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a thesis entitled **SCIENTIFIC MOTHERHOOD AND "GRUESOME DISCOVERIES"**
IN HALIFAX, 1910-1930 and "Gruesome
Discoveries" in Halifax, 1910-1930

by Lara Jakabfy-Bradley by _____
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Abstract

This thesis examines the Scientific Motherhood movement as part of the culture of the 1910's and 1920's with particular emphasis on the city of Halifax. This study tries to assess the movement's influence on the parenting practices of the nation, the cultural construction of infanticide and its relation to parallel trends concerning women's work inside and outside of the home. Three research avenues used by this thesis include: (1) discourse from popular culture (newspapers and magazines); (2) medical discourse (the Reports of the Halifax Medical Examiners); and (3) discourse from the justice system (Halifax Supreme Court Cases involving mothers who were charged with murdering their newborns).

This study argues that during the teens and twenties, society's perception of Motherhood had a defining effect on women's lives. The Scientific Motherhood was part of the culture of this period and, thus, normative standards for motherhood can not be viewed separately from the sexual and work standards applied to women. While the Scientific Motherhood did have a transformative effect on child-rearing practices, the cultural construction of infanticide and ultimately on women's lives, it was not the only prescriptive discourse available to women. By examining the discourse from popular culture of the period, this thesis uncovers alternative methods of child raising available to parents. Despite this availability of alternative child-rearing practices, the Scientific Motherhood was undeniably a strong and transformative force in society, quite difficult to totally ignore.

Introduction

From the Doctor's Practice

A well-known club bringing a mother's meeting of poor women bringing their children into the country for some fresh air. It occurred to her that this was a fine opportunity to give some much-needed instruction to the

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The clubwomen, representing middle-class women reformers, believed it was their duty to instruct working-class mothers on how to bear and raise their children in a modern and scientific manner. Contemporary middle class women were limiting the number of their offspring despite the fact that distribution of birth control information was illegal. Although the middle-class reformers were interested in helping to save mothers and infants, for many this did not translate into comfortable promotion of contraception but rather advocacy of doctors' and nurses' services. Working-class women, in this episode, were presented as generally ignorant and specifically as

1 "From the Doctor's Practice", Nova Scotia Medical Bulletin, (Jan 1926)15.

Introduction

From the Doctor's Practice

A well-known club woman was addressing a mother's meeting of poor women brought with their children into the country for some fresh air. It occurred to her that this was a fine opportunity to give some much-needed instruction to the prolific ones. She had much to say about economic and sociologic conditions and finally blurted: "The trouble with you women is that you have too many children." At this the stolid mother of a super-six group spoke right out in meeting. "Well, how can we help it?" The speaker sparred for time, but finally said: "Among other ways there is the method of total abstinence." "Total abstinence!" the stolid one said contemptuously, "I don't think much of that. They's a couple just 'cross the street from us, been married a year and got twins already, and neither of 'em touches a drop."¹

This joke drawn from the Nova Scotia Medical Bulletin represents three parties to the medical discourse on motherhood and sexuality in the twenties. The clubwomen, representing middle-class women reformers, believed it was their duty to instruct working-class mothers on how to bear and raise their children in a modern and scientific manner. Contemporary middle class women were limiting the number of their offspring despite the fact that distribution of birth control information was illegal. Although the middle-class reformers were interested in helping to save mothers and infants, for many this did not translate into comfortable promotion of contraception but rather advocacy of doctors' and nurses' services. Working-class women, in this episode, were presented as generally ignorant and specifically as

¹ "From the Doctor's Practice", Nova Scotia Medical Bulletin, (Jan 1926)15.

lacking in the knowledge of birth control which the clubwomen obviously possessed but could not name. One can also sense the working-class women's resentment at being given such impractical and condescending advice. The last voice, that of the implied readers, was the doctors laughing at and passing judgement over this situation. By mocking the clubwomen's inability to dispense any practical advice they were implicitly declaring themselves to be the legitimate leaders in the crusade to educate women on how to bear and raise their children. A final aspect to this scenario was the fun being poked at the poorer women who had never heard of sexual abstinence. Was the author suggesting that this class of women had no sense of self-control when it came to sexual intercourse? This would perhaps imply that they conformed to a different sexual normative standard than did the reforming women. Taken as a whole, this story highlights tension during the nineteen twenties about sexuality when even the institution of marriage did not provide a solution to the problems of how to care for or prevent unwanted children.

The Scientific Motherhood was a movement which began in the teens and grew to larger proportions in the twenties and involved doctors, nurses and volunteer groups. The premise behind the movement was the notion that child-raising could be improved and modernized through the application of scientific and also business principles. The movement wanted to break mothers of the habit of relying on traditional/folk

sources of child raising information, i.e. the knowledge gained from grandmothers and neighbours, and replace it with scientifically proven research done by doctors on such subjects as bacteriology, human biology and psychology.

The main question this thesis endeavours to answer is whether the Scientific Motherhood movement had a transformative influence on society's perception of women's work, sexuality, motherhood and valuation of infants. This study asserts that the war was a catalyst in creating the impetus for the movement and consequently effecting changes in Canadian women's lives. Hence, the time period selected by this paper includes both the decade in which the war took place and the decade after, in order to monitor changes in the normative standards available to women, particularly in Halifax.

According to historians such as Mary Vipond, by the twenties Canadians had become tired of reform.² While it is true that the social gospel movement, which sought both a social and economic transformation of society based on Christian ideals about brotherhood, had run its course by the twenties,³ the Scientific Motherhood movement, which

²Mary Vipond, "The Image of Women in Mass Circulation Magazines in the 1920's", Susan Mann Trofimenkoff and Alice Prentice, eds., The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History, (Toronto: 1985)116.

³Richard Allen, The Social Passion, (Toronto: 1971)introduction.

represented a new style of reform, one grounded in the secular world of science, began earnestly campaigning after the war. The impetus behind Scientific Motherhood was Canada's high infant and maternal mortality rates. The First World War had led the nation to the realization that Canadian men enlisting for service, in general, were in poor health. Furthermore, it underscored through slaughter the value of the next generation. The lives and health of infants became linked with the future of the country. Despite these significant insights, Scientific Motherhood did not attempt to change the health care services of the country or the economic conditions which contributed to poor health, but sought to educate mothers both on "scientific" child raising techniques and the necessity of regular medical supervision of themselves and their infants.

On one hand the campaign appeared to be conservative. It preserved gender roles and the economic status quo by affirming that women's ultimate responsibility was caring for the children and that families were responsible to pay for the medical supervision of their children, not the state. On the other hand it also was innovative in its application of scientific and medical discourse to pregnancy and child raising. This step legitimized the authority of doctors in determining the parenting practices of the nation. Although it did not destroy the concept of private and public spheres, Scientific Motherhood helped to shift the boundaries of these

spheres by bringing a detailed discussion of the work of "mothering" into the public discourse.

There are several guiding questions which this study attempts to answer in order to assess the impact of Scientific Motherhood's messages. First, did the 1920s represent a change in the normative standards of behaviour for women? The framework of one's life is built using the beliefs of one's culture, and thus the scope of women's lives is determined by ideology regarding gender, race and class. Hence, a second question this thesis asks is whether there were diverse normative standards which pertained to class, race and gender.⁴ And finally, one must ask, "So what?" What significance did diversity in the normative standards have in the realities of women's lives?

All of the literature written on the Scientific Motherhood movement, with the exception of Neil Sutherland's study which includes information on British Columbia,⁵ concentrates on Ontario's leadership, specifically Toronto. The Maritimes have been for the most part ignored, with the

⁴Suzann Buckley, "Efforts to Reduce Infant Maternity Mortality in Canada Between the Two Wars", *Atlantis*, v 2, no 2, pt 2, (1977).

⁴ I use the word "race" because this is the term most commonly employed by contemporaries to denote one's ethnicity.

⁵Neil Sutherland, "To Create a Strong and Healthy Race," *History of Education Quarterly*, (Fall 1972)12.

exception of the occasional reference by Suzann Buckley.⁶ Halifax was different from the metropolis of Toronto in that it did not have a rich multicultural population and was 80% native-born by 1911.⁷ The immigrants who did infiltrate Halifax came from Newfoundland, England or the surrounding countryside. The two dominant ethnicities/religions were Anglican English and Roman Catholic Irish. At the top of the social ladder rested the native Anglican English, otherwise known as the "the great six hundred",⁸ while climbing up the bottom half were the Irish followed by the Black population. The Irish, one rung above the Blacks, were primarily labourers, though there were some examples of upwardly mobile Irish, and lived in "Irish Town", an area between Water and Hollis Street. The Blacks, like the Irish, were spatially segregated to their own community of Africville, a satellite of Halifax. However, some did live in the Maynard/Creighton Street area which included both black and white residents. Catherine Waite aptly describes Halifax as a "multi-tiered society segregated along lines of class and race".⁹ Halifax's

⁶Suzann Buckley, "Efforts to Reduce Infant Maternity Mortality in Canada Between the Two Wars", Atlantis, v 2, no 2, pt 2, (1977).

⁷Catherine Waite, The Longshoremen of Halifax 1900-1930, M.A. History Thesis, Dalhousie University, (1977) 39.

⁸Ibid., 41.

⁹Ibid., 78.

relatively homogeneous population affected the way in which scientific motherhood was presented to its inhabitants. Scientific Motherhood efforts targeted mainly the working class but were also visited upon the "colored" community of Africville.¹⁰

Another factor which marked its divergence from Central and Western cities was the state of its economy. According to David Alexander the prospects for the Maritime economy during the early twentieth century did not compare well with those for the rest of Canada. He blames the emigration of manufacturing and capital to Upper Canada on the province's loss of control over the rate structure of the Intercolonial in 1918.¹¹ Furthermore, the city of Halifax experienced the terrible trauma inflicted by the Explosion of 1917, in which one square mile of the city's working-class district was levelled, 2,000 were killed, 6,000 injured, and 1,000 left homeless.¹² The economy and the Explosion of 1917 both influenced the child raising capabilities of Halifax citizens. However, the Explosion also caused the creation of an extensive system of public health nurses who would be able

¹⁰Kathryn MacPherson, Nurses and Nursing in Twentieth Century Halifax, History M.A. Thesis Dalhousie University, (1982)94.

¹¹David Alexander, "Economic Growth in the Atlantic, 1880-1940", Acadiensis, (Autumn 1978)48.

¹²Catherine Waite, The Longshoremens of Halifax, 1900-1930, M.A. Thesis, Dalhousie University, (1977)77.

to speed along the ideas of the campaign.

Besides researching Scientific Motherhood's influence on the city of Halifax, this study also departs from the work of Katherine Arnup, Veronica Strong-Boag, Cynthia Comacchio and Suzann Buckley with respect to use of sources.¹³ They have investigated the discourse written by health care professionals, government agencies and reformers, in order to discover what was Scientific Motherhood's message and whether there was any change or resistance by the masses. The above historians did employ magazine articles, but did not consider articles written by non-Scientific Motherhood writers, such as those written by self-proclaimed fathers, mothers or advice columnists. Furthermore, none have seriously examined newspaper articles. In researching a relatively small community, I have been able to examine a wider array of sources. The three streams of my research were: popular culture discourse extracted from newspapers and magazines; medical discourse drawn from the "Reports of the Medical Examiner" and the mass media; and discourse from the justice system, i.e. evidence gleaned from Halifax's Supreme Court cases involving mothers charged with murdering their infants.

Each of the sources used has its own specific potential

¹³Katherine Arnup, Delivering Motherhood, (New York: 1990); Veronica Strong-Boag, "Intruders in the Nursery", Joy Parr, ed. Childhood and Family in Canadian History, (Toronto: 1982); Cynthia Comacchio, Nations are Built of Babies, (Toronto: 1993).

value. By examining the four Halifax newspapers and Chatelaine, Maclean's and The Canadian Magazine, this study attempts to ascertain whether there was resistance to Scientific Motherhood and as well, whether popular culture afforded people more than one normative standard.

In reading newspapers and magazines one is faced with the problem of determining whose values they reflect. Roger Fowler believes that while news is socially constructed, it tends to reflect only one segment of society, the controlling groups in an industrial-capitalist society.¹⁴ But one must recognize that the mass media were not always aware they were an agent of socialization, so sometimes dissenting voices and examples did appear. Advice columns in the women's pages contained questions written by working class people, as well as people who did not appear to understand what were the normative standards of behaviour. The media's role as an agent of socialization was also at times criticized. For instance, Allene Sumner, a journalist, complained that,

"It is impossible to pick up a magazine or paper today without seeing the picture of some noted woman; a singer, painter or piano player or novelist or judge, posed at the kitchen stove and apron about her busily stirring a mess in a sauce pan."¹⁵

She questioned why talented women were made to appear to love the domestic scene more than their chosen professions. In the

¹⁴Roger Fowler, Language in the News, (New York: 1991)2.

¹⁵Allene Sumner, "The Woman's Day", The Evening Mail, February 1, 1927.

end she concluded it was only clever press agents giving the public what it wanted. The moral of this story is that the role of reader should not be forgotten. People criticized the material they read and took away the values that they wanted.

Another aspect of the print medium to consider is that it underwent a shift in content and format during the early part of the twentieth century. According to Mary Vipond the newspaper changed from being small, politically oriented, and low circulation to becoming bulky, diverse and widely read.¹⁶ Why the change in content? Vipond demonstrates that through increasing literacy, with the legislating of compulsory education, overall readership grew. For instance in 1872 less than half of Canadian families bought papers but by 1900 more papers were sold daily than the number of families.¹⁷ As the century progressed ads played a bigger role and the pursuit of ad revenue forced stylistic changes. In order to appeal to a wider potential audience the newspapers became independent of political parties, carried evening editions. These were read during leisure hours, were cheaper at one cent vs two to three cents, and had a secondary emphasis on entertainment. Vipond shows an increase in both human interest stories and in the number of features such as

¹⁶Mary Vipond, The Mass Media in Canada, (Toronto: 1989)1.

¹⁷Ibid., 15. Mail, front page, (January 1, 1914).

serialized novels.¹⁸ Douglas Fetherling points to another change driven by the scramble to get ad funds: many dailies disappeared after World War One through amalgamation. He maintains that by the twenties while the press was less of an institution, those individual papers that survived the rationalization behaved in an institutional manner. Thus the twenties marked the start of the phenomenon of newspaper chains.¹⁹

Two Halifax newspapers, the Halifax Herald and the Evening Mail, had most of the characteristics of the modern newspaper outlined by Vipond, by 1910. The Herald was sold in the morning, while its counterpart, the Mail was sold at night. By 1914, together they claimed to have a circulation of 250,000 papers a day.²⁰ There were two other prominent newspapers, the Morning Chronicle and the Acadian Recorder but they had a much smaller circulation and did not conform to Mary Vipond's description of the modern paper. The Chronicle had no formalized departments, although it did have more editorial space allotted. The Acadian Recorder, was the shortest paper of the four, typically between three and four pages. This paper also featured many articles on the bizarre.

¹⁸Ibid., 13.

¹⁹Douglas Fetherling, The Rise of the Canadian Newspaper, (Toronto: 1990)108.

²⁰The Evening Mail, Front page, (January 1, 1914).

All four Halifax newspapers were used in researching this paper.

In the area of magazines Mary Vipond claims that Canada was dominated by the American market.²¹ During the nineteenth century, Canadian magazines were designed mostly for the upper class. However in 1890, American magazines went on a campaign to widen their readership base. They did this by lowering their subscription rate and catering to the interests, hobbies, tastes and problems of the middle class. Meanwhile Canada continued along with its traditional specialized products. It was 1926 before the Magazine Publishers Association of Canada (MPAC) launched a campaign to try to break the US monopoly of the Canadian market. However, by this time there were eight United States imported magazines to every one Canadian magazine.²² It was not until 1930 that measures were taken by Bennett's Conservative government to introduce a tariff to protect Canadian markets for magazines. The tariff worked exceedingly well by reducing the American magazine numbers by 62%, and stimulating Canadian growth by 64%.²³ However, the tariff was reduced in 1935 by the Liberal King government, and the United States magazines regained their old numbers. Therefore, although for

²¹Mary Vipond, The Mass Media in Canada, 20.

²²Ibid., 25.

²³Ibid., 28.

the purposes of this study Canadian magazines were used, it is important to keep in mind that Canadians had the option of purchasing many American magazines.

In examining the three magazines used for this study, The Canadian Magazine, Maclean's, and Chatelaine, several changes occurred over our time period. These changes in content reflect a move by the magazines to appeal to a wider audience and also show the effects of Scientific Motherhood's reformation of the private sphere. Maclean's most obvious move to appeal to a wider audience came with its change of name. Originally called The Busy Man's Magazine, it took on its present name in 1911, which was less gender-oriented and more inclusive of both sexes. The magazine also began to carry more articles about and for women. During the 1910 to 1919 period, besides its regular women's department, "Women's Work", which was located at the back of the magazine, it ran approximately fifteen other articles on the subject of women. However, in the 1920-1929 period this number was more than doubled to 34 articles.

A second source employed by this thesis is the reports of the Medical Examiners. These reports are pertinent in researching the movement because they reveal the medical discourse which occurred when things went wrong with motherhood. This discourse differs from that found in the popular press in that it appears to be less prescriptive than the articles written by both the proponents of the Scientific

Motherhood and the "common sense" advice givers, yet more critical of specific families' parenting practices. Journalists had the liberty to discuss ideal situations, while the Examiners were faced often with the worst. The Medical Examiners of Halifax, unlike coroners in Ontario, had to be licensed physicians. They occupied the unique position of representing the medical establishment's view on what constituted criminal action. Medical Examiners were invested with the power to order inquiries to be conducted by the police and were expected to determine whether a death was "accidental", "due to natural causes" or "foul play". Besides examining the corpses they were also granted leave to conduct their own investigations. This thesis examines cases in which the Medical Examiners were called upon to determine cause of death in infanticide cases and in infant deaths reported by parents.

The final source which will be examined is Halifax Supreme Court cases involving mothers charged with murdering their newborns. These cases are of interest because they demonstrate how the justice system and members of the jury viewed the crime of infanticide in the climate of the Scientific Motherhood movement. The movement's rhetoric stressed the importance of infants and presented a more demanding conception of motherhood. Infanticide was antithetical to the campaign's ideal of saving babies through medical intervention and a behaviourist style of parenting.

This undertaking is divided into four chapters. The first examines the historiography dealing with the twenties, scientific motherhood, sexuality, and infanticide in order to highlight themes that connect these topics. The second chapter delves into the normative standards for women's work using evidence from newspapers and magazines. How the scientific motherhood movement indirectly and directly changed attitudes toward women's work and status is the central question of this chapter. Chapter three analyzes the discourse of proponents of the movement, doctors, nurses, and reformers, in order to ascertain their specific purposes. Then a contrast is made with dissenting voices opposed to the ideals of Scientific Motherhood. Newspapers and magazines are the sources used for this analysis. The chapter ends with an investigation of the two different Medical Examiners' reports on infant death and the parenting practices of Halifax families over the two decades. Finally, chapter four compares the incidence of infanticide and discoveries of unidentified dead infants with the amount of press coverage that ensued. The verdicts in specific cases are used to assess the attitudes of the community and judicial system to these "gruesome discoveries". Hence this chapter employs all three source materials: the print media, Medical Examiner's Reports and Supreme Court documents.

This chapter examines the historiography about the twenties, scientific motherhood, and sexuality in order to demonstrate the themes that connect these topics. Society's construction of motherhood is a central connecting theme because during the twenties, to a large extent, the meaning of motherhood determined normative standards about sexuality, women's work inside and outside of the home, and the criminal construction of infanticide. Discourse on motherhood was by no means a new phenomenon in the twenties. However, what was significant about the twenties Scientific Motherhood reform movement and the public discussion which ensued, was the use of "science" and "medicine" to define motherhood.

Warren Susman and Mary Vipond are two historians with different interpretations of what the twenties represented. On one hand, Susman views this decade as a time of discontinuity rather than continuity, when short range developments rather than larger trends occurred. He sees it as a period when people in the arts, sciences, and social sciences were concerned with trying to fix a decaying civilization. Society was becoming increasingly self-conscious of itself both on the individual level and collectively.¹ On the other hand, Mary Vipond, whose research

¹Warren Susman, Culture as History, (New York: 1984)121.

relies on images of women in magazines and employment figures, regards the twenties as an ambiguous decade in Canada, featuring both change and contradiction. Canadians clung to traditional values but realized the past was lost to them. She maintains that the war had not the large effect on women's lives it was thought to have had; they kept to traditionally female employment and marriage remained their main career. Finally she states the war brought disillusionment with reform and idealism.² One must keep in mind that Canada had a vastly different experience at war than did the United States. The States entered late in the war, thus did not experience the same economic disruption, loss of life and women's labour force participation as did Canada.

The trends of scientific motherhood, sexual experimentation, and the acceptance of women in the work force show the twenties appears to be a decade excited by change yet modestly denying it. Unlike Vipond's prognosis that reform was considered passe, the twenties seemed to be striving to effect reform of the private sphere with the application of scientific methods. True, the social gospel was on the wane during the twenties; however, a new reform movement, namely Scientific Motherhood, was in progress.

²Mary Vipond, "The Image of Women in Mass Circulation Magazines in the 1920s", Susan Mann Trofimenkoff and Alice Prentice, eds., The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History v, (Toronto: 1985)116.

Susman's view that the sciences and social sciences were busy trying to redefine society stands when one regards the phenomenon of scientific motherhood. Although in many ways women's lives did not change in a perceivable manner, yet change was afoot. The Scientific Motherhood movement helped to shift the boundaries between public and private. Women still may have been seen as mistresses of the home, but duties such as child raising, which took place in the confines of the home, were no longer considered purely private. Furthermore, the campaign changed normative standards for women's work. Women were expected to enter the labour force prior to marriage and even acquire a post-secondary education. This participation of women in the labour force and in academic circles was legitimized through the notion that such experiences would create better mothers. However, an unexpected development initiated by this comingling of the sexes in the public world of employment, educational institutions, and also entertainment venues, was a more sexualized view of women.

A catalyst for change during our period was World War One. In perusing articles from the popular press one constantly comes across the expression, "What the war has taught us is that...". Usually the sentence ends with sentiments such as: women are capable of handling any career, the health of our nation depends on the health of the next generation of infants, greater efficiency can be achieved

through mass organization ...etc. The war, which had necessitated close coordination of state and civilian, taught women to accept scrutiny of their private lives by the government, underscored through slaughter the value of the next generation as a national resource, and promoted the idea of scientific management as a way to achieve greater efficiency and less wastage. Trends which affected the public's perception of women's work, sexuality, parenting duties, and criminal behaviour in regards to infanticide, were both directly and indirectly affected by the culture's experience at war. As to whether the twenties represent a break with the past or a continuation of past trends, I would argue, admittedly in a somewhat circular manner, that new tools were being developed to examine both old patterns of behaviour and new normative standards.

The ideology of separate spheres, that men operated in the public world and that women looked after and were protected by the private world of the home, took the greatest beating. Wendy Mitchinson explains that during the nineteenth century physicians reinforced the idea of separate spheres with scientific evidence. Women's destiny was defined by her reproductive biology.³ It was her duty to remain in the home and bear children because her biology determined it was so. At the core of her nature was a maternal instinct which

³Wendy Mitchinson, The Nature of Their Bodies, (Toronto:1991)24.

dictated her every motivation. Yet, as Cynthia Comacchio shows, the permeability of this private realm was demonstrated with the intrusion of state and medicine into women's lives with onset of the Scientific Motherhood Movement.⁴

The movement also represented a divergence from the nineteenth century belief in maternal instinct. The campaign primarily relied on educating mothers on the importance of pre- and post- natal exams, nutrition, hygiene and behaviourist models of parenting, rather than providing any concrete health care. The resounding phrase of reformers, nurses and doctors was, "instinct is not enough". Professionals claimed that they could teach women to become better mothers. This represents a break with the ideology of maternal instinct, although this may not have been apparent at the time. The idea that women had a different "nature" than men was slowly being eroded by the theory that maternal instincts were not sufficient to guarantee good parenting. This led to a divergence in the normative standards regarding women's role in society.

Who controlled the movement is a point argued amongst historians because the answer implies different gender and class hierarchies depending on whether it was the predominantly male middle-class doctors, the female nurses

⁴Cynthia Comacchio, Nations Are Built of Babies, (Toronto: 1993)4.

who occupied a somewhat ambiguous professional status, or the mainly female middle-class reformers. Katherine Arnup describes the movement's bureaucracy as having doctors in the key positions and nurses on the front lines.⁵ Comacchio maintains that the movement began with clamour about high maternal and infant mortality by women's organizations prior to the war, and then was taken over by male health care professionals and public employees.⁶ Suzanne Buckley presents it in yet a third manner, as being dominated by the personalities of Dr. Helen Macmurchy, head of the Division of Child Welfare (created in 1919) and Charlotte Whitton, head of a volunteer agency, the Council on Child and Family Welfare, created in 1925.⁷ Nevertheless, all concur that there was an intrusion into women's private sphere by middle class professionals and it dragged the activities of that sphere into the public eye. In this thesis I will compare the discourse of each group, doctors, nurses and reformers, in order to ascertain their individual agendas and whether they tried to increase or decrease women's authority as mothers.

⁵Katherine Arnup, "Educating Mothers: Government Advice for Women in the Inter-War Years", Katherine Arnup, Andree Levesque and Ruth Roach Peirson, eds., Delivering Motherhood, (Toronto: 1990)192.

⁶Cynthia Comacchio, Nations are Built of Babies, 5.

⁷Suzann Buckey, "Efforts to Reduce Infant Maternity Mortality in Canada Between the Two Wars", Atlantis, (1977)76.

Another aspect of the movement debated among historians is the class nature of the campaign. Suzanne Morton, Veronica Strong-Boag and Katherine Arnup argue that the parenting model was of middle class construction.⁸ Andree Levesque, Jane Lewis and Cynthia Comacchio claim that it was targeted at working class mothers.⁹ While both arguments may sound similar, they are subtly different. The first argument leaves room for the notion that the educational campaign perhaps spanned all classes, while the latter states that the campaign was only targeted at one class in particular. In Halifax, I will argue, working class families were viewed as the most deficient in hygiene and in need of health lessons by public health nurses, but there was an effort on the part of women's volunteer organizations to include women of all classes in their campaign to educate.

A third point of contention among historians is whether there was resistance to the ideas of scientific motherhood. Veronica Strong-Boag maintains that while not all accepted their recommendations, more mothers were exposed to a precise

⁸Suzanne Morton, Men and Women in a Halifax Working-Class Neighbourhood in the 1920s, (History Ph.D Dalhousie University: 1990)179; Veronica Strong-Boag, "Intruders in the Nursery" (Toronto: 1982)161; Katherine Arnup, Education for Motherhood, 53.

⁹Andree Levesque, Making and Breaking the Rules, (Toronto:1989)48; Jane Lewis, The Politics of Motherhood, (Montreal: 1980)19; Cynthia Commachio, Nations are Built of Babies, 23.

set of guidelines.¹⁰ Comacchio says clients took what suited their purposes, while Arnup concludes that for the most part the advice was welcomed.¹¹ Finally Levesque mutters darkly that "the poor paid the price of services rendered by intrusions into their lives by specialists".¹² I found responses varied for two reasons. First, the Scientific Motherhood model had several parts, and thus one must examine the reception of several different concepts. Secondly, there were alternative standards or models of motherhood available as guides.

By examining popular culture sources, such as newspapers and magazines, voices dissenting from the Motherhood movement appear. These voices, also offering prescriptive advice, dispute Comacchio's, Arnup's, Buckley's and Strong-Boag's suggestion that the behaviourist model of parenting advocated by the Scientific Motherhood movement was the only prescriptive advice given to mothers. The behaviourist school of child raising believed that infants were lumps of clay to be modelled by their parents. They viewed the personality of an individual as the sum of his/her learned behaviours.¹³

¹⁰Veronica Strong-Boag, "Intruders in the Nursery", 161.

¹¹Cynthia Comacchio, Nations are Built of Babies, 23; Katherine Arnup, Education for Motherhood, 127.

¹²Andree Levesque, Making and Breaking the Rules, 48.

¹³Paula Fass, The Damned and the Beautiful, (New York: 1977)45.

Behaviourists stressed the training of regular habits as a mode of parenting. Paula Fass paints a different picture of parenting practices in the United States. She explains that while the views of the behaviourist, Watson, were influential to some extent, they were sparingly incorporated; a more permissive model of child raising was the accepted norm.¹⁴ Thus Fass shows that American families had two models from which to choose. Susman reinforces this analysis with his comment that Charlie Chaplin's "The Kid" provided a counteracting model to Watson's precise and regulatory behaviourism.¹⁵ Since in 1925, for every Canadian magazine, eight were imported from the United States, one wonders if Canadians also had two child raising models from which to make a selection. This study aims to demonstrate that while the discourse presented by doctors, nurses and reformers, only allowed the behaviourist school, popular culture contained two other models from which Canadians could choose, an "affectionate/common sense" style and a "disciplinarian" mode of parenting.

Newspapers and magazines also gave evidence that the sexual standard of behaviour and, in particular, women's image underwent a transformation during the twenties. This was possibly due to an alteration of how "private" matters

¹⁴ Ibid., 106.

¹⁵ Warren I. Susman, Culture As History, p. 103.

were treated and to the cross class contacts associated with new forms of entertainment and female employment in the work force. However, historians are divided as to whether women's new image resulted in reinforcing the ideology of separate spheres or in destroying it. On one hand, John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman point to changing normative standards of sexuality as contributing to the collapse of separate spheres. The hetero-social world of commercialized amusement that the working class enjoyed was spreading to the middle class through tamer, more respectable forms.¹⁶ Therefore, D'Emilio and Freedman argue, new normative standards of sexuality developed out of the growth of commercialized amusements and through the exchange, across class lines, of normative standards. Paula Fass, in her study of middle class college kids, expresses similar ideas. She describes a revolution which grew out of new forms of sexual play. These new forms developed with the burgeoning urban entertainment and co-ed college scene. She characterized the youth of the twenties as both agents and products of social change.¹⁷

On the other hand, Nancy Cott has a more sinister interpretation of sexuality in the twenties, focusing more on the sexually liberated marriage rather than on youth culture.

¹⁶John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freidman, Intimate Matters, (New York: 1988)233.

¹⁷Paula Fass, The Damned and the Beautiful- American Youth in the 1920s, (New York: 1977)261.

She maintains that while social sciences were aggressively describing and defining marital and sexual roles, advertising was using women's sexuality to confirm gender hierarchy.¹⁸ Perhaps the social sciences' move to grab authority through preserving gender roles was related to the Scientific Motherhood doctors' efforts to become authorities or experts on child raising by also conserving gender hierarchy. Cott maintains the ideal of the companionate marriage, a marriage based on romantic love, sexual expression and equality between the partners, confirmed the bourgeois marriage as woman's destination. She explains that the cult of modernity absorbed messages of feminism and re-represented them. The home was glamorized by advertising, while social sciences "proved" gender differences, hence ensuring that women would view marriage and home making as their career.¹⁹ Suzanne Morton, in her study of the Halifax working-class neighbourhood of Richmond Heights, found that the ideal of the companionate marriage was adopted.²⁰ Couples now spent leisure time together engaging in amusing activities. She also found that men were turning to the home to find renewed status and purpose. The assertion of identity

¹⁸Nancy Cott, The Grounding of Modern Feminism, (New Haven:1987)125.

¹⁹Ibid., 145.

²⁰Suzanne Morton, Men and Women in a Halifax Working Class Neighbourhood in the 1920s, 193.

through family resulted in a reinforcing of gender roles.²¹ This study views the twenties' sexual standard of behaviour as both conservative and progressive. The progressive changes include the new sexualized image for women, particularly among women in the work force, and new forms of courtship experimentation. The Scientific Motherhood campaign encouraged women to get an education or engage in a career prior to motherhood in order to better guide and instruct their children. The movement particularly endorsed the transferring of business methods to the home. Ironically, during the twenties working women, particularly the business stenographer, acquired a new sexualized image, perhaps due to the mixing of the sexes in the public realm. Women and men also engaged in new forms of romantic play due to the boom in the entertainment business which encouraged new dating practices. As a result of more interaction by women in the public realm and perhaps more discussion of their activities which had previously been considered private, women had access to a wider normative standard. However, despite these changes, society dictated that the conception of children be confined to the institution of marriage. The strength of this social norm was felt by Gertrude Reynolds who was charged with the murder of her new born infant in Halifax in 1924. She confessed that she had put a rag in her baby's mouth in

²¹Ibid, 197.

order to "hide her shame".²² Women were caught in a difficult position. They had access to a new sexualized image, yet birth control remained illegal, society stigmatized children born out of wedlock, and women's average salary was insufficient to support dependents.

The last half of the thesis is devoted to considering how the Scientific Motherhood movement affected Haligonians perception of the crime of infanticide and the discoveries of unidentified dead infants. The movement politicized the value of infants' lives by presenting them as carrying on the future of the "race" (read white race) and of the country. Changes in the media coverage of unidentified dead infants and infanticide cases demonstrated that their value as newsworthy events dramatically increased when one compares the teens to the twenties. However, the treatment of "murdering mothers" by the justice system remained lenient. This thesis goes beyond the existing historiography on Scientific Motherhood by explaining how these developments in journalism and the justice system related to the Scientific Motherhood movement. The question this study asks is what part the Scientific Motherhood movement played in these developments in the way people valued infants and perceived the role of mothers.

Underlying all the historical literature discussed here

²² "Hilda Reynolds was Arraigned on Charge of Murder", Evening Mail, (August 21, 1924)12.

Chapter Two: Normative Standards for "Women's Work" and the
is the question of what significance the Scientific
Motherhood movement had for the lives of women . Did it give
them more power or less? All the authors concurred that women
recieved the short end of the stick. The movement gave
doctors more authority in society and legitimized their
scrutiny of women's parenting skills. However, this analysis
may be a little black and white. Although, granted, women
were placed on the lower end of the power teeter-totter,
perhaps women began sharing new forms of information that
they gleaned from their doctors. One positive aspect of the
campaign was that it brought the activities of the private
sphere into public discussion. Although it legitimized women
as caretakers of the home, their activities were introduced
to the public sphere, thus shifting the barrier between
public and private.

Firstly, the gender terms in
descriptions of working women underwent a transformation.
During the teens much of the discourse about working women
contained a type of masculine-feminine duality in the
descriptions of the personality of diverse working women.
However, by the twenties this duality was dissolved in favour
of a feminized personality. This did not mean the total
acceptance of women in the work force but a recognition of
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ghettos and thus enabled a feminine characterization to be
accorded to working women. Secondly, there appeared to be an

Chapter Two: Normative Standards for "Women's Work" and the

Scientific Motherhood Movement

Scientific Motherhood's proposed reform of the private sphere resulted in the articulating, analyzing and acknowledging of what women did in the home. This resulted in helping to shift the boundary of the separate spheres and also led to new standards for women's work inside and outside of the home. There was an increase in the number of normative standards of behaviour for women's work. In Halifax there were four such standards: one for young single women of both middle class and working class backgrounds, a second for married working class women, a third for married middle class women, and a fourth for black women.

Within these four categories, there were various new trends in the period. Firstly, the gender terms in descriptions of working women underwent a transformation. During the teens much of the discourse about working women contained a type of masculine-feminine duality in the descriptions of the personality of diverse working women. However, by the twenties this duality was dissolved in favour of a feminized personality. This did not mean the total acceptance of women in the work force but a recognition of the fact that some areas of labour were turning into female ghettos and thus enabled a feminine characterization to be accorded to working women. Secondly, there appeared to be an

increase in the perception that working women, especially stenographers, were either "bringing sex into business" or were the victims of sexual advances by their bosses. Thirdly, the career of home making was professionalized, at least in some ways. Fourthly, there was more discussion on whether women, once married, should continue with their careers.

Although the idea was frowned upon it was at least open to debate. And finally, the idea that women had the option to support themselves with a career if they chose not to marry was put forth.

Changes in the structure and composition of Canadian magazines and Halifax newspapers reflected new normative standards developing for women and their new sexualized image. For instance, more space and even entire magazines were created to discuss the concerns of women. Perhaps this demonstrated the fact that the Scientific Motherhood movement created more discussion about the activities of women both inside and outside of the home. Although women were still linked with the private sphere of the home, they had taken on a more public image.

The changing of headings for the women's pages in the Evening Mail suggested an uncertainty as to how to describe women's status and behaviour. The evolution began with "The

Home Department" in 1911, then in 1912 there was "Women and the Home", in 1915 it was listed as "Women and Children Will Find Entertainment Here", in 1916 it read "Womankind and Her Sphere", in 1922 it changed to "Women's Activities", and in 1924 women and girls were accorded each their own page with "The Girl's Own Mail" and "Features Fiction and Feminine Fashions". The titles from the 1910 to 1920 period emphasized women's place is in the home and connected them with the caretaking of children. However, the title "Women and Children Will Find Entertainment Here" appears to indicate that perhaps women were thought to have the same intellect as children. Many of the headings also gave the impression that women had a distinct nature from men and their own sphere. The twenties title of "Women's Activities" encouraged a broader scope of behaviour and included the activities of women's groups such as the "Local Council of Women," "Women's Christian Temperance Union" and the "Young Women's Christian Association." This column continued throughout the decade in the Mail, but was not included every day. Finally, the creation of a separate department for young women was indicative that separate norms of behaviour were expected of them. Despite the changes in headings the woman's department remained relatively constant in its content, which consisted mainly of serial romances, articles on fashion, advice columns, and during the twenties, a health column. Occasionally during the twenties a column called "Women's

Day" would appear. This unusual column criticized aspects of women's lives and was written by Canadians. The advice columns, serial romances and health talks were all American syndicated articles. Therefore, Halifax women were being exposed to American standards of behaviour on a daily basis. American standards of parenting, sexuality and women's work were the ones to which Canadian women had the easiest access, since newspapers cost less than did Canadian magazines.

One other change in Halifax newspapers was in the area of comics. The space allotted to comics increased and the women in comics began to be portrayed as sexual beings. Before 1917 comics appeared randomly throughout the papers. However, in 1917 the comics were accorded full pages of their own on Saturdays. Before the twenties comics were typically rude or cuddly and, in general, devoid of depictions of sexuality. There were such favourites as "Mutt and Jeff," "Freckles and His Friends," "The Captain and the Kids," "The Jay Family," "The Doings of the Duffs" and "The Trouble with Toots." These featured a type of slapstick comedy, involving little children, dogs, and unrealistically drawn humanoids. However, in the twenties women appeared as sexual beings and were drawn in a more realistic manner. In the comic, "Bringing Up Father," the father was constantly trying to get away from the company of his ugly wife in order to dance with beautiful young flappers. His own daughter made an appearance in the later twenties as a willful young

flapper. "Boots and her Buddies" was a comic about young college/flapper kids. Boots, the central figure was an independent young flapper woman who flew a plane, ran a tea room and had joy-seeking adventures. She was even shown in a bathing suit, with seductively chubby thighs, a slight double chin, and pouty mouth. Boots had numerous dates, but never took them seriously; she valued her independence too much. And finally there was "Petting Patty", who despite her racy name just wanted to get married.

Another indication of women's increasing presence in public discussion can be understood by surveying the covers of the Canadian Magazine. With the exception of a hot spot during the 1914-1915 period, the total number of covers with women on them expanded during the twenties (see Table I). In the late teens and early twenties women were shown by themselves, and interacting with men and children. Perhaps this was indicative of the trends of the companionate marriage and scientific motherhood. For instance, covers with entire families had a renaissance during the late teens. While using covers of magazines is by no means a precise way of understanding society, changes in the persons represented on the covers can be used as a broad indication of social trends. Chatelaine's covers also experienced a shift in content. Chatelaine was created in 1928 near the end of our period of study. The creation of a women's magazine, solely

concerned with the activities of women, indicated an acknowledgement that their lives were of importance to society. Although Chatelaine was announced as a woman's magazine, the first three years of its life featured children prominently on its covers; both in 1928 and in 1929 seven covers out of the yearly total of twelve featured children and in 1929 covers displaying children peaked at a total of eight. This was a strong message to women: child rearing is your central duty. This message was undoubtedly prompted by the Scientific Motherhood movement. However, during the next three years there was a decline in the role of child rearing in women's lives, judging by the covers. Covers with only women on them were in 1931, 1932 and 1933 the majority at a ratio of 8:12. Perhaps this denoted the fact that women were beginning to be seen as contributing to society in a greater scope of activities.

II

Now shifting from the topic of "women in general", this study moves to an exploration of diversity within the category of "women" and marks four normative standards of behaviour for working women in Halifax. These categories are somewhat arbitrary since overlap does occur between the four

standards. The first applied to young women prior to marriage or the single, never-married woman. The second and third were related to middle class and working class women respectively. Finally the fourth standard applied to black women of all ages.

The first standard applied to young single women approximately between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five or the never married single woman. The reform of the private sphere had the indirect effect of legitimizing the ideal of the young career woman. Out of the drive to have better educated mothers came the idea that mothers should have wider experience than that gleaned solely from the private sphere. This glove fit both working and middle class women. Suzanne Morton refers to the blending of middle class and working class daughters by the fact that there was difficulty in determining what class a working girl belonged to by looking at their clothes and that young women regardless of class generally congregated in a limited stratum of opportunities.¹ However, one subtle difference in the normative standards of behaviour between the two classes was in the area of motivation. While it was true that middle class and working class women participated in similar types of employment because women's labour was segregated from men's, the motivation for seeking employment attributed to these two

¹Suzanne Morton, Men and Women in a Halifax Working Class Neighbourhood, 189.

classes of women differed.

By the twenties working class women were thought not to be fulfilling their familial duties, by middle class standards, if they did not seek employment. In Dorothy Dix's advice column a "girl of eighteen" wrote of her home situation. Her father was unable to work, and while her two brothers were working his income was not enough to support the nine of them. Her sister and she wanted to work but her father declared that every girl who goes out to work, "goes to the dogs".² Dorothy Dix responded with,

"For heaven's sake Child, where do you live that people entertain such archaic opinions. You're fifty years behind the times. Nowadays we don't think a girl is respectable if she doesn't earn her living when she is poor. Girls in factories and shops earn money honestly rather than through 'the easiest way'."³

Obviously, her father was concerned about maintaining the separate spheres ideology in order to preserve her sexual purity. However, Dix claims such ideas were outdated by the twenties and she went even so far as to call working class girls who did not earn a wage old fashioned and dishonest. Moreover she stressed that women could now move in the public sphere without becoming prostitutes (read "loose women"). A second message we can derive from this exchange of letters is that, with women venturing into the public world, came

² "Dorothy Dix", The Halifax Herald, (July 9, 1927)6.

³Ibid.

anxieties about women's sexuality.

However, the motivation for middle class girls to work stemmed from a different impetus: the idea that by getting an education and selecting an interesting career they would become better mothers and wives. For instance, in an interview conducted with a woman lawyer, the male interviewer asked whether her career would prevent her "from following her natural destiny."⁴ She declared she would have to meditate very seriously before considering leaving her career but that studies make women better at choosing mates so her law experience would never be wasted. After all, "The hope of the race depends on the choice of women doesn't it?"⁵ In this instance, the education and careers of middle class women were being linked to the improvement of the race. By becoming a lawyer, Miss Mabel French suggested that she was helping to build better babies.

One unpredicted effect the reform of the home had on young single women, through its message of education and work experience, was offering the choice between a career and marriage. However, the majority of the time career was not really presented as choice but rather as the loser's consolation prize. For instance Dorothy Dix advised ugly and awkward girls to seek a career as a solution: "If you're a

⁴J. Sedgwick Couper, "Confidences of a Woman Lawyer", Canadian Magazine, (July 1912)287.

⁵Ibid.

drag on the dance market, if you tried different sets of boys and none of them sees your charms, then concentrate entirely on a career."⁶ The message was clear: if men reject you then you had better turn to a life of wage labour. The option of a career was not always offered in such a negative manner. One author lauded the new social and economic conditions the war was creating for women's careers. She gave the glowing example of two girls attending a finishing school who went to meet with their principal for academic counselling and announced, "First, we've decided we're not going to be married."⁷ One unusual article, written by "A Wife" in the early thirties, advised women to choose a career over marriage. She demonstrated that her labour as a middle class housewife was significantly more than a career woman's work: her work took up the entire day while her single sister only worked an eight-hour work day as a business woman. Her second largest disadvantage in lifestyle compared to her sister was the fact she had no financial independence. Her husband refused to give her an allowance: "He simply will not see that I have any claim on even the smallest part of his salary. He likes to feel that he is a sort of feudal lord

⁶ "Dorothy Dix", The Halifax Herald, (July 13, 1927)10.

⁷"Your Daughter's Career: The War Is Bringing a New Social and Economic Conditions for the Girl", Maclean's, (January 1918)106.

dispensing bounty to his subjects."⁸ However, this outright rejection of marriage in favour of a career was quite unusual. Despite the opportunity for young women to choose between marriage and a career, the normative standard dictated that both working class and middle class women work before marriage and then end their employment.

There were some changes in the discourse on young working women and several new trends became apparent by the twenties. These new trends included: increasing sexual anxiety and intrigue about the world of the business woman; increasingly feminized characterization of working women; and a type of segregation into distinct feminine spheres of employment. The discussion of young working women is divided into the categories of professional woman, woman teacher, the catch-all phrase "business woman" (included clerical, entrepreneurial, and retail), and domestic servant.

The discourse on the woman professional during the 1910 to 1920 period was pregnant with references to women's nature and to nature in general. In order to take a career in the professions a woman had to take on aspects of the masculine yet still be true to her feminine nature. For instance in the article on the woman lawyer there was a type of masculine-feminine duality in the author's description of her personality. In answering the question why she came to study

⁸A Wife, "This Bondage", Maclean's, (October 1931)4.

law she said, "Oh, I suppose because I'm of such a serious nature."⁹ The implication was that law was for people of serious intent. Females were not linked with either the profession of law or generally with a serious nature (with the exception of missionaries). Therefore, she was giving herself a male characterization. However, the interviewing journalist quickly feminized the lawyer by a comment: "Her laugh was musical and full of the joy of life and youth. Woman like, she laughed to think of her seriousness. Man-like I laughed because she did."¹⁰ This was followed by another characterization that treated masculine and feminine as alternatives: "Her laugh gave a glimpse of another personality besides the keenly earnest and coldly logical mind of the lawyer."¹¹ The laugh represented the warmth and frivolity of women, while her intellect was manlike - cold and logical.

In describing why women doctors should be accepted by society, another author in the 1910-1920 decade resorted to ideas about women's and men's natures. The author maintained that these "doctoresses" were not "usurping but regaining possession of a field for which they have been endowed by

⁹J. Sedjwick Couper, "Confidences of a woman lawyer", Canadian Magazine, (July 1912)284.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

nature and which has been wrested from them by strange processes of civilization."¹² In other words, woman's entrance into the medical profession was justified because it was congruent with her nature. Civilization was a convenient scape-goat because it was seen to be somehow separate from society and avoided labelling male doctors as the perpetrators of her exclusion. The woman doctor explained why both educated and non-educated women turned to her for medical treatment: "It isn't natural for men to be perfectly frank with women."¹³ Therefore, during this period there was also an appeal to nature to justify women in the professions.

The reform of the home seemed to have a negative impact on women professionals in the twenties according to the articles surveyed: descriptions of female professionals became feminized; they became portrayed as the helpmates of men rather than doctors and lawyers in their own right; and there was intensification of the move to slot them into areas of female labour. An article titled "Should People in the Same Profession Marry?" was indicative of the drive to return these women to the home. A lady medico who was also the wife of a doctor stated, "A mother's first duty is to her children. She should never put her profession before that ...

¹² "Women Doctors - A Fair Canadian Medico Explains Why They Succeed", Acadian Recorder, (November 12, 1913)2.

¹³Ibid.

natural mothers are superior to the most educated of help."¹⁴ The description of a female lawyer who professed that helping her husband gave her the greatest of pleasures was very feminized. The author described her as "the sweetest, gentlest type conceivable."¹⁵

In a diatribe against women doctors, the male practitioner author warns, "You will often spoil a good nurse to make a poor doctor."¹⁶ He was obviously in favour of segregating women into feminized and lower-status areas of work because later in the article he grudgingly admitted that women could be allowed to practice medicine but "they should limit themselves to certain specialities and always have an expert of the opposite sex to fall back upon."¹⁷ Perhaps this idea that women should limit themselves to certain specialities such as pediatrics and obstetrics was a result of Scientific Motherhood's assertion that women act as the caretakers of infants and children. Women were being urged to seek lower-status careers than those of lawyers and doctors which also conformed with the movement's gender hierarchy. When women did attain such a professional status they were

¹⁴ "Should People in the Same Profession Marry?", Chatelaine, (June 1930)14.

¹⁵Ibid. Braithwaite, "The Problem of the Teacher", Canadian Magazine, (October 1919)480.

¹⁶ "Should Women Practice Medicine", Nova Scotia Medical Bulletin, (January 1924)16.

¹⁷Ibid. "Five O'Clock", Canadian Magazine, (July 1910)110.

then advised to use their talents to become helpmates for their husbands. The Scientific Motherhood movement appeared to have had a restrictive influence on professional women because it stressed that women's ultimate duty was the raising of children.

In the category of teachers discussion went from lamentations, during the 1910 to 1920 period, that so few men were being churned out of normal schools, to the acceptance in the twenties that teaching was mainly a female occupation. For instance, E.E. Braithwaite cited the opinion of a president of a leading university who cried "For several years the teaching profession has been gradually impoverished by its failure to attract young men."¹⁸ Men did not want to become teachers because of the low pay so naturally this was a profession filled with women. The author claimed that Nova Scotia was one of the places that paid the least to teachers, who brought home less than three hundred dollars. He compared that salary to the \$1,275 which New York garbage collectors made.¹⁹ Another author pointed to the fact that, while men of ambition were leaving teaching, "There will not be enough capable women left at the end of two decades either."²⁰ The

¹⁸E.E. Braithwaite, "The Problem of the Teacher", Canadian Magazine, (October 1919)480.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰ "At Five O'Clock", Canadian Magazine, (July 1910)110.

reason she gave was that, "Woman has learned during a generation of business training, to discard any sentimental ideas regarding the beauties of giving work for meagre returns."²¹ This author was showing a shift away from in the idea of "maternal sacrifice". She claimed that young women were no longer subscribing to that notion. Perhaps this refutation of maternal sacrifice was linked to reform of the private sphere. No longer was it in vogue for a woman to subsume her personality and energy totally to her children. Her sparkling intellect and hobbies were supposed to enrich their lives. This was not a total refutation of maternal sacrifice but a rephrasing in order to let women extend their lives into the public sphere.

During the twenties, teachers were now spoken about as females. In an article advocating that teachers should receive more training, the author complains that "popular tradition has it that any raw or inexperienced girl is good enough to be a teacher."²² The feminization of teaching was completed. Teachers were automatically thought of as females. Hence a separate sphere for women in public life, one that corresponded with the idea that women were the proper caretakers of children, was one of the unfortunate parallels to the scientific motherhood movement.

²¹Ibid.

²² "All the World's a Stage", Evening Mail, (March 15, 1921).

The young business woman was often used as a personification of all working women. Business was also a catch-all term which applied to women working in retail, clerical and entrepreneurial business. The discourse on the business girl went from tension in the teens about whether to assign masculine and feminine characteristics to a later comfort and certainty in assigning feminine characteristics. Entrepreneurial suggestions for women remained domestic in nature in both decades. In a profile of Canadian women in business, the author gave a description of a woman who was a contractor of teamsters. His characterization of her contained both masculine and feminine elements:

"Miss Violet Louis Moor is about 30, very tastefully dressed, her round, white throat rising from a delicate lace collar, above medium height, with fine shoulders, out of the pallor of whose face looked a singular pair of blue eyes, observant, penetrating and powerful."²³

The author was deliberately building a contrast between Miss Moor's feminine appearance and her male intellect. What should be the audience's reaction? The mixture of marvel and horror at viewing such an independent female-male monster? Or simply acceptance which comes with the understanding of "Ah, that explains how women can succeed in business?" Another woman was presented in a way that combined masculine and feminine images, those of mother and father. Miss Winifred

²³ "Canadian Women in Business", Maclean's, (February 1915)24.

Mary Wiseman, President of the Canadian Business Women's Club, was said to "extend a strong 'mothering instinct' on both her men and child friends."²⁴ However, a couple of sentences later, she states that "women who want to succeed in life have got to be 'selfish'."²⁵ Fathers were the ones who were supposed to be selfish in order to get ahead in business not women with 'mothering instincts'.

The description of Miss Violet Moor was also created to show her subtly in somewhat of a sexual light. The imagery was not overt, just gentle teasing. Another article, which contained a touch of sexual intrigue, was on the increase of women in clerical work; "The present day secretary wears skirts, the typist looks a trim little figure in belted blouses, and petticoats swish around the legs of office stools."²⁶ Women's dress in both articles was the subject of contrast and fascination.

Finally, the entrepreneurial ventures suggested to business girls were of a domestic production nature. For instance an article on the girl graduate's first job offered, through the medium of pictures, suggestions of independent businesses women could start up. The pictures were of a

²⁴ "Northern Lights", Canadian Magazine, (January 1918)270.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶ "Girls Crowd Out Men in Business", Chronicle, (May 20, 1911)10.

woman running an open air kindergarden, making jam, caring for pets, gardening for profit, and selling wild flowers. None of these activities would require an education and all necessitated knowledge gleaned from the domestic sphere.

During the twenties the business girl was increasingly portrayed in a sexual manner. On one hand she was portrayed as a trouble maker such as the woman in the movie, "A Virtuous Vamp", which played at the Casino in Halifax. In the film she remained a steady stenographer until a Broadway Shimmie dancer made an application for a \$50,000 policy. It became necessary for the typist to escort her bachelor boss into a jazz parlour. This marked the "beginning of her vampiest attempts to win the only man who refuses to be captivated by her innocent wiles."²⁷ In one article an author complained that "Some business girls find the cultivation of sex appeal much less trouble than acquiring a deep and wide professional knowledge. Men to some extent have themselves to thank for this state of affairs."²⁸ Although the author accorded men part of the blame for hiring sexy unskilled typists, she targeted women primarily for affecting sexual mannerisms in order to get ahead in business. It would appear that as part of coping with the business world some women

²⁷ "Natural Vamp is Trouble Maker in Busy Office", Morning Chronicle, (May 24, 1920)11.

²⁸F.E. Baily, "Women Bring Too Much Sex Into Business", Chatelaine, (July 1930)5.

were pursuing a new sexual image that deviated from their previous chaste and pure private sphere image.

On the other hand, anxiety about women working in the public world with male bosses led to fears that they were vulnerable to unwanted advances. This fear was the basis for the racy play, "Scarlet Woman", which ran at the Strand in Halifax. This was the story of a husband and wife who disagreed over a girl secretary in a big business concern where the husband was principle shareholder. The secretary was framed and subjected to the undesired advances of a crooked politician involved with a pay day robbery. The wife, who took the girl's side, went as far as to initiate divorce proceedings. In the end the secretary's innocence was established and the wife felt satisfied that she had won a great battle for women's rights.²⁹ It was unusual that the wife took the part of the victim because many of the advice columns featured warnings such as the one issued by Ruth Cameron, "Care for Your Looks Young Wives." Cameron recounted the tale of Mrs. B., red-eyed because her husband was decidedly too attentive to his pretty stenographer. She admonished the wives for not working harder to appear attractive because after all, "Men are only human."³⁰ While some wives may have had sympathy for the sexual harassment

²⁹ "Scarlet Woman", Evening Mail, (February 4, 1926)13.

³⁰Ruth Cameron, "Care for Your Looks Young Wives", The Evening Mail, (January 4, 1911)15.

which business girls might have to face, they were mostly worried about the threat of competition by younger, well-dressed women. Unfortunately the new sexualized image of working women served to divide women that the notion that all women represented potential competition for men's attentions. Did the new perception that women were sexual beings have any positive effects on the lives of women? Possibly it represented a broadening in the normative standards of behaviour. Diversity meant greater choice for some women. Women could choose to play the part of a virtuous secretary or a vampy one. However, both types of women would still be vulnerable to sexual harassment.

With the altering of separate spheres by women working in the public world came the spicy idea that women could also take business trips. In fact two articles attest to the novelty of the travelling woman buyer. Miss Esther Richardson was cited as the first woman to cross the ocean on a buying trip for a Canadian store and probably one of the first female foreign buyers. The author plays with the idea in his shocking title, "Successful Business Women Attains Her Ambition to Become a 'Tramp'."³¹

The discourse on the subject of domestic servants was written from the point of view of the employer during both decades. This suggests that newspapers and magazines were not

³¹ "Successful Business Woman Attains Her Ambition to Become a 'Tramp'", Maclean's, (April 1, 1924)35.

written with the perspective of servants in mind, but for middle class women. During the 1910 to 1920 period there were attempts to make employers understand that maids were not from a separate sub-species and that they should be treated as women with women's natural instincts. Domestic service was already feminized to the extent that, by the start of our period, authors referred to them as females. The ideology of separate spheres naturally encouraged such employment for women. One writer gave the example of a maid who refused to stay because her room had no window, heat, paper on the wall and "she could never make her room look homelike."³² The author urged mistresses to view their maids as women with "natural desires for happiness" and not as a "distinct species of animal life."³³ Another article featured advice from a family who had the same servant for fifty years. The fact that an article was written about the family suggests that it was a general problem for employers to retain servants for any significant length of time. They advised other families to: "treat her as if she were human", "encourage her to be religious"; "pay for extra work"; "never tip her"; "give her a whole day and one afternoon off every

³²Maude Petitt Hill, "What's the Matter with House work? If the General Help is Acute, the Solution Rests With the Housekeeper", Chatelaine, (April 1928)2.

³³ "The Unreasonable Maid", Halifax Herald, (July 6, 1927)11.

week"; "encourage her to have some company".³⁴ While much of this advice was extremely paternalistic it revealed the problem that many employers were failing to treat these women "as if they were human" with a right to a lives of their own. Such women were subjected to a higher degree of scrutiny and judgement by the middle class because they were living in their homes.

In the twenties' discourse on domestic servants there was evidence of the impact of the same cultural trends that were fuelling the scientific motherhood movement. People were still wondering how to treat the maids. One author discounted the idea of raising their social status through education, set hours, a uniform and free evenings because of the expense and the fact that households with children needed help in the evenings. Then she disparaged the idea of raising the status of a housekeeper by taking meals with her, because after all one's husband did not eat with the stenographer. Finally she advised, not to pay them more, but to acquire training yourself in business and home management in order to organize them better. In the terms of this article, domestic servants still had no rights when it came to employment hours and hardly any privacy. Their lives did not appear to be altered by the reform of the private sphere other than perhaps in the

³⁴ "They'll Wait on Barbie For Once; She's Been Working for Them Just 50 Years Straight", Halifax Herald, (August 2, 1911).

area of directions from their mistresses. It was the middle class women who were targeted as the ones to run their homes like businesses.

Aside from the ideas and images about young working women, what were the other realities of their employment opportunities in Halifax? The percentage of women in the workforce in Halifax fell from 32.55% in 1911, to 25.53% in 1921, and then rose slightly to 26.88% in 1931 (see Table III). Therefore, the twenties did not herald an increase in the numbers of working women. However, there did appear to be an increase in the percentages of older women working, although the numbers of young working women clearly dominated. The percentage of the female workforce between fifteen to twenty-four years dropped by ten per cent during the twenties. Perhaps some women were now choosing a career over marriage and thus continuing to work as they grew older or the frequency of married working women was increasing.

By occupational sector, the trends of female employment experienced a decrease in the number of women in manufacturing but an increase in clerical jobs (see Table IV). The decrease can be explained by an overall shrinkage of manufacturing in Halifax. The growth in the clerical sector matched the large amount of dialogue about the young business woman and the feminization of that occupational sector. However, the largest numbers of women were located in the service sector. Approximately one-third of women workers were

employed as domestic servants.³⁵ It was ironic that the largest number of working women were accorded no voice by the supposedly "mass" media.

What was the normative standard of behaviour concerning the labour of middle class and working class married women? There was an overarching standard which applied to both classes of women. Married women were expected to run the home and raise the children. With the emergence of the scientific motherhood movement, their duties during the twenties became professionalised and praised.

However the normative standards for middle class married women were fissuring gradually, creating a new sub-group for the talented career woman. For middle class women there existed a debate as to whether they should continue working, if they were making decent wages. Often the debate took an economic tone. However, opponents often maintained that no substitution, however professional, could replace the wife's or mother's special touch. The working married middle class women had not quite reached the acceptance needed to be labelled. However, one can see a slow growth in the amount of debate over whether career women should keep on working after marriage.

During the 1910 to 1920 period, Halifax newspapers supply two examples of people arguing from opposite ends in

³⁵Suzanne Morton, Men and Women in a Halifax Working Class Neighbourhood, 252.

the debate over whether middle class career women should continue to work after marriage. Through the medium of a serial romance the first author argues in favour of married women working. In the serial romance, the wife found a job as an interior decorator at a salary of twenty dollars a week, because her husband, working as a junior lawyer, was not making enough money to supply the house with pretty things or a servant. The wife's argument revealed the inequities inherent in a marriage contract for women: "Why should I do what I have to for nothing when I can get paid for doing what I love?"³⁶ The husband replied that by working she was humiliating him. To which the wife answered, "Why should you humiliate me by wanting me to do servant's work when I am capable of earning, even to start with, almost as much as you?"³⁷ This argument revealed the low status of domestic labour. The scientific motherhood movement later tried to raise the status of women's domestic duties but was not entirely successful.

The author who argued against middle class women continuing to work also went into the inequities of the marriage contract for women who had experienced the economic independence of a career:

"To the girl who once earned a regular salary which she could

³⁶ Jane Phelps, "The Wife", Halifax Herald, (December 11, 1919)14.

³⁷Ibid.

expend as she saw fit, naturally, looks upon with misgivings a contract to become the spender of another's income without becoming, in a definite way, a contributory factor."³⁸

She continued with an economic argument: "Some contend it is a waste for a 100 dollar girl to do the job of a 6 dollar a week servant kitchen girl."³⁹ However, she resolved this dilemma with the idea that only a wife can make a home truly homelike and that housekeeping ability was beyond any fixed value. It becomes apparent that middle class women were having difficulty in swallowing the idea that housekeeping was a high status job.

During the twenties more prominent women began speaking out in defence of the married working woman. For instance, Helen Gregory MacGill, MA and judge, wrote an article in defence of the wage-earning wife. She cited the International Alliance for Woman Suffrage in Berlin as the latest reformers to assert the right of married women: "That the right to work of all women be recognized, no obstacle being placed in the way of married women who want to work."⁴⁰ She went on to state that historically wives and mothers have always worked and that objections were mainly against the middle ranks:

³⁸Harriet Culver, "Should A Girl Give Up Her Career When She Marries?", Halifax Herald, (August 28, 1915)15.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Helen Gregory MacGill, "What of the Wage-Earning Wife?", Chatelaine, (March 1930)8.

"Neither public performers, artists, writers: nor at the other extreme, wash and char women nor even women working in mills, have any campaign against them."⁴¹ This statement would seem to contradict my earlier argument that like middle class women working class married women were expected to be full-time housewives. However, I have included it because it demonstrates that there was no discourse on the married working class wage earning woman. While in reality it may be that they did work, no rhetoric in the press defended their right to work or even (with the exception of this article) acknowledged them as working. Working class married women did not fit this new sub-group because usually they did not make enough money to pay for a servant or for help with the children. One must keep in mind that reality does not always fit the rhetoric. Many working class women did have to earn extra cash but they did so in discreet ways. Connelly and MacDonald argue that working class households have always required more than the male wage and that women have always contributed to the maintenance of the home by either intensifying their domestic labour in the home, by earning money through an informal economy, or by participating in the labour force and earning a wage themselves.⁴²

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²M. Patricia Connelly and Martha MacDonald, "Women's Work: Domestic and Wage Labour in Nova Scotian Communities", Studies in Political Economy no 10, (Winter 1983)46.

Other authors put the onus on the husband to decide whether the middle class wife should be allowed to work. Thus, these authors reinforced the patriarchal hierarchy of the home. Annie Laurie, who wrote a syndicated advice column for girls, received a letter from a young married woman, who had a very good position with a firm and did not care for household duties, asking whether she should continue to work. Annie Laurie maintained that this problem must be solved between a husband and his wife.⁴³ Nellie McClung stressed the importance of a husband's attitude and went as far as to say women should choose their husbands on the character of their prospective mother-in-law. If their mother-in-law was an independent woman in favour of women in the public sphere, then likely her son would have the same values.⁴⁴

For most married women the home was their location of labour. However, the definition of housekeeping changed and became more publicly detailed over the two decades. During the first decade, the Canadian Magazine's articles on what women did in the home promoted a rural ideal. Victoria Hayward wrote two articles which promoted the work of "foreign" women. However, although these women were non-Anglo-Celtic, they all came from Europe; she made no mention of women of African, West Indian or Asian descent. The

⁴³ "Annie Laurie," Evening Mail, (Sept 3, 1924)8.

⁴⁴Nellie L. McClung, "Can a Woman Raise a Family and Have a Career?", Maclean's, (February 15, 1928)7.

articles were accompanied by photos of women weaving, tilling the land, planting, raising pigs, knitting, preparing food, hulling cabbages, clam digging, dairying, and drying codfish.⁴⁵ The domestic work of these women would be quite foreign to city dwellers and certainly did not reflect any technological advancements. She also promoted the ideal of maternal sacrifice, "someone has called these women 'Mothers of Canada' because of their sweetness, unselfishness, and ability typifies all the time-honoured qualities summed up in that glorious word motherhood."⁴⁶ She even went so far as to place their domestic production accomplishments above those of urban women in terms of the war effort: "The woman who farms is working for Victory even more than the woman who knits."⁴⁷

During the twenties not much was mentioned of the domestic duties of rural women. Mass circulation periodicals focused on professionalising the housekeeping of the urban woman. For instance one article explained "How introducing business methods into the home helped to make a small salary

⁴⁵Victoria Hayward, "Women Workers of Canada", Canadian Magazine, (March 1918)34.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Victoria Hayward, "Foreign women Who Work For Canada", Canadian Magazine, (November 1918)553.

adequate."⁴⁸ Skills women learned in the workforce were supposed to make the home run more smoothly and more economically. While on one hand, housekeeping was presented as a scientific/business accomplishment, on another hand, it was also lauded as a type of religious accomplishment. Winnifred Black, an advice columnist, linked spiritual success with good housekeeping: "I wouldn't be surprised if the Recording Angel has some sort of special recording mark of merit that he puts at the name of a women who can buy decent food, cook it decently and serve it so that it makes you hungry to look at it."⁴⁹ She also claimed that the mental health of children and the temper of husbands depended on a wife's ability to cook. While Black offered much discussion of housework and praise of the good housekeeper, she also criticised women who neglected their duties. Finally, the idea of maternal sacrifice was being transformed to allow women some private time to themselves. One author advocated that every woman have a hobby which took her out of the home because, "It's no more relaxing or restful for the woman once her work is done, to sit all afternoon and evening in the

⁴⁸ "Housekeeping and Happiness", Maclean's, (march 15, 1922)57.

⁴⁹Winnefred Black, "The Missionary Housekeeper", Mail, (January 21, 1922)14.

house she labours over."⁵⁰ One could conclude from this that while housekeeping duties became more detailed, women were expected to be more than housekeepers.

The last standard of behaviour was that for black women of all ages. African-Nova Scotian women had two strikes against them, their gender and their "race." Nova Scotian laws discriminated between black and white people. Halifax prohibited African-Nova Scotians from proceeding beyond grade seven and provided separate schools for them.⁵¹ During the early twentieth century the African-Nova Scotian community protested against the separate school system but to no avail. According to Robin Winks, white prejudice reached a peak following World War One. During the war the African-Nova Scotians who enlisted were relegated to a corps of foresters who, when sent to France, were assigned manual labour tasks. At the end of the war, soldiers attacked an African-Nova Scotian community in Truro stoning houses and shouting obscenities. Finally in 1919, the Coloured Political and Protective Association of Montreal lost an attempt to win orchestra seating for coloured people and almost immediately

⁵⁰Margaret Fea, "Every Woman should Lead a Double Life", Chatelaine, (April 1928)24.

⁵¹Suzanne Morton, "Separate Spheres in a Separate World:African Nova Scotian Women", Acadiensis, v 22, no 2(Spring 1993)69.

theatres in Nova Scotia sent them to the balcony.⁵² African-Nova Scotians were limited in both their educational potential and in their public movement.

According to Morton, African-Nova Scotian women, both single and married, were expected to work. The employment available to such women was mainly limited to domestic service, taking in laundry or sewing. In 1921, the "Home for Colored Children" opened. Originally it had been intended to be the "Normal and Industrial Institute for Colored Children"; however, the explosion of 1917 exacerbated the problem of what to do with orphaned or neglected 'colored' children since they were not accepted at any of the white orphanages. Thus the home's function was directed towards providing for the needy rather than providing specialized education. However, the home did endeavour to equip the children with something of an education. For female 'inmates' this meant an elementary education and training for the domestic service: "Girls learnt by doing. They scrubbed the floors in the playroom, kitchen and dining room daily. As well they learned cooking, washing and sewing from staff members."⁵³ Charles Saunders maintains that this education reflected the employment opportunities for African-Nova-

⁵²Robin Winks, "Negroes in the Maritimes: An Introductory Survey", Dalhousie Review, (1968-1969)467.

⁵³Charles Saunders, Share and Care - The Story of the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children, (Halifax:1994)54.

Scotian women during the twenties; married and widowed women charred and young women worked as domestic servants. African-Nova-Scotian women were expected to be engaged in hard physical labour such as scrubbing, thus confirming an unladylike reputation. Yet those who restricted their labour to the private domestic sphere and demanded their husbands support them were viewed as lazy. As late as 1920, a white woman looking for help with her laundry felt free to stop any African-Nova Scotian woman and ask "where she could get a good girl".⁵⁴ However, some managed to acquire enough education to become teachers under the provision of a special permissive license.⁵⁵ Miss Gladys Walcott for example, was the principal teacher at the home between 1921 to 1930. She was authorized to teach from grades one to nine. Another example is Mrs. Upshaw who taught in North Preston but was stricken with a stroke at the age of forty-eight. Her Obituary read: "With a Heart full of sunshine, a keen brain, and eagerness for service, Mrs. Upshaw ever pursued her duties."⁵⁶ However, these women teachers were exceptions rather than the rule. The majority of African-Nova-Scotians were constrained to domestic service, the lowest status and worst paying

⁵⁴Ibid., 66.

⁵⁵Suzanne Morton, "Separate Spheres in a Separate World", 69.

⁵⁶Charles Saunders, Share and Care, 57.

occupation. service, the worst paying and the least status

occupation.

Conclusion: unexpected development, perhaps attributable to the

The changes in the normative standards for women's work were influenced in many ways by the cultural values associated with the Scientific Motherhood movement. Young single women and unmarried women were expected to work and even seek a career prior to marriage. This can be traced to the movement's emphasis on education in the development of "potential mothers" (read every woman); the end goal, of course, was to create better mothers. The movement also possibly influenced the creation of feminine occupational ghettos. These sectors of primarily female employment, such as teaching, were often ones which reflected beliefs about women's responsibility as caretakers of children. However, once married, women were discouraged from working in the public world; they were now expected to look after their own homes and children. Despite this normative standard which dictated married women work in their own home, for a small group of middle class career women, there was some debate as to whether they could continue to work after marriage. This was indicative of a widening of normative standards concerning women's work. Finally, for African-Nova-Scotian women, the normative standards accorded to them did not appear to be altered by the modernizing trends associated with the movement; these women were still constrained to the

domestic service, the worst paying and the least status occupation.

One unexpected development, perhaps attributable to the fact that more women were moving in the public world of employment and education, was that women's image became increasingly sexualized. This certainly was not anticipated or promoted by the Scientific Motherhood campaign. The sexualizing of women's image, particularly of the young business woman, possibly led to a cultural separation of sexuality from reproduction and thus, motherhood. Nevertheless, cultural norms indicated that motherhood, within the confines of marriage, was still women's ultimate profession.

v 37, 1911	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
v 38, 1912	3	0	0	0	0	0	2
v 39, 1913	2	1	0	0	0	0	2
v 40, 1914	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
v 41, 1915	4	0	0	0	0	0	4
v 42, 1916	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
v 43, 1916-1917	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
v 44, 1917	0	0	1	0	1	1	2
v 45, 1917-1918	3	0	0	0	0	1	4
v 46, 1918	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
v 47, 1918-1919	0	1	2	0	0	1	1
v 48, 1919	1	1	1	0	0	0	1
v 49, 1919-1920	1	1	0	1	0	0	2
v 50, 1920	1	4	0	1	0	0	2
v 51, 1920-1921	2	1	0	2	0	0	4
v 52, 1921	3	0	1	2	0	0	5
v 53, 1921-1922	2	1	0	0	0	0	2
v 54, 1922	4	0	0	0	0	0	4
v 55, 1922-1923	3	2	0	0	0	0	3
v 56, 1923	1	2	0	0	0	0	1
v 57, 1923-1924	3	0	0	1	0	0	4
v 58, 1924	3	1	1	0	0	0	3
v 59, 1925	2	2	1	0	0	0	1

Table I

Covers of the Canadian Magazine

- #1 - Covers with only women on them
 #2 - Covers with only men on them
 #3 - Covers with only children on them
 #4 - Covers with women and children on them
 #5 - Covers with men and women
 #6 - Covers with women, men and children on them
 #7 - Total number of covers with women on them

Volume/Year	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7
v 37, 1911	1	1	2	1	0	0	2
v 38, 1911-1912	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
v 39, 1912	2	3	0	0	0	0	2
v 40, 1912-1913	1	1	0	0	1	0	2
v 41, 1913	2	1	1	0	0	0	2
v 42, 1913-1914	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
v 43, 1914	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
v 44, 1914-1915	3	2	0	1	0	0	4
v 45, 1915	4	0	1	0	0	0	4
v 46, 1915-1916	2	1	0	0	0	0	2
v 47, 1916	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
v 48, 1916-1917	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
v 49, 1917	0	0	1	0	1	1	2
v 50, 1917-1918	3	0	0	0	0	1	4
v 51, 1918	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
v 52, 1918-1919	0	1	2	0	0	1	1
v 53, 1919	1	1	1	0	0	0	1
v 54, 1919-1920	1	1	0	1	0	0	2
v 55, 1920	1	4	0	1	0	0	2
v 56, 1920-1921	2	1	0	2	0	0	4
v 57, 1921	3	0	1	2	0	0	5
v 58, 1921-1922	2	1	0	0	0	0	2
v 59, 1922	4	0	0	0	0	0	4
v 60, 1922-1923	3	2	0	0	0	0	3
v 61, 1923	1	2	0	0	0	0	1
v 62, 1923-1924	3	0	0	1	0	0	4
v 63, 1924	3	1	1	0	0	0	3
v 64, 1925	2	2	1	0	0	0	1

57Suzanne Morton, Men and Women in a Halifax Working-Class Neighbourhood in the 1920's, 249.

58ibid, 262.

Table II

Female Labour and the Halifax Workforce, 1911-1931⁵⁷

	1911	1921	1931
population of Halifax	46,619	58,372	59,275
total workforce	13,784	23,063	23,017
total female workforce	4,487	5,888	6,188
% of workforce female	32.55%	25.53%	26.88%
% female workforce 15-24	51.70%	51.85%	41.45%

Table III

Female Employment in Halifax by Occupational Sector⁵⁸

	1911	1921	1931
agriculture	0.15%	0.04%	0.05%
manufacturing	22.63%	10.39%	5.56%
clerical	8.59%	23.64%	23.90%
transportation	1.18%	3.21%	2.61%
warehousing		0.15%	1.84%
trade	12.67%	14.79%	10.87%
finance		0.08%	0.13%
service	54.78%	47.40%	54.54%
other		0.30%	0.50%

⁵⁷Suzanne Morton, Men and Women in a Halifax Working-Class Neighbourhood in the 1920's, 249.

⁵⁸ibid, 262.

The previous chapter discussed the common cultural ground shared by the Scientific Motherhood Movement and discourse on women's work inside and outside of the home. While there were some changes in the public discourse concerning standards of behaviour for women, particularly for young women, the home and child-raising were confirmed as every woman's ultimate goal. This chapter explores new expectations and duties for mothers held by various Scientific Motherhood groups - doctors, nurses, and reformers - and compares their discourse with that of dissenters to the movement - among mothers, fathers and advice columnists. Newspapers and magazines provide sources for this comparison. The last portion of the chapter examines two Halifax Medical Examiners' reports on the deaths of infants under parental care. A comparison is made of the Examiners' expectations of what the responsibilities of parents should entail, with actual parenting practices of Halifax families. This comparison is undertaken in an attempt to gauge the influence of the Scientific Motherhood movement on societal beliefs and parenting practices.

On one hand the movement appeared to have a transformative effect on society since it was part of a move to shift the border between public and private. Jay Cassel believes the campaign to eradicate gonorrhoea and syphilis,

which occurred after the outbreak of World War One, had a similar effect on Canada's public/private distinction. Previously a sensitive, private matter, sexual education became the topic of public debate. However, Cassel labels the medical movement against venereal diseases as conservative, since it sought not to alter radically the sexual norms of behaviour but treated venereal disease as a problem to be answered with purely medical solutions.¹ In contrast, the scientific motherhood movement, although also led by the medical community in conjunction with state support and volunteer organizations, attempted to change parental and national standards of behaviour concerning children.

The new motherhood reform discussion brought the parental duties and housekeeping activities of women into the public eye and opened them up to "scientific" evaluation. Also Scientific Motherhood reform advocates disputed the nineteenth century concept of "maternal instinct", maintaining that education and medical consultation were necessary for one to be considered a good mother. If, guided by the ideals of the movement, parents would raise their children in substantially new ways and these new practices would fit with other innovations in Canadian culture, would then denote a large transformation of society's behaviour and beliefs.

¹Jay Cassel, The Secret Plaque - Venereal Diseases in Canada, (Toronto: 1987)250.

On the other hand, the movement could be called conservative because, while it attempted to educate, it did not address the socio-economic issues which were at the heart of the high maternal and infant mortality rate. Dr Helen MacMurphy, head of the division of Child Welfare, clearly stated her opposition to any state funded medical care system: "Nothing will be gained by the rude methods of socialism, by taxing the middle class."² Ironically, a report commissioned by MacMurphy in 1922 demonstrated that the high rates of infant and maternal mortality were caused by poverty, overwork, malnutrition and fatigue, as well as "meddlesome midwifery" on the part of doctors i.e., excessive intervention and poor hygienic techniques. However, MacMurphy reframed the report's findings so that doctors' failure to combat maternal mortality was secondary to and not as shameful as "the ignorance of mothers for not obtaining adequate prenatal care."³ Comacchio notes that in the campaign women became paradoxically both the problem and the solution. The belief that children's health could be improved only through approaching their mothers made mothers solely to blame for all children's health problems.

The scientific motherhood campaign was indeed more conservative in some ways than the Social Gospel movement, a

²Katherine Arnup, Delivering Motherhood, (New York:1990)25.

³Ibid., 61.

reform movement which advocated a type of religious socialism in the earlier part of the twentieth century. Its social work, done through religious volunteer agencies, had regarded labour issues as central to social improvement and took on the kinds of economic questions the Scientific Motherhood movement avoided. However, according to Doug Ogram the social gospel movement had started to decline by the twenties just as the Scientific Motherhood movement was finding greater acceptance.⁴ Mary Vipond inferred, from the decline of the grass roots style and popular acceptance of the social gospel's radical agenda, that in the twenties people were tired of reform.⁵ Perhaps people were not cynically sick of reform but wanted a new kind of reform, one that was less emotionally taxing. Indeed the reform style of the scientific motherhood movement, which used "hard" scientific evidence not religious ideas about brotherhood, found greater acceptance in post-World War One Canadian society.

In order to determine whether the movement can be considered transformative or conservative, several questions must be answered. First of all, was it a movement that tried to transform all families' parenting practices or simply one class of parents? Second, who directed and shaped the

⁴Doug Ogram, The Government Generation, (Toronto: 1986)107.

⁵Mary Vipond, "The Image of Women in Mass Circulation Magazines in the 1920's", 116.

movement? Third, did it change parenting practices? Fourth, was there resistance to its tenets or other parenting models available in popular culture from which to choose? And finally, how were women's lives affected?

This chapter aims to demonstrate that the movement, in many ways like the twenties decade, was both transformative of social norms but also conservatively retentive of other elements such as the economic status quo and the existing gender hierarchy. The movement's own hierarchy did conserve gender and class norms. Doctors rested at the top of its pyramid where they issued prescriptive advice on proper child raising techniques to all classes of women. Next came the female body of public nurses. They restated concepts developed by the doctors, but also used these concepts to formulate rules to guide women in their everyday housekeeping techniques. Their authority to educate, supervise and intervene, was mainly directed at working class and poor women. Despite the fact that reformers had begun the movement, they followed in the third position. Their ideas about Scientific Motherhood broadly encompassed all classes, though they felt that middle class mothers' training and income provided a better base for quality mothering. Squashed at the bottom of the Scientific Motherhood movement's pyramid were both working class and middle class mothers. While according to this hierarchal structure mothers had the least authority over knowledge of proper and hygienic child-raising

skills, this authority relationship was actually reversed in the portrayal of parenting by some popular culture sources. The diversity of models available to mothers in popular culture sources, such as newspapers, magazines, plays and films, allowed them to opt out of the Scientific Motherhood's authority pyramid if they so chose. However, Scientific Motherhood was a strong and persuasive force in society, quite difficult to completely ignore. It subtly influenced the parenting practices of all Canadian women within the range of popular media or medical advice.

How does this thesis depart from the work of Comacchio, Arnup and Strong-Boag? While this study does not claim to have reinvented the steam engine and certainly does not compare in volume or in detail to the work of the above three, it has been conducted in a way that varies slightly from their method of studying the problem. Comacchio, Arnup and Strong-Boag have all examined the movement by studying the medical and government discourse. While all three do examine some articles from magazines such as Chatelaine, Canadian Home Journal and Maclean's, they only used articles written by representatives of government or medicine; their research thus neglected the opinions of non-Scientific Motherhood people. Also none of the three used newspaper articles.

This chapter complements the existing historical literature on the Scientific Motherhood movement in three

ways. First, it analyses the discourse of proponents of the Scientific Motherhood movement: doctors, nurses and reformers.⁶ These groups all battled for recognition in the arena of the print mass media. This study reveals that each group had its own set of priorities and view on the status and authority of mothers. Second, it examines voices from popular culture - mothers, fathers, and "common sense" advice columnists - who debated the subject of parenting in magazines and newspapers. These voices revealed more than one normative standard for parenting in society. Third, this chapter examines the inquisitorial discourse contained in the Medical Examiner's reports on infants who died under parental care. The Medical Examiner's reports give some insight as to whether parents were changing to accommodate new expectations and what behaviours they clung to despite pressure from experts.

Part I

A. Discourse by the Doctors

Doctors were undoubtedly the self-styled leaders of the campaign. Arnup notes that while they assumed key posts, the

⁶This study accords the label of reformer to people who were not themselves trained in medicine, but worked to bring the ideas of scientific motherhood to society.

nurses took their place in the front lines.⁷ Cynthia Comacchio also maintains that while voluntary organizations still participated, by WWI health care and public employees had taken over the movement.⁸ Indeed by 1919, the government reinforced the authority of medicine by creating the Division of Child Welfare and naming a doctor to its helm, Dr. Helen MacMurchy. MacMurchy had been instrumental in raising the issue of maternal and infant mortality among women's groups and health care workers with her series of reports released in 1910, 1911, 1912 and 1913.⁹ It is important to note that not all doctors involved with the campaign were men and thus, while a large proportion of them were male, one should not consider the discourse of the doctors strictly a male voice. Despite the fact that doctors came to be the captains of the campaigns, this study notes that they, with the exception of MacMurchy, were slow to warm up to the movement. The volume of material published by doctors in magazines such as Maclean's and Canadian Magazine, as well as in the four Halifax newspapers, during the 1910 to 1920 period was considerably less than that written by reformers.

During the 1910 to 1920 period doctors mainly directed their criticisms at the poor, in an effort to shift the blame

⁷Katherine Arnup, Education for Motherhood, 30.

⁸Cynthia Comacchio, Nations are Built of Babies, 3.

⁹Katherine Arnup, Education for Motherhood, 30.

for high infant mortality off their own shoulders; their lack of medical innovations were not to blame but rather the poor health practices of the lower classes. They held mothers and fathers accountable for the poor health of their children. While they did take into consideration families' finances as a factor causing poor health in children, they blamed parents for not earning enough rather than the economic climate or lack of a state medical care system. For instance, an article on infant mortality quoted the American Medicine Association as saying,

"The real reason why there are 300,000 unnecessary deaths every year among our babies is that the fathers cannot make enough money to keep them alive. One in eight is foredoomed for this reason. If father makes more than \$25 a week, death rate is less than 80 per 1000, if less than \$10, 256 per 1000."¹⁰

Mothers were also targeted for endangering their infants by not eating enough or the proper foods. While Dr. Lillian Whitney gave suggestions on a proper diet for pregnant women, she did not take into account the possibility that some women could not afford to maintain a steady diet of: "whole wheat, milk, vegetables, and sorghum."¹¹ While the advice blanketed all mothers, a middle class woman's diet would have been superior to a poor or working class woman's diet.

One article did give an indication that doctors also

¹⁰ "Infant Mortality", Acadian Recorder, (November 13, 1915)3.

¹¹Lillian Whitney, "Practical Health Talks", Halifax Herald, (May 13, 1916)10.

judged middle class parents as inadequate. Dr Charles Page targeted women who entered their infants in baby contests:

"I want to tell the mothers of those babies that have been exhibited in the baby contest that every one of them is a little obese wretch. Another thing, I feel I must speak about before any more babies die is that they are being smothered by the quantity of clothes they are made to wear"¹²

These contests were initiated by reformers, as a way to heighten interest about the health and importance of infants. Perhaps Dr Page was acting out of a need to assert his professional expertise over the efforts of the reformers and the smugness of middle class mothers.

Compared with the 1910's, the 1920s saw an increase in doctors' interest in and zeal for bringing Scientific Motherhood to all parents, but especially working class ones. They portrayed pregnancy, infancy and childhood as stages which should be treated with intense medical supervision and as far too complex for the average woman to muddle through alone. Only education could transform the average woman into a good mother because the complexities of modern civilization demanded this increased level of skill. Civilization was also to blame for having destroyed the nineteenth-century idea of "maternal instinct", if indeed it ever existed.¹³ While doctors now included all classes of women as ignorant, they

¹² "Plump and Dimpled Babies are Wrong", Halifax Herald, (August 1, 13)¹³.

¹³Wendy Mitchinson, The Nature of their Bodies, 67.

targeted immigrants and working-class families as responsible for high levels of infant and maternal mortality, not because they were less civilized but because they had the worst hygienic conditions and the least education. Dr. Hutchinson,

Doctors' discourse during the twenties often dictated that women be defined entirely by their roles as mothers. Dr. Chipman claimed that "It is generally conceded by all thinking women that the one big event in any woman's life is her motherhood."¹⁴ Another doctor denied the charge that the modern woman "prefers her own comfort and good looks and success in life to either the number or health of her children," by maintaining that her children were foremost on her mind.¹⁵ Dr. Chipman believed that a woman's entire training should be directed towards motherhood. He warned that too much education on other matters not connected with motherhood was dangerous: "Too much classroom saps young vitality, dwarfs the growing body and stacks the mind with unrealities."¹⁶ This idea that too much education would wreak disastrous consequences on a woman's body harked back to the nineteenth-century notion that women's bodies were inferior

¹⁴Dr W.W. Chipman, "Preparing Women for the Greatest of Professions", Maclean's, (October 1921)58.

¹⁵Dr Woods Hutchinson, "The Modern Mother", Maclean's, (July 1920)68.

¹⁶W. W. Chipman, "Preparing Women for the Greatest of Professions", 58.

to men's and that their reproductive systems, in fact, these dominated their bodies. They were deemed more susceptible to mental deterioration due to the close connection between their reproductive organs and their brains.¹⁷ Dr Hutchinson, who did not subscribe to such nineteenth-century ideas, accorded women a somewhat larger scope of behaviour, yet still viewed the focus of her existence as being directed toward the improvement of her children:

"She is outgrowing her saint status which was frankly that of slave and house servant. She now asserts her own individuality to impress this on her kids and become their guide and protector not merely in the nursery but for the critical period of adolescence."¹⁸

In this description, Hutchinson was also describing the expansion of the modern mothers' duties which now included character builder not just for infants but also for adolescents.

The bulk of the doctor's interest lay in medicalizing childhood: an unexpected but lucrative cash cow. While all children needed medical attention, the focus of the campaign was getting poor parents to see the need for visits to the doctor for the purpose of maintenance: "The intelligent mother may take the precaution of bringing her child to the doctor at regular intervals. This is being done for babies of

¹⁷Wendy Mitchinson, The Nature of their Bodies. (Toronto: 1991)Chapter Two.

¹⁸W.W. Chipman, "Preparing Women for the Greatest of Professions", 58.

the poor in hundreds at infant welfare stations."¹⁹ At these stations babies were weighed and examined by nurses, and their mothers were taught proper feeding techniques. Doctors relied on standardized tables which indicated average weight and height. They felt a great need to control the growth of infants in a rigid scientific manner, despite the fact not all babies were the same size. Doctors especially concentrated on the feeding of infants and in particular, the bottle fed ones. This leaves one with the impression that they distrusted breast feeding because it was so difficult to measure the amount of milk taken. For instance, while Dr Alan Brown in one breath maintained that, "There is no real substitute for mother's milk," he spent the rest of the article explaining how to bottle feed in a hygienic fashion without discussing proper breast feeding techniques or typical breast feeding problems.²⁰ Despite the difficulty in turning nursing into a science, doctors decided that nursing mothers should be put on a rigid scientific schedule of only allowing their child to drink every four hours. The message was clear: the feeding of one's infant was a difficult and dangerous undertaking that only a doctor could properly regulate. The line between becoming a good mother or

¹⁹Dr Alan Brown, "Keeping the Well Child Well", Maclean's, (October 1922)22.

²⁰Dr Alan Brown, "What You Should Know About a Child's Feeding", Maclean's, (November 1922)45.

remaining a potentially murdering mother, through ignorance, could only be crossed through a visit to the doctor. This discourse represented an attempt to decrease the power and authority of mothers and to claim an increase in the doctor's authority and power. Previously, mothers' decisions regarding the diet of their children had been unchallenged. The child care knowledge passed on by grandmothers, whether it was home remedies for coughs or special recipes for baby's first meal, was disparaged by doctors in favour of their own "expertise." A female area of knowledge was being replaced by primarily male "professional" advice.

Another interesting aspect to the doctors' discussion of motherhood was their tendency to explain the high levels of infant and maternal mortality by blaming immigrants and thus the working class population. Dr Hutchinson claimed that infants of today were in better health, "with the exception of certain congested areas, populated almost exclusively by recently arrived foreign-born immigrants."²¹ Dr McCullough explained why midwives would not be successful in Canada, despite the fact that Sweden, where they were dominated as health care workers, had one of the lowest rates of infant and maternal mortality:

"People in Sweden are of a single race. In Canada all races are striving to make a living and to reproduce in an alien

²¹Dr Woods Hutchinson, "The Modern Mother", 68.

climate. Inter-marriage is a factor in difficult labour."²² By targeting the unhealthy conditions of the poor people, doctors were able to generate public concern and state endorsement. However, these same poor people who they were trying to help also made convenient scape-goats when the infanticide levels refused to descend or when reformers clamoured for the supervision and licensing of midwives, a threat to their profession.

During the twenties, doctors and especially psychologists also turned their attention to the socio-cultural aspects of parenting itself, drawing heavily on a behaviourist model. It is important to keep in mind that the word "parents" was really a code word for the word "mother." Often authors would begin with the "parents" yet later slip in the word "mothers." Since the onus of child raising was placed primarily on mothers, this thesis considers any mention of "parents" to be probable references to the duties of "mothers."²³ William Blatz was the primary proponent and most frequent publisher of behaviourist methods in Canada,

²²Dr. John McCullough, "Should Canada Have Midwives", Chatelaine, (October 1931)18.

²³Cynthia Comacchio in Nations are Built of Babies (Chapter Four), notes that fathers were rarely specifically referred to in a child rearing capacity. Doctors usually referred to them only as either a figurehead or as the family's breadwinner. For instance, they would encourage fathers to allow their wives to visit the doctor for pre-natal exams because they believed fathers controlled the family's finances. Comacchio also views the label of "parents" as referring primarily to women.

and all other doctors' writing on the subject referred back to him. Paula Fass explains that behaviourists believed the individual was the sum of his social behaviours.²⁴ Behaviourists viewed infants as essentially lumps of clay ready to be prodded and pulled by their parents into an acceptable form. This model was justified as a way to create better citizens in a scientific manner:

"In recent years emphasis shifted from studying causes of wrong doing to seeking a method of training to good behaviour which will help the child meet his obligations in a satisfactory way to society."²⁵

Doctors emphasized the need for parents (read mothers) to acquire education on how to perform behaviourist style parenting and judged parents as inadequate if they failed to do so. Dr. Frances Lily Johnson explained that in the past bringing up a child appeared to be a simple undertaking because life was simpler. However, with rapid industrialization, the skills demanded of people were more complex, and thus parents had to prepare their children in an even more complex manner. According to Johnson, the trouble with parents today was that they did not receive enough training: "Would you trust your child to a doctor who was no

²⁴Frances Lily Johnson, "Child and Parent Training", *Chatelaine*, (February 1930)43.

²⁴Paula Fass, *The Damned and the Beautiful*, 103.

²⁵Dr Frances Lily Johnson, "What of Your Child", *Chatelaine*, (January 1930)51.

better trained than are most parents?"²⁶ She blamed parents who did not avail themselves of this new scientific method:

"Parents today are more severely criticized, in spite of advances, [and] they deserve it. This new branch of learning on how to make a scientific study of their children will enable them to have an objective attitude in order to see them as individuals with certain possibilities and limits and treat behaviour unbiased by personal feelings."²⁷

Clearly, this model stressed the superiority of scientific study as a method to achieve unemotional and analytic parenting. This model was mainly directed at middle class parents who had time for extra study and probably some background training in the scientific method.

This style of parenting also held parents, but primarily mothers, even more responsible for their children's actions because it theorized that only they were responsible for their child's formation, since according to Dr Brown, "The child is little more than a vegetable when it is born."²⁸ Johnson clearly shoved the blame on mothers when she stated that when one finds a nervous child, there is a nervous mother.²⁹ Parents (read mothers) were told not to spank their children but to analyze the root of their misbehaviour and then react accordingly. One could infer that the doctors

²⁶Frances Lily Johnson, "Child and Parent Training", *Chatelaine*, (February 1930)43.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Alan Brown, "Keeping the Well Child Well,"22.

²⁹Frances Lily Johnson, "Child and Parent Training", 43.

probably believed the misbehaviour lay in the parent's faulty training of the child.

In conclusion, the discourse of the doctors reinforced their own authority and tried to decrease the authority of mothers. They saw both the physical and mental growth of infants as medical problems to be handled in a scientific manner. The working class was targeted as the most ignorant of hygienic practices, while the middle class was targeted for instruction in the new behaviourist model of parenting. Both classes were expected to submit to the authority of the doctors.

B. The Discourse of the Nurses

As Arnup noted, it was the nurses who were actively involved in teaching and visiting the people, especially working class families. They were poised between the expertise of the doctors and the common sense of the average woman. Essentially they were women doing women's work. Because nurses had more contact than did doctors with parents they focused on the actual "housekeeping" aspect of the regime. They instructed parents mainly on the handling of infants: bathing; feeding; elimination; sleep; and separation of infant from the rest of the house. They did not trust parents to follow their orders and were quick to blame and label them as "bad". They also encountered more resistance

thAn did doctors to their orders, perhaps due to the fact they were women and lower down on the medical hierarchy. Most of the material written by nurses was published during the twenties or late teens so this study will not provide a comparison of their discourse between the two decades.

While nurses also followed a behaviourist model, they believed that proper raising of children revolved solely around instilling in the child regular hygienic habits. Stella Pines, who wrote numerous articles for Chatelaine, claimed: "Of the first importance are the baby's regular habits for he cannot be expected to thrive without punctuality in matters of toilet, feeding, rest and so on."³⁰ While doctors were obsessed with feeding, nurses fixated on the other end, elimination. Feeding schedules of every four hours were necessary, not only for standardized weight gain, but so as not "to have too frequent movement of bowels."³¹ Pines also attributed to the mother the baby's constipation: "If the mother is, baby will also likely be constipated."³² Finally, she recommended for "sluggish babies" that they be given salt water enemas for the period of a week. However, Pines warned that it was wrong to subject babies to daily

³⁰Stella Pines, RN, "Irregularities of Babyhood - Life Long Habits May Be Established in the First Few Months", Chatelaine, (February 1929)26.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid.

enemas for months at a time.³³ Pine's article shows that nurses were as interested as doctors in medicalizing infancy. However, nurses worked at teaching hygiene habits in more detail and at the practical level, housekeeping.

Nurses promoted a type of middle-class style of child raising involving many sanitary accessories. Stella Pines was adamant that baby have his own room, in order for him to be separate from the rest of the house. She gave detailed instructions as to the contents of the nursery, "washable floor, rugs, crib and screen, small cupboard, small set of drawers, a low chair, a table that can be washed, an enamelled receptacle with lid for soiled clothes, a wet bulb thermometer."³⁴ While in our own consumer society this might not appear to be extravagant, many working-class families during the twenties would not have been able to afford a crib much less an extra room. According to the Medical Examiner's reports, discussed in greater detail later, many infants slept in their parents' bed or in one case with its grandmother, mother and other sibling.³⁵ Other elements in Pines's advice confirms that such articles were designed with a middle class audience in mind: for example, "Give him meals

³³Ibid.

³⁴Stella Pines, "The Baby's Routine and Management", Chatelaine, (January 1929)19.

³⁵P.A.N.S., RG 41 "D" vol 84, case # 1964, (July 16, 1924)1.

at stated hours, by himself, at a properly set table with clean linen." Many couples would have felt daunted by this deluxe method of child raising and doubtful that they could provide such luxuries. Women working as domestics for twenty-five dollars a month who faced caring for a child without a father could not possibly have felt able to buy the necessary amenities.

While the ideal accessories described by nurses may only have been in reach of a middle class budget, nurses targeted both classes of parents for their hygiene lectures. For instance, Emma Gary Wallace cautioned that neglect due to ignorance was "Not limited to poorer homes. One-third of infants suffer from malnutrition including well to do ones."³⁶ Pines's description of a bad parent included both classes as well:

"A bad parent does not cooperate with nature, has no thought for the good of others, who accepts all things as inevitable and makes no effort to improve conditions and overcome difficulties, who thinks advice is only for those who are economically poor, and who considers this advice an insult."³⁷

Notice the tension in this description. Pines had obviously encountered many "bad" parents who resisted her advice.

Perhaps some of her frustration may have been caused by the fact that nurses were only allowed to conduct visits in the

³⁶Emma Gary Wallace, "During the No Man's Land of Childhood", Chatelaine, (February 1931)3.

³⁷Stella Pines, "The First of a Chatelaine Series on Mothercraft", Chatelaine, (May 1928)4.

poorer sections of town and that "well baby clinics" were also only for the economically stressed. As a result middle class families were escaping the nurses' scrutiny. Middle class women went directly to doctors and even specialists for their children's medical evaluation.³⁸

In Halifax, two tragedies occurred at the end of the teens but the effects of which carried over into the twenties. These tragedies both affected the economy of the working class, and thus influenced their child raising capabilities. However, these tragedies also created an extensive system of nursing and thus sped along many of the Scientific Motherhood movement's messages. The first tragedy was the Halifax Explosion of 1917. On December 6, 1917 the French Mont Blanc, carrying TNT, collided mid-channel with the Belgium relief vessel, the Imo. One square mile of the Richmond Heights area, one of the city's main working-class neighbourhoods, was levelled, resulting in 35 million dollars in property damage, 2,000 killed, 6,000 injured and 1,000 homeless. Unfortunately, their places of occupation were also destroyed; both the factory area and the dockyards were reduced to rubble. Many working-class families had had the opportunity to purchase homes in the pre-1910 period when they were affordable. After the explosion it was a sellers' market and compensation was slow in coming, if at all;

³⁸A Young Mother, "Just One Baby?", Chatelaine, (March 1931)15.

therefore, many families were faced with renting.³⁹ The second unfortunate occurrence was a Spanish Influenza epidemic which started in June 1918, peaked in the Autumn of 1918, and ended in 1922. Hundreds died and others were reduced to invalids with heart conditions and nervous disorders. The Halifax Municipal Council even had to close all public places for five weeks as the disease was transmitted through the air.⁴⁰

These two unfortunate calamities resulted in the development of an extensive system of public health nurses in Halifax. According to Suzanne Morton, existing organizations were expanded and new ones created to deal with immediate health problems.⁴¹ As a result of the Explosion, Kathryn MacPherson adds, Halifax became an innovator in the field of public health nursing.⁴² The three branches included the Victorian Order of Nurses (VON), the Halifax-Massachusetts Health Commission (HMHC) and the Red Cross.

The three different branches of nursing at times overlapped but provided slightly different variants of health

³⁹Catherine Waite, The Longshoremen of Halifax 1900-1930, 77.

⁴⁰Ibid, 78.

⁴¹Suzanne Morton, Men and Women in a Halifax Working-Class Neighbourhood, 178.

⁴²Kathryn MacPherson, Nurses and Nursing in Twentieth Century Halifax, History M.A. Thesis Dalhousie University, (1982)77.

care and Scientific Motherhood instruction. The Red Cross was a volunteer organization of lay women formed during the war to provide supplies and services for the troops. After the explosion, the Red Cross decided to continue its work by sponsoring public health programs, such as Caravans bringing health care clinics and child care education to rural Nova Scotia, and the services of public health nurses throughout Nova Scotia.⁴³ The HMHC came into being as a result of the Explosion of 1917. The hierarchal structure of the Health Commission and its emphasis on education mirrored many other Scientific Motherhood reform projects: three doctors sat on the board of directors, while public health nurses were hired to carry out the actual work of examining and treating patients at a variety of clinics held weekly at health centres. The HMHC nurses also visited homes to supervise and instruct mothers on how to care for their infants. However, if actual medical care of a patient was needed the HMHC nurses called a VON, a hospital or a doctor. Other services provided by Commission nurses included: giving lectures on hygiene, conducting a children's nutritional class, supervising children at Farmer Smith's Fresh Air Camp at Rainbow Haven, and allotting plots to the poor in the garden behind Health Centre No. 1.⁴⁴ Despite these good works author

⁴³Ibid, 86.

⁴⁴Ibid., 94.

W.D. Forrest criticized the HMHC nurses for educating without actually providing medical care and praised the VON for its bedside nursing services:

"Bear in mind the fact that these ladies do no nursing. They simply advised their clientele how to keep from getting sick. If the latter are so stupid to follow the advice given and become ill, a VON nurse is summoned to attend them until restored to health when the public health nurse will again take them on with more advice."⁴⁵

It appears that some citizens, at least in Halifax, were cynical about the Scientific Motherhood public health nurses' concentration on education without balancing this advice with real medical assistance

An article written by Jessie Ross, a Commission nurse working at "Attacking Infant and Maternal Mortality" in Halifax, indicated that while many participated in their "Well-Baby Clinic", which opened in 1920, nurses were greeted at times with distrust and they in turn distrusted their working-class clientele. That there was some resistance to their intrusion into families' parenting practices was apparent when she complained that "Forever is one met with the argument that the mother or great-grandmother did thus and so hence it is right..that conditions have changed with each generation is the fact that must be made clear."⁴⁶ The

⁴⁵W.D. Forrest, "Health Board Chairman Raps Sieniewicz Report", Evening Mail, (March 3, 1925)6.

⁴⁶Jessie Ross RN, "Attacking Infant and Maternal Mortality - The Halifax Experiment", The Public Health Nurse, 125.

nurses' distrust of the clients extended into the program of the Well-Baby Clinic. Ross explained that there were 2,000 families on their list and that it was their goal to visit every baby under six months once a week. The reason for this frequency of inspection was that "It is impossible to assure an infant proper feeding without almost constant supervision .. so many neighbours and relatives giving advice and alluring ads."⁴⁷ Despite the distrust on both sides, the great numbers flocking to the clinic indicated that many were interested in using the service in Halifax.

However, Ross explained that the pre-natal clinic did not fare as well as it might have due to the fact that, "there is a tradition in Halifax of not consulting a physician."⁴⁸ Halifaxians and perhaps other citizens in Canada were slow to accept the medicalizing of pregnancy and also infancy. Perhaps Ross's expression of dissatisfaction at the pre-natal clinic's low attendance was indicative of nurses' interest in increasing their own authority and decreasing that of parents. Possibly, too, this statement indicated that nurses felt frustrated at the limited degree to which their authority was accepted.

C. Discourse of the Reformers

⁴⁷Ibid., 126.

⁴⁸Ibid., 127.

During the 1910 to 1920 period reformers wrote prolifically about the Scientific Motherhood movement. Unlike the doctors and the nurses they were interested in increasing the status of mother and giving her more influence in society. The reformers also accorded women a wider standard of behaviour; they stressed both training in domestic motherhood duties but also maintained women needed an education that would allow them to have a separate career. Finally, while they were interested in all classes, they favoured the idea that middle class women such as themselves or their female kin made better mothers.

Reformers regarded the war as a factor enabling change in the normative standard for women's behaviour as future mothers. For instance Miss Marjory MacMurchy, head of the Woman's Reconstruction Program, claimed "The war has taught women the advantage of being organized for special lines of work."⁴⁹ She was advocating that "Education [of girls] should be adjusted so that they may be prepared for the service of womanhood in the nation as well as fitted for some skilled occupation."⁵⁰ Hence, she saw the war as having been responsible for widening the range of standards for women's lives. While she did want women to become better mothers,

⁴⁹Marjory MacMurchy, "A Woman's Reconstruction Program", Maclean's, (February 1919)13.

⁵⁰Ibid.

they were also expected to work at some other employment, at least prior to motherhood. She also saw the need to raise the status of motherhood in a monetary fashion through the initiation of mother's pensions. She added that this was not only to help single mothers but to create better future citizens. Ethel Chapman echoed this need for pensions. She emphasized how the war had underscored the importance of the next generation of infants: "Now the war had taught us what the country needs more than anything else is well cared for, healthy, normally brought up children."⁵¹ She ventured the idea that mothers availing themselves of the pensions should not be considered objects of charity but "civil servants" earning a salary. Therefore these reformers linked increasing the status of motherhood with a type of nationalism. In such a system of mother's pensions, infanticide would have undoubtedly been considered an inconceivable treasonous act. However, they held the state somewhat responsible for desperate measures taken by women, if it did not ensure their economic independence.

Chapman actually did mention an attempted infanticide case in a later article. However, unlike the growing trend to view such abnormal acts in a medical manner, she ascribed economic reasons to the case and was quite sympathetic to the mother. The woman was described as destitute and heartbroken

⁵¹Ethel M. Chapman, "Mother's Pensions", Maclean's, (April 1919)98.

over the fact her soldier lover had deserted her. Chapman and her reformer friends chose not to remind the woman of the criminal charge that might have been brought against her, but instead supplied her with a home and special baby middle class accessories. Her band of women, "of the best homes in the city," worked to make her the baby clothes and accessories that any middle class woman would have had: "They made a layette for her baby, hand worked, lace edged, just like they would make for their own children."⁵² Chapman clearly associated the raising of children with middle class consumption. Perhaps one might infer that some reformers, unlike the doctors and nurses, saw parenting in more economic terms or at least in the context of its broader social meanings (not just health but pride and love).

Finally, the last aspect of the reformers' discourse for the 1910 to 1920 period we will discuss was how they viewed the class nature of the campaign. On one hand, they targeted the poor for special instruction, while lamenting the ignorance of their own class:

"That is why district nurses are sent from house to house among the very poor and the foreign elements to show the mothers just how a baby should be bathed, clothed and fed. Unfortunately nurses don't visit the up-town sections."⁵³

On the other hand, many of them believed that their own class

⁵²Ethel Chapman, "New Field of the Red Cross", Maclean's, (September 1920)14.

⁵³"Mothercraft - A New Science", Maclean's, (December 1917)112.

naturally were better predisposed for motherhood. While college education was still an experience of only a small minority of women, the middle class had an easier access to it. The Scientific Motherhood movement furnished middle class women with a justification for a college education. In an article that clearly stated, "College Girls Make Better Mothers," the author explained that the college girl would be able to pick out a better husband and would have a more serious interest in life.⁵⁴ Therefore, while officially they felt every woman needed more education on how to become a better mother, they felt their own class had the economic resources to properly fulfil the endeavour.

In Halifax, reformers appeared to have made an effort to include all classes of women during their educational bonanza called "Baby Saving Week", which took place in 1919. This eight-day educational campaign was hosted by the Local Council of Women with help from the VON, the Saint John's Ambulance Brigade, the Graduate Nurses, the Welfare Bureau, the Dispensary, the Halifax Infants Home and the Massachusetts-Halifax Relief Commission; it was undoubtedly a community undertaking. Besides providing information booths, there was a weighing and examination station, movies on baby hygiene,

⁵⁴ Mrs Moore, President of the Federation of Women's Clubs, "Says College Girls Make Better Mothers", Morning Chronicle, (June 18, 1911)7.

and a lecture series given by various experts.⁵⁵ There was enough variety in the presentation of information to have appealed to all classes. Poor mothers may have been enticed by the free medical examination and information, while middle class mothers might have felt interested in attending the academic lecture series.

During the twenties Halifax reformers concentrated more on devising measures which would help specifically poor mothers. Reformers organized the donation of secondhand clothing, books and hot lunches for children of the poor.⁵⁶ This reflected the reformers' concern over financial matters as well as those of health. Despite their recognition that adequate family finances were integral to proper child raising, they maintained the somewhat surprising attitude that "health is not freedom from disease but physical capital obtainable by rich and poor."⁵⁷ Notice the equation of health to "capital." This quote demonstrates a naivete on the part of the Reformers about equality of access to money, that is a prerequisite to saving. Similarly one needed money to eat well enough to acquire physical capital, the saved vitality of good bones, nerves, etc. Although naive about working-

⁵⁵Mrs. E.M. Murray and Mrs. William Blish, "Saving Babies in Halifax," The Canadian Nurse, (December, 1919)2171.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Flora C. Liggett, "Red Cross Work Growing Steady," Evening Mail, (January 1, 1926)8.

class families' possible income some reformers were aware that the working class's ability to be good parents was undermined by their lack of capital, both financially and healthwise. This concern was in part a reflection of how the notion of "deluxe" child raising was becoming a normative standard in society.

The twenties, as well, marked the reformers' interest in imparting proper parenting skills. Like doctors and nurses, they too subscribed to a behaviourist model. However, while the doctors were primarily concerned with demonstrating how the model could be used to make parenting scientific and nurses valued it for teaching children and mothers hygienic habits, the reformers saw it as an avenue for character development of model citizens and as an effective and easier method of parenting. For instance, Mabel Crews Ringland, a reformer who wrote extensively on behaviourist parenting, claimed, "Character doesn't happen; it must be built and the parent's task is that of builder."⁵⁸ Environment was integral to this development:

"It is important that there is an atmosphere of serenity and regularity in the home so that the child's physical needs of meal time, bedtime, playtime, dressing, toilet evolve through a consistent routine to wholesome every day habits."⁵⁹

Certainly only middle class mothers would have been able to

⁵⁸Mabel Crews Ringland, "As the Twig is Bent," Maclean's (May 1929) 63.

⁵⁹Ibid.

afford to care about projecting serenity and regularizing their child's routine to the last minute. Reformers promoted this intense scheduling of the child's day as a way to not only build a good citizen but as a way of avoiding power struggles: with scheduling, children "will be more apt to accept restrictions placed on their freedom ...without need of argument, coaxing or nagging."⁶⁰ One can infer that reformers endorsed behaviourist parenting because it appeared to offer a means to make parenting easier. It is important to remember that doctors and nurses were involved with Scientific Motherhood for professional reasons, while reformers saw it as a way to improve the health of their own children as well as those of the rest of society.

One final note in the reformer discourse was their criticism of two other parenting methods, the affectionate and the disciplinarian. This study defines both affectionate and disciplinarian parenting as styles based on experience either gained by the individual or handed down to the individual by their parents rather than ones based on book learning. Affectionate parenting was distinctively characterized by the parents' trust in their children's ability to behave rationally if they in turn treated their children respectfully, i.e. they treated them as thinking

⁶⁰Mabel Crews Ringland, "Children Are Not Born Bad; But it Takes Brains to Handle Them," *Maclean's*, (March 15, 1928)72.

human beings and not as animals to be trained through repetition. By contrast, disciplinarian parents used corporal and other kinds of punishment as methods to correct and "keep in line" their children's behaviour. The fact that a reformer bothered to criticize these two alternative modes of parenting was indicative that they were considered competition to the behaviouralist method by contemporaries. Ringland disparaged what she termed "permissive" and "authoritarian" style as ineffective:

"Some who pin their faith to the good old methods of corrective discipline on which they were reared, have just as disobedient and unruly youngsters as their neighbours believing in the new "rule of love" as they call it, allow their young hopefuls to walk roughshod over everybody who crosses their path."⁶¹

In this paradigm she placed the disciplinarian at one extreme and affectionate at the other. Hence, readers would be likely to think the behaviourist represented the best choice because it occupied the middle ground. Another way in which she diminished the two styles had to do with her historical characterization of them. She labelled the disciplinarian style as "old fashioned" (read out of date) and the permissive style as modern, but the wrong sort of modern because it was unscientific (read flaky).

D. Dissenting Voices from Popular Culture: Mothers, Fathers,

⁶¹Mabel Crews Ringland, "To Spank or Not to Spank?", and Maclean's, (April 1928)4.

and Advice Columnists

A series of characteristics were shared by those whose voices dissented from the Scientific Motherhood orthodoxy. These dissenting voices wrote not from a position of wanting to reform, but from a position of defense. They justified their parenting style, which was either authoritarian or permissive, as one derived from "experience" and not book learning. The mothers and fathers who wrote articles self-consciously labelled themselves as such, thus denoting where their expertise came from. Advice columnists, who likewise did not represent a reforming or academic position, also justified their expertise on the grounds of "common sense". Often they set themselves up as providing alternative perspectives on parenting to those of the academic experts. For instance, one author wrote an article based on selected stories which showed women's common sense triumphing over the blustering of doctors.⁶² These voices are of interest because they provided resistance to the behaviourist model by offering two other standards of parenting.

The problem of "deluxe" child raising was an issue which particularly concerned mothers. New expenses came not only from heightened consumer expectations but also from the problem of how to afford the medical bills which scientific

⁶² "On Woman's Resourcefulness A Tribute to Her Ways and Means", Chatelaine, (February 1928)3.

motherhood prescribed. One author who labelled herself as a "Young Mother" defended her and her husband's choice to only have one child. She was addressing the popular question of whether "The Modern girl is too lazy or pleasure loving to wish for children."⁶³ This spiteful question indicated a normative standard that women bear many children. However, because this question was provoked one can infer that this standard was changing, perhaps due to the increased use of birth control devices or information. In her article this Young Mother demonstrated, through comparing her household's lower middle class income with all their expenses, that it would be impossible to have more than one child. One senses that she felt guilty about controlling her fertility. Of the expenses she listed, medical bills came out as the highest. The accessories involved in raising a baby, which included garments, bedding, carriage, and crib, totalled \$75. In contrast her medical bills, which included her pre-natal exams, her caesarean-section, 19 days in a hospital room, use of a nurse, use of operating room, and anesthetic, came to a total of \$360. These bills effectively wiped out three years of savings. After the baby was born it required check-ups which amounted to five dollars a visit.⁶⁴ This example demonstrated that families were beginning to accept the

⁶³A Young Mother, "Just One Baby?", Chatelaine, (March 1931)15.

⁶⁴Ibid.

practice of regular medical supervision of their children and of mothers during pregnancy and child birth. However, these new medical expenses also made people hesitate about having children. A domestic only made an average of three-hundred dollars a year. She certainly would have had doubts about being able to afford to ensure the health of her child under the dictates of Scientific Motherhood.

In contrast to the behaviourist model's neglect of the role of fathers in parenting practices, the disciplinarian method of parenting presented them as central figures.

"A little lad was desperately ill, but refused to take the medicine the doctor had left. At last his Mom gave up, "Oh my boy will die, my boy will die." But a voice spoke from the bed, "Don't cry Mother, Father will be home soon, and he'll make me take it."⁶⁵

As this joke illustrates, fathers were most often linked with the giving of corporal punishment, a disciplinary method that went against the dictates of the behaviourist method. One father who was also a social worker, championed this disciplinarian style of parenting and lamented the new ideas of child raising dictated by the experts: "I find my methods are no longer considered orthodox. I received lickings as a boy and they did me some good."⁶⁶ He was outraged at the advice of a Juvenile Court Judge who said you

⁶⁵ "First Aid", Canadian Magazine, (November 1911)210.

⁶⁶ "The Stupid Side of the Social Service", Chatelaine, (August 1931)43.

should not admonish your children for lying, stealing, swearing. Finally, he ridiculed the trend in social work of seeking the motivation behind a person's actions: "But she can show that it isn't exactly all your fault. Some of it, she will point out, has descended to you from Adam and Eve."⁶⁷ He claimed that his experience raising six of his own children and two adopted, as well as caring for his invalid wife, outweighed any knowledge gained by social workers who had just graduated from university. This man was clearly setting experience above the advice of experts and trying to discredit their academic expertise.

"Mothers" also used corporal punishment but seemed to temper it with an affectionate style of parenting. Eleanor Brett, "Mother of Five Happy Children," had a parenting style that involved a lot of positive reinforcement. She advised parents to treat their children as thinking human beings and to take them into their confidences: "Don't pose as a saint. Confide of your own childhood mistakes."⁶⁸ However, she was not above giving her child a good switching: "Watch them pretty closely around the age of two. Then it will need very little switching when it grows up."⁶⁹ Brett combined affection

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Eleanor Brett, "Never Say Don't", Chatelaine, (August 1931)19.

⁶⁹Ibid.

and discipline in her parenting methods, which she learned through experience.

Ruth Cameron, an advice columnist, also suggested an affectionate style of parenting to her readers. Her suggestions included: stop the extravagance of children's spending by telling them your financial situation, don't tell lies to children because it creates unnecessary fears, and in order to get children to do the right thing follow the course of least resistance.⁷⁰ On the whole, the affectionate method advocated by parents and advice columnists appeared to treat their child with respect and as reasoning creatures not as monkeys, to be trained through repetition, as the behaviourists did.

In short, by examining the discourse of the dissenting voices, one notices a concern over the rising cost of care expected to maintain children's health and a resistance to the parenting methods prescribed by experts. However, it did appear that Scientific Motherhood's message that medical supervision was necessary for both mothers and infants was taking root.

Part II - The Medical Examiners' Reports of Infant Death

⁷⁰Ruth Cameron, The Evening Mail, (January 5, 1912; July 23, 1911; March 6, 1912).

Under Parental Care: Scientific Motherhood both Accepted and Resisted

The Medical Examiners' reports on the death of infants under parental care are a valuable source of information on how the tenets of Scientific Motherhood were accepted by both doctors and parents. While it is difficult to gain a full understanding of the parenting practices of Halifax residents because one can only view their actions through the professional discourse of the doctors, one can still get a glimpse, if somewhat murky, of changes and continuity in their methods. On one hand, by the twenties parents appeared to have accepted the message that regular medical supervision was needed by both delivering mothers and infants. On the other hand, they continued with many practices that Scientific Motherhood firmly opposed, such as sleeping with infants, single mothers continuing to work, listening to the advice of neighbours and relying on the help of grandparents. The diagnoses of the Medical Examiners are of particular interest as well because they reflected the changing medical values of the time. The diagnoses of Dr Finn, who worked as the Examiner from 1896 to 1924,⁷¹ differed noticeably from the Scientific Motherhood diagnoses and conclusions of Dr. Woodbury, who started in 1924, just as the movement was

⁷¹ "Dr. W.D. Finn Died Early Yesterday Morning", Morning Chronicle, (April 14, 1924)2.

building momentum. The two Medical Examiners, besides being representative of different religions and ethnic backgrounds, provide perfect examples of the medical practices before and during the Scientific Motherhood movement. Although Dr. Finn did hold office during the early phase of the movement, his ideas reflect those of an earlier time. Dr. Finn was of Irish ancestry and was described as "a staunch Roman Catholic and a Liberal".⁷² Catherine Waite describes the Irish as occupying the second lowest social position in Halifax, just above that of the African-Nova Scotians. According to Waite, they were primarily labourers and lived in "Irish Town", an area between Water and Hollis Street.⁷³ However, Dr. William Finn, his brother, Hon R.E. Finn, and his uncle, Dr. Farrell, obviously were exceptions to that pattern. Dr. W. Finn's residence was on the affluent South Park St, and besides gaining the prestigious office of Medical Examiner, he also held the position of "Chief Medical Officer for American Immigration".⁷⁴ Nothing in his background suggests any kind of specialization in health of infants or in the Scientific Motherhood movement.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Catherine Waite, The Longshoremens of Halifax, 1900-1930, MA Thesis in History, Dalhousie University, (1977)38.

⁷⁴ "Dr. W.D. Finn Died Early Yesterday Morning", 2.

Indeed, compared to Woodbury, his reports seemed to show the barest, most perfunctory interest in dead infants. While Woodbury's reports on dead infants were an average of 29.6 lines long (averaged over a period of two years), Finn's were only 5.7 lines in length. They also were far less "scientific" in their medical language. In addition, Finn labelled symptoms as the "cause of death", rather than venturing an opinion on what disease or event was responsible for the symptoms. Most of the babies examined by Finn were said to have died of "convulsions" and no diagnosis was given as to what caused the convulsions. Finn, as well, seemed to not see the need for conducting autopsies, for they were few and far between. In short, Finn's style reflected an era which was less concerned with the explanatory side of science; it reported, but did not investigate or interpret.

In contrast, Dr. Frank V. Woodbury epitomized a Scientific Motherhood doctor. Woodbury's parentage was Anglo Saxon and his family had long been members of the United Methodist church.⁷⁵ According to Richard Allen, members of the Methodist church were the most involved in the social gospel movement. His family appeared to typify the Methodist ideal. For instance, his nephew Dr. Ralph Woodbury, a dentist, was the President of the Supervised Playgrounds Commission, a subscriber to the Young Man's Christian Association and a

Chronicle, (April 26, 1920).

⁷⁵ "Dr. Ralph Woodbury Died, 39th Year of Life", Mail, (Oct 21, 1924) Front page.

member of the Children's Aid. Hence, Ralph Woodbury was active in both religious and secular social work. In contrast, Frank Woodbury appears to have moved exclusively in the scientific, secular realm of reform. He began his career serving as a doctor during World War One. This experience perhaps led him to see the need for continued mobilization of the public around health issues. On his return he actually did Scientific Motherhood work, by organizing two travelling clinics, which offered child care education and medical services for people in rural Nova Scotia.⁷⁶ After taking the post of Medical Examiner in 1924, he later also served as a doctor for the Halifax Infants Home.⁷⁷ Woodbury was grounded in the Scientific Motherhood movement and was particularly focused on the health of infants. Not surprising, then, his diagnosis reflected many of its ideas about medical supervision and child care.

Woodbury's report writing style differed from Finn's in its use of scientific and medical terminology. Woodbury conducted many more autopsies and ordered more inquiries by the police into specific cases (see Table VI). He also interviewed more people as is demonstrated in Table IX. Finn appeared to mainly rely on the testimonies of the mother,

⁷⁶ "Red Cross Clinics to Tour Province", Morning Chronicle, (April 26, 1920).

⁷⁷P.A.N.S, "Halifax Infants Home - 59th Annual Report, 1933", (1933)6.

while Woodbury questioned grandparents, neighbours, and sought out more fathers. He was interested in family history and scrutinized the interactions of its members more closely. In short, he was using the principles of Scientific Motherhood, which emphasized the importance of home environment, to judge the behaviour of families.

A comparison between the Medical Examiners' judgements and their reporting on the parenting practices of Halifax families over the two decades reveals several trends. First, there was an increase in the minimum medical attention for children the Examiner expected the parents to have provided. There was also an increase in the amount of medical supervision actually sought by parents for their children. Third, during the twenties there was an increase in the scrutiny and blame attached to parenting practices by the Examiners. In spite of this close scrutiny, families resisted following some parenting methods dictated by Scientific Motherhood.

During the 1910 to 1920 period, Dr Finn appeared not to expect much medical supervision of their children from parents. Usually he asked if a doctor had been called to treat the child's illness. However, he did not seem to mind that only two of thirty-four doctors called made it to the home before the child expired (See table V). Doctors' failing to get to the home prior to the child's death leads one to believe that the parents waited to the very last minute

before calling them. Perhaps Finn saw the parents' hesitation in summoning medical aid as normal. He did not protest their hesitation as incompetence, nor did he specify in his reports which doctors had been called to attend the infant. When a newborn child died he did note whether there had been a medical attendant or other who had assisted. However, unlike Dr. Woodbury, he did not question parents of older infants as to whether their infants were under regular medical supervision or whether a doctor had originally delivered their child. Finally, Finn, unlike Woodbury, did not link diet to infant death. Sometimes he would note the events which occurred prior to the infant's death, and only then would he mention feeding: "Baby did not nurse by will in the morning. She washed the child and laid her in the baby carriage. Later found it dead. Death due to Natural Causes."⁷⁸ Perhaps Finn viewed infant death as inevitable and thus saw the behaviour of parents as perfectly normal.

In contrast, Woodbury had expectations that parents would seek out regular medical supervision for both pregnant mothers and for their infants. Woodbury asked all of the parents whether their infants had been under regular medical supervision and fully expected an affirmative answer. Secondly, he questioned parents of both newborns and older infants as to whether a doctor had delivered their child.

⁷⁸P.A.N.S., RG 41 "D" vol 82, case #1285, (July 2, 1913)1.

Contemporary child care experts were linking pre-natal care and delivery with health of the infant later in its life; thus Woodbury's line of inquiry must have arisen from that analysis. Another example of his diagnoses aligning with those of the scientific motherhood movement was his focus on diet. Unlike Finn he questioned families about whether their baby was nursing or was bottle feeding, which was demonstrated in the increased reporting of women recorded in Table IIIIV, as either bottle feeding or nursing. Changes in the infant's diet he often ascribed as the cause of death: "Diet has been changed that morning. An arrowroot biscuit instead of milk formula to which the child was accustomed. Recommended by neighbour."⁷⁹ As mentioned earlier, this association of diet with death was popular among the Scientific Motherhood doctors. Finally, during the twenties, especially the end of the twenties, Woodbury began to interpret cases in which women had delivered without medical attendance as potentially criminal cases. He even ordered inquiries into two cases where women had delivered alone (See Table VI). This indicated an acceptance that medical supervision was not only advised but, in the eyes of doctors, failure to secure it now amounted to criminal neglect. Therefore, by examining Woodbury's judgements and areas of inquiry, one can infer that by the last half of the twenties

⁷⁹P.A.N.S., RG 41 "D" vol 85, case #123, (March 4, 1930)1.

both child birth and infancy were increasingly medicalized.

The behaviour of Halifax parents also indicated that medical supervision was beginning to be perceived as part of a parent's duty. During the twenties doctors appear to have been called more quickly to the side of an ailing infant because more were arriving prior to the infant's death (See Table IV). Secondly, more children did have a history of regular medical supervision in the twenties (see Table IV). Thirdly, twenties parents appeared to be more likely to engage doctors and even use the services of a hospital for child birth (See Table V). This change was no doubt sped along by the opening of Grace Maternity Hospital in 1920.

However, there were some who resisted converting to medicalized maternity and child care. Domestic servants and married women whose husbands were either out of town or dead, were the most likely to bear children without any medical supervision (See Table VI). These women were undoubtedly under the most restrictive financial constraints. Nevertheless, it was highly suspicious when they did not even arrange for the help of a neighbour, as many women did. Finally, there were some parents who resisted calling a doctor to treat their infant's illness and may have resented the advice that their child needed one. For instance the Macdonalds had twins who were in poor health. When one died, Woodbury noted that no doctor was called to treat it, and advised that the other twin receive medical attention.

However, the father said that the child seemed better, so no doctor was called. This child also died. Woodbury's diagnosis was "inexperienced mothering."⁸⁰ He held the mother ultimately responsible for the health of the child even though it was the father who vetoed calling a doctor. Despite these exceptions, the data in Table V suggest that, overall, parents in Halifax were seeing the need for medical attendance.

In other areas of parenting, the Medical Examiner's judgements became more critical of parents. Furthermore, the home situation was more closely scrutinized during the twenties than in the teens. Dr. Finn was more positive than Woodbury about the actions taken by parents to keep their children alive (see Table VII) and often supportively stated, "Parents did what they could." However, if an infant happened to die while it was in bed with its mother, then Finn was likely to conclude it had experienced "Overlying by its Mother," as its cause of death. This frequent diagnosis seems unlikely to have been valid. Since the 1960s some child care experts have actually advocated taking one's infant to bed.⁸¹ Was this diagnosis a form of mother blaming or a convenient explanation for difficult-to-explain infant deaths? Finn did

⁸⁰P.A.N. S., RG 41 "D" vol 84, case #1979 and #1982, (Sept 29 and Oct 2, 1924).

⁸¹Katherine Arnup in Education for Motherhood, notes "La Leche League" sanctioned sleeping with one's infant (p. 189).

have trouble diagnosing causes of death in infants, and possibly "overlying by mothers" simply offered an easy solution for the cause of death. However, since it targeted only mothers and not "parents" it does appear to be a form of mother blaming. Finally, by questioning mainly mothers in his investigations and rarely addressing fathers (See Table VI), Finn placed the responsibility of child raising primarily on the mother's shoulders.

Compared with Finn, Woodbury was more interested in scrutinizing the mechanics of family life and then passing judgement. He noted whether the infant was an illegitimate one, thus demonstrating his suspicion that such children would not be as wanted as legitimate ones. He reported whether other children in the family appeared to be healthy and well looked after. He also critiqued the character of the parents. For instance, if a father was employed in a high status position then the parents were deemed to be of good reputation: "I have interviewed the parents who are of excellent character, the father a sergeant in the Royal Canadian Engineers."⁸² Working class parents were suspected of drunkenness or poor parenting practices, although they too could be judged as having good characters: "The child slept in a wide, flat double bed between parents who are of good

⁸²P.A.N.S., RG 41 "D" vol 84, case #2243, (November 13, 1928)1.

reputation and not drunken."⁸³ Woodbury was also concerned about the practice of sleeping with one's baby; however, he was not as quick to diagnose overlying by mothers (See Table VII). But he did subscribe to the reformers' ideas that mothers should not go back to work after having a child. He implied that some employment of mothers which resulted in them placing their children under the care of others, whether by boarding them out or placing them in the Jost House day care, was the indirect cause of the death of their infants.⁸⁴ Woodbury was quicker than Finn to label parents as inadequate and the indirect cause of their child's death. Like Finn, he too put primary responsibility for the children's health on the shoulders of mothers, although he did question fathers to a greater extent.

Halifax parents resisted following many the dictates of the behaviourist school of parenting by continuing with practices handed down by their parents. They continued to listen to grandmother and even relied on her help. For instance, in one case: "The baby's face turned black. The mother gave the child to the grandmother and went for help.

⁸³P.A.N.S., RG 41 "D" vol 84, case #1994, (December 30, 1924)1.

⁸³P.A.N.S., RG 41 "D" vol 84, case #2238, (October 21, 1928)1.

⁸⁴P.A.N.S., RG 41 "D" vol 84: case #2224 (Sept 6, 1928)1; case #2079 (April 10, 1926)1; case #2082 (May 15, 26)1.

Grandmother put him into a mustard bath."⁸⁵ This reliance on the grandmother's help also reflected the fact that often in households were not nuclear but extended. Neighbours were also consulted on issues such as what to feed: "Weaned onto milk and water. Lately on advice of neighbour given half milk and water mixed up with rolled crackers."⁸⁶ Unfortunately, according to the Medical Examiner, the advice of neighbours led to the deaths of three infants.⁸⁷ Parents, as well, continued to take infants to bed with them despite admonitions from doctors, nurses and reformers. Finally, single mothers continued to work immediately after childbirth usually by boarding their children out with a relative or a stranger. What else could they do?

III - Conclusion

The Scientific Motherhood movement in many ways had a transformative effect on society. It succeeded in shifting the boundaries between public and private by bringing the duties and responsibilities of motherhood into public

⁸⁵P.A.N.S., RG 41 "D" vol 84, case #1994, (December 30, 1924)1.

⁸⁶P.A.N.S., RG 41 "D" vol 84, case #2199, (May 7, 1928)1.

⁸⁷P.A.N.S., RG 41 "D" vol 84, case # 2194 (May 7, 1928)1; RG 41 "D" vol 85: case # 123 (March 4, 1930)1; case # 51 (June 7, 1929)1.

discourse. The movement also influenced to some extent a change in parenting practices, particularly by instilling in parents the notion that child birth and child raising required medical supervision. Three different actors - doctors, nurses and reformers - worked towards educating the public about the movement's ideas. However, their message was by no means uniform. Doctors, with their theme that all women needed more education and the constant advice of their doctors, appeared to be primarily concerned with increasing their own authority and gaining more business. Doctors used the poor's dubious hygienic practices to rally both public and government to support their Scientific Motherhood reform efforts, but blamed the poor when infant death rates refused to yield to such intervention. The poor were not the doctors' only focus. Middle class parents were targeted for advice on how to practice the new behaviourist methods of parenting. Nurses also set themselves above the knowledge of mothers, but were more concerned with the type of housekeeping practices which went on in the home. While they were only authorized to intervene in the lives of the poor, they expressed frustration at this limitation because they felt that middle class mothers would also have profited from their advice. In contrast, reformers seemed to want to increase the status of mother by means of education. The reformers were also the most receptive to the new notion of deluxe child raising. They felt middle class women were more likely to be

better mothers because they had the finances to afford medical help and child care accessories. The scientific motherhood movement could be considered transformative because it did aim to change the parenting practices of all classes of society.

Parents did not totally welcome the movement's advice. They often opted for different methods of parenting because the behaviourist model was not the only one advocated in public discourse. Popular culture presented two other styles of parenting: affectionate and disciplinarian. Nevertheless, the movement did influence parents' notions of what was considered adequate care for the health of their children. The ideas that doctors were needed to aid at child birth and then to supervise infancy slowly became part of the normative standards of behaviour.

The impact of the movement on the lives of women was to make child raising a more complex and in many ways daunting prospect. Women were now more concerned about the new financial requirements of caring for the health of their children. The discourse of doctors indicated that mothers were also held more responsible than fathers for both the physical and mental health of their children and thus were more apt to be blamed when something went wrong. Did the campaign raise the status of motherhood as the reformers predicted? In many ways it did raise the status because by discussing and detailing the activities of motherhood it

served to validate their importance. Motherhood also became linked with a type of nationalism. However, the campaign, as well, confirmed motherhood as women's ultimate occupation.

This belief helped make the crime of infanticide seem particularly shocking and heinous because the murder of an infant contradicted both the ideas of scientific motherhood and other popular cultural beliefs about motherhood. The next chapter explores new developments in the public's response to this long-standing crime.

1911-12	9	9	2	7	1
1913-14	1	6	-	1	-
1915-16	-	6	-	-	-
1919-20	-	6	-	-	-
total	24	34	2	22	1
1921-22	1	3	1	-	-
1923-24	2	13	-	2	5
1925-26	9	5	-	9	3
1927-28	6	4	4	3	2
1929-30	1	1	1	-	2
total	19	26	6	14	12

Table V - Child Birth

Year	Who Attended Birth?:				Where?:		Home of	
	Doctor	Midwife	Other	Alone	Home	Hospital	Employer	
1911-12	-	1	1	-	2	-	-	
1913-14	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	
1915-16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
1917-18	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	
1919-20	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	
total	0	1	2	2	3	0	2	
1921-22	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
1923-24	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	
1925-26	4	-	1	3	5	2	1	
1927-28	4	3	-	2	7	-	2	
1929-30	4	-	1	1	2	1	-	
total	13	4	3	7	16	4	4	

Halifax Medical Examiner's Records of Infant Death Under
Parental Care:

Table IV - Steps Taken by Parents to Ensure Health of their
Children

Year	Was Doctor Called?		Did he Make it in Time?		Child Had a Previous History of Medical Attendance
	Yes	No	Yes	No	
1911-12	9	9	2	7	1
1913-14	10	5	-	10	-
1915-16	1	6	-	1	-
1917-18	4	8	-	4	-
1919-20	-	6	-	-	-
total	24	34	2	22	1
1921-22	1	3	1	-	-
1923-24	2	13	-	2	5
1925-26	9	5	-	9	3
1927-28	6	4	4	3	2
1929-30	1	1	1	-	2
total	19	26	6	14	12

Table V - Child Birth

Year	Who Attended Birth?:				Where?:		Home of Employer
	Doctor	Midwife	Other	Alone	Home	Hospital	
1911-12	-	1	1	-	2	-	-
1913-14	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
1915-16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1917-18	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
1919-20	-	-	1	-	1	-	-
total	0	1	2	2	3	0	2
1921-22	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1923-24	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
1925-26	4	-	1	3	5	2	1
1927-28	4	3	-	2	7	-	2
1929-30	4	-	1	1	2	1	-
total	13	4	3	7	16	4	4

Halifax Medical Examiner's Records of Infant Death Under
Parental Care

Table VI - Women Who Delivered Alone

Year Ordered	Domestic	Other	Single	Married	Inquiry
1911-12	-	-	-	-	-
1913-14	1	-	1	-	-
1915-16	-	-	-	-	-
1917-18	1	-	1	-	-
1919-20	-	-	-	-	-
total	2	0	2	0	0
1921-22	1	-	1	-	-
1923-24	-	1	1	-	-
1925-26	1	2	1	2	1
1927-28	2	-	2	-	1
1929-30	1	-	1	-	-
total	5	3	6	2	2

Table VII - Judgement of Parents By Medical Examiner

Year	Death due to other Causes:		Death due to:	
	"Parents Did What They Could"	"Inexperienced Parenting"	"Overlying by Mothers"	
Dr Finn:				
1911-12	5	-	-	1
1913-14	1	-	-	2
1915-16	1	-	-	-
1917-18	-	-	-	3
1919-20	-	-	-	-
1921-22	-	-	-	1
1923-24	1	-	-	2
total	8	0	0	9
Dr Woodbury:				
1924-25	-	2	-	-
1926-2	-	-	-	-
1928-29	1	1	-	1
1930-31	-	1	-	-
total	1	4	-	1

Chapter Four - Infanticide: A Transformation of Society's Perception of the Crime or a Continuation of Old Attitudes?

Infanticide was perceived in a new manner. The media became interested in the phenomenon and publicized the details of

The previous chapters have demonstrated the association of the Scientific Motherhood movement with the normative standards for women's work and the movement's impact on normative standards of parenting. Both women's work and ideas about motherhood were factors which played a part in the cultural construction of the crime of infanticide. During the twenties the Scientific Motherhood movement swept through society redefining the activities of women in a new scientific and medical manner. Parents were held more accountable for the health of their children and were expected to secure regular medical supervision of them by doctors. Doctors and nurses were working towards constructing pregnancy, infancy and childhood as medical stages, to be approached in a scientific and logical manner. While ideas about women's work did expand to include the notion that they should pursue a career prior to marriage, motherhood was held up as the ultimate goal. Its status was raised somewhat through the detailing of new duties but at the same time doctors and nurses attempted to inoculate society with the idea that there existed a hierarchy of experts in which their own authority overrode that of parents.

Within this context of medical rule, emphasis on

Peter Hoffer, Murdering Mothers: Infanticides in England and New England, (New York: 1941)10.

motherhood and on the importance of infants, the crime of infanticide was perceived in a new manner. The media became interested in the phenomenon and publicized the details of "gruesome discoveries" as a method to whet reader appetite and ultimately sell more papers. Prior to the twenties the discovery of an unidentified dead infant did not provoke enough interest to warrant an article. However, during the baby-saving twenties, such a discovery deserved a front-page headline. Despite this change, the average judge and juror felt some sympathy for these criminal mothers and continued to view the crime as one prompted by societal pressure about confining sexuality to marriage and the economic realities of trying to support a child on a meagre wage. Hence, while there was change in the print media discourse, cultural beliefs were slower to transform.

The creation and evolution of the crime of infanticide before the twentieth century was a product of reform movements and notions about motherhood, according to Peter Hoffer. Pre-early-modern English authorities had condemned the act of child murder but did not energetically suppress it. However, Hoffer credits the Reformers' repugnance toward concealment of sins and fear of sexual immorality and criminal tendencies among the poor as factors which led to infanticide's becoming a capital offense in England in 1624.¹

¹Peter Hoffer, Murdering Mothers: Infanticide in England and New England, (New York: 1984)10.

Hoffer notes that the preamble to the law condemned sexual promiscuity almost as much as it did the murder of the child, "Whereas, many lewd women that have been delivered of bastard child, to avoid their shame, and to escape punishment, do secretly bury or conceal the death of their children."² The law thus constructed the crime as one committed solely by women bearing illegitimate children and seeking to rid themselves of both the social stigma and economic burden by killing them. Nova Scotia adopted the "Stuart Bastard Neonaticide Act" in 1758.³

During the eighteenth century there was a decrease in prosecutions and an abundance of merciful rulings and creative defences, which Hoffer maintains were due to changing sexual mores and ideas about maternal sentiment. A new sentimental valuation of children and notions of mother love affected the attitudes of judges and juries. Now the quality of motherly love was called in to question and not the women's past sexual history. The difficulty in attaining prosecutions led to the creation, in 1829, of the lesser charge of "concealment of birth", by which a woman could

¹Peter Hoffer, *Murdering Mothers: Infanticide in England and New England*, 86.

²*Ibid*, 11.

³Aileen Aquino, Good Mothers Don't Kill their Children, Honours B.A. Sociology Thesis, Saint Mary's University, (1994) 11.

receive up to two years in jail rather than hanging.⁴ This charge was adopted across Canada between 1831 and 1850.⁵

In England, the next transformation of the law occurred in 1922 during the Scientific Motherhood movement. The 1922 Infanticide Act connected mental illness with the crime, which according to Bernadette McSherry, rendered the act more "irrational" than "rational".⁶ The law now linked the crime to post-partum depression in women, a hormonal imbalance associated with giving birth. The Act reduced the offence from murder to infanticide where a woman caused the death of her 'newly born', if:

"At the time of the act or omission she had not fully recovered from the effect of giving birth to such child but by reason thereof the balance of her mind was disturbed."⁷

The law was later amended in 1938 to replace 'newly born' to 'under the age of twelve months' in order to take into consideration the hormonal imbalance caused by lactation. McSherry believes this construction of the crime of infanticide as one based on physiological changes was a

⁴Peter Hoffer, Murdering Mothers: Infanticide in England and New England, 86.

⁵Ibid, 14.

⁶Bernadette McSherry, "The Return of Raging Hormones Theory", Sydney Law Review, (Spring 1993)302.

⁷Ibid, 304.

return to the nineteenth century belief in the general susceptibility of women to mental illness as a result of their reproductive system.⁸

Canada did not adopt this British definition of the crime of infanticide until 1948 when, according to D.C.J. Cummings,

"Society generally, and jurors in particular, felt that a mother who caused the death of her newly born child was in all probability suffering from a disturbance of her mind as a result of child birth and a charge of murder in such a case was excessive."⁹

During the teens and twenties, while there was definitely a cultural definition of infanticide, the crime was not included in the criminal code. Women who killed their newly born children during the teens and twenties were charged with murder.¹⁰ Nevertheless it is interesting to note that, while English reformers took this step in transforming the infanticide law during the onslaught of the Scientific Motherhood campaign, Canadians did not reframe the crime of infanticide in medical terms until 1948.

Canadians had been exposed, as early as 1911, to the primarily the argument which resulted in having her sentence

⁸Ibid, 305.

⁹D.C.J. Cummings, "Regina v. Smith", Canadian Criminal Cases - A Series of Reports of Important Decisions in Criminal and Quasi-Criminal Cases, vol 32, (Agincourt: 1977)225.

¹⁰ Both Bernadette McSherry and Aileen Aquino have mistakenly reported that an infanticide law was included in the Canadian Criminal Code in 1922. The correct date is 1948.

idea that pregnancy could possibly affect a woman's mental state. Karen Dubinsky describes the trial of Angelina Napolitano who had axed her husband while he was sleeping. Earlier that day Mr Napolitano had threatened to kill his seven month pregnant wife if she did not procure thirty dollars by prostituting herself. The judge, despite this threat of death and other evidence of abuse, ruled that Mrs Napolitano was a "free agent" and sentenced her to hang as soon as she delivered her baby.¹¹ Women's groups across the country and even internationally protested this sentence. Many blamed her pregnant state as a factor which caused her to commit the murder. For instance, the "No Vote No Tax League" stated: "Pregnancy sometimes produces in women a mental disorder."¹² Dr. G. Villeneuve, medical superintendent of St. Jean Dieu Hospital in Montreal, agreed that "pregnancy often created in a number of women a morbid condition, both mental and moral, leading to an unbalanced state of mind and more especially to impulsiveness."¹³ Despite these medical interpretations of Napolitano's crime, Dubinsky believes that primarily the argument which resulted in having her sentence commuted to ten years imprisonment instead of death was the image portrayed by women's groups of wounded/defiled

¹¹Karen Dubinsky, Improper Advances, (Chicago: 1993)107.

¹²Ibid, 109.

¹³Ibid, 109.

motherhood. In the five Halifax cases where mothers were charged with murdering their newborns, no mention was made of their pregnant state, the trauma they experienced from delivering a child without aid, or post-partum depression as factors which may have disturbed the balance of their minds. Perhaps this suggests that Canadians were slower to accept the idea that infanticide or other crimes committed by women were motivated by hormonal imbalances. Perhaps in Canada the crime was still seen as one motivated by poverty and shame.

Part One - The Socio-Economic Roots of Infanticide in Halifax

Leila Williamson, an anthropologist, claims that infanticide's most prominent function appears to be the control of population as an adjustment to environmental and economic resources of both family and society.¹⁴ In comparing the peaks of discoveries of dead infants to the economic situation of Halifax families and single working women, some match ups did occur (See Tables X and XI). The highest number of dead infant discoveries took place after the explosion, the most virulent round of Spanish Influenza and the start of

¹⁴Leila Williamson, "Infanticide : An Anthropological Analysis", Marvin Kohl, ed., Infanticide and the Value of Life, (New York: 1978)61.

an economic depression in Halifax. Perhaps another factor to consider was the return of the soldiers and sailors to Halifax, which might have increased the number of pregnancies and, hence, unwanted pregnancies. In 1920 six bodies were discovered. But the other peak took place between 1915 to 1916, when eight bodies were uncovered. This statistic is difficult to explain in economic terms. However, one might venture that the departure of future soldiers meant many women did not want to carry children into an uncertain and perhaps widowed or single status future. The last peak took place in 1930. While 1930 may have marked the start of the Great Depression in other parts of Canada, the Maritimes had already been in the throes of hard times since the early twenties. It is difficult to attribute infanticide only to economic factors particularly when one takes into consideration Mary Ellen Wright's study of infanticide in Halifax between 1850 to 1875. Ironically her highest point, at fifteen dead infants, occurred in 1866 during Halifax's supposed "golden age."¹⁵ While economic explanations may provide some motives, they cannot completely account for the pattern of discovered unidentified dead infants.

Perhaps a better explanation is given by McSherry, who links the availability of birth control with the numbers of infanticides. She cites A. Allen, who reports that the rate

¹⁵Mary Ellen Wright, "Unnatural Mothers", Nova Scotia Historical Review, (December 1987)24.

of infanticide at the turn of the century bore an inverse relationship to the increase in the abortion rate.¹⁶ The numbers of discovered dead infants did decline between the 1910 to 1920 decade and the 1920 to 1930 decade, from twenty to fifteen (see Tables XI and XII). At the same time sexual standards of behaviour for women were widened to encompass new forms of sexual play.¹⁷ One might therefore expect that sexually active Halifax women, whether they were single working women receiving meagre wages, widows, impoverished married women, married women who did not wish to bear more children or any children, did have a range of alternatives and strategies, besides infanticide. These strategies can be divided into two categories: prior to conception methods and post conception strategies. However, all these strategies involved elements of monetary expense, health risk and possible public humiliation. There was no easy answer for sexually active women.

Birth control devices and advice had been illegal since 1892; however, there is much evidence to indicate that such methods were increasingly being employed by women to limit their fertility. The Nova Scotian fertility rate per 1,000 women fell from 128 in 1911 to 98 in 1931. The national average took an even steeper plunge from 144 in 1911, to 94

¹⁶Bernadette McSherry, "Return of the Raging Hormones Theory", 303.

¹⁷See Chapter One pages 23-24.

in 1931.¹⁸ Daniel Scott Smith labels this reduction in family size "domestic feminism" and argues that it reflected an increase in autonomy for women.¹⁹ Since this "autonomy" was declared illegal by law makers and doctors, worried about Anglo Saxon "race suicide" and the moral implications of marriage becoming a form of "legalized prostitution", it is difficult to appreciate women's increased autonomy.²⁰ Women had the options of using traditional recipes, following advice concerning natural methods, or purchasing contraband devices. In 1908 Emma Angell Drake published the book, What a Young Wife Ought to Know. This coyly titled book revealed natural methods such as twin beds, prolonged nursing and only engaging in sexual intercourse during the "safe period" which physicians had estimated to occur mid-month. Ironically, they had miscalculated and this "safe period" was in actuality during women's most fertile period. The fourth natural method was "coitus reservatus." This entailed having the man withdraw prior to ejaculation during intercourse. This was definitely not a fail-safe method because it put women at the mercy of their partner's self

¹⁸Angus McLaren and Arlene Tigar McLaren, The Bedroom and the State, 16.

¹⁹Daniel Scott Smith, in James C. Mohr's, "The Social Character of Abortion in America", in Kathryn Kish Skylar and Thomas Dublin, eds., Women and Power in American History v. 1 to 1880, (Englewood: 1991)264.

²⁰Op. cit, McLaren, p. 84.

control or lack of it.²¹ While three of the four methods offered some hope in prevention of pregnancy, all four were extremely uncertain means of controlling one's fertility.

The Women's Christian Temperance Union published a book in the early 1910's which outlined mechanical birth control devices which could be purchased. These included the sheath, the douche and the pessary. Sheaths were mass produced in England and the United States and could be purchased through Canadian druggists in urban centres. However, many Canadians may have felt hesitant about purchasing a sheath due to its association with the prostitute or libertine. Furthermore, the quality of the product was not controlled by government regulation, so even if one used sheaths regularly their effectiveness was still questionable.²²

Home made recipes also circulated among women, most involving cocoa butter, boric acid or tannic acid.²³ Kristen Luker lists some of the primary ingredients of American home made spermicides, "aloes, apiol (parsley), black hellebore, savin (juniper), tansy, penny royal, rue, "Peruvian bark",

²¹Angus McLaren and Arlene Tigar McLaren, The Bedroom and the State, 19.

²²Angus McLaren, "Birth Control and Abortion in Canada 1870-1920", 95.

²³Ibid, 21.

and ergot".²⁴ Women also employed home made douches from lysol or quinine. This leads one to conclude that even though birth control devices and information were illegal, they still could be used by many Canadian women. However, the safety and effectiveness of the advice was always a gamble.

Another method women used to control their fertility was through abortion. McLaren refers to two methods by which women could abort their fetuses; self abortion or use of the services of an abortionist.²⁵ Traditional lore advised women to use ergot of rye, gin, hot baths, violent exercise, bleeding or dilation of the cervix with slippery elm, a sponge tent or catheter.²⁶ If a woman did not want to risk traditional recipes she could send for one of the many drugs advertised in the newspapers. The Halifax Evening Mail ran a discrete advertisement for "Dr. De Van's Female Pills - Reliable monthly medicine for all female complaints".²⁷ If these methods did not work, then the woman could attempt to locate an abortionist through word of mouth or through newspaper advertisements. Unlike the women who undergo abortions today, 65.8% of whom are unmarried (1981), the

²⁴Kristin Luker, Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood, 37.

²⁵Angus McLaren, "Birth Control and Abortion in Canada 1870-1920", 91.

²⁶Ibid, 92.

²⁷The Halifax Evening Mail, (November 9, 1917)9.

majority were older married women at 56.47% (1896-1937).²⁸ Of sixty-five cases of abortion deaths examined by McLaren in British Columbia over the years 1896 to 1937, fifty were due to infection (peritonitis), ten caused by haemorrhage or rupture, four by drug toxicity and one embolism.²⁹ Only three abortion deaths were listed in the Medical Examiners reports for the period studied. All took place during the twenties, a period when McLaren also reported an increase in the numbers of abortion deaths.³⁰ In keeping with McLaren's statistics, the three Halifax women also all died of general peritonitis. The types of abortion used by these women varied from the employing of the drug, "Apergols," to dilation of the cervix uteri and finally, insertion of instruments by another person.³¹ This evidence confirms that abortion was indeed used in Halifax. However, because these records only show fatal abortions, they do not indicate to what extent women employed abortions to limit their fertility.

Haligonians had begun to deal with the problem of unwanted babies by 1865. In reaction to rising rates of infanticide, a foundling's home was created. The first year

²⁸Angus McLaren and Arlene Tiglar McLaren, The Bedroom and The State, 42.

²⁹Ibid, 43.

³⁰Ibid, 45.

³¹RG 41 "D", vol. 84, case #1990, #2034, and #2116.

the home "rescued" twelve unwanted babies. However, by 1867 the premise of the home no longer seemed to be working and it closed. In 1875, the Protestant Infant's Home came into being.³² The impetus for this establishment was not to combat infanticide but to prevent children from perishing in the hands of "baby farmers". Judith Fingard explains that domestic servants and unofficial soldiers' wives were the primary clients of these disreputable enterprises. Fifty cents out of a four to six dollar a week wage, and one could deposit one's child to be cared for in the country.³³ However, this care was negligent at best. Minutes of a 1880 meeting of the Halifax Infants Home described how they "snatched gaunt skeletons from the cellars and garrets of baby farmers".³⁴ In addition to trying to stem the practice of baby farming and supplying an outlet for unwanted babies to be adopted, the Infant's Home provided a birthing service for poor pregnant women. This service was so popular that in 1886 the Sisters of Charity opened the Home of the Guardian Angel. Fingard believes this reflected a shift from condemning women as murderers to concern over their working conditions.³⁵

³²Judith Fingard, The Dark Side of Life in Victorian Halifax, (Potters Lake: 1989)124.

³³Ibid, 124.

³⁴Mary Ellen Wright, "Unnatural Mothers", 16.

³⁵Op. cit, Fingard, p. 129.

Unfortunately, concern for African-Nova-Scotian unwanted or neglected children was not demonstrated until 1921 when the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children opened. Before 1921 African-Nova-Scotian orphans or neglected children were either cared for by relatives or placed in county jails or mental institutions, since the Halifax orphanages refused to take in "colored children."³⁶

Giving one's child or infant up for adoption or boarding it out were alternatives which Halifax's single mothers, widows, and married women considered. At times, the Children's Aid also removed surplus children from the economically stressed, either permanently or until the family recovered from its financial hard times. Another way to give children up for adoption was to place an advertisement in the Evening Mail or The Halifax Herald's adoption column.³⁷ However, the humiliation of such a public declaration of extreme indigence would have been difficult to bear on top of the pain of having to part with children one loved but could not afford to keep.

Another strategy was to attempt to raise the child by seeking employment and putting the child in daycare. Only one such daycare existed, the Jost Mission. In 1910 it had

³⁶Charles Saunders, Share and Care - The Story of the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children, 36.

³⁷Suzanne Morton, Men and Women in a Halifax Working - Class Neighbourhood in the 1920s, 147.

opened a nursery and by 1913, an employment bureau for domestic work. Day care, which also included a lunch and clean clothes and baths for children under three, cost ten cents a day or could be obtained for free by special arrangement. Unfortunately, the mission's capacity could only extend to sixty children, so only a limited number of mothers could partake of its services.³⁸

Although female-headed families were not the aspired norm, they constituted 16% of Halifax families by 1931. While the majority were headed by widows, others were headed by deserted wives, divorced wives, wives whose husbands had gone in search of employment and the single working mother.

Although some forms of financial aid were available, only the morally worthy were entitled to it - widows with preferably two children. If one's husband had been killed at a work place that carried workman's compensation, the surviving widow who previously managed a budget of forty-five dollars, was fortunate to receive twenty-five dollars a month, the equivalent to the wage received by the head maid at the Jost Mission.³⁹ Assistance might also be had from one's church or husband's union. However, these funds could not be counted upon due to the fact one had to be perceived as a worthy of

³⁸Christina Simmons, "Helping the Poorer Sisters: the Women of Jost Mission Halifax, 1905-1945", in Veronica Strong-Boag and Anita Clair Fellman, eds. Rethinking Canada, (Toronto: 1991)291.

³⁹Ibid, 137.

cause. "family wage" earned by man.

Finally, in 1930 Nova Scotia implemented "Mother's Allowance" as a way of dealing with this social problem. Despite its embracing name, Mother's Allowance was only tailored to help "one class in particular, as unquestionably deserving of state aid ... the indigent widow with two children to support".⁴⁰ Deserted wives, divorced wives, impoverished married women and even widows with one child were not eligible to receive aid. Furthermore, the widow's behaviour had to conform to the unofficial "morality guideline". One widow, whose neighbours saw a man leaving her house late in the evening and filed a complaint, had her Mother's Allowance cut off (visions of the welfare hotline?).⁴¹ Both aid bestowed by government services or private charity given on a community level reflected a rigid bias in favour of the institution of marriage. If a woman raising a family failed to conform to the ideal, whether because her husband had left her, she had left him, or she had never managed to trot up the aisle, she was not eligible to receive assistance from the community or state. These women had to fall back on the resources of either family or else endeavour to raise their children on a woman's wage. The existence of female-headed families highlighted the paradox of the much

⁴⁰Ibid, 138.

⁴¹Ibid, 140.

touted "family wage" earned by men.

Unwed female domestic servants were the most common perpetrators of the crime of infanticide, indicating that perhaps they faced the most economic hardships, and thus had the least access to birth control, abortion or community aid. They also faced the most sexual harassmen and rape due to their living arrangements. Unwed domestic servants figured prominently in Hoffer's work on Modern England, in Mary Ellen Wright's study of infanticide in nineteenth-century Halifax, and in this paper's examination of the 1910 to 1930 period. Hoffer states that the Reformers in the seventeenth century singled out "descendants of Eve, especially poor serving women, as bearers of the temptations of the flesh."⁴² Mary Ellen Wright came across twenty-six cases between 1850 and 1875, and of that number, ten were domestic servants.⁴³ Similarly, of the five cases which went to trial during the 1910 to 1930 period, four were also domestic servants. Finally, as noted in chapter three, women employed as servants were also more likely to deliver their children without any assistance, which may have contributed to the infant's failure to live. This consistency in the occupation of the women committing the crime indicates that there was

⁴²Peter Hoffer, Murdering Mothers, 11.

⁴³Mary Ellen Wright, "Unnatural Mothers: Infanticide in Halifax 1850-1875", Nova Scotia Historical Review, (December 1987)19.

indeed an economic basis for the crime. A domestic's ability to find and retain work depended on her having a good reputation. Bearing and raising a child without a husband would have destroyed this reputation. The fact that the same women were committing the same crime three centuries after the period Hoffer describes indicates that for this class of women not much had changed; they were still making the lowest wages, had the least access to birth control, and were the most subjected to middle class scrutiny.

However, despite the fact that socio-economic factors did appear to play a large role in determining whether a woman was likely to commit infanticide, it is important to keep in mind that these women might have been making the decision to kill their newborns under mental stress. For instance, Gertrude Reynolds and Beatrice Thomas, two of the Halifax mothers charged with murdering their newborns, exhibited signs of psychological stress. While both women were motivated by either economic or social considerations, they both appeared to be somewhat in denial of the actual event. Reynolds smothered her child in Kentville, proceeded to pack it up in a suitcase, and then took it with her to Halifax. She left this incriminating suitcase in the basement of the hotel where she worked. Its odour soon attracted notice.⁴⁴ Thomas had left her dead infant in her room, where,

⁴⁴ "Hilda Reynolds Was Arraigned on Charge of Murder", Evening Mail, (August 21, 1924)12.

similarly, its terrible odour attracted her landlady's attention. Margaret Davis, Thomas's landlady, testified that after she had gone upstairs to inquire about the smell, "I felt so sick that I went out in the yard and vomited. She [Thomas] put her head out of the window and said it was dirty clothes." When Thomas went out to do her "laundry," the landlady, suspicious that such a stench could not possibly have been caused by dirty clothes, had one of the other tenants follow her. The man eventually learned that the bundle contained a child and the matter was reported to the police.⁴⁵ One might infer that Thomas and Reynolds could not have been thinking clearly to have both been found out in such a manner. Thomas was actually living in the room with the stench that caused Davis to vomit, without appearing to notice it. One could presume that both were in denial, distraught or simply desperate.

In short, four different factors appeared to have affected the Halifax infanticide rates. Leila Williamson's theory that economy plays a principle role in determining rates of infanticide did provide some match ups between downturns in the economy and high incidence of discoveries of unidentified infants in Halifax. However, this theory did not offer explanations for all the peaks and valleys in the Halifax statistics. Similarly, while McSherry's belief that

⁴⁵P.A.N.S., RG 39 "C", box 707, case #222, "Halifax Supreme Court Cases", (October 21, 1924)8.

women's access to birth control did appear to be a factor affecting the infanticide rate in Halifax, it was by no means the only one. This study would venture that a woman's marital status and occupation were also factors in determining whether they were more likely to commit infanticide. Single women employed as domestic servants figured prominently in the Halifax infanticide statistics. However, it is important to remember that individuals do react differently to stressful situations. An unwed domestic who became pregnant did not automatically kill her newborn child: the woman's mental state was definitely yet another factor in the infanticide calculation.

Part II - Changes in Media Coverage of Unidentified Dead Infants

It is ironic that while factors affecting infanticide cases remained constant in Halifax between 1910 and 1930, the coverage of discovered unidentified infants changed dramatically. In order to appreciate the changes which occurred in the newspapers' coverage of the discovery of unidentified dead infants it is important to define how events become "news". Socio-linguist Roger Fowler tells us that "News is the end product of a complex process which begins with a systematic sorting and selecting of events and topics according to a socially constructed set of

categories."⁴⁶

During the 1910 to 1920 period, not counting the one case which went to trial, only two of a total of twenty discoveries of unidentified dead infants made the newspapers (See Table XI). Fowler explains the selection of news events by referring to a table constructed by Johann Galtung and Mari Ruge, which lists fifteen different factors which could cause an event to become news. The factors which are relevant to the crime of infanticide becoming news include: Frequency; Meaningfulness (cultural proximity and relevance); Reference to something negative; Stereotypes (an event which will reinforce a stereotype will likely become news).⁴⁷

Galtung and Ruge's news values can be used to explain both the absence of coverage during the 1910 to 1920 period and the selection of one of the discoveries as news. The only case of a "coloured" dead infant discovered during the 1910 to 1920 decade was reported by the Evening Mail. Perhaps this item was selected because it met the criteria of reinforcing a "stereotype". This writer notes that African-Nova-Scotians usually only made the news if they had committed a crime. Therefore, reporting the discovery of a dead "coloured" child reinforced notions about African-Nova-Scotians' supposed capacity to commit violent acts or lack of parenting skills.

⁴⁶Roger Fowler, Language and the News, 12.

⁴⁷Ibid, 14-17.

The discovery did not appear to fulfil the factor of 'meaningfulness' because of the manner in which it was reported. The event was not sufficient to warrant an article and occupied only a few lines under "News of the City". The fact the discovery was reported without any comment on its criminal implications, indicates that the event did not carry any more significant cultural meaningfulness than would the discovery of a dead horse, "The dead body of a coloured child found on the shore of the Bedford Basin, in the area of Africville, had been lying at the high water mark for a week or two."⁴⁸ While the discovery contained definitely a negativity factor, it was not, apparently, negative enough to create a sense of horror or indignation.

Wright also notes the lack of surprise or interest that dead infants generated in the newspaper coverage during the 1850 to 1875 period. The coverage was limited to one or two lines, running to three if the mother was caught. Furthermore, she adds, there was a cavalier attitude taken about such discoveries. People were reported to have joked about finding the body of one infant lying behind the rum shop on Water St.⁴⁹ If such attitudes persisted, it is possible to conclude that the discoveries of dead infants were not reported because both the controlling groups and

⁴⁸ "News of the City", Evening Mail, (May 29, 1914)13.

⁴⁹Mary Ellen Wright, "Unnatural Mothers: Infanticide in Halifax", 24.

average citizens had little interest in the subject. Unexplained infant corpses were considered a frequent mundane occurrence, hardly worth mentioning. While they did fulfil the requirement of "negative" they were not spine-tinglingly horrible.

However, the coverage of such discoveries radically changed during the twenties, both in volume and in writing style. During this decade ten of the fifteen unidentified dead infants made the newspapers and more newspapers covered the discoveries (See Table XI). They were often in fact referred to as a "gruesome discovery,"⁵⁰ signalling a change in the negativity factor of their newsworthiness. Furthermore, not only was there an increase in the volume of articles about unidentified dead infants but the reporting style during the twenties also underwent a subtle transformation. This study divides the decade into an early-middle twenties reporting style and a late twenties method of coverage.

The early-twenties marked a change in presentation of the "gruesome discoveries." The first dead infant to make front page headlines was one found, in 1920, by caretaker Mackenzie in the Camp Hill Cemetery.⁵¹ There was nothing out

⁵⁰Six articles labelled the discoveries of identified dead infants as "gruesome".

⁵¹ "Dead Body of Infant Found in Cemetery", The Evening Mail, (July 27, 1920) Front page.

of the ordinary in the location of the dead infant: cemeteries were popular places for people to hide their dead infants, both during Wright's time period and the 1910 to 1930 period. Nor was the infant distinctive in the manner of its death. Dr. Finn diagnosed "neglect" as the cause of death, due to the fact the placenta was still attached.⁵² The diagnosis of "neglect" was the most common diagnosis, during the 1910 to 1920 period, at nine out of fifteen cases (See Table X). Additionally, other infants killed during the teens would have created more sensationalistic news, such as the one found on Queen St. in an old bag with a cotton rag stuffed in its mouth.⁵³ Nor was there much forensic furor over the infant's death. Dr. Finn did not bother to even order an investigation into the child's death. Finn was generally loathe to order inquiries into the deaths of infants: of the twenty-four unidentified dead infants he examined, he ordered only four inquiries. In contrast, Dr Woodbury, Mr. Scientific Motherhood, was quite anxious to track down the mothers of the unidentified dead infants. He ordered investigations into twelve of thirteen cases which passed over his examining table. The timing of the 1920 front page story, two years before the change in guard of Medical Examiners, suggests

⁵²P.A.N.S., RG 41 "D" vol 83, case #1766, (September 9, 1920)1.

⁵³P.A.N.S., RG 41 "D" vol 83, case # 1624, (June 4, 1918)1.

that journalistic interest did not hinge on whether an official inquiry had been ordered. Since the 1920 case was neither distinguishable in the manner of death nor in the site where the body was concealed, it seems likely that it was public attitudes which had changed, at least the attitudes of those whose job it was to select the news. No longer would the attitudes of the newspapers and the general public towards the unexplained deaths of infants and the casual disposal of their remains be so casually uncaring. The early and mid-twenties articles also adopted a new reporting style, which one could only term sensationalistic and emotional. This emotional reporting style, with its absence of calls for reform, appears to indicate that it was written by possibly "common-sense" voices whose consciousness had been raised by the Scientific Motherhood movement, rather than by actual proponents of the movement. For instance the discovery of a strangled infant hidden in a yeast box on a passenger train was described as "One of the most hideous and brutal crimes."⁵⁴ Even the title which labelled the infant a "babe," and thus conjured an air of innocence in its use of slang (like a babe in the woods etc.), was meant to pull at the reader's emotions. This act was deemed not only one committed by a mentally abnormal person but also one of

⁵⁴ "Murdered Babe Found in Maritime," Evening Mail, (March 7, 1921)4.

"inhuman brutality."⁵⁵ Finally, this abhorrent crime was said to have unified all of Nova Scotia. Its shocking nature was said to have "aroused a thrill of horror throughout the entire province."⁵⁶

Another journalist, reporting on a later dead infant, worked equally hard to rouse the audience into a proper state of disgust. This time the "gruesome discovery" was found by two "horror stricken boys who gazed for a moment at the unexpected, and to them tragic discovery, but gathering their wits rushed out to Blower St. to inform a police officer."⁵⁷ This reporter was playing upon the juxtaposition of idealized childhood innocence with the reality of the two boys' witnessing of death and perhaps murder. Another element of this scenario to be taken into consideration was the movement's emphasis on child psychology. Were the readers supposed to worry about both the death of the infant and possible psychological scarring of the boys? The author did indicate that the sight of the dead infant caused them to lose their wits: hence the need for "gathering their wits" after the experience. One can draw two possible conclusions from this sensationalistic style. First, reporters may have

⁵⁵ "Police Scour Country for Baby Slayer", The Evening Mail, (February 24, 1921)8.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ "Dead Body of Infant found in St Mary's School Yard this Morning", Evening Mail, (April 30, 1921) Front page.

felt that the readers had to really be sold on the fact that these discoveries were indeed newsworthy events and hence reporters had to dress up the stories with emotionally charged language. Second, juxtaposed against the values of the Scientific Motherhood campaign, these discoveries were indeed considered ghastly in new ways. Either interpretation would indicate a transformation in the general valuation of infants.

Articles reporting on dead infants discovered at the end of the decade were of a dry style which tended to take attention away from the crime itself and concentrate interest on the figures of the police and the Medical Examiner. This was more in keeping with the Scientific Motherhood movement's emphasis on the authority of state and medicine. For example, the case of a baby found in the moat of the Citadel, generated such headlines as, "Police Are Investigating Death of Infant"⁵⁸, "Baby Killed, Sleuths Have Slight Clue"⁵⁹, and "Child Murder is Charge"⁶⁰. The emphasis in all of those titles was on the action of the police and not the circumstances of the infant's murder. Also, two of the three titles used the less emotional nouns of "infant" and "child" rather than the more emotionally charged term of "baby". In

⁵⁸ Evening Mail, (March 8, 1930)5.

⁵⁹ Halifax Herald, (March 8, 1930)22.

⁶⁰ Morning Chronicle, (March 8, 1930)4.

the case of the Bayer's road infant, authority was also established within the context of the article by naming the institutional figures and their subsequent actions: "Officers Kennedy and McNeil handed the skeleton off to Woodbury to be examined."⁶¹ The change in reporting style could be due to the fact that the journalists no longer had to prove that these discoveries were newsworthy events. They had crossed that hurdle at the beginning of the decade; "meaningfulness" had already been established. Perhaps another explanation for the authority-confirming structure of the articles could be the increase in government intervention during the twenties. This increase in government intervention was also symptomatic of the Scientific Motherhood movement. In both its forms the increase of newspaper coverage of unidentified dead infants appears to be related to the influence of the Scientific Motherhood movement.

Part III - Infanticide Court Cases

The infanticide cases in which a mother was found generated new levels of media interest during the twenties. The case of Annie Newton, dubbed "The Shocking Crime of a particularly heinous one. Annie Newton and Beatrice Thomas

⁶¹ "Skeleton Found Near Bayers Rd", Morning Chronicle, (March 26, 1930)12.

Domestic That Will Horrify the Community"⁶², occurred in 1917 and only produced a total of three articles. This case had enough shock value to make it newsworthy. City workers investigating a stoppage in the sewer system pulled out the chopped-up remains of an infant, which Annie Newton had borne and disposed of the night previous. This could have been the crime of the year; instead only two of four newspapers bothered to report its decidedly gruesome details. Furthermore, only one of the four papers reported the sentencing Newton received. In contrast, the cases of Gertrude Hilda Reynolds and Beatrice Thomas, which took place in 1924, generated eight and thirteen articles respectively and were covered by all four newspapers. Infanticide was definitely now perceived as a newsworthy event.

However, the light sentencing passed by judge and jury, as well as the somewhat laissez-faire unfolding of the 1920's trials, indicated that not much had changed in community attitudes. First, both the trials and the reportage of the crimes appeared to indicate that the community still perceived the crime as having both social and economic roots. Second, sentencing and time taken by juries to arrive at a sentence demonstrated that the crime was not perceived as a particularly heinous one. Annie Newton and Beatrice Thomas

⁶² "The Shocking Crime of a Domestic That Will Horrify the Community", Evening Mail, (June 26, 17)4.

had their charges of murder reduced to concealment of birth.⁶³ Gertrude Reynolds fared even better, being totally acquitted of her murder charge⁶⁴, while Florence Thomas's case only made it as far as a hearing before the Stipendiary Magistrate, where it was determined that the case be dropped on the grounds that the Magistrate was "unable to determine the guilty party"⁶⁵. These light sentences may have reflected judges' and juries' sympathy for the mothers. Additionally, the conduct of members of the jury seemed to indicate that they were somewhat bored with the proceedings. Wright's analysis of the infanticide court cases during the nineteenth century revealed a similar reluctance to convict. She maintains that infanticide "was not considered a serious crime."⁶⁶

The following discussion will compare two of the infant murder cases, those of Gertrude Hilda Reynolds and Beatrice Thomas. These cases provide a perfect foil for each other and demonstrate both the socio-economic reasons behind the crimes

⁶³ "Annie Newton Pleaded Guilty to Concealment of Birth", Evening Mail, (July 26, 1917)17; "Not Guilty of Murder is Verdict for Beatrice Thomas", Halifax Herald, (October 22, 1924)2.

⁶⁴ "[Gertrude] Hilda Reynolds Acquitted of Murder Charge", The Evening Mail, (October 17, 1924) Front page.

⁶⁵P.A.N.S., RG 42 "D" vol 85, case #230, The Stipendiary Magistrate's Report was included in the Medical Examiner's Report, (May 22, 1931)1.

⁶⁶Mary Ellen Wright, "Unnatural Mothers", 25.

and community attitudes towards the murder of infants. What was remarkable about the occurrence of the two crimes was that they were discovered within days of each other. In addition Thomas and Reynolds disposed of their infants in the same manner: both infants were found with cotton rags stuffed down their throats. However, where the cases integrally deviated from each other, in the eyes of Halifaxians, was in the skin colour of the accused. Reynolds was a single white girl, recently arrived in town from Guysboro County. In contrast, Thomas was clearly labelled by race: "Colored Mother Charged with Murder."⁶⁷ She was a married African-Nova-Scotian woman whose husband had left her a few years earlier. She was already raising a three year old girl.

While both Reynolds and Thomas were employed as low paid domestic servants --Reynolds working in a hotel and Thomas cleaning house for a family-- their motivations for killing their infants, as reported by the press, were different. The Evening Mail maintained that Reynolds "Committed the crime in order to hide her shame."⁶⁸ Her motivation did appear to be fear of being slapped with the metaphorical scarlet letter, which was allotted to single women who bore children out of wedlock. After her trial, it was reported that, "As she was

⁶⁷ "Colored Mother Charged with Child Murder", Evening Mail, (August 26, 1924)4.

⁶⁸ "Hilda Reynolds Was Arraigned on Charge of Murder", Evening Mail, (August 21, 1924)12.

alone at the time of her birth and she did not want the other girls to hear its cries, she stuffed a piece of cloth into its mouth to muffle the noise."⁶⁹ Thomas, in contrast, was alleged to have confessed that "She found it hard enough to support one child without caring for the new born babe." Her living conditions reflected this lack of funds. The detective, Charles Aitkin, testified that "She lived in an attic on 254 Water St. Only a stove and bedstead were in the room. It was in a destitute condition."⁷⁰ It is difficult to determine what the reporters thought about these motivations. Some comparison may be indicated by the fact that no terms such as "inhuman brutality" which surfaced with some of the early twenties unidentified infants, were used in describing these cases.

As for the trial proceedings themselves, both women's lawyers selected similar defences; both lawyers claimed the women had been prompted into giving false confessions. Thomas's lawyer implied through his cross examination of the police officers that she had been bullied into a confession: "Cross examination revealed she had been questioned in presence of four men without support of the presence of a policewoman and that leading questions had been put to her by

⁶⁹ "Hilda Reynolds Acquitted of Murder Charge", Evening Mail, (Oct 17, 1924)Front page.

⁷⁰P.A.N.S., RG 39 "C", box 707, case #222, "Halifax Supreme Court Cases", (October 21, 1924)2.

Webber [a policeman]."⁷¹ The gender ideology which required a policewoman to lend "support" to a woman being questioned in Halifax, was perhaps not thought to apply to African-Nova-Scotians, hence the lack of one attending Thomas. However, perhaps the judge and the jury felt this omission was not correct. Four men questioning a female, regardless of colour, seemed improper. Reynolds, whose infant was discovered four days earlier, was treated to the presence of a female police officer. However, Mrs Egan, the police woman present, told her that, "If she would tell the truth everything would be alright."⁷² This inducement to confess made the evidence thus obtained inadmissible and, since the crown presented no further evidence, the judge told the jury to return a verdict of not guilty.

While Reynolds was acquitted of the murder charge completely, Thomas was not so fortunate. Perhaps the colour of her skin influenced the jury to give her the lesser sentence of "concealment of birth." Certainly both women warranted the sentence since both had tried to conceal the death of their infants. Why did Reynolds get off completely while Thomas received some penalty? Thomas's lawyer, Mr Griffiths, argued for her not to be excused "from punishment,

⁷¹ "Third Murder Trial of Supreme Court Session Opened this Morning", Evening Mail, (October 21, 1924)3.

⁷² "Girl Not Guilty on Murder Charge", Halifax Herald, (Oct 18, 1924)2.

for she deserved it but that in view of her good character previously and that she had been a good worker as a domestic, she be given a light sentence."⁷³ Thomas did indeed receive the extremely light sentence of only one month in jail. It is interesting to note that even her own lawyer felt she needed some form of punishment. Were paternal ideas about the need to guide African-Nova-Scotians with discipline, due to their supposed innate susceptibility to commit criminal acts, at work? Another factor of contrast between representations of Thomas and Reynolds lay in the reports of their respective reactions to the trial process. Beatrice Thomas's behaviour was described by the Mail, as indifferent: "The Defendant sat with head resting against the side of the desk, apparently taking no interest with the proceedings."⁷⁴ In contrast, Reynolds appeared to be a truly repentant woman, "The girl when in court this morning, was dressed in black, and seemed very sad and apparently realized fully her serious position."⁷⁵ Another time she was described as "weeping bitterly." It might have been easier for members of the jury and the judge to fully sympathize with Reynolds when she

⁷³ "King vs B. Thomas", Evening Mail, (October 27, 1924)7.

⁷⁴ "Murder Trial of Supreme Court Session", Evening Mail, (Oct 21, 1924)3.

⁷⁵ "Child Murder Case", The Halifax Herald, (August 26, 1924)6.

displayed such contrite behaviour.

Finally, could Wright's analysis that infanticide was not viewed by society as a serious crime apply as well to this period of Halifax history? There was evidence to indicate that Thomas's jury was not completely convinced of the severity of her crime. The judge had to tell the jury twice to pay attention to the testimonies being given. Furthermore, George Roma, who had been scooped up to serve on the jury prior to the trial because they had not enough jury members, attempted to leave the court room half-way through the trial.⁷⁶ This would appear to indicate that the jury members were not taking the crime that seriously. In the case of Gertrude Reynolds's trial, the jury members only took ten minutes to arrive at their decision to acquit. Similarly, Thomas's jury also took less than half an hour to determine her charge. In referring to Reynolds's acquittal, the paper appeared to rejoice in the fact that she escaped any punishment, by the way that it praised her lawyer's performance: "A brilliant defence and congratulation on his success."⁷⁷

Therefore, while the media did increase its coverage of the infant murder cases and the discoveries of unidentified

⁷⁶ "Third Murder Trial of Supreme Court Session", Evening Mail, (Oct 21, 1924)3.

⁷⁷ "Gave Verdict of Acquittal from the Box", Morning Chronicle, (October 18, 1924)10.

dead infants, society still did not view the crime of infanticide as a particularly serious one and continued to feel some sympathy for the mothers. Unlike the proponents of Scientific Motherhood who had the liberty to conjure up ideal child raising situations, jurors and judges, when deliberating at trials such as those of Thomas and Reynolds, confronted the worst possible child raising situations. The severity of sentence which a murder charge carried (a maximum punishment of death) also predisposed juries to drop the charge or to reduce it to the lesser offense of concealment of birth. Perhaps it was also difficult for the 1920's judges and juries to equate the murder of a newly born with that of an adult. This opinion was expressed by Mercier, an English physician, in 1911:

"It [a newborn infant] is incapable of feeling fear or terror. Nor is its consciousness sufficiently developed to enable it to suffer pain in appreciable degree. Its loss leaves no gap in any family circle, deprives no children of a breadwinner or Mother, no human being of a friend, companion or helper."⁷⁸

In short, while judges and juries may have subscribed to the Scientific Motherhood's message about the importance of infants or their own belief system which valued the potential of every infant, it still would have been difficult to place ideology above the lives of these women.

However, it seems likely that the transformation of the

⁷⁸Glanville Williams, "The Legal Evaluation of Infanticide", Marvin Kohl ed, Infanticide and the Value of Life, (New York: 1978)118.

reporting of such occurrences was connected with the success of the Scientific Motherhood movement. First, the movement stressed the importance of infants as national assets, as expressed by a Halifax reformer: "The race marches forth on the feet of little children."⁷⁹ These dead infants could now be perceived as a national loss. Also the campaign focused on the psychological development of child raising. Since a couple of the dead infants were discovered by children, this heightened the horror factor. Finally, an infant that had consciously been murdered was antithetical both to the message of the campaign which focused on saving babies through medical intervention and to society's norms about motherhood. The super-charged style of the early twenties reporting did lack a reform message. This leads one to the possible conclusion that these were "common-sense" voices who had had their consciousness raised by the campaign's baby-saving message. In contrast, the reports written at the end of the twenties indicate the influence of the Scientific Motherhood movement since the articles worked to confirm the authority of state and medicine. It is difficult to concretely assess the total impact of the movement on society's construction of the crime of infanticide. However, it is evident that the Scientific Motherhood movement did transform the way the crime was reported by the media and

⁷⁹ "Women's Institutes of Nova Scotia, For Home and Country", The Morning Chronicle, (March 30, 1922)5.

perceived by the Medical Examiner.

The cause of death for unidentified discovered dead infants during the 1911-1920 period in Halifax

Year	Stillborn	Neglect	Violence	Prematurity	Unknown	Total
1911						0
1912	1					1
1913						0
1914	1				1	2
1915	1	3				4
1916	1	2		1		4
1917		1	1			2
1918	1		1			2
1919						0
1920	2	3		1		6
Total	7	9	2	2	1	21

Table XI⁸¹

The cause of death for unidentified discovered dead infants during the 1921-1930 period in Halifax

Year	Stillborn	Neglect	Violence	Prematurity	Unknown	Total
1921		1	1			2
1922			1			1
1923						0
1924			2			2
1925				2		2
1926	1	1				2
1927						0
1928						0
1929	1					1
1930		2		1	2	5
Total	2	4	4	3	1	15

⁸⁰RG 41 "D", vol. 81, 82, and 83, Coroner's Inquest and Medical Reports Collection of Halifax County.

⁸¹RG 41 "D", vol. 83 and 84, Coroner's Inquest and Medical Reports Collection of Halifax County.

Table X⁸⁰

The cause of death for unidentified discovered dead infants during the 1911-1920 period in Halifax

Year	Stillborn	Neglect	Violence	Prematurity	Unknown	Total
1911						0
1912	1					1
1913						0
1914	1				1	2
1915	1	3				4
1916	1	2		1		4
1917		1	1			2
1918	1		1			2
1919						0
1920	2	3		1		6
Total	7	9	2	2	1	21

Table XI⁸¹

The cause of death for unidentified discovered dead infants during the 1921-1930 period in Halifax

Year	Stillborn	Neglect	Violence	Prematurity	Unknown	Total
1921		1	1			2
1922			1			1
1923						0
1924			2			2
1925				2		2
1926	1	1				2
1927						0
1928						0
1929	1					1
1930		2		1	2	5
Total	2	4	4	3	1	15

⁸⁰RG 41 "D", vol. 81, 82, and 83, Coroner's Inquest and Medical Reports Collection of Halifax County.

⁸¹RG 41 "D", vol. 83 and 84, Coroner's Inquest and Medical Reports Collection of Halifax County.

Table XII - The Media's Coverage of Such "Gruesome Discoveries"

Year	Unidentified Dead Infants White "Coloured"	# of Articles Written:			
		<u>Halifax Herald</u>	<u>Evening Mail</u>	<u>Morning Chronicle</u>	<u>Acadian Recorder</u>
1911					
1912	1	-	-	-	-
1913	-	-	-	-	-
1914	1	-	1	-	-
1915	1	-	-	-	-
1916	1	-	-	-	-
1917	1	-	-	-	-
1918	1- trial	-	2	1	-
1919	-	-	-	-	-
1920	1	-	-	-	-
1921	1	-	2	1	-
1922	-	-	-	-	-
1923	-	-	-	-	-
1924	1- trial	1	5	3	4
1925	1	-	1	1	-
1926	1	-	1	1	1
1927	-	-	-	-	-
1928	-	-	-	-	-
1929	1	-	-	1	-
1930	1	-	-	-	-
1- stipendiary mag,		-	-	-	-
total	15	5	16	14	5

During the teens and twenties, society's perception of motherhood had a defining effect on women's lives. The Scientific Motherhood movement was part of the culture of the twenties as a whole and, thus, normative standards for motherhood cannot be viewed separately from the sexual and work standards applied to and by women. This study has argued that the Scientific Motherhood movement had a tremendous transformative effect on the child raising practices of the nation and ultimately on women's lives. The movement marked the beginning of what Paula Fass terms the "cult of the child" and a new way of using scientific terminology to explain both childhood and motherhood. However, the movement was also conservative in many respects. It reinforced both traditional gender roles and beliefs about class. Nevertheless, by bringing the duties and responsibilities of mothers into the public discourse, the movement nudged the boundary between public and private spheres.

The Scientific Motherhood movement influenced women's work both inside and outside of the home, indirectly gave them a new sexualized image, and subtly affected the cultural construction of the crime of infanticide. The movement encouraged women to become more knowledgeable mothers by working in the public sphere prior to marriage. This

broadening of the normative standards for women's work indirectly resulted in the creation of new female occupational roles based on the notions about women's mothering nature and a more sexualized image for women due to their increased interaction in the public sphere. Women were caught in a difficult position. They had a new sexual image yet birth control remained illegal, society stigmatized mothers who bore children out of wedlock, and women's wages, in general, did not provide enough money to support dependents.

The Scientific Motherhood campaign, of course, had its most direct impact on the cultural construction of motherhood. The authority of doctors and nurses as child raising experts increased to the detriment of mothers' authority. Child-raising became a more complex and daunting prospect. While the campaign did increase the blame accorded to mothers when something went wrong and confirmed motherhood as women's ultimate profession, it also validated and increased the status of motherhood by bringing its duties into public discussion.

Scientific Motherhood's message that motherhood was every woman's ultimate goal and the emphasis it placed on the importance of infants helped make the crime of infanticide seem particularly shocking and horrific. The fatal neglect of infants and infanticide became more newsworthy. A Medical Examiner influenced by Scientific Motherhood also handled

infant deaths in new ways. However, judges and juries treated the murdering mothers leniently, and continued to view the crime as one prompted by socio-economic conditions and not medically-described hormonal imbalances.

Many of our current assumptions about the responsibilities of parents or even what makes a "good" mother can be traced to the Scientific Motherhood movement. The doctors during the twenties became the authorities on child raising, a sphere in which, in the nineteenth century, women as mothers had previously ruled. In today's society childhood and pregnancy have become such medicalized phenomena that it is difficult for a nineties mother to imagine not bringing her child for a "check up" or not arranging an appointment with her doctor at the first signs of pregnancy. However, despite the medicalization of childhood and pregnancy, the socio-cultural aspect of parenting itself has remained the disputed territory, as I have shown it to have been in the twenties. For every book written by a doctor or psychologist on how to raise one's child "scientifically", there is a talk-show host or an Ann Landers who advocates "common-sense" parenting. Deluxe child raising can also find its roots in the twenties. Despite our current association of child raising with a large pocketbook, sources in popular culture today often dispute this need for the middle class finances of a Cosby family, with the examples of the working-class families such as Rosanne's

menagerie or the Simpsons. Similarly, twenties parents also had alternative child-raising styles which were available to them in newspapers, magazines, plays and films. While the advice of medical experts was sought for dilemmas such as what to feed one's infant, the advice columnist Ruth Cameron might have had more influence in counselling parents on such matters as how to prevent children from lying.

The use of popular culture in this thesis has shown that while some elite messages about the Scientific Motherhood movement dispensed by doctors, nurses and reformers were absorbed by the general populace, other styles of parenting based on experience or "common-sense" were also available. Focussing on a relatively small city has made possible the examination of a large portion of the city's newspapers. The value of such research in larger cities is, however, suggested by this thesis. Some other sources which might be valuable to mine for alternative child-raising standards are comics, serial romances, and films.

Despite the undeniable value of information gleaned from popular culture it is important that this information be balanced with elite discourse, i.e. government, medicine, and the justice system, because, often, these institutions are the ones who determine the boundaries of change. This thesis suggests that more research should be done into crimes associated with parenting such as: the "Duty of Persons to

Provide Necessities"¹ offense; the "Abandoning Child"² offense; and the "Neglect to Obtain Assistance in Child-Birth"³ offense. Scientific Motherhood is an important movement to study because it had a transformative effect on the parenting practices of the nation, the role of government and medicine in the lives of families, the cultural construction of the crime of infanticide, but most importantly it had a defining effect on the lives of women.

Acadian Recorder (Halifax)

Evening Mail (Halifax)

Halifax Herald (Halifax)

Morning Chronicle (Halifax)

Magazines and Journals:

Canadian Magazine

Canadian Nurse

Chatelaine

Maclean's

Nova Scotian Medical Bulletin

Public Health Nurse

¹Edward L. Greenspan, Martin's Annual Criminal Code 1991, (Aurora: 1991)s.215.

²Ibid, s.218.

³Ibid,s. 242.

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