"SANDWICHES AND\OR SUSHI?": SECOND GENERATION JAPANESE CANADIAN WOMEN AND THE NEW CANADIAN, 1938-1949

by

Stephanie Jean Marie Camelon
B.A., McGill University, 1994

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department of History

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

[redacted]

Dr. Patricia E. Roy, Supervisor (Department of History)

[redacted]

Dr. Lynne Marks, Departmental Member (Department of History)

[redacted]

Dr. Fong Woon, Outside Member (Department of Pacific Asian Studies)

[redacted]

Dr. David Moyer, External Examiner (Department of Anthropology)

Supervisor: Dr. Patricia E. Roy

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the writings of second generation Japanese Canadian women in the newspaper, The New Canadian between 1938 and 1949. Nisei women lived in a dual world containing different messages of appropriate female behaviour. Although there were similarities between Japanese and North American notions of womanhood, female Nisei writers advocated acculturation to the dominant society. In The New Canadian three major themes emerge from their writings that centre around social acceptance. The first theme is prescriptions of masculinity and femininity. They openly advocated popular North American gender roles, deportment, etiquette and courting customs. The second theme concerns the Issei-Nisei relationship and the conflicts that arose over different notions of femininity. The third examines how Nisei women responded to Anglo-Canadian prejudice, by denouncing racism and advocating acculturation to mainstream society.

These articles offer one image of how some Nisei women actively defined themselves, their male counterparts and their future roles. These female voices suggest the deep seeded ambivalent feelings many Nisei women had about their

dual identity, their Issei parents, and their status in Canadian society. The women in The New Canadian offered one solution to this uncertainty--acculturation.

Examiners:

[redacted]

Dr. Patricia E. Roy, Supervisor (Department of History)

[redacted]

Dr. Lynne Marks, Departmental Member (Department of History)

[redacted]

Dr. Fong Woon, Outside Member (Department of Pacific Asian Studies)

[redacted]

Dr. David Moyer, External Examiner (Department of Anthropology)

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my thesis committee, Dr. Patricia Roy, Dr. Lynne Marks, and Dr. Fong Woon for all their assistance. My deepest thanks goes to Dr. Roy, my supervisor, for her guidance, correction and support. Her insight and patience in reading and rereading numerous drafts eased many of my uncertainties and kept me focused.

I would also like to thank the numerous Nisei who were generous with their time and stories. Special appreciation goes to Midge Ayukawa whose wealth of knowledge proved invaluable and helped my understanding of Nisei women's experiences. I feel very fortunate to have met these Japanese Canadians and been privy to their life stories.

Finally, I wish to thank those friends and family who continually encouraged me, shared their ideas and opinions, and gave me the love and support necessary to complete this thesis. Their belief in my ability has been the greatest encouragement of all.

CHAPTER ONE

SETTING THE STAGE

Mama, those people are staring so!
Please don't use the ohashi!
And why didn't you bring the sandwiches
Instead of these osushi?
Of course, Mama, I love them
But don't you see
For our picnic tea.

Mama, I wish you'd make sis stop
Eating with her ohashi
No, Mama, I don't feel very hungry now.
I guess I don't like osushi. [1]

This untitled verse by Eiko Henmi, a popular writer in the Japanese Canadian newspaper, The New Canadian, poignantly illustrated how the Nisei occasionally felt about being different from Anglo-Canadians.[2] Nisei is the Japanese word for second generation Japanese immigrants.[3] Nisei women, in being marginalized and "the Other" in Canadian society prior, during, and immediately following World War Two, had to face and overcome numerous

---

[1] The New Canadian, May 28, 1941.

[2] In this thesis "Anglo-Canadian" refers to the British or continental European majority.

[3] First generation Japanese immigrants are called "Issei", while the third generation is called "Sansei".

obstacles. Prejudice and sexual subordination restricted their experience as it did that of all minority women. To understand the Nisei women's experiences, historians need to reveal the complexities and subtleties of racial and gender oppression. In this context, gender "refers to any social construction having to do with the male\female distinction, including those constructions that separate "female" bodies from "male" bodies".[4] Historians also need to recognize the differences in male/female immigrants and non-immigrant/minority women's experiences, most importantly as they relate to changes in language, location, and public and familial roles. Gender roles played an integral part in household economics, social networks, popular perceptions of life, and community stratifications.[5]

Ethnic historians in Canada have tended to neglect immigrant and minority women; early writers of Canadian women's history made no distinction between Anglo-Canadian women and non-Anglo-Canadian women.[6] With a few

---

[4] Linda Nicholson, "Interpreting Gender" in Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society. Vol.20, no.1, Autumn 1994, 79-105.

[5] As noted by Suzanne Morton, gender ideals were quite distinct from reality, are class or community specific, and must be examined in a particular context. "The fluctuation in the distance between expectations and reality meant that gender ideals were by definition always shifting and relative". (Ideal Surroundings: Domestic Life in the Working-Class Suburb in the 1920s, Toronto, 1995), 6.

[6] Alison Prentice and Susan Mann Trofimenkoff, The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History: Volume 2 (Toronto, 1977) is a prime example of women's history that marginalizes the immigrant woman's experience. Of the

recent exceptions, ethnic historians in Canada have overlooked gender as a analytical tool and have focused instead on ethnicity, race and class.[7] Immigrant and minority women must be differentiated from both their male counterparts and their Anglo-Canadian sisters. Although immigrant and minority women's trials and conflicts are not exclusive to them, how they struggled and dealt with the various problems is unique. They encountered language differences, discrimination, sexual exploitation and subordination, and changing roles in the family structure. These in themselves make the female immigrant experiences worthy of study. This thesis, using gender analysis, reveals one portrait of such a minority group--Nisei women.

Recent studies in Canadian immigration history employ numerous methodological approaches to investigate the immigrant experience.[8] Most obvious is the transference of focus onto the immigrant, who is seen as an actor in the process of transformation from native country to host country. One

---

eight essays, the only one discussing immigrant women is restricted to immigrant women from northern Europe. Non-European and non-white women immigrants are not mentioned in the book.

[7] For further reading on the neglect of gender analysis by historians, see Gillian Creese and Veronica Strong-Boag's "Taking Gender Into Account in British Columbia" in BC Studies 105-106, (Spring\Summer 1995): 9-26.

[8] For a detailed analysis of immigrant historiography see Franca Iacovetta "Manly Militants, Cohesive Communities, and Defiant Domestics: Writing about Immigrants in Canadian Historical Scholarship" Labour/Le Travail 36 (Fall, 1995): 217-52.

approach is the comparative method of a single ethnic group in two different locations, as in Royden Loewen's Family, Church, and Market. [9] In bringing the focus down to a phenomenological level, Loewen presented a grass-roots image of the immigrant experience. Loewen focused on the Mennonite families in both Manitoba and Nebraska and examined their relationship with the church and market and the reformulated strategies they implemented to maintain old values and familiar ways of life in new contexts. Loewen also highlighted the separate experience of women by examining kinship, marriage and women's work.

Other scholars have studied propaganda and community programs devised by the immigrant groups to insure the continuity of native beliefs and customs. In Wedded to the Cause: Ukrainian-Canadian Women and Ethnic Identity, 1891-1991, Frances Swyripa, for example focuses on the ethnic group as a national-cultural collectivity.[10] By studying the female images, roles and myths as cultivated and defined by the elite community leaders, Swyripa showed the Ukrainian communities' priorities and concerns, and the tensions between a cultural ethnic consciousness and a politicized national consciousness. This top down historical approach, is valuable, but does not completely reveal the lived

---

[9] Royden Loewen, Family, Church, and Market: A Mennonite Community in the Old and the New Worlds, 1850-1930 (Toronto, 1993).

[10] Frances Swyripa, Wedded to the Cause: Ukrainian-Canadian Women and Ethnic Identity, 1891-1991 (Toronto, 1993).

experience of Ukrainian immigrant women.

A third approach is that of Franca Iacovetta's Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto.[11] This micro-analysis of southern Italian immigrants showed the interconnectedness of class, ethnicity, and gender. Iacovetta examined in depth the Italian workplace, household, church, club, and union and the changes made in each to shift from rural peasant living to industrial urban existence. She provided a gender analysis of women's experiences by inspecting the construction of femininity and how it was used, altered and developed after immigration to Canada. Her effective use of interviews allowed a clear vision of immigrant men and women's experience through their own words and deeds. This grass-roots, bottom up approach provided an average Italian immigrant's perspective and illuminated an Italian immigrant experience in Canada.

In contrast, few historians of the Japanese Canadians have given any attention to gender differences. The historiography of Japanese Americans is much more extensive but even it has many limitations. The early American works provided brief overviews of women's experiences but did not attempt to present women's perspectives. One of the first historians to depict American Japanese women's experience, Yuji Ichioka in his 1980 article "Japanese Immigrant

---

[11] Franca Iacovetta, Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto (Montreal, 1992).

Women in the United States, 1900-1924" discussed women only in relation to men, as wives, mothers or workers, and viewed them as being totally dependent on husbands and solely motivated to work for the benefit of their families.[12] Similarly, Emma Gee in "Issei Women", posed many important and pertinent questions concerning Issei women and their experiences, but offered only "a glimmer of the rich history of the Issei pioneer women".[13] Although Gee gave voice and agency to immigrant women and provided an image of family dynamics, she never clearly investigated how these memoirs could be interpreted with respect to the larger ideological concepts of gender and race.[14]

---

[12] Yuji Ichioka, "Japanese Immigrant Women In the United States, 1900-1924" Pacific Historical Review (1980): 339-357. His other works include "Ameyuki-san: Japanese Prostitutes in Nineteenth-Century America" Amerasia 4 (1977): 1-21 and The Issei: The World of the First Generation of Japanese Immigrants, 1885-1912 (New York, 1988).

[13] Emma Gee, "Issei Women" in Asian and Pacific American Experiences: Women's Perspective, Nobuya Tsuchida, ed. (Minneapolis, 1982), 66. Gee's article is frustrating because it never uncovers how these women felt about their lives, their choices, families, social position, and prescribed gender roles. Her quick descriptions of Issei women's experiences fails to analyze how Issei women managed the transition to the West.

[14] In a second problematic article within the anthology L.C. Hirata in "Chinese Immigrant Women in Nineteenth Century California" provides a historical chronology of Chinese women in California and describes how their presence helped shape a more permanent frontier settlement. She fails to illustrate how women existed in this structure or examine the resources at their disposal, how they were used, and most importantly, how these women saw themselves and their situation. Both essays merely skim the surface of Asian women's early experiences and fail to uncover their personal experiences and voices.

More satisfactory analytical works have surfaced recently in the American historiography.[15] Three works deserve special mention. In "Nisei Women and Resettlement During World War Two" Valerie Matsumoto used a wide range of archival sources and interviews to create a detailed and insightful account of changes to family life, the kinds of work available, and their effects on Nisei women's conception of self.[16] She illustrated the Nisei's shift to a more independent and confident position within the Japanese community as they became pioneers by leaving the camps for work and educational opportunities in the Midwest and East. In similar fashion, Gail M. Nomura also flushed out the personal female perspective. Her 1987 article "Tsugiki, a Grafting: a History of a

---

[15] Another satisfactory source for revealing Japanese American women's experiences is autobiographies and biographies. One such intuitive piece is Monica Sone's Nisei Daughter (Seattle, 1953), which recounted her personal search for identity while living in a bi-racial world surrounded by prejudice. Starting with her earliest childhood memories and moving forward to her adolescence and college years prior to World War Two, Sone reconstructed the devastating effects of the 1941 Pearl Harbor bombing and the relocation years in Idaho. Other similar biographies are Yoshiko Uchida, Desert Exile: The Uprooting of a Japanese American Family (Seattle, 1982), Akemi Kikumura, Through Harsh Winters: The Life of a Japanese Immigrant Woman (Novato, California, 1981) and Lauren Kessler, Stubborn Twig: Three Generations in the Life of a Japanese American Family (New York, 1993).

[16] Valerie Matsumoto, "Nisei Women and Resettlement during World War II" in Making Waves: An Anthology of Writings By and About Asian American Women. Edited by Asian Women United of California. Boston: Beacon Press, 1989, 115-125. She considered both the positive and negative psychological ramifications of moving East on Nisei women and how various formal and informal support groups assisted in the process.

Japanese Pioneer Women in Washington State" moved past a simple depiction of the general life of a Japanese immigrant woman by using both oral interviews and tanka poems composed by her subject Teiko Tomita.[17] By analysing the two combined, Nomura reached the deeper dimension of her subject's experience. She dealt with gender relations, family dynamics, and examined Nisei women's paid work. Both Matsumoto and Nomura presented a very personal history of Japanese American women.

The most comprehensive and detailed analysis in the American literature is Evelyn Nakano Glenn, Issei, Nisei, War Bride: Three Generations of Japanese American Women in Domestic Service.[18] Glenn detailed the complex interaction of race, gender and class and specifically how three cohorts of women in the San Francisco Bay area dealt with family, conflicting customs, and work. Glenn sought to "look at the historical circumstances of their [women's] entry into this field and at the interrelations among their experiences as workers, family members, and community participants".[19] As well as highlighting

---

[17] Gail M. Nomura, "Tsugiki, a Grafting: a History of a Japanese Pioneer Woman in Washington State" Women's Studies 14 (1987): 15-37.

[18] Evelyn Nakano Glenn, Issei, Nisei, War Bride: Three Generations of Japanese American Women in Domestic Service (Philadelphia, 1986).

[19] Glenn, Issei, Nisei, War Bride, 5.

women's experiences both in terms of domestic service and in the family sphere, Glenn expanded her analysis to consider the national picture. She began with the political economy and moved to cohort and individual life histories, and finally to the subjective meanings that individuals constructed to make sense of their experience.[20] She examined the historical relationship among female immigrants, racial-ethnic subordination and domestic service. Glenn also revealed the individual and personal experiences of domestic servants, examining the employee-employer relationship, and the strategies each party used in negotiation. Glenn successfully provided a sense of how these women lived, saw themselves and others. By examining the intricacies of women's lives, Glenn demonstrated how good history should be written.

Historians have not yet analyzed the experience of Japanese-Canadians in such a way. Early works, written from a Anglo-Canadian perspective, concentrated on the political and economic factors associated with white racism.[21] Social historians discussed the immigrant experience from the

---

[20] Ibid, 18.

[21] Examples of this are Forest La Violette, The Japanese Canadians and World War Two: A Sociological and Psychological Account,(Toronto, 1948), Peter Ward, White Canada Forever, (Montreal, 1978), Gillian Creese, "Working Class Politics, Racism and Sexism: the Making of A Politically Divided Working Class in Vancouver, 1900-1939" Ph.D thesis (Ottawa: Carleton University, 1986) and Patricia Roy, A White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914 (Vancouver, 1989).

immigrant perspective, examining how immigrants dealt with white racism and Anglo-Canadian society. Most of these works centre around World War Two, when the Japanese community was forcibly uprooted, interned and resettled in Eastern Canada.[22]

Gillian Creese's Ph.D thesis, "Working Class Politics, Racism and Sexism: the Making of A Politically Divided Working Class in Vancouver, 1900-1939" briefly mentioned female Asian workers' subordinate position and their invisibility among workers, women, and Asians in B.C, but Creese excluded Asian women in her in depth examination of gender and ethnic subordination.[23] Even Rigenda Sumida's 1935 Master's thesis, "The Japanese in British Columbia", one

---

[22] Roy Ito, We Went to War: The Story of the Japanese Canadians Who Served During the First and Second World Wars (Stittsville, Ontario, 1984); Barry Broadfoot, Years of Sorrow, Years of Shame: The Story of Japanese Canadians in World War II (Toronto, 1977), and Ann Sunahara, The Politics of Racism: The Uprooting of Japanese Canadians During the Second World War (Toronto, 1981) have written extensively on the personal consequences of the Japanese experience in World War Two. They investigate, in varying degrees, the economic, social, psychological and political ramifications of the Canadian government's actions on the community and the individual. Several graduate theses also have focused on various aspects of the internment, forced resettlement and dispersement of the Japanese Canadian community. Peter Takaji Nunoda's 1991 Ph.D. thesis, " A Community in Transition and Conflict: The Japanese Canadians, 1935-51" concentrates on the political aspects of the Japanese community and its dealings with the provincial and federal governments. Mona Oikawa's 1986 Master's thesis, "'Driven to Scatter Far and Wide': The Forced Resettlement of Japanese Canadians to Southern Ontario, 1944-1949" (Toronto, 1986) examines the attitudes of public servants who were responsible for implementing the policy of dispering Japanese Canadians, and how those attitudes were influenced by the capitalist system.

[23] Creese, "Working Class Politics, Racism and Sexism", 47.

of the earliest and most comprehensive works on Japanese Canadians, provided a detailed account of Japanese immigrants and their families in Canada by examining their economic, social, political and personal relationships, but only briefly discussed women's organizations, occupational preferences and socializing activities, and did little analysis of the data.

More recent academic works have concentrated on the personal and psychological consequences for the Japanese community, yet these too neglect the intricacies of gender difference. Cheryl Maeva Thomas in her 1992 Master's thesis, "The Japanese Communities of Cumberland British Columbia 1885-1942: Portrait of a Past" took an anthropological approach.[24] Drawing on interviews, diaries, and photographs, Thomas depicted two small Japanese communities in Cumberland, detailing their social organizations and rituals, family life, economic survival techniques, and the role of religion. Another academic work, Tomoko Makabe's Ph.D dissertation, "Ethnic Group Identity: Canadian-Born Japanese in Metropolitan Toronto" examined the problem of ethnic identity as a social-psychological phenomenon and concluded that occupational mobility, social participation and informal group affiliations were relevant to maintaining the

---

[24] Cheryl Maeva Thomas, "The Japanese Communities of Cumberland, British Columbia 1885-1942: Portrait of a Past", M.A. Thesis, (Victoria, 1992).

group's identity.[25]

One of the first books to acknowledge gender difference was Ken Adachi's, The Enemy That Never Was: A History of the Japanese Canadians.[26] Within his examination of the internal functioning of the Japanese community, and its experiences with the larger national and international scene, Adachi also investigated the actions of the Nisei generation as a whole, and briefly mentioned Nisei women's experiences. Adachi also provided a sketch of Issei women, their status in Japanese society and some of their experiences in Canada as picture brides. Unfortunately, his brief analysis of Nisei women only highlighted a few of the differences in experience between the sexes.

Fortunately, a few recent works have come to differentiate the experiences of Issei women from their male counterparts and have detailed the uniqueness of Japanese immigrant women's lives. Michiko (Midge) Ayukawa and Keibo Oiwa, for example, have translated Issei women's diaries, which make immigrant women's own words and feelings accessible to historians. Using numerous

---

[25] Tomoko Makabe, "Ethnic Group Identity: Canadian-Born Japanese in Metropolitan Toronto" Ph.D Thesis, (Toronto, 1976).

[26] Ken Adachi, The Enemy That Never Was (Toronto, 1976). Along with detailing the immigrants' perspective and their response to racism, Adachi also dealt with the Anglo-Canadian perspective and the reasoning behind the policy of forced internment and resettlement.

personal narratives from Issei women, Ayukawa's works highlighted the experiences of picture brides to Canada and pointed out the multiple forces that shaped Issei women's lives, including the influential role of Meiji gender ideology in women's sense of self.[27] Ayukawa is clear, however, to note the active and, at times, resistant role of Issei women in their daily struggles in Canada, as mothers, wives, and workers. Her translation of Imada Ito's memoirs clearly illustrated the various race, gender and class relations at play for Japanese women during this time.

Likewise, Keibo Oiwa in one section of Stone Voices: Wartime Writings of Japanese Canadian Issei chose particular portions of Kaoru Ikeda's diary to reveal the tenacity of women in the camps and their perseverance in dealing with the relocation.[28] The diary also described the women's network within the camps that assisted in alleviating some stresses of camp life. Kaoru Ikeda's diary

---

[27] Ayukawa's major work is her translation of an Issei woman's memoir. "Bearing the Unbearable: The Memoir of a Japanese Pioneer Woman", M.A. thesis, (Victoria, 1990). Other articles include "Neither Wataridori Nor Dekasegi: Early Japanese Women Building New Lives in Canada" in Japan in Focus ed. Jacob Kovalio (Toronto, 1994) and "Good Wives and Wise Mothers: Japanese Picture Brides in Early Twentieth-Century British Columbia" BC Studies (Spring/Summer 1995), 103-118.

[28] Keibo Oiwa, Stone Voices: Wartime Writings of Japanese Canadian Issei (Montreal, 1991). Oiwa's sought to illustrate how "the persecuted themselves felt, thought, wished to do and actually did and failed to do" and what meanings they attached to their thoughts and actions.(15) Kaoru Ikeda, the only woman in the book, was an Issei relocated to Slocan, British Columbia.

presents a first hand impression of the racial and gender issues encountered, and some of the Issei's impressions on the younger generation.

Other historians of Japanese Canadian women's experience have also examined the Issei generation. Like some American historians, some of them have fallen prey to depicting immigrant women as victims or one dimensional characters. Although Audrey Kobayashi's article "For the Sake of the Children: Japanese/Canadian Workers/Mothers" examined the ideological contradictions that faced working Issei women in Canada, she quickly portrayed Issei women as obedient and submissive wives.[29] Despite Kobayashi's appreciation of gender role dynamics, she ignored both the active role of women in constructing gender, and the effects of racism on Issei women's experiences. Although Issei women might have had limited dealings with the Anglo-Saxon community, the economic and social effects of racism on their family and the Japanese community had individual and personal consequences. Kobayashi dealt with work, family dynamics and gender relations, but did not reveal any sense of feminist consciousness. She stated Issei women felt no sense of accomplishment from their paid labour and its economic contribution to the family economy because women's work was antithetical to the proper raising of children. Such a broad

---

[29] Audrey Kobayashi, "For the Sake of the Children: Japanese/Canadian Workers/Mothers", in Women, Work, and Place. Edited by Audrey Kobayashi. (Montreal, 1994), 45-72.

generalization is erroneous when one considers the positive work sentiment found in the Issei diary of Imada Ito translated by Ayukawa.[30]

Another powerful medium used to explore the experiences of Japanese Canadians is the novel. This has been done most skilfully by Joy Kogawa in Obasan.[31] Kogawa poignantly uncovered a very personal dimension of the Japanese Canadian experience by revealing the pain, suffering and endurance of an Issei woman, and the various ways some Nisei coped with World War Two. Kogawa drew upon the Muriel Kitagawa papers to create her character Aunt Emily, the political activist. In doing so, Kogawa drew an authentic portrait of the Japanese Canadian experience. Her narrative further enriches one's understanding of the long term and psychological effects that forced relocation and dispersement had on the Japanese community.

In contrast, very little has been written on the second generation female experience. This is My Own: Letters to Wes and Other Writings on Japanese Canadians, 1941-48 confines itself to exploring the writings of one exceptional

---

[30] In contrast to Kobayashi's approach is Tamara Adilman's methodology in examining Chinese women in Canada. In "A Preliminary Sketch of Chinese Women and Work in British Columbia, 1858-1950", British Columbia Reconsidered: Essays on Women, edited by Gillian Creese and Veronica Strong-Boag. (Vancouver, 1992). Adilman covers the history of Chinese women's work in Canada, detailing the numerous occupations women held and the importance of racism in restricting women's occupational and social mobility. Adilman shows that Chinese women historically had choices, however limited, in their lives.

[31] Joy Kogawa, Obasan (Toronto, 1981)

Nisei woman during the 1940s.[32] As a young writer corresponding to her brother in Toronto, Kitagawa recounted the personal and social impact of the Japanese uprooting, her deep feelings of resentment towards the government, her views of the racial persecution of the community and her passionate commitment to human rights. The book includes numerous speeches and articles Kitagawa wrote for The New Canadian. Her clear voice of resistance counters the general opinion that the Nisei meekly accepted what happened to them during the war. Considering she is one of only a handful of women Nisei who had the courage and conviction to speak out, her words are even more significant for historians.

Only one study to date exclusively examines the experience of Canadian Nisei women. Hyang-Sae Kang's 1996 Master's thesis "Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Work and Family: the Experiences of Second Generation Japanese Canadian Women in Winnipeg, 1942 to Present"[33] examined the occupational concentration, social mobility, and the interrelationship between Nisei women's wage work and their family roles. In noting the different life experience of specific age cohorts and their different reactions to conventional gender ideology, Kang highlighted the unique family experiences within an ethnic group, and

---

[32] Muriel Kitagawa, This is My Own: Letters to Wes and Other Writings on Japanese Canadians, 1941-48, Edited by Roy Miki, (Vancouver, 1985).

[33] Hyang-Sae Kang, "Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Work and Family: The Experience of Second Generation Japanese Canadian Women in Winnipeg, 1942 To Present" (M.A Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1996).

disproved the popular assumption of the same lived experiences for all women in an ethnic group. Her work is an important contribution to ethnic women's history and accents the need to consider class, race and gender, as well as the effects of a specific historical time and place in studies of ethnic groups. Kang's work is an example of an accurate and inclusive history of Japanese Canadians.

As shown above, the Canadian canon on Japanese immigrant women is limited, and there are no historical studies of second generation Japanese women. Nisei women, like other second-generation ethnic women, had to deal with two cultural worlds that presented different rules about sex, marriage, womanhood and family. These differences need to be revealed and analyzed.[34] This thesis attempts to address this problem by uncovering and analysing the female perspectives they presented in the pages of The New Canadian. First published by the Nisei in 1938, the English-language newspaper expressed Nisei concerns and interests about both the Japanese community and the larger mainstream society. The women's articles offer one image of how young adult Nisei women defined themselves, their male counterparts and their future roles. Although these Nisei women writers recognized their dual status as both

---

[34] Franca Iacovetta notes the importance of exploring how second-generation ethnic women "negotiated their identity while living simultaneously within different cultural worlds that could prescribe conflicting rules about sex, marriage, manhood, womanhood and family" "Manly Militants, Cohesive Communities, and Defiant Domestics", 251.

Japanese and Canadian, they strove to fit into the prescribed gender roles of the Anglo-Canadian society. Despite parental opposition and Anglo-Canadian racism, their columns and articles advocated adherence to mainstream customs and traditions. This paper focuses on the female writings in The New Canadian between 1938 and 1949 and examines how and why some Nisei women identified themselves as wholly Canadian in action, appearance and outlook. Although no clear, definitive answers may be given, this thesis supports the theory that racism played a central role in Nisei desires to acculturate.

Nisei women lived in a bi-racial and bi-cultural world during the 1930s and 1940s, where both the larger Anglo-Canadian society and the small intimate Japanese community presented them with many different and, often conflicting, social messages. Each community was influential in their search for identity. The second chapter examines the Japanese definition of womanhood as evident in the Issei, or first generation women, who grew up in Japan between 1880-1920 and learned first hand the Meiji definition of womanhood.[35] Gender roles were firmly engrained in Issei women by the time of their emigration and remained essentially unchanged after their settlement. It was the late nineteenth century Japanese feminine ideal that the Issei handed down to Nisei daughters.

The third chapter begins by examining some of the major differences

---

[35] The Meiji period (1867 to 1912) was named after the reigning emperor Mutsuhito.

between the Japanese and Canadian mind set. It then shifts to depict the experiences of the Nisei generation during the 1930s and 1940, especially the impact of public school socialization and racism generally and in creating generational conflicts between the Issei and Nisei. The chapter then analyzes Nisei women's experiences, starting with a brief survey of the Anglo-Canadian definition of womanhood, and moving to an examination of young Nisei women's lives both in the home and in the public domain. It will be clear that Canadian and Japanese-prescribed gender roles shaped Nisei women's experiences and affected how they saw themselves as women and especially, women of Japanese heritage.

The fourth and fifth chapters focus on the female voices in the Nisei newspaper The New Canadian and examine how Nisei women used the paper from its inception in 1938 to 1949 as a medium of expression, to vent frustrations and advocate change, and to discuss important issues of the day. For purposes of analysis, three main themes are highlighted to reflect the most important concerns of Nisei women. The first theme centres around prescriptions of masculinity and femininity. From advice and relationship columns, it is clear that the gender roles espoused by women writers between 1938 and 1949 mirrored Anglo-Canadian norms and standards of behaviour. The second theme concerns Issei-Nisei relationships and the conflicts arising from differing notions of

femininity. The arguments of these articles reveal that some Nisei women preferred Canadian-style behaviour and attitudes to Japanese customs. The last theme examines how Nisei women responded to Anglo-Saxon racism and put forth resolutions to rectify the problem. Their writings illustrate their continued search for identity and suggest that some women sought an identity fashioned on the dominant society.

Fewer than ten Nisei women wrote for The New Canadian on a regular basis, and they were mostly in their late teens and early twenties. They were both strikingly different and yet similar to other young Nisei women. The women who wrote for The New Canadian, stood out as part of an intellectual elite within the Japanese Canadian community. Their public expression of support for acculturation to Anglo-Saxon mores and standards of behaviour was unusual and not representative of Nisei women, who were mostly quiet, unassuming and avoided public attention. However, like other Nisei women, they belonged to the small close-knit Japanese community, shared a common dual identity and faced racist treatment by the larger Anglo-Canadian society. Most Nisei women experienced the forced resettlement and relocation imposed on the whole Japanese community during the Second World War. The effects of this racist act deeply scarred the Nisei generation, who saw themselves as wronged Canadians. Because of the commonality of prejudicial experience, the female columnists

expressed views that can be considered representative of some Nisei women. The women writers of The New Canadian expressed familiar sentiments and, in doing so, brought to light a perspective of women's experience that would otherwise have remained hidden.

Uncovering the voices of Nisei women is integral to understanding their experiences. Although in no way complete, this examination of these voices in The New Canadian should enrich the ethnic and gender history of Japanese Canadians and reinforce the need to present different and multiple perspectives, especially those found in the margins of historical inquiry. Only by revealing those hidden perspectives can historians present a dynamic and clearer picture of the past.

CHAPTER TWO

FROM THE OLD COUNTRY-- THE ISSEI PARENTS

Second generation Japanese Canadians lived in a dual world, one Japanese and one Canadian. To appreciate the experiences of the Nisei one must first recognize the various conflicting influences and pressures of these two worlds on their lives. Along with racial discrimination and oppression, some pressures were gender specific and for Nisei women growing up in Canada in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s this had significant results. On one side, the Japanese community and Issei parents had a particular view of how Nisei women were supposed to act, based on the patriarchal social structure of Meiji Japan. On the other side, the dominant Anglo-Canadian community imposed its own distinctive cultural influences on the Nisei.

In this thesis it is possible only to sketch the background and tradition of Japan and its influences on the Issei and Nisei's world view and behaviour. However, the Japanese influence on Nisei women can be grasped primarily through the generation that inspired it, the Issei. This earlier generation, raised in Japan, held values that espoused traditional Japanese culture. Japanese education and personal home life indoctrinated Issei women in a culture which

included a strict definition of "womanhood" that influenced and shaped their sense of self. Japanese gender roles were exported with picture brides to Canada, and ultimately, dictated how Issei women would raise their daughters in the West.[1]

To establish a picture of Japanese womanhood one must focus on the Issei generation and its view of women. Issei women grew up and were educated during the Meiji period (1868-1912) when patriarchal domination was prevalent. As in patriarchal societies in Europe and North America, Japanese society expected women to be morally superior yet submissive to men.[2] Gender roles did not change a great deal between the late Tokugawa (1600-1868) and Meiji-Taisho periods.[3] Despite the major social changes of the Meiji Restoration,

---

[1] Most single Japanese emigrants could not return to Japan to choose a wife personally. Therefore a practice originated wherein a man chose his wife based on an exchange of photographs, correspondence and family recommendations. Started in 1908, the "picture bride" system continued until 1921 in the United States and 1928 in Canada. See Ken Adachi, The Enemy That Never Was (Toronto, 1976), Chapter 4. For American experience see Mei Nakano, Japanese American Women (Berkeley, 1990), 21-42.

[2] An example of a European patriarchal society is Italy. Here the concept of familial honour rested primarily on the sexual purity of wives, daughters, and sisters, and the men's successes in guarding the virtue of their women. For more, see Franca Iacovetta's Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto (Montreal, 1993), 78-80.

[3] The Meiji emperor died in 1912 and was succeeded by the emperor Taisho (1912-1926).

male dominance remained intact.[4] Society still regarded women as inferior to men and in need of male protection. The Meiji state's ideology towards women was called "good wife, wise mother" (ryosai kenbo), and was rooted firmly in patriarchy. As Kobayashi explains,

> Patriarchy is also much more than the oppression of women. It is bound up within a cultural system, a shared way of life, in which gender relations consist of "both the conflict and the complementary association between the sexes". Like the image of 'farmer' that provided the ideal basis for material wealth and social status, the image of 'mother' represented the pinnacle of rightness and therefore, for most, the greatest source of happiness in a Japanese woman's life. Hence the life of the Japanese woman came to be ordered by a mutually reinforcing pattern of "constraint and fulfilment".[5]

This ideology represented the ideal woman as hard working, frugal, an efficient household manager, caregiver of the old, young and ill who responsibly raised her children.[6] Moral textbooks of the period clearly detail this:

> Girls must be gentle and graceful in all things. In their conduct and manner of speech, they must not be harsh. While remaining

---

[4] The Meiji Restoration initiated numerous political, judicial, educational and technological changes in Japan's attempt to modernize. For a complete analysis and discussion of this transformation see W.G Beasley, The Meiji Restoration (Stanford, 1972). For Meiji ideology see Carol Gluck, Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period (Princeton, 1985).

[5] Audrey Kobayashi, "For the Sake of the Children" in Women, Work and Place (Montreal, 1994), 52.

[6] Sharon Nolte and Sally Ann Hastings, "The Meiji State's Policy Toward Women, 1890-1910," Recreating Japanese Women, 1600-1945, ed. by Gail Lee Bernstein (Berkeley, 1991), 152.

> gentle, however, they must have inner strength in order not to be easily swayed by others. Loquacity and jealousy are defects common among women, so care must be taken to guard against these faults. When a girl marries she must serve her husband and his parents faithfully, guide and educate her children, be kind to servants, be frugal in all things, and work for the family's prosperity. Once she marries, she must look upon her husband's home as her own, rise early in the morning, go to bed late, and devote all her thoughts to household affairs. She must assist her husband, and whatever misfortune befalls the family she must not abandon it.[7]

Although this was a text specifically for middle-class women, females of all classes were taught from an early age to dedicate their lives to the welfare of the family. Japanese society considered serving the family was the most dutiful role a daughter could assume. Women's obedience in accepting this role was assured because they were tied economically and socially to their families and had little power or independence of their own.

The definition of mother was culturally constructed to conform to the demands of the Meiji Restoration.[8] The feminine ideal of "good wife, wise mother" was rooted firmly in patriarchy, which desired women to remain subservient and inferior to men. Meiji women, like their Tokugawa predecessors,

---

[7] Mikiso Hane, Reflections on the Way to the Gallows: Rebel Women in Prewar Japan (Los Angeles, 1988), 12.

[8] Audrey Kobayashi, "For the Sake of the Children", 51.

knew their place in society; they were to show humility and absolute obedience.[9] Only with age did women receive a considerable amount of respect and care from younger household members of both sexes as their due for their lifelong loyalty to the family and their competency and efficiency in maintaining the family unit.

Not only were gender roles enforced within the family, but the state reinforced them in law and creed. By the turn of the twentieth century, the Japanese state had become "the primary authority on acceptable women's roles in politics, the family, education, and the workplace".[10] The Civil Code of 1898 reflected this by establishing the old samurai ideal of the family as the national standard and reinforcing the legal authority of the household head, who was usually male.

The Code circumscribed women's autonomy in a number of ways. Although a wife could hold property of her own she needed her husband's

---

[9] Although possessing few legal rights, samurai women of the Tokugawa period had numerous obligations and restrictions. The Doctrine of the Three Obedience, made a woman completely dependent and obedient to her father, then her husband and eventually her son. In addition a girl's marriage was arranged by her parents, and the daughter had no say in the decision. In contrast to samurai women, peasant women had considerably more personal liberties and were regarded as partners in the economic survival of the family. Although denied legal property rights, women could inherit property. See M. Hane, Modern Japan: A Historical Survey (Boulder, 1992), 35-37.

[10] Mariko Asano Tamanoi, "Songs As Weapons: The Culture and History of Komori(Nursemaids) in Modern Japan" Journal of Asian Studies, (1991), 796.

consent to enter a legal contract and, as a rule, a widow did not inherit her husband's property. Children were members of their father's family and their mother had few legal rights concerning them; in cases of divorce, children went to the father. Only a wife's adultery constituted grounds for legal divorce and criminal punishment. Men could also file for divorce on the grounds of barrenness or 'unreasonable treatment' of her parent-in-law.[11] The state's concept of womanhood paralleled the Tokugawa samurai attitude and came to be popularized in the ideology of "good wife, wise mother". This construction of femininity became the cornerstone of women's education in Japan, solidified in the education legislation of 1899.

Although the content and form of women's education changed between the Tokugawa and Meiji periods, the essential purpose of educating women remained the same. Women were to be morally pure and remain in the domestic sphere under male dominance. Although the state had different conceptions of the exact role for women of each particular class, it encouraged all women to contribute to the advancement of family and nation. Like their male counterparts, rural women and women of the lower classes were to concentrate on patriotic duties and, more specifically, on enhancing the nation's prestige by contributing to Japan's economic and industrial base. In short, these

---

[11] Nancy Andrew, "The Seitosha: An Early Japanese Women's Organization, 1911-1916," Papers on Japan (Cambridge, 1972), 46.

women should obtain a job. While still endorsing the "good wife, wise mother" ideology for rural women, the government emphasized achievement through financial gains for family and state. This included encouraging women to emigrate to North America.

An emigrant woman could assist her homeland in two ways. She could send money back home to help in the care and maintenance of parents, and secondly, she could help curb the perceived problem of the Japanese bachelor society abroad. This early group of young male immigrants had gained a reputation among the larger white society, which saw them as leading immoral lives due to the gambling, women, and drink within their work camps. To combat this negative image abroad, the Japanese consulate lowered the requirements necessary for men to summon wives from Japan.[12] Many immigrant men soon redirected their attentions to starting and maintaining a family.

For Japanese women of all classes decisions about their futures were made by the patriarchal head of the family and based on larger family interests. Women obeyed these decisions out of filial obligations and because few

---

[12] In 1908 Canada concluded the "Lemieux Agreement" with the Japanese Government which limited the number of Japanese immigrants to an annual maximum of 400. The annual quota exempted returning residents and their close relatives, including picture brides. For a more detailed description of the agreement and its results, see Ken Adachi, The Enemy That Never Was, 81-85.

alternatives existed. If families did not need girls to assist at home, lower class families often "contracted" daughters out for a specific period of time to a factory. The factory sent their wages directly to the family.[13] Under this arrangement, a woman served her family faithfully but gained little for herself.

Families also decided on a woman's marriage. Many lower class women were married off by their families to Japanese emigrants as picture brides. This practice, which brought the majority of immigrant Issei women to Canada and the United States, was the fundamental element in the permanent settlement of Japanese in the West. According to Japanese historian Tomoko Makabe, most picture-brides were ambitious and emigrated eagerly to North America and few, if any, were coerced.[14] Some had personal aspirations to better their social status while others wanted to help their natal families financially.[15] This is plausible considering the limited avenues available to women and the harsh economic conditions of rural Japan in the early twentieth century.

Young rural woman had only three real occupational options in Japan;

---

[13] Yasue Aoki Kidd, Women Workers in the Japanese Cotton Mills:1880-1920 (Cornell, 1978), 21. For a more complete description of women's experiences in Japanese factories, see Patricia Tsurumi, Factory Girls: Women in the Thread Mills of Meiji Japan (Princeton, 1990).

[14] Quoted in Michiko Ayukawa, "Neither Wataridori Nor Dekasegi: Early Japanese Women Building New Lives in Canada" Japan In Focus, ed. by Jacob Kovalio (Toronto, 1994), 269.

[15] Ibid., 269.

they could remain at home and help in family production, work at a factory in town, or become domestic servants.[16] The state deemed each option acceptable as it benefitted the economy of family and state. The state even openly endorsed paid labour by lower class married women in both city and countryside because it permitted women to ensure the survival of household and children. The Japanese state still considered these women "good wives, wise mothers".[17]

Near the end of the nineteenth century, emigration became another possibility for young single or widowed women. With families burdened with higher taxes, costs of education and a reduced workforce through conscription, emigration let women escape the pessimistic future of rural existence.[18] Most women leapt at the chance to emigrate.

Between the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth century approximately 5 000 young Japanese women

---

[16] Konosuke Odaka, "Redundancy Utilized: The economics of female domestic servants in pre-war Japan" in Japanese Working Women ed. by Janet Hunter, (New York, 1993), 24.

[17] Kathleen Uno, "One day at a time: Work and domestic activities of urban lower-class women in early twentieth century Japan" in Japanese Women Working ed. by Janet Hunter, 60.

[18] The phenomenal costs of industrialization and modernization of Japan led to a dramatic increase in taxes, particularly for farmers who accounted for 81 percent of the government's tax revenue. For a concise summary, see Mikiso Hane, Modern Japan: A Historical Survey (Boulder, 1992), 93-94. Also part of Japan's new state was a national army and navy, which successfully defeated the Russia in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5. See also Hane, Modern Japan, 171-79.

came to Canada to join the 10 000 Japanese male immigrants living there.[19] Over ninety-five per cent of them settled in British Columbia. Most came from areas of Japan, such as Miomura in Wakayama-ken, Hikone in Shiga-ken, and the area around Hiroshima, where significant emigration had already occurred.[20] The Issei women, who came from predominantly farming backgrounds, were well accustomed to the strenuous labour necessary for family survival.[21] Work in the fields or in cottage industries, combined with domestic tasks took up the majority of women's time. The sense of purpose, expectation and duty inherent in the psyche of Japanese women continued to be influential when they emigrated and joined husbands in the North America.

Upon emigrating, Japanese women, like many of their European counterparts, experienced a definite change in lifestyle. Getting acquainted with the new environment of Western Canada was only one demand made on Issei women. Husbands, expecting their newly-arrived wives to adapt quickly, forced them to replace their traditional Japanese-style kimono with a western-style dress

---

[19] Adachi, The Enemy That Never Was, 91.

[20] Midge Ayukawa, "Neither Wataridori Nor Dekasegi", 270.

[21] Female domestic labour included a wide variety of jobs: cultivating wet and dry fields, silkworm raising, spinning, weaving and straw sandal-making, and through domestic tasks such as cooking, laundry, cleaning, preparing the bath, and child care. Women worked from dawn to dusk, in either agricultural labour or handicrafts, making a vital contribution to the family's survival. (Kathleen Uno, "One day at a time", 60.)

and commence work at once. In a land of strange habits, languages and attitudes, Japanese culture became a cherished memento that thrived in the small Japanese communities that sprouted up in British Columbia. As Gillian Creese notes, the formation of these communities, "occurred as acts of inclusion, providing mutual aid, economic links, and sociability, and as acts of exclusion, offering self-defence against a generally hostile dominant society".[22] Retaining Japanese traditions was a small comfort for Issei women whose life was anything but easy. Foreign surroundings, an unfamiliar language, hard work and primitive living conditions were the lot for many. Few Issei women learned the English language, which further held them within the Japanese community and made the larger Anglo-Canadian society a foreign entity, only to be engaged with if necessary.[23]

Despite racism and hostile Anglo-Canadian attitudes limiting the jobs available to them, many Japanese women found paid work within and outside the close-knit Japanese community. Women worked in laundries, clothing factories,

---

[22] Gillian Creese, "Class, Ethnicity and Conflict: The Case of Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1880-1923" Workers, Capital and the State in B.C. edited by Rennie Warburton and David Coburn, (Vancouver, 1988), 73.

[23] "Notable exceptions were women who were educated in Japan by Christian missionaries and women who went to work outside the family enterprise, such as those engaged in domestic work in white homes in North America. Many of these women eventually grasped a functional speaking knowledge of English." Mei Nakano, Japanese American Women (Berkeley, 1990), 27.

family businesses, restaurants, canneries, and in lumber camps as cooks and laundresses. They also found employment as hairdressers, dressmakers, farm labourers in the Fraser and Okanagan Valleys, and as domestics in white households.[24] Determined and resourceful, picture brides willingly moved beyond women's traditional roles to assist and advance their families.[25]

Racial discrimination towards Asians significantly differentiated the experience between European and non-European female immigrants. As in the United States, wage rates, employment opportunities and social status differed considerably between Japanese immigrant women and Northern European immigrant women.[26] Although many European immigrants could not speak

---

[24] Audrey Kobayashi, "For the Sake of the Children: Japanese/Canadian Workers/Mothers", Women, Work and Place, ed. by Audrey Kobayashi, (Montreal, 1994), 59.

[25] For a more complete look at an Issei's woman's experience as a picture bride and labourer in Canada see Midge Ayukawa, "Bearing the Unbearable: The Memoir of a Japanese Pioneer Woman" (M.A thesis, University of Victoria, 1990)

[26] Mei Nakano, Japanese American Women, 47. Although most working women had the triple duty of caring for children, maintaining the household, and working outside the home, racial discrimination effectively barred Japanese American women from favoured jobs, and unions. Although American Issei women (and men) were barred from owning real property, there was no such restriction in Canada. In contrast Varpu Lindstrom-Best examines the immigrant experience of Finnish women in Defiant Sisters: A Social History of Finnish Immigrant Women in Canada (Toronto, 1988), and reveals a very different experience from that of Japanese women. Although Finnish women lacked skills and spoke a foreign language, they did not face the hostile racism that Japanese women did. As Lindstrom-Best notes, Finnish women were able to achieve a "high degree of independence, relatively good wages, and an opportunity to save money".(87)

English or had few skills, the job pool was larger than for Japanese immigrant women. Unlike British and Finnish women, whom the Canadian government welcomed, Japanese women faced a hostile reception by B.C. politicians, who regarded them as propagating the 'yellow race'.[27] Most Issei women needed to do paid work for an extended period to sustain the family unit and were required to work longer outside the home than European female immigrants. With the majority of their time taken up with family responsibilities and concerns, Issei women had few pursuits that did not serve family interests.

Another heavy responsibility for Issei women was the care of children. For most early picture brides, childbirth occurred at home with husbands acting as midwives. This experience contrasted with the customary practices in Japan, where women returned to their birth homes to be cared for by mothers and given a few weeks to recuperate. In Canada, the need for economic survival drove many women back to work within a week of giving birth, strapping their babies on their backs, or leaving them unattended at home. Traditionally, older members of the family cared for the child, but such assistance was absent in Canada. If finances allowed, parents sent children back to Japan to be reared by

---

[27] For a more detailed comparison, see Varpu Lindstrom-Best, Defiant Sisters: A Social History of Finnish Immigrant Women in Canada (Toronto, 1988), Chapter 5.

relatives, or sent them a few years later for their education.[28]

Issei women were responsible for clothing, feeding, washing and tending to all health concerns of family members. Because their primary concerns were their husband and children, they dedicated themselves to ensuring their general health and advancement. By strictly adhering to the ascribed gender roles Issei women found a sense of fulfilment and achievement in their new surroundings.

In addition to the laborious household tasks, an Issei woman was also the primary role model for her daughters. Japanese custom dictated that women were to teach their daughters proper 'female behaviour'. Most Issei women sought to be the model 'good Japanese wife and mother', who directed their life primarily to the welfare of children and husband. Mothers expected Nisei daughters to emulate this behaviour. Most Issei women hoped their daughters would follow proper Japanese behaviour and incorporate it with Canadian ways to become model Canadian citizens. However, this task proved complicated due to the separate and discordant influences of the larger Anglo-Canadian populace on the Nisei generation. The Issei, and in particular Issei mothers, found themselves combatting certain Canadian practices and norms and, ultimately, found themselves in conflict with the younger Nisei generation.

---

[28] Midge Ayukawa, "Good Wives and Wise Mothers: Japanese Picture Brides in Early Twentieth Century British Columbia" in BC Studies 105 (Spring 1995), 10.

CHAPTER THREE

FOLLOWING SUIT--THE NISEI GENERATION

With the immigration of a large number of Japanese wives and women to Canada after 1907, the Japanese community ceased to be a predominantly male society and became a permanent family settlement with children as its nucleus. The number of Nisei grew quickly, from 64 in 1901 to 4,000 by 1920 and over 10,000 by 1931.[1] Unlike their parents who grew up surrounded by Japanese culture, the Nisei in Canada inhabited two worlds. They experienced the same duality that befell children of immigrant parents from Eastern and Southern Europe, but unlike them they could not aspire to full Canadian citizenship.

The first sphere of influence was the larger white Anglo-Canadian society where the Nisei received their formal education. Here the Nisei, although Canadian citizens, experienced the same racial slurs and exclusions as their Japanese parents. Federal and provincial laws and practise denied them the franchise, government employment and election to public office, and prohibited them from the professions of law, pharmacy and engineering.[2] The second

---

[1] Ken Adachi, The Enemy That Never Was, 107, 157. See Table I.

[2] Harold K. Hutchinson, "Dimensions of Ethnic Education: The Japanese in British Columbia, 1880-1940", M.A Thesis, (Vancouver,1972), 139. For further

sphere was the small yet tightly-knit Japanese community. The Nisei watched and learned from the Issei the necessity of hard work, education and loyalty to family. Each sphere of influence presented different messages of social acceptability and exerted considerable pressure to conform. From these influences and pressures, the Nisei attempted to forge an identity for themselves.

To understand Issei-Nisei conflicts it is necessary to note the broad differences between the North American mind set and the Japanese one. Several distinctions can be discerned between Japanese and Western customs. North American families were less concerned with family name, reputation and familial obligation but admired personal advancement and individual prestige and saw open disagreements as natural, healthy expressions of opinion. The Japanese, in contrast, emphasized collectivism, and especially the importance of family. As noted by Young and Reid:

> The conception of the family as including more than those in the immediate household, together with the devotion of the members of the family to one another, guarantee a certain security for relatives whether in Canada or in Japan.[3]

The Japanese stressed interpersonal harmony and social obligation. Individuals were responsible to their immediate family and to the community at large.

---

examples, see Ken Adachi, The Enemy That Never Was, 171-172.

[3] C.H. Young, H.R. Reid and W.A. Carrothers, The Japanese Canadians (Toronto, 1939), 79.

Japanese society held an individual's behaviour to be a credit or a stain upon all members of the community. As a result, the community at large reflected and reinforced family standards of appropriate social behaviour. Ken Adachi noted that Issei parents were more concerned about propriety and decorum than about the happiness of their children.[4]

From a young age Japanese children were instructed in appropriate behaviour, including proper manners and emotional control. As Nakano noted of the American Nisei, Issei parents saw their children being "good Japanese" when they complied with Japanese behavioural norms like gaman(perseverance), enryo(self-restraint), giri(sense of duty and obligation), majime(serious,honest), sunao(gentle, obedient), and, oya koh koh(filial piety).[5] Fear of shaming the family was a major influence in keeping Nisei obedient to parents. Nisei Canadians were torn between the more individualistic nature of Canadian society, which stressed personal needs and wants and the group harmony and loyalty to family and community that existed in the Japanese community.

A second discernable difference was the Japanese emphasis on mutually dependent hierarchical relationships. Termed "iemoto", this arrangement originated in the family but moved outward to include the community at large.

---

[4] Adachi, The Enemy That Never Was, 169.

[5] Nakano, Japanese American Women, 105.

Iemoto explicitly encouraged the development of superior/subordinate role relationships in larger and larger social groupings. The Japanese believed that individuals should have associate ties with individuals outside their immediate family and kin.[6]

Iemoto extended a feeling of intimacy by forming an all-inclusive, mutual dependence between members of any two levels in a large hierarchical organization. This differed from the Western norms of casual egalitarianism and the stress on individualism. The Issei expected the Nisei to avoid taking risks or working independently. Instead, they stressed working for the benefit of the group by minimizing public conflict and preserving relationships, even if it meant sacrificing individual goals.[7] As explained by Fugita and O'Brien,

> from a Japanese perspective to be individualistic in the Western sense is to be selfish in the worst meaning of the term. When a Japanese is individualistic and is thinking only of self, he or she is failing to be an actualized person. To be ethical, one cannot fully exist without performing an appropriate social role.[8]

The Nisei were well aware that to maintain harmony and outward appearances, they had to conform to Japanese social expectations.

Although the Issei encouraged Japanese behaviour traits in the Nisei, they

---

[6] S. Fugita and D. O'Brien, Japanese American Ethnicity (Seattle, 1991), 39.

[7] Ibid, 45.

[8] Ibid., 80.

did not necessarily oppose Western culture. Some Issei parents placed their children in Christian kindergartens and Sunday Schools so they might integrate better with the larger Anglo-Canadian society.[9] To achieve economic and social security, Issei parents wanted their children to succeed in Canadian society and, therefore, stressed academic excellence. Yet in doing so, the Issei laid the groundwork for the Nisei to choose Anglo-Canadian customs over Japanese ones. The training received in public schools was Anglo-Canadian, and indirectly, Christian. "[The Nisei's] playmates, schools, calendar, holidays, and activities, [were] integral parts of a civilization which superficially at least, [was] Christian."[10] In encouraging academic excellence, Issei parents were indirectly supporting Anglo-Canadian standards. This ultimately created conflicts because the Issei also wanted the Nisei to maintain their Japanese identity, and more importantly, Japanese values and customs.[11] The Nisei generation found it

---

[9] Rigenda Sumida, "The Japanese in British Columbia" (M.A thesis, Vancouver, 1935), 475-6.

[10] C. Young and H. Reid, The Japanese Canadians, 116.

[11] Norman Knowles, "Church of England Missions and Patterns of Ethnic Adaptation: The Case of British Columbia's Chinese and Japanese Communities, 1861-1942" (paper presented at BC Studies Conference, 1994), 12, 17. Similarly, American Nisei were told regularly to be both "good Japanese" and "good American". Mei Nakano explains these terms referred exclusively to behaviour and had little to do with divided loyalties. The Issei never challenged the obligation of the Nisei to hold allegiance to their native country America. (Japanese American Women, 105).

difficult, if not impossible to find a satisfying medium between the two cultures. The Nisei's preference for Canadian customs over Japanese ones caused many conflicts between parent and child. The Issei fought to keep their children essentially Japanese while the Nisei sought acceptance as Canadians.

Although some parents sent Nisei children to Japan for their education, the majority of Nisei who grew up in the 1920s and 1930s, remained in Canada and went to public schools.[12] Surrounded by white children, the young Nisei quickly imitated and adopted the behaviour of their Anglo-Canadian classmates. The Nisei also actively participated in the athletic and organizational life of their schools, integrating themselves as much as possible in student radio broadcasts, basketball, rugby, tennis, debating, recitals, choirs, service clubs and school money raising projects.[13] Classroom and playground interaction throughout primary and secondary school, profoundly affected the Nisei way of thinking, behaviour, and values. School for many Nisei was a favourable place for acculturation.[14]

Although no definitive conclusions can be drawn due to the uniqueness

---

[12] Nisei who were sent to Japan in the early years to receive a Japanese education were called "Kika" Nisei. Ken Adachi, The Enemy That Never Was, 174. In the United States, Japanese educated Nisei were called "Kebei" translated literally as "returning to America". Mei Nakano Japanese American Women, 121.

[13] "Nisei Active in Our Schools," New Canadian, March 1, 1939, 4; "Niseis in Radio Broadcast", New Canadian, December 7, 1939, 1; and "Nisei Take Part in School Bazaar", New Canadian, November 3, 1939, 4.

[14] Harold K. Hutchinson, "Dimensions of Ethnic Education", 118.

and complexity of individual experience, Nisei children in urban settings such as Vancouver and Victoria were more exposed and thus probably more influenced by Western norms than their counterparts in rural areas and smaller company towns.[15] English skills were also superior in integrated areas. As one rural principal remarked in 1934:

> The Japanese pupils in this school are on the whole very good workers and sincere. They do not, however, compare with those in city schools because of the fact that they live a very segregated life here and many of the mothers are directly from Japan. English is rarely spoken in the homes-hardly at all by our pupils after they leave the school-grounds.[16]

Prior to World War Two, Nisei social interaction outside of school was restricted and segregated along ethnic lines.[17] Well documented is the degree to which the Japanese community was isolated from mainstream society. Equally clear is the fact that Nisei children felt racial prejudice too. As one Nisei woman recalled:

> I can remember when I was in grade school when I went home

---

[15] Rigenda Sumida in his 1935 thesis "The Japanese in British Columbia" found Vancouver Nisei were more assimilated to Western ways than the Nisei of Steveston, an overwhelmingly Japanese community where the Nisei grew up "in an environment almost purely Japanese, without contact with White people".(461) Sumida also found assimilation in areas with few Japanese and many Euro-Canadians was more advanced. In high-density Japanese areas the Japanese were able to retain their customs and institutions (462-465).

[16] Ibid., 513-14.

[17] Ken Adachi, The Enemy That Never Was, 171.

> with a classmate- her mother looked at me and scolded her and said- why do you have to play with her and she was forbidden to play with me.[18]

Another Nisei, realizing that he was different from his Caucasian counterparts, noted:

> Death came painfully in the last years of my high school life. The Canadian within me slowly became extinguished. Persistently, the fact that I was of Japanese origin was imposed upon me. Rather unsympathetic teachers, prejudiced, often thoughtless students treated me as a different being, because of my physical characteristics, which I, in spite of every effort, could never hope to alter.[19]

The dominant society made the Nisei distinctly aware of their inferior status, as they encountered hostile sales clerks, segregated theatre seating and occasional denial of entrance to such public places as swimming pools, restaurants and athletic facilities. The Nisei were also denied the vote, despite being Canadian born and holding Canadian citizenship. Anglo-Canadian prejudice prevented well-educated Nisei from obtaining white collar jobs.[20] One Nisei woman recalled the open discrimination she faced in pre-war B.C.

---

[18] Letter from Omeye, n.d., Winnifred Awmack Collection, British Columbia Archives and Record Services.

[19] Rigenda Sumida, "The Japanese in British Columbia", 439. For an American example see Lauren Kessler's moving biography Stubborn Twig: Three Generations in the Life of a Japanese American Family (New York, 1994), 133.

[20] For more information on Nisei employment opportunities, see Adachi's The Enemy That Never Was, 171-175.

> Not so many places opened for Japanese. See, I applied to the B.C. telephone to be a telephone operator. I knew the man in the top of the company---in the authority. and I spoke to him, but he said, "Sorry, but we don't hire Japanese." That's what it was like, you know. Before the war, we couldn't get into too many different professions.[21]

Some fortunate Nisei found professional work in the Japanese community but most Nisei were forced to take low-paying menial jobs, with little chance of upward mobility. This negative reception by the larger society reinforced the Nisei perception of being different.

Despite this negative reception, the Nisei were susceptible to Western popular culture, through magazines, novels, movies and radio. Those images reproduced the common ideas and dominant beliefs of a particular society in a particular time period, namely that of middle-class Anglo-Canadians.[22] Popular culture was irresistible to the Nisei who witnessed it on a daily basis. Being unable to participate with white classmates in social events, the Nisei brought mainstream Canadian social activities into their own organizations. They created baseball, basketball, and bowling leagues and ballroom dancing clubs within

---

[21] Hyang-Sae Kang, "Gender, Race\Ethnicity, Work and Family", (M.A thesis, Winnipeg, 1996), 71.

[22] Richard Maltby, ed. Passing Parade: A History of Popular Culture in the Twentieth Century (Oxford, 1989), 8.

organizational frameworks that were traditionally Japanese.[23]

They also established a broad network of organizations for social activities. Japanese networks within Anglo-Canadian organizations included a youth league in the Christian and Buddhist churches, clubs found solely for social purposes, and Nisei YMCA and athletic groups which offered sports activities. For girls there were Nisei Canadian Girls in Training groups.[24] By emulating Anglo-Canadian social clubs and activities the Nisei felt connected to Canadian society. Even during the war in the relocation centres, the Nisei continued to emulate Canadian mainstream activities, like reading popular magazines and books, listening to jazz and watching American movies.[25] After relocation in the east, these clubs continued to play an important social function. One such group was the BC Girls Club of Hamilton. Affiliated with the YWCA, the club tapered to Nisei girls' interests, including music appreciation, discussion and demonstrations of flower arrangements. They also performed recitals, played bridge, and had career planning and cooking demonstrations.[26]

---

[23] C. Young and H. Reid, The Japanese Canadians, 157; Nisei Lycee- Tashme Correspondence Classes, 1944, (copy in British Columbia Archives and Record Services, Winnifred Awmack Collection), 30.

[24] Interview with Midge Ayukawa, February 1996.

[25] Ken Adachi, The Enemy That Never Was, 275.

[26] The New Canadian, March 1, 1947, 8.

Canadian patterns of social interaction were also incorporated into Nisei behaviour. Dating and casual social mingling between the sexes were only two Anglo-Canadian customs adopted by the Nisei. One Nisei woman recalled her parents accepting her group of Nisei friends, which included boys, because they hung around as a group. She noted that although some boys and girls coupled up, almost all dated within the group setting.[27] This practice might possibly have alleviated parental concerns about morality and propriety.

Within these social cliques many Nisei found "a means of establishing friendships and maintaining communication and support".[28] The exclusive Nisei groups, controlled by young adult Nisei, provided a location for Nisei to embrace the larger dominant culture with little or no interference from parents. Unfortunately, despite their enthusiastic efforts to adopt popular ideas and attitudes, the Nisei were not accepted as fully Canadian by the larger white society. Nisei found acceptance elsewhere.

Unlike the majority of their white classmates who only participated in Anglo-Canadian society, the Nisei took part in another ethnic community. The Japanese community, in stark contrast to its white counterpart, openly embraced the Nisei. Here the Nisei received acknowledgement, praise, and equal

---

[27] Interview with Mrs. M. January 11, 1996.

[28] Mei Nakano. Japanese American Women, 120.

treatment. The Issei included the Nisei in all aspects of community life and openly congratulated them for demonstrating Japanese attributes. To help Nisei identify with their Japanese heritage, the community offered Japanese-language schools.

Started at the turn of the century, these language-schools expanded with the population. By 1935, 40 schools operated in British Columbia with a combined staff of 80 teachers and an enrolment of 3,283.[29] These schools taught the Japanese language and exposed the Nisei to Japanese ideology and values. Classes were normally for one hour after elementary public schools were dismissed. In some remote areas, classes could only be held twice a week. Class instruction was limited to Japanese reading, writing, composition and conversation.[30] Most textbooks came from Japan and drew their illustrations from Japanese events, personalities, concepts and mythology. In the late 1930s when anti-Asian attacks on these schools became more prevalent, the Japanese claimed the text books came from California. The community also defended the language schools by stating that their curriculum was in keeping with mainstream

---

[29] Adachi, The Enemy That Never Was, 127.

[30] Sumida, "The Japanese in British Columbia", 524. For a more complete description of the language schools and their curriculum prior to 1939, see chart in Sumida on 523.

schools and "designed to inculcate true Canadian citizenship in the pupils." [31] Some school lessons included extensive reading of shushin (ethics) and Japanese history, all aimed to instill reverence for the Emperor and pride in serving Japan.[32] As expected, Nisei children became familiar with Japanese customs. They were praised when they practised these customs and admonished when they did not.

The language-school curriculum clearly articulated gender roles, with girls portrayed in traditional Japanese style. Japanese gender ideology pressured girls to be docile, submissive, and obedient. Parents expected Nisei girls to emulate this behaviour. One Nisei woman recalled how, despite attaining the highest grades in Japanese language school, the principal admonished her because she lacked "ochitsuki" (mental composure, inner poise). Waving her hand to answer questions and speaking up without consideration annoyed her Japanese teacher who spoke negatively about her errant behaviour.[33]

---

[31] Harold K. Hutchinson, "Dimensions of Ethnic Education", 63.

[32] Adachi, The Enemy That Never Was, 128.

[33] Interview with Midge Ayukawa, January 3, 1996. Similarly as one American Nisei woman described her experience:

> Nihon Gakko was so different from grammar school I found myself switching my personality back and forth daily like a chameleon. At Bailey Gatzer School I was a jumping, screaming, roustabout Yankee, but at the stroke of three when the school bell rang and doors burst open...I suddenly became a modest, faltering, earnest little Japanese girl with a small timid voice. Monica Sone, Nisei Daughter (Seattle,

Integrated public schools also instructed Nisei girls in proper female behaviour in both formal and informal ways. In the classroom and on the playground, Nisei girls saw their white female counterparts demonstrating very different behavioural patterns than were visible in the Japanese community. Nisei children were exposed to individualistic Canadian values by being taught to question, challenge and be aggressive in a classroom environment.[34] Being timid, shy, quiet and unassuming, as required of Japanese women, was not normal Canadian social behaviour.[35] Nisei girls learned to amalgamate as best possible the two faces needed to survive in their dual existence. Yet for many Nisei women, cultivating characteristics like assertiveness and independence would be a lifelong struggle.

Apart from reinforcing appropriate Japanese behaviour, the language-schools did not successfully indoctrinate the Nisei. Even acquiring the Japanese language was difficult. Most children between the ages of seven and fifteen attended reluctantly and acquired minimal fluency in the Japanese language.

1953), 22.

[34] Hyang-sae Kang, "Gender, Race\Ethnicity, Work and Family", 56.

[35] The American experience also suggests the difference between mainstream social behaviour for girls and that espoused in the Japanese community. White female classmates tended to be more assertive and willing to speak up to both teachers and male classmates. White American girls were also visibly more expressive of emotion and in demanding attention. Mei Nakano, Japanese American Women, 107.

The Nisei:

> looked upon [Japanese language school] as a punitive task imposed on them by parents, and resented the restriction upon their time which otherwise could have been indulged in sports and other activities taking place after regular school hours.[36]

Many Nisei found the school curriculum impractical, teaching material that was useless outside the Japanese community. Bowing, salutes to the emperor, Buddhist hymns, elaborate greeting rituals and Japanese traditional dress could only be displayed in the confines of the small Japanese neighbourhood. Exhibiting such behaviour and attire in mainstream society would only reinforce Anglo-Canadian opinion that Nisei were essentially Japanese and not Canadian.

Although Nisei children were influenced by and accepted many Japanese ideas and customs, they were sceptical of numerous other Japanese customs. The Nisei regarded portions of Japanese ideology and values at odds with Canadian norms and did not incorporate them into their lifestyle. By the 1930s only a few Nisei were affiliated with the Buddhist Church, whereas almost forty percent of Nisei professed some form of Christian faith.[37] Many saw Christianity as "the national religion" and regarded it "as a natural acquision for a Canadian-born citizen".[38] Although they exerted considerable pressure, the Issei could not

---

[36] Adachi, The Enemy That Never Was, 129.

[37] Harold K. Hutchinson, "Dimensions of Ethnic Education", 43.

[38] Young and Reid, The Japanese Canadians, 121.

outweigh the powerful attraction that the larger white society held for the Nisei. The result was a schism between the two generations.

Despite numerous cultural differences between Canadian and Japanese social behaviour patterns and customs, there were also similarities. A key similarity was the family structure. Both Japanese and Canadians structured the family along patriarchal lines. Although families differed according to culture, religion, race or ethnicity, income levels, rural or urban residency, both societies considered men the primary breadwinners and heads of the household.[39] This perception remained intact even when female family members performed paid work.[40] Although a considerable number of women supplemented if not supplied the household income, males continued to wield familial and social power. As in many patriarchal societies of Europe, Canadian and Japanese prescribed gender roles ensured the supremacy of men.[41]

A second similarity between Japanese and Canadian ideals was their

---

[39] Beth Light and Ruth Roach Pierson, eds., No Easy Road: Women in Canada 1920s To 1960s, (Toronto, 1990), 129.

[40] For a more detailed examination of women as primary breadwinners and the ideological ramifications to the patriarchal social structure, see Joy Parr's The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Men, and Change in Two Industrial Towns 1880-1950 (Toronto, 1990).

[41] One example of a strong patriarchal society is Italy, where cultural mores significantly shaped gender relations inside and outside the family. For a more detailed explanation see Franca Iacovetta, Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto (Montreal, 1993), 78-83.

analogous outlook on female roles; both societies saw women's primary role as wife and mother. Women were to oversee the domestic responsibilities, including caring for husband, children and possibly, older relatives. Subtle and marked differences in how a woman was to run her household and interact with her husband, children and outside society differentiated Japanese gender ideology from its Canadian counterpart. Anglo-Canadian women were permitted a more social and public role in society than Japanese women. These differences also made self identity for Nisei women all the more complex. For many, it would be a lifelong and unhappy struggle.

Generational conflicts are commonplace among families, regardless of ethnic background. Although two generations of a common ethnicity share norms and values, divisions can exist due to different and changing aspirations and attitudes. Conflicts are especially evident in immigrant family experiences, where younger generations are born and or raised in the host country and experience a different culture than that of their immigrant parents. Expectations of the first generation for younger generations to adhere to and accept certain codes of behaviour clash with the different values and norms of the dominant society.[42] The Japanese in Canada were no exception.

---

[42] For an example see Evangelia Tastsoglou and George Stubos, "The Pioneer Greek Immigrant in the United States and Canada (1880s-1920s): Survival Strategies of a Traditional Family" Ethnic Groups Vol.9 (1992): 175-189.

On one level the Issei and Nisei shared an ethnic heritage and tradition, with its familiar rituals, hymns, organizations, and social structure. Within this tradition each generation knew its place and the expected requirements. More significant was the shared experience of racism and segregation from the Anglo-Canadian society. However, differences in personality and attitude polarized the Issei and Nisei. The Issei held on and nurtured their Japanese customs and ideals and remained essentially impermeable to Anglo-Canadian society. The Nisei, in contrast, did not wish to be only Japanese and actively integrated themselves with mainstream Canadian society. As the Nisei, Ken Adachi, noted, the gap between parents and children grew as the Nisei absorbed the ways and ideas of the larger Canadian community as they attended school, learned English and acquired the cultural traits of white society. The influence of the Canadian environment almost transcended that of the Japanese home.[43] This ultimately created problems for the Nisei generation.

One issue of contention was conduct between the sexes. In striving to be acceptable Canadians, the Nisei openly embraced popular ideals, attitudes, activities, clothing and social behaviour. This meant socializing along Western lines; going to dances and parties and having boyfriends and girlfriends. As one Nisei girl noted:

---

[43] Adachi, The Enemy That Never Was, 166.

> We see no harm in dancing, and it is a valuable means of social communication. But our parents don't care about social intercourse, and just to say "dance" to them is met with "haki-pokku-naru" (how disgusting!). We respect our parents, but we want to live a four-fold life, not merely work, eat, and sleep. We never go to rowdy dances, but even if we go to a private dance, the First Generation all gossip about us. Only a very few understood the situation.[44]

For the Issei, this free intermingling of the sexes was completely incomprehensible and contrary to their sense of morality. Most Issei had had no interaction with non-family members of the opposite sex during their youth, and family arranged their marriages which followed strict Japanese etiquette. Although marriage customs changed in Japan due to the influx of Western ideas by the 1930s and 1940s, most Issei maintained pre-1920 Japanese customs concerning match making and marriage.[45] Nisei marriages during the 1920s were almost all arranged, but this custom was eventually replaced by the late 1940s with the western custom of love marriages as the Issei control over the Nisei disintegrated.

Compounding the problem was the Issei's limited access and understanding of Canadian norms and attitudes, because many had only elementary English speaking and comprehension skills and few occasions to use

---

[44] Sumida, "The Japanese in British Columbia", 436.

[45] For more information on the Japanese marriage customs, see Sumida, "The Japanese in British Columbia", 484-486.

them. The majority of Issei existed and communicated through the Japanese community and left outside social interactions to community leaders. In not being privy to Canadian behaviour and social patterns, the Issei could only perceive Nisei behaviour as radical and highly inappropriate when compared to Japanese standards. Nisei girls had an especially difficult time with parents, because of the differing notions of proper female behaviour.[46]

In the home, observation reinforced the instruction Nisei girls received about the subordinate place of women. Male dominance and privilege prevailed in both the Japanese home and community, and influenced the way Nisei women saw themselves. As one Nisei woman recollected, her mother served dinner to her father first, then her brothers in order of age and lastly, the daughters. This was a common occurrence in most Japanese homes.[47] Within the Japanese community, few Issei women stood outside the role of wife and mother. Even those mothers who did work, only did so for the benefit of family, which only reaffirmed women's image as submissive, hard working and completely self-sacrificing.

Canadian popular culture gave Nisei women a somewhat different message on womanhood and women's participation in the work force. Although in the

---

[46] Adachi, The Enemy That Never Was, 168.

[47] Interview with Midge Ayukawa, February 1996.

first half of the twentieth century Canadian society still held the Victorian ideal of women as home makers, it also sanctioned the limited entry of young single women in the work force. High school teachers encouraged young women to cultivate a skill or trade and work outside the home until marriage. Unlike the Japanese community, Canadian society saw this as enhancing a woman's character development and providing her with a sense of independence until marriage. Numerous college programs and career opportunities were offered to women. Society viewed teaching, nursing, domestic service, child-care, dress-making, secretarial work, stenography, and clerking as female occupations.[48] Jobs for women were chosen by the 'feminine' qualities they required, and reflected the gender divisions of Canadian society. Underlying all women's participation in the paid work force was the social assumption that women's paid work was temporary, a preliminary step to marriage.[49]

Prescribed gender roles prior to the war clearly discouraged women from being independent, career driven and engaging in long term active participation in the economic and political arenas. Young women were to work only until

---

[48] Ruth Roach Pierson, They're Still Women After All: The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood (Toronto, 1990), 91.

[49] During the 1930's many governments refused to hire women, especially married ones, on the grounds that women "did not need to work". For further insight into the popular mind set on women's paid work, see Veronica Strong-Boag, The New Day Recalled (Mississauga, 1988), 46-51.

marriage. "From fairy tales to Hollywood movies and the comics, popular culture (and increasingly mass advertising) led the adolescent girl to look forward to her wedding day as the high point of her life."[50] Society still considered marriage and children the only respectable avenue for women and popular culture reflected this reality. Like Japanese customs, Canadian social norms dictated that men were to be the primary breadwinners and women the caretakers of family and home. Although racism curtailed Nisei women's job choices, it was primarily family ties and domestic responsibilities that prevented them from pursuing many individual interests, especially if they required post-secondary education.

Before World War Two few Nisei women aspired to go to college or university because few families could afford to send them. This situation was particularly true if there were boys in the family, as the males got priority. As one Nisei woman recalled, "And I just knew I wasn't going to University so when I was in high school, I didn't take a University Entrance Programme...."[51] Many Nisei women had similar thoughts and found themselves looking at more practical avenues. Many parents expected daughters to go to work as soon as

---

[50] Veronica Strong-Boag, The New Day Recalled, 131.

[51] Interview tape of Mrs. Ellen Enomoto, Reynolds Research and Studies Collection, British Columbia Archives, 1972, Interview #76, Tape 1 (transcribed), 16.

possible and help support the family while brothers attended college.[52] In the rare instances when parents were supportive of daughters attending post-secondary institutions, they experienced community opposition. As Misao Yoneyama recollects of her parents;

> Poor Mum and Dad, I think Dad got the worst of the backlash. They had three girls and then a boy and they certainly heard enough gossip and advice about what were they doing, educating three girls? ...But we all went and got our degrees...there were lots of Japanese people who didn't think they should be educating females. This was Haney, a small place. However, we managed.[53]

Between 1920 and 1941 only ten Japanese women graduated from the University of British Columbia.[54] This low figure can be attributed to the social perceptions about women and their place in the home.

Because different socio-economic and personal factors influenced each Nisei woman's experience during the 1930s and 1940s, one personality does not define all Nisei women. Background, education and philosophy of parents played important roles in a Nisei woman's development. One Nisei woman noted that her mother's high education level played a positive factor in her gaining parental

---

[52] Ibid., 112. One Nisei woman recollected how her sister-in-law was required to work and give her wages to her parents so they could support her brothers, who attended university. Interview with Mrs. A., February 1996.

[53] The Bulletin October 1994, 21.

[54] Harold K. Hutchinson, "Dimensions of Ethnic Education", 124. Total enrolment of Nisei for 1938, 1939 and 1940 were 50, 60, and 50 respectively. (Hutchinson, 125).

support for her university aspirations.[55] Individual personal experiences in both the Anglo-Canadian society and the Japanese community also played a critical part in establishing a woman's character. However, on a more general level, some similarities can be drawn of Nisei women's lives during this time frame. Racial prejudice ensured that numerous political, economic, social and personal experiences were parallel. These similar life experiences helped define Nisei women's sense of self.

Nisei women also had family obligations that were shaped by established gender roles. In the home, young Nisei women cared for younger siblings, did household chores, and, if necessary, performed paid labour. Girls who worked did not have the liberty to spend their earnings as they pleased. Instead, they were often expected to turn over a large percentage of their wages to their parents. This was especially true in the immediate post-war years when Japanese Canadian families needed as many sources of income as possible to rebuild their lives.[56]

Female careers, however temporary, were not an issue in most Japanese families. Women worked because of family needs and not for personal cultivation and spending money. Mothers were permitted to do paid labour

---

[55] Interview with Midge Ayukawa, February 1996.

[56] Hyang-Sae Kang, "Gender, Race\Ethnicity, Work and Family", 119.

because the earnings permitted them to care for their husbands and children. Due to strong familial ties, most Nisei women perceived their wage labour in relation to their domestic responsibilities instead of valuing it as an independent activity from the household.[57] Teenage Nisei girls adopted this work mentality when they too took on family responsibilities.[58] Although Nisei women found work in numerous industries, most jobs were low-paid, required minimal skills, and held few prospects for advancement.

Racism and sexism kept most Nisei women from jobs in white offices and businesses. Before 1942, most available jobs were within the small Japanese community, domestic service or as garment workers.[59] Other women worked as dressmakers, laundresses, or seasonally as fruit pickers or in white-owned fish canneries and vegetable canneries and on large white-owned farms.[60] From 1939 to 1941 and for those Nisei that relocated East, women found work in the garment industry. As in Anglo-Canadian society, sewing was regarded as

---

[57] Ibid., 124.

[58] In 1931, 681 women of Japanese origin were members of the paid labour force and that number rose dramatically to 1158 by 1941. Unfortunately it is not clear whether these numbers include the Nisei as well as the Issei. Census of Canada, 1931, Vol. VII, Occupations and Industries, 430; Census of Canada, 1941, Vol. VII, Occupations and Industries, 437.

[59] Hyang-Sae Kang, "Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Work and Family", 71.

[60] Creese, "Working Class Politics, Racism and Sexism", 189.

"women's work". Issei parents encouraged their daughters to learn to sew as they saw sewing as a necessary skill for housewives and one of few potential female careers.[61]

Women found work in numerous industries. The 1941 Census of Canada listed Japanese women in the following occupations: Agriculture 161; Manufacturing (including dressmakers, sewers, food, clothing and textile products) 320; Commerce (owners, managers, and dealers in retail and sales clerks) 128; Professional Service (nurses, nurses in training, teachers) 33; Personal Service (domestics, cooks, barbers, hairdressers, waitresses, lodging and boarding housekeepers) 447; and Clerical (stenographers and typists) 42.[62] Unfortunately the census does not demarcate between Issei and Nisei women. Nevertheless, it is clear from the census that the majority of Japanese women worked in the service and manufacturing industries.[63]

The few Japanese commercial schools stressed vocational training. The most successful was the Vancouver Girls College of Practical Arts, whose

---

[61] Hyang-Sae Kang, "Gender, Race\Ethnicity, Work and Family", 104.

[62] Census of Canada, 1941, Vol. VII Occupations and Industries, Table 12., 437.

[63] The number of Japanese women in all occupations in Canada totalled 1,158 compared to 42,455 women of British origin. Only 3 percent of British women worked in manufacturing compared to 28 percent of Japanese women. Conversely, in clerical work 23 percent of British women were employed versus only 3 percent of Japanese women. (Census of Canada, 1941)

curriculum included dressmaking, embroidery, flower making and arranging, deportment and cooking.[64] All schools, including The Academy of Domestic Arts, the Antoinette Yosai Gakuen, the Women's Sewing School and the Marietta School of Costume Design offered practical training for employment in the clothing industry.[65] One institute advertised three different courses to Nisei women. The first was a general course including dressmaking, embroidery, flower-making, flower arrangement, manners and cooking. The second course offered more advanced dressmaking skills, embroidery or flower-making. The last course, appropriately titled the "Special Course" prepared women for professional work. The college's overall aim was to mould girl's characters and provide instructions along practical lines.[66]

For the few Nisei women permitted to continue their education past high school, few professional careers were open to them. Teaching was a viable career option for Anglo-Canadian women but, the extreme difficulty of finding a teaching position after graduation discouraged many Nisei from entering the profession. With one exception, those who did, went to Japan after graduation, taught in Japanese Language Schools or in kindergartens operated by Christian

---

[64] "Nisei Girls College Affords Unique Training", New Canadian, May 1, 1939, 6.

[65] Harold K. Hutchinson, "Dimensions of Ethnic Education", 56.

[66] The New Canadian May 1, 1939, 6.

churches. This would later prove to be a problem during World War Two, when a lack of teachers posed serious difficulties in maintaining adequate education for the 3 000 Nisei students in the relocation camps.[67]

Nursing was also a difficult profession for Nisei women to enter. Asian women were only allowed to enter the Vancouver General Hospital's Nursing School in 1932 after twelve years of lobbying by the Vancouver Canadian-Japanese Association.[68] Other hospitals remained opposed to the idea, as was the case with Prince Rupert General Hospital.[69] Prior to the war, women who became nurses worked within the Japanese community or looked for employment in Japan. As one first year university nursing student remarked in 1940, "If there is no opening at all then I'll go to Japan because I'm determined to make

---

[67] Mary Ashworth, The Forces Which Shaped Them, (Vancouver, 1979), 124. Intensive teacher training programs were created for young Nisei women and men in July, 1942 and were held in the following three summers. For more information see Patricia Roy "The Education of Japanese Children in the B.C. Interior Housing Settlements During World War Two" Historical Studies in Education (1992), 211-231.

[68] Nora Kelly, Quest for a Profession: The History of the Vancouver General Hospital School of Nursing, (Vancouver, 1973), 83. The first two Asians to graduate were Hatsue Matsukara (Japanese) and Louise May Lore (Chinese) in 1936. (Vancouver Sun, May 15, 1936). For more information see Kelly, Quest for a Profession, 83-87.

[69] The Board of Directors of Prince Rupert General Hospital went on record as being opposed to admitting Asian students on the grounds that patients might object, and the hospital had no "Oriental section" where the nurses might work. Prince Rupert Daily News, August 11, 1934.

practical use of my university education".[70] After the war, training hospitals were more tolerant of Nisei students. As a YWCA report stated of the Nisei in the East, there "were signs of softening of the open discrimination practised against Japanese Canadian girls during the war".[71] Although racial discrimination lessened somewhat after 1945, many Nisei women continued to enter traditional Japanese Canadian jobs and remain there until marriage. Nisei women, like most female pioneers entering previously male-only professions, encountered sexism and the subtle forms of racism when they too branched out into new fields.[72] Few women ventured down this path.

After relocation many Nisei women started working at an earlier age. Before the war, most Nisei girls finished high school before joining the work force. With the outbreak of the Pacific war and the subsequent relocation, most families needed all able family members to contribute to the family income. As one Nisei woman recalled of the war years, "The older ones had to work. They couldn't go to school, you know. In order to make enough money, my dad had

---

[70] The New Canadian, February 16, 1940, 3.

[71] The New Canadian November 8, 1947, 2.

[72] Dr. Misao Yoneyama, Canada's first Nisei woman specialist in Obstetrics and Gynecology, noted the sexism she and her sister encountered in medicine and dentistry in the 1940s. For further information see her interview in The Bulletin, October 1994, 19-25 and November 1994, 19-24.

to have large acreage. Otherwise, if it was small acreage, it wasn't (enough)".[73] Many high school girls had their education interrupted or, more often, terminated by the internment. The British Columbia Security Commission, which was responsible for Japanese Canadians, compounded the problem by refusing to pay for high school education.[74]

The differences between Japanese and Canadian culture are both obvious in some respects and more subtle and less easily defined in others. From the Japanese community, attitudes towards family reputation and responsibility, the collectivist behavioural patterns and the stress on hierarchy all made their mark on Nisei women. These Japanese characteristics, then, had to be meshed with the more individualistic, aggressive and egalitarian qualities of Canadian society. It became a constant balancing act, at times with certain Japanese characteristics winning over Canadian ones and vice versa. Whatever character combination resulted, Nisei Canadians were certainly distinguishable from either their Issei elders or their Canadian comrades in the larger white society.

To acquire a better understanding of the Nisei woman's experience in Canada in the 1930s and 1940s, one can look at the newspaper that was created

---

[73] Hyang-Sae Kang, "Gender, Race\Ethnicity, Work and Family", 74.

[74] Adachi, The Enemy That Never Was, 264. For a more complete look at the Security Commission's policies on education, see La Violette, The Japanese in British Columbia (Toronto, 1948), 108-116.

by the Nisei themselves, The New Canadian. Beginning with its first issue in 1938 the newspaper published many articles and columns detailing the concerns, ideas, feelings and attitudes of both Nisei men and women. Numerous Nisei women wrote for it and expressed their feelings on a wide variety of issues. What these women wrote illustrates Nisei women's search for self-identity and the conflicts that arose from being both Japanese and Canadian.

CHAPTER FOUR

WOMEN AND THE NEW CANADIAN

Women writers of The New Canadian illustrated their complexity and multiplicity in thought and action as they faced parental opposition, social marginalization, racism and changing economic and political realities in Canada. This chapter focuses on the background of The New Canadian and articles concentrating on gender prescriptions. The next chapter analyzes their writings on generational conflicts and social acceptance. By revealing their feelings toward these subjects, one can better understand the difficulties Nisei women had in formulating an identity for themselves. These difficulties prompted some of them to support the North American notion of womanhood.

To uncover the Nisei women's perspective, it is necessary to hear from them. Their voices reveal what they did, how they felt, how they saw themselves as both women and women of Japanese origin. In short, their voices are vital to understanding their experiences and the sense of self they created for themselves. Oral interviews are one avenue of exploration. An interview allows the subject to explore his or her memories and feelings towards a particular historical event. Along with giving the interviewee the freedom to expand and discuss related

events, oral interviews also personalize historical events by bringing them down to the individual level.[1]

There are, however, problems with this form of historical inquiry. As is the case in studying Nisei women during the 1930s and 1940s, much time has elapsed since the period being discussed. A subject's ability to remember specific details or the entire incident accurately is doubtful. Problems of recollection can create difficulties both in terms of clarity and in event reconstruction. Memories are subjective, and become progressively more subjective as time distances the individual from that historical period. More difficult, perhaps, than recalling historical events is recalling one's feelings and thoughts.[2] The possible complications that arise from relying on memories can hamper if not distort the history being told.[3] For this reason I have chosen a second approach to

---

[1] As noted by Barbara Allen, "Stories encapsulate and highlight significant and emotionally powerful experiences. Recurrent narratives and narrative themes within a corpus of oral history interviews suggest what the narrators individually and collectively consider to be key aspects of their historical experience". "Story in Oral History: Clues to Historical Consciousness" The Journal of American History (September 1992), 607.

[2] In the present study, where only four interviews were conducted, every subject stated clearly the difficulties in recollecting events, and especially feelings, of fifty years past. This is particularly important in this study where individual perceptions and feelings are vital as they affected these women's sense of self.

[3] For further information see David Henige, Oral Historiography (London, 1982), who stressed the importance of oral interviews lies in the historian's ability to interpret the texts.

unearthing and examining Nisei women's perspectives.

For a contemporary account of Nisei women during 1938 to 1949, one can focus on the women writers of the Japanese Canadian newspaper The New Canadian. Although only a few women wrote for the newspaper, their writings suggest the issues important to women and the diversity and complexity of Nisei women's opinions. Similar exposure to social marginalization, Anglo-Saxon prejudice, sexual subordination, and lastly, evacuation and relocation, created a commonality of experience between the female writers of the newspaper and their female counterparts in the Japanese Canadian community. Although these exceptional female writers do not represent the average Nisei women, they can provide insight into Nisei women's dilemma of finding a definitive sense of self prior, during, and after the Second World War.

The New Canadian originated as a civil rights newspaper in 1938 and modeled itself after the University of British Columbia newspaper and the Pacific Citizen from the United States.[4] It started as a monthly publication, changed to semi-monthly before becoming a weekly newspaper in August 1940. Most contributors to the English-language weekly were young adults, in their late teens or early twenties. Many were from liberal, like-minded families, who stressed

---

[4] Interview with Thomas Shoyama, March 1995. For a more detailed discussion on the founding of the newspaper, see Ken Adachi, The Enemy That Never Was, 159-60.

education and held strong convictions for self-betterment. Most young men and women writers wrote under pen names and initials to keep their anonymity.[5] This was in keeping with the Japanese custom of not drawing attention to oneself. Only rarely did a female writer sign her name to a column or article in the newspaper. As Margaret Lyons, a former contributor noted of her involvement with the paper,

> The New Canadian became a medium of self-expression for me while I was working as a domestic in Winnipeg. Becoming part of a countrywide network of nisei writers was satisfying at a time when our prewar community and contacts had been destroyed....The New Canadian of Powell Street, Kaslo, and Winnipeg had succeeded in its assimilationist mission.[6]

Like the columnists of the newspaper, the early readership of The New Canadian was similar in mind-set. Thomas Shoyama, one of the editors of the newspaper, stated that writers, contributors and readership shared an eagerness "to become more Canadian and adopt more Western ideals".[7] Initially, the

---

[5] According to an interview with Thomas Shoyama, "Candlelight and Wine" was written by Irene Shita. She later became a leading geneticist. Eiko Henmi wrote "Femme-Fare", and Margaret Lyons (previously Margaret Inouye) who wrote under "Peg" and "K.I", later became an executive in CBC radio. Interview, March 1995. Muriel Kitagawa wrote under "T.M.K.", "Sue Sada" and the columns "Water 'Neath the Bridge", "For All That", and "Hello There". Muriel Kitagawa, This is My Own: Letters to Wes and Other Writings on Japanese Canadians, 1941-48 (Vancouver, 1985), 5.

[6] Nikkei Voice, May 1991, 8.

[7] Interview with Thomas Shoyama, March 1995.

paper appealed to those in the community who were more forthcoming and outgoing in style and outlook, including those who attended Christian churches.[8] However, with the outbreak of the Pacific war and the subsequent evacuation of the Japanese community, The New Canadian became the "lifelink" for the entire Japanese community as it was the only Japanese Canadian newspaper allowed to continue publishing.[9] With the evacuation in 1942, the paper moved from Vancouver to Kaslo, B.C. and later to Winnipeg, Manitoba in 1945. The newspaper eventually settled in Toronto, Ontario in 1948.[10]

Racism was a prevalent aspect of Nisei women's lives prior, during and after the war and played a central role in the evacuation and relocation of the Japanese Canadian community. Racism marginalized the Nisei in their country of birth, where they considered themselves Canadian. Unlike northern European immigrants who possessed physical attributes akin to Anglo-Canadians, the Nisei were strikingly different in appearance. This marked them as different and, in the eyes of some Anglo-Canadians, "un-Canadian". Some Nisei saw acculturation

---

[8] Interview with Thomas Shoyama, March 1995.

[9] Nikkei Voice, May 1991-7, 1. The paper was allowed to continue publishing after the evacuation because it was in English. Adachi, The Enemy That Never Was, 200. It was subsidized by the federal government. See Patricia Roy et al. Mutual Hostages (Toronto, 1990), 103.

[10] The New Canadian, May 12, 1948. Hereafter all dates refer to The New Canadian unless otherwise specified.

as the only viable solution to combat racism. Adopting Canadian customs, dress, and attitude became important tools demonstrating 'Canadianness'.

In its women's columns and articles, The New Canadian considered a variety of subjects including personal hygiene, relationships, war experiences, career and academic opportunities, school life and racism. Three larger themes, however, predominate. The first concerns prescriptions of masculinity and femininity as evinced through many articles on relationships and in advice columns. Nisei women had a definite ideal of how each sex was to act as an individual and in relation to the opposite sex. Although there was a striking similarity between Japanese and Canadian notions of femininity, the Canadian one prevailed in the women's columns, which supported North American dress, food, deportment and socializing patterns. The columns, "Candlelight and Wine", "Femme-Fare", "Caprice" and "Evacuette Eavesdropping" repeatedly explored the actions, behaviour and attitude of both men and women and provide encouragement, correction and criticism. Other anonymous or pseudonymously signed articles also commented on gender roles, as did some by male writers. In sum, attitudes towards gender roles remained relatively fixed, and reflected the gender roles present in the larger Anglo-Canadian society.

The second major theme was inter-generational issues. Nisei women dealt with parental expectations that focused on Japanese traditions in conflict with

Canadian values. The Issei's sense of decorum and femininity led to many conflicts with the Nisei. Before the war, articles detail conflicts between mothers and daughters and their different perceptions of appropriate female behaviour. With the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December 1941 and the subsequent evacuation, articles discussed the difficulties of women being permitted to move east to find jobs or go to school. Some women writers used the medium of story telling as a beneficial tool to talk about generational differences. Through fiction, Nisei women expressed their frustrations, disappointments and desires.

The third theme is social acceptance. The columnists attempted to illustrate the Nisei's Canadian nature by depicting, in great detail, individual successes, such as obtaining jobs like their white counterparts, and their war effort. They highlighted positive achievements, especially in areas where admittance had been previously reserved for Anglo-Canadians. Although analysis of Nisei success is beyond the scope of this study, it is important to note that the desire for social acceptance played a central role in how Nisei women viewed and conducted themselves in Canadian society from 1938 to 1949.

Nisei women's experiences were multi-faceted and their writings demonstrate that reality. Although many of the women's articles in The New Canadian contain several themes, for purposes of analysis the works are organised into three subfields. For example, in April 1939, an article outlined

the achievements of Yoshiko Suzuki, a popular and widely respected dress designer. While calling Yoshiko's "achievement truly praiseworthy", the columnist mentioned how Yoshiko had to overcome the objections of her mother, who saw her daughter's actions as "unheard of and which no girl in her proper senses should attempt".[11] This column illustrated both the generational problems, the differing notions of femininity at play in Nisei women's lives, and the positive attitude of some Nisei women towards full time career women. The multiple thematic content of women's articles strengthens their interconnectedness to women's experience.

Between 1938 and 1949 female writers in The New Canadian wrote regularly on women's concerns, especially household responsibilities. Articles mirrored the widely held assumption that maintaining the home was a female responsibility and her primary domain. Tips on cooking, cleaning, and decorating appeared almost weekly in The New Canadian. In successive weeks in September 1939, for example, the weekly column, "Candlelight and Wine", provided cleaning tips for the kitchen; advice on how to serve fruit as an appealing dessert; hints on how to prevent glass from breaking and a recipe for marshmallow dreams; and suggestions for better ironing and hair shampooing techniques. The recipes were based on Canadian meals, and may have been

---

[11] April 1, 1939, 3.

taken from popular magazines or the mainstream daily press. In its section "Women Today", The Vancouver Sun, for example, often published whole pages of recipes. It also provided detailed shopping tips and etiquette advice.[12] The amount of advice on home-improvements geared towards women in The New Canadian clearly suggests that these women columnists saw the home as an extension and reflection of women. As a result, women's sense of self was directly tied to their capabilities as efficient and energetic home-makers.[13]

The female columnists in The New Canadian continually strove to assist women in perfecting the home as a cosy, appetizing place of rest. They discussed even the smallest details concerning home-care and most were non-Japanese in style. They gave instructions on how to wash dishes properly, cook potatoes or make a salad.[14] For example, one columnist detailed the proper way to make a tossed salad, starting with directions on how to store lettuce, how to clean and efficiently use all parts of the head, including browned leaves, and lastly, how to

---

[12] The Vancouver Sun September 7, 1939, 7; September 28, 1939, 8. Similarly, whole pages were reserved for recipes in both Chatelaine and Canadian Home Journal throughout 1938 to 1949.

[13] Mainstream society saw women's primary domain as the home and expected them to have little leisure time. An article on spring cleaning suggested that women rest by planting some vegetables in the garden. (Vancouver Sun, 7 April 1947)

[14] Similar information was provided in Country Guide and Nor'West Farmer, where in October 1942, it contained an article entitled "Doing the Dishes: time-saving tactics".

add variety to the salad.[15] The amount of detail supplied suggest that such salads were not traditional Japanese cuisine. Columnists continuously encouraged women to be innovative in their meal making and household chores.

The columns advised women to be resourceful and thrifty since part of being a successful home-maker was showing ingenuity on a limited budget. On January 31, 1941 Cinderella gave a recipe for tomato soup cake, with the exclamation that good meals could be made out of a can. Most of the recipes were based on Canadian ways of cooking. In an article titled "Tips to Niseiettes" a columnist described how to make stocking boots, suggested ways for remaking old dresses and noted what is best worn with shawls, including the different styles for night and day wear.[16]

The number of recommendations on clothing, accessories, hair styles and deportment suggest that women considered appearance and personal hygiene to be key concerns. "Candlelight and Wine", for example, listed ideas for dress accessories and detailed instructions for washing and drying stockings and putting them on properly.[17] Women were expected to be resourceful with their wardrobe and follow changing fashion trends. To help women follow fashion

---

[15] The New Canadian October 20, 1939.

[16] January 16, 1943, 3.

[17] October 13, 1939, October 27, 1939.

advice, columnists provided sewing tips and detailed instructions on such matters as following a pattern.[18]

Columnists were clear in setting the acceptable boundaries for women's fashion and appearance. As one columnist stressed, "Simplicity should be the key-note in the feminine wardrobe".[19] Columnists even discussed the finest detail of proper style, including make-up. "Candice" instructed women to avoid the confusing advice of make-up professionals and choose their own make-up; in another occasion she discussed hairstyles, noting the tiara braid as the 'in' hairstyle.[20] Female writers examined all aspects of female manner and appearance, including deportment. One columnist instructed women on how to walk properly, noting, "there is nothing that makes a woman look clumsy and ungainly so much as a poor walk".[21] She even suggested women follow the finishing schools' advice of walking with a book on the head for practice.[22] Although Issei mothers would have given similar instructions on proper appearance and behaviour, the Nisei columnists followed the Canadian fashion

---

[18] August 12, 1944, 7.

[19] March 9, 1946, 7.

[20] February 2, 1946, July 20, 1946.

[21] September 5, 1941, 3.

[22] September 5, 1941, 3.

trends and behaviour.[23]

The columnists also addressed personal hygiene as they warned women about the consequences of failing to comply to acceptable standards of cleanliness. "Cinderella" cautioned that a girl who is not clean and well kept would lose her man. She listed soiled handkerchiefs, grimy powder puffs, slipped frocks and bra straps, and unwashed hair as sure ways for a woman to drive a man away.[24] "Candice" noting the importance of looking presentable at home in case of unexpected visitors, urged women, at the very least, to comb their hair before breakfast, cover curlers with a handkerchief, and clean their face daily. She also suggested applying lipstick "If you think you look 'washed out'."[25] The emphasis on personal hygiene was in keeping with both North American and Japanese standards. Personal appearance was an important tenet of femininity and columnists, stressed this as did their Anglo-Canadian counterparts who

---

[23] Popular magazine columnists also emphasized women's appearance. In Chatelaine in February 1939, a columnist remarked "You must be meticulous of course. You must be well groomed from head to foot. You must have the confidence of knowing that your hair style and clothes are becoming to you".(26)

[24] April 18, 1941, 2. Strikingly similar rationale was used in many mainstream magazine advertisements. In one particular ad by Lysol Disinfectant for Feminine Hygiene, the heading stated "Many husbands grow indifferent because of 'ONE NEGLECT' that may ruin romance. "Lysol" helps prevent this risk". Canadian Home Journal, (June, 1941), 28.

[25] May 11, 1946, 7.

encouraged girls to guard their "most prized assets".[26]

The women writers overwhelmingly favoured Western style manners over Japanese decorum. Much of the advice given on hygiene, appearance and behaviour followed the advice of the established conservative American etiquette expert, Emily Post. A writer in early 1941, said the true woman:

> must be up with Emily Post in all her doings...She must be able to note critically her deficiencies as well as her good points-wear her clothes, her hair, her make-up to accentuate the good and minimize the bad.[27]

References to the teachings of Emily Post appeared throughout the advice and relationship columns of The New Canadian. Columnists rarely disagreed with the dictates of Emily Post. In one case, "Caprice" was not convinced with Emily Post's statement that a man, who did not give up his seat on a bus to a woman, was still a gentleman. Although Emily Post reasoned that women in the business world should not expect "special favours", "Caprice" believed that certain elements of chivalry should be standard.[28] For this columnist, changes to the chivalric code were not acceptable. However, women columnists rarely openly questioned etiquette procedure and only over small matters. Most of them agreed with the widely held etiquette rules of Emily Post and reflected the advice

---

[26] Veronica Strong-Boag, The New Day Recalled, 85.

[27] The New Canadian, January 10, 1941, 4.

[28] October 26, 1946, 7.

being given in mainstream popular magazines.

Nisei women sought to emulate Anglo-Canadian women who followed very similar forms of etiquette, and could read about them in the daily press and popular magazines. The Vancouver Sun, for example, included pointers for smoking and the proper etiquette for a young woman dating.[29] Advertisements lured readers with quizzes "Are You in the Know?" on subjects ranging from how to ask a boy out, to getting into a car, to keeping lip rouge on longer.[30] Nisei prescriptions of femininity and masculinity were based on North American standards and paralleled the advice provided in daily newspapers and magazines.

Before the Pacific war some Nisei women writers favoured keeping some Japanese customs and acknowledged the need to speak Japanese and retain Japanese etiquette; others felt that the Anglo-Canadian notion of womanhood was superior. One columnist, for example, openly supported women taking the initiative in conversations with men. Although this behaviour was "against our venerable ancestors", she defended it by saying it was acceptable to Emily Post.[31] Overwhelmingly, the women who wrote in The New Canadian endorsed the popular North American notions of femininity and masculinity and suggested

---

[29] The Vancouver Sun, September 9 and 11, 1939.

[30] Chatelaine, May 1946, 43; Canadian Home Journal, June 1941, 17.

[31] The New Canadian January 31, 1941, 5.

them to their readers.

Another area that reflected Nisei's views on gender roles were articles on relationships. To follow the North American custom of love-marriages rather than the Japanese arranged marriage, Nisei women had to exert considerable energy to find a partner. The women's columns stressed developing inter personal skills, fashion sense and proper etiquette. Both male and female columnists chastised the opposite sex for inappropriate behaviour. "Cinderella" voiced the qualities Nisei women should espouse, mainly having an education, being independent, well-mannered and dressed, and capable home makers. Nisei men concurred. In a short piece, "A Letter From Prince Charming", a male writer depicted the most desirable woman as being educated, able to cook, speak both English and Japanese, know proper etiquette, and overall, "act like a Lady".[32] Here, 'lady' was taken to mean the proper female code of conduct espoused in popular culture. It is significant to note that only prior to the evacuation did columnists speak out in favour of Nisei speaking Japanese. After the evacuation most Nisei columnists advocated assimilation to the Anglo-Canadian society's definition of 'femininity' and 'masculinity' which included using English as the spoken language.

Relationship columns also detailed proper social etiquette for men and

---

[32] January 10, 1941, 4.

women. They specified the proper behaviour for dinner parties, making conversation, hostessing, accepting compliments, attending bridge parties, being house guests, writing thank-you notes, and declining invitations. For Thanksgiving, "Candlelight and Wine" noted it was now acceptable for the hostess to carve the turkey in the kitchen whereas in the past a man carved it at the dining room table. Such advice was clearly taken from the North American tradition, where the turkey dinner was the recognized special dinner meal.[33] Columnists were meticulous in highlighting proper female behaviour and their advice closely followed Anglo-Canadian norms.

Much of the etiquette and fashion tips were geared towards attracting the opposite sex. "Estrellita" under the heading "How to Catch a Man" directed women to proper eating habits, and the successful art of making conversation. As in the popular Canadian women's magazines which stated a good female conversationalist veers the discussion towards the man and his interests, "Estrellita" suggested that women read the sports page and keep up to date on world events.[34] "Estrellita" even instructed women on voice intonation, stating the necessity to keep the "voice soft and low". She summarized her advice to women by stating that "towards men in general, be appreciative, enthusiastic,

---

[33] October 13, 1939, 4.

[34] "Don't read only the women's pages, but keep abreast of what's going on". (Canadian Home Journal, August 1941, 56).

feminine and sweet. And let them think they do the pursuing".[35] Because it was not considered appropriate female behaviour to be aggressive and pursue a man openly, "Estrellita" tailored her advice to adhere to proper etiquette. However, she also empowered women with the necessary tools to 'catch a man'.

"Estrellita's" aggressive tactics were totally contrary to Japanese courting customs, where such things as being a good conversationalist and appearing attractive to the opposite sex mattered little compared to family compatibility. Ideally, single Japanese women were not suppose to interact with men, much less actively pursue them. This stood in direct contrast to North American social norms, where women played an active role in the courting process. Although a girl was not supposed to visibly pursue a boy, she was instructed to make herself attractive so that she would be pursued. As Veronica Strong-Boag noted, girls were encouraged to pay close attention to their appearance because:

> Male admiration was the ultimate goal. Boys and men were routinely portrayed as preferring beauty to brains in their girlfriends and wives, or at least preferring to the latter quality to be relatively invisible, thus constituting no threat to their public authority.[36]

The advice female columnists gave to Nisei girls and women, like mainstream magazines, repeatedly stressed beauty and attractiveness towards men as an important priority.

---

[35] October 30, 1943.

[36] Veronica Strong-Boag, The New Day Recalled, 12.

Columnists also provided men with tips on social etiquette. "Candlelight and Wine", for example, discussed the polite gesture of tipping one's hat at women. The importance of the gesture is evident by the intricate details provided on how a man should tip his hat in various situations. The title of the column-"Niseiettes Prefer Gentlemen Heart-Throbs" also suggested that women expected men to adhere to a certain code of behaviour.[37] Female columnists gave men advice on a regular basis and on a wide variety of topics. One columnist discussed the merits of flower giving, and noted Emily Post's endorsement.[38] Men, like women, were expected to follow mainstream notions of proper etiquette. To ensure men knew how to be the perfect gentlemen, columnists provided necessary information, even very minor details, such as advising men to consider a woman's dress when choosing her flowers.[39] Columnists were aware of their ability to reach many Nisei through The New Canadian and used the medium to educate and encourage Anglo-Canadian notions of proper masculine and feminine behaviour.

Women also provided advice on men's attitudes. "Caprice" advised men to be well-mannered and courteous towards women, in addition to looking at

---

[37] May 1, 1940, 4.

[38] April 12, 1940, 4.

[39] December 18, 1940, 6.

women's characters and not just "the glitter in social butterflies".[40] On the issue of dating, women writers had much to say on how a man should properly conduct himself. They advised him to call in advance, walk on the outside curb, offer her the seat on a bus, introduce her to friends, and deliver her home safely to her door. As a columnist noted, the "age of Chivalry isn't dead by any means".[41]

Both men and women had clear views on how each of the sexes was to conduct itself, and they were very similar to Canadian mainstream gender roles. Mainstream attitudes towards dating were strikingly different from Japanese social norms, where dating was non-existent. The Nisei, however, firmly believed in North American style courting and followed Canadian social norms. In the column entitled, "It's a Date", "Cinderella" narrated the perfect date. The woman was "quiet and ladylike" and the man was "gentlemanly and courteous".[42] The formalities of dating in the early twentieth century made certain assumptions about each sex, one being that men were to pay for women. Most female writers endorsed these popular gender roles.

While columnists dispensed much advice, apparently not all followed it. Some articles complained about the inadequacies of the opposite sex. One male

---

[40] February 16, 1946, 7.

[41] April 5, 1947.

[42] November 8, 1940, 4.

writer listed a series of complaints concerning women's behaviour. He protested against women being late, women taking charge, women adjusting men's clothing, women expecting men to carry their make-up, and women feigning interest.[43] Another male columnist complained that women were humourless and brittle and more interested in their physical appearance. He noted that "for intellectual sustenance men need to go to other men".[44] A reoccurring male complaint against women was their preoccupation with beauty. Paradoxically, some men did not realize that beauty and personal appearance were the qualities on which men, and society in general, rated a woman's femininity.

Women were quick to answer men's accusations. Against the charge of being shallow, a female columnist detailed the numerous professions women, in general, occupied, including law and medicine.[45] Women columnists also complained about male behaviour. One woman vented her frustration by outlining the hypocritical actions of men who said they wanted women to be their pals but then "marry the pouty ones", claimed embarrassment about overattentive females but sulked when they did not get it, said they preferred intelligence "but

---

[43] October 31, 1941

[44] April 17, 1948

[45] June 9, 1948, 3.

ool [sic] over beauty".[46] Both sexes complained about inappropriate behaviour, and judged it on a scale parallel to that in mainstream Canadian society.

Although there is no clear way of knowing the degree Nisei women acculturated in the late 1930s and 1940s, the women's columns in The New Canadian promoted the idea. The columnists even commented on changes in Nisei women's behaviour. "Peg" noted the personality changes in post-war Nisei woman. Prior to the war a Nisei girl was ensured a husband if she could cook, sew, keep house and bear her husband's indiscretions. However, with the "evacuation came emancipation" and women's roles changed. "Peg" saw post-war Nisei women as being more independent and needing to be "chic, curvaceous, and good conversationalists", in addition to being good housekeepers. Women columnists provided ample advice on how to be "chic, curvaceous, and good conversationalists".[47] The recommendations in The New Canadian firmly supported mainstream behavioural norms and reflected the advice given in mainstream magazines.

The behaviour of some Nisei women after World War Two suggest that Nisei women were adopting more Anglo-Canadian social habits. Having career aspirations, expecting more freedom as young women, and even filing for divorce

---

[46] November 13, 1943, 7.

[47] November 1, 1947.

were visible accomplishments of post-war Nisei women. In 1947 "Peg" examined the phenomenon of divorce among Nisei. Although "Peg" had ambivalent feelings towards the occurrence, she clearly stated that the 'niseiette' in question was "a gently-reared country girl drilled from infancy to respect the sanctity of the home and the servility of women" and "not a city flapper". "Peg" attributed the occurrence of divorce by a Nisei to acculturation. "The Nisei has embraced the Canadian (Hollywood?) ideal of a desirable wife", and calls the divorce "a shocking accomplishment of Canadianization".[48] Most female columnists were much more positive in their assessment of acculturated Nisei women and actively supported them.

Female columnists also favoured the idea of career women. The debate in mainstream Canadian society over the issue of women working in professional and white collar occupations, also appeared in the pages of The New Canadian in late 1947 and early 1948.[49] Although no clear victor emerged, it is apparent that the scale on which Nisei women were being evaluated was parallel to mainstream social definitions of femininity. The controversy crystallized the

---

[48] November 1, 1947, 3.

[49] For an analysis of the gender debate concerning women working in the Anglo-Celtic society during 1945-60 see Veronica Strong-Boag, "Canada's wage-Earning Wives and the Construction of the Middle Class, 1934-60" Journal of Canadian Studies Vol.29, No.3 (Autumn 1994), 5-25. On the American debate, see Joanne Meyerowitz, "Beyond the Feminine Mystique: A Reassessment of Postwar Mass Culture, 1946-1958" Journal of American History 79 (March 1993), 1455-1482.

various definitions of femininity that were present among the Nisei generation. Women columnists openly supported Nisei women's desire to work; a male columnist insisted that women's primary place was in the home.

"Kayo", a male, regarded career women as "the gladiatorial-minded women of the twentieth century bent on...[competing] against men as equals".[50] He made numerous observations denoting the impoverished state of career women and warned that career women did not receive male attention but usually died single. According to "Kayo", career women had to "sacrifice warm affection for doubtful dignity and terrified respect". Instead, "Kayo" advocated a more traditional and domestic station for women:

> If only she would realize that her greatest strength is in her weakness, and that her influence is greatest when she is playing the truly feminine role...In the interest of the human race, women must climb back onto their pedestals and forget their foolish chant about equal rights.[51]

For "Kayo" and many traditionally-minded Nisei men, women should not be autonomous or possess power independent of men. This perceived threat to men's masculinity led some men to demand women return to the domestic sphere where they could be supported by men. This concept of 'femininity'

---

[50] November 1, 1947, 3.

[51] November 1, 1947, 3

paralleled the opinion voiced by anti-careerists in the larger community.[52] Countering this traditional concept of womanhood were female columnists, who advocated a more liberating definition of femininity.

On the pro-career side stood numerous advocates, most notably "Sue Sada", who argued for women's careers on the grounds of equality. "Sue Sada" noted that both men and women have limited the 'ideal women' to the domestic sphere. She stated the possibility of women having both careers and marriage if the couple "[do] a fine bit of team work".[53] In another article "Sue Sada" delineated the past, present and future roles of women, and noted the limitations to the four categories into which women have been grouped, namely the exclusive housewife, the homemaker with outside interests, the careerist, who is married or aspires to be married, and the genius.[54] With technology freeing women of many domestic responsibilities, "Sue Sada" concluded that "today's home has plenty of room for all talents"[55]. She asserted that women should

---

[52] One short story appearing in a woman's magazine, had the antagonist declaring that women "should be at home raising the family and hanging curtains and baking pies". (Chatelaine, February 1946, 15). For more information, see Veronica Strong-Boag, "Canada's Wage-Earning Wives and the Construction of the Middle Class, 1945-1960" Journal of Canadian Studies, Autumn 1994, 10.

[53] January 3, 1948, 3.

[54] January 10, 1948, 3.

[55] January 24, 1948, 3.

strive to be "true to the best that is in her", which did not mean denying her female status and acting like a man.

Other advocates argued in favour of career women because of its temporary nature. One columnist noted that a career for most women was "just a stepping stone to marriage" and gave them "work for a few years at a good important position before rushing off to marriage".[56] She argued that better educated women were better wives and mothers and, if widowed, would be able to reenter the work force and support their families if they had trained for a career.[57] Another columnist recommended that having careers would raise the level of Nisei girls "to the standard that American Niseiettes and our Canadian sisters have set".[58] Many of these arguments paralleled those found in mainstream magazines like Chatelaine.[59]

Although female columnists spoke out in favour of working women, many Nisei women, like their Anglo-Canadian counterparts, left the workforce after marriage and stayed home to raise families.[60] Nisei women followed the trend

---

[56] November 22, 1947, 10.

[57] November 22, 1947, 10.

[58] November 22, 1947, 10.

[59] Chatelaine, "Women the World Over", September 1946, 16,58.

[60] Interviews with Midge Ayukawa and Mrs. M., January 1996.

of the larger society and embraced domesticity after marriage.[61] Only economic necessity prevented some married women from remaining in the home, and those who worked were still burdened with domestic responsibilities.

The self-help and relationship columns in The New Canadian espoused the widely held opinion of women as primarily wives and domestic care-givers. Both the home and personal image were central tenets to the Nisei's notion of womanhood. Although this notion of femininity was similar to Issei norms, female columnists only pushed Canadian behavioural and social etiquette, which included dating. Columnists continuously offered advice on how to make an attractive home and run it efficiently and how to enhance a woman's appearance and deportment. The Nisei notion of femininity was strikingly similar to the popular view of women and the columnists' advice paralleled that found in the mainstream press and popular women's magazines.

However, complicating the Nisei's absorption of this advice was the influence and interference of Issei parents. The pressure by the earlier generation on the Nisei to adhere to Japanese customs and traditional Japanese gender roles created problems for Nisei women. Further complicating the

---

[61] Women's participation in the paid work force dropped from its high in 1944 of 33.5 per cent to a low of 23.6 per cent by 1954. The rate of marriage for women twenty to twenty-four years old rose from 75 per 1,000 in 1937 to 100 per 1,000 in 1954. Ruth Roach Pierson, "They're Still Women After All": The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood (Toronto, 1986), 215.

problem was the racial marginalization of Nisei women from their Anglo-Celtic Canadian counterparts. In writing about these difficulties, female columnists attempted to find a satisfying solution and further elucidate their own identity.

CHAPTER FIVE

BARRIERS TO BEING TRULY 'CANADIAN'

Women columnists in The New Canadian spoke out about the numerous frustrations and obstacles they met as women and, especially, as women of Japanese ancestry. They regularly discussed Issei-Nisei relationships and barriers created by racism and prejudice. Expectations by Issei parents, relatives and the Japanese community restricted women's freedom to a considerable degree, and ultimately led to conflicts. Likewise, Anglo-Canadian racism marginalized Nisei women and prevented them from fully participating in Canadian society. Social and economic opportunities were continuously denied to the Nisei on the grounds of their Japanese heritage. For purposes of analysis, the issues of parental conflict and Anglo-Canadian racism will be examined separately. In writing, women found an outlet for their frustrations and disappointments and were able to advocate changes that were geared towards gaining social acceptance as Canadians.

The Issei held considerable social power, especially regarding the Nisei, within the tightly-knit community prior to the evacuation and transformation of the Japanese community in 1942. In the desire to keep Japanese customs alive,

the Issei exerted pressure on the Nisei to uphold Japanese social protocol. Some Nisei women, who felt caught between Japanese and Canadian cultures, voiced their concerns in The New Canadian. Articles about generational conflicts centred around issues of female conduct and attitude, and the question of marriage, and appeared prior to the evacuation, when Issei control and influence on Nisei lives was the greatest. The women writing about these conflicts favoured Canadian ideals of womanhood, western style relationships and behaviour. Although these writers did not speak for all Nisei women, most Nisei women were in communion with the words and sentiments they expressed and understood the voiced frustrations. Some Nisei women were attempting to forge an identity for themselves that would allow them to co-exist in both mainstream and Japanese society. A large part of mainstream identity was social norms that encouraged love-match courting arrangements, which ultimately stood in direct conflict with Japanese social customs of arranged marriages. The female columnists who spoke out against Japanese customs were voicing opinions that all Nisei understood, even if they did not agree.

Before the evacuation, the female writers disagreed over retaining Japanese customs or adopting Canadian ones. One Nisei writer advocated concessions between the generations but most rejected Japanese culture. In an early 1939 article, Martha Kayahara noted the need for concessions between the

generations. Kayahara believed that the Nisei could combine the two cultures, by "[taking] the good from our parents Oriental culture" and mixing with "the American influence".[1] Although she did not explain how the Nisei were to do this, Kayahara's attitude towards the older generation was respectful and conciliatory. Columnists rarely expressed such favourable sentiments towards the Japanese influence.

Other articles, in contrast, were more harsh in criticizing Japanese customs and traditions. In a contest winning essay of 1939, Mavis Yuasa encouraged rejection of Japanese culture. She declared, "We must sacrifice personal pride and feelings, give up contacts with Japanese culture which are contrary to Canadian ways...and give the best of our time and talents".[2] Many Nisei believed the two cultures were incompatible and that acculturation with the dominant society was the best solution, especially in light of the negative and racist image held by Anglo-Canadians on things Japanese. The fact that Mavis Yuasa's essay won a prize suggests that her ideas were considered positive and, were possibly, ideas held by other Nisei.

One Issei voiced his opinion on the generational conflicts in The New

---

[1] April 15, 1939, 5.

[2] November 17, 1939, 2.

Canadian.[3] Reverent Takefumi Tatsu viewed liberal minded Nisei women critically, and he expressed dissatisfaction with Nisei girls who adopted more western style behaviour. Reverend Tatsu noted,

> there is a tendency of Nisei girls to misconceive womanly virtues of the western tradition. They often forget to be ladies, they lose sight of the true spirit of courtesy and show the attitude of impudents. The beauty of humanity and the virtues of meekness and politeness are lost to them.[4]

Reverend Tatsu spoke out against girls who smoked and "yelled out in a way that wasn't nice at all" and attributed this behaviour to the lack of proper training at home. Like most Issei, Reverend Tatsu desired girls to be quiet, obedient and polite. Girls who were talkative with other girls were categorized as "tomboys", but he excused them if they were "gentle, shy and retiring in the presence of boys".[5] He regarded boisterous girls who made their presence known in public as unwomanly and demonstrating distinctly male characteristics. It is interesting to note that although mainstream society encouraged these "gentle", "shy" and polite attributes, Reverend Tatsu did not see them in Nisei women. In another article, he suggested:

---

[3] An interesting topic for further research would be a comparison between Issei writings in the Japanese language newspapers concerning the Nisei and Nisei writings in The New Canadian concerning the older generation. Unfortunately, my lack of Japanese language skills prevented me from conducting the analysis.

[4] October 25, 1940, 6.

[5] October 25, 1940, 6.

> the way for the Nisei [to] advance is to live as New Canadians, to have clean ideas, high but practical ideals, good tastes so that young men may be rugged but true gentlemen and girls maybe lovely, polite and virtuous Canadian young women.[6]

Reverend Tatsu was the only Issei who personally expressed his views in The New Canadian. However, it must be noted that Tatsu was a Christian clergyman, fluent in English and well acquainted with mainstream culture. His understanding of Canadian customs gave him a better comprehension of what the Nisei were experiencing. Yet, even with this understanding, Tatsu still voiced some of the concerns and objections of the Issei generation towards the Nisei.

The majority of articles on generational conflicts centred around the strained relationship between Nisei daughters and their Issei mothers. The diverging opinions on proper female behaviour created a schism between the two generations. Nisei women were openly frustrated with their mothers' strict insistence on maintaining Japanese decorum and loudly voiced their dissatisfaction. As one columnist noted, "Mothers want daughters to grow up into the refined gentility and self-effacing womanhood that is supposed to be the ideal; daughter demands freedom of speech and action and a little of her own way".[7] Although the Issei view of womanhood appears similar to mainstream femininity, the degree of liberty it permitted women was very different.

---

[6] November 8, 1940, 6.

[7] July 25, 1941, 3.

Mainstream social norms allowed for personal cultivation and limited individual pursuits, while Japanese tradition expected women to dedicate all their time and energy to the family. Therefore, the Issei regarded events such as dances, clubs and social outings as trivial and a waste of time. Another Nisei columnist complained that many parental objections occurred "for the sake of appearances" and were not based on any personal conviction of wrongdoing.[8] The fact that many Issei could not read English magazines and newspapers further alienated the Issei from understanding Nisei conduct and their point of view.

Some Nisei women felt constrained and overwhelmed by Japanese customs. One columnist talked of the misfortune of the Nisei girl:

> Let one of them flout the strict Japanese conventions, she was straightaway beyond the pale of respectability. Let her try to develop her own likes and dislikes, and she is unfilial. Let her indulge in 'cheek-to-cheek' dancing and she was declassee.[9]

The frustration for some Nisei women lay in the fact that the Issei could not comprehend their behaviour and understand that the Nisei had been influenced by the larger popular culture. Amalgamating the two communities proved equally frustrating. As one columnist complained in her article titled, "Tragedy of the Nisei Girl", "If they are 'genteel' they are also pale and uninteresting. If

---

[8] July 25, 1941, 3.

[9] July 4, 1941, 2.

they are individualists they have unpleasant chips on their shoulders".[10] To solve the dilemma the columnist believed the Issei had to stop "clinging to the inhuman outmoded precepts of the ridiculous 'onna daigaku'".[11] Part of relinquishing Japanese traditions was lessening control on daughters. The columnist spoke of women's rights to choose and mentioned women who made history because they were able to make their own decisions.[12] Female columnists were frustrated by the Issei's insistence on complete obedience to Japanese customs.

The Nisei wanted approval and acceptance from their Issei parents, yet also desired to conduct themselves in accordance to mainstream Canadian norms. One columnist saw parental sympathy, encouragement and understanding as the solution to the generational conflict:

> Daughters need time to spread out her wings...Daughter needs sympathy and understanding for her real needs: carving a career if that is her bent, and being encouraged, not forced into marriage just because the parents will it time enough.[13]

---

[10] July 25, 1941, 3.

[11] July 4, 1941, 2. "Onna Daigaku" refers to the ancient Japanese treatise on female moral conduct, which stipulated that women should give "self-abnegating obedience to her parents, to her husband, and in widowhood to her son" R.P Dore, Education in Tokugawa Japan (London, 1965), 65.

[12] July 4, 1941, 2.

[13] July 18, 1941, 3.

In objecting to their parents' wishes for more Japanese style behaviour, the female writers declared their desire for an alternative. They found that alternative in Canadian mainstream society. Nisei attempts to fit in and "be as Canadian as possible, outwardly as well as inwardly" met with Issei hostility as in Reverend Tatsu's article.[14] Issei sentiment, although less discussed by Nisei columnists after 1942, did not change with the evacuation and relocation of the Japanese community.

Issei control over Nisei daughters continued throughout the internment and immediate post-war years. Some girls got parental permission and were able to move east to Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec after 1943 to work as domestics or in factories. Some were even permitted to go east to further their education. The numerous domestic employment opportunities advertised in The New Canadian and the positive articles written by young women already there encouraged girls to go east. One 1943 letter from Kay Oda, a former welfare worker, expressed the pleasant reception her group of Nisei women received upon starting work in a sanatorium in Guelph. She noted that no rude or racist remarks had been made towards them.[15]

Many girls, however, remained with their parents in 'ghost towns' and

---

[14] July 25, 1941, 3.

[15] June 19, 1943, 3.

resettlement areas. Although personal reasons kept some from leaving, many were unable to leave because parents intervened. One columnist claimed that parental opposition was the prime reason why so few 'niseiettes' had moved east by 1945.[16] Rumours of girls 'gone wild', fear of the unknown, and lack of parental guidance and supervision provoked some parents to deny leave to their daughters. Numerous articles praising Nisei women who had gone east and portraying their new homes as very attractive did not convince some Issei parents, even though by going east daughters could continue their education or assist family finances.[17] Family ties remained formidable and restricted women's freedom.

Like many women in Canadian society, Nisei women demonstrated both concern for parents and an individual desire for independence. However, for Nisei women the two interests were incompatible. Generational conflicts remained a constant throughout the period of 1938 to 1949 as Issei parents continued to exert considerable influence on their daughters. Most Nisei girls were reluctant or unwilling to disobey parental wishes. Sentiments expressed in The New Canadian illustrated the continual struggle between the generations.

---

[16] March 10, 1945, 7.

[17] March 10, 1945, 7. Mrs. C.V. Booth of the Vancouver office of the Japanese Division attempted a large-scale relocation of Nisei girls to work as domestics in Eastern Canada. She was only able to recruit thirty-five Nisei women and soon abandoned her plan. Patricia Roy et al. Mutual Hostages (Toronto, 1990), 146-7.

Female writers often expressed their feelings towards the Issei in short stories, where emotions and opinions could more easily be conveyed under the veil of fiction. One short story in 1945 told of a young woman who remained with her parents in the country despite wanting to go to the city. Because her parents were "too old-fashioned", she was forbidden to go to the city alone. She commented in a resigned tone, "that was that".[18] The Nisei woman did not consider rebelling against her parents, but silently craved for "the bright lights, the excitement, and going around with friends". The story ended with her realizing that the excitement of the city is "an illusion of life rather than life itself". Although the woman was resigned to being denied freedom, the story's tone suggested an inner resentment at not having had the chance to choose her own path.[19] This story rung true for many Nisei women who lived under the controlling hand of parents yet were surrounded by the appealing aspects of a perceived liberal mainstream society.

The issue of marriage also divided the generations. The Nisei's conviction in North American love-match marriages stood in direct contrast to the Japanese custom of arranged marriages. Prior to the Pacific war, columnists had debated this issue at length in The New Canadian. In a 1941 discussion a group of Issei

---

[18] December 22, 1945, 4.

[19] December 22, 1945, 4.

and Nisei on the subject of marriage concluded:

> the 'ideal' form of a Nisei marriage is reached where there is mutual interest between two young people (not necessarily 'love'), when parents approve of the match, and when a 'nakodo' or 'go between' is called upon to make the arrangements for the marriage.[20]

However, some Nisei women wanted the freedom of choosing a partner and objected strongly to their parents' interference. As one female columnist strongly declared, "given the freedom of choice, the principals will stand a better chance of happiness and contentment than if they had to marry someone picked for them willy-nilly".[21] Although the columnist admitted the Issei's good intentions, she stated that the Issei were "compelled to just follow old tradition" and not concede to new ideas.[22] From Nisei women's strong objections to the Japanese custom of arranged-marriages, it is clear the Nisei had socializing patterns that differed distinctly from the Issei. In being surrounded by and interacting with Anglo-Canadians throughout their childhood and adolescence, the Nisei had internalized Canadian social behaviour and attitudes. This, ultimately led to the Nisei rejecting the Japanese tradition as foreign and incomprehensible.

Columnists further illustrated the negative effects of parental interference

---

[20] June 19, 1941, 2.

[21] December 6, 1940, 4.

[22] December 6, 1940, 4.

in stories of broken romances and tragic love-stories. One story, entitled "My Life Is My Own, Mother..." by T.M.K. poignantly depicted the inner struggle many Nisei had with domineering mothers intent on maintaining parental control. The story centred around two young lovers who were threatened with separation by the man's overbearing mother. The man's fear of his mother was illustrated clearly in his recollection of being caught as a seventeen year old holding hands with a girl in public:

> His mother had stripped him with scathing remarks, with renunciations that left in him a bruise of ugliness and shame. His mother had stormed at the poor girl's parents, affronted them sorely. The scars of that humiliation still rankled within him.[23]

The author highlighted the difficulty surrounding career decisions and western forms of socializing, including love marriages, that were part of Nisei life into the 1940s. The story pointed out that many Nisei faced similar ordeals and resolved them in two ways: "It was either you appeased your parents and put away your dreams or had your own way and took the consequences".[24] Those who chose to disobey parents usually faced ostracism and verbal assault. When the young man wrote to his mother that he would choose his own wife, her reply was fast in coming:

> Came an air-mailed tirade against his ingratitude, the shamelessness

---

[23] December 22, 1945, 14.

[24] December 22, 1945, 14.

> of modern girls who defied customs and maidenliness. It demanded that he return at once to the family fold...She threatened disinheritance, demanded obedience such as he had hitherto given, pleaded consideration for her old age, enumerated her many sacrifices, and as a grand finale she cried to know if he had been seduced.[25]

Although the man was twenty-eight years old, his parents fully expected filial piety. The story reflected the numerous dilemmas faced by some Nisei and detailed the various solutions Nisei used to resolve them, including disobedience of a parent's wishes. The short story ended happily when the protagonist found the strength to stand up to his mother. It is impossible to know how true this story was but the underlying message clearly suggested that Nisei were breaking free, albeit slowly, of parental control.

Another revealing short story portrayed the generational conflict from both perspectives. In the 1940 short story "The Years Are So Long" by Eiko Henmi, the protagonist is an Issei mother who stumbles across her teenage daughter's diary. In reading it aloud, both the mother in the story and the reader are privileged to the thoughts and feelings of a young Nisei girl. O Haru, the mother, sees how her daughter dislikes her job as a domestic and resents her mother for forcing her to return to a particular employer. O Haru also reads of the many obstacles that her daughter faced, including prejudice by the white community. "Today, Shigeko and I were refused admission to the skating rink

---

[25] December 22, 1945, 15.

because we're Japs. I wish I had never been born..."[26] The author also brought out the dilemma of Nisei girls having boyfriends and going to dances. O Haru must contend with her husband's objection to his daughter's "gallivanting" and find a middle ground. At the end of the story, after the father and daughter fight, the daughter defiantly leaves to go to a dance; O Haru tells her not to stay out too late. The mother's inner turmoil to raise her daughter as she had been raised conflicts with her desire to alleviate her daughter's suffering. Eiko Henmi poignantly revealed the numerous conflicts and inner turmoil that both Issei and Nisei faced in living in Canada.

These stories are neither spectacular in their events nor in the characters they portray, yet they suggest a commonality in experience with which most Nisei readers could relate. The various articles and columns demonstrated that generational conflicts occurred for some Nisei women and had profound effects on their life decisions. In attempting to forge an identity for themselves, Nisei women had to contend with the pressures from both the larger society and the Japanese community. Since finding a satisfying medium was difficult, if not impossible, some chose to deny their Japanese heritage and adopt mainstream customs and culture. For many Nisei searching for self-identity in Canada, being accepted by Anglo-Canadians was essential to being a Canadian. Women took

---

[26] January 12, 1940, 6.

different paths to achieve that goal, with some rebelling against Japanese customs, others pushing for Anglo-Canadian acceptance and an elimination of racism and still others followed the path of least resistance and acknowledged their secondary status.

The third theme resonating through many of the writings in The New Canadian is social acceptance. Nisei women, despite being Canadian born and raised, were fully aware of their marginal social status during the 1930s and 1940s. Their desire to be part of mainstream society and to be acknowledged as fully Canadian is evident in many articles. Women expressed themselves in various ways, writing on the evils of racism, the government's unfair treatment of Japanese Canadians during the war, the necessity of demonstrating Nisei loyalty to Canada and the need for acculturation. Discussing the numerous ways they were prevented from fully joining Canadian society, and reporting the few Nisei who successfully entered mainstream occupations and organizations, women writers in The New Canadian voiced their sentiments on the successes and obstacles to social integration.

Some Nisei women sought recognition through participation in mainstream women's groups and social activities. By detailing these achievements, The New Canadian endorsed and encouraged other Nisei women to do the same. One letter published in 1943 detailed the community involvement of a Nisei woman in

Hamilton, Ontario. A university student wrote of her membership in the Women's Red Cross Corps, the university orchestra as a violinist, and her involvement in the Baptist Church. She also highlighted her recent athletics award at the university for active participation in sports.[27] Another article highlighted a niseiette's graduation from the Church of England Deaconess and Missionary Training House, while the appointment of a Nisei girl to represent the Winnipeg YWCA at the first YWCA National Convention made the front page of the newspaper in 1947.[28] Nisei women continuously sought admission to popular and socially acceptable organizations, where they could prove themselves competent and integrate with mainstream society.

Some Nisei women saw themselves also as representatives of the Nisei generation. In recognizing their marginalized status, they wanted to prove to the Anglo-Canadian majority that they were worthy Canadians. As one female hospital worker in Port Arthur, Ontario wrote to the newspaper, "I realize my responsibility and I will do my best to create a last good impression so that many more doors will be open to the Nisei."[29] Dispelling the negative image Anglo-Saxon British Columbians had presented of all Japanese Canadians, drove some

---

[27] April 17, 1943, 2.

[28] May 3, 1947, 12, August 30, 1947, 1.

[29] June 26, 1943, 2.

Nisei women to prove themselves model Canadian citizens.

The newspaper heralded girls who gained admission into careers previously denied to Nisei. In October 1939, the paper congratulated Ruth Akagawa for being the first and only Nisei member of the Victorian Order of Nurses.[30] In May 1942 a front page article described three Nisei girls doing social work in Kaslo.[31] A year later, the newspaper's front page announced the appointment of a Nisei girl to social service work in the university settlement of Toronto, and the recent scholarship a Nisei woman won at the Ontario College of Education.[32] Girls who gained admission to nursing schools, teachers' colleges or universities were portrayed as examples of Nisei women who had successfully stepped closer to mainstream society. For many, excelling in school was the only chance of gaining entrance into professional occupations.

Other articles outlined the contributions of Nisei women to the war effort. For example, under the headline "Columnist Says Montreal Niseiettes As 'Canadian as Maple Sugar'", the article highlighted the positive attitude of a reporter from a Montreal newspaper towards the Nisei, and their enthusiasm

---

[30] October 27, 1939, 5.

[31] May 30, 1942, 1.

[32] October 9, 1943, 1.

"about the Red Cross and blood transfusions to help save Canada's wounded".[33] Other columns told of Nisei women assisting the war effort by sending clothes to needy children in Europe.[34] By reporting the integration of some Nisei women into mainstream social clubs and their war effort, women columnists illustrated the positive accomplishments of Nisei women as individuals and as Canadians.

Stressing individuals' contribution to Canada through their positive actions was an important vehicle for demonstrating loyalty to Canada. Even prior to the war, Nisei writers were keen to demonstrate model Nisei Canadians. 'Success' stories of individuals were regularly tied to the nation as a whole. In the description of Miss Chitose Uchida, a Nisei night school teacher who assisted many Japanese in acquiring English skills, the columnist noted that,

> Single-handed, she is contributing to the general welfare of the country of her birth. In the abetting of the assimilation of these new arrivals from Japan she is indirectly contributing to the cultural future of Canada.[35]

The columnists, by associating the merits of Nisei women with the nation as a whole, portrayed the Nisei as good Canadians. Positive Nisei portraits reaffirmed the Nisei's belief in their Canadianness.

Self-help columns also helped Nisei women demonstrate their

---

[33] September 18, 1943, 2.

[34] May 25, 1946, 8.

[35] November 24, 1938, 3.

'Canadianness'. Writers provided advice on how to emulate Anglo-Canadian behaviour. One of the earliest columnist to do so was 'Cinderella' of "Femme-Fare". Suggestive from the pseudonym 'Cinderella', "Femme-Fare" can be seen as reflecting the deep wish of some Nisei women for social acceptance. Like Cinderella, who sought recognition and respect from her step-sisters, so too did the Nisei from the dominant society. In fact, one could suggest that the 'Cinderella' of "Femme-Fare" was the ideal for some girls because she espoused the behaviour, attitude and intelligence that was believed to be found in the fully acculturated Nisei woman. Some Nisei girls looked to this 'ideal' woman for comfort and advice on how to better assimilate themselves.

"Femme-Fare" appeared in almost every issue of The New Canadian and clearly portrayed the true acculturated Nisei. This is exemplified in the October 7, 1940 column subtitled, "Leaves from a Niseiette Diary". Cinderella notes on Monday she read a book on etiquette; Tuesday, saw a romantic movie; Wednesday, listed tips for ironing and cleaning windows and called a boy for a date. On Thursday she went shopping where she noticed a group of Japanese Canadians speaking Japanese. About this she remarks, "I saw a Canadian glaring sharply at them. We create our own discrimination"; on Friday she received a letter from a friend in Japan saying to remain in Canada; Saturday she got hair done and remarked about the war; and Sunday she went to church and read a

book.[36]

Numerous conclusions can be made from this particular column. To include a diary segment of an unnamed Nisei girl, which did not describe any spectacular events but rather, those appearing very 'average', suggested that this lifestyle was one lived or desired by some Nisei girls. Not only do the events detail how a proper young Nisei woman spent her time, but they also present a list of attitudes and activities that are regarded as 'ordinary', and thus, appropriate for women. 'Cinderella' regarded studying correct etiquette, maintaining one's appearance, enjoying the arts and literature, being sociable, going to church, and above all, fitting into the larger dominant society as 'ordinary'. Whether in fact, this was a reality for most Nisei women is not explored. However, from the tone and words used, the column suggested a lifestyle that some Nisei women would enjoy.

"Leaves from a Niseiette Diary" reflected the influence of mainstream society on the Nisei. Cinderella did not portray a young Nisei girl working hard for her family and faithfully carrying out their wishes, but rather, a girl being independent and enjoying Western hobbies and activities for her own satisfaction. One of the most revealing aspects of the segment is the Nisei woman's negative reaction to the group of Japanese Canadians speaking Japanese. Her response is

---

[36] The New Canadian, October 7, 1940, 6.

testimony to the fact that some Nisei women ardently desired to emulate Western behaviour and fit in to the larger Anglo-Canadian society, which included, speaking the dominant language, English.

While some writers were subtle in their attempts to acculturate Nisei women to Canadian ways, other writers chose a more direct path. Many articles advocated full assimilation in order to overcome racism and to obtain the full rights of Canadian citizenry. One writer declared the fight for enfranchisement would be won by demonstrating true 'Canadian' behaviour. In her prize winning essay, Norah Fujita spoke of her love for Canada and listed four ways the Nisei could bring about enfranchisement. The first was to avoid reading or talking Japanese in public, as it "certainly does not make a good impression". The second tip was for Nisei to be "good sports" and volunteer with enthusiasm. "He should, in fact, welcome the opportunity to set forth before the eyes of his white friends that we can be all-around good sports".[37] Her use of the masculine pronoun suggests that, like most Nisei women, she felt men were more active in bettering Nisei ties with the larger society. The third tip was to be studious, the fourth, to assist in breaking down the barriers between whites and Japanese. Fujita felt the Nisei had to prove themselves and illustrate that they were "honest, peace-loving gentle folks...and that the now privileged Canadians will

---

[37] August 27, 1938, 1.

never regret if they permit us to join hands in common brotherhood".[38] Although Canadian born, the Nisei were made to feel less than true Canadians by racist Anglo-Canadians. The desire to prove their 'Canadianness' became even more pronounced with the outbreak of the Pacific War and the subsequent relocation of the Japanese Canadian community.

Another way women writers advocated social acceptance of the Nisei was to condemn racism and the government's actions towards Japanese Canadians after 1942. By declaring the evils produced by prejudice and maintaining their status as wronged Canadians, the Nisei hoped to explain their marginalization and provide a solution to it. Nisei women recounted the ordeal and trials many Nisei faced in attempting to gain employment in white collar jobs. When Nisei overcame racial boundaries, the newspaper heralded the achievement. Not only did this prove that Nisei could obtain jobs in mainstream economic areas but it proved the possibility of equality of Nisei with their white counterparts.

A poignant short story titled "Assimilation", illustrated a Nisei women's difficulties in being accepted by Anglo-Canadians. She clearly noted that prejudice on the part of whites against Japanese Canadians was the primary obstacle to their acculturation:

> We who are coloured try our best to mix. Equality is recognized among students and in churches, but we knock on the door of

---

[38] August 27, 1938, 2.

> ordinary people like the Marshes and we find it closed and blocked with ignorant benevolence-'Go back to your colonies, there you'll be happier'.[39]

Many Nisei writers felt the frustrations of being segregated by mainstream society. In an address to the Executive Conference of the Toronto Council of Women, Muriel Kitagawa spoke of the evils associated with racial discrimination and the need for Anglo-Canadian women to recognize the abusive affects of prejudice, teach their children equality, help change community attitudes, and influence legislation to prevent the recurrence of incidents like the evacuation of Japanese Canadians. Her closing remarks poignantly illustrated her wish for racial harmony. "The minorities desire, not patronage, (though kindly meant) not tolerance (which rises from conceit of superiority), but acceptance as people, in spite of any and all faults".[40]

The female columnists of The New Canadian ardently strove to be as Canadian as possible. Considering the numerous negative effects they had to endure because of their Japanese heritage, it is understandable why they did so. Many of their writings conformed to popular advice on appearance, deportment, and attitude with the goal to gain mainstream acceptance. Although the extent of acculturation of these women is beyond the scope of the present study, the

---

[39] July 13, 1946, 8.

[40] June 2, 1948, 3.

fact that women wanted to acculturate, demonstrated a need of some Nisei women that could not be fulfilled by the Japanese community and their peers alone.

Nisei women writing for The New Canadian saw themselves as Canadians, wrongly marginalized by racism. They gave advice on how to care for themselves and their homes and it was in keeping with Canadian mainstream ideas. The notion of femininity, concerning both character and their public conduct was similar to the mainstream conception of womanhood. The female columnists' ideas, attitudes and philosophy demonstrated an ardent desire to embrace Canadian customs and forgo Japanese traditions. Their difficulties with the Issei were indicative of this point. The sense of identity they created or idealized was that of the fully acculturated Nisei woman. By meshing with all things Canadian, Nisei women hoped to terminate their marginalized status and be accepted as true Canadians.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

The majority of Nisei women who wrote for The New Canadian were young adults by 1949 and living east of the Rockies. The evacuation and relocation of Japanese Canadians during World War Two was a turning point for many Nisei. As one columnist declared, "with evacuation came emancipation".[1] Although racism still existed, many new opportunities became available to Nisei women that had previously been denied in British Columbia. The accessibility of white collar and professional careers brought them a step closer to mainstream society. Yet, Nisei women could not easily forget their past. Although they were born and raised in Canada, went to public schools, and considered themselves Canadians, racism forced them to recognize their distinction as Japanese Canadians. Consequently, in being termed different by virtue of their Japanese heritage and subsequently marginalized and stigmatized by racism, Nisei women were left with an ambivalent sense of self. Some, recognizing they could not alter their physical attributes, strove instead to prove their Canadianness by demonstrating popular behavioural characteristics and attitudes.

---

[1] The New Canadian, November 1, 1947.

Linked with "being Canadian" were popular notions of femininity and masculinity. Women writers in The New Canadian endorsed mainstream gender roles for Nisei women, thus creating an identity for Nisei women that would be wholly acceptable to the larger population and would bring them closer to Anglo-Canadian women. Although mainstream notions of femininity were similar to the femininity model espoused by the Issei, there were marked differences. Subtle attitude variations towards women's personal development, future prospects, and marriage choice differentiated Canadian notions of womanhood from the Japanese sense of femininity.

By pushing popular gender roles so adamantly, female columnists made clear their preference of Canadian customs over Japanese customs. Self-help columns and relationship articles firmly supported popular gender roles and provided Nisei women with advice on the attitude, fashion, and deportment necessary to be full Canadians. The preference for Canadian notions of womanhood was also evident in the difficulties Nisei women had with the older Issei generation. Favouring Canadian norms, or "sandwiches" over "suishi", led to open clashes with the first generation, which were not easily resolved and deeply affected Nisei women. Differences in opinion on proper female behaviour divided the two generations and further complicated Nisei women's search for identity. The Issei objected to Nisei women's social interaction with males,

which, for the Issei, bordered on immoral. Nisei girls who did not strictly obey parents or who attempted to cultivate personal interests considered inappropriate for Japanese girls, such as furthering their education or aspiring for a career, met with community disapproval.

Nisei women had to contend with parental expectations to maintain Japanese customs and gender roles, while striving to be recognized as Canadians. The ensuing struggle was extremely painful for some Nisei women. Still, female columnists in The New Canadian between 1938 and 1949 rallied against Issei expectations and advocated acculturation to Anglo-Canadian norms.

Part of acculturation lay in gaining political and economic recognition. This involved winning the franchise and being admitted into white collar and previously denied occupations. Columnists wrote repeatedly on the need for Nisei women to demonstrate their Canadianness by succeeding in professions such as nursing, social work, and teaching which Anglo-Canadians recognized and applauded. They were clear in the identity they desired for Nisei women. Whether this desire became a reality for the majority of Nisei women is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, the desire itself to gain mainstream acceptance by acculturation illustrates the Nisei's deep sense of insecurity towards their Canadianness and the lengths to which some Nisei were willing to go to be recognized as Canadians.

The historiography on Canadian Nisei women is almost non-existent. In revealing the perspectives of Nisei women as presented in The New Canadian, this thesis has attempted to reduce that problem. Nisei women's perspectives are necessary components to understanding them and in acknowledging their active role in history. Only by uncovering and examining the context and content of women's words and actions can historians provide a dynamic and accurate description of Nisei women's experiences.

This thesis has presented the conflicting spheres of influence that played on the Nisei generation, and in particular, on young Nisei women. The female perspectives presented in The New Canadian between 1938 and 1949 give a bird's eye view of some of the conflicting and, often difficult, issues Nisei women faced on a daily basis. Parental and peer pressure, racism and mainstream gender role ideals all influenced their sense of self. Although the female voices in The New Canadian are not representative of the ordinary Nisei female, the voices hold a sentiment that all young Nisei women would have recognized and perhaps, even agreed with. In sharing the common experience of blatant racism and subsequent evacuation that befell all Japanese Canadians, these female voices suggest the deep seeded ambivalent feelings some Nisei women had about their dual identity, their parents, and their status in Canadian society. The women in The New Canadian offered one solution to this uncertainty--

acculturation. They chose sandwiches over sushi.

APPENDIX I

Table 1. National Status of Japanese in 1941.

	BRITISH COLUMBIA						CANADA	
	Male		Female		Total		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
JN	3558	28.6	2006	20.7	5564	25.2	5768	24.9
NC	1825	14.7	1398	14.5	3223	14.6	3694	16.0
CB	7043	56.7	6266	64.8	13309	60.2	13687	59.1
Total	12426	100.0	9670	100.0	22096	100.0	23149	100.0

JN- Japanese Nationals
NC- Naturalized Canadians
CB-Canadian Born

Source: Censuses of Canada (Ken Adachi, The Enemy That Never Was, 414)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources:

Manuscript Sources

British Columbia Archives and Record Services (Victoria, B.C)
Aural History Collection
-Winifred Awmack Collection
-Reynolds Research and Studies Collection, British Columbia Archives, 1972, Interview #76, Tape 1 (transcribed).

Government Documents

Seventh Census of Canada, 1931 Occupations and Industries VII. Ottawa, 1931

Eighth Census of Canada, 1941 Occupations and Industries VII. Ottawa, 1941.

Interviews

Ayukawa, Midge (Victoria, British Columbia, 1995 & 1996)

Shoyama, Thomas (Victoria, British Columbia, 1995 & 1996)

Four Anonymous Subjects (Victoria, British Columbia, 1996)

Periodicals, Newspapers

Canadian Home Journal, monthly, 1938-1949.

Chatelaine, monthly, 1938-1949.

Country Guide and Nor'West Farmer, monthly, 1942.

Nikkei Voice, (Toronto, Ont.), monthly, 1991.

Prince Rupert Daily News, (Prince Rupert, B.C), daily, 1934.

The Bulletin,(Vancouver, B.C), monthly, 1994.

The New Canadian, (Vancouver, Kaslo, Winnipeg, B.C., Toronto, Ont.), weekly, 1938-1949.

The Vancouver Sun, (Vancouver, B.C), daily, 1938-1949.

Secondary Sources:

Adachi, Ken. The Enemy That Never Was. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1976.

Adilman, Tamara. "A Preliminary Sketch of Chinese Women and Work in British Columbia, 1858-1950" British Columbia Reconsidered: Essays on Women. Edited by Gillian Creese and Veronica Strong-Boag. Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers, 1992, 309-339.

Allen, Barbara. "Story in Oral History: Clues to Historical Consciousness" The Journal of American History. no.79, September 1992, 606-611.

Andrew, Nancy. "The Seitosha: An Early Japanese Women's Organization, 1911-1916," Papers on Japan. no. 6. Cambridge: Harvard East Asian Research Centre, 1972.

Ashworth, Mary. The Forces Which Shaped Them. Vancouver: New Star Books, 1979.

Ayukawa, Michiko. "Neither Wataridori Nor Dekasegi: Early Japanese Women Building New Lives in Canada" Japan in Focus ed. by Jacob Kovalio. Toronto: Captus Press, Inc., 1994, 267-274.

-----. "Good Wives and Wise Mothers: Japanese Picture Brides in Early Twentieth Century British Columbia" BC Studies no.105-106 (Spring 1995), 1-22.

Broadfoot, Barry. Years of Sorrow, Years of Shame: The Story of Japanese Canadians in World War II, Toronto: Doubleday, 1977.

Creese, Laura Gillian. "Working Class Politics, Racism and Sexism: the Making of A Politically Divided Working Class in Vancouver, 1900-1939" Ph.D. thesis. Ottawa: Carleton University, 1986.

------. "Class, Ethnicity and Conflict: The Case of Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1880-1923" Workers, Capital and the State in B.C. Rennie Warburton and David Coburn, eds. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1988, 55-85.

------. "Exclusion or Solidarity? Vancouver Workers Confront the 'Oriental Problem'" BC Studies. no. 80, winter 1988-89, pp.24-51.

Dore, R.P. Education in Tokugawa Japan. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965.

Fugita, Stephen S. and David J. O'Brien. Japanese American Ethnicity:The Persistence of Community. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991.

Glenn, Evelyn Nakano. Issei, Nisei, War Bride: Three Generations of Japanese American Women in Domestic Service. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986.

Hane, Mikiso. Reflections on the Way to the Gallows: Rebel Women in Prewar Japan. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988.

------. Modern Japan: A Historical Survey. Boulder: Westview Press, 1992.

Hutchinson, Harold Keith. "Dimensions of Ethnic Education: The Japanese in British Columbia, 1880-1940" M.A Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1972.

Iacovetta, Franca. "Manly Militants, Cohesive Communities, and Defiant Domestics: Writing about Immigrants in Canadian Historical Scholarship" Labour/Le Travail, no. 36 (Fall, 1995), p. 217-52.

------. Such HardworkingPeople: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto. Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1993.

Ichioka, Yuji. "Ameyuki-san:Japanese Prostitutes in Nineteenth-Century America" Amerasia 1977 4(1) 1-21.

-----. The Issei: The World of the First Generation of Japanese Immigrants, 1885-1912. New York: Free Press, 1988.

-----. "Japanese Immigrant Women In the United States, 1900-1924" Pacific Historical Review (1980): 339-357.

Ito, Roy. We Went to War: The Story of the Japanese Canadians Who Served During the First and Second World Wars. Stittsville, Ontario: Canada's Wings, 1984.

Kang, Hyang-Sae. "Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Work and Family: The Experience of Second Generation Japanese Canadian Women in Winnipeg, 1942 To Present" M.A Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1996.

Kelly, Nora. Quest for a Profession: The History of the Vancouver General Hospital School of Nursing Vancouver: Evergreen Press, 1973

Kidd, Yasue Aoki. Women Workers in the Japanese Cotton Mills:1880-1920. Cornell: East Asian Papers, 1978.

Kitagawa, Muriel. This is My Own: Letters to Wes and Other Writings on Japanese Canadians, 1941-48 Edited by Roy Miki. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1985.

Knowles, Norman. "Church of England Missions and Patterns of Ethnic Adaptation: The Case of British Columbia's Chinese and Japanese

Communities, 1861-1942" Paper presented at B.C. Studies Conference, 1994.

Kobayashi, Audrey. "For the Sake of the Children: Japanese/Canadian Workers/Mothers", in Women, Work, and Place. Edited by Audrey Kobayashi. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994, 45-72.

Kogawa, Joy. Obasan. Toronto: Penguin Books, 1981.

Lauren Kessler, Stubborn Twig: Three Generations in the Life of a Japanese American Family. New York: Penguin Group, 1993.

La Violette, Forrest E. The Canadian Japanese and World War Two, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1948.

Light, Beth and Ruth Roach Pierson, eds., No Easy Road: Women in Canada 1920s To 1960s. Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1990.

Lindstrom-Best, Varpu. Defiant Sisters: A Social History of Finnish Immigrant Women in Canada. Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1988.

Makabe, Tomoko. "Ethnic Group Identity: Canadian-Born Japanese in Metropolitan Toronto" Ph.D. Thesis, University of Toronto, 1976.

Maltby, Richard, Ed. Passing Parade: A History of Popular Culture in the Twentieth Century. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Matsumoto, Valerie. "Nisei Women and Resettlement during World War II" in Making Waves: An Anthology of Writings By and About Asian American Women. Edited by Asian Women United of California. Boston: Beacon Press, 1989, 115-125.

Morton, Suzanne. Ideal Surroundings: Domestic Life in the Working-Class Suburb in the 1920s. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995.

Nakano, Mei. Japanese American Women: Three Generations, 1980-1990. Berkeley: Mina Press Publishing, 1990.

Nicholson, Linda. "Interpreting Gender" in Signs: Journal of Women in Culture

and Society. Vol. 20, no.1, Autumn 1994, 79-105.

Nolte, Sharon and Sally Ann Hastings, "The Meiji State's Policy Toward Women, 1890-1910," Recreating Japanese Women, 1600-1945, Edited by Gail Lee Bernstein. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991, 151-174.

Nomura, Gail M. "Tsugiki, a Grafting: a History of a Japanese Pioneer Woman in Washington State" Women's Studies 1987 14, 15-37.

Odaka, Konosuke. "Redundancy Utilized: The Economics of Female Domestic Servants in Pre-war Japan" in Japanese Working Women. Edited by Janet Hunter. New York: Routledge, Inc., 1993, 16-36.

O'Brien, David and Stephen Fugita. The Japanese American Experience. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991.

Oikawa, Mona. "'Driven to Scatter Far and Wide': The Forced Resettlement of Japanese Canadians to Southern Ontario, 1944-1949". Master's thesis, University of Toronto, 1986.

Oiwa Keibo, Ed. Stone Voices: Wartime Writings of Japanese Canadian Issei. Montreal: Vehicule Press, 1991.

Pierson, Ruth Roach. "They're Still Women After All": The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1986.

Roy, Patricia E. A White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1989.

------., et al. Mutual Hostages: Canadians and Japanese in the Second World War. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990.

------. "The Education of Japanese Children in the B.C. Interior Housing Settlements During World War Two" Historical Studies in Education 4,2 (1992), 211-231.

Sone, Monica. Nisei Daughter. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1953.

Sumida, Rigenda. "The Japanese in British Columbia", M.A. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1935.

Sunahara, Ann M. The Politics of Racism: The Uprooting of Japanese Canadians During the Second World War. Toronto: James Lorimer Inc., 1981.

Tamanoi, Mariko Asano. "Songs As Weapons: The Culture and History of Komori(Nursemaids) in Modern Japan," Journal of Asian Studies. 4, (1991), 793-817.

Tastsoglou, Evangelia and George Stubos, "The Pioneer Greek Immigrant in the United States and Canada (1880s-1920s): Survival Strategies of a Traditional Family" Ethnic Groups Vol.9, (1992): 175-189.

Thomas, Cheryl Maeva. "The Japanese Communities of Cumberland, British Columbia 1885-1942: Portrait of a Past", M.A. Thesis, University of Victoria, 1992.

Tsuchida, Nobuya, ed. Asian and Pacific American Experiences: Women's Perspectives. Minneapolis: Asian\Pacific American Learning Resource Centre, 1982.

Uno, Kathleen. "One day at a time: Work and domestic activities of urban lower-class women in early twentieth century Japan" in Japanese Women Working. Edited by Janet Hunter. New York: Routledge, Inc., 1993, 37-68.

Ward, W. Peter. White Canada Forever. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978.

Young, C.H., H.R. Reid and W.A. Carrothers. The Japanese Canadians. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1939.

VITA

Surname: Camelon Given Names: Stephanie Jean Marie

Place of Birth: Almonte, Ontario, Canada

Educational Institutions Attended:

McMaster University	1989 to 1991
McGill University	1991 to 1994
University of Victoria	1994 to 1996

Degrees Awarded:

B.A. (Joint Honours)	McGill University	1994

Honours and Awards:

University of Victoria Graduate Teaching Fellowship

PARTIAL COPYRIGHT LICENSE

I hearby grant the right to lend my thesis to users of the University of Victoria Library, and to make single copies only for such users or in response to a request from the Library of any other university, or similar institution, on its behalf or for one of its users. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by me or a member of the University designated by me. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Title of Thesis:

"Sandwiches and/or Sushi?": Second Generation Japanese Canadian Women and The New Canadian, 1938-1949.

Author [redacted]

Stephanie Jean Marie Camelon
April 7, 1996.