

What My Mother Taught Me: The Construction of Canadian Jewish Womanhood in Montreal,
1945-1980

by

Andrea Ellen Eidingen
B.A., McGill University, 2006

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

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

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In this dissertation, I argue that from the late 1940s to the late 1970s, the Jewish community of Montreal underwent a series of changes that significantly altered its character. And while increasing numbers of Jews from all over the world began arriving on the island, the established elites reacted by creating and then entrenching a new cultural orthodoxy based on their own practices and values. Jewish women were fundamental to this process, as both objects of the new cultural discourse as well as active participants. Understanding the process through which a "Jewish community of Montreal" group was created requires a consideration of both public and private ethnic signifiers, so an analysis of the construction of gender norms for Jewish women is key. This dissertation will track these fractured dialogues through an analysis of currents of thought and discussion among Jewish individuals living in Montreal between 1945 and 1980. I will accomplish this through a comparison of both textual documents and oral interviews. In sum, I will examine how dominant discourses are constructed by elites, and how they are in turn experienced by the women themselves.

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Dedication

To those who saw the beginning but not the end, but always let me know how proud they were of me:

Rona Krakower (1932 - 2001)
Bennie Eidinge (1913? - 2009)
Joseph Backer (1926 - 2011)

Introduction

People don't usually write about ordinary women, but women who've accomplished things, like if they're writers, or musicians. Then they write about them, and if they happen to be Jewish, they mention that they're Jewish. Just being a woman is not enough. – Aviva, interviewed in Montreal, Quebec, November 13, 2008.

One Rosh Hashanah evening I asked my mother, why do you put ketchup on the brisket? She turned to me, in all seriousness, and told me that it was a traditional Jewish recipe, passed down for generations, that she got from her mother. This answer satisfied me for a few years, until I realized that it was unlikely that my Eastern European ancestors had ketchup at their disposal in the shtetls of the late 19th century. After I moved out, I finally located the source of my mother's brisket recipe: a Jewish cookbook named *Second Helpings, Please*. Imagine my surprise when I found my family's "traditional" recipe in a book published in the 1960s by Montreal B'nai B'rith, a women's organization that neither my mother nor my grandmother were ever involved in. I asked myself, where did this recipe come from, and why did my mother think it was a "traditional" Jewish recipe? What did this word "traditional" even mean? When I searched the existing historical literature for answers to these questions, I found that my family's experiences weren't reflected there. My search for answers eventually led me to graduate school, where I sought them in the archives. What I found is contained within the pages of this dissertation.

I was born and raised in Montreal, in a family that has called itself Canadian for at least four generations, and on my mother's side, Montrealers for at least that long. My ancestors came from Poland, Russia, and Austria, and they settled in both Montreal and Quebec City. My great-grandfather on my father's side was a tailor who arrived from Austria, via Hamburg, in 1909. He

married my great-grandmother, originally from Russia, and they went on to have children, including their eldest, my grandfather. My mother's maternal grandparents were both born in Montreal, while her paternal grandparents emigrated here from Germany and Poland in the early 20th century. My family is Jewish, and I was raised in the Orthodox/Conservative Jewish tradition. In many ways my history, messy and complicated as it has been, has been the impetus behind this dissertation.

Defining the Ordinary

Over the past thirty years, the history of Jewish women in Canada has emerged as a small but growing academic field, one that straddles the border between Jewish history, immigrant history, women's history, and Canadian history. The foundation for this field was laid by a number of important Canadian Jewish historians. Joseph Kage's *With Faith and Thanksgiving: The Story of Two Hundred Years of Jewish Immigration and Immigrant Aid Effort in Canada (1760-1960)* is one of the earliest surveys of the evolution of the Jewish community in Canada. Massive in scope, Kage's work analyses Jewish immigration from every angle, from the difficulties of initial establishment, to government policies, to the impact of successive waves of immigrants.¹ Stephen A. Speisman's *The Jews of Toronto: A History to 1937*, is another example of an early work on the Jewish community. An accomplishment for its time, Speisman's work chronicles the emergence of a distinctly Torontonians Jewish culture, as opposed to a more conservative Montreal culture.² In *Taking Root: The Origins of the Canadian Jewish Community*, its sequel, *Branching Out: The Transformation of the Canadian Jewish Community*, and the recent *Canada's Jews: A People's Journey*, Gerald Tulchinsky examines the establishment and growth of the Jewish community in Canada from the 1760s until the present. Tulchinsky goes to considerable pains to demonstrate the uniqueness of the Canadian Jewry and to differentiate it

from the American Jewish experience. He argues that while American Jews sought to integrate into the larger American culture and developed a strong Reform following, Canadian Jews, plagued by virulent anti-Semitism, were much more traditional and homogenous³. Irving Abella's ten year anniversary reissue of *A Coat of Many Colours: Two Centuries of Jewish Life in Canada*, presents a celebration of Jewish accomplishments. Although this is a popular history book rather than an academic one, Abella does provide a detailed, if uncritical, description of the challenges faced by Jewish immigrants: the fight to integrate into the larger Canadian community while still retaining their own cultural distinctiveness. While Abella gives a standard account of the important role women played in philanthropic efforts and the labour movement, he also provides new information about consumer boycotts, for instance the 1910 Montreal protest by Jewish housewives about the price of bread.⁴ Finally, any study of Jews in Canada would be remiss without a mention of Pierre Anctil. In a series of works, including, but not limited to, *New Readings in Yiddish Montreal*, *An Everyday Miracle: Yiddish Culture in Montreal*, *Through the Eyes of The Eagle: the Early Montreal Yiddish Press*, Anctil has detailed the history of the Montreal Jewish community in the early part of the twentieth century.⁵

The earliest works on Jewish women in Canada, by Rachel Schlesinger, Yael Gordon-Brym, Paula Draper, and Janice Karlinsky address the almost total neglect of Jewish women in the contemporary literature on Jews in Canada.⁶ More recent works have made it a point to write sophisticated histories of Jewish women in Canada, engaging with the most recent theoretical advances in the fields of social and women's history. Ruth Frager's *Sweatshop Strife* is notable for its look at the intersections of ethnicity, gender, and class in the Toronto Jewish labour movement in the early part of the century.⁷ Lynne Marks uses gender and ethnicity to examine the assimilation process in an educational setting in her article, "Kale Meydelach or Shulamith

Girls: Cultural Change and Continuity Among Jewish Parents and Daughters – a Case Study of Toronto's Harbord Collegiate Institute in the 1920s." This article examines the conflict between the gender systems of immigrant parents and Canadian-born daughters.⁸ Tamara Myers' recent article, "On Probation: The Rise and Fall of Jewish Women's Anti-Delinquency Work in Interwar Montreal, " examines the Juvenile Aid department of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies, focusing specifically on the professionalization of aid and social work in the interwar period.⁹ Finally, three articles on Jewish women in Canada have appeared in *Canadian Jewish Studies*. These articles deal with the subject of advertising in *The Keneder Adler*, Montreal synagogue sisterhoods, and Canadian Hadassah's involvement in the establishment of agricultural schools.¹⁰ While all of these works have made important contributions, significant gaps remain in our knowledge. One significant problem in the existing literature on Jewish women is the focus on a narrow segment of the population: women who were involved in philanthropic organizations or the labour movement. These studies have failed to take into account the fact that the vast majority of Jewish women were neither clubwomen nor factory workers, but housewives. Indeed, numerous studies in the United States have remarked how it was particularly unusual for married Jewish women to work outside of the home, as compared to other immigrant groups.¹¹

My study builds upon these works by filling a gap in the Canadian context through a consideration of "ordinary Jewish women." By "ordinary" I refer to individuals who were homemakers, teachers, and secretaries as opposed to those who had "great professional accomplishments." I have deliberately excluded from my study women who were public figures. By public figures, I refer to members of the executive of various philanthropic and Zionist organizations, activists, unionists, politicians, writers, and so on.

I tried to put as few limits as possible on my study so as to draw the most diverse participants possible. The only requirements were that my participants had considered themselves Jewish and that they had lived in Montreal at any point between 1945 and 1980. Some may wonder why I did not specify that I wanted to interview women. I gave the matter a great deal of thought, and I concluded that since my study was focused on gender ideals, it was inappropriate for me to restrict my participants by gender. After all, men also play an important role in the formation of ethnic and gendered identities.

I interviewed thirty-five Jewish men and women who lived in Montreal at some point between 1945 and 1980.¹² I provide a more detailed examination of my research methods later in this chapter. For now, a composite portrait of these individuals provides a concrete definition of "ordinary."¹³ Out of my thirty-five participants, three were male, and thirty-two were female. The main strength of my sample is the many women of Ashkenazi heritage, with some differences among them, who had similar perspectives and worldviews. Nearly 95% of my participants were Ashkenazi, or Eastern European in origin. Of the total, 70% of my participants could trace their ancestry back to Russia or Poland, 37% were the second generation of their families born in Canada, 31% were from the first generation born in Canada, and 26% were immigrants. Twenty-nine percent of my participants identified as Orthodox Jews, followed closely by 20% who identified as Reform Jews and 17% who identified as Conservative Jews. Seventeen individuals that I interviewed were between the ages of 50 and 69. There was a mixed response for synagogue attendance. The most common answers were: only on the high holidays (29%), more or less regularly (25%), and forced as a child but never attended as an adult (21%). Again, there is a great deal of variation when it came to keeping kosher. The most popular response was no (40%), followed by yes, in the strict sense (27%), and forced as a child but never as an adult

(23%). Finally, more than a third (34%) of my participants attended either Hebrew lessons or Sunday school, or did some kind of Jewish studies, though not a single woman had a bat mitzvah. In the period under study it would have been extremely unusual for men not to have a bar mitzvah, and indeed, all three of my male participants underwent the ceremony.¹⁴

The overwhelming majority (thirty-three out of thirty-five) of my participants were married or had been married but were now widowed, divorced, or separated. Out of the total, 53% of these women had two children, and 32% had three. On the whole, my participants were highly educated. Only 21% of my participants had no more than high school diplomas or had completed some high school. Age proved to be a significant factor. Those who attended high school and did not graduate were never younger than eighty at the time of the interview (two were eighty, and one was eighty-nine). The rest of my participants had attended university at some point in their lives. 24% of my participants had attended some classes but had not graduated, 27% had a certificate in teaching, 33% had a bachelor's degree, and 21% also had done graduate work. So it is perhaps unsurprising that 40% of my participants had worked as teachers at some point in their lives. Only 9% of my participants were exclusively homemakers. The rest of my participants (91%) worked in numerous fields, ranging from marine biology to interior design. With only one exception, all my participants who worked outside of the home were salaried white-collar workers. The only participant in my study employed in some type of manual labour was a seamstress. Similarly, all of the participants that I interviewed with children had stayed home following their first pregnancy. A staggering 89% of these women returned to work several years later, usually once their children had reached school age.

Among my sample group there were very clear patterns that repeated themselves. My “typical” interviewee was Ashkenazi and had Russian or Polish ancestry. This woman was, more

often than not, the descendent of immigrants, rather than an immigrant herself. She was between the ages of fifty and sixty-nine, married, and had two children. She was educated and worked outside of the home in some type of profession, though she stayed at home when her children were young. The practice of Judaism was the factor subject to the most variation. Whether it was religious affiliation, synagogue attendance, keeping kosher, or attended Jewish studies, there was a great deal of variety. This complexity will be fleshed out in this dissertation.

While I recognize the limitations of my study, given the consistency of the responses, I believe that I can make some general conclusions about the attitudes and worldviews within this group of Ashkenazi Montrealers. In turn, these conclusions can, with caution, be extended to those of a similar demographic. Recent books by Dina Pinsky and Karen R. McGinty use similar sample sizes to my own (thirty and forty-three interviews, respectively). McGinty, in her study of intermarriage and its impact on Jewish women's practice of Jewish religion in the United States, makes the case that "[my] sample does not strive to be random or representative. Rather, it selectively sheds light on the complex histories of some Jewish women who intermarried and whose voices have yet to be heard. This sample size is large enough to illustrate some common experiences among women who intermarried and the meanings these experiences generated at various points across time."¹⁵ Pinsky concurs on this point. As she notes, she is not trying to make general claims. Instead, her goal is to provide a glimpse into her subject of study, to "examine multiple discourses of Jewishness [and to] think critically about the constructions of cultural discourses and the integration of diverse identities."¹⁶ In a similar vein, my study can provide a sense of common themes, experiences, viewpoints, and beliefs among Ashkenazi Jewish women in Montreal.

Ethnicity as Social Process

This study relies upon a consideration of my participants as ethnic and gendered beings in a postwar setting. I drew much of my inspiration from Canadian research on women and the postwar period. This is one area where Canadian historians have excelled. There are numerous examples, including Franca Iacovetta's *Gatekeepers*, Joy Parr's *Domestic Goods*, Doug Owram's *Born at the Right Time*, Mona Gleason's *Normalizing the Ideal*, Elise Chernier's *Strangers in our Midst*, and Magda Fahrni and Robert Rutherford's *Creating Postwar Canada*.¹⁷

I also drew on the literature of ethnic and immigrant women in Canada for inspiration. Among the books that I consulted are the edited collections *Sisters or Strangers, A Nation of Immigrants*, Carmela Patrias' *Patriots and Proletarians: Politicizing Hungarian Immigrants in Interwar Canada*, Varpu Lindstrom's *Defiant Sisters: A Social History of Finnish Immigrant Women in Canada*, Vivienne Poy's "Calling Canada Home: Canadian Law and Immigrant Chinese Women from South China and Hong Kong, 1850-1930," Frances Swyripa's *Wedded to the Cause: Ukrainian-Canadian Women and Ethnic Identity, 1891-1991*, Marlene Epp's *Women Without Men: Mennonite Refugees of the Second World War*, Ruth Frager's *Sweatshop Strife: Class, Ethnicity, and Gender in the Jewish Labour Movement in Toronto, 1900-1939*, and others.¹⁸

One of the most notable examples is Franca Iacovetta's monograph, *Such Hardworking People*.¹⁹ This book focuses on the experiences of working class Italian men and women in Toronto from 1945 to 1965. In particular, Iacovetta examines the links between gendered identities, class, the experience of immigration, and militancy. Italian immigrants from this period came from southern Italy and brought with them a culture of hard work, family economy, and protest. Their goal in immigrating was to build a better life for themselves and their families and to preserve their cultural and religious traditions after decades of war. Much like the Irish in

the previous century,²⁰ southern Italians participated in chain migration according to family networks, where men arrived first to establish a financial base, and women and children were sent for later. These women and children were permitted to enter Canada as legal dependents of their sponsor (a male relative, usually the husband or father).²¹

A strong working-class culture emerged among male Italian workers. They saw themselves as the family breadwinners, and their success or failure to provide for the families was key in forming self-identity. Women are often absent from these histories due to their invisibility in the historic record. The Canadian government viewed these women as legal dependents, surviving on the wage of the man of the house. This was a view that was often perpetuated by the Italian community itself, where women's work was seen as a secondary wage. However, a closer look reveals that Italian women, as wage-earners and homemakers, played an important role in the transition to a new country as Italian men.²²

Iacovetta is at her best when considering how Italian immigrants blended aspects of their experiences in Italy with a new Canadian culture, and how this in turn affected their identities as Italian-Canadians. Rather than focus on how Italians were perceived by the host society, she enabled the Italian community of Toronto to tell its own history. I propose to take her framework even further by critically examining how dominant ethnic and gendered identities are constructed in heterogeneous populations. The first step is to define "ethnicity" and "ethnic community."

One article, "Ethnicity Without Groups," by American sociologist Rogers Brubaker, has been particularly helpful.²³ In this article, Brubaker challenges the predominance in academic circles of the idea of a "group." He notes that academics take for granted the concept of "group" and the existence of groups. The use of concepts such as "the Italian community," "Blacks," or "Americans" in academic studies of ethnicity is problematic in that it assumes the existence of

these groups, thus reinforcing their legitimacy. It also conflates individuals with different experiences, beliefs, and motives under a constructed category.²⁴ Brubaker lays out eight steps to overcome this problem. First, ethnicity must be re-conceptualized from concrete entities to relational social processes. Or, as Brubaker notes, we should think of ethnic groups as "practical categories, cultural idioms, cognitive schemas, discursive frames, organizational routines, institutional forms, political projects and contingent events."²⁵ Second, defining ethnicity as a process must not discount its impact. Just as race is understood as a social process, the impact of ethnic group-making is real and measurable. Third, the creation of ethnic groups must be understood as an event that occurs in a particular place and time. These events are often the result of "phases of extraordinary cohesion and moments of intensely felt collective solidarity."²⁶ These events can be both political and social in nature. But more importantly, conceptualizing group-making as an event rather than a fixed entity allows academics to consider instances where group-making has failed.

Fourth, academics must distinguish between groups and categories. Brubaker defines a group as "a mutually interacting, mutually recognizing, mutually oriented, effectively communicating, bounded collectivity with a sense of solidarity, corporate identity and capacity for concerted action."²⁷ Categories, on the other hand, are a form of division in a classification system. Separating these concepts allows academics to understand the relationships that existed between them. For instance, it becomes possible to examine group-making as a top-down and bottom-up process, or how categories are created and imposed and how the categorized understand, internalize, or reject these categories. Further, "we can study the sociocognitive and interactional processes through which categories are used by individuals to make sense of the social world."²⁸

The final four requirements are closely related. First, group making must be understood as a project "aimed at transforming categories into groups or increasing levels of groupness."²⁹ Second, the principal actors in group-making are organizations that are understood as legitimate authorities. Some examples are states, religious groups, political parties, philanthropic organizations, and newspapers. However, these organizations are not the same as groups, nor do they necessarily represent all of the individuals they claim to. Next, historians must understand that ethnicity is always *attributed* to individuals and organizations. For instance, in cases of ethnic violence, the violence becomes framed as ethnic once individual actors, such as victims, are identified as "ethnics." In turn, this framing codes a particular event as ethnic. However, the identification of an event as ethnic violence does not necessarily reflect the experience of the actors involved. Instead, the framing and coding of an event as ethnic can be used by individuals or organizations with a particular goal in mind. Just because an event is identified as ethnic does not make it so. Finally, ethnicity only exists through our perceptions.

Brubaker's eight-point framework for understanding ethnicity is key to this dissertation. By defining ethnicity as a social process that only exists as it is perceived, I am able to understand the idea of a "Jewish community of Montreal" as a *project* aimed at creating groupness, a sense of solidarity among disparate peoples. That there is no concrete thing as a "Jewish community of Montreal" in no way diminishes the power of this idea, both in terms of the way it has been manipulated by individuals claiming to be representative of a "Jewish community of Montreal," those individuals that this model is imposed upon, those it excludes, and the larger Canadian society. By situating this project at a particular moment in time, beginning at the end of the Second World War, I am able to consider how social realities in Montreal, Canada, and the Western World all acted upon the project of creating a "Jewish

community of Montreal." This in turn allows me to critical examine instances where this project succeeded partially, wholly, or failed all together. And finally, by separating out the idea of a "Jewish community of Montreal" as a group from the categories that are part of this group-making project, I am able to pull apart the ways in which individuals used these categories to make sense of the world around them at a particular moment in time.

Ethnicity from the Top-Down and Bottom-Up

For Brubaker, the principal actors in group-making are organizations, whether religious, political, or charitable, that are considered to be legitimate authorities. I would characterize this approach as top-down. And indeed, this fits with his focus on ethnic conflict and ethnic violence. Brubaker is not alone in this assertion. In *Special Sorrows: The Diasporic Imagination of Irish, Polish, and Jewish Immigrants in the United States*, Matthew Frye Jacobson connects ethnic identification to the rise in nationalist impulses on the part of immigrants. In essence, nationalist terms promoted group allegiance.³⁰ Similarly, in *Working Towards Whiteness*, David Roediger links biological and essentialist understandings of race to state policy, whether through census categories or restrictive immigration policy. In particular, he examines the role of American immigration legislation at the federal and state levels in setting the parameters within which group categories emerged in ethnic communities and the ways in which biological understandings of race became embedded in American immigration policy. As he notes, "what was so striking about restrictionist and racist thought at the beginning (and, indeed, at the end) of the twentieth century was its very entanglement of the biological and the cultural."³¹

Finally, Kathleen Conzen, David Gerber, Ewa Morawska, George Pozzetta and Rudolph Vecoli echo Brubaker's understanding of ethnicity as a social process, "which incorporates, adapts, and amplifies preexisting communal solidarities, cultural attributes, and historical

memories [...] and is grounded in real life context and social experience."³² However, they emphasize that immigrants were active participants in this process, rather than passive recipients of a larger social discourse. The conscious efforts of immigrants to maintain "traditions" points to "a collective awareness and active decision-making."³³ Of particular interest to Conzen et al is the way in which ethnic identities are relational, essential in setting the boundaries of group membership, defining the Other, and establishing the relationship between the "group" and Anglo-American society. Like Brubaker, they believe that the "invention of ethnicity" is historically situated and that its context cannot be ignored. Their article contains three case studies to support these assertions: mass immigration of Irish Catholics, Scots, and English in the 1840s and 1850s; the concept of the *Vaterland* in Eastern European immigrant communities as a coping mechanism that links American experience to the Old Country; and the ethnic revivals of the 1960s and 19670s with respect to the Italian-American community. Each one of these examples focuses on community institutions, newspapers, religious organizations, and mutual-aid societies.

Each of these works relies on a particular type of source in a particular setting. Specifically, the documents relied upon for these analyses are exclusively textual, they were produced almost exclusively by men, and they were all public expressions of ethnic identities. These sources are crucially important for historians when analyzing group-making as a project. However, I would argue that such an approach privileges the male voice and only examines one aspect of group-making. Shifting the gaze inwards and examining public *and* private ways of group-making will enrich our understanding of the process of the invention of ethnicity. Not only does this bring more women into the narrative, but it also allows for an examination of how signifiers of identity were received, resisted, or reinterpreted by so-called "ordinary" individuals.

For instance, a bottom-up approach would reveal that gender is a significant marker of difference between, but more particularly *within*, ethnic groups. This makes it difficult to generalize about ethnic groups without understanding the gender dynamics and different experiences of women and men within them.

A focus on women involved in group-making projects from *both* the top-down and the bottom-up is particularly important. Ayelet Shachar examines the tensions between gender equality and religious expression in *Multicultural Jurisdictions: Cultural Differences and Women's Rights*. One of her chapters, "Constructions of Collective Identity" focuses on Jewish women, the *agunah*, and the protection of religious rights. Canada's Charter of Rights enshrines the notion of religious freedom.³⁴ However, cases like the *agunah* (literally, "chained," women who are unable to secure a religious divorce from their husbands) complicate the issue of religious freedom when it impinges upon the rights of women.³⁵ The *agunah* is important in illustrating the importance of doing history from the top-down and the bottom-up. For example, this approach allows historians to use the *agunah* to study the identification of women as cultural and biological reproducers and subsequently employment of this as a justification to impose additional social controls.³⁶

Shachar explains that in Judaism women are "assigned 'the role of bearers of cultural values, carriers of traditions, and symbols of the community' because they carry out the tasks of nurturance and reproduction."³⁷ While women are acknowledged for the power and responsibility inherent in being bearers of identity, this endangers their rights as citizens. As Shachar notes, for Jews, religious law is used to establish membership boundaries. It allows for a system of classification based on difference, Jewish or not-Jewish.³⁸ This system of classification is maintained through a combination of biological and cultural controls.

According to Shachar, the group “Jews” consequently develops “the social and legal mechanisms for controlling the personal status and the reproductive activity of women - for women have a central and potentially powerful role in perpetuating the collective [membership].”³⁹ These rules are established to limit the power of women in determining group-membership, “via the implementation of personal status laws and lineage rules which clearly state how, when, and with whom women can give birth to children who will then become full and legitimate members of the community.”⁴⁰ The requirement for a *Get* is one of these rules, establishing the condition that children born to Jewish mothers are only legitimate if the mothers are in a religiously-legitimate marriage. Thus, the rules related to the *Get* prevent Jewish women from exercising their right to have more children that would be considered Jewish. For Jews at least, religious family law is a tool used to determine the qualifications demanded for membership.⁴¹

In this instance, what comes across powerfully is the idea of women having influence because of their biological and cultural responsibility, and how this influence justifies even greater control by group leaders over every aspect of their lives. That women are responsible for making new members allows religious authorities to control their lives as a method of exerting control over accepting new members. This serves to glorify women as important group members while giving others (men) the authority to determine who belongs to that particular group. This is a major reason why gender must be a key element in an analysis of ethnicity, and the missing element in Brubaker's framework.

Some of the best works of American scholarship on Jewish women use gender as a category of analysis and explore the relationship between gender and ethnicity, in relation to the identity formation of both Jewish women *and* Jewish men. For example, in *Gender and*

Assimilation in Modern Jewish History: The Roles and Representation of Women, Paula Hyman argues that gendered differences played an important role in the experience of assimilation for Jewish men and Jewish women. In Eastern Europe, the line between public and private was not rigid as a result of their gender system. Jewish women were associated with the public arena, and seen as earthy, business-minded individuals. In contrast, the ideal Jewish male was a religious scholar. When Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe arrived in the United States, they encountered an opposing gender ideology that connected men with public spaces and work while connecting women with the home and religion. As it was no longer considered acceptable for Jewish women to be the primary wage earners, Jewish men were forced to leave their religious studies for the factory floor. This social reality combined with western notions of femininity to situate Jewish women, rather than Jewish men, as the primary transmitters of Jewish culture.⁴²

Similarly, Riv-Ellen Prell uses gender and ethnicity in her analysis of the gender stereotypes (the hen-pecked Jewish husband, the Jewish mother, the Jewish American Princess) employed by Jews to reflect their encounters with America. Throughout the twentieth century, Jews have remained anxious about their place in the United States, particularly over disappearing cultural difference and increasing economic mobility. Gender stereotypes, often around women, were used to displace anxieties. Prell uses the Jewish American Princess as a striking example. The image of Jewish American Princess (or JAP, as she is more commonly known) is that of an over-assimilated Jewish woman who is only focused on material wealth. These women were depicted as lazy housewives with shopping addictions who expected “to be taken care of.” This image was seen in contrast to the image of hard-working non-Jewish married women. Thus, the exploitative and grasping Jewish stereotype is displaced onto Jewish women rather than Jews as a whole; the JAP became the image of everything that was wrong with assimilated Jews while

leaving Jewish men untouched. But going to work was no solution to the label of JAP in a culture which emphasized the non-employment of married women as a symbol of middle-class status. In effect, Jewish women are expected to stay at home as evidence of the family's middle-class status and integration of American ideas, and then punished for doing so.⁴³ For Prell, gender and gendered norms are key to understanding how Jewish identities are constructed.

Ethnic group-making among Jews is not simply a project of elites or organizations that purport to represent a large number of individuals. Instead, it is a fragmented set of discussions between individuals and organizations at all levels of society that revolve around questions of bodies, food, religiosity, and so on. An individual's identity is shaped by a multiplicity of factors. The foods one eats, the ways in which individuals view and modify their bodies, their understanding of the meaning of family, their religious practices, and their views on larger political issues like feminism are all crucial areas for expressions *of* identity as well as debates *about* identity. Norms that support these group-making efforts are produced, consumed, and rejected over the course of these discussions. This is a messy process, where the lines between elites, organizations, and "ordinary" individuals become blurred. I complicate Brubaker's understanding of ethnicity and group-making projects by incorporating gender as a category of analysis. As a result, I am able to unravel these fractured dialogues in such a way that provides a broader understanding of the mechanisms of ethnicity as a social process.

Oral History, Memory, and the Making of Ethnic Groups

Earlier in this introduction, I critiqued studies that consider ethnic group-making based only on textual documents. Oral history provides one way to go beyond written documents. It is now generally agreed that oral history is an important resource for historians.⁴⁴ But aside from being a useful tool for obtaining information about individuals who are often invisible in

traditional sources, oral history is important because it allows historians to go beyond objectivity to consider subjectivity. Oral testimonies have long been critiqued because of the problem of memory. The information obtained from oral testimonies is sometimes considered inherently flawed because it relies upon an individual's memory, which, by its very nature, is unreliable. People forget, exaggerate, invent, and revise memories. However it is this process that makes oral history so useful when analyzing ethnic group-making projects. In "Memories of Internment: Narrating Japanese Canadian Women's Life Stories," sociologist Pamela Sugiman moves away from considering memory from a psychological perspective. Instead, she explains that

memory as a social act, [is] one that is far more than "spontaneous," "personal", and individually experienced. Past events after all are very much situated and represented in present-day society. As such, they cannot be accessed in "unmediated form." In the words of Annette Kuhn, memory is 'always already secondary revision.' It is neither "pure experience" nor "pure event". It reflects personal and historical transformations, ideological shifts, changing relations of power, strategy and struggle.⁴⁵

In other words, the ways in which individuals remember specific events or experiences has much to do with the context in which they are viewed. The past can only be viewed through the lens of the present, and this inevitably reshapes the original memory; all memories are filtered through a person's own personal experiences. Finally, memories can often be shaped as well by a discourse that is part of ethnic group-making projects, even decades after the original event that triggered the memory.

Marlene Epp develops these ideas in her study of wartime rape of Mennonite refugees in "The Memory of Violence: Society and East European Mennonite Refugees and Rape in the Second World War." She points out that memories are shaped by "social memory" or "collective

plot," providing a framework for individuals to instill their experiences with meaning. These "collective memories" are an integral part of ethnic group-making projects. As I mentioned earlier in my discussion of Brubaker's analysis, particular events, often traumatic, can be used to create a sense of solidarity and shared experience, which is essential to group-making. Epp incorporates these insights into her analysis, describing common narrative structures such as the de-personalization of historical events (sometimes by using the third person) and master narratives.⁴⁶ Like Epp, many historians acknowledge that collective and individual memories are constantly interacting. For example, commemorations often reproduce a particular and socially acceptable memory of the past. In doing so, they obscure and silence alternative memories. This was, for example, the case with the collective forgetting of the Holocaust in central Europe.⁴⁷ It is through this process that pasts are transformed into histories.⁴⁸ Both individual and collective memories draw upon a common "cluster of tales, symbols, legends, and imaginary reconstructions."⁴⁹ As historian Alessandro Portelli notes, such processes are important because they result in "the myths which shape the identity of a group"⁵⁰ in the process of ethnic group-making projects.

In her seminal work, *Life Lived Like a Story*, Julie Cruikshank notes that oral traditions are important for the creation and maintenance of community: "if anthropologists no longer think of communities as bounded or homogenous, we continue to look for the variety of ways continuity, locality, and a sense of belonging are culturally constituted."⁵¹ Common narratives provide ways of holding communities and families together. As she notes, "the endurance of oral tradition in the Yukon speaks to the persistence and adaptability of narrative as a framework for bridging social fractures that threaten to fragment human relationships."⁵² Memory is therefore important, not for its ability to tell us "what really happened," but because its study allows

historians to examine the lenses through which individuals make sense of their past, present and future. And it is these lenses that form the basis for Brubaker's project of group-making.

Memories of the past are not necessarily "true" or factual. And this is precisely why they are important: different lenses exist for different fragments of the community, all with different ways of seeing. These lenses of the past must be analyzed by historians to understand how individuals choose to forget, invent, or reinvent (self- or sub-consciously) memories as a part of establishing a sense of community.

Biases and Research Problems

The personal nature of this study and my own involvement with the community under study impels me to address some of the problems that I encountered in my research. My experience interviewing women in Montreal and Victoria had its share of wonderful moments, moments where I never wanted to talk to another human being again, and moments that really made me think. Overall, it was a privilege for me to speak with thirty-five individuals from diverse backgrounds.

That said, I did experience a few problems during my interviews. I must admit to my own bias. As someone who was raised within the community that I am studying, I had a privileged insider's view. I also, as a result, had a limited perspective. Being an insider has given me the insight to ask certain questions, and ingrained assumptions that have led me to ignore others.

At the same time, while I am an insider, I am also to some certain extent an outsider, because I am academic, secular, and not generally involved in the community. Thus, some of my participants were unwilling to trust me in my research because I was perceived as someone who was not like them. Some of my beliefs were viewed as problematic by some of my participants.

In particular, my feminist and liberal views, the fact that English is my first language, and my lapsed religious practice made me suspect in their eyes. Others felt particularly uncomfortable that I was engaged (and now married) to a non-Jewish man.

Finally, as I continued with my interviews, I noticed that my participants were, in many ways, trying to shape me into the ideal Jewish Canadian woman. A pattern quickly established itself where, when exchanging pleasantries or sometimes during the course of the interviews, my participants would inquire about two things: why I was doing a Ph.D. and was I married? In answer to the first, I explained my desire to learn more about the history of my community. Many questioned the usefulness of this type of work. They did not understand why "a nice Jewish girl" needed to do a Ph.D., especially so far away from home and family.

As for the second question, I replied that I was engaged. I only provided further details if asked. When I revealed that my fiancé was not Jewish, I received a variety of reactions. While some people congratulated me and left the matter alone, more often my interviewees told me to rethink what I was doing because interfaith marriages are doomed to failure, are very hard, and/or are not worth the effort. I was also informed that since I was waiting to finish school before getting married, I might as well call the whole thing off since it was obviously not going to happen. While at first these types of remarks infuriated me, I quickly realized that this type of interaction was my dissertation come to life.

In many ways, my experiences echoed those of Mmantho Nkotsoe, the insider/outsider interviewer profiled in Belinda Bozzoli's work on oral history. Nkotsoe and I were seen to some extent as outsiders and insiders, as well as young women that need to be educated. In her book, *Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, Life Strategy and Migrancy in South Africa, 1900-83*, Bozzoli presents twenty-two stories from South African black women who were born before

1915 and lived in the same small town in the Western Transvaal. She is particularly interested in the way working-class women migrated to Johannesburg in search of work. Bozzoli's study is also concerned with methodology and includes a lengthy discussion of the relationship between one of the interviewers she employed and the interviewees, both of whom came from similar backgrounds. As my subject of study is the community into which I was born and raised, I too must deal with the question of my relationship to my interviewees. Like me, Nkotsoe was considered by many of the interviewees as a 'local girl', a kinswoman, a girl, and even a child.⁵³ Many of the interviewees thus adopted a positionality that saw them as the elder educating the younger in the ways of the world. At the same time, Nkotsoe was also in a position of authority, as a university-educated woman. This fascinating contradiction resulted in a particularly rich result for the researchers. The fact that Nkotsoe was a local girl meant that the interviewees often felt comfortable bringing up certain topics, while her education allowed her to elicit answers that might otherwise have been kept from members of the community. As Bozzoli notes, "she combines, therefore, the roles of a learned authority, whose questions must be answered, and an ignorant junior, who must be told about reality. At the same time, some of the women prefer to present themselves to Mmantho in terms they know will be understood by a younger, modern person."⁵⁴ The life stories of the women of Phokeng that resulted were filled with the details of ordinary life. The fact that Nkotsoe was a woman also added to this feeling of familiarity, and further enriched the oral narratives.⁵⁵

Similarly, many of the men and women in my study felt comfortable with me because of my status as "local girl," someone who had grown up in the same area and used the same language, a mix of English, French, Yiddish, and Hebrew. They often felt comfortable in speaking about difficult topics (such as racism and abuse). At the same time, my position as

researcher on a topic that was so familiar to my interviewees meant that they often felt a duty to “set the record straight.” Finally, since many of my interviewees were old enough to be my grandparent, some viewed me as someone who needed to be taught about the realities of being a Jewish woman in Montreal. It is for this reason that I feel that my position as insider and outsider resulted in deeper and more compelling insights.

My Project

This dissertation will fill the gaps in the current understanding of the invention of Jewish ethnicity in Montreal following the Second World War. I will accomplish this through a focus on discourses involving Jewish women, principally because of their identification as "bearers of identity" and the resulting target for social and legal restrictions. Understanding the process through which a "Jewish community of Montreal" group was created requires a consideration of both public and private ethnic signifiers, so an analysis of the construction of gender norms for Jewish women is key. This dissertation will track these fractured dialogues through an analysis of currents of thought and discussion among Jewish individuals living in Montreal between 1945 and 1980. I will accomplish this through a comparison of both textual documents and oral interviews. In sum, I will examine how dominant discourses are constructed by elites, and how they are in turn experienced by the women themselves.

The textual documents that I relied upon are located at the Canadian Jewish Congress Charities Committee National Archives, located in Montreal. This archive contains the records of the most prominent Jewish organizations in the country, in addition to many fonds from local synagogues, community organizations, and individuals. In particular, I focused on Jewish women's organizations and the records of Montreal synagogues. I examined the holdings of B'nai B'rith Women as well as Hadassah, two important Jewish Canadian women's philanthropic

organizations. I paid particular attention to their publications, the *Woman's Work Agenda* and *Orah* magazine respectively. I also consulted the records of a number of important synagogues, including, but not limited to, the Shaar Hashomayim and Temple Emmanu-El. I also consulted some of the holdings of B'nai B'rith Women contained at the National Archives in Ottawa.

I begin by situating my study within its social context, as ethnic group-making is always historically contingent. As I have noted earlier, ethnic group-making often takes place during what Brubaker calls "phases of extraordinary cohesion and moments of intensely felt collective solidarity."⁵⁶ The period between 1945 and 1980 was one such phase. These years saw the development of four trends that acted as catalysts: postwar migration, fears about intermarriage, the loosening of social controls on women, and the rise of nationalism in Quebec. These will be outlined in my first chapter.

I begin my own analysis in my second chapter by looking at the food history of the Jewish community. Food and food rituals are an important part of the Jewish female identity -- for women, home and food are common associations. The ideal Jewish mother is often associated with food. However, most Jewish women learned how to cook from cookbooks, not from their mothers. While these cookbooks appear to be simple collections of recipes, they in fact contain a discourse on "Jewishness" that is outwardly middle-class Canadian and inwardly Eastern European. This discourse asserted the "Canadianness" of Jews during the Cold War and established Eastern European culture as the dominant Jewish culture of Canadian Jews. This discourse reveals the struggles and tensions in the Jewish community of Montreal when it came to self-identification and the normalization of one specific way of being "Jewish."

Chapter three examines how Jewish Canadian identity was inscribed upon and negotiated through the bodies of Jewish women in Montreal in the 1950s, 60s and 70s. This period saw the

normalization of female Canadian bodies, in the minds of Jewish women in Montreal, as tall, thin, blonde, and blue-eyed. Known as the "*shikse* goddess" look, this ideal served both to reify non-Jewish Canadian women and construct Eastern European bodies as "ugly" and "other." Many Jewish women turned to cosmetic procedures in order to "pass" as white or Anglo-Canadian, seeking refuge in plastic surgery, diet and exercise regimes, and beauty treatments. However, these practices were at odds with the community ideal of "looking Jewish," where Eastern European bodies were normalized, and all others excluded. This chapter explores these contradictions, how these women both concealed and revealed their difference and sameness, and how "Jewishness" and "whiteness" are embodied, coded, and mapped onto the body.

Chapter four focuses on the position of Jewish women in both the family and the extended kin network. While prevailing discourses at the time emphasized nuclear families, extended female kin networks were extremely important for Jewish women. Grandmothers and aunts were often as important as mothers. Other women formed strong relationships with female friends. It was also true that Jewish families were not simply safe havens. While many were happy, others were filled with fears. This chapter will pay close attention to family conflicts, ranging from mother and daughter-in-law conflict to domestic violence, in the words of the women who experienced these events. One important source of conflict both within the family and in the broader community was the subject of intermarriage. Finally, this chapter looks at individuals who did not fit into the larger family narrative. I consider the influence of non-Jewish domestic servants who had personal relationships with the families they worked for. I also discuss the imposition of heteronormativity as an integral part of the larger narrative in the Jewish community of Montreal, and how this affected individuals who did not or would not conform.

Chapter five surveys the relationship between Jewish women, rituals, and celebrations. While religious leaders emphasized that Jewish women were the bearers of Jewish identity and sought to educate them accordingly, their efforts traced authority back to the synagogue as dispenser of religion. Community leaders similarly focused on the importance of Jewish women in the home and of domestic rituals in terms of cultural transmission. Instead of the synagogue, they centred their attention on the home, and admonished women to make their homes a sanctuary to ensure that they were passing on the beauty of religion. While ordinary Jewish women accepted the idea that Jewish women were the bearers of domestic rituals that were fundamental to the continuance of Jewish identity, they did not always bear these rituals in entirely expected ways.

Finally, chapter six looks at the impact of feminism in the Jewish community of Montreal. While Jewish women were active at the highest echelons of the second wave feminist movement, most ordinary Jewish women were ambivalent about the topic. While the issue of equality was debated in feminist circles, most ordinary Jewish women still valued traditional women's roles as homemakers and bearers of culture and were thus reluctant to endorse the feminist cause. The one area where feminist views seemed to take hold in the Jewish community of Montreal was to censure the treatment of non-Ashkenazic Jewish women. Ashkenazic women portrayed themselves as liberated and progressive while criticizing Sephardic, Hassidic, and Mizrahi Jews for being backwards and barbaric with respect to their views on women. The othering of Jews by Jews is a consistent theme that ties all of these chapters together.

My study was to a great extent influenced by the amazing women who played important roles in my life growing up in Montreal. Seeing their struggles, their triumphs, their sorrows, and

their joys inspired me to give them a chance to speak for themselves. They might not have become doctors, judges, authors, or human rights activists. But their accomplishments as wives, mothers, sisters, daughters, grandmothers, and granddaughters are equally important.

¹ Joseph Kage, *With Faith and Thanksgiving: The Story of Two Hundred Years of Jewish Immigration and Immigrant Aid Effort in Canada, 1760-1960*. (Montreal: Eagle Pub. Co., 1962).

² Stephen A. Speisman, *The Jews of Toronto: A History to 1937* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1979), 32.

³ Gerald Tulchinsky, *Branching Out: The Transformation of the Canadian Jewish Community* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1998); Gerald Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews: A People's Journey* (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2008); Gerald Tulchinsky, *Taking Root: the Origins of the Canadian Jewish Community* (Toronto: Lester Pub, 1992).

⁴ Irving Abella, *A Coat of Many Colours*. (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys Ltd, 1990).

⁵ Pierre Anctil, *New Readings of Yiddish Montreal = Traduire le Montréal yiddish = Taytshn un ibertaytshn Yidish in Montreol* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2007); Pierre Anctil, *Through the Eyes of The Eagle: The Early Montreal Yiddish Press (1907-1916)* (Montréal: Véhicule Press, 2001); Pierre Anctil, *Saint-Laurent: Montréal's Main* (Montréal: Pointe-à-Callière Montréal Museum of Archaeology and History, 2002).

⁶ Paula Draper, "Abraham's Daughters: Women, Charity and Power in the Canadian Jewish Community," in *Looking Into My Sister's Eyes: An Exploration in Women's History*, ed. Jean Burnet (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1986), 75-90; Paula Draper, "The Role of Canadian Jewish Women in Historical Perspective," in *Jewish Women of Today: Who's Who of Canadian Jewish Women 1983* (Downsview, Ont.: J.E.S.L. Educational Products, 1983), 3-9; Yael Gordon-Brym, "The Changing Role of Canadian Jewish Women," in *Canadian Jewish Women of Today: Who's Who of Canadian Jewish Women* (Downsview, Ont.: J.E.S.L. Educational Products, 1983), 11-21; Rachel Schlesinger, "Changing Roles of Jewish Women," in *Canadian Jewry Today: Who's Who in Canadian Jewry* (Downsview Ont.: J.E.S.L. Educational Products, 1989).

⁷ Ruth Frager, *Sweatshop Strife: Class, Ethnicity, and Gender in the Jewish Movement of Toronto 1900-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).

⁸ Lynne Marks, "Kale Meydelach or Shulamith Girls: Cultural Change and Continuity Among Jewish Parents and Daughters – a Case Study of Toronto's Harbord Collegiate Institute in the 1920s," in *Gender and Education in Ontario: An Historical Reader*, eds. Allison Prentice and Ruby Heap (Toronto: Canadian Scholar's Press, 1991), 295-305.

⁹ Tamara Myers, "On Probation: The Rise and Fall of Jewish Women's Anti-Delinquency Work in Interwar Montreal," in *Negotiating Identities in 19th and 20th C. Montreal*, eds. Tamara Myers and Bettina Bradbury (Vancouver; Toronto: UBC Press, 2005), 175-201.

¹⁰ Esther Carmel-Hakim, "Canadian Hadassah/WIZO and the Establishment Women's Agricultural School at Nahalal," *Canadian Jewish Studies* XII (2004): 97-108; Donna Goodman, "Montreal Synagogue Sisterhoods (1900-1949): A Unique Organization," *Canadian Jewish*

Studies XVI-XVII (2009-2008): 117-137; Eve Lerner, "Soft Hands for the Seder: The Portrayal of Gender in the Advertising of The Keneder Adler, 1920-1935," *Canadian Jewish Studies* XV (2007): 37-52.

¹¹ Beth Wenger, "Budgets, Boycotts, and Babies: Jewish Women in the Great Depression," in *American Jewish Women's History: A Reader*, ed. Pamela Nadell (New York: New York University Press, 2003), 186.

¹² My study is consistent with others that have been published while this dissertation was a work-in-progress. For instance, Dina Pinsky's *Jewish Feminists: Complex Identities and Activist Lives* and Keren R. McGinity's *Still Jewish: A History of Women and Intermarriage in America*. Pinsky's study is based on interviews with thirty Jewish individuals (twenty-five women, five men), while McGinity's work is based on interviews with forty-three women. Both describe methods of recruitment consistent with my own. While McGinity's limits her description of recruitment to her comment: my sample is self-selected and all women volunteered their time," Pinsky provides more detailed information. She notes that she contacted individuals through the posting of advertisements in Jewish publications and "snowball technique," where one contact lead to another, and then another, and so on. Keren McGinity, *Still Jewish: A History of Women and Intermarriage in America* (New York: NYU Press, 2009), 17-18; Dina Pinsky, *Jewish Feminists: Complex Identities and Activist Lives* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 6-8.

¹³ Please note, throughout this entire dissertation, the names of my interviewees have been changed, along with any possible information that might identify them. I have assigned pseudonyms to my participants, based on popular names for baby girls that were appropriate for Jewish women in the period under study.

¹⁴ Ronald L. Eisenberg, "Bat Mitzvah," *Dictionary of Jewish Terms: A Guide to the Language of Judaism* (Rocheville, Maryland: Schreiber Publishing, 2008), 45-46 and Ronald L. Eisenberg, "Bar Mitzvah," *Dictionary of Jewish Terms: A Guide to the Language of Judaism* (Rocheville, Maryland: Schreiber Publishing, 2008), 41-42.

¹⁵ McGinity, *Still Jewish*, 17.

¹⁶ Pinsky, *Jewish Feminists*, 10-11.

¹⁷ Elise Chenier, *Strangers in Our Midst: Sexual Deviancy in Post-war Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008); Magdalena Fahrni and Robert Rutherford, eds., *Creating Postwar Canada: Community, Diversity, and Dissent, 1945-1975* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008); Franca Iacovetta, *Gatekeepers: Reshaping Immigrant Lives In Postwar Canada* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2006); Franca Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto*, 1992; Valerie J. Korinek, *Roughing it in the Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the Fifties and Sixties* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000); Doug Owram, *Born at the Right Time: a History of the Baby-Boom Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); Joy Parr, *Domestic Goods: The Material, the Moral, and the Economic in the Postwar Years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

¹⁸ For example, please see: Marlene Epp, *Women without Men: Mennonite Refugees of the Second World War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000); Marlene Epp, Franca Iacovetta, and Frances Swyripa, eds., *Sisters or Strangers: Immigrant, Ethnic and Racialized Women in Canadian History* (Toronto ; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2004); Ruth Frager, *Sweatshop Strife*; Alexander Freund and Laura Quilici, "Exploring Myths in Women's Narratives: Italian and German Immigrant Women in Vancouver, 1947-1961," *BC Studies* 23,

no. 2 (Spring/Summer 1995); Wenona Giles, *Portuguese Women in Toronto: Gender, Immigration, and Nationalism*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002); Franca Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992); Franca Iacovetta, Paula Draper, and Robert Ventresca, eds., *A Nation of Immigrants: Women, Workers, and Communities in Canadian History, 1840s-1960s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998); Varpu Lindstrom, *Defiant Sisters: A Social History of Finnish Immigrant Women in Canada* (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1988); Royden K. Loewen, *Family, Church, and Market: A Mennonite Community in the Old and the New Worlds, 1850-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1993); Vivienne Poy, "Calling Canada Home: Canadian Law and Immigrant Chinese Women from South China and Hong Kong, 1860-1990" (Ph.D Dissertation, University of Toronto, 2003) and Frances Swyripa, *Wedded to the Cause: Ukrainian-Canadian Women and Ethnic Identity, 1891-1991* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

¹⁹ Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto*.

²⁰ For instance, please see Donald Harman Akenson, *The Irish in Ontario: A Study in Rural History* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984); Brian Clarke, *Piety and Nationalism: Lay Voluntary Associations and the Creation of an Irish-Catholic Community in Toronto, 1850-1895* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1993); Bruce S. Elliott, *Irish Migrants in the Canadas: A New Approach* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988).

²¹ Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto*.

²² Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto*.

²³ Rogers Brubaker, "Ethnicity Without Groups," *Archives Européennes de Sociologie* XLIII, no. 2 (2002): 163-189.

²⁴ Brubaker, "Ethnicity Without Groups," 165-167.

²⁵ Brubaker, "Ethnicity Without Groups," 167, italics not added.

²⁶ Brubaker, "Ethnicity Without Groups," 168.

²⁷ Brubaker, "Ethnicity Without Groups," 169.

²⁸ Brubaker, "Ethnicity Without Groups," 170.

²⁹ Brubaker, "Ethnicity Without Groups," 170-171.

³⁰ Matthew Jacobson, *Special Sorrows: The Diasporic Imagination of Irish, Polish, and Jewish immigrants in the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).

³¹ David R. Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Become White: The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), 66.

³² Kathleen Conzen et al., "The Invention of Ethnicity: A Perspective from the USA," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 12, no. 1992 (1992): 4-5.

³³ Conzen et al., "The Invention of Ethnicity," 5.

³⁴ For more information on the only *agunah* case brought before the Supreme Court of Canada, please see *Brucker v. Marcovitz*, [2007] 3 S.C.R. 607, 2007.

³⁵ Ayelet Shachar, *Multicultural Jurisdictions: Cultural Differences and Women's Rights* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

³⁶ In order for a divorce to be considered legal under religious law, the husband must issue a *Get*, an official bill of divorce. When a husband refuses to grant his wife a *Get*, any new marriage or children resulting from this marriage are considered illegitimate. The crux of the problem lies with the requirement that *Gets* be issued by free will. That is, no husband can be forced to issue

one. He is legally entitled to withhold a *Get* for any reason. While historically, men who refused to issue a *Get* could be pressured by rabbis or shamed by their communities, there is currently no way of forcing men to issue a *Get*. Ronald L. Eisenberg, "Get," *Dictionary of Jewish Terms: A Guide to the Language of Judaism* (Rocheville, Maryland: Schreiber Publishing, 2008), 158.

³⁷ Shachar, *Multicultural Jurisdictions*, 50.

³⁸ Shachar, *Multicultural Jurisdictions*, 51.

³⁹ Shachar, *Multicultural Jurisdictions*, 52.

⁴⁰ Shachar, *Multicultural Jurisdictions*, 52.

⁴¹ Shachar, *Multicultural Jurisdictions*, 53-54.

⁴² Paula E. Hyman, *Gender and Assimilation in Modern Jewish History: The Roles and Representation of Women* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995), 5-6.

⁴³ Riv-Ellen Prell, *Fighting to Become Americans: Jews, Gender, and the Anxiety of Assimilation* (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1999).

⁴⁴ For more information on these debates, please see Belinda Bozzoli, "Interviewing the Women of Phokeng," in *The Oral History Reader*, eds. Robert Perks and Alistar Thomson (London: Routledge, 1998), 145-156; Belinda Bozzoli, *Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, Life Strategy, and Migrancy in South Africa, 1900-1983* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1991); David Williams Cohen, "The Undefining of Oral Tradition," *Ethnohistory* 36, no. 1 (Winter 1989): 9-18; Julie Cruikshank, *The Social Life of Stories: Narrative and Knowledge in the Yukon Territory* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998); Alexander Freund and Laura Quilici, "Exploring Myths in Women's Narratives: Italian and German Immigrant Women in Vancouver, 1947-1961," *BC Studies* 23, no. 2 (Spring): 159-182; Luisa Passerini, *Memory and Totalitarianism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Alessandro Portelli, *The Battle of Valle Giulia: Oral History and the Art of Dialogue* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997); Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli, and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991); Alessandro Portelli, *The Order Has Been Carried Out: History, Memory, and Meaning of a Nazi Massacre in Rome* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Alessandro Portelli, "What Makes Oral History Different," in *The Oral History Reader*, eds. Robert Perks and Alistar Thomson (London: Routledge, 1998), 63-74; Joan Sangster, "Telling Our Stories: Feminist Debates and the Use of Oral History," in *Rethinking Canada: The Promise of Women's History*, ed. Anita Claire Fellman and Veronica Strong-Boag, 3rd ed. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997), 304-321.

⁴⁵ Pamela H. (Pamela Haruchiyo) Sugiman, "Memories of Internment: Narrating Japanese Canadian Women's Life Stories," *The Canadian Journal of Sociology* 29, no. 3 (2004): 364.

⁴⁶ Marlene Epp, "The Memory of Violence: Society and East European Mennonite Refugees and Rape in the Second World War," *Journal of Women's History* 9, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 58-87.

⁴⁷ David William Cohen, *The Combing of History* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press: 1994), 3, 246.

⁴⁸ Cohen, *The Combing of History*, 247.

⁴⁹ Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli, and Other Stories*, 1.

⁵⁰ Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli, and Other Stories*, 59.

⁵¹ Cruikshank. *The Social Life of Stories*, 2.

⁵² Cruikshank. *The Social Life of Stories*, 24.

⁵³ Bozzoli, *Women of Phokeng*, 8.

⁵⁴ Bozzoli, *Women of Phokeng*, 9.

⁵⁵ Bozzoli, *Women of Phokeng*, 9.

⁵⁶ Brubaker, "Ethnicity Without Groups," 168.

Chapter 1: A Short History of the Jewish Community of Montreal

In 1945, the Jewish community of Montreal stood on the brink of pivotal changes that would alter its very nature.

New Immigrants, Old Problems

Jews are one of the oldest ethnic groups in Canada. For the most part, Jews are concentrated in cities and large towns. The Jews that came to Canada came from places and cultures that were vastly diverse. The earliest settlers were British American Jews who arrived in Montreal in the 1760s. These Jews were the descendants of Sephardic Jews who had fled Portugal and Spain during the Inquisition. German Jews arrived in the late nineteenth century, followed by a massive wave of Eastern European Ashkenazi Jewish immigrants.¹

The interwar period saw massive readjustments as different groups of Jews and waves of immigrants learned to live together. In 1919, the Canadian Jewish Congress was founded in order to give Jews a national voice. The same period saw the growing prominence of Jewish socialists of European background, "where battles for worker's rights, humanistic values, and democratic government were fought [...] against the dark forces of reaction and anti-Semitism."² Alongside the capitalists and the socialists, Canadian Zionists began organizing themselves to establish a Jewish homeland.³

After the end of the Second World War, many Jews left the downtown area of Montreal for a new life in the suburbs, particularly Outremont, Hampstead, and Cote Saint-Luc. Some Jewish families, however, remained downtown, while their old neighbourhoods were taken over by newer immigrants, Jewish, Greek, Italian, and so on. Increasing numbers of Jews were entering into the professions, while those employed in manufacturing grew fewer in number. In

1941, 5.62% of Jews were employed in professions. This number rose to 13.59% by 1961. The number of Jewish university graduates also grew.⁴

Such was the state of the "Jewish community of Montreal" when the first post-war immigrants began arriving. In a community that had always been characterized by conflict between individuals with different goals, philosophies, national origins, generations, and religious denominations,⁵ the arrival of these new immigrants made a complex situation even more complicated.

The impact of these new immigrants is reflected in the enormous growth of the Jewish community in Montreal. In 1941, there were 63,721 Jews in Montreal.⁶ By 1951, Jewish individuals numbered 80,800, an increase of 27.4% from 1941. In 1961, this number again increased to 102,700, peaking at 109,500 in 1971, or a growth of 72.4% from the 1941 totals. Essentially, within twenty years the community had grown by nearly three quarters.⁷ These new immigrants can generally be divided into four groups: Displaced Persons and Holocaust Survivors, Hungarian Jews, North African Jews, and Hassidic Jews. I will deal with each group individually, as their experiences upon arrival varied greatly. It is important to note that I have to some extent created these groups artificially or accepted a grouping that has been asserted. These groups have been used for the purpose of analysis, but are fluid and not necessarily reflective of reality. That said, many of the participants of my study used similar groupings to refer to various waves of Jewish immigrants to Canada.

Displaced Persons and Holocaust Survivors

In 1945, the Jewish population in Montreal was 63,500 strong, making up approximately 5.5% of the total population of Montreal.⁸ This population swelled enormously with the arrival

between 1946 and 1951 of Jewish Displaced Persons and Holocaust survivors. Estimates have put their numbers at between 15,000 and 17,000 individuals.⁹ This enormous number of new immigrants placed a strain on the resources of the philanthropic organizations of Montreal. And once these new immigrants settled in, problems began emerging.

Although, like the preceding wave, these immigrants were of Eastern European origin, they were very different in that they were largely of Polish rather than Russian origin, and had directly experienced the Second World War and the Holocaust.¹⁰ Newly arrived immigrants, largely consisting of Holocaust survivors and Displaced Persons, had a more difficult time than most adjusting to Canadian life.¹¹ Many of the new immigrants were offended by a perceived negative reaction on the part of the established Jewish-Canadian community, and felt that the established community could never understand their experiences in Europe. Others resented the established Jewish-Canadians for their relative safety in North America during the war.

Part of this difficulty lay with the feelings of the established community. Some resented the immigrants, saying that they had a "more persecuted than thou" attitude. The established Jewish-Canadians disliked the constant reminder that the immigrants evoked of the horror of war. At the same time, many in the established Jewish-Canadian community feared that association with the newcomers would challenge their recently acquired middle class identities; these new immigrants, who had often arrived in Canada with little or no financial resources, and usually unable to speak English, were increasingly viewed as a dominant Jewish representation by the Montreal public.¹²

In addition to conflicts between the Displaced Persons and Holocaust survivors and the already established Jewish community of Montreal, there was also the fall-out from the emotional trauma of the war. Although I do not deal directly with the Holocaust in this

dissertation, some of my interviewees were directly or indirectly affected by it, so I feel that a few words are in order regarding the impact of the Holocaust on survivors and their children in the years after their arrival in Canada. I had intentionally tried to avoid this topic, because of my own personal discomfort and because I did not wish to cause emotional strain on my participants. That said, I quickly learned through my interviews that this was not a topic that could be avoided. Of my participants, one had directly experienced the Holocaust. A further five were closely related to individuals (parents) who had directly experienced the Holocaust. This is based solely on information volunteered by my interviewees, so the numbers are not 100% accurate. As well, the majority of the rest of the participants mentioned the Holocaust as a significant event in their lives, despite having no direct relationship to it.

As Paula Draper has noted, many survivors were able to create new families and communities and go on to great success.¹³ But she also reports that even years after their arrival in Canada, many survivors continued to be traumatized. Draper recounts the story of Susanne Reich. She immigrated to Canada as a teenager, and struggled to suppress her memories. It was only after the Eichmann trial went public that she sought out mental health professionals.¹⁴ Eleanor Simkevitz, a survivor who was originally from Belgium, leaves every door open in her house at all time. As she said: "You'll never get me. I cannot stand closed doors. I have to have a valid passport. I have to be able to find everything in the dark. We were hiding, we were blacked out, we couldn't turn on any lights so if we had to run, we had to go and find whatever we needed... in the dark."¹⁵ The Holocaust would also deeply affect the following generation. As John J. Sigal and Morton Weinfeld noted in their book, *Trauma and Rebirth: Intergenerational Effects of the Holocaust*, many survivors were unable to form emotional bonds with their children.¹⁶ Holocaust survivors tended to function well in daily life, and were reasonably well

adjusted. However, they tended to keep to themselves and marry other survivors. The children of survivors often felt that their parents had been horribly altered by their experiences, either by manifesting "cold" personalities or by withdrawing into themselves. Most reported being unable to speak to their parents about the subject at all. Draper agrees, noting that many of the fears and anxieties of survivors were passed on to their children. Some survivors coped by becoming quite religious, or by rejecting their Jewishness completely, having lost their faith in God as a result of the Holocaust.¹⁷

Despite this, by 1970 most of the Holocaust survivors and Displaced Persons had learned to live separately but alongside the established Jewish community, enjoying prosperity and making up a high percentage of the professional class. Their distinctiveness was maintained through the establishment of their own *landsmanshaftn*, or men's societies for individuals from the same town or village in Eastern Europe. These individuals were drawn together by their shared experiences of the Holocaust and the Second World War.¹⁸ In the face of derision from the established community, Holocaust survivors and Displaced Persons felt free to share their feelings with each other. As one person noted: "Amongst our group, if we felt like talking about something, we could. We were listening to each other's stories, and it was just fine."¹⁹ Aside from serving as refuges for survivors, these groups dedicated themselves to providing financial assistance for members in need, worked towards supporting Israel, and financed Holocaust commemoration.

The Hungarians

In the years to come, still more new groups of Jews arrived in Montreal. Approximately 5,000 Hungarian Jews arrived in 1956 and 1957, fleeing the Communist suppression of the 1956 revolution.²⁰ The testimony I received from Hungarian immigrants that I interviewed reveals the

mixed reception of these new immigrants by the Jews of Montreal. Miriam moved to Canada in 1957 from Hungary. Her family received assistance from JIAS, and she was very grateful for this help. She never experienced any animosity from the established Ashkenazi community upon her arrival. Others, however, report welcomes that were less warm. Lisa, in particular, was sharply critical of the way she was welcomed into the Montreal community. This is how she put it: "We lived a little bit outside of, and we were invited to this party. [...] And I came in, and I said Hello, Shalom, and I went to give my hand, and nobody. Hi, nobody gives you anything. They were not anti-social. We were always feeling an outsider looking in, [...] with other Jews. They were much worthier than we were."²¹ Unfortunately, at this time there is a complete dearth of materials available on the experiences of Hungarian Jewish immigrants in Montreal. It is important to note that while Hungary is often considered to be part of Eastern Europe, Hungarian Jews do not see themselves as Eastern European. As Aaron explained, the Hungarian Jewish community was deeply integrated into Hungarian society. He argued that the only real difference was that the Hungarian Jews did not eat pork, while all other Hungarians did.²²

Hassidic Jews

Perhaps the most visible immigrants to the Jewish community in Montreal in the years following 1945 were the Hassidim. The main influx of Hassidic immigrants arrived in the years immediately following the Second World War. Hassidic Jews came from a variety of places. There was considerable overlap between Hassidic immigrants and Holocaust survivors and Displaced Persons. A number were refugees from the Lubavitch *Yeshiva* in Warsaw, Poland.²³ Montreal was desirable as a new home because of its proximity to New York and its already established Jewish infrastructure. The Hassidim were not a homogenous group, but comprised many different sects that each follows their own rabbi. In Montreal, the largest group belonged to

the Lubavitch sect. The Lubavitch sect was distinct in that it is the only Hassidic sect that organizes conversion campaigns among non-Hassidic Jews, bringing them (back) to Modern Orthodoxy.²⁴ While in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, the established Jewish population was moving out of its traditional enclaves and into the Western suburbs, the Hassidim were moving into these enclaves. Most chose to settle in "an area which is bounded by Fairmount St to the south, Van Horne to the north, St. Urbain to the east, and Jeanne Mance to the west - boundaries which marked the Jewish community until the mid-1950s."²⁵ Within these geographical boundaries, they formed their own enclaves and recreated Eastern European patterns of life. They practiced a far stricter form of Judaism than either the established Jews or the postwar newcomers, and retained much more rigid gender role distinctions. For example, men continued to wear the clothing they had worn in Eastern Europe, did not shave, or cut their side locks. Women wore clothing that covered all parts of their bodies except their hands and face, and covered their hair upon marriage.²⁶

In my interviews, I asked about the participants' views and/or interactions with the Hassidim. Kim probably summed the situation up best. I asked her what she thought of the Hassidim. Her reply was that she thought that they were strange. She continued, "[a]nd I still do!" and she burst out laughing. She went on to explain that she rarely had any contact with the Hassidim, given that they lived along the Main while she lived in Town of Mount Royal.²⁷

As Donna's story demonstrates, many established Jews resent the insinuation that they are somehow not "authentic" Jews because they are not strictly religiously observant.

They annoyed me. [...] they would come to your house, they would want to check your mezzuzah, and check your everything, for being kosher. And, I wouldn't let them one time. And the two of them started talking in Yiddish. [...] And they started calling me a shikse, and all of kinds of names, and I was insulted. [...] So I

*retorted in Yiddish, and then they got, Oh. Oh... I just didn't want them, it was a brand new mezzuzah, they didn't need to check.*²⁸

She further clarified that she rarely had any contact with Hassidic Jews. "I mean, we were the modern Jews in Cote Saint Luc, and they were the old-fashioned Jews in Outremont. And we didn't [interact]."²⁹ Donna clearly resented their intrusion into her life, and felt that their inspection of her home was an insult to her Jewish identity.

Julie despaired of the infighting between different segments of the Jewish community.

But she reserved her most scathing comments for the Hassidim:

*They're fundamentalists. [...] They're just as unpleasant and judgmental as any other fundamentalist group in my opinion. And so, I was very disappointed to see that in Judaism. [...] I thought, if you've experienced prejudicial behaviour, and bad treatment, and abuse, and you name it, through your lifetime that you would want to eradicate this kind of behaviour. But no, they didn't. They pull in closer and they in-fight. And so that was a disappointment for me.*³⁰

Julie was particularly disappointed because of the lack of compassion, as she saw it, demonstrated by the Hassidim towards other Jews. She understood the importance of strict observance when it comes to preserving Jewish culture. But she was greatly offended that anyone would question her Jewishness. In her words: "Because, I said, I was singled out [by the Hassidim] cause, I was already singled out because I didn't have that education and it hurt me that a Jewish person would call me a *goyim*. When I found out what *goyim* meant, it means a worm crawling on the ground."³¹ The use of the term *goyim*, which translates colloquially as "non-Jew," was offensive to Julie, a woman who took pride in her Jewish identity.

While these are simply three examples, they reflect other interviewees' perception of the separation between Hassidim and other Montreal Jews. While the Hassidim viewed established Jews as non-observant potential converts, the established community viewed the Hassidim as judgmental, oppressive, and overbearing. This created a vicious cycle where rebuff from established Jews only encouraged the Hassidim to work harder, which in turn upset the established Jews, and so on and so forth. Throughout the dissertation, I will be particularly concerned with how other Jews in Montreal saw the Hassidim as "Other."

North African Jews

Aside from Holocaust survivors and Displaced Persons, the largest group of Jewish immigrants to arrive in the postwar period was Sephardic Jews from North Africa. Many Egyptian Jews fled Egypt in late 1956 following the Suez Crisis and the subsequent Egyptian action against Jews. As Joseph Kage notes: "There were no official anti-Jewish laws in Egypt, but following the Suez action, Jews were arrested, persecuted, subjected to severe repressive measures, detained, dismissed from jobs and from professions and their property subjected to sequestration."³² Concurrently, large numbers of Sephardic Jews were fleeing North Africa as many former French colonies, such as Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco, were asserting their independence. Kage continues, saying "as part of this process the social and political situation became unstable and in many respects the Jews were affected more severely than the general population. Many wanted to come to Canada because of their French background."³³ By 1991, the Sephardim (including Moroccan, but also Sephardic Jews from elsewhere) in Montreal had reached 21,049 individuals compared to 77,131 Ashkenazim. Sephardic Jews represented 21.4% of the total Montreal Jewish population at this time.³⁴ Moroccan Jews made up the bulk of these

Sephardic immigrants. The two most important decades of Sephardic immigration from Morocco were the 1960s and the 1970s. In the 1950s and 1960s, 1450 individuals, or 37%, of the total Moroccan immigrant population, while 4% (1600 individuals) of all Moroccans immigrated between 1970 and 1980. Prior to this, Sephardic immigration from Morocco to Canada was minimal. Further, the 1991 Census series by the Federation of Jewish Community Services of Montreal reports that since 1959 Moroccan Jews have consistently outnumbered other Sephardic Jewish migrants by a factor of about 1.5 times. Or, two out of three Sephardic immigrants to Montreal since 1959 were from Morocco.³⁵

The arrival of Moroccan Jews had an enormous impact on the Jewish community of Montreal. The relationship between Moroccan Jews and Ashkenazi Jews was summed up by Karen:

It goes back to the history of when the Sephardim came to Montreal. And how were they welcomed into the city. And were they welcomed with open arms? No they weren't. Did they resent it? Yes they do. Did the Ashkenazim think that they wanted everything handed to them on a platter, Yeah, probably. I mean, that's the story of all new ethnic groups moving in. [...] The last guy in is the one everybody looks down on.³⁶

This relationship is best illustrated in publications in the general Canadian Jewish community. *Viewpoints*, a magazine that was published by the Canadian Jewish News and the Canadian Jewish Congress, was originally envisioned as a showcase and vehicle for Jewish literature and thought. Established in the Fall of 1965, *Viewpoints* published articles by many luminaries in the Canadian Jewish community, including Saul Hayes, Joseph Kage, Morton Weinfeld. Throughout the 1960s, *Viewpoints* featured a number of articles directly addressing the issue of new North African immigrants, consistently painting them as the "Other." Joseph Kage, then the Director

JIAS, published an article in 1966 entitled "New Segment in the Community."³⁷ At the beginning of the article, Kage introduces the new immigrants to the larger community. He provides a short background in North African history, with a focus on the anti-Semitism that forced many from their homes. Kage's feelings towards Sephardic immigrants seem to be mixed. In the following quote, North African Jews are presented as "behind the times":

To those who are acquainted with the history of Jewish settlement in Canada, the problems of the North African immigrants, their efforts at social integration and the determination to retain their identity, will not seem unfamiliar. Many people in our community can undoubtedly think back to the early days of their own attempts to form landsmanshaften, fraternal societies, synagogues and schools, clubs and reading groups, the important part that these social activities played on their own lives.³⁸

Kage connects the experiences of North African Jewish immigrants to those of his readers and his ancestors. Kage challenges the prejudice in the Montreal Jewry by reminding them of their immigrant roots, particularly Eastern European Jews who had only arrived three decades earlier. Though he appears to be sympathetic, Kage clearly believes that North African Jews ultimately need to become integrated into the larger Montreal Jewish community. Put simply, Kage outlines two possible paths for Sephardic immigrants to take: integration into the larger Jewish community, or establishing separate Sephardic organizations. While from our perspective, there is nothing wrong with separate Sephardic organizations, Kage's aversion to this option points to the sense of the Ashkenazi community that it was necessary for the Sephardi to be part of a community "of all Jews together," as opposed to remaining distinct. Kage goes on to insist "the integration of the new arrivals must not be left to chance and requires an attitude of acceptance and understanding on the part of the Jewish community."³⁹ Or, in other words, the new immigrants must be integrated, whether or not this was their desire, and the established

community should be tolerant of the newcomers' foibles in the meantime. To this end, Kage proposed a three-point integration program. First, the new immigrants were to be educated about Montreal and the established Jewish community. Second, the new immigrants were to be made to feel welcome. Finally, the last step was "to help the newcomer come out of his social isolation and become an active participant in community affairs."⁴⁰ Kage's article reveals his underlying attitudes towards the new immigrants. In focusing on efforts to integrate the newcomers into the established community he creates a clear differentiation between the established community and the new immigrants, who are fundamentally different in character. Second, the strong emphasis on integration of the new immigrants makes it clear that the newcomers are required to assimilate *into* the established Jewish community, and only on the established community's terms. Or, as Kage describes it, the North African Jew must "come out of his social isolation."⁴¹ These newcomers were criticized for creating their own community and were being alienated as the other, apart from the established Jewish community.

Kage's mixed views stand in contrast Esther Benaim, who was much less sympathetic towards the Sephardim. Her article, "Francophone Jews and the French Fact," was published in the spring of 1979.⁴² In essence, Benaim believes that Moroccans make Anglophone Jews look less a part of Quebec than the Moroccans, on account of their language. This relates principally to the "resurgence of French nationalism in Quebec, and the resultant emergence of the French language as the primary language in Quebec."⁴³ She laments the exodus of young Anglophone Jewish professionals from Quebec while noting that Moroccan Jews did not seem to be experiencing a similar exodus. Instead, they seemed to be flourishing because of their French: "Many French Moroccans empathize with the desire of French-Canadians to preserve and develop their own culture in this same French language since they are themselves engaged in a

conscious effort to preserve and develop their own French Sephardi culture. In this, they show a solidarity due to their situation as a cultural minority."⁴⁴

To be fair, Benaim acknowledges that the Anglophone Jewish community is at least partly to blame for this. For instance, the lack of French services in established Jewish institutions and social services was a serious problem. The reluctance to accept charity because of its social stigma along with the lack of French-language services in existing institutions prompted the Moroccan community to create their organizations.⁴⁵ She also notes that, "consciously or unconsciously, many Anglophone Jewish parents have transmitted to their children a negative attitude towards French language and culture, because of their own conditioning as adherents to the Anglophone majority."⁴⁶ However, Benaim's message is mixed. She critiques Moroccan Jews for their admiration of French culture⁴⁷ and blames Moroccan Jews for strained relationships with the Ashkenazi. She argues that "the normal discomfort in being the recipient of social aid [has] generated some unavoidable antagonisms which unfortunately hardened into mutual prejudices."⁴⁸

The views of the North African Jews are more difficult to gauge. Thankfully, noted Sephardic scholar Jean Claude Lasry, an expert on relations between Sephardim and Ashkenazim in Montreal, polled North Africans in Montreal in 1972. While efforts to locate his original survey have not yet been successful, a summary of its results appeared in *Jews in Canada*, an edited collection of articles published by Robert J. Brym, William Shaffir, and Morton Weinfeld in 1993. The survey was administered to 469 North African Jews, all of whom lived in Montreal. Lasry selected these individuals "from a master list of more than 2,500 household[s], [re]presenting approximately 10,000 to 13,000 persons."⁴⁹ Of the 469 participants, all had lived in Montreal between 2 to 15 years, with over 70% having spent 4 years or more in

the city. The sample was roughly divided by gender, with 258 men and 211 women. Lasry notes that 199 of these individuals were married couples. Finally, the ages of the participants ranged from 18 to 62 years of age.

One of the most interesting conclusions to come out of this survey was the distinction between Ashkenazim and Canadian Jews. The former "are perceived as immigrants with heavily accented English, while 'Canadian Jews' are perceived as native-born, second-generation Canadians who speak unaccented English."⁵⁰ Thus, the North African Jews made a distinction between Jews who had lived in Montreal for at least two generations and postwar European immigrants. And it was the latter that they disliked the most.

Lasry asked his participants if they had any preference as to the ethnicity of their friends. Sixty-eight per cent of the time, North African Jews were preferred as friends. A close second were Canadian Jews, coming in at 23%. However, these numbers were turned on their heads when Lasry asked his participants about preferences as regards to the ethnicity of their children's friends. This question provides an indication about the intentions of North African Jews for their children's future. In indeed, Canadian Jews were seen as even more desirable playmates for their children than non-Moroccan North African Jews, 75% to 21%.⁵¹ These two statistics call into question many of the conclusions of Joseph Kage's and Esther Benaim's regarding the social isolation of Moroccan Jews and their resistance to assimilation. North African Jews deliberately set out to make connections between their children and Canadian Jews. It appears that North African Jews who were adults found that it was important to maintain connections to other North African Jews. However, the fact that they wanted their children to make friends with Canadian Jews suggests their desire to have their children integrate more fully into the larger Montreal Jewish community. This was likely an effort to ensure their future economic and social success;

the more connections one has with those in places of power, the more likely one is to succeed. This is a strong indication that North African Jews sought to integrate into the larger Montreal Jewish society.

However, efforts to integrate should not overshadow the conflicting feelings that many North African Jews felt with regards to Canadian Jews. Lasry noted that many North African Jews felt that they were discriminated against by Canadian Jews. Many felt that Canadian Jews were less culturally accommodating than French Canadians and Muslims, and 20 percent expressed an outright dislike of Canadian Jews. In particular, they objected to "the disparaging remarks made about their Arabic, and allegedly primitive, origins by persons they perceived to be former residents of spindly one-room shacks in East European *shetls*. Many Sephardim were proud of their roots and of the enlightened aspects of the Arabic culture of North Africa. As devotees of metropolitan French secular culture, they were resentful of being regarded as a threat by the rest of Montreal Jewry."⁵²

In the end, these feelings of alienation led North African Jews to establish their own community services, particularly L'Association Sépharade Francophone, which included Francophone chapters of B'nai B'rith and Hadassah. Over time, this became the Communauté Sépharade du Québec. These individuals were a double minority, "Jews in a predominantly Christian province and francophones in a largely English-speaking community."⁵³

Intermarriage – Betrayal of Your "Race"?

The second factor influencing the Jewish community of Montreal in the postwar period was the threat of intermarriage. Before going any further, I need to emphasize the difference between a dramatic rise in the number of intermarried couples and the fears of a dramatic rise in the number of intermarried couples. Historically, mixed-marriage (here defined as between a Jew

and a non-Jew) rates among Jews are among the lowest for ethnic groups in Canada. The earliest year in which reliable data on intermarriage was recorded was 1961. In this year, 3,026 marriages were performed involving at least one Jew. Overall 7.4% of marriages involving Canadian Jews were mixed. Of those 3,026 marriages, 161 (10.3%) were mixed marriages with a Jewish male, and 64 (4.4%) mixed-marriages with a Jewish female. These numbers remained low throughout the decade, though there was a steady climb upwards.⁵⁴

While the 1970s did see an increase in the number of mixed marriages, the overall number still remained quite low. By 1974, the last year in which data for Quebec was included, there were 2,739 marriages, 23% of which were mixed marriages. Again, 24% of Jewish men married outside of their religion, while 19.6% of Jewish women did the same. After 1974, Quebec stopped recording information about the religion of married individuals. This significantly skewed the data, as 30 to 40 percent of Jewish marriages took place in this province. That said, Canada-wide, the numbers generally seem to follow the same pattern.⁵⁵

A significant shift only takes place in 1980 when, for the first time, Jewish women marry more non-Jews than Jewish men. In 1980, 28% of marriages involving Jews in Canada were mixed. Of the Jewish men who married, 25.8% married non-Jews, while 30.1% of Jewish women married non-Jews.⁵⁶ However, because of the lack of data from Quebec on the subject of mixed-marriage, these percentages are not necessarily reflective of mixed-marriage rates in Montreal.

As the reader can see from looking at these statistics, the number of Jews in Canada who married outside the Jewish religion remained low throughout the period under study. Only after 1980 did the proportion grow to just above one quarter of Jewish marriages. However, these numbers were not necessarily the basis for fear around intermarriage. Instead, the fact that rates

were rising, regardless of the actual numbers themselves, was the basis for an increase in fears about intermarriage following the end of the war, even if the concern appears exaggerated from our perspective. In the end, fears of intermarriage and/or the perception of growth in intermarriage rates were ultimately more important than the actual figures.

Concern about intermarriage long pre-dates the 1980 surge in mixed marriages. These concerns reflect the fear that intermarriage would ultimately lead to the destruction of the Jewish people. In 1954, the *Jewish Western Bulletin* published an article by Rabbi David C. Kogen entitled "Intermarriage in Vancouver - Emotions Versus Facts." He cautions young people against intermarriage. After going through some statistics about intermarriage rates in British Columbia, he argues: "one can understand why David Einhorn, an early leader of American Reform Judaism stated: "Intermarriage drives 'a nail in the coffin of Judaism.'" Now you understand some of the reasons why we Jews oppose intermarriage.⁵⁷" He then goes on to elaborate: "actually, we feel that the time to discourage intermarriage is on the first date, or rather, before the first date. One Jewish mother put it to her son in these words: "If you don't take out a non-Jewish girl, you won't put your arm around her. If you don't put your arm around her, you won't fall in love with her. If you don't fall in love with her, you won't marry her."⁵⁸ Similarly, in 1965, *Canadian Jewish News* published a letter to the editor in defence of day schools (parochial schools for Jews). One of his arguments is that public schools result in high rates of intermarriage. As he asserts: "The seeds of the current problem of intermarriage may be sown in the public school where Jew and Gentile are so closely associated"⁵⁹

Such concerns only intensified around 1980, after the sharp jump in intermarriage rates. For instance, the Canadian Jewish Congress organized an entire conference on March 18, 1980 on this very topic. The conference included panels on the psychological effects of intermarriage

on the individual, the sociological and demographic factors in intermarriage, and the theological issues in intermarriage. These topics were covered by a number of speakers, including Dr. Daniel Silver (a Toronto psychiatrist), Dr. Morton Weinfeld (a Sociologist from McGill), and Rabbi Sternberg himself (the director of the National Religious Department of the Canadian Jewish Congress).⁶⁰

Again, most of the concern about intermarriage revolved around the disappearance of the Jewish people through assimilation into the dominant culture. The speakers at the conference saw Jewish education and Jewish practice as essential for the continued survival of the Jewish people. And they saw intermarriage as a key factor. In 1979, *Viewpoints* polled a number of important Jewish intellectuals about the most serious problem facing Canadian Jews. Professor M. W. Steinberg linked intermarriage to assimilation and growing secularism. He believed that intermarriage was a symptom of the larger problem of assimilation.⁶¹ He argued that "Assimilation in an open society is inevitable and up to a point even desirable. But we must be aware that the process moves with its own momentum towards total assimilation. If, for whatever reason - religious, historical, social - we wish to preserve our identity as Jews and enrich our lives as Jews and Canadians by doing so, we must obviously cultivate and practice our Jewishness."⁶²

Conversion

The subject of intermarriage inevitably brings up the subject of conversion. On this matter, all sects of Judaism (at least in Montreal) are in agreement: a non-Jew who converts becomes a Jew for all intents and purposes. Dr. Maurice Cohen, Conservative rabbi, noted that the Conservative sect does not approve of intermarriage. However, he notes that the rabbi is obligated to encourage the non-Jew to convert. Once this happens, "all restrictions and

limitations shall be lifted."⁶³ He continued: "we view the avenue of conversion as one of our readier tools against the high and unavoidable incidence of intermarriage."⁶⁴ In sum, a converted Jew is no different than a person who is born Jewish.⁶⁵ Rabbi Robert Sternberg, from the Orthodox sect, is quite straightforward about the matter: "If a person sincerely accepts the basic principles of the Jewish faith and commits himself/herself to the Jewish way of life and people, and follows through with the required ritual of conversion, such a person becomes a full-fledged Jew. Despite the non-Jewish background of the proselyte, and the family problems that may arise as a result of it, the marriage is essentially a marriage between two Jews."⁶⁶ He goes on to warn people: "Once converted, attention must not be called to the person's non-Jewish background lest it be a source of embarrassment. The convert must be treated with love and consideration."⁶⁷ The Reconstructionist view, presented by Rabbi Ronald Aigen, is equally clear: "A marriage between a Jew and a convert to Judaism is not in any sense to be considered to be an intermarriage."⁶⁸ Finally, the Reform rabbi, Rabbi Michael Stevens insisted on providing "the opportunity for conversion of the non-Jewish spouse" in order to keep every channel to Judaism open.⁶⁹

The Daughters Rebel

Fears of intermarriage were not just characteristic of religious leaders and the Canadian Jewish Congress. My interviews with Jewish women and men in Montreal demonstrate the enormous pressure to marry other Jews. When I asked my participants about how they met their future husband, none of the women described actively seeking Jewish spouses. That said, many of the women I interviewed described pressure from their parents to marry Jews. Indeed, not a single person I spoke with mentioned pressure from rabbis. That said, the rabbis never mentioned parents in their discussions of intermarriage, and considered the synagogue as the ultimate arbiter in this matter. However, my sense is that parental attitudes to intermarriage are similar to the

views of the rabbis. But while the rabbis were concerned about the survival of the Jewish people, Jewish parents were more concerned about respectability. In other words they hoped that their children would follow the "norm" within the Jewish community so as to make their (the children's) lives somewhat easier.

Beth dated non-Jewish men, but ultimately chose to marry a Jewish man. When I then asked her if she felt it was important to marry someone was Jewish, she exclaimed, "There was no question! There was just no question!" She further elaborated:

Dating, I meant I did it on the QT, very clandestine. Marriage? No. I don't approve, I don't know what my parents would have done. I honestly don't know what my parents would have done. It's a good question. I never dated anybody that was serious enough to even think of getting married. None of my friends, ever, married anybody out of their faith. None of them. I don't know if any one of them ever dated anybody out of their faith. I was the rebel, Ha Ha!⁷⁰

In the end, the two most important motivating factors for marrying within the faith were social stigma and assumptions about the workability of inter-faith marriages. For instance, Donna told me how her mother's experiences shaped her decision to marry a Jew. Her mother gave birth to her at the age of fifteen, and surrendered Donna to her parents. As a result, Donna knows nothing about her father, including whether he was Jewish or not. However, Donna's mother eventually went on to marry a non-Jew:

It wasn't done. It just wasn't done. [...] Well, my mother, my very own mother, she married someone who was not Jewish. And, she was ostracized. My grandfather didn't speak to her for many, many years. And then, it was, an unspoken or sometimes spoken thing, Oh, he would have been really nice if he was a Jew. And, um yeah... It was funny because, I would never, ever, ever, bring somebody home who wasn't Jewish. I would never think of dating someone who wasn't Jewish. [...] I think it was because my mother did it, and I didn't want to disappoint my grandparents again. But it just, wasn't done. And you know, among my own circle of friends, if someone dated somebody who wasn't Jewish, it was Oh!

*Oh my God! He's not Jewish. No it would big, it was a big big deal. [...] It really was not done.*⁷¹

When I asked her if it ever occurred to anyone that marrying a non-Jew did not affect the Jewishness of the woman involved, she replied: "No! Because you just didn't do it. It wasn't worth it. [...] The whole, kerfuffle that would ensue, it just wasn't..."⁷² She further elaborated that prior to university, she and her friends were largely isolated from non-Jews: "besides the fact, to be quite honest with you, where would we find someone who wasn't Jewish? [...] We would have had to look! I mean, when we got to University, all of a sudden there was an influx of non-Jews. But, [before that], how would we have found them? We would have had to search high and low! Seriously! It would have been an effort." Donna raises the important issue of the social isolation of Jews in Montreal as a factor in creating groupness. By surrounding oneself with others that are seen as part of the same group, the group encourages marriage within a group (endogamy) by reducing opportunities for group members to interact with non-group members. Further, the difficulty of finding someone who was not Jewish to date increased the social stigma of intermarriage, as it suggests that this was a goal that was deliberately sought contrary to the group's emphasis on endogamy.

In Aaron's case, having a Jewish spouse was important because it made married life easier: "I was fully aware that, when you're getting married, it's not just two people, it's entire families and everything, it's backgrounds, traditions, and, it'll make your life easier, it will do that. Don't kid yourself, it will make your life easier. It wasn't going to be the thing to make the difference, it just happened to be that [my wife] was Jewish."⁷³ Like Donna, Laura felt pressure both from her parents and from society. For Laura, it was very important for her to marry a Jewish man. When asked why this was important, she said "Because I am Jewish. All my friends

were Jewish. I knew I liked the culture, I liked the traditions, I liked being Jewish. And I knew that it would really hurt my parents."⁷⁴ She recounted that her father was very vocal about the possibility of her marrying a non-Jew. He said: "You're not going out with somebody who's not Jewish." She continued, noting "It just makes life easier [to marry a Jew]."⁷⁵

Out of the thirty-five participants in my study, four married non-Jews. Two others were in long-term unions with non-Jews, but these unions took place outside of the time period of this study. With respect to the four women who married non-Jews, all of them did so in the latter part of the period under study. Donna was married in 1980, Linda in 1978, Debra in 1986, and Jennifer in 1992. Again, because Jennifer married in the 1990s (and therefore outside of my study period), I will not touch on her experiences. Like the other women in this study, their parents were against intermarriage. Donna only married her non-Jewish husband after her grandfather died, so as not to offend him. Donna and Debra's husbands converted after they got married; Donna's husband only converted twenty-five years after they were married. Linda's husband never converted. In each family, there was a celebration of Jewish and Christian holidays, and their children were allowed to pursue the religion of their choice. The conversion of their husbands seemed of little importance when they spoke to me about it, though obviously it was important at some point in their life. Unlike the other participants, they emphasized the importance of happiness in marriage over social conformity or racial preservation. They also did not consider faith to be an issue that could cause problems in marriage. In general, these women were less observant religiously than most of my participants, though some did attend Reform services. These women were born at the beginning of the period under study, and married quite late.⁷⁶ All of the women born before 1945 married Jews, as did most of those who were born after 1945. This likely points to a change in attitude over time. My evidence suggests that prior

to the late 1970s, young women were more likely to acquiesce to parental pressure and internalize views against intermarriage. However, as time went on, and the women's liberation movement grew in strength, young women felt more inclined to go their own way, regardless of what their parents believed.

Discussions of intermarriage point to the importance of looking at discourse from both the top down and the bottom up. For religious authorities, intermarriage was an important danger because it led to the decline of the Jewish people. But for my participants, marriage was about relationships. Although the language and motivations of my participants used to talk about intermarriage, though different from that of religious authorities, indicated a certain internalization of their views. Specifically, they believed that the idea that Jewish identity should be fundamental in the selection of a spouse. As well, parents were undoubtedly aware, and may have somewhat bought into the notion that intermarriage would lead to the end of the Jewish people, even if that was not their main concern.

This partial internalization is an indication of "lived religion." In other words, "ordinary people" take the decrees of their religions and define them in their own terms. Further, this is entirely consistent with other religious groups. As Tina Block demonstrates in "Families that Pray Together Stay Together," church and religious authorities may establish a dominant ideal, but that does not necessarily mean that their followers actually listen to them. In this article, Block examines two churches in Victoria in the 1950s. She looks at official pronouncements on the family and marriage and interviews members of these two churches to get their views. As she concludes, "in their homes, ordinary Protestants alternatively affirmed, rejected, and refashioned the meanings of family that they encountered in their churches and the wider culture."⁷⁷ When examining motivations for the use of contraception, Danielle Gauvreau and Peter Gossage look

at both official and unofficial discourse on its use. They discovered that while it mattered to some Catholics that the Church did not condone the use of contraceptives, many Catholic couples did, indeed, still use contraceptives. However, most avoided mechanical methods, which were in direct violation of Catholic ideology. Instead, most Catholic couples relied on rhythmic methods, such as avoiding sexual intercourse while they were ovulating (or when they thought they were ovulating).⁷⁸ In the end, however, it was not simply one factor that went into the decision of whether or not to use contraceptives. Issues ranging from religion, to the relationship between husband and wife, to the education level of the woman, to thoughts about how many children one desired, all came into play.⁷⁹

Intermarriage raised questions about Jewish identity that made most Montreal Jews uncomfortable: What makes a Jew a Jew? Is it a matter of blood or of education? Are children of intermarriages fully Jewish or only half? Does it depend on how they are raised? In accepting the children of intermarriages, are we diluting Jewish culture? Who gets to decide who counts as Jewish and who does not? These were the unspoken questions being asked each time either religious leaders or ordinary individuals spoke about intermarriage. The answers, as I will demonstrate later in my dissertation, were never consistent, shifting from group to group, individual to individual, but were fundamental to efforts to delineate Jewish group-ness in Montreal in the decades after the Second World War. Further, an understanding of intermarriage is important because increased anxiety resulting from the perceived and actual rise in intermarriage played a role in the demarcation of groupness, in a group, that feared for its survival, whether rationally or irrationally.

Women's Roles in a Modern World

Thus far, I have discussed issues that were of particular concern only to Jews in Montreal. But two important changes were taking place in the wider context that must be considered when discussing Jewish women in Montreal. First, a number of important demographic and social changes were taking place in the postwar period that would have profound implications for women. These changes resulted in an increasingly liberal attitude when it came to female gender roles, significantly departing from pre-war attitudes. Rather than try to condense all of these changes into a short space, I will focus on the most significant and their repercussions among Montreal Jews specifically: participation in the workforce, and a loosening of moral norms regarding marriage and sex. These changes had a significant impact on the lives of women in postwar Canada, opening up new avenues and changing the course of their lives.

Far from ending women's participation in the labour force, the end of the war saw a dramatic increase in the number of married women employed outside of the home. Joan Sangster's *Transforming Labour: Women and Work in Post-war Canada*, explores this issue in depth. She argues that the increasing number of married women in the workforce was the "truly 'revolutionary' change in the post-war period."⁸⁰

In 1946, women workers were encouraged by the state to leave their jobs in order to provide work for returning soldiers. As Sangster notes, measures to ensure this including cutting funding for child care, eliminating tax exemptions for married women, banning women from the civil service and "[running] a public relations campaign urging the preferential hiring for male (breadwinner) veterans."⁸¹ Many of these ideas emerged from the Advisory Committee on Reconstruction, established by the Liberal government as early as March 1941, and a special sub-committee, established in January of 1943, to deal specifically with the problem of women

workers after the end of the war.⁸² The success of their efforts is clear. At its height in 1944, the number of women workers reached one third of the entire population of Canadian women over the age of fifteen. By 1946, only one quarter of the population of these women worked for wages. The number of women working outside of the home would only start to increase in the mid 1950s.⁸³

While overall numbers declined immediately after the war, the proportion of married women workers among female works grew steadily. In 1941, only 10% of all women workers were married. By 1951, the number of married women employed had risen to 30%. By 1961, married women made up nearly half of the entire population of women workers.⁸⁴ Beginning in the mid-1950s, the number of women entering the workforce began surpassed the number of men. At the same time, overall unemployment rates for women were lower than that of men.⁸⁵ Jobs for married women were not simply occupations for bored housewives; in many families, the money earned by working wives was a crucial second income.⁸⁶ The proportion of married women in the workplace continued to climb, so that by 1961 nearly half of women workers were married.⁸⁷ Sangster links this to the emergence of a "two phase life cycle" of paid employment. In essence, "women worked until they were married or had their first child and, after a period outside of the paid labour force, they returned to wage labour when their children were older."⁸⁸

These statistics tell one side of the story. While the number of married women in the workforce increased significantly, there were important limits placed on their work. For instance, the labour market was explicitly gendered. Women worked primarily in so-called pink-collar jobs. Many worked in the service industry, in retail and doing clerical work. Others became teachers and nurses. These jobs often came with low salaries and few benefits.⁸⁹ Racialized and immigrant women workers were further segregated in the workforce, where "a gendered and

racialized hierarchy was maintained."⁹⁰ Another important limitation was the prevalence of an ideology that idealized female domesticity. While it is inappropriate to assume that all women in the 1950s were stereotypical housewives, it is equally problematic to assume that these ideologies did not exert a tremendous influence on their lives. Sangster provides an illustration of this reality when examining responses to the federal Women's Bureau surveys. As she explains: "the majority of these women asserted that their wages were necessary to the family economy, yet many also felt compelled to justify, excuse, and apologize for their labour outside the home."⁹¹

The end of the war also saw important changes in the realms of marriage and sexuality. Following a short-term spike, marriage rates began dropping soon after end of the war. In 1958, they reached a 20 year low, with 7.7 marriages per 1000 individuals.⁹² It was only in the late 1960s that marriage rates began climbing again, reaching 8.9 per 1000 people by 1971.⁹³ In addition, this period saw more liberal social norms regarding extra-marital sex. Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, it was increasingly acceptable for young women to have sex prior to marriage, though this was often with men whom they intended to marry. This happened alongside the legalization of the Birth Control Pill in 1969. More and more couples also began living together without getting married first. All the while, the age-at-marriage was dropping. In 1941, the average age at first marriage for women was 24.6. This number fell to 23.8 in 1951, 22.9 in 1961, and 22.6 in 1971. This is also the result of increasing independence exhibited by young women. More young women made their own decisions about marriage, in terms of both the partner and the timing.⁹⁴

A loosening of attitudes regarding sexuality was not limited to increasing acceptance of pre-marital sex. At the same time, the use of contraceptives grew steadily. This is reflected in a

dramatic drop in birth rates. Although the postwar period is often linked to the Baby Boom, the birth rate began dropping as early as 1957. Women were having fewer and fewer children, and they were limiting childbearing to the early years of marriage. In 1961, the average family had 1.9 children. By 1971, this number had dropped to 1.7. This was especially true in Quebec, where a number of important changes related to the Quiet Revolution resulted in a birth rate that was cut by half between 1959 and 1969.⁹⁵

While these changes were a significant departure from pre-war attitudes, they had a significant impact in the lives of many Jewish women. A look at the statistical information reveals that these trends were present among Montreal Jews. When comparing the experiences of women who came of age in the prewar versus the postwar period, there is a significant change. Of my interviewees, most women who came of age in the prewar period did not obtain more than some high school education. While some worked prior to marriage, largely as secretaries, they all left their jobs upon marriage. Those who did return to work almost exclusively began as bookkeepers for their husbands. As well, the older individuals in my study were more likely to have 3 to 4 children. In contrast, individuals who came of age in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s follow very different patterns from those who came of age before the Second World War. Almost all my younger participants went to university, and many of these obtained degrees. Most of these degrees were bachelors' degrees, but some of the women obtained graduate degrees. Most of these women had careers prior to marriage, mostly in teaching. Most left their jobs when they got pregnant for the first time. But nearly all of them returned to the workplace once their children were old enough to go to school. Many of these women went on to have long careers as teachers, secretaries, and business owners. And in contrast to older

participants who were more likely to have between three and four children, these participants usually had between one and two children.

Further evidence can be seen by a glance through *Viewpoints*. In the spring of 1976, *Viewpoints* published an article by Lenore Lieblein, entitled "The Professional Woman and the Nice Jewish Girl." It is a manifesto by a Jewish woman over the age of thirty against traditional gender norms that stipulate that all women should be married and have children. She refers to this problem as the dilemma of "THE NICE JEWISH GIRL." A nice Jewish girl is expected to be "responsive to Jewish traditions and interested in and respectful to older people, and if perhaps I seem intelligent as well, in other words, if I am super-nice, super-Jewish, and super-feminine," then she is granted the esteemed title.⁹⁶ But being deemed a "nice Jewish girl" comes with requirements. She describes it thusly: "there are a number of things expected of a "nice Jewish girl." The most comprehensive one is that she marry a "nice Jewish boy" and of course procreate and transmit the values of the Jewish experience to her children."⁹⁷ Lieblein emphatically rejects this model for her own life, arguing that her life has not been meaningless for want of a Jewish husband and children. The majority of the article focuses on the implications of the "nice Jewish girl" paradigm on young women. First, there is the issue of social status. Lieblein notes that a Jewish woman is only considered a woman if she is married. Or, in other words, "until she is married or definitely an old maid, she remains a girl and not a woman. The implication is that between the period of girlhood and womanhood (i.e. marriage) is a no-woman's-land of waiting."⁹⁸ Unmarried women, even if they have successful professional careers, are financially independent, or are over the age of thirty, as still viewed by the community as "girls," childlike and ignorant, that they are playing at life and their careers are temporary distractions. Lieblein describes it as "not [being] recognized as the complete human

being that I am."⁹⁹ Any accomplishments or even interests and hobbies are considered irrelevant simply because she lacks a husband. Married women regularly gave advice to unmarried women about how to achieve happiness. This usually involves advice on the selection of a husband:

I am told of the wonderful doctor or lawyer (not, lord help us, of an Indian Chief) whom everyone seems to number among their relatives and acquaintances. Needless to say, the doctor and lawyer whatever is a man and not a woman. Also taken for granted is the fact that he is Jewish. Such a person and I might have common interests and values, much to share and like in each other, but you may be sure that unless he is unmarried, he will not be mentioned as a possible friend.¹⁰⁰

Not only is this condescending, but it violates the "wholeness and dignity of women," and drives them away through the lack of respect.¹⁰¹

Lieblein's article points to the persistence of older gender ideals in the Jewish community even into the mid-1970s. This ideal, the "nice Jewish girl," is the embodiment of traditional womanhood, wife and mother, with the added benefit of knowledge of Jewish traditions. The implication was that a Jewish woman is only useful in so far as she can pass on Jewish traditions, customs, and rituals to the following generation; indeed, her adulthood is predicated on this. In other words, to be an adult Jewish woman, one must be married and have children. Any other accomplishments, no matter their significance to the wider world, are irrelevant by comparison. They are just ways to pass the time until she can snare a suitable husband. Without a husband, she is just a child herself. While men are relegated to the role of sperm-donor in this model, they are recognized as full adults prior to marriage, hence the emphasis on their respective careers. The key to adulthood seems to be responsibility. A Jewish man with a career is a good provider — he is establishing his financial freedom in order to provide for a Jewish family. A Jewish woman with a career is the embodiment of irresponsible selfishness, for her work and her income

are not for establishing a family, but for her own gratification. This is how the traditional construct of male breadwinner and female homemaker was preserved.

That Lieblein is able to point this out, and argue with the notion rather than accepting it, is significant in the context of a community that still seemed untouched by feminism in the mid 1970s. She can name the gender construct that others are trying to impose on her and she can dispute its relevance. While Lieblein acknowledges that the ideal of the "nice Jewish girl" has enormous power, and she even admits to her desire to play the part to win approval from those around her, she refuses to blindly accept her (imposed) gendered identity. Of course, the fact that she spends the entire article railing against the ideal of the "nice Jewish girl" reinforces the power of the paradigm. But it no longer represents the totality of the Jewish female experience. Other options exist, such as a career and other intellectual pursuits, even though the larger Jewish community might not validate them. These options are particularly relevant for the younger individuals in the Jewish community; they had the opportunity to change the path of their lives and go in a direction previously unavailable to their own mothers. The presence of this article in a major Jewish publication points to an important shift in conceptions of Jewish woman as well as the continuing strength of an older model. Overall, Lieblein's work suggest that the Jewish community was slow to embrace feminism, and that my own work on feminism in my dissertation reinforces this point.

A similar change was taking place regarding contraceptives and family planning. Interestingly, an argument is made that birth control was essential for preserving the physical and emotional health of mothers, particularly working mothers. While I was unable to locate a specific source regarding Jewish attitudes to birth control and abortion in the 1950s, this article makes it clear that there was a degree of change over the course of two decades. In 1976, an

article by Carol B. Epstein appeared, entitled "Conservative Judaism and the Problem of Birth Control." This article features interviews with Conservative Rabbis on the subjects of birth control and abortion. The attitudes displayed in this article are in fact quite liberal. According to Rabbi Bokser, "in the face of peril to the life or health of the mother or the child, permission was granted by rabbinic authorities to the woman on the advice of a physician, to use a contraceptive in order to avoid pregnancy; some rabbis went beyond the permissive in such cases and declared the use of a contraceptive obligatory."¹⁰² The life and health of the mother must also take into consideration a woman's mental state. Rabbi Bosket continues by noting, "many wives today must take a job during the first years of marriage, often a key factor in making the marriage possible. Having children immediately could very well lead to mental distress for these women,"¹⁰³ In such cases, the use of contraceptives was also encouraged, "in order that the wives fulfill their highest obligation - to keep themselves in good health, mentally and physically."¹⁰⁴

Behind such a liberal attitude lies a number of important changes to social mores: that women were able to work outside of the home after marriage, and that sex was not simply for the purpose of conception.¹⁰⁵ Further, women may limit the size of her family. Rabbi Bosker argues that women with a history of bearing "mentally defective children" or children afflicted with physical disabilities would likely be advised to take contraceptives so that "no Jew should wilfully bring into the world an unhealthy being."¹⁰⁶ In addition to preventing unhealthy children from being born, this was important for "if there is a chance of danger to the life or health of already existing children on the birth of a sibling, a mother should not be condemned for limiting the size of her family."¹⁰⁷

But even more radical pronouncements appear later in the article. When asked about abortion. Rabbi Goldfarb explains that religious debates about when life begins should be

entirely irrelevant to discussion about abortion.¹⁰⁸ Aside from whether or not abortions are acceptable under Jewish law, the presence of the subject in a major Jewish publication is enormously significant. Discussions of abortion would never have taken place earlier in the century, But more importantly, the very fact that this article exists, an article that gives advice to women and married couples of Jewish views regarding birth control and abortion, testifies to the growing number of women and married couples using birth control and obtaining abortions. Within ten years of legislation that made birth control and abortion legal in Canada, they became sufficiently common to have been an issue worth of serious discussion. After all, this article is not simple a philosophical guide to contraceptives and abortion. Instead, it has educational and even instructional overtones. Its purpose is to provide information from trusted sources to ordinary Jews.

This section demonstrated some of the changes that were taking place in women's lives immediately following the end of the Second World War. These changes had profound implications for the lives of Jewish women. Where previously there had been few options for women outside of their roles as wives and mothers, opportunities were appearing. Even if this was limited to married women working outside of the home before having children and using birth control in the context of a sexual relationship between a married couple, these are important steps forward. And while many of these changes were taking place in the larger Canadian context, the Jewish community of Montreal felt their repercussions as well.

Exodus: Understanding Quebec Nationalism and Anti-Semitism

The final change that took place in the period under study is the growth of Quebec Nationalism. While this is a topic that is worthy of its own study, in this section I will concentrate on how it relates to Jews in Montreal. Specifically, I will discuss how many Jews in

Montreal linked Quebec anti-Semitism to Quebec nationalism. Further, I will discuss how the introduction of language legislation combined with perceived anti-Semitism ultimately led to the exodus of many Ashkenazi Jews from Montreal beginning in the 1970s.

The history of Quebec nationalism is long and complex.¹⁰⁹ In this instance, I am only concerned with developments in Quebec nationalism between the 1950s and the 1980s. One of the strongest factors in the growth of Quebec nationalism was the way in which Quebecois were treated as second-class citizens in their own province. At the end of the 1950s, Francophones controlled only 20% of Quebec businesses. Francophone unemployment had reached 40%. On average, the annual income of French Canadians was 35% lower than those of Anglophone Canadians.

These problems were particularly evident in the Montreal district of St. Henri. Long a traditional stronghold of working-class French Canadians, 36% of families in 1962 were reported as living in unliveable buildings, as compared to the average 11 to 34% of other Montreal districts. By any standard, life was difficult: "Childhood in these mean streets and humble abodes, well into the 1960s, was stalked by malnutrition and disease, too often accompanied by abuses in familial and institutional settings."¹¹⁰ In terms of the relative wealth of ethnic groups in Canada, French Canadians ranked twelve out of fourteen. In Montreal, only First Nations and Italians were poorer.¹¹¹

Poverty and oppression among French Canadians led to nationalism. And as conditions failed to improve, more and more individuals turned to radical nationalism. The most radical elements of the nationalist movement had formed the militant underground organization known as the FLQ ("*Front de liberation du Quebec*"), in 1963. This organization was run by Raymond Villeneuve, at the time a 19 year old baker, Gabriel Hudson, a 21 year old aircraft parts factory

worker, and Georges Schoeters, a middle-aged Belgian who had taken part in the anti-Nazi resistance as a teenager.¹¹² The principle behind the FLQ was that "Independence by itself means nothing. Independence must be accompanied by social revolution."¹¹³ To achieve this goal, the FLQ resorted to extreme measures. Throughout the 1960s, they planted bombs in areas of the city associated with Anglophones and what they perceived to be agents of government oppression. The targets included Federal tax buildings, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation buildings, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police headquarters, and the central post office, among others. As well, "mailboxes in suburban Anglophone Westmount, labeled a 'colonial stronghold' by the FLQ were all either bombed or had primed incendiary devices planted in their midst."¹¹⁴

Although the bombs that they planted were frightening in and of themselves, the rhetoric employed in the manifestos and other publications of the FLQ were most worrisome to the Jewish community of Montreal. The best example of this is Pierre Valliere's work, *Nègres blancs d'Amérique: Autobiographie précoce d'un terroriste Québécois*. The language employed in this book is incendiary, a veritable "Molotov cocktail of a book."¹¹⁵ The book likens the experiences of the Québécois to other colonized peoples, particularly those of African-American heritage. Valliere argues that French Canadians have been "racialized historically from at least the time of Lord Durham in the 1830s."¹¹⁶ This racialization, and the concurrent Anglophone subjugation of Francophones, was blamed for the stunted growth of the Quebec economy and their weak position in the Canadian confederation. The use of the term "white nigger" is key to his argument. This device served to clarify the level and type of oppression experienced by the Québécois, that oppression and colonization damaged white people as well. Further, as Bryan Palmer explains, "This [...] was thus an embrace of *negritude* as a universal struggle of all of those oppressed and exploited, all of those who could join the ranks of anti-colonialist, anti-

capitalist insurgents to create a society in which opposition clash of *white* and *nigger* would be transcended."¹¹⁷ *Negres blancs* ultimately serves as a call of solidarity, of arms to throw off colonial regimes worldwide.

However, it coincided with the Quiet Revolution, a period of intense secularization in Quebec society along with the polarization of Quebec politics into federalist and separatist camps. Federalist Quebec politicians, the most famous of which was Pierre Trudeau, emphasized that Quebec's future lay with maintaining links to the rest of Canada. Separatist politicians, like Rene Levesque, instead argued that only through the separation of Quebec from Canada could Quebec prosper economically and culturally. The Quiet Revolution also coincided with a rise in Quebec nationalism.

However, the FLQ remained relevant as some of their ideas began to gain respectable currency among separatist politicians in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Specifically, Rene Levesque, dissatisfied with the Liberal government under Jean Lesage, formed a new political party. This party, called *Mouvement Souveraineté-Association*, advocated the independence of Quebec from Canada. The MSA became the Parti Quebecois (PQ) in 1968, still under the leadership of Levesque.¹¹⁸ The PQ was elected to the National Assembly in April 1970, and became more radical as a method to gain more votes.¹¹⁹ The PQ adopted the slogan, "*cent ans d'injustice*" and sought "a legally sovereign Quebec to confirm its existing cultural and territorial distinctiveness and at the same time an economic association, as an equal partner with the rest of Canada."¹²⁰ Not only was this a concrete strategy for an independent Quebec, but also the moderate nature of this interpretation of independence further increased the popularity and acceptability of the PQ. By 1974, it became the official Opposition, and two years later the ruling party.¹²¹

The 1960s and 1970s were turbulent times in Quebec, and many of the events described above would have a profound impact on the Anglophone Jewish community of Montreal. According to some historians, particularly Gerald Tulchinsky, anti-Semitism declined following the end of the Second World War. During the 1920s and 1930s, anti-Semitism took many forms. For instance, signs saying: “No Jews, No Dogs” were not uncommon. In another example, a number of French intellectuals and businesses were actively involved in the “Achat Chez Nous” movement, which was an attempt to boycott Jewish businesses in Quebec with the goal of driving all Jews from the province.¹²²

He claims that outright anti-Semitism largely disappeared due to human rights legislation. He acknowledges that problems remained, though he downplays their significance:

The nastiest forms of anti-Semitism virtually disappeared from view, especially in Quebec. Human-rights and antidiscrimination legislation allowed for easier social and economic mobility, and general postwar Canadian prosperity facilitated an enormous expansion of the Jewish community's institutions. The struggle for Israel mobilized Jews behind the Zionist banner as never before, providing them with a sense of purpose that combined the urgent rescue of Jews at risk with the idea of national revival in the ancient homeland [in the 1950s and 1960s]. There were anti-Semitic incidents to be sure, some of them very serious. Graves were desecrated, anti-Jewish literature was circulated, poisonous remarks were made by public figures, restrictive covenants prevented Jews from living in certain areas, and Jews were still barred from many resorts and private clubs [into the 1960s and 1970s]. But all of these episodes were minor compared with the anti-Semitism current in Canada in the 1930s.¹²³

Tulchinsky attributes this to increasing communication between French Canadian and Jewish communities, as well as the waning power of the Catholic Church.¹²⁴ He also points to the emergence of a Francophone Jewish community with the arrival of Sephardic Jews from former French colonies in North Africa. For instance, he points to the establishment of the Cercle Juif de

la Langue Française by Saul Hayes and David Rome. Naim Kattan, a Sephardic Francophone immigrant from Iraq, ran the Cercle.

Other historians agree with this assessment. In *Jews & French Quebecers: Two Hundred Years of Shared History*, authors Jacques Langlais and David Rome argue that the Holocaust forced French Quebecers and all Canadians to re-evaluate their racist behaviour. Uneasy with comparisons to Germany under Hitler, open anti-Semitism virtually disappeared overnight. Langlais and Rome go even further than Tulchinsky and argue that there was in fact considerable rapprochement between Jews and French Canadians in this period. They point to the increasing assimilation of Quebec Jews, who, unlike their parents, identified as Quebecers, the adoption of both French and English as languages of business, and the efforts of clerical leaders and lay elite to enter into dialogue with the Jewish community.¹²⁵

However, there are dissenting voices. In her controversial doctoral thesis, Esther Delisle focuses on the views of the elite of French Canadian society and its role in perpetuating anti-Semitism in Quebec. Following an exhaustive review of published material she alleged to have been authored, in some cases, anonymously, by Abbé Lionel Groulx, one of the early leaders of the nationalist movement in Quebec, Delisle denounces him as an anti-Semite. She goes on to argue that his anti-Semitism greatly influenced his views on Quebec nationalism. Specifically, she alleges that his nationalism rested on his belief that Jews had no place in a Catholic province.¹²⁶ Delisle's doctoral thesis resulted in a negative backlash. Irving Abella argued, in 1994, the year after Delisle's book was published, "[c]learly Delisle's message is discomfiting to many French-Canadian nationalists and it should be. She portrays a nationalism that was racist, paranoid, xenophobic, and anti-Semitic. Yet its spokesmen and ideologues were not cranks, but rather the leaders of French-Canadian society, its clerics, academics, and journalists - people who

were universally admired and listened to."¹²⁷ In other words, Delisle argued that anti-Semitism was central to Quebec nationalist culture in the 1920s and 1930s. Some of these ideas were, as Abella puts it, “the unsavoury and dangerous origins of certain significant elements of French-Canadian nationalism. And she has thrown down the gauntlet to today’s nationalist to come to term with these pernicious elements.”¹²⁸

At this time, I am unable to come down on one side of this issue. But I should note the perception of anti-Semitism on the part of the Montreal Jews I interviewed. Many of my participants felt that anti-Semitism was common in Quebec from 1945 onwards. A great deal of their anxiety about anti-Semitism resulted from perceived historical connections between nationalism and anti-Semitism. Specifically, with the horrors of the Holocaust so fresh in the midst of many and the presence of so many Holocaust survivors, another nationalist movement was cause for considerable fear. To this end, I present the stories of four of my participants, in their own words.

Emily considered herself a Canadian first — her Jewishness is a private thing. As a young woman, she trained to be a teacher. She recounted to me one experience that left a lasting impression on her:

As a student teacher, [...] I was sent to a school in an area of Montreal that was clearly the furthest from Jewish. Interestingly enough, there was, at one time, a Jewish community, and I as a young, young child, lived there. When I went back, it was a Catholic school, that I taught in, so I did very well as a teacher. And what happened is that they knew I had this musical background, [...] I did my community working teaching the guitar etc.. So, in working with the kids, I had twenty-six boys in this Catholic school, many of these boys were immigrants. To make a long story short, I went on to teach them the lessons. It was a science lesson, I taught them about the eye. At that point, they came in to inspect us, great I was from McGill. And they came around with one of the heads of their education committee who happened to be a nun. So, they had already asked me, it was very

very hard to find teachers, at that time. If I had [...] the credential you need to teach music, they were hoping that rather than let me stay with in McGill, that, they were hoping that I would come to the school to teach music, at least on a part time basis, after leaving. At the end of the lesson I gave to the kids, [...]the nun got very very excited. She said, alright children, I think you're happy Mrs. [Emily] has taught you such and such. It's time to thank God for our eyes, the lord Jesus, etc etc.. And everyone bowed their heads, and she recited a prayer for the kids to thank the good Lord for their eyes, etc etc, And of course everyone crossed themselves except for me. I remained in the back of the classroom, very respectful. And at the end I was called in to ask me, Mrs. [Emily], we noticed that at the end of the prayer, you didn't cross yourself. And I said, no, I didn't. It was a wonderful, wonderful prayer, all the children were involved, it meant very much to me. She says, well, are you not a Catholic? I said no, I'm not a Catholic. She says, [Emily] is guess, it's a very English sounding name, you're Protestant? And I said, no I'm not and I was about to answer. So she said, you aren't a pagan are you? And I said no. Oh my goodness, she said, you wouldn't be a Jew? Oh, she said, I have many many friends that are Jewish. I never heard about a teaching job again from that school. Some of my best friends are Jewish. [laughing]¹²⁹

David felt that anti-Semitism in Quebec was a particular brand all its own: "Anti-Semitism in Quebec is they smile at your face and they club you from the back. It's always been that way, it'll always be that way."¹³⁰ He later continued:

I resent that. I resent the fact that my people are industrious, and my people are tired of being stepped on. And here, I've had cases, I mean, anti-Semitism it's more rampant than you know. It's just very [hidden]. [...] I think it's just as bad as it ever was, I just think that people have more awareness of it, so they tend to... People try to be social correct on the outside, but on the inside, I don't think anybody tries to be socially correct. [...] Jews have had more rights in Quebec longer, and yet, the anti-Semitism is probably higher here than anywhere else.¹³¹

Debra expressed a deep-seated fear of Quebec society. As she notes, "I feel Quebec, it's a very racist, racist society. [...] I always felt it was an anti-Semitic society, but now I can see its descended to, you know, practically anyone who's not pure-laine. They don't like Muslims, they just put us all together, and we're different. They're not very tolerant. That's the way I see it. [...] I don't like Quebec that much."¹³² Both of her parents were Holocaust survivors, though neither had been in a death camp. Her father's entire family, except for him, had been killed at Treblinka. This has very much coloured her perception of racism. She later continued: "It's the anti-Semite that creates the Jews. [...] People hate us. That's what makes us Jewish in a way. That's what defines me, not that I would ever talk, I don't light the *Shabbos* candles."¹³³

Finally, Renata told me that she also had trouble getting jobs: "I can tell you, close to forty years ago, I got a job in a bank. [...] And someone said, Oh, you were lucky because they don't hire Jewish people. And there was no way they couldn't know I was Jewish because my maiden name was [...]. I mean, I applied for a job, they accepted me. I don't remember staying that long, but that wasn't the issue. The issue was that somebody very early on, said, you're very lucky. Because, they don't hire Jews."¹³⁴

Finally, I offer up the opinion of one particular Quebecois on the issue of anti-Semitism in Quebec. Claude Ryan was the editor of *Le Devoir*, leader of the Parti libérale du Québec, and a strong proponent of French Canadian and Quebecois nationalism (though not separatism). In 1969, he wrote an opinion piece for *Viewpoints*, entitled "A French Canadian Looks at the Jews." He prefaced his article with the following caveat: "In the eyes of the average French Canadian of today, then, what does the Jew represent in Montreal? You may contest many of things that I will say if you find they are in line with your own experiences and observations, but this is the reality as it appears to me."¹³⁵ He links attitudes of French Quebecers towards Jews to class conflict.

Many of their interactions are those of a client and a customer, or an employee and a boss. And these interactions often position The Jew as "the one who enjoys a superior economic position."¹³⁶ This has led to resentment and prejudice. Ryan notes that many French Canadians view Jews as moneymakers, a "person who will do practically anything in order to make a fast dollar."¹³⁷ Further, the term "bad Jew" evolved into an epithet used to refer to greedy French Canadians.

Ryan also argues that many negative attitudes towards Jews resulted from the religious background of French Canadians. As he notes here, it goes back to the myth that the Jews were responsible for the death of Christ.

I think the myth that Jews killed Jesus Christ is still very much alive among French Canadians, and scholarship has not progressed enough among French-Canadian teachers of religion for them to be able to establish a very clear distinction here and to suggest to their students that if Christ were killed, it was by the decision of a very limited establishment which was not entirely Jewish and which was very much like the establishment of all times and all countries. But for years, for generations, Christians have been taught that Jews killed Jesus Christ and that, because of this deed, God has disposed in His sovereign wisdom that they would have to suffer in a very special way.¹³⁸

That said, Ryan makes it clear that open hostility towards Jews is rare and that compared to the 1930s and 1940s, the situation appears to have improved dramatically. But, as he warns readers, "We [French Canadians] are still far from genuine understanding based upon true, accurate knowledge of what the other represents and of what he is."¹³⁹

To sum up, it is presently unclear just how prevalent anti-Semitism was in Quebec in the three decades following the Second World War. But many individuals in the Jewish community, and even some French Canadians, felt that there was still a problem. Concerns about anti-

Semitism only worsened as time went on. As Tulchinsky noted, "Quebec's Jews still felt that they were walking a tightrope. The separatist upsurge in the 1960s, the language legislation of the 1970s, the October Crisis, and statements by some sovereignists made Quebec Jews nervous and uncertain of their future."¹⁴⁰ These concerns would go on to have a profound impact on the Jewish community of Montreal and its viability in the future, culminating in a Jewish exodus.

In addition to perceived anti-Semitism, language legislation was a major motivating factor. Over the course of the 1970s, the Government of Quebec, first under the Liberal Government of Robert Bourassa, and later under Levesque, enacted a number of new laws designed to strengthen Quebecois identity and the French language. Among these was Bill 22, which made French the official language of Quebec in 1974. Bill 101, *charte de la langue française*, replaced this law in 1977. Bill 101 enacted a number of sweeping changes to do with the French language. Among these were prohibitions of English signage - instead, French had to appear alone, or if English was also used, it had to be half the size of the French. French also became the official language of the workplace, and all new immigrants were required by law to learn French. These laws were enforced by a new creation of Bill 101, namely the *Office de la langue française*. This organization gained the power to prosecute any offenders of Bill 101. Finally, Bill 101 made sweeping changes to the education system. From 1977 on, only select children were permitted to attend schools that taught primarily in English, namely those with a parent who had also attended an English school in Quebec as a child. All others were required to attend French schools.¹⁴¹

Some Jews viewed the imposition of language legislation as another aspect of Quebec anti-Semitism. Others saw the matter as simply one of discrimination against native English speakers. In the end, the result was the same. Many young Anglophone Jews, concerned that

work opportunities were limited because of language legislation and/or potential discrimination by anti-Semitic Quebecois, ended up leaving Montreal. In a movement known colloquially as the Exodus, approximately 15,000 Jews left Montreal over the course of the 1970s and 1980s. From a high in 1971 of approximately 109,500, the Montreal Jewish population fell to 103,425 by 1981. This was 33.1% of the total Canadian Jewish population, down from 39.7% in 1971. Montreal lost the distinction to being home to the most Jews Canada to Toronto. Montreal's Jewish population would continue its decline in the decades to come. By 1991, it was 101,210 strong, representing of 28.4% of Canada's Jews.¹⁴²

Conclusion

The end of the Second World War heralded a number of changes in Canada, Quebec, and Montreal, which would fundamentally alter the character and nature of the Jewish community of Montreal. Large numbers of Jewish immigrants of various nationalities, ethnicities, and cultural and religious traditions met with an established Jewish community that had only lately been fundamentally transformed by the demeanour of Eastern European immigrants of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The four largest groups of these postwar immigrants included Holocaust survivors and Displaced Persons, Hungarian Jews, Hassidic Jews, and North African Jews. While the established community came into conflict with each of these groups in different ways, the most heated conflict was with North African Jews. The established community despaired of the isolation of the North African Jews and their refusal to submit to the will of the Ashkenazi Jews. The North African Jews resented the lack of French-language services in the community as well as the demeaning treatment they received from some members of the established community.

The 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s would also see increasing anxiety over the issue of intermarriage. Although the actual increase in intermarriages in the postwar period was slight, it raised the spectre of the annihilation of Jewish identity through intermarriage with the host community. While religious authorities were concerned about intermarriage because of its implications for the future of the Jewish people, many Jewish parents emphasized endogamy in order to avoid social stigma. The pressure on Jewish individuals to marry other Jewish individuals was such that doing otherwise could cause a serious rift between parents and children.

In addition to these two Jewish-specific issues, two broader changes in the Canadian and Quebec landscape would have their own impact on the Jewish community of Montreal. The first of these was the gradual shift in gender norms with respect to women. While before the war there had been an unspoken assumption that middle-class married women did not work because of their responsibilities at home, the movement of women into traditionally male industries during the war sparked new ideas about women and work. Although these changes were small in comparison with what was to come following the Women's Liberation movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s, they were nonetheless significant. After the war, married women entered into the workforce in increasing numbers, seeking personal fulfillment and income once their children had entered school. The resultant demographic changes, namely dropping marriage rates, younger age-at-marriage, increasing education, and lower birth rates, all point to the increasing power wielded by women over their own lives. Concurrent with these demographic changes was a loosening of societal constraints on the behaviour of young women. It was also increasingly accepted for a couple to live together before marriage. These changes went along with a loosening of the moral code with respect to sexuality: extra-marital sex became, if not

totally accepted, at least more common, though most women would only have sex with men they believed they would marry. This was due in large part to both the increasing efficacy of birth control measures but also their increasing acceptability. These new, modern women — professional, educated, single, and sexually liberated — would come into conflict with older ideas about Nice Jewish Girls; this put many Jewish women into the uncomfortable position of being caught between two female ideals.

Finally, the 1960s and 1970s were politically turbulent times in Quebec. Following the fall of the Duplessis government and the beginning of the Quiet Revolution, young, educated, and professional French Canadian men began calling for an end to Anglophone domination of the Quebec economy, which had resulted in the poor financial state of many Quebecois. Over the course of the 60s, the most radical elements of the second group, famously represented by the FLQ, began advocating for a social revolution by means of violence. Eventually, the FLQ fell apart and was reintegrated into the separatist movement. This movement gained political credence following its incorporation into the Parti Quebecois, though radicals like Vallieres remained outside of the mainstream. The PQ was able to mobilize great power because of its call to right historical injustice while moderating calls for independence. All the while, the Jewish community of Montreal was concerned that this new emphasis on Quebec nationalism would result in further discrimination. Many argued that despite the horrors of the Holocaust, anti-Semitism was still intimately associated with nationalism. This fear, along with the increasing emphasis on French as the official language of the province, prompted large numbers of young Jews to leave Quebec to seek employment in what were perceived to be more friendly environments.

To say that 1945 was a pivotal year for the Jewish community of Montreal would be an understatement. The end of the Second World War unleashed changes of enormous significance for the community. Faced with these changes, the established Jewish community of Montreal sought to ride out the storm the best way they knew how: by shoring up their own identities as Jewish, middle-class Canadians.

¹ Gerald Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews: A People's Journey* (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 7-9.

² Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews*, 8-9.

³ Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews*, 8-10.

⁴ Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews*, 416-422.

⁵ In this instance, I am referring to Reconstructionist, Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox Jews. For more information on the difference between these denominations, please see Ronald L. Eisenberg, "Judaism," *Dictionary of Jewish Terms: A Guide to the Language of Judaism* (Rochville, Maryland: Schreiber Publishing, 2008), 218.

⁶ Gerald Tulchinsky, *Branching Out: The Transformation of the Canadian Jewish Community* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1998), 1.

⁷ James L. Torczyner and Shari L. Botman, *Diversity and Continuity: The Demographic Challenges Facing Montreal Jewry* (Montreal: Canadian Jewish Congress, 1994), 14-16 and Joseph Yam, *Canadian Jewish Population Studies: The Size and Geographic Distribution of the Canada's Jewish Population - Preliminary Observation*, vol. 3 (Montreal: Canadian Jewish Congress, 1974), 12, 14.

⁸ Torczyner and Botman, *Diversity and Continuity: The Demographic Challenges Facing Montreal Jewry*, 14-16 and Yam, *Canadian Jewish Population Studies*, 12, 14.

⁹ Tulchinsky, *Branching Out*, 264-265.

¹⁰ Tulchinsky, *Branching Out*, 264-265..

¹¹ Tulchinsky, *Branching Out*, 265.

¹² Tulchinsky, *Branching Out*, 266.

¹³ Paula Draper, "Surviving their Survival: Women, Memory, and the Holocaust," in *Sisters or Strangers: Immigrant, Ethnic and Racialized Women in Canadian History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 400.

¹⁴ Draper, "Surviving their Survival," 402.

¹⁵ Quoted in Draper, "Surviving their Survival," 403.

¹⁶ John Sigal, *Trauma and Rebirth: Intergenerational Effects of the Holocaust* (New York: Praeger, 1989).

¹⁷ Draper, "Surviving their Survival," 407-407.

¹⁸ Sigal, *Trauma and Rebirth*, 6; Tulchinsky, *Branching Out*, 267.

¹⁹ Quoted in Tulchinsky, *Branching Out*, 267.

²⁰ Joseph Kage, *With Faith and Thanksgiving: The Story of Two Hundred Years of Jewish Immigration and Immigrant Aid Effort in Canada, 1760-1960* (Montreal: Eagle Pub. Co., 1962), 147-148; Tulchinsky, *Branching Out*, 268.

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- ²¹ Interview 7, interview by author, October 29, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ²² Interview 1, interview by author, October 15, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ²³ Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews*, 423.
- ²⁴ William Shaffir, "Safeguarding a Distinctive Identity: Hasidic Jews in Montreal," in *Renewing our Days: Montreal Jews in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Ira Robinson (Montreal: Véhicule Press, 1995), 76.
- ²⁵ Shaffir, "Safeguarding a Distinctive Identity," 77.
- ²⁶ Tulchinsky, *Branching Out*, 284.
- ²⁷ Interview 33, interview by author, February 12, 2010, Victoria, British Columbia.
- ²⁸ Interview 33.
- ²⁹ Interview 33.
- ³⁰ Interview 32, interview by author, February 3, 2010, Victoria, British Columbia.
- ³¹ Interview 32.
- ³² Kage, *With Faith and Thanksgiving*, 148-149.
- ³³ Kage, *With Faith and Thanksgiving*, 149.
- ³⁴ *1991 Census Series* (Federation of Jewish Community Services of Montreal, n.d.), part 6. We do not have all of the statistics for Sephardic Jews in Montreal prior to 1991. However, it is reasonable to assume that the 1991 figures are higher than those of previous decades, considering the flow of Sephardic immigrants discussed above. It is equally reasonable to assume that Sephardim made up less than 20% of the total Jewish population in Montreal during this same period.
- ³⁵ For example, between 1959 and 1969, out of a total of 2300 individuals, 1450 immigrants came from Moroccan, compared to 859 from other countries. From 1970 to 1980, these numbers changed to 1600 Moroccan Jews and 751 Jews from other parts of the world out of a total of 2351 Jewish immigrants. Finally, from 1981 to 1991, there were 710 Moroccan immigrants compared to 471 Jewish immigrants from elsewhere. Further, the discrepancy between the 4,000 Moroccan Jews who immigrated as compared to the total number (21,000) of Sephardim can be explained in two ways. First, significant numbers of Sephardic Jews also entered Quebec from other parts of Canada as well as the non-French Middle East (for instance, Iran), as well as the children produced by each successive wave of immigrants. *1991 Census Series* (Federation of Jewish Community Services of Montreal, n.d.), part 6.
- ³⁶ Interview 16, interview by author, November 10, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ³⁷ Joseph Kage, "New Segment in the Community," *Viewpoints* 2, no. 1 (Spring 1967): 18-21.
- ³⁸ Kage, "New Segment in the Community," 21.
- ³⁹ Kage, "New Segment in the Community," 21.
- ⁴⁰ Kage, "New Segment in the Community," 21.
- ⁴¹ Kage, "New Segment in the Community," 20.
- ⁴² Esther Benaim, "Francophone Jews and the French Fact," *Viewpoints* 10, no. 1 (Spring 1979): 11-17.
- ⁴³ Benaim, "Francophone Jews and the French Fact," 12.
- ⁴⁴ Benaim, "Francophone Jews and the French Fact," 13.
- ⁴⁵ Benaim, "Francophone Jews and the French Fact," 13.
- ⁴⁶ Benaim, "Francophone Jews and the French Fact," 13.
- ⁴⁷ Benaim, "Francophone Jews and the French Fact," 13.

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- ⁴⁸ Benaim, "Francophone Jews and the French Fact," 14.
- ⁴⁹ Jean-Claude Lasry, "Sephardim and Ashkenazim in Montreal," in *Renewing our Days: Montreal Jews in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Ira Robinson (Montreal: Véhicule Press, 1995), 396.
- ⁵⁰ Lasry, "Sephardim and Ashkenazim in Montreal," 397.
- ⁵¹ Lasry, "Sephardim and Ashkenazim in Montreal," 397.
- ⁵² Tulchinsky, *Branching Out*, 314.
- ⁵³ Tulchinsky, *Branching Out*, 312.
- ⁵⁴ Morton Weinfeld, *Like Everyone Else, but Different: The Paradoxical Success of Canadian Jews* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2001), 372-375.
- ⁵⁵ CJCCCNA DA 2 Box 6 Louis Rosenberg, File 6/5 Marriage and Inter-marriage – article, stories, corr. And press clippings, "Inter-marriage in Canada, 1921-1963," 6.
- ⁵⁶ CJCCCNA DA 2 Box 6 Louis Rosenberg, File 6/5 Marriage and Inter-marriage – article, stories, corr. And press clippings, "Inter-marriage in Canada, 1921-1963," 6.
- ⁵⁷ Rabbi David C. Kogen, "Inter-marriage in Vancouver - Emotions Versus Facts," *Jewish Western Bulletin*, January 22, 1954, 6.
- ⁵⁸ Kogen, "Inter-marriage in Vancouver," 6.
- ⁵⁹ David Cohen, "Letter to the Editor – Scientific Case for Jewish Day School," *Canadian Jewish News*, October 15, 1965, 4.
- ⁶⁰ CJCCCNA DA 15.1 Rabbi Robert Sternberg National Religious Department Box 4, File 19 Commission on the Family and Marriage, "Invitation to Conference on Inter-marriage, February 3, 1980."
- ⁶¹ M. W. Steinberg, "How Do You See It – A Questionnaire," *Viewpoints* 10, no 2: 36.
- ⁶² M. W. Steinberg, "How Do You See It – A Questionnaire," *Viewpoints* 10, no 2: 35-36.
- ⁶³ CJCCCNA DA 15.1 Rabbi Robert Sternberg National Religious Department Box 4, File 19 Commission on the Family and Marriage, "Invitation to Conference on Inter-marriage, February 3, 1980," 9.
- ⁶⁴ CJCCCNA DA 15.1 Rabbi Robert Sternberg National Religious Department Box 4, File 19 Commission on the Family and Marriage, "Invitation to Conference on Inter-marriage, February 3, 1980," 9.
- ⁶⁵ CJCCCNA DA 15.1 Rabbi Robert Sternberg National Religious Department Box 4, File 19 Commission on the Family and Marriage, "Invitation to Conference on Inter-marriage, February 3, 1980," 10.
- ⁶⁶ CJCCCNA DA 15.1 Rabbi Robert Sternberg National Religious Department Box 4, File 19 Commission on the Family and Marriage, "Invitation to Conference on Inter-marriage, February 3, 1980," 13.
- ⁶⁷ CJCCCNA DA 15.1 Rabbi Robert Sternberg National Religious Department Box 4, File 19 Commission on the Family and Marriage, "Invitation to Conference on Inter-marriage, February 3, 1980," 13.
- ⁶⁸ CJCCCNA DA 15.1 Rabbi Robert Sternberg National Religious Department Box 4, File 19 Commission on the Family and Marriage, "Invitation to Conference on Inter-marriage, February 3, 1980," 16.
- ⁶⁹ CJCCCNA DA 15.1 Rabbi Robert Sternberg National Religious Department Box 4, File 19 Commission on the Family and Marriage, "Invitation to Conference on Inter-marriage, February 3, 1980," 18.

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- ⁷¹ Interview 31, interview by author, January 4, 2010, Victoria, British Columbia.
- ⁷² Interview 31.
- ⁷³ Interview 1, interview by author, October 15, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ⁷⁴ Interview 13, interview by author, November 5, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ⁷⁵ Interview 13.
- ⁷⁶ Interview 22, interview by author, November 14, 2008, Montreal Quebec; Interview 31, interview by author, January 4, 2010, Victoria, British Columbia; and Interview 9, interview by author, November 02, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ⁷⁷ Tina Block, "‘Families that Pray Together, Stay Together:’ Religion, Gender, and Family in Postwar Victoria, British Columbia," *BC Studies*, no. 145 (2005): 31.
- ⁷⁸ Danielle Gauvreau and Peter Gossage, "Empêcher la famille: fécondité et contraception au Québec, 1920-60," *Canadian Historical Review* 78, no. 3 (1997): 490-495.
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- ⁸¹ Sangster, *Transforming Labour*, 18.
- ⁸² Gail Cuthbert Brandt et al, *Canadian Women: A History*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: Nelson Education, 2010), 322.
- ⁸³ Cuthbert Brandt et al, *Canadian Women: A History*, " 324-325.
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- ⁸⁶ Prentice et al., *Canadian Women: A History*, 313.
- ⁸⁷ Prentice et al., *Canadian Women: A History*, 312-313.
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- ⁸⁹ Sangster, *Transforming Labour*, 20-21.
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- ¹¹⁰ Bryan Palmer, *Canada's 1960s: The Ironies of Identity in a Rebellious Era* (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 319.
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- ¹²² Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews*, 301-305.
- ¹²³ Tulchinsky, *Branching Out*, 269.
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- ¹²⁶ Esther Delisle, *The Traitor and the Jew: Anti-Semitism and Extreme Right-Wing Nationalism in Quebec from 1929 to 1939* (Montreal: R. Davies Pub., 1993).
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- ¹³⁴ Interview 27, interview by author, November 21, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
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- ¹³⁶ Ryan, "A French Canadian Look at the Jews," 7.
- ¹³⁷ Ryan, "A French Canadian Look at the Jews," 7.
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- ¹³⁹ Ryan, "A French Canadian Look at the Jews," 11.
- ¹⁴⁰ Tulchinsky, *Branching Out: The Transformation of the Canadian Jewish Community*, 274.

¹⁴¹ Langlais and Rome, *Jews & French Quebecers*), 140-141 and Sigal, *Trauma and Rebirth: Intergenerational Effects of the Holocaust*, 9-11.

¹⁴² Torczyner and Botman, *Diversity and Continuity*, 14-16 and Yam, *Canadian Jewish Population Studies*, 12, 14.

Chapter Two: Gefilte Fish and Roast Duck with French Fries: A Jewish Food History

In a March 2007 article that traced the history of the traditional matzah-and-egg dish that was a family favourite of many Montreal Jews during Passover, Montreal *Gazette* writer Susan Schwartz declared that "Nostalgia is a key ingredient, so cooks strive to get their family recipe just right."¹ For Montreal Jews, the relationship between their sense of "Jewishness," holiday celebrations, and food remains as strong today as it was nearly sixty years ago when, in 1950, the Ethel Epstein Ein Chapter of Hadassah-WIZO in Montreal published *A Treasure for my Daughter: A Reference Book of Jewish Festivals with Menus and Recipes*. Edited by Bessie W. Batist with recipe sections edited by Sarah Ein, Anne Warshaw, and Mary Davids, this cookbook highlights the important connection between Jewish women, food, and sense of identity. Indeed, the book has achieved near legendary status in the Jewish community of Montreal, where it holds a place of honour in the home of many a Canadian Jewish woman who received it as a wedding gift from her mother.

When I began this study, I tried to find any historical scholarship about Jewish women and Jewish foods. I was surprised to find that *A Treasure for my Daughter* was mentioned in Gerald Tulchinsky's latest work, *Canada's Jews*. Tulchinsky describes the book as depicting "the subservient and dependent role of the Jewish wife in the 1950s. Although portrayed as poorly educated in religious traditions, she was, however, responsible for her domestic observances of the holidays."² I found myself quite dismayed after reading these two sentences. While Tulchinsky's analysis seems consistent with *A Treasure for my Daughter*, I felt that there was more to the cookbook that meets the eye. Further, his comments about the subservience and dependence of Jewish wives seemed at odds with both my own experiences of Jewish women as

well as more recent scholarship that has questioned older interpretations of postwar domestic ideals.³

My suspicions were confirmed when I encountered two articles that analyzed connections between gender, food, and culture among ethnic women in Canada.⁴ The first is Carol Bardenstein's "Transmissions Interrupted: Reconfiguring Food, Memory, and Gender in the Cookbook – Memoirs of Middle Eastern Exiles."⁵ In the context of exile, she argues that collective memory and self-identification often took shape around food, which was frequently perceived as an authentic way to regain a sense of the lost homeland. The result was often contradictory and inconsistent; cultures were caught between a desire for tradition, authenticity, and belonging, and the unavoidable cultural complexity of their personal and collective identities. Similarly, in "Jell-O Salads, One-Stop Shopping, and Maria the Homemaker: The Gender Politics of Food," Franca Iacovetta and Valerie J. Korinek evaluate food traditions among several immigrant groups, including Jews, in early Cold War Canada. The postwar atmosphere was characterized by a tension between tolerance for the traditions of incoming immigrants on the part of middle class social workers and an insistence that they adopt Canadian cultural standards. The immigrants themselves had deeply ambivalent feelings. They were torn between their desires to both preserve their traditions and integrate into Canadian society.⁶ Both of these articles were extremely influential in my subsequent analysis of the relationship between gender, ethnicity, and food as an important part of ethnic-group-making among the Jews of Montreal.

This chapter addresses a complex question -- how did Jewish-Canadian women *learn* to cook Jewish foods? – through an exploration of the post-World War Two origins, recipes and character of Jewish community cookbooks and through the memories of the women themselves.

Indeed, *A Treasure for my Daughter* was only one of a number of cookbooks that were published by Jewish women in Montreal in this period. Contrary to popular myths, most Jewish women in Montreal did not in fact learn to cook from their mothers. Most women in this community relied entirely on community cookbooks that were produced by and for Jewish Canadian women in Montreal who were of the middle class and Eastern European descent. This chapter examines the beginning of the ethnic-group making project of a "Jewish Community of Montreal" through the medium of food by a specific subset of that community, namely elite Ashkenazi women. Cookbooks were essential to this process.

The cookbooks themselves contain a contradictory and internally inconsistent portrayal of Canadian Jewish identity. While many of the recipes reflect the Eastern European heritage of the editors and recipe creators, the cookbook was devoid of any mention of Eastern Europe. Instead, they try to associate Jews with Canadian middle-class culture. This tension, between the professed culture of the established Jewish-Canadians, and the underlying Eastern European recipes, speaks volumes about the tension within and among various individuals in defining a "Jewish community of Montreal." The concealment of the Eastern European origins of many of the recipes in Jewish community cookbooks served to downplay this aspect of the elites. This served not only to shore up their middle-class Canadian identities, but also allowed the elites to dissociate themselves from the most recently arrived Jewish immigrants. As time went on, and Jewish immigrants to Canada increasingly came from places and cultures far removed from the established Jewish community, the Eastern Europeanness of Jewish cuisine was normalized and reinforced through comparisons to Sephardic cuisines, which were exoticized. Beginning in the 1960s, cultural changes between Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews increased. The hegemonic nature of the brand of Jewishness put forward by the Ashkenazic elite became evident through my

interviews with Jewish women about Jewish cooking, who either assume the Eastern European nature of Jewish cuisine or resist the dominance of this particular style of cooking.

I am So Glad to be Your Daughter

Paul Grossinger was the son of Jennie Grossinger, the founder and manager of the famous Catskills Jewish resort, Grossinger's. In the introduction to his mother's cookbook, *The Art of Jewish Cooking*, he says: "For it comes down to this. French cuisine may be famous for its Escoffier. Italian for its Alfredo. But Jewish cooking - well, for generations and generations, way back to Sarah, Rebecca and Rachel, the master chef has always been the mistress of the particular tent: Mom."⁷ He goes on to note that Jewish cuisine is an ancient cuisine that has been preserved through the generations as recipes were handed down from mother to daughter.⁸ The idea that Jewish cooking is passed down in an unbroken line from mother to daughter all the way back to biblical times is also the central organizing principle behind one of the most important Jewish cookbooks published in Montreal, *A Treasure for my Daughter*. Indeed, this cookbook is written in the form of a conversation between a Mother and Her Daughter, who is named Hadassah. The purpose of this conversation is for Mother to teach Hadassah Jewish customs and traditions on the occasion of her upcoming marriage.

This assumption is reinforced in the conversation. For example, in the section on Chanukah, Hadassah and her mother discuss the menorah. While admiring the beauty of it, Hadassah exclaims: "It is your mother's and my own grandmother's! Was she a wonderful mother like you? Was she a mother to guide and advise, was she a comrade to discuss all the aspects of living? I am so glad to be your daughter."⁹ In this passage, Hadassah makes a clear association between holidays, ritual objects, her mother, and her grandmother. Further, she implies that a good (or wonderful) mother necessarily passes down the information that is

considered crucial for every young Jewish woman to set up a home. This type of transmission is also assumed to be natural. When Hadassah first asks for instruction from her mother about how to prepare for Shabbat, Mother responds that it "is something that will come *naturally* to you because you were brought up with it."¹⁰

The fact that young Jewish women need this kind of book implies a breakdown in communication, that something has gone terribly wrong. It suggests that young Jewish women, despite being well meaning, are largely ignorant of the proper way to observe Jewish holidays and rituals in the home. In a number of places, Hadassah laments her own ignorance, saying "I have some qualms about my ability to manage my own home in the traditional Jewish way."¹¹ The neglect of Jewish traditions is an important theme in *A Treasure for my Daughter*. While at times deploring her own lack of knowledge, Hadassah actively criticizes Jewish women who neglect Jewish traditions. For example, when Mother recounts the story of the Jewish Maccabees, in the section on Chanukah, she notes: "During the reign of [the Greek ruler] Antiochus Epiphanes (Illustrious) of Syria, Palestine was a part of his realm. Jews were greatly persecuted. Antiochus tried to force them to worship Greek idols and to become assimilated. Those who refused were put to death, martyrs for our faith."¹² Antiochus is portrayed as a villain because he tried to assimilate the Jews by forcing them to give up their religion and traditions. Through this story, Mother asserts her view that assimilation entails the ultimate betrayal of the Jewish faith. As Mother notes, assimilation is the chief threat to the Jewish people. She notes that this is why Zionism is so important: "You must realize that Zionism strives for a national regeneration – a return to our true Jewish cultural heritage which has become thinned out by assimilation and by the idea that philanthropy alone is important. In order to combat this and to rebuild ourselves, education is necessary, to gain dignity and self-respect by emphasizing our

Jewish values."¹³ Hadassah goes on to add that part of her motivation for learning how to prepare for the holidays is because "I have always taken the routine of this home for granted."¹⁴

Elsewhere in the text, Hadassah also notes that many of her friends have expressed a lack of enthusiasm for holiday celebrations, and they feel that Jewish holidays are usually sad and difficult times. She asks her mother, "How did you manage to convey the spirit of the Jewish ceremonies and customs to us without making us think them burdensome?"¹⁵

The over-assimilation of the latest generation of young Jewish women appears to have been a significant problem for community leaders. In the case of Jewish communities, communal leaders often desired external acculturation, through the adoption of Canadian middle-class signifiers of identity, but internal continuity with their Jewish traditions. In other words, they did not desire to assimilate, but to acquire the outward trappings of Canadian middle-classness. This was achieved in the Jewish community through the creation of "religious, educational, and philanthropic institutions that maintained Jewish particularism."¹⁶ In other words, while Jewish individuals were expected to adopt the English language and Canadian clothing, they were also expected to retain Jewish traditional values and customs. Jewish leaders were, and remain, largely hostile to total assimilation, and actively sought to retain Jewish cultural distinctiveness even as they adopted external markers of Canadian-ness. However, in postwar Canada, the distinctiveness of Jewish identity appeared to be under threat. There were indications that young Jewish women actively rejected their Jewish identities and strove to be as Canadian as possible. The 1950s was a time when many young adults chose to "[shift] their allegiances from the old ethnic ties to the new nuclear family ideal."¹⁷ Ethnic diversity was not a prized quality in this period, but cultural uniformity was.¹⁸ These sentiments are also reflected in demographic changes in the Montreal Jewish population. Family size was continually decreasing and

marriages between Jews and non-Jews rose from 4.9 percent in 1926 to 12 percent in 1953. This provoked a great deal of concern from community leaders, who viewed assimilation as a serious threat to the future of the Jewish people in Canada.¹⁹

Intergenerational relationships were a key factor in the assimilation of young Jewish women. Because of the gaps in the literature, there are no examples of this type of conflict in Canada. In the absence of any definitive information, I have relied upon the American literature on this subject, where conflicts between Jewish immigrant mothers and Jewish-American daughters were common and are well documented in the history of Jews in North America.

In *The World of Our Mothers*, Sydney Stahl Weinberg describes how American-born children often felt ashamed of their European parents, for their backward ways and inability to speak English. In one case, the "sister wanted her family to be American too, and she resented the fact that they were not like the parents of her native-born friends and felt ashamed of their home on the Lower East side."²⁰ Much of this resulted from the education of the children of immigrants in American schools, which preached the superiority of American values.²¹ Another point of contention was religion. Oftentimes a young woman's job would require her to work on Saturday, which was forbidden under Jewish law. Other parents worried that a young woman's desire to be American would result in her abandoning Judaism, and even going so far as to eat non-kosher hot dogs.²²

This trend was evident among my interviewees. Their testimony indicated a distinct disconnect between mothers and daughters. Miriam discussed some conflict between her and her parents over the matter of religion. Miriam was born in a small town in Hungary in 1947. At the time of her interview, she was sixty-one years old. She immigrated to Canada as a child along with her family. She remembers her childhood being a time of hardship. Her parents were

observant Orthodox Jews, and she had a very strict upbringing. After she was married, her parents refused to go to her house for the Jewish holidays because they refused to drive. She recalled how growing up, she felt stifled by the religious observance of her parents. She told me that she asked too many questions as a child, and when she didn't get answers that satisfied her, she became something of a rebel. She later abandoned many practices after she got married.²³

Leah began her interview by recounting her relationship with her parents, particularly her mother. She resented the hypocrisy, as she saw it, of her parent's beliefs: keeping the Sabbath holy, but only if you don't need to work. She told me that she had a very difficult time with Judaism as a result, unable to reconcile these inconsistencies.²⁴

Aside from outright conflict, there were also more subtle rifts in mother and daughter relationships, particularly when it came to cooking. These would go on to have a serious impact on how Jewishness was later transmitted to future generations. When asked what types of recipes they learned from their mothers, most of the participants disputed the validity of the question. Aaron, a first generation Hungarian Jewish man, responded: "Well, actually my mother worked all her life. While my grandmother was still alive, she's the one who basically cooked."²⁵

Similarly, when I asked Beth, the daughter of Ukrainian immigrants, the same question, she responded:

Okay, you have to know my mother was a lousy cook, and she never really cooked. But she's one of six who lived in Montréal and I was very close with her older sister, who was your typical mother. And who cooked typical Ashkenazi foods. I guess it's Ashkenazi, yeah sure. Ashkenazi food. And that's what I associate with, not what my mother made. Because my mother, with all due respect to my mother, and may she rest in peace, opened a can, and that was it. [...] My mother was a lousy cook.²⁶

Similarly, Miriam elaborated that "I learned to cook from [my mother] on the phone. I never knew how to cook at home. I learned on the phone and the way my daughter learned on the phone. [...] Actually, my mother didn't appreciate it, me being in the kitchen. [...] So, I ended up not knowing even how to boil an egg. [...] I learned on my own."²⁷ As many of the women in my study reminded me, their mothers were simply too busy. The majority of the women that I spoke to had mothers who worked at least part time, and were often too tired to start preparing elaborate meals when they came home from work. And during the Jewish holidays, when they did cook, there was simply so much work to be done that children were considered a nuisance and a distraction. Many of the women I interviewed recounted being pushed out of the kitchen by their mothers during the holidays because they were in the way. When asked what their contributions to holiday celebrations were, most of my informants responded "cleaning up."²⁸

In practical terms, most Jewish women in Montreal learned to cook from cookbooks, and only after they left home. When asked about how she taught herself to cook, Miriam replied: " I used *A Treasure for my Daughter* until I learned to cook. I changed all the recipes. I should write my own *Treasure*. [...] My *Second Helpings* I would be ashamed to show you. It's stained and browned and disgusting."²⁹ Fears of over-assimilation and the disruption of intergenerational cultural transmissions combined to produce a tidal wave of cookbooks published to assist Jewish Canadian homemakers. Montreal was at the heart of this. Every single woman I spoke with knew about *A Treasure for my Daughter*, and most owned a well-used and well-loved copy. In the introduction to *A Treasure for my Daughter*, the editors argue that "[t]his volume has been written for the purpose of answering the questions of our young Jewish homemakers who, in their desire to observe the Jewish traditions, often find themselves uncertain of the details in

carrying out these practices."³⁰ The editors state that they are producing this book in response to inquiries from young women who wish to learn about the Jewish tradition.

The other most popular book, which was even more ubiquitous, was *Second Helpings, Please!* This book was written and published in 1968 by Montreal B'nai B'rith Mount Sinai Chapter #1091. Like *A Treasure for my Daughter*, this cookbook was originally envisaged as a guide for young Jewish women who needed help cooking traditional recipes.³¹ As the introduction notes: "In the following chapters, you will find recipes which go back generations, to great-grandmother's time. Old recipes with new variations, recipes from foreign lands, and menu suggestions."³² The book's editor, Norene Gilletz, would go on to have an illustrious career as a writer of Jewish and health-food cookbooks.

While these two books were mentioned by nearly every person who took part in my study, most of the participants also had numerous other Jewish cookbooks. For the purposes of this chapter, I have sampled some of the cookbooks mentioned by the women I interviewed, as well as the collection of Canadian Jewish community cookbooks published in this period held at the Canadian Jewish Congress Charities National Archives. These included *A Toizand Taman* (1960s), *Recipes Mother Never Knew* (1965), *Wonders of the Palate* (1966), *Kinnereth Cook Book* (1973), *The Pleasures of your Processor* (1979), and the Jewish General Hospital Women's Auxiliary publications on *Hors D'Oeuvres* and *Desserts*. I have also included two American cookbooks that were mentioned by several women, particularly Jennie Grossinger's *The Art of Jewish Cooking* (1958), and the *Rochester Hadassah Cookbook* (1963). While these books were not published in Canada, it is probable that they informed both the authors of Canadian cookbooks as well as Montreal Jewish home cooks. Finally, I have included recipes and advice published in *Orah*, a Zionist magazine published by Hadassah, and agendas and souvenir books

by the Montreal B'nai B'rith Woman's Work Agenda, and The National Council of Jewish Women of Canada.

Cookbook Creations

As I noted earlier in this chapter, the Jewish cookbooks were published by local elites. While there is not a great deal of documentation regarding most of the books in this study, all of them, except for *Pleasures of your Processor* were compiled and published by philanthropic organizations in Montreal. Fortunately, the creation of *A Treasure for my Daughter* is well documented, and an examination of its editors and authors provides insight into one aspect of ethnic-group making. In particular, I was lucky to be in contact with Batiste's daughter. She was happy to provide me with information about her mother and how she created *A Treasure for my Daughter*. *A Treasure for my Daughter* was the creation of The Ethel Epstein Ein Chapter of Montreal Hadassah-WIZO, which was founded on 17 December 1947 in memory of Mrs. Hyman Ein. Hadassah-WIZO was and continues to be a powerful organization of Jewish women volunteers that devotes itself primarily to providing education and health care for women and children in Canada and Israel. The original intent for the founding of this chapter was to participate in a program that would develop "qualities of leadership, fellowship, resourcefulness and ingenuity and to enrich life through emphasis upon Jewish living and learning."³³ The book itself, with sections written collectively by various volunteers, was originally suggested by editor Bessie Wittenberg Batist following the first meeting of the Hadassah chapter. The book grew out of her work with young Jewish women's organizations, where she was frequently questioned about Jewish practices. Batist was one of the founders and volunteers of the library of the YWHA. Born in either 1905 or 1906, she immigrated to Canada as a child from Odessa and learned Jewish customs from her mother and father, both Eastern European Jews. Her daughter

informed me that she felt that information about Jewish cultural practices was vitally important for the community and that it was her duty to ensure its transmission.³⁴ The profits from the book were intended for the rehabilitation of victims of World War II and their establishment in Israel.

The creation of the cookbook was a long and complicated process. A number of committees were formed to look at the various papers submitted by members that eventually became the substance of the cookbook. Because the Hadassah chapter did not have enough money to pay for the first printing, a number of fundraising activities were organized. These included, a cabaret night, fashion shows, dances, box socials, rummage sales, beautiful child contests, and international bake feasts. One woman, the late Mrs. L. Rotchtin, even prepared eighty pounds of gefilte fish to raise money, a testament to the personal dedication of individual community members to see the book published. The book was also named through a contest to raise money before publication; Mrs. H.L. Schwartz and the late Miss Shirley Epstein won with "A Treasure for my Daughter." Each pre-purchased book cost \$2.00, and after printing, it was \$3.00 with monies directed towards funding the next printing of the book. The first printing sold out in eight months, and subsequent printings, each consisting of a few thousand books, sold out in turn. By the seventh printing in 1964, the book had already sold 40,000 copies, profits from the book totalled \$45,000, and it was on sale in twenty stores in Montreal. This book was not limited to Montreal; *A Treasure for my Daughter* went out across the country, and even abroad.³⁵

The creation of *A Treasure for my Daughter* was "undertaken and followed through by a group of homemakers with no previous experience [in publishing or writing] but with a great sense of dedication and the will to succeed."³⁶ However, like many publications, this was a collaborative work; a number of individuals from the Montreal Jewish community outside of

Hadassah also participated in its creation. Many other prominent individuals, notably several men, were thanked for their assistance in the introduction. Several notable rabbis read and reviewed the manuscript, including Rabbi Wilfred Shuchat of the Shaar Hashomayim Congregation and Rabbi Maurice Cohen from the Shaare Zion Congregation. David Rome, noted scholar of the Montreal Jewish community, also lent his assistance. According to her daughter, Bessie Batist's husband, Joseph Batist, played a significant role in the creation of the cookbook: "Mom did the text with *much help from my Dad*. We remember the arguments! And my sister had never even heard them raise a voice until then."³⁷

Although Canadian Hadassah was founded by upper-class philanthropist Lillian Freiman, most of the members of Hadassah-WIZO were of middle-class origin, women who had the time and financial resources to engage in philanthropic activities.³⁸ Most of the names on the book committee mentioned in the preface and acknowledgements are of Eastern European and Germanic origin (Singer, Raginsky, Weinstein, Schwartz), which suggests that the authors were of Ashkenazic descent. As for those individuals involved in the publication in this book who were not affiliated with Hadassah, it is significant that two prominent rabbis endorsed the publication. These rabbis were affiliated with the two major synagogues in the area, the Shaar Hashomayim Congregation and the Shaare Zion Congregation were (and are) Orthodox/Conservative and Conservative, respectively. They were two of the wealthiest and most important synagogues in the city, and, due to their high membership price, were accessible only to those with surplus income. It is thus reasonable to conclude from this list that *A Treasure for my Daughter* was written and supported by a particular group in the Montreal Jewish community: the men and women of the Ashkenazic middle-class who were either part of or the descendants of the Eastern European wave of Jewish immigrants to Montreal, and who practiced

either Orthodox or Conservative Judaism. While general terms are never ideal and are, in fact, highly problematic, I will use the term "elite" for the remainder of this paper with the understanding that it includes the characteristics just discussed.

Biblical French Fries

The authority of the type of Jewishness represented in these cookbooks is continually reinforced using biblical language and allusions to "ancient times." The best example of this is *A Treasure for my Daughter*. *A Treasure for my Daughter* is unlike most cookbooks. Rather than simply being a collection of recipes organized like a dinner menu, this cookbook is ordered according to the Jewish calendar and the most important holidays therein. Following a description of the meaning and traditional observances of each holiday is a selection of dinner menus that are appropriate for the occasion. The explanatory text is written in the form a conversation between a mother (hereafter known as Mother) and her daughter, Hadassah, who is about to be married. The assumption is that this interaction is the desirable way that this type of information is passed down and disseminated. This assumption is reinforced in the conversation as well.

Many of the rituals described in *A Treasure for my Daughter* are described as dating to Biblical times. During explanations of the origins of certain ritual practices, the same words are repeated: "history," "tradition," "ancient," and "ancestors." Indeed, the "ancestors," specifically those of Biblical times, are cited frequently as a major authority on modern Jewish customs and practices. Further, all of these words in the text are connected to the words "Palestine," "Israelites," and "the Exodus." When Mother explains the origins of Succot to Hadassah, she says that the holiday is significant because "our ancestors in Palestine celebrated it as the festival

of the ingathering of the harvest," and because it commemorates the temporary shelters used by the Israelites while wandering in the desert.³⁹

Significantly, these explanations are not simply described as religious. Instead, throughout this text, there is a conflation of religion and history. Consider, for example, the explanation offered for Shabbat observance:

The Sabbath is one of the first institutions observed by our ancestors dating back to the days of the Exodus. There are two foundations for the Sabbath: one the religious, that God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Sabbath is the anniversary of the Creation. The other approach is historical. When the Israelites were freed from slavery they received the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai, the fourth of which is 'Remember the Sabbath to keep it Holy'.⁴⁰

Although Mother says that the first explanation is religious and the second is historical, both originate in religious scripture. It is remarkable indeed how religious scripture is used in these cookbooks as an explanation for recipes. Indeed, most holidays and their customs are linked back to the Exodus, Moses, Mount Sinai, and the Ten Commandments. Exodus is also referenced as an explanation for Jewish customs in other cookbooks. For instance, in *Wonders of the Palate*, the authors describe the biblical origins of many holiday customs, including the Sabbath. As they note: "An age old custom is to have a guest to share the Sabbath meals. 'For you were once strangers in the land of Egypt.' Exodus 22-20."⁴¹ Religion is not simply a matter of beliefs about God or the afterlife, but also involves perspectives on history. Just as being Christian involves a sincere belief in the truth of the story of Jesus in the Bible, being a religiously observant Jew involves accepting the version of history that is presented in the Torah (the Jewish bible, consisting of the first five books of the Old Testament). It is believed that the Torah was set down by Moses himself as a true account of the history of the Jewish people. Therefore, when it

comes to ancient history in particular, the stories that are contained within the Torah are not taken as allegorical stories but as historical fact. For religiously observant Jews, Creationism is taken for granted. One of my interviewees, David, recalled asking one rabbi why he believed in Creationism when there were 20 million year old fossils. The rabbi responded, "Because Hashem made 20 million year old fossils. If he can make a universe, he can make a 20 million year old fossil!"⁴² Similarly, the Exodus story, where the Jews were slaves in Egypt to the Pharaoh, is taken as historical fact, despite the lack of archaeological evidence. In effect, religion and history are the same.⁴³

While the established Jewish-Canadian community was orienting itself to the past, it was also looking to the modern state of Israel for many of its customs. For example, in *A Treasure for my Daughter*, according to Mother, "'Oneg Shabbat' means the 'Pleasure of the Sabbath' and assumed its present form in Tel Aviv, in 1923, when Chaim Nachman Bialik modernized the old custom of group study of religious texts to include social events like sing-alongs."⁴⁴ Similarly, in the section on Chanukah, Hadassah devotes two pages to describing public celebrations of Chanukah in Tel Aviv, as inspiration for her own, noting that it is "unique and picturesque."⁴⁵ The implication is that it is not enough to emulate the past. It is the duty of modern Jews to look to the Israeli example to learn how to "modernize" ancient customs and bring them into line with contemporary values.

This orientation to the Biblical past served a very specific purpose: to lend weight to the new cultural orthodoxy that is present (and subtly championed) in the community cookbooks. The myth that the customs of the established Jewish-Canadian community were of ancient heritage legitimized their own practices and beliefs with respect to Judaism. In *A Treasure for my Daughter*, Mother puts it best in the section on Chanukah when she describes "the privilege of

belonging to an ancient nation of great tradition, a nation so great that even today the way of life of righteous men throughout the world is based on the Ten Commandments."⁴⁶ And these customs must be strictly followed: "I know that in carrying on the Jewish beliefs in your home, you will find it no more burdensome than I did. You may make minor changes here and there, but basically you will do as has been done for centuries, and Jews will continue to do as long as this world exists."⁴⁷

In asserting the primacy of their cultural system, the established Jewish-Canadian community was implicitly comparing itself to other Jews, particularly those who were either too Jewish or too Canadian. For, in targeting a specific audience, they include some individuals as Jews, just as they exclude others. As a result, they considered other denominations and groups to be deviations from authentic Judaism. Further, the fact that the book seems to be targeted to young Jewish women in general suggests that established Jewish-Canadians were actively spreading the way of life and cultural practices reflected in *A Treasure for my Daughter* to other Jewish groups. Indeed, the book constructed and reinforced the cultural orthodoxy it was trying to promote by virtue of its publication.

The elites felt that complete assimilation was an undesirable outcome. However, it was equally problematic to be the "wrong kind of Jewish." Even as the traditions of the elites are highlighted, others are excluded or ignored entirely. There are no attempts to display other Jewish traditions in *A Treasure for my Daughter* except Israeli and Eastern European customs. Sephardic, North African, and Western European Jewish traditions are excluded from the text. Equally excluded are Hassidic, Ultra-Orthodox, and Reform cultural practices. In sum, all Jewish cultural practices that do not conform to the cultural practices of the established Jewish-Canadian

community are excluded. Instead, inward Eastern-European-ness and outward middle-class Canadian-ness are projected as the norm for Jewish Canadians in Montreal.

Roast Turkey in the Succah

While actively looking to the Biblical past as a source of authority, the established Jewish-Canadian community embraced values that were distinctly North American and middle-class. Accordingly, *A Treasure for my Daughter* depicts the Jewish people as the originators of the most important North American and Christian traditions, particularly the Sabbath and Thanksgiving. The Sabbath is described as "one of the greatest contributions Israel has made to the world."⁴⁸ This is for a number of reasons. First, the Jews were the first to observe the Sabbath. As noted earlier, the use of this term is deliberate. Rather than using the Hebrew or Yiddish terms, Shabbat and *Shabbos*, the English word is used to connect Jewish traditions with Christian traditions. Second, the Sabbath, specifically the fourth commandment, has been redefined as "the first labour law of mankind,"⁴⁹ with Israel receiving acclaim for being the first nation to dedicate one day in the week to rest, a very enlightened principle.⁵⁰

The Jewish people are also given credit for being the originators of Thanksgiving celebrations. In the opening section on Succot, the following conversation takes place between Mother and Hadassah:

'Mother, I asked David [Hadassah's fiancé] to have dinner with us tomorrow night. What will you serve?'

'How does turkey with all the trimmings appeal to you?'

'Fine, Mother, though it seems like a Thanksgiving menu and tomorrow is the first day of Succot.'

'Why, Hadassah, Succot is the Jewish Thanksgiving. As a matter of fact the Pilgrim Fathers in America based their thanksgiving on our festival because they were steeped in the knowledge of the Bible.'⁵¹

Hadassah is right in that the menu does seem strangely like a traditional North American Thanksgiving meal. There is nothing in the menu that suggests that this is a Jewish harvest celebration. The menu is distinctly American, right down to turkey, cranberry sauce, and mashed potatoes. The second Succot Dinner Menu is even more puzzling: Cantaloupe Basket, Yellow Split Pea Soup, Southern Fried Chicken, Honey, French Fried Potatoes, Cabbage Salad, Peace Tarts, Date and Nut Loaf, and Tea.⁵² Similarly, Dinner Menu II for Rosh Hashanah is as follows: wine, honey and apple, sweet and sour meat balls in tomato sauce, chicken soup with noodles, roast duck with orange slices, potato varenikes, string beans, tossed salad, jelly mould with fresh fruit, honey teiglach, and tea.⁵³ Once again, I think that it is unlikely that roast duck with orange slices was a common recipe in the *shtetls* of Eastern Europe. These menus will give even the more serious reader pause, and indeed a survey of all of the recipes in the cookbook reveals that two-thirds of the recipes are North American or Western in origin.

What do fried chicken and French fries have to do with the wanderings of the Jewish people in the desert for forty years or bountiful crops? Nothing, and this is precisely the point. These menus are a strong statement that the established Jewish-Canadian community was rooted firmly in the present and in North American values of family and freedom. Indeed, throughout the text, the words "Church" and "Christianity" could easily be substituted for "synagogue" and "Judaism." These concerns and values are eloquently described in Mother and Hadassah's conversation about the special significance of Chanukah:

'It testifies that the Jew can be a soldier when the need arises. This festival, however, commemorates the victory of a great moral cause rather than the victory of the battlefield.'

'Yes, Hadassah. Our rejoicing is not at the defeat of our enemies, but at the rededication of the Temple. [...]'

*'Chanukah exemplifies the rebellion in defence of the inalienable rights of man. It is a protest against the denial of the freedom of worship. The victory of the Maccabees is that of godliness over paganism, Judaism over Hellenism, right over might, democracy over dictatorship. From this point of view, this victory assumes world-wide significance even today. Now we hope that our rededication to the ideals of our people will maintain the Jews as a contributing factor in the advancement of civilization.'*⁵⁴

This passage is significant for other reasons as well; the key words in this exchange are strong examples of Cold War military rhetoric. As Doug Owram has demonstrated, "In Canada, the Cold War seems to have been a less dominant force; nevertheless it was a brooding presence that reminded people that their current situation was tenuous."⁵⁵ The Cold War was perceived as an international diplomatic dispute, described in *A Treasure for my Daughter* as "a moral crusade: evil against virtue, Christ against anti-Christ or, more accurately, a re-creation of the struggle between democracy and tyranny that predated the Second World War."⁵⁶ In the 1950s, the reality of the Cold War loomed large, reminding Canadians of the fragility of their political institutions. It remained the duty of all Canadians, regardless of their ethnicity, to support their country and to live the ideal of democracy even in their daily lives.⁵⁷ With these keywords, the editors of the cookbook are declaring that the values and traditions of the established Jewish-Canadians coincide with those of the larger middle-class Canadian society. After all, Jewish Canadians are the originators of some of the ideals that Canadians hold most dear.

Part of the cultural orthodoxy presented in *A Treasure for my Daughter* also involves the appropriate roles for women that internalize Canadian middle-class gender roles from the period. The 1950s saw a domestic revival that emphasized the importance of the nuclear family and associated traditional gender roles: man as father and breadwinner, and woman as mother and homemaker. Scholars have suggested that this emphasis on the breadwinner/homemaker divide was a new feature of the American family and arose following the instability of the Depression

and World War II and in the context of widespread fears about the Cold War. The home would contain and isolate subversive and potentially dangerous forces like working women, homosexuals, and communists. While the pervasiveness of this ideology is a hotly debated subject, what is clear is that these stereotypical images had considerable cultural currency.⁵⁸

Many features of this cookbook play into this 1950s domestic ideal. *A Treasure for my Daughter* assumes the presence of a housewife, as evidenced by the complexity and expense of the recipes. For instance, Dinner Menu II for Rosh Hashanah contains eight separate dishes.⁵⁹ One can only imagine what the grocery bill would look like to purchase the ingredients for such a menu, without even taking into account the notoriously expensive kosher products. Further, many of the dishes take considerable time and care to prepare; Roast Duck with Orange Slices is not a recipe for a beginner.⁶⁰ The assumption is that the woman of the household does not need to work outside of the household, and is thus able to stay at home and devote many hours to cooking food, cleaning house, and preparing for the holidays. Mother says to Hadassah, "I worked hard to develop our home, as you will too, I am sure."⁶¹

While the earliest cookbooks emphasize 1950s domestic ideals with respect to women, as the 1960s and 1970s progressed, there was an increase in "shortcut" cooking, particularly in the B'nai B'rith *Woman's Work Agenda*. As early as 1959, the culinary capers section advertised that its recipes were "long on flavour – short on labour."⁶² Over the next decade, the idea of meals that were easy and fast to prepare becomes an important theme. The 1962 Edition featured "Dining Around the Clock," a guide to cooking with convenience foods. The writer speaks about changes in modern living, which necessitate the adaptation of many recipes: "Time has wrought many changes in our living habits. In the past, large homes had many servants and entertainments were formal. Today our homes are smaller, with little or no help."⁶³ However, the

writer claims that modern technology has compensated for the lack of servants through the invention of refrigerators and freezers; canned, frozen, and dehydrated foods; and delis. Many of the recipes in this article require canned foods as ingredients, including the inevitable jellied salad.⁶⁴ In 1963, the editors produced "Short Cuts to Tall Meals," a guide for busy women in the preparation of delicious foods. They claimed that:

the same organizational ability a busy woman exercises in her work, may be carried into her home. There are difficult ways of getting things done, and there are simple, direct ways, but for the latter, the key word is "planning," whether for the daily menu or for entertaining. "Anxiety" is no ingredient to introduce. [...]

There are evenings when the career woman just to stay in, doing little odd chores which were there, awaiting her mood. Those are evenings in which to do a bit of cooking. Every apartment is equipped with a modern electric refrigerator in which there is a freezing component. Meals can be made partly ready and finished whenever needed.⁶⁵

Finally, the 1970s edition included "Revolutionize your life with a Freezer." This article gave advice on preparing meals in advance and freezing them in such a way that they were edible (supposedly) months later. The writer advertised the importance of a freezer to "busy modern women."⁶⁶ While I will return to the debate about modern femininity in postwar Montreal in a later chapter, for now the fact that Jewish community cookbooks reflect changes operating on the larger Canadian stage demonstrates the extent of the reality that increasing numbers of married women were working outside of the home. It is important to note that this domestic ideal for women is entirely consistent with that of the larger Canadian society. In other words, the ideal is not explicitly Jewish, though it is being written by Jews. As with the Roast Turkey, this is another example of how local elites attempt to integrate middle-class Canadian values in its model for a "Jewish community."

In keeping with the North American character of Jewish community cookbooks, many of them followed Canadian trends with respect to food. Much like other Canadian magazines and cookbooks of the time,⁶⁷ Jewish community publications, with the exception of *A Treasure for my Daughter*, increasingly began showcasing so-called "foreign" dishes beginning in the mid 1950s, and increasingly as time went on. The 1955 edition of the Woman's Work Agenda's "Culinary Capers" section included a showcase of various international cuisines, including Spanish, Italian, and Chinese menus. On the menu for the French-Canadian feast: French Canadian pea soup, baked black bass, stuffed baked potatoes, tossed green salad, casserole, onion bread, apple crunch pie, Canadian cheese and crackers, and tea.⁶⁸ Interestingly enough, these recipes are "kosher-ized." The pea soup recipe does not contain a ham hock, but instead calls for two small marrow bones and one-quarter pound of lean beef.⁶⁹ The "International Cuisine" article in the B'nai B'rith 1967 Woman's Work Agenda boasted about the increasing interest in foreign cuisine: "We of Montreal are proud of our city... the Paris of North America... a city of many cultures - of French, English, Hebrew, Italian and others... a city abounding in fine restaurants - acclaimed by gourmets the world over."⁷⁰

The same trend appears increasingly in cookbooks, particularly from the mid 1960s onward, suggesting that "foreign" dishes were becoming increasingly accepted into Jewish-Canadian homes. *The Pleasures of Your Processor* includes a guide to using woks, promoting stir-frying as a healthy alternative to deep-frying, and a cooking method that is quick, nutritious, and delicious.⁷¹ In the forward to *The Art of Jewish Cooking*, Jewish cooking is described as being international in nature: "Jewish cooking, since the kettles of the Hebrews have simmered in every country of the world since the Dispersion many centuries ago - is never monotonous, but thoroughly international in flavor. All it requires is good ingredients and plenty of them."⁷²

The cookbooklet, *Recipes Mother Never Knew*, includes an entire chapter entitled "Domestic and Foreign Affairs." This chapter includes detailed menus and recipes from a variety of different origins, including the United States, China, France, Israel, Java, and Italy.⁷³ Similarly, *Wonders of the Palate* includes a "Foreign Foods" chapter, with a long list of recipes from Argentina, Costa Rica, the West Indies, El Salvador, Finland, Holland, Israel, Latvia, New Zealand, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United States.⁷⁴

As the 1960s proceeded in the 1970s, there is a similar increasing emphasis on the importance of scientific ideals in cooking. In the Montreal B'nai B'rith *Woman's Work Agenda*, a feature on "A Resume of Cooking" goes into considerable detail about the benefits of modern science for the Jewish cook. After first describing how gastronomy has become more scientific, the author discusses how modern science has made the lives of Jewish-Canadian women better through the more efficient production of livestock:

To take it a step further, scientific research has produced for us natural and prepared foods to a degree unimaginable to our forefathers. As a case in point, birds and animals of today have been graduated to a much higher level than those of our ancestors. During the past 15 - 20 years fowl and livestock have been the subjects of strange experiments to the point where we now have produced chickens that are mostly white meat and turkeys streamlined to smaller specifications to fit the average buyer's purse. Before man could control Vitamin D, chicken for instance, had to have plenty of sunshine to soak up an abundance of the life-giving vitamin. When confined to their coops and shut off from the sun, they would die. But when we conquered Vitamin D and could feed it to them, it opened up a vast new modern way of producing eggs. Given plenty to eat, room to cackle and a comfortable air-conditioned building, the hen produced eggs in a factory assembly line schedule.⁷⁵

While the benefits of such a system would give today's readers pause, the introduction of industrialized farming practices was revolutionary in this period, allowing for the production of

cheap and easily accessible meat and eggs. These modern advances were seen as beneficial, everything that was new was good, and anything that was old was bad. Similarly, many cookbooks emphasize the importance of modern ways of cooking. One writer remarked:

Along with the elves and fairies of childhood stories has vanished the "like-mother-used-to-make" fable. Unloyal though it may seem, for some time now many of us had our doubts as to just how good mother's cooking was, compared to the modern variety! Cooking has been reduced to such a scientific basis that nearly every wife can make the "eaten'st dish" ever tasted in an amazingly short time.[...] Correct temperature, prefabricated ingredients, effortless gadgets are what we have become accustomed to; cooking today has eliminated the guesswork and the tedium.⁷⁶

Several years later, in 1967, another version of the *Woman's Work Agenda*, remarked that: "in we had lived in 1867, our recipes would have advised us to "take a handful", "add a pinch," perhaps "enough liquid to make a dough", or worse, "use your judgement." And, of course, if you have ever asked your grandmother the recipe for a well-beloved family favorite, well, we are all familiar with that oft-used expression used to indicate the amounts needed!"⁷⁷ Older methods of measurement, based on knowledge of texture and "feel" were no longer seen as "scientific" enough for the modern cook. The emphasis was instead on precision using volumetric measurement.

While all of these changes are in keeping with larger Canadian trends, there is often a particular Jewish tone to these discussions. One of the writers of the *Rochester Hadassah* cookbook argued that the adaptation of modern scientific nutrition standards is part of Jewish cultural heritage. Estelle Zaldin argued that Jewish women have always adapted their cuisine by blending "traditional" dishes with more modern ones. Jews had successfully survived as a cultural group over the centuries in this one important way.⁷⁸ In essence, only the Jewish people of North American were uniquely qualified to adapt to modern and scientific ways of cooking, as

Jewish cuisine is at its very heart about adapting to new circumstances. As a case in point, let us consider the Eastern European "origins" of Jewish cuisine.

Hide the Gefilte Fish!

Cold war rhetoric, an emphasis on postwar domestic ideals, international trends in cooking, and an emphasis on modern nutrition and ways of cooking all point to the extent to which both elites have internalized and disseminated broader North American values. And while some Jewish cultural components were showcased, such as the attention paid to the Biblical and Israeli past, the Eastern European origin of the individuals who authored this cookbook is ignored entirely and consciously. Once again, I will turn to *A Treasure for my Daughter*, as it contains the best and most complete examples of this trend. The history of the established Jewish-Canadian community as described in *A Treasure for my Daughter* is contradictory and inconsistent. While at first it appears that there is a disconnect between the actual ethnic identities of the authors and the heritage that is presented in *A Treasure for my Daughter*, the picture becomes more complicated when one looks beyond the explanatory texts to the recipes themselves. Indeed, Eastern European recipes like Gefilte fish, Eier Kichel, Kishke, Kugel, and Potato pancakes (latkes), are central to most of the dinner menus.⁷⁹ A full one-third of the recipes in this cookbook are directly drawn from Eastern European cooking traditions.

By concealing the Eastern European nature of Jewish cooking in Montreal through a focus in the text on middle-class Canada and modern and ancient Israel, the established Jewish community sought to shore up their own middle-class identities against the threat posed by the newly arrived Jewish immigrants from Europe. There was a significant distance between these newcomers and the established Jewish-Canadian community. Newly arrived immigrants, largely consisting of Holocaust survivors and Displaced Persons, had a more difficult time than most

adjusting to Canadian life.⁸⁰ Bad feelings existed on both sides: many of the new immigrants were offended by a perceived negative reaction on the part of the established Jewish-Canadian community and many in the established Jewish-Canadian community feared that association with the newcomers (poor, unable to speak English) would challenge their middle-class identities.⁸¹ Thus, by concealing the Eastern Europeanness of their culture and cuisine, the established Jewish community both reinforced its character as a middle-class Canadian community and disassociated itself from the newly arrived Jewish immigrants, who were "too Jewish" in character.

However, as the Eastern Europeanness of the established Jewish community of Montreal is concealed, it is also assumed, and to a certain extent taken for granted. The underlying Eastern-Europeanness of the cookbooks is best revealed by examining the humble potato latka. Most cookbooks do not provide any particular recommendations with respect to meals for Chanukah. The only mention of food in *A Treasure for my Daughter* is a brief mention that dairy suppers are common for Chanukah meals. None of the other cookbooks examined in this study provided much more assistance. It, provides no specific suggestions besides a mention that latkes "are traditionally served."⁸²

While it is difficult to find descriptions of traditional foods for Chanukah, most cookbooks include a recipe for latkas. However, this popular food item appears to have obscure origins. The *Kinnereth Cook Book* tells readers that latkes and doughnuts fried in oil are eaten in remembrance of the miracle in the Temple.⁸³ However, the Rochester cookbook disputes this association. As the editors say, "Why potato latkes on Hanukkah? Don't believe that the Maccabees ate them: potatoes were not known to us until Columbus discovered America. But

pancakes of some sort, fried in oil, are fine for a festival of light, reminding us of the little cruse of holy oil that burned so long.⁸⁴ " *The Wonders of the Palate* cookbook agreed, noting that:

*the traditional food for this festival is potato 'latkes' or pancakes. The origin of this custom is unknown, but might have something to do with the fact that the holiday comes during the winter months and latkes are an appropriate dish for that season. Any other traditional goodies may also be served during the celebration. There are also some decorative salads representing the Menorah which are attractive and appealing especially to the children.*⁸⁵

In the November 1968 edition of *Orah*, "The History of Chanukah Dishes," by Molly Lyons Bar-David purports to educate readers about the actual origins of latkes. The author claims to have investigated biblical source and Aramaic writings in her quest to discover why latkes are a popular Chanukah treat.⁸⁶ She locates the origins of latkes in the sugfaniyot, describing how the wives of Maccabean soldiers fried dough as they fought battles. However, Bar-David disputes the idea that potato latkes were introduced in Europe after Columbus brought the potato back from America. She argues that:

*As there are definite records that Columbus was of Jewish blood and faith and became a Marrano (for some of his family correspondence still gives evidence with the Beth-Heh blessing in Hebrew letters on the top of the page that he secretly retained his Jewish faith). It may therefore be that the luxurious potato was secretly and symbolically used to honour Columbus by using it as the chief ingredient of the Hanukah treat - the potato latkes of today.*⁸⁷

Both of these cookbooks acknowledge the paradox of modern celebrations of Chanukah: this is a holiday that celebrates an event described in the bible through the consumption of a New World food product. Potatoes were part of what Alfred Crosby calls the "Columbian Exchange."⁸⁸ Following the conquest of the Americas, the potato was brought back to Europe and successfully cultivated. It quickly became a staple in peasant diets across the continent, particularly in Eastern

Europe. This association between latkes and Eastern Europe is reinforced by the knowledge the Sephardic Jews do not make latkes for Chanukah, but instead fried dough (sugfaniyot). The fact that doughnuts are mentioned in passing in several of these cookbooks points to early cultural exchanges between the two Jewish groups in Montreal.

So how did an Eastern European peasant food become associated with a biblical holiday? I suspect that it has less to do with remembering oil burning for eight days than with remembering the Eastern European heritage of many of the Jews of Montreal. For most of the year, Jews in Montreal eat much the same things as other Montrealers. However, at Jewish holidays, Jews of all different backgrounds generally eat the foods that are imported from the countries from which they count descent. Eating Eastern European foods is normal during Jewish holidays because it is a time when Jews are "Jewish." And being Jewish, for the authors of these cookbooks, was being Eastern European. Food historians suggest that "ethnic" foods from the old country were not easily displaced because of the collective identity that was often invested in them. These foods had helped to ease the transition to a new country, by providing some sense of continuity between the past and the present, even for individuals who were two or three generations removed from the Old Country. Thus, latkes have become traditional Jewish food not because of their imagined connection to Israeli guerrilla fighters, but because of their association with the diets of Eastern European Jews. And indeed, this could be said of many "Jewish" foods, like gefilte fish, brisket, and even matzah balls.

My conversations with Jewish women in Montreal have revealed that the relationship between food, holidays, and nostalgia for the Old Country is quite strong. Just as the recipes are always associated with holidays in the cookbooks I mentioned earlier, my participants associated Jewish foods with Jewish holidays, rather than everyday meals. Similarly, while the cookbooks

rely on history to promote their ideals about Montreal Jewish-ness, my participants associated Jewish foods with their ancestors, particularly their grandparents. While the term "ancient times" is not used as in the cookbooks, grandmothers and aunts are often cited as sources of knowledge and the voices of authority when it comes to Jewish food and identity.

Beth spoke with great feeling when remembering the foods that her aunt cooked around the holidays. Beth was born in Montreal in 1945, making her sixty-three years old at the time of her interview. While her parents kept a non-traditional Reform household, her grandmother and aunt were observant Orthodox Jews. Beth spent a great deal of her childhood in the home of her grandmother, particularly around the holidays. As she and her daughter reminisced about one particular dish that her aunt used to make, sweet and sour meatballs, she noted how just the mention of it brought back memories of her aunt and her cooking, to the point where she could even smell the foods that were being prepared.

My aunt, I have to do the translation. Because obviously, as a child, when she tells me what the dish is, she would say it in Jewish, and that's the way I know. But in reality, sweet and sour meatballs. I guess you would know it. I'm salivating now. She would call it, the Jewish. My mother's family she's my mother's sister comes from the Ukraine. And when they came here to New Brunswick in 1905-1906, the food that they took I guess came from the Ukraine, the recipes came from Ukraine. And they had a dish which is now sweet and sour meatballs. [...] And she was a great cook, and when I asked her for the recipe, and she died at a hundred I don't know, 102, 104, so she died not that long ago, and I asked her for the recipe, and being the wonderful cook that she was, she gave me all the ingredients except that ingredient that makes it what it is.

[My daughter] was born in 1971, that's a little more recent, and. If I say escheflait, she knows exactly what I'm talking about.⁸⁹

Similarly, Tamara describes how she associated traditional Jewish cuisine with her grandmother. Tamara was born in Montreal in 1959 to Montreal Jews. She was forty-nine at the

time of her interview. Tamara had three grandparents who were immigrants, and one who was born in Montreal. Her immigrant grandparents were quite traditional and Orthodox, though her parents raised her to be a secular Jew. When I brought up the subject of "traditional" Jewish cuisine, this is how she responded:

My grandmother taught us how to make chicken soup, and that comes out when we're sick, making chicken soup although sometimes it's with the Campbell base, which she wouldn't approve of, but I do know how to make a chicken soup because of my grandmother. She used to make these hideous green latkes, because she let them sit on the counter too long. They turned green because the potatoes would go black before she got around to cooking them. But we sometimes make latkes, not as green, with the carrots in it, that was her thing., and there were some recipes. [...] The brisket I'm sure was handed down, one of those dried out Jewish briskets [...] The last one she made, it was a very small one because it was just for her and me and she cooked it for a very long time, and we broke our knives trying to carve it.⁹⁰

As both of these women note, Eastern European Jewish foods were comforting and familiar, the kind of food that evoked childhood memories of grandmother's kitchen.

I have already noted that the largest and most dominant group of Jews in Montreal in this period were of Eastern European or Ashkenazic descent. It is perhaps not surprising then that Eastern European cuisine became the most prevalent and ubiquitous form of Jewish cooking, by sheer numbers alone. However, this type of food did not simply become known by Jews in Montreal as Eastern European food, but as explicitly Jewish food. Eastern European foods were normalized as Jewish foods, in keeping with the normalization of other aspects of Eastern European Jewish identity as Jewish identity. Hence, it was not necessary for cookbook authors to note the Eastern European origin of many of the recipes included within their pages because it was assumed that most readers already had this information.

Further, assumed and unspoken Eastern Europeanness was a common theme in my interviews, particularly when it came to food. Many women discussed how their mothers and grandmothers always prepared the same dishes, from year to year, on the holidays, without variation. Brisket, chicken soup, meatballs, kugel, and tzimmes all made regular appearances at Jewish holidays. While invention and creativity was a feature of a few households, most stuck to the same old familiar favourites. The sameness of the selection of Eastern European peasant dishes for the holidays was to such an extent that I had a difficult time obtaining any information about household variations. Most women, when asked directly which foods were prepared for the holidays, responded: "You know, the usual." When asked for clarification, they tended to repeat themselves or repeat the list of dishes that I asked them about.⁹¹ While it is unclear if they assumed that as a Jewish woman I should know what to prepare for the holidays or if "everyone" should know which foods are traditionally served on the Jewish holidays, these responses indicate that it is self-evident that Eastern European peasant foods are served for the Jewish holidays.

Perhaps the most telling marker of the powerful reach of the view that Eastern European food is Jewish food is the extent to which it was resisted. Aaron spent his earliest years in Hungary, arriving in Canada at the age of nine. At the time of his interview, he was fifty-nine. He came to Canada with his mother and his grandmother. When talking with Aaron about the nature of Jewish cuisine in Montreal, he had the following to say about how Hungarian cuisine fits into this paradigm:

They're not Jewish, they don't tend to be on the Jewish side, uh, Hungarians do not, even Hungarian Jews, don't really have foods that are considered what are Jewish foods. Most of those so-called Jewish foods tend to be from Poland. I know my uncle who was Polish, he would be eating those kinds of foods, that even my aunt, who was also Hungarian, learned how to do. But they were more

*Polish origin. Hungarians did not tend to eat so-called Jewish foods, they tended to eat foods that were more the same as other Hungarians. But if you were religious, you wouldn't eat pork, but everything else would pretty much be Hungarian-style rather than Jewish-style. [...] When I think of Jewish food, I think of Polish foods. I don't really care for it.*⁹²

Aaron makes a clear distinction between Jewish cuisine and Hungarian cuisine. He describes Jewish cuisine as Polish cuisine, naming the Eastern European nature of Jewish foods in Montreal. He sees his own cuisine, Hungarian cuisine, as something that is at once separate and yet related. Miriam, who is also a first generation Hungarian immigrant, makes the same distinction between Hungarian and Jewish cuisine, though she admits to cooking both types of dishes.⁹³ Both Aaron and Miriam point to the reification of Ashkenazic cuisine, where one particular type of Ashkenazic cuisine (in this case, Polish), has come to be representative when in fact, Ashkenazic cuisine itself is a term that encompasses a wide range of divergent cuisines. They did not buy into this reification, but continue to cook Hungarian foods, which are Ashkenazic but not Polish.

Similarly, Tamara, when asked to describe the traditional Jewish foods that her mother prepared, responded that her mother did not prepare traditional Jewish foods. Instead, because of her personal fascination with Morocco, she incorporated a number of Sephardic dishes into her menus for Jewish holidays. Tamara in particular recounts the Moroccan meatballs that her mother prepared, carrot and potato salad with cumin, and her own unique recipe for charoset, which she got from a Moroccan cookbook.⁹⁴ Not everyone bought whole-heartedly into the cultural orthodoxy of the established Jewish community of Montreal. Instead, certain individuals turned to alternate Jewish cuisine, while remarking that traditional Jewish foods were not to their tastes. At the same time, the integration alternate Jewish cuisines points to another level of

Jewishness, one which can accommodate diversity within a particular model while still reinforcing the model. Aaron and Tamara both make the association that "traditional" Jewish foods are Eastern European in nature. They do not do anything to challenge this idea, but rather, through their very resistance, demonstrate and reinforce this power through their identification as "rebels."

An important challenge to the idea of Eastern European foods as Jewish foods came with the large influx of Moroccan immigrants. Evidence of this challenge only begins in the late 1960s, once the Sephardic community had grown in both strength and numbers. While the Jewish cuisine described in the community publications of the Jewish community of Montreal is largely Eastern European in origin, the term Ashkenazi does not appear. One of the earliest mentions appears in *Orah's* March 1969 edition, in two articles. In "Israel's Colourful Communities Celebrate Passover," the author describes Passover traditions among Ashkenazi, Sephardic, and Yemenite peoples. While the differences between their religious texts are described as minimal, the cultural traditions are described as a "colourful mosaic of practices mirroring each community's social and political circumstances, dietary habits, folklore and superstitions."⁹⁵ In particular, differences between which foods are accepted to eat at Passover is debated. While Eastern European Jews do not eat rice and lentils on Passover, these foods are considered acceptable among Sephardic and Yemenite Jews.⁹⁶ In "Passover's Emblematic Foods," Molly Lyons Bar-David briefly describes how "In Ashkenazic homes the food traditions are most stringent than in Sephardic homes. Rice and Legumes are not permitted to Westerners but Oriental Jews - who are indeed deeply religious - these foods are popular on the Seder table."⁹⁷

It is not until the 1970s that the term "Ashkenazi" comes into regular usage in these publications, and usually within texts that compare Ashkenazic and Sephardic traditions in such a way as to normalize Ashkenazic cooking traditions. The earliest in the sample consulted in this study dates back to 1972, in the *Rochester Hadassah Cookbook*, which includes an entire chapter on Sephardic cuisine. According to this book, "The term Sephardim literally means Jews with a Spanish background. When used in connected with Jews of today, it applies to descendants of those who, after their expulsion from Spain in 1492, found their way eastward to Italy and countries in the Eastern Mediterranean or northward to towns such as Amsterdam and London and from there sometimes westward to North and South America. The earliest Jewish settlers in both North and South America were predominantly Sephardim."⁹⁸ The author of this section, Mrs. Sol Cohen, describes how Middle Eastern culture has been influenced by the cuisine of Sephardic Jews, and is particularly noticeable in the recipes included in this collection. This text is then followed by a fairly lengthy collection of recipes, including cheese bourekas, Turkish eggs, bamyra (okra and tomato sauce), musaka, arros con pollo, falfel, tahina, and rose petal jelly. However, these traditions are clearly separated from the traditional Jewish recipes that are contained in the rest of the book. Further, as this is a community book, the contributors are listed. Their names are overwhelmingly of Eastern European origin, especially in the Sephardic section. The voices of actual Sephardic Jews are not represented in any of these cookbooks. Rather, the Sephardic Jews are presented as just another cultural oddity, much like the presence of Chinese recipes in other places in the cookbook.

This theme of Sephardic cooking as a cultural oddity continues in the Canadian literature. In the March 1978 edition of *Orah*, there is an article entitled "The 'Melting Pot' in Israel's Kitchen." This article details the evolution of Israeli cuisine as an example of modern Jewish

cuisine. Effectively, this consists of a comparison between Ashkenazi and Sephardic traditions, starting with a description of what these two terms mean. Ashkenazi cuisine is described in this way: "typical Ashkenazi foods were also divided into their countries of origin, but it is this cuisine, which, in America, is referred to as "Jewish" food."⁹⁹ Sephardic cuisine is described as foods belonging to those Jews who originated in the Middle East and North Africa, including bourekas, stuffed vegetables, hamindas, shakshoukas, couscous, kibbeh, and tabulah.¹⁰⁰ Sephardic cuisine is described as utilizing a great deal of spice, including garlic, cumin, coriander, and cardamom. The article concludes by saying that Israeli cuisine "must be thought of in terms of both where one's ancestors came from, and how much one is influenced by the climate, and the eating habits, and the evolving produce of the land."¹⁰¹ It is telling that Ashkenazi foods are described as "Jewish cuisine," while Sephardic cuisine is exoticized with foreign names, (ie. those that were neither English, French, Hebrew or Yiddish, or, in other words, foreign to most Jews of Eastern European descent.) descriptions of exotic ingredients, and an emphasis on difference. Indeed, the similarities between Sephardic and Ashkenazi cuisine are not highlighted, but the differences are.

The emphasis on differences continues in another *Orah* magazine article, "Festival Feasting, and Why?" in the Summer 1979 edition. This article describes the difference between Ashkenazi and Sephardic foods during the most important Jewish holidays. For instance, fish is described as a common ingredient because of its role as a symbol for fruitfulness. Ashkenazim eat gefilte fish, and Sephardim eat fish baked with tomatoes and garlic.¹⁰² While both groups are eating fish, it is the differences between the two preparations that are highlighted. Sephardic traditions with respect to autumn vegetables at Rosh Hashanah is also described in some detail, with a long discussion about the symbolic nature of the foods: "Interestingly enough, the names

of the vegetables they eat contain a symbolic allusion through alliteration for certain prayers of fulfillment."¹⁰³ Ashkenazic food is not described in this way, but continues to be normalized throughout the article. Ashkenazic foods are described first, often as a benchmark for Jewish traditions at each holiday, with the Sephardic traditions as an alternative and exotic option.

Again, consider the following passage:

*Breaking the fast is usually done with something sweet then with something salty. Eastern Europeans break the fast with shnekem (cinnamon, nut and raisin buns); Sephardim eat burekas; Dutch eat a cinnamon coffee cake; Syrian, Iraqi and Egyptian Jews eat coffee cake with cardamom; Yemenites eat cake with ginger; Italians eat a mocha cake; Moroccans will serve tea and deep fried pastries with a sweet syrup.*¹⁰⁴

The treatment of Sephardic cooking and cultural customs in Jewish Canadian community cookbooks points to the effort on the part of the elites to normalize Eastern European foodways as "Jewish food" for a "Jewish community of Montreal." As opposed to Ashkenazic cuisine, Sephardic culinary traditions are presented as exotic alternatives. However, the very fact that Sephardic traditions are presented points to a certain level of cultural exchange between the two groups. This exchange is reflected through women like Tamara, who, despite being Ashkenazi, prefers Sephardic cuisine. The exchange also went both ways.¹⁰⁵ Bernadette, a first generation Moroccan immigrant who arrived in 1963, was very familiar with Ashkenazic cooking customs, and spoke with a great deal of affection about *A Treasure for my Daughter*: "That's my bible. When I got married I bought the second copy." She also spoke about and used *Second Helpings, Please*, particularly in her baking.¹⁰⁶

Keeping Kosher

A Treasure for my Daughter talks at length about the importance of being kosher. In particular, Mother makes the argument that keeping kosher was fundamental to the preservation of the Jewish people, because it is the foundation upon which the Jewish home is built. Not only is a healthy body essential for a healthy soul, "the Jew who keeps Kashrut is reminded of his religious duty at every meal."¹⁰⁷ However, the value of keeping kosher throughout the cookbooks in question is more often tied to the modern benefits of food hygiene than religious obligation. Mother tells Hadassah that keeping kosher is the reason why Jews had higher survival rates during the black plague: "In the Middle Ages, when epidemics occurred often, the Jewish population was less affected. This gave rise to the malicious accusations that the Jews were responsible for the plagues and had poisoned the wells."¹⁰⁸ Modern research is also cited as an authority in demonstrating the value of Jewish dietary laws. Mother later notes: "Modern research has proven that the Jewish dietary laws are based on sound hygienic principles. Certain animals are breeders and carriers of disease germs; consequently the flesh of such animals is harmful to people. Those animals are excluded from the Jewish diet."¹⁰⁹

Surprisingly, few cookbooks assumed all of its readers kept kosher, though they assume that most were familiar with kosher rules. *The Pleasures of your Processor* boasts "Although the recipes in this book are geared to the Kosher kitchen, the food processor is definitely not prejudiced! It can handle with equanimity recipes from any ethnic background."¹¹⁰ The cookbook goes on to provide suggestions about how to keep a kosher home with appliances. The author suggests that you should have a second food processor despite the expense.¹¹¹ Similarly, many of the cookbooks clearly separate main dishes into dairy and meat sections, without mentioning the word kosher.¹¹² *Second Helpings, Please!* even includes a poem about the difference between meat and dairy meals: "Dairy dishes are a treat/From the usual meal of

meat./Serve a dairy dish today/And "Second helpings!" they will say."¹¹³ *The Rochester Hadassah Cookbook*, first printed in 1972, has a warning in the introduction for "readers who keep the dietary laws."¹¹⁴ Once again, the readers are not assumed to be kosher, but to have at least some familiarity with Jewish cuisine and even Jewish dietary laws. The kosher readers are warned to check their products for labels that indicate that the foods in question have been approved as kosher by rabbinical certification.¹¹⁵ *A Treasure for my Daughter* provides detailed information about how to kasher a chicken.¹¹⁶ *The Art of Jewish Cooking* includes this warning: "in this book you will find some recipes which specify the use of either butter or fat. If you wish to cook according to strict dietary observances, you will cook such dishes with fat if they are to accompany meat, with butter if they accompany dairy products."¹¹⁷ Finally, and perhaps most amusingly, the B'nai B'rith *Woman's Work Agenda* for 1967 contains an advertisement for fresh lobster and other seafood, something that is most definitely not kosher.¹¹⁸

As I learned through my interviews, there are perhaps as many different ways of being kosher as there are Jews. Some individuals did not keep kosher in any sense of the word. Others did not keep kosher, but would buy only kosher meat. Some did not keep kosher, but would not mix meat and milk, nor consume any pork product. Others would eat bacon, but would not mix meat and milk. Many of these individuals would purchase kosher-for-Passover products during Passover, but many did not. Many kept kosher in the strictest sense of the word, usually with four sets of dishes and two of each appliance (one each for milk and meat, and another two sets for Passover). Some who kept kosher would not eat outside of the house. Others would keep kosher inside the home only, and would eat non-kosher foods outside of the home. Sometimes these individuals would not eat pork products or mix meat and milk outside the home. Others would. Some kept kosher only outside of the home, to ensure that their foods have been prepared

in a hygienic way. Others who kept kosher would eat non-kosher foods in the house, but only so long as they were served on disposable dishes and cutlery, or straight from the serving container. And there are still more variations.¹¹⁹

Aside from debates over the extent to which one should keep kosher, my participants felt that the relationship between keeping kosher and being Jewish was contentious. Most of the people I interviewed said that it was an individual choice, and that one cannot impose viewpoints. The rest generally fell into one of two camps: those who did not keep kosher and looked down on others who did, saying that it was an out-dated customs and those who did keep kosher and felt like they were discriminated against because they did. Beth tied her views on keeping kosher to debates over what it means to be a good Jew. Beth was raised in a Reform Temple. In her view, very traditional Jews (those who attend Conservative and Orthodox synagogues) judge other Jews based on their observance of dietary laws. She felt that this was quite hypocritical, as many of her critics did not keep kosher inside of the home:

You don't keep kosher yeah yeah yeah but I think I'm a better Jew thing you are. When it's okay to go, like saying hail Marys, you go on Saturday morning shul and you absolve yourself of all your sins and go to eat pizza outside and you eat Chinese food outside, but you're a good Jew [...] I'm no worse a Jew than I think than you are [...].

I mean it's fine if you want to do it. I don't. I believe if you're going to do it, you do it. There's no half ass. [...] I don't think that being a Jew has anything to do with being kosher or not kosher. And I know kosher means clean and I know where kashrut started and it was a great idea when it started, but I think we've evolved and I think dishwashers and china and porcelain have made the difference, And don't tell me that you're a better Jew because you keep kosher. I can't stand the hypocrisy.¹²⁰

On the other side of the story, others felt that they were discriminated against for keeping kosher. Renata was born in Montreal in 1941, making her sixty-seven at the time of her

interview. Her parents were also born in Montreal, while her grandparents originated in Eastern Europe. She considered herself an Orthodox Jew that was strictly observant and kept a kosher home. Renata was invited to wedding in the 1970s. She declined the invitation because the dinner would not be kosher. She felt that her relatives treated her unfairly as a result:

And they called me up, and I have to tell you they gave me such, to put it mildly shit, because how could I even, what kind of nonsense was this. I said, well this is my belief. If you don't like it. [...] They made such a production out of it. [The] reason they made such a production because I said we do not eat anything out and they turned and said to me well the rabbi who's officiating at our wedding was going to eat and I said about his privilege, that something that my husband and I don't do. And they were very a very insulted. [...] They also said do you know what you're missing out by not eating a hamburger at McDonald's or not eating a cheeseburger [...]

What upset me was the fact they told me [...] it I was the one with the problem and that to me and [...] everybody's entitled to their own way [...] you do yours let me do mine after that we can be friends. [...] There is a lot of intolerance when it comes to people who are kosher [...] if their families are not all the same. people that aren't are sometimes very judgmental because they don't understand why someone who is will say well I can't eat this or I can't eat that and I can't go here and I can't go there. They don't try and see it from another point of view or another perspective or if there's some way we can accommodate each other.¹²¹

In both of these quotations, the issues of whether or not one keeps kosher is always related to being Jewish. Beth talks about how she has been judged in the past as being not Jewish, and not a good Jew, because she does not keep kosher. She is quite vehement in asserting that she thinks that her status as Jew has no bearing on whether or not she keeps kosher. She also ridicules those who do keep kosher, saying that this is unnecessary and an out-dated custom. Renata on the other hand points to her being kosher as a point of contention among Jews. She says that other Jews are frequently intolerant of Jews who are kosher, that they discriminate against them and refuse to accommodate simple requests. She dislikes other Jews saying that she

is simply being difficult, and pitying her for not having ever had a hamburger. She also has a problem with the suggestion that if the food is good enough for a rabbi, shouldn't it be good enough for her? The suggestion is that she thinks she is a better Jew than everyone else, including the rabbi.

Being kosher was an issue that divided the community when it came to the Sixth Annual Women's Community Conference. The conference was held on April 3, 1962 at the Sheraton-Mount Royal Hotel and organized by the Women's Federation of the Combined Jewish Appeal.¹²² Maurice S. Cohen, President of The Board of Jewish Ministers of Greater Montreal wrote a stern letter to Mr. Monroe Abbey, President of the Combined Jewish Appeal. The subject of this letter was the issue of kosher catering at the conference. This is what Rabbi Cohen had to say on behalf of his organization:

It is the position of the Board of Jewish Ministers that, as a matter of principle, all meals associated with a public Jewish function and sponsored by a community agency should be kosher catered. We feel that the importance of Kashrut, in the light of communal self-discipline and responsibility, transcends the significance of this particular event. As devoted friends of the Combined Jewish Appeal we believe that the observance of Jewish dietary laws will only gain greater stature and respect as well as a more devoted following for the cause.¹²³

Mr. Abbey responded to Rabbi Cohen on April 4, 1961. He noted that "General surprise was expressed that this issue should have been raised in view of the fact that the women had arranged for a fish luncheon with a fresh fruit plate as an alternative and this had in the past, been acceptable to all segments of the community."¹²⁴ He further noted only one out of thirty-one representatives from women's organizations in the city requested a kosher meal.

In line with Rabbi Cohen's letter, there was a call issued to the Montreal Sisterhoods to boycott the conference. The Women's Branch of the Montreal Chapter of the Union of Orthodox

Jewish Congregations of America decided to attend the conference. They cited communications from the conference organizers who feared that the boycott would jeopardize the success of their endeavour. Instead, the conference organizers suggested that a meeting discussing kosher catering policy would be called. In the end, the Women's Branch notified all other sisterhoods in the city that "we have decided it would be in order for us to attend this function and NOT STAY FOR THE LUNCHEON PERIOD."¹²⁵

Unfortunately, this is the only information that I could find on the subject. But even from these small hints, the issue of whether or not to keep kosher was deeply divisive. While some community leaders felt that keeping kosher was an important part of being Jewish and fighting assimilation, others were not as concerned. Instead, they provided an option that was, if not kosher, generally in line with Jewish dietary laws. While the issue was a deal-breaker for the rabbis of Montreal, the Sisterhoods felt that an accommodation could easily be reached. For instance, those who did keep kosher could decline to eat lunch.

There is a subtle tension between individuals of different religious observance over the issue of keeping kosher that adds another dimension to the project of creating a "Jewish community of Montreal." Whether or not one keeps kosher or the extent to which one does, is an acceptable variation in Jewish-Canadian identity. Both Beth and Renata recognize that other individuals are Jews whether or not they keep kosher. However, this variation creates subgroups within the model, groups that are often at odds with each other over the legitimacy of their type of Jewishness. While one's identity as a Jew was not questioned when it came to keeping kosher, it often determined whether someone was a "good" or a "bad" Jew, and this way was often central to conflict between Jewish individuals.

Conclusion

The "Jewishness" described in Canadian Jewish community cookbooks from Montreal by local elites has a distinct character. In essence, these cookbooks were key in the ethnic-group making projects of the local elites. For established Jewish-Canadians, their culture was outwardly modern, middle-class and Canadian, building on links to ancient and modern Israel. As they orient themselves toward the Biblical past and modern Israel, their espousal of middle-class North American values points to their desire to affirm their Canadian-ness. In this respect, they created a tripartite identity: Jewish, Israeli, and Canadian. In writing these cookbooks, the editors felt that they were asserting the primacy of their own brand of Judaism and saving the Jewish people as a whole. However, this cultural identity is at odds with the Eastern European origin of the authors, which is not explicitly acknowledged. Many of the recipes contained in the cookbooks implicitly reference this heritage in that they originate in the humble and filling foods of the Old World. These contradictions between the outward middle-class Canadian-ness and the underlying Eastern European recipes both reflects and informs tensions between various groups in the Jewish community of Montreal. While each group struggled to determine for itself what it meant to be Jewish in Canada and in Montreal, they came into conflict over which ideal would be representative. In the end, the elites of Montreal established its version of Jewish-Canadian identity, based largely on their strength in numbers and their propaganda. Over time, this conception became normalized to the extent that it became ubiquitous. The effectiveness of this is such that even today, when the average person is asked what they believe Jewish foods, they will answer matzah soup, bagels, and smoked meat sandwiches, all Eastern European dishes. All other forms of cooking were exoticized or excluded, though many in the community resisted these characterizations and sought to define for themselves what Jewish foods were.

Rather than being static, identity, tradition, and "authenticity" are constantly being negotiated and renegotiated. That being said, the orthodoxy in *A Treasure for my Daughter* continued to play a role, even if this role is limited to nostalgia. The fact that I have recently received my own copy of the most recent edition of *A Treasure for my Daughter* from my mother points to its continued importance in the Montreal Jewish community and the success of the 1950s orthodoxy. According to this copy, as of 2001, *A Treasure for my Daughter* was in its thirteenth printing.

¹ Susan Schwartz, "8 Days of Matzo Brei," *The Montreal Gazette*, March 28, 2007.

² Gerald Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews: A People's Journey* (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 19.

³ For more information, please see Joanne Meyerowitz, ed., *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994).

⁴ For some examples of other scholarship on related topics that I found useful, please see: Michel and Ellen Desjardin, "The Role of Food in Canadian Forms of Christianity: Continuity and Change," *Edible Histories, Cultural Politics: Towards a Canadian Food History*, eds Franca Iacovetta, Marlene Epp, and Valerie Korinek. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, forthcoming 2011); Jennifer R. Horner, "Betty Crocker's Picture Cookbook: A Gendered Ritual Response to Social Crises of the Postwar Era," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 24, no. 3 (2000): 332-345; Harvey Levenstein, *Paradox of Plenty: A Social History of Eating in Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Karal Ann Marling, "Betty Crocker's Picture Cook Book: The Aesthetics of American Food in the 1950s," *Prospects* 17 (1992): 79-103; Rafia Zafar, "The Signifying Dish: Autobiography and History in Two Black Women's Cookbooks," *Feminist Studies* 25, no. 2 (1999): 449-469; Stephen Mennell, Anne Murcott, and Anneke H. van Otterloo, *The Sociology of Food: Eating, Diet, and Culture* (London: Sage, 1994); and Margaret Visser, *Much Depends on Dinner: The Extraordinary History and Mythology, Allure and Obsessions, Perils and Taboos, of an Ordinary Meal* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986).

⁵ Carol Bardenstein, "Transmissions Interrupted: Reconfiguring Food, Memory, and Gender in the Cookbook-Memoirs of Middle Eastern Exiles," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society* 28, no. 1 (Autumn 2002): 353.

⁶ Franca Iacovetta and Valerie J. Korinek, "Jello-O Salads, One-Stop Shopping, and Maria the Homemaker: The Gender Politics of Good," in *Sisters or Strangers? Immigrant, Ethnic, and Racialized Women in Canadian History*, ed. Marlene Epp, Franca Iacovetta, and Frances Swyripa (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 196.

⁷ Jennie Grossinger, *The Art of Jewish Cooking* (New York: Random House, 1958), viii.

⁸ Jennie Grossinger, *The Art of Jewish Cooking*. xi.

- ⁹ Bessie W. Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter: a Reference Book of Jewish Festivals with Menus and Recipes* (Montreal: The Ethel Epstein Ein Chapter of Hadassah Montreal Canada; The Eagle, 1952), 59.
- ¹⁰ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter*, 19, emphasis added.
- ¹¹ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter*, 19.
- ¹² Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter*, 59.
- ¹³ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter*, 17.
- ¹⁴ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter*, 19.
- ¹⁵ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter*, 23.
- ¹⁶ Paula E. Hyman, *Gender and Assimilation in Modern Jewish History: the Roles and Representation of Women* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995), 17.
- ¹⁷ Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), 19.
- ¹⁸ Doug Owsram, *Born at the Right Time: a History of the Baby-Boom Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 19.
- ¹⁹ Gerald Tulchinsky, *Branching Out: The Transformation of the Canadian Jewish Community* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1998), 282-283.
- ²⁰ Sydney Stahl Weinberg, *The World of Our Mothers: The Lives of Jewish Immigrant Women* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 111.
- ²¹ Weinberg, *The World of Our Mothers*, 114.
- ²² Weinberg, *The World of Our Mothers*, 116.
- ²³ Weinberg, *The World of Our Mothers*, 116.
- ²⁴ Interview 15, interview by author, November 10, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ²⁵ Interview 1, interview by author, October 15, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ²⁶ Interview 2, interview by author, October 15, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ²⁷ Interview 7, interview by author, October 29, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ²⁸ For example, see interview 3, interview by author, October 26, 2008, interview 16, interview by author, November 10, 2008, Montreal, Quebec, interview 17, interview by author, November 11, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ²⁹ Interview 7, interview by author, October 29, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ³⁰ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter*, xi.
- ³¹ B'nai Brith Women of Canada, *Second Helpings, Please!* (Montréal: Mount Sinai Chapter #1091 B'nai Brith Women of Canada, 1967), iii.
- ³² B'nai Brith Women of Canada, *Second Helpings, Please!*, iii.
- ³³ Nancy Gutterman, email message to author, August 29, 2007. It should be noted that this information was provided by her daughter, and may or may not be an accurate representation.
- ³⁴ Nancy Gutterman, email message to author, August 29, 2007
- ³⁵ Nancy Gutterman, email message to author, August 29, 2007
- ³⁶ Nancy Gutterman, email message to author, August 29, 2007
- ³⁷ Nancy Gutterman, email message to author, August 29, 2007
- ³⁸ Tulchinsky, *Branching Out: The Transformation of the Canadian Jewish Community*, 151.
- ³⁹ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter*, 48.
- ⁴⁰ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter*, 22.

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- ⁴¹ Lillian Shoub and National Council of Jewish Women of Canada, *Wonders of the Palate: a Collection of Favourite Recipes* ([Montreal: National Council of Jewish Women of Canada, 1966), 202.
- ⁴² Interview 20, interview by author, November 12, 2009, Montreal, Quebec.
- ⁴³ The Torah is accepted a largely fact by mostly Orthodox and Conservative groups. Reform Jews may or may not believe that the Torah's version of history is fact.
- ⁴⁴ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter*, 21.
- ⁴⁵ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter*, 57.
- ⁴⁶ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter*, 59.
- ⁴⁷ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter*, 23-24.
- ⁴⁸ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter*, 23.
- ⁴⁹ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter*, 22.
- ⁵⁰ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter*, 22.
- ⁵¹ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter*, 48.
- ⁵² Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter*, 54.
- ⁵³ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter*, 36.
- ⁵⁴ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter*, 58.
- ⁵⁵ Owrarn, *Born at the Right Time*, 52-53.
- ⁵⁶ Owrarn, *Born at the Right Time*, 162.
- ⁵⁷ Owrarn, *Born at the Right Time*, 45.
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- ¹¹⁶ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter*, 9.
- ¹¹⁷ Grossinger, *The Art of Jewish Cooking*, vi.
- ¹¹⁸ CJCCCNA ZF B.B. Publications Box 1, Montreal B'nai Brith Women, "Advertisement," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1967, 136.
- ¹¹⁹ This subject came up in nearly every interview. Some examples include interview 1, interview by author, October 15, 2008, Montreal, Quebec; interview 7, interview by author, October 29, 2008, Montreal, Quebec; interview 12, interview by author, November 4, 2008, Montreal, Quebec; and interview 27, interview by author, November 21, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
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Chapter Three: Looking Jewish: The Embodiment of Gender, Class, and Ethnicity

Over the course of my life, many people have told me that I do not look Jewish. Many people assume that my olive-toned skin means that I am Spanish, Italian, or Greek in origin. I have also been told that I do not sound Jewish, that my accent is more reminiscent of southern Ontario than Montreal's Jewish community. Over the course of my interviews, this subject kept coming up; my interviewees repeated what I have heard countless times. The subject of "looking Jewish" seemed to be very important to them. Some sympathized, claiming that those around them did not believe they were Jewish. Sarah confided, "a lot of people take me as Italian." When she asked them why, they would never be able to answer.¹ Karen similarly commented, "When you look at me [...] you wouldn't necessarily think I was Jewish, red headed, freckles." Karen insisted, "I don't consider myself looking ethnic."² These remarks have left me wondering, what does it mean to "look" Jewish?

While body history remains a relatively new field in Canadian scholarship, important work has been done on the mapping of gender onto children's bodies and the mapping of colonization and oppression onto indigenous bodies. The history of the body as a site for the construction of ethnic identities has not yet been developed in Canada. The fact remains that certain physical traits have become intuitively associated with specific ethnic or cultural groups, and bodies are then classified and coded according to these features. Further, the ways in which individuals from inside a particular group understand identifiers and apply them to others shows the complex layering of the meanings of physical difference.

In this chapter, I examine how Jewish Canadian identity was inscribed and negotiated on the bodies of Jewish women in Montreal in the 1950s, 60s and 70s. Jewish women of Eastern

European heritage often had a fraught relationship with their own bodies and difficulty determining how they fit into the Canadian model. This problem was further compounded with the influx in the late 1950s of Jewish women of Moroccan descent and Hassidic women from Eastern Europe. These immigrants complicated the question yet again of what Jewish Canadian women looked like and what made them beautiful. Many Montreal Jewish women turned to cosmetic procedures in order to "pass" as white or Anglo-Canadian, seeking refuge in plastic surgery, diet and exercise regimes, and beauty treatments. Their desire was not simply to look beautiful, but to look "normal." Using magazines, films, diet books and oral histories, I explore how these women both concealed and revealed their difference and sameness, how "Jewishness" and "Whiteness" are embodied, coded, and mapped onto the body, and the complexity of Jewish Canadian bodily identity in postwar Montreal.

Historiography

Despite this being a relatively new field, a number of important works in Canada have explored body history and body theory.³ While body history continues to grow as a field in Canada, some interesting theories are coming out of the United States.⁴ Several works stand out with respect to what they can offer Canadian historians of the body. Kathy Davis' *Reshaping the Female Body: The Dilemma of Cosmetic Surgery* offers important insights into women's agency with respect to cosmetic surgery and their bodies in general. She comments on those who argue that women are victims of misogynistic messages about beauty or cultural dopes who will try and buy any new product to satisfy their vanity. Instead, she argues that individuals should be reinstated as active and knowledgeable agents who negotiated their lives in a context where their awareness is partial and the options limited by circumstances which are not of their making,

because people draw upon both shared and contradictory cultural discourses in order to make sense of and legitimate their actions.⁵

The integration of material and discursive approaches to body history is an important point for Kathleen Canning, in her now classic article, "The Body as Method? Reflections on the Place of the Body in Gender History." She argues that historians of the body need to be more aware of convergences of material and discursive elements of bodily inscription and embodiment. She analyzes historians who place undue emphasis on the discursive body (the imaginary body) without sufficient attention to how the material world also makes and marks bodies. Material bodies are too often taken for granted, under-theorized, or examined only in terms of resistance and subjection. She points to the concept of embodiment as a way out of this impasse, which allows historians to analyze how the material body and the discursive body inform and form each other.⁶

Bodies are important sites for the negotiation of identities, power and relationships, but are embedded in the ordinariness of everyday, material life. The concept of embodiment, defined here as the varied process through which bodies are made, marked, and imbued with meaning, is useful for historians who seek to understand how concepts like race, class, and gender are embedded and mapped onto bodies. This chapter will explore how gender, class, and ethnicity were mapped onto the bodies of Jewish women in Montreal. It will consider the questions: What does a Jewish woman look like? What is a beautiful Jewish woman? How do women themselves respond to ideals of beauty? What does it mean to look like a Canadian? What does it mean to have a "normal" body? How do women attempt to modify their bodies to conform to dominant ideas about normal bodies? Is this modification an indication of oppression or empowerment or both? What role do clothing, cosmetics, jewellery, hair products, and even surgery play with

respect to the formation of identity? How can women employ these methods to reshape their identities? What role does religion play, if any, with respect to embodiment? Are Jews white, non-white, or not-quite-white? And, can you really tell who is Jewish by sight alone?

White, Non-White, Not-Quite-White

Some of the first questions that arose in my mind were: what does it mean to look "white?" and "Are Jews white?" The invisibility of whiteness is key to answering these questions. As Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham reminds historians, race is a metalanguage, In "African- American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race" she argues that race has a "powerful, all-encompassing effect on the construction and representation of other social and power relations, namely, gender, class, and sexuality." ⁷ For Higginbotham, it is impossible to understand race without understanding how it acts and is acted upon by gender, class, and sexuality. Further, "Race not only tends to subsume other sets of social relations, namely gender and class, but it blurs and disguises, suppresses and negates its own complex interplay with the very social relations it envelops." ⁸

Despite this important theoretical work, whiteness remains extremely difficult to define. The question of just what "white" and "whiteness" means is one that has often been debated by historians. In *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness*, Ruth Frankenberg offers the following definition: "Whiteness [...] has a set of linked dimensions. First, whiteness is a location of structural advantage, of race privilege. Second, it is a "standpoint," a place from which white people look at ourselves, at others, and at society. Third, "whiteness" refers to a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed." ⁹ Whiteness is always socially constructed and historically specific. It is difficult to locate because the racial privilege enjoyed by white people permits "their seeming normativity, their structured

invisibility."¹⁰ In other words, being White is less a matter of appearance and more a matter of social, economic, and cultural dominance. Whiteness is reflective of the cultural and social attitudes and values of those individuals or groups who are in a position of power and have allowed them to become dominant. Because these attitudes belong to those in power, they become seen as "normal" or the accepted standard. This serves to erase or at least render invisible the structures through which one particular group has become socially, economically, and culturally dominant. And it is for this reason that Whiteness is so difficult to characterize. Because those who are socially, culturally, and economically dominant have shifted over time, the definition of Whiteness has shifted as well.

Frankenberg was one of the first historians to employ the term "whiteness." Over time, there emerged a new field, whiteness studies. Some of the pioneers in this area include David Roedinger, Matthew Frye Jacobson, and Thomas A. Guglielmo.¹¹ These studies are innovative in that they attempt to understand racial privilege by deconstructing the meaning of "whiteness." Rather than statements of essence (for example, that American is equivalent to white), the study of "whiteness" is about destabilizing racial categories by demonstrating that they, like other delineations of power, are always works-in-progress, always under construction. For these historians, race is not something that is essential or biological, but a social and cultural construction that is always ongoing. "Whiteness" is a story, not a stable or essential divide.

When Brubaker's concept of ethnic-group making is combined with "whiteness" theory, the creation of the category of "white" becomes a crucial part of group-making projects.¹² Ethnic-group projects often rely on the premise that members are inherently "different" from others around them. These "differences" are used to create a sense of solidarity, but their delineation also sets up the creation of a "normal" group identity. That is, when individuals in the

Jewish community of Montreal attempted to create an ethnic group, they tried to set themselves apart from other Canadians. While this served to create a sense of shared difference among Jews in Montreal, it also created the category of "Canadian." This category is considered the norm, the standard according to which all other ethnic identities in Canada are compared. This sets up an essentialist notion of "Canadian-ness," a category that contains racially privileged individuals. These individuals are seen as more "authentically" Canadian, as "normal," but also as "other" in comparison to the ethnic-group project that was the Jewish community of Montreal.

In the postwar period "whiteness" was often linked to American-ness or Canadian-ness and defining the Other, who is not fully American or Canadian. This process involved the creation of a dichotomy between American culture and Other culture. When asked about her cultural identity, one of Frankenberg's interviewees, Helen Standish, responded that "it didn't seem like a culture because everyone else was the same."¹³ When asked about Italian-Americans in her neighbourhood, she responded, "They are different, but I'm the same as everybody else. They speak Italian, but everybody else in the U.S. speaks English. They eat strange, different food, but I eat the same kind of food as everybody else in the U.S. [...] everybody who was the same as me were "American," and the other people were of "such and such descent."¹⁴ Helen has a very clear sense of the difference between Americans and others. As Frankenburg further notes, Helen believes that Americans are White. White, within this discursive repertoire, became conceptually the real Americans. Whiteness and Americanness both stood as normative and exclusive categories in relation to which other cultures were identified and marginalized.¹⁵

This distinction between Americans (or Canadians) and everyone else was also present in Canada. Aaron in particular spoke at length about the difference between Canadian and Other,

though he included himself in the category of Other. Aaron was born in Hungary in 1949, and immigrated to Canada in 1958 with his mother and his grandmother. This is what he had to say:

Because, we tend to kind of almost interbreed, in a sense, we tend not to diversify our looks. That's why we can still be identified as Jews by our looks. While you can have many women from Europe and it's hard to tell, where are you from. Are you from Sweden, Germany, Denmark, where are you from? There's tendencies. There are things. I can tell a Hungarian. [...] If you're really Jewish and really beautiful, you tend to have the dark, you won't look so-called Canadian. What is Canadian? Canadian, when someone describes Canadian, do they describe them as dark hair dark eyes? Tendencies is not to. Tendency is to think of a northern clime, having lighter hair, blue eyes, possibly, I think that, if you were to ask, what is a Canadian, that would stick out first, before the dark hair, dark eyes would.¹⁶

Aaron's testimony is significant because it establishes an understanding of whiteness at the place and time under study. Aaron describes authentic "Canadians" or "White people" as individuals of Northern European ancestry. However, as Frankenberg explains, these are imagined categories. "People in power" did not actually look like the image of "Canadians" that Aaron and other in this study present, blonde, blue-eyed, tall, thin, and pale people. However, this is how the Jews of Montreal *imagined* those individuals in power. This has important implications for Jewish self-understandings. When the women in this study sought to look "Canadian," they actually sought to look liked *imagined white people*, an image of the "white person" rather than "white people" specifically. It is the imaginings rather than the people itself that are important, specifically imaginings of the "Jewish woman," and the "white woman."

The racial positioning of Jews is very difficult to characterize. In *How Jews Became White Folks*, Karen Brodtkin argues that Jews have been typically distinguished by "racial middleness." Historically, while they have never truly been completely accepted as White, they have never quite belonged to the category of non-White either.¹⁷ Throughout the history of the

United States, Jews have been placed in both the white and non-white categories. The racial identification of Jews is often created through comparisons. While they may at times look White, they are never quite as White as Anglo-Saxons. On the other hand, they are not quite non-White either because their skin is sometimes fair. While it is undeniable that Jews have faced discrimination based on their race throughout their history, is it equally true that they have also enjoyed some of the privileges and powers held by “white” people in North American in the twentieth-century. While Brodtkin argues that the whitening of American Jews was accomplished through the adoption of middle class values at the instigation of community elite following economic success, I would argue that a similar principle was at work among Montreal Ashkenazi Jews.

The invisibility of Whiteness in historical texts, however, has meant that I have had to look for race between the lines. My examination of documents published by Jewish women’s organizations in Montreal and my interviews with Jewish women have revealed that racial terms seldom appear. However, I would argue that it is possible to trace the evolving racial identities of the Jewish women of Montreal through an analysis of class. For the Jewish women of Montreal, the adoption of middle class standards was a way of acquiring Whiteness. Higginbotham argues that until the Civil Rights era, race served as a metaphor for class. However, I would argue that class could serve equally as a metaphor for race, though probably only for “in-between” groups (ie. Jews rather than African-American). Because Whiteness is often invisible, assumed, and normalized, it is difficult to locate in historical documents. Higginbotham further argues marginalized groups have traditionally seen class as the key to social success:

‘Race work’ or ‘racial uplift’ equated normality with conformity to White middle-class models of gender roles and sexuality. [...] [M}any black women linked mainstream domestic duties, codes of dress, sexual conduct, and public etiquette with both individual

success and group progress. Black leaders argued that 'proper' and 'respectable' behavior proved blacks worthy of equal civil and political rights. Conversely, nonconformity was equated with deviance and pathology and was often cited as a cause of racial inequality and injustice.¹⁸

Class can serve as a useful way to problematize the construction of Whiteness and its normalization. Class is always intimately tied to race, and while Jewish women came from a different ethnic background from Anglo-Protestant women, they could, to a certain, extent “pass” as Canadian through the embodiment of middle class ideals. Looking “middle class” and looking “Canadian” are related concepts. Thus, the key to understanding how Ashkenazi Jewish women sought to look “Canadian” and/or “White” is to look at their embodiment of middle-class-ness.

In sum, Whiteness and Americanness were linked to the extent that Americans are White, and Whites are American, and they set the standards for normality. People who were not-quite-White were not-quite-Americans, and firmly marked as Other. This serves to exclude people who are not-quite-white and not-quite-American from the category of "normal." The same principle can be seen in Canada, where Whiteness and Canadianness are inextricably linked in such a way that they are normalized.

Shikse Goddess Beauty

It has recently been argued that beauty is racialized as White in North America. Kathy Peiss's “Making Faces: The Cosmetics Industry and the Cultural Construction of gender, 1890-1930,” argues this point by demonstrating how cosmetics companies would sometimes promote their products by linking whiteness to social success and upward mobility. Makeup could be “a means of acquiring a whiteness that connoted gentility, female domesticity, ‘protection’ from labor, the exacting standards of the elite and Anglo-Saxon superiority.”¹⁹ Similarly, in *Hair*

Raising: Beauty, culture, and African American Women, Noliwe M. Rooks looks at the pressure that many African American women felt to conform to white standards of beauty, including using hair straighteners to make their hair less "kinky."²⁰ Finally, Laila Hairdarali's "Polishing Brown Diamonds" argues that when African American models first broke into the modeling industry, their race was often erased and they were made to look white.²¹

Racialized beauty was also part of the cultural atmosphere of the Jews of Montreal in the postwar period. Beauty was perceived as conforming to the imagined "white woman," seen as a woman with blonde hair and blue eyes who was also tall and thin. Several women in my study referred to this as the *shikse* look. *Shikse* is a Yiddish term that is generally translated to mean a non-Jewish woman. The term *shikse* often has a negative connotation, suggesting that non-Jewish women are immoral, loose, and "not kosher" (unclean). For example, one scholar remarked that: "the shiksa [sic] obsesses many Jews: rabbis see her as an intermarital threat to the survival of Judaism; parents fear that she will lure their sons away from family and faith; and Jewish men fantasize about her sexual and social desirability."²² In "The Quest for the Ultimate *Shiksa*," Frederic Cople Jaher analyses the appeal of *shiksas* to Jewish men. He notes that Christian women appeal to Jewish men as "exotic sirens, *femme fatales*, humble servants, Christian saints, victims, and American goddesses."²³ The *shikse* is desired because she is exotic: "the exotic female in Jewish life is the sexy *shikse*, frequently a blue-eyed blonde who offers gratifications withheld, at least until marriage, by proper Jewish girls. She is the analogue of the "Oriental Jewess," that sensual, mysterious brunette in western culture often contrasted with the duller but more serene Christian women."²⁴ According to Jaher, the *shikse* is desirable not just because of her physical appearance, but because *shiksas* are "tickets into American society"²⁵ for Jewish men who "desperately seek assimilation."²⁶ The acquisition of the *shikse* goddess is a

status symbol, a symbol of the rise to middle-class society. In some cases, as we will see in the examples below, the term *shikse* could connote someone with black hair or red hair. The *shikse* image posed a particular problem for Jewish women who had any combination of blonde hair, blue eyes, and tall and thin bodies. Just as it served to describe the imagined "white woman," it also established Jewish women who conformed physically to this image as not truly Jewish.

Aviva was born in Israel (then Palestine) in 1939, making her sixty-nine at the time of this interview. She moved to Montreal as a student in 1957, and eventually settled down with a Montreal-born Jewish husband. Her parents were university educated Ashkenazi Jews, and she identified as an Ashkenazi Jew. She was highly educated, going on to earn a Master's degree. When I asked Aviva if she thought it was possible to identify a Jew on sight, she laughed, and admitted that while this was possible most of the time, she refused to admit that it was true in principle. She then continued: "Do I look Jewish? Go to Israel, you have blonde, blue-eyes, you've got red hair, freckles, I mean, it's completely stupid." In her denial of "Jewdar,"²⁷ she clearly pinpoints certain physical characteristics as stereotypically non-Jewish: blonde hair, blue eyes, red hair, and freckles.²⁸

Elaine was born in Montreal in 1944 and was sixty-four at the time of this interview. She was a second-generation Jewish Canadian. Her grandparents were of Russian and Polish origin. Elaine described a meeting with her husband's uncle and how he questioned her Jewishness: "Because Andrew's late uncle, I don't know if he was referring to me or somebody Andrew went out with. He said, blonde hair, and she's tall. Is she a *shikse*?[...] You're a *shikse* if you have blonde hair and you're tall."²⁹ Sharon was born in Montreal 1952, making her fifty-six at the time of her interview. She identified as a second-generation Canadian. Her parents were born in Montreal, while her grandparents came to Canada from Vienna and Odessa. When she was

growing up, her family was strictly working-class. Her husband's family was considerably wealthier than hers was, so she saw herself as marrying into middle-class respectability. Sharon used very similar language to describe an encounter with her sister's future mother-in-law. When I asked her about racialized beauty, this is how she responded:

You mean shikse goddess beauty? [...] I suppose in the media [they] portray this exotic look, the Hebrew look or whatever.[...] It's not like it was then. Most guys then wanted to go for the shikse goddess. I think, my sister and I we both have blonde hair and blue eyes, so we go at the time to over to [her]future mother-in-law, she says [...] Is she a shikse? I said loudly, NO, I'm NOT a shikse.³⁰

The fact that Jewish men are seen as wanting to date *shiksas* emphasizes the implied association between beauty and imagined "white women." However, the use of the term by Sharon's mother-in-law is entirely negative, implying that she does not believe Sharon's Jewish identity because of her looks.

Dana thought that the idea of telling someone's ethnicity by looks alone was racist. Dana was born in Montreal in 1936 and was seventy-two at the time of this interview. Her parents had immigrated to Canada as young adults from Russia. Both parents were Orthodox Jews. As a child, Dana became involved in left-wing politics, joining the Communist party at the age of twelve. And in her case, she was often tormented as a child for having blonde hair and blue eyes: "I mean, when I was a kid, people used to say, I'd go in a store, and they'd call their partner, Moishe come quick! Look at this little girl! She has blue eyes and black hair. Well, apparently that's not very Jewish. I should have had brown eyes and a beaky nose, but I don't."

Donna was born in Montreal, but she did not tell me her exact age. Based on her interview, she appears to have been born in the late 1940s or early 1950s. Her parents were born in Montreal, but she was raised by her grandparents, immigrants from the Ukraine. As a child,

she had almost no contact with non-Jews. Donna told me that she grew up hearing the term *shikse*: "Well, there are the Jews and the *shikses*. You know, I grew up with people from the *shtetl*, so it was very clear as to who was Jewish and who wasn't. And it wasn't the best of terms, but yeah. I heard it, and I knew what it meant." She then told me about how one day, some Chabad emissaries came to her door to convince her, as a secular Jew, to become Orthodox. She was very insulted when they spoke together in Yiddish, speculating if she was Jewish or not: "Coming from the Chabad, it was an insult. Because they didn't think I was Jewish."

In each case, there is a clear distinction between women who look "Jewish" and those who look "not Jewish." Features that mark individuals as not-Jewish are those that are typically associated with individuals of Anglo-Saxon heritage: blonde (or in one case, black) hair and blue eyes. The term *shikse* implies that non-Jewish women are dangerous, because beautiful non-Jewish women "steal" Jewish men from their "rightful" partners, Jewish women. As I noted earlier, non-Jews are inscribed with Anglo-Saxon features: the term *shikse* is usually used to refer to a woman who has blue eyes, blonde hair, and is slender. This "look" is understood in contrast to the "Jewish look," which is defined as having brown hair, brown eyes, and sometimes a large nose.

The idea that Jewish features are not beautiful is particularly apparent in contemporary attitudes towards noses. At the time of this writing, there is really only one publication that deals in any depth with the subject of Jewish women and nose jobs, Bernice Schrank's "Cutting off your nose to spite your race." Schrank, an English professor at Memorial University, makes the important point that "In correcting a perceived facial abnormality, rhinoplasty perpetuates a racialized aesthetic in which features regarded as typically Anglo-Saxon are considered not only more acceptable, but more beautiful than those of ethnics and non-whites."³¹

My discussions with Jewish women bore this out. Miriam was born in Hungary in 1947, and arrived in Canada at the age of ten, in 1957. She was sixty-one at the time of her interview. She entered the English public school system shortly after her arrival in Montreal, and learned to speak English very quickly. She remembers her early years in Canada as a time of hardship. She attended high school and a few years of university before embarking on her career. Miriam described how many girls she knew growing up had nose jobs. When asked why she thought girls would want this procedure, she insisted that it wasn't because they didn't want to look Jewish. It was because they wanted to be beautiful:

Interviewer: What have you heard about Jewish women having nose jobs?

Interviewee: Absolutely! [Laughter] My cousin had one, and [Eva]! [...] She's very proud of her nose, so's my cousin! My other girlfriend's daughter also. [...]

Interviewer: Is there a reason they get this done?

Interviewee: They don't like their hooked nose. [Laughter] Not to do anything with Judaism. They don't like their appearance. They don't like their noses. Whether it's Jewish, Italian, Greek, whatever, you know, they don't like their nose.³²

Sarah was born in Montreal in 1937 to a Welsh mother and a Czechoslovakian father. She was seventy-one at the time of her interview. Her parents died in a car crash when she was very young, so her grandparents and her aunt raised her. Sarah finished grade nine and three years of business school. She has worked in a number of fields over the years, primarily doing secretarial work. Sarah remembered many girls getting nose jobs, particularly when her daughter was younger. But she insisted that it was "[b]ecause they don't like the hump, but they never mention religion just that they don't like the hump. Not because it's Jewish, just ugly."³³ Aaron told me that he knew several women who had had nose jobs: "There was one friend of ours [...]"

She needed it desperately. She had the ugliest freakin' nose you ever saw. [...] It was not a Jewish nose; it was just an ugly nose. But there were several, several girls I remember in high school that had nose jobs. That was not unusual."³⁴

In each one of these cases, my interviewees insisted repeatedly, that having a nose job was not about having a "Jewish nose," per se, but having an "ugly nose." But this disavowal only strengthens the association between Jewish and ugly. By the postwar period, Jewish women in Montreal had internalized Anglo-Saxon conventions of beauty. Physical characteristics that referenced Anglo-Saxon heritage, blond hair, blue eyes, had become coded as beautiful, while physical characteristics that referenced Eastern European Jewish heritage, large noses in particular, had been coded as not beautiful and even ugly.

However, the desire for cosmetic surgery is not necessarily an indication of female oppression, or even internalization of White standards of beauty. Instead, it can also be indicative of wanting to participate more fully in ethnic standards of beauty. For example, Taeyon Kim's dissertation, "The Moving Eye: From Cold War Racial Subject to Middle Class Cosmopolitan Korean Cosmetic Eyelid Surgery, 1955-2001" examines eyelid surgery among Korean immigrants to the United States and Korean-Americans. She argues that while on the one hand, eyelid surgery was based on ideas about White beauty, other women who underwent the procedure felt that it reinforced their identity as diasporic Koreans. The women interviewed in this study rationalized that the procedure brought them closer to their Korean roots, as the procedure was increasingly common among middle-class Koreans in Korea.³⁵ In this sense, cosmetic surgery is both oppressive and empowering.

The same potentially holds true for nose jobs. While it is clear that the preponderance of nose jobs among Jewish women in Montreal in the postwar period is an indication of in the

desire to appear "Canadian", it could also be a way for Jewish women to conform more closely to middle-class Jewish identity. The nose job came to be a powerful symbol of one's Canadianness and middle-class status, but also a symbol of "Jewishness" due to its growing popularity among Jewish women. While Miriam, Sarah, and Aaron all note that women who had undergone nose jobs seemed to be proud of their noses, their emphasis on the nose job itself suggests a deeper meaning. None of the women who had undergone nose jobs tried to hide the fact that they had undergone a cosmetic surgical procedure. In fact, the medical procedure is almost flaunted. None of my interviewees speculated about individuals who may have undergone nose jobs. Instead, they are quickly able to identify specific individuals who underwent the procedure. This suggests that while these women may have been proud of their noses, they were equally proud of their nose jobs. The fact that their families were able to afford a medical procedure for cosmetic reasons (rather than a medical necessity) was a powerful indicator of middle-class affluence.

In *Reshaping the Female Body*, Davis examines the motivations among women to apply for cosmetic surgery. Her findings reveal that most individuals who desired cosmetic surgery wanted it not because they necessarily wanted to look beautiful, because they wanted to look "normal."³⁶ She devotes an entire chapter to the experiences of one woman, Diana, a high school teacher in her mid-thirties.³⁷ Throughout her life, she had been mercilessly teased for having a protruding jaw. After much deliberation, she eventually chose to undergo cosmetic surgery.³⁸ Diana's face was almost entirely reconstructed, "her jaw shortened, her chin and nose altered, and her teeth fixed."³⁹ When she finally returned to work, she recalled how many of her colleagues no longer recognized her, and looked right past her. She recounts:

What I noticed right away was that no one noticed me. Now that was a great feeling, let me tell you. I realize that more and more.

*Finally, nobody is there looking at me. Not a single kid who yells something at me. That was the first thing I noticed after the surgery and I was really glad. [...] I don't have to look like a movie star or anything. It's just ... well, it's a nice face now ... that's the main thing, I'm just ordinary.*⁴⁰

Davis explains that cosmetic surgery was more than simply an invasive procedure designed by a misogynistic culture to control women. In a very real sense, it allowed women like Diana to control their own bodies, to become "embodied subjects," by making their bodies match how they see themselves inside. As she notes:

*Cosmetic surgery is not about beauty, but about identity. For a woman who feels trapped in a body which does not fit her sense of who she is, cosmetic surgery becomes a way to renegotiate identity through her body. Cosmetic surgery is about exercising power under conditions which are not of one's own making. In a context of limited possibilities for action, cosmetic surgery can be a way for an individual woman to give shape to her life by reshaping her body.*⁴¹

This same principle applies to the Jewish women of Montreal. Jewish noses were, and still are, markers of difference, features that set Jewish women apart from the rest of the Canadian population. Because Jewish noses are different, they are ugly. In desiring rhinoplasty, Jewish women sought to look more normal, to look like everyone else, to look Canadian. And the popularity of this procedure among young Jewish women was such that it was recognized as a common sweet sixteen present for Jewish girls in Montreal throughout the period in question.⁴² The goal was not beauty, to blend in, to appear as "normal" or "Canadian" as possible.

The view of Jewishness as ugly extended beyond the face to the body itself. Jewish foods were increasingly perceived as unhealthy foods that caused weight gain. Before the 1960s, Jewish foods were generally seen to be quite healthy. In *A Treasure for my Daughter*, a

significant cookbook from the Jewish community of Montreal, praises Jewish foods as being the key to good health. As one of the narrators of this cookbook notes, "The dietary laws, Hadassah, are the foundation on which the Jewish home is built and have been an important factor in the preservation of the Jewish race. [...] A healthy soul in a healthy body is its ideal."⁴³ In a number of places, kosher foods are consistently described as the key to the health and success of the Jewish peoples.⁴⁴ And indeed, historically, Jewish dietary laws have proven to be a factor in the typically low infant mortality rates that have characterized Jewish populations in the Western World.

In her studies on Jewish mothers in East London, Lara Marks notes that Jewish dietary laws stressed the importance of personal hygiene and general cleanliness, particularly about the proper handling and storage of foods.⁴⁵ These rituals, which identified foods as kosher, or clean, "weighed heavily against the consumption of infected food, but also necessitated the separation of milk and meat utensils and called for a high degree of cleanliness of implements."⁴⁶ Thus, the problems encountered by other working-class households concerning the preparation and storage of foods was to some extent eliminated by Jewish rituals.

Despite these earlier associations, from the late 1950s and onward, Jewish food acquired a reputation in Montreal as being unhealthy. In *Second Helpings, Please!*, the various recipes sections are prefaced with a small poem related to the contents. Many of them contain allusions to healthy eating, dieting, and losing weight. For instance, the sections on cakes and other desserts contain a warning "So you people on a diet,/Read this chapter - but don't try it! ,"⁴⁷ and "Oh well, another few pounds to lose."⁴⁸ Perhaps the best illustration appears in the preface to the section on Jewish recipes for the holidays. The poem is as follows:

Our holidays come throughout the year,

Each with its own tradition.

The food we serve is plentiful -

No lack of good nutrition!

We always say, "There's not enough!"

And so we cook some more.

All eat with gusto and delight

And then roll out the door.⁴⁹

This poem is an illustration of a Jewish comedic trope. There is a recognition that Jewish food is heavy and unhealthy, but it is part of the culture, and many people like to make light of it as a result. In many ways, this is a fatalistic attitude, but one that is met with humour rather than simply resignation. Many of the respondents echoed this idea, and noted that they felt that Jewish cooking was unhealthy because it was based on carbohydrates and fat. Others described how kosher dietary laws required the use of (unhealthy) chicken or beef fat instead of butter for bread and even baking when served with meat meals. Sarah noted that as she and her husband have gotten older, they have made more and more modifications to traditional Jewish recipes, reducing fats, sodium, and carbohydrates. For instance, she has adapted her grandmother's chicken soup recipe for modern sensibilities. She now boils the chicken in water first, to allow the fat to render and rise to the surface. She then removes the chicken, throws away the water, and starts again. This allows her to make traditional Jewish chicken noodle soup, but without as much *schmaltz*, or chicken fat. A number of different women have made similar alterations.⁵⁰

I will return to this subject later in this chapter. But for now, the omnipresence of dieting information and the emphasis on losing weight in publications from Jewish women in Montreal is a telling reminder that the current obsession with weight control and preventing obesity is nothing new. As with the *shikse* goddess look and rhinoplasty, the overwhelming preoccupation with weight points to the uneasy relationship that many Eastern European Jewish women had with their own bodies. These Eastern European bodies were consistently described as not beautiful, and at times ugly, because they did not conform to the idealized image of "Canadian" bodies. This ideal would become the standard sought by many Jewish women in Montreal in their desire to look beautiful and Canadian.

Soft, Sweet-Smelling, White Hands

Throughout Hadassah's *Orah* Magazine and B'nai B'rith's *Woman's Work Agendas*, Ashkenazi women are continually implored to embody middle-class values through their physical appearance, particularly with respect to fashion and jewellery. Nan Enstad and Kathy Peiss have both chronicled how women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries used clothes and cosmetics to create a new identity. Enstad dismisses claims that the fashion-obsessed working class women were simply vain, self-centred, or frivolous. Instead, she argues, caught between and excluded from the hegemonic ideals of middle class femininity and masculine worker, they fashioned for themselves a new identity that supported their political consciousness and action. They recreated themselves as working ladies through the adoption and exaggeration of middle-class styles of fashion and beauty, enabled largely through waged work and consumer culture.⁵¹ Similarly, Peiss' ground-breaking *Hope in a Jar* takes a serious look at the often belittled world of cosmetics. In particular, she is concerned with how cosmetics could be used as a tool of empowerment for women. In her words: "The possibility of transformation through

cosmetics is often belittled as a delusion, "hope in a jar" that only masks the fact of women's oppression. In truth, women knew then - as they do now - precisely what they are buying. [...]. Indeed, the pleasures of fantasy and desire were an integral part of the product."⁵²

In sum, the use of cosmetics and of fashion could enable women to alter their bodies. In the case of the Jewish community of Montreal, Jewish women sought to remake their identities by embodying the middle-class WASP ideal. Just as working class Jewish women of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries used clothes and cosmetics to fashion for themselves a new identity, newly successful Jewish women adopted the clothes and styles of the White Canadian middle class to assert their outward identities as White Canadians, and part of the middle class. This was accomplished in several ways: by concealing bodily labour, by dressing "tastefully," and by controlling their bodies through dieting. In this way, discursive reality and material reality intersect in the creation of an embodied identity for Jewish women in Montreal.

Despite wild claims by advertisers that technology would soon eliminate the need for household chores, in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, most Canadian women were responsible for domestic labour. They needed to do laundry, cook meals, clean, and take care of the garden and so on. The publications of the Ashkenazi women of Montreal reflect this reality. Throughout the period under study, Jewish women were sometimes valorized as *balebustas*, or excellent housekeepers. This view is based on the following passage from Proverbs:

Who can find a virtuous women? For price is far above rubies...

She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.

Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.

*Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.*⁵³

This passage appeared at the beginning of *A Treasure for my Daughter*. What one would expect to confront in a book like this is a particularly Jewish trope, a housewifely image. However, an examination of other publications reveals that white, WASP standards of beauty and valour are emphasized, rather than the image of the *balebusta*. There is little to distinguish Jewish publications from publications by other Canadian groups with respect to the idealized image of a housewife free from labour, largely thanks to “modern” appliances.⁵⁴

In the 1950s and 1960s, Joy Parr reminds us that most domestic appliances were out of the reach of most Canadians or were passed over in favour of spending on other household expenses.⁵⁵ Nonetheless, the powerful image of the housewife free from labour is present among the publications of the Ashkenazi women of Montreal. Recognizing the fact that Parr emphasizes, these publications reinforce the idealized housewife image by providing detailed advice about how to conceal the fact that most women laboured.

Ashkenazi women were encouraged to conceal their labour by ensuring that their hands remained beautiful, that they were soft, sweet-smelling, and White. *A Toizand Taman: '1000 Tastes'*, a cook book by Unit 63 of the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Mount Sinai Sanatorium, was one of several cookbooks which suggested that housewives remove onion odour from their hands by rubbing them with salt and then rinsing them in cold water.⁵⁶ The 1955/1956 edition of the *Woman's Work Agenda* suggested that "Immediately after dishwashing, drop a little lemon juice in the palms and rub well over hands to keep them soft and White. This also removes odours such as fish or onion."⁵⁷

While working-class women were expected to labour because they were poor, middle-class ideals of the time held that women should be free from all work (paid and, later, with the rise of modern kitchen appliances, most domestic tasks) because of the economic success of their husbands. By removing food odours from their hands, Jewish women could conceal the fact that they needed to labour and give every appearance (smell?) of belonging to the liberated middle classes. In addition, removing fish or onion odours from hands also served to conceal peasant or ethnic origins by concealing ethnic smells. Pungent foods are often associated with ethnic foods, in that strange or unusual smells are associated with strange foods. Canadian foods and their odours are normalized by omission in the same way that whiteness has become normalized, and thus invisible. This is not to suggest that other women in Canada did not want to have hands free of onion odours. Instead, there is a dichotomy created between odours that were considered "normal" and those that were considered "ethnic," much in the same way that the scent of curry is often connected to individuals of East Asian origin. The scent of these "ethnic" foods served as an inescapable marker of difference, which marked Jewish women as other as a result, emphasizing their non-Canadianness, their difference, their strangeness. The emphasis placed on removing these odours from the hands of Jewish women points to a desire to conceal Jewish markers of difference as much as possible in the face of such associations.

The discourse on "tastefulness" is another example of the inscription of middle-class values onto the bodies of Ashkenazi women. As Nan Enstad explains, the idea of taste "served to maintain distinctions even after industrialization reduced the extreme differences in the types of fabrics and styles between classes."⁵⁸ "Taste" was used by middle class women to assert their superiority over and their difference from working-class women. For the most part, Ashkenazi women's publications advised against following trends. Instead, these publications featured a

"tasteful" discourse, in which women were told that they must dress in styles designed to make the most of their figure. The underlying message is one of conformity to the dictates of the dominant classes. It is a judgment about what types of behaviours are "appropriate."

Throughout the fashion sections of the *Woman's Work Agenda* and *Orah* magazine, Ashkenazi women are implored to conform to styles deemed tasteful by their social betters. The repeated admonition to not follow trends further suggests that many Ashkenazi women writing for these publications did indeed follow fashion trends, and imitated them to the greatest extent possible.

Orah magazine featured beauty quizzes to determine one's level of understanding of taste. In 1958, the editors turned their attention to teenagers and included a quiz for girls to assess their "Beauty Quotient," which was eminently more important than their IQ: "Chances are you'll never know your IQ. But that doesn't matter too much. [sic] How about your BQ? That's really important."⁵⁹ The BQ quiz questions covered topics like the best hair style for face shapes, posture, clothing selection, and defining taste and style. The answer to the last question was as follows: "Taste is the proper selection of styles best suited to your figure and personality. Don't necessarily wear what everyone wears or you'll show, perhaps, bad taste. Remember - styles and fads are things of the moment. The taste lingers on."⁶⁰

Discussions on "taste" also appeared in the *Woman's Work Agenda*. The 1953 edition begins by saying that "Deep in the heart of every one of us is the feeling that we want to look our best before our friends and associates, whether we meet socially or at some communal endeavour."⁶¹ To this end, the author continues, while young girls may be able to wear anything at all, married women must strive to be "well dressed."⁶² The key to being well dressed is to start with an honest assessment of one's figure. Trying to squeeze into a dress that is too small

because of concern over size is firmly discouraged as unflattering. Instead, dressing in such a way as to overcome one's bodily shortcomings can be achieved with a simple knowledge of cut, shape, and colour. Most important, wearing the correct size is key to looking good.⁶³

To dress tastefully was to emulate one's social betters (in this case the nobility of the 1950s and 1960s, beauty queens and celebrities) rather than slavishly following trends. Of course similar messages about "taste" and "class" go out to non-Jewish audiences. But the comments I am discussing were specifically directed towards Jewish women, as they appeared in Jewish women's publications. By dressing their bodies in clothing that was deemed "suitable" to their body types, Ashkenazi women could announce to the rest of the world that they too were middle class because they cut stylish and fashionable figures by not following trends, but being tasteful.

In addition to concealing labour and dressing tastefully, dieting and weight loss were important ways in which Ashkenazi women performed Whiteness. Like cosmetics, this was both empowering in that women could remake themselves, and oppressive due to the internalization of racialized beauty. And like cosmetic surgery, dieting had direct and often brutal consequences for women's bodies. Dieting was a major concern for most North American women throughout the 1960s and 1970s. While the 1950s idealized breasts and made allowances for curvy women, the 1960s heavily emphasized thinness as an ideal for all women. It is only beginning in this period, for example, that weight becomes the focus in the diaries of adolescent women, as opposed to chest size.⁶⁴ This standard was not just restricted to Anglo-Saxon women and girls. As Brumberg reports, several studies suggested that African-American girls in the United States were also affected by the ideal, although to a lesser extent due to economic factors. For instance, *Essence* magazine, which reached an audience of largely middle class African-American women, ran stories on weight control. As she notes, this "suggests that conventional "White"

standards become more relevant among women of color as affluence increases."⁶⁵ Beginning in the early 1960s, dieting became an overriding occupation in the diaries of middle-class adolescent girls. As Brumberg reports, admonitions of "eating like a pig" and "I've got to lose weight" were persistent and ever-present, across the racial spectrum.⁶⁶ Unlike more recent concerns, thinness, not athleticism, was the ideal. Women and girls sought the body of their dreams strictly through limiting food intake, not through exercise.⁶⁷

The same trend was in present in Canada. Valerie Korinek, in *Roughing It in the Suburbs*, examines dieting information in *Chatelaine* in the 1960s. As she notes, *Chatelaine* generally reflected the bias of its editors: married, middle-class women.⁶⁸ The topic of dieting became increasingly popular in the 1960s, along with concurrent emphasis on the necessity of looking beautiful. Makeover stories proved to be extremely popular, playing on the idea that makeup and a good haircut could radically transform your life.⁶⁹ And, as the story of one woman attests, losing weight could turn Cinderella into a princess. One woman, after having lost a significant amount of weight, went on to get married to the man of her dreams not long thereafter.⁷⁰ As Korinek notes, the first liquid diet product, Metrical, was introduced to the American market in 1959-1960, and by 1961 the dieting industry was making \$350 million annually. This trend was driven by a new emphasis on thinness in the international fashion scene. Eponymous Twiggy embodied this ideal. And *Chatelaine* followed suit: "*Chatelaine* began to feature an ever increasing number of dieting features, with titles such as "Three Dazzling Diet Successes," "Three Diet Winners Discover New Beauty," or "A 212 Pound Girl Becomes a Hundred Pound Bride."⁷¹ *Chatelaine* also offered its own dieting programs, specifically "Chatelaine's MM Diet" and "The LP Diet." According to the editors, this was a compromise "born of the

realization that dieting was here to stay and that the magazine should do its part by providing a safe diet for the readers."⁷²

While the message is largely the same, there are ethnic overtones present in the publications of the Ashkenazic women of Montreal. For instance, Jewish foods in particular are singled out as being unhealthy because of their high caloric content. Jewish cookbooks are filled with information about dieting. Later editions of *Second Helpings, Please!* include a recipe section with low-fat versions of many of the recipes that appear in other parts of the cookbook. The preface describes the story: "My chubby friend, your dream's come true,/We've added this section just for you/[...]/Since it is weight you're most anxious to lose,/Make the following recipes, there are plenty to choose."⁷³ Other community cookbooks and women's publications also followed the same pattern, providing various low-fat and low-calorie options. *The Pleasures of your Processor* suggests combining one cup of butter or margarine (cut into chunks and soft) with half a cup of cold water in a processor. The mixture is then whipped, providing a butter spread that has fewer calories than similar amounts of butter alone.⁷⁴ The Kinnereth cookbook even describes these types of alterations as one of the defining features of Jewish cooking. One of the editors, Estelle Zaldin notes, "Jewish women have always used their imagination and ingenuity to adapt indigenous foods and seasonal ingredients for the Jewish festivals. In our time and place, 20th century North America, we are evolving a new and unique cuisine which is a synthesis of our traditional European foods, our health-conscious, low calorie eating habits and the contemporary food ideas, foods, and techniques available to us."⁷⁵ The *Woman's Work Agendas* also ran a number of articles about how to diet, with suggestions to "Limit your portion of cake or nasheri⁷⁶ to one per week. The same goes for ice-cream."⁷⁷

Along with the usual advice to cut fat, avoid fried foods, gravies, and cream sauces, and eat slowly, advice about comportment while dieting also appears in Jewish cookbooks:

"Remember that most people are not at all interested in your dieting woes, so diet silently."⁷⁸

The admonition for Jewish women to diet silently raises the implicit stereotype of the loud, overweight Jewish woman, who is unhappy at being deprived her food, as compared to the silent, uncomplaining WASP dieter who knows that she is doing this for her own good. There have been no studies to suggest that the theme of women complaining about dieting is present outside of the Jewish literature, as in the poem "Starting on Monday."

The 1972 edition of the *Women's Work Agenda* contains a poem "Starting on Monday" by Judith Viorst. Its theme would not be out of place in a modern women's magazine.

Starting on Monday I'm living on carrots and bouillon.

Starting on Monday I'm bidding the bagel adieu.

I'm switching from Hershey's with almonds to gaunt and anaemic,

And people will ask me could that skinny person be you.

I'll count every calorie from squash (half a cup, 47)

To Life Saver (8), stalk of celery (5), pepper ring (2),

Starting on Monday.

Starting on Monday I'll jog for a mile in the morning.

(That's after the sit-ups and push-ups and touching my toes.)

The gratification I once used to seek in lasagna

I'll find on the day that I have to go buy smaller clothes.

I'll turn my attention from infantile pleasures like Clark Bars

To things like the song of a bird and the scent of a rose,

Starting on Monday.

*Starting on Monday my will will be stronger than brownies,
 And anything more than an unsalted egg will seem crude.
 My inner-thigh fat and my upper-arm flab will diminish.
 My cheeks will be hollowed, my ribs will begin to protrude.
 The bones of my pelvis will make their initial appearance -
 A testament to my relentless abstention from food,
 Starting on Monday.*

*But Tuesday a friend came for coffee and brought homemade
 muffins.*

And Wednesday I had to quit jogging because of my back.

On Thursday I read in the paper an excess of egg yolk

Would clog up my vessels and certainly cause an attack.

*On Friday we ate at the Goldfarbs. She always makes cream
 sauce,*

And always gets sulky if people don't eat what she makes.

On Saturday evening we went with the kids to a drive-in.

I begged for a Fresca but all they were selling were shakes.

On Sunday my stomach oozed over the top of my waistband,

And filled with self-loathing I sought consolation in pie,

*And the thought that Onassis could bribe me with yachts and with
 emeralds*

But still I'd refuse to taste even a single French fry...

Starting on Monday.⁷⁹

This poem speaks to the impact of the emphasis on dieting and weight loss as the keys to beauty and acceptance by the larger society on ordinary Jewish women in Montreal. While making light of the situation, the author is clearly disappointed in herself and her ability to stick to a plan. She castigates herself for failing to live on celery alone, and dreams of "her ribs beginning to protrude."

Throughout, dieting and weight loss are always associated with women, and always with the message that for a woman to be beautiful, she must be thin, because being thin is normal. In *Second Helpings, Please!* the "One Helping, Please!" section promises: "If size eleven has been your desire,/Cut out the cheating, hubby sure will admire!"⁸⁰ The *Women's Work Agenda* of 1955/1956 advises that women pay attention to which foods they are eating; as the title, "Food that Affects Your Looks" suggests, food can affect a woman's looks. Eating improper foods can cause dryness, pallor, scaliness, poor appetite, frequent depression, indigestion, constipation and headaches due to digestive troubles, and tendency to bruise easily."⁸¹ An article later in the same agenda, entitled "Reduce Scientifically – Safely" associates the search for weight loss with the search for beauty. The author is critical of women who take "some short-cuts to beauty" through the use of "pills, self-imposed diets or fad diets" that may "take off some weight quickly but may also be damaging to your own good health."⁸² The author goes on to warn that "overweight people" need to learn proper nutrition, and avoid fattening foods. The implication is that overweight people are not beautiful, and women who want to be beautiful must control their weight and their impulses. There are overtones of moral condemnation for overweight, unhealthy and un-beautiful people, who cannot control their impulse to eat fattening foods, overindulge, and are too lazy to get any exercise.⁸³ The article concludes with a suggestion:

if you are thinking of slimming down for the Spring Season and looking your best in that new party dress, it might be well to keep a few of the above mentioned pointers in mind. Excess pounds are the result of overeating during an extended period of time so don't expect to lose this weight in a few days. Remember you can reduce safely and feel wonderful if you go about it sensibly.⁸⁴

As we have seen throughout, in striving to embody Canadianness and Whiteness, Ashkenazi women of Montreal were encouraged by female community leaders to look, dress, and act middle class. They were encouraged to conceal their labouring and dress in such a way that they looked to be part of the middle class. Throughout, the unspoken word has been regulation. There is a strong, unspoken, element of social regulation present in all of these documents. This emphasis on control is perhaps best seen with respect to dieting. Women were encouraged to exercise control over their own bodies, to regulate them and force them to adhere to a certain standard, no matter what the cost to themselves.

When weight loss is discussed in conjunction with men, which only occurs twice in the materials consulted, his weight is considered the responsibility of his wife. In the "Ode to a Wife," the narrator complains that his clothing is no longer fitting properly because his stomach is getting larger. He says "It is you that I blame for my broadening beam,/Tho' I'm sorry to take you to task for it,/Will you please stop giving me pie and ice-cream,/In spite of the fact that I ask for it."⁸⁵ In the 1953 edition of the *Woman's Work Agenda*, the article "When Nature Needs a Little Help," suggests that wives need to watch their husband's weight carefully: "perhaps hubby has fed not wisely but too well, and is beginning to get that stuffed look around the middle. Maybe he's too full of your good cooking and all he wants to do is sit behind his newspaper and doze - Girls, don't let him."⁸⁶ There are no associations here between beauty, thinness, or control. Instead, the husband has abdicated his responsibility over his own body, and requires

that his wife takes the blame. She is supposed to be his moral guardian, his watchdog, to make sure that he does not gain more weight. And if he does, the implication is that she is to blame, not her husband.⁸⁷

In sum, in the postwar period, Ashkenazi women of Montreal constructed a Jewish-Canadian identity for themselves that embodied Canadianness. They literally wore middle-classness on their skin, through weight control, fashion, jewellery, and cosmetics. Much like the uptown Jews of days past, their Jewishness was outwardly concealed, and their Canadianness was emphasized. They reinvented themselves as part of the White community, able to enjoy all of the privileges that came with it. However, as the story of Connie-Gail recounts, this effort was not entirely successful.

The Story of Connie-Gail⁸⁸

The adoption of Canadian, middle-class standards by Jewish women in Montreal was not entirely without its problems. On Friday, August 11, 1961, Connie-Gail Feller was crowned as Miss Canada 1962. Described as "a 20-year-old brunette from Ottawa,"⁸⁹ Feller had won the competition hands down, after having won the bathing suit competition and the talent competition with her demonstration of flamenco dancing while playing guitar. Despite a bomb scare that delayed proceedings, Feller told reporters: "It's wonderful, I'm so happy."⁹⁰ And while reporters provided readers with her measurements (35 ½ - 22 ½ - 35 ½), they failed to mention perhaps the most remarkable thing about Connie-Gail Feller: she was, and remains to this day, the only Jewish Miss Canada ever selected.

At the time of her crowning, her father, Joe Feller, was described as the "[h]appiest person in the auditorium."⁹¹ However, on September 23, 1961, the news came that Feller had been dethroned. Officially the reason was for failing to fulfill her obligations as described in her

contract. Two days later, the *Toronto Star* ran an article entitled "'No Trouble' With New Miss Canada." The article describes meeting with the new Miss Canada 1962, pageant runner-up Nina Holden of Esquimalt, B.C.. Pageant organizer S. Radcliffe Weaver said "She's a nice kid [...]. We won't have trouble with her not doing what she's told."⁹²

It turned out that Feller was fired for failing to make a specific appearance because it coincided with Yom Kippur. While her father denied allegations that there was a religious component to her dethronement, he noted "I specified at the beginning of her contract that Connie-Gail couldn't work on our High Holidays, the three holiest days of the Jewish year [...]. Mr. Weaver said he didn't know when those days fell. I told him, and the matter never came up again."⁹³ It is significant that the fact that Feller was Jewish was only revealed once she failed to do as she was told. As soon as she was unable to fulfill her obligations due to religious difference, she was marked as different, other, and "trouble."

As Feller's story demonstrates, once her Jewishness became clear, the organizers refused to have anything to do with her. Despite claims to the contrary, she was fired simply because her religious obligations revealed her difference. Just after winning her crown, Feller seemed to be like any other Canadian girl. Problems only began to arise when her religious obligations conflicted with the pageant-organizers agenda. The fact that Feller wanted to take off the High Holidays was an indication that she was *not* like any other Canadian girl, who followed the Christian holidays. Even in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, most Jews were still not entirely accepted by the larger Canadian community as being authentically "White" or "Canadian," largely because of their religion. Aside from skin tone, religion was a marker of difference that separated Jews from other Canadians. At the same time, it is clear that not all Jews were entirely comfortable with their own positionality as White people. Jewish women who conformed too

closely to Anglo-Saxon ideals were criticized and at times reviled. Feller herself was criticized for not behaving like a "nice Jewish girl," in that she was interested in Canadian frivolities like beauty pageants. Rabbi W. Gunter Plaut of Holy Blossom Temple commented in the *Toronto Star* that "Frankly, I cannot feel awfully sorry for the young lady except that I don't like to see anyone so bitterly disappointed after having gained the grand prize [...] I'm not much impressed with beauty contests and pageants."⁹⁴

Being Jewish and looking Jewish remained important, at least in the eyes of the Jewish community of Montreal. I have already discussed how the *shikse* goddess look affected Elaine and Sharon. Both women were accused by other Jews of not being Jewish because of having blonde hair, blue eyes, and being tall. For both of these women, the idea that they did not look Jewish seems to have been a sore point. While these incidents are looked back on with humour, the way in which the women described the events suggest that they were perplexed and even insulted by the idea that their Jewishness was being questioned. And even though Sharon seemed to be insulted by the thought of someone questioning whether or not she was Jewish (as I noted earlier, by calling her a *shikse*) she herself disparaged a woman who did not conform to her idea of what it meant to be Jewish. She spoke of a woman of her acquaintance, and described her in an insulting tone of voice. She said that her acquaintance wore power-suits with a family crest and tried to act "very WASPy." Other WASP offenses including wearing Capri pants and open-toed shoes, and "brown nos[ing] with the wealthy people." To add further insult to injury in Sharon's eyes, this woman would sometimes throw in Yiddish words, whenever she wanted to display her Jewishness to other Jews. It appears that this woman's major offense was her desire to be part the middle classes by rejecting her Jewish heritage, and only using it when there was an advantage to be gained.⁹⁵

"Looking Jewish" was, and still is, an important part of belonging to the Ashkenazi community of Montreal, even if it did directly contradict the ideal of *shikse* beauty. There is a commonly held belief in the Jewish community of Montreal that it is possible to identify a Jew on sight. While some of my interviewees insisted that it was impossible to identify a Jew by sight alone, most responded to this question by laughing and telling me about their unique ability to spot a Jew. They claimed that it wasn't difficult, particularly for the practiced eye. However, when asked what they looked for, most were unable to pinpoint any specific features. Some, laughing, mentioned noses, and then dismissed its significance. They were unable to articulate why they knew who was Jewish. Most said that it had something to do with a certain look. When asked what this look means, most people defined it as a combination of clothing, mannerism, accent, jewellery, hand movements, and overall appearance, for most people. However, many participants commented that at times it is difficult to tell European Jews apart from the rest of the population.

Sarah claimed that she could usually tell, but when asked what she looked for, her only answer was: "There's a certain expression about a Jewish person, by the smile [...] something that's there."⁹⁶ Sharon answered similarly. She insisted that she could always tell who was Jewish, and relied largely on intonation and attitude as indicators. Correct use of Yiddishisms was usually a dead giveaway.⁹⁷ Karen claimed a ninety-nine percent success rate, at least within her own city. Karen was born in Montreal I 1953. She was fifty-five at the time of this interview. She was the daughter of two Montrealers. Their status as native Montrealers was a source of pride for both her and her parents. Karen grew up in the West End of the island, in a mixed community and school. She finished school with a bachelor's degree and two teaching certificates. She worked as a teacher for many years. In 1980, she married a Sephardic man. As

she said, "can I tell who's Jewish? Absolutely. For sure." In explaining her ability, she had the following to say:

I'm not looking for anything, it's just [...] it's not even physical features. It's more, clothes, dress, walk, where I'm seeing them . It's a dead give away. When you're from the city of Montreal and you're going to certain restaurants you know is frequent by the Jewish community, you know there's going to be lots of Jewish people there. If I'm going out of my zone, if I'm in a area that's not as Jewish, it will be the clothes they're wearing, the hairstyle, the jewellery , the latest vogue, the bling, the nails, the look. If I heard a voice, I would look, turn to my friend. You have J-dar, Jewdar, right. [Speaking to her daughter] You just know. [...] Here you know what's in, what everybody's looking for, what everybody's doing and when you see someone like that, you assume they're doing, and ninety-nine point nine percent of the time we're right.⁹⁸

For most of those blessed with the magical ability to spot a Jew on sight, identifying and classifying a person as Jewish relied on more than physical features. It was a matter of appearance, how they dressed, how they acted, how they spoke. Most were usually unable to express exactly what they were looking for, as if Jewishness were intangible and almost unknowable. And interestingly, many of these individuals insisted that they did not look Jewish. "Jew-Spotting" is about more than just bodies, it is also about culture. It is about needing to be able to identify and identify with other Jews, to feel more comfortable in a strange milieu because there are others of "us" there, of belonging somewhere and not being alone. "Jew-spotting" also demonstrates the ambivalent attitude that many Jewish women had towards their own bodies. While at times they reviled features that exposed their Jewishness (hence the emphasis on nose jobs), they enjoyed being able to identify other people as Jews and being identified as Jewish by other Jews. This often created conflicting notions of the self, as many Jewish women were caught between the desire to look Jewish and the desire to pass as Canadian.

In addition to this contradiction, "looking Jewish" itself is simply another form of racial categorization. It creates a discourse about Jewish appearance, which conforms to a set of standards predetermined by those in a position of power. In this particular case, the standards for "looking Jewish" were established by the Ashkenazi Jews, as the dominant force in the Montreal Jewish community. To look Jewish is thus to look Eastern European, to have a large nose, curly hair, to be short, round, and compact, to speak or swear in Yiddish, to have a nasal accent, to wear lots of gold jewellery. Jewishness is just as much constructed as is Whiteness in terms of the classification of physical characteristics. Now this is not to say that this image of "looking Jewish" was based on a fantasy. Some physical and cultural characteristics are common to large numbers of Ashkenazi Jews. A person who speaks with a Yiddish accent more than likely comes from somewhere in Eastern Europe. One again, this is a matter of discursive and material reality informing each other. In this case, a discourse about "looking Jewish" has emerged that is based on a collection of physical and cultural characteristics that are associated with a specific group of people.

Indeed, "looking Jewish" became, in effect, one of the defining features of the imagined Jewish community of Montreal. In *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Benedict Anderson argued that nations are imagined communities. As few people will ever meet every single member of the nation, certain markers are established which tie them all together artificially. While he is focused particularly on what makes people want to give up their lives for their nations, I believe that his arguments with respect to imagined communities can be applied to smaller units, such as the Jewish community of Montreal. He notes that membership in a nation (or a community) was often defined by skin-colour, gender, and parentage. I would argue that physical features and other aspects of overall presentation

were important aspect of the imagined community of the Montreal Jews. This was one way of marking individuals with little to tie them together as part of one community.

Further, this particular style of "looking Jewish" happened to place an emphasis on looking Canadian, White, and middle class, and served to create unspoken assumptions about what Jews looked like based on the Ashkenazic ideals of a certain subset of the community, the subset that was largely responsible for the creation of the women's publications: second and third generation Jewish women. This created the ideal of image of a Jewish woman that was largely indistinguishable from non-Jewish Canadians, those who could pass most easily as white. The goal was to "look Jewish" in a semi-invisible, *almost* WASP middle-class way. That said, there was a fine line between WASP-y enough, and too WASP-y. Tipping too much in one direction or the other was equally damaging. Because most of these Jews came from Northern and Eastern Europe, they were more easily able to adapt to this particular model. However, not all Jewish women were willing or able to follow suit.

Would You Look at What She's Wearing?

Up until this point, I have described the ways in which Ashkenazi women sought to define themselves using the image of the White woman (Anglo-Saxon, Canadian, middle-class). Concurrently, some Ashkenazi women reinforced their Canadian identities through comparisons to other Jews. This served to both normalize Ashkenazi Jews and to other Sephardic and Hassidic Jews. As I have discussed in my previous chapter on food, the dominant Jewish group in the city of Montreal normalized their ideals and practices in such a way to preserve and obscure their power and privilege through the othering of everyone who did not conform to these standards. Much of this exclusion had to do with the tenuous position of the Ashkenazi Jews

themselves. By aspiring to Whiteness and by othering different types of Jews, they sought to shore up their own identities as members of the larger Canadian community. This othering took different forms depending on the group. Hassidic women were criticized for wearing their religiosity, Sephardic women were stigmatized as dark exotic Others. In sum, race and Jewishness are constructed through the recognition and classification of differences created through comparisons between Ashkenazi, and Hassidic, and Sephardic Jewish women.

When I asked Miriam whether or not she believed it was possible to identify a Jew on sight, her first, impulsive response was: "guy with a beard and a payots, you don't have to guess!"⁹⁹ Hassidic people were often said to be easily identifiable by appearance. Donna commented that she did not remember her first encounter with Hassidic Jews. But she remembered thinking: "they looked like pictures of my great-grandparents." She remembered visiting a Hassidic area with her grandmother. She told me that at the time she considered them "quaint." When asked what she had thought at the time of Hassidic women, she responded, "they always looked really tired to me. But I always thought they were nice to their kids." But she did recall a specific incident when she was in school: "I remember we had a kid in my class, in Talmud Torah, whose father was a cantor and had *tzitzes*, and we, some of the kids in the class were unmerciful. I mean, they tied them to the chair. I mean, we were bad. I wasn't, but you know some people were really bad. [...] I used to think they were peculiar."

The Hassidim were often described in ways that viewed them and their appearance as old-fashioned and backwards. Donna specifically recalled thinking that they looked like her great-grandparents, not like modern Jews at all. And because of their distinctive appearance, they were readily identified by those outside of the community as "what Jews look like." This created a negative stereotype all too readily associated with non-Hassidic Jews, much to their dismay.

The Hassidim are presented as a negative stereotype of Jews in general, one that non-Hassidic Jews felt was unjustly applied to them as well. The Hassidim represented everything that the non-Hassidic Ashkenazi Jews wanted to avoid showing: their Eastern European roots, their Otherness, and their backwardness.

In the case of Sephardic women, while they were Othered and marked as different, they were also exoticized, seen as more beautiful and more fashionable than Ashkenazi women. This is what Donna told me about how she viewed Sephardic women: "The people I knew, we regarded them as Exotic, but not in a negative way. Because they all, okay, I'm going to make a stereotype now, they dressed better, and they had a good sense of flair, style, which was important."¹⁰⁰ Miriam commented that they are easier to spot than European Jews because they stand out.¹⁰¹

Sarah described how Jewish women in general are quite vain, but tied the beauty of Sephardic women to their arrogance. She complained that they arrived in Canada expecting handouts, and were arrogant in their dealings with Ashkenazi Jews. She claimed that they "acted like they were doing you a favour," in business. She went on directly to say that: "I feel that they live pretty nicely [...] the young girls, they're at the hairdressers every week, with the French manicures, [...] stylish clothes. And a few times, we've been to the Beth Orah [a synagogue with a large Sephardic congregation], they're all dressed up in their garbs. I don't see them lacking for anything."¹⁰²

While she did not speak about Sephardic arrogance, Karen clearly perceived them as more stylish and beautiful. She claimed that she had never heard of Jewish women being described as exotic, but as stylish. Their language was also important. When asked if Sephardic

women looked different from Ashkenazi women, she replied: "Absolutely," but then had difficulty come up with a reason. She finally concluded:

Sephardic woman would be described as being very high fashion, and very a la mode, the latest thing with the feathers, the veils, and the bling, and the blang, And then the Ashkenazi women might be more, like, conservative looking, sort of. Largely, if I'm looking for differentiation. [...] Sephardic women generally are, well I mean, I hear them, I hear them in French. First of all the language. The first difference is you hear them when they're speaking. Their French is so different [...]. They're much more trendy because many of them are in the fashion business. And I mean I'm just trying to look at a picture of them. They do a little different. More shiny, more sequin-y, more bubbly. But I mean, they're stunning, I don't mean it's ugly. They're a very good looking group, very striking looking features. I'm trying to think, are they all dark? Maybe darker in general? Maybe more olive-y than the Ashkenazi group.¹⁰³

Sephardic women are described as being exceptionally beautiful and stylish, but as different, somehow, from other Jews, or at least from the dominant image of what a Jew should look like.

While Ashkenazi women argued that Jewishness should be private, they criticized other Jewish women for wearing their Jewishness on the outside. Hassidic men and women were presented as ugly and old fashioned (too Jewish), and Sephardic women were presented as beautiful and exotic (abnormal kind of Jewish). However, both were marked as being quite different from the norm that was being negotiated in Montreal at the time.

Conclusion

Today's media talks about the plague of anorexia among fashion models and comments on the fashion and beauty industries for portraying unrealistic body images to young and susceptible girls. As this chapter has demonstrated, this is not a new trend. For the Jewish women of Montreal, the media presented an image of beauty that was often unattainable for the

majority. This image of beauty – blonde haired, blue eyed, tall, and thin – elevated some characteristics of individuals with Anglo-Saxon heritage as beautiful. This in turn constructed all other body shapes and types as not beautiful, as different, Other, and ugly.

In response, the Ashkenazi women of Montreal mounted a campaign to reconstruct their bodies in order to conform to the dominant models of beauty, what "normal people looked like." They used fashion, cosmetics, jewellery, and sometimes cosmetic surgery to embody the ideals of the dominant Canadian society, middle class Anglo-Saxons. This involved concealing bodily labour, dressing tastefully in accordance with the dictates of their social betters, and rigidly controlling their bodies and body weight.

Unfortunately, these tactics failed to take into account the one aspect of Jewish women that could not be erased: their embodiment of Jewishness. Thus, while Jewish Canadian women appeared White, they were in fact not-quite-White, similar, but also different. Some Jewish women were also uncomfortable with the adoption of a White racial identity. Jewish women who embodied Canadian ideals too much were reviled, while those who were "too Jewish" were othered, and exoticized. The debate over how Jewishness was embodied served to reinforce fractures in an already fractured community. While it remains impossible to know what a Jewish woman looks like, it is clear that in postwar Montreal, this was a contentious issue.¹⁰⁴

¹ Interview 4, interview by author, October 27, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.

² Interview 16, interview by author, November 10, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.

³ For example, please see: Mona Gleason, "Embodied Negotiations: Children's Bodies and Historical Change in Canada, 1930 to 1960," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 34, no. 1 (April 1, 1999): 112-138; Lisa Helps, "Body, Power, Desire: Mapping Canadian Body History," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 41, no. 1 (2007): 126-150; Mary-Ellen Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia, 1900-50* (Vancouver BC: UBC Press, 1998); Joy Parr, "Notes for a More Sensuous History of Twentieth-Century Canada: The Timely, the Tacit, and the Material Body," *Canadian Historical Review* 82, no. 4 (2001): 720-745; Joan Sangster, "Making a Fur Coat: Women, the Labouring Body, and Working-Class History," *International Review of Social History* 52, no. 2 (2007): 241-270.

⁴ For instance, please see: Lois W Banner, *American Beauty* (New York: Knopf, 1983); Ava Baron, "Masculinity, the Embodied Male Worker, and the Historian's Gaze," *International Labor & Working-Class History*, no. 69 (2006): 143-160; J.J. Brumberg, "The "Me" of Me: Voices of Jewish Girls in Adolescent Diaries of the 1920s and 1950s," in *American Jewish Women's History: A Reader*, edited by Pamela Nadell (New York: New York University Press, 2003), 223-237; Joan Brumberg, *The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls*, 1st ed. (New York: Random House, 1997); Kathleen Canning, "The Body as Method? Reflections on the Place of the Body in gender History," *Gender & History* 11, no. 3 (1999): 499-513; Katie Conboy, *Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); Elizabeth Haiken, *Venus Envy: A History of Cosmetic Surgery* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999); and Barbara Weinstein, "'They Don't Even Look Like Women Workers': Femininity and Class in Twentieth-Century Latin America," *International Labor & Working-Class History*, no. 69 (2006): 161-176.

⁵ Kathy Davis, *Reshaping the Female Body: The Dilemma of Cosmetic Surgery* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 170.

⁶ Kathleen Canning, "The Body as Method? Reflections on the Place of the Body in gender History," *Gender & History* 11, no. 3 (1999): 499-513.

⁷ Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, "African-American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society* 17, no. 2 (1992): 252.

⁸ Brooks Higginbotham, "African-American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race": 255.

⁹ Ruth Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters: the Social Construction of Whiteness* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 1.

¹⁰ Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters*, 6.

¹¹ Thomas Guglielmo, *White on Arrival: Italians, Race, Color, and Power in Chicago, 1890-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Matthew Jacobson, *Special Sorrows: the Diasporic Imagination of Irish, Polish, and Jewish Immigrants in the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995); David R. Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Become White. The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs* (New York: Basic Books, 2005).

¹² Rogers Brubaker, "Ethnicity Without Groups," *Archives Européennes de Sociologie* XLIII, no. 2 (2002): 163-189.

¹³ Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters*, 198.

¹⁴ Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters*, 198.

¹⁵ Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters*, 198.

¹⁶ Interview 1, interview by author, October 15, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.

¹⁷ Karen Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says About Race in America* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1999), 2.

¹⁸ Brooks Higginbotham, "African-American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race," 271.

¹⁹ Kathy Peiss, "Making Faces: The Cosmetic Industry and the Cultural Construction of Gender, 1890-1930," in *Unequal Sisters: An Inclusive Reader in U.S. Women's History*, eds. Vicky L. Ruiz and Ellen Carol DuBoi, 4th edition (New York: Routledge, 2008), 357.

²⁰ Noliwe M Rooks, *Hair Raising: Beauty, Culture, and African American Women* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1996).

- ²¹ Laila Haidarali, "Polishing Brown Diamonds: African American Women, Popular Magazines, and the Advent of Modeling in Early Postwar America," in *Unequal Sisters: An Inclusive Reader in U.S. Women's History*, eds. Vicky L. Ruiz and Ellen Carol DuBoi, 4th edition (New York: Routledge, 2008), 542.
- ²² Frederic Cople Jaher, "The Quest for the Ultimate *Shiksa*," *American Quarterly* 35 no. 5 (Winter 1983): 518-542.
- ²³ Cople Jaher, "The Quest for the Ultimate *Shiksa*," 520.
- ²⁴ Cople Jaher, "The Quest for the Ultimate *Shiksa*," 528.
- ²⁵ Cople Jaher, "The Quest for the Ultimate *Shiksa*," 521.
- ²⁶ Cople Jaher, "The Quest for the Ultimate *Shiksa*," 521.
- ²⁷ "Jewdar" is a colloquial term used by some Jews to describe the ability to spot Jews based on appearance or behaviour alone. It is derivative from "Gaydar."
- ²⁸ Interview 21, interview by author, November 13, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ²⁹ Interview 3, interview by author, October 26, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ³⁰ Interview 17, interview by author, November 11, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ³¹ Bernice Schrank, "'Cutting Off Your Nose to Spite Your Face' Jewish Stereotypes, Media Images, Cultural Hybridity," *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 25, no. 4 (2007): 32.
- ³² Interview 7, interview by author, October 29, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ³³ Interview 4, interview by author, October 27, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ³⁴ Interview 1, interview by author, October 15, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ³⁵ Taeyon Kim, "'The Moving Eye: From Cold War Racial Subject to Middle Class Cosmopolitan, Korean Cosmetic Eyelid Surgery, 1955-2001'," (Ph.D diss. Bowling Green State University, 2005: ii-iii.
- ³⁶ Kathy Davis, *Reshaping the Female Body: the Dilemma of Cosmetic Surgery*, 90-92.
- ³⁷ Davis, *Reshaping the Female Body*, 93.
- ³⁸ Davis, *Reshaping the Female Body*, 101.
- ³⁹ Davis, *Reshaping the Female Body*, 101.
- ⁴⁰ Davis, *Reshaping the Female Body*, 102.
- ⁴¹ Davis, *Reshaping the Female Body*, 163.
- ⁴² In the United States, there was "an epidemic of nose jobs" among young Jewish women during the 1950s and was still common in the 1960s. While there are no exact figures for the number of nose jobs performed in Canada, it is reasonable to assume that there was a similar trend of nose jobs for Jewish women in Canada. Schrank, "'Cutting Off Your Nose to Spite Your Face' Jewish Stereotypes, Media Images, Cultural Hybridity," 22.
- ⁴³ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter: a Reference Book of Jewish Festivals with Menus and Recipes*, 8.
- ⁴⁴ See chapter 2.
- ⁴⁵ Lara Marks, *Model Mothers: Jewish Mothers and Maternity Provision in East London, 1870-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); Lisa Hilder and Lara Marks, "Ethnic Survival Among Jewish and Bengali Immigrants in East London, 1870-1990," in *Migrants, Minorities, and Health: Historical and Contemporary Studies*, eds. Lara Marks and Michael Worboys (New York: Routledge, 1997), 179-208.
- ⁴⁶ Marks, *Model Mothers: Jewish Mothers and Maternity Provision in East London, 1870-1939*, 194.

- ⁴⁷ B'nai Brith Women of Canada, *Second Helpings, Please!* (Montréal: Mount Sinai Chapter #1091 B'nai Brith Women of Canada, 1967), 125.
- ⁴⁸ B'nai Brith Women of Canada, *Second Helpings, Please!*, 179.
- ⁴⁹ B'nai Brith Women of Canada, *Second Helpings, Please!*, 203.
- ⁵⁰ Interview 4, interview by author, October 27, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ⁵¹ Nan Enstad, *Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure: Working Women, Popular Culture, and Labor Politics at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).
- ⁵² Peiss, *Hope in a Jar: The Making of America's Beauty Culture*, 6.
- ⁵³ Proverbs, 31:10, 27-30
- ⁵⁴ Valerie J. Korinek, *Roughing it in the Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the Fifties and Sixties* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 131.
- ⁵⁵ Joy Parr, *Domestic Goods: The Material, the Moral, and the Economic in the Postwar Years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 199-266.
- ⁵⁶ Unit 63 of the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Mount Sinai Sanatorium, *A Toizand Taman: '1000 Tastes'*, 125.
- ⁵⁷ CJCCCNA ZF B.B. Publications Box 1, Montreal B'nai Brith Women, "News, Views, and Cues," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1955, 26.
- ⁵⁸ Enstad, *Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure*, 31.
- ⁵⁹ CJCCCNA ZF B.B. Publications Box 1, Montreal B'nai Brith Women, "News, Views, and Cues For Girls Only: Beauty Quotient," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1958, 17.
- ⁶⁰ CJCCCNA ZF B.B. Publications Box 1, Montreal B'nai Brith Women, "News, Views, and Cues For Girls Only: Beauty Quotient," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1958, 17.
- ⁶¹ CJCCCNA ZF B.B. Publications Box 1, Montreal B'nai Brith Women, "Talking About Fashion," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1953, n.p.
- ⁶² CJCCCNA ZF B.B. Publications Box 1, Montreal B'nai Brith Women, "Talking About Fashion," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1953, n.p.
- ⁶³ CJCCCNA ZF B.B. Publications Box 1, Montreal B'nai Brith Women, "Talking About Fashion," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1953, n.p.
- ⁶⁴ Brumberg, *The Body Project*, 108, 116.
- ⁶⁵ Brumberg, *The Body Project*, 119.
- ⁶⁶ Brumberg, *The Body Project*, 119-120.
- ⁶⁷ Brumberg, *The Body Project*, 120-121.
- ⁶⁸ Korinek, *Roughing it in the Suburbs*, 184.
- ⁶⁹ Korinek, *Roughing it in the Suburbs*, 198-199.
- ⁷⁰ Korinek, *Roughing it in the Suburbs*, 204.
- ⁷¹ Korinek, *Roughing it in the Suburbs*, 204.
- ⁷² Korinek, *Roughing it in the Suburbs*, 205.
- ⁷³ B'nai Brith Women of Canada, *Second helpings, Please!*, 247.
- ⁷⁴ Norene Gilletz, *The Pleasures of your Processor* (Montreal: Margo Corporation, 1979), 39.
- ⁷⁵ Hadassah-WIZO Organization of Toronto, *Kinnereth Cookbook.*, 288.
- ⁷⁶ Nasher is a Yiddish term that means snack foods.
- ⁷⁷ CJCCCNA ZF B.B. Publications Box 1, Montreal B'nai Brith Women, "News, Views, and Cues," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1953, n.p.
- ⁷⁸ B'nai Brith Women of Canada., *Second helpings, Please!*, 248.

⁷⁹ CJCCCNA ZF B.B. Publications Box 1, Montreal B'nai Brith Women, Judith Viorst, "Starting on Monday," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1972, 82. While in this instance I am discussing procrastination with respect to dieting among Jewish women, I do not mean to suggest that this is a particularly Jewish trait. I suspect that if scholars looked into the broader women's magazines of the period they might well find similar admonitions and satires to those contained in the poem "Starting on Monday."

⁸⁰ B'nai Brith Women of Canada., *Second Helpings, Please!*, 247.

⁸¹ CJCCCNA ZF B.B. Publications Box 1, Montreal B'nai Brith Women, "Foods that affects your look," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1955, 18-22.

⁸² CJCCCNA ZF B.B. Publications Box 1, Montreal B'nai Brith Women, "Reduce scientifically – Safely," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1955, 131.

⁸³ CJCCCNA ZF B.B. Publications Box 1, Montreal B'nai Brith Women, "Reduce scientifically – Safely," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1955, 131.

⁸⁴ CJCCCNA ZF B.B. Publications Box 1, Montreal B'nai Brith Women, "Reduce scientifically – Safely," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1955, 131.

⁸⁵ CJCCCNA ZF B.B. Publications Box 1, Montreal B'nai Brith Women, "Ode to a Wife," *Woman's Work Agenda*, Tree , 38.

⁸⁶ CJCCCNA ZF B.B. Publications Box 1, Montreal B'nai Brith Women, "When Nature Needs a Little Help," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1953, n.p.

⁸⁷ In addition to identifying women as responsible for their husbands' eating habits, this passage provides insight into notions of middle-class Jewish masculinity. It appears that men could not be trusted to oversee their own health; they had to rely on wives (perhaps seen as latent mothers) to do so. The hen-pecked image creeps in here, as well as a possible infantilisation of men. This is one area where further research is needed.

⁸⁸ In the interest of disclosing possible bias, I should mention that Connie-Gail Feller is actually a cousin of mine. My parents alerted me to her former title of Miss Canada as a child at a family bar mitzvah. And although she has lived in Ottawa for many years, she has lived in and participated in the Jewish community of Montreal.

⁸⁹ "A Queen and Her Admiring Court," *Toronto Star*, August 12, 1961, Night Edition, 1.

⁹⁰ "Bomb Scare at Pageant - Miss Ottawa is Miss Canada," *Toronto Star*, August 12, 1961, Night Edition, 4.

⁹¹ "Bomb Scare at Pageant - Miss Ottawa is Miss Canada," *Toronto Star*, August 12, 1961, Night Edition, 4.

⁹² "'No Trouble' With New Miss Canada," *Toronto Star*, September 25, 1961, Night Edition, 2.

⁹³ "'No Trouble' With New Miss Canada," *Toronto Star*, September 25, 1961, Night Edition, 2.

⁹⁴ "Rabbi Not Impressed with Beauty Contests," *Toronto Star*, October 10, 1961, 21.

⁹⁵ Interview 17, interview by author, November 11, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.

⁹⁶ Interview 4, interview by author, October 27, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.

⁹⁷ Interview 17.

⁹⁸ Interview 16, interview by author, November 10, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.

⁹⁹ Interview 7, interview by author, October 29, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.

¹⁰⁰ Interview 31, interview by author, January 4, 2010, Victoria, British Columbia.

¹⁰¹ Interview 7.

¹⁰² Interview 4, interview by author, October 27, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.

¹⁰³ Interview 16.

¹⁰⁴ In this chapter, I have concentrated largely on three groups: the Ashkenazi, the Hassidim, and the Sephardi. However, Jews are found all over the world, from Ethiopia, to China, to India. Many of these individuals are faced with an entirely different issue: being a person of colour. This has exposed many not only to racism but has also complicated their identities as Jews. Their very existence challenges assumptions about the racial identity of Jews. It is my hope that future scholarly studies will continue to address Jews of colour directly, further problematizing the dominant model of Eastern European/Canadian Jews. For more information, please see: Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz, *The Color of Jews: Racial Politics and Radical Diasporism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007).

Chapter Four: The Strongest Bonds: Reconceptualising the “Family”

I do not remember many details about my life when I was really young. One memory that does stick out is when I built a Barbie house in my bedroom. The house used to belong to a neighbour of mine who had outgrown her Barbies, and I was doing my best to reconstruct the house considering that half of the pieces were missing. I remember going off to pre-school, and coming home to find my Barbie house gone. I was deeply upset. My mother told me that the housekeeper had thrown it out when she was cleaning because it was garbage. Now, my family has always been firmly in the middle of middle class, but my childhood was filled with housekeepers, nannies, and babysitters. My mother employed a baby-nurse when I was born, and again for my sister two years later. From my baby pictures, I can tell that she was a heavy-set African-American or Afro-Caribbean woman. My parents tell me that when she stayed with us, she used to watch Billy Graham with me every Sunday, singing along. Apparently, some of the first words out of my mouth were the words to "Hallelujah." I also remember going over to my grandmother's house for Passover, where dinner was served by waiters she hired from a catering company. There was always at least one, sometimes two. And this was in addition to a housekeeper that she employed full-time, a woman named Eva. I think that she might have been Polish. She looked after my sister and me during my great-aunt's funeral because we were deemed too young to attend. These women were privy to some of the most intimate moments of my life and of my family. And yet I can only remember snippets about them. These memories left me reflecting on the nature of family.

Once again, I did not find my experiences with family to be reflected in most of the literature on this topic, which focused mostly on mainstream, Anglo-Canadian, and Anglo-American prescriptive ideals. The study of the family in the postwar period began with Elaine Tyler May's *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*. In this book, May argued that the domestic revival of the 1950s centered on the American nuclear family. In the context of the Cold War and following the instability of the Depression and WWII, the nuclear family imparted a sense of security and stability. May focused on the concept of "containment," in that the nuclear family would be a bulwark against subversive forces, including communism and homosexuality. The nuclear family would neutralize these forces, and transform them for the benefit of the American nation.¹

May has been heavily critiqued by more recent historians of postwar culture and society for her generalizations about women. One of the most vocal is Joanne Meyerowitz, in her edited collection, *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960*. She argues that generalizations about the domestic ideology of the postwar period do not do justice to the complex forces that shaped people's lives. Rather than being a time simply of conformity, the 1950s was a time of great social and cultural upheaval and change. Further, she argues May's approach, which views the family as a place for containment, presents an unrelenting focus on women's subordination that erases much of the history of the postwar years. Such an approach downplays women's agency and portrays them as victims, obscures the complexity of postwar culture and the significant social and economic changes of the postwar era, inadvertently bolsters the domestic stereotype, and renders other ideals and women invisible.² Her article in this collection, "Beyond the Feminine Mystique: A Reassessment of Postwar Mass Culture, 1946-1958," argues that domestic ideals coexisted in ongoing tension with an ethos of individual

achievement that celebrated nondomestic activity, individual striving, public service, and public success.³ While Meyerowitz's critique is correct, it does not address the most important part of May's argument. Her book discusses families, not just women. The many articles in Meyerowitz's collection repeat this problem, focusing on women outside of families. I would add to Meyerowitz's argument that May's portrayal of both families and women, and women in families, are simplistic portrayals of the complexity of postwar lives.

Countless works on the history of the family in Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom have appeared in recent years.⁴ Four works in particular have had a profound impact on this chapter. The first, Karen Dubinsky's *Improper Advances: Rape and Heterosexual Conflict in Ontario, 1880-1929*. Dubinsky is interested specifically in the history of the ways that sexual danger and sexual pleasure were experienced. She maintains a delicate balance in her argument, between incidences of sexual crime, the links between masculinity, sexuality, and domination, and heterosexual intimacy and pleasure. What struck me most about Dubinsky's book was her analysis of discourses of danger versus actual incidents of rape and domestic violence. Despite prevailing images of stranger rape, most incidents of violence were perpetrated by attackers known to their victims, and these attacks often inside the home. For example, one of the more common discourses of danger was that of incest. Incest was viewed as the result of poverty, "as a housing question or a poverty question or a question of working-class morality, all of which served to reinforce one set of relations of domination - class - and erase another, gender."⁵ This emphasis as poverty and class as causes of incest left unexamined "patriarchal family structures" as well as "sexual violence within middle- and upper-class families."⁶ In this example, and in others, Dubinsky makes it clear that discourses of danger served to displace attention away from real dangers onto imagined dangers, largely to avoid dealing with

fundamental social problems resulting from gender imbalances. Dubinsky's assertion that most heterosexual violence takes place within the home prompted me to discuss incidents of family violence among my participants, rather than glossing over uncomfortable truths.

Linda Gordon's *Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence* is similar to Dubinsky's book in that it focuses on uncovering family violence. Gordon argues that family violence is always historically and politically contingent, that its visibility correlates to political considerations such as the rise and fall of feminism and the welfare system. I was particularly struck by her insistence on viewing the family unit as one filled with "intrafamily conflicts of interest."⁷ Family violence cannot be understood outside of the overall politics of the family and the interests of its individuals. Thus, an analysis of family violence requires an analysis of gender imbalances. For example, male dominance was enforced by violence against women. This violence is sanctioned and controlled through culture, religious belief, law, and norms of friendship, kinship, and neighbourhood groups. I was also struck by Gordon's insistence that women were not necessarily passive victims or tragic angels. Many were indeed victims of domestic abuse, but this did not stop them from occasionally fighting back. Further, Gordon's assertion that violence was an ordinary part of everyday life and her desire to uncover "the ordinary in all family violence" spoke to me powerfully.⁸

Two final texts were particularly important to me as I was writing this chapter, and both for similar reasons. I have long admired Bettina Bradbury's *Working Families: Age, Gender, and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal*. Bradbury's exploration of the expansion of wage labour between 1860 and 1890 with respect to family survival paints a detailed picture of everyday life for the working-classes of Montreal in the period in question. I was particularly struck by her discussion of how people used living spaces, particularly around the framework of

the family economy. The last two chapters, "Managing and Stretching Wages: The Work of Wives" and "Managing without a Spouse: Women's Inequality Laid Bare" were particularly striking. Bradbury's analysis of working-class women's inequality in the family and dependence on male wage earners was powerful and insightful, particularly when these problems were exposed after a husband failed to provide, deserted his family, or died.⁹

Finally, Ellen Ross' *Love and Toil: Motherhood in Outcast London, 1870-1918* has served as a starting point for my own research. In this work, Ross argues that motherhood is not simply natural, but a "historically conditioned grouping of definitions and activities."¹⁰ Ross, like Bradbury, provides a detailed portrait of everyday life for working-class women in London. And like Bradbury, she explores how it was married women "whose skills and self-denial dampened the impact of poverty on husbands and [...] children" despite the "disappointment, frustration and fear that poverty and near-poverty generated [...] penetrated inside" the household.¹¹ As with Dubinsky, Gordon, and Bradbury, Ross argues that family violence occurred as a result of gender inequalities and female dependence on male wage-earners. Ross' work is a masterpiece of scholarship, detailed and insightful. Her problematizing of motherhood and her emphasis on the working-class perspective is accomplished through the use of innovative sources, including benevolent society documents, hospital papers, court proceedings, and popular culture sources. Finally, like Gordon, Ross does not paint a romantic or sentimental picture of working-class motherhood, but shows the devastating impact that poverty and gender imbalances have while discussing some of the less complimentary actions of working-class women. For example, Ross argues that working-class mothers "unsentimentally viewed their children in terms of the resources they required or contributed,"¹² taking them out of school to work when necessary. Indeed, "intense and contradictory emotional and material bonds connecting [family members]

were complicated by "scarce resources and limited choices,"¹³ and sometimes resulted in difficult choices.

I will draw on and expand these works to consider Jewish families in postwar Montreal. And, while prescriptive ideals are important, I will focus more on the actual experiences of ordinary women in this period, something that I feel is lacking in much of the previous literature. My analysis revealed some new and important insights. Despite Canadian society's attempts to impose nuclear family structures, extended families continued to be extremely important in the Jewish community of Montreal. Further, many Old World ideals, such as the matriarch, remained quite prevalent. However, this model of the extended family rested primarily on normalization of heterosexual relationships, or heteronormativity. The concept of a marriage between one woman and one man as the core of a family was often assumed to be universal. Rather than accept this assumption, I dug deeper to find women who did not fit into this discourse: singles, divorcees, and lesbians. Their refusal or inability to fit into the established norms with respect to heterosexual relationships often had long-lasting and deeply damaging consequences for them.

Despite the glorified image of the closely-knit Jewish family, my interviews revealed that many Jewish families were filled with conflict. Sometimes this conflict took place between wives and mother-in-laws, or between sisters. At other times, this conflict emerged as full-fledged domestic abuse. These conflicts often took place between daughters and fathers over inter-faith dating, and could featured threats of disownment. Unable to cope with these stresses, many Jewish women either used humour to downplay their pain or kept silent on the issue. Finally, I found that my experiences with domestic servants were not uncommon. These women were silenced family members, household servants who were usually of French Canadian,

Mediterranean, Caribbean or African descent. These women were integral to the functioning of Jewish families, and yet few details are known about their lives and experiences. Overall, this chapter will advance the historiography on the family by using oral history sources to allow Jewish women to speak for themselves on the often private subject of the family.

Extended Families

In *Normalizing the Ideal*, Mona Gleason speaks at length about the imposition of the nuclear family model on postwar families. However, my own research found that efforts by psychologists and other scientific authorities to impose this model had very little impact in the Jewish community of Montreal. In postwar Montreal, family was a very important part of the lives of Jewish women. The definition of a "family" was fluid, and in many ways echoed Old World family patterns. Great importance was placed on the extended family, family gatherings, and even neighbourhood families. For many Jewish women, other women formed the core of their families and the source of their most enduring and intimate relationships.

In the tradition of Old World extended families, Jewish holidays were always celebrated with extended family. Women did not learn about cooking and holiday food preparation from religious authorities. Instead, they learned recipes from cookbooks while learning domestic rituals and holiday customs from family members. This subject will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

Anita recalled learning much of her knowledge of Jewish religious rituals and customs from her grandmother. Anita was born in Israel in 1939, and was sixty-nine at the time of her interview. Anita grew up under the austere conditions of the young state. Her mother seldom made Jewish foods because Anita's father did not like them very much. She was a basic meat and potatoes cook, largely because Anita's grandmother worked and could not teach her daughter. So

if Anita ate homemade Jewish foods, her grandmother always prepared them. This connection to extended family was not just about everyday foods, but holidays. Anita's family was quite large and spread across the continent. Nonetheless, great efforts were made to have the entire family together for the holidays, whether far-flung individuals came to them, or they travelled to far-flung relatives. Different types of religious rituals were also used to accommodate the various members of Anita's family. She recalls participating in seders from every different religious denomination, including a feminist seder one year. Everyone around the table was encouraged to share. Guests were always welcome, and often contributed stories from their own particular culture.¹⁴

Beth informed me that her mother did not cook on a regular basis, and almost never when it came to Jewish holidays. Beth was born in Montreal in 1945, making her sixty-three at the time of her interview. She was raised in a non-traditional Reform Jewish family. Much of her childhood was spent with her extended religious Orthodox family, particularly her aunt and grandmother. Her grandmother was originally from the Ukraine. Beth spent every Jewish holiday, from the Sabbath to Passover, at her maternal aunt's house. It was here where she watched the preparation of Jewish foods and Jewish rituals. Her grandmother and her aunt shared in the preparation of foods.¹⁵ Karen also reported that Jewish holidays always involved celebrating with large family gatherings, involving extended relatives. Holidays always involved only family members, or very close friends that were called "aunt" or "uncle."¹⁶ Elaine also always celebrated the Jewish holidays with extended family. Her family usually celebrated at her mother's house, but as time went on, the hostess changed from her late aunt, to herself, to her sister.¹⁷ Finally, Kim always celebrated religious holidays with family members. These were

often held at her aunt's or her grandmother's. These were very secular events, but she particularly remembers women congregating in the kitchen and chatting.¹⁸

Leah was born in Montreal in 1928, and was eighty at the time of her interview. Her parents were Eastern European immigrants. When she was young, her family was very poor and life was very hard. Her family was very religious. She finished high school and attended university for less than one year. Leah abandoned religious practice in her youth after struggling with inconsistencies in Jewish observances at her local synagogue. However, her sister was quite religious, so she hosted all of the religious family gatherings, like the Passover seder. Leah and her family would always go to her sister's house for these events. Her sister said to her one day that without her, Leah's children would know nothing about religion.¹⁹

Religious celebrations were more often than not occasions for family to gather. Family dinners during the holidays strengthened bonds between extended members of the family. But they also served a very important purpose: teaching children, and particularly young women as I discuss in my chapter on religion, about domestic rituals. All of the women of a family took on this role. This was particularly the case when the mother did not or could not fulfill these duties herself. In Beth, Leah and Anita's cases, grandmothers and aunts were central when it came to passing down each family's own interpretation of Jewish domestic rituals.

Some extended family members were in fact central in the lives of the women I interviewed, though for more personal reasons. And in many of these cases, one woman out of each family was dubbed the family matriarch. This title was generally assigned to the oldest female in the family. Often the grandmother or an elderly aunt, this matriarch formed the centre of the family. Sarah was orphaned at a young age, and was raised by her grandparents and her great-aunt. She was born in Montreal in 1937. Her mother was from Wales, her father from

Czechoslovakia. Sarah was particularly close to her grandmother, but all of the female relatives in her family maintained close relationships. She learned most of what she knew about Jewish culture from her grandmother and her great-aunt, including how to keep kosher and how to keep the holidays. This same great-aunt is still alive, and has now become the family matriarch. After Sarah's parents passed away, her grandparents moved in with her into a three-level tenement building. When speaking about her relationship with her grandparents, she spoke mostly of her grandmother, who ended up taking on the role of Sarah's mother.²⁰

After she moved out of her grandmother's house, Sarah lived with her aunt for two years. In my conversation with her, she referred to this aunt, her mother's youngest sister, as the "matriarch." As Sarah noted: "There's one matriarch, my mother's youngest sister. She's the matriarch of the family right now. She's 94 years old. [...] I speak to her everyday of course."²¹ Sarah never spoke of a family patriarch, only a family matriarch. Further, by mentioning that her aunt was the matriarch "right now," she is clearly indicating that this is a title that is passed around, going to the most senior or elder female in the family.

Emily was born in Montreal in 1954, making her fifty-four at the time of her interview. Her parents were also born and raised in Montreal. Her family was quite religious when she was young. Her grandparents also lived in Montreal when she was young. Emily used language similar to Sarah to describe her relationship with her grandmother and aunts. While she never lived with them, she described having a very close relationship with them. She recalled how her grandmother would take her to hockey games in the limo. She was (and continues to be) very close to her aunts on her father's side. "I enjoyed a great relationship, because they lived with my grandmother. [...]" However, in her case, she tied the title of matriarch to a particular apartment. First lived in by her grandmother, since her passing, her aunts have moved into her

grandmother's apartment in the duplex. She said that whoever lived in this home is the matriarch of her family:

So when I go to my aunt's home, today, interestingly enough, I'm still going to the home of my grandmother. So, I will see her portrait in the living room. And, wherever she lived was the head of that family, head home of that family. So still, it would still be the kind of home, even though it's their private home, whether they resent it or not I don't know. But I would just ring the bell in the middle of the day and just walk in, and expect to grab a cup of coffee or sit there, and that's what goes on in the family.²²

Finally, Donna had a fairly unusual upbringing. Donna was born in Montreal, though she did not tell me how old she was. Her parents were born in Montreal, while her grandparents were recent immigrants from the Ukraine. At first she told me that her grandmother raised her because her mother had her when she was quite young. However, Donna later elaborated that she was not even aware that her mother was her mother: "For the first three or four years of my life, I thought that my grandmother was my mother and my grandfather was my father, and I was a very happy little girl. Until one of my grandmother's well meaning friends told me that my mother in fact wasn't my sister, she was my mother. [...] And my grandfather never referred to me as his granddaughter."²³ Donna's grandparents had adopted her because Donna's mother had been pregnant out of wedlock. The relationship between Donna and her grandparents was quite close, especially since her biological mother played only a very small role in her life. The relationship was so strong that after Donna's grandfather died, their rabbi granted her special permission to be a primary mourner at his *shiva*. Normally, primary mourners must be within one blood relation: a father or mother, son or daughter, brother or sister, or spouse. Grandchildren are not considered primary mourners according to Jewish funeral customs. In this case, the rabbi recognized that Donna was a daughter to her grandfather, and so made an exception.²⁴

However, close relationships between grandmothers and granddaughters existed in many families, not only in cases where they lived together. Tamara reported having a very strong relationship with her grandmother, who lived separately. Tamara was a mostly second-generation Jewish woman of Eastern European heritage. Three of her grandparents were from Poland or Russia and one was born in Montreal to immigrants. Tamara herself was born in 1959, making her forty-nine at the time of this interview. Her parents were secular Jews, though her grandparents were traditional and Orthodox. She recalls always celebrating Jewish holidays with her extended family at her grandmother's house. The menu was tailored to Tamara's grandmother's taste, so Moroccan foods or non-kosher meats were outlawed. She fondly recalls her grandmother's cooking, even though she did not care for its taste. She spoke warmly about eating the last brisket her grandmother ever cooked with her, even though she said that it was hard as a rock.²⁵

Finally, Emily talked at length about her grandmother. She recalled having a very close family growing up, but she had a particular relationship with her grandmother as the petted child. This is what she told me:

*My grandmother, I used to sleep over, she used to take me to the hockey game in the limo. [...] I don't come from a limo background, but we had a limo in the family. And the other one too. I used to watch [...] Hockey Night in Canada when my parents when out for the evening. [...] I was the oldest grandchild on my mother's side, and I was the second baby on the other side, and I had a grandmother who preferred girls to boys. So somebody had to braid my hair, there you go, it was my grandmother.*²⁶

In addition to grandmothers and aunts, some women had close relationships with their mothers-in-law and considered them important parts of the family. Sarah's mother-in-law was Romanian, and was a very talented cook. Sarah learned many recipes from her when she was

first married. She often went over to her mother-in-law's house for dinner. While she spent the holidays with her grandmother, after she passed away Sarah spent one night of the holidays with her mother-in-law, and the other with her great-aunt. She had an excellent relationship with her mother-in-law.²⁷

Lisa also reported a very close relationship with her mother-in-law, particularly when it came to food. Lisa was born in Israel in 1943, making her sixty-five at the time of her interview. She arrived in Montreal as a young woman in 1964. She married Jewish woman she met on vacation in Haifa, Israel. While she was of Russian origin, her husband was Romanian. When she was first married, she learned many traditional Romanian recipes from her mother-in-law. When I asked her what she learned from her mother-in-law, she replied: "A lot! She used to be the best gefilte fish [maker] [...] from scratch! And I learned it from her. And I guess, she said, before she died, that I was the best, she never ate such good fish before. And her compote was unbelievable. I learned it from her."²⁸

In each of these cases, my participants placed a high level of importance on the elder female members of their family, particularly their grandmothers and aunts. The term family matriarch or head of the family was used, always describing the head of the family to be a woman and never a man. This elder female was the centre around which the entire family revolved, and the title would be passed on, generally to the eldest living female relative. This points to a degree of continuance of Old World gender roles after immigration, as identified by Rickie Berman. In Jewish folk culture, it was considered a woman's ultimate religious duty to support a religious man, a duty that may be rewarded with a place in Paradise. In Eastern Europe, the ideal for a man was to be a rabbi or a scholar, an educated and religious man. However, men were frequently gone from their homes for weeks and months at a time, pursuing their studies or

teaching in other communities. In the absence of their husbands, Jewish women often assumed most of their duties, effectively becoming family breadwinners. Rickie Berman argues that the transition to North America resulted in a shift of gender ideals, some of which become more important and some of which faded. In the *shtetls*, women's domestic practices were seen as peripheral while men's religious studies were seen as the basis of Jewish identity. After immigration, male gender ideals were disrupted as religious scholarship was no longer seen as an indication of status (nor was it possible for most people). As the synagogue's dominance over Jewish life declined, women's domestic practices became the cornerstone of Jewish identity. Thus the "Matriarch" is evidence both of the continuance of certain elements of Old World gender ideals, and the increasing importance of Jewish women as bearers of Jewish identity following immigration. As the importance of male religious leaders declined, the "Matriarch" became even more important.²⁹

There is, of course, the possibility that Montreal Jewish men might discuss the family patriarch as the central figure, in a way the women did not. The focus of my participants on matriarchs might be an artefact of the fact that I was speaking to women. Of the men in my study, two discussed the position of women in their families. Aaron, a Hungarian immigrant, was raised entirely by his mother and his grandmother, so they were the central figures in his life. He proudly asserted that he feels fortunate to have been surrounded by women while he was growing up. David was the adopted son of Diane. David describes his father as his best friend. However, he spent a great deal more time speaking about his mother. He told me her history in detailing, on illustrations of her strength. For instance, he proudly told me that his mother was born prematurely, and that everyone thought she was going to die. Instead, she thrived. David's mother also suffered through a hard childhood. Her father died when she was very young, and

her mother married an abusive man. As a result, she ran away from home when she was very young, going to Edmonton (from Saskatchewan) to stay with her aunts and cousins. She later ran away to the east, and worked to support herself during the Second World War. He also spoke about her struggle to adopt him, at time when adopting Jewish children was far from usual. David's mother, by all accounts, was a remarkable woman. While this is not enough evidence to conclusively argue that Jewish men, like Jewish women, emphasize the matriarch as the centre of the family, it may suggest a tendency in this direction.

Just as female relatives were important for my interviewees, so were female friends. Many women reported lifelong friendships with other women, often using very similar language. Anita was born in Montreal in 1940. She was sixty-eight at the time of her interview. Her parents had immigrated to Canada as infants. Her grandparents came from Russia originally. Anita grew up all over the island of Montreal, but predominantly in Jewish neighbourhoods. She attended public school as a child. Anita spent many hours outside playing with her friends as a child:

*We all played on the side streets. I played on Byron. The Jewish kids played on Byron. The French Catholic kids played on Glaubert, and they weren't allowed to play with us. Because Catholics weren't allowed to associate with anybody not Catholic. [...] So I used to walk up Byron, and pick up my friends [...] and we'd climb a fence to Musset, over the back yard, and we'd walk through the woods to go to Iona school. In the summer time, there was a boy's bathroom and a girl's bathroom, and the boys built a playhouse in there, and we used to play in the woods.*³⁰

The streets could be places for close friendships, and for anti-Semitism. Despite not being allowed to play with the French Canadian kids, Anita recalled happy days spent romping around with her friends, and the hidden world she discovered in inner-city Montreal with her friends. During her childhood, these were her most intimate relationships. However, Anita placed an

even greater importance on her relationships with her friends from university. She told me that she has had the same group of friends since her days at McGill University. She said that they all grew up together, went through the same milestones, and ended up living in the same neighbourhood. They were, and continue to be, quite close. As she told me: "We were teenagers together, we were young twenties. We went through dating, marriage, having our kids. Now we're getting, we're in the grandparent's stage. And fifty years later, we still meet as a group once a year."³¹

Aviva used similar language to describe her adult relationships with her female friends. Aviva had few friends of her own initially because she had so recently immigrated to Montreal from Israel. However, she became friends with her husband's friends and acquired some of her own. Or, in her own words: "Well, I kind of inherited his friends. And they all, we all got married sort of around the same time. People he went to school with, like architecture, um, and eventually we kind of made, I made a group of friends. Well. Sort of a nice group of friends evolved."³² As she noted, they lived their lives together, had all the same milestones, and continued to be close as they got old together.

Similarly, Miriam told me that she often felt closer to her friends than her relatives did. Miriam was born in Hungary in 1947, and was sixty-one at the time of her interview. She came to Canada when she was ten years old. She married in 1972. Her husband was a secular Jew of Hungarian origin who worked as a chef. After her marriage, she lived in the same area for the past thirty-odd years, and had developed closer relationships with some of her neighbours. They were all roughly the same age, and so lived through life's many difficulties together, and supported one another through it all. Their children had been young together, and they often shared babysitters. This is how she described their relationship:

My friends. Closer than my relatives. [...] Oh, we're still friends. Now you figure that out. We've been together since our kids were two years, not even. One years old. So, the first generation grew up together, the second generation grew up together [...] and we're still super good friends. There're five couples, and they're not all on the street. But not divorces. We celebrate anniversaries, we celebrate birthdays, we've done forties, fifties, now we're doing sixties. And we're still best of friends. Not to say that we don't have other friends or other. I really don't have that friendship with anybody else except them. [...] But, we're still friends. And we can count on each other anytime. [...] If the kids need something, or if they needed somewhere to stay because one of them was just wasn't feeling well. I mean, I had breast cancer. They were fabulous with me. Everybody does their thing in a different way. But they do their thing.³³

In many cases, female friends acted as fictive kin, or chosen family members. The strength of these relationships was such that they emphasize the importance of extended family for the Jewish women of Montreal. Because these women remained friends throughout most of their lives and experienced many of the same things, they were often closer to one another than to either relatives or even husbands. Indeed, some participants never spoke about either relatives or husbands with the same feeling that they did their close female friends. That said, many of these relationships ended up being relationships between couples, though my participants were closer to the wives than the husbands and bonded over their shared experiences. Further, these friends often had the same lifestyles, came from similar backgrounds, went to the same schools, had husbands with similar careers, and even raised their children around the same time. These friendships were often determined by geography; both Anita and Miriam described friendships limited to one street or neighbourhood. They socialized on the street; Miriam even described standing on the street corner with her friends looking out for cars while their kids rode their bikes. They had each other over for dinner parties, celebrated milestones together. And even in cases where my participants did not elaborate on their friends, several described having close

friends over for the holidays.³⁴ And, interestingly, most of my participants' friends were entirely or mostly Jewish.³⁵ The close nature of these friendships is unusual compared to the postwar Catholic immigrant women discussed by Robert Orsi in *Thank You, St. Jude*. While he notes that times of trouble often drew women together over their shared experiences even when they were total strangers, he argues that friendships among Catholic women were discouraged. Orsi argues that "the stringent sense of family honor among southern and eastern European Catholics demanded that domestic problems should be discussed only with one's own."³⁶ He also noted that:

Devotional culture accused women precisely of talking too much, as we can see, of having voices too insistent and powerful; they were enjoined to silence as discipline and calling. [...] The words they needed most at home – those to speak and complain about their pain, about things at home, about their fears and new ambitions, the problems and possibilities of their everyday lives – were precisely the ones denied them by both their cultures, American and Catholic.³⁷

Orsi argues that American Catholic culture promoted the idealized image of the silent women. Repeated admonitions to "bear your cross in silence" were common, which served to isolate women from one another and to detract from their struggles.

Unfortunately because of the lack of research in Canada on Jewish women and the limited information on the topic from my participants, I cannot make any firm conclusions on the matter. However, it appears that the cultural prohibition against airing family business in public did not apply to female friends among Jews. Many women sought out female friends to fill this gap, women who could understand and empathize with their position. But perhaps more importantly, despite the importance placed on family in Jewish culture, there was no emphasis on

silent women in this culture, so there was no cultural imperative to keep one's problems to one's self. There is one important exception to this rule, abuse, which will be dealt with below.

Given the importance of both female friendships and extended kin to women in postwar Jewish Montreal, the idea of a family appears to have been as much about emotional ties as about blood relations. Extended families were, in some cases, just as important as nuclear families. In many cases, the Jewish women that I interviewed went to live with relatives, particularly grandmothers and aunts, on a permanent or temporary basis. And, contrary to the traditional horror stories, many women maintained close relationships with their mothers-in-law. Families often took it upon themselves to care for all of their members. In cases where particular branches were not religious, the more religious members of the extended family would step in and assume responsibility for the Jewish education of the children. Finally, some women made their own families or developed deeper emotional networks through the formation of lifelong friendships with other Jewish women.

Singles, Lesbians, and Divorcees, Oh My!

For many, marriage is one of the basic elements of the family. However, not everyone gets married, nor does everyone stay married. Further, intimate relationships don't always necessarily consist of a man and a woman. This was reflected among some of the women who agreed to be interviewed as part of my study. Four of the participants³⁸ in my study were married and then divorced in the period under study, and two spoke to me in some detail about their experiences. Two of my participants³⁹ identified as lesbians in the period under study, and both spoke extensively about their experiences. Two of my participants had never been married, although one was in a long-term committed relationship.⁴⁰ While these numbers are too small to

provide any thorough examination of any of these topics, in all they reveal much about how heteronormativity operated in an ethnic community. First, I will discuss how singles were perceived in the community generally, followed by testimony from my interviewees, and then draw some tentative conclusions on the topic.

Many insights on the Jewish community's perceptions of single people can be gleaned from documents from the Singles Conference of the Commission on Family and Marriage of 1979. The Conference included a public workshop that was attended by over 350 members of the Jewish community of Montreal.⁴¹ Many participants in this workshop expressed concerns related to the heteronormativity of the Jewish community of Montreal, though no one called it that. Numerous people at the hearings raised the issue that synagogues and the Jewish community in general were extremely couple-oriented, or in other words, normalized marriage. Charging for synagogue seats by couple rather than by individual was seen to be a primary symptom of this problem. There were no rates for singles for High Holiday seating, and in some cases there were no provisions made for continuing membership for widows or widowers.⁴²

The conference organizer, Rabbi Shuchat, spoke about the demands of Singles:

What is it that this audience expected of synagogues? That they provide a meeting place for singles; that they offer programs on a rotating basis between synagogues; that all synagogues get together to provide a permanent centre or gathering place for singles as now exists for Golden Ageds; that synagogues provide an outreach, a human concern, counselling services, friendship services and hospitality to singles for a Passover Seder, a Purim Seudah and any and every holiday occasion, etc. The list is much longer than what I have noted.

Many other recommendations were made that concern the total community. I was struck, however, by the manner in which the synagogue was singled out. It is something for us to think about and maybe we will feel called upon to act.⁴³

Further, many singles' advocates also felt that the community itself failed to address their needs. Various reports lamented the lack of supplementary assistances from Jewish Family Services for single parents, "making it possible for them to exist as a Jewish family in a dignified way."⁴⁴ Crisis intervention for widows and widowers, as well as recently divorced or separated Jews was also not widely available, though urgently required.⁴⁵ Dr. Barbara Wainrib, the Montreal psychologist who spoke at the Singles Conference, discussed the problem of loneliness among singles, noting that singles' need for friendship often went unsatisfied because they felt "'left out' of community-based 'couple oriented' activities" that failed to address the unique circumstances of singles, whether they met unmarried, divorced, or widowed.⁴⁶ Divorced and widowed individuals also requested more counselling services at the Singles Workshop, and parents with young families requested organized activities for them and their children. On a less concrete level, the participants asked the community, through the established synagogues, to sensitize the married world to some of the difficulties of being single, especially when one is a member of a community that places such a strong emphasis on the family unit."⁴⁷

The problem of being a single woman was also one that concerned my participants. Single or divorced people were objects to be pitied. Marilyn was the only person I spoke with who had never married nor been in any kind of long-term relationships. She attributed this to never learning how to be feminine: "I think I never figured out how to pick the right man." Growing up, she described being praised for her intelligence. She recalled never learning how to wear makeup. Unfortunately, she did not say anything else on the subject, except to say that she did experience feeling somewhat stigmatized for being single.⁴⁸ Sharon was born in Montreal in 1952, making her sixty-two at the time of this interview. She was a second-generation Canadian, her parents having been born in Montreal, while her grandparents came from Eastern Europe.

Sharon recalled Jewish holidays as an occasion to invite people over. "The odd cousin, mostly what I consider to be unfortunate cases. Single people, divorced people, you know, Holocaust survivors that don't have a family." Note that she classed single and divorced individuals in the same category as Holocaust survivors. Donna agreed that the Jewish community was very oriented towards marriage. She recalled to me: "oh yeah, I mean, when I was a young adult, the only way girls could leave home, of course without big to-dos. [...] Very few girls did, left home on their own, to live in an apartment. It just wasn't done. The only excuse to leave home was to get married. And, I think, certainly in my first case, it was to rebel. It was an acceptable way to rebel. You got presents, decorated your house." She further noted that this pressure was distinctively for women "I think that, a woman, a guy who wasn't married was a catch. But a woman who wasn't married was a pity, you pitied her. [...] It's a big, it was really something else if you got married too late in your twenties. There's a certain time when you got married, like 20, 21, 22, 23 was getting older."⁴⁹

Two of the participants in my study identified as lesbian during some part of their lives, Dana coming out in the late 1950s and Kim in the late 1970s. Kim was born in Montreal in 1947, making her sixty-one at the time of her interview. Both of her parents were born in Montreal, while her grandparents were from Eastern Europe. Kim came out in the context of the Women's movement in California. And while neither described their experiences as having anything to do with Judaism, as both had rebelled against their Jewish identities at the time, their comments do reveal a great deal about the view of lesbians in the Jewish community of Montreal. Quite simply, they did not exist. Dana was born in Montreal in 1936, making her seventy-two at the time of her interview. Her parents were recent immigrants to Canada. They were also Orthodox Jews. Throughout her youth, she was involved in left-wing politics. Dana's experiences were

remarkable in that she was a lesbian in such an early period. As she noted, "It was very difficult."⁵⁰ Her first experiences were with another woman she met in school. But as she noted, "you were an oddity."⁵¹ While there were other lesbians out in Montreal, they were hard to find. When Dana eventually connected with the lesbian community in Montreal, she felt that the butch/femme labels were too restrictive, as she didn't fit into either category. When I asked her about how she thought being Jewish would have played into the situation, she said, "Of course, I wasn't being Jewish in those times, I was just being a dyke. Floundering."⁵²

Kim came out in San Francisco in the context of the Women's Movement. At this point in her life, she had rejected her Judaism and had left Montreal because of what she perceived to be the stifling nature of the Jewish community of Montreal. She first became frustrated with "cultural stifling"⁵³ when she was in high school. As she noted, "When it was really cold out, and we couldn't hang out on the street and do stuff, you know, hang out on the block, I would hang out with my Jewish friends. And we'd go to parties inside, and couples, and ugh. And that, you know to me... I still have problems with social gatherings where everybody's couples."⁵⁴ For Kim, the assumption of heteronormativity in the Jewish community of Montreal bothered her, long before she came out as a lesbian. But she noted that this was a particularity of the Jewish community. She told me that once it got warmer out, she would hang out with her non-Jewish friends, "hanging out on the corner, smoking, drinking, you know, going to dances at the rec centre [...] Who were like, cool! You know. They had fun!"⁵⁵

Each one of these is the story of an individual or a group of individuals that were left out of the Jewish community of Montreal because of its tendency towards heteronormativity and the view that marriage was the only normal and natural state for adults. As the complaints and comments by Jewish singles reveal, the Jewish community of Montreal was ill-equipped to deal

with those who did not fit into this model. Assumptions that marriage was a normal and natural state of affairs for individuals was reflected in most aspects of Jewish life, synagogue fees being only one example. The Jewish community of Montreal was likely more invested in heteronormativity than the general Canadian population because of the focus on the reproduction for Jewish survival. In this sense, they are much like the French Canadians of the same period.⁵⁶ Heteronormativity became less of an important focus in the larger Canadian and Quebec society moving into the 1970s and 1980s, yet it remained quite strong in the Jewish community of Montreal. None of the women I interviewed questioned the notion that marriage was the normal and natural state for Jewish women. The closest anyone came to questioning this assumption was Kim and Dana's description of the rigid nature of Jewish Montreal society. But both solved the problem by eventually leaving Montreal. In the end, single, divorced, or lesbian Jews remained an invisible minority in the Jewish community of Montreal.

Family Conflict and Abuse

Even for those who ostensibly "fit into" the heteronormative family, family life could be less than happy. Even so-called "happy families" could be stressful, especially around holiday times. As Elizabeth Pleck reminds us in her book, *Celebrating the Family*, family gatherings around holiday rituals could often be filled with conflict. In particular, many women suffered from the "Holiday Blues," stressed out over all of their responsibilities around Christmas time. Family quarrels and family violence were also prevalent around Christmas and New Year's.⁵⁷ Other families experience these problems all year long. Jewish family relations in postwar Montreal were not necessarily always happy. Conflicts ranged from simple disagreements to outright violence. In "The Memory of Violence: Soviet and East European Mennonite Refugees and Rape in the Second World War," Marlene Epp speaks about narratives used by Mennonite

women as they recalled memories of violence and rape during the Second World War. As she discovered, these memories were often depersonalized, in part to help the victims deal with such memories, and also because they failed to fit into the overall narrative of the horror of war in the Mennonite framework.⁵⁸ While I did not find the same pattern, I did recognize certain patterns, particularly the use of humour to hide pain and the attribution of violence to other members of the family.

Like Canadian families, Jewish-American families were often idealized. Riv-Ellen Prell argues that Jewish families internalized many of the ideals of the dominant American society. As with the dominant Canadian and American ideal, men were represented as having an outward focus while women were the rulers of the private domain.⁵⁹ Prell focuses on the portrayal of Jewish fathers in television, particularly through the character of Jake Goldberg in the show "The Goldbergs" in the 1950s. She noted that in the series, "his presence was marginal, and without symbolic or literal footsteps in their houses. No one under him followed his advice, and he increasingly appeared as a blustering foil to Molly's [his wife's] good sense. His simultaneous marginalization at home and success at work suggested an uprooted masculinity contained within his business."⁶⁰ Conversely, Molly, his wife, is depicted as having common sense and being the true head of the household.⁶¹ While there is no information about the Canadian Jewish family ideal, the Canadian postwar family ideal generally follows the same pattern. As Mona Gleason notes: "Democratic family life, a powerful trope in the postwar years, was said to depend on a cooperative adherence to traditional gender roles for women and men."⁶² While the Jewish family ideal is generally indistinguishable from the dominant family ideal, there was one important difference: there was a strong sense that Jewish husbands were "better" than average. Specifically, they were hardworking and caring, but generally did not interfere in the family.

The history of wife-beating in Jewish families is almost non-existent because of this myth. Some studies have suggested that Jewish marriages are characterized by higher degrees of equality between partners.⁶³ Others noted that "at a time when wife beating was acceptable in Christian Europe, rabbinical courts issued sharp denunciations of instances of wife beating."⁶⁴ This often made it more difficult for Jewish women to speak about domestic and family violence because many were convinced that no one would believe them. One study, "Family Violence: Silence isn't Golden Anymore," by Faith Solela, examines the silence around this issue in the United States. Many Jews tried to prove that they were good Americans by "proudly displaying the strength of their families and found that silence hid their weakness."⁶⁵ Consequently, many abused Jewish women believed that because Jewish tradition says that family violence should not happen, they were alone. When battered women did seek aid, "victims reported being greeted by disbelief on the part of friends and relatives, by rabbis who assume the victim provoked the batterer, and by counsellors who tell the victim that this is the first case of [Jewish?] family violence they have ever seen."⁶⁶ All of this left most Jewish women ill-equipped to deal with domestic abuse. In this respect, the experiences of abused Jewish women parallels those of the abused Catholic women discussed by Orsi. Both Jewish and Catholic women were encouraged by community leaders (often religious authorities) to keep silent about their suffering, specifically domestic abuse. Silencing these women undermined their testimony and also served to keep the issue of domestic violence from public view and its roots unexposed.

Humour was sometimes used as a coping mechanism. The history of Jewish humour is well-documented. Some recent works, including Lawrence J. Epstein's *The Haunted Smile*, talk extensively about how Jewish humour has been used in North America by Jewish-Americans as

a way to cope with anti-Semitism and the difficulties of being between two worlds, Jewish and American. As he notes,

the story of Jewish comedians in American is one of triumph and success. But their stage smile is tinged with a sadness. It is haunted by the Jewish past, by the deep strains in American Jewish life – the desire to be accepted and the concern for a culture disappearing – by the centuries of Jewish life too frequently interrupted by hate and by the knowledge that too often for Jewish audiences a laugh masked a shudder. The comedians' story in American includes bitter encounters with anti-Semitism and the lures of an attractive culture along the way. The jokes these comedians told, their gags, and their nervous patter need to be set alongside the obstacles they overcame.⁶⁷

Most works on Jewish humour focus on professional comedians.⁶⁸ But I would argue that the same principles apply to ordinary Jewish individuals. Humour was often employed as a coping mechanism to deal with the difficulties of living in North America, caught between anti-Semitism, a desire to fit in, and a desire to honour the past. It was also a coping mechanism to deal with aspects of family life affected by this conflict, emerging in the form of family violence. Jewish women employed humour as a way of minimizing the impact of domestic and family violence. Laughing off a situation, and thereby diminishing its importance, was often unfortunately their only way of fighting back against violence.

It is difficult to trace domestic violence or abuse within the archives of the Jewish community of Montreal, particularly in the postwar period. However, some clues can be gained by looking between the lines. The National Archives of Canada contains a small cache of case files from Jewish Family Services of the Baron de Hirsch Institute. While most date from the 1920s, 1930s, and early 1940s, there is one curious exception from 1957. This file contains the story of Anna.⁶⁹

In 1957, sixteen-year-old Anna arrived in Halifax from Hungary. She went to live with the third cousin of her mother, Mrs. W, who subsequently applied to Jewish Family Services for financial assistance. Beneath the simple request for help, it is quite apparent that this was an unhappy family. The social worker that interviewed Mrs. W. reported that "Mrs. W. noted during the interview that her husband was not happy with this arrangement. She pointed out that he is a difficult person at any rate and feels very resentful of having to support a stranger."⁷⁰ Mr. W was a sewing machine mechanic who was only employed sporadically. The social worker goes on to note that "Mrs. W. discussed another aspect of her present problem, namely that she does not feel that her home is the proper place for Anna, in view of her husband's resentment against the child. She said that she herself had to put up with her husband's little quirks, but that she did not feel that Anna should be involved in this."⁷¹ This language is a classic example of an abusive husband and a wife trying to cover up or make light of his abuses. Mrs. W "didn't feel that she could change her marital situation but certainly felt that the child deserved better."⁷²

Anna herself was interviewed several days later. She also reported that "Mr. W. is not easy to get along with and resents her presence in the home because he has to support her."⁷³ On March 19, Mr. W. was finally interviewed. He reported that Mrs. W had been hospitalized for a "nervous breakdown." The social worker presumed she was being given tranquilizers and shock treatment.⁷⁴

The following year, a letter was inserted from the Jewish General Hospital. This letter, from a medical social worker reported that Anna had been admitted to the psychiatric ward, and was currently being treated for tuberculosis. The letter reported that the Ws., particularly Mrs. W. "showed superficial concern for Anna,"⁷⁵ and constantly critiqued the doctor for the quality of care. The social worker, Mrs. U, further specified that Mrs. W "is an extremely depressed

woman, as is her husband whom she constantly berates and who earns only a marginal income.

[...] She feels that doctors did not understand her and that no one can help her." ⁷⁶ Mrs. U said that Mr. W. was "depressed, tense, cannot sit still long enough to read even a newspaper, suffers from insomnia and says he gets along with almost no one because of his extreme irritability." ⁷⁷

Anna did not return to their home after she was discharged. Mrs. W. commented that "her husband's tenseness and nervousness as a poor environment for Anna was her primary concern.."

⁷⁸ Mrs. W. was described as "a manipulative controlling person," and Anna as a young girl who had been deprived of love and affection her whole life, and was diagnosed as "psychoneurotic" and as having "a "perfectionist" ego ideal." ⁷⁹ This same letter reported that Anna "felt very unhappy and isolated in her aunt's home, and reacted against their rigid religious practices," ⁸⁰ this despite avowing that she did not feel comfortable working on Saturday due to her religiosity. ⁸¹

The case file seems to suggest that Mr. W abused both Anna and Mrs. W.. Both Anna and Mrs. W. were eventually admitted to hospital for nervous breakdowns and psychiatric problems. In reports about their behaviour, Mrs. W. is described as manipulative and controlling, and Anna as not aware of her situation and too much of a perfectionist. Mr. W's "quirks" and "resentments" are almost completely ignored.

It is perhaps easier to uncover family conflicts and domestic abuse through oral history than through case files. And while the evidence is still fragmentary, certain patterns emerge. Several participants were willing to talk about family conflicts. Whether the topic was conflict over religion, child raising, or relationships with mother-in-laws, many concealed their pain through humour. Other participants related stories of domestic violence, but in a very vague manner. In some cases, further details were revealed later. Domestic violence was a silent shame

for many Jewish women. I have tried to keep their stories as intact as possible, to allow their voices to be heard.

Many of the women I spoke with reported difficult relationships with their parents. Miriam discussed some conflict between her and her parents over the matter of religion. After she was married, her parents refused to go to her house for the Jewish holidays because they refused to drive. She recalled how growing up, she felt stifled by the religious observance of her parents. Her parents were quite strict. She recalled that her father in particular was quite religious. She mentioned that "Father prayed all day," and attended *shul* three times a day.⁸² She told me that she asked too many questions as a child, and when she didn't get answers that satisfied her, she became something of a rebel. She later abandoned many practices after she got married.

When it came to her mother, Miriam had a difficult relationship. She had this to say:

My mother was not very supportive. [...] She doesn't have that connection [with family]. I call it the Holocaust personality. Cold. Just cold, not a warm, loving, I never had a warm, loving relationship with my mother, with my parents, at all. And, they were not the touchy-feely-kissy type, ever. [...] So much happened to them, you know. But my mother was totally traumatized. On the other hand, my aunt, who was with her, and two years younger, she just can't say enough about her grandchildren, you know. So, my mother's philosophy always, about her children, was don't praise your kids, let others praise your kids. Other people's praise means zero, they don't know you, you know. What is better than your own parents thinking you are the best are. You know. And, what is worse than hearing your parents say you're not the best. You know. So, no matter how well I did in school, it was, what did so-and-so get. [...] I remember that so distinctly, that I would never, ever, [...] it would never pass my mouth.⁸³

In Miriam's case, the impact of the Holocaust can clearly be seen. Out of my thirty-five subjects, a total of five referred to themselves as directly associated with the Holocaust, whether as

victims or the children and close relatives of victims. Another two were likely associated, but did not identify themselves as such. There is a great deal of research on this topic. One extensive study was conducted by John J. Sigal and Morton Weinfeld, and later published as *Trauma and Rebirth: Intergenerational Effects of the Holocaust*. This book draws upon two surveys of Jews in Montreal conducted in 1979 and 1981. Their research has established that there was some degree of psychological and physical impairment among survivors even as late as the 1980s.⁸⁴ This trauma could also affect the next generation. While in some cases parents were overprotective with their children, seeing postwar children as replacements for those lost during the war,⁸⁵ others were so afraid of losing their children that they distanced themselves to protect themselves. Hannah Starman in particular points to the continuance of psychological wounds and even abuse: "The testimonies of Holocaust survivors' children indicate that all of the features that characterize "the narcissist family system" were discernable in their family settings: indirect communication, the parents' emotional unavailability and lack of empathy, unclear boundaries and overprotectiveness, lack of entitlement, guilt-inducing behaviours, the impossibility of satisfying the parent, and consequently, constant attempts at mind reading."⁸⁶ As a result, the children of Holocaust survivors were "poorly equipped to develop a healthy array of emotional responses or a sense of emotional entitlement."⁸⁷

The Holocaust was sometimes a factor when it came to conflicts between daughters and their parents. But so too was the issue of religiosity. Women's turning away from Judaism due to parental conflict was another common theme. Leah began her interview by recounting her relationship with her parents, particularly her mother. This is how she described the situation:

I was born into an Orthodox family. My mother was very orthodox, my father just went along with what my mother, my mother was the stronger one she is. And she turned me off religion. [...] We couldn't open the lights Saturday, we couldn't cook, [...] and when

I started to work and to make money and my boss said I have to work Saturday, That I would have to do. That was okay, to go make money was okay. I couldn't understand it [...]. I couldn't take the bus to work, I had to walk to work cause it was Shabbos. Not during the week, [then] I could take the bus. So I couldn't, in my youth I was struggling with these inconsistencies all the time.⁸⁸

Leah was further conflicted when she was married. Both she and her sister argued with her mother over the mikveh. This is how she recalled the story:

I met my husband and we were getting married and my mother says you have to go to the mikveh. So I said, the mikveh, it's so filthy, it's so dirty. [...] Daf gein to the mikveh! And so I went to the mikveh the night before and I dunked my head, my hairdo went, my nails were cut, my feet, a mess! When I went to the wedding, nothing like I had prepared for. If I didn't go to the mikveh, my mother says you wouldn't be able to have children. [...] and I went to the mikveh, and it took me 10 years to have three children.⁸⁹

Her sister, however, was not so easily cowed:

My sister was five years younger than me and she's getting married and she absolutely refused to go to the mikveh. My mother says Hazein! [Leah] had trouble so you won't be able to have any! So my sister says so fine and [my mother said] I'm not coming to the wedding. I said, Mama, I'll take her to the wedding. [...] My mother gave us a lot of trouble but she didn't go to the mikveh. And to nine months she had her first child. When she went for her check-up six weeks later she was pregnant again. She had her second child, I think her third child came a little after. So I said, Ma it's a good thing she didn't go to the mikveh, cause if she went to the mikveh, she'd have like a dozen and a half like rabbits!⁹⁰

Leah often resented her parents' religiosity, particularly when her mother put her in awkward situations. In particular, she had a problem with her mother using her to take advantage of other people's generosity. For example, when Leah was a child and her mother wanted to determine

whether a chicken was kosher or not, she would send Leah to the *shochet* (ritual butcher) to ask him to verify the bird. However, Leah's mother never sent along any money to repay the butcher for his services. As Leah noted, "And he would do it because he couldn't refuse, but he resented the fact that I came so often [with the chickens] and no money. At the time I didn't understand it, but now I do. That wasn't nice of my mother.[...] He had to make a living and he was just as poor as we were." ⁹¹

In other cases, conflict occurred between sisters. Diane related a story to me that characterized her relationship with her older sister:

She was in Rochester, and I was worried. You know, you fight with them, your sisters, or I don't know brothers. But when they're sick or something, there's something, All the anger disappears. You only worry. [...] My sister was having this operation in Rochester, and my mother couldn't go. [...] So I went. [...] And [my sister] talked to the doctors in Rochester like I was the older sister, coming to visit to take care of her. I walked in, so it was a hot day, so I put on a pair of shorts to travel with and I get into Rochester.[...] And I get to the desk, and they said, oh the doctors want to see you before you go see your sister. [...] You know, fight or not, you love your sister. And the doctor's looked at me and broke out laughing. [...] I thought they were making fun of me.[...] And they said, are [you sure you're her sister?] And I said, yes, you sent for me. They said, well, we'll tell you why we're laughing. I said, well why are you laughing, I feel terrible. He said, we expected a woman about 45-50, well to do, and you come in here, he said, how old are you? I said I'm 32, 33 at the time. And I said my sister's about ten years older than me, she was about 42, 40. And they said, we expected this woman in her late 40s, and wealthy. And here you come in looking like a little kid. And I did look young for my age. And rosy cheeks. [...] They explained to me the way she talked about me, that I didn't care, I wasn't helping her. [...] He said, It's just that we expected we were going to be very angry with you, and you just broke us up.⁹²

She said further that "I never liked my sister."

In other cases, the participants reported direct confrontations with their mothers-in-law. Miriam discussed a head-on confrontation that occurred between her and her mother-in-law, as well as the situation leading up to it. This is what she had to say:

*I learned a lot from my mother-in-law, [...] not in a very good way! My mother-in-law was obsessed with my son. We were super close, until my son was born. Then I became the wicked witch of the west. I could do nothing right. Nothing. And she knew everything. And she would come over here, and upset my whole schedule. Ugh, my god, she was a pain in the butt. But she was obsessed with him. So, I never did the right thing. And he was a little small when he was born, and so on. Until, one day, I just couldn't take it anymore. And I said, I took my son, and I handed him to her, and I said here, you go take him home, and you do whatever you want with him. And when you're fed up, bring him back. She never bothered me again!*⁹³

While this ended direct conflict over Miriam's children, she said that her mother-in-law continued to harass her and criticize her, and even put her husband in the middle. Miriam's husband refused to intervene, due to previous experience confronting his mother. Later on, she stopped coming around to visit Miriam and her two children. She eventually realized that Miriam was not the enemy, and they made their peace. Again, while this story is told in a humorous style, it is quite clear that underneath this façade, Miriam was deeply hurt by both her mother-in-law's interference, and her husband's refusal to defend her.⁹⁴

Aviva also had problems with her mother-in-law. At first, she merely mentioned that her in-laws hoped to be very involved in her family life, but that it did not work out. However, she soon elaborated.

It was very difficult. Having one child, they thought they would be very involved, but they ended up not being. I wasn't even 21, but I knew that was not the right way to go, having my mother-in-law as part of the package. [...] It was conflicted, at the beginning. [...] I saw her 10 times a day, she was cooking and baking as though he

*was still living at home, and bringing stuff over, or wanting to bring stuff over. She really did not realize that one part of life was over and a new phase was starting.*⁹⁵

However, Aviva had a great deal of sympathy (at least in retrospect) for her mother-in-law. She recognized that immigration took so much from her in-laws, that they were unable to deal with any more massive change. At the same time, she recognized that her mother-in-law was isolated because she never worked and spoke no English. However, this did not prevent conflicts, which only escalated. Her mother-in-law thought it was only appropriate that she stay home to cook and bake, but Aviva wanted to go back to work after her children were born. While her husband fully supported her decision, her mother-in-law was not at all pleased. She was often surprised at her assertiveness with her mother-in-law. Eventually, the situation reached a breaking point: "She was reduced to tears often. I just knew that was not right. I knew that I had my life to live."⁹⁶

Perhaps the most significant cause of conflict was the subject of intermarriage. Many of the women I interviewed described pressure from their parents to marry Jews. While rabbis were concerned about the survival of the Jewish people,⁹⁷ Jewish parents were more concerned about respectability, that their children follow the "norm" within the Jewish community so as to make their lives somewhat easier. While many of my interviewees noted that both of their parents were against intermarriage, they singled out their fathers as the main antagonists.

Sharon spoke about her experiences dating non-Jews. She dated a French-Canadian boy when she was a teenager, and recounted that her father threatened to break every bone in his body. Sharon was attracted to him because he was the school star. She would often meet him after *shul* in the park to smoke marijuana. As a graduate student, she also dated many non-Jews. In particular, she dated a Mormon who was a bit of a rebel (in that he drank diet coke). She became very involved in his community. As she noted, "he was really handsome. They were

really good. I used to go to these family home meetings, and I volunteered at their country kitchen, their stand at the Calgary stampede. I made cheeseburgers, even though I didn't eat them. And um, just stuff like that. But, you know, they said I would make a very good Mormon." However, in the end she married a Jewish man.⁹⁸ While Elaine did not care one way or another, she only dated Jews because her parents would have been very upset.⁹⁹

For Miriam, the Jewishness of her future husband was extremely important because of her parents' views.

Because, I am [Jewish], and that's how I was brought up. And my father would have disowned me, immediately. He would have sat shiva for me, I can guarantee that. He would never think of it as gaining a son, instead losing a daughter. I just... it would never happen anyway. Even to marry someone non-religious, was like sacrilegious. It was a big thing. [...] Not so much my mother, but my father. He fought me tooth and nail. And, I'll kick you out of the house. I said fine, I'll move. I have an aunt, she'll take me in. I guess he knew I was serious. And I never really dated religious guys because I hated them all. They were all like, wimps, mama's boys. [...] There's something about them, not worldly, very simple, not super educated. Not that I wanted someone super educated, I just, not worldly. That's what it was. Because I wasn't worldly, I was an innocent. You know, and I guess I wanted to meet someone who knew more than me. And maybe I could learn something.¹⁰⁰

In the end, she made her father halfway happy; she married a Jewish man who was almost completely irreligious.¹⁰¹

Beth informed me that her father was very strict. She told me about the first time that she dated a non-Jew:

My parents, they were not exactly, I don't think they ever knew. [...] And I was working in the summer time for British Petroleum. Shows you what you remember. I was in university and [...] I met some guy, and he wasn't Jewish. And whether it was forbidden fruit, I don't know what it was. But I remember, I had to meet him, I lied to my parents. What a big surprise. And I didn't have my

driver's license, so that was. I had to take the 65 bus [...] to meet him, because if my parents would have found out that I, even, I mean even if I went for coffee, and they didn't have coffee houses then [...]. If they got any clue, that I was remotely having anything to do with somebody from the opposite sex that was not Jewish, I can't imagine what would have happened.¹⁰²

When I then asked her if she felt it was important to marry someone who was Jewish, she exclaimed, "There was no question! There was just no question!" She further elaborated:

Dating, I meant I did it on the QT, very clandestine. Marriage? No. I don't approve, I don't know what my parents would have done. I honestly don't know what my parents would have done. It's a good question. I never dated anybody that was serious enough to even think of getting married. None of my friends, ever, married anybody out of their faith. None of them. I don't know if any one of them ever dated anybody out of their faith. I was the rebel, Ha Ha!¹⁰³

Even women raised in secular Jewish homes felt pressure from their parents to marry Jews. Linda's parents were quite secular, believing that Jewish culture was far more important than Jewish religion. Linda was born in Montreal in 1948, making her sixty at the time of her interview. Both of her parents were born in Montreal, while her parents were from Eastern Europe. She grew up in what she characterized as a very liberal household, with an emphasis on Jewish moral values rather than religious observances. After she got old enough to start dating, and was dating non-Jews, her mother said to her, "Don't think you can ever think you're not Jewish. [...] Doesn't matter what you think, it's what other people say. You will always be a Jew to other people." Linda said that at the time, she felt that her mother was being unreasonable, that it wasn't important to be Jewish. Her feelings changed when she encountered anti-Semitism on her honeymoon to England.¹⁰⁴ The importance placed on Jewish marriage even by non-religious Jewish parents is significant. As I will discuss further in later chapters, it points to the fluid and

dynamic nature of Jewish identity, particularly when it came to ethnicity. In the end, many women succumbed to pressure from their parents against intermarriage. In fact, some of the women I spoke with married Jews in order to make their parents happy. Debra told me as much when she was speaking about her first marriage. Debra was born in 1950 to survivors of the Holocaust after they immigrated to Canada. She was fifty-eight at the time of her interview. Her family was not very religious, her parents having lost their faith in God because of their experiences.¹⁰⁵ She told me that dating non-Jews was probably the only issue she had with her parents. "I think that, when I married the first time, it was, um, probably to please them, I chose a Jewish man. And I'm sure it was to please them. But I definitely had a lot of boyfriends that weren't Jewish."¹⁰⁶ Julie was born in Montreal, though she did not tell me the exact date. Her parents were Canadian, while her grandparents were Lithuanian immigrants. Her parents were considered very modern at the time because they were secular Jews and wanted to assimilate into Canadian culture. They did not give her a Jewish education, though they did celebrate the holidays at home. Similarly, Julie married her husband because her mother wanted her to marry a Jew. As she told me: "He kinda fit the bill."¹⁰⁷

In each one of these cases, the pressure to marry Jews comes not from religious or community authorities, but from parents. Regardless of the personal opinions of many of the women discussed, they all told me that their most important reason for not marrying non-Jews was because their parents would be upset, disappointed, or angry.

In conflicts over intermarriage and a range of other issues, stories of family conflict are often portrayed as comedies. While the participants related these stories with laughing and joking, it was quite clear that this was a façade used to conceal their pain. From Diane telling me that she never really liked her sister, to Leah repeatedly telling me she abandoned her religious

practices because of her mother, to Miriam's obvious resentment of her father's rigidity in forcing her to marry a Jew, her mother-in-law's interference and her husband's refusal to intervene in her favour, family conflict could leave deep and lasting scars.

While some forms of family conflict were dealt with through humour, this was not always the case with domestic abuse. Such cases were often silent, hushed up, and not talked about, although some women commiserated with each other. Sharon employed a Jewish Hungarian babysitter for her children when they were young. She related to me the story of this woman. "I remember, I had this Hungarian woman who was a babysitter for me for some time. And she was around fifty, and she told me, her husband would come home from work, and he would start complaining, the soup was not there. And so he came home one day, and his suitcases were near the door, and she says go back to your mother."¹⁰⁸ What this text does not illustrate is the comedic way that Sharon recounted her babysitter's struggles and triumphs as comedy. Despite the difficult subtext of the story, Sharon makes it into a joke on the husband, one who got his just desserts in the end.

However, when it came to her own experiences, Sharon was less flippant. Sharon spoke at length about her experiences with family conflict and abuse. She discussed conflicts over who was more religious or the better Jew depending on the level to which Jewish observances were kept. Sharon said that some of the very religious members of her family considered her "the *goyim* in the family,"¹⁰⁹ and would make fun of her for where she would purchase food (presumably not from kosher grocery stores). Family members would also gossip about her behind her back about her husband's lax attendance at synagogue (he preferred to go bike riding). She said that as a result, many people would then not speak to her in synagogue because they thought she was divorced. She also received abuse at the hands of more immediate relatives. Her

father was abusive, verbally and physically. She said "[He was] really mean, but he was always mean when I was growing up. He always called me names. And so, I said, if you're going to act like that, then I'm leaving and I would just walk out. [...] My nickname when I was growing up was [...] piece of shit. [...] And you know what, to be told your whole life that you're a piece of shit, and why, because I was the youngest, I was the one who did the cleaning, I did this, I'd do that, you know. But because I was ungrateful. [...] My mother always stood up for my father, she never said a word." ¹¹⁰

She later elaborated on the subject of "Mama's boys," and the intimate relationship between Jewish mothers and sons. She related the following story to me: "They're all Mama's Boys [...] I wanted to have girls, so I could raise them to be more independent. [...] My mother-in-law wanted boys so badly, after I gave birth to the second one, and it was a girl, and my mother-in-law used to go to Florida, and if it was a boy, she'd hang around till the Pidyon Ben ¹¹¹ [...] and if it was a girl she'd go to Florida right away." ¹¹²

Diane's story is perhaps the most poignant of all. In her discussions with me, she described how her father died when she was quite young, and her mother remarried soon after. She initially told me that she was not fond of her stepfather, and so chose to leave her home to go and work in Montreal. However, later on in the interview, she provided some more details about her stepfather. She began by relating how her grandmother eventually came to live with her family, as she got older. While she had other daughters, Diane's mother was the only one who kept kosher, and this was important for the orthodox grandmother. However, her stepfather greatly resented her presence and became violent towards her. As Diane recounted:

In her later years, she stayed with us, until she became absolutely senile. So completely out of it, she used to climb up on the cupboards, [...] and my stepfather was so mean, and he would grab her. We went to give her a bath one week, to get her into the

*bathroom was like fighting, and getting her into the bath, and we looked, she was black and blue all over, he used to pinch her. He was a terrible man. So we had to send granny to the old people's home.*¹¹³

She also mentioned in an offhand manner that she spent many years living with relatives, like her grandmother and aunt, throughout her childhood, but claimed that this was because her mother was unable to care for her as she had to work.

This is all that Diane mentioned about her stepfather. She never mentioned any violence towards her, only towards her grandmother. I was fortunate to talk to her son David, as well. He raised the subject of Diane's stepfather. However, he told me a very different story. This is what he had to say about his mother's childhood:

David: She had a tough childhood. When my grandfather died, she was three or four. And she had a tough childhood because my grandmother remarried a very, the stories she's barely told me, if I could find this guy, he's dead obviously, but if I could find him, I'd wring his neck. You know. What he put my mother through as a child is what you hear about parents putting some children through. [...]

Interviewer: So he was abusive?

*David: Yeah, extremely. She ended up running away when she was old enough basically, even before she was old enough. And moved [...] in with her aunts and cousins, and grew up there, basically.*¹¹⁴

In this case, there were two versions of one story. Diane's story whitewashes the abuse to a certain extent, reducing it to an isolated incident that happened to someone else. However, David's story, while missing crucial details, describes his mother as the principal victim of the stepfather. But in each case, the violence is quite clear.

Domestic violence between men and women often related to difficulties Jewish men faced after immigrated to Canada around their male and religious identities. As with Berman, Hyman notes the declining importance of the synagogue and religious studies as markers of Jewish identity because of gender norms in North America that established men as belonging to the material world and women to the spiritual. As a result, women and their domestic work (such as putting on seders) were increasingly represented as primary transmitters of Jewish identity and culture. This placed a high degree of stress on Jewish men, as their traditional markers of status and respect became signs of weakness and femininity. As second and third-generation Jews integrated into middle-class culture and adopted Canadian ideals, "struggling to gain respect and power for themselves as men in a far from open larger society, male Jews defined an identity that not only distinguished them from women but also displaced their own anxieties upon women."¹¹⁵ In other words, Hyman argues as anti-Semitism painted Jewish men as feminized because of their devotion to religious studies, Jewish men in turn responded by creating negative representations of Jewish women. Hyman traces this through the emergence of stereotypes like that of the Jewish Mother. This process displaced onto Jewish women many of the characteristics that anti-Semites used to described Jewish men. The overall result was that "Jewish men constructed a modern Jewish identity that devalued women and marked them as the Other in Jewish culture."¹¹⁶

These ideas are further developed and expanded into the 1960s and beyond by Riv-Ellen Prell in her book, *Fighting to Become Americans: Jews, Gender, and the Anxiety of Assimilation*. As she argues, gender images served as a powerful medium through which Jews expressed anxieties about their relationship with American culture. Prell relies on Hyman and Berman's arguments about the changing markers of Jewish identity from male religiosity to female

domestic practices because of the adoption of middle-class gender norms. As they sought to be equal and to some degree indistinguishable from other (Christian) Americans, Jewish men faced persistent anti-Semitism that prevented them from reaching this goal. As an expression of their frustration, Jewish men began to spread negative stereotypes of Jewish women, specifically the Jewish Mother and the Jewish American Princess. By making Jewish women into "decoy Jews," Jewish men sought to redirect anti-Semitism to Jewish women in order to make themselves appear more American and less Jewish.¹¹⁷ Though I agree with both Hyman and Prell's arguments, I would speculate that this dynamic was not limited to popular culture or comedy. Instead, Jewish men could employ these stereotypes against the Jewish women in their lives, whether through verbal or emotional abuse, or even as a justification for physical abuse. Unfortunately, without a more extensive survey of the victims of domestic abuse and their abusers, I am unable to do more than speculate at this point in time.

While families could be wellsprings of support and love, they could also be sites of conflict and violence. Relationships with parents were sometimes complicated by differences in religious belief and practice. Issues of religiosity (or lack thereof) could be quite contentious. While assimilation was a significant factor in this, intergenerational conflicts also played a role. American-born children, like Miriam and Leah, often resented their parent's religiosity and "old fashioned" ways. In reaction, these young women often moved away from the Jewish religion, which only prompted more conflict as their parents reacted in turn. In this chapter, the nature of these conflicts becomes clearer, indicating why so many young Jewish women moved away from the Jewish religion as they grew older, and explaining the existence of books like *A Treasure for my Daughter*.

Personality conflicts also appeared, whether between mothers and daughters or between sisters. And of course, conflicts between daughters and mothers-in-law could often be fraught with difficult emotions. In many of these cases, the women I interviewed related these stories with humour. While making light of the situation, they concealed the extent of their pain, casting these incidents as isolated. And in some cases, conflicts escalated to emotional and physical violence. Those brave enough to speak about such incidents described them as simply and quickly as possible. And in the case of Diane, the terms of the abuse were changed, assigned to someone else, to cover up important details.

Domestic Servants/Silenced Women

An important part of the responsibilities of a woman was the maintenance of a spotless home. That housekeeping and homemaking was the responsibility of women was blatantly obvious. The *Woman's Work Agenda* operated on the assumption that women alone were responsible for housework. Women were often described as homemakers.¹¹⁸ Each *Agenda* started with a featured entitled "News, Views and Cues," which featured helpful household tips. Sometimes this section contained short articles extolling the virtues of homemakers. In one case, the work of homemakers is described as god-like: "Let us be a little presumptive and take the latter part first – MAKER. This term, used in many religions when referring to God, makes of woman an almost super-human being. And so she is!"¹¹⁹ Not only does she create life itself, but she also creates the loving atmosphere that creates a home: "Warmth, understanding, sympathy, respect, harmony, and the opportunity for each individual to develop his own potential while sharing mutual pleasures with the others who surround him are the vital and primary factors which create a home. This miracle is an atmosphere which enfolds all who enter through the door; this atmosphere is the ultimate achievement of woman."¹²⁰ The *Woman's Work Agenda*

also featured articles like "At home With Our Women," which looked at women's work within the home. Some of her tasks involved the "daily routine of tidying up, marketing, preparing meals, doing laundry; ushering in each season with its manifold preparations, helping junior with his lessons."¹²¹ This was crucially important, for "Home is the source from which the family unit draws its confidence, its inspiration to aspire and create, to learn and to establish a sense of values; to share in the activities of the community."¹²²

When men are discussed in the context of housekeeping, they are described as an oddity, though not one that was entirely undesirable. In an article entitled "There is A Man Around the House," the *Woman's Work Agenda* writers take aim at stereotypical depictions of awkward fathers. Such depictions, they argue, are exaggerations. They question the notion that men cannot cook, take care of a baby, or do the laundry. In fact, they suggest that fathers-in-law are ideal babysitters because they are strict disciplinarians and generous with money: "Who makes a better, more conscientious and worrying babysitter than father-in-law? Would he allow even one peep out of the kids without stomping into their bedroom to check, and to find (if that's what they want) a Martian or a monkey; a gangster or a private eye? Who has more pennies than a Grandpa – why, he is like the bank itself!"¹²³ Fathers are also applauded for their contributions: "Doesn't Dad do the diaper rinsing? Who has blisters on his hands from digging? Who climbs to the top of the ladder to adjust the curtains, to change a bulb, to unstick a window, to change the plug in the iron? Is he not the one to yell at in times of stress, to be comforted by in times of sorrow, to be with in times of joy?"¹²⁴ However, the fact that a father's parenting even needs to be mentioned suggests that the contributions of men around the house were so rare as to be applauded. They are exceptional cases, men going beyond the call of duty, so to speak. The work of women, however, is never similarly applauded. In other words, the publications of Jewish women in

Montreal not only bought into the notion of domestic containment (the home as a container for subversive forces) as Elaine Tyler May describes, but the assumption that it was the responsibility of Jewish women to maintain the home, in which to maintain the family, and by extension, the community at large.

While wives and mothers are often associated with housework, there were other women, who are not mentioned, who assisted with or took over these tasks: domestic servants. These women are largely invisible in the historiography of the 1950s and onwards. However, one of the most important works that deal with servants in the nineteenth century, Anne McClintock's *Imperial Leather*, offers important insights. For McClintock, it comes down to what she calls "The Labor of Leisure."¹²⁵ Specifically, in the Victorian period, the ideal middle class woman was a lady of leisure. She employed three servants to do her work for her. However, as McClintock remarks, only the upper middle classes could afford this type of labour.¹²⁶ But because this was such an important ideal, many women performed being a lady of leisure in order to appear to be of a higher class. In McClintock's own words: "apart from the tiny, truly leisured elite – idleness was less a regime of inertia imposed on wilting middle-class wives and daughters than a laborious and time-consuming *character role* performed by women who wanted membership in the "respectable" class."¹²⁷ To this end, middle class women devoted much of their time to housework and childrearing and simultaneously concealed all of their work; "her success as a wife depended on her skill in the art of both working and appearing not to work."¹²⁸ McClintock connects the desire to ensure that a woman's hands did not reveal her labour to Victorian hand fetishes. She argues that housewives were given a great deal of advice on making sure that their hands were soft and smelled nice because "hands could betray the traces of female work more visibly than a washable apron or disposable gloves."¹²⁹ I would argue that the same

process was at work in the 1950s, even down to the hand fetish.¹³⁰ Once again, as with the previous chapters, the emphasis is on seeming as middle-class or financially comfortable as possible, in aspiring to acceptance into the larger Canadian society. One of the most telling markers of middle-class-ness and upward social mobility was the ability to hire domestic workers. Though their presence is often assumed, their work was largely concealed.

"In Portrait of a Busy Woman," an unnamed B'nai B'rith member was profiled for the *Woman's Work Agenda* readers. She is described as a very busy woman, who organized the B'nai B'rith Blood Bank at the Royal Victoria Hospital. In addition to this work, she was involved in Camp B'nai B'rith as a volunteer coordinator of a large division of the Combined Jewish Appeal. She also had numerous hobbies, including sewing dresses, interior decorating, piloting private planes, and collecting china and objects d'art. Despite this heavy load, the author of this article noted: "Amidst all this 'activity', she is a devoted wife, mother of two daughters, one married, and the housekeeper of a fairly large home for which she will accept only occasional help."¹³¹ While the author is in awe of this woman, I am somewhat sceptical. What exactly "occasional help" refers to is not made clear in the article. One can assume that this refers to the employment, at least part time, of domestic workers to care for the house. The fact that this is mentioned at all suggests that domestic workers were in fact an important part of this woman's housekeeping work. Otherwise, it seems quite hard to believe that one woman could do so much on her own.

In the 1953 *Woman's Work Agenda*, the "News, Views and Cues" section featured a description of the home of a presumably wealthy woman. The unnamed authors of this profile described being welcomed by a maid, who informed them that the lady of the house was not available. Nonetheless, the authors, who were there on "the interest of B'nai B'rith,"¹³² were very impressed with their surroundings. They remarked that: "As we were ushered out by the maid,

and walked down the front steps, the word "balabatischkeit," seemed to suggest itself."¹³³

Related to balabusta (good housekeeper), balabatischkeit is defined as "appealing to one's sense of fitness in every respect."¹³⁴ In other words, it refers to superior housekeeping knowledge.

Despite the fact that the lady of the house never made an appearance, the authors attribute the beauty of her home to her, rather than to the maid. As in the previous case, the contributions of the domestic workers were ignored and rendered invisible. Not only did this serve to obscure the labour of domestic workers, but it also set up non-wealthy Jewish women with an unattainable standard for housekeeping. These articles present ideal homes, which are impeccably decorated, maintained, and cleaned. While this standard could only be maintained through the labour of domestic workers, giving the credit to the ladies of the house sets an impossible standard for women who do not have the advantage of maids to do the actual work.

In the article, "The Career Woman Entertains," the *Woman's Work Agenda* provided suggestions about how to entertain with minimal fuss. The tips for a sit-down dinner begin as follows: "If you, the hostess, have no auxiliary help to serve or remove dishes, it is easier to plan the sort of meal which can be prepared well in advance, and just heated for the occasion."¹³⁵ In the 1962 *Woman's Work Agenda*, domestic help is mentioned several times in an article "Dining Around the Clock." In the first case, the article laments the impact of modern living on domestic service: "Time has wrought many changes in our living habit. In the past, large homes had many servants, and entertainments were formal. Today our homes are smaller, with little or no help, yet we entertain more often."¹³⁶ This change is attributed to the introduction of modern food storage. Shortly thereafter, the readers of the *Woman's Work Agenda* recommend hiring help for entertaining large numbers of guests: "The hostess, who entertains large groups, will probably find a waitress most helpful for replenishing dishes and for serving. If you have no professional

help, make use of serving carts and tables, and accept the assistance of good friends."¹³⁷ In each case, the labour of domestic workers is both assumed and concealed. That a woman would be able to afford such assistance is taken for granted, as is the fact that she should take all of the credit for organizing and pulling off a successful dinner party. Quite simply, a good dinner party depends on the labour of an outsider, as well as that of the homemaker herself, but this fact is not to be acknowledged. Assistance from friends seems to have been acceptable, but only in the absence of professionals. Further, the specific use of the term "friends" rather than "guests" suggests that female friends should assist the hostess in concealing her lack of servants, and thus her lower economic status.

Such discussions suggest that the ability to properly manage household workers was the sign of a respectable (read, middle-class) woman. So, the approbation of those women leaving that well-kept home might well be assigned in part to the fact that the homemaker oversaw her domestic workers so effectively: she managed them so well that there was not a trace of their activities. The onlookers and the homemaker conspired in this charade of admiring the homemaker's skill. Further, the handling of domestic workers by *Jewish* women in particular was seen as a sign of respectability in that it reinforces the middle-class privilege of Jewish women at the expense of black or immigrant domestic workers. As these Ashkenazi women asserted their middle-class-ness, they also asserted their identities as "white" Canadians -- that they were not immigrants because they employed working-class people. As Karen Brodtkin reminds us:

The relationship between white and black women around domestic labor, as so many feminists of color have shown, carries deeply racist expectations for white women. Grandma embraced the racial superiority of her position as an employer and a white woman. In this context, to be white is to direct but not perform the dirty work of cleaning, which marks its doers as racially inferior women. Grandma marked her superiority as a white woman by disengaging from work.¹³⁸

Ashkenazi Jewish women could, and often did, use domestic workers to reinforce their status as both white and middle-class. This was accomplished both through the very employment of a domestic worker (a marker of affluence) but also to do their labour for them. Finally, the concealment of this labour from public view points back to a skill set required of respectable women.

The invisibility of domestic workers is a common theme. As McClintock argues, "the most damaging burden of the erasure of domestic labor fell on servants. The housewife's labor of *leisure* found its counterpart in the servant's labor of *invisibility*."¹³⁹ Domestic servants were to perform the labour of the household in a manner that was entirely unseen. And while they were not present in the majority of homes, they were an undeniable part of many Jewish homes in Montreal. A number of women spoke about coming from homes where domestic servants were employed at least part of the time. And although the context was once again that of the 1950s, not the Victorian period, the same tendency towards invisible labour was present. Most of the interviewees who recalled having mothers who employed domestic servants did not consider them part of the family, nor did they seem to pay much attention to them. When it came to describing the importance of family and traditions, it was only mothers who were singled out, never domestic workers. And further, the interviewees claimed to remember very little actual information about the domestic workers employed in their families or by themselves as they grew older.

It was common for participants to make passing references to domestic workers, but be unable to remember specific details when questioned directly. When speaking about her family's food traditions, Tamara mentioned that ethnic foods were often featured at the kitchen table. She then noted: "And then we had this meat sauce recipe, and I still make it. [...] But she used to

make this recipe that she got from her Italian cleaning woman, which was a really good meat sauce recipe, with lots of meat, and little chopped up carrots that was the secret ingredient."¹⁴⁰

The fact that a recipe from a domestic worker was featured among Tamara's family recipes is telling. However, even more interesting is the fact that, as this statement demonstrates, the meat sauce recipe became attributed to Tamara's mother. The domestic worker's contribution is seen as secondary, not very important. When I asked Tamara about her cleaning lady, this is what she had to say: "Yeah, we used to have one once a week, one day a week. Just about all my childhood, I remember someone, one day a week. [...] That was the day before Shabbat. But I don't think that was the reason. [...] I remember one when I was really little who used to help me get dressed for school and get me home. She used to put my tights on for me by holding me up by the tights. She was a big strong Russian lady. She had a daughter I would play with."¹⁴¹

Tamara further recounted, "when we lived in Paris, the two years I was away [...] we had a maid that would come in for half days, four days a week. She was Spanish, she used to cook for us, cook these Spanish foods."¹⁴²

I then asked Tamara about the influence of these domestic workers on her life. Despite claiming that they were a large influence, she knew very little about their backgrounds. When asked, she replied quite vaguely, that they were generally working-class women, usually immigrants, from diverse backgrounds. She remembered her mother employing women from Italy, Portugal, Russia, and Spain. She said that the times they spent working for her family varied tremendously, sometimes a long time, sometimes a very short time. One had been caught stealing. But she was unable to tell me why any of these women left her family's employment, or any additional information.¹⁴³ Despite this, she consistently referred to the domestic workers not by name, title, or even pronoun, but as "one." Despite the intimate nature of the work they

performed, these domestic workers were not even considered people or individuals, just another in a long line of anonymous, invisible workers upon which the family depended, but did not acknowledge.

Anita's family always employed domestic workers. Although Anita's mother was a stay-at-home mother for ten years, she had a maid, a cleaning lady, or live in help on and off. She had a baby nurse for a few months after her children were born, because they were born so close together. She always employed babysitters, who were teenagers. She preferred the younger teenagers, because they did not have boyfriends. She recalled that her parents always had a cleaning lady:

Yeah, they were French-Canadian. [...] My mother cooked them a big meal. Got tickets for the bus, the streetcar. That's when I was very little. That was Natalie¹⁴⁴ [...]. And then she had another one, who was maybe Polish or something. And then she had a French-Canadian one, who lived in one of these huge, huge mansions, on the back river, the North Shore [...]. But she wanted a fur coat, so she cleaned houses, so she could get all her luxuries. And then, you know, she had different ones all the time. But they were just, they came in once a week, once every two weeks.¹⁴⁵

Once again, Anita uses language similar to Tamara's. The noun "one" is used, and different domestic workers are seen as interchangeable. Perhaps they spoke a different language or came from different countries, but they were basically the same, in the eyes of Ashkenazi Jewish women. But at least in this case, Anita remembered the name of one of the domestic workers employed by her mother.

In much the same way that Ashkenazi Jewish women constructed their middle-class identities through food and their bodies, their labour too was racialized and classed. By employing largely working-class immigrants, these women announced to the world not only that

they were wealthy enough to afford domestic workers, but also that they were set above and apart from these working-class immigrants

The employment of domestic workers also served to reinforce the privilege of middle class and upper class Jewish women. It drew stark lines between employer (middle and upper class, "white,") and labourer (working-class, "not-white"). This also served to Other the non-Jewish women employed in the household as domestic servants. Jewish women were never employed, only non-Jewish women. And while none of the women I interviewed referred to these domestic servants as *goy* or *goyim* (a pejorative and sometimes racist term for non-Jews), it might be that they were too embarrassed to use this term in front of me or the tape recorder. However, when I was growing up, I thought that the term *goy* meant cleaning lady. This is how my grandmother referred to her domestic servant.

Domestic workers were, if not common, not unusual in the homes of Jewish women in Montreal. Mothers and wives were not alone in being responsible for domestic tasks. In many well-to-do homes, domestic workers were employed on permanent or temporary base. They performed basic housekeeping, sometimes babysitting, and food preparation. Despite the important function that these women played, their contribution was generally ignored and concealed. Their labour was assumed, taken for granted, and even forgotten. Their identities were also concealed. The women I interviewed on the subject of domestic workers knew very little about their identities, and considered them interchangeable and beneath their notice. While the concealment of the labour of domestic women is problematic enough, more problematic is the use of these workers to assign and reinforce the privilege of the Ashkenazi Jewish women of Montreal. The employment of such workers reinforced the middle or upper class identities of the women who employed them.

Conclusion

Previous scholarship on the family in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s has generally accepted the nuclear, contained family as the model. A close examination of the family, in this particular case Ashkenazi Jewish women in families, reveals that the situation is quite complex. Rather than simply placing value on nuclear families, extended families were extremely important. Religious events like weddings or religious holidays were occasions that were very much about the families. Immediate and extended families would gather for these happy events, and renew their ties. But extended family members also played an important role in the everyday lives of the Ashkenazi women in Montreal. Grandmothers and aunts were often called the family matriarchs, echoing Old World family patterns that assigned importance to the senior female. And, in certain cases, Ashkenazi women made their own families, turning to female friends in their neighbourhood to form relationships that supported them throughout their lives. Many Jews in Montreal had families that did not conform to prevailing heterosexual norms in that some individuals were single, divorced, or homosexual. Unfortunately, the Jewish community of Montreal was ill equipped to deal with anyone who did not fit into their image of the family, one that was based on marriage between one man and one woman.¹⁴⁶ Jewish women who were single, divorced, or lesbian were often invisible members of the Jewish community Montreal, alienated and forgotten.

Not everything was sunshine and rainbows even for those in heterosexual families. Family conflict and family violence was a very real reality in the homes of many Ashkenazi women in Montreal. Conflicts about religiosity, intermarriage, child rearing, or just plain personality often arose between women and their relatives, particularly mothers, mother-in-laws, and sisters. Such conflicts were deeply painful, though many women chose to conceal such pain through humour. Some of these conflicts fractured families, and left lasting scars. Some families

were characterized by abusive relationships. Whether the violence was emotional (name calling, withholding) or physical (hitting, pinching), it shaped the women who survived it. Women who survived such abuse found it difficult to talk about their experiences, generally providing only vague descriptions. Sometimes further details were revealed, often through conversations with other relatives who were more removed. In any case, violence within families is a subject that is simply too important to be ignored.

Finally, families sometimes contained silent members: domestic workers. Despite propaganda that promoted women as responsible for domestic labour, some families employed domestic workers. These workers, often working-class immigrant women, were responsible for basic household duties, including laundry, cleaning, food preparation, and childcare. However, their labour was generally concealed, and attributed to the stay-at-home mothers. Women whose families employed such domestic workers or who employed them themselves often were unable to remember any specific details about these workers. It was unusual for my participants to remember their names, or anything about them other than their ethnicity (at times). These domestic workers were seen as faceless, interchangeable cogs. Not only was their labour erased, but their very identities were as well. All of this served to reinforce the class and racialized privilege of middle and upper class Ashkenazi Jewish women. Indeed, the employment of such individuals was a marker of status that allowed Ashkenazi women to assert their white-middle class identities. As this brief look demonstrates, Jewish families in postwar Montreal were sites for love, conflict, and concealment. But in any of their forms, they left indelible marks on the women who lived within them.

¹ Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988).

² Joanne Meyerowitz, "Introduction," in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960*, ed. Joanne Meyerowitz (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 1-18.

³ Joanne Meyerowitz, "Beyond the Feminine Mystique: a Reassessment of Postwar Mass Culture, 1946-1958," in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960*, ed. Joanne Meyerowitz (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 229-262.

⁴ For instance, see Denyse Baillargeon, *Making Do: Women, Family, and Home in Montreal during the Great Depression* (Waterloo Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1999); Tina Block, "'Families That Pray Together, Stay Together': Religion, Gender, and Family in Postwar Victoria, British Columbia," *BC Studies*, no. 145 (2005): 31-54; Bettina Bradbury, ed., *Canadian Family History, Selected Readings* (Mississauga, Ontario: Copp Clark Pitman, 1992); Nancy Christie, *Households of Faith, Family, Gender and Community in Canada, 1760-1969* (Montr: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002); Cynthia Comacchio, *The Infinite Bonds of Family: Domesticity in Canada, 1850-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999); Magdalena Fahrni, *Household Politics: Montreal Families and Postwar Reconstruction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005); Danielle Gauvreau and Peter Gossage, "'Empêcher la famille: fécondité et contraception au Québec, 1920-60,'" *Canadian Historical Review* 78, no. 3 (1997): 478-510; Mona Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal: Psychology, Schooling and the Family in Postwar Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999); Peter Gossage, *Families in Transition: Industry and Population in Nineteenth-Century Saint-Hyacinth*, 1999 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999); Franca Iacovetta, "Making 'New Canadians': Social Workers, Women, and the Reshaping of Immigrant Families," in *A Nation of immigrants: Women, Workers, and Communities in Canadian History, 1840s-1960s*, eds. Franca Iacovetta, Paula Draper, and Robert Ventresca, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 482-513; Royden Loewen, *Family, Church, and Market: A Mennonite Community in the Old and the New Worlds, 1850-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1993); Suzanne Morton, *Ideal Surroundings: Domestic Life in a Working-Class Suburb in the 1920s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995); Joy Parr, *The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Men, and Change in Two Industrial Towns, 1880-1950* (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1990); Kenneth Sylvester, *The Limits of Rural Capitalism: Family, Culture, and Markets in Montcalm, Manitoba, 1870-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001); Sylvie Taschereau, "'Behind the Store': Montreal Shopkeeping Families Between the Wars," in *Negotiating Identities in 19th and 20th C. Montreal*, eds. Tamara Myers and Bettina Bradbury (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005), 235-258;

⁵ Karen Dubinsky, *Improper Advances: Rape and Heterosexual Conflict in Ontario, 1880-1929* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 62.

⁶ Dubinsky, *Improper Advances*, 62.

⁷ Linda Gordon, *Heroes of their own Lives: the Politics and History of Family Violence, Boston 1880-1960* (New York: Viking, 1988), v.

⁸ Gordon, *Heroes of their own Lives*, 205.

⁹ Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families: Age, Gender and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal*, 1993.

¹⁰ Ellen Ross, *Love and Toil: Motherhood in Outcast London, 1870-1918* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 7.

¹¹ Ross, *Love and Toil*, 9.

¹² Ross, *Love and Toil*, 129.

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- ¹³ Ross, *Love and Toil*, 165.
- ¹⁴ Interview 12, interview by author, November 4, 2008, Montreal Quebec.
- ¹⁵ Interview 2, interview by author, October 15, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ¹⁶ Interview 16, interview by author, November 10, 2008, Montreal Quebec.
- ¹⁷ Interview 2, interview by author, October 26, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ¹⁸ Interview 33, interview by author, February 12, 2010, Victoria, British Columbia.
- ¹⁹ Interview 15, interview by author, November 10, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ²⁰ Interview 4, interview by author, October 27, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ²¹ Interview 4.
- ²² Interview 30, interview by author, November 26, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ²³ Interview 31, interview by author, January 4, 2010, Victoria, British Columbia.
- ²⁴ Interview 31.
- ²⁵ Interview 5, interview by author, October 28, 2010, Montreal, Quebec.
- ²⁶ Interview 30, interview by author, November 26, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ²⁷ Interview 4, interview by author, October 27, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ²⁸ Interview 11, interview by author, November 4, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ²⁹ Rickie Berman, "Women in Jewish Religious Life: Manchester 1880-1930," in *Disciplines of Faith: Studies in Religion, Politics, and Patriarchy* (London; New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), 37-55.
- ³⁰ Interview 12, interview by author, November 4, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ³¹ Interview 12.
- ³² Interview 21, interview by author, November 13, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ³³ Interview 7, interview by author, October 29, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ³⁴ See, for example, Interview 3, interview by author, October 26, 2008, Montreal, Quebec; Interview 16, interview by author, November 10, 2008, Montreal, Quebec and Interview 22, interview by author, November 14, 2009, Montreal, Quebec.
- ³⁵ See, for example, Interview 2, interview by author, October 15, 2008, Montreal, Quebec; Interview 10, interview by author, November 3, 2008, Montreal, Quebec; Interview 13, interview by author, November 5, 2008, Montreal, Quebec; Interview 22, interview by author, February 12, 2010, Victoria, British Columbia; and Interview 32, interview by author, February 3, 2010, Victoria, British Columbia.
- ³⁶ Robert Orsi, *Thank You, St. Jude: Women's Devotion to the Patron Saint of Hopeless Causes* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996), 128.
- ³⁷ Orsi, *Thank You, St. Jude*, 124-125.
- ³⁸ Interview 9, interview by author, November 02, 2010, Montreal, Quebec; Interview 31, interview by author, January 04, 2010, Victoria, British Columbia; Interview 32, interview by author, February 03, 2010, Victoria, British Columbia and Interview 34, interview by author, February 15, 2010, Victoria, British Columbia.
- ³⁹ Interview 33, interview by author, February 12 2010, Victoria, British Columbia and Interview 34, February 15, 2010, Victoria, British Columbia.
- ⁴⁰ Interview 19, interview by author, November 12, 2008, Montreal, Quebec and Interview 5, interview by author, October 28, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ⁴¹ CJCCCNA P99/08 1960s Jewish Singles Groups in Montreal, "National Religious Department: Assessment of Present Projected Activities report by Rabbi Robert Sternberg, Director," 1-2.

- ⁴² CJCCCNA P99/08 1960s Jewish Singles Groups in Montreal, "10,000 – Why? Background Paper, Toronto Jewish Congress, Social Planning Consultation, Sunday May 6, 1979," 1-4.
- ⁴³ CJCCCNA P99/08 1960s Jewish Singles Groups in Montreal, Shaar Hashomayim Bulletin March 23rd, 1979, 1-2.
- ⁴⁴ CJCCCNA P99/08 1960s Jewish Singles Groups in Montreal, "10,000 – Why? Background Paper, Toronto Jewish Congress, Social Planning Consultation, Sunday May 6, 1979," 5.
- ⁴⁵ CJCCCNA P99/08 1960s Jewish Singles Groups in Montreal, "10,000 – Why? Background Paper, Toronto Jewish Congress, Social Planning Consultation, Sunday May 6, 1979," 11.
- ⁴⁶ CJCCCNA P99/08 1960s Jewish Singles Groups in Montreal, "Commission on The Family and Marriage Outreach to Singles - Report by Rabbi Robert Sternberg," 1.
- ⁴⁷ CJCCCNA P99/08 1960s Jewish Singles Groups in Montreal, "Commission on The Family and Marriage Outreach to Singles - Report by Rabbi Robert Sternberg," 2.
- ⁴⁸ Interview 19, interview by author, November 12, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ⁴⁹ Interview 31, interview by author, January 4, 2010, Victoria, British Columbia.
- ⁵⁰ Interview 34, interview by author, February 15, 2010, Victoria, British Columbia.
- ⁵¹ Interview 34.
- ⁵² Interview 34.
- ⁵³ Interview 33, interview by author, February 12, 2010, Victoria, British Columbia.
- ⁵⁴ Interview 33.
- ⁵⁵ Interview 33.
- ⁵⁶ Both Michael Gauvreau and Magda Farhni discuss Ligue Ouvrière Catholique (LOC) and its initiative, Les Cent Mariés. This mass marriage of one hundred couples was part of a larger movement to increase French Canadian birth rates that had been falling dramatically during this period. Farhni, *Household Politics*, 87-107 and Michael Gauvreau, *The Catholic Origins of Quebec's Quiet Revolution, 1931-1970*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), 77-119.
- ⁵⁷ Elizabeth Pleck, *Celebrating the Family: Ethnicity, Consumer Culture, and Family Rituals* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), 11, 58-61.
- ⁵⁸ Marlene Epp, "The Memory of Violence: Society and East European Mennonite Refugees and Rape in the Second World War," *Journal of Women's History* 9, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 58.
- ⁵⁹ Riv-Ellen Prell, *Fighting to Become Americans: Jews, Gender, and the Anxiety of Assimilation* (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1999), 172-174.
- ⁶⁰ Prell, *Fighting to Become Americans*, 171.
- ⁶¹ Prell, *Fighting to Become Americans*, 170-171.
- ⁶² Mona Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal*, 140.
- ⁶³ Jack Balswick, "Are American Jewish Families Closely Knit?: A Review of the Literature," in *The Jewish Family: A Survey and Annotated Bibliography*, ed. Benjamin Schlesinger (Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 19.
- ⁶⁴ Paula E. Hyman, "Afterword," in *The Jewish Family: Myths and Reality*, ed. Steven M. Cohen and Paula E. Hyman (New York, N.Y: Holmes & Meier, 1986), 232.
- ⁶⁵ Faith Solela, "Family Violence: Silence Isn't Golden Anymore," *Response: A Contemporary Jewish Review* 14, no. 4 (n.d.): 102.
- ⁶⁶ Solela, "Family Violence: Silence Isn't Golden Anymore," 103.
- ⁶⁷ Lawrence Epstein, *The Haunted Smile: The Story of Jewish comedians in America* (New York: Public Affairs, 2001), x.

⁶⁸ Arthur Berger, *Jewish Jesters: A Study in American Popular Comedy* (Cresskill N.J.: Hampton Press, 2001); Chaim Bermant, *What's the Joke?: A Study of Jewish Humour Through the Ages* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1986); Epstein, *The Haunted Smile: The Story of Jewish Comedians in America*.

⁶⁹ The names have been changed.

⁷⁰ National Archives MG 28 V86 Vol 29. File 15 Sheet No.1.

⁷¹ National Archives MG 28 V86 Vol 29. File 15 Sheet No.1.

⁷² National Archives MG 28 V86 Vol 29. File 15 Sheet No.2.

⁷³ National Archives MG 28 V86 Vol 29. File 15 Sheet No. 3.

⁷⁴ National Archives MG 28 V86 Vol 29. File 15 Sheet No.6-7.

⁷⁵ National Archives MG 28 V86 Vol 29. File 15 Jewish General Hospital Letter January 19, 1959, 1.

⁷⁶ National Archives MG 28 V86 Vol 29. File 15 Jewish General Hospital Letter January 19, 1959, 1.

⁷⁷ National Archives MG 28 V86 Vol 29. File 15 Jewish General Hospital Letter January 19, 1959, 1.

⁷⁸ National Archives MG 28 V86 Vol 29. File 15 Jewish General Hospital Letter January 19, 1959, 1.

⁷⁹ National Archives MG 28 V86 Vol 29. File 15 Jewish General Hospital Letter January 19, 1959, 2.

⁸⁰ National Archives MG 28 V86 Vol 29. File 15 Jewish General Hospital Letter January 19, 1959, 2.

⁸¹ National Archives MG 28 V86 Vol 29. File 15 Sheet No.5

⁸² Interview 7, interview by author, October 29, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.

⁸³ Interview 7.

⁸⁴ John Sigal, *Trauma and Rebirth: Intergenerational Effects of the Holocaust* (New York: Praeger, 1989), 51-86.

⁸⁵ Dvir Amramovich, "The Psychological Wounds of the Second Generation in Post-War Holocaust Literature," *Mentalities* 19, no. 1 (2005): 8.

⁸⁶ Hannah Starman, "Generations of Trauma: Victimhood and the Perpetuation of Abuse in Holocaust Survivors," *History & Anthropology* 17, no. 4 (December 2006): 333.

⁸⁷ Starman, "Generations of Trauma: Victimhood and the Perpetuation of Abuse in Holocaust Survivors," 336.

⁸⁸ Interview 15, interview by author, November 10, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.

⁸⁹ Interview 15.

⁹⁰ Interview 15.

⁹¹ Interview 15.

⁹² Interview 10, interview by author, November 3, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.

⁹³ Interview 7, interview by author, October 29, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.

⁹⁴ Interview 7.

⁹⁵ Interview 21, interview by author, November 13, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.

⁹⁶ Interview 21.

⁹⁷ Needless to say, there was considerable debate on this topic, and no two sects dealt with it in the same fashion. However, a detailed discussion of this subject is beyond the scope of this particular work. For more information about the prevailing opinions of Montreal rabbis from

various denominations, please consult the following source: CJCCCNA DA 15.2 Box 1 Religious Affairs Ian Kagedan Files 1985-1987, File 1, "*Facing Intermarriage – Resource Book (Eng/Fr)* by R. Aigen."

⁹⁸ Interview 17, interview by author, November 11, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.

⁹⁹ Interview 3, interview by author, October 29, 2008, Montreal Quebec.

¹⁰⁰ Interview 7, interview by author, October 29, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.

¹⁰¹ Interview 7.

¹⁰² Interview 2, interview by author, October 15, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.

¹⁰³ Interview 2, interview by author, October 15, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.

¹⁰⁴ Interview 22, interview by author, November 14, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.

¹⁰⁵ Admittedly, this could be retrospection on a failed marriage

¹⁰⁶ Interview 9, interview by author, November 2, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.

¹⁰⁷ Interview 32, interview by author, February 3, 2010, Victoria, British Columbia.

¹⁰⁸ Interview 17, interview by author, November 11, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.

¹⁰⁹ Interview 17.

¹¹⁰ Interview 17.

¹¹¹ Properly, the Pidyon Ha-Ben, a religious ritual regarding the first born male child of a mother. This ritual is discussed in more detail in "Daughters of the Commandments." Ronald L. Eisenberg, "Pidyon Ha-Ben," *Dictionary of Jewish Terms: A Guide to the Language of Judaism* (Rocheville, Maryland: Schreiber Publishing, 2008), 343.

¹¹² Interview 17.

¹¹³ Interview 10, interview by author, November 3, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.

¹¹⁴ Interview 20, interview by author, November 12, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.

¹¹⁵ Hyman, *Gender and Assimilation in Modern Jewish History: the Roles and Representation of Women*, 134-135.

¹¹⁶ Pamela S. Nadell, "Gender and Assimilation in Modern Jewish History: The Roles and Representations of Women," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 17, no. 3 (1998): 120-121.

¹¹⁷ Prell, *Fighting to become Americans*, 177.

¹¹⁸ CJCCCNA Montreal B'nai Brith Women "Lady on a Budget," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1961, 83: "his newly-acquired responsibilities as the breadwinner; she to the realization of the implications of wife and homemaker." See also CJCCCNA Montreal B'nai Brith Women, "Short Cuts to Tall Meals: The Career Woman at Home," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1961, 99.

¹¹⁹ CJCCCNA Montreal B'nai Brith Women, "News, Views, and Views," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1964, 79.

¹²⁰ CJCCCNA Montreal B'nai Brith Women, "News, Views, and Views," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1964, 79.

¹²¹ CJCCCNA Montreal B'nai Brith Women, "At Home With Our Women," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1964, 9. See also "News, Views and Cues – March," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1953, n.p.

¹²² CJCCCNA Montreal B'nai Brith Women, "At Home With Our Women," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1964, 9.

¹²³ CJCCCNA Montreal B'nai Brith Women "There is a Man Around the House," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1961, 95.

¹²⁴ CJCCCNA Montreal B'nai Brith Women "There is a Man Around the House," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1961, 96.

¹²⁵ Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 160.

¹²⁶ There is some evidence to suggest that some members of the working class were able to afford servants in mid-nineteenth century Hamilton. However, I do not have enough evidence to make any claims about the prevalence of domestic servants in working-class Jewish homes in postwar Montreal. Michael Katz, *The People of Hamilton, Canada West: Family and Class in a Mid-Nineteenth-Century City* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975).

¹²⁷ Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 161.

¹²⁸ Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 162.

¹²⁹ Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 162.

¹³⁰ This topic is covered in my chapter on body history.

¹³¹ CJCCCNA Montreal B'nai Brith Women, "Portrait of a Busy Woman" *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1964, 83.

¹³² CJCCCNA Montreal B'nai Brith Women, "News, Views and Cues - Flowers in the Home," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1953, n.p..

¹³³ CJCCCNA Montreal B'nai Brith Women, "News, Views and Cues - Flowers in the Home," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1953, n.p.

¹³⁴ CJCCCNA Montreal B'nai Brith Women, "News, Views and Cues - Glossary of Jewish Phrases used in Text," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1953, n.p..

¹³⁵ CJCCCNA Montreal B'nai Brith Women, "The Career Woman Entertains," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1961, 102.

¹³⁶ CJCCCNA Montreal B'nai Brith Women, "Dining Around the Clock," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1962, 85.

¹³⁷ CJCCCNA Montreal B'nai Brith Women, "Dining Around the Clock," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1962, 86.

¹³⁸ Karen Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says About Race in America* (Rutgers University Press, 1999), 18.

¹³⁹ McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 163.

¹⁴⁰ Interview 5, interview by author, October 29, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.

¹⁴¹ Interview 5.

¹⁴² Interview 5.

¹⁴³ Interview 5.

¹⁴⁴ Name has been changed.

¹⁴⁵ Interview 12, interview by author, November 4, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.

¹⁴⁶ I suspect that other Canadians in the same period were probably similarly ill equipped to integrated single, divorced, or homosexual individuals. However, any conclusions on this topic must wait until further research has been completed.

Chapter Five: Daughters of the Commandments: Competing Discourses on Jewish Women and Religion

As a child, my experiences of religion generally had nothing to do with the synagogue. I remember being excited to play Queen Esther in my pre-school's annual Purim Play. I remember being excited for Chanukah, lighting the candles and getting Chanukah *gelt* (chocolate money). I remember how each year we put out cookies and milk for Santa Claus, and how one year, when my sister and I woke up on Christmas morning, there were presents on the living room chairs for the two of us. I remember sitting with my family around the table for Passover, and dreading how long it took for my grandfather to say the prayers. And I remember how we always went to my grandmother's house for Rosh Hashanah, and how she always put a bowl of parsley next to my plate, just because she knew I liked to eat it.

The history of religion in Canada is a subject that has been much studied. Works like William Westfall's *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Ontario*, David B. Marshall's *Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief*, and Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau's *A Full-Orbed Christianity: The Protestant Churches and Social Welfare in Canada, 1900-1940* have contributed greatly to our understanding of shifting patterns of religiosity among Canadian churches.¹

Others have gone further by examining relationships between lay individuals and religious institutions. Michael Gauvreau's *The Catholic Origins of Quebec's Quiet Revolution, 1931-1970* pays particular attention to lay movements, like L'Action Catholique and the move to allow birth control as part of Catholicism.² Nancy Christie has similarly looked inside and outside the church to consider the relationship between religious discourse and the idealization of the family in her collection, *Households of Faith, Family, Gender and Community in Canada*,

1760—1969.³ Lynne Marks' *Revivals and Roller Rinks: Religion, Leisure and Identity in Late Nineteenth Century Small Town Ontario* has led the way in looking at religion and identity, and the impact of religion on ways of life, values, beliefs, leisure activities, and perceptions of self.⁴

My intention is to build upon these works by examining the connections between synagogues, rabbis, ordinary Jewish women, domestic rituals, and lived religion. Only recently have historians have begun to consider the concept of "lived religion." Lynne Marks has written a recent article on the topic and the integration (or lack thereof) of this concept into studies of working-class women. She draws upon the work of historians liked, Robert Orsi, David Hall, Coleen McDannell and Leigh Eric Schmidt using Robert Orsi's definition of "lived religion" as "the ways in which ordinary people took what they wanted or needed from dominant religious beliefs, idioms, and practices, mixing and remixing the sacred and the secular, the magical and the orthodox, in their daily lives, in ways that would have horrified clerical elites but provided comfort, community, and often a basis for resistance for working-class men and women."⁵ Any study, whether it is of working-class women or Jewish-Canadians, would be incomplete without a consideration of the role that religion plays in the lives of individuals.⁶

The American literature on material Christianity has been particularly inspiring in this regard. For instance, Colleen McDannell argues that American Christians negotiate their relationship with the Divine through interactions with the created world of images and objects, like the Bible.⁷ In *Consumer Rites: The Buying and Selling of American Holidays*, Leigh Eric Schmidt examines the complementary and contested relationship between American Christianity and modern consumer culture. His most memorable examination of this contradiction appears in his chapter on Easter, where he examines how the rite of spring combined with fashion to refashion Easter as a celebration of American abundance.⁸ Finally, Robert Orsi examines the

following of St. Jude, the patron saint of hopeless causes in *Thank you, St. Jude.*⁹ He argues that the daughters of immigrants turned to St. Jude when they were unable to resolve the Catholic Church's expectations that women be self-sacrificing with the economic and social realities of the Depression and the years following the end of the Second World War. The Church portrayed life's difficulties as spiritual challenges for women to overcome through suffering and self-sacrifice. In response, the daughters of immigrants re-imagined St. Jude as a friend and benefactor to whom they could confide their fears and hopes, and who would in turn solve their problems. In this way, the daughters of immigrants empowered themselves by taking action (praying), and reaching out to other women but in a way that did not challenge existing gendered hierarchies.

Debates over the role of women in the Jewish religion were yet another aspect of ethnic-group making among the Jews of Montreal. As I have noted in the introduction, women's responsibilities as biological and cultural reproducers justified the imposition of additional social and legal sanctions on them. One of these was the matter of the Jewish woman as educator; if the goal of any group-making project is to define the terms of membership, and blood kinship is not enough, the leaders must control the education that children receive in order to qualify as full members of "the Jewish community of Montreal." This in turn brings up questions about how Jewish women should be educated and in what matters, with the understanding that this is the knowledge that will be passed down to their children, and culturally invest them with full group-membership.

In practical terms, this was primarily a dialogue between religious and lay authorities and laywomen. While all three groups used similar language to describe the responsibilities of Jewish women and religion, they had different ideas about the fulfilment of these duties. While clergy

and lay leaders emphasized knowledge of history, theology, and the Hebrew language, most Jewish women felt that the most important knowledge that needed to be passed down to ensure the continuance of "the Jewish community of Montreal" was that of the performance of religious domestic rituals. Crucial to this process is an unresolved tension between the notions of religion and tradition. In some instances, religion and tradition were understood by my interviewees in opposition to each other. In others, the two seem to blend together in a blurred and nebulous fashion. A deeper examination reveals that the reiteration and recreation of traditions by laywomen *was* their lived religion. In other words, for my participants, the practice of Jewish tradition *is* religion, in its most meaningful and lived form.

Women's Institutes and Bat Mitzvahs

The end of the Second World War saw a flourishing of courses and programs designed to educate Jewish women in Montreal. At the forefront of these movements was the Shaar Hashomayim synagogue. The Shaar Hashomayim describes itself as "Canada's oldest and largest traditional synagogue,"¹⁰ and was established 1846. 1946, its centennial year, proved to be a pivotal year in its history. In this year, Rabbi Wilfred Shuchat arrived in the Congregation, and two years later, he was appointed as Rabbi.¹¹ Shuchat was instrumental in establishing a number of new initiatives in the synagogue, many of them explicitly directed at women. This was also an era of expansion, from a low of 300 families, or 900 individual members, in 1915, the synagogue reached 1,750 families, or 4,000 individuals, by 1965. This made up nearly 5% of the entire Jewish population in Montreal, all in one congregation. By this point, the Congregation had already moved and expanded once, in 1922, and would further extend the current building over the next several years. Because of its size and its prominence, the Shaar Hashomayim provides an important case study when considering the formulation of Jewish women's education.

Because the synagogue was Orthodox, I have supplemented its study with another prominent synagogue of the time, the Reform Congregation of Temple Emanu-el.¹²

The Shaar Hashomayim began educating women specifically in 1947, when the Women's Institute of Jewish Studies was founded "to build up the Jewishness both of knowledge and custom, of our homemakers."¹³ This school was extremely popular from the outset, and continues Bible studies classes to the present day. The school was targeted towards women who were active members of the Sisterhood¹⁴ and "mothers of school-age children," to the extent that courses were offered during the day to make it easy for them to attend.¹⁵ Community and religious leaders believed that adults, particularly women, were becoming lax when it came to religious education.¹⁶ This institute offered courses in Jewish history and religion. For example, in its thirteenth year, it offered such courses as Beginner's Hebrew, Intermediate Hebrew, Advanced Hebrew, Modern Jewish Life and Thought, and Studies in the Bible. Courses were taught in two terms, in the fall (from October to December) and the winter (January to March).¹⁷ In 1963, a beginning class in basic Judaism for the home and synagogue was introduced at the Women's Institute of Jewish Studies. A brochure promoting the school noted "this course is designed especially for young women who wish to acquaint themselves with the elementary procedures and ideas of Judaism and their relevance to the contemporary world."¹⁸ In later years, organizers expanded the offerings, and included weekly lectures. The Winter 1970 calendar of the Women's Institute offered weekly lectures from a Mr. Zalmn Amit on the subject of the relationship between nationalist and religious movements. Amit was an Israeli educator who also worked with the department of Israeli Youth Labour and was working on his Ph.D. in psychology at McGill. Topics included the influence of revolutionaries, Berstein's Revisionism

and Lenin's Bolshevism, the development of socialist and labour movements, Israel Today (a post '67 analysis), and the New Left Movement.¹⁹

The Women's Institute was established because religious leaders believed that Jewish women were ignorant of Jewish history and the celebration of Jewish holidays. Evidence of this view appears throughout the Shaar Hashomayim's synagogue bulletins (weekly newsletters, containing information about religious services, the congregation, and congregants). For instance, a number of bulletins, particularly those around Chanukah and Passover, contain detailed information about how to celebrate these holidays. Passover was a frequent target. Passover is an eight-day festival commemorating the freedom of the Hebrew slaves from their Egyptian overlords. This story is described in the Book of Exodus. One of the key observances for this holiday is that, for the duration of the holiday, observant Jews do not eat any leavened bread. This is to remember that in their haste to leave, the Hebrew slaves did not have time to let their bread rise before they fled Egypt. In preparation for this, households must be cleansed of all leavened breads, which are called *chometz*. The search for *chometz* is thorough; not only are all products containing leavening agents (such as yeast, baking soda, or baking powder) thrown out, but the entire house must be scrubbed from top to bottom to ensure that there are no lingering crumbs. On the night before Passover, any remaining *chometz* is ceremonially burned in a large bonfire, declaring that the home has been cleansed. For the eight days of Passover, eating *chometz* or foods containing *chometz* is strictly forbidden. Special kosher products are sold during this time for this purpose. These products are colloquially known as "kosher for Passover," because they are kosher and have been certified as having no *chometz*. Because *chometz* is a food item, women play a particularly important role. They are generally responsible for the cleaning, while the male head of household inspects the results and blesses the home.

While the ban on *chometz* is described in the Torah, the ceremonial search for and burning of the *chometz* is not. Instead, there are folk traditions around the search for and burning of the *chometz*. So, it is unusual that instructions would be given in a synagogue bulletin. But this was precisely the case for the bulletin issued on April 8, 1960.²⁰ The appearance of such information in a synagogue bulletin is a telling indicator of a growing belief in the ignorance of Jewish women when it came to Jewish domestic rituals.

Similarly information appeared in the 1970 bulletin for April 18, 25, and May 2.²¹ This guide included information on the significance of Passover as "a symbol of humanity's first festival of freedom."²² It argued that

To talk about Passover is not enough. One must live Passover. One must make Passover. All the preparations, food regulations and ceremonies help to make vivid the reality of the holiday. The home, which undergoes a complete transformation before Passover and in which the scrupulous removal of Hametz²³ is observed, which characterizes Passover. Such a home elevates the children and adults above the sordid existence of the work-a-day life into the realm of spiritual joy.²⁴

The guide went on to define *chometz* in detail, including information on how to substitute baby cereals, and how to rinse fruits and vegetables. Kashering²⁵ was also described, particularly for utensils that would be used before, during, and after Passover, and which utensils could not be Kashered (like earthenware or glassware). A guide to the schedule of Passover (when to do the ritual search for *chametz* and when to ritually burn it) was provided. Finally, advice was provided for housewives to determine whether prepared foods were certified as kosher for Passover by Rabbinic supervision.²⁶

Similarly, the bulletins of Temple Emanu-El provided detailed information on celebrating Chanukah in the home. Entitled "Chanukah Service for the Home," the article's introduction

stated: "The following suggested Chanukah Service for the home is being included in our Bulletin in the hope that it will aid in contributing to the ceremonial beauty for the Chanukah Festival. It is very effective to have the ceremony at the dinner table, with the family all congregated."²⁷ The prayers for the candle lighting appeared, followed by the lyrics for Chanukah songs, including the popular "My Dreydel":

I have a little dreydel

I made it out of clay

And when it's dry and ready

Then "dreydel" I shall Play.

Chorus:

O dreydel, dreydel, dreydel

I made it out of clay,

O dreydel, dreydel, dreydel!

Then dreydel I shall play.²⁸

It is clear that there was a perceived need for education and instruction among Jewish women. That detailed instructions on how to celebrate important holidays with a strong domestic component points to women as the intended audience. Despite the fact that Jews have lived in Canada for generations, it is only after the end of the Second World War that there is a crisis about the ignorance of Jewish women. But this was about more than just teaching women who do not know what to do, but ensuring that they are taught in the correct way. The appearance of instructions for domestic rituals was also part of the standardization of domestic ritual practice.

Efforts to educate Jewish women about Jewish religion eventually led to the establishment of bat mitzvahs (translated as daughter of the commandments). Traditionally,

Jewish boys undergo a coming of age ceremony at the age of thirteen. This ceremony, which is called a bar mitzvah (translated as son of the Commandments), marks the transformation from Jewish boy to Jewish man and formal entrance of a Jewish boy into the Jewish community. After a Jewish boy has undergone bar mitzvah, he receives all of the responsibilities and obligations of a Jewish man, such as participation in religious services and following all of the Commandments. Usually the Jewish boy receives a thorough education in Judaism and Hebrew as preparation. Up until the twentieth century, bar mitzvahs, or the marking of entrance into adulthood, were reserved for men. Beginning in the early part of the twentieth century, some American Jews began agitating for a similar ceremony for girls.

In Canada, the process of adopting bat mitzvah was much slower. Generally, Reform congregations adopted the ceremony much earlier, in line with their liberal progressive views and their increasing emphasis on gender equality. At Temple Emanu-El, bat mitzvahs were held as early as 1957, as far as the accessible records testify. In this case, notices congratulating individual parents on the bat mitzvah of their daughter appear in the records, suggesting that at this synagogue such events were similar or identical for boys and girls, as was (and is) the common Reform pattern.²⁹ However, the situation at Shaar Hashomayim was entirely different. The Shaar Hashomayim is an Orthodox synagogue that sometimes takes on Conservative characteristics. In general, their adherence to traditional Jewish law is much stronger than among Reform synagogues, though they do adapt over time to changing social values. For this reason, the idea of a bar mitzvah for girls did not catch on until much later than in the Reform synagogues.

The Shaar Hashomayim detailed the creation of the bat mitzvah ceremony in their Bulletins. For the congregation Shaar Hashomayim, Chanukah was the time of the year selected

to celebrate the synagogue's first and subsequent bat mitzvahs. Unlike the Temple Emanu-El, the bat mitzvahs, as they were then known, were seen as entirely separate from Bar Mitzvahs. The Shaar Hashomayim held its first bat mitzvah on December 3, 1961, when twenty-two girls were honoured.³⁰ Two years later, the bulletin included a detailed description of the ceremony: "25 girls were consecrated at a Chanukah Service, as Daughters of the Commandment – B'nos Mitzvoh."³¹ The service began when the girls walked into the Main Synagogue. Next, Rabbi Shuchat officiated over an evening service. Then the choir sang Psalm 30, a Song of Dedication. The B'nos Mitzvoh then "presented an impressive pageant interpreting the meaning of the Chanukoh [sic] lights. This pageant was under the direction of Mrs. Wilfred Shuchat, Instructor of the B'nos Mitzvoh course."³² After an offering of a Torah covering, the Ark was opened, and the girls "recited the prayer beginning with the words, 'With everlasting love hast Thou loved us....'"³³ After another speech from Rabbi Shuchat on the historical significance of the event, the girls received a book each, and then went to a reception in their honour.³⁴

A great deal of planning went on behind the scenes when preparing for this ceremony. According to a sermon by Rabbi Shuchat, discussions over the course of studies and ceremony took place over ten years. Organizers were motivated by a desire to include Jewish girls in the congregation and "to impress upon the daughters of our community that they too are involved in the life of the commandments and that they are expected to observe the commandments and that they are expected to observe those Jewish duties which are incumbent upon them."³⁵ Shuchat recounted that coming up with a course of studies was fairly simple. The organizers agreed that "the goals for such a course would be an intensive review of those personal and home observances that have a special relationship to the role of Jewish women in our society, such as dietary laws, festival observance and Jewish symbols – as well as a review of the lives of great

Jewish women of past and present." ³⁶ This course was offered from January to June for girls who were twelve years old. It was entirely voluntary, and was open to girls who did not attend their Hebrew school provided that they were receiving an equivalent Jewish education elsewhere. ³⁷ Later advertisements for the course emphasized that:

This course was designed to prepare girls to accept their duties as B'not Mitzvah – Daughters of the Commandment. The participating students would be given an opportunity to learn about prominent Jewish women from a historical and contemporary perspective. They will also examine those aspects of our Tradition that related to the Jewish girl and mother. Above all creative projects have been designed to involve the girls in a practical and meaningful way in order to emphasize the role of the Jewish Mother in the home. [...] We are looking forward to an exciting and enthusiastic experience. ³⁸

Chanukah was selected as the most appropriate day, "because of the fact that Jewish women were equally involved in the miracle of the festival and are equally commanded in its observances." ³⁹ The organizers made a point to differentiate this ceremony from bar mitzvahs. In their view:

Such a ceremony would have to be related to the real role of Jewish women as we understand it and not an artificial role. Therefore, it could not at all be an imitation of a Bar Mitzvah. Secondly, it should be a group ceremony with high standards and thus eliminate many of the materialistic abuses that have invaded the Bar Mitzvah experience for boys. ⁴⁰

This ceremony would be held following the completion of the course of studies, when girls were thirteen years old. Up until 1970, bar mitzvahs and bat mitzvahs were entirely separate events, and noted separately in Shaar Hashomayim bulletins. However, beginning in May of 1970, they were pictured together. A photo of the "B'nai and B'not Mitzvahs" of 5730 appear in the May 22,

1970 bulletin. The caption of the enclosed picture noted that the Men's Association honoured both boys and girls for their achievements.⁴¹

Unlike a bar mitzvah, the bat mitzvah ceremony at Shaar Hashomayim had nothing to do with the inclusion of a woman into the Jewish community as an adult. Each boy receives his own bar mitzvah. In most synagogues, bar mitzvahs involve the reading of a Torah passage by the celebrant. It is this reading of the Torah that symbolizes the boy's transition into a man; his ability to read the passage in Hebrew, in public, and unaided is a visible and symbolic manifestation of his new adult status. However, the bat mitzvah was very different. It was not a coming-of-age celebration. Rather, Jewish women were only considered adults after marriage.⁴² Rather, the bat mitzvah ceremony reflected and supported established gendered roles for women in the synagogue. In putting on a pageant, the celebrants performed an idealized Jewish womanhood, a standard that they were taught during the preparatory education. This idealized Jewish womanhood was predicated on the idea that a woman's responsibility to transmit Judaism to her children is paramount. While bat mitzvahs have come to be seen as the result of the women's liberation movement and feminism, at least at the Shaar Hashomayim, bat mitzvahs had much more to do with 1950s gender roles than they do equal rights. Further, while Jewish religiosity in the home was recognized as important, the structure of the bat mitzvah ceremony placed the synagogue in the role of legitimizer and ultimate arbitrator of Jewish religion. Religious leaders, as authority figures in the community, bestowed the duty (and privilege) of passing on the traditions to Jewish women. It is clear that all authority in the Jewish religion stems from these leaders. Women were expected to play only a passive role in receiving such knowledge and transmitting it as religious leaders desired.

All of these educational efforts on the part of religious leaders situated Jewish women within the confines of the home, and usually in relation to their children. These women were perceived as largely ignorant of the theology, language, and customs of their people. They needed to be educated, whether through periodic information published in synagogue bulletins or through more formal avenues like the Women's Institute or bat mitzvahs. The knowledge that was prized was a working knowledge of Hebrew, basic Jewish theology, and religious rituals for the home. All of these educational measures established the synagogue as a place of power and authority, with the sole right to interpret the meaning of Jewish religion for all Jews. And, as we shall see, many of these sentiments were echoed in community publications for Jewish women.

Like Mother, Like Daughter

Like the religious leaders of the Montreal Jewish community, lay leaders emphasized the role of Jewish women as bearers of Jewish culture and situated them in the home. In lay Jewish publications, written both by women and by men, all women were homemakers, wives, and mothers, and it was their duty to ensure the survival of Jewish customs and traditions. And, like the religious leaders, these publications emphasized the importance of knowledge of Hebrew, Jewish history, Jewish theology, and domestic rituals. Perhaps the best place to start is to return to the cookbook *A Treasure for my Daughter*.

Throughout this text, mothers are frequently associated with wonder and entertainment and fathers are characterized as sombre, with the dignity reserved for the position of authority, but with the distance of someone who is not quite a part of the inner family, someone who is outside. Fathers only appear at the table for significant religious rituals, and they seem to be set apart from the rest of the family. For instance, in the cookbook's treatment of Passover, the Father is assigned the role of religious leader:

Mother, with all the symbols on the Seder table and all the family gathered around it, each one of us participating in the ritual of the service, each following the story of the Exodus in the Haggadah, the Passover Seder is indeed a holiday for all of us to look forward to each year, with father seated at the head of the table reclining on a cushion. [...] Before father comes to the table he places three Matzot covered with a special cloth on a special Matza plate. [...] Father pours a goblet or glass of wine for each member of the family and will refill it until the 'Arba Kosot' are drunk. He chants the 'Kiddush' and then is followed by each male adult in chanting Kiddush, while they drink the first of the four cups required for the Seder service. The ritual of the washing of the hands is performed. [...]

Father always looks so solemn when he lifts the plate of Matzot and shows it to us, after which he breaks the third Matza.⁴³

The only other time that Father appears in this book is for the Briss and the Pidyon Ha-Ben.⁴⁴ In these ceremonies, the mother is seen as secondary. After describing the ceremony of the Briss, the book describes how the *mohel* says a blessing for the baby and the mother, after which "the baby is then returned to its mother."⁴⁵ However, the father has a starring role. Despite the fact that the Pidyon Ha-Ben is only performed when the child is the first-born son of the mother, and not the father, it is the father who takes responsibility for the child. According to the book, the Father is essential for this ceremony because he is alone responsible for the religious education of his son and for any transgressions he may commit as a child.⁴⁶ This is how the book describes the ceremony:

The father presents the child to this Cohen saying, 'This, my first-born, is the first born of his mother, and the Holy One Blessed be He has commanded me to redeem him, etc.

The member of the Tribe of Aaron then asks, 'Which do you prefer: to give me thy first born son, for God's service, the first born of his mother, or to redeem him for five shekels which you are by law required to give?' The father replies, 'I prefer to redeem my son. Here is the value of his redemption which I am by law obliged to give.' The redemption money is accepted by the Cohen and the

*child is returned to his father who says, 'Praised by Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us with His Commandments, and enjoined upon us the redemption of the son.'*⁴⁷

The Father figure that appears in this text is one that, at times, is remote, distant, and authoritative. The father is often seen "at the head of a table," the key figure in a religious setting. He is the one who presides over religious occasion, as he "chants the Kiddush" or negotiates with the Cohen for the return of his son. Though the mother of the first-born son is referenced in the ceremony, she does not participate formally. Instead, the father takes centre stage.

When it comes to most religious rituals (with the exception of domestic religious rituals, such as the lighting of the Shabbat candles), women were seen as superfluous. The editors of *A Treasure for my Daughter* provide detailed information about the Pidyon Ha-Ben and the naming of male children. However, the rituals surrounding the naming of girls is treated very perfunctorily. Hadassah asked Mother: "Are you going to say anything about the naming of a girl, mother?"⁴⁸ This is how she responded:

*Now I know that you were listening very carefully, Hadassah. I have a short paragraph on that right here. 'In the case of the birth of a girl, the father is called to the synagogue Ark during the reading of the Torah; the reader announces the name given to the baby girl and makes a benediction for the child and parents. The child can be named the first day of Reading of Law or Torah after the day of birth. The Torah is read on Monday, Thursday and Saturday.'*⁴⁹

This description is something of an afterthought, as is the birth and naming of a girl. The main event, starring Dad, is always the birth and naming of a boy.

As opposed to fathers, who only make appearances at important life events, mothers are integral to the routine domestic practice of the Jewish religion. Mothers are associated with the

home, they are portrayed as entertaining, warm, loving, and present. They are the proverbial heart of the home. Nowhere is this more apparent than in religious rituals about Shabbat. Mother describes to Hadassah how she lights the Sabbath candles and adds a personal prayer. The conversation continues:

'You know, mother, after you have lit the candles and said the prayer, when we gather around you to say 'Good Sabbath' peace and joy seem to settle over our home; sometimes I think I can see that peacefulness and joy, not only feel it.'

'I, too, feel very much as you do, Hadassah. In fact you will experience it even more in your own home, because you will be the one who ushers in the Sabbath by lighting the candles, and you will bring that joy and peace into your household.'⁵⁰

The language in the language, aside from the formality of the religious ritual, is significant. The terms "peace" and "joy" are used no less than three times in two sentences. And in each case, the mother is associated with these terms, the individual that brings "peace" and "joy" to the household.

Indeed, the home, the Sabbath, and Jewish women are always associated with one another. The *Rochester Hadassah Cookbook* asked the question: "How do we recognize a Jewish Home?" While they mention the mezuzah as a key feature to recognize, most importance is placed on the Sabbath. As the cookbook notes: "We see in the home the Sabbath candlesticks, the lighting of whose candles each Friday evening is, in the words of Henrietta Szold, 'symbolic of the Jewish woman's influence on her own home, and through it upon larger circles. She is the inspirer of a pure, chaste family life whose hallowing influences are incalculable; she is the centre of all spiritual endeavors, the confidante and fosterer of every undertaking. To her the Talmudic sentence applies: 'It is woman alone through whom God's blessings are vouchsafed to a house.'"⁵¹

The cookbook continues by noting that the senses also reveal a Jewish home on the Sabbath. "More pervasive, more insistent even than these appeals to mind and sense, however, are the aromas and sizzlings of the Jewish kitchen [...] It used to be that Friday morning the child would awake to find the house filled with the warming fragrance of the baking Hallah. "Shabbos" was imminent and precious, an approaching guest of honor. Though this delight may be lost to many of our homes (need it be?), even now the soups and savors of Shabbat, and certainly the heady flavors of Passover preparation arouse the feelings of joy, of anticipation, of wonder, of holiness."⁵² The final question, what is a Jewish home, is answered as simply: "It is one where through the work and love of the woman of the house, 'God's blessings are vouchsafed,' made manifest. We hope this book will help you to build up heart-warming experiences and fragrant memories for your family."⁵³

Orah Magazine also believed that keeping the Sabbath was a key to maintaining Jewishness throughout the generations. Among Orthodox Jews, Shabbat is a time of rest, but also of celebration. All work is prohibited and, instead, the day is devoted to spiritual contemplation and family. A number of activities that are construed as work are prohibited. For instance, it is prohibited to turn electric devices on or off during the Sabbath, to drive on the Sabbath, to cook or to bake, or to handle tools involved in work (such as a hammer, or a pencil).

In an article entitled "Our Jewish Heritage: Shabbat: The Cornerstone of Jewish life" author Naomi Frankenburg (National General Secretary) argued that the Sabbath was the most important Jewish practice. As she noted: "The laws of Shabbat observance, however, are among the most important and practical in Jewish life. Perhaps these laws are even more important than they used to be, in view of the present-day breakup of the Jewish family, and the erosion of Diaspora Jewry due to assimilation, intermarriage, and indifference."⁵⁴ And, like the authors of *A*

Treasure for my Daughter and the Rochester Hadassah cookbook, Frankenburg describes the Sabbath as the particular duty of Jewish women: "Shabbat traditionally begins with the lighting of the candles by the mother of the household."⁵⁵ This was a time not only of rest, but also of family togetherness. Without the distractions of the television, family members relied on each other for entertainment, bringing them even closer together.

Perhaps the most obvious example of the emphasis on Jewish women and the beauty of the Jewish religion that appears in *A Treasure for my Daughter* is the name "Hadassah." Although this is probably a nod to the name of the publishing organization, the word Hadassah is also associated with the biblical Book of Esther. In fact, Hadassah is Hebrew for Esther. Why is this significant? The Book of Esther tells of the story of a beautiful Jewish maiden who attracts the attention of Ahasuerus, a Persian ruler. He selects her as his new wife, while unaware that she is, in fact, Jewish. Meanwhile, Esther learns that Haman, the king's prime minister, is campaigning to have the King issue a command to execute all of the Jews. Risking her own safety by revealing her Jewish heritage to him, Esther warns the King about Haman's plot. Haman is subsequently hanged.⁵⁶ This is Esther's legacy to modern Jewish women: Jewish women must use their wisdom to save the Jewish people by making their homes beautiful, peaceful, and conducive to the transmission of "Jewishness." Mother reinforces this herself when she tells Hadassah, "it is by the observance of these holidays and customs in our homes that we have been able to retain the religion and traditions of our heritage."⁵⁷ The significance of this name also testifies to the cultural project of *A Treasure for my Daughter*, for in creating this book, the editors and contributors were also attempting to save Judaism by making the homes of all Jewish women beautiful.

The education of children was the paramount responsibility of Jewish women, according to community publications. However, it was not simply enough for a Jewish woman to place food on the table and light the candles on the holidays; she needed to educate the next generation by inspiring her children through their involvement in Jewish rituals and by making her home a Jewish sanctuary. The importance of including children in domestic rituals is apparent in every aspect of this cookbook. In each holiday, either Mother or Hadassah points out the special duties reserved for children.⁵⁸ The most striking example of this is their discussion about Chanukah, which must be celebrated largely for the sake of the children. Following a lengthy discussion about Hadassah's supervision of her Sunday school pupils in their Chanukah play, Hadassah remarks how this event marked a high point in the celebration for the children: "the children, who have looked forward eagerly to this annual Chanukah parade, form a line of spectators, their little flags and Menorot clutched firmly in their hands."⁵⁹ However, even more striking is Mother's explanation for why she must always light the menorah with the children:

A ritual such as that of the candles inspires even little children, and when we explain their meaning, the education and religious goal is attained. We cannot all be scholars in the Talmud, but we can all enjoy the practice of our religion in our homes and synagogues. Our heritage is so rich that it is our obligation to the children to impart as much of the meaning of our observances as we possibly can.⁶⁰

The symbolism inherent in the lighting of the candles and the illumination of the children's minds cannot be overlooked. Through such simple acts, Jewish women are called upon to transmit "Jewishness," learned in *A Treasure for my Daughter*, to the next generation and thus ensure the survival of the Jewish people.

The idea of making the holidays fun for children to inspire their Jewishness is also an important theme when it comes to the treatment of Purim. Sometimes referred to as the Jewish

Halloween, Purim became increasingly important as a holiday for children. *A Treasure for my Daughter* pays particular attention to the inclusion of children on this holiday: "When [the children] are here, we will tell them the story around the table, for this is customary on this holiday. I have written the story so as to be certain of all the details. [...] The story is very clear and the children will enjoy it. Would it not be a good idea to tell some of the customs observed on this holiday?"⁶¹ The holiday in general is also described as great fun for the children, particularly during the reading of the story of Esther. The cookbook describes how children rattle noisemakers whenever Haman's name is mentioned. As Mother notes, the holiday is always a joyful occasion, and many banquets, dances, and carnivals are held. Particularly important are the Purim Plays, where children in parochial school re-enacted the story of Esther for their parents.⁶² Finally, children are encouraged to wear costumes depicting characters from the book of Esther, and to go out collecting treats "from house to house [...] gaily singing and dancing."⁶³

The Jewish home as sanctuary appears in a number of places in *A Treasure for my Daughter*. Creating the proper atmosphere through decoration and table setting were important as well. In *A Treasure for my Daughter*, the editors emphasize how decorative touches enhance the importance of the holidays. For Shavuot, these decorations are at once aesthetic and symbolic: "The spirit of this joyous holiday is heightened by the decorating of the home and the synagogue with flowers and green branches and plants and fruits. Dairy dishes are usually prepared, with milk and honey. [...] The flowers and fruits represent the land and crops. They also commemorate the harvest festivals as it is believed to be the judgement day for the thriving of the fruits of trees."⁶⁴ Further, the Rochester Hadassah Cookbook believes in the importance of decorating for the holidays: "The never-forgotten enchantment of the Passover holiday is

invoked by mother's work and ingenuity. The home is polished, the table different, the atmosphere magic. The Seder is a king's banquet, spiced with song and ceremony."⁶⁵

The creation of such a sanctuary does not depend solely on a woman's skill at interior decorating. Instead, she must, like Esther, use words. The Sabbath and the Sanctuary are continually associated: "One of the problems I face, as a Jewish [mother], in trying to maintain the home as a Sanctuary, is how to get my whole family, from grand-parents to youngest children, to observe a Sabbath 'hallowed unto the Lord'".⁶⁶ When Mother explains to Hadassah the Sabbath as a boon to mankind and quotes Claude G. Montefiore, Hadassah responds: "What a beautiful statement! Mother, you have always explained all the festivals – not only the Sabbath, - and made an interesting Jewish home for all of us."⁶⁷ Mother later adds, "I wanted our home to be a gay place where our friends could come and enjoy themselves in a Jewish way."⁶⁸ By carefully explaining the importance of domestic ritual observances, Mother is able to demonstrate their beauty and thus their value. In addition to careful explanations, communication between mother and daughter is also seen as important in creating a joyful and beautiful Jewish home. After Hadassah questions her mother about her own mother, and the openness of their relationship, Mother responds:

I am happy indeed, that you are not reticent about these matters with me. We are too apt to criticize our own immediate family, often leaving the nice things unsaid until it is too late to say them... On the threshold of your new married life, Hadassah, you must think and plan to make your home a sanctuary where husband and children eagerly look forward to be together each day. [...] Only the sense of 'belonging' brings happiness and understanding. Chanukah, you will recall, commemorates such families.⁶⁹

Most of the publications of Jewish women in Montreal purport to provide Jewish education to Jewish women. Again, like religious leaders, community leaders felt that Jewish

women were largely ignorant of the customs of their people. Hence the large number of educational articles and books. In *A Treasure for my Daughter*, the general public is perceived to be largely ignorant in matters of the Jewish religion. "I can't think how many times I've heard you answering questions of friends and neighbours on those matters. All you are really doing when you give your paper [her talk on Pidyon Ha Ben] is to answer all the questions of a group of friends and neighbours."⁷⁰

A Treasure for my Daughter was not the only Jewish women's publication to deal with the Jewish holidays. Since its inception, *Orah Magazine* had published numerous articles about Jewish holidays, the better to instruct its readers about their Jewish heritage.⁷¹ Throughout its run, various series on Jewish religion appeared. These articles gave the basic histories of Jewish holidays and surveys of customs.⁷² The first few years of *Orah* also saw the monthly publication of the "At Home" series, which featured a photograph of a table set for a Jewish holiday. For the first edition, the picture was of a table decorated for Rosh Hashanah, piled high with fresh fruits.⁷³ These early editions also featured "Did you Know?" columns, which provided facts about the origins and customs of Jewish holidays and religious law.⁷⁴

There were also efforts to educate Jewish women about Hebrew. A series of articles ran in *Orah Magazine* that either attempted to make Hebrew fun or convince readers that it was easy to learn. November 1961's edition featured a Hebrew bingo game as a way to learn Hebrew. The image was used to promote the complete game, which was sold at the National headquarters of Canadian Hadassah-Wizo.⁷⁵ Another article, titled "Our Language: Learn Hebrew? – Of Course You Can!", by Helen Smolack encouraged women to take the initiative when learning Hebrew. She boasted that it was extremely easy, being a simple language with no capitals, written phonetically, and being a "logical" language.⁷⁶

Much as was the case for food and the body, when Sephardic and Mizrahi customs were presented in *Orah*, they appeared as interesting alternatives to "standard" or Ashkenazi practices. In "Israel's Colourful Communities Celebrate Passover," an unnamed author profiled the customs of Tunisian, Yemenite, and Iraqi Jews as they celebrated Passover in Israel. Their customs were presented as informative and quaint anecdotes for the edification of Western readers. For instance, the article paints a picture of Jewish housewives as old-fashioned, and static: "You can still see an Israeli housewife of Tunisian, Iraqi or Persian origin sifting through all her rice-stocks three or four times over as she prepares for the holiday to make sure they contain no *chametz* from other cereals. She specially launders the bags in which she stores them too."⁷⁷ Or, "Many Moroccan Jews, for instance, still wear long gowns of white – the colour of freedom, at the holiday table."⁷⁸ The key term in each of these quotes is "still." It situates Sephardic and Mizrahi Jewish women in the past, as they are "still" observing certain customs. Using the term "still" creates both a past and two presents: one in which old customs are retained and another that does not. It also implies stasis, a resistance to change by hanging on to older customs when all others have abandoned them. Further, there could also be an implication that these women are still keeping to the Jewish laws in ways that most modern Jewish women are not.

In these publications, all women are homemakers, wives, and mothers. As such, their paramount duty is to ensure the survival of Jewish customs and traditions. In the new world, domestic rituals came to be seen as the most effective method of transmitting cultural knowledge. By using beauty and wisdom, Jewish women would create happy Jewish homes, preserving both family and the Jewish religion. However, it was not enough to simply clean house and prepare a nice meal. It was essential that Jewish women ensured the survival of Jewish

culture by passing this knowledge and wisdom on to their children, by inspiring them, and by making their home a Jewish sanctuary.

The Woman in the Kitchen

In this section, I will examine the "lived religion" of ordinary Jewish women in Montreal. While there are many commonalities between the discourse put forward by clergy and lay leaders and ordinary Jewish women, there are a number of important differences. While, like the leaders, Jewish women associated their Jewishness with the home, this conception was almost entirely divorced from what they considered religion. Most women distinguished between religion and tradition, with religion being theology and tradition being cultural practices. They believed that Jewish women had little to no role in the religious aspects of Judaism, but a crucial role in perpetuating tradition. While most women argued that they learned little directly from synagogue or Hebrew schools, they told me that they learned most of their Jewishness by watching their female relatives prepare for the holidays. Further, their experiences of religiosity often had little to do with the synagogue. Instead, the Jewish religion is consistently associated with family, the holidays, and particularly food, because, for these women, Jewish traditions *are* their Jewish religion.

In my earlier chapter on Jewish food, I noted that most women did not learn to cook from their mothers. However, this chapter seems to directly contradict this assertion, as many of my participants insisted that they learned about Jewish customs from their mothers. This contradiction can be resolved by considering what is being taught. Cooking is more an everyday activity, and since many women worked, they often did not have a direct hand in preparing daily meals. Religious celebrations were special occasions, and many of my participants insisted that their mothers were directly involved in preparations. So, while mothers may not have been

available on a daily basis to teach cooking, their daughters could learn indirectly through observance of family religious customs and traditions. Indeed, most of the women I interviewed recalled learning about religion and Jewish traditions from their family members, particularly female relatives. While few could recall any direct or detailed instruction, most told me that they picked it up naturally by watching their mothers or female relatives. Their language, particularly around their use of the term "naturally," and their insistence that this was the "normal" way to learn about Jewish religious practices, suggest that the transmission of knowledge from mother to child was part of the mother's child-raising responsibilities. It was assumed that Jewish mothers passed on their knowledge of Jewish practices. This language echoes that used by community leaders when talking about cultural transmission through the beautification of the Jewish religion. Further, it was the transmission from mother to daughter that was seen as particularly important. Daughters were expected to pick up the torch of celebrating Jewish holidays from their mothers when they grew too old to host the celebrations themselves. It was thus crucial for daughters to possess information about how to put on Jewish domestic rituals.

When I spoke to these women about how they taught their children, if they had any, about the traditional holidays, many spoke only in reference to their daughters. When it came to their own children, women with sons expressed some dismay that their children no longer practiced. Indeed, men in general were considered quite useless in this regard. In each of these cases, men are associated with religious observance and the synagogue, whereas women are associated with the home and domestic rituals. That women were responsible for the passing down of religious traditions, and that this transmission was supposed to happen between mother and daughter was something that Betty made clear at the beginning of her interview. When I asked her about typical holidays with her family, she described how her mother was quite close

to her mother's family, and Betty spent the holidays at her grandmother's house. She continued: "And for years and years, my grandmother made all, you know, the seders were at her house, the holidays were celebrated there. And then when she got too old, my mother took over, even though she was the youngest, she was the one who was the take-over person in that family."⁷⁹ Betty made it clear that women were responsible for organizing and planning the Jewish holidays.

Aviva lamented how her two grown sons no longer observe the Jewish holidays. She attributed this to the fact that neither of her daughters-in-law made the effort to put together a holiday celebration. Bernadette commented that her husband could not care less about Jewish traditions or holiday celebrations. As she noted: "I would say [tradition is more important to women.] [...] I'm going to take an example from my family. If I wouldn't celebrate the holidays, my husband wouldn't mind. I'm the one who instilled it in the children, in the household. That he wouldn't care less. But I want you to know, he enjoys it."⁸⁰

Despite their insistence that they rarely learned specific details about how to make holidays foods, my interviewees insisted women had special responsibilities in the Jewish religion in terms of transmitting tradition. They argued that women were ideally placed in the kitchen to educate their children and make the holidays joyful for all involved. While their idea of what to transmit was not entirely in line with religious and lay leaders, they all shared the idea that Rickie Berman discusses, that Jewish women and domestic rituals were the front line when it came to the transmission of Jewish identity and all that it entailed. Men were seen as largely useless when it came to knowledge of tradition.

Rosemary also felt that Jewish men were not knowledgeable when it came to Jewish traditions in the home. This is what she had to say:

Well it depends on [who you're closer with,] your mother or your father. I would venture that daughter and mother are close, that is, I hope. [...] And a woman would naturally spend more time in the kitchen, so she would pick it up more than a son, or from your father. How much do fathers mix into the kitchen. Not much. Unless there is some who cook, you're lucky to have met a guy who cooks. [...] Trust me, if you got a real Jewish guy, he wouldn't know a thing!⁸¹

Instead, she emphasizes the necessity of a good relationship between mother and daughter.

Traditionally, Jewish boys would get more education in Jewish, [...] But on the other hand, I don't think that they would follow the small Jewish traditions as much as women do, because women are expected to know more about them, and do them at home. Mostly related to food. Isn't that true? That's how Jewish women know about the holidays. [...] But most of us know what to do for the Jewish holidays.⁸²

Karen felt that Judaism was equally important for men and women. However, she felt that men were more important in terms of religious practices, and women were more important in terms of traditions. When I asked her if women were more important than men in terms of tradition, she responded "I guess, in the house and the home, and the food and the cooking, yes, but in terms of the participation in synagogue and synagogue-directed activities, generally, you know, the man says Kiddush, the man says the prayers, so that's the way it is, that's his area, and this is mine."⁸³ Again, the woman is always associated with the home, and the husband in the synagogue. She also elaborated, "Each time we come to a holiday, and we go into a panic because [my husband] can't remember what we're supposed to do in the food department because he never paid attention to it cause his mother did. So there's areas of Judaism that are very much dependent upon the woman and what she knows, and then there's similarly many that depend on the male and what he knows."⁸⁴

Finally, it was not just the women that I spoke with who believed that women were important for carrying on Jewish traditions. David repeatedly emphasized that women were incredibly important when understanding how Judaism was and is passed down. As he said:

*In the form of Jewish traditions, yes [women are more important]. Yes, I think because of the fact that we go back to the aspect of food, who teaches the religious in the home, who is responsible for the religion in the home. I mean, as far as I can tell, the men who are the ultra, ultra, ultra religious, they go to shul, but that's it. But I don't see any other function in the family, they're not educating the children, their job is not to teach the children, it's the mother's job to teach them. I think that's the problem.*⁸⁵

Overall, the transmission of both Jewish identity and Jewish religiosity depends on the relationship between a mother and a daughter. Men were seen as having little to do with the exchange, for it was not their duty to be involved in domestic rituals except as a distant observer or as a religious participant. For ordinary Jewish women, their religious practices centred almost exclusively in the home. This remained consistent with that set forward by the clergy and lay leaders, but it also contradicted the official discourse. While community and religious leaders emphasized the importance of knowledge of Hebrew, Jewish theology, and Jewish history, stemming from official sources like the synagogue and community publications, ordinary Jewish women emphasized the communal celebrations of the holidays, particularly with respect to holiday foods. The women I spoke with emphasized the enduring relationship between female relatives and the home as the site for the transmission of the Jewish religion. They distinguished between the Judaism that was practiced in the synagogue as being religion and Judaism that was practiced in the home as tradition. That said, the line between the two was not always clear.

Following these discussions, I asked my participants if there was a difference between religion and tradition, a distinction introduced by my participants. Almost all of the women I

spoke with argued that there was an important difference. Indeed, most of the women I spoke with did not consider themselves to be religious at all. Despite this view, there was a great deal of slippage in these women's discussions of the difference between religion and tradition. My interviewees seemed to indicate that while tradition is not the same as religion, in their view it is an important part of religion. For instance, Bernadette noted: "No, [I] don't consider myself to be religious. I think religious is really following all the precepts, and being Shomer Shabbat⁸⁶, and there's so many things you have to observe. I don't think I'm capable of observing them. [...] More traditions. I love Jewish traditions." When I asked her at the end of the interview what she felt it was important for future generations to know about Montreal Jewishness, she emphasized that traditions should continue because they were such an important part of our religion. The traditions of our holidays will result in many good things. She emphasized how much she loved Jewish traditions, and lamented the fact that her husband was not more religious. She believed that if her husband were more religious, she would have been more religious and a better Jew.

Thus, while Bernadette does not consider herself to be religious, she religiously observes all of the Jewish holidays. Indeed, she informed me that she even observes fast days. She emphasized how much she loved Jewish traditions and the importance of observing the holidays in her religious practice. Unlike religious leaders, who situate Jewish religiosity in the synagogue, with women or men passing on the desired knowledge of Jewish theology, ordinary women like Bernadette situate it within the home, and particularly with the observance of Jewish traditions and the celebration of Jewish holidays. Bernadette makes it clear that her practice of the Jewish religion is largely divorced from the synagogue, despite occasional attendance. She does not seek rabbis or community leaders as sources of authority. They are seen as largely

irrelevant to her. For Bernadette, the Jewish religion lives on, for example, in the eating of hamentaschen on Purim and the lighting of the Shabbat candles each Friday night.⁸⁷

Many of the other women I spoke with echoed her sentiments. Miriam had quite definitive feelings about the difference between religion and tradition. She felt that despite having been raised to be quite Orthodox, she was religious more in spirit than in action, for it was hard for her to accept that things are meant to be, that God's will must be done. Her exact quote was "of the spirit, not of the doing stuff." In other words, Miriam did not always observe Jewish religious law strictly, though she believed in the spirit of the laws. She felt that she was not religious because she lacked a faith in God that she deemed an essential aspect of Jewish religiosity. She explained her position thus:

I light my Shabbat candles, I kind of sit on the fence, because I work in a medical environment, scientific, you know. I find it hard to believe that things are what they call v'shert, that it's meant to be. I don't think it's meant to be that little children have leukemia, I don't think it's meant to be that I had breast cancer, I don't think it's meant to be that both my parents had strokes. I don't think that these are, I find it very hard to accept that these things are meant to be for good people. So, in that respect, I don't accept. Um. Whether there's a God or not, I find, intelligently, you know, it's hard to say that there is. So, I'm on the fence. I mean I practice all the rituals, I pray on the holidays, but I don't know what I'm saying. So I read the English, [and I think] What the hell am I doing here! But I think that, it's the goodness of a person, it's the spirituality, so you know, it's the joy of the holidays, it's a whole bunch of things, it's not necessarily a belief in some obscure thing.⁸⁸

She continued by noting that she believed that there was a definite difference between religion and tradition, religion being belief in the unknown and following Jewish principles about what it meant to be will be, and tradition being observing the holidays and saying the prayers. But despite believing in this difference, there is still a great degree of slippage between these two

words. As she says, being religious is about spirituality, morality, and the observance of tradition, all at the same time. While conceptually she may believe that there is a real difference between religion and tradition, and she does not consider herself to be religious due to her lack of belief in a higher power, she considers herself to be very much a Jew and ties her Jewishness to her practice of Jewish ritual. When asked if she considered herself to be ethnically, religiously, or culturally Jewish, she responded: "all of them."⁸⁹

When I asked Rosemary what she learned as a child about the Jewish religion, she responded that she learned a lot about proper behaviour from her mother. She would tell Rosemary that it was written in the Torah to never embarrass someone, to never to stand out, to never steal, and to never tempt those who are less fortunate. Rosemary said that her mother often told her "Jewish people don't do that. Which is hardly applicable today, but, you know, that's the way she would talk."⁹⁰ When asked why these rules exist, she believes that "To me, I think, the reason they have that, is so that people would be apart, you know there would be no intermarriage. So we had certain rules that were different from the Gentiles, from the other tribes, so that we wouldn't mix."⁹¹ She also noted that she thinks that the emphasis on morality is what makes Judaism a good religion.⁹² Debra expressed a great deal of fear and anxiety that I would ask her questions about the Jewish holidays. She said that she learned about Jewishness from her parents. However, her Jewishness was not a matter of religiosity, but of behaviour. She told me that her father taught her to never draw attention to herself. As she said: "my Father has always, he's always been, timid, is not quite the right word, but don't [...] draw attention to yourself, don't make trouble, don't create a fuss, be subservient in a way."⁹³ She attributed this to their experiences during the Holocaust. She later noted that religion and traditions were not passed down in her family. Instead, "What was passed on in my family more than religion:

ghosts."⁹⁴ This attitude has shaped her views on Judaism. For Debra, it was never a matter of religion or tradition. Instead, she said that "anti-Semitism makes the Jew," that Jewish people exist as a group as a direct result of the hatred of Jews by non-Jews.

For these women, being Jewish was not primarily about attending synagogue, which most admitted they did seldom. Indeed, synagogue attendance was seen as peripheral to their feeling of being Jewish. Instead, they were concerned about what happened in the home. And, for the most part, their experiences centred around the Jewish holidays and holiday foods. When I asked my interviewees about their experiences during the Jewish holidays, the responses I received were quite consistent. Most recalled a brief visit to *shul* (if at all) prior to the main event: a family dinner. Food and the holidays were always associated in these stories. Miriam had a similar experience. The holidays were always about food and family. For Passover, the entire family would gather around the table, and her mother would serve the meal. She complained that her Father prayed for hours over the Seder.⁹⁵ Rosemary also associated the Jewish holidays with foods. When I asked her what a typical celebration of Rosh Hashanah looked like when she was growing up, this is how she responded: "We ate. You always eat on Jewish holidays. You know that. That's primary, really."⁹⁶ Laura told a very similar story: "Rosh Hashanah, we would light the candles. My mother would light the candles, and um, chicken soup, matza balls, coleslaw, gefilte fish, horseradish, a meat, a beef of some sort, probably a roast beef of some sort. Desserts."⁹⁷

Karen described a typical holiday celebration as a large event. On the second night of Rosh Hashanah, she and her family would go to a *shul* in the morning, and a friend's house for lunch. The dinner table would be set the night before, because her mother was quite efficient. Her mother used only the best of everything for holiday dinners: silver, crystal, and fine linens.

Family members were always the centre of the event, but very close friends were also quite important. They would arrive around six or seven o'clock. Then:

My father would make kiddish and we would make the kiddish and the prayers for Rosh Hashanah, and then we would start with salad, generally tossed salad. We'd have gefilte fish, and then we'd bring in the soup, and then my mother would make kneidlach, oh and that was actually a favourite. [...] And then the meal would go on and on, and there would be laughter and singing, you know, drinking wine, not too much. [...] What was most important was the dessert! You'd have six kinds of cake, and my mother would make mundelbroit, and you know, she'd make honey cakes, and [...] then we'd have cake, and we'd have coffee, and then you know, midnight, twelve-thirty, people would be perhaps sitting around the table, and then we'd start the cleaning up.⁹⁸

Again, the synagogue is seen as either irrelevant or an opening act to the main event: a family holiday dinner. While many of the women I spoke with recalled going to *shul* for the holidays when they were young and as they grew older, most did not seem to remember much beyond sitting in a bench and not understanding anything that went on around them. Instead, their memories centred around the Jewish home and family dinners prepared by their mothers, grandmothers, or aunts. The food was central to the event, prayers were simply something that had to be endured before eating. These foods have happy memories associated with them, and were one of the most important aspects of Jewish religiosity for the women I interviewed.

Throughout this chapter, there has been an unresolved tension between the notion of religion and that of tradition. Religion is generally defined as a cultural system that purports to make sense of the world with a supernatural element, and tradition is defined as a ritual, practice, or belief that has been passed down through several generations. In Judaism, there is no clear boundary between religion and tradition, as each is informed by the other. For instance, the Shaar Hashomayim and Temple Emanu-el both published bulletins with information about how to

celebrate Passover and Chanukah. While the bulletins speak of religious holidays, these holidays are commemorations of events in the past. That is, they fall under the category of religion and tradition. The same contradiction appears in the section on community interpretations of the role of women in the Jewish religion. While all of the publications I discussed in this section of the chapter talk about Jewish women being responsible for transmitting the "beauty of religion," they confine their focus to women transmitters of traditions within the home. Finally, many of my participants assert that they are not religious because of their lack of strict observance, but that they follow the spirit of the Jewish religion.

The situation becomes still more complicated when we consider that domestic rituals can be classified as both traditions and religions. In other words, the procedures for celebrating Jewish holidays are considered traditions, in that they are passed down through the generations. But they are also considered religious rituals. This is particularly true in the case of lighting the Shabbat candles. The lighting of the candles is considered an extremely sanctified religious ritual. However, this is a ritual that takes place in the home, is performed by women, and each family and community have their own particular way of performing the ritual. Similarly, religious rituals that take place in synagogues are not uniformly consistent. Each synagogue has their own particular method for performing religious rituals, based on the education of the rabbis, the particular cultural background of the congregants, and the history of the synagogue itself. In this way, the celebration of religious rituals in the synagogue is based on tradition. However, my participants make the distinction between religious rituals that are practiced in the home by family members versus religious rituals performed in a synagogue by religious authorities such as rabbis and cantors. Religious rituals that take place in the home are defined as tradition and

religious rituals that take place in the synagogue are defined as religion. This despite the fact that the terms tradition and religious apply equally to both.

So how can this contradiction be resolved? I believe that redefining Jewish tradition as a meaningful form of lived religion is the key. As American scholars like Colleen McDannell, Eric Leigh Schmidt, and Lynne Marks have noted, a historical understanding of religion as defined solely according to religious institutions and religious authority figures is problematic because religion is never experienced in only one fashion. In both Christianity and Judaism alike, the celebration of religious rituals in the home are crucial aspects of religion. Further, religion is never experienced or practiced in one place alone. Instead, tradition and religion are two sides of the same coin. They operated in concert with each other, and depended upon each other for their very existence. The Jewish religion depends on Jewish traditions, on the continuation of practices through the ages as passed down from generation to generation. This is why religious holidays are always about remembering and commemoration. They are a powerful way for individuals to form a collective identity based on a shared history. They ensure that the connection between the past and the present remain, and this connection is preserved with the performance of Jewish traditions, traditions that were passed down by the very people that are commemorated in each religious holiday. Therefore, religion is never only about synagogue attendance or religious texts, but the marriage of spiritual beliefs to ancient practices that remind individuals of their shared history.

For the participants in my study, the Jewish traditions are their Jewish religion. They distinguish between one form of the Jewish religion, one that focuses on the observance of Jewish law and on religious institutions and authorities, and another that focuses on the preservation of links to the past by the performance of domestic rituals. The voice of authority is

central. In one, the voice of authority is the rabbi, the representative of Jewish texts and Jewish laws. In the other, the voice of authority is the mother or elder female relative, the representative of all of the generations of Jews who came before. For these individuals, the most meaningful expression of themselves as Jews is their practice of domestic rituals. These rituals are the ways in which Jewish women live their religion, their spiritual beliefs and their understanding of their relationship to their past. To them, the practice of Jewish tradition keeps faithful to the spirit of the Jewish religion in that it connects individuals with their collective history and identity. It is this that is crucially important to my participants. The degree of religious observance is seen as important, but these are actions that affirm what the Jewish traditions teach. Further, when Jewish women prioritize Jewish traditions and female relatives as voices of authority, they empower themselves. These women bypass to a large extent the imposition of social sanctions by religious authorities and lay leaders by focusing on those aspects of the Jewish religion that they consider to be important: traditions.

Christmakkah and other Christian Holidays

In addition to relying on female relatives as sources of authority and the practice of Jewish traditions as lived religion, some Jewish women integrated new traditions into their lives. Contrary to efforts by religious authorities and lay leaders to encourage Jewish women to limit their traditions to Jewish customs, certain Christian cultural traditions did catch on. And these traditions reflected the experiences of Jewish women who were growing up in the 1950s and 1960s. Jewish traditions around Christian holidays became integral to Jewish women in the formation of their understanding of themselves as a Jewish minority within a Christian consumer majority. Thus discussions of Jewish traditions around Christian holidays evoke feelings of envy and alienation. This envy is not simply for presents or pretty lights, but for the ease in which the

dominant culture surrounded itself with its own traditions. The Christian holidays were a time of togetherness for most individuals in Canadian society, a time when all families joined in the celebration of common holidays. But this togetherness did not extend to everyone; just as the common experience of Christian holidays as a time for families was prevalent, there was an implicit othering of Jews. They were outside of the dominant paradigm in a way that was starkly visible and alienating. The stories discussed below relate these feelings of envy and exclusion and also demonstrate some of the ways in which Jewish individuals coped with these feelings. The creation of new Jewish traditions around Christian holidays helped to ease these feelings by creating another sense of solidarity, of shared exclusion. But even more so, it is a powerful message to Canadian society: you may try to exclude us, but we will not just sit around feeling sorry for ourselves. Instead, we will create new traditions that celebrate our difference.

When it comes to holidays, ordinary Jewish women did not limit their celebrations entirely to Jewish holidays. In the 1950s and 1960s, celebrating Christmas and Halloween became increasingly common in Jewish families. As a result, many synagogues and clergy set out to make Purim and Chanukah more exciting for children (and more central to the Jewish calendar than they had been in the past), largely in response to the popularity of Halloween and Christmas. Purim was often a featured event. The Shaar Hashomayim sponsored Purim Plays for the children in their school. The school also organized a Purim Parade, and a Purim Masquerade, where over 350 children in costumes depicting themes by classroom appeared.⁹⁹ Chanukah was also an important occasion, and Chanukah parties were held each year at the Shaar Hashomayim.¹⁰⁰ Temple Emanu-El did the same thing, and offered Chanukah Services for the Home in the pages of its bulletin.¹⁰¹

Many of these views did trickle down to ordinary Jewish women, although perhaps not as thoroughly as the leaders would have liked. For instance, in Anita's case, she did not celebrate Christmas at all. However, as a child she did celebrate Halloween. She did not believe that this holiday was at all religious. However, she noted that Hebrew schools were and are clamping down on the practice and encouraging the celebration of Purim instead. Sarah fondly recalled Purim plays that her Hebrew school performed and the parties that were also held. She dressed up as Queen Esther: "Everyone wanted to be Queen Esther, of course, with the long dress, and the tiara." ¹⁰²

Halloween in particular seems to have been an important occasion, despite not being a Jewish holiday. Sarah's children always went out for Halloween to go trick-or-treating. Her daughter in particular loved Halloween. She herself also went trick-or-treating as a child, though only on her street. This was despite the fact that she lived in a predominantly Jewish neighbourhood. As she recalled: "Got up the stairs, and Mr. R. said, you have to sing a song before we give you a treat! [...] Some kids would sing, others would just collect the loot! It was fun." ¹⁰³ For New Years, she gathered with family members, went out to the movies, had dinner, and then watched the television until midnight. On St. Valentines Day, she and her husband exchanged cards with each other and her children. As a child, she exchanged cards at school. Each child had a mailbox on their desk, and everyone would send everyone else a card. They would be unveiled at the end of the day, and everyone was eager to see who got the most. ¹⁰⁴

While most of my interviewees did not have a problem celebrating Halloween, their response to my questions about celebrations of Christmas were more mixed. Some were outright opposed, while others recalled fond memories of that time of the year. The main reason why some of my interviewees were opposed to the celebration of Christmas was because it is an

overtly Christian holiday. Unlike Halloween, which was largely accepted as a secular holiday, the Christian overtones of Christmas were impossible to ignore for some people. Miriam made it quite clear that she did not celebrate Christmas because that was "someone else's holiday." Nor did she care for Halloween. However, she did believe that the increasing lavishness of Christmas celebrations had a significant impact on the celebration of Chanukah. She was not impressed with the changes. She felt that the giving of eight presents was "ridiculous,"¹⁰⁵ because Chanukah was not about presents. She felt that this was due to Christmas envy and the increasingly materialistic society that we are living in.¹⁰⁶

Lisa agreed. Having been raised in Israel, she took a dim view of North American celebrations of Chanukah. She felt that the gift-giving trend was strictly North American, and thought it had more to do with Christmas and "keeping up with the Jones," rather than anything else.¹⁰⁷ When it came to Chanukah, Sarah recalled that she never received gifts as a child, only Chanukah *gelt*. She felt that Chanukah has changed a great deal over the years due to parochial school. As it became a much bigger deal, more effort would be put into the celebrations. She agreed that this was at least partly due to the popularity of Christmas, hence the practice of giving children one present for every night of Chanukah, so as to compete.¹⁰⁸ And while some women made it clear that Christmas was not on their list of annual holidays, the fact that they had such vehement reactions suggests that Christmas has become part of the Montreal Jewish psyche, even though it was sometimes just something to react against.

On the other hand, some Jewish women actively embraced the Christmas season, and their experiences with the holidays are at once touching, funny, and sad. Sarah recalled during her working days watching Christians going out to buy gifts for everyone, and thinking "Where did they get all the money?"¹⁰⁹ As she got older, Christmas became a bigger deal: "I remember

[my husband], we'd get in the car at night, and we'd drive around certain streets in the area just to show the kids how beautiful the Christmas trees were [...] and the lights."¹¹⁰ She expressed great delight in Christmas trees, lights, and carols.

Christmas was a very important part of Tamara's childhood. These were her reflections:

I used to have such a trauma about Christmas. I went to Protestant school, I was so conscious of Christmas, but I was so, it was not my holiday. Even as an elementary school student, when I was in elementary school, all the kids in the class were asked to write a Christmas play. [...] We were ten, ten Jewish kids in a class of thirty, but we all wrote our Christmas plays. It was two Jewish kids, me [and] another boy, got the best plays. And they decided our plays were so good, and so similar in theme, it was about kids who found Santa's list in the street, and we both wrote about that, and so they merged out [our?] plays and put them on.¹¹¹

She recalled that Chanukah was probably the most important holiday for her family, the one which involved the most ritual. But, she was always conscious of Christmas:

There was always that consciousness, then Christmas comes, and all your friends are busy, cause most of my friends were not Jewish. And um, even though we had our presents for Chanukah, there's nothing for you here. I remember one Christmas morning, the saddest story of my childhood, waking up and seeing in the distance, in my fuzzy vision, cause I had glasses since I was two and a half, I saw a pile of brightly coloured things on the dresser. And I thought, [gasp] I have got Christmas after all. Santa's come to me! It was socks, from the washing machine.¹¹²

In spite of this crushing disappointment, her family did have Christmas traditions of their own, including her mother giving her chocolate advent calendars and getting chocolate mice from Ogilvie's. She also helped a friend of hers to decorate her Christmas tree every year.

When I asked Debra if she ever wanted to celebrate Christmas, this is how she responded:

Oh yeah! [...] How could you not? It's just everywhere, you know Santa Claus, and stuff. In fact, I had, see I can't remember the story. But I know I made my mother take me downtown to, so I could try out, so I could be in the Santa Claus parade. [...] I had to go downtown to where an armory was. [...] I was just a kid, but she took me. [...] I wanted to be in the Santa Claus parade. But I don't think I made it for some reason."¹¹³

She also told me that she also always wanted a Christmas tree, and all of the accoutrements. Debra said that she went to a public school that was Protestant. She was forced to sing Christmas carols every year, which she said was very hard for her, especially because she was envious of the Christian children's presents. She also had to sing other Christian songs at other times of the year, like "Onward Christian Soldiers," but that didn't bother her as much.¹¹⁴

While Laura emphasized that she never even thought about celebrating Christmas because all of her friends were Jewish, she did describe some traditions that her family had around that time of the year. For instance, she recounted that they often had Chinese food on Christmas, and that her parents were married on Christmas.¹¹⁵ She told me that her parents selected that date because they could be sure that no one was forced to work. Sharon talked with humour about eating Chinese food at Christmas. As she said, "it's the only place that's open!"¹¹⁶ One of her other traditions for Christmas included attending the movies, because no one was ever there. She called this holiday "Erev Christmas," a Yiddish-ization of Christmas Eve.

Linda recounted a funny but sad story about her relationship with Christmas. She blamed her parents for her eventually marrying a non-Jew as a result of this experience:

I could not have been more than six years old, but I suspect I was younger, I think I was five or four. In those days, men wore [wool] socks. [...] So on Christmas eve, my parents let us put up two stockings, okay. We hung them on the door to our room, and I remember waking up in the middle of the night, and in each stocking was, my brother got a box of soldiers, like kids in those

days, in the fifties played with soldiers, and I got a box, instead of soldiers, they were little farm animals. I was so excited that Santa Claus came to our house. We only did it once! And my father used to always tell us the story that when he was four years old, he put a stocking up on his crib, so this is 1918, okay. His father was not pleased. And when he got up in the morning, his stocking was filled. And guess what it was filled with? Coal! [...] So I think that's why my father did that for us.¹¹⁷

While Christmas and Halloween are not part of the Jewish calendar, for better or for worse, they played an important role in the minds of Jewish women in Montreal. Feelings of exclusion and alienation during the Christian holidays were an important part of what it meant to be Jewish in Montreal in this period. While some coped by insisting that they did not want to participate in the dominant culture in that way, others reinterpreted existing traditions that celebrated the particular experience of being Jewish at Christmas.

Conclusion

Religion is never something that can be confined to religious institutions or measured by church attendance. Religion is instead a lived experience, one that is profoundly meaningful to a large number of people in many different ways. Religious practice was particularly meaningful in the process of ethnic-group making in Montreal following the end of the Second World War. As bearers of the cultural identity, Jewish women in Montreal and their religious practices came under intense scrutiny. At stake was the future of the entire community, the basic cultural knowledge required of all members of the "Jewish community of Montreal."

This question was taken up by Jewish religious authorities, lay elite, and the public. Religious leaders emphasized the synagogue as authority. They sought to educate women in matters they deemed crucial for Jewish mothers to teach their children as part of their efforts of establishing the cultural parameters of membership into "the Jewish community of Montreal."

Lay elite used similarly language in emphasizing women's roles in domestic rituals. Rather than the synagogue, these individuals centred their attention on the home, and admonished women to make their homes a sanctuary to ensure that they were passing on the beauty of religion. My discussions with my interviewees revealed another dynamic at play: the unresolved tension between religion and tradition. While some individuals seemed to see religion and tradition as two entirely separate concepts, religion being the purview of the synagogue and tradition centred in the home, others demonstrated considerable slippage when discussing the two concepts. For instance, many insisted that they were not religious, while simultaneously insisting that tradition was the most important part of the Jewish religion. This contradiction can be resolved once it is understood that Jewish traditions emerged out of religious belief as well as practice; they are not entirely separate. Jewish women defined traditions as how they interpreted religion in their own lives, and how it was handed down to them – this was their lived religion.

¹ William Westfall, *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Ontario* (Kingston, Ont.: McGill-Queen's University Press: 1989); Michael Gauvreau, *The Catholic Origins of Quebec's Quiet Revolution, 1931-1970* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005); David B. Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1992*; Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau, *A Full-Orbed Christianity: the Protestant Churches and Social welfare in Canada, 1900-1940* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996).

² Gauvreau, *The Catholic Origins of Quebec's Quiet Revolution, 1931-1970*.

³ Nancy Christie, *Households of Faith, Family, Gender and Community in Canada, 1760-1969* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002).

⁴ Lynne Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks: Religion, Leisure and Identity in Late Nineteenth Century Small Town Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

⁵ Lynne Marks, "Challenging Binaries: Working-Class Women and Lived Religion in English Canada and the United States," *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas* 6, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 109.

⁶ Marks's article examines an exhaustive list of studies on lived religion and working class women in Canada, the United States, and England. Some of the most important include, but are not limited to, Robert Orsi, *Thank You, St. Jude: Women's Devotion to the Patron Saint of Hopeless Causes* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996); Jenna Joselit, *The Wonders of America: Reinventing Jewish Culture 1880-1950* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1994); Elizabeth Pleck, *Celebrating the Family: Ethnicity, Consumer Culture and Family Rituals* (Cambridge,

Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000); Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Consumer Rites: The Buying and Selling of American Holidays* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995); Colleen McDannell, *Material Christianity: Religion and Popular Culture in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

⁷ McDannell, *Material Christianity: Religion and Popular Culture in America*.

⁸ Schmidt, *Consumer Rites: The Buying and Selling of American Holidays*.

⁹ Orsi, *Thank You, St. Jude: Women's Devotion to the Patron Saint of Hopeless Causes*.

¹⁰ <http://www.shaarhashomayim.org/>, accessed April 27, 2011.

¹¹ When you are appointed the Rabbi of a Congregation, this is effectively saying that you are the Chief Rabbi, in charge of both the congregation and the direction of the synagogue. Ronald L. Eisenberg, "Rabbi," *Dictionary of Jewish Terms: A Guide to the Language of Judaism* (Rocheville, Maryland: Schreiber Publishing, 2008), 413.

¹² Temple Emanu-el was consolidated with Temple Beth Shalom in 1980, giving it its current name, Temple Emanu-el Beth Shalom.

¹³ CJCCCNA ZH Shaar Hashomayim - Documents from the Estate of Alan Sorffer – By-laws, dedications, events, education, religious minutes, 1861-1917, File 9 Education Post 1950, Proceedings for the Congregation Conference on Adult Jewish Education January 19th, 1958 at the Shaar Hashomayim, "The Women's Institute of Jewish Studies."

¹⁴ Sisterhoods are common in synagogues across Canada. They were originally known as the Ladies Auxiliary. Much like Ladies Auxiliaries in churches, synagogue Sisterhoods are a committee of women, usually the wives of male congregants, who organize social and fundraising activities. They are considered a supporting body of a synagogue. Many focus exclusively on charity work. For instance, at the moment, the Shaar Hashomayim Sisterhood sponsors Meals on Wheels for Jewish seniors who require kosher, pre-cooked food. In addition to financial support, many members volunteer with the organization itself.

¹⁵ CJCCCNA ZH Shaar Hashomayim - Documents from the Estate of Alan Sorffer – By-laws, dedications, events, education, religious minutes, 1861-1917, File 7 Events, "Women's Institute of Jewish Studies 5727 Prospectus 1966-67."

¹⁶ CJCCCNA ZH Shaar Hashomayim - Documents from the Estate of Alan Sorffer – By-laws, dedications, events, education, religious minutes, 1861-1917, File 9 Education Post 1950. Proceedings for the Congregation Conference on Adult Jewish Education January 19th, 1958 at the Shaar Hashomayim, "The Women's Institute of Jewish Studies."

¹⁷ CJCCCNA ZH Shaar Hashomayim Box 1 Bulletins 1921-1975, File 6, Bulletins January – December 30 1960, "Bulletin," October 12, 1960, 4.

¹⁸ CJCCCNA ZH Shaar Hashomayim Box 1 Bulletins 1921-1975, File 9, Bulletins January 4–December 27 1963, "Bulletin," December 19th and 27th 1963, 5.

¹⁹ CJCCCNA ZH Shaar Hashomayim Box 1 Bulletins 1921-1975, File 16 Bulletin January 2, - December 25, 1970, "Bulletin," January 9, 1970, 4

²⁰ CJCCCNA ZH Shaar Hashomayim Box 1 Bulletins 1921-1975, File 6, Bulletins January – December 30 1960, "Bulletin," April 8, 1960, 4. See also File 16 Bulletins January 2-December 25, 1970, "Bulletin," April 18, 25, and May 2, 1970, 2.

²¹ In some instance, like this one, one bulletin would cover several weeks. This often occurred during holidays, since the editors and printers were busy with holiday preparations.

²² CJCCCNA ZH Shaar Hashomayim Box 1 Bulletins 1921-1975, File 16 Bulletins January 2-December 25, 1970, "Bulletin," April 18, 25, and May 2, 1970, 2.

²³ There is no standardized system for transliterating Hebrew or Yiddish words into English. As a result, there are multiple ways to spell Hebrew or Yiddish words. For instance, chometz can also be spelled hametz or chametz. Similarly, Chanukah can be spelled Chanukkah, Hannukah, Hanukkah, and so on. None of these spellings are incorrect. It is the pronunciation, rather than the spelling, that is important. For the sake of consistency, I have used one spelling throughout the text, but have left alternate spellings in quotations in place.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Kashering: the process through which food and utensils are rendered kosher, often through a specific method of cleaning.

²⁶ Ibid, 2, 6.

²⁷ CJCCCNA ZH Temple Emanu-el box 1 of 2, Temple, "Emanu-El Bulletin," November 27th, 1964, 3.

²⁸ CJCCCNA ZH Temple Emanu-el box 1 of 2 Temple, "Emanu-El Bulletin," November 27th, 1964, 3.

²⁹ CJCCCNA ZH Temple Emanu-El Box 1 of 2, "Emanu-El Bulletin," November 8, 1957, 2 and CJCCCNA ZH Temple Emanu-El Box 1 of 2, "Bulletin," December 21st, 1962, 2. Also CJCCCNA ZH Temple Emanu-El Box 1 of 2, "Emanu-el Bulletin," April 6, 1962, 2

³⁰ CJCCCNA ZH Shaar Hashomayim Box 1 Bulletins 1921-1975, File 7 Bulletin January 6-December 29 1961, "Bulletin," December 3, 1961, 2.

³¹ "B'nos Mitzvoh" is an alternate spelling of "bat mitzvah"; CJCCCNA ZH Shaar Hashomayim Box 1 Bulletins 1921-1975, File 9, Bulletins January 4– December 27 1963, "Bulletin," December 19th and 27th 1963, 5.

³² CJCCCNA ZH Shaar Hashomayim Box 1 Bulletins 1921-1975, File 9, Bulletins January 4– December 27 1963, "Bulletin," December 19th and 27th 1963, 5.

³³ CJCCCNA ZH Shaar Hashomayim Box 1 Bulletins 1921-1975, File 9, Bulletins January 4– December 27 1963, "Bulletin," December 19th and 27th 1963, 5.

³⁴ CJCCCNA ZH Shaar Hashomayim Box 1 Bulletins 1921-1975, File 9, Bulletins January 4– December 27 1963, "Bulletin," December 19th and 27th 1963, 5.

³⁵ CJCCCNA ZH Shaar Hashomayim Box 1 Bulletins 1921-1975, File 7 Bulletin January 6-December 29 1961, "Bulletin," December 1, 1961, 2.

³⁶ CJCCCNA ZH Shaar Hashomayim Box 1 Bulletins 1921-1975, File 7 Bulletin January 6-December 29 1961, "Bulletin," December 1, 1961, 2.

³⁷ CJCCCNA ZH Shaar Hashomayim Box 1 Bulletins 1921-1975, File 7 Bulletin January 6-December 29 1961, "Bulletin," December 1, 1961, 2.

³⁸ CJCCCNA ZH Shaar Hashomayim Box 1 Bulletins 1921-1975, File 19 Bulletins January 6-December 21, 1973, "Bulletin," February 3, 1973.

³⁹ CJCCCNA ZH Shaar Hashomayim Box 1 Bulletins 1921-1975, File 7 Bulletin January 6-December 29 1961 "Bulletin," December 1, 1961, 2.

⁴⁰ CJCCCNA ZH Shaar Hashomayim Box 1 Bulletins 1921-1975, File 7 Bulletin January 6-December 29 1961 "Bulletin," December 1, 1961, 2.

⁴¹ CJCCCNA ZH Shaar Hashomayim Box 1 Bulletins 1921-1975, File 16 Bulletin January 2 - December 25, 1970, "Bulletin," May 22, 1970, 3.

⁴² Lenore Lieblein, "The Professional Woman and the Nice Jewish Girl," *Viewpoints* 10, no. 1 (Spring 1979): 24.

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- ⁴³ Bessie W. Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter: a Reference Book of Jewish Festivals with Menus and Recipes* (Montreal: The Ethel Epstein Ein Chapter of Hadassah Montreal Canada; The Eagle, 1952), 84-84.
- ⁴⁴ Ronald L. Eisenberg, "Pidyon Ha-Ben," *Dictionary of Jewish Terms: A Guide to the Language of Judaism* (Rocheville, Maryland: Schreiber Publishing, 2008), 343.
- ⁴⁵ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter: a Reference Book of Jewish Festivals with Menus and Recipes*, 133.
- ⁴⁶ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter: a Reference Book of Jewish Festivals with Menus and Recipes*, 137.
- ⁴⁷ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter: a Reference Book of Jewish Festivals with Menus and Recipes*, 136.
- ⁴⁸ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter: a Reference Book of Jewish Festivals with Menus and Recipes*, 133.
- ⁴⁹ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter: a Reference Book of Jewish Festivals with Menus and Recipes*, 133-134.
- ⁵⁰ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter: a Reference Book of Jewish Festivals with Menus and Recipes*, 20. It is important to note that the lighting of the candles on the Sabbath is an extremely sanctified, formal ritual.
- ⁵¹ Hadassah, *Rochester's Hadassah Cookbook* (Rochester, N.Y.: Rochester Chapter of Hadassah, 1963), 10.
- ⁵² Hadassah, *Rochester's Hadassah Cookbook*, 11.
- ⁵³ Hadassah, *Rochester's Hadassah Cookbook*, 16.
- ⁵⁴ CJCCCNA ZG P06/09, Naomi Frankenburg, "Our Jewish Heritage: Shabbat: The Cornerstone of Jewish Life," *Orah*, March 1979, 10.
- ⁵⁵ CJCCCNA ZG P06/09, Naomi Frankenburg, "Our Jewish Heritage: Shabbat: The Cornerstone of Jewish Life," *Orah*, March 1979, 10.
- ⁵⁶ Esther 1:10-21
- ⁵⁷ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter: a Reference Book of Jewish Festivals with Menus and Recipes*, 123.
- ⁵⁸ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter: a Reference Book of Jewish Festivals with Menus and Recipe*, 19.
- ⁵⁹ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter: a Reference Book of Jewish Festivals with Menus and Recipe*, 57-58.
- ⁶⁰ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter: a Reference Book of Jewish Festivals with Menus and Recipe*, 61.
- ⁶¹ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter: a Reference Book of Jewish Festivals with Menus and Recipe*, 72, 74.
- ⁶² Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter: a Reference Book of Jewish Festivals with Menus and Recipe*, 74-75.
- ⁶³ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter: a Reference Book of Jewish Festivals with Menus and Recipe*, 75.
- ⁶⁴ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter: a Reference Book of Jewish Festivals with Menus and Recipe*, 122.
- ⁶⁵ Hadassah, *Rochester's Hadassah Cookbook*, 15.

⁶⁶ CJCCCNA ZH Shaar Hashomayim - Documents from the Estate of Alan Sorffer – By-laws, dedications, events, education, religious minutes, 1861-1917, File 9 Education Post 1950, Proceedings for the Congregation Conference on Adult Jewish Education January 19th, 1958 at the Shaar Hashomayim, “The Lesson of Our Tradition.”

⁶⁷ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter: a Reference Book of Jewish Festivals with Menus and Recipes*, 23.

⁶⁸ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter: a Reference Book of Jewish Festivals with Menus and Recipe*, 23.

⁶⁹ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter: a Reference Book of Jewish Festivals with Menus and Recipe*, 59.

⁷⁰ Batist et al., *A Treasure for my Daughter: a Reference Book of Jewish Festivals with Menus and Recipes*, 131.

⁷¹ For example see CJCCCNA ZG P06/09, H. Singerman, "Chanukah Jottings," *Orah* November 1968, 24; CJCCCNA ZG P06/09, Molly Lyons Bar-David, "The Treats of Tu-Beshvat: Israel's New Year of the Trees," *Orah*, January 1969, 25; CJCCCNA ZG P06/09, Molly Lyons Bar-David, "Passover's Emblematic Foods," *Orah*, March 1969, 23. CJCCCNA ZG P06/09, Molly Lyons Bar-David, "Rosh Hashanah at the Table," *Orah*, July/August 1969, 10; CJCCCNA ZG P06/09, Molly Lyons Bar-David, "Purim Foodlore," January/February 1970, 22; and CJCCCNA ZG P06/09, Philip Gillion, "Rosh Hashanah in Israel," *Orah*, September 1960, 6-7, 19.

⁷² CJCCCNA ZG P06/09, Gita Rotenberg, "Our Jewish Heritage: Three Festivals," *Orah*, June 1979, 24.

⁷³ CJCCCNA ZG P06/09, "At Home," *Orah*, September 1960, 20; "At Home," *Orah*, November 1960, 23; and CJCCCNA ZG P06/09, December 1960, 18.

⁷⁴ CJCCCNA ZG P06/09, "Did you Know?," *Orah*, September 1960, 20, 22; CJCCCNA ZG P06/09, "Did you Know?," *Orah*, October 1960, 21; CJCCCNA ZG P06/09, "Did you Know?," *Orah*, November 1960, 22; and CJCCCNA ZG P06/09, "Did you Know?," *Orah*, February 1961, 18, 23.

⁷⁵ CJCCCNA ZG P06/09, "Hebrew Bingo Game," *Orah*, November 1961, 18.

⁷⁶ CJCCCNA ZG P06/09, Helen Smolack, "Our Language: Learn Hebrew? – Of Course You Can," *Orah*, October 1962, 15.

⁷⁷ CJCCCNA ZG P06/09, "Israel's Colourful Communities Celebrate Passover" *Orah*, March 1969, 4.

⁷⁸ CJCCCNA ZG P06/09, "Israel's Colourful Communities Celebrate Passover" *Orah*, March 1969, 8.

⁷⁹ Interview 25, interview by author, November 18, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.

⁸⁰ Interview 29, interview by author, November 25, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.

⁸¹ Interview 8, interview by author, October 30, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.

⁸² Interview 8.

⁸³ Interview 16, interview by author, November 10, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.

⁸⁴ Interview 16.

⁸⁵ Interview 20, interview by author, November 12, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.

⁸⁶ Refers to the strict observance of the commandments regarding the Jewish Sabbath.

⁸⁷ Interview 29, interview by author, November 25, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.

⁸⁸ Interview 7, interview by author, October 29, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.

⁸⁹ Interview 7.

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- ⁹⁰ Interview 8, interview by author, October 30, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ⁹¹ Interview 8.
- ⁹² Interview 8.
- ⁹³ Interview 9, interview by author, November 2, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ⁹⁴ Interview 9.
- ⁹⁵ Interview 7, interview by author, October 30, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ⁹⁶ Interview 8, interview by author, October 30, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ⁹⁷ Interview 13, interview by author, November 5, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ⁹⁸ Interview 16, interview by author, November 10, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ⁹⁹ CJCCCNA ZH Shaar Hashomayim Box 1 Bulletins 1921-1975, File 6, Bulletins January – December 30 1960, “Bulletin,” March 25, 1960.
- ¹⁰⁰ CJCCCNA ZH Shaar Hashomayim Box 1 Bulletins 1921-1975, File 9, Bulletins January 4– December 27 1963, “Bulletin,” December 19th and 27th 1963, 5.
- ¹⁰¹ CJCCCNA ZH Temple Emanu-El Box 1 of 2, “Emanu-el Bulletin,” December 21st, 1962, 2.
- ¹⁰² Interview 12, interview by author, November 4, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ¹⁰³ Interview 4, interview by author, October 27, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ¹⁰⁴ Interview 4.
- ¹⁰⁵ Interview 7, interview by author, October 29, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ¹⁰⁶ Interview 7.
- ¹⁰⁷ Interview 11, interview by author, November 4, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ¹⁰⁸ Interview 4, interview by author, October 27, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ¹⁰⁹ Interview 4.
- ¹¹⁰ Interview 4.
- ¹¹¹ Interview 5, interview by author, October 28, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ¹¹² Interview 5.
- ¹¹³ Interview 9, interview by author, November 2, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ¹¹⁴ Interview 9.
- ¹¹⁵ In both Canada and the United States, the custom of eating Chinese food on Christmas has become something of tradition. This dates back to the mid twentieth century, when the only places open on Christmas were Chinese restaurants and movie theatres.
- ¹¹⁶ Interview 13, interview by author, November 5, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ¹¹⁷ Interview 22, interview by author, November 14, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.

Chapter Six: “For Ladies Only (Feminists Welcome too)”: The Relationship between Feminism, Judaism, and Jewishness.

As a child, I had never heard of a "feminist." The subject only came up when I turned eleven, and the question was raised of whether or not I should have a bat mitzvah. I had no interest in the religious aspect of the ceremony, but I was very interested in the boatload of presents and money that would come my way. Unfortunately for me, my mother put her foot down. "Bat mitzvahs," she said, "are just feminist garbage." Instead, my mother offered to throw a Sweet Sixteen party in five years, not the most appealing prospect for an eleven year-old. Being a typical child of the 1990s, I immediately threw myself into "feminism," if only to irritate my mother. I read Marion Zimmer Bradley's *Mist of Avalon*, and promptly declared myself a feminist. Of course, at the time, I only had a vague sense of what being a feminist meant.

My desire to irritate my mother was largely successful. At one point, in response to my endless queries about the place of women in the Jewish religion, she complained, "Why do you ask so many questions? Why can't you just accept what you are told?" At the time, I brushed off her remark. But in later years, I found myself thinking about this series of exchanges. My mother came of age at the height of the Women's Liberation movement, yet she did not consider herself a feminist. How could such a thing happen?

Unfortunately, the subject of postwar feminism has not been much discussed in the Canadian context. The exception is Valerie Korinek's *Roughing it in the Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the Fifties and Sixties*. In the 1950s and 1960s, the magazine created a community of editors, writers, and readers as they explored the changing nature of women's lives. The success of *Chatelaine* rested on its treatment of the difficulties of modern living, married life, and balancing work and home, rather than trading on stereotypes or uncritical

portraits of domestic bliss. Korinek examines how tensions between domestic ideals and personal accomplishment operated in the media. Unfortunately, Korinek's insights are limited to the employment of feminism in the magazine; she does not know how most women responded to feminism in general. This is particularly evident in the final section of the book, "Subverting the Standard," where Korinek examines the feminist agenda of *Chatelaine* primarily through editorial articles and fiction. As she notes, the fictional stories included in the magazine, rather than painting a rosy picture, argued that life for women could be difficult. These stories gave women the power to change, interpret, or rewrite the imaginings or life situations. The editorial articles reflected this. While in the fifties, there was a mixture of feminist and non-feminist material, in the sixties the magazine steadily became more politicized.

Despite the important work that Korinek has done, I found myself wondering how feminism worked in ethnic communities: was it the same or different? While paying particular attention to class, Korinek does not include an analysis of ethnicity or religion in her argument. Some of the questions that arose for me included: how did feminism in the 1950s and 1960s impact ethnic communities, particularly the Jewish community of Montreal? Did similar discussions about the pros and cons of working mothers appear in Jewish women's publications, or was this discussion restricted to *Chatelaine*? What did ordinary Jewish women themselves think about feminism? Was feminism in tension with the Jewish religion, and if so, what affect did this tension have on how Jewish women viewed feminism? Did *Chatelaine* and other women's magazines stimulate or reflect (or both) these tensions? And finally, how was feminism used in terms of the self-identification of Jewish women?

Moving Away from Overarching Narratives

During the writing of this dissertation, I was privileged to attend a talk given by University of Glasgow historian Lynn Abrams. She spoke about her work on a new monograph on oral history, specifically around narrations of the self and the project of self-identity. Abrams views oral history interviews as a process for the narrators to refashion their self over time. Unlike diaries, which record emotions and thoughts of the moment, oral histories provide an opportunity for reflection, a way of linking the past with the modern self. This linkage is particularly important in stories of disruption, where reflection served as a bridge between past and present. When interviewing Catholic Scottish women about their experiences before and after the Second World War, she noticed that her interviewees were reinterpreting their histories to remake themselves as free and liberated women, a decade before second-wave feminism. Many of these narratives revolved around ideas of self-worth. Immediately after the war, ideas of self-worth were centred on service (taking care of the needs of others before one's own), being a "good girl," and the performance of respectability through strict adherence to established gender ideals. Religion played an important role in this, imposing injunctions on the behaviour of "nice Catholic girls." Catholic girls were supposed to accept what they were told rather than questioning orders. For example, it was simply accepted that "nice Catholic girls" needed to get married by no later than twenty-four years old.¹

In contrast, Abrams found that ideas of self-worth in the 1960s (prior to 1968) were defined by new conceptions of "freedom." Narratives of this period reject the passive self in favour of the active self. Women created new identities for themselves as "modern women," autonomous individuals freed from the constraints of the past. Freedom (or autonomy) was equated with the ability to freely make choices that may have violated gender norms but could have brought about better lives and more opportunities. There was a simultaneous rejection of

the Catholic religion, what Abrams calls the feminizing of "secularity." However, while the interviewees told stories of independence, they apologized for not being involved in the feminist movement at the time. Instead, they were more concerned with their journey away from their mother's experiences of womanhood. Their testimony focused on narratives of constraint versus narratives of freedom. These women sought to free themselves from the constraints of the postwar period so that their lives were "freer" than their mothers. They associated their mothers with rules and constraints, and themselves with freedom.²

In addition to her other points regarding the self in oral histories, Abrams argued that it is inappropriate to impose larger global or national narratives onto small communities. For example, the established narrative locates the emergence of second-wave feminism in 1968-69 as a pivotal moment for all western women. Further, this narrative points to the focus on gender equality as an important part of second-wave feminism. However, Abrams' interviews demonstrate that this was not necessarily the case. Instead, the community she worked within followed a very different time line. Because of the specific experiences of this community, second-wave feminism was not as much of a factor in women's lives as their desire to make their lives different from their mothers. Thus, 1968 was not a pivotal moment, but merely a part of a longer shift that began in the early 1960s.³

Abrams' arguments resonated with me because I saw similarities to my own research among the Jews of Montreal. Like Abrams' Scottish interviewees, my Jewish interviewees' experiences of feminism did not necessarily line up with conventional narratives regarding the emergence of second-wave feminism in 1968. Instead, discussions about women's liberation began a full decade earlier, in the late 1950s. These discussions did not come to an end or even shift dramatically when second-wave feminism became a force in the Western world. Further, as

with Abrams' Scottish interviewees, discussions with my Jewish interviewees about women's liberation did not necessarily revolve around ideas of gender equality. The Scottish interviewees emphasized the idea of autonomy and freedom from social constraints. My Jewish interviewees selectively integrated aspects of feminism as they saw fit. The integration of feminism was mitigated by their traditional roles as the bearers of Jewish culture. They, like the Scottish interviewees, noted their lack of involvement in second-wave feminism as a movement.⁴

The proliferation of feminist ideas before 1968 is entirely consistent with the findings of Canadian and American historians of feminism. The idea of feminism in the 1950s and 1960s, before and during the early years of second-wave feminism, is a subject that has been spiritedly debated in the United States. Elaine Tyler May emphasized conformity as the dominant feature of this period, downplaying any subversive elements through her discussion of containment. More specifically, she emphasizes that women in the 1950s were expected to be in the home, rather than in the workplace, and that this notion was rarely questioned. More recent works have questioned this complacency. Wini Breines linked 1960s feminism to the malaise of young women during the 1950s in *Young, White, and Miserable: Growing Up Female in the Fifties*. This malaise resulted from conflicts between expectations of young girls in the 1950s and the realities of postwar America. Breines points to conflicting messages as an example, like encouraging girls to be sexy but punishing those who had sex.⁵

It would be another two years before a critique of May's work arrived, in the form of Joanne Meyerowitz' edited collection, *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960*. This groundbreaking book complicates stories of the past regarding women in the postwar period. As Meyerowitz notes, women's sense of themselves includes not only their gender identity, or their identity as women, but the relationships between class, race, ethnicity,

sexuality, religion, occupation, and politics. She argues that May's emphasis on the victimization of postwar women obscures both the complexity of postwar culture and women's agency and resistance.⁶ The articles in this edited collection reinforce Meyerowitz's points.⁷ Joanne Meyerowitz's own contribution to the collection, "Beyond the Feminine Mystique: A Reassessment of Postwar Mass Culture, 1946-1958," makes the case that domesticity was only one aspect of postwar culture. In actuality, these domestic ideals existed in tandem and tension with an ethos of individual achievement and liberal notions of self-fulfillment that celebrated non-domestic activity and public success. While Cold War rhetoric reinforced domesticity, it also encouraged women to enter the workforce and make public contributions.⁸

My evidence from the Jewish community of Montreal bears out both Korinek and Meyerowitz's conclusions. Feminism was a major force in women's lives before the emergence of second-wave feminism in 1968. Further, feminist debates that occurred in the late 1950s and early 1960s persisted before second-wave feminism grew to prominence.

Feminists in the Home or Feminism 1.5?

Any discussion of feminism must incorporate a brief discussion of the many versions of feminism. In this chapter, I will be focusing on feminism in the latter half of the twentieth century. The broad category of second-wave feminism is an umbrella term for a number of distinct forms of feminism. For instance, liberal or moderate feminism focuses on "changes in women's opportunity structures, especially in education and work," and often includes an emphasis on equal rights.⁹ Marxist feminism "locates women's oppression in capitalism, underscoring the need for dramatic changes in economic structures."¹⁰ Radical feminists argue for the complete reorganization of gender systems, and arguing that women's oppression is not restricted to any particular economic system. Socialist feminism "is an amalgamation of Marxist

and radical feminism, but attempts to locate the material base for patriarchy within capitalism.”¹¹ Other varieties include anarchic feminism, lesbian feminism, postcolonial feminism, third-world feminism, and environmental feminism, to name a few. What ties all of these movements and ideologies together is that they all “challenge the underlying assumptions that have devalued women’s work, defined women as property, or justified exploitation and control of women’s bodies and sexuality.”¹² In this chapter, I will mostly be touching on liberal feminism and radical feminism, the latter in relation to interviewees who were actively involved in the women’s liberation movement.

The period between women gaining the vote, seen as the climax of first-wave feminism, and the rise of the women’s liberation movement in the late 1960s was not a barren feminist landscape. Rather, as Korinek suggests, feminism (usually liberal or moderate) remained relevant throughout the 1950s and early 1960s.¹³ These themes appear throughout the publications of the Ashkenazi women of Montreal. In the very first edition of the *Woman's Work Agenda*, the premier publication of B’nai B’rith Women in Montreal, there was a column entitled "Women in the Community." This article implores Canadian women to use their shopping power for good. Since over 80% of the buying was done by women in the house, they had the potential to wield considerable power. The anonymous author praises women for the changes that they have already wrought, including the standardization of clothing sizes, more appropriate packaging for goods, the stabilization of prices and the prevention of artificial shortages. But the author insists that there is still more work to do, and encourages women to continue to be active in women's consumer groups: "there is no doubt but that an organization of this kind is good for the community, good for women and for the causes for which women work. Such [a consumer group] has undoubtedly raised the prestige of women in each community and pointed up the

importance of women as a force for good in whatever community they function."¹⁴ All that was required was free time and a willingness to contribute.

A later edition of this same column critiqued the rights of married women in the province of Quebec. This article calls the "Femme Couvert" policy of Quebec legislation "perhaps the sole example of discrimination found in the law of Canada to-day and it is that which relates to married women."¹⁵ The author criticizes the government of Quebec for failing to ensure that married women retained the right to control their own property after marriage. While prior to marriage, women have essentially the same property rights as men, "on receiving her wedding ring, her status is thereupon reduced almost to that of minor children, idiots, imbeciles and habitual drunkards."¹⁶ It is also insulting, the authors claim, that while men can divorce their wives for adultery, women can only do so provided the husband keeps the concubine in their marital home.¹⁷ The *Woman's Work Agenda* author concludes "we are still far removed from the situation of complete equality under law," thus expressing the righteous indignation of women.¹⁸

The question of women's paid employment became the focus of attention in 1963, when B'nai B'rith Women in Montreal published their agenda dedicated to women and their careers. The introduction praised women who had made forays into public service and politics, their ability to take care of themselves, and their small business ventures.¹⁹ Further articles in this volume profiled a number of women in various careers. Some of the women profiled included Ellen Fairclough, when she was Postmaster General;²⁰ Margret P. Hyndman, a lawyer;²¹ Lorraine Monk, photographer and employee of the Photo Services Division of the National Film Board;²² and Ruth E. Addison, a Commissioner of the Civil Service of Canada.²³ Although the tone appears to be optimistic and encouraging, a closer look at the articles reveal the conclusion that the disadvantages of women working outside the home mostly outweighed the benefits.

One article in this series was written by Irene Baird, chief of Administrative Services, Department of Northern Affairs, who contributed an article entitled "It's Worth it If..." Despite her high profile job, Baird seemed unsure if women belonged in the workplace. She begins her article by noting that "Most intelligent women, if they are prepared to pay the same price as men in time, cost, and professional training – which normally includes lifetime practice – for the calling of their choice can turn in a good performance."²⁴ Her choice of words – "prepared to pay the same price" – suggests that women are ill served by choosing to become professionals because the cost is too high. Presumably this cost involves her duties in keeping her home, care of her husband, and rearing of her children. Baird addresses questions of individual fulfillment, but mostly focuses on how women might best benefit society: in the home or at the workplace. Baird never directly questions the idea that women are homemakers. Instead, she compares the contribution of women's work in the home to her potential contribution in the public arena. In the end, Baird concludes that the cost of working outside of the home was too great for most women. Her message is that women should work outside of the home only if they were unmarried or when it was a financial necessity. In such cases, Baird advocates for the rights of these women to work outside of the home and be treated fairly. However, the message remains that, for most women, their work as homemakers was too important to be sacrificed to their personal ambitions.

Despite believing that it is unfair that women are paid less than men for the same work, Baird refuses the title of feminist, noting that "I have never been anything even approaching a feminist. But you don't need to be a feminist to recognize this truth. All you need is to have some quite elementary experience in the business and professional world to know that women, to be

paid as much as men, have to be (generally speaking) rather better."²⁵ While Baird advocates equal pay for equal work, she also notes that

*Yet when all the talk of 'career' settles down and the foam blows off, it is marriage that most girls hope for, initially at least. A warm, strong partnership is still her most reassuring achievement as a woman, a growth point to other fulfillments, the reward that proves to herself and the world that she is an expert at the skills biology has assigned her.*²⁶

Once again, Baird makes it clear that she considers family and marriage to be the highest priorities for women.²⁷

In the May 1961 edition of *Orah*, an article entitled "The Iceman Cometh Not" looks at the revolution in the lives of Israeli women. According to the author, Ilana David, Israeli women have been largely freed from domestic labour thanks to domestic appliances. As a result, "like her counterpart in other countries, the Israeli housewife, so long tied to the daily needs of her family, is now turning more and more to voluntary social work and to cultural activities."²⁸ This is presented as an important step forward for women in Israel. Later in the article, David praises the entrance of married women into the workplace as the answer to the shortage of workers for a growing economy. David believes that this is a trend that should be encouraged.²⁹ Despite this enthusiasm, her conclusion indicates that her overall feeling about women in the workplace is more ambivalent. As she notes, feminism is to blame for the misery of modern women: "much has been written about the restlessness of the 'modern woman' who 'with feminism triumphant lost her femininity, and with her femininity her peace of mind.'" ³⁰ David further notes that Israeli women need to find a suitable balance, "finding fresh fields for her interests while maintaining her satisfaction as home-maker."³¹ In effect, David is communicating to Montreal Jewish women that the home is the preferred place for women.

In 1962 *Orah* ran a two-part feature on a conference sponsored by the CBC, "The Real World of Woman." The article was written by Nina Cohen, National President of Hadassah, who attended the event. Among the numerous topics raised, the issue of women in the workforce was discussed. While most of the conference participants believed that women should advocate for rights in the workplace, they were clear to point out that they only support *some* women working. Cohen believed that work outside of the home should be restricted to particular women: those who are widows, divorced, or have grown children. In these cases, work outside of the home was acceptable as they either had no man to support them or had no one to look after except themselves: "Many are widows who must take the place of the wage-earners. Others are divorced who must look for support. Still others reach a station in marriage when their children are at an age when they no longer need full time attention of a mother."³² The final paragraph of this essay perhaps is the most telling: "Then the taxi called to take us to the airport and as we paid him, the driver said, 'don't let them change you ladies, we like you as you are.'"³³ Cohen does not question the established gender order. Instead, she reinforces it by only allowing certain exceptions to go beyond established gender norms.

Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, the Jewish women of Montreal debated the place of women in the modern world. Indeed, the publications of the Ashkenazi women confirm Meyerowitz' and Korinek's assertions that feminist debates took place in the late 1950s and early 1960s, long before the arrival of the women's liberation movement in 1968. I would speculate that the specific emphasis in these publications on mothers not working outside the home grew directly out of the experiences of the previous generations of Jewish women.³⁴ New immigrant women were often forced to work outside of the home to support their families, whether in factories or family businesses. Many of the children of these immigrants and even their

grandchildren also worked alongside the first-generation Canadians. This work was necessary to support the family. However, working ran counter to prevailing gender notions of the time, based on ideals of the public and private spheres that emphasized the place of women in the home. These notions of gender were often internalized by the immigrant Jewish women, but particularly by their descendants. The dreams of Jewish immigrants were that their children and grandchildren would be better off than they were. And, as with food and the body, this often meant the adoption of middle-class Canadian values. This included traditional gender systems where women did not work outside the home, though they continued to do domestic work within the home. Indeed, the sign that middle-class prosperity had been achieved was that the woman of the house no longer needed to work outside of the home to support her family. This desire was so strong that even when these gender systems began to be questioned by Canadian society at large, they had become fundamental to the lives of Jewish-Canadians.³⁵ More research will be needed to confirm these speculative inferences.

Different but Equal, or is it Not Equal, but Different?

In the United States, second-wave feminism emerged from the dissatisfaction that many women felt following the Civil Rights movement. Specifically, many were unhappy with being relegated to a secondary position within the larger movement. Instead, they "now sought full equality with men in political, social, legal, and economic opportunity and power."³⁶ The women's liberation movement (a name that is often used interchangeable with second-wave feminism although women's liberation tends to more specifically mean the more radical, grassroots second-wave feminism.) began around 1967/1968 with consciousness-raising circles, groups of women, usually college educated, white, and middle class, who spoke about their

experiences with sexism. Over time, numerous organizations, like the National Organization of Women in the United States, were founded and began agitating for full equality for women. The rise of second-wave feminism in Canada took a similar path, with the emergence of both women's liberation groups splitting off from the student movements of the 1960s, and the more mainstream umbrella feminist organization, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC).³⁷ Though the second-wave women's movement in both Canada and the United States accomplished a great deal, it was plagued with problems. In particular, because it emphasized gender as the primary identifier, the movement often overlooked important differences between women of different ethnicities, religions, classes, and sexual orientations.³⁸

In *Chatelaine* magazine, feminist debates intensified after second-wave feminism emerged. *Chatelaine* encouraged women to question their roles to such an extent that Korinek concludes that "by the end of the decade, all regular readers were conversant with the goals of second-wave feminism and many seemed to have become converts, particularly over issues such as pay-equity, changes in women's legal status, and the importance of women's voices in politics and the workplace."³⁹ However, as I noted in my introduction, the Ashkenazi Jewish women of Montreal did not necessarily experience the same shift as other women in the United States and Canada as a result of the emergence of second-wave feminism. Instead, I found that older models of feminism, particularly liberal feminist ideologies, were far more prevalent throughout the late 1960s and into the 1970s than those more characteristic of the second-wave, such as radical feminism.

Jewish women's organizations and Ashkenazi women in general accepted some notions of equality, but only within a context that accepted that women had very different roles to play from men.⁴⁰ The prevalence of early liberal feminist views among the Jews of Montreal is

evident in both *Orah Magazine*, and the *Woman's Work Agendas*. Feminist articles, that is, articles about women's rights or topics of special interest to women in these magazines, maintain and emphasize a separation between women's roles and men's roles. And all of these articles are based in the principle of biological essentialism, the view that women and men are "naturally" endowed with specific but gender-universal characteristics. The underlying assumption is these characteristics arise from their biology, that they are "naturally occurring" rather than the result of social conditioning. Further, many of these articles implore women to leave the workforce and accept that their fundamental nature as women is incompatible with the modern workplace.

For example, some articles, while advocating for the right for women to work outside the home, only encouraged women to enter into traditionally "feminine" areas, using biology as their justification. "A Special Report on the Status of Women in Israel" was published in the September 1968 edition of *Orah* magazine. This article looked at housewives, women in politics, women in public service, and Arab women. The section on housewives was a personal story about one woman. However, the other three sections contain contradictory arguments about women in the modern world. The Politician section was written by Ethel Kaiser, and was a profile of Rachel Kagan, one of the signers of Israel's Declaration of Independence as well as a member of the Knesset. Kagan reported that she felt pessimistic about the future of women in politics. She said that the Knesset was dominated by men, and what women were there had largely adopted a "male mentality."⁴¹ She further reported that "the nation needs the women behind movements for better social legislation – for this purpose women must have self confidence that they alone, with their womanly ways and views, are eminently equipped to know what is good."⁴² Women were most effective when they limited themselves to work that was in line with their fundamental nature as women, within the home or "feminine" areas of interest

involving health or education rather than traditionally "male" areas, like foreign affairs or finance.

Other articles reinforced the notion that women's work in the home is fundamentally important. Further, this work could *only* be performed by women *because* they are women. Once again, the different yet equally important roles for women and men is emphasized. This can be seen in an *Orah Magazine* interview of David Ben Gurion. Over the course of the interview, he presented his thoughts on the subject of equality for women and women in Israel. On the first topic, he echoed many of the unstated assumptions throughout these publications: "What is equality? [...] There is no equality between two people. Each one is different. Only twins who come out of the same egg are sometimes alike, yet seldom identical."⁴³ He later turned to the topic of childbirth. As an argument against equality, he argued that women were special because only they were capable of giving birth. As a result, he argued that childbearing should be the preeminent concern of women: "We must raise our birth rate. Everything should be done so that the woman in Israel should be able to have four to six children."⁴⁴ The message is clear. Ben Gurion explicitly used biological essentialism to argue that women belong in the home because they are able to give birth (and then raise) children, while men, who cannot give birth, are best utilized in the workforce. Men and women are different, and thus have different responsibilities.

Still others maintained the distinction between women and men and their roles in society by discussing the inherent incompatibility of women with paid employment. Irene Fink discussed Betty Freidan's *The Feminine Mystique* five years after its publication in her article "The Many Faces of Eve." She was not impressed with the impact of this book. As she notes, following the publication of Freidan's book, many women felt guilty about not working outside the home and returned to the workplace. At first things went well. And then

*the days and months wore on and the challenge became routine, the discipline of managing two lives became routine. We began to wonder what all the fuss was about. The glamour of being a working girl was not the answer either – we missed having lunch with the girls, an afternoon shopping, a visit to the Art Gallery. And then we came the honest assessment, the last part of decision making. We began to question the gospel of Betty Freidan.*⁴⁵

The life of a working girl was not all that it was made out to be, and in working outside of the home, many women lost the advantages of being at home. Fink bemoaned how this also resulted in less time for volunteer work. But most importantly, she argued that homemaking should be the priority of all women and an opportunity to express their creativity. As she notes: "Both voluntary work and home pursuits need talent and organization ability, and can utilize every ounce of brain and brawn most of us have. [...] It must be rather obvious that most of us derive the greatest joy in fulfilling our responsibilities within our families."⁴⁶ The underlying message of Fink's article is that women have special responsibilities to their families and to society. These responsibilities result from their unique abilities *as women*. She tries to persuade her readers that women would be better served by working to their strengths rather than going counter to "nature" by working outside of the home.

Even articles that purport to be about gender equality reinforce gender differentiation. In "Equal in Rebuilding, But..." by Ruth Seligman, she begins the article by noting that "It is a little difficult for us in Israel to talk objectively about the 'Women's Lib' Movement because we are equal partners with our men in rebuilding the country from the very first day. [...] [b]ut the Israeli woman is neither as liberated nor as equal as myth would have her – or as she thinks she is."⁴⁷ While Israeli women may have been equal in status to men in the idealistic early days of Israel, in more recent times, women have regressed. Seligman attributes this to the development of

Israel when "women retrogress to a femininity which prevents them from being the full and equal members of society they once were."⁴⁸ That said Seligman herself disagrees with the ideas put forward by second-wave feminism. She finds it "hard for me personally to buy into all their beliefs," particularly those around the full equality between men and women.⁴⁹ Seligman also interviewed Professor Rivka Bar-Yosef, a sociologist at the Hebrew University. Bar-Yosef took a dim view of the feminist movement, particularly in regards to the Jewish religion: "Yes, there is discrimination against women in the Jewish religion, but nothing to make a revolution over. [...] I am not sure that I would like to live in a world where women are the same as men. Women are inherently different from men. If other cultural religious groups are entitled to maintain their own identity, why not women?"⁵⁰ Yet Seligman agreed that there needed to be more women in politics and better conditions for women in the workplace, but only once they had finished childbearing.

While these articles discuss various topics, one principle seems to underlie all of their arguments: men and women are different, but equally important. The same trends were repeated in the larger community as well. The issue of women's place in the world was one that was discussed with fair regularity in the synagogues. The Shaar Hashomayim ran a conference in 1973 on the subject. This conference debated the role of women in Judaism, considering such questions as: "Do you believe that women should have the right to be ordained as Rabbis? Be called to the Torah? Sit with their families (mixed seating?) Be counted in the minyan? Say Kaddish for their parents? Institute Jewish divorce proceedings?"⁵¹ This conference also featured a session on Birth Control and Abortion. Around the same time, the Shaar Hashomayim Sisterhood also held a Torah Fund Dessert Luncheon on the topic of "Jewish Women – Second Class Citizen?"⁵² Unfortunately, I was unable to find further

information about the nature of the conversation at this conference or what conclusions were drawn. But the very fact of its existence is significant nonetheless.

Temple Emanu-El really sponsored even more events around the subject of the modern woman. In January of 1962, the Rabbi's sermon was entitled "Woman and the Synagogue."⁵³ In March 1962, they held a panel discussion on "Woman Faces the World Crisis," featuring speeches by three unnamed prominent women. This was during the same week as a speech by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.⁵⁴ In February of 1964, a discussion was held at the Temple entitled "Feminine Mystique – Its Pros and Cons." Sponsored by the Sisterhood, this panel was moderated by a Dr. Nathan Wiseboard, a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst in Montreal. A number of women spoke, including Mrs. M Charles Cohen, lecturer from Sir George Williams University, who spoke on career women; Mrs. M Edmund Gordon, who spoke from the perspective of volunteer social workers; and Mrs. Clarence Gross, who spoke from the perspective of homemakers. It is interesting to note that all three women had Bachelor's Degrees, while the homemaker representative was the most qualified with a Bachelor of Common Law (B.C.L).⁵⁵

Finally, Mrs. David Rivlin, the Wife of the Consul General of Israel in Montreal gave an address in October of 1964 on the status of women in Israel. She recalled being proud to speak in place of the Rabbi, and was pleased to note that full equality for women was increasingly becoming reality in Israel. She saw this as part of the modernization of Judaism. As she noted: "I see in this not only a matter of equality for women within the spiritual experience, as expressed in our services, but also a means of creating the framework in which our religious adherence will match the modern concepts and way of life of our vibrant and dynamic Jewish – Hebrew society."⁵⁶

As with *Orah*, the *Woman's Work Agenda*, the Shaar Hashomayim, and Temple Emanu-El, The Women's Federation of the AJCS (now the Canadian Jewish Congress) debated about women's rights and equality. As well, the Women's Federation of the AJCS was consistent with the other examples in this text when it set forth its opinion that women and men are fundamentally different, but of equal importance. This point was made clear in a speech given at the Fifth Annual Women's Community Conference, sponsored by the Women's Federation. This speech, entitled "Woman's Search for Fulfillment," was given by Mrs. Martha K. Selig, Consultant on Family and Children's Services for the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York. Throughout this text, Selig makes it clear that she considers it inappropriate for women to work outside of the home.⁵⁷ She talks extensively about the anxiety and grief experienced by many women who work outside of the home, in light of the conflict between the traditional roles and the modern expectations of women.⁵⁸ Selig makes it clear that women belong in the home, and that the home is the primary responsibility of all women. Once again, her work outside of the home should be only to fulfill her responsibilities to her children and husband. As Selig notes:

*No normal woman wants to be a man. [...] When a woman moves out in the world it is not because she wants to be a man, but because she wants to bring the world into her home. The modern woman still wants love, marriage and children. If she chooses to combine this with work, whether professional or volunteer, it is because she believes she can function better as a useful human being – and, therefore, a better wife and mother.*⁵⁹

She later continues: "I believe we can preserve the woman's role as mother and wife, within the cultural context which looks for the fullest development of her potentialities. For only then can she bring into her own home the richer qualities that will enhance all around her."⁶⁰ It is

in this way that she can find individual fulfillment. For after all, women are not the same as men: "the truly fulfilled woman has no need to compete with her husband – she complements him – either in the home or outside. [...] Women must join men as full and equal, though different, partners in the tremendously important job of learning to live harmoniously, not only with one another, but with all the peoples of the world."⁶¹ Once again, Selig emphasizes fundamental differences between women and men, rooted in their biology, their essential natures. She encourages each gender to play to their different strengths, for it is only through this separation of responsibilities that society can be made better.

This perspective was reflected in the brief submitted to the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada from the Women's Federation of the AJCS on June 14, 1968. Rather than discuss the status of women in the Jewish community, the authors deplore the impact of the working world on women's lives. They particularly lament the decline of volunteerism as a result. As the authors of this brief note: "In the past, when women were not so readily acceptable in the labour force, we had abundant numbers of thinking, concerned citizens willing to give their time – This is no longer the case – Women are attracted by financial rewards and the recognition that comes with that pay check – Tangible proof of their work each week."⁶² To make up for this, the Women's Federation suggested that the Commission put in place measures to increase the profile of volunteers. In their eyes, being a volunteer was part of "the democratic process in action;"⁶³ Women were naturally prepared to be good volunteers.

This emphasis on difference, not sameness, rooted in biological essentialism appears in the rhetoric of my participants. Despite his avowal that men and women should have equal opportunities, Aaron felt that boys and girls were fundamentally different, and should be treated

as such. He felt that girls in particular needed to be treated with respect because they would grow up to become mothers. As he said:

Males and females are different, we think different, we are different, we have different views of things. But it's not a matter of being treated differently as being treated in accordance to what you are. And, it's not as a negative but a positive to have respect for the fact that this is a woman, not a man. Have respect and treat them with the fact that this is a person who is potentially to be a mother. Being a father is not the same thing. [...] So give that as a differentiation in treatment, not so much as, well, because you're a girl, you're not allowed to do this that. Bullshit.⁶⁴

Like so many others, Aaron points to pregnancy and childbirth as a fundamental difference between men and women. He assumes that the ability to bear a child is somehow linked to a woman's ability to be a good mother and her affinity for children and families.

Reluctant Feminists

Unfortunately, there remains a great deal that we do not know, particularly for Canada, about what the majority of women felt about second-wave feminism. Some insights can be gleaned from Janet Mancini Billson's article entitled "Keepers of the Culture: Attitudes Toward Women's Liberation and the Women's Movement in Canada."⁶⁵ This article compares the overall impact of the women's movement in Canada with the experiences of "women who live in distinct cultures that make up the Canadian mosaic."⁶⁶ Billson focused on three separate ethnic groups: Scottish, Mennonite, and Iroquois. In each of these groups, Billson noted that "attitudes toward the movement [were] closely intertwined with cultural definitions of being female, and with women's role as 'keepers of the culture.'"⁶⁷ More specifically, Billson argues that each of these cultures identify women, particularly mothers, as the bearers of ethnic culture, and that this role as culture-keeper came into conflict with some of the underlying messages of the feminist

movement. Many women who identified as culture bearers feared that feminism would mean the end of their cultures.

Billson explains there were two dominant strands in feminism, separated according to their “strategies for social change.”⁶⁸ The first emphasized “institutional reform in order to achieve *equality* for women” while the second “[strove] for *broad cultural redefinition of gender relations* through all social institutions.”⁶⁹ The first corresponds to liberal or moderate feminism, while the second corresponds to radical feminism, as discussed above. While what Billson called the *role equality* seemed non-threatening since it permitted women to remain in the home, the second, *role change*, was perceived by ethnic women as bringing about “dramatic change in the dependent female roles of wife, mother, and homemaker.”⁷⁰ Thus, while some individuals may have supported a notion of gender equality, or, as Billson notes, many were “at least liberal feminists who supported legislative and constitutional gains in the reality of equal rights and opportunities,” they were reluctant to call themselves feminists for fear of seeming to encourage more radical role change.⁷¹ This fear of encouraging radical change relates to the role that women in particular ethnic communities are seen as “keeper” of culture. Billson argues that this results in “an unconscious, built-in-bias toward *conservation and preservation*.”⁷² Further, this status often accords women power and respect in patriarchal communities. Radical feminism appears threatening to some ethnic women because it holds the potential to both disrupt the transmission of culture as well as damage or reduce their power or position.

The end result is what Billson calls “the selective incorporation factor.”⁷³ In essence, some women were favourably disposed towards notions of gender equality, particularly around the issue of women’s rights. This could include being supportive of higher educational opportunities for women, political rights, and equal pay for equal work. Thus, certain feminist

elements are integrated into the lives of some women. However, feminist critiques of traditional gender roles are rejected both for the devaluation of traditional women's work but also because of its perception of creating a "man versus woman" antagonism. This results in the rejection of certain feminist elements along with the title of feminism. Complications arose, however, around issues of domestic abuse, which has forced some women to reconsider their rejection of gender role change.⁷⁴

Billson also emphasizes the importance of exploring "the perspectives of those who do *not* participate."⁷⁵ It is too simplistic to study only women who were directly involved in the women's movement. This limits the insights regarding how feminism worked on a more everyday basis, alongside and compared to larger political and social changes. Feminism is a concept that resonated with women at many different levels. While some embraced it, others rejected it, and still others selectively integrated some elements into their lives. These conclusions are consistent with my findings among my interviewees.

Emily felt that the women in the women's liberation movement had outsmarted themselves. Emily was born and raised in Montreal. She was fifty-four at the time of her interview. Both of her parents were born in Montreal as well. Emily obtained a bachelor's degree and had been employed in a number of fields, including community assistance and teaching. She has been married twice. Emily did not provide any information about her first marriage. Her second marriage took place in 1992, and resulted in one son, aged fourteen. Eventually she switched careers and became an advertising consultant. While her family was Orthodox, she considered herself to be Conservative.

Emily raised the issue of the women's movement when I asked her if she had a bat mitzvah. She replied that she had not, and then went on to speak about her grandmother. She

was proud that her grandmother had been a powerful woman, who was a devoted mother while making clear that she was in charge. She said that women required self-confidence to be powerful, and nothing else. Her discussion of her grandmother was rooted in her belief that women and men are fundamentally different, yet equally important. As she said:

I think that the role of the woman you know, self-confidence isn't something that necessarily is mandated. Self-confidence is something that comes from within. The woman, doesn't have to be somebody that's in competition with a man, in my view. Jewishly or in life. And the woman, the Jewish mother, the Jewish woman is the head of a whole household, it is an aspect of the woman that doesn't necessarily [need] some artificial thing [...] to give her credence and make her whole. The Jewish mother is the leader of the family, I don't need a bar mitzvah to be a Jewish mother, absolutely not. I think those are all artificial things, just like the Chanukah bush. [...] Do I need to sit beside the man to be equal to him? First of all, I don't want to be equal to the man. I might be superior. And do I have to? No, all those things are meaningless. I am who am I am.⁷⁶

As Emily notes, she had no desire for gender equality because she believes that women might be superior to men. Her grandmother's strength is described as originating in her gender. Because she was female, and women who play traditional roles are inherently associated with the home, she ruled her house with an iron fist. She later elaborated on this view by discussing the special role that women play in Judaism. She viewed women as the bearers of Jewish identity, and those who will ensure the continuity of the Jewish people; this, she said, was a thing to be proud of.

Emily's testimony features a number of allusions to Jewish cultural identity and the Jewish religion. She locates her grandmother's strength in her Jewishness. But more importantly, she alludes to the issue of seating (in a synagogue). In most Orthodox synagogues, women and men sit separately. A *mechitza*, or a partition (whether physical or not), is put in place to ensure separation. At times, the women are relegated to a balcony in the synagogue. The historical

justification for such a separation is to preserve the modesty of the women and to ensure that the men pay attention to the service. In other words, the separation ensures that the beauty of the Jewish women in the synagogue does not distract Jewish men from their religious devotion.⁷⁷ Some individuals are critical of the *mechitza* because of the distinction it creates between genders. Some non-Jews and feminist Jews also see it as a symbol of the oppression of Jewish women.⁷⁸ Emily believes that the *mechitza* is simply not an issue for her. She does not see it as a sign of discrimination against women. This debate surfaced repeatedly for my interviewees as a means to discuss their views on women's rights. The continued allusion to the *mechitza* and lack of interest in its elimination suggests that the synagogue partition serves as a metaphor for the prevailing attitudes with respect to women among my interviewees. The *mechitza* symbolizes the notion in Orthodox Judaism (and among many of the interviewees) that men and women are fundamentally different, yet each plays an important role in society. To my interviewees, the separation does not necessarily mean that men are considered more important than women.

Lisa was far more mixed, even at times contradictory, on the subject of women's rights, than Emily. For Lisa, women's rights were linked to women's positions in Judaism and in the synagogue. Lisa was born in Palestine in 1943. She was sixty-five years old at the time of her interview. She arrived in Canada as a young woman, obtained a bachelor's degree, and spent her life working as a teacher in Jewish schools. She married a man she met on vacation in Israel and together they had two children. She considers herself an Orthodox Jew, though she qualified this by noting that she was not strictly religiously observant. Lisa asserted that she believed in women's rights. She told me that both women and men should be able to vote or smoke. However, most of her narrative regarding women's rights related to Judaism. She noted that she had recently added Miriam's Cup and an orange to her seder table (feminist modifications to the

traditional seder).⁷⁹ However, she qualified this by noting that for the most part, she could take it or leave it, that these changes were made because she found them to be new and interesting. She also told me that she enjoyed watching bat mitzvahs and knowing that the girls selected their pieces.⁸⁰ When asked for further clarification, however, she did not believe that everything should be changed to accord women equal rights with respect to Judaism. She told me:

I believe in women's rights, but I'm not a stickler for[everything]. If I have to go to synagogue and sit in the women's section, and the men sit in their section, that doesn't bother me. I don't have to sit, mixed sitting, and it doesn't hurt me, it doesn't take away my personality, like everybody says, Oh I don't like it, I like to sit with my husband. I said, no I don't, he can sit with his guys, let me sit with my ladies. However, there are things that women's rights should be looked into. I don't object to women's rights, we've come a long way.⁸¹

Lisa was a powerful example of the selective integration of feminism. She was clear about her support for gender equality and women's rights in a larger Canadian context. She even seems proud of the accomplishments of Canadian women in general. At the same time, she did not believe that the concept of gender equality held any relevance in her religious life. When Lisa brought up the issue of the *mechitza*, she insisted that she does not see it as a problem. Her language suggested that, with respect to the synagogue and religion, she was not concerned about women's equality. However, she seems proud of the adoption of bat mitzvahs in her congregation. As I noted in the previous chapter, bat mitzvahs emerged in response to calls for a more formal role for women in Jewish religious life. This appears contradictory to her stance on women's rights in the synagogue with respect to the *mechitza*. It appears that, for Lisa, not all aspects of Jewish religion life were in need of "fixing" to ensure gender equality. However, she further complicated the matter by suggesting that problems did exist in the Jewish religion when

it came to women, that “there are things that women’s rights should be looked into.” Lisa’s case illustrates that individuals can hold and defend opinions of feminism that seem conflicting to scholars but do not necessarily feel internally inconsistent to individuals.

The same can be said for Renata. Renata was born and raised in Montreal in 1941, making her sixty-seven at the time of this interview. She considers herself to be an Ashkenazi Orthodox Jew, is strictly observant, and keeps a kosher home as well as the Sabbath. While she does not discuss the *metchitza* in particular, she also saw the subject of women's rights as linked to Judaism. Renata had what seemed like conflicting views on the subject. Although she was passionate on the subject of domestic abuse in Jewish families (which she blamed on out-dated gender roles within Jewish Orthodoxy), she was firmly against the idea of female rabbis. She was insistent that men and women have different roles in Judaism. She told me that the most important task for Jewish women was to rear children and teach them to carry on Jewish traditions.⁸²

Towards the other end of the continuum were those interviewees who identified themselves as feminists, but were not actively involved in the women’s liberation movement. Joy was born in Montreal in 1919. Her parents were immigrants to Canada, arriving in their mid-teens. Her parents were religiously observant. She attended school until midway through grade nine. She married in 1940 and worked in an office until her retirement. While Joy was observant as a young woman, her husband was not, and over time she abandoned many of her religious observances. During our interview, Joy proudly informed me that she was a feminist, as she put it, even before it was popular. She explained this assertion by speaking about her upbringing and her experiences as a married woman. She spoke with pride about how, when she was a child, her father refused to eat until her mother was able to sit at the table. This, she told me, was a sign of

her father's respect for his wife. She also told me that her husband demonstrated a similar level of respect to her. She elaborated that:

I always felt we were equal. And I remember way back when, gee I must take a look at my medicare card, I don't know now, I don't look closely. I remember the men had number one, the females had number two on our medicare cards. Second-class citizens. And I was very put out with that. Why is a man more important? And, in those days, the women were home with the children, making the meals. The husband came down. [...] At the same time, I was feminist, because we didn't, I had people I played cards with, they ran home cause the husband was coming, you know, I said, what if he eats five minutes later?⁸³

For Joy, equality was not necessarily a matter of legal rights, but of relationships. She believed that both women and men were deserving of equal respect. She did not question her role as a wife to provide food for her husband. Instead, she objected to putting her husband's interests ahead of her own, of interrupting her card game to ensure that her husband did not have to wait before eating. She did not automatically put her husband's own interests before her own. When Joy does speak of women and the state, her objection is that they are labeled “number two.” Again, the problem identified by Joy is the attribution of higher status to men, and the suggestion that women were not as important.

Beth also identified herself as a feminist and described her past actions as feminist. Beth was considerably younger than Joy. Born in 1945, at the time of this interview she was sixty-three years old. She was raised in a non-traditional Reform Jewish family. That said, she spent much of her youth with her extended Orthodox family. Her grandmother was an immigrant to Canada. Her mother was well educated and had worked as a nurse in the 1920s. Beth herself earned a bachelor's degree and has worked in a number of fields, including education. She married an Orthodox man, but considered herself, at the time of the interview, to be a non-

religious Reform Jew. She left work when she first became pregnant but eventually returned once her children were old enough to enter school. During her interview, Beth informed me that she learned to be a feminist as a child. She told me that this was because her mother taught her to believe in herself. Beth felt that it was important for her to stand up for herself, because otherwise men would just push her down. She instilled these beliefs in her daughters, and her husband now blames the fact that their oldest daughter is unmarried on her actions.⁸⁴

There is simply not enough data on the interviewees who identified themselves as feminists but were not actively involved in the women's movement to draw any kind of conclusions. These women were all of different ages, religious affiliations, educations, and life experiences. None of these women came to identify themselves as feminists for the same reasons. And in Beth and Joy's cases, their specific self-identification as feminists may be the result of later life experiences colouring their recollections of the past. Regardless, it would be inappropriate to disregard the experiences of those women in my study who identified as feminists. The diversity in their experiences illustrates the complex nature of identity and the complicated relationship between Judaism and feminism. It is significant nonetheless that neither Joy nor Beth seems to challenge their roles as mothers and wives. Both saw themselves as feminists in terms of believing in strong women and in women not being secondary to men, but did not challenge their roles as wives and mothers.

The articles examined in this chapter along with my interviewees were also consistent with Billson's interviewees on the subject of ethnic women as bearers of tradition. Further, this position is described as an indication of their superior position in Judaism. For example, "WIZO and International Woman's Year," an article by Evelyn Sommer, argues that Jewish women are lucky because they have always been honoured for their work. As she notes, "What has been the

Jewish attitude towards woman in general, not in her family relationship as daughter, wife and mother, but as a human being, as a member of the community? In the Biblical records it appears that women enjoyed considerable freedom and equality – social, intellectual and spiritual.”⁸⁵ She discusses the prominence of women in the Bible, including Ruth and Naomi. Even when life became more restricted for Jewish women, compensation was offered: “Jewish life became more complicated, customs and ceremonies developed and women were excluded. To compensate for this, the Jewish woman was entrusted the greatest responsibility for the sanctification of the home, and her role as a mother was and is highly esteemed.”⁸⁶ And once again, she emphasizes the importance of women in the home. As Sommer notes: “the key issue for working women is still how to reconcile their home and family roles with the new occupations outside the home.”⁸⁷

A number of my interviewees whose attitudes towards feminism were ambivalent also emphasized the importance of women as the bearers of Jewish culture. In a number of instances, Judaism was praised for the high accord and respect granted to women, particularly around their roles as culture bearers.⁸⁸ Aaron felt that the fact that Judaism passes on through women gives them more power. Because the focus of the Jewish religion is in the home, not the synagogue (for Aaron), Jewish women have traditionally had more power than women in other religions. David felt similarly. As he said, “You know, supposedly women are the keeper of the religion, because they are the protector to the children, they are the ones that light the *Shabbos* candles. They are the ones who cook the food, they are the one who basically carry on the religion based on the fact their children are the religion, and not the father’s religion. Well, that’s true, and I believe that. If that’s true, then what the hell are the men for, where are they, what are they good for?”⁸⁹ Finally, when I asked Rosemary what she thought being a good Jewish mother meant, she said “A Jewish mother should teach her daughter the good, wonderful things, that the Jewish

religion teaches you.”⁹⁰ Both the articles discussed above as well as my interviewees emphasized the important role that Jewish women, more specifically as mothers, play in passing down Jewish culture and traditions. The articles and interviews point to the Jewish woman’s position within the home, more specifically as childcare provider, to mean that she would “naturally” assume the role of culture educator. For this reason, Jewish women are “lucky” because their position as culture bearers gives them stature and prestige in the Jewish religion they might not have otherwise achieved. Further, the position of Jewish women in the home was not identified as a problem but as strength. Indeed, the contributions of women are highlighted and even lauded *because* they were distinct from male contributions to society.⁹¹

My analysis of feminist currents of thought among Montreal Jews demonstrates the importance of moving away from global and national analyses of trends. In the late 1960s and the early 1970s, the women's liberation movement was a powerful force for change. As my interviews and my study of the archival record reveal, there was tremendous variation in how Jewish women in Montreal experienced feminism. In the case of the Jews of Montreal, second-wave feminism was not seen as a watershed moment. Instead, there is significant continuity between the feminist debates of the 1950s and early 1960s and those of the late 1960s and early 1970s. In analyzing *Orah Magazine*, the *Woman's Work Agendas*, and the testimony of my interviewees, it was clear that the dominant understanding of gender was based on watered-down liberal feminist ideologies, where there might have been some limited critiques of male dominance (around issues like wife abuse, or acknowledging that some women could work outside the home), but at the same time women and men were viewed as fundamentally (and naturally) different, but equally important to society.

Additionally, the majority of my interviewees did not identify as feminist. However, many offered their thoughts on the women's movement. Their responses spanned the spectrum, illustrating Billson's concept of "selective integration." The ambivalent attitude towards feminism displayed by many of my interviewees is also consistent with some of Billson's findings regarding Scottish, Mennonite, and Iroquois women. Namely, the Ashkenazi women of Montreal seemed to be generally in favour of equal rights while simultaneously disagreeing with the concept of gender role change. Instead, they emphasized the value they placed on their traditional roles. Finally, my interviewees displayed little consistency regarding how much freedom and independence women should have in their roles, and what opportunities should be available to them.

Jewish women stood at the forefront of the American Women's movement. From Betty Freidan to Judy Chicago, these individuals spoke out powerfully for women's rights. In spite of this, most of the Ashkenazi women of Montreal were ambivalent about the need for and even the impact of Second Wave Feminism. For them, the emphasis on gender equality did not have much currency in their lives and most were opposed to significant role changes for women. Many Ashkenazi women felt alienated from the movement as result, raised as they were to view Jewishness as the most important aspect of their identity and steeped in the view that men and women are different, but equally important.

Feminist Jews and Jewish Feminists: The Exceptions to the Rule

While mild and ambiguous liberal feminist ideologies remained prevalent among the Ashkenazi Jewish women of Montreal, a number of individuals did take part in radical feminism through the women's liberation movement, whether directly or indirectly. Three of my

participants were in California during the women's liberation movement. These three individuals were the only self-identified feminists in my sample of thirty-five interviews. Unfortunately, I am unable to make any firm conclusions because of the extremely small sample size. However, it is important to discuss the varied ways that Ashkenazi Jewish women from this time and place experienced feminism.

To begin, it is important to understand the difference between Jewish feminists and feminist Jews. This topic is discussed at length in Dina Pinsky's *Jewish Feminists: Complex Identities and Activist Lives*. Pinsky sought to "explore the relationship between Jewish and feminist identities."⁹² She distinguishes between Jewish feminists, "who, for example, called for the ordination of women rabbis or became scholars of Jewish women's studies" and feminist Jews (or Jews in the feminist movement), "the population of Jewish women in the larger feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s."⁹³ Further, there appears to have been very little overlap between the two categories. Jewish feminists only became involved in the women's movement in the 1980s.⁹⁴ Since my study ends in 1980, this section will deal only with feminist Jews.

Dana and Kim's stories, while not necessarily representative of the experiences of all feminist Jews, do provide some insights into how Ashkenazi Jewish women from Montreal experienced the women's movement directly as well as how their Jewishness related to their feminism. Dana and Kim both insisted that their involvement in the women's movement was largely a matter of solidarity with other women. Further, while both women identified as Jews, both had abandoned the Jewish religion at that point in their lives.

Dana grew up in a very Orthodox family, but one that was active in labour politics. At the age of twelve she joined the Communist Party. At the same time, she also considered herself a Zionist, though she said that she outgrew the movement when she was seventeen. Around the

same time, she rebelled against Judaism and refused to participate in the Jewish religion. Despite her rejection of the Jewish religion, she still identified strongly as a Jewish woman. She eventually got married, but her marriage only lasted two years. After her divorce, she came out as a lesbian, but was disillusioned with the isolation and rigid structure of the lesbian community in Montreal at the time. At the age of twenty-seven, she encountered the women's movement, and as she said, "I haven't looked back" since.⁹⁵

When recounting her experiences, she remembered the excitement and the feeling of fighting together. As she described it: "The Women's Movement, I mean, it was really exciting. And we were out there, like *together*, fighting for women's rights, and those were the days of the bra burning. feminism, and standing up for yourself, and we had women's music, the system was a whole culture that was developing."⁹⁶ She noted that it was a large movement in Montreal. She joined a women's centre and helped plan a lesbian conference: "there were hundreds of women, I thought I'd died and gone to heaven!"⁹⁷ But for her, it was more to do with her being a lesbian than a Jewish woman; her intent was to connect and form a community with women. As she told me,

*I was part of that developing culture, which was exciting, not being isolated and needing to meet men to dance, and get out. [...] It has a social structure into which I could fit. [...] I belonged somewhere, I didn't feel like I belonged anywhere in Montreal, and I came out in this vacuum. You know, it was really hard. I loved to dance, and I really liked going out to the bar, and the only way I could do that was with a man.*⁹⁸

While Dana was no doubt interested in the fight for women's rights, the aspect of the women's movement that she seemed to embrace the most was the feeling of belonging. Dana did not in any way reject her Jewish identity, but it seemed to have been a secondary aspect of her life at the time when compared to her sexual orientation and political activities. While she had

abandoned the religious aspects of her Jewish identity in her youth, she remained firm in her self-identification as secular/ethnic/cultural Jew.⁹⁹

Kim was more explicit when describing the relationship between her Jewish identity and her feminism. Growing up in Montreal, Kim felt very stifled in the atmosphere of Montreal. In particular, she disliked the notion of the "nice Jewish girl," and the emphasis on conformity. She preferred hanging out with her gentile friends. After graduating from McGill University, she left Montreal as fast as she could to travel to Paris and Israel. In the 1960s, she was involved in the hippie movement, and eventually became involved in the feminist movement starting in California in the 1970s. She told me that her experiences in the hippie movement were an important motivating factor in her later participation in the women's movement:

So I spent a lot of my twenties just kind of wandering around, wandering Jew, you know [laughing]. I mean, that's what was in the air, that's what hippies were doing. [...] It was a really crazy time. [...] Like, there was no feminism, and there was still lowly women, we were my Old Lady, the guys would say, this is my Old Lady. And we'd say, oh this is my Old Man. That's what we called each other. [...] And then, we were still supposed to do all the work and the cooking, all that kind of stuff.¹⁰⁰

She said that her feminism likely came out of her frustration with this arrangement. She had just gone back to school to be an artist, and had gone to see a feminist art show in LA. It was there that she saw the famous Judy Chicago installation; Chicago, incidentally, was also Jewish. Kim told me: "It was the artist that hooked me."¹⁰¹ Eventually, she came out as a lesbian, and then bisexual, though she noted that this was more of a political issue for her than one of sexual orientation.

When I asked her directly what relationship her Jewishness had to her feminism, her initial response was unequivocal: "I did reject my Judaism." Her use of this term, and her later

comments, make it clear that she was speaking specifically about the Jewish religion rather than Jewish culture as a whole. Indeed, her secular Jewishness appears to have been a significant conduit when connecting with other lesbians, even if she did not want to recognize it. Indeed, her language suggests that her Jewish cultural (read, secular) identity was an important aspect of her feminism. She noted that, "when I became a feminist, there was a big movement in the Bay area at the time, Jewish feminist, radical Jewish feminists [...] and I was a Jewish lesbian feminist, radical, Jewish lesbian feminist! [laughs] So I re-claimed that part of my myself."¹⁰² In other words, her secular Jewish identity acted as a conduit for her involvement in the women's movement.

Marilyn, like Kim, had been in California when the women's movement started. She was interested in the movement itself, but her involvement was generally limited to reading books and magazines. Marilyn was born in Montreal in 1944, and was sixty-four at the time of her interview. She was raised in a secular Jewish home. Her grandparents were immigrants to Canada while both of her parents had been born in Montreal. Marilyn was highly educated, with both a bachelor's degree and a master's degree. She was not affiliated with any Jewish denomination. She never married or had any children and always felt like she was an outsider in the Jewish community of Montreal. She attributed this to her attitudes towards gender. She saw herself as more of a man, in that she was intelligent and interested in mathematics. She told me that she was unable to resolve her feelings of being like a man with the prescribed roles for women she saw in her youth. She told me of her struggle to overcome this gender dichotomy, insisting that her family never taught her how to be "female."¹⁰³

The similarities between Dana, Kim, and Marilyn's accounts are significant. Marilyn's family had always been secular. Dana and Kim rejected the Jewish religion specifically, though

they retained a sense of themselves as secular and culture Jews. Further, while both identified as Jewish, they felt that their Jewishness was not the most important factor in their involvement in the women's movement. Instead, Dana and Marilyn came to the women's movement out of their desire to find a community of like-minded people, while Kim became a feminist after her experiences of sexism in the hippie community.

The disjunction between feminism and Judaism in the lives of my feminist participants appears to be consistent with the experiences of American feminist Jews. There appear to be three interrelated reasons why this was so: universalist ideas in the women's movement, the prevalence of anti-Semitism in the women's movement, and the perception that Jews held privileged positions in society. I will discuss each in turn, beginning with universalist ideas in the women's movement.

In "Jewish Feminism Faces the American Women's Movement: Convergence and Divergence," Paula Hyman argues that, for many Jewish women, race or ethnicity did not come into the equation.¹⁰⁴ She explains that "despite the fact that Shulamith Firestone and Robin Morgan, as well as Betty Friedan, were of Jewish origin, none dealt specifically with Judaism or with the Jewish community. [...] Within feminism, this reticence was reinforced by the presumption that gender trumped all other aspects of identity."¹⁰⁵ Despite the overwhelming presence of Jewish women in the women's liberation movement, many of Pinsky's interviewees continually asserted that Jewishness was not considered an important issue. Further, many were either not aware of other Jews within particular consciousness-raising groups or did not see it as significant if there were other Jews there. Her interviewee, Kathie, sums up her ignorance of other Jewish women best: "we knew each other was Jewish. It was not something we talked

about, it wasn't that we hid, but it wasn't like a conscious bond... You know, the Jewishness wasn't something that we talked about or cared about that much. It just was."¹⁰⁶

Second, the prevalence of anti-Semitism in the women's movement caused some feminist Jews to downplay or conceal their Jewishness. Joyce Antler, in "We Were Ready to Turn The World Upside Down: Radical Feminism and Jewish women," points to the political climate into the late 1960s as a major factor in the minimization of Jewish identity among Jewish feminists. A number of non-Jewish second-wave feminists were opposed to Israel's military activities in the Arab-Israeli War of 1967. Their objections could, at times, carry overtones of anti-Semitism. Further, many progressive Jewish women felt uneasy about their Jewish identities as a result of Israel's actions.¹⁰⁷ Diner and Benderly also argued that the Jewish feminists downplayed their Jewish identities as a product of anti-Semitism within the women's movement. In particular, they note that the anti-Zionist rhetoric often alienated Jewish women. She argues that "Jewish feminists began to suspect that their much vaunted sisterhood, though powerful, might not be free of ancient religious bigotry. For the first time in years, even decades, some began to wonder whether they were not only women but also Jews."¹⁰⁸ However, Pinsky is careful to qualify this discussion. As she explains, "there are shades of oppression, from invisibility to marginalization, from anti-Zionism to overt anti-Semitism"¹⁰⁹

Finally, the perception that Jews held privileged positions in society also kept some feminist Jews from asserting their Jewish identities. One of Antler's interviewees noted that her Jewish identity was actually a source of embarrassment: "the obvious Jewishness, both on the left and in women's liberation, was suppressed. We didn't talk about it... It was so embarrassing to have so many Jews around."¹¹⁰ She elaborated that she felt this way because Jews were no longer "the workers who built the garrisons."¹¹¹ Daniel Horowitz also points out the privileged

position that many Jews held, or were perceived to hold, in society compared to more oppressed groups like African-Americans and Hispanics.¹¹² He links this to "a waning sense, whatever the reality, of Jews as an oppressed minority"¹¹³ in favour of "more oppressed" groups. As I noted in my chapter on body history, Jews occupy an ambiguous racial position. At various points in time, Jews have been considered white and not-white. While often identified as a racial other, some Jews have been able to "pass" as white because of their skin colour, and can thus sometimes take advantage of white privilege. Regardless of the realities of the situation, Jews were seen to hold a privileged position in comparison to non-white individuals, particularly African-Americans, and were therefore no longer subject to "racial" oppression. Jews, therefore, were not seen to be in a position to "complain" about their oppression.¹¹⁴

In sum, in the United States, there was a disconnect between Jewishness and feminism, or what Pinsky describes as "silences around Jewishness."¹¹⁵ She emphasizes the deliberate nature of the omission: silence around Jewishness was "not an issue of faulty memory, but rather was reflective of the silences in their experiences."¹¹⁶ However, it appears that there were strong links between feminism and Jewishness, even for individuals who denied this.

Pinsky in particular notes the importance of *Tikkun Olam* as social justice among her interviewees. A number of her interviewees, while rejecting the Jewish religion, embraced Jewish ethics as the foundation for their activism. Her interviewees would select various aspects of Judaism and incorporate them into their lives while simultaneously rejecting others. Many emphasized the importance of performing *mitzvahs*, good deeds, and their "desire to repair the world." Others pointed to their particular experiences of social justice with respect to their parents. A number of secular feminist Jews in Pinsky's study came from activist families. These individuals often had one or more parents involved in communism or socialism and believed

strongly that social justice is essential to Judaism. Similarly, liberal Jews often argued that Jews historically have been activists for social justice and were inherently moral.¹¹⁷ Dana's own experiences of communism within her family seem to fall in line with the experiences of Pinsky's interviewees. Antler argues similarly and asserts that grounding in Jewish radical culture influenced many early feminist activists.¹¹⁸

Interestingly, Antler also raises Jewish mothers as role models for feminist Jews. The strength and independence of some Jewish mothers could serve as inspirations. In other instances, "their nurturing and caring attitudes"¹¹⁹ inculcated young Jewish women in the Jewish ideals of social justice. Finally, some Jewish daughters were inspired to enter the feminist movement after observing their mothers' frustrations with the limitations of their lives under postwar domestic ideals. Some young women also "felt mainly anger, and sometimes betrayal, at what they viewed as mothers' subordination to fathers and to men generally,"¹²⁰ such as when "a politically radical mother [...] gave up her career as a concert pianist to raise her family."¹²¹

In contrast to Jewish feminists, feminist Jews did not necessarily identify with the Jewish religion. Instead, their Jewishness was seen as an ethnic or cultural identity rather than a religious one. In other words, they "referred to themselves as secular Jews, [...] 'cultural Jews,' 'politically Jews,' or, in the case of one interviewee, a 'culinary Jew.'"¹²² Indeed, there was a range of experiences for secular Jews. Pinsky notes that some "mentioned being Jewish only incidentally and said that it is something they do not think much about. On the other hand, others claimed to be very strongly Jewish, even though they are secular."¹²³

This disconnection from the Jewish religion was central to many feminist Jews and key to their own perspective about the tension between their feminist and Jewish identities. The label "religion" was given to aspects of the Jewish religion that were seen by feminist Jews as sexist.

Or, as Pinsky puts it: "she relegates the problematic content of Jewishness to religion and thereby diminishes its personal impact."¹²⁴

As I mentioned earlier, three accounts do not offer sufficient evidence to make any conclusions. Nonetheless, Dana, Kim, and Marilyn's experiences do reflect Pinsky's assertion that the relationship between Judaism and feminism is complex and inconsistent. As she notes, "the same individuals may claim that Jewishness and feminism are both congruent and dissonant, or that they have changed their position on this at various points in their lives. The divergence of approaches and understandings of this relationship among my respondents points to the multiple meanings and configurations of interlocking identities."¹²⁵ She continued by noting that, "Jewishness means different things to different people, and it can be integrated with other identities, including variously defined feminist identities."¹²⁶

Feminist Discrimination

I was surprised to discover that many of my participants brought up the subject of women's rights in their discussions of non-Ashkenazi Jewish sects. This was particularly true among the thirty participants who did not self-identify as feminist. Specifically, these individuals spoke out against the treatment of women in Sephardic, Hassidic, and Yemenite communities. As I delved deeper into their comments, it became clear that complex forces were at work. In my chapters on body history and food history, I discussed how Ashkenazi Jews strove to reinforce their middle-class, white, and Canadian identities through the othering of different groups of Jews. My analysis reveals that a similar phenomenon was at work when Ashkenazi women discussed women's rights in relation to non-Ashkenazi Jewish women.

Many critiques in both the publications of the Ashkenazi Jewish women of Montreal and my interviewees echoed a very basic form of feminism and women's rights, particularly on issues of access to education and domestic/spousal abuse. Non-Ashkenazi cultures were singled out and criticized for the exclusion of women from public life. Since *Orah* was Zionist, it dedicated a fair number of its pages to Israel. A certain percentage of these articles looked at the position of Arab, Sephardic and Mizrahi women. For instance, the very first edition includes an article titled "Rosh Hashanah in Israel." While this article is ostensibly a look at how different cultures celebrate Rosh Hashanah, it is surprisingly critical of the treatment of Yemenite women. In particular, the exclusion of women from formal religious services is characterized in an unflattering light:

Most of the immigrants from the oriental lands exclude women from the synagogues, but the ladies gather outside dressed in their finest clothes – the Yemenite women embroider their magnificent dresses and trousers. The wise old men reject most indignantly a suggestion that there is contempt in this exclusion – they say the woman's place is that of home-maker. But their customs formerly permitted polygamy (up to four wives) and the husband would reject a wife for little reason by the man.¹²⁷

In addition to the outright orientalism of Yemenite women, with their "exotic" costumes, "magnificent dresses and trousers," the article emphasizes the lack of respect that Yemenite men have for Yemenite women. Throughout this article, author Philip seems to be saying that "these" men are more backwards than "our" (Canadian) men. Indeed, he emphasizes what he interprets as contempt in the voice of the Yemenite elder. This implies that while both the Yemenite elder and Ashkenazi Jews view women's responsibilities as centred on the home, only the latter accords their women the proper respect for their important work.

Many of these views were reflected and reinforced by the women and men that I interviewed. Karen spoke about the difficulties of being an Ashkenazi woman married to a Sephardic man. She was born in Montreal in 1953 to two Ashkenazi Montrealers. Their status as native Montrealers was a source of pride to both her and her parents. She obtained a bachelor's degree and a number of teaching certificates, and taught for many years. She married a Sephardic man in 1980, with whom she had a son and twin daughters. Throughout her interview she emphasized the good relationship she had with her husband. However, she insisted that he was an exception to most Sephardic men: "It's complicated, also when you're Ashkenazi and Sephardic, the slightly different traditions, or, not in terms of, like my husband like you know, sitting around waiting for me to wait on him, not that kind of stuff, he's not like that, but different expectations, like stupid things."¹²⁸ Even though she acknowledges that her husband treats her well, she appears to buy into the stereotype that Sephardic men treat women, particularly their wives, badly.

Other critiques are similar to those put forward regarding the physical appearance of Hassidic and Sephardic Jews. In these instances, the middle-class Canadian identities of the Ashkenazi Jews speaking are shored up through the othering of Hassidic and Sephardic Jews. They are portrayed as "coming from elsewhere," "different," entirely apart from the Ashkenazi Jews. The othering of Hassidic and Sephardic Jews serves to distance them from the Ashkenazi community, whose culture is then normalized. Further, many of these critiques draw upon liberal second-wave feminist ideologies.

Beth was quite critical of the treatment of Hassidic women and recalled stirring up trouble with the rabbi at her daughter's Chabad¹²⁹ synagogue. However, Beth reserved her most stringent critique for the treatment of Sephardic women by Sephardic men. Beth was sixty-three

at the time of her interview. Born and raised in Montreal, she was raised in a non-traditional Reform Jewish family, though she spent much of her childhood with her Orthodox extended family. She strongly identifies with her Ashkenazi heritage. She was troubled by what she saw as the patriarchal nature of Sephardic culture. As she notes, “ I get the impression that Sephardic, that it's a patriarchal society. The Sephardic men are a little more macho than Ashkenazi men. [...]Um, I don't necessarily know that, I don't know a lot of Sephardic men, but the few that I have encountered, I would not have married, because they're a little too chauvinistic for me. [...] But they'll come around, they haven't been in this country for that long, they'll change.¹³⁰

It is quite clear that Beth associates the proper treatment of women with Canadian values. Sephardic men, in her eyes, are backwards, largely because they have not yet sufficiently assimilated into Canadian society. She distinguishes between Canadian Jews (Ashkenazi) and non-Canadian Jews (Sephardic and Hassidic). Their status as Canadian or non-Canadian depended not on one's citizenship papers, but the extent to which Canadian values had been adopted, at least in line with those considered important by Ashkenazi Jews. She alludes to what she sees as the persistence of out-dated customs among Sephardi Jews, notably, child beating. Indeed, she identifies physical domestic violence as the ultimate cause of the subsequent problem of macho Sephardi men who abuse their women. She is clear to differentiate between Ashkenazi Jews (us) and Sephardi Jews (them). And yet, she appears to contradict herself when she asserts, proudly, that Ashkenazi women abuse Ashkenazi men and coerce them into behaving appropriately. While I believe that she is speaking metaphorically, and is actually arguing that the woman is the dominant party in an Ashkenazi marriage, it is significant that she describes this as "beating the crap" out of Ashkenazi men.

Leah takes the us/them paradigm even further than Beth. Leah was born in Montreal in 1928, making her eighty at the time of her interview. Her parents were Eastern European immigrants. Her childhood was characterized by poverty and the strict religious observance of her parents. She finished high school and attended university for one year before marrying a non-religious Jewish man. Together they had three children, two sons and a daughter. She abandoned the Jewish religion early in her marriage over what she called hypocrisy in the synagogue, particularly the class-based discrimination she saw in the synagogue. She worked throughout her life, helping with her husband in his textile and sewing supply business.

When speaking to me about feminism, she asserted that she felt that men and women had their own place, and claimed she did not resent this. However, she was quite critical of other cultures in the area of women's rights. Many of these criticisms seem to echo second-wave feminist ideas about gender equality. This is what she had to say about Sephardic Jews:

One of my friends [...], the son married a Moroccan Jewish girl. And we went to the Henna party, and everything, and everything was nice. Two years later, he's having a divorce from her. What happened, he caught her in bed with his friend. Okay, this happens anywhere. So the father said, rich boy, you know, he says, why are you divorcing her? He caught her in bed with somebody else. You don't divorce her for that, you knock the shit out of her, beat her up, she won't do it again. The father, telling the son in law to beat his daughter up. That's what the Moroccans do, the women can fool around and play. You beat the shit out of them and then its over. Their mentality is completely different than ours. You see, and he was an Ashkenazi like me, so he wouldn't stand for it. So he divorced her. But the Moroccans couldn't understand, why you get a divorce for something around that. They're animals, they're from Africa.¹³¹

Like Beth, she believed that a large part of the poor treatment of women related to physical abuse. She also engages in victim blaming when she implies that Moroccan women cheat with

the assumption that they will only suffer a physical beating as a punishment, rather than divorce. She also differentiates between "our" and "their" culture. However, she takes the Canadian/non-Canadian dichotomy to an entirely new level. Rather than simply asserting that Moroccan men and women have not assimilated to Canadian values (like not beating your wife) as have Ashkenazi Jews, she de-humanizes Sephardi Jews by calling them "animals." She believes that their tendency towards wife beating is the result of their "unevolved" state. And she takes the metaphor even further by saying that "they're from Africa." Leah implies that Africa is a barbarous (read, foreign) place populated by individuals who are not human, but animals. Her use of language appears to liken Moroccan Jews to primitive apes, human-like in appearance but lacking in "civilized" behaviour and reverting to physical violence to solve any problem.

Leah was also critical of Hassidic Jews, though she did not refer to them as animals.¹³² This is what she had to say about her experiences with them and her thoughts on their behaviour: "And when they come in, they won't talk to me [because I am a woman so my male colleague] has to serve them. Now, he'll ask them the question, and he doesn't know, so he has to ask me. I'll tell the question, he'll say to him, what did she say? [...] Then it comes, I musn't cut it, I musn't touch it. And when it comes to money they don't give me, they give him. I musn't make the bill. [...] Won't look at me."¹³³ She further added,

then [a Hassidic woman] come[s] in, she's pregnant, she's got one by the hand, you know. And she's taking a course in something or other in what I sell. And I said, well, why would you want to do this. She says, We have to make a business when they're young so they have something to go into, because they can't go to college to be a doctor or a lawyer, our religion doesn't allow it. And I look at them, and I think, hey lady are you for real. You're in Canada, why are you tying down your children. Then, another lady comes in, very with it, and she's also starting a business, but she only has two children, or three. So I says, how come? In your religion, its six, eight., ten. And when we put things in the car, we see six car seats for the kids. She says, I went to the rabbi and told him I

*couldn't, I'm too nervous, I'm too this, I'm too that. And he gave me a dispensation. Good. You know, there's one that used her brain.*¹³⁴

Like Beth, she viewed Canada as a "modern" and liberal country. According to Leah, any immigrant to Canada should conform to her view, and to her perception of the Canadian government's view, that all individuals should be free to decide their own fates. She was critical of Hassidic Jews for preserving what she understands as "Old World customs" of submission. In other words, Leah believed that the idea that a wife should submit to her husband's will and that a child should submit to his father's will is a remnant of an old fashioned way of life that is inconsistent with the Canadian way of life. According to Leah, the fact that Hassidic Jews subscribe to this notion of submission is an indication that they have failed to adopt Canadian values and are thus a backwards people. She extends this view by critiquing Hassidic women in particular, viewing their submission as evidence of their mindlessness and their status as uncomplaining passive victims of domineering husbands.

Both David and Linda worried about how the treatment of Hassidic Jewish women reflected on all Jews. Their analysis of Hassidic women again emphasizes the difference between us (Canadian Jews) and them (other Jews). David had major problems with the treatment of women by Lubavitch men. David was born in Montreal in 1951. He was fifty-seven at the time of his interview. He was the adopted son of Diane, another interviewee. He considers himself to be a fourth-generation Canadian Jew, because his father's grandfather arrived in Canada at the age of four while his mother's family were farmers on the Canadian prairies. He was raised in a Conservative Jewish home, though as a young man he gave up the religion. He did this because of his perception of hypocrisy in the Jewish religious community. He eventually got married, and had two daughters. He graduated university with a bachelor's degree, and has worked in numerous fields over the years. David had strong views about the role of Jewish women. He

found the treatment of women in Hassidic culture to be particularly problematic considering their important positions: "If that's true, then what the hell are the men for, where are they, what are they good for? And yet they [Hassidic Jews] come off, I find that most of their traditions are barbaric. Neanderthal in some cases.¹³⁵ According to David, Jewish women were the key to the Jewish religion. He views men are largely unnecessary. However, he identifies Hassidic religious practices as "barbaric" and "Neanderthal." In this respect, he echoes Leah. While he does not use the terms "animals" or "from Africa," nor was he speaking of Sephardic Jews, he implies that Hassidic Jews as non-humans, or primitive animals. By calling them "barbaric," he is implying that they lack any civilization. In this instance, David uses it as a pejorative term to describe Hassidic Jews as belonging to a primitive society that is uncivilized. He extends this metaphor through the use of the term "Neanderthal." David uses it to describe Hassidic Jews as "unevolved," "primitive," and "uncivilized." David's use of the term suggests that this is how he sees Hassidic Jews.

He later continued by noting the following:

I have a lot of non-Jewish friends, One of the things they find the most distasteful about Judaism, is our blatant patriarchal stature. That the women really are a second-class citizen. But they're kept, they want them home barefoot and pregnant. You know. It's not just a statement. Why's a Hassidic woman shave her head? Why do they make love, they have to do it with a sheet between them to make sure they shouldn't touch skin to skin. That's not natural, that's not natural. That's contrived by somebody.¹³⁶

David first implies that Hassidic Jews are increasingly seen as representative of all Jews in Canada, and that he believes that this is a significant problem. By criticizing their lifestyles and culture, he is asserting his Canadian identity and setting himself apart from Hassidic Jews. He sees Hassidic Jews as giving Canadian Jews "a bad name," that Canadian Jews become guilty of

misogyny by association. Further, he critiques Hassidic Jews for treating women as "second-class citizens." In this respect, David appears to endorse the notion of gender equality as a goal. He implies that all individuals, regardless of gender, should be considered full citizens, without any differentiation. In this respect, he implies that Hassidic men are forcibly depriving their women of their fundamental democratic rights as free citizens. Throughout, he ensures that the division between Hassidic Jews and Canadian Jews is clear, at least in his mind, and endeavours to convince others of the truth of this.

Finally, Linda echoed David's concerns that Hassidic Jews negatively influence other Canadians in their perceptions of Jews as a whole. Linda was born in Montreal in 1948, and she was sixty at the time of her interview. Both of her parents were born in Montreal, while her grandparents originated in Eastern Europe. She grew up in what she described as a very liberal household, where the emphasis was on Jewish ethics rather than religious observance. She attended university and graduated with several degrees and certificates, and became a teacher. She married a non-Jewish man, and together they had two sons. While her parents affiliated with a Conservative synagogue, Linda herself began attending a Reform synagogue after she was married. She is firm in her view that religion should be a private matter only, never aired in public. When the subject of Hassidic Jews entered into our discussion, she asserted that:

I hate them, the views. I don't hate the people, because they probably don't know better. But I really resent it. And you know my father brought me up. If he didn't tell me a million times, you know what the Orthodox Jews say everyday,[...] thank God I'm not a snake, and thank God I'm not a woman. You know, to toughen me up. You don't, you know, you don't buy into that stuff. So you know, I can't stand it. Makes me feel a little bit ashamed if other people think that that all Jews would think that women are not on the same level.¹³⁷

Linda employs strong language in her discussion of Hassidic Jews. While she asserts that she does not "hate the people" and paints them as passive dupes of their rabbis, her use of the term "hate" makes me question her true feelings on the subject. Further, despite emphasizing that her problem is with Hassidic beliefs, she points to the prayer recited by men as a significant problem. Her problem is not with the prayer itself, but that it is recited by men. And again, she is clear to differentiate between herself and Hassidic Jews. While she does not employ terms that suggest that Hassidic Jews are less than human, she makes it clear that her father did not "bring her up" in the same manner. And she laments the negative influence that Hassidic Jews have had on Canadians in their perception of Jews in general. She tries to distance herself from themselves as much as possible.

Finally, Aviva was very vocal that it was impossible to do the history of ordinary Orthodox or Israeli Jewish women. Aviva herself was born in Israel (then Palestine) in 1939. She was sixty-nine at the time of her interview. She grew up under the austere conditions of the young state. Her parents were university-educated. She came to Montreal in 1957 on a visit, and ended up staying. She married a Montreal-born Jew, graduated university with a Master's degree, and spent the rest of her life working as a librarian and historian. She claimed to be a secular Jew. Most of her critiques identified the Jewish religion as a problem:

The Jewish religion, really [...] the authority comes from the male figure, whether it's the rabbi or the husband. The woman, she complies, but it's never her voice that you hear, it's always the voice that she kind of responds to. Where is her voice? I don't know where. I mean, the more secular you are, the more voice you have. The more Orthodox you are, the less voice you have. Because you just follow blindly. The strictures, the rules, and what they said about before you, you have absolutely no way of changing that. You know, so religion in a way, I mean. I know there's all kinds of efforts on some women, [...] where you insist of going up to the Bimah, and doing whatever you do, but that's not even recognized by Orthodox Judaism. Which is the only one

*that counts. [...] Where is the great voice, where is the great religious women's voice?*¹³⁸

In this instance, Aviva demonstrated Pinsky's argument that feminist Jews were able to reconcile their feminist and Jewish identities by relegating all misogynist practices to the category of the Jewish religion. Thus, the feminist Jew can be a secular Jew, maintaining a Jewish cultural identity while rejecting what she sees as the sexist elements in Judaism generally. Similarly, Aviva asserts that the Orthodox Jewish religion is fundamentally misogynist and is at the root of the poor treatment of Jewish women by Jewish men. The problem, according to Aviva, is the emphasis on strictly following the rules and the lack of women as religious leaders. Aviva sees the end result of this is the elevation of Jewish men over Jewish women.

Aviva continues her critique of the Jewish religion by extending her argument to Hassidic Jews. She asserts that Hassidic men treat Hassidic women like children. She argues her point by discussing the religious education of Hassidic women:

*You know [Tseinah Ureina], that's the watered down childish version of the prayer book with all the stories fit for women to read. I mean, it wasn't even the real text. It was like the watered down version for little bubbemeisters[old wives' tales, literally grandmother tales]. [...] It was the book that women were allowed to read. They were not good enough to pray in Hebrew. [...] Where is the great honourable role of women and religion? I'd like to know. [...] Women had no choice. You want to know how things really are, ask Israeli women, or Hassidic women, they're like slaves.*¹³⁹

With this argument Aviva illustrates her assertion that the Orthodox Jewish religion is detrimental to Jewish women. Hassidic Jews are said to practice modern Orthodox Judaism, though in general their observance is much stricter than other Orthodox Jews. Aviva identifies the lack of attention paid to the religious education of women as evidence of a significant

problem. She argues that, among Hassidic Jews, women are seen as children, unable to understand the full complexities of the Jewish religion. She extends her argument, without any further evidence, to Israeli women as well. While it clearly bothers her that women are not respected in religious Judaism, she believes that religious women are nothing more than passive victims. These women, for Aviva, are unable to even speak with their own voices, for everything that comes out of their mouths must inevitably be traced back to the male authorities in their lives.

While my interviewees at times had very different things to say regarding Hassidic, Sephardic, and Yemenite Jews there are two common themes. The first is an emphatic distinction made between Canadian Jews (Ashkenazi) and other Jews. This distinction takes many forms, whether through an emphasis on their foreignness or describing them less than human, primitive, and uncivilized. Second, while my interviewees claim to be concerned about the state of women among Hassidic and Sephardic Jews in particular, their concern disguises a deeper desire to reinforce their position as the "representative" Jews of Canada. This is illustrated by the constant othering of Hassidic and Sephardic Jews, arguing that their treatment of women is what sets Canadian (Ashkenazi) Jews apart. One, the Hassidic and Sephardic Jews, are "bad" while the other, Canadian Jews, are good. And these Canadian Jews are good because they follow wider Canadian middle class values rather than harking back to primitive and uncivilized views from the Old World. Meanwhile, "bad" Jews who abuse women give all Jews a bad name.¹⁴⁰

Conclusion

The relationship between feminism and the Jews of Montreal in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s was complex and constantly changing. In some instances, this relationship was consistent with happenings in other Canadian communities. Far from being an era of Stepford wives, the 1950s and early 1960s were a time of feminist discussions around the role of women and work. Many of these arguments centred around the advantages and disadvantages of married women working. The debates that appeared in *Orah* and the *Woman's Work Agenda* echo those found by Korinek in *Chatelaine*, though they seem to have been more conservative overall than *Chatelaine*. At other times, particularly in the late 1960s, there was considerable variation. Despite the prevalence of feminist debates, and the strong presence of Jewish women at the forefront of the women's liberation movement, the majority of my participants did not identify as feminists. While many supported notions of women's rights, they rejected a complete change of gender ideologies. This partial integration of feminism was in large part due to the importance placed on Jewish women as bearers of Jewish culture.

Further variation appeared among those of my participants who did consider themselves to be feminist. While only three of my participants were involved directly or indirectly in second-wave feminism, their comments are sufficient to suggest some common experiences. Feminist Jews had what, at times, seem to be contradictory feminist and Jewish identities. My feminist participants asserted that their Jewishness was not a factor in their feminism. But a deeper analysis of their comments in light of recent American studies suggest that their activism may have been rooted in Jewish ideals of social justice. Further, they may have been able to reconcile their Jewish identities by associating misogyny with the Jewish religion, and separating religion entirely from Jewish culture. Thus, these participants were able to see themselves as feminists but also as cultural Jews. The relationship between feminism and Jewishness becomes

more complex when considering the participation of Jews in the women's movement as a whole. While a dominant force, Jewish women were silent about their Jewishness. This was the result of perceived anti-Semitism, anti-Zionism, an emphasis on gender as opposed to ethnicity, and the increasing view of Jews as a privileged (or at the very least, not oppressed) people.

Finally, feminism influenced Ashkenazi critiques of Hassidic, Sephardic, and Yemenite Jews. Many of these critiques revolved around the perception of the poor treatment of women and misogynist aspects of their cultures. These commentaries often disguised a strong desire to create a distinction between Ashkenazi Jews and Hassidic, Sephardic, and Yemenite Jews. Indeed, the testimony of my participants often emphasized differentiation and a paradigm of us versus them. This system of differentiation emphasized the Canadian nature of Ashkenazi Jews while relegating Hassidic, Sephardic, and Yemenite Jews to the Old World, and even at times, to the status of animals.

All of these insights come together to emphasize the importance of studying groups of individuals rather than creating overarching narratives about the experiences of all Canadian women. As the work of Billson, Antler, Pinsky, Abrams, and myself demonstrates, conventional explanations about the impact of second-wave feminism do not necessarily apply. The integration of feminism into the Ashkenazi community of Montreal happened over the course of several decades, starting in the 1950s. And this integration was inconsistent; individuals selectively incorporated aspects of feminism as they felt it applied to their own experiences. There was no singular moment, no realizations that fundamentally altered world-views, no revolution. Instead, there were only individuals using those means available to make sense of their place in the world.

¹ Lynn Abrams, "Mothers and Daughters: Narrating a Path to the Individualized Self in Post-War British Women's Lives." (presentation, University of Victoria, Department of History, March 7, 2011).

² Lynn Abrams, "Mothers and Daughters: Narrating a Path to the Individualized Self in Post-War British Women's Lives." (presentation, University of Victoria, Department of History, March 7, 2011).

³ Lynn Abrams, "Mothers and Daughters: Narrating a Path to the Individualized Self in Post-War British Women's Lives." (presentation, University of Victoria, Department of History, March 7, 2011).

⁴ Lynn Abrams, "Mothers and Daughters: Narrating a Path to the Individualized Self in Post-War British Women's Lives." (presentation, University of Victoria, Department of History, March 7, 2011).

⁵ Wini Breines, *Young, White, and Miserable: Growing Up Female in the Fifties* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992).

⁶ Joanne Meyerowitz, ed., *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994).

⁷ Susan Hartman, "Women's Employment and the Domestic Ideal in the Early Cold War," in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960*, ed. Joanne Meyerowitz (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 84-101; Susan Lynn, "Gender and Progressive Politics: A Bridge to Social Activism of the 1960s," in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960*, ed. Joanne Meyerowitz (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 103-127; Donna Penn, "The Sexualized Woman: The Lesbian, the Prostitute, and the Containment of Female Sexuality in Postwar America," in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960*, ed. Joanne Meyerowitz (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 335-381; Rickie Solinger, "Extreme Danger: Women Abortionists and Their Clients before Roe V. Wade," in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960*, ed. Joanne Meyerowitz (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 335-357.

⁸ Meyerowitz, "Introduction," in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960*, ed. Joanne Meyerowitz (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 1-18.

⁹ Janet Mancini Billson, "Keepers of the Culture," *Women & Politics* 14, no. 1 (1994): 7-8.

¹⁰ Billson, "Keepers of the Culture," 8.

¹¹ Billson, "Keepers of the Culture," 8.

¹² Billson, "Keepers of the Culture," 8.

¹³ Joan Sangster, *Transforming Labour: Women and Work in Post-War Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 27.

¹⁴ CJCCCNA ZF B.B. Publications Box 1, "Women in the Community," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1953.

¹⁵ CJCCCNA ZF B.B. Publications Box 1, "Women in the Community: Women's Rights in the Province of Quebec" *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1955/1956, 72.

¹⁶ CJCCCNA ZF B.B. Publications Box 1, "Women in the Community: Women's Rights in the Province of Quebec" *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1955/1956, 72..

- ¹⁷ CJCCCNA ZF B.B. Publications Box 1, "Women in the Community: Women's Rights in the Province of Quebec" *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1955/1956, 72..
- ¹⁸ CJCCCNA ZF B.B. Publications Box 1, "Women in the Community: Women's Rights in the Province of Quebec" *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1955/1956, 72..
- ¹⁹ CJCCCNA ZF B.B. Publications Box 1, "Women and their Careers," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1963, 9-10.
- ²⁰ CJCCCNA ZF B.B. Publications Box 1, Ellen Fairclough, "C'mon in, the water's fine," *Woman's Work Agenda*. 1963, 11, 13.
- ²¹ CJCCCNA ZF B.B. Publications Box 1, Margaret P. Hyndman, "Women – Then and Now," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1963, 75-76.
- ²² CJCCCNA ZF B.B. Publications Box 1, Lorraine Monk, "Here, There, Everywhere," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1963, 79, 81.
- ²³ CJCCCNA ZF B.B. Publications Box 1, Ruth E. Addison, "How Do you Rate?," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1963, 87.
- ²⁴ CJCCCNA ZF B.B. Publications Box 1, Irene Baird, "It's Worth It If," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1963, 93.
- ²⁵ CJCCCNA ZF B.B. Publications Box 1, Irene Baird, "It's Worth It If," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1963, 93.
- ²⁶ CJCCCNA ZF B.B. Publications Box 1, Irene Baird, "It's Worth It If," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1963, 94.
- ²⁷ CJCCCNA ZF B.B. Publications Box 1, Irene Baird, "It's Worth It If," *Woman's Work Agenda*, 1963, 94.
- ²⁸ CJCCCNA ZF/ZG p06/09 *Orah* Box 1 and 2, Ilana David, "The Iceman Cometh Not," *Orah* May 1961,16.
- ²⁹ CJCCCNA ZF/ZG p06/09 *Orah* Box 1 and 2, Ilana David, "The Iceman Cometh Not," *Orah* May 1961,16-17.
- ³⁰ CJCCCNA ZF/ZG p06/09 *Orah* Box 1 and 2, Ilana David, "The Iceman Cometh Not," *Orah* May 1961,17.
- ³¹ CJCCCNA ZF/ZG p06/09 *Orah* Box 1 and 2, Ilana David, "The Iceman Cometh Not," *Orah* May 1961,17.
- ³² CJCCCNA ZF/ZG p06/09 *Orah* Box 1 and 2, Nina Cohen, "The Real World of Woman," *Orah* November 1962, 13.
- ³³ CJCCCNA ZF/ZG p06/09 *Orah* Box 1 and 2, Nina Cohen, "The Real World of Woman," *Orah* November 1962, 14.
- ³⁴ I do not mean to suggest here that the experiences of Jewish women deviate from the mainstream Canadian experience or that of other immigrant groups. However, at the moment, I only have enough information to limit these statements to the people and period under study.
- ³⁵ For a fascinating discussion of Jewish women activists before the era of Betty Freidan, please see Raymond A. Mohl, "Some of Us Were There before Betty: Jewish women and Political Activism in Postwar Miami," in *A Jewish Feminine Mystique? : Jewish Women in Postwar America*, ed. Hasia R. Diner, Shira Kohn, and Rachel Kranson (New Brunswick N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 13-30.
- ³⁶ Beryl Lieff Benderly and Hasia R. Diner, *Her Works Praise Her: A History of Jewish Women in America from Colonial Times to the Present* (New York: BasicBooks, 2002), 397.

- ³⁷ For more information on the NAC, please see Vanaja Dhruvarajan, "Women of Colour in Canada", in *Gender, Race, and Nation: A Global Perspective*, eds. Vanaja Dhruvarajan and Jill Vickers, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002) 99-122.
- ³⁸ For more on second-wave feminism in Canada, please see Gail Cuthbert Brandt, *Canadian Women: A History*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: Nelson Education, 2010), 520-549.
- ³⁹ Korinek, *Roughing it in the Suburbs*, 364.
- ⁴⁰ In the earliest periods, this played out between liberal feminism (equality) and maternal feminism (difference). For more information, please see: Seth Koven, *Mothers of a New World: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States* (New York: Routledge, 1993).
- ⁴¹ CJCCCNA ZF/ZG p06/09 *Orah* box 1 and 2, Ethel Kaiser, "A Special Report on the Status of Women in Israel: Politician," *Orah* September 1968, 4.
- ⁴² CJCCCNA ZF/ZG p06/09 *Orah* box 1 and 2, Ethel Kaiser, "A Special Report on the Status of Women in Israel: Politician," *Orah* September 1968, 4.
- ⁴³ CJCCCNA ZF/ZG p06/09 *Orah* box 1 and 2, Erika Oyserman, "David Ben Gurion: An Exclusive Interview," *Orah* July/August 1969, 20.
- ⁴⁴ CJCCCNA ZF/ZG p06/09 *Orah* box 1 and 2, Erika Oyserman, "David Ben Gurion: An Exclusive Interview," *Orah* July/August 1969, 20.
- ⁴⁵ CJCCCNA ZF/ZG p06/09 *Orah* box 1 and 2, Erika Oyserman, "David Ben Gurion: An Exclusive Interview," *Orah* July/August 1969, 20.
- ⁴⁶ CJCCCNA ZF/ZG p06/09 *Orah* box 1 and 2, Erika Oyserman, "David Ben Gurion: An Exclusive Interview," *Orah* July/August 1969, 26.
- ⁴⁷ CJCCCNA ZF/ZG p06/09 *Orah* box 1 and 2, Ruth Seligman, "Equal in Rebuilding But....," *Orah* April/May 1973, 4.
- ⁴⁸ CJCCCNA ZF/ZG p06/09 *Orah* box 1 and 2, Ruth Seligman, "Equal in Rebuilding But....," *Orah* April/May 1973, 4.
- ⁴⁹ CJCCCNA ZF/ZG p06/09 *Orah* box 1 and 2, Ruth Seligman, "Equal in Rebuilding But....," *Orah* April/May 1973, 5.
- ⁵⁰ CJCCCNA ZF/ZG p06/09 *Orah* box 1 and 2, Ruth Seligman, "Equal in Rebuilding But....," *Orah* April/May 1973, 5.
- ⁵¹ CJCCCNA ZH Shaar Hashomayim Box 1 Bulletins 1921-1975, File 19 Bulletin Jan 6 - Dec 21 1973, May 25, 1973, 3.
- ⁵² CJCCCNA ZH Shaar Hashomayim Box 1 Bulletins 1921-1975, File 19 Bulletin Jan 6 - Dec 21 1973 May 25, 1973, 3.
- ⁵³ CJCCCNA ZH Temple Emanu-El Box 1 of 2, Bulletin January 19, 1962, 1.
- ⁵⁴ CJCCCNA ZH Temple Emanu-El Box 1 of 2, Bulletin February 23, 1962, 1.
- ⁵⁵ CJCCCNA ZH Temple Emanu-El Box 1 of 2, Bulletin January 31, 1964, 5.
- ⁵⁶ CJCCCNA ZH Temple Emanu-El Box 1 of 2, Bulletin October 22, 1964, 4.
- ⁵⁷ CJCCCNA MB 1 Series C Box 38 FJP – Women's Federation 1954-1963, File 6 Women's Federation Program Material, "Woman's Search for Fulfillment," 1-2.
- ⁵⁸ CJCCCNA MB 1 Series C Box 38 FJP – Women's Federation 1954-1963, File 6 Women's Federation Program Material, "Woman's Search for Fulfillment," 4, 7.
- ⁵⁹ CJCCCNA MB 1 Series C Box 38 FJP – Women's Federation 1954-1963, File 6 Women's Federation Program Material, "Woman's Search for Fulfillment," 15.
- ⁶⁰ CJCCCNA MB 1 Series C Box 38 FJP – Women's Federation 1954-1963, File 6 Women's Federation Program Material, "Woman's Search for Fulfillment," 16.

- ⁶¹ CJCCCNA MB 1 Series C Box 38 FJP – Women's Federation 1954-1963, File 6 Women's Federation Program Material, "Woman's Search for Fulfillment," 17.
- ⁶² CJCCCNA MB 1 Series C Box 38 FJP – Women's Federation 1954-1963, File 9 Material Re Brief to Royal Commission on Status of Women, "Summation of Presentation by Women's Federation AJCS to the Royal Commission on Status of Women in Canada June 14, 1968," 2.
- ⁶³ CJCCCNA MB 1 Series C Box 38 FJP – Women's Federation 1954-1963, File 9 Material Re Brief to Royal Commission on Status of Women, "Summation of Presentation by Women's Federation AJCS to the Royal Commission on Status of Women in Canada June 14, 1968," 2..
- ⁶⁴ Interview 1, interview by author, October 15, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ⁶⁵ Janet Mancini Billson, "Keepers of the Culture," 1-34.
- ⁶⁶ Billson, "Keepers of the Culture," 2.
- ⁶⁷ Billson, "Keepers of the Culture," 3.
- ⁶⁸ Billson, "Keepers of the Culture," 6.
- ⁶⁹ Billson, "Keepers of the Culture," 6.
- ⁷⁰ Billson, "Keepers of the Culture," 7.
- ⁷¹ Billson, "Keepers of the Culture," 9.
- ⁷² Billson, "Keepers of the Culture," 9.
- ⁷³ Billson, "Keepers of the Culture," 10.132
- ⁷⁴ Billson, "Keepers of the Culture," 10.
- ⁷⁵ Billson, "Keepers of the Culture," 11.
- ⁷⁶ Interview 30, interview by author, November 26, 2008, Montreal, Quebec. emphasis added
- ⁷⁷ Ronald L. Eisenberg, "Mechitza," *Dictionary of Jewish Terms: A Guide to the Language of Judaism* (Rocheville, Maryland: Schreiber Publishing, 2008), 279.
- ⁷⁸ In more recent times, others have critiqued the *mechitza* because it sexualizes women and/or makes them into sexual objects. Other criticize it for treating the assumption that all individuals are heterosexual. Ronald L. Eisenberg, "Mechitza," *Dictionary of Jewish Terms: A Guide to the Language of Judaism* (Rocheville, Maryland: Schreiber Publishing, 2008), 279.
- ⁷⁹ Miriam's Cup is a more recent innovation in the Jewish seder. Essential, a goblet with water is placed on the seder table in remembrance of Miriam, sister to Moses. Ronald L. Eisenberg, "Miriam's Cup," *Dictionary of Jewish Terms: A Guide to the Language of Judaism* (Rocheville, Maryland: Schreiber Publishing, 2008), 292.
- ⁸⁰ In a standard bar mitzvah, the celebrant (a boy) reads from the Torah selection of the day. In bat mitzvah, the celebrant (a girl) selects her a passage to read instead.
- ⁸¹ Interview 11, interview by author, November 4, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ⁸² Interview 27, interview by author, November 21, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ⁸³ Interview 18, interview by author, November 14, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ⁸⁴ Interview 2, interview by author, October 15, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ⁸⁵ CJCCCNA ZF/ZG p06/09 *Orah* box 1 and 2, Evelyn Sommer, "WIZO and International Woman's Year," *Orah* March 1975, 9.
- ⁸⁶ CJCCCNA ZF/ZG p06/09 *Orah* box 1 and 2, Evelyn Sommer, "WIZO and International Woman's Year," *Orah* March 1975, 9.
- ⁸⁷ CJCCCNA ZF/ZG p06/09 *Orah* box 1 and 2, Evelyn Sommer, "WIZO and International Woman's Year," *Orah* March 1975, 10.
- ⁸⁸ For other examples of interviewees who emphasized the role of Jewish women as culture bearers see: interview 9, interview by author, November 2, 2008, Montreal, Quebec, interview

10; interview by author, November 3, 2008, Montreal, Quebec; interview 16, interview by author, November 10, 2008, Montreal, Quebec and interview 18, interview by author, November 14, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.

⁸⁹ Interview 20, interview by author, November 12, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.

⁹⁰ Interview 8, interview by author, October 30, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.

⁹¹ This subject is discussed at length in the previous chapter.

⁹² Dina Pinsky, *Jewish Feminists: Complex Identities and Activist Lives*, 1st ed. (University of Illinois Press, 2009), 7.

⁹³ Pinsky, *Jewish Feminists*, 18.

⁹⁴ Pinsky, *Jewish Feminists*, 18.

⁹⁵ Interview 34, interview by author, February 15, 2010, Victoria, British Columbia.

⁹⁶ Interview 34.

⁹⁷ Interview 34.

⁹⁸ Interview 34.

⁹⁹ Interview 34.

¹⁰⁰ Interview 33, interview by author, February 12, 2010, Victoria, British Columbia.

¹⁰¹ Interview 33.

¹⁰² Interview 33.

¹⁰³ Interview 19, interview by author, November 12, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.

¹⁰⁴ Other historians who argue are Joyce Antler, “‘We Were Ready to Turn the World Upside Down:’ Radical Feminism and Jewish Women,” in *A Jewish Feminine Mystique? : Jewish Women in Postwar America*, eds. Hasia R. Diner, Shira Kohn, and Rachel Kranson (New Brunswick N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 225 and Daniel Horowitz, “Jewish Women Remaking American Feminism: Women Remaking American Judaism: Reflections on the Life of Betty Friedan,” in *A Jewish Feminine Mystique? : Jewish Women in Postwar America*, eds. Hasia R. Diner, Shira Kohn, and Rachel Kranson (New Brunswick N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 246.

¹⁰⁵ Paula E. Hyman, “Jewish Feminism Faces the American Women's Movement: Convergence and Divergence,” in *American Jewish Women's History: A Reader*, ed. Pamela Nadell (New York; London, Eng.: New York University Press, 2003), 299.

¹⁰⁶ Pinsky, *Jewish Feminists*, 64.

¹⁰⁷ Antler, “‘We Were Ready to Turn the World Upside Down,’” 225-227.

¹⁰⁸ Benderly and Hasia R. Diner, *Her Works Praise Her: A History of Jewish Women in America from Colonial Times to the Present* (New York: BasicBooks, 2002), 397.

¹⁰⁹ Pinsky, *Jewish Feminists*, 79.

¹¹⁰ Antler, “‘We Were Ready to Turn the World Upside Down,’” 225.

¹¹¹ Antler, “‘We Were Ready to Turn the World Upside Down,’” 225.

¹¹² Horowitz, “Jewish Women Remaking American Feminism,” 246.

¹¹³ Horowitz, “Jewish Women Remaking American Feminism,” 246

¹¹⁴ Karen Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says About Race in America* (Rutgers University Press, 1999), 18.

¹¹⁵ Pinsky, *Jewish Feminists*, 64.

¹¹⁶ Pinsky, *Jewish Feminists*, 64.

¹¹⁷ Pinsky, *Jewish Feminists*, 52-55.

¹¹⁸ Antler, “‘We Were Ready to Turn the World Upside Down,’” 211.

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- ¹¹⁹ Antler, “We Were Ready to Turn the World Upside Down,” 222.
- ¹²⁰ Antler, “We Were Ready to Turn the World Upside Down,” 223.
- ¹²¹ Antler, “We Were Ready to Turn the World Upside Down,” 223.
- ¹²² Pinsky, *Jewish Feminists*, 44.
- ¹²³ Pinsky, *Jewish Feminists*, 48.
- ¹²⁴ Pinsky, *Jewish Feminists*, 49.
- ¹²⁵ Pinsky, *Jewish Feminists*, 96.
- ¹²⁶ Pinsky, *Jewish Feminists*, 97.
- ¹²⁷ CJCCCNA ZF/ZG p06/09 *Orah* box 1 and 2, Philip Gillion, “Rosh Hashanah in Israel,” *Orah* September 1960, 7.
- ¹²⁸ Interview 16, interview by author, November 10, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ¹²⁹ Chabad is a particular Hassidic movement, closely related to the Lubavitch movement I discuss in the previous chapter.
- ¹³⁰ Interview 2, interview by author, October 15, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ¹³¹ Interview 15, interview by author, November 10, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ¹³² It should be noted that while I was clear to specify that these conversations were about their experiences during the 1950s and 1960s, I cannot be sure when my participants were talking about this time period, or allowing more recent experiences to colour their judgments.
- ¹³³ Interview 15, interview by author, November 10, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ¹³⁴ Interview 15.
- ¹³⁵ Interview 20, interview by author, November 12, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ¹³⁶ Interview 20.
- ¹³⁷ Interview 22, interview by author, November 14, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ¹³⁸ Interview 21, interview by author, November 13, 2008, Montreal, Quebec.
- ¹³⁹ Interview 21.
- ¹⁴⁰ This attitude, constructing non-western societies as “primitive” and “other” for treating women badly, is consistent with both some first-wave feminist ideologies as well as general Christian “othering” in the nineteenth century. For more information on this in Canada, please see: Mariana Valverde, “When the Mother of the Race is Free: Race, Reproduction, and Sexuality in First-Wave Feminism,” in *Gender Conflicts: New Essays in Women’s History*, eds. Franca Iacovetta and Mariana Valverde (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1992), 3-26.

Conclusion

As a child growing up in the 1990s in Côte Saint-Luc near Montreal, I took for granted many of the social values and customs that surrounded me. It never occurred to me to question that there was an entire section of the grocery store dedicated to kosher foods. I took it for granted that I could always get Chanukah candles at the pharmacy, and that my school would close on Rosh Hashanah. I thought that everyone knew about the Jewish holidays and could understand Yiddish and Hebrew words like *shul* and *shiva*. I believed that everyone in the world thought and believed like me. And, for the most part, I had no reason to question any of these beliefs. Imagine my surprise when I moved to Victoria.

In many ways, this dissertation has forced me to examine my own worldview in ways that I never imagined. As I noted in my introduction, this dissertation has been part of my journey of self-understanding. But while it began as an attempt to understand my history, it turned into something much greater, and, arguably, more important.

In this dissertation, I argue that from the late 1940s to the late 1970s, the Jewish community of Montreal underwent a series of changes that significantly altered its character. And while increasing numbers of Jews from all over the world began arriving on the island, the established elites reacted by creating and then entrenching a new cultural orthodoxy based on their own practices and values. Jewish women were fundamental to this process, as both objects of the new cultural discourse as well as active participants.

The framework to my dissertation has been influenced by Rogers Brubaker's arguments about groupism as presented in his article, "Ethnicity Without Groups."¹ Throughout, I have viewed ethnicity as a social process that only exists as it is perceived. I have studied the ethnic

group-making project of the "Jewish community of Montreal," rather than taking for granted the characteristics of such a group. In each of my chapters, I interrogated one aspect of the larger project. Each of these chapters provides a glimpse into currents of thought, fragmented sets of discussions between individuals and organizations at all levels of society on subjects as diverse as the body and feminism. All of these areas were sites for debate about the meaning of Jewish identity both from the top down and the bottom up. Norms with respect to gender and ethnicity were created, accepted, rejected and modified as individuals interacted with them.

I have deliberately shifted my gaze to take into account the public and private ways of group-making at work in Montreal in the time period in question. Doing so has enabled me to bring women into discussions of ethnic identity formation. As I have argued throughout this dissertation, women are central to group-making projects. This centrality brings women both great responsibility and great vulnerability. Just as these women are imbued with an immutable power to pass on cultural identity, the consequent responsibility is used by social authorities to justify the imposition of additional restraints to limit the power of women in determining group-membership. In this respect, this dissertation has been a study of the messy and complex relationship between Jewish women and Jewish identity in Montreal.

It is my contention that understanding the experiences of ordinary women is as important, if not more so, than those of elite women or men. The almost complete lack of information on the subject of ethnic Canadian women in post-war Canada has led me to concentrate on the experiences of ordinary Jewish women, particularly as they negotiated the relationship between their Jewish and Canadian identities. That said, it should be noted that ordinary Jewish men were equally implicated and entangled within the negotiations of Jewish and Canadian identities. It is my hope that future research will provide more information on the subject.

These negotiations saw the emergence of a dominant discourse of a Jewish-Canadian identity in postwar Montreal that was at once Eastern European, middle class, and Canadian. This type of Jewishness, or way of being Jewish, focused on encouraging Jews to outwardly seem as if they were no different than any other Canadians. It promoted assimilating many aspects of middle-class Canadian values as a part of this process. But while Montreal Jews were to appear outwardly Canadian, it was assumed that they would remain inwardly Eastern European. Despite the inherent diversity of the community, both in terms of its historical and new members, it was assumed that to be "Jewish" itself was to accept this dominant discourse of identity. Thus Eastern European foods and body types were reinterpreted as distinctly "Jewish," both to insiders and to outsiders. However, this aspect of the new dominant discourse was inherently contradictory: many Eastern European elements were reinterpreted as Jewish Canadian, and at the same time, the maintenance of outwardly subtle Eastern European appearance became increasingly important in maintaining community bonds.

That said, this dominant discourse at once permitted great diversity and inspired great resistance. Polish and Russian-style food became normalized as "Jewish food" in Montreal, while other cuisines were considered distinct and separate. For example, the bagel and smoked meat became symbolic of Jewish cuisine. On the other hand, different levels of "keeping kosher" were permitted, whether that meant eating Jewish-style foods that were not kosher at all, or whether that meant following the letter of the law. However, not everyone accepted these limitations. Some individuals completely eschewed Eastern European cuisine, preferring their native Hungarian foods, integrating Moroccan Jewish dishes into their lives, or creating a blend of Moroccan and Eastern European foods.

A similar principle was at work with Jewish bodies. Jewish bodies were a site of great cultural conflict and contradiction. Ideals of beauty in the Jewish community focused on Anglo-Saxon physical features, taking the notion of being "outwardly Canadian" to an entirely new level. This ideal of beauty stood in direct contrast to the physical features that often characterized individuals of Eastern European Jewish descent, particularly with respect to body size and nose shape. This conflict sometimes drove women to extreme measures to be considered beautiful, such as rhinoplasty and dieting. But just as Anglo-Saxon physical features were idealized, Eastern European Jewish bodies were being normalized. The importance of "looking Jewish" at once excluded Jews who did not possess Eastern European physical features and served as a marker of sameness and of community to those who did. These excluded Jews, mostly Sephardic and Hassidic, were consequently dismissed as other, too exotic or too "backward" in relation to the established ideal.

The dominant discourse around Jewish-Canadian identity did not unquestioningly accept all middle-class Canadian values, such as the centrality of the nuclear family in postwar Canadian society. In contrast, extended family networks were fundamentally important to Jews. Other familial discourses were also important to the new Jewish-Canadian identity, including the idea that Jewish families were somehow better or more civilized than other ethnicities, which masked family conflict and domestic abuse. Many family conflicts arose as a result of deviance from the norm that Jews only marry Jews. In addition, transgressions against heteronormativity were seen as particularly problematic. The normalization of the relationship between one man and one woman, united in marriage, resulted in the exclusion of all those who did not fit into this paradigm, particularly single, divorced, or lesbian women. Many transgressors felt alienated to the point that they eventually left the community altogether.

Religion was one of the most important and contentious aspects of this dominant discourse of identity. Religious leaders sought to establish the synagogue as the authority on the Jewish religion. They emphasized the role of the synagogue in educating Jewish women, with the goal of determining the cultural knowledge passed on to future generations. Community leaders also positioned Jewish women as keepers and transmitters of Jewish religious culture. Unlike religious authorities, community leaders focused on the creation of a Jewish sanctuary in the home as central to ensuring culture transmission. Finally, ordinary women emphasized the role that Jewish women played in teaching children about their religious and cultural heritage. My discussions with ordinary women revealed an underlying tension in matters of Jewish identity around definitions of religion (from the synagogue) and tradition (from the home). This tension was resolved as Jewish women made their own Jewish traditions out of their interpretations of Jewish religion.

The relationship between feminism and the Jews of Montreal in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s was complex and constantly changing. In some instances, this relationship was consistent with happenings in other Canadian communities. Far from being an era of Stepford wives, the 1950s and early 1960s were a time of feminist discussions around the role of women and work. Many of these arguments centred around the advantages and disadvantages of married women working. The debates that appeared in *Orah Magazine* and the *Woman's Work Agenda* echo those found by Korinek in *Chatelaine*. At other times, particularly in the late 1960s, there was considerable variation. Despite the prevalence of feminist debates, and the strong presence of Jewish women at the forefront of the women's liberation movement, the majority of my participants did not identify as feminists. While many supported notions of women's rights, they rejected a complete change of gender ideologies. This partial integration of feminism was in

large part due to the importance placed on Jewish women as bears of Jewish culture. Many of my interviewees argued that they had a privileged position compared to other Canadian women because the Jewish religion pays particular attention to the important role played by women in cultural transmission in the home.

Further variation appeared among those of my participants who did consider themselves to be feminist. While only five of my participants were involved directly or indirectly in second-wave feminism, their comments are sufficient to suggest some common experiences. Feminist Jews had what, at times, seem to be contradictory feminist and Jewish identities. My feminist participants asserted that their Jewishness was not a factor in their feminism. But a deeper analysis of their comments in light of recent American studies suggest that their activism may have been rooted in Jewish ideals of social justice. Further, they may have been able to reconcile their Jewish identities by associating misogyny with the Jewish religion, and separating it entirely from Jewish culture. Thus, these participants were able to see themselves as feminists but also as cultural Jews. The relationship between feminism and Jewishness becomes more complex when considering the participation of Jews in the women's movement as a whole. While a dominant force, Jewish women were silent about their Jewishness. This was the result of perceived anti-Semitism, anti-Zionism, an emphasis on gender as opposed to ethnicity, and the increasing view of Jews as a privileged (or at the very least, not oppressed) people.

Finally, feminism influenced Ashkenazi critiques of Hassidic, Sephardic, and Yemenite Jews. Many of these critiques revolved around the perception of the poor treatment of women and misogynist aspects of their cultures. At times these critiques rested on the lack of respect for women, at others on the lack of gender equality, and still others on the denial of democratic rights to women. However, these commentaries often disguised a strong desire to create a

distinction between Ashkenazi Jews and Hassidic, Sephardic, and Yemenite Jews. Indeed, the testimony of my participants often emphasized differentiation and a paradigm of us versus them. This system of differentiation emphasized the Canadian nature of Ashkenazi Jews while relegating Hassidic, Sephardic, and Yemenite Jews to the Old World, and even at times, to the status of animals.

Finally, my discussion of the relationship between Jewish identity and feminism emphasizes the importance of understanding national trends as they affect ethnic communities. There was no singular moment where feminism became central to the lives of Jewish women in Montreal. Instead, feminist viewpoints, often liberal in origin, were slowly and selectively integrated over the course of three decades. For example, many women accepted the idea that men and women should be equal under the law. Belief in the notion of women's rights and the treatment of women was used to reinforce the power of the new discourse around Jewish-Canadian identity (good) over Hassidic and Sephardic Jews (bad). Conversely, many women were opposed to more radical changes in gender ideology, particularly those they felt threatened their status as culture keepers. As a result, many Jewish women rejected the label of "feminist" for fear of seeming to agree with the need for more radical change.

Typically, histories such as this one fall into one of two categories: women's history or gender history. In many ways, this dissertation is a traditional women's history in that it chronicles the lives of Jewish women in Montreal. But this dissertation is also a gender history. As I have shown, Jewish womanhood underwent significant changes in the postwar period. Women became the bearers of culture and were expected to keep a Jewish home. But the roles, responsibilities, and values associated with being a Jewish woman in the latter half of the twentieth century also said much about the values of the larger Jewish community. This

dissertation shows how, for this ethnic community, to be a “Jewish woman” was to subscribe to a set of gendered cultural values. Although many of the women I interviewed tried to resist or subvert certain gender norms, they were all implicated in the creation of a notion Jewish womanhood. And while I concentrate on the creation of female Jewish identities, I would argue that similar forces, particularly the drive to seem Canadian and middle class, were at work in the shaping of Jewish masculinity. I hope that future research will delve into this important, but much neglected area.

The ways that Jewish women perpetuated, modified, or even abandoned Old World practices to fit the exigencies of Canadian life are instructive for the study of ethnic women in Canada more generally. If we are to truly understand the ways that ethnic women learn to be Portuguese, Greek, Japanese, and so on, we must look to the way that they have understood their place in society. In some cases this might mean that certain values (woman as homemaker) became more prominent in certain ethnic communities, while other values and norms (body image) were modified to fit Canadian standards. The study of changing ethnic identities, though fraught with contradictions, will lead to a more complex and richer picture of Canadian women’s history and Canadian history more generally. I believe that it is for this reason that my dissertation has larger significance of gender for postwar ethnic women and identity, beyond its contribution to our understanding of Jewish women.

Comparisons between different groups and their concepts of the idealized body, for instance, would likely reveal insights into how different groups internalized Canadian social values. Similarly, an examination of the creation of a Jewish cuisine provides a framework for a similar study of the creation of Chinese, Italian, and Japanese cuisine in Canada. Further studies into family networks, such as Iacovetta's work on Italian female networks, would be relevant for

understanding the extent to which dominant discourses regarding nuclear families were adopted by ethnic communities, as well as elucidate the importance of female friends and relatives for easing the transition in a new country or dealing with discrimination. The same is true of feminism; how, for instance, did women in different ethnic or religious groups react to feminism? Did they buy into the new idea of gender equality, or rely on older ideals that were more consistent with their religious and cultural traditions? In sum, I believe that historians would benefit from more precise and varied investigation of the experiences of women in Canada by focusing on the relationship between gender and ethnicity in the formation of identity.

While this study has concentrated primarily on the Jews of Montreal, I believe that it presents important insights into the creation of Jewish identity across Canada, and points to the need for further study. This is true of significant Jewish communities in cities like Toronto and Winnipeg, but also small communities like Halifax or Victoria. For example, one area where this dissertation may not be applicable for smaller communities is in the othering of Sephardic Jews. Most Sephardic Jews in Canada reside in Quebec, especially in Montreal, because they speak French. In the study of Jews outside of large cities there may be other important issues that need to be addressed. For instance, given that Jews are so often associated with urban environments, how do Jews in rural communities assert their Jewish identities? How does Jewish identity change when there are only a small number of Jews in one location? What about Jews in the North? Further, a cross-Canadian study would reveal important information about how Jews in different parts of the country viewed themselves in relation to other Jews in Canada, or even the United States. It might also reveal networks of cultural diffusion: how did the culture of the Montreal Jewish community influence the culture and Jewishness of other Canadian Jews? What about Jews of colour? How do they fit into this picture, given the growing population of

Ethiopian Jews in Montreal after 1980? And finally, it would be fascinating to compare Montreal and Toronto Jews, especially given the historic competition between the two communities. These are just some of the questions that might be answered by further research into the creation of Canadian Jewish identities.

One of the main goals of this work has been to expand the study of the Jewish community beyond the immigrant generation. There has been much good work done on the Yiddish-speaking culture centred on Saint Laurent (known colloquially as "the Main"). Authors like Ira Robinson, Pierre Anctil and David Rome have provided us with a rich understanding of the vibrant cultural landscape inhabited by the Jewish community in the early twentieth century. Similarly, scholars like Gerald Tulchinsky, Harold Troper, and Irving Abella have chronicled the ways in which first and second-generation Jewish men and women interacted with the larger Canadian population and government elites. My work differs in that it focuses almost exclusively on second and third-generation Jewish Montrealers, and specifically females. By focusing on the social history of the postwar Jewish community, this dissertation paints a picture of a community that is more diverse and more complicated than has heretofore been portrayed.

I have raised only some of the possible areas of research that are opened up by my research. But there is also a personal element. This work is to a great extent autobiographical. For many years, I have struggled to place myself in the world. While I have always been proud of being Jewish, I have not always agreed with many aspects of Jewish culture and religion. I have also always been a proud Montrealer. But I have not always been able to reconcile my love of this city with my feelings on Quebec and many of my personal experiences in Montreal with discrimination. And finally, while I am proud to be a woman, I often find myself caught between my desire to conform to the image of "the nice Jewish girl" and my feminist beliefs. This study

has been one way for me to come to terms with myself, to look at the creation of my own identity, messy and complicated as it is.

¹ Rogers Brubaker, "Ethnicity Without Groups," *Archives Européennes de Sociologie* XLIII, no. 2 (2002): 163-189.

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 CJC Montreal Organization – Jewish General Hospital Auxiliary Annual Reports
 CJC ZC Communate Sepharade Du Quebec Fonds
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 CJC ZC La Voix Sepharade Fonds
 CJC DA 2 Louis Rosenberg Fonds
 CJC ZF Montreal B'nai Brith Women Fonds
 CJC ZH Merkaz Sepharade Fonds
 CJC MA 4 PC 3 National Council of Jewish Women Fonds
 CJC ZG Pioneer Women Fonds
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Appendix

Glossary

Alef – the letter “A” in Hebrew

Ashkenazim – Jews originating in Eastern Europe and Russia (esp. Poland, Ukraine)

Balebusta – a good housewife

Brisket – cut of beef

Bubkes – literally “nothing”

Bat/Bar Mitzvah – coming of age ceremony for 13-year-old boys and 12-year-old girls

Briss – ceremony of circumcision

Challah – egg bread

Chanukah – also known as the “festival of lights”

Daf Gein -- onwards

Erev – literally “the night before”

Eruv – a line (sometimes a string) demarcating the boundaries of a Jewish community

Chassidim – a group of Jews who follow “rebbe” or spiritual leaders; much of their customs rely upon 19th-century Eastern European Jewish culture

Goy/Goya/Goyim – an often pejorative term for non-Jews

Kneidlach – matzo balls (usually put in chicken soup)

Kugel – a noodle casserole

Landsmanshaftn – mutual aid societies that were often made up of people (Landsmen) from similar areas in the Old Country

Latkes – potato pancakes; usually eaten at Chanukah

Lox – smoked salmon

Matzah/Matzo – unleavened crackers

Mizrahi – Middle Eastern Jews

Mikveh – ritual bath for purification

Mitzvah – a good deed

Nidda – ritual purity laws for menstruating women

Oneg Shabbat – a new form of celebrating Shabbat

Passover – celebration of the Jewish exodus from Egypt into Israel

Pidyon Haben – ritual sale of the firstborn male child to the priesthood

Pogrom – riot against Jewish people; many took place in the late 19th century in the Ukraine and Poland

Purim – spring festival celebrating the story of Esther

Rosh Hashanah – the Jewish New Year

Seder – a Passover meal

Sephardim – North African and Mediterranean Jews

Shabbas Goy – a non-Jew hired to do work for Jews on Friday nights and Saturdays

Sheygets – non-Jewish male

Shikse – non-Jewish female (often portrayed as blonde)

Shmuck – literally “dick”

Shtetl – Jewish village within the old Russian empire

Shul – synagogue, temple

Synagogue – Jewish house of worship

Tallis – prayer shawl for men

Talmud – rabbinical texts and commentaries

Tikkun Olam – religious obligation to make the world better

Tisha B'av – a fast day commemorating the destruction of the First and Second Temple

Torah – the Jewish holy text; the first five books of the Old Testament

Tzitzes – ritual fringes worn by orthodox Jews

Tsimmes – a vegetable dish often served at Rosh Hashana

Tu Bishvat – celebration of the planting of trees

Yom Kippur – the Day of Atonement