremely lax in teaching their children about the facts of coitus, venereal disease, prostitution, menstruation and seminal emissions. But physicians involved in the social hygiene movement had not fared much better. Physicians had done nothing more than throw a "revolting mass of information about venereal diseases, prostitution and sexual perversions" at young people, thereby linking, in the minds of the young, sex instruction with the abnormal and the pathological.<sup>73</sup> Despite his connections to the ASHA, Popenoe accused physicians involved in the social hygiene movement of not making a concerted attempt to conserve the family. Physicians had failed to inculcate in youths a broad, constructive point of view which held that family life represented the pinnacle of human development. While it could be argued that social purists and hygienists had attempted to inculcate this very same viewpoint by introducing children to nature study, Popenoe complained that the nature study's biggest drawback was that the child would not transfer the botanical information he or she acquired to humankind. Because the home had lost its ability to train the young to achieve successful family life, Popenoe's suggested that the public schools should construct their entire curriculum toward conserving the family. The school's mission was to prepare boys for intelligent fatherhood and to churn out girls who understood the grave problems the declining birth rate posed to the race.

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<sup>72</sup> TBEA Management Committee Minutes, May 26, 1937, pp. 104-105.

<sup>73</sup> Paul Popenoe, *The Conservation of the Family* (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1984 [1926]), p. 177.

Popenoe's suggestion on gearing the public schools' curriculum to conserving the family was timely. In 1927, Canadian and American social workers attended a "mile-stone meeting" whose repercussions on public school children's sex instruction would be felt until the late 1970s. Having served in 1913 as the site of the Fourth International Congress on School Hygiene, Buffalo, New York, once again proved to be the location for the "Family Life Conference." Held between October 2-5, 1927, the conference was designed to showcase social workers' growing acknowledgement that the institution of the family had changed in its configuration.<sup>74</sup> The conference was organized by both Canadians and Americans under the auspices of the American Association for Organizing Family Social Work to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of charity organization movements in the United States. The city of Buffalo was chosen for the conference because the first Charity Organization Society was founded there in 1877.<sup>75</sup>

During the inter-war period, social workers, psychologists and educators promoted a middle-class ideal of family life which was said to result in the democratization of the relationships amongst its members. Thought to be more resilient than the traditional patriarchal family to the strains of modern life, the "conjugal" or "companionate" family was to be founded upon a close mental, emotional and sexual partnership between husband and wife.<sup>76</sup> Possibly as a response to the high rate of venereal disease, an attempt was made to eroticize marital lovemaking by pro- and anti-birth control advocates after the First World War.<sup>77</sup> Pre-war marital advice, which was shaped by the feminist wing of the social purity movement, insisted upon the need for wives' strict control

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<sup>74</sup> Anna Garlin Spencer. "A Mile-Stone Meeting: The Family Life Conference in Buffalo, New York." *Journal of Social Hygiene* 14, 2 (February 1928): 76-80.

<sup>75</sup> Margaret E. Rich (ed.), *Family Life Today: Papers Presented at a Conference in Celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of Family Social Work in America Held at Buffalo, October 2-5, 1927* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1928), pp. v-vi.

<sup>76</sup> James G. Snell, *In the Shadow of the Law: Divorce in Canada, 1900-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), pp. 21-47; Steven Mintz and Susan Kellogg, *Domestic Revolutions: A Social History of American Family Life* (London: The Free Press, 1988), pp. 107-131.

<sup>77</sup> Lesley A. Hall, *Hidden Anxieties: Male Sexuality, 1900-1950* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1991), p. 39.

over the *quantity* of sexual intercourse. By contrast, post-war marital advice, which was increasingly overseen by male "experts" focused on enhancing the *quality* of sexual intercourse.<sup>78</sup> On the one hand the eroticization of marital sex firmly established that women experienced insistent sexual desires unconnected to any maternal longing and that husbands had a responsibility to physically satisfy their wives. On the other hand the eroticization of marital sex not only restricted the exercise of women's sexuality to heterosexual intercourse within marriage but also placed pressure on wives to be enthusiastically receptive to their husband's sexual demands. The post-war "sexual revolution" ushered in by sex reformers was entirely heterosexual and restricted to marriage. It deprecated celibacy, spinsterhood, homosexuality and lesbianism and invited wives to fulfill the prostitute's role by providing sexual pleasure to their husbands.<sup>79</sup>

In her best-seller, *Married Love* (1918), Marie Stopes encouraged couples to acknowledge the importance of wives' sexual yearnings and to learn how to fulfill each other sexually in marriage. She also reminded her readers of the dangers of venereal infection to which wives and children were exposed when the husband frequented prostitutes. Yet rather than blaming husbands for their lack of moral fibre, Stopes counselled wives to understand that although they were repelled by prostitution they should understand that prostitutes pleased men in ways wives rarely did. In other words, Stopes was urging wives to learn the tricks of the trade so that they could work toward freeing men from venereal disease.<sup>80</sup> Tyrer, Stopes' Canadian admirer, repeated her

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<sup>78</sup> Christabelle Sethna, "The New Heaven Needs a Devil in Bed: The Ideal Canadian Wife in Alfred Henry Tyrer's *Sex, Marriage, and Birth Control* (1936)," a paper presented at the First International Conference on the History of Marriage and the Family in Western Society, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada, May 13-16, 1992.

<sup>79</sup> Jeannette H. Foster, *Sex Variant Women in Literature* (United States: The Naiad Press, 1985 [1956]), pp. 240-243; Linda Gordon, *Woman's Body, Woman's Right: Birth Control in America* (New York: Penguin Books, 1977 [1974]), pp. 186-245; Sheila Jeffreys, *The Spinster and Her Enemies: Feminism and Sexuality, 1880-1930* (London: Pandora Press, 1985), pp. 165-185; Margaret Jackson, "Facts of life' or the eroticization of women's oppression? Sexology and the social construction of heterosexuality," in Pat Caplan (ed.), *The Cultural Construction of Sexuality* (London: Tavistock Publications Ltd., 1987), pp. 52-81; Margaret Jackson, "Sexology and the universalization of male sexuality (from Ellis to Kinsey, and Masters and Johnson)" in Lal Coveney et al. (eds.), *The Sexuality Papers: Male Sexuality and the Social Control of Women* (London: Hutchinson, 1984), pp. 69-103; Alison Oram, "Embittered, sexless or homosexual: attacks on spinster teachers, 1918-39," in Arina Angerman et al. (eds.), *Current Issues in Women's History* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 183-202.

<sup>80</sup> Marie Carmichael Stopes, *Married Love: A New Contribution to the Solution of Sex Difficulties* (London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, Ltd., 1920 [1918]), pp. 174-175.

message in his sexually explicit advice to betrothed and married couples. An advocate of sterilization and birth-control, Tyrer exulted in the sexual possibilities monogamous marriage offered husband and wife. He insisted that Nature lured the young toward monogamous marriage "lest the race should perish."<sup>81</sup> While Tyrer reinforced the significance of the wife's orgasm during or after intercourse to her mental, physical and emotional health, the sexually unsatisfied husband posed a far greater health threat to the race. A sexually satisfied husband, noted Tyrer, would be unlikely "at the cost of money and the danger of disease and the impairment of his faculties [to] seek an inferior quality elsewhere."<sup>82</sup> Inter-war marriage manuals came increasingly to blame marital dissatisfaction on the wife's unfortunate sexual frigidity, a condition Tyrer attributed to repressive sex teaching in childhood<sup>83</sup> and Stopes and Popenoe ascribed to women's adherence to an ideology of purity. Stopes asserted that married women who thought themselves "advanced" by permitting intercourse solely for procreative reasons most probably possessed an underdeveloped clitoris.<sup>84</sup> While Stopes considered these women to be biologically aberrant, Popenoe claimed that emotionally abnormal women purity lecturers had directed many women to scorn the idea of marital relations. He believed that elderly spinsters, unhappily married women and jaded divorcées twisted the facts of life and expounded the gospel of sexual repression to unsuspecting girls.<sup>85</sup> Yet not even the plethora of post-war marital advice, which held that husband and wife should be so in tune as to attain orgasm simultaneously, could arrest the rise in middle-class teenage petting parties, trial marriages and sky-rocketing divorce rates or curb the growth of lesbian and gay subcultures in cities.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Tyrer, *Sex, Marriage, and Birth Control*, p. xiii.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 133-134.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>84</sup> Marie Carmichael Stopes, *Enduring Passion: Further New Contributions to the Solution of Sex Difficulties being the continuation of Married Love* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, Ltd., 1934 [1928]), p. 94.

<sup>85</sup> Paul Popenoe, *Modern Marriage: A Handbook* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1925), pp. 141-142.

<sup>86</sup> Paula Fass, *The Damned and the Beautiful: American Youth in the 1920s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979 [1977]); John Modell, "Dating Becomes the Way of American Youth," in David Levine et al (eds.), *Essays on the Family and Historical Change* (Arlington, Texas: Texas A and M University Press, 1983), pp. 91-126; George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994).

It was not the perils of venereal disease but the breakdown of the patriarchal nuclear family which was very much on the minds of the speakers at the Family Life Conference. Presenters agreed that the family was under siege. The religious, educational and economic bonds which held families together in the past were now loosening under the strain of modernization. Women's growing economic clout was repeatedly invoked as one of the main reasons why women, no longer afraid of spinsterhood, were delaying or rejecting marriage.<sup>87</sup> As Mary Vipond has shown, Canadian women in the 1920s were far from exerting either political or economic influence: women's primary role was still considered to be motherhood.<sup>88</sup> Yet in the minds of social hygienists the result of women's new found economic clout was evident in blood samples provided by the "better sort" of woman at venereal disease clinics established after the war. Employed and independent the new woman sought sexual pleasure from men and became infected. Men were still blamed for disseminating venereal disease but women's role in the spread of infection, apart from prostitution, was increasingly emphasized.<sup>89</sup>

The presenters at the Conference unanimously agreed that the family had to be conserved not merely because it provided its members with social security and racial survival but because it was potentially a spiritual force founded upon mutual love and respect.<sup>90</sup> This environment of mutual love and respect was one which provided the child with the best "social heritage" possible. As the family was the universal institution through which children received their biological inheritance, so was the family responsible for passing onto the child the main environment within which the child developed his or her personality. What was usually taken to be heredity was, in

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<sup>87</sup> For example, see Paul H. Douglas, "The Changing Basis of Family Support and Expenditure," in Rich (ed.), *Family Life Today*, pp. 102-104.

<sup>88</sup> Mary Vipond, "The Image of Women in Mass Circulation Magazines in the 1920s," in Susan Mann Trofimenkoff and Alison Prentice (eds.), *The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History* Vol. 1 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977), pp. 116-124.

<sup>89</sup> Cassel, *The Secret Plague*, pp. 187-188.

<sup>90</sup> Anna Richardson, "The Art of Family Life," *Journal of Social Hygiene* 14, 2 (February 1928), pp. 86-87.

reality, the family's influence on the child's early years of life. Without naming Freud's contribution to psychology, some presenters appeared to accept that mental defects—psychoses and neuroses—were caused by the child's early experience with its family situation.<sup>91</sup> The conference presenters appeared convinced that the most satisfactory solution to maximizing the quality of the social inheritance parents passed onto their children lay in education for marriage and parenthood.

While it has been convincingly argued that in the post-World War I period the public school gradually encroached upon many of the functions traditionally considered the province of the patriarchal nuclear family,<sup>92</sup> a number of the conference presenters maintained that it was the public school which would come to the rescue of the family. Anna Richardson's address squarely upheld the important role public schools could play in inculcating in children loyalty to home and family. "Worthy home membership" was to be one of the key principles of public school education. The public school would provide the channel through which girls and boys would be given an appreciation of the significance of the right kind of home and the desire to perpetuate it.<sup>93</sup> Ernest Groves suggested that along with institutions of higher learning, law schools, theological seminaries, churches and community-based organizations, public schools should take up education for family life in order to prepare pupils for the problems of marriage and parenthood. Groves' conceptualization of education for marriage and parenthood came to be encompassed by the phrase "education for family life" or "family life education."<sup>94</sup>

By the mid-1930s Francis Bruce Strain had become the leading spokesperson for incorporating sex instruction into family life education and incorporating family life education into

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<sup>91</sup> W. F. Ogburn, "Social Heritage and the Family," in Rich (ed.), *Family Life Today*, pp. 24-39.

<sup>92</sup> Christopher Lasch, *Haven in A Heartless World: The Family Beseiged* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1979 [1977]).

<sup>93</sup> Richardson, "The Art of Family Life," p. 86.

<sup>94</sup> Ernest Groves, "Education for Family Life," in Rich (ed.), *Family Life Today*, pp. 49-57.



the public schools in the United States. Although Strain supported home-based sex instruction for children she did concede that parents were now looking to the school system to "take over" the responsibility for teaching sex instruction. Strain noted that although there were no concerted programmes of family life education in American public schools, curious students' thirst for knowledge about sex pushed teachers to organize some sort of sex instruction for them. As a result of children's widespread exposure to adult magazines, newspapers and public performances their queries were becoming increasingly complicated. Trained teachers with charts, models, diagrams and accurate answers to children's questions were better equipped to deal with these queries than were parents.

In discussing children's school-based sex instruction, Strain developed a chronology of children's school-based sex instruction which completely ignored purity education's and sex hygiene's contributions to school-based sex instruction. She identified social hygiene, sex education and family life education as three generations of one family—"they are grandparent, parent, and child."<sup>95</sup> Social hygiene was pioneered by medical doctors and public health officials seeking to eliminate venereal disease. Public confidence in these doctors opened the school doors to the teaching of sex instruction. Physicians' departure from the field of sex instruction led to the development of sex education. Strain defined sex education as a clean-cut presentation of human reproduction devoid of any of the moral and medical warnings against venereal disease promoted by the social hygienists. Ironically, Bigelow, the most famous advocate of "sex-education," had dismissed purity education as passé, sex hygiene as too narrowly identified with venereal disease and social hygiene as appropriate but too closely associated with sex hygiene. For Bigelow, sex-education encompassed all scientific, ethical, social, and religious instruction which helped youths prepare to meet any problems related to sex.<sup>96</sup> For Strain, family life education included sex

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<sup>95</sup> Frances B. Strain. *New Patterns in Sex Teaching: A Guide to Answering Children's Questions on Human Reproduction* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1951 [1934]), p. 220.

<sup>96</sup> Bigelow, *Sex-Education*, p. 27.

education but stressed an understanding of family members' relationships to each other and to their community.<sup>97</sup>

Along with Popenoe, Strain agreed that the entire public school curriculum should be constructed around education for family life. The construction of an entire curriculum around family life education certainly represented a departure from social purists' and hygienists' efforts to incorporate sex instruction into public schools in Ontario. Social purists were generally supportive of the special lectures given by speakers such as Arthur Beall who were hired for the purpose.<sup>98</sup> After the Great War, social hygienists were more likely to advocate that sex instruction be incorporated into the subject of nature study.<sup>99</sup> Yet adherents of family life education stressed, as did social purists and hygienists, that the ultimate goal of children's sex instruction was to place children safely on the path toward monogamous marriage and reproduction. Obviously influenced by Freudian theory, Strain believed that the child's sexual instinct had to be guided from the auto-erotic stage in infancy through the homosexual stage of childhood to the heterosexual stage of adolescence until it arrived at its "final and free expression in normal productive maturity."<sup>100</sup>

## VI

The ASHA was not about to let family life education upstarts write off the social hygiene movement's contribution to children's sex instruction on the basis of its supposed senescence. Between June 30 and July 3, 1934, the same year in which Strain published her *Patterns in Sex Teaching*, Columbia University hosted a Conference on Education for Marriage and Family Relations for 300 educators and social workers under the auspices of the ASHA, the Teachers College of Columbia University and the American Home Economics Association. Popenoe served

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<sup>97</sup> Strain, *New Patterns*, pp. 221-223.

<sup>98</sup> Beall, *The Living Temple*.

<sup>99</sup> OSP Vol. LI Part X Report 58 "Interim Report on Venereal Diseases," 1919.

<sup>100</sup> Strain, *New Patterns*, p. 6.

as chair of the Conference's Organizing Committee. Two other noteworthies long associated with the ASHA, Bigelow and William F. Snow, also served on the Committee. Popenoe's prominence on the Conference committee illustrates how closely eugenicists identified with education for family life. This identification was also apparent in the writings of Morris Siegal, the well-known Canadian eugenicist author of the 1930s. Siegal believed that one of positive eugenics' most important contributions was to make marriage more attractive to youths: "We must preach that marriage besides being a social convenience has a greater and nobler purpose. We must bring to the attention of the young people that men and women have been entrusted with a sacred trust, the germ of life. Therefore, marriage is not only a state of convenience but more so an act of honour and duty."<sup>101</sup> In his marriage manual, *Constructive Eugenics and Rational Marriage* (1934), Siegal suggested that the Canadian government establish a Federal Eugenics Department to oversee marriage in order to radically improve the health of the nation.<sup>102</sup>

Under Popenoe's guidance, the Committee asserted that there was a need in society for education for married companionship and parenthood. For the Organizing Committee, social hygiene's mandate was large enough, flexible enough and progressive enough to encompass family life education. The Committee agreed that since the American social hygiene movement "deals with a large group of health and welfare problems (physical, mental, and social) which have a direct or indirect origin in the fundamental phenomena of sex and which concern the family accepted as the basic unit of society," the Conference had to consider how social hygiene related to education for family life.<sup>103</sup> The Conference dealt with seven subject areas—childhood, youth, college men and women, young men and women, adult education, teacher training as well as personal and family counseling. These areas were to consider the contributions homes, schools,

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<sup>101</sup> Morris Siegal, *Population, Race and Eugenics* (Hamilton, Ontario: The Author, 1939), p. 33.

<sup>102</sup> Morris Siegal, *Constructive Eugenics and Rational Marriage* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1934), cited in Angus McLaren, *Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada, 1885-1945* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1990), p. 76.

<sup>103</sup> "Conference on Education for Marriage and Family Social Relations, 1934," *Journal of Social Hygiene* 22, 1 (January, 1936), p. 3.

churches and other institutions made toward the preparation for family life. Each group agreed on three fundamental assumptions which clearly revealed how deeply under siege the middle-class family was perceived to be and which shaped the kind of presentations which were made. The first assumption claimed that: "Marriage and the family are here to stay." While environmental conditions changed, the family as a biological and social unit remained intact. The conference was said to be of significance only if the presenters based their papers on their belief in the ages-long permanence of marriage and the family. The second assumption maintained that while education for family life would neither prevent nor resolve all family problems it could improve the attitudes of betrothed couples and family members. The third and final assumption was purposefully structured to avoid any debate over the viability of the family. The conference was to be concerned mainly with the selection and organization of material for available use. It intended to stay clear of the "numerous unsolved and highly debatable problems" relative to family life in the fields of law, sociology, psychology and social biology.<sup>104</sup>

There were at least two other motivating factors for the ASHA's willingness to take up the discourse of family life education. Some critics of the social hygiene movement agreed with Popenoe's contention that social hygienists were overly concerned with sexual pathology. Other critics claimed that social hygienists were overly moralistic in their approach to combatting venereal disease. Allan Brandt has discovered that the social hygiene movement was discounted by many critics during the inter-war years because the association it maintained between venereal disease and immorality prevented the medical establishment from treating syphilis and gonorrhoea as dispassionately as any other contagious disease. The most notable critic of social hygiene's moralizing was Thomas Parran, appointed Surgeon-General by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1936.<sup>105</sup> In supporting family life education, the ASHA neatly sidestepped their responsibility for

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<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>105</sup> Allan Brandt, *No Magic Bullet: A Social History of Venereal Disease in the United States Since 1880* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 136-138.

the association between venereal disease and immorality while affirming that sex instruction which emphasized the need for monogamous heterosexual relationships leading to marriage and child rearing was the most effective prophylaxis against venereal disease.

The ASHA's support for family life education may also be viewed as part and parcel of the inter-war trend toward dramatic legal incursions into family life where venereal disease was concerned. A series of public health measures, put into effect ironically by Parran, encroached upon both marriage and parenthood. Arguing that it was much easier to treat venereal disease in general and syphilis in particular by medicalizing rather than by moralizing the problem, Parran adopted a five-point programme of attack. He insisted upon free diagnostic centres which would administer confidential blood tests; prompt treatment for infected individuals; the identification and testing of all sexual contacts of infected patients; mandatory blood tests before marriage and in early pregnancy; and a public education campaign. Parran led the way to governmental action against venereal disease. By the end of 1938 26 states prohibited the marriage of infected individuals. The ASHA saw compulsory pre-marital and pre-natal tests as a major triumph in the battle against venereal disease, arguing that such laws benefitted individuals and the nation.<sup>106</sup>

The pro-family propaganda of the inter-war period cropped up repeatedly in the CSHC's most successful anti-venereal educational film, "Damaged Lives."<sup>107</sup> Strapped for financial assistance when the economic depression forced the federal, local and municipal governments to cut their grants to the CSHC, the organization decided to raise money by developing a feature film. In early 1933, the CSHC cut a deal with Columbia Pictures in Hollywood with Bates functioning as the technical advisor. The film was endorsed by the ASHA and by the British Social Hygiene Council (BSHC), both of which preferred to screen it for mixed audiences while the Canadian

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<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150.

<sup>107</sup> NAC VI 9206-0023 "Damaged Lives, 1936." See also Cassel, *The Secret Plague*, pp. 239-242.

Council opted for same-sex screenings.<sup>108</sup> In the film, up and coming businessman Don Bradley accompanies a rather coarse company executive for dinner and drinks. He is introduced to a peroxide blond named Elsie. After a night of drinking at night clubs and speakeasies, Elsie invites Don to her apartment. Soon afterward, Don marries Joan, his fiancée of long standing. Some time later, Elsie tells Don that the company executive has given her a disease which she may have passed on to Don and which Don may have passed on to his wife. Distraught and suicidal, Elsie shoots herself just as Don prepares to leave her apartment. Although his wife is supportive of Don throughout the scandal, he breaks up with her. He then goes to a doctor who claims he can cure Don for \$100. After Don is pronounced cured he reconciles with his wife. Joan announces shortly afterward that she is pregnant. Early in her pregnancy, Joan visits Dr. Bill Hall, a family friend, who discovers that she is infected with syphilis. Bill and another venereal disease specialist confront Don and then take him on the same tour of the venereal ward to which Vera is treated in the film, "The End of the Road." Once again the audience sees actual footage of men and women suffering from skin lesions, motor disturbances, paralysis, blindness, deafness and insanity. Joan is told that immediate treatment will cure her and her unborn child. She remains horribly upset and attempts to kill herself and her sleeping husband by turning on the gas. Don awakens just in time to save his life and hers. The couple reconcile yet again and the film ends. Bates then appears to lecture on the effect of and treatment for venereal disease in men and women.

The film was an interesting synthesis of the paternalistic moral and medical approach to venereal disease so characteristic of the social hygiene movement. "Damaged Lives" ostensibly rails against Don's infidelity but it is clear that Elsie and Joan are held responsible for provoking it. Elsie is one version of the confident new woman who seeks sexual pleasure with men. Joan is yet another version of the new woman who can afford to delay her marriage to Don. Elsie's suicide neatly takes the "immoral" woman out of the picture. Joan is victimized by the double blow of

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<sup>108</sup> "Damaged Lives." *Journal of Social Hygiene* 19, 7 (October 1933): 394-396.

infidelity and disease. Yet while physician and husband are prepared to address venereal disease as a medical issue, both ignore the moral weight Joan has attached to Don's sexual betrayal. When Joan continues to appear traumatized even after Bill explains how easily medical science can cure her and her unborn child, he exclaims, "Snap out of it, everything will be okay." When Don wakes up in time to turn off the gas, he can only splutter to Joan, "Are you mad?" When Joan cries out, "How can we forget?...What does it matter if our bodies are alright?" her husband replies, "We'll be alright." Bates appearance at the end of the film capped the film's patronizing attitude toward women. Venereal disease, lectured Bates, required more than a cure; it required the strength of love and family relationships. Behind this pro-family rhetoric lay the iron insistence that venereal disease was powerless to destroy families when women forgave their husbands for betraying their love and infecting their bodies.

Two years after the debut of "Damaged Lives," the CSHC changed its name to the Health League of Canada (HLC). While the aims and objectives of the new organization remained intact, the HLC broadened its sphere of influence to include the promotion of periodic health examinations, immunization, pasteurization and anti-cancer campaigns. The HLC appeared as reluctant as its predecessor to work toward the implementation of sex instruction in public schools. Pressure to incorporate sex instruction in Ontario came from the some of the province's left-wing reformers. Toward the end of the 1930s Dr. Luke Teskey (1898-1990), a trustee with the York Board of Education and a member of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), openly advocated public school sex instruction for students.<sup>109</sup> Teskey held the opinion that children's sex instruction was a prophylaxis against venereal disease particularly because: "Knowledge is a safeguard and those who leave our public schools without attending the collegiates and are not given proper instruction in health are a menace to society."<sup>110</sup> Teskey had been influenced by a graphic lesson taught to a male friend during the First World War. In a real-life experience similar

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<sup>109</sup> Obituary, *Toronto Star*, October 26, 1990.

<sup>110</sup> "Public School Health Talks Banned by York," *Globe and Mail*, October 12, 1938.

to the cinematic one Vera and Don undergo in "The End of the Road" and "Damaged Lives," respectively, Teskey's friend was taken on a tour of the syphilis wards of the Toronto General Hospital by his father. The father intended to warn his son, who was about to leave for military duty overseas, about the dangers of sexual promiscuity. But Teskey was also motivated to support public school sex instruction because of economic conditions. His poor patients were unable to provide for their growing families, and this fact convinced Teskey to advocate birth control as well. These two convictions—children's sex instruction and birth control—cost him his job as a doctor on the staff of St. Joseph's Catholic hospital.<sup>111</sup> Teskey's stand, at least on sex instruction, was endorsed by many collegiate and secondary pupils at a student "Parliament" assembly on New Year's Eve, 1937. The students claimed that ignorance of sexual matters was the cause of the spread of venereal disease and called for compulsory sex instruction "as a regular part of the secondary school curriculum."<sup>112</sup> Teskey also gave a lecture, which some mothers commended, on venereal disease to a mixed group of students at Vaughn Road Collegiate in February, 1938. One mother believed that parents were generally delighted to have their children instructed by a competent doctor. Yet another claimed that teenagers' safety and happiness depended on the information they received.<sup>113</sup>

Teskey's efforts, the students' pro-sex instruction resolution and some public parental support made no difference, however, to the majority of York Board of Education trustees. When Teskey proposed that any competent and qualified man could give health talks to students at the request of school principals, his motion was voted down, 6-3, on October 11, 1938. A prominent newspaper editorial denounced the Board's decision as an example of false modesty, complaining that while the "innocence of childhood is to be treasured....there comes a day when life's pitfalls

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<sup>111</sup> This information was provided to me in a telephone conversation with Dr. Luke Teskey's daughter, Margaret Teskey Sager, December 22, 1993. I also thank Mrs. Luke Teskey and Mr. Bill Sager for their help.

<sup>112</sup> "Students Ask Sex Education," *Daily Clarion*, January 1, 1938. This bit of information appears, unexplored, in Cassel, *The Secret Plague*, p. 244.

<sup>113</sup> Letter to the editor, "Health Lectures" from "Mother of Adolescents," *Toronto Star*, February 23, 1938 and "Health and Education," from "Another Mother," *Toronto Star*, February 28, 1938.



have to be explained." Parents were once again held to be too incompetent to deal with their children's sex instruction whereas medical men "who have seen the terrible effects of venereal disease understand the price of ignorance." Children had to be guided by the competent from moral and physical pollution: "Tell them the truth before it is too late."<sup>114</sup> The six trustees would have probably agreed with one anonymous school teacher committed to home-based sex instruction. Writing to the editor of the *Globe and Mail*, the teacher questioned the purity of the "halo" society bestowed upon those individuals—doctors, nurses, teachers and clergymen—most often called upon to lecture to children about sexual matters: "I cannot imagine any self-respecting and child-respecting school teacher or clergyman, or any other person, butcher, baker or candlestick maker, lecturing to a class of boys and girls on sex." The teacher expressed doubt that the knowledge of venereal disease actually promoted chastity. A doctor friend, noted the teacher sarcastically, had treated all his medical school classmates for venereal disease.<sup>115</sup>

The response of the Toronto Board of Education to the stir Teskey's motion caused was to insist that sex instruction was not taught systematically in any of its schools and that the issue required deliberate and careful consideration. Dr. W. H. Rutherford, principal of Central Technical School, hinted that a teacher's lecture on sex education might upset parents,<sup>116</sup> while trustee Dr. Hardy, one-time head of the English department at Jarvis Collegiate, remarked that his preference was for casual sex instruction given separately to boys and girls by physical education teachers.<sup>117</sup> The reactions of the York and the Toronto Boards bore out Strain's observation that the "bottleneck" blocking the implementation of sex instruction was located in the school administration offices. According to Strain, school officials were not necessarily personally opposed to sex teaching. They were aware that sex instruction was a controversial matter and

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<sup>114</sup> "Tell Them The Truth," *Globe and Mail*, October 13, 1938.

<sup>115</sup> Letter to the editor, "Sex Education in Schools," from "School Teacher," *Globe and Mail*, October 24, 1938.

<sup>116</sup> "Trustees Not Ready To Rush Sex Studies," *Toronto Star*, October 14, 1938.

<sup>117</sup> "No Teaching Of Sex Officially, Is Claim," *Toronto Star*, March 3, 1938.

remained cautious because the security of their positions was at stake.<sup>118</sup> The pressure to unplug that bottleneck would soon originate overseas. Unwittingly aided by the policy of appeasement promoted by British foreign secretary Neville Chamberlain, Adolf Hitler's quest for German *lebensraum* swallowed up Austria and Czechoslovakia in quick succession. By the summer of 1939 it was clear that Poland was next in line. Battle lines were drawn between Britain and France on one side and Germany and the Soviet Union on the other. The Second World War would occasion another venereal disease emergency which focused attention on the deadly spectre of the juvenile delinquent and forced many Ontario social hygienists and educators to actively support the incorporation of sex instruction in the guise of family life education into public schools.

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<sup>118</sup> Strain, *New Patterns*, p. 225.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### "The Democracy For Which We Are Now Fighting"<sup>1</sup>

With English Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's policy of appeasement in tatters, England and France declared war on Germany once the Wehrmacht crossed Poland's borders on September 1, 1939. No longer a British colony but an autonomous member of the British Commonwealth of Nations, the Canadian Parliament independently declared war on Germany on September 10th. The declaration was almost unanimous. Pacifist J. S. Woodsworth, leader of the left-wing Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), and two French Canadians were the only members of the House who dissented. On December 10, 1939, the Canadian First Division sailed for England. In that same year the Defence of Canada Regulations were put into effect giving the federal government sweeping powers to move against labour organizers, suspected Communists and fascists. After Japan entered the war in late 1941 these same powers would be used to incarcerate Canadians of Japanese origin in the province of British Columbia because the federal government considered them potential enemies to the state.

The war was widely justified as a struggle for democracy—a tenet for which the British Commonwealth was believed to stand. Ontario educators rallied to the task of training Canadian school children for democratic citizenship. If Nazi German school children could be educated to accept dictatorship, Canadians could be taught to love their country, protect the British Commonwealth and "build a new world order based on freedom and equality in the relationships of man with man [sic] and nation to nation."<sup>2</sup> Some educators believed the school's role in

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<sup>1</sup> Winnifred Ashplant, "Dates, Doubts and Decisions of the Teen Age," *The Ontario Home and School Review* 19, 2 (December 1942), p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph McCulley, "Education and the War," *The School: Secondary Edition* 28, 6 (February 1940), p. 471. See also Dr. Lloyd White, "Education in a Militant Democracy," *Ontario Educational Association Yearbook*, 1942, p. 29.

preserving democracy lay in supporting the cadet movement, Christian religious instruction and the principles of freedom and justice.<sup>3</sup> But as skyrocketing venereal infection in the military and civilian populations came to be portrayed by military, governmental and public health authorities as a menace to the allied nations, Ontario educators maintained that sex instruction was one of the best ways to prevent venereal disease<sup>4</sup> and thereby preserve democracy. The public school was repeatedly portrayed as the ideal site for this endeavour. By the end of the war, the Canadian social hygiene movement, as represented by the Health League of Canada (HLC), would prescribe the introduction of family life education into schools.

## I

The support for school-based sex instruction during the Second World War sprang from wartime concerns with the breakdown of the middle-class patriarchal nuclear family. "Home life," wrote one London wartime columnist writing in a Canadian magazine, is the first casualty in a war.<sup>5</sup> Juvenile delinquency was perceived as a major symptom of the disintegration of the Canadian family. Social purists had raised the spectre of the juvenile delinquent at the turn of the century and attributed its existence to parental neglect. Social hygienists had been far more likely to attribute its existence to recapitulation theory or to feeble-mindedness. But as both arguments fell into disfavour by the time the Second World War was underway, juvenile delinquency came to be attributed to wartime stress. Statistics confirmed that between 1939 and 1943 the conviction rate for individuals under 16—defined as juveniles by the law—had increased by 29.4% across Canada. By 1943 Ontario had the highest rate of juvenile convictions for major and minor offenses

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<sup>3</sup> Robert M. Stamp, *The Schools of Ontario, 1876-1976* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), pp. 177-178.

<sup>4</sup> Jay Cassel, "Making Canada Safe for Sex: Government and the Problem of Sexually Transmitted Disease in the Twentieth Century," in David Naylor (ed.), *Canadian Health Care and the State: A Century of Evolution* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), pp. 141-192; Mary Louise Adams, "The Trouble With Normal: Postwar Youth and the Construction of Heterosexuality," unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Toronto, 1994, pp. 224-225.

<sup>5</sup> Beverly Baxter, "War Damages Family Life," *Maclean's*, May 15, 1943, p. 40.

in Canada.<sup>6</sup> Ontario Police Chief Draper maintained that wartime stress, or the combination of the lack of parental supervision and war excitement, explained the dismal rise in juvenile crime. Like adults, children were caught up in the adventure of the war but came home to an empty house because "the adults of the family are either in the armed services or in the war plants....thus [the children] are caught in the emotions of the conflict and want to do something to let off steam. Unsupervised and inexperienced, they get into trouble."<sup>7</sup>

During the Second World War juvenile delinquency was conceptualized according to two gendered visions. Far more male than female juvenile delinquents were convicted of major and minor offences. For example, in 1943 2,681 males were convicted of major offenses as opposed to 123 females. In that same year 1,098 males and 276 females were convicted of minor offences.<sup>8</sup> Males were characteristically convicted of burglary, theft, arson and common assault. By contrast females were most often convicted of immorality or sexual misconduct. One Toronto journalist acknowledged that the phrase "juvenile delinquency" had been worn thin but where girls were concerned it meant 12- to 16-year-old licentious girls who entrapped men into sexual relationships.<sup>9</sup> During the Second World War the female juvenile delinquent came to be perceived as synonymous with the amateur prostitute held responsible for infecting Canadian soldiers with venereal disease.

With the lessons of the First World War uppermost in the minds of physicians and educators, the campaign to control the spread of syphilis and gonorrhoea in Canadians moved into high gear soon after the war began. J. J. Heagerty, the Director of Public Health Services, Department of Pensions and National Health, urged that given the experience of the Great War, the "problem of the control of the venereal diseases among soldiers and civilians is urgent and no time

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<sup>6</sup> *The Canada Yearbook*, 1945 (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier, 1945), p. 1088.

<sup>7</sup> "Neglected Youth," *Globe and Mail*, September 10, 1943.

<sup>8</sup> *The Canada Yearbook*, 1945 (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier, 1945), pp. 1087-1088.

<sup>9</sup> Janet Tupper, "Wayward Girls Need Your Aid," *Globe and Mail*, December 2, 1943.

should be lost in instituting measures for their protection."<sup>10</sup> The tension resulting from the debate over using moral or medical means to combat venereal disease was evident early on. During the same month Canada declared war on Germany, Lieutenant-Colonel D. H. Williams came out against the regulation of prostitution and insisted that the moral or social approach was superior to the medical approach for treating venereal disease.<sup>11</sup> Just two months later Heagerty argued that because many soldiers would undoubtedly succumb to sexual temptation or would actively seek out sexual gratification they should receive information on prophylactic measures against venereal disease.<sup>12</sup>

Supporters of either the moral or the medical approach to combatting venereal disease could agree, however, that venereal disease was a menace to democracy. Canadian soldiers and civilians were told that the enemy abroad and the fifth columnists at home were not the only adversaries they had to battle. Speaking at a Vancouver gathering on "Social Hygiene Day" in 1941 Dr. Walter Clarke, the Director of the American Social Hygiene Association (ASHA), asserted that venereal disease posed a serious threat to the free democracies: "Disease in general does more to undermine the efficiency of a country's war effort than all of the enemy agents put together."<sup>13</sup> He insisted that all Canadians had the opportunity to enlist in the war against syphilis and gonorrhea. "It is up to all of us," noted Clarke at the close of his speech, "especially in this time of crisis, to join forces in wiping them out. But first, all of you, learn the facts."<sup>14</sup>

The facts seemed quite clear to Gordon Bates of the HLC. According to Bates, the general director of Canada's largest and best-known social hygiene organization, health was not a parochial matter but a national objective; the venereal diseases were the most difficult of public

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<sup>10</sup> J. J. Heagerty, "Venereal Disease Control During Wartime," *Canadian Public Health Journal* 30, 12 (December, 1939), p. 570.

<sup>11</sup> Donald H. Williams, "Venereal Disease and the Social Approach," *Health* (September 1939), p. 64.

<sup>12</sup> Heagerty, "Venereal Disease Control During Wartime," p. 569.

<sup>13</sup> Walter Clarke, "They Are in Danger," *Health* 9, 1 (Spring 1941), p. 12.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

health problems to solve because their origins were sexual; and any failure to take into account the social fall-out of non-monogamous sexual relationships would result in serious damage to the body politic. Bates complained that the Canadian body politic had already been severely weakened. In contrast to the American federal government, which continued to provide State Departments of Health with large amounts of money to combat venereal disease, the Depression-era Dominion government had cut the grants for venereal disease it gave the provinces in 1932. For Bates, a widespread educational campaign was needed to convince Canadians of the seriousness of venereal disease. Once convinced, Canadians would pressure the Dominion government to restore the funding to the provinces. Once funded, organizations like the HLC would work toward combatting venereal disease.<sup>15</sup>

For Bates, medical advances in treating and curing venereal disease posed serious problems to the moral approach the HLC and the ASHA considered the hallmark of the fight against syphilis and gonorrhoea. Bates recognized that medical science had made huge strides in treating and curing venereal disease. The sulpha drugs had virtually broken gonorrhoea's stranglehold. Medical experiments conducted at Toronto's Mount Sinai Hospital held out the promise of wiping out syphilis. Bates feared that the elimination of venereal disease would lead to an increase in sexual licentiousness. Bates likened condoms to prevent venereal disease and prophylactic packets to be used after sexual intercourse to contraceptive devices. He claimed their use would damage the "moral fibre" of Canadians to such an extent that the nation would emerge from the war "as close to paganism as is Germany."<sup>16</sup> While Bates was willing to support compulsory Wasserman tests for the civilian and military populations, he insisted that the moral approach to venereal disease was essential. Moral restraint had to be promoted by the clergy, parents and teachers. Education about the dangers of syphilis and gonorrhoea was needed as a deterrent to pre-marital or extra-marital

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<sup>15</sup> Gordon Bates, "Is Venereal Disease a Moral Issue?" *Health* 9, 2 (July 1941): 37, 54-55.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

sexual activity. Prostitution had to be kept under control and "protective work" for girls was required.<sup>17</sup>

Bates' targeting of protective work for girls was fuelled by two factors. One, as the war progressed, the prostitute was replaced, in the minds of military authorities, by the amateur as the primary locus of infection.<sup>18</sup> Two, statistics collected during the course of the war showed that most Canadians acquired syphilis and gonorrhoea between the ages of 16 to 30.<sup>19</sup> These statistical findings focused attention on controlling venereal disease in army recruits and on introducing sex instruction into the schools.

As with the Boer War and the First World War, the health of Canadian recruits was said to be dismal—43% of the men called up for military training were rejected as physically unfit.<sup>20</sup> Venereal infection threatened to lower Canadian soldiers' ability to fight for Canada even further. Upon request, the HLC sent thousands of English and French reprints of Gene Tunney's article, "The Bright Shield of Continence," to army, navy and air force chaplains for distribution among recruits in 1942. Yet the article's message—"Sexual continence is the strongest weapon yet devised to combat venereal disease"—did little to reduce the rates of venereal disease in the Armed Forces.<sup>21</sup>

Faced with the prospect of skyrocketing venereal disease rates in the military population, Canadian officials' approach to combatting syphilis and gonorrhoea in men during the Second World War loosened up after 1942. After 1942 men who contracted syphilis or gonorrhoea

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>18</sup> Allan M. Brandt, *No Magic Bullet: A Social History of Venereal Disease in the United States Since 1880* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987 [1985]), p. 168.

<sup>19</sup> D. H. Williams, "Canada's National Health and Venereal Disease Control: A Statement of the General Policy Concerning Canada's National Venereal Disease Control Program," *Canadian Public Health Journal* 34 (June 1943), p. 262.

<sup>20</sup> "Health Training in Schools," *Canadian Public Health Journal* 33, 5 (May 1942), p. 178.

<sup>21</sup> NAC MG 28 I 332 Vol. 144, File: Social Hygiene—Literature Requests, 1941–43, letter to Mabel Ferris from R. A. MacDonnell, November 26, 1942.



continued to receive their salaries and were not placed in isolation during the infective period. Isolation was now considered punitive as well as unscientific because medical research confirmed that sexual contact was the exclusive means of transmission. In contrast to the measures taken during the Great War, each male recruit now received three condoms per month; by 1944 condoms were given out upon request and prophylactic kits were issued, particularly to men serving overseas. In contrast to the way the men were treated, women who joined the Canadian Women's Army Corps (CWAC) were subjected to a "whispering campaign" about their putative sexual immorality. Women recruits were not given contraception against pregnancy nor prophylactics against venereal disease. Men infected with venereal disease remained on the job while women infected with the same were subject to discharge from the Army.<sup>22</sup>

The same double standard which held women recruits to be more sexually suspect than men held the pick-up, or the so-called amateur, as the main source of a male soldier's venereal infection. The amateur was depicted as all the more dangerous than the prostitute because she appeared so innocent. The term "amateur" was first used in the early twentieth century to distinguish between prostitutes and unmarried, working-class, sexually active women who enjoyed sexual relations with men.<sup>23</sup> By the Second World War, the distinctions pertaining to the fee-for-service and class aspects were blurred. An increasingly fine line separated the fee-taking from the non-fee-taking female provider of sexual services.<sup>24</sup> Christian Smith, the director of the social hygiene and publicity divisions of the HLC, noted that although the red light districts in many cities had been outlawed, venereal disease rates were increasing. He asserted that public health officials were satisfied that amateurs who went "soldier hunting" around railways, barracks and juke joints were responsible for the alarming spread of venereal disease. Citing information

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<sup>22</sup> Ruth Roach Pierson, *"They're Still Women After All:" The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986), pp. 169-214.

<sup>23</sup> Marilyn Lake, "The Desire for a Yank: Sexual Relations between Australian Women and American Servicemen during World War II," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 2, 4 (April 1992), pp. 623-624.

<sup>24</sup> Pierson, *"They're Still Women After All"*, p. 211.

gleaned from the judge presiding over Winnipeg's Juvenile Court, Smith reported that girls aged 12 to 17 were regular camp followers. They picked up soldiers and spent the night with them at local hotels. Army officials requested the judge to keep the girls away from soldiers but the girls kept going back. To Smith, it came as no surprise that between 1941 and 1942 there was a 50% increase in venereal disease in girls aged 14 to 17.<sup>25</sup>

As the war wore on amateurs' sexual licentiousness was portrayed as circumscribing the fight for democracy—the cost of medical care and lost training time due to venereal disease for the Canadian armed forces between January 1940 and June 1943 was calculated at \$7,955,724.<sup>26</sup> If Canada's fight for democracy incurred heavy losses due to female sexual licentiousness, girls who had sexual relations—coercive or not—with soldiers also paid an oppressive price. During the war, the amateur and the female sexual delinquent were portrayed as interchangeable entities. Feminist historians of sexuality have stated that the tension between sexual danger and sexual pleasure remains a powerful theme in women's lives. Adolescent girls' sexuality, particularly working-class adolescent girls' sexuality, has been seen, since the early 19th century, as problematic, as a threat to public order, as a quality which had to be managed. Sexual desire in unmarried girls has traditionally been considered a sign of moral perversity and waywardness. So-called criminal behavior in girls has been associated with sexual acting out. Thus, in a patriarchal culture which continues to experience difficulty with adolescent girls who seek sexual pleasure outside of marriage the interchangeability of the amateur and the female juvenile delinquent during the 1940s is understandable.<sup>27</sup> There is no doubt that some young women actively sought and

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<sup>25</sup> Christian Smith, "Teen Age Tragedy," *Health* 11, 3 (Autumn 1943): 10-11, 27.

<sup>26</sup> "This is What VD Costs!" *Maclean's*, March 1, 1944), p. 7.

<sup>27</sup> Carole S. Vance (ed.), *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984); Constance Nathanson, *Dangerous Passage: The Social Control of Sexuality in Women's Adolescence* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991); Carol Smart, *Women, Crime and Criminology: A Feminist Critique* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977); Linda Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence, Boston, 1880-1960* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), pp. 130-141; Deborah Tolman, "Adolescent Girls, Women and Sexuality: Discerning Dilemmas of Desire," in Carol Gilligan, Annie G. Rogers and Deborah L. Tolman (eds.), *Women, Girls and Psychotherapy: Reframing Resistance* (New York: Harrington Park Press, Inc., 1991), pp. 55-69.

delighted in sexual relations with soldiers.<sup>28</sup> Yet they also risked venereal infection, unwanted pregnancy, abortion, sexual violence, social ostracism and the label of juvenile delinquent.

The sexual politics of juvenile delinquency were perfectly illustrated by journalist Mary Brechin. Although Brechin found that boys outnumbered girls 27 to one in convictions for serious juvenile offences, she maintained, in gender-blind fashion, that a "youthful crime wave" was spreading across the Dominion from Prince Rupert to St. John's. Two examples she chose to illustrate this crime wave are telling. Bill, age 13, was convicted several times of arson, willful damage to property and automobile theft. Sentenced to the Boys' Industrial Home, Bill escaped and ended up in jail. But Betty, age 15, dropped out of grade 8 and was soon "found by the health authorities to be a source of gonorrhoeal infection. She confessed that since she was 14 she had been having contact with soldiers."<sup>29</sup>

Some studies show that the incidence of incest and extra-familial sexual abuse of girls under age 14 had quadrupled in the United States since the early 1900s.<sup>30</sup> Both forms of abuse decreased during the First and Second World Wars, perhaps because so many men were involved in the war effort.<sup>31</sup> The possibility, however, that some young girls were sexually abused by soldiers or unenlisted men escaped comment. As Ruth Pierson remarks, in the official Canadian literature on venereal disease, "[n]either the word 'rapist' nor the notion of VD by rape occurs."<sup>32</sup> Brechin also catalogued the case of three girls, Marjorie, Helen and Lena, aged between 14-15, who ran away from home with fifty cents between them. Two men picked them up on a highway and took them to a hotel. "This was the first sex experience for all three girls," noted Brechin. The

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<sup>28</sup> Young women's sexual encounters with American servicemen stationed in Australia are investigated in Lake, "The Desire for a Yank," pp. 621-633.

<sup>29</sup> Mary Brechin, "Danger: Child Growing Up," *Maclean's*, August 15, 1943, pp. 48.

<sup>30</sup> Diana Russell, *The Secret Trauma: Incest in the Lives of Girls and Women* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1986), p. 78.

<sup>31</sup> Gloria Steinem, *Revolution from Within: A Book of Self-Esteem* (Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1993 [1992]), p. 94.

<sup>32</sup> Pierson, "They're Still Women After All", p. 211.

girls were given some money and were picked up again by another man and his friend. The girls then ended up in a lumber camp "where they spent the night with men." The first two men were charged with a criminal offence, pleaded guilty and fined. The girls contracted venereal disease, were taken into custody and sent to a home where they would be under supervision until age 21. The girls' experiences provided proof of their delinquency rather than of the men's criminality.

## II

By 1943, when official concern about venereal disease in the civilian and military population reached a "fever pitch"<sup>33</sup> and juvenile delinquency was portrayed as a "war neurosis,"<sup>34</sup> the public press openly began touting school-based sex instruction as an imperative. Yet school-based sex instruction was supported neither by military officials nor by the HLC. In the spring of 1943 Lieutenant-Colonel Williams, appointed Chief of the Division of Venereal Disease Control in the Department of Pensions and National Health, attempted to bind together the moral and the medical approaches to combatting venereal disease with the "Four-Sector Front Against VD." The health, welfare, legal and moral sectors in Canadian society were to be united in a concerted attack against syphilis and gonorrhoea. For Williams, the roots of venereal disease lay in sexual incontinence, an unchaste environment and the ineffective application of medical science. To wit, physicians, nurses and public health officials within the health sector would combat venereal disease with the best medical science had to offer. Social workers and welfare agencies leading the welfare sector would do their best to battle against the overcrowded housing conditions thought to be a contributing factor to sexual immorality. The police and the courts which were part of the legal sector would ensure that prostitutes and pimps would be brought to justice. Finally, the churches and homes which played a major role in the moral sector would uphold the sanctity of marriage and

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<sup>33</sup> Ruth Roach Pierson, "The Double Bind of the Double Standard: VD Control and the CWAC in the World War II," *Canadian Historical Review* 62, 1 (March 1981), p. 32.

<sup>34</sup> "Juvenile Delinquency: A War Neurosis," *Toronto Star*, October 13, 1943.

family life. Interestingly, Williams did not accord schools any part to play in the battle against venereal disease.<sup>35</sup>

Williams maintained that the health sector was the key to combatting venereal disease. Williams encouraged health agencies across Canada to adopt a six-point plan to cure and prevent syphilis and gonorrhoea. 1) Public education, in which Williams invited the HLC to play a major role, was meant to give Canadians accurate information about venereal disease. 2) Adequate diagnostic and treatment facilities concerned with venereal disease had to be provided for everyone. 3) Quacks and charlatans who preyed on the fears of the venereally infected had to be routed. 4) To guarantee the birth of healthy children, proper prenatal-care including blood tests, should be made available to expectant mothers. 5) To assure couples a happy family life, a general health examination including blood test before marriage was recommended. 6) Effective measures against the spread of venereal disease, such as education about the dangers of prostitution, should be taken. Once again, schools were never mentioned in Williams' schematic.

The HLC took Williams' invitation to participate in the public education campaign seriously. The HLC had already organized, in 1942, cross-Canada showings of the film "No Greater Sin." Sponsored by the ASHA, the film's story line was similar to that of "Damaged Lives" but was shot through with wartime patriotic sentiment. Bill Thorne unknowingly infects his pregnant wife, Betty, with syphilis. Bill and Betty work in a munitions factory. Wasserman tests administered to all plant workers confirm that the Thornes have syphilis. Infuriated, Bill pays a visit to a Dr. Hobson, a quack who purported to have cured Bill of his venereal infection prior to marriage. They scuffle. Hobson is knocked unconscious and dies. Bill is arrested, tried in court and acquitted once it is revealed that Hobson was a quack. Feeling ashamed because he infected Betty, Bill decides to leave town. He is stopped by Betty's father. Betty's father convinces Bill to return to Betty as he has done nothing to be ashamed of. Diseased amateurs and medical quackery

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<sup>35</sup> D. H. Williams, "A 6 Point Attack Against Venereal Disease," *Health* 11, 1 (Summer 1943): 6-7, 27-30.

were blamed for the Thornes' unfortunate situation. As with "Damaged Lives," the issue of male culpability for the spread of venereal disease, which played so large a part in feminist social purist discourse, went missing. The film played to rave reviews in the French and English press. Adults and youths were encouraged to see the picture because of the invaluable lessons it provided.<sup>36</sup>

During the early stages of the war, the HLC was initially reluctant to support school-based sex instruction, insisting that parents had to teach their children about sexual matters. The HLC received some support for this position. Fears about juvenile delinquency, venereal disease and the loosening of moral codes among adolescents led the Health Education Committee of the Ontario Home and School Association to recommend, as early as 1941, that given the perils of the last Great War, parents should give their children specific information about sex.<sup>37</sup> Home-based sex instruction also received a boost from some teachers like Ann Crockett. Writing in the popular Canadian magazine *Liberty*, Crockett condemned those teachers who wanted to teach the facts of life to children. In one fell swoop she stereotyped them as sexually frustrated spinsters, timid bachelors and homosexual eccentrics—"the queer, the purient-minded cranks who show in graduate school a deep interest in sexology."<sup>38</sup>

By the end of 1943 the HLC began to waver in its opposition to school-based sex instruction. Although Smith recommended that Canadian mothers should give considerable thought to their children's sex instruction, he appeared to come out in favour of "family life education" in schools. Smith's approval of family life education was proof that the Canadian social hygiene movement was well-aware of the support American social hygienists had given this kind of sex instruction in the United States. It also signalled that the HLC, like many American social hygiene organizations, was willing to distance itself from its traditional focus on prostitution and venereal

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<sup>36</sup> NAC MG 28 I 332 Vol. 141, File: No Greater Sin-Clippings.

<sup>37</sup> "Health Education Committee Report," *Ontario Home and School Review* 18, 4 (May 1941), p. 20.

<sup>38</sup> Ann Crockett, "Should the Schools Teach Sex?" *Liberty: Canada's Largest Weekly Magazine*, September 14, 1940, p. 17.

disease. The HLC's shift from social hygiene to family life education was perceived as a step in the direction of a kinder, gentler and certainly brighter form of moral suasion. Smith not only counseled mothers to read Francis Strain's work but allowed that school-based sex instruction should be encompassed by "a course in family and community relationships, so that the ethical and moral aspects will be dealt with as well as the physiological angles."<sup>39</sup> Yet Smith soon contradicted himself, remarking that teaching parents and teachers how to instruct children about the facts of life was of greater importance than "the much-discussed introduction of sex education in the schools."<sup>40</sup>

Smith's waffling resulted from the conflict between the HLC's traditional opposition to school-based sex instruction and wartime developments which made school-based sex instruction appear more attractive to those seeking to curb juvenile delinquency, eliminate venereal disease and protect Canadian democracy.

Some provincial educational departments did experiment early on in the war with various sex instruction curricula. Alberta and British Columbia, the two provinces which had passed legislation to sterilize the "unfit," in 1928 and 1933, respectively, introduced venereal disease education into high schools. In 1939, the Alberta Department of Education introduced a *Programme of Studies for the High School* which incorporated units on "How We Began," "Heredity" and "The Social Diseases" into Health and Physical Education courses. Teachers were to emphasize that syphilis had become a world-wide "scourge" and was a great menace to the young. Similarly, gonorrhoea was considered an illness with serious consequences, one of which was blindness in infants. Alberta teachers looked to the HLC to provide them with further

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<sup>39</sup> NAC MG 28 I 332 Vol. 141, File: Literature Requests and Enquires, letter to Mrs. Joe Hyndman from Christian Smith, October 23, 1943.

<sup>40</sup> NAC MG 28 I 332 Vol. 141 File: Social Hygiene—Home and School Clubs, 1943-1944, letter to Mrs. C. E. Dragan from Christian Smith, December 2, 1943.

information on sex and venereal disease, writing to that organization with requests for pamphlets and other materials.<sup>41</sup>

Educational authorities in British Columbia endorsed the venereal-disease education curriculum for high schools prepared by the British Columbia Division of Venereal Disease Control. The Division decided to teach students about syphilis and gonorrhea via round-table discussions, feeling that because this technique had been successful with "women's organizations," it would be suitable for high school students. After 1942, male and female students over age 16 were treated jointly to the 10-minute British film about venereal disease, "With These Weapons," followed by a 45-minute round-table discussion led by a lecturer from the Division. The Greater Vancouver Health League surveyed parents' and teachers' opinions of the course and concluded they were positive. A survey of students in eight high schools revealed that a majority said they learned a great deal from the discussions. Ninety percent of the male and 77% of the female students wished to have venereal disease education included in their regular health classes.<sup>42</sup>

In contrast to the approach taken by officials in Alberta and British Columbia, Miss Winnifred Ashplant, a nurse appointed Health Counselor of the London Board of Education secondary schools in Ontario, rejected the pedagogical focus on venereal disease. In January 1942, the London Board agreed to employ a Health Counselor to teach four units, drawn up by Dr. John Wilkey, the London schools medical officer, as part of the health education curriculum for girls at the grade eleven level.<sup>43</sup> Ashplant believed that the educational system had traditionally assumed responsibility for dealing with children's minds and children's bodies. It now had to assume

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<sup>41</sup> NAC MG 28 I 332 Vol. 80, File: Health Education in Schools 1939-59, letter to Alberta Minister of Education from L. A. Clarke, July 18, 1939.

<sup>42</sup> H. Cecil Rhodes and Pauline M. C. Chapelle, "Venereal Disease Education in the High Schools: British Columbia's Experiment," *Canadian Public Health Journal* 35 (May 1944): 181-189.

<sup>43</sup> Winnifred Ashplant, "Whose Job is Sex Education?" *The School: Secondary Education* 34, 2 (October 1945): 410-142.



responsibility for dealing with children's "emotions." Ashplant's euphemism for sexuality. Ashplant believed that the school's ability to look after children's minds, bodies and emotions was crucial to the "democracy for which we are now fighting," a democracy which subscribed "to the development of the individual as a whole— in all his [sic] potentialities."<sup>44</sup>

Public support for the fight against venereal disease—which included the need for school-based sex instruction—was high. In May, 1943, 90% of Canadians polled by Gallup thought a government-sponsored campaign to give people more information about venereal disease and a free examination was a "good idea." The percentage of those in agreement with the campaign in Ontario was slightly higher at 92%. In the same poll, 84% of Canadians approved of a law requiring couples to take a compulsory physical exam and blood test for venereal disease before marriage.<sup>45</sup> In August another poll cemented the perceived connections between venereal disease and juvenile delinquency and confirmed that Canadians overwhelmingly supported school-based sex instruction to alleviate the problem. Seventy-six percent of those polled by Gallup approved of giving a sex instruction course to students in high school. Those respondents who had a college education, were situated in the upper income bracket and in the lowest age group were especially enthusiastic about this suggestion.

Gallup's press release concluded that Canadian experts who "deal daily with the question of juvenile delinquency and the closely associated problem of venereal disease" cited overly strict parents, inadequate parental supervision, and the lack of recreational facilities for youth as the three main reasons why youths got into trouble.<sup>46</sup> In her exposé of juvenile delinquency, Brechin agreed. She asked plaintively, "What is Canada going to do for her children?"<sup>47</sup> and suggested the

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<sup>44</sup> Ashplant, "Dates, Doubts and Decisions," p. 14.

<sup>45</sup> GC, "Huge Majority Favour Educational Campaign Against Social Disease," May 15, 1943, Public Opinion News Service Release.

<sup>46</sup> GC, "Canadians Endorse Plan to Install Sex Education Course in High Schools," September 1, 1943, Public Opinion News Service Release, p. 2.

<sup>47</sup> Brechin, "Danger: Child Growing Up," pp. 48-49.

country needed community-organized recreation and teenagers' clubs as well as more social workers, teachers and child psychologists. Canada may have been the metaphorical neglectful parent but the negligence displayed by the juvenile delinquent's mother and father was considered all too real. George Drew, Ontario Premier as well as the Minister of Education after August 17, 1943, blamed juvenile delinquency on both parents, remarking that "it is only too clear that the problem of juvenile delinquents is very largely a problem of delinquent parents."<sup>48</sup> Yet it was the wartime mother, not the father, who was repeatedly portrayed as *the* delinquent parent, a characterization borne out by research on child neglect and parental responsibility during the Second World War.<sup>49</sup>

The wartime mother was guilty of parental delinquency for two reasons. First, she was, once again, held to be derelict in teaching her sons and daughters about sex. Most of the talks given on wartime juvenile delinquency and venereal disease, observed a writer for *Saturday Night*, stressed the importance of teaching children about sex. Yet parents seldom felt competent to do the job.<sup>50</sup> The lack of information was considered especially detrimental to young girls who came into contact with soldiers. The information one young woman remembers receiving about venereal disease during the War was spotty: "Sex education was non-existent then...when we started going to the service men's dances we didn't know anything...all we were told was not to dance with anyone with sores around their mouth!"<sup>51</sup> As the rates of venereal disease and juvenile delinquency continued to rise during the War, it was the *mother's* inability to exercise this responsibility which was condemned repeatedly.

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<sup>48</sup> "Drew Gives Principles of Reform," *Globe and Mail*, November 9, 1943.

<sup>49</sup> See Gordon, *Heroes*, pp. 166-167; Karen Anderson, *Wartime Women: Sex Roles, Family Relations, and the Status of Women During World War II* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1981), pp. 90-111; D'Ann Campbell, *Women at War with America: Private Lives in a Patriotic Era* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), pp. 201-212; Pierson, "They're Still Women After All", p. 50.

<sup>50</sup> Miriam Chapin, "Sex Instruction in the School Curriculum," *Saturday Night*, April 15, 1944, p. 39.

<sup>51</sup> Dorothy Turvill, quoted in Deidre Rowe Brown, "Public Attitudes Towards Canadian Women During and Immediately After World War Two," unpublished M. A. thesis, University of Toronto, 1992, p. 59.

Proof of a mother's inability to instruct her children about sex came from the reputable Dr. W. E. Blatz in the form of a jest.<sup>52</sup> Blatz told an interviewer the joke about "the war wife" who was too embarrassed to talk to her youngest son, seven-year-old Bobby, about sex while his father was away overseas. She asks her eldest son, 11-year-old Jim, to tell Bobby what their father had told Jim about the "facts of life" and the "birds and the bees" before he left. Jim agrees:

Jim went out and hauled his kid brother away from his playmates.  
 "Lissen," he said. "Mom wants me to explain something to you...Do you know how babies come?"  
 "Sure," said Bobby, who had learned fast in the street.  
 "You know why people get married and how they have kids?"  
 "Sure, that's old stuff," said Bobby.  
 "Well, its the same with bees and birds—see! [sic]"<sup>53</sup>

Blatz explained that the war exacerbated parental shortcomings in teaching children about sex because with so many fathers serving in the war, mothers were especially reluctant to speak to their sons: "They feel it should be their husband's job. And they make this an excuse for doing nothing about it."<sup>54</sup>

Second, the mother was negligent in supervising her children during war time. The Canadian wartime mother was caught in a Catch-22. If she did not contribute her labour to the war effort, she was unpatriotic. If she worked and left her children unsupervised, she was responsible for her children's delinquency. The children of mothers who worked in war plants were called "war victims," apt to be permanently marred by neglect.<sup>55</sup> Brechin agreed. She reminded her readers that the sexually licentious Betty had a father overseas and a mother toiling in a war plant who was too "work weary" to supervise her daughter.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> For more information on Blatz and the Institute see, Jocelyn Moyter Raymond, *The Nursery World of Dr. Blatz* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).

<sup>53</sup> Dr. W. E. Blatz as told to Geoffrey Hewelcke, "Your Child—and Sex," *Maclean's*, January 1 1945, p. 7.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>55</sup> "War Victims," *Toronto Star*, June 12, 1943.

<sup>56</sup> Brechin, "Danger: Child Growing Up," p. 48.

By 1943, the pool of single women over age 20 and married women without children entering the labour force to replace the men now in the Armed Forces dried up. This labour shortage forced the National Selective service to turn to married women with children. Government officials appeared reluctant to recruit women whose primary responsibility was their home and, therefore, compromised by employing married women with children for part-time work. The greater numbers of women who remained at home also contributed their unpaid labour to the war effort. While their employed sisters worked in ammunition plants and on farms, "housesoldiers" saved metal, rags and grease for recycling, launched salvage campaigns, tended victory gardens, knitted garments for soldiers and canned jam for Britain.<sup>57</sup>

The employment of women in war industries generated fears of "latch-key" children and the connection between working mothers and juvenile delinquency generated calls for the establishment of nurseries. Individual companies set up child care facilities for the exclusive use of their employees and day nurseries for mothers involved in war work were made available in Ontario via the Dominion-Provincial Wartime Day Nurseries Agreement. Nevertheless, the Nurseries remained a temporary measure which initially applied only to the children of mothers working in essential industries. The few Wartime Nurseries which were established were unable to meet working mothers' demand for wartime child care. Women with children who were employed in non-essential industries were expected to make their own child care arrangements. In response to calls from newspapers, churches and women's organizations, the Wartime Nurseries Agreement was revised to allow in some children of mothers working in non-essential sectors but priority was still given to the children of mothers employed in essential industries.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Pierson, *They're Still Women After All*, pp. 22-61.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 48-61. For a reminiscence of one working mother's exhaustion see Gwen Lambton, "War Work in Toronto," in Ruth Latta (ed.), *The Memory of All That: Canadian Women Remember World War II* (Burnstown, Ontario: General Store Publishing House, 1992), pp. 29-35.

Some working mothers accepted the blame for wartime juvenile delinquency. A series of interviews conducted with married women, aged 26–45, who worked in war industries revealed that inadequate child care arrangements led some women to believe their sons and daughters would become juvenile delinquents. One interviewee heard on the radio that juvenile delinquency was on the rise in children between ages nine to 11 and began to worry what her 11-year-old son would do without adequate supervision: "On my street all the kids just roam around after school with nothing to do but get into mischief." Another commented that colleagues at work with daughters were really concerned because "it's the young girls of 14 and 15 that are the real problems. The women at work with daughters of that age are really worried because the kids are growing up so darn fast." Another woman confirmed that women at work often talked about their children's behaviour problems because they were having difficulties supervising them.<sup>59</sup>

Ironically, a large part of the supervision problem stemmed from the fact that children were also encouraged to do their bit for the war. This encouragement intensified after 1942 as German forces extended their grip on Europe and Africa and Japan solidified the gains it had made in the Far East.<sup>60</sup> Educators insisted that the school child, regardless of his or her age, should be given an active role on the home front.<sup>61</sup> Indeed, by instilling in students a sense of democratic pride in the British Commonwealth, participation in the war effort was seen as one method of curbing juvenile delinquency. Unlike women's labour, youthful efforts were not organized under the National Selective Service but provincial departments of education, organizations such as the Junior Red Cross and industries actively sought out pupils' labour. But like women's labour, children's volunteer or paid labour was also militarized specifically for the war effort. Participation in the war effort, particularly for Ontario adolescents employed in war plants, gave youths a degree

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<sup>59</sup> Canadian Youth Commission, *Youth, Marriage and the Family*, "Appendix B" (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1948), pp. 214-219.

<sup>60</sup> Charles M. Johnston, "The Children's War: The Mobilization of Ontario Youth During the Second World War," in Roger Hall, William Westfall and Laurel Sefton MacDowell (eds.), *Patterns of the Past: Interpreting Ontario's History* (Toronto and Oxford: Dundurn Press, 1988), pp. 356-380.

<sup>61</sup> "A Universal Challenge," *Toronto Star*, May 28, 1943.

of economic independence which women working in industry were also beginning to enjoy. With economic independence came a certain freedom of movement which raised concerns about the loosening of adolescent sexual morality.

### III

During the war years, educators idealized the school as the "bulwark of democracy."<sup>62</sup> Wartime rhetoric encouraged teachers to preserve personal freedom and save democratic institutions by bringing democracy into the classroom. Teacher indoctrination of pupils was out. Front line work such as teaching the pupils to think for themselves was in. One of the important cornerstones of classroom democracy was classroom discussion. The teacher was to act as a catalyst to discussion, drawing out the timid pupils and subduing the more boisterous. The teacher would provide opportunities for discussion of a particular topic. Pupils could then talk out situations, exchange opinions, find ideas from sources outside themselves and draw their own conclusions. The fear that too much democracy would lead to anarchy was also addressed. Educators told teachers that their task was to train students to "think independently but [to be able to] follow a leader well at the same time."<sup>63</sup>

Not everyone accepted such inflated pronouncements. CCF member J. W. Noseworthy complained that the school wouldn't be a bulwark of democracy until federal grants-in-aid were given to provincial departments of education on the basis of need; schools received larger provincial financial support; teachers were paid in relation to the social importance of their job; the discrepancy between facilities in urban and rural schools was eliminated; and equality of

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<sup>62</sup> For another point of view which examines the discourse on the American war-time family as the school for democracy, see Sonya Michel, "American Women and the Discourse of the Democratic Family in World War II," in Margaret Randolph Higonnet, Jane Jenson, Sonya Mitchell and Margaret Collins Weitz (eds.), *Behind The Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), pp. 154-167.

<sup>63</sup> Anne Dunston, "Democracy in Education," *The School: Secondary Edition* 31, 1 (October 1942), p. 103.

opportunity existed for all Canadians seeking an education.<sup>64</sup> But Noseworthy's observations were no match for the democracy band wagon. During the war years, Canadian educators militarized thousands of school children under the guise of rallying to freedom, justice and democracy. Ontario students viewed patriotic war films such as "Front of Steel," "Atlantic Patrol," "Peoples of Canada," "Britain At Bay," "Squadron 992 Royal Air Force" and "Wings of Youth."<sup>65</sup> Pupils in elementary schools were encouraged to collect scrap metal, become involved in Junior Red Cross work, compete to purchase war stamps and write letters of support to British Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret Rose. Much of the students' war work was divided along gender lines. Girls in home economics classes knitted socks, sweaters, scarves and afghans for soldiers and sewed outfits for children who had lost their homes in bombing raids. Boys in manual training classes made splints for setting limbs, model airplanes to aid recruits in aircraft recognition and cribbage boards for sailors' amusement.<sup>66</sup>

The war boosted the school cadet movement. Abolished in 1933, compulsory cadet training for high school boys was reintroduced by the Ontario Department of Education in 1939. A year later there were 4,700 cadets enrolled in Toronto Board of Education schools who met at 8 o'clock three to four mornings a week for drill, route marches and military training. There was no room for pacifist sentiments on the democratic bandwagon.<sup>67</sup> Principal Colonel F. Wood of North Toronto Collegiate claimed cadet training improved his boys' studying, and declared that if there were any conscientious objectors "we would tell them they can have their choice, drill, or knit socks for

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<sup>64</sup> J. W. Noseworthy, "The School—The Bulwark of Democracy," *Canadian Forum* 21 (September 1941), pp. 168-70.

<sup>65</sup> AO RG 2 P 3 DM 3 Box 236, File 15, letter to Mr. Buchanan, from Ontario Deputy Minister of Education, February 9, 1942.

<sup>66</sup> This summary of pupils' militarized activities was compiled by looking at newspaper articles in the *Toronto Star*, the *Evening Telegram* and the *Globe and Mail* between 1939 and 1945. See also Stamp, *The Schools of Ontario*, pp. 171-182; Johnston, "The Children's War;" Norah Lewis, "Isn't this war awful?: children's reaction to two world wars as demonstrated through their letters," a paper presented at the Australian and New Zealand History of Education Society and the Canadian History of Education Association/Association canadienne d'histoire de l'éducation Conference, University of Melbourne, Australia, December 9-12, 1993.

<sup>67</sup> Johnston, "The Children's War," p. 373.

soldiers with the girls."<sup>68</sup> In the *Courses of Study for Grades IX, X, XI and XII, Defence Training, Health and Physical Education* for 1942, the Department made cadet training compulsory for boys from grade 10 onward.<sup>69</sup> The Department's move ensured that the Department of National Defence would not exercise control over the schools' military preparedness. But by 1944 cadet training under the direction of the army or air force became compulsory for high schools.<sup>70</sup>

Some students may have felt they were doing their duty to democracy by contributing their labour to the war effort. Others may have been more attracted by the prospect of earning their own wages. Students harvested crops in the summertime, took after-school jobs in war plants and found employment in theatres, bingo hall, restaurants and pool parlours.<sup>71</sup> Despite the urgings of the Department of Education and the Department of Labour that employers refrain from hiring boys and girls under age 14, abuses were apparently common. Some boys under 14 were discovered working in war plants during the evenings only to fall asleep in school the next day.<sup>72</sup> As the war progressed, concerns about boys and girls earning too much money, playing truant, working late at night, jitterbugging to the boogie woogie, attending "necking parties," and becoming infected with venereal disease were expressed.<sup>73</sup>

Canadian women's participation in the armed forces and war industries threatened to close the putative gap between the masculine and the feminine, engendering what Pierson calls "wartime jitters over femininity."<sup>74</sup> Where Canadian youth were concerned, the Second World War threatened to blur the conceptual boundaries separating adolescents from children and adults

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<sup>68</sup> "No Softies Here' As 600 Boys Drill," *Toronto Star*, October 10, 1940.

<sup>69</sup> Ontario Department of Education, *Courses of Study for Grades IX, X, XI and XII, Defence Training, Health and Physical Education*, 1942.

<sup>70</sup> Stamp, *The Schools of Ontario*, pp. 172-173.

<sup>71</sup> Johnston, "The Children's War," p. 365.

<sup>72</sup> "Boys Under 14 Found Working in War Plants," *Globe and Mail*, December 15, 1942.

<sup>73</sup> Johnston, "The Children's War," p. 366.

<sup>74</sup> Pierson, *They're Still Women After All*, pp. 129-168.



which social hygienists like G. S. Stanley Hall had established at the turn of the century. Hall maintained that the adolescent was neither child nor adult.<sup>75</sup> By contrast, educators in the 1940s, like Blatz's colleague, Dr. Karl Bernhardt, straddled the divisions Hall had established and labelled the adolescent "Half Child—Half Adult."<sup>76</sup> The confusion over Hall's conceptual boundaries began occurring in the 1920s. Improved economic conditions freed many middle-class adolescents from parental restrictions. The loosening of parental restrictions led youths to participate in a new form of intimate heterosexual companionship which was no longer supervised by adults—dating. Prior to the Great War, heterosexual couples signalled their interest in each other via the chaperoned practice of calling. Spurred on by the mobility and privacy the automobile offered middle-class youths, dating replaced calling as *the* form of heterosexual courtship by the 1920s. A decade later, dating had lost entirely its early association with rebellious behaviour in the upper classes and prostitution in the lower classes. As such dating was key to both the regulation of teen sexuality and the institutionalization of compulsory heterosexuality.<sup>77</sup>

During the Second World War, the heterosexual experimentation of adolescents and the employment of boys and girls under 18 contributed to the confusion over the conceptual boundaries amongst children, adolescents and adults. In addition, there is evidence that some youths' increasingly rapid metamorphosis into physical adulthood also helped blur those divisions. Historians have recognized that children's physical growth is an important factor in determining their relationship to health and nutrition over time. Growth is a complex process involving genetic inheritance and environmental influences. To achieve optimum growth, a child, before age 5, must acquire resistance to disease, emotional sustenance and good nutrition. Growth

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<sup>75</sup> G. Stanley Hall *Adolescence: Its Psychology and its Relation to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion and Education* Vols. 1 and 2 (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1908 (1904).

<sup>76</sup> Karl Bernhardt, "Young Adults or Just Children?" *Parent Education Bulletin: The Institute of Child Study* 26 (February 1944): 2-4.

<sup>77</sup> Paula S. Fass, *The Damned and the Beautiful: American Youth in the 1920s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979 [1977]); Beth Bailey, *From Front Porch to Back Seat: Courtship in Twentieth-Century America* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1989 [1988]); Adams, "The Trouble With Normal," pp. 204-207.

is so rapidly affected by factors which draw upon the child's energy reserves that it is now fairly common for paediatricians and social workers to look to stunted growth patterns for evidence of deprivation and/or child abuse.<sup>78</sup> Growth triggers sexual maturation in girls and boys and, simultaneously, the development of secondary sex characteristics—pubic hair, breasts and rounded hips in the female; pubic hair, facial hair and upper body development in the male. Unfortunately, longitudinal historical studies on growth in human females are sparse because available long-run statistics dealing with height and weight measurements, such as those amassed on soldiers and sailors, are restricted to the male sex.<sup>79</sup> Historians who have analyzed these records agree that increases in the consumption of animal protein have contributed to rapid increases in height and weight in North America between the 18th and 20th centuries.<sup>80</sup>

A series of surveys conducted on the height and weight of elementary school children aged 7-13 in Toronto from 1891 to 1939 showed that children increased in height and weight from 2 to 5% over a generation. On the average, children of prosperous parents were found to be taller than their poorer peers because of their genetic inheritance and "superior environment."<sup>81</sup> During the 1940s, educators noticed that some girls and boys were attaining the height and the contours of adult female and male bodies noticeably early. Mrs. Grace McCullagh, a trustee with the Toronto Board of Education, complained that there were many pupils measuring six feet who could not get behind a school desk.<sup>82</sup> A survey revealed that of the 63,285 desks in Toronto public schools, 1,115 were considered too small for pupils to seat themselves comfortably. McCullagh also

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<sup>78</sup> Roderick Floud, Kenneth Wachter and Annabel Gregory, *Height, Health and History: Nutritional Status in the United Kingdom, 1750-1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 17.

<sup>79</sup> The analysis in Roderick Floud, Kenneth Wachter and Annabel Gregory, *Height, Health and History: Nutritional Status in the United Kingdom, 1750-1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), is based on statistics on boys between 12-17 enrolled in the Marine Society of London, established in 1756.

<sup>80</sup> Robert W. Fogel et al., "Secular Changes in American and British Stature and Nutrition," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 14, 2 (Autumn 1983): 445-481.

<sup>81</sup> TCA, RG 11 E.1 Box 66, File 7, *A Height and Weight Survey of the Toronto Elementary School Children, 1939* (Ottawa: Authority of the Honourable James A. MacKinnon, Minister of Trade and Commerce), pp. 29-31.

<sup>82</sup> "Fitting Six-Foot Pupil Behind Tiny Desk Just Can't Be Done," *Toronto Star*, December 6, 1945.

complained that girls and boys who failed the grade 8 entrance exam were too physically large to repeat the grade without embarrassment and feared they might drift into truancy.<sup>83</sup>

Ironically, social hygienists had traditionally initiated and/or supported many of the public health reforms so crucial to child welfare. The pasteurization of milk, the emphasis on child rescue and the establishment of well-baby clinics cut down on child mortality. These reforms also contributed to disease prevention, emotional sustenance and good nutrition in early childhood, the very factors which are key to the increase in children's height and weight and, hence, to the earlier appearance of secondary sex characteristics. The irony is that the same reforms of which social hygienists were so proud led to physiological changes in children's bodies which challenged the conceptual boundaries they had drawn amongst childhood, adolescence and adulthood.

Educators in the 1940s scrambled, nevertheless, to maintain the divisions between childhood, adolescence and adulthood by focusing on some aspect of youths' immaturity. Blatz admitted that while a child between 14 and 16 was "sexually potent" and "physically an adult," he or she was not emotionally mature.<sup>84</sup> Leta Hollingworth, whose work was referenced by the committee responsible for the 1942 *Courses of Study*, remarked that many adolescents were psychologically unweaned from their parents and behaved like infants five or six feet tall.<sup>85</sup> Bernhardt did make some sensitive observations about the tensions adolescents experienced precisely because they were considered more emotionally akin to children but more physically akin to adults. He remarked that adolescents wanted "the independence that they think should go with their size. The thing that bothers young people most is being treated like children." Youth needed friends and counsellors not parents who acted like dictators.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> "6-Footers Flunk 8th Grade Said 'Too Big To Go Back'," *Toronto Star*, September 7, 1945.

<sup>84</sup> Blatz as told to Geoffrey Hewelcke, "Your Child—and Sex," pp. 37

<sup>85</sup> Leta Hollingworth, *The Psychology of the Adolescent* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1928), p. 37.

<sup>86</sup> Karl S. Bernhardt, "Achieving Maturity," *Parent Education Bulletin: The Institute of Child Study: University of Toronto* 27 (April 1944), p. 4.

The fact that children's early physical, sexual and reproductive maturation was now occurring within the context of wartime stress led Blatz to prescribe that children's sex instruction be directed toward two ends—conformity to societal conduct and enjoyment within the limitations set by society. For educators like Blatz, conformity was intimately related to heterosexual "normality" and normality to psychological maturity. In the post-war era, psychological maturity was increasingly tied to marriage and child rearing.<sup>87</sup> Blatz supported home-based rather than school-based sex instruction. He conceded that parents would have a difficult job training children to maintain their sexual desires within socially acceptable boundaries but concerted efforts beginning in childhood would do the trick. The parent was instructed to teach the child about the biological facts of human reproduction while making the child appreciative of the inevitability of social ostracism once social laws were transgressed. Blatz's focus on the penalty of social ostracism was an augur of post-war developments directly related to the medical triumph over venereal disease. The fear of venereal disease had traditionally been used to keep youths on the sexual straight and narrow. After penicillin's extraordinary effectiveness in curing both syphilis and gonorrhoea became apparent, the threat of social ostracism was used to counter any sexual deviation from the norm of pre-marital chastity.<sup>88</sup>

Ironically, educators during the 1940s came to believe not only that non-sexualized heterosexual friendships were possible but that they were crucial to the development of the individual's maturity. Spurred on by a curious mix of biology, sociology and Freudian psychology, dating came to be considered, by the 1940s, a socially desirable precursor to marriage for teenagers as young as 13. Blatz told parents to encourage adolescents' socializing in order to sublimate his or her sexual feelings.<sup>89</sup> Bernhardt warned parents not to discourage teenage

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<sup>87</sup> Barbara Ehrenreich, *Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight From Commitment* (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1984); Adams, "The Trouble With Normal," pp. 173-217.

<sup>88</sup> See excerpts of accounts of dating and teenage pregnancy in Beth Light and Ruth Pierson (eds.), *No Easy Road: Women in Canada, 1920s to 1960s* Vol. III (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1990), pp. 111-120.

<sup>89</sup> Blatz as told to Geoffrey Hewelcke, "Your Child—and Sex," and W. E. Blatz, "Freud and the Institute," *Bulletin of the Institute of Child Study, University of Toronto* 48 (Winter 1951), pp. 1-3.

socializing because dating helped the individual achieve heterosexuality.<sup>90</sup> Problems arose, of course, when teenagers who dated did more than sip sodas and go bowling. The Canadian Youth Commission (CYC) recognized that wartime teenage dating resulted in relaxed moral codes, temporary sexual relationships and children borne out of wedlock.<sup>91</sup> Yet dating was considered so important to the achievement of heterosexuality, that professionals continued to promote the practice. They maintained that the sexual dangers posed by dating could be eliminated if teenagers learned to follow "proper" dating etiquette with its strong proscriptions against necking, petting and long automobile rides. Girls, whether they went out with other girls and boys on group dates or went out alone with a boy, were assigned the responsibility of enforcing those proscriptions.<sup>92</sup>

#### IV

The Ontario Department of Education did its bit to place compulsory heterosexuality on its curriculum for girls by way of the Department's emphasis on democratic sentiments. In 1942, the Department introduced a *Programme of Studies for Grades VII and VIII of the Public and Separate Schools*<sup>93</sup> and the *Courses of Study* for grades 9-12 of the high schools which made cadet training compulsory. Their emphasis on military preparedness, health and physical fitness was not surprising. According to J. G. Althouse, Ontario's Chief Director of Education, Nazi Germany had developed national health and physical fitness in order to exterminate, subjugate and dominate. Canadian democracy needed to develop the national health and physical fitness necessary to repulse the enemy. With the health of Canadian recruits in question, the school needed to turn out citizens

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<sup>90</sup> Bernhardt, "Young Adults or Just Children?" p. 4.

<sup>91</sup> Canadian Youth Commission, *Youth, Marriage and the Family*, p. 56.

<sup>92</sup> Bailey, *From Front Porch to Back Seat*, pp. 83-84; Adams, "The Trouble With Normal," pp. 204-216. For one American primary source on dating etiquette read in Canada, see Winfield Scott Hall, *Steering the Girl to a Happy Marriage: Doctor and Mrs. Dawson Instruct Their Daughter, Margaret* (Huntington, Indiana: "Our Sunday Visitor Press," 1944). My thanks to Ruth Pierson for this reference.

<sup>93</sup> Ontario Department of Education, *Programme of Studies for Grades VII and VIII of the Public and Separate Schools*, 1942.

who were fit for survival, fit for sacrifice, fit to resist fascism, and fit for a kind of life "that will not permit such evil to rear its ugly head again."<sup>94</sup>

The *Programme* emphasized "education for social living." Its linchpin was the training of a child to "be a good citizen." A good citizen had a socially satisfactory personality, got along with others and lived according to a standard of Christian ethics appropriate for a democracy.<sup>95</sup> The school's three major tasks were to help the child understand its own environment, to choose and accept standards of behaviour which conformed to society's approval—it was hoped that principals and teachers would train students in democratic citizenship by example—and to assist the pupil in acquiring essential skills. The *Programme* stressed the necessity of teaching children about good health.

As in the 1939 version of the *Programme*, the subject Health promoted the best physical and mental health possible for each child. A secondary aim was added in the 1942 version of the *Programme* which was undoubtedly connected to wartime fears over the spread of venereal disease: the cultivation of a scientifically-based genuine interest in personal and community health. The *Programme* encouraged the child to develop a "health conscience" which was necessary to the good health of the individual *and* the community. For grade 7 pupils this meant understanding the basics of communicable diseases like colds. Students in grade 8 went beyond learning about communicable diseases. They not only discovered the role bacteria played in the transmission of disease, but learned about the relationship between alcohol and accidents, poverty and crime, first aid in air raid emergencies and the development of "moral health." A morally healthy child was obviously a sexually chaste child for he or she set high ideals, had "clean" thoughts and kept the company of "wholesome" companions.

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<sup>94</sup> J. G. Althouse, "The Coming of Age of Physical and Health Education," *Ontario Educational Association Yearbook*, 1945, p. 117.

<sup>95</sup> *Programme of Studies for Grades VII and VIII*, pp. 5-9.

As part of the Canadian government's mobilization of society for war, Ontario educators prepared the *Courses of Study* in co-operation with officers from the Royal Canadian Air Force and the Army. The *Courses of Study* prepared high school students to serve Canadian democracy in whatever capacity was required. The educators who framed the courses established an interesting distinction between boys' and girls' usefulness to democracy. Boys could prepare to participate in the armed forces and war industries. By contrast girls had to decide whether they were most useful in the war services, the industries or at home.<sup>96</sup> The *Courses of Study* recommended that both boys and girls had to learn the basics of drill, knots and lashings, aircraft recognition and civilian protection. But while boys in grade 11 were taught about internal combustion engines, map reading and orientation, grade 11 girls were taught "Healthful Living." Healthful Living had been a part of the grade 10 boys' and girls' Health and Education Course in 1939. But the 1942 version of Healthful Living, intended to be taken only by grade 11 girls, was designed with the nirvana of heterosexuality, normality and maturity in mind. Indeed, one educator praised the Healthful Living course for girls, on the grounds that "were there more young people educated to act rationally there would be fewer maladjusted adults."<sup>97</sup>

In line with the democratic emphasis on classroom discussion, Healthful Living was not intended to be a standard lecture course but a series of discussions. The patient and wise teacher would provide pupils with the opportunity to discuss vocational problems, social relations and rational standards of conduct. The course focused on six units, the Meaning of Successful Living, the Nature of Development, Work, Recreation, Social Adjustment and a Philosophy of Life. Each unit laid stress on the importance of good physical and emotional health, but the Social Adjustment unit provided the opportunity to link girls' democratic education to the institutionalization of compulsory heterosexuality in schools. This unit dealt with good health, good citizenship, family

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<sup>96</sup> Helen Bryans, "The New Course for Girls: Defence Training, Health and Physical Education," *The School: Secondary Edition* 31, 1 (September 1942), p. 57.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

life and friendships with boys. The unit clearly intended girls to develop the skills they supposedly needed to maintain friendships with boys. Girls were encouraged to discuss the ways and means of cultivating feminine attractiveness, entertaining boys and keeping a boy's friendship and love. Some girls, as Dr. Rutherford, the director of technical education, found, were more interested, however, in studying internal combustion engines than they were in learning about Healthful Living.<sup>98</sup> Nevertheless, the daily press thrilled to the Social Adjustment unit. It was portrayed as far more interesting than boys' army work:

For the girls—ah, the lasses have it on the lads for interesting variety of subjects. These range from lighting a camp fire in the woods to lighting a flame of love in a lad's heart—and how to keep it burning.<sup>99</sup>

In 1943, an expanded version of the Healthful Living course was introduced to girls in Grade 12. It included lessons in democratic ideals and self-discipline. These lessons were intended, perhaps, to curb girls' licentious behaviour with soldiers and with other boys. Discussions about friendships with boys remained high on the agenda. But so did friendships with girls. The 1943 version of the Healthful Living course tackled the thorny possibility that some girls may have been more inclined to develop and maintain close friendships with other girls than with boys. In an attempt to wean girls from the adolescent "stage" of homosexual attraction, the course also included discussions about the difference between "crushes" on other girls and "mature friendships" with them. Presumably, mature friendships were sexless associations and were considered, therefore, more acceptable than mad crushes. Child Study was also included as a topic of study for grade 12 girls, a development undoubtedly related to the employment of high school girls' employment in the Wartime Nurseries.

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<sup>98</sup> "Girl and Boy Friendship Figures in Defence Course," *Toronto Star*, August 25, 1942.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.



At the behest of Premier Drew, a review of the 1942 *Courses of Study* was undertaken by C. E. Reynolds. After studying 100 collegiate institutes, high, vocational and continuation urban and rural schools across Ontario, Reynolds recommended that the course's name be changed to "Practical Citizenship, Health and Physical Education." He suggested that along with "Responsibilities of Citizens in a Democracy" and "Industrial Relations," "Sex Hygiene and related subjects" be added to the course. According to Reynolds, Sex Hygiene for girls and boys should begin in grade 11 because many students did not pursue their education beyond this grade. For girls, the subject would be built around Nutrition, Healthful Living, Home Nursing and Child Study. Based on discussions he had with teachers and doctors, Reynolds concluded that the subject of Sex Hygiene should include the study of venereal disease for both girls and boys and:

- a) Physical Growth from foetus to adult.
- b) Emotional Growth from foetus to adult
- c) Anatomy and Physiology of Reproduction
- d) Desirable Attitudes and Ideals, based on the relationship between Mature Physical and Emotional Growth.<sup>100</sup>

Yet during the war Ontario's largest school board, the Toronto Board of Education, was unprepared to meet the demand for school-based sex instruction.

## V

In May 1943, Dr. E. A. Hardy, a Toronto Board of Education trustee and the head of the Urban School Trustees Association of Ontario, made a recommendation concerning school-based sex instruction at the Association's annual meeting. Hardie suggested that the provincial Boards of Health and Education collaborate to formulate a plan to include sex instruction in schools.<sup>101</sup> By 1944, the Toronto Board could no longer ignore the issue of sex instruction. On January 26 of that year, the Ontario Department of Health announced that more than 50,000 cases of venereal disease

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<sup>100</sup> AO RG 3 Drew Papers, 1943-1948, Box 435, File 82-G, C. E. Reynolds, "Survey Report: Cadet Training Defence Training, Health and Physical Education," January 29, 1944, p. 2.

<sup>101</sup> "Urge Forming Plan To Give Sex Education," *Globe and Mail*, May 20, 1943.

had been recorded since the beginning of the war. The problem was far worse, however, for the Health Department estimated that for every one case of syphilis, another two went undiagnosed. In every case of gonorrhoea, another four or five individuals didn't know they had the disease. Without giving out any statistics, the Department announced that venereal disease in youth numbered in the thousands. The personnel at the provincial Department of Health's personnel put their energies into a new "Ontario Venereal Disease Control programme" based on seven objectives aimed at wiping out venereal disease, the "silent, hidden enemy." Along with more effective medical treatment, public education for all sectors of society was stressed. The Department stood firmly behind sex instruction for youth because venereal disease was said to have a devastating impact upon home and family life. The Department recommended that young people should be taught the facts about venereal disease and compelled to submit to a blood test before marriage. "The public must be told the truth," trumpeted the Department,

the programme requires the support of every serious-minded father and mother, employer and employee, community leader, and young man and woman in Ontario. Success will be measured in terms of healthy young men and women; in happy homes, secure against the threat of venereal disease; in a nation with its virile strength undiminished for the work of planning and building the future.<sup>102</sup>

Undoubtedly influenced by the sense of urgency generated by the Ontario Department of Health, Toronto Board of Education Trustee E. L. Roxborough put forward a motion seconded by Hardy: "the [Ontario] Department of Education be requested to include in the secondary school curriculum, the teaching of Social Hygiene, in accordance with the suggested programme outlined by the Provincial Department of Public Health [sic]."<sup>103</sup> Mary Louise Adams argues that because social hygiene was losing ground as a term and an idea, Roxborough was being "conservative" in calling for social hygiene. Adams is correct in maintaining that by the mid-1940s, social hygiene

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<sup>102</sup> NAC MG 28 I 11 Canadian Youth Commission, Vol. 35 File: Health 1(3d), "Facts About the Venereal Disease Problem in Ontario," January 26, 1944.

<sup>103</sup> TBEA, *Minutes of the Toronto Board of Education*, February 3, 1944.

had become too narrowly associated with prostitution, venereal disease and overt moralizing to be considered an effective educational vehicle for youths.<sup>104</sup> She is incorrect in suggesting that Roxborough was being "conservative." Given the widespread sense of urgency over venereal disease, Roxborough was merely being practical. Roxborough's motion was referred to the Toronto Board's Management Committee and Dr. C. C. Goldring, the Superintendent of Schools, was requested to write up a report on the matter. An editorial in the *Toronto Star* lauded Roxborough's motion, arguing that since 1939, the number of teens aged 15 to 19 attending venereal disease clinics had increased by 7%. The editorial considered that the inclusion of social hygiene into the school curriculum was timely, given the "urgency to combat the spread of social disease and the weakening of morals."<sup>105</sup>

In his report, dated March 6, 1944, Goldring admitted that school-based sex instruction had received considerable attention from many quarters but that the Ontario Department of Education did not offer such teaching in any of its courses of study. Goldring conceded that Ontario Health and Physical Education teachers sometimes gave students incidental teaching in social hygiene. Although Goldring did not elaborate on what kind of incidental teaching some teachers gave their students, it is certainly possible that women teachers gave information on menstrual hygiene to their girl pupils, probably within the context of the girls-only Healthful Living course. Advertisements for free booklets with titles such as "As One Girl to Another," distributed by Canadian Cellucotton Products, appeared during the early 1940s in *The School*. Canadian Cellucotton Products' advertising urged teachers to send away for these booklets because, it was claimed, mothers often hesitated discussing intimate problems with their daughters: "That's why many of *your* girls look to you, their teacher, for facts on the vitally important subject..."<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Adams, "The Trouble With Normal," pp. 230-233.

<sup>105</sup> "A Sound Proposal," *Toronto Star*, February 10, 1944.

<sup>106</sup> "How's A Girl To Manage," *The School: Secondary Edition* 30, 9 (May 1942), p. 827.

Goldring understood that the London and Vancouver Boards of Education had already taken steps to include some form of sex instruction in their curriculum. Similar steps had also been taken in England, the United States and the Soviet Union. He appeared particularly impressed with the Soviet plan for reducing venereal disease. The Soviet Union had, of course, become a Canadian ally after Germany invaded that country on June 22, 1941. As a result of the invasion, the Soviet Union and the Allies joined forces, forcing a *volte face* on the part of some Toronto Board trustees vociferously opposed to any hint of communism.<sup>107</sup> Goldring explained that in the Soviet Union all youths received school-based sex instruction before age 15, that legal penalties were enforced for transmitting venereal disease, and that medical information on the subject was disseminated freely. Goldring's praise for the Soviet plan garnered positive attention in the press.<sup>108</sup>

Despite Goldring's admiration for the Soviet Union's efforts in controlling venereal disease, he wished to follow the United States' example of school-based sex instruction. Held in the spring of 1943, the United States National Conference for Co-operation in Health Education recommended that the schools' health curriculum regularly encompass the issue of venereal disease. The American plan stressed the importance of co-operation between the departments of education and health, something Goldring recommended for Ontario:

If, in the opinion of the Provincial Department of Health such instruction is necessary, the Department of Education should be requested to secure from the Department of Health authentic information to serve as a standard lesson or lecture to be given by the Health teachers on the various high school staffs to their students. This information should be presented to the boys and girls separately, with men teachers for the boys and women teachers for the girls; and the groups for these lessons should be rather small, certainly not larger than class size...The lectures should be given as

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<sup>107</sup> "Communist Trustee Alone Opposes Move to Refuse 'Isms' Aired in Schools," *Evening Telegram*, January 19, 1940; TBEA *Minutes of the Toronto Board of Education*, June 6, 1940, p. 102 and September 5, 1940, pp. 131-132.

<sup>108</sup> "Goldring Cites Soviet Plan to Combat Social Disease," *Toronto Star*, March 6, 1944.

a matter of routine during the regular Health periods, and should be considered a normal part of the school course.<sup>109</sup>

Goldring suggested that the health and physical education teachers receive instruction on how to teach social hygiene from a medical doctor provided by the Department of Health. Mindful of possible parental opposition, Goldring also gave a nod to parents' receiving information on this subject via their Home and School Associations. But some Home and School Associations were already preparing to combat the spread of sexually transmitted disease amongst Canadian youth. The Toronto Home and School Council sponsored a series of talks and films on venereal disease at a number of high schools in the city. "Young people," stated Mrs. Andrew Dunn, president of the Toronto organization, "will have to be made aware of the dangers surrounding them, and parents will have to be awakened to the necessity of warning their children."<sup>110</sup>

After having read Goldring's report, the Management Committee recommended that the Toronto Board "favour the teaching of Social Hygiene in secondary schools as may be approved by the Department of Education, and that the Superintendent of Schools [Goldring] be requested to take the matter up with the Department of Education and report to the Board thereon."<sup>111</sup> Trustee May Robinson was reported to have said: "I once disapproved of teaching social hygiene in secondary schools, but I now see that we can hardly be proud of what we have left undone."<sup>112</sup> Despite these encouraging responses, the Board continued to drag its feet. More concrete plans to implement some kind of sex instruction at the Board's schools would not be initiated before 1947.

During 1944, public concern with juvenile delinquency and venereal disease remained high. The Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation unanimously endorsed compulsory tuberculosis and venereal disease testing for all high school students.<sup>113</sup> Support for some form of

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<sup>109</sup> TBEA, Reports by Board Officials, 1937-1962 # 285 Social Hygiene.

<sup>110</sup> "Home and School Council to Combat V. D.," *Globe and Mail*, March 16, 1944.

<sup>111</sup> TBEA, Appendix to the *Minutes of the Toronto Board of Education*, Management Report No. 6, Part I, March 7, 1944, p. 67.

<sup>112</sup> "Teaching Social Hygiene Endorsed," *Toronto Star*, March 8, 1944.

<sup>113</sup> "Teachers Urge All Students Be VD Tested," *Globe and Mail*, December 29, 1944.

sex instruction in secondary *and* elementary schools grew enormously. The Ontario Educational Association passed a resolution recommending that "sex education" be made a part of the secondary and elementary schools' curricula or that special instructors be available to interested school boards.<sup>114</sup> The Junior Chamber of Commerce, headquartered in Montréal, passed two lengthy resolutions on "juvenile delinquency" and "sex education." The organization urged that elementary and secondary instruction in human relations, human biology and sociology could curb juvenile delinquency. Believing that sex ignorance contributed to delinquency, venereal disease and the demoralization of home and family life, the organization recommended that a programme in human relations be incorporated into subjects like biology, religious instruction, physical education and citizenship. In a well publicized campaign, copies of the two resolutions were sent to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Justice, the Ministers of Welfare, Health and Education across the Dominion as well as to women's organizations, home and school federations and churches.<sup>115</sup>

The HLC's traditional opposition to school-based sex instruction crumbled in 1944. Its "Social Hygiene Kit" endorsed parent education, home-based and school-based sex instruction.<sup>116</sup> Launched on February 6—"Social Hygiene Day"—the kit was intended for widespread distribution to parents, youth leaders and educators. It included approximately one dozen pieces of information ranging from pamphlets to articles to mock-ups for church sermons and radio scripts. Some of the material, such as the pamphlets "Tell Your Children the Truth" and "What Every Woman Should Know," had been used by the HLC's predecessor, the Canadian Social Hygiene Council (CSHC), during the interwar years. While a number of the materials acknowledged that the venereal diseases were curable, they leaned heavily upon the ideal of sexual continence as the best means of prevention. Some of the material singled youths out for special attention. One

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<sup>114</sup> "Resolutions of the Ontario Educational Association," *Ontario Educational Association Yearbook*, 1944, p. 18.

<sup>115</sup> AO RG 2 P 3 3-183, Box 264, File 7, "Courses of Study 1944."

<sup>116</sup> NAC MG 28 I 332 Vol. 141, File: Social Hygiene Kit, 1944-1947.

pamphlet adorned with a smiling teenage couple walking arm-in-arm was captioned by the statistic: "75% of all VD is spread by persons under 30!"

Not surprisingly, the HLC advised concerned parents and educators who took to the radio waves to argue that the prevention of venereal disease meant protecting young people from promiscuity. The major line of attack was to educate youths, the citizens of the future, in family life. Parent education would enable parents to teach their children the lessons of family life which schools set out to reinforce. Despite the fact that the HLC was willing to initiate its public education campaign on "Social Hygiene Day," the HLC recommended that speakers tell their radio audience that they preferred to call sex instruction not "social hygiene" but "education for family life." The speaker would explain that this change in terminology was necessary only because of the "mistaken idea" that social hygiene teaching was too narrow, that it would be taught apart from other subjects on the curriculum and that it would encompass discussions on birth control, marital sex and venereal disease. The claim that venereal disease had no place in social hygiene teaching may have required the listening audience to suspend their disbelief. It was obvious that the HLC was, on the one hand, overcompensating for the reputation of social hygiene, mistaken or not, as pedagogically restrictive. On the other hand, the HLC was now trying to do what the ASHA had done in the late 1930s—embrace family life education rather than risk being pushed aside by it.

Family life education was meant to shore up compulsory heterosexuality within a framework which was, in many aspects, reminiscent of Ontario social purists' vision of a graduated programme of purity education. According to the HLC, parents and teachers would make a concerted attempt to train individuals from infancy to adulthood to develop the strength of character required to give up momentary sexual indulgences in favour of the promise of a fulfilling sexually monogamous future. It was suggested that family life education be undertaken in concert with children's "normal" growth and development. Every subject had the potential to teach children about the wonder of marriage and parenthood. Biology, botany and natural science could introduce children to human reproduction by studying plant and animal life. Students in mathematics could

learn how to calculate household budgets. The subject of English offered students the possibility of reading literature which portrayed the strength of family ties. In order to reduce the sensationalist aspects of venereal disease, syphilis and gonorrhoea would be dealt with solely as communicable diseases. As Goldring had done, the HLC turned to the United States to show that sex instruction in schools was feasible. The HLC approved of the state of Oregon's decision to pass a law incorporating "public health education" into grades 1-8. The HLC gave the Oregon Federation of Women's Clubs the majority of the credit for the labour involved in passing the law.<sup>117</sup>

By the summer of 1944, Joseph Lichstein, the Acting Director of the Social Hygiene Division of the Health League of Canada, appeared to have won Bates' reluctant support for incorporating family life education into public schools. Traditionally unwilling to favour school-based sex instruction, Bates appears to have capitulated.<sup>118</sup> Lichstein gingerly assured Bates that the support for incorporating family life education into schools came from Maurice Bigelow, the star personality of the American social hygiene movement, and from the London Board of Education. Lichstein agreed with Bigelow's feeling that family life education, because it contributed to the development of character, was very important to venereal disease control. But despite the fact that venereal disease was the underlying rationale for family life education, family life education would neither begin with nor centre on venereal disease control. Rather, family life education would emphasize the "normal" relations between the sexes. The London Board similarly found that neither the "pathological aspects" of sex nor the "fear of disease" should be made part of school-based sex instruction, especially in elementary schools.<sup>119</sup>

While the Ontario Department of Education did not officially endorse family life education in schools, it did take steps to dispel the hysteria about venereal disease by insisting upon its

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<sup>117</sup> "Fifteen-minute Radio Script," in *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> NAC MG 28 I 332 Vol. 80, File: Education—Sex Education—Correspondence 1935-40, letter to Dr. J. H. Elliot from Dr. Gordon Bates, October 19, 1940.

<sup>119</sup> NAC MG 28 I 332 Vol. 141, File: Social Hygiene Poll, 1943-1947, "Memo to Doctor Bates from Joseph Lichstein Re: Coming Gallup Poll Release on V. D. Education in High Schools," June 19, 1944.



similarity to any other communicable disease. The 1944 *Courses of Study* for grades 9 to 13 in Physical and Health Education and Cadet Training placed the study of venereal disease in the Health Education sections of grades 10 and 12.<sup>120</sup> This was the first time venereal disease became part of the official curriculum. But unlike cadet training, the teaching of venereal disease was not mandatory. Individual public schools in Ontario could, therefore, choose whether or not to include the subject in the curriculum. After a unit on the Ductless Glands, grade 10 boys were to study venereal disease and a host of other communicable disease like measles and colds in the unit "Health Progress Through the Ages." If time permitted, the boys would also study biographies of Paul Erlich, the "discoverer" of Salvarsan, Hippocrates, and Florence Nightingale. Boys in grade 12 would study venereal disease within a unit on Current Problems in Health and after a unit on First Aid. Grade 10 girls were to study venereal disease after the Nutrition unit and within a unit on Communicable Diseases. Girls in grade 12 studied venereal disease in a unit on Community Health and after a unit on Home Nursing.

Girls in grade 11 continued to take the Healthful Living course. A shorter version of the girls' Healthful Living course was now slated for grade 11 boys taking Health Education. Whereas the girls' Social Adjustment unit within the Healthful Living course stressed the necessity of cultivating feminine attractiveness, entertaining boys and keeping a boy's friendship and love, the boys' Social Adjustment unit emphasized the control of the emotions, the acceptance of civic responsibilities and the problems of conduct—smoking, gate crashing and petty gambling. Nevertheless, boys in grade 11 were also subjected to the demands of compulsory heterosexuality. Social Adjustment required boys to discuss "wholesome" relationships with one's family, girls and other boys. Neatly sandwiched between the study of venereal disease in grades 10 and 12, compulsory heterosexuality in the school boys' grade 11 curriculum now made its official debut.

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<sup>120</sup> Ontario Department of Education, *Courses of Study for Grades IX, X, XI, XII and XIII Physical and Health Education and Cadet Training, 1944.*

True to Goldring's expectations, the introduction of the study of venereal disease control as part of Ontario schools' regular schedule was made possible due to the co-operation of the provincial Department of Health and Department of Education. Dr. W. Gordon Brown, Assistant Director of the Department of Public Health, hoped the health and physical education teacher would do his or her utmost to carry out this educational recommendation. Brown noted that although the Department of Health had concentrated its efforts on venereal disease control in the Canadian adult population, it was now in the process of developing material suitable to educating a younger audience. Brown repeated the familiar refrain—teenagers needed to know the facts about venereal disease because statistics revealed they were at risk. Parents were not teaching their children about sex. The schools had to pick up the slack. The Department of Health hoped to make available to every school principal and every health and physical education teacher a plan for teaching grades 10 and 12 about venereal disease. The plan involved, first, sending a letter requesting parental permission; second, teaching boys and girls separately about venereal disease according to a rudimentary manual prepared by the Department of Health; and third, distributing a booklet to students. It was hoped that instead of taking notes, the students would refer to the booklet and use it to further discussion at home. The Department of Health rejected the idea of using a physician or nurse to teach venereal disease control. The health and physical education teacher was said to have the confidence of the students and was thoroughly competent to teach a subject "so closely related to behaviour and good citizenship."<sup>121</sup>

The Department of Health's manual for teachers, entitled *Plan for Secondary School Instruction on the Subject of Venereal Diseases*, was a straightforward affair. The introduction to the manual recommended that health and physical education teachers for grade 10 students outline the historical progress in treating gonorrhoea and syphilis, and explain the medical tests and

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<sup>121</sup> W. Gordon Brown, "Education in the Prevention of Venereal Disease," *Ontario Educational Association Yearbook*, 1945, pp. 119-122. See also OSP Vol. LXXVIII, Part III, 1946, W. G. Brown, "Annual Report of the Division of Venereal Disease Control," pp. 174-181.

treatment available. Grade 12 students would learn about the cause, nature and mode of transmission of the venereal diseases and about their impact on personal and community health. The manual itself detailed the aetiology, transmission, manifestations and treatment of syphilis and gonorrhoea and defined the federal, provincial and municipal responsibilities for venereal disease. The Department of Health recognized that as many students did not pursue their education up to grade 12, it would make available this manual and a number of other educational materials to organizations which dealt with this age group.<sup>122</sup>

In contrast to the straightforward teachers' manual, the educational aids made available to youths obviously intended to scare the teenager into celibacy until marriage. One of the aids was a pamphlet called "Victory over Disease." This title was emblazoned over a test tube, reinforcing the importance of medical science's triumph over syphilis and gonorrhoea. The pamphlet confirmed the danger the innocent-looking amateur posed to men. "Outward appearance belie and mislead," warned the pamphlet: "Wine, women and—V. D. is a common association."<sup>123</sup> Literary and graphic linkages portraying women as the source of venereal infection were extremely common during the war.<sup>124</sup> Bates himself admitted that all the literature put out by social hygiene societies and departments of health depicted an attractively dressed woman luring a weak male to his destruction. Bates was quite capable, however, of blaming women for the existence of these unfair portrayals. He claimed that with the exception of Josephine Butler and Emmeline Pankhurst few women had called the double standard of sexual morals into question. Oblivious to the way the social hygiene movement had marginalized the feminist wing of the social purity movement, Bates asked sarcastically: "Is it impolite of me to say that women certainly have been asleep?"<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> OLL, *Plan for Secondary School Instruction on the Subject of Venereal Diseases*, Department of Health, Division of Venereal Disease Control, 1949 [1945].

<sup>123</sup> OLL, "Victory Over Disease," 1948 [1945?].

<sup>124</sup> Pierson, *They're Still Women After All*, pp. 188-214.

<sup>125</sup> Gordon Bates, "Women and Politics," *Health*, Spring, 1944, p. 21.

"Take Care of Yourself: V. D. Information for Teen-Agers" was the title of the booklet adolescents were supposed to take home and discuss with their parents. An explanation of the nature of syphilis and gonorrhoea was punctuated by an illustration of a teenage boy and girl in conversation with each other, books in hand, walking away from their high school. The pamphlet confirmed that venereal disease was transmitted via "sex contact" yet this term was never defined. Set alongside an illustration of teenage couples dancing happily to a swing band were the words: "Infected persons usually look perfectly healthy and therefore appearances mean nothing. Young people must realize that there is a danger in any sex contact which is outside of healthy marriage." The last page of the pamphlet revealed a father reading the pamphlet in front of his son while a seated mother did the same, her daughter perched comfortably on the chair's arm. The teenager was told that parents, teachers and doctors were willing to answer their questions and that the avoidance of venereal disease was the one way to assure future family health and happiness.<sup>126</sup>

Two films, "Sixteen to Twenty-Six" (for girls) and "Very Dangerous" (for boys), made in 1945 by the National Film Board in consultation with the Division of Venereal Disease Control, National Health and Welfare, were also available for teenagers' viewing. Like the afore-mentioned booklet, the films intended to scare teenagers into celibacy before marriage.

Titled for the period during which venereal disease struck most often, "Sixteen to Twenty-Six" told high school and college girls that they should be personally concerned because of their age group's vulnerability to infection. Girls were also warned that infection during this 10-year period of "school, job and marriage" threatened their future happiness. Girls were told that venereal disease was transmitted via sexual intercourse. A "modern" woman, who could hold down a job until she married, might find out that she was unable to conceive or bear healthy children due to infection. Using techniques made famous by the venereal disease education films of the First World War, the girls were treated to images of the suffering of infected patients—

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<sup>126</sup> OLL, "Take Care of Yourself: V. D. Information for Teenagers," Department of Health for Ontario, 1949.

wheelchair bound paralytics, scarred buttocks, occluded eyes and the anguished faces of the mentally ill. Bates' concern over the standard association made between women and venereal infection was finally addressed in this film. Girls were advised not to submit to the male "pick-up," for some men were "full of VD." This advice clearly indicates that in rare instances, the term "pick-up" was also applied to men. The film concluded by explaining that co-operation with medical authorities, a clear understanding of the scope of the venereal disease problem and a high moral standard would eradicate syphilis and gonorrhoea.

The film "Very Dangerous" warned boys that a "hidden enemy" lurked in many young people's bodies. Sexual intercourse transmitted venereal disease. Boys had to beware of female pick-ups and prostitutes because they were "always infected." Boys were warned against going to quack doctors. Whereas the girls' film appealed to the vision of healthy motherhood, the boys' film pandered to the vision of healthy economic success. In contrast to the girls' film, which relied on drawings of external and internal reproductive anatomy, the boys' film showed images of sores on male genitalia, a pus-filled penis and grossly swollen testicles. Like the girls, the boys were also treated to clips of patients suffering from enlarged joints, paralysis, blindness and mental insanity. The boys' film similarly concluded with the same prescription for the eradication of venereal disease: co-operation with the medical profession, a thorough grounding in the facts of the diseases and high moral principles.<sup>127</sup> During the 1946 calendar year, 23,294 "Victory Over Disease" pamphlets and 21,516 "Take Care of Yourself" booklets were distributed. "From Sixteen to Twenty-Six" was shown 131 times; "Very Dangerous" had a total of 97 showings.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> NAC "From Sixteen to Twenty-Six," National Film Board of Canada, 8221-1169, 1945 and "Very Dangerous," National Film Board of Canada, 8221-0105, 1945.

<sup>128</sup> OSP, Vol. LXXIX, Part II, 1947, W. G. Brown, "Annual Report of the Division of Venereal Disease Control," p. 156.

Toward the end of the war, social hygienists forcefully predicted that post-war Canada would sink into a gaping moral void. It was feared that rapid medical successes in routing venereal disease would lead to an increase in sexual immorality.<sup>129</sup> Consternation was also expressed over the possibility that youths who had become jaded over the course of the war would force conviction rates for juvenile delinquency to rise.<sup>130</sup> An increase in sexual immorality and a rise in juvenile delinquency was considered an explosive combination sure to result in even greater numbers of venereally infected individuals. Yet statistics prepared by the Department of Health show that the number of reported syphilis infections in Ontario peaked at 7,484 in 1941 and then showed a steady decline after 1943. The number of gonorrheal infections peaked at 8,225 in 1945 and then dropped off quickly.<sup>131</sup>

By the end of the war, it was clear to many prominent educators that the introduction of education about venereal disease into the school curriculum was not enough. Speaking on the heels of a Gallup Poll which showed that only 18% of youths polled on behalf of the CYC said that their school prepared them adequately for family life,<sup>132</sup> Lichstein spoke out in favour of incorporating family life education in schools at the 1944 Third Western Canada Venereal Disease Conference in Regina, Saskatchewan. Lichstein claimed he supported family life education because it represented education for marriage, parenthood, and almost all other social relations.<sup>133</sup> Lichstein insisted, as he had to Bates, that in promoting family life education in schools he was doing nothing new. American men active in the social hygiene movement over the past four decades—Drs. Prince

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<sup>129</sup> Brandt, *No Magic Bullet*, p. 172. See also NAC MG 28 I 332 Vol. 154, File: American Social Hygiene Association, 1944-1945, letter to Gordon Bates from Maurice Bigelow, November 13, 1945 and letter to Maurice Bigelow from Gordon Bates, November 17, 1945.

<sup>130</sup> Gerald Zoffer, "Psychological Factors in Juvenile Crime," *Saturday Night*, January 26, 1946, p. 18.

<sup>131</sup> OLL, *Plan for Secondary School Instruction on the Subject of Venereal Diseases*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>132</sup> GC, "Youth Feels High Schools Fail to Prepare it for Family Life," September 22, 1944, Public Opinion News Service Release.

<sup>133</sup> NAC MG 28 I 11 Vol. 42, File: 8(3g) Family Living, Joseph Lichstein, "Family-Life Education As One Measure for VD Control," a paper presented at the Third Western Canada Venereal Disease Conference, Regina, Saskatchewan, November 21-22, 1944.

Morrow, Charles W. Eliot, Bigelow, Benjamin Gruenberg, Lester A. Kirkendall and Paul Popenoe—had paved the way for its introduction into the schools.

Interestingly, Lichstein made an issue of the perceived narrowness of social hygiene teaching *and* sex education. He expressed the hope that a change in nomenclature from "social hygiene" or "sex education" to "family life education" would help change any negative attitudes toward sex instruction in schools. Reiterating Bigelow's sentiments, Lichstein reconfirmed that family life education would not focus exclusively on the study of venereal disease but investigate two sets of issues. One, the inculcation in children of attitudes leading to happy marriage and parenthood and two, the consequences of a mismanaged sex life—dysgenic parenthood, venereal disease, illegitimate pregnancy, promiscuity, vulgarity and unhappy matrimony. Lichstein reiterated that because family life education touched all aspects of life, it could not be contained within a separate course but could be incorporated into the biological and social sciences, physical education, hygiene, homemaking, general literature, psychology, religious instruction, citizenship and extra-curricular activities. In concluding his remarks, Lichstein once again raised the link between the spectre of the juvenile delinquent and the spread of venereal disease:

if we do not begin our educational work with children and youth, we shall never mop up the flood of VD from the leaking tap of promiscuity which results from youth's ignorance of life and social living. It is like continuing to put out fire after fire without teaching fire prevention.<sup>134</sup>

Fittingly, family life education was being heavily promoted at the same time Canadian women who had contributed so much to the effort were showing their reluctance to return to hearth and home. The results of polls and surveys revealed that the vast majority of single and married women intended to continue working outside the home after the war if paid work were available.<sup>135</sup> Yet the democracy for which women had made sacrifices to protect did not return the favour. Despite

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<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> Pierson, *They're Still Women After All*, p. 78.

women's participation in the war effort there was no surge in popular sentiment to change women's fundamental role of wife and mother in Canadian society.<sup>136</sup>

In her stinging 1938 indictment of war, Virginia Woolf had likened British patriarchal society to European fascism where the treatment of women was concerned. Woolf maintained that no difference existed between the pronouncements British and Nazi government officials had made about the necessity of restricting women's life choices to the role of wife and mother.<sup>137</sup> Even if Woolf's commentary on the grave impact of the rule of the fathers on women's freedom of choice had reached Canadian post-war planners, it would have been ignored. Post-war planners insisted on organizing Canadian society on the basis of the conviction that women's primary role of wife and mother could not be combined with paid employment. Even the Subcommittee on the Post-War Problems of Women recommended channeling single women into paid domestic work and married women into the so-called scientific art of household management and child care.<sup>138</sup> Men returned to claim their "rightful place" in the world of paid work; women were relegated, yet again, to the world of home and family. Post-war restrictions on women's labour combined with the end of day care and inducements to stay at home took effect. In the post-war world women's participation in the paid work force fell as marriages amongst younger women rose dramatically.<sup>139</sup> Many women, however reluctantly, went back to the home. The CYC acknowledged this development by explaining that although women's political and economic advancement had made the family more democratic, the post-war employment situation had re-

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<sup>136</sup> Gail Cuthbert Brandt, "Pigeon-Holed and Forgotten: The Work of the Sub-Committee of the Post-War Problems of Women, 1943," *Social History/Histoire sociale* 15, 29 (May 1982): 239-259.

<sup>137</sup> Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1986 [1938]), p. 62. Berenice A. Carroll, "To Crush Him In Our Own Country: The Political Thought of Virginia Woolf," *Feminist Studies* 4, 1 (February 1978): 98-131, provides an excellent analysis of Woolf's writings on male-domination and war-making. For further evidence of literary women writing about the links between fascism and male domination, see Susan Gubar, "This Is My Rifle, This Is My Gun: World War II and the Blitz on Women," in Higonnet, Jenson, Mitchell and Collins Weitz (eds.), *Behind The Lines*, pp. 227-259.

<sup>138</sup> Pierson, *They're Still Women After All*, p. 84.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 215-220.



established the father's position as head of the family. The result was "a reshifting of family relationships to a more normal footing."<sup>140</sup>

Ironically, this more normal footing was vaunted by family life education theorists as the key to the distinction between fascism and democracy. Pedagogues who promoted the institutionalization of family life education in schools believed that one of the major differences between fascism and democracy was the state of family life. In supporting trial marriage, promiscuous relations and state-controlled marriage, the Nazi regime was supposed to have surrendered, in the words of one pro-family life educator, "the best way of life yet evolved—the family way—and [reverted] to the ways of barbarism, savagery, and primitivity."<sup>141</sup> Another well-respected educator active in the HLC announced that an unhappy family life led both Adolph Hitler and Benito Mussolini to develop the aggressive personalities which plunged the whole world into war.<sup>142</sup> Yet another educator maintained that a stable family life was crucial to a lasting post-war peace. He claimed that the co-operation and mutual affection characteristic of a rejuvenated family life in Canada would lead to the building of "a 'United Nations of the World' which will save our civilization."<sup>143</sup> In the post-war era the return of the patriarchal nuclear family would be portrayed in increasingly glowing terms for students at the Toronto Board of Education.

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<sup>140</sup> Canadian Youth Commission, *Youth, Marriage and the Family*, p. 37.

<sup>141</sup> Charles S. Gulston, "Mental Hygiene and Family Life," *The School: Secondary Edition* 34, 10 (June 1946), p. 825.

<sup>142</sup> S. R. Laycock, "New Approaches to Sex Education," *The School: Secondary Edition* 34, 4 (December 1945), p. 313.

<sup>143</sup> NAC MG 28 I 332 Health League of Canada Vol. 141, File: Kit (Social Hygiene) 1944-47, C. E. Silcox, "Moral and Social Control Factors in V. D. Control," An address given at an Open Seminar on VD Control, October 30, 1945, Toronto.

## CHAPTER SIX

### "Working Out Satisfactory Boy-Girl Relationships"<sup>1</sup>

During the last year of the war, the Ontario government inaugurated the first—and up until 1993 the only—Royal Commission on Education in Ontario. Its mandate was to chart a course for post-war publicly supported education in the province. The Commission was chaired by Chief Justice John A. Hope and was colloquially referred to as the Hope Commission. Public sessions were held at the University of Toronto; private sessions in the Board Room of the Toronto Board of Education. By the time the Commission completed its work in December 1950, 258 briefs and 44 memoranda had been submitted by concerned individuals, educational institutions and organizations. The Commission has been perceived as an ideological battlefield pitting advocates of progressive education against conservatives. Led by Stanley Watson, co-author of the 1937 reforms, the progressives hoped post-war education in Ontario would stress experiential learning, co-operative group activities and social studies. Conservatives feared that extreme progressivism, American-style, would sweep Ontario. The Commission purported to take a position between progressivism and conservatism but ended by supporting the latter.<sup>2</sup> Reflecting this dissension, the Commissioners signed a Majority Report, a Minority Report, a memorandum appended to the Minority Report and one separate statement.<sup>3</sup>

A number of the briefs and memoranda presented to the Hope Commission came out in favour of school-based sex instruction. Some of the submissions proposed the institutionalization of a comprehensive programme of family life and human relations education in schools, others

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<sup>1</sup> TBEA Reports by Board Officials, 1937-1962 #130 Family Life Education, "Report of the Teachers' Committee On 'Family Life Education,' 1948," p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Stamp, *The Schools of Ontario, 1876-1976* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), pp. 187-191.

<sup>3</sup> *Report of the Royal Commission on Education in Ontario, 1950* (Toronto: Baptist Johnson, 1950).

wanted sex education as parts of existing courses, while still others wanted special lectures on venereal disease and sex hygiene alone. According to the Commissioners responsible for the Majority Report, the school could not accept complete responsibility for sex instruction: it could only supplement the work of the home, particularly in the development of children's attitudes and ideals toward sex. The Commissioners were not prepared to outline a detailed curriculum of sex instruction. Nevertheless, they recommended that sex instruction was appropriate for secondary schools. In keeping with the sentiments of social purists and hygienists, the Commissioners deemed that sex instruction combine physiological information with "the inculcation of related spiritual and moral values."<sup>4</sup> The Commission's recommendations would not appear until 1950. By then a Family Life Education curriculum for elementary schools, which had been devised by a group of teachers at the Toronto Board of Education seeking to combine physiological and moral knowledge, had been rejected by the majority of the Board's trustees. A truncated version of the original curriculum, divested of virtually all physiological information, remained in effect until 1952 when it was discarded entirely.

Ontario social purists, hygienists and family life educators had long maintained, at least in theory, that the most successful home- or school-based sex instruction combined hygienic information with moral values which upheld the ideal of sexual continence before marriage. The defeat of the original Family Life Education curriculum reveals that, in practice, educators were far more likely to sanction sex instruction programmes for public schools when they ceded first place to morality. The reasons for educators' willingness to sacrifice straightforward physiological information to moral values were complex. The sacrifice educators made betrayed the residual impact of the social purity movement. Social purists and then hygienists had purposefully obfuscated physiological information for children while idealizing sexual chastity, marriage and parenthood. Morality assumed even greater importance in the post-war era. The briefs to the

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<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, p. 135.

Commission cited juvenile delinquency, venereal disease and the high divorce rate as the main reasons why school-based sex instruction was vital to post-war education in Ontario. Yet after 1945 venereal disease was no longer the primary public health emergency it had been during the war. Penicillin could cure syphilis and gonorrhoea rapidly. The threat of venereal disease could no longer act as the brake against individuals' sexual conduct social purists had first put in place and social hygienists had maintained.

In the absence of the check venereal disease provided, some educators became disconcerted by the prospect of straightforward physiological information. Educators feared that a thorough knowledge of sexual physiology could entice youths to careen rapidly toward a consequence-free promiscuous sexual life. Given these considerations, some educators like Dr. Gordon Bates of the Health League of Canada (HLC) emphasized that, "[m]orality must be taught again, not as a means of avoiding venereal disease but because only through moral conduct can one enjoy a normal life."<sup>5</sup> In post-war Canada, educators increasingly came to consider that morality and normality were synonymous concepts. They maintained that family life education could help students strive simultaneously toward morality and normality. Family life education could guide pupils away from sex delinquency, steer them toward heterosexuality and deliver them safely into monogamous marriage and responsible parenthood.

## I

Brief No. 170 had been submitted to the Hope Commission by the Men's Physical Education Section of the Ontario Educational Association on March 26, 1946. N. Rae Speirs, a physical education teacher at Danforth Technical School, authored and presented the organization's position on "Sex Education and V. D. Education in that brief."<sup>6</sup> Speirs also raised the spectre of

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<sup>5</sup> Gordon Bates, "Venereal Disease—A Social and Moral Problem," *Health*, January-February 1948, p. 28.

<sup>6</sup> AO RG 18 B-115 Brief 170 Box/Vol 18, "The Need for Sex Education and Venereal Disease Education," Appendix A of Brief 170, Physical Education (Men) Section, Ontario Educational Association, presented March 20, 1946. I thank Rosemary Speirs for patiently answering my many questions about her father, N. Rae Speirs.

the juvenile delinquent, maintaining that a strong connection existed between juvenile delinquency, sexual misconduct and war. He warned that the Second World War had done much to undermine the emotional bonds which held families together. He called for "no mere smattering of the 'facts of life'—but a programme in which every phase of school life contributes to prepare students for successful family living." Speirs suggested that because of the need for compulsory attendance, the school was the ideal place for sex instruction. Parents let barriers grow between themselves and their children and gave their offspring little direct help. Churches did not reach all of their adherents. Speirs recommended that instead of occasional lecturers, teachers could be trained to present sex information to their pupils. The teacher, noted Speirs, should be the "anvil rather than the hammer upon which the solution to some hypothetical conduct problem is hammered out." He hoped that the teacher could pin his faith in the democratic process of classroom education and retire to the back of the room while the pupils thrashed out the matter.

Speirs drew up a number of principles for sex instruction. Influenced by Winnifred Ashplant of the London Board of Education, he insisted that "sex education" be disentangled from any association with venereal disease. He believed that sex education could make a contribution to "normal living" while venereal disease education was often used as a "whip to secure better sex conduct." Indeed, Speirs claimed that fear had not worked in the past, so information on the pathological aspects of venereal disease should not be stressed. In order for adolescents to gain a foundation in anatomy and biology, sex education should precede venereal disease education. Because many students did not continue their studies beyond grade 10 sex education should begin in that grade. Any sex education programme should take into consideration the need for "healthy tension discharge" through hard physical work and skills development. He dismissed the notion that parents would object to sex education in schools when it was based on a "judicious programme."<sup>7</sup> Speirs would later admit that in appearing before the Royal Commission he had

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

committed a "rash act" because he had only recently begun to explore the literature on the topic of sex education and had just experimented with some teaching plans. A few months after his presentation, Speirs joined the American Social Hygiene Association (ASHA) to keep up with its material on sex education.<sup>8</sup> There is no indication to show whether or not Speirs also joined the HLC.

In September, 1946, the revised *Courses of Study for Grades IX, X, XI, XII and XIII: Physical and Health Education and Cadet Training* kept the non-compulsory teaching of venereal disease on the curriculum for grades 10 and 12 and added, for the first time, an authorized textbook on health for teachers' and students' use.<sup>9</sup> Authored by J. T. Phair, Deputy Minister of Health for Ontario, and Speirs, *Good Health* (1945),<sup>10</sup> set out to reveal the "oft-unsuspected relation that exists between health habits and the realization of adolescent ideals." to present the laws of human health as based in scientific fact and to build up a respect for the body. The book devoted two pages to venereal disease, illustrating this portion with a captioned photograph—"Happy, Healthy Companionship"—of a glowing teenage girl walking hand-in-hand with her admiring male date. Readers were correctly informed that syphilis and gonorrhoea were spread by intimate physical contact with an infected person but were mistakenly informed that gonorrhoea could also be spread via mediate contagion. Exposing anyone to venereal disease was held up as "not only a moral crime but a legal one."<sup>11</sup>

Some Toronto educators soon began to express fears that the materials provided for health and physical education teachers, such as the *Plan for Secondary School Instruction on the Subject*

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<sup>8</sup> TBEA TBE Curriculum, Family Life and Sex Education, 1948-1967, Box R22-6, letter to Dr. G. G. Wetherill from Rae Spiers, June 15, 1946 and letter to The American Social Hygiene Association from Rae Spiers, September 16, 1946.

<sup>9</sup> Ontario Department of Education, *Courses of Study for Grades IX, X, XI, XII and XIII Physical and Health Education and Cadet Training*, 1946, p. 37.

<sup>10</sup> J. T. Phair and N. R. Speirs, *Good Health* (Toronto: Ginn and Company, 1945).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 246.

of *Venereal Diseases* (1945)<sup>12</sup> did not deal with the moral aspects of syphilis and gonorrhoea. Some time in 1946 Z. S. Phimister, the Superintendent of Secondary Schools at the Toronto Board of Education, met with boys' and girls' physical education teachers to consider some additions to the *Plan*. According to Dr. C. C. Goldring, it was felt that the *Plan* emphasized the "scientific point of view while the spiritual aspect was ignored."<sup>13</sup> One result was a 12-page pamphlet which instructed teachers to emphasize what social purists and hygienists had long proclaimed: "any sex relationship outside of healthy marriage is dangerous, and constitutes a risk of venereal disease infection." Students would be told that there was no danger of contracting the disease as long as husband and wife were uninfected.<sup>14</sup>

J. MacPherson, the Director of Health and Physical Education for Toronto Schools until the end of 1946, also put together a smaller pamphlet on the "Guiding Principles in the Subject of Venereal Disease."<sup>15</sup> This pamphlet was based on a summation of recommendations made by the men and women physical education teachers. The teachers were clearly less concerned with physiology than with morality.<sup>16</sup> The men teachers recommended that "sex education" should precede venereal disease education in order for students to completely understand the nature of syphilis and gonorrhoea. Sex education would stress the importance of a high standard of moral conduct, "normal" boy-girl relationships and the necessity of a happy family life. Teaching about venereal disease was not to be maudlin but should emphasize the preventable, controllable and curable aspects of venereal disease. Women physical education teachers similarly agreed that instruction in venereal disease was just one aspect of the broader subject of sex education, and that

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<sup>12</sup> OLL *Plan for Secondary School Instruction on the Subject of Venereal Diseases*, Department of Health, Division of Venereal Disease Control, 1949 [1945].

<sup>13</sup> TBEA Reports by Board of Officials, 1937-1962, Report # 276 Sex Education, May 13, 1948, p. 2.

<sup>14</sup> I have not been able to locate this pamphlet, which is mentioned in "Study Venereal Disease in Ontario High Schools," *Toronto Star*, June 11, 1948.

<sup>15</sup> TBEA Reports by Board of Officials, 1937-1962, Report # 276 Sex Education, May 13, 1948, appended Recommendations, February 27, 1946.

<sup>16</sup> Mary Louise Adams, "The Trouble With Normal: Postwar Youth and the Construction of Heterosexuality," unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Toronto, 1994, p. 245.

suitable groundwork had to be laid before such instruction took place. Of even greater importance than venereal disease was the development of sane and healthy attitudes toward sex matters in general. Teachers should not discuss actual sexual relations in grade 10 but strive to develop healthy attitudes. In grade 11, the girls' Healthful Living course presented a natural opportunity to discuss the personal attitudes toward sex. In the section on associating happily with boys, the teacher could lead discussions against promiscuity. Once this was done, the students would be ready to receive technical information on venereal disease education in grade 12. Both groups of teachers recommended that sex education begin in grade 10, possibly because working-class boys and girls who left school for employment after age 16 would have a chance to learn about the importance of adopting moral attitudes toward sex.<sup>17</sup>

In 1947 Speirs, now Director of Physical Education, received Goldring's permission to train physical education teachers to teach venereal disease education and, simultaneously, to develop a separate course on sex education. Pro-family life education theorists would have disagreed. A separate course made sex education conspicuous. They preferred to work aspects of sex education throughout the entire curriculum. Not surprisingly, some teachers brought their objections about the development of a separate course on sex education to Speirs. Doris Rider, who taught health, physical education and guidance at Central Technical School and was the president of the Toronto Secondary Schools Women Teachers' Physical Education Association between 1946 and 1947, maintained sex education could be introduced via the opportunities provided by the 1946 *Courses of Study*. She believed that sex education could be introduced as a topic in grade 9 when girls used menstruation as a reason to be excused from gym classes, in grade 10 after a unit on the ductless glands, in grade 11 in Healthful Living and in grade 12 in Child Study.<sup>18</sup> Speirs, however, pressed on with his vision of a separate course.

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 245-246.

<sup>18</sup> TBEA TBE Curriculum, Family Life and Sex Education, 1948-1967, Box R22-6, letter to Rae Speirs from Doris Ryder, August 5, 1947.



For Speirs a separate course on sex education in the younger grades would combine straightforward physiological information with moral values. Physiological information would include the study of the anatomy of both sexes. Although he acknowledged that his tentative plans for a separate sex education course were culled from "current thinking from leaders in this field."<sup>19</sup> the moral values Speirs laid out echoed many social purist sentiments. Students' introduction to sexual morality would include the wonder of sex and its potential for good or evil, the different contributions males and females made to society and the value of family life to society. Menstruation and seminal emissions were normal processes, something both boys and girls should know about. Sports and hobbies were to be encouraged because they served as an antidote to youthful erotic impulses. Speirs departed from social purist assumptions about masturbation. Like many social hygienists he claimed that masturbation was not physically harmful but an emotionally draining juvenile habit.

In keeping with the post-war emphasis on compulsory heterosexuality, Speirs argued that boys and girls needed to develop desirable attitudes toward each other; feelings of hostility or contempt for the opposite sex were to be discouraged. The possibility that some boys and girls would find each other too desirable troubled Speirs. He suggested, therefore, that rather than going steady, both boys and girls should be encouraged to develop friendships with a variety of members of the same and of the opposite sex. Speirs neatly conflated sex education with gender instruction where girls were concerned. Girls who railed against adopting the feminine role society imposed upon them had to be checked. For example, Speirs maintained that girls should be taught not to wish they were born boys because boys did not share in household duties. Any girl who expressed distaste for menstruation was to be told that menstruation made childbirth possible.

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<sup>19</sup> TBEA TBE Curriculum, Family Life and Sex Education, 1948-1967, Box R22-6, letter to Dr. Jean Davcy from Rae Speirs, October 17, 1947.

In the higher grades, according to Speirs, a sex education course should focus on a more detailed investigation of the biological, psychological, sociological and ethical aspects of sex. Speirs envisioned that each stage of life from babyhood through adolescence, marriage, parenthood and menopause would be discussed. Sounding much like turn-of-the-century special lecturer Arthur Beall, Speirs suggested that a discussion on childbirth could lead to a discussion about the need to respect women. Sex in animals was also an important topic of study. In a reference he made to nature study, Speirs maintained that although animals' sexual organs could be compared to those in humans, he felt it was imperative that students were to understand that animals had no family life. For Speirs, sexual self-control was the key to sexual health. Therefore, Sigmund Freud's "psychological rubbish" on the dangers of sexual repression had to be discredited. The strength of the biological urge had been exaggerated. Only when this urge had been deliberately overstimulated during necking and petting did it threaten to sweep girls and boys off their feet. Girls, he argued, needed to know that boys were sexually aroused very easily.<sup>20</sup> In effect, Speirs was arguing, as did social purists before him, that sexual continence was healthy, that females possessed a lower sexual drive than did males and that women, not men, had to be sexual gatekeepers.

## II

In response to the focus on a more positive approach to sex instruction than was provided by the focus on venereal disease, Speirs organized a series of five one-hour evening lectures in sex education for teachers known as the "Family Life" series. The lectures took place at the Central High School of Commerce between November 18 and December 18, 1947. Dr. Jean Davey was scheduled to lecture to the women teachers; Dr. Karl Bernhardt was scheduled to lecture to the men. Speirs suggested that principals select emotionally well-adjusted teachers skilled in dealing

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

with young people. Speirs himself encouraged teachers responsible for the grade 11 course in Healthful Living to attend.<sup>21</sup> A total of 73 women and 40 men teachers attended the lectures given by Davey, who had been on the medical staff of the Royal Canadian Air Force, and Bernhardt, on staff at the University of Toronto Institute for Child Study. For some unknown reason, by the end of the series, Bernhardt had also lectured to the women.<sup>22</sup>

The two lectures given by Davey to the women teachers which have survived in print show that she spoke on "Sex Education" in relation to adolescent girls. Davey explained that sexual feelings and desires were normal but had to be carefully directed and controlled. Bodily functions related to human sexuality, such as menstruation, were never to be considered embarrassing. Davey provided the women teachers with a full explanation on the position and function of the female reproductive organs, noting incidentally that the use of tampons was controversial because of chafing and irritation. Obviously influenced by Freudian theory, Davey argued that the individual's psychological development culminated in heterosexuality. Heterosexuality found its ultimate expression in married life. Davey informed her female audience that every girl "visualizes herself in her own home, with her own husband and children...and she should be encouraged to persist intelligently in that desire and to prepare for it."

Davey believed that the adolescent girl had to be steered toward heterosexuality, marriage and family without engaging in one form of sex delinquency—pre-marital sexual intercourse. Davey advised the women teachers to think seriously about the factors which contributed to pre-marital intercourse. According to Davey these were: children's lack of sex education which resulted in ignorance; the consumption of alcohol which lowered inhibitions; post-war restlessness which challenged high moral standards; the "smart 'alec attitude" which maintained sex was the thing to

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<sup>21</sup> TBEA TBE Curriculum, Family Life and Sex Education, 1948-1967, Box R22-6, "Memo For Principals" from N. R. Speirs, November 3, 1947.

<sup>22</sup> TBEA TBE Curriculum, Family Life and Sex Education, 1948-1967, Box R22-6, memo to Mr. Oliver, from N. R. Speirs, December 12, 1947.

do; and the "modern point of view" which urged that sex experience before marriage was best. Davey argued that the primary cause of pre-marital sexual intercourse was petting. She claimed that few youths understood that petting was the "normal preliminary" to sexual intercourse. Now Davey agreed that girls and boys had to learn to control their appetites. Yet she believed that girls were ultimately responsible for not stopping their dates from engaging in "wet kisses and handling of breasts and thighs." Like Speirs, Davey set adolescent girls up as sexual gatekeepers. Davey did not entertain the possibility that some girls could be sexually coerced or raped by their dates. Instead, she concluded callously that there were many girls who viewed sex as a sport. These were the "scalp-collectors' [sic]...who ultimately get exactly what they have asked for."<sup>23</sup>

Bernhardt's surviving lecture indicates that he spoke on "Family Life Education Classes for Teachers." Beginning with the dramatic statement, "Sex education is inevitable," Bernhardt went on to more matter-of-fact business. He claimed that his ultimate aim was to establish conditions where children could receive the foundations of training in family life education in the home. Bernhardt envisioned a broad community plan for family life education. He believed that sex education should ideally begin in the home but recommended that parallel programmes of family life education take place from kindergarten to grade 13. He also recommended inaugurating teacher training, pre-marital counselling, behavioural counselling for "problem" children, marriage counselling and parent education programmes. In Bernhardt's view, school-based family life education could be incorporated into any number of subjects like physical education and social studies but some "technical aspects" should have a specific place within the curriculum. It is unclear what Bernhardt meant by this reference to the technical aspects. Perhaps he was referring to physiological information. He certainly did believe that family life education should include an account of the anatomy and physiology of reproduction, the meaning of physical growth and development and the significance of secondary sexual characteristics.

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<sup>23</sup> TBEA TBE Curriculum, Family Life and Sex Education, 1948-1967, Box R22-6, Dr. Jean Davey, "Sex Education," Lecture 2.

Like Davey, Bernhardt subscribed to the view that heterosexuality could achieve its full flowering only within the family. Yet heterosexuality was ironically perceived to be a hard-won adult achievement. Bernhardt understood that the weaning process from the adolescent stage of homosexual attraction would be difficult. Bernhardt was not alone. University of Toronto Professor Charles E. Hendry's lectures to parents on adolescent behaviour established that adolescents had to make "effective contact with the opposite sex." Hendry confirmed that heterosexuality was not a "biological gift; it is a psychological attainment, something learned only through a relationship."<sup>24</sup> In keeping with this kind of reasoning, Bernhardt suggested that family life education include the study of the significance of social conventions; the meaning of marriage and family life; and the development of "normal interest in the opposite sex." These would presumably serve as spurs to healthy heterosexual behaviour in adolescence. Although Bernhardt discussed the possibility that, depending on the maturity of the students, homosexuality, promiscuity and birth control could be discussed, everyone of Bernhardt's topics for school-based sex education in adolescence was placed within the framework of marriage and the family. For example, teachers were told that "sexual intercourse in human beings without the deep love between man and woman is about the same as in rabbits and dogs." Sexual intercourse was only for two humans who deeply loved each other in marriage and were prepared for the possibility of pregnancy. The insertion of the erect penis into the vagina followed by ejaculation led to the union of egg and sperm. Fertilization represented the joyous union of two parents who built a happy home for their child: "This is the true meaning of marriage." Menstruation meant only that fertilization did not occur. Bernhardt told teachers to listen to their students, to avoid appearing shocked, to answer their questions as truthfully as possible. Teachers were never to preach. They had to expect some students to want individual counseling in solving worries and problems.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Charles E. Hendry, "Adolescence," *The School* 35, 8 (June 1948), p. 590.

<sup>25</sup> TBEA TBE Curriculum, Family Life and Sex Education, 1948-1967, Box R22-6, Karl Bernhardt, "Family Life Education Classes for Teachers."

As part of the five evening lectures in the "Family Life" series, Speirs organized the screening of a number of films teachers could request permission to show their students. Records show that women physical education teachers went to the National Film Board on November 25 to see a number of films the Toronto Department of Physical Education had acquired. Among these were "In the Beginning," a 20-minute film on reproduction, and "The Story of Menstruation," a ten-minute Walt Disney animated film.<sup>26</sup> The T. Eaton Company Ltd. loaned Speirs another three films: "Junior Prom," a 20-minute film devoted to dating etiquette; "You and Your Friends;" and "You and Your Family." The last two films were intended to spark classroom discussion on handling social situations and family problems.<sup>27</sup> Possibly because he feared that embarrassed students or parents would object to a film about menstruation, Speirs asked the teachers at the "Family Life" lectures to respond to four questions about the suitability of screening "The Story of Menstruation" in the classroom. Every one of the thirty-two responses was in favour of showing the film to students. The film's simple, clear-cut explanation for menstruation won rave reviews. A few teachers thought it could be shown as early as grade 8. These teachers may have opted for school screening in grade 8 because girls who menstruated early needed adequate preparation for this event.<sup>28</sup> Most teachers, however, thought that the film should be introduced in grades 9 or 10.<sup>29</sup>

The benefits of the "Family Life" lecture series were soon made obvious to Speirs. Six months after the course ended, Speirs distributed a "Family Life Education Questionnaire" dated June 22, 1948, to find out whether the teachers attending the lectures had passed on the information they received to their students. Forty-seven replies from teachers employed in schools

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<sup>26</sup> Joan Jacobs Brumberg, "Something Happens to Girls: Menarche and the Emergence of the Modern American Hygienic Imperative," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 4, 1 (July 1993), p. 124 estimates that "The Story of Menstruation" has been seen by approximately 93 million American women.

<sup>27</sup> TBEA Toronto Secondary Schools Women Teachers' Physical Education Association, Minutes, November 25, 1947.

<sup>28</sup> Brumberg, "Something Happens to Girls," p. 109.

<sup>29</sup> TBEA TBE Curriculum, Family Life and Sex Education, 1948-1967, Box R22-6, "Story of Menstruation" surveys.

in Toronto's eastern district survive. Twenty-eight of the respondents were women: 19 were men.<sup>30</sup>

A clear majority, 28 of the 47 teachers, said they had taught classes in family life education primarily for students in grades 10-12 during regular school hours. Another three teachers said they gave classes in this subject after hours or in guidance interviews. Importantly, a total of 33 teachers said they would continue to teach family life education; some would even enlarge upon it. A number of the teachers were proud of the effort they had made. One commented that: "Even with all the mistakes I made I have felt I was teaching something that had the greatest value I have ever given." Another (presumably male) teacher noted proudly: "I feel the work was a success and worth the effort...[t]he lectures were straight from the shoulder—from man to man."

Some teachers detailed exactly what they taught their male and female students. One teacher showed grade 9 and 10 girls the movie "The Story of Menstruation" and had one discussion period. Grade 11 girls were given some pamphlets to read and discussions were conducted, some on venereal disease, over a total of five periods in the course on Healthful Living. Grade 12 girls spent a total of nine periods discussing sex education, family life and venereal disease, watched "The Story of Menstruation" and read pamphlets on maturity as part of courses on Community Health and Child Study. Another teacher organized a course, based on Bernhardt's lectures, consisting of one period a week over three months for grade 12 boys. The boys also saw "The Story of Menstruation." All the girls at the same school saw the same film but girls in grade 11 also had lectures in sex education.

Parental reaction to the classes was either non-existent or positive; no teacher reported any adverse reaction. The teachers' answers appeared to confirm what social purists and social

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<sup>30</sup> TBEA TBE Curriculum, Family Life and Sex Education, 1948-1967, Box R22-6, surveys dated 22/6/48 in an envelope labelled "East." The breakdown by sex is an approximation I have made based on the teachers' signatures, the subjects they taught and the schools at which they taught. Mark Greenberg's valuable assistance in tabulating these surveys is gratefully acknowledged.

hygienists who supported school-based sex instruction had long maintained: parents had shirked their duty in teaching children about sexual matters. Some parents were reported to be grateful for the instruction their children received. Several mothers, noted one teacher, were "relieved to have [their children] discuss openly such sex problems which were bothering them and yet about which they wouldn't speak at home." Some mothers apparently got the same lesson their daughters did "the evening after it was taken in class." The members of the executive of one Home and School Association were "very enthusiastic," claiming there was a "real need" for such classes.

The teachers deemed that the student reaction to the discussions was very favourable. A few teachers remarked that a minority of students had received sex education at home. At one school the ratio of those students who had and had not received home-based sex education was "1.3 out of 10—instruction varied from the bare essentials to a complete coverage." One teacher wrote that the girls in the class she taught were silent after the first lesson but then "the questions came fast and furiously." Boys at another school apparently asked many sensitive questions such as "Is there any cycle in a boy's life which is comparable to menstruation?" and behaved in a manner which led their teacher to believe his work "was a success and worth the effort." Other students were "keenly interested in the subject and willing to discuss personal or group problems in class period or else after school." Another group of students displayed a "keen interest," for "they had been asking for this information for 2 years previous—and many had been unable to get it at home." One teacher who built her own physical education class around family life education conducted her own survey of students. She found that 70 out of 75 grade-12 students were able to correct much "misinformation" and develop "a greater respect for the opposite sex." She believed 5 students' responses were "dangerous" but did not elaborate. Fears that the students' sexual desires would be aroused by the classes were dismissed quickly by many of the respondents: "As far as I could ascertain there was no aggravation of any situation, nothing of a sex-stimulating nature—strictly cold facts woven into 'Family Life.'"



The students' enthusiastic reactions to family life education were reinforced by the findings of the Canadian Youth Commission (CYC). The Commission had compiled the results of youth hearings conducted across Canada during 1944. In the report, *Youth, Marriage and the Family* (1948), the Commissioners insisted that both boys and girls needed to have school-based training for marriage, parenthood and family living.<sup>31</sup> The Commission would have come out even more strongly in favour of "sex education" had the Catholic Commissioners not objected to school-based sex instruction on religious grounds.<sup>32</sup> The Commission's findings confirmed that youths were demanding school-based sex instruction. According to a report based on briefs submitted to the Commission on the subject of health, 27 out of 67 youth groups brought up the subject of sex instruction. Twenty of the 27 groups approved of school-based sex instruction taught by teachers. Seven of the 27 groups rejected school-based sex instruction, believing that parents, doctors or members of the clergy were more appropriate instructors than were teachers. A number of the youth groups which supported school-based sex instruction suggested that some form of sex instruction should be introduced as early as grades 5, 6 or 7.<sup>33</sup> Preparation for family living could not come soon enough.

In August, 1948, Z. S. Phimister, the same Superintendent of Secondary Schools at the Toronto Board of Education who had met with boys' and girls' physical education teachers to consider some additions to the *Plan for Secondary School Instruction on the Subject of Venereal Diseases*, looked upon the results of Speirs' Family Life Education Questionnaire with favour. Phimister suggested cryptically to Speirs that "something more" could be done with sex education

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<sup>31</sup> The Canadian Youth Commission, *Youth, Marriage and the Family* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1948), pp. 172-176.

<sup>32</sup> Adams, "The Trouble With Normal," pp. 236-237.

<sup>33</sup> NAC MG 28 I 11 Canadian Youth Commission Vol. 35, Files 1-4 Health Reports and Surveys. "Canadian Youth Discusses Health: A Report Based on Briefs Submitted to the Health Committee of the Canadian Youth Commission By Sixty-Seven Youth Groups," [1945?].

in the elementary schools.<sup>34</sup> Under Speirs direction, that "something more" was soon forthcoming.

### III

As the fear of venereal disease ebbed in post-war Canada, a new threat appeared on the horizon: sexual abnormality or sex delinquency. During the Second World War girls' delinquency was almost always sexualized and politicized. In the post-war era, delinquency in girls *and* boys also took on sexual and political connotations. Sexual behaviour which was not contained within the boundaries of monogamous marriage was conceptualized as dangerous because it contributed to social chaos. Historians have theorized that the search for post-war stability, coupled with anxieties over Soviet expansionism, resulted in the need for the "containment" of communist ideologies and sexual energies. Fears of fifth-column Communist activity were expressed in terms remarkably similar to the way fears over venereal contagion were traditionally articulated. Silent and deadly, communist activity corrupted the body politic. By 1950, some of the American hysteria over fifth-column Communist activity had migrated northward. As in the United States, fifth-column Communist activity in Canada became inextricably connected to the threat of virtually any sexual activity outside marriage in general and to the "menace" of homosexuality in particular.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>TBEA TBE Curriculum, Family Life and Sex Education, 1948-1967, Box R22-6, letter to R. Speirs from Z. S. Phimister, August 11, 1948.

<sup>35</sup>Philip Girard, "From Subversion to Liberation: Homosexuals and the Immigration Act, 1952-1977," *Canadian Journal of Law and Society/Revue Canadienne de droit et société* 2 (1987): 1-27; Estelle B. Freedman, "Uncontrolled Desires: The Response to the Sexual Psychopath, 1920-1960," in Kathy Peiss and Christina Simmons with Robert A. Padgug (eds.), *Passion and Power: Sexuality in History* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), pp. 199-225; John D'Emilio, "The Homosexual Menace: The Politics of Sexuality in Cold War America," in Peiss and Simmons with Padgug (eds.), *Passion and Power*, pp. 226-240; Geoffrey S. Smith, "Sex, Gender, and the Family in Cold War America," paper presented at the First International Conference on the History of Marriage and the Family in Western Society, Carleton University, May 13-16, 1992, Ottawa, Canada; Gary Kinsman, *The Regulation of Desire: Sexuality in Canada* (Montréal: Black Rose Books, 1987), pp. 109-138; Gary Kinsman, "Inverts, 'Psychopaths' and 'Normal' Men: Historical Sociological Perspectives on Gay and Heterosexual Masculinities," in Tony Haddad (ed.), *Men and Masculinities: A Critical Anthology* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 1993), pp. 3-35; Adams, "The Trouble With Normal," p. 249.

Sex delinquency came to encompass not only pre-marital sex and homosexuality, but sexual crimes such as rape and child molestation. Public panic over sex crimes committed by male "psychopaths" had begun in the 1930s, abated during the Second World War and resurfaced in the post-war period. A sharp division was made between the homosexual and the heterosexual psychopath with the former labelled a violent child molester. In 1948, laws concerning criminal sexual psychopaths were introduced into the Canadian Code. A sexual psychopath was defined as one who could not control "his sexual impulses and who, as a result, is likely to attack or otherwise inflict injury, pain or other evil on any person." A convicted sexual psychopath would be sentenced to an indeterminate jail term and would come under review every 3 years. Public support for these laws remained high.<sup>36</sup> New laws promised to punish sexual psychopaths for their crimes. Sex instruction held out the hope that males could be deterred from sexual psychopathology. Indeed, in the post-war period, sex crimes were cited as a major justification for introducing family life education into schools.<sup>37</sup> An article in a popular Canadian magazine appeared to validate this justification. Author Joanna Price told Canadians that William Heirens, a University of Chicago honor student, had committed 3 sex murders because at age 11 his mother told him that sex was dirty. American psychiatrists apparently agreed that the Heirens case confirmed that inadequate sex instruction permitted such deviance to occur.<sup>38</sup>

By 1948 sex delinquency was very much on the mind of Dr. Kenneth Rogers. Rogers had authored a study on male juvenile delinquency during the last year of the war.<sup>39</sup> After the war he served as the General Secretary of the Toronto Big Brother Movement and as a Committee member advising the Toronto Kiwanis Club on Sex Education and Sex Aberration. In a widely-quoted speech made on April 21, 1948, Rogers maintained that schools had to accept responsibility for

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<sup>36</sup> Adams, "The Trouble With Normal," p. 250.

<sup>37</sup> Freedman, "Uncontrolled Desires," p. 210.

<sup>38</sup> Joanna Price, "Should Sex Be Taught in Canada's Schools?" *Liberty*, June 21, 1947, p. 8.

<sup>39</sup> Kenneth H. Rogers, *Street Gangs in Toronto: A Study of the Forgotten Boy* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1945).

sex instruction. Rogers insisted that sex education, or family life education in secondary *and* elementary schools could cut down on homosexuality, sex crimes, promiscuity, venereal disease and marriage breakdowns. If children knew the "truth" about sex, they would be less inclined to experiment with it or drift into sexual delinquency. He argued that parents and schools must cooperate "in facing the problem of sex delinquencies and crimes by making sure that our children are properly informed and guided in sex education."

Galvanized by the widespread publicity Rogers' remarks received, Goldring suggested that Rogers' remarks could challenge the Ontario Department of Education to broaden its mandate concerning the teaching of venereal disease and extend that teaching downward into the elementary schools. But on a more cautious note Goldring acknowledged that the Department's 1946 *Courses of Study*, which authorized the study of venereal disease for the secondary schools, would remain unaltered.<sup>40</sup>

Goldring's caution did not get the better of some of the trustees at the Toronto Board of Education. Two months after Rogers made his remarks, the Board's Management Committee approved of the establishment of a "Special Committee Appointed to Consider and Report on the Matter of Sex Education in Schools." The Special Committee consisted of five trustees—Herbert Orloff, Edna Ryerson, Edward Cane, A. J. Brown and Charles Edwards, who served as the chair. Rather self-servingly, Goldring told the Special Committee that the Toronto and London Boards of Education already had the best secondary sex education programme in Canada.<sup>41</sup> Yet Edwards proposed that the Toronto trustees lead the way in submitting new ideas on sex education to the Ontario Department of Education because parents were not taking the responsibility for teaching their children about sex. Edwards sounded very much the social purist, maintaining that if children did not learn accurate information about sex in homes or schools they would pick up

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<sup>40</sup> TBEA Reports by Board of Officials, 1937-1962, Report # 276 Sex Education, May 13, 1948.

<sup>41</sup> TBEA *Special Committee Minutes, 1944-1949*, September 2, 1948, p. 78.

inaccurate information on the streets."<sup>42</sup> Edwards also claimed that sexual delinquency occurred more frequently in urban than in rural areas. He maintained that in rural Ontario children learned "the facts of life" at home and on the farm where they were exposed to examples of animal reproduction. By contrast in Toronto, municipal bylaws restricted the number of cats and dogs one could own. City children were, therefore, bereft of the opportunity to understand the mysteries of reproduction.<sup>43</sup>

By the end of 1948, the Special Committee had made rapid progress in its quest for school-based sex instruction. Its first step was to review a letter and three articles on school-based sex instruction sent to the Special Committee by Dr. Adolph Weinzirl, the Director of the Division of the Social Hygiene Education, the E. C. Brown Trust at the University of Oregon. Weinzirl's views on sex instruction smacked of the sentimentality which had characterized the social purity movement and which had, in turn, influenced the social hygiene movement. Weinzirl maintained that sex was related to the best things in life—courtship, marriage, parenthood and grandparenthood, art, music, drama and nature. Sex was an instinct intended to perpetuate the species but it required careful direction. Sex instruction was the responsibility of the home and the church but given the difficulties experienced, the school was the best place for such instruction.<sup>44</sup>

Acknowledging his indebtedness to Dr. Walter Clarke, the Executive Director of the ASHA, Weinzirl rejected the term "sex education," complaining that it confused and threatened individuals. Weinzirl argued that boys and girls did not have to be segregated during sex instruction. He believed that any proposal to teach children about sex had to deal with the endocrine and reproductive systems, and with family living on the grounds that the family was the basic unit of society. Most importantly, teachers had to present the students with a moral

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<sup>42</sup> "Five Trustees Study Proposal to Teach Sex in City Schools," *Globe and Mail*, May 26, 1948.

<sup>43</sup> "Sex Education Planned for Grade 8 Students; Parents Found Lacking," *Globe and Mail*, September 3, 1948.

<sup>44</sup> TBEA Reports by Board of Officials, 1937-1962, # 276, Adolph Weinzirl, "A Pattern for Social Hygiene Education," pp. 1-6.

viewpoint. For Weinzirl, a moral viewpoint was intimately connected to the inculcation of heterosexuality in children: "the establishment in children of feelings and emotions that will compel attitudes and behaviour leading to a minimum of promiscuity and to restricting sex to monogamous marriage with the expectation of having and raising children."<sup>45</sup>

Although Weinzirl recommended that venereal disease remain only one topic of study in sex instruction, he did raise the spectre of the venereally diseased girl delinquent in order to drive home the need for school-based sex instruction. Weinzirl sent the Special Committee an article he had authored on a sixteen-year-old girl who had become infected with venereal disease after an encounter with a sailor in 1944. Weinzirl's conclusions about the girl he called a "reservoir of venereal disease" had a psychoanalytic twist. Weinzirl explained that like many adolescents, the girl had become dissatisfied with her family. Devoid of any sense of self-worth and resentful about her situation in life, the girl rebelled by becoming sexually licentious. He also suggested that adolescent girls had sexual encounters with men to get even with them in general, or to gratify their wishes for adventure and sociability. According to Weinzirl, venereal infection would not be the sole tragedy resulting from girls' rebelliousness. He believed that the rebellious girl would have no desire to start and nurture a family of her own in the future. His solution was to get parents to understand that they had to find a happy medium between discipline, love and freedom, resist the urge to crack down on their daughter, and support the school's efforts to institutionalize sex instruction. It was up to adults to provide the adolescent with a loving home, a good school, a civic conscience and a belief in the "rightness of marriage."<sup>46</sup> In other words, the adolescent girl had to be carefully withdrawn from the bosom of her family in order to begin one of her own. Weinzirl found a Canadian kindred spirit in Dr. Stephen Laycock, a professor of educational

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<sup>45</sup> TBEA *Special Committee Minutes*, 1944-1949, letter to Charles Edwards from Adolf Weinzirl, July 24, 1948 appended to the *Minutes of the Special Committee Appointed to Consider and Report on the Matter of Sex Education in the Schools*, September 2, 1948.

<sup>46</sup> TBEA Reports by Board of Officials, 1937-1962, # 276, Adolph, Weinzirl, "The Family—And Its Daughters," pp. 13-20.

psychology at the University of Saskatchewan. Laycock warned parents that it was natural for children to move outward from the home. The child's centre of attention shifted gradually from the mother to both parents to the same-sex playmate to the opposite sex to, finally, the mate. Keeping the child's affection tied solely to his or her parents would stunt the child. Laycock maintained that parents "should rejoice as their child's interest progressively goes out from them towards the final establishment of his own home and his own family [sic]."<sup>47</sup>

Weinzirl's gave the members of the Special Committee the encouragement they needed to go ahead with their plans for school-based sex instruction. The Special Committee's second step was to request Goldring to submit a report on a suggested sex education course in grades 7 and 8. Goldring authorized the formation of a Teachers' Committee under Speirs' chairmanship to plan for such a course. Goldring informed Speirs on September 3, 1948, that he wanted a report on a sex education course in grades 7 and 8 by the end of September.<sup>48</sup> He gave the members of the Teachers' Committee a political reason for the haste. He was apparently afraid that sex education would become a political issue in the next provincial election!<sup>49</sup>

The composition of the Teachers' Committee consisted of Marjorie Moore, Assistant Supervisor of Physical Education; Mary Hill, Principal of Hester How School; Russell Godbold, Principal of Blythwood Public school; Ada Warren from Dufferin Public School; Mary Blessinger of Brock Avenue Public School; John Toogood from Dufferin Public School; and William J. Quinn from Earl Haig Public School. They were advised by three prominent Torontonians who took a professional interest in sex delinquency—Rogers of the Big Brother Movement; J. Alex Edmison, Chair of the Committee on the Sex Offender, Canadian Penal Association; and Dr. J. D.

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<sup>47</sup> Dr. S. R. Laycock, "Boys and Girls Need A Life Of Their Own," *Ontario Home and School* 25, 2 (December 1948), p. 13.

<sup>48</sup> TBEA TBE Curriculum, Family Life and Sex Education, 1948-1967, Box R22-6, memo to Rae Speirs from C. C. Goldring, September 3, 1948.

<sup>49</sup> TBEA TBE Curriculum, Family Life and Sex Education, 1948-1967, Box R22-6, "Organization Meeting P. S. Sex Education Committee," September 13, 1948.

M. Griffin, Psychiatrist with the Canadian Council of Mental Hygiene. By the end of September the Teachers' Committee had put together the Report of the Teachers' Committee On "Family Life Education."<sup>50</sup>

The focus of the Report of the Teachers' Committee On "Family Life Education" was on introducing family life education to grades 7 and 8. This focus was in keeping with the post-war orientation of school-based sex instruction. After 1945, many Ontario educators were more than willing to move school-based sex instruction in two separate but parallel directions— 1) away from the focus on venereal disease and 2) downward into the younger grades. Some educators were eager to implement family life education even earlier than grade 7. In the summer of 1948, the Ontario Home and School Association's panel on "Education for Family Life," which featured speakers Ashplant and Griffin, agreed that the preparation for family living should begin in grades 5 and 6.<sup>51</sup> Despite these sentiments, the goal of giving children sex instruction prior to the dangerous passage of adolescence, which was first articulated by the social purists, remained elusive.

Why did the Report of the Teachers' Committee On "Family Life Education" single out adolescent pupils in grades 7 and 8 rather than pupils in the younger grades for family life education? It is possible that the Report targeted grades 7 and 8 for family life education so that the pupils could be adequately prepared to begin the study of venereal disease in grade 10. The authors of the Report may have considered that the 12-14-year-old age group in grades 7 and 8 was ripe for family life education because of the sense of urgency generated over adolescent girls' putative sexual licentiousness during the Second World War. Yet given the widespread publicity Rogers' speech received, combined with the influence Rogers Edmison and Griffin had on the Teachers'

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<sup>50</sup> TBEA Reports by Board Officials, 1937-1962 #130 Family Life Education, "Report of the Teachers' Committee On 'Family Life Education,' 1948."

<sup>51</sup> *Ontario Home and School* 24, 4 (June 1948), p. 14.



Committee, it is highly probable that adolescents were singled out for family life education because of the fear of their supposed propensity for sex delinquency.

The Special Committee's third and final step was to accept the Report of the Teachers' Committee On "Family Life Education" and pass it onto the Management Committee of the Toronto Board. The Management Committee was sufficiently impressed with the Report to recommend that the Toronto Board of Education compliment the teachers for the excellence of their work; accept the Report in its full form; and direct Goldring to negotiate with the Department of Education for the authority to implement the Report in Toronto elementary schools.<sup>52</sup>

#### IV

Choppy, badly edited and somewhat repetitive, the Report of the Teachers' Committee On "Family Life Education" betrayed the haste with which it was put together during September of 1948. Nevertheless, as an archival document it remains one of the best available records in the history of sex instruction in Canada. The Report established a bureaucratic rationale for the incorporation of family life education into the Toronto Board of Education's elementary schools; stated the aims of Family Life Education; developed an outline of a Family Life Education curriculum for grades 7 and 8; and set out a preliminary plan for instructing teachers how to teach the curriculum.

The Ontario Department of Education had not officially authorized the teaching of sex instruction in elementary schools. Thus, the Teachers' Committee felt it was imperative to establish an acceptable bureaucratic rationale for implementing the Family Life Education curriculum into grades 7 and 8. The Department's wartime push toward education for democracy provided the

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<sup>52</sup> TBEA "Special Committee Appointed to Consider and Report on the Matter of Sex Education in Schools," in the Appendix to *Minutes of the Toronto Board of Education*, November 22, 1948, pp. 402-403 and Management Committee Report No. 20 in the Appendix to *Minutes of the Toronto Board of Education*, December 7, 1948, p. 424.

Teachers' Committee with the rationale they needed. The Report claimed that the Department "encourages and envisages" a Family Life Education curriculum.<sup>53</sup> Apparently, evidence for this point of view would be found in the introduction to the *1942 Programme of Study for Grades VII and VIII of the Public and Separate Schools*. The Report maintained that family life education was in keeping with the *Programme's* emphasis on democracy. Family life education would educate the child for "social living;" train the child to "be a good citizen;" and accomplish the school's threefold aim of helping the child understand its own environment, conform to societal approval and acquire essential living skills.<sup>54</sup>

The authors of the Report expressed the hope that parents and teachers would be allies in family life education. The home was the essential site for teaching the young child about sex but for youth, the school was "the ideal laboratory for working out satisfactory boy-girl relationships, for it is the focus of social and recreational life in the community."<sup>55</sup> The best solution would be to incorporate family life education into all grade 7 and 8 subjects. For example, case histories could be discussed in English composition, animal social organization in Science, family budgets in Mathematics and family relationships in Home Economics. But for the moment the authors of the Report were satisfied to limit the curriculum to the subject of Health.

The Family Life Education curriculum outlined in the Report had two sets of long- and short-term cardinal aims clearly intended to channel boys and girls toward heterosexuality, monogamous marriage and responsible child-rearing, aims synonymous with "normalcy" and "morality." The first of the long-term aims was to enable pupils to appreciate and value "the normal, natural husband-wife-child relationship in the home, "the cornerstone of "successful, happy family life." The second long-term aim was to give students standards of values enabling

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<sup>53</sup> "Report of the Teachers' Committee On 'Family Life Education,' 1948," p. 11.

<sup>54</sup> Ontario Department of Education, *Programme of Studies for Grades VII and VIII of the Public and Separate Schools*, 1942, p. 5.

<sup>55</sup> "Report of the Teachers' Committee On 'Family Life Education,' 1948," p. 4.

them to distinguish "what is good in sexual life from what is sordid, selfish or perverted." The Report's short-term aims intended to show that it was important to protect the home, women and children, to help the adolescent boy and girl learn proper conduct in their relationships with each other, to emphasize that sex was a bodily function as well as a joyous emotion, to provide an adequate vocabulary of sex, to understand the biology of reproduction and to develop respectful attitudes towards the whole subject.<sup>56</sup>

These aims had been arrived at not only via consultations with Rogers, Edmison and Griffen, who took a professional interest in sex delinquency. The authors of the Report had perused literature produced mainly by Americans professionals active in promoting either social hygiene, sex education or family life education in schools before and after the Second World War. The authors swung their weight behind Weinzirl, Maurice Bigelow, Paul Popenoe and Francis Bruce Strain. The British influence on the Report was minimal. Only one British author, Cyril Bibby, was mentioned. A few Canadian sources were included in the Report's bibliography. Works authored by Ashplant, from the London Board of Education, Bernhardt, from the Institute of Child Study in Toronto, and by journalists writing for popular Canadian magazines like *Macleans* and *Saturday Night* were listed. Material produced by the Canadian Cellucotton Corporation, manufacturers of menstrual hygiene products, diagrammatic charts and pamphlets was also cited.

Despite the fact that the HLC had come out in favour of family life education during the war, materials produced by the HLC were not cited in the Report's bibliography. This was surprising for Speirs was also a member of the Sub-committee on the Moral and Educational Aspects of the Committee on Venereal Disease Control in Toronto. The Sub-committee also included Bates of the HLC and Goldring of the Toronto Board. Speirs may have wanted to

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

distance the Teachers' Committee from any association with the perception that social hygiene focused primarily on venereal disease. Yet Speirs had joined the ASHA in 1946. It is more likely that Speirs believed that as opposed to the Canadian social hygiene movement, the American social hygiene movement was on the cutting edge of family life education.

Whatever Speirs' reasoning may have been, it is clear that the Sub-committee on the Moral and Educational Aspects of the Committee on Venereal Disease Control also came out in favour of implementing family life education in schools in order to fortify individuals' moral character. The Sub-committee affirmed that despite improvements in the treatment of venereal disease, nothing succeeded in venereal disease prevention like the avoidance of exposure. The Sub-committee recommended, therefore, that any educational campaign should, first and foremost, improve the individual's moral sense so that promiscuous sexual intercourse would be avoided. The key to this goal was to inculcate in children the sacredness of family life. Teachers should be specially trained to build up the child's character, presenting sex education in such a way that the pupil understood the problem of venereal disease, the normal boy-girl relationships, the significance of marriage and the conditions for a happy home life. The Sub-committee agreed that the school provided pupils with many opportunities to interact with each other chastely. In this manner, students would learn that the only way to complete sex-fulfillment was in marriage—the best things in life "must be paid for in full. Those who offer discounts are frauds."<sup>57</sup>

On the basis of their research, the authors of the Report of the Teachers' Committee On "Family Life Education" concluded that venereal disease was *not* to be the focal point of the Family Life Education curriculum. In fact, neither the use of pictures showing the ravages of venereal disease nor a discussion of the subject itself—unless a student brought up the matter—was permitted. Statistics designed to illustrate the prevalence of sex delinquency were not allowed. The

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<sup>57</sup> TCA Welfare Council of Toronto, Division of Health, "Report on Venereal Disease Control in Toronto," October 1948," p. 21.

pupil's present and future family remained the focus of the curriculum. The term "Family Life Education" was to be used over "Sex Education" to describe this curriculum. Pupils would be instructed about the meaning of the physical changes of adolescence. Yet although physiological information would be given to students, the curriculum's emphasis would be placed on moral principles. Anxious, perhaps, that the Toronto Board's trustees would look askance at the amount of straightforward physiological information the proposed curriculum would provide students, the authors of the Report confirmed that the most important teaching principle in family life education was that: "the establishment of habits, attitudes and ideals of life, is more important than mere physiological information."<sup>58</sup> Sexual conduct had to be based on inspiring ideals. Pupils would be taught about the "excellence of sex and its immense potentialities." The curriculum would help them realize the "dignity of the human body and the creative purpose of sex."<sup>59</sup>

It is obvious that the authors of the Report wanted growing up to mean growing away from sex delinquency and growing toward marriage and family life. The emphasis on the complete "normality" of sex would lead pupils away from "the pathology of sex and family life" and "unhealthy speculation or brooding upon sexual matters."<sup>60</sup> Teachers would assure students that menstruation and nocturnal emissions were completely normal but that heavy necking or petting were "bad psychological preparation for marriage and family living." The Report suggested that the school could give the student many opportunities to sublimate his or her sexual energy in games, sports and hobbies. Ostensibly, the sublimation of students' sexual energy via physical exercise was suggestive of one social purist time-honoured prescription for dealing with youthful masturbation. Yet the word masturbation never appeared anywhere in the Report. The absence of any specific mention of masturbation confirmed the change in thinking on the matter since the 1930s.

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<sup>58</sup> "Report of the Teachers' Committee On 'Family Life Education,' 1948," p. 3.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

Although the authors of the Report did not refer specifically to homosexuality either, they would have been aware that American authors Strain and Bibby, two of the family life education theorists cited in the Report's bibliography, considered homosexual activities far more dangerous than masturbatory practices. This signified a major reversal of social purist thinking. Strain and Bibby were willing to allow that the dangers of masturbation had been grossly exaggerated. They argued that the child did not have to be physically restrained from the habit and suggested that physical exercise would divert children's attention from their desire to masturbate. Whereas social purists had regarded masturbation in childhood to be the first step on the slippery slope toward sexual incontinence in men and prostitution in females, family life education theorists portrayed homosexual behaviour in adolescence as the first link in the chain of sex delinquency.

The homosexual behaviour of adolescent boys received far more attention than did the homosexual behaviour of adolescent girls, possibly because the former was long associated with illegality, perversion and violence. Strain and Bibby paid special attention to adolescent boys' homosexuality. Strain identified the sex delinquent as an older adolescent boy who was a menace to younger boys. The older adolescent was usually a misfit or a bully or mentally retarded. He coaxed or bribed boys into friendship but this relationship posed a grave danger to the younger males. Strain feared that the young boys would be corrupted by the encounter and become homosexual. She agreed that friendships between younger boys and those who were sexually mature should be discouraged.<sup>61</sup> Bibby claimed that homosexuals deserved understanding rather than punishment but admitted that homosexuality was a real "deviation." Deviation, according to Bibby, encompassed same-sex crushes as well as criminal acts such as rape and child molestation. Bibby suggested that deviation could be headed off at the pass if boys and girls got a chaste taste of each other in co-educational schools. Same-sex schools were presumably a problem because they inadvertently encouraged same-sex crushes. These crushes manifested themselves in love-play and

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<sup>61</sup> Francis Strain, *New Patterns in Sex Teaching: A Guide to Answering Children's Questions on Human Reproduction* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1951 [1934]), pp. 167-168.

mutual masturbation. Bibby suggested that an understanding adult talk sympathetically to the two same-sex friends about the unnatural nature of their relationship. If the talk failed to do the trick, Bibby advised that the young couple should be kept apart. Youthful crushes on older same-sex teachers also posed an unfortunate problem. The possibility that the adult could seduce starry-eyed junior and corrupt him or her made Bibby anxious. No children, warned Bibby, "who would otherwise grow up into normal heterosexual adults [should be] be deviated along the path of homosexuality."<sup>62</sup>

The Report of the Teachers' Committee on "Family Life Education" came out during the same year *The Sexual Life of Savages in North-Western Melanesia*, authored by ethnographer Bronislaw Malinowski and originally published in 1929, came out in its sixth edition and University of Indiana researchers Alfred Kinsey, Wardell Pomeroy and Clyde Martin published the landmark *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*.<sup>63</sup> Both studies were also listed in the Report's bibliography.

Social purists had used carefully selected examples of plants and animals in nature study to glorify monogamous marriage and parenthood in humans. Brimming with romanticized racism, family life education theorists turned to carefully selected examples of tribal societies to show up Western culture's putative disregard for family life. Malinowski's study, complete with an admiring preface by the self-professed social hygienist Havelock Ellis, and photographs of a pith-helmeted Malinowski communicating with the near-naked matrilineal Trobrianders, appeared to affirm that even "savages" revered the morality family life bestowed upon the community. Despite the heterosexual freedom allowed adolescents, marriage, according to Malinowski's ethnocentric

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<sup>62</sup> Cyril Bibby, *Sex Education: A Guide for Parents, Teachers and Youth Leaders* (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1944), p. 33.

<sup>63</sup> Bronislaw Malinowski, *The Sexual Life of Savages in North-Western Melanesia: An Ethnographic Account of Courtship, Marriage, and Family Life Among the Natives of the Trobriand Islands, British New Guinea* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1968 [1929]); Alfred Kinsey, Wardell B. Pomeroy and Clyde E. Martin, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Philadelphia and London: W. B. Saunders and Co., 1948).

observations, was the cornerstone of Trobriand society: "there are, in fact, no unmarried men of mature age, except idiots, incurable invalids, old widowers and albinos."<sup>64</sup>

Malinowski affirmed that Trobriand children had a rich "family life." Adolescent boys and girls were free to carry out sexual relations with each other with their parents' complete knowledge. But although heterosexual sexual intercourse carried out in private outside or inside of marriage was acceptable, Trobriand society had a set of strict sexual taboos. Malinowski apparently discovered that homosexual sexual intercourse, bestiality, exhibitionism, fetishism, masturbation and oral and anal eroticism were jeered at. Thus, Malinowski concluded that the natives achieved "almost complete freedom from perversion" via psychological rather than social sanctions. The decorum with which the Trobrianders conducted their sexual life led Ellis to comment that "the savage man" was much like the European man but in many aspects "had reached a finer degree of civilization than the civilized man."<sup>65</sup>

In contrast to the Trobrianders, the average white American male seemed to participate in an unparalleled number of apparently perverse acts. The publication of *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, popularly referred to as the Kinsey Report, documented the widespread existence of a sexual experiences at odds with publicly espoused values. Kinsey's, Pomeroy's and Martin's interviews with thousands of white American males revealed that heterosexual petting and masturbation were nearly universal, that close to 90% of the respondents had experienced premarital sex, almost half had experienced extramarital sex and more than one-third of adult men had engaged in homosexual activity.<sup>66</sup> The Kinsey Report defined homosexual activity as exhibition of genitalia, manual manipulation of genitalia, anal or oral contacts with genitalia and urethral insertions. The Kinsey Report found that the male's sexual peak occurred in the late teens rather than in the thirties or

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<sup>64</sup> Malinowski, *The Sexual Life of Savages*, p. 68.

<sup>65</sup> Havelock Ellis, "Preface," in Malinowski, *The Sexual Life of Savages*, p. xii.

<sup>66</sup> John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), p. 286.



forties as previously supposed. The attainment of maximum sexual capacity in adolescence posed a number of sociological problems for young men. The authors of the study argued that in England and the United States, increasing sexual repression co-incident with an increasing delay in the age of marriage. This resulted in an "intensification of the struggle between the boy's biologic capacity and the sanctions imposed by the older male who...is no longer hard-pressed to find a legalized source of sexual contact commensurate with his reduced demand for outlet." The fact that the unmarried male managed to achieve an average of 3.4 orgasms per week via masturbation, nocturnal emissions, heterosexual petting, heterosexual sexual intercourse, homosexual relations and intercourse with animals of other species demonstrated "the failure of the attempt to impose complete abstinence upon him."<sup>67</sup> For the majority of unmarried adolescents intercourse with girls who were not prostitutes was said to be the chief sexual activity; masturbation was a more frequent outlet among males in the upper classes.

According to the Kinsey Report the average adolescent girl apparently got by with one-fifth as much sexual activity as the average adolescent boy. As a result of this supposed disparity Kinsey and his co-authors made some hostile observations about women's influence on moral regulation. They contended that women, who were primarily responsible for caring for young boys, campaigning for law enforcement, combating juvenile delinquency and developing programmes for sex instruction, did not understand the problem boys faced in being constantly sexually aroused. The Kinsey Report maintained, therefore, that it was crucial for any form of sex instruction curriculum to take into account that the young boy had a wider variety of sexual experience than his female teacher would ever have. No curriculum should be based on the simplistic belief that boys were "beginners" who ignored their sexual development.<sup>68</sup> The Kinsey Report was used to argue in favour of tolerance toward homosexuality and, simultaneously, to

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<sup>67</sup> Kinsey, Pomeroy and Martin, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, p. 222.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 223.

reinforce traditional morality. Public reaction in Canada to the Kinsey Report was skewed toward shoring up traditional moral values. The HLC suggested the post office ban the Kinsey Report from the mails while popular magazines argued that sex was a moral, not a statistical matter.<sup>69</sup> For the authors of the Report of the Teachers' Committee on "Family Life Education" the Kinsey Report undoubtedly confirmed that adolescents needed family life education to keep them marching on the heterosexual straight and narrow.

The authors of the Report of the Teachers' Committee on "Family Life Education" recommended that grade 7 pupils in family life education should not be segregated by sex. The significance of secondary sex characteristics, boy-girl relationships and community life would be taught. So would the development of a scale of moral values. Grade 7 boys and girls would learn about the evolution of the family beginning with amoeba and ending with humans. The contrast between human and animal family life would form the basis of instruction in sexual ethics. Students would be encouraged to develop emotionally healthy attitudes toward parents and siblings. They would learn about the importance of doing chores at home, sharing the telephone with brothers and sisters, resisting peer pressure and coming home on time. Pupils would be taught to understand the danger of accepting rides from strangers, learn how to turn down a date gracefully, and appreciate the value of dating many friends as opposed to going steady. These lessons would be undertaken within two kinds of frameworks: democratic classroom discussions in which everyone had a say and in "case history" presentations. The case history of Margaret, a "Boy-Crazy Girl" who did everything she could to attract boys, was held up as an example. Students could vote on such questions as "Will a girl like Margaret likely succeed in her schoolwork?" and "Will a girl like Margaret attract the best type of boy?"<sup>70</sup> The decision to teach menstruation in grade 7 was left up to the individual school.

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<sup>69</sup> Adams, "The Trouble With Normal," pp. 78-79.

<sup>70</sup> "Report of the Teachers' Committee On 'Family Life Education,' 1948," p. 8.

The Report allowed that in some schools, where "girls mature earlier," the study of menstruation was too urgent to be put off until the later grades. The authors of the Report may have been referring to schools in downtown Toronto which had large populations of southern European immigrant girls. It was commonly believed that ethnic variation in the age of menarche did exist. Females from warm climates were thought to menstruate earlier than females from colder climates. It was also commonly held that European immigrant mothers were extremely reluctant to forewarn their daughters about menstruation or did not know how to talk about menstruation to their daughters in the commercialized sophisticated language provided by sanitary napkin manufacturers such as Kotex. There is some American evidence to support this contention.<sup>71</sup>

The authors of the Report highly recommended three films for the grade 7 curriculum: "You and Your Family;" "You and Your Friends;" and "The Story of Menstruation." "You and Your Family" was a short American film designed to spark classroom discussion about conduct within the family. The Johnson adolescent children portrayed in the film are white and middle class. They live in a large, two-storey home with their mother and father, dress neatly, eat dinner together and engage in some good-natured bickering. The children encounter a number of situations which test the waters of conflict between the adolescent desire for personal autonomy and the parents' authority. Each child acts out three different ways of resolving the dilemmas with which they are presented. For example, when Frank asks Mary Johnson, approximately 14 years old, out to a dance, her parents refuse to let her go. Mary says no to the boy and is resentful; Mary asks her parents if she can invite Frank over instead to listen to records and eat popcorn; Mary informs Frank she will sneak out; Mary complains dramatically, "No one in this family wants me to have any fun. I wish I was dead." Brother Bill, approximately 17 years old, comes home at 1 o'clock in the morning, two hours later than he agreed to. His father confronts him and Bill tells a lie; informs his father angrily his lateness is none of his business, he can look after himself and

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<sup>71</sup> Brumberg, "Something Happens to Girls," pp. 119-125.

leaves; apologizes and agrees to accept his punishment of not going out for a week. The male narrator asks the audience to discuss which scenario they would choose and confirms that "family problems can be solved through frank and friendly discussion which points the way to a happy family life."<sup>72</sup> It is obvious that the scenario most appropriate to each situation is the one which allows the parent to surveil and manage the adolescent's desire for personal autonomy.

"You and Your Friends" was another short film featuring Mary and her male and female pals at a party in her parents' home. This film was carefully constructed to suggest that entertaining dates at home and dating in groups fulfilled adolescents' desire for personal autonomy. In actual fact, at-home entertaining and group socializing limited youths' privacy and actually extended parental control over their children's sexual expression.<sup>73</sup> The film was also conveying powerful messages about the importance of heterosexual interaction and white, middle-class ideals of social conformity. In the film, 13- to 15-year-old white couples dance to records, snack and talk. Each individual breaks some rule of social conduct. Frank talks about a friend behind his back, Betty displays bad table manners, Ethel tells someone a secret she wasn't supposed to, Mary blows the secret out of proportion and Betty cancels a date by telling a lie because she really wants to go out with someone else. The narrator asks the audience a number of questions throughout the film such as "Would you rate Frank plus or minus on loyalty?" and "How did you feel when Betty broke her date with George?" The male narrator concludes that because friendship is one of the most precious things in life, problems between friends should be talked out.<sup>74</sup>

"The Story of Menstruation" was a Walt Disney animated film made in conjunction with Kotex Products. The film opens with a pink-cheeked, blue-eyed baby girl sleeping peacefully in her crib. A female narrator soothingly begins to describe the impact of the pituitary gland on the

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<sup>72</sup> NAC VI 9307-0106, "You and Your Family," 1946.

<sup>73</sup> Beth L. Bailey, *From Front Porch to Back Seat: Courtship in Twentieth-Century America* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989 [1988]), p. 84.

<sup>74</sup> NAC ISN # 213726, "You and Your Friends," 1946.

development of the female reproductive system. The film, replete with diagrams of the internal reproductive organs and a tear drop-shaped blood flow, attempts to describe and demystify menstruation. Menstruation is, however, contextualized within a framework of white middle-class marriage and motherhood which is portrayed as cycling repetitively, comfortingly and inevitably over the generations. The narrator explains that the monthly loss of blood which begins in adolescence was "a routine step in a normal and natural cycle." She notes that menstruation occurred when fertilization did not take place. The narrator encourages adolescent girls to eat leafy vegetables, rest, try to remain even-tempered and exercise to relieve cramps. The film ends as the narrator intones that the menstrual cycle was nature's plan for "passing on the gift of life." On screen the baby grows into a young blonde girl. The girl develops into a young woman. The young woman becomes a bride. The bride evolves into a young mother tending the same pink-cheeked, blue-eyed baby girl first featured in the opening scenes. The final frame features a Kotex box.<sup>75</sup>

Although the authors of the Report of the Teachers' Committee on "Family Life Education" also recommended screening "The Story of Menstruation" for grade 8 students, the film "Human Growth" was considered the centrepiece of the grade 8 curriculum. Weinzirl had suggested that the Special Committee consider using this film as a classroom aid in sex instruction. Indeed, "Human Growth" received rave reviews from many quarters. Many social hygiene organizations in the United States gave it their stamp of approval.<sup>76</sup> In Canada, Rogers appreciated the film and the opportunities it presented for questions and answers. He claimed that "Human Growth" could help take sex education "out from behind the barn and into the classroom."<sup>77</sup>

Produced in Hollywood by Eddie Albert Productions and directed by Weinzirl and Dr. Lester F. Beck under the auspices of the E. C. Brown Trust, "Human Growth" defined and

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<sup>75</sup> LC "The Story of Menstruation," FAA 4745, 1947.

<sup>76</sup> Betty A. Murch, "Educational Notes," *Journal of Social Hygiene* 34, 9 (December 1948), pp. 438-439.

<sup>77</sup> TBEA Reports by Board of Officials, 1937-1962, Report # 276 Sex Education, May 13, 1948.

explained the physiological changes of adolescence. Established by the \$500,000 legacy left to the University of Oregon in 1939 after the death of Dr. E. C. Brown, a Portland physician interested in the work of the Oregon Social Hygiene Society, the Trust had been long associated with social hygiene projects. The film was intended to demonstrate to parents how sex instruction in schools could be handled smoothly; to give the teacher an instructional aid for explaining the facts of sex; and to stimulate classroom discussion amongst the students and teacher. Test screening of the film to housewives, fathers, men and women teachers revealed that a majority of audience members supported showing the film to students from grade 7 on up, agreed that the film did not have to be restricted to sex-segregated classes, realized that the film's impact would be largely determined by the competence of the teacher screening it, and saw value in the film even though it did not stress "the moral side of sex."<sup>78</sup>

Because the authors of the Report were undoubtedly concerned that the presentation of biological and anatomical information to a mixed class could embarrass the teacher and/or the students, they recommended segregating grade 8 pupils by sex. "Human Growth" was intended to introduce grade 8 classes to what social purists and hygienists had long advocated in their vision of sex instruction—the study of the significance of the human family, a simple vocabulary of sex, the hygiene of menstruation and nocturnal emissions. The authors of the Report departed significantly, however, from Ontario social purists' and hygienists' tendency to obfuscate biological and anatomical detail. They insisted that that the grade 8 curriculum include straightforward physiological information on the meaning of "growing up."

The meaning of growing up would comprise a discussion of the development of secondary sex characteristics. It would encompass the study of the human genital organs, the sex glands and sex cells, fertilization, cell division, embryo development and the birth sequence. Although the

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<sup>78</sup> TBEA Reports by Board of Officials, 1937-1962, # 276, Lester Beck, Marcille H. Harris and Adolph Weinzirl, "A Preliminary Report of Parent-Teacher Reactions to HUMAN GROWTH," pp. 7-12.

Report did not specifically mention sexual intercourse, a "Suggested Course of Study For Grade Eight" drawn up by the Teachers' Committee did. The Suggested Course allowed for a description of the erection of the penis and its insertion into the vagina during sexual intercourse to help explain the "act of fertilization."<sup>79</sup> This description of sexual intercourse was couched within a narrow, reproductive framework. Yet given Ontario social purists' and hygienists' penchant for discussing reproduction in animals and humans without any mention of sexual intercourse, the Teachers' Committee's decision to include a description of the practice was truly revolutionary.

The film began with a white, middle-class family consisting of a mother, father, teenage daughter and pre-adolescent son relaxing and reading in their living room. The boy is shown engrossed in a textbook on Native people. The textbook's drawings depict aboriginal peoples stereotypically. The drawings feature naked Native children alongside semi-naked Native Indian adults. Father and son engage in a discussion about the difference in clothing styles between adult and child members of the tribe. The father then reminds his daughter she has to prepare for the showing of "Human Growth" in her class the next day. The next day, after a preparatory discussion with her mixed class, a competent female teacher signals one of her students to begin screening the film, "Human Growth."

"Human Growth," then, was a film within a film. The students on screen viewed an animated extrapolation on growth from infancy to age 21. Secondary sex characteristics, from underarm hair to the enlargement of breasts and testes, fertilization, menstruation, premature ejaculation, fetal development and the birth of a baby are outlined. The male narrator ends the film by confirming that upon birth, growth continues until the baby becomes a "full-grown boy or girl and eventually a father or mother thus continuing the cycle of human growth." Having viewed the film the pupils look suitably awed, the teacher appropriately wise. She opens the floor to

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<sup>79</sup> TBEA TBE Curriculum Family Life Education and Sex Education, 1948-1967 Box # R22-6, "Suggested Course of Study for Grade Eight," p. 3.

questions. The pupils ask several: "Why are there so many sperm cells and such a few egg cells?" "Is it really normal for the body to bleed?" "When will I stop growing?" "Are girls always bigger than boys at age 13?" "Why do I have red hair?" The teacher deftly answers these questions with the help of slides, then turns to the camera and announces reassuringly: "You may have the same questions or others. Discuss these with your teacher."<sup>80</sup>

## V

In a letter dated January 19, 1949, Dr. J. G. Althouse, the Chief Director of Education for the province of Ontario, gave Dr. Goldring conditional permission to implement the Family Life Education curriculum as outlined in the Report of the Teachers' Committee on "Family Life Education" in grades 7 and 8 of the Toronto Board of Education's schools. School principals could use their discretion to decide whether or not they wanted the curriculum taught in their schools. Althouse imposed two restrictions on the curriculum's implementation. The curriculum would be conducted on an experimental basis. Members of the Ontario Department of Education would be permitted to observe and report upon the classes of instruction.<sup>81</sup> Ironically, a Gallup poll released just three days before Althouse gave Goldring the go-ahead found that provincial Boards of Education which had resisted implementing courses in sex education may have been reflecting local public opinion but not public opinion nationally. Gallup found little difference in the attitudes of Canadians surveyed about the institutionalization of sex instruction in schools between 1943 and 1949. Whereas 76% of Canadians in 1943 approved of sex education, that number had dropped slightly to 72% in 1949. As with the earlier poll, the younger the respondent the higher the approval for sex instruction. Interestingly, the 1949 respondents were evenly split on when sex

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<sup>80</sup> LC FBA 528, "Human Growth," 1948.

<sup>81</sup> AO RG 2 P 3 Box 310/32 File 4-452, 1949, note appended to letter to Dr. Goldring from Dr. Althouse, May 7, 1949. See also TBEA Management Report No. 2, Part II, January 25, 1949, in Appendix to the Minutes of the Toronto Board of Education, pp. 42-43. Reports of Althouse's letter appeared in the press. See "Teach 2 Grades 'Life of Family' As Experiment," *Toronto Star*, January 25, 1949; "Sex Education in Grades 7, 8 As Experiment," *Evening Telegram*, January 25, 1949.



instruction should begin. Thirty-five % of respondents suggested elementary school; another 35% suggested high school. A small minority believed grade I was an appropriate beginning.<sup>82</sup>

On February 3, 1949, the Toronto Board agreed that the Family Life Education curriculum should be implemented in grades 7 and 8 on an experimental basis. For Speirs, the next step was to train elementary school teachers to present the Family Life Education curriculum to their elementary students with the hope that the curriculum would be put into effect after Easter. Speirs felt that the properly trained teacher was the key to the successful implementation of the curriculum. The authors of the Report of the Teachers' Committee on "Family Life Education" had feared that a special lecturer could give an unnatural emphasis to the curriculum. Thus, the Report recommended that school principals, in consultation with physical education teachers, select the most appropriate teachers to be trained to instruct pupils in family life education. Speirs and the Teachers' Committee began to organize a course of preparatory lectures for the selected teachers. The Toronto Board agreed to pay for these lectures and for the purchase of reference materials.

The teacher training course would begin with an address by Speirs. The address would be followed by lectures on children, reproduction, heredity, secondary sex characteristics and family conflict given by Bernhardt and Griffin, and two other educators, Florence Scott and Roger Myers. The four films recommended by the Family Life Education Report were also available for viewing.

Speirs began the teacher training course on the evening of March 23, 1949, at Jarvis Collegiate. An audience of almost 300 physical education, home economics and vocational guidance teachers from grades 5 to 8, vice-principals and principals attended his address on Family Life Education; only one student was present to operate the public address system. The audience was requested not to take notes and not to speak to the press. The press, Speirs feared, would

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<sup>82</sup> GC "Sex Education in High Schools Is Approved By Majority Here," January 15, 1949, Public Opinion News Service Release.

distort the events taking place. Speirs warned the teachers that the pupils they taught would have to be content with oral and visual presentations. No pamphlet material, notes or advertisements were allowed. No statistics on sex delinquency were to be cited. Speirs announced that "[w]e do not want to lay ourselves open to the rumour which circulated in Forest Hill [school] that they were using the Kinsey Report as a text book."<sup>83</sup> Following Speirs' address, the film, "Human Growth" was screened.

Speirs' address was a masterful attempt at deflecting any possible teacher and/or parent opposition to the curriculum and at validating teacher-taught school-based sex instruction. Speaking as a parent and a teacher he appealed to those teachers in the audience who had asked permission to defer teaching the Family Life Education course because they had honest misgivings. Speirs established and then rejected a number of objections to school-based sex instruction which had been around since the turn of the century. On the issue of home-based sex instruction, Speirs noted that as a parent he initially did not want schools meddling in sex instruction. He changed his mind when a group of boys took his daughter aside and undressed her. Speirs also conceded that parents were able to successfully instruct their young children but not adolescents. Drawing on the conceptualization of the adolescent as one who now turned away from his or her family toward the direction of establishing his or her own home, Speirs felt that counsellors and teachers were more acceptable to the adolescent during this "weaning" period. There was no conflict between parents and teachers; they were allies. In fact, teachers reinforced home teaching by coating it with scientific precepts. Parent education, popular during the inter-war period, was not as effective because it reached those who needed it least. The time for "bringing up father" was while he was at school. Church-based sex instruction lent dignity to sex and family life but also reached those who needed it least. Doctors and nurses used too much technical jargon, stressed the abnormal and were not trained pedagogues.

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<sup>83</sup> TBEA Reports by Board of Officials, 1937-1962, # 130, Rae Speirs, "Family Life Education," appended to C. C. Goldring's report, April 6, 1949.

Visiting lecturers gave sex instruction an unnatural flavour and an undue emphasis. Single teachers were not at a disadvantage when teaching family life. There was no guarantee that married teachers understood family life any better than did unmarried teachers. Embarrassing and emotional attempts to teach sex instruction in schools in the past did not have any bearing on future efforts. Perhaps Speirs was thinking of Arthur Beall when he referred to "the lurid and sentimental lectures designed to tell WHAT EVERY YOUNG BOY OR GIRL SHOULD KNOW." In Speirs' opinion, these lurid lectures deserved to be forgotten. Speirs believed that sex feelings were not prematurely aroused by classroom instruction. A student whose sex delinquency patterns were already established could use such instruction as a scapegoat to excuse his behaviour. Speirs argued that it was more likely that a judicious curriculum could combat widespread gutter talk found in radio, movies and magazines. Quoting Ashplant, Speirs stated: "We do not refuse to teach writing because a few may use it for forgery." Requiring written permission from parents to take the course drew undue attention to the curriculum. Once a judicious curriculum was institutionalized, parental disapproval proved to be a "bogey;" studies showed that parents were relieved and delighted that schools taught sex instruction. Children in grades 7 and 8 were not too young to benefit from sex instruction. Indeed, they were capable of receiving such information without the "emotional complications" experienced by older children. More importantly, older children who received such instruction often wished they had been taught earlier. Speirs concluded that family life education could not eradicate all the world's sexual evils but would help guide the "normal" boy and girl. The boy and girl would learn the truth, not lies; develop a healthy emotional attitude not a distorted one; and establish a clear-headed rather than a muddled sexual moral code.<sup>84</sup>

Each teacher was given a copy of the Family Life Education Report, a question and answer manual, lecture notes and sample lesson plans. These were intended to help the teacher cope with the new course.

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

While the final version of the question and answer manual seems to have disappeared, a draft copy of "A Manual: How to Answer Questions In Family Life Education" is on deposit at the Toronto Board of Education Archives.<sup>85</sup> The questions listed in the draft manual were "genuine pupil queries" collected from Toronto students in the older grades. These questions were probably amassed when those secondary school teachers who had sat in on the 1947 "Family Life" series of lectures given by Drs. Davey and Bernhardt began to pass on the information to their students. The preamble to the draft manual warned teachers to expect embarrassing or difficult questions from the pupils. Answering pupils' questions was considered essential. The draft manual likened the teacher's experience of answering pupils' question to diving into a cold pool. The teacher hesitated, jumped and then experienced "exhilaration" and "purification." No question should be considered unacceptable by teacher or other pupils. With the manual's help, the teacher could answer even the most "treacherous questions" turning them to the "best advantage."

Teachers were encouraged to turn the questions to the best advantage by placing the answers "in a family setting." In effect, the answers suggested by the draft manual encouraged teachers to gloss over any of the difficulties teachers could experience and bathe heterosexuality, monogamous marriage and reproduction in a rosy glow. For example, a question such as, "Do pregnant women feel embarrassed because of their big stomachs?" could be answered like this: "A good deal depends upon the attitude of the husband and family. It is normal for the husband to be very proud of his wife and more affectionate and considerate than ever at this time. Usually this more than compensates for the inconvenience." Similarly, a query about the pain of childbirth could be met with an answer about anaesthetics and the fact that "when the mother sees the lovely little baby, she forgets all about the pain." The teacher could expect to hear the question: "Is intercourse painful?" The response had to "present intercourse as a joyful mutual surrender not as something forced on the [married] woman." Therefore: "Of course not! When grown people are in

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<sup>85</sup>TBEA TBE Curriculum, Family Life and Sex Education, 1948-1967, Box R22-6, "A Manual: How To Answer Questions in Family Life Education."

love it makes them very happy to have intercourse—even without wanting to have a baby. There is certainly nothing painful about it." Although this response ignored the possibility that some wives may have found intercourse distasteful, it did present non-procreative sexual intercourse in an extremely positive light.

The draft manual conceded that it would be far more difficult for teachers to answer questions of a biblical, contraceptive, pathological or "shocker" nature. The teachers had to measure their words carefully. They had to give pupils enough information to quell their curiosity but not so much information as to lead them to doubt the need for sexual chastity before marriage. One question teachers would have to deal with would concern the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. The draft manual suggested that teachers could tell students that no scientist had yet reported the case of a virgin birth among humans. Thus, "such an occurrence would clearly be in the nature of a miracle...If you have trouble believing in miracles, why not talk it over with your own minister or Sunday school teacher." It was doubtful if grade 7 and 8 pupils would ask teachers about contraception. Nevertheless, the draft manual warned teachers to keep on their toes because the students could be aware of the term "birth control." Very little information on contraceptive techniques should be given out unless they discouraged premarital sexual experimentation. To answer the following: "Are there only certain times when a woman is less likely to become pregnant than at other times?" the teacher would agree and add "but each woman follows a pattern of her own which is difficult to predict." Pupils who asked specific questions about condoms or pessaries would be told that these contraceptive methods were far from perfect and that married people talked over such matters with their doctor.

The draft manual warned that some pupils would ask questions about the pathology of venereal disease. If a pupil asked: "Can one get V. D. from kissing an infected girl?" the teacher was not to fear. His or her answer would be short and to the point: "Almost impossible. It is contracted during sexual intercourse almost exclusively." One example of a "shocker" question had come from a 14-year-old girl in a down-town school: "If a girl makes a habit of having intercourse

regularly with boys, and the boy (or one of them) becomes diseased (V.D.) what is the cause? Is it the lack of cleanliness of the girl?" The draft manual's response to this question was pat. It suggested that this kind of question was probably "insincere." The pupil intended only to shock his or her teacher and classmates and to bask in the notoriety of the question. The teacher was to comment that cleanliness was irrelevant as "venereal disease is always acquired by intimate contact with someone who has the disease." The pupil was not to learn that he or she could avoid venereal disease by being promiscuous with contacts who were free of the disease.

Draft copies of proposed lecture notes are also available at the Toronto Board of Education archives. One proposed lecture a teacher could give students on "Questions About Sexual Morals and Ethics" suggested that Christianity should serve as the basis for adolescent morality.<sup>86</sup> The teacher was to sympathize with the adolescent. The adolescent was in an unenviable position. Neither child nor adult, he or she required a set of moral guidelines for decision-making. The teacher was told that adolescents who asked questions about sexual morality were unsure about what course of action to take. For example, adolescents often asked questions such as: "Is it wrong to neck at a party if your friends are doing it?" "What should you do if the boys you go out with won't ask you out again unless you neck the first night?" "Why are most boys uncontrollable?" "How can a marriage ceremony make any difference?" and "Is trial marriage a good idea?" Many of these questions clearly reveal the difficulties post-war adolescent girls had in negotiating heterosexual relationships. Yet the lecture notes encouraged the teacher to view these questions as excellent opportunities to point out the "real" purposes of sex. Christian ethics apparently revealed that the real purposes of sex lay in marriage and the propagation of the human race.

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<sup>86</sup> TBEA TBE Curriculum, Family Life and Sex Education, 1948-1967, Box R22-6. "Questions About Sexual Morals and Ethics."

Draft sample lesson plans for grades 7 and 8 were also found. One of the lesson plans drawn up for both grades was based on the theme, "Families Have A Present."<sup>87</sup> Ostensibly, the object of the lesson plan was to show pupils that the family was not a relic of the past but a viable contemporary institution. This aim would be accomplished by establishing that adolescent sexual activity was unworthy of the real purposes of sex. The teacher would prepare the class for the lesson by defining "morals" as "the rules of conduct demanded by society—enforced by such things as laws, customs, gossip, etc." and "ethics" as "the rules of conduct which people think out for themselves of their own free will." The teacher would ask the pupils to voice or write out questions they would like discussed in class. These questions could be about dating etiquette, necking, petting, blind dates, dutch treats. The teacher could then move on to discuss with the pupils the real purposes of sex and summarize them on the blackboard. In this manner, the teacher would help the pupils understand that adolescent sexual activity often occurred due to peer pressure or a desire to rebel against parents.

## VI

Reaction to the teacher training course, for the most part, proved to be positive. Another "Family Life Education Questionnaire" was sent out to the teachers who participated. The Questionnaire asked the teachers whether or not they would begin teaching the Family Life Education curriculum after Easter; what were their reactions to the teacher training course; what was their opinion of the film "Human Growth;" and what kind of comments the participants would like to contribute about any aspect of the teacher training course. Two hundred and twenty-one questionnaires survive. One hundred and forty of the respondents were men; 81 were women.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> TBEA TBE Curriculum, Family Life and Sex Education, 1948-1967, Box R22-6, "Grade 7 and 8 Families have a present."

<sup>88</sup> TBEA TBE Curriculum, Family Life and Sex Education, 1948-1967, Box R22-6, undated surveys in envelopes labelled "North," "Centre," "West" and "East." Again, this breakdown by sex is an approximation I have made based on the teachers' signatures, the subjects they taught and the schools at which they taught. Mark Greenberg's valuable assistance in tabulating these surveys is gratefully acknowledged.

The questionnaires show that a very small minority—38 respondents—did not intend to teach the curriculum after Easter. Reasons for this decision varied. Some mentioned that their principal was opposed to the curriculum, others believed that sex instruction should always be home-based while still others remained unconvinced that such a course was needed in elementary schools.

Whether or not they agreed to teach the Family Life Education curriculum after Easter, a clear majority of the respondents rated the teaching training course from good to excellent. One teacher liked the curriculum as an educator and a parent: "I have often wondered how I might present these facts to my own children. I feel now that I am able to approach that problem with complete confidence. I believe that this course should be made available to every teacher who is a parent regardless of whether or not he or she will be teaching it." Another noted that the teacher training course "overcame many fears I had about aims and [it] has given me more confidence in my position. I believe that I shall be able to present [the] course to pupils confident of the result." Yet many teachers expressed important reservations about portions of the proposed Family Life Education curriculum. These reservations stemmed from three major concerns: the appropriateness of the segregation of the pupils by sex; the unsuitability of the curriculum for elementary schools; and the putative incompatibility between straightforward physiological information and moral values.

The absence of sex segregation in grade 7 family life education classes irritated a number of the respondents. Some of the teachers believed that segregation on the basis of sex had to be enforced in grades 7 and 8. "I do not approve of mixed classes," commented one woman. Another teacher remembered that as a young girl she would have appreciated sex-segregated classes so that she could present her own problems "without the thought of what a young boy was thinking." In contrast, another teacher disapproved wholeheartedly of sex segregation: "Both sexes should take the lessons together, as there surely can not be any reason why these 'secrets' should not be known to both. Furthermore, it would do away with shunting pupils from room to room which causes confusion." Other teachers recommended segregating students on the basis of age and/or



physical development. Only one teacher recommended segregating pupils on the basis of their sexual maladjustment.

A number of teachers expressed the point of view that the family life education curriculum was not necessary for elementary school pupils for a variety of reasons. One teacher lamented that if all the details of sex were presented in grades 7 and 8 there would be nothing left to teach in the high schools. Another teacher stated that he was not prepared to "go as far" as the curriculum for grade 8 suggested. Others commented that the curriculum was suitable only for high schools, was too broad for elementary schools and could "do harm" to the "immature" students in grades 7 and 8. A small minority of teachers maintained, however, that the curriculum would be even more effective if it were begun in the lower grades. One of these teachers reasoned that much of "the information has already been received by the so-called 'gutter' method by many before they reach grade 7."

A few respondents objected most fiercely to what they believed to be the curriculum's emphasis on straightforward physiological information. Some teachers felt that the curriculum emphasized too much sex and not enough family life; so much so that in some instances, the curriculum was said to be immoral. One teacher was vociferous in her denunciation of this aspect of the curriculum: "Some pictures shown...are obscene and not [a] fit mental diet for young girls or boys. They portray humans on the level of beasts and would be horrifying to modest little girls (if there still are some). They shocked me." Another teacher complained that not enough stress was placed on family life. This teacher felt that this stress was particularly necessary given the "apparent present-day break-down of many families [and] utter disregard of parents." Another teacher noted that there was an "over-emphasis on the biological fact relating to sex [sic]." Still another commented that the curriculum had a "hazy outlook" when it came to classroom discussions about family and community life. Some respondents perceived the curriculum to be dangerously skewed toward physiology, biology and anatomy. Thus, "[t]he spiritual side of the whole topic seems to have been overlooked...it is dangerous to give children so much knowledge

without God in the picture." "Repercussions" were possible, claimed one teacher, without naming any. Another teacher predicted what some of these repercussions would be: "Too much detail would soon result in circulation of the knowledge that intercourse can be carried on with comparative safety at certain times. How, tell me, do I meet the question of a 'spaced' family—the use of contraceptives etc.?"

The film "Human Growth" received the support of the majority of the respondents who had viewed the film. The film was generally said to be "a step forward," an excellent way to "break the ice" and something that students and parents should view. But some respondents expressed concerns that the film was not moral enough. The studies on audience reaction Weinzirl had sent the Special Committee did acknowledge that viewers saw value in the film even though it did not stress "the moral side of sex." Yet some teachers who responded to the "Family Life Education Questionnaire" did not agree. The following comments make this obvious. The film was "much too biological [with] not enough reference to [the] moral and family aspect." It was "too drastic." It was too advanced for grades 7 and 8—"Let's keep a little modesty yet." The film gave "too much exposure" to sex. "Human Growth" had to be handled gingerly, requiring "very careful preparation by the teacher." Perhaps the film "would be better shown by the nurse and doctor under proper conditions." In any case students should not view it unless "a proper attitude" had been established ahead of time.

The participants' reservations, particularly those expressed over the film "Human Growth," reached the Toronto Board of Education trustees immediately. The day after Speirs' address, the Board decided in private session to request Goldring to investigate and hand in a report on the matter.<sup>89</sup> Goldring's report, dated April 6, 1949, was relatively innocuous, noting that Trustee Edwards, chair of the Special Committee, had approved the film originally and that the film had

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<sup>89</sup> TBEA *Private Minute Book*, Details of Private Session of Board Following Regular Meeting Held on Thursday, March 24, 1949, p. 3.

been screened twice in the Board Room for the benefit of the remaining trustees.<sup>90</sup> The Board had reason to be apprehensive about any criticism "Human Growth" received. In February that year, the Board had gone on record opposing the indiscriminate showing of any film pertaining to sex education for such films "may be based on a philosophy of education which this Board of Education believes to be false and dangerous." The Board would back the showing of any film which was screened under the auspices of the Health League of Canada or the Academy of Medicine.<sup>91</sup> The Board was most probably reacting to the showing of "Mom and Dad," a "sex education" film which played to packed audiences at Massey Hall and was sponsored by Hygienic Productions of Toronto. The film focused on the plight of an unmarried girl who becomes pregnant. The Toronto Board was not alone in objecting to this film. Don Moffatt of the National Film Board of Canada disagreed with the way the film "scared the daylights out of people." Joseph Lichstein of the HLC recalled that the original version of the film was even more "frightening" because it featured a Cesarean birth, a chart of the rhythm method of birth control, and horrifying symptoms of venereal disease.<sup>92</sup>

On April 7, the Toronto Board excluded press and public from a private session. During the session, the Report of the Teachers' Committee on "Family Life Education" was referred back to the Management Committee suspending, in effect, the plan to implement the Family Life Education curriculum after Easter.<sup>93</sup> Parental opposition—the bogey raised traditionally by those opposed to school-based sex instruction—did not materialize. In fact, one mother belonging to a Home and School Association congratulated Speirs on the Report, the film "Human Growth" and his presentation. She expressed a great deal of disappointment when she heard that the proposed curriculum had been suspended. Writing on behalf of a number of other parents she claimed that

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<sup>90</sup> TBEA Reports of Board Officials, 1937-1962, # 130 "Family Life Education," April 6, 1949.

<sup>91</sup> TBEA *Minutes of the Toronto Board of Education*, February 17, 1949, p. 39.

<sup>92</sup> NAC MG 28 I 332 Vol. 165, File: National Film Board of Canada, 1944-1947, letter to J. Lichstein from D. A. R. Moffatt, August 8, 1946 and letter to Don Moffatt from J. Lichstein, July 5, 1946.

<sup>93</sup> TBEA *Private Minute Book*, Details of Private Session of Board Following Regular Meeting Held on Thursday, April 7, 1949, p. 10.

"criticism of the course could only have come from persons who had not been even as well acquainted with it as we were."<sup>94</sup> "The mother was obviously referring to those teachers who had expressed dissatisfaction with the curriculum's lack of moral content.

Despite the exclusion of the press and public, reports of the private session held on April 7 leaked out. The press reported that the debate had been "heated," quoting one trustee as saying that the meeting had "plenty of dynamite."<sup>95</sup> Teacher dissatisfaction with the curriculum's lack of moral emphasis was held to be the cause of the Board's "sudden shyness." The *Globe and Mail* editorialized that this was a good enough reason for postponing the course: "To initiate children of twelve and thirteen into the mysteries of the sex function in human life without providing them with at least some idea of the need for moral discipline is courting trouble." The editors claimed that obliging teachers paid by the State to take over what was essentially a parental responsibility was an "unjustified intrusion" into the home. In addition, the difficulty of finding and training teachers suitable for the job of sex instruction should have been "restraint enough in itself." It was hoped that the curriculum would be revised and the debate amongst Board trustees be conducted in public.<sup>96</sup> Speirs was greatly disappointed, especially with the adverse reaction to "Human Growth." He explained to Curtis Avery, the new director of the E. C. Brown Trust, that plans to implement the Family Life Education curriculum had suffered a setback. "Human Growth" had been criticized by a "small minority of teachers." Speirs complained that "the criticism was prejudiced and based on second-hand reports, but you know how easily people become hysterical in this area."<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> TBEA TBE Curriculum, Family Life and Sex Education, 1948-1967, Box R22-6, letter to Rae Speirs from H. Ward, April 12, 1949.

<sup>95</sup> "School Sex Study Handed Setback," *Evening Telegram*, April 8, 1949.

<sup>96</sup> "A Lesson in Sex Education," *Globe and Mail*, April 11, 1949.

<sup>97</sup> TBEA TBE Curriculum, Family Life and Sex Education, 1948-1967, Box R22-6, letter to Curtis Avery from Rae Speirs, April 13, 1949.

A week later it became obvious that "The Story of Menstruation" was also under suspicion. Goldring was requested by the Board to draw up a modified version of the Family Life Education curriculum. Some trustees protested that all the Board's discussions should remain public, but the Board resolved itself into private session on another two occasions in April to discuss the curriculum further and to review all four films recommended by the Report of the Teachers' Committee on "Family Life Education."<sup>98</sup> Goldring soon produced a modified version of the Family Life Education curriculum which bowed to those critics who blasted the original curriculum because they believed it paid too much attention to imparting straightforward physiological information. Goldring justified the excision of much of the physiological information contained in the original curriculum by citing the same principle the Teachers' Committee had determined to be most important in teaching Family Life Education: "The establishment of habits, attitudes and ideals of life is more important than mere physiological information." With this in mind Goldring recommended that his modified curriculum be taught in grades 7 and 8 in the course on health education during the remainder of 1949 and during the 1949-50 school year. With the exception of teaching on menstruation, the sexes were not to be separated.

Goldring's modified version of the Family Life Education curriculum was divided into 6 sections. The first, the "Evolution of the Family," intended to demonstrate that when compared with family life in amoeba, fish, birds and other mammals, the human family provided the best possible care for the young. Section 2 on "Relationships Within the Human Family" focused on classroom discussion about getting along with parents, siblings and friends. The films "You and Your Family" and "You and Your Friends" were recommended. The third section dealt with glandular changes and "normal" boy-girl relationships in "The Meaning of Adolescence." In

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<sup>98</sup> "Trustees View Sex Films: Disagree On Use In School," *Toronto Star*, April 22, 1949. See also TBEA Management Report No. 9 Part II, April 26, 1949 in Appendix to the Minutes of the Toronto Board of Education, p. 173.

Section 4 on "Community Life," the relationship of the "triangle" of home, church and school to a peaceful society was outlined.

Section 5, "Menstruation," would be dealt with on an optional basis. The film "The Story of Menstruation" could be shown "under the direction of a competent, sympathetic woman teacher" to girls only after the pupils had been adequately prepared. The teacher had the right to restrict the film to girls on the basis of their "maturity." Goldring's restrictions were unfortunate. They could only perpetuate the traditional taboo against discussing menstruation in mixed company and reinforce girls' ignorance about their bodies' natural functioning. Ironically, teachers at the Toronto Board of Education who collected secondary school students' questions about sex found that girls were extremely curious about menstruation. Sixteen out of 45 questions posed by girls aged 14 to 18 were related to menstruation. These questions ranged from "Can you go swimming while menstruating?" to "Is tampsax any good?" to "Is it possible when you are menstruating to have intercourse and not to have a baby?" By contrast, only 1 out of 21 questions posed by boys aged 14 to 16 was about menstruation: "Why does menstruation stop during pregnancy?"<sup>99</sup> The last section of Goldring's modified curriculum was entitled "The Significance of the Human Family." This section would trace the development of the family since "primitive times" and emphasize the "control of *all* emotions." The film "Human Growth" disappeared entirely from Goldring's modified version of the Family Life Education curriculum.<sup>100</sup>

On May 5th trustee Edwards, the chair of the Special Committee which had approved the original Family Life Education Report, moved that the Board accept Goldring's modified version. Given the hostile attitudes of some of the trustees who continued to look askance at Goldring's modified version, Edwards felt that the modified version would be better than nothing at all. The vote was close. The 5 trustees who served on the Special Committee swung the vote in favour of

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<sup>99</sup> TBEA TBE Curriculum, Family Life and Sex Education, 1948-1967, Box R22-6, "Questions—Girls Gr. 9 and 10" and "Questions—Boys Grade IX."

<sup>100</sup> TBEA Reports by Board Officials, 1937-1962, # 130 "Family Life Education," May 4, 1949.

Goldring's modified curriculum by a narrow 10 to 8 vote. The same 5 trustees also helped defeat two amendments. The first amendment proposed to restrict the modified curriculum to grade 8. The second amendment proposed striking the sections on the Evolution of the Family, The Meaning of Adolescence, and Menstruation from the modified curriculum.<sup>101</sup> The successful passage of this amendment would have stripped the modified curriculum of any physiological information. "Some members," a disgruntled trustee Sam Walsh told the press, "seem determined to keep from children the fact that there are males and females in the world."<sup>102</sup> Goldring informed Althouse of the Board's decision to accept the modified curriculum, saying only that "there was some criticism of the original outline regarding the teaching of Family Life Education in the public school." Althouse accepted the modifications without much comment. Goldring also sent a copy of the curriculum and a copy of a circular intended to principals. The circular confirmed that discussions at the Toronto Board led to the conclusion that "physiological information regarding sex should not be given to [elementary] school pupils. This is definitely a course in Family Life Education, and not a course in Sex Education."<sup>103</sup>

In 1950, the year in which the Toronto Board of Education celebrated its centenary, and the Majority Report of the Hope Commission deemed that sex instruction in secondary schools should combine physiological information with moral values, the revised Ontario Department of Education *Courses of Study for Grades IX-XIII, Physical Education* for 1950 appeared.<sup>104</sup> The pall cast on imparting physiological information to elementary school pupils now descended upon secondary school students, and upon girls in particular. The Health Education section of the *Courses of Study* retained *Good Health* as the authorized text, but dropped all mention of the study of venereal

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<sup>101</sup> TBEA *Minutes of the Toronto Board of Education*, May 5, 1949, pp. 90-91.

<sup>102</sup> "Board Approves Sex In Very Modified Form," *Globe and Mail*, May 6, 1949.

<sup>103</sup> AO RG 2 P 3 Box 310/32, File 4-852, "To the Public School Principals," from C. C. Goldring, May 6, 1949.

<sup>104</sup> Ontario Department of Education, *Courses of Study for Grades IX-XIII, Physical Education*, 1950.

disease. The Health Section for boys and girls read like an indoctrination programme in compulsory heterosexuality and social conformity.

Boys in grade 9 would take two units on "Body Growth and Development" and "Understanding Changes in Adolescence." The latter stressed the importance of good grooming, understanding the interests of the opposite sex and participation in co-educational activities. Grade 10 boys studied the importance of relationships to the family, to friends of the same sex, to friends of the opposite sex, poise, emotional control and good habits. In grade 11, Healthful Living emphasized high morals, wholesome relationships with boys and girls, sensible attitudes toward alcohol and gambling, emotional maturity and satisfying recreation. The Healthful Living course in grade 12 took "Family Life"—courtesy, respect for parents, responsibilities to the family, independence within the context of respect for parents' judgement—into consideration. The "Good Citizenship" unit looked at self-discipline and loyalty to the democratic ideal. "Problems of Modern Living" encompassed the study of racial discrimination, the effect of technology like the automobile on family life and the effect of alcohol on society. The essentials of successful living were said to be work and social adjustment. A number of films—"You and Your Friends," "Shy Guy," "Are You Popular?" and "Family Life" were recommended viewing. Presumably considered less dangerous because it would be screened for an audience of grade 12 rather than grade 8 boys, "Human Growth" was also approved as a visual aid.

Health Education for girls would focus on the development of personality and personal appearance. According to studies conducted in Denver, Colorado, these were said to be of greatest interest to girls from grades 7-10. In grade 9, girls would learn about the mechanics of good posture, bathing, choosing appropriate recreation, the assumption of adult responsibilities and the hygiene of menstruation. The film "The Story of Menstruation" was recommended. Grade 10 girls studied muscular movement, the circulatory and respiratory systems, first aid and the effect of tobacco and alcohol on the body. The Healthful Living course in grade 11 dealt with the meaning of democratic citizenship, hobbies and recreation, job choices, emotional maturity, overcoming



prejudice, getting along with family, "crushes" and mature friendships and getting along with boys. The latter included comparisons between the social development of boys and girls, common problems in getting along with boys, qualities one looked for in the opposite sex and "looking forward to marriage—Factors that tend to make for a successful marriage—happiness in childhood, common interests, similarity of social background and education, emotional maturity."<sup>105</sup> Grade 12 girls devoted themselves to Child Study. In contrast to the grade 12 boys who had, at least, the opportunity to see "Human Growth," the film did not even rate a mention where grade 12 girls were concerned.

Thus, by 1950 Ontario educators had failed both elementary and secondary school students where school-based sex instruction was concerned. The non-compulsory Family Life Education curriculum outlined in the 1948 Report of the Teachers' Committee on "Family Life Education" had been rejected by the Toronto Board of Education trustees. The modified version of the curriculum accepted by the Board's trustees in 1949 kept physiological information for grade 7 and 8 elementary school students to a minimum. It is doubtful that the 1949 version of the Family Life Education curriculum had much of an impact. The non-compulsory nature of the modified curriculum would have made it easy for elementary school principals to ignore it. At any rate, the modified curriculum remained in effect until 1952 when it was discarded entirely. Secondary school students did not fare any better. The recommendation of the Majority Report of the Hope Commission that school-based sex instruction in secondary schools should combine physiological information with moral values was not implemented. By eliminating any mention of the study of venereal disease in the Health Education section of the 1950 *Courses of Study for Grades IX-XIII, Physical Education* the Ontario Department of Education provided secondary students with precious little leeway to learn about human anatomy and biology. Although provided with a surfeit

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<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

of information on grooming, dating, marriage and child rearing, girls in secondary schools were apparently granted even fewer opportunities to learn about human physiology than were boys.

## CONCLUSION

### "Like Lenin's Corpse"<sup>1</sup>

When it had become obvious that the Family Life Education curriculum, as outlined in the Report of the Teachers' Committee on "Family Life Education," had run into trouble at the Toronto Board of Education, John Toogood, Rae Speirs' colleague on the Teachers' Committee, consoled Speirs by saying: "I do hope and believe...that our efforts will not fail to bear fruit in due season."<sup>2</sup> That due season was a long time coming. Some 16 years after the 1949 defeat of the original Family Life Education curriculum, Speirs was derisively referred to as "that nut on sex education" and was still working to introduce a "Family Living" curriculum into the province's schools.<sup>3</sup>

In 1950, in the red-baiting atmosphere of the Cold War, the Toronto Board turned its attention from developing and implementing sex instruction curricula to combating what some trustees perceived to be the Communist infiltration of the Toronto public school system. Some vociferously anti-Communist trustees insisted on ferreting out students, fellow trustees and teachers they claimed were Communist sympathizers. For instance, when 1000 students at Harbord Collegiate walked out in April, 1950, to protest Principal Walter T. Graham's decision to veto Student Council election speeches, trustee Blair Lang charged that red students were responsible. Despite some discussion that students were disgruntled because Graham insisted Jewish students attend classes during the Jewish high holidays, Lang claimed that student ring

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<sup>1</sup> TBEA Rae Speirs Papers Acc. # 251 R12S2, June Callwood, "Its Time We Taught Sex Education in Our Schools," *Canadian Weekly*, January 23, 1965, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> TBEA TBE Curriculum, Family Life and Sex Education, 1948-1967, Box R22-6, handwritten letter to Rae Speirs from John Toogood, undated.

<sup>3</sup> Callwood, "Its Time," p. 4.

leaders had actively supported Communist candidates in civic elections and had distributed to other students Communist pamphlets urging the outlawing of the atomic bomb.<sup>4</sup>

By the 1950s, links were made between advocating school-based sex instruction in any of its forms and Communist sympathizing. Branded Communists, trustees Sam Walsh and Edna Ryerson had been strong advocates of family life education. In 1949 Walsh had thrown his support behind the original and the modified Family Life Education curricula. A year later his opposition to cadet training, the atomic bomb and Winston Churchill not only aroused the ire of some of his colleagues but the suspicion of American governmental officials. In March, 1950 he was refused entry into the United States to attend a conference of music educators.<sup>5</sup> Ryerson was one of the members of the Special Committee Appointed to Consider and Report on the Matter of Sex Education in Schools. Struck in June, 1948, the Special Committee approved of the Report of the Teacher's Committee on "Family Life Education Family Education," and passed it on to the Management Committee of the Toronto Board of Education. Like Walsh, Ryerson threw her support behind the original and the modified Family Life Education curricula in 1949. Ryerson was hounded by the press for being a Communist. Her campaign to provide Toronto students with a pint of free milk at lunch to ensure that poor children were adequately supplied with vitamins was cited as proof of her Communist sympathies. The fact that many women's groups supported Ryerson's free milk campaign did not deter one newspaper from editorializing about "the simple-minded manner in which leading women's groups will lend themselves to the malicious purposes of agitators."<sup>6</sup>

Teachers with any hint of a Communist past were also targeted by the Board. Ironically, E. L. Roxborough, who had supported the teaching of social hygiene in schools in 1944 became,

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<sup>4</sup> "Charges Harbor Revolt Led By Red Students," *Globe and Mail*, April 24, 1950.

<sup>5</sup> "School Trustee Walsh Barred From U. S. Entry," *Toronto Star*, March 17, 1950.

<sup>6</sup> "Editorial" *Globe and Mail*, March 3, 1950.

in the 1950s, one of the most active red-baiting trustees. After a rancorous discussion in November that year, the Board passed a resolution, sponsored by Roxborough, which insisted that the Director of Education and the Superintendents of Elementary and Secondary Schools investigate all teachers for Communist sympathies before they were hired. Some trustees complained that this action amounted to the kind of "witch hunt" occurring under Senator McCarthy in the United States. In response, Roxborough stated: "I don't think this board has any idea how much Communism infiltrates into the objects of its desire, including education. If any member of the staff now is a Communist, we should dismiss him."<sup>7</sup>

Associated as school-based sex instruction was with Communism, the pall which descended on elementary and secondary school-based sex instruction during the '50s lasted well into the '60s. Dr. William Dunlop, the Ontario Minister of Education in 1959, complained that "sex education" was a "frill" he did not wish to have on the curriculum. In response to Dunlop's hostility to school-based sex instruction, the Superintendent of Secondary Education issued a directive a year later which noted that no subject on the curriculum should include "sex education" as a topic. The directive urged teachers to "exercise care in dealing with topics of the course of study which may be construed erroneously as sex education."<sup>8</sup> Ontario educators' distrust of school-based sex instruction prompted leading Toronto journalist June Callwood to remark in the mid-60s that although massive changes in the Ontario public school curriculum were taking place, "the intractability of educators on the subject of sex is almost a miracle of preservation, like Lenin's corpse."<sup>9</sup> The spectre Callwood raised was that of the promiscuous teenager. Now considered a virtual paper tiger, venereal disease was no longer said to be the end result of teenage promiscuity.

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<sup>7</sup> TBEA *Minutes of the Toronto Board of Education*, November 16, 1950, pp. 156-157 and "To Screen Teachers for Red Leanings Before Appointment," *Evening Telegram*, November 17, 1950.

<sup>8</sup> Callwood, "It's Time," p. 3; Canadian Education Association, *The Present Status of Sex Education in Canadian Schools*, Report No. 2, September, 1964, p. 6.

<sup>9</sup> Callwood, "Its Time," p. 3.

Callwood claimed that the promiscuous teenager would become the reluctant groom in a shotgun marriage or would become the unhappy unwed mother.

Callwood complained that Ontario high school students dissected the reproductive organs of frogs in zoology but never came across any mention of human reproductive organs at all. She was not far off the mark. A survey on "sex education" conducted in 1964 by the Canadian Education Association (CEA) of Canadian public and separate schools in grades 1-13 revealed that the majority of school boards were willing to take on the job of sex instruction because they claimed that parents had failed in their duty to teach their children about sexual matters.<sup>10</sup> Yet not one provincial department of education and not one of the 55 boards of education surveyed reported having a separate sex education course on the curriculum. Various topics related to sex instruction were, however, included in regular subjects such as health, science, social studies, home economics, personal and family living and guidance.

The various topics related to sex instruction ranged from considerations in choosing a mate to understanding where babies come from to the roles and responsibilities of parents. In keeping with the post-war trend toward institutionalizing curricula that encouraged the development of heterosexual interaction amongst youths, the two topics discussed by the majority of school boards (42 out of 55) in grades 7 through 13 were dating manners and physical changes in girls at puberty. Understanding where babies come from, physical changes in boys at puberty, the physiology of human reproduction and necking were the next most common topics of discussion. The subject of venereal disease was no longer considered a vital topic of discussion. Only 19 out of 55 school boards dealt with the subject in grades 7 through 13. Sex in marriage was discussed in grades 7 through 13 by only 14 out of 55 school boards. The topic discussed by the least

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<sup>10</sup> Canadian Education Association, *The Present Status of Sex Education in Canadian Schools*, Report No. 2, September, 1964, p. 14.

number of school boards (9 out of 55) was contraception. Remarkably, one school board in an unnamed province reported discussing contraception as early as grades 4 through 6.<sup>11</sup>

Callwood appeared to throw her weight behind the need for a separate course in sex instruction. She maintained that the 1948 Family Life Education curriculum for grades 7 and 8 outlined in the Report of the Teachers' Committee on "Family Life Education" was a good example of school-based sex instruction. She claimed that the defeat of the original Family Life Education curriculum was an example of the "vulnerability" of such instruction. Her interview with Speirs was particularly revealing. Some 16 years after the original curriculum had been shelved, Speirs proved to have a telling interpretation of the events which spelled the end of that curriculum. He did not blame the defeat of the curriculum on those teachers who feared that the grade 7 and 8 pupils would be privy to too much straightforward physiological information. Instead, he condemned the same caricature social hygienists had repeatedly held up as the antithesis of progressive sex reform—the prudish spinster—for triggering the defeat of the curriculum. Speirs recalled that "an uninvited spinster" teacher present at the March, 1949, teacher training course was affronted by the nudity displayed in the text book drawings appearing in the opening scenes of the film "Human Growth." She complained to one of the Board's trustees. This trustee took up the matter during the next Board meeting, thus spelling the end of the original Family Life Education curriculum.<sup>12</sup>

Speirs was, of course, being disingenuous in his condemnation of the spinster teacher. In actual fact, the original Family Life Education curriculum met its sorry end because of the impact of the post-1885 social purity movement on children's sex instruction. The vestigial influence of the social purity movement's moral approach to sex reform had not only survived into the 1950s, it

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>12</sup> TBEA Rae Speirs Papers Acc. # 251 R12S2, "June Callwood Says," *Canadian Weekly*, January 23, 1965, p. 4.

had received a new infusion of energy from the moral conservatism characteristic of the Cold War era.<sup>13</sup> Initially triggered by the anxiety over the spread of venereal disease, the social purity movement's emphasis on the moral approach to sex reform involved a two-fold undertaking: inculcating in the child the sexual self-control necessary to maintain celibacy before marriage and imparting rudimentary information on sexual physiology. Yet because social purists feared arousing children's curiosity about sex, the physiological information they provided children either elided human anatomical, reproductive and sexual detail or couched it in oblique terms.

Convinced that children's ignorance about sexual matters was responsible for the spread of venereal disease, Canadian social purists at first came out in support of home-based sex instruction. They charged parents, and mothers in particular, with the duty of teaching their children about sexual matters before the sexual storm and stress of adolescence. Social purists held mothers responsible for inculcating sexual self-control in children. Mothers were to strictly regulate the flow of pollution into and out of the child's orifices in order to prevent children from engaging in masturbation, sexually experimenting with peers and adults and/or passing on untrue stories about the origin of life to other children. The mother would censor all pornographic literature from her children and oversee their friendships with peers and adults. She would keep her children from consuming all sexually stimulating substances—tea, coffee, meat, cigarettes, alcohol and opium. She would insist her children had regular bowel movements, wear loose clothing and sleep with their hands above the bed covers so as to prevent the child from rubbing his or her irritated genitals. She would prescribe fresh air, exercise and cold water bathing to check the emergence of any sexual manifestations.

The mother was also held responsible for passing onto her children rudimentary information on sexual physiology. More often than not, this information was situated within nature

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<sup>13</sup> My thanks to Ruth Pierson for this insight.



study. The study of the reproductive habits of flora and fauna fit neatly with turn-of-the-century conceptualizations of the mothers' asexuality, the purity of the natural world and the child's putative affinity to a primitive universe set out in recapitulation theory. The study of the reproductive habits of plants and animals was intended to give children just enough knowledge to curb their curiosity about sexual physiology while simultaneously indoctrinating them in the wonders of monogamous marriage and child rearing. Ironically, the obscure sexual information dispensed to children in nature study was not considered problematic; mothers were. The emerging social hygiene movement increasingly disparaged mothers for their supposed inability to teach their children about the facts of life. This disparagement intensified at the same time that the discourse around sex instruction shifted from social purity to social hygiene. This shift reflected the American and the Canadian medical professions' increasing involvement in defining and treating venereal disease as rates of syphilis and gonorrhoea rose frighteningly during the Great War. Yet after the war, a few social hygienists pushed for the introduction of sex instruction into the nature study curriculum of Ontario schools while the majority were keen to improve parents' ability to educate their children about sexual matters at home.

In contrast to social hygienists' disunity over the issue of school-based sex instruction, one Ontario women's social purity organization, the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), remained united in its support for a combination of home-based and school-based sex instruction. Made up largely of white, middle-class women concerned with eradicating Canadian society of social and racial impurity, the WCTU charged men with the responsibility for spreading moral and physical contagion to women and children. In 1900, the WCTU hired Arthur Beall to be their purity missionary. Even when employed by the Ontario Department of Education between 1912 and 1933 to lecture to elementary, secondary and collegiate boys on purity and eugenics, Beall continued to replicate the Ontario WCTU's firm insistence on the need for a single standard of sexual morality for men and women. Beall shared the social purist horror of masturbation, telling boys that the practice would lead to insanity and death. He stood firmly behind the social purists'

punitive treatment of the practice, warning boys that unrepentant masturbators were often incarcerated in mental asylums and castrated. Although Beall's lectures were praised by mothers, social purists and sexologists, they provided boys with very little anatomical or biological detail. Like the members of the Ontario WCTU, Beall was more concerned with impressing boys with the importance of sexual continence and responsible parenthood. Despite the fact that Beall's lectures on masturbation ran counter to social hygienists' opinions on the subject, both Beall and the Ontario WCTU would claim, by the end of the Great War, that his lectures were consistent with the aims of social hygiene.

During the inter-war years, the social hygiene movement took up social purists' concerns with feeble-mindedness. The feeble-minded were believed to be responsible for a host of social evils from venereal disease to poverty. In an attempt to curtail the propagation of mentally defective individuals, many Ontario professionals active in the social hygiene movement supported both negative and positive eugenics. Negative eugenics was synonymous with the sterilization of individuals considered mentally defective. Unlike the governments of Alberta and British Columbia, the Ontario government did not pass sterilization legislation, possibly because politicians were afraid of losing the Catholic vote. While sterilization was perceived to be the key to negative eugenics, the revival of the patriarchal nuclear family served as the central focus of positive eugenics. Although social hygienists wished to pave the way for race betterment, the leading social hygiene organization, the Canadian National Council for Combatting Venereal Disease (CNCCVD) and its later incarnations—the Canadian Social Hygiene Council (CSHC) and the Health League of Canada (HLC)—refused to take responsibility for school-based sex instruction. Social hygienists hoped to bolster home-based sex instruction by teaching parents how to educate their children about sexual matters.

Education for parents advocated by social hygienists was not necessarily any more explicit than what was now being termed sex education for children. Like sex education, parent education

also depended heavily on nature study. The most noticeable difference between the social purity and the social hygiene programmes of sex instruction for children lay in the understanding of childhood masturbation. Influenced by a mechanistic model of children's sexuality, masturbation was understood to be a problem of habit formation. Nevertheless, social hygienists continued to recommend some of the social purists' less invasive "treatments" for masturbation: clean genitalia, exercise, non-stimulating foods, loose clothing, hard beds and fresh air. During the late 1930s, many of the social hygienists involved in the push to sterilize mental defectives in the United States, came to embrace the concept of incorporating sex instruction into family life education. Family life education was conceived of as a broadly-based programme of sex instruction which concentrated on the preservation of the patriarchal nuclear family rather than on the threat of venereal disease. Canadian social hygienists would call for the institutionalization of family life education into public schools towards the end of the Second World War.

During the Second World War, venereal disease rates in the military and civilian population rose once again. Juvenile delinquency, and particularly, the presumed sexual licentiousness of the female juvenile delinquent, was now held to be responsible for the spread of venereal disease. Although social hygienists were reluctant, during the early years of the war, to support school-based sex instruction, public demand for school-based sex instruction grew as venereal disease came to be portrayed as a menace to the allied nations and hence to the fight for democracy. An attempt to introduce social hygiene education at the Toronto Board of Education in 1944 failed. But in that same year the Ontario Department of Education set the stage for sex instruction in secondary schools by placing the study of venereal disease in the health education curriculum for grade 10 and 12 students. In 1944, the HLC also came out in favour of incorporating family life education into schools.

After the war, venereal disease was no longer perceived to be a dangerous medical threat. Having been conquered by penicillin, venereal disease could no longer act as the brake against

individuals' sexual conduct social purists had first put in place and social hygienists had maintained. Fifth-column Communist activity, homosexuality and sex delinquency were now perceived to be far more dangerous contagions. Some social hygienists attempted, therefore, to redouble their efforts to inculcate in children the importance of sexual chastity before marriage based on the promise of a healthy heterosexuality and a happy family life. A separate course on Family Life Education for elementary school students, developed in 1948 by a group of teachers at the behest of some of the trustees on the Toronto Board of Education, did recognize the importance of reinforcing children's moral backbone. Developed in the midst of Cold War hysteria, when Canadians were growing increasingly concerned about national security and social order, the Family Life Education curriculum sought to steer boys and girls in grade 7 and 8 safely toward sexual chastity, heterosexuality, marriage and parenthood.

While the curriculum turned to nature study to introduce grade 7 pupils to family life, it did provide fairly explicit physiological information on human sexual maturation, sexual intercourse, fertilization, gestation and birth to grade 8 students. Teachers were encouraged to frame every lesson in the curriculum within the context of marriage and the family. Yet although many teachers supported the curriculum because they hoped it would control teenagers' putative propensity for sexual delinquency, a minority of teachers and a majority of trustees reacted adversely. They feared that the straightforward physiological information contained in the curriculum would lead the young students to become sexually promiscuous. It was believed that the students, now freed from the threat of venereal disease, and possibly armed with the knowledge of how to avoid pregnancy, could engage in sexual activity at liberty. After an acrimonious debate amongst the trustees, the Family Life Education curriculum was replaced by a modified version which greatly reduced the content of physiological information while retaining the moral messages about sexual chastity before marriage. In the Cold War quest for national security and social order, it was teenage sexuality which had to be firmly regulated.

Some of the moral concerns at the heart of the post-1885 social purity movement would survive into the 1960s, when the demand for public school-based sex instruction peaked for the third time. Evidence for this contention can be found in the results of the CEA's 1964 survey on sex education. A number of school boards made it plain that they were still wrestling with the tension between the need to provide straightforward physiological information to youths and the desire to make them aware of the moral implications of sexual activity. One unnamed school board's response to school-based sex instruction showed just how powerful the tension between the moral and the hygienic aspects of sex instruction continued to be: "Consideration must be given to the social and moral implications. Too often anatomical and physiological facts are considered sufficient."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Canadian Education Association, *The Present Status of Sex Education in Canadian Schools*, Report No. 2, September, 1964, p. 14.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

**AO Archives of Ontario**

**GC Gallup Canada**

**LC Library of Congress**

**NAC National Archives of Canada**

**OLL Ontario Legislative Library**

**OSP Ontario Sessional Papers**

**TBEA Toronto Board of Education Archives**

**TCA Toronto City Archives**

**TFRBL Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library**

**VCA Vancouver City Archives**

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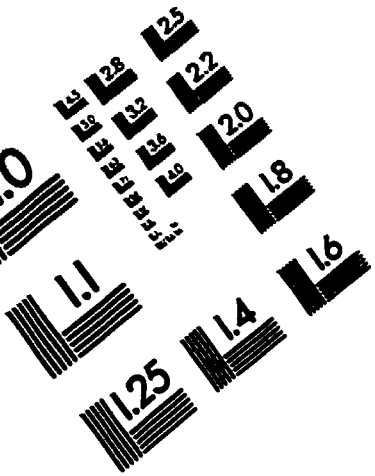
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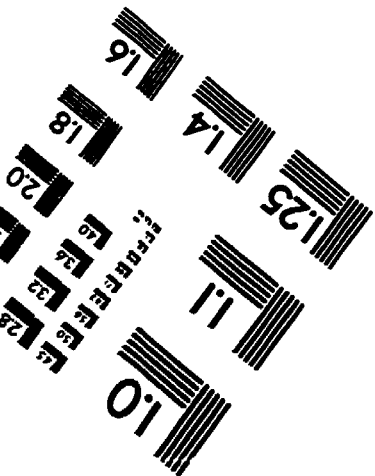
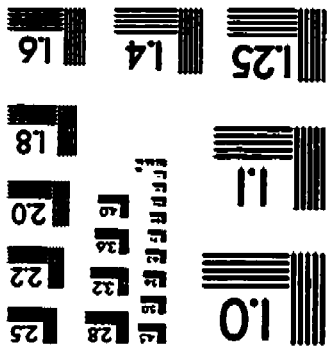
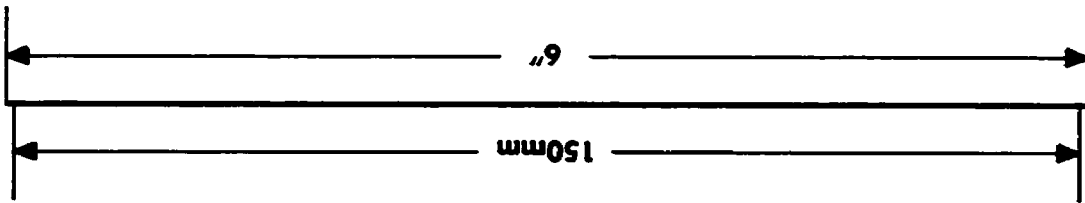
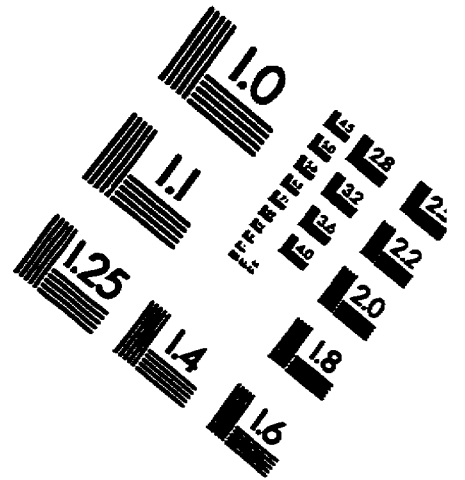
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