Disciplining Children, Disciplining Parents: The Nature and Meaning of Advice to Canadian Parents, 1945–1955

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Advice to parents of school-age children and adolescents in Canada in the postwar period was shaped in many ways by the discipline of psychology, and more specifically child psychology. The psychological imperative in parenting, promoted in postwar manuals and popular magazines, influenced the social construction of gender. Moreover, the teachings of child psychologists, strengthened by their claim of safeguarding the emotional well-being of the country's children, justified the intervention of outside institutions such as the public school and public health department into the home. Close interpretive attention to the discourse surrounding "proper" parenting reveals much about the nature of social relations and social change in Canada's recent past.

La pédopsychologie a modelé à bien des égards les conseils dispensés aux parents d'enfants et d'adolescents d'âge scolaire dans l'après-guerre au Canada. L'impératif psychologique dans l'éducation des enfants, encouragé dans les manuels et les magazines populaires d'après-guerre, a influé sur la construction du statut social des hommes et des femmes. Qui plus est, les enseignements des pédopsychologues, que renforçait l'affirmation de ceux-ci de travailler à la protection du bien-être émotif des enfants du pays, motivèrent des institutions externes telles que les services publics d'enseignement et de santé à intervenir dans la vie des foyers. Le discours entourant la « bonne » éducation des parents nous éclaire beaucoup sur la nature des relations sociales et de l'évolution sociale au Canada dans un passé récent.

ON JUNE 3, 1948, Edmund Davie Fulton, a Conservative member for the riding of Kamloops, British Columbia, interrupted a Canada Evidence Act debate taking place in the House of Commons to draw the House's attention

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to what he believed to be a much more pressing problem. According to him, the number of crime comic magazines making their way into the hands of young people had reached alarming proportions.[1] Fulton informed his colleagues that in Kamloops, a city of 12,000, the circulation of crime comics had reached 15,000 issues in 1947 alone. The Honourable Member demanded that Parliament take swift action to "put a stop to this tendency".[2] His reason was straightforward and undeniable: crime comics were "producing or contributing to a child's becoming a juvenile delinquent".[3] Following a spirited year-long debate, the Canadian Parliament ultimately agreed. On December 5, 1949, private member's Bill 10, thereafter known as the Fulton Bill, was given its final reading. This amendment made it a criminal act to "print, publish, sell or distribute any magazine or book that was devoted to the pictorial presentation of crime".[4] Crime comics were, and to this day still are, outlawed in Canada.

Parliament's decision to ban the crime comic was an important symbol of Canadians' concern about family and childrearing in the postwar period. In their debate over the well-being of Canadian children and their place within the family, however, these parliamentarians were not alone. The writings of journalists in popular Canadian magazines and the advice of professional child psychologists such as Dr. William Blatz and Dr. Samuel Laycock exposed postwar parents to a novel approach to childrearing.[5] The new emphases in childrearing, particularly regarding school-age children and adolescents, reflected larger anxieties that characterized the postwar years. The psychologically informed advice of the experts helped to shape attitudes towards gender and, by claiming to safeguard the mental health of the country's children, legitimized the intervention of outside institutions into the private realm of the family. The development of my interpretive approach to postwar parenting advice is influenced by the writings of Michel Foucault. Foucault's reading of the history of prisons, madness, and sexuality portrayed each as partaking in the disciplining and standardizing of human bodies into the "universal reign of the normative"; similarly, I see

1 Canada, House of Commons *Debates*, 4th Session, 20th Parliament, vol. 5, June 3, 1948, p. 4754.

2 *Ibid*., p. 4754.

3 *Ibid*., p. 4754.

4 *Ibid*., p. 4754; R.S.C. 1970, C–34, Section 159; R.S.C. 1985, C–46, Section 163. The legalistic aspects of the crime comic debate in Canada (especially as it relates to pornography legislation) has been the focus of two scholars. See Janice Dickin McGinnis, "Bogeymen and the Law: The Crime Comic and Pornography", *Ottawa Law Review*, vol. 20, no. 1 (1988), pp. 3–25; Augustine Brannigan, "Mystification of the Innocents: Crime Comics and Delinquency in Canada, 1931–1949", *Criminal Justice History*, vol. 7 (1986), pp. 111–144, and "Delinquency, Comic and Legislative Reactions: An Analysis of Obscenity Law Reform in Postwar Canada and Victoria", *Australian-Canadian Studies*, vol. 3 (1985), pp. 53–69.

5 Popular Canadian magazines surveyed for this study from approximately 1947 to 1955 include *Maclean's Magazine*, *Chatelaine*, *Saturday Night*, *Canadian Forum*, and *Food for Thought*, the official organ of the Adult Education Association in Canada.

glimpses of this disciplining and normalizing process accompanying advice to parents in postwar Canada.[6] The discourse regarding parenting reveals much about the nature of social relations and social change in Canada's recent past.

Two aspects of the nature and meaning of advice to parents in postwar Canada are relevant here. First, the advocates of psychologically sensitive parenting contributed to the social construction of gender in a number of ways in their treatment of Canadian mothers and fathers. Experts tended to put much of the blame for "problem" children squarely on the shoulders of insensitive parents. Mothers were warned against giving their children either too much love and attention, or not enough. Fathers were scolded for their reluctance to get involved with their children and were encouraged to be likable and accessible role models. Not only did parenting advice reflect uneasiness and uncertainty about acceptable gender roles in the postwar period; it added its own mental health imperative to the maintenance of traditional meanings surrounding "man" and "woman", "mother" and "father".

A second important aspect of postwar parenting involves the place of the family in a larger, more public context and the ways in which the public school and the public health systems incorporated psychological thinking into their dealings with the family and with children. Efforts to ensure the psychological stability of young Canadians, quite apart from their physical well-being, shaped the impact public institutions made upon the family and the interactions between institutions and the home. The fact that experts understood healthy psychological development to be an ongoing concern added to the legitimacy of this interaction.[7] While child psychologists pointed out the importance of the early years, "diseases" of the personality could apparently crop up at any stage in a child's life. Whether five or fifteen, the experts counselled, young people were psychologically vulnerable to disruption and therefore in need of expert surveillance. Under the legitimizing mantle of science, child psychologists, much like medical doctors, encouraged Canadians to look to professional guidance rather than trust their own judgements or rely on past experience.[8] Ironically, Canadian

6 J. G. Merquior, *Foucault* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 85–107. See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (London: Tavistock, 1972), *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, *An Introduction* (New York: Pantheon, 1978), vol. 2, *The Use of Pleasure* (New York: Pantheon, 1984), and vol. 3, *The Care of the Self* (New York: Pantheon, 1984).

7 A number of the ground-breaking works on the history of parenting advice in Canada and the United States, cited in note 24, are concerned primarily with the care of babies and pre-school children. My study attempts to broaden our understanding of the significance of this phenomenon by exploring advice offered to parents of school-age and adolescent children.

8 The interpretive parallels between the rise of professional medicine and psychology as legitimate, scientific, and patriarchal is thought-provoking. For an account of this process in Canada's medical profession see Wendy Mitchinson, *The Nature of Their Bodies — Women and Their Doctors in Victorian Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).

parents were often left feeling inadequate and confused about how to be good parents. As much as it was aimed at producing happy and well-adjusted young people, psychologically inspired advice rested on the necessity of first disciplining parents.

There are both benefits and limitations in using postwar advice to parents as an interpretive tool. Critics have pointed out that parents do not always follow the advice of experts in the matter of childrearing or in any other life experience.[9] This does not, however, undermine the potential importance of advice as a useful tool for historians. Conceptualizing advice as an ideological artifact in itself, rather than as a flawless blueprint of how parents actually behaved, allows social historians to learn something about the climate of ideas in the past.[10] By examining what those in a position to shape social convention such as parenting experts had to say, we can learn a great deal about the society in which they circulated their ideas.

Despite its interpretive potential, the advice explored in this study addressed only a certain "type" of parent: a white, Anglo-Saxon, middle-class mother and father. The experts made little attempt to accommodate the different needs of immigrant or single-parent families, various ethnic traditions, or working-class realities. They addressed a monolithic audience — a generic "every family". The creation of a new ideal, a new model, for child-parent relations in Canada during this period ignored cultural and ethnic differences and aimed instead to homogenize and standardize parenting skills. The particular foray into the emotional life of the family represented by postwar advice to parents created a rather artificial standard at the same time as it collapsed differences along the lines of class, race, and ethnicity.[11]

A growing number of investigations have been devoted to the social history of childhood and the family in postwar Canada.[12] The most recent

9 See Julia Wrigley, "Do Young Children Need Intellectual Simulation? Experts' Advice to Parents, 1900–1985", *History of Education Quarterly*, vol. 29, no. 1 (Spring 1989), pp. 41–77; Jay Mechling, "Advice to Historians on Advice to Mothers", *Journal of Social History*, vol. 9 (Fall 1975), pp. 44–63. For instructive examples of the usefulness of using advice as an interpretive tool in the Canadian context, see 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 & Stewart, 1982), pp. 160–221; Katherine Arnup, "Education for Motherhood: Women and the Family in Twentieth Century English Canada" (Ph.D thesis, University of Toronto, 1991).

10 Arnup gives thorough consideration of the problem in "Education for Motherhood".

11 See, for example, the important work on the experience of ethnic families in postwar Canada in Franca Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992).

12 See especially Neil Sutherland, Jean Barman, and Linda Hale, compilers, *History of Childhood and Youth: A Bibliography* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1992); Doug Owram, "Home and Family at Mid-Century", paper presented at the 71st Conference of the Canadian Historical Association, May 29–June 2, 1992, University of Prince Edward Island; Veronica Strong-Boag,

assessments of this burgeoning field of historical inquiry have noted a shift in interpretive concentration. Early studies of childhood and youth focused primarily on a specific time, a specific "type" of child, and a specific place: namely the nineteenth century, delinquents and orphans, and the central provinces, especially Ontario. In more recent studies, however, historians have broadened their approach to include the experience of non-deviant children and young people and have begun to question all aspects of their past.[13] My study attempts to contribute to these later investigations that explore the less tangible and less easily categorized characteristics of growing up in Canada. By focusing on the varying and often conflicting ways in which adults were advising each other to raise good children, we can learn something about what values Canadians held dear and about the plurality of opinion surrounding these values in the postwar period.[14]

The considerable social value attached to the establishment and maintenance of family life was not simply a pleasant characteristic of the late forties and fifties, but rather signalled a powerful reaction on the part of Canadians to prolonged periods of turbulence and uncertainty. Doug Owram found that:

> The idea of home was ... invested with a great number of powerful meanings by the end of the war, ranging from material comfort to the end of the war itself. Underlying it all, however, was a search for stability on the part of a generation that had known nothing but instability. The home, coming home, and the formation of the family as a point of reference in an unstable world all merged into one vision.[15]

"Home Dreams: Women and the Suburban Experiment in Canada, 1945–1960", *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. 72, no. 4 (1991), pp. 471–504; Russell Smadych, Gordon Dodds, and Alvin Esau, eds., *Dimensions of Childhood — Essays on the History of Children and Youth in Canada* (Manitoba: Legal Research Institute, 1991); Patricia T. Rooke and R. L. Schnell, *Studies in Childhood History: A Canadian Perspective* (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Limited, 1982); Parr, ed., *Childhood and Family in Canadian History*; Linda Ambrose, "The Canadian Youth Commission: Planning for Youth and Social Welfare in the Postwar Era" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Waterloo, 1992); Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People*; Neil Sutherland, " 'Everyone seemed happy in those days': The Culture of Childhood in Vancouver between the 1920s and the 1960s", *History of Education Review*, vol. 15 (1986), pp. 37–51, "'We always had things to do': The Paid and Unpaid Work of Anglophone Children Between the 1920s and the 1960s", *Labour/Le Travail*, vol. 25 (Spring 1990), pp. 105–141, and " 'Listening to the Winds of Childhood': The Role of Memory in the History of Childhood", *Canadian History of Education Association Bulletin*, vol. 5, no. 1 (February 1988), pp. 5–29.

13 See especially the collection of essays contained in Smadych, Dodds, and Esau, eds., *Dimensions of Childhood*. In the introduction, the editors remark on the state of the history of childhood and youth in Canada and suggest future work.

14 For a discussion of attitudes towards mothering in an earlier period, see Katherine Arnup *et al.*, *Delivering Motherhood: Maternal Ideologies in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (London: Routledge Press, 1990). In her study, "Educating Mothers: Government Advice for Women in the Inter-War Years", Arnup discusses the nature of government-sponsored advice manuals for new mothers.

15 Owram, "Home and Family at Mid-Century", p. 8.

Owram points out that the image of the family portrayed during the postwar years was, in a sense, a defence mechanism against the social mayhem that had characterized the years of depression and war. The widespread promotion of family living and marriage satiated a social craving for calm, happiness, and certainty.

This promotion was also partly the consequence of the belief of many Canadians that certain aspects of modern postwar society conspired to undermine the traditional family. A curious characteristic of the years after the war was the power of the perception of social disruption, regardless of proof to the contrary, to influence and shape public opinion. In addition to the perceived rise in juvenile delinquency, which motivated the members of Parliament to seek a ban on crime comics, other postwar social problems seemed to threaten the family. An article in a 1947 issue of *Maclean's Magazine*, for example, declared:

> The fact that there was "only" one divorce for every 21 Canadian marriages in 1945, as compared to one divorce for every three marriages across the border in 1945, is grounds for little satisfaction when you dig a little deeper. For after the first world war only one Canadian couple were divorced for every 482 who married. What is the matter with us? Our grandparents seemed to get along pretty well in marriage — why can't we?[16]

The increasing divorce rate that seemed to be a new fact of postwar life was not the only indication of a social breakdown that Canadians perceived to be confronting their generation. Child abuse was also discussed in the popular press. Journalist Sidney Katz reported that "according to the latest available estimate, 40,000 Canadian children are now under the care or supervision of social agencies."[17] In Ontario alone, the incidence rate of desertion, abuse, ill-treatment and neglect had risen from 2,771 cases in 1939 to 4,025 cases in 1947.[18] In light of such shocking increases, Katz asked his readers:

> What are the reasons behind these alarming figures? Are we becoming more cruel as individuals? Have we been so brutalized by a long and bloody war that we are no longer sensitive to the sufferings of helpless youngsters unable to take care of themselves?[19]

16 Paul Popenoe, "First Aid for the Family", *Maclean's Magazine*, vol. 60 (May 1, 1947), p. 19. Further examples include C. Wesley Topping, "How to Stay Married", *Chatelaine*, vol. 8, no. 2 (February 1946), pp. 10, 11, 47; George Kisker, "Why You Fight With Your Wife, Husband", *Maclean's Magazine*, vol. 60 (August 1, 1947), pp. 1, 36, 37.

17 Sidney Katz, "Are We Growing More Cruel to Our Children?", *Maclean's Magazine*, vol. 61 (July 15, 1948), p. 42.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 42.

19 *Ibid.*, p. 42. For a timely appraisal of the situation in Quebec, see Chs.-E. Bourgeois, "Protection of

The danger to children in postwar Canada was not only to be found in the home; it was believed to be omnipresent. In particular, the young were being stalked by a new enemy: the "sexual psychopath". An article in *Chatelaine*, written to "bring understanding to the average women who has had only the remotest acquaintance with such things before", declared:

> So many dangers exist to *all our children* everywhere, rich or poor, city or country. For the sexual psychopath can be found in any class of society, any calling, and with any degree of education ... in other words, they may appear in every other respect to be ordinary members of society.[20]

The increasing stresses accompanying urbanization and the failure of parents to spend time with their children were offered as probable explanations for the apparent social breakdown that confronted the immediate postwar years. One cure-all for these symptoms of social decay involved a return to "good old-fashioned family life":

> Much has happened, of course, and most of it can be traced back to industrialization, with the accompanying growth of large cities. In them the individual, not the family, becomes the unit. And so far as a simple formula can be suggested to curb divorces it is that the nation must again become family-minded.[21]

The reaction of Canadian parliamentarians to this apparent breakdown of the family was to advocate a return to the strict family upbringing that they

Children in the Province of Quebec" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Ottawa, 1948). Although still greatly influenced by the dictates of the Catholic Church, Quebec postwar society also appeared to be suffering from a breakdown in family values. In this regard, Bourgeois laments what he identifies as a trend towards "practical paganism" in Quebec: "This mentality is shared by so many that one witnesses some sort of general conspiracy against the family, brought about by economic interests, pleasure-seeking, immorality, and commercial interests" (p. 40).

20 Lotta Dempsey, "We the People vs. the Sex Criminal", *Chatelaine*, vol. 21 (January 1, 1948), p. 6. A special 1954 issue of *Food for Thought*, vol. 14, no. 6 (March 1954), was dedicated to the problems of the postwar family. It included Frank E. Jones, "The Newcomers", pp. 62–66; W. E. Baker, "A Home on the Prairie", pp. 22–26, for a brief discussion of the urban/rural tensions in the "modern" family; and Marjorie J. Smith, "Meeting Needs", pp. 44–46. For examples of the concerns in the French-Canadian family, see Annalee Götz, "Family Matters — The Canadian Family and the State in the Postwar Period", *Left History*, vol. 1, no. 2 (Fall 1993), pp. 24–26; Guy Rocher, "Le Père", *Food for Thought*, vol. 14, no. 6 (March 1954), pp. 6–10; Evelyn M. Brown, *Educating Eve* (Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1957).

21 For writer George Kisker, the problems visited on the postwar family were the result of "a deep-seated war between the sexes". Kisker maintained that "the battle of the sexes is one war that the U.N. won't be able to do anything about. Men and women may bury the hatchet during the excitement of finding a husband or wife, but the truce is only temporary." Kisker, "Why You Fight With Your Wife, Husband", p. 36. See also the instructive article by Götz, "Family Matters", pp. 9–49, in which she points out that "this period witnessed a concerted attempt to re-stabilize the family" (p. 9).

themselves had experienced. To them, the growing popularity of the unsavoury crime comic represented the failure of Canadian parents to discipline their children effectively and to provide them with more cultured leisure pursuits.[22] In speaking out against the effects of reading crime comics, the government members employed powerful rhetoric to castigate a generation of parents thought to be at risk of rearing a generation of delinquents. Through their arguments, the members were rallying to defend a vision of family life and of parenting that they feared was disappearing in the postwar era. Scholars such as Augustine Brannigan and Janice Dickin McGinnis have provided valuable investigations of the crime comic debate as it has affected the social and legal history of Canada. These postwar concerns also provided a window of opportunity for experts, particularly child psychologists, to influence Canadian family life.[23]

As other historians have pointed out, advice to Canadians and parents' concerns regarding the best way to raise their children were not new developments in postwar Canada.[24] Canadian mothers and their babies had long

22 In the United States, some important studies of the impact of crime comics and comic books in general have been carried out by Amy Kiste Nyberg. See, for example, "Ignoring the Evidence: The Senate Investigation of Comic Books in the 1950's", paper presented to the American Journalism Historians Association, October 4–7, 1990, Coeur d'Arlene, Idaho; "Conflicting Advice: Parents, the Popular Press and the Comic Book Controversy, 1948–1954", paper presented to the Qualitative Studies Division, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Annual Conference, August 1991, Boston.

23 See note 4. Augustine Brannigan, for example, uses the debate to demonstrate that the ban was based on the erroneous belief that juvenile delinquency was on the rise in Canada during the postwar years. Dickin McGinnis draws a parallel between the crime comic ban and pornography legislation; both represent instances in which a small segment of society, namely the government, unjustly dictates moral, social, and community standards.

24 The literature on the history of parenting advice in the United States is extensive. See, for example, Mary Wolfenstein, "Trends in Infant Care", *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, vol. 23, no. 1 (January 1953), pp. 120–130; Peter Stearns, "Girls, Boys and Emotions: Redefinitions and Historical Change", *Journal of American History*, vol. 21, no. 1 (June 1993), pp. 36–74; Wini Breines, "Domineering Mothers in the 1950s: Image and Reality", *Women's Studies International Forum*, vol. 8, no. 6 (1985), pp. 601–608, and "The 1950s: Gender and Some Social Science", *Sociological Inquiry*, vol. 56, no. 1 (Winter 1986), pp. 69–93; Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988); Stephanie Shields and Beth Koster, "Emotional Stereotyping of Parents in Child Rearing Manuals, 1915–1980", *Social Psychology Quarterly*, vol. 52, no. 1 (1989), pp. 44–55; Susan Contratto, "Mother: Social Sculptor and Trustee of the Faith" in Miriam Lewin, ed., *In the Shadow of the Past: Psychology Portrays the Sexes* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), pp. 226–256; William Graebner, "The Unstable World of Benjamin Spock: Social Engineering in a Democratic Culture", *The Journal of American History*, vol. 67, no. 3 (December 1980), pp. 612–629; Eugenia Kaledin, *Mothers and More: American Women in the 1950s* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1984); Nancy Pottishman Weiss, "Mother, the Invention of Necessity: Dr. Benjamin Spock's *Baby and Child Care*", *American Quarterly*, vol. 29, no. 5 (Winter 1977), pp. 519–547. For a British focus, see Christina Hardyment, *Dream Babies: Child Care from Locke to Spock* (London: Jonathan Caper, Ltd., 1983); Denise Riley, *War in the Nursery: Theories of the Child and Mother* (London: Virago, 1983). In the Canadian context, see Strong-Boag, "Intruders in the Nursery"; Arnup, "Education for Motherhood"; Norah Lewis, "Advising the Parents: Childrearing

been the favourite targets of childcare professionals. A number of influential Canadians, such as the founder of the Institute of Child Study in Toronto, Dr. William Blatz, who was active in the 1940s and 1950s, had been engaged in studying child development since the 1920s and 1930s.[25] Veronica Strong-Boag has demonstrated how the federal Division of Child Welfare had become firmly established by the 1920s. Dr. Helen MacMurchy's "Little Blue Books" were immensely popular with Canadian mothers and went through numerous reprints.[26]

The government's interest in maternal welfare and prenatal care led to the publication of many manuals. *The Canadian Mother's Book*, produced by MacMurchy throughout the twenties, was continually revised and updated. In 1937 Dr. Ernest Couture was named head of the Division of Child and Maternal Hygiene of the Department of Pensions and National Health and undertook the production of the first edition of the immensely popular *The Canadian Mother and Child*. By 1953 Couture's contribution had gone through 12 reprints.[27] Likewise, as Katherine Arnup's work on the construction of mothering in Canada from 1920 to 1960 details, government departments such as the Federal Department of Health, public health nursing, the Division of Child Hygiene, and the Bureau of Child Welfare were well established by the 1920s.[28] Other organizations such as the Canadian Federation of Home and School Associations, founded in Ontario in 1919 and established in the other provinces shortly thereafter, had a long history of providing Canadians with the "education of parenthood ... devoting time and thought to the child in our midst".[29]

Historians in Canada, the United States, and Britain tend to agree that essential changes had taken place in the basic tenor and character of postwar advice to parents. Parenting advice in the pre- and interwar years had focused on keeping children on rigid schedules for sleeping, eating, and playing. In her study of experts' influence on the training of preschool children from 1920 to 1940, Veronica Strong-Boag characterizes advice to parents during this period as highly regulated and mechanized. She quotes from "one typical Toronto psychologist", William Blatz, who stated in 1920

in British Columbia During the Interwar Years" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of British Columbia, 1980); Keri Delhi, "Women and Class: The Social Organization of Mothers' Relations to Schools in Toronto, 1915–1940" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1988); Douglas Owram, "Draft Manuscript — Babies" (forthcoming), pp. 9–18.

25 For a detailed study of the growth of the Institute of Child Study at the University of Toronto in 1925, see Mary L. Northway, "Child Study in Canada: A Casual History" in Lois Brockman, *et al.*, *Child Development: Selected Readings* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973), pp. 11–45.

26 Strong-Boag, "Intruders in the Nursery", pp. 160–221.

27 Norah Lewis and Judy Watson, "The Canadian Mother and Child: A Time-Honoured Institution", *Health Promotion*, vol. 30, no. 3 (Winter 1991/1992), p. 10.

28 Arnup, "Education for Motherhood"; Arnup *et al.*, *Delivering Motherhood*.

29 Canadian National Federation of Home and School, "Report of the Sixth Biennial Convention", Halifax, July 13–16, 1938, p. 3.

that, where "it formerly was believed that mother instinct or mother love was the simple and safe basis for the problems of training, it is now known that a much more reliable guide is the kitchen time piece."[30]

By the postwar period, Blatz was still an advocate of employing routine and consistency in bringing up children. He and his colleagues, however, now spoke more frequently of the need to provide the child with, above all else, love, security, and understanding.[31]

> Consistency had been somewhat overrated; and so we have well-meaning but rigid parents who are afraid to change the rule because it might be "inconsistent"... you are more of a automaton than a parent if you are consistent all the time. If parents can remember to be consistent with their warmth and love, then some inconsistency in discipline does not ruin the child for life.[32]

After the war, advice to parents became more relaxed and focused upon the mind of the child, his or her emotional health, in junction with physical health.[33] Advice was not merely aimed at parents of newborn babies and toddlers.In the postwar period, parents were schooled in the most psychologically healthy way to handle everything from their child's first day at school, to formative experiences with friends, to whether or not their sons and daughters should engage in "petting".[34] Although the prevailing parent-

30 Strong-Boag, "Intruders in the Nursery", p. 164.

31 In his tireless promotion of the need for nursery schools along the lines of that found at his Institute of Child Studies, Blatz talks of the needs of children for "cultural fulfilment" and "unhampered thinking". Blatz, *Understanding the Young Child* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin and Company, 1944), p. 252. See also John Alan Lee, "Three Paradigms of Childhood", *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, vol. 19, no. 4 (1982), p. 600.

32 Mary Frank and Lawrence K. Frank, *How to Help Your Child in School* (New York: Signet Books, 1950); Karl Bernhardt, *What it Means to be a Good Parent* (Toronto: Institute of Child Study, 1950); Baruch Silverman and Herbert R. Matthews, "On Bringing Up Children", *Canadian Home and School*, vol. 10, no. 1 (September 1950), pp. 4–8; Samuel Laycock, "Is Your Child Different From Other Children?", *Quebec Home and School*, vol. 4, no. 3 (December 1951), p. 10; Arnup, "Education for Motherhood", p. 23; Ella Kendall Cork, *A Home of Her Own* (Canada: The National Girl's Work Board of the Religious Education Council of Canada, 1944). Although *How to Help Your Child in School* was an American publication, Canadian experts such as Laycock often recommended it to Canadian parents as one of the best manuals for parents of school-age children.

33 For reviews of earlier approaches to childrearing see Strong-Boag, "Intruders in Nursery"; May, *Homeward Bound*, p. 187; Hardyment, *Dream Babies*, pp. 221–288; Arnup, "Educating Mothers", pp. 190–211. Useful descriptions of the changes in childrearing advice from the pre-war to the postwar period in Canada and the United States are detailed in Contratto, "Mother: Social Sculptor and Trustee of the Faith"; Graebner, "The Unstable World of Benjamin Spock"; Strong-Boag, "Intruders in the Nursery"; Breines, "Domineering Mothers of the 1950's"; Arnup, "Education for Motherhood"; Owram, "Draft Manuscript — Babies"; Hardyment, *Dream Babies*; John Newson and Elizabeth Newson, "Cultural Aspects of Childrearing in the English-Speaking World" in M. P. M. Richards, ed., *The Integration of the Child into the Social World* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974), pp. 52–65.

34 Frank and Frank, *How To Help Your Child in School*, p. 103.

ing wisdom of the twenties and thirties had generally advocated strict regimentation in childcare and the avoidance of excess maternal emotion, by the end of the war experts were advocating a more relaxed, emotionally expressive approach that integrated the teachings of child psychology into parenting.[35]

Why did these changes happen in the first place and then take root? Any answer must necessarily consider a number of converging factors. The experience of two world wars had surely made Canadians receptive to alternative ways of understanding human conflict and hungry for ways to resolve it. Since his *Interpretation of Dreams*, published in 1909, Freud's psychological explanations for seemingly inexplicable human tragedy had enjoyed popularity among academics and elites.[36] Freudian psychology and psychology in general became more and more widely accepted during subsequent years. As the discipline became allied less with philosophy and more with science, increased attention was focused upon psychology's more practical applications.[37] The use of psychological testing for military purposes by the Americans in 1917 had caused Canadian psychologists to become more "relevant" in the lives of ordinary citizens, according to Karl Bernhardt, an associate at the Institute of Child Study in Toronto. With the testing of the American army, reported Bernhardt, "Canadian psychologists were forced to broaden their horizons. Tests took them away from their soundproof rooms and their preoccupation with sensory analysis, into schools and clinics."[38] With the arrival of another world war, Canadian psychologists again had to assess their role in Canada's efforts overseas and at home. Psychologist C. R. Myers pointed out that many Canadians were mindful of the fact that, while Canadians would be involved in the war from the beginning, their American counterparts would not. This was a particular problem since Canadian psychologists had been represented under the umbrella of the American Psychological Association. The action on the part of Canadian psychologists to form their own national organization in the late 1930s was a decisive move.

> It was clear that there were many ways in which psychology and psychologists, if properly used, could make an important contribution to the nation's war-effort. But it was also clear that this would only happen if there was a national body representative of Canada's psychologists that could speak

35 Wolfenstein, "Trends in Infant Care"; Clark Vincent, "Trends in Infant Care", *Child Development*, vol. 22, no. 3 (September 1951), pp. 198–209; Celia Stendler, "60 Years of Child Training Practices: Revolution in the Nursery", *Journal of Paediatrics*, vol. 26, no. 1 (January 1950), pp. 132–140.

36 Owram, "Draft Manuscript — Babies", p. 13.

37 Mary J. Wright and C. R. Myers, "Introduction" in Wright and Myers, *History of Academic Psychology in Canada* (Toronto: C. J. Hogrefe Inc., 1982).

38 Karl Bernhardt, "Canadian Psychology: Past, Present, and Future", *Canadian Journal of Psychology*, vol. 15, no. 2 (June 1947), pp. 50–51.

> authoritatively for them to those government bodies responsible for the enormous task of re-organizing a civilian population for war.[39]

Between 1945 and 1948, the Canadian Psychological Association had grown from approximately 158 members to 473. It had representatives in all provinces except Prince Edward Island and members in the United States, the United Kingdom, Holland, France, and Africa.[40]

The effects of the two world wars, a movement towards a higher social profile and relevance, and the insistence on ties to scientific inquiry all influenced psychology's relation to postwar parenting advice.[41] As the discipline of psychology moved from the laboratory and "into the schools and clinics", it received much more exposure to civilian problems and inevitably began to emerge in forms intended for popular consumption. In this complex process, Canadians were not just passive receptacles of a new trend in social thought. Bernhardt maintains, for example, that "even in the laboratory and the classroom the psychologist could no longer restrict his discussion to sensations, feelings and reaction times, for the student was demanding knowledge of how to get along with his room-mates and girl friends and how to manage difficult parents."[42] The Canadian Youth Commission likewise reported in 1948 that more child psychologists were needed to help sort out young people's problems.[43] A representative of the Adult Education movement, adding her voice to the demand for psychological expertise, maintained "At the present time there is a growing body of parents who want *to know and to use* the knowledge and expertise of experts who have specialized in the scientific study of normal childhood development."[44]

Child psychologists were thus in a uniquely favourable position to influence discussions of human interaction in the postwar years. Recurring themes in the popular writing of the day revolved around the increasing complexity of modern life, the growing number of women working outside the home, the increasingly anonymous and impersonal nature of corporate

39 C. R. Myers, "Notes on the History of Psychology in Canada", *Canadian Psychologist*, vol. 6a (1965), pp. 4–19.

40 National Archives of Canada, Canadian Psychological Association Papers, MG28, I 161, vol. 5, file no. 7, Annual Meeting and Correspondence.

41 S. R. Laycock, "Parent Education is Adult Education", *Food for Thought*, vol. 5, no. 3 (December 1944), pp. 3–7. Laycock insists that "it is necessary to point out that the *science* of child study has a vast array of data based not on the casual observation of untrained persons but on systematic observation and careful experimentation on thousands of cases" (p. 5).

42 Bernhardt, "Canadian Psychology: Past, Present and Future", p. 5.

43 Canadian Youth Commission, *Youth, Marriage and the Family* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1948), p. 145, as cited in Owram, "Draft Manuscript — Babies", p. 16. For a history of the Canadian Youth Commission, see Linda McGuire Ambrose, "The Canadian Youth Commission: Planning for Youth and Social Welfare in the Postwar Era" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Waterloo, 1992).

44 Mary L. Doan, "Parents are Important", *Food for Thought*, vol. 8 (December 1947), p. 34.

work, and the supposed crisis in masculinity that accompanied it.[45] Social life in general and family life in particular were perceived to be in danger of disintegrating after the war, and the mentally and spiritually therapeutic expertise of psychologists seemed to offer some hope for redemption. In general, the period was one in which the "expert" was not only highly regarded, but sought out as a matter of course to advise on a variety of issues.[46] Qestions surrounding the "proper" stance to take in relation to young people — the next generation of Canadians — seemed to invite psychological answers. In one of his CBC radio addresses, Samuel Laycock, professor of educational psychology at the University of Saskatchewan, Director of the Division on Education and Mental Health of the National Committee for Mental Hygiene, and a leading childcare expert, eloquently captured the promise that psychological thinking held out to postwar Canadians:

> May I say, then that we don't have to sit down in the face of crippled personalities and fold our hands in resignation and blame the Deity for our troubles. As we do a better job in the home and school we don't have so many crippled personalities — the kind who create problems in family, community, national and international life.[47]

According to the experts, attempting to "do a better job" meant that parents had to become familiar with psychological teachings and skilful at avoiding mental trauma in their children. Yet becoming a successful parent began with an even more rudimentary step: recognizing personal inadequacies and renouncing them. To achieve this, Laycock encouraged postwar parents to "let go" of their children. He counselled that:

> This does not mean indifference to their children — far from it.... Rather it means providing the child with a secure home base in the shape of parents who are so truly fond of him that they desire *his* best interest rather than their own narrow satisfaction.[48]

45 See Götz, "Family Matters", pp. 25–27; Breines, "Domineering Mothers in the 1950s", pp. 605–606, and "The 1950s: Gender and Some Social Science", pp. 69–93; Strong-Boag, "Home Dreams", pp. 471–504.

46 On the creation of social convention by experts in the United States during this period, see Beth Bailey, *From Front Porch to Back Seat: Courtship in Twentieth Century America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), pp. 119, 121, 123, 126, 139; Owram, "Draft Manuscript — Babies", p. 10.

47 University of Saskatchewan Archives, Samuel R. Laycock Papers, vol. 5, *Publications*, no. 271, p. 4, Samuel Laycock, "Radio Address: Mental Hygiene in School and Home", n.d.

48 University of Saskatchewan Archives, Samuel R. Laycock Papers, vol. 5, *Publications*, file A — Address and Publications, no. 22, Samuel Laycock, "Boys and Girls Need a Life of Their Own", n.d. In most cases, the masculine gender, "he", is used in reference to "child".

The pressure on parents to strive for the proper balance between authority and nurturing did not apply only to direct contact with their children; it was a constant concern. Even when they were not acting in their capacity as parents, postwar adults were warned against producing unwanted psychological consequences in their children. A brief article in *Chatelaine* entitled "Mother and Daughter Act" testified to the degree of personal "monitoring" that parents, particularly mothers, were to do:

> A youngster really suffers if her mother doesn't measure up to other parents at birthday parties and school functions. But if her mother is well groomed a child glows with pride. She may not say it in actual words but you can read it in her face — "This is MY mother, the most beautiful person on the world."[49]

Playing on parents' efforts to safeguard the psychological "health" of their children, this particular advice made an effective pitch for women to "keep up appearances".

The postwar period witnessed a particularly virulent attack on the parenting skills of mothers. Written during the late 1940s and early 1950s, books such as Phillip Wylie's *Generation of Vipers*, eminent psychiatrist Dr. Edward Strecker's *Their Mothers' Sons*, and child psychologist Erik Erikson's *Childhood and Society* blamed the "overprotective mother" for much of the ills of postwar society.[50] Erikson, for example, berated the overbearing and pathological mother, suffering from what he dubbed "momism", for transferring her ills upon her children: "'Mom' is a woman in whose life cycle remnants of infantility join advanced senility to crowd out the middle range of mature womanhood, which thus becomes self-absorbed and stagnant."[51]

In a variation on Erikson's "momism", prominent Canadian paediatrician Dr. Alton Goldbloom took postwar mothers to task for doing too little. Goldbloom scolded parents, in particular mothers, for refusing to make decisions on their own. In a difficult double-bind, Canadian mothers were told on one hand to depend on the experts, and on the other to exercise their skills independently. Reflecting on his practice in the 1950s, Goldbloom complained:

49 Adele White, "Mother and Daughter Act", *Chatelaine*, vol. 18, no. 1 (January 1946), p. 42.

50 While it is impossible to measure the real popularity of these books in Canada, evidence suggests that they were influential. Both *Generation of Vipers* and *Their Mother's Sons* were reviewed in Canadian magazines and newspapers. In several of the articles cited in this paper, direct reference is often made to these books, both positively and negatively. Often the pop psychology jargon introduced by these books, such as the term "momism", is used freely in magazine articles. For a useful critique of the thrust of these works and of the perception of women and mothers upon which they are based, see Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, *For Her Own Good: 150 Years of Experts' Advice to Women* (New York: Doubleday/Anchor Books, 1978), pp. 211–269.

51 Erik Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1950), p. 291.

> [M]other guidance has lost its vogue in this era of industrialization and the social liberation of women from the thraldom of the home.... This is why the paediatrician is plagued by the incessant telephone calls over trivialities, why every article of clothing, every procedure, every choice that is of no consequence or importance, becomes a subject of decision for the overworked paediatrician.[52]

Rather than attributing mothers' indecision to the possible effects of too much psychologically influenced advice, Goldbloom assumed that lack of skill and initiative was to blame. Whether doing too much or too little, postwar mothers were often the scapegoats for negative effects on their children.

Mothers, it seemed, also had to control their tendency to "nag" children and to make them feel inferior. If children got into trouble, Canadian doctor W. W. Bauer warned, an insensitive mother might well be to blame:

> Suppose somebody you thought was the most wonderful person in the world — your mother — told you day in and day out that you were the naughtiest and the dirtiest and the most no 'count brat she ever saw — and you began to believe it must be so. Would you be anxious to go home?[53]

Even in her relationship with her husband, mothers were warned of the potential danger of lashing out in anger. Discontentment between parents, Canadian experts warned, was sure to harm the emotional well-being of children. In their manual for Canadian parents entitled *The Normal Child*, doctors Elizabeth Chant Robertson and Alan Brown reminded mothers:

> Although you may think you are concealing the differences that exist between yourself and your husband, your child can sense them in an almost uncanny way and they affect him unfavourably. The children of parents who are not congenial to each other develop far more behaviour difficulties than youngsters living with parents who are generally happy. The greater the disagreement between the parents, the more serious the children's problem will be as a general rule.[54]

52 Alton Goldbloom, *Small Patients: The Autobiography of a Children's Doctor* (Toronto: Longmans, Green and Company, 1959), p. 307.

53 W. W.Bauer, "Children are so Annoying", *Maclean's Magazine*, vol. 60, no. 8 (March 15, 1947), p. 64. For additional studies on the experience of women in the postwar period in Canada, see also Strong-Boag, "Home Dreams"; Yvonne Matthews-Klein, "How They Saw Us: Images of Women in National Film Board Films of the 1940's and 1950's", *Atlantis*, vol. 4, no. 2 (Spring 1979), pp. 20–34; Gertrude Joch Robinson, "The Media and Social Change: Thirty Years of Magazine Coverage of Women and Work, 1950–1977", *Atlantis*, vol. 8, no. 2 (Spring 1983), pp. 87–111.

54 Alan Brown and Elizabeth Chant Robertson, *The Normal Child*, 4th ed. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1948), pp. 159–160.

If mother tended to be the problem parent in the postwar years, father was often considered the correcting influence.[55] Advice to fathers, however, did not include the accusatory (often misogynist) undertones that characterized so much of that directed at mothers. A common theme running through advice directed towards fathers was a plea to become more involved with their children. Parenting experts agreed that in addition to his role as primary disciplinarian, a good father was an entertaining playmate: "Boys and girls are pleased when Daddy plays a joke, or brings back a memento when he has been on a trip.... They like the favourite routine of hiding under the bedcovers at night while Daddy pretends to be looking for them."[56]

Experts tended to talk about the postwar father as a "new man" — one who was both approachable and sensitive, yet strong and dependable. Canadian children were to be made to feel comfortable in talking to their fathers about personal problems, and fathers were instructed to encourage this. In his report on the state of the French-Canadian family in the postwar period, Guy Rocher maintained that traditional sources of patriarchal authority over the family were quickly disappearing. Rocher noted that "the balance of power of the traditional family is destroyed ... a new definition of the father's role and authority is therefore to be developed in order to meet a new situation."[57] While Rocher focused upon what the French-Canadian father seemed to be losing in the postwar years, most experts talked instead about what was to be gained in a rethinking of the father role. Fathers were still to be good models of masculinity, yet this masculinity was to be balanced with a healthy dose of sensitivity:

> Fathers must remember that young children, boys and girls, often feel that only women cry and feel sad, only women or "sissies" are fearful and timid. Therefore, you will find little boys who think that, even if they don't show sadness or fright, they are disappointing Daddy by feeling that way inside — they are cowards ... a child needs to hear the words, "I understand; I know how you feel."[58]

Mothers were warned against undermining this sensitively masculine model of fatherhood. Most women were expected to be at home most of the day, tending to housework and looking after the children. Despite the fact

55 For a discussion of postwar fathering, see Janice Drakich, "In Search of the Better Parent: The Social Construction of Ideologies of Fatherhood", *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law*, vol. 3, no. 1 (1989), pp. 69–87; Shields and Koster, "Emotional Stereotyping of Parents in Child Rearing Manuals"; Breines, "Domineering Mothers in the 1950s"; Weiss, "Mother, the Invention of Necessity".

56 Frank and Frank, *How to Help Your Child in School*, p. 93; Baruch Silverman and Herbert R. Matthews, "A Happy Home is Most Important to the Pre-School Child", *Canadian Home and School*, vol. 10, no. 2 (November 1950), pp. 4, 5, 32.

57 Rocher, "Le Père".

58 Frank and Frank, *How to Help Your Child in School*, p. 122.

that they were expected to spend the greatest amount of time actively looking after their offspring, experts pointed out that mothers might complicate or sabotage the relationship built up between fathers and children. This was especially true when the problem of discipline entered the fray. Dr. Laycock warned parents not to threaten children with psychologically damaging punishments, such as refusing to love them. He singled out mothers and told them not to "use a father as a threat held over the child". A mother who engaged in this type of threatening behaviour, in Laycock's opinion, "destroys the father's relationship with his children and makes him a sort of tyrant".[59]

Parenting advice then, like all aspects of postwar society, was shaped by and reflected gendered thinking. While husbands and wives were told that the postwar period had ushered in a new democratic attitude towards marriage and family, the roles of "mother" and "father" were very much subject to the dictates of gender.[60] The potentially devastating effects on Canadian children of independent women who acted outside their roles as mothers and wives were noted by many writers. Child psychologists also contributed to the social construction of gender through their teachings about what it meant to be a good mother and a good father. The most dangerous effect of parents, particularly mothers, who failed to act as proper gender models for their children was the spectre of homosexuality. In "How Parents Hinder Adolescents' Adjustments to the Opposite Sex", Laycock warned that bad parenting caused homosexuality. A bad parent, among various other things, was one who acted outside accepted gender roles and upset the traditional power balances:

> The first pattern of masculinity for either a boy or a girl is the father. Likewise the first pattern of femininity is the mother. Deep-seated ideas and attitudes as to the role of men and women are laid down in the child's early life. If the mother is the dominating partner in the home and the father is merely a pay-check or a meek and willing servant, that is the pattern which a child has deeply engrained in him.[61]

Maintaining traditional gender roles, girls learning to emulate their mothers and boys their fathers, was important if serious personality disorders were to be prevented. Parenting experts added their own mental health imperative to the maintenance of separate gender roles for men and women. The possi-

59 S. R. Laycock, "Discipline and Supervision: How Much Freedom?", *The Home and School Quarterly*, vol. 14, no. 1 (September-December, 1945), p. 8.

60 On the nature and limits of the democratic model of postwar marriage, see Götz, "Family Matters"; Strong-Boag, "Home Dreams"; May, *Homeward Bound*.

61 Samuel Laycock, "How Parents Hinder Adolescents' Adjustment to the Opposite Sex", *Understanding the Child*, vol. 14, no. 2 (April 1945), p. 38, and "Homosexuality: A Mental Hygiene Problem", *The Canadian Medical Association Journal*, vol. 63 (September 1950), pp. 245–250.

bility of causing homosexual tendencies in children was the price that parents might pay for doing otherwise:

> If the mother wanted a girl when a boy arrived the situation may be even more tragic ... she encourages him in feminine manners and interests. Such a boy is likely to remain dependent on his mother with an infantile type of affection.... Such boys find it difficult when they reach adolescence to accept the male role in our society. Some of them never do accept it.[62]

Parents were not the only ones encouraged to adopt the mantle of psychological thinking in the postwar period, however. Representatives of public institutions, like school teachers and public health officials, were also encouraged to do the same.[63] The fact that these public workers were exposed to psychology as a means of performing their duties more successfully testifies to the discipline's increasing visibility and profile in the postwar years. Karl Bernhardt pointed to the initial success, decades earlier, of the mental hygiene movement and the dedication of its leader, Dr. C. M. Hincks, for the subsequent influence of child psychology in the postwar years in Canada.[64] Based on this influence, he concluded that "the world became the psychologist's laboratory ... and made child psychology a topic for the living room. It created a new category of public servant — the psychologist in the school, the social agency, the shop and the clinic."[65]

The particular shape of psychology's influence on these public institutions suggests a number of significant things about postwar Canada and the family's place within it. To promote and safeguard happy, well-adjusted children, public workers, especially teachers, were advised to adopt and use psychological theories about human behaviour and development. The psychological mindset, in other words, was to be an influential one in the classroom and for the public health nurse:

> Whenever a child presents difficulties in development, the teacher should ask herself "which of his basic psychological needs is the child attempting to satisfy by his behaviour?" ... If the school is not wise enough to provide him with socially-approved methods of meeting these needs, he will be forced to try anti-social ones.[66]

62 *Ibid.*, pp. 35–39.

63 For a discussion of a similar process in the American context, see Robert Castel, Françoise Castel, and Anne Lovell (translated by A. Goldhammer), *The Psychiatric Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

64 For more on the mental hygiene movement in Canada, see Theresa Richardson, *Century of the Child: The Mental Hygiene Movement and Social Policy in the United States and Canada* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), especially chap. 5.

65 Bernhardt, "Canadian Psychology: Past, Present and Future", p. 51.

66 S. R. Laycock, "Do Our Schools Meet the Basic Needs of Children?", *The School*, vol. 31, no. 10

While teachers were to integrate psychological thinking into their approach to students, they also became the targets of psychological scrutiny. If they had a problem child in their midst, teachers were to turn their psychological training inward, analysing their own mental dispositions for clues to the child's behaviour. For his courses on educational psychology at the University of Saskatchewan, for example, Laycock developed his "Mental Hygiene Self-Rating Scale for Teachers". Many of the questions on the rating scale clearly demonstrated the degree to which good, competent teachers were also those found to be psychologically "fit":

> I look upon a behaviour difficulty as being a symptom of some underlying maladjustment and I try to discover the cause and to remedy it? I think it is as important for me to give my pupils guidance in social and emotional development as to develop them in knowledge and skills? I am free from such characteristics as fussiness, fastidiousness, over-sensitiveness, being too-too efficient, gushing and coddling students?[67]

Teachers, like parents, were the targets of psychological theory and were often blamed for an unruly classroom or for unsuccessful students.[68] Like mothers, female teachers were to receive the lion's share of this advice and scrutiny.

Despite this psychological disciplining, teachers, along with public health officials, were presented to Canadian parents as "partners" in the training of healthy children. According to the experts, each shared equally in the considerable task of building psychologically balanced young Canadians.

> In the old days when teachers merely taught "the three R's" and a few facts in geography, history and literature, they could afford to ignore and even resent parents. That day is gone. To develop John and Mary as mentally healthy and wholesome citizens of our Canadian democracy is a joint job of the home and the school. Parents and teachers are partners — tied together like Siamese twins whether they like it or not.[69]

(June 1943), p. 6. In his promotion of the nursery school system, Blatz bases a great deal of its importance on its ability to look after the psychological needs of young children. See Blatz, *Understanding the Young Child*, p. 236.

67 S. R. Laycock, *The Laycock Mental Hygiene Self-Rating Scale for Teachers* (Saskatchewan: University of Saskatchewan Bookstore, n.d.), p. 3–4. The scale contains 45 questions in which student teachers are to rate their responses to the statements along a scale from complete disagreement to complete agreement.

68 Laycock, in particular, stressed the importance of a well-adjusted teacher in his writing. He warned against the "dithery teacher who has a dithery classroom, the tense teacher a tense one and the domineering teacher a resentful or cowed one". Laycock, "Education and the Home", *The United Church Observer*, August 1, 1946, p. 10; "Must Parents and Teachers Disagree?", *Canadian Home and School*, vol. 8, no. 1 (November 1948), pp. 1–4; "Do Our Schools Meet the Basic Needs of Children?"; and "Discipline and Supervision: How Much Freedom?"

69 S. R. Laycock, "The Parent's Responsibility", *The Ontario Public School Argus*, vol. 3, no. 4 (April

Florence Emory stressed the need for psychological training in her 1953 manual for public health nurses, who were to work with teachers and parents to create a healthy "mental and emotional environment".[70] Parents were advised to co-operate with these outsiders in the interest of their children. They were to help teachers and health officials "weed out" any problem children who might surface at school. In an article entitled "Is Your Child a Problem?", written in 1945 by journalist Marjorie Winspear, parents were taken through the process by which their child could be referred to a psychologist or a psychiatrist for counselling by the public health nurse:

> Instead of being indignant and refusing to admit that Tommy can do wrong ... the wise parent will take the nurse into their confidence. They will assume the nurse is interested in the erring child and together they will plan the rehabilitation of Tommy.... The nurse will report what she sees about the home — attitudes of parents, family history, overcrowded or unsanitary conditions. Then she will make an appointment for the child to see a psychologist.[71]

As this scenario demonstrates, public health workers had the real potential to undermine parental authority in childrearing. In so doing, they made well-adjusted children a matter of public concern rather than a private, familial concern. In Foucault's terms, this "universal reign of the normative" achieved by psychologists legitimized and made possible considerable intervention and surveillance on the part of experts.

In the postwar period, both mothers and fathers were under pressure to develop certain kinds of parenting skills which incorporated the psychological theories of leading childcare experts of the day. According to Dr. Laycock, the authority of childcare specialists should be taken very seriously. In his presidential address to the Canadian Federation of Home and School in October of 1946, Laycock stated:

> We have learned that it is better for children to be born under the care of a trained obstetrician, who, being usually a man, has never had a baby himself, rather than have the services of a midwife be she the mother of twenty children. We have *not*, however, learned that the person who gives his or her life to a study of research in child development and to the clinical study of hundreds of every kind of child should know more about the problems of child

1944), p. 85, and "Planning With Your Partner, the Teacher", *New Brunswick Federation of Home and School*, vol. 4, no. 4 (December 1951), p. 3. See also Doan, "Parents Are Important", p. 24; Silverman and Matthews, "On Bringing Up Children", p. 5.

70 Florence H. M. Emory, *Public Health Nursing in Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan Company, 1953), pp. 322–323.

71 Marjorie Winspear, "Is Your Child a Problem?", *National Home Monthly*, vol. 46 (April 1945), pp. 72–74.

> development than the so-called "expert" who has had experience with two or three children.[72]

Laycock's comments underscored the premium increasingly placed upon the opinions of childcare specialists rather than the experiential knowledge of untrained parents. The cost of not listening, warned the experts, was not only an unhappy home life, but possibly a threat to the mental and emotional well-being of one's children.

With the adoption of these more intricate psychological theories, parents were under considerable pressure to avoid harming their children in all sorts of unseen ways. Parents were encouraged, for example, to give their children "a sort of 'psychological tanning' which will protect them against being injured by day-to-day experiences just as the tanning of their skin in the summer protects them against the rays of the sun".[73] The business of giving Canadian children this necessary "psychological tanning" demanded that parents become amateur psychologists. Between establishing too many rules or too few, being too overbearing or too aloof, parents had to find the perfect balance in their approach to raising their children.[74]

The pressure on parents to keep up to date with the new theories prompted one child psychologist, Dr. Timothy Williams, to pen an article entitled "Don't Let the Child Care Experts Scare You" in 1955. In it, Williams tried to calm and reassure overburdened parents:

> You don't need to be right all the time. Your child wants a man for a father, not a formula. He wants a woman for a mother, not a theory. He wants real parents, real people, capable of making mistakes without moping about it. You're not going to do any harm as long as you do your best.[75]

As Williams suggests, parents seemed to be in danger of becoming immobilized by the weight of expert opinion on how to raise their children properly. Enforcing rules and behaviour was a delicate matter that involved, the experts agreed, sensitivity and understanding on the part of parents. Punishment deemed overly harsh was thought to pose a very real threat to a child's psychological state. On the other hand, punishment that was not well thought out or too sporadic could be equally dangerous. That postwar parents consequently felt confused seemed understandable. One commentator lamented that, while in the past "parents didn't worry too much about

72 S. R. Laycock, "Building for Children", *Canadian Home and School*, vol. 1, no. 6 (October 1946), p. 19.

73 S. R. Laycock, "Learning to Live", *Maclean's Magazine* (February 1, 1947), p. 18.

74 *Ibid.*, p. 37.

75 T. Williams, "Don't Let the Child Care Experts Scare You!", *Maclean's Magazine*, vol. 68 (May 15, 1955), p. 20.

rearing a family", those days were long gone. With the birth of child psychology, "Parents discovered they had been making terrible mistakes — mistakes which could transform their sons and daughters into problem children, social misfits, juvenile delinquents and even potential schizophrenics."[76] The exasperation of one such postwar father, trying to adhere to the new emphasis in childrearing, is unmistakable:

> It's all very well to say, when a child squirms, rubs food in her hair, kicks you rhythmically on the shin under the table and spills milk down your leg, that this is typical behaviour for a six-year-old.... In the old days her father would have kicked her back. That's what you feel like doing, but instead you'll try gritting your teeth and repeating to yourself: "This is typically behaviour for a six-year-old.... She's developing her little motor mechanism."[77]

Canadians were thus encouraged in the postwar period to incorporate the teachings of child psychologists into their parenting. Child psychologists such as William Blatz, Samuel Laycock, and Karl Bernhardt taught parents much more than the proper physical care of babies and toddlers. They sought to shape and reshape beliefs and attitudes towards the child's place in the family and towards the parent's role in determining that place. Parents, in particular mothers, were closely scrutinized by the experts and were warned against acting outside their traditional roles. If they became outspoken or "domineering", mothers could produce homosexual children.

From the patriarchal attitudes evident in the opinions of members of Parliament to the often negative treatment of mothers in other more popular forms of advice, gender constraints contributed to the social construction of good parenting after the war. Fathers in this period were portrayed as a potent corrective to the ills that had supposedly befallen the family in the postwar years. This advice also tended to be directed at a generic Canadian family, inevitably white, Anglo-Saxon, and middle-class, and therefore made no attempt to recognize familial differences along racial, cultural, ethnic, or class lines.

Psychologically informed advice to parents intersected and at times merged with that being promoted in the classroom and the public health department. By adopting a psychological stance, outside experts could insinuate themselves into the family. The "problem" child and the "problem" family became part of a public discourse fostered by postwar psychologists and circulated in newspapers, magazines, and manuals, through schools and municipal governmental agencies. While it was aimed at ensur-

76 Dorothy Sangster, "The Ten Worst Mistakes Parents Make", *Maclean's Magazine*, vol. 65 (December 5, 1952), p. 20.

77 Duncan MacPherson, "You Too Can Be a Perfect Parent", *Maclean's Magazine*, vol. 64 (March 15, 1951), p. 11.

ing and promoting happy and well-adjusted Canadian children, parenting advice in this period did much more. Influenced by psychological theories, parenting advice carried on a complex negotiation with postwar society. It sought, for better or worse, to influence Canadians' vision of the future and their role in creating it.