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INTRODUCTION /

> The history of sexuality is inextricably intertwined with structures of power. You cannot really think sexuality without gender: masculinity, femininity… Sexualities and their his tories intersect with histories of race, class, age, religion, and with geographies, urban and rural spaces.[1]

Questions of girlhood are no different. The structure of gender acts in inherently codifying and socially conditioning ways in the United States. Throughout the nation's history, adolescents have been mechanized as aids to the state, and white children especially have been the subject of physical, mental, and moral investment. Especially visible in the aftermath of war and the midst of social turmoil, youth-oriented programs are not native to the Cold War. However, the 1950s and 1960s offer a unique point of study where morality, social policy, public health, education, and popular culture intersect in the lives of teenagers.

Containing Teenage Femininity in Cold War Curriculum examines how and what girls were taught about sexuality, race, and national identity in the 1950s and 1960s. Through a collection of social educational films from the early Cold War, this research examines videos created for classroom use, during a time when educational production companies were "as prevalent in the United States as Hollywood Studios."[2] Films in this genre typically range from nine to twenty minutes in length, and typically follow a storyline that began in a peer group social situation, whether that be amongst romantic partners, classmates, community leaders, or parents. Two companies comprise the bulk of the films I examine, Centron and Coronet, with one outlier, and I

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[1] Jeffrey Weeks, *What is Sexual History?,* Polity, Cambridge: 2016, 20.

[2] Faye E. Riley, "Centron, an Industrial/Educational Film Studio, 1947-1981: A Microhistory," *Films that Work,* 221.

generally adhere to Marilyn Holt's framing of the postwar period as the years from 1945 to 1960 and as a time that "despite the nostalgia often attached to those years, it was a time of tensions and conflict."[3] The films existed within an educational monopoly, essentially creating their own macrocosm of social values and ideology. From 1947 to 1981, Centron produced approximately 500 industrial, educational, and government films.[4] Ranked nationally among industry producers, the company ranked "13th out of 25th," competing with the likes of Disney, McGraw-Hill, and Coronet, and held clients including the University of Kansas, University of Mississippi, Howard University, the American Medical Association, the United Methodist Board, and the Sears Foundation.[5]

One of the guiding questions of this research was: *what were the standards of normalcy for teenage girls?* To answer this question, I first looked at standards imposed upon adult women in the United States. In popular memory, the postwar era is often regarded as a beacon of traditional family life and domesticity, despite a reality was far less picturesque. Modern depictions of the era in television shows like *Mad Men* offer moments of historical insight for both the historian and the average viewer and reinforce the relevance of this era beyond academic pursuits. The reason these narratives in particular stand out is that they reject the mythos of a perfect postwar American culture. This was life in the atomic age, where war against the United States became an increasingly serious threat.

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[3] Marilyn Holt, *Cold War Kids: Politics and Childhood in Postwar America, 1945-1960,* University Press of Kansas, 2014; 4.

[4] Faye E. Riley, *Centron, a Microhistory*, 222.

[5] Riley, 228.

The immediate context of both this history is an era when women's labor became essential, married women with children worked outside the home at unprecedented rates than ever before, and the alleged masculinization of women was under suspicion for its threat to the nation. Calls for the restoration of respectability and the protection of conservative values often lie with blame being placed on disproportionately marginalized groups, like women, the working class, and people of color, thus allowing for cultural scapegoating. From 1945 to roughly 1960, instability, pessimism, and anxiety were paramount in restructuring a culture conducive to the survival of the United States as the leading world power.

Following a war effort that mandated every citizen contribute to military success abroad, American Cold War culture echoed a similar call of responsibility. In 1950 there were over 363,000 adolescents aged between fifteen and nineteen, and by 1960 almost sixty million children had been born in the United States since the end of World War II.[6] The generation of baby boomers had power to change American ideals and institutions by their demographic's size alone, marking them with "enormous expectations" and a belief that these teenagers would "achieve more and have greater opportunities than any generation before them."

Instead of selling war bonds or hanging propaganda for the Office of War Information, youth served their country through compliance and conformity. In the postwar era, American youth were scrutinized by educators, child-rearing advisors, psychologists, medical specialists, child-welfare officers, and the popular press.[7] World War II was seen as a battle to protect the nation and its young, leaving adults the responsibility of preparing teenagers for life in an atom-

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[6] Holt, 17.

[7] Holt, 19.

ic, desegregating, and subversive world. A psychologically sound child was essential to what President Truman dubbed the "struggle between freedom and communist Slavery."[8]

The beginning of World War II dashed post-depression hopes of creating stable homes as thousands of men were drafted, enlisted, and went overseas. The gap in the labor force meant that women would enter the workforce at an increasing rate, disrupting prewar expectations of women's labor and the value of it in the 1930s. Women's work took on a new cultural meaning, relying on ideas of feminine patriotism that promoted service to their country. Their employment was encouraged as a patriotic duty, so long as it occurred in a time of male absence, not in one of male abundance. This enabled not just employment, but recruitment and the female labor force had grown by fifty percent by the end of the war.[9]

Women were officially members of the armed forces for the first time, which warranted an emphasis of femininity by the military to avert suspicions that women were defying their natural place in society by performing labor in a field as masculinized and violent as the United States military. Propaganda depicted pretty, bubbly, youthful white girls to counteract the growing concern that lesbian and gay communities were emerging in the armed forces, coupled with an overarching fear that if not gay, women were losing their feminine touch.[10]

When the war ended, women were expected to return to their homes and relinquish their new-

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[8] Harry S. Truman, "Address Before the Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth," *The American Presidency Project,* December 5, 1950, www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-before-the-midcentury-white-house-conference-children-and-youth.

[9] "Women in World War II," *Metropolitan State University of Denver,* www.msudenver.edu/camphale/thewomensarmycorps/womenwwii/#:~:text=In%201945%2C%20women%20comprised%2036.1,women%20entered%20the%20labor%20force.

[10] May, 61.

found economic freedom to the former breadwinners, their husbands. While many women did return home, there has been an increasing rise of women in the workforce since the onset of World War II, contradicting the idea that *all* women went back to their housework quietly. The political narrative was driven by a multitude of forces, among them "television, urbanization, divorce, working women, and social integration."[11] Some issues like the postwar housing crisis were short-term problems solved by innovations of suburbia, but most issues affecting children were long-lived.

In many ways, the shift back to a male-dominated workforce and immediate calls for female domesticity is not surprising. Women were expected to adapt to their husbands' interests and priorities, absorb the role of caretaker, comforter, and homemaker; all the while reaffirming perfected traditional domesticity. Unbridled female sexuality was dangerous to a culture of conformity, so much so that non-marital relations were deemed an attack on national strength that required strong, manly men to stand up against the threat of communism. As the country transitioned from a wartime economy to a consumer one, that thrived on the newfound prosperity to fund it. Between 1940 and 1960, real wages increased by about 30 percent."[12] The median family income rose. Although this betterment of material conditions did not occur uniformly, the middle class grew significantly and surveys showed that the majority of Americans, regardless of race or ethnicity, "considered themselves to be members of the middle class, if not in actual income, in outlook and self-confidence."

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[11] Holt, 3.

[12] Holt, 4.

Women were compelled to invest in the nuclear family, and more buying power and access to consumer goods were evidence of a rising economy, but a "fundamental element" in the quest for normalcy was successful marriages and productive parenthood.[13] By the end of the 1950s, the average age upon marriage for women was twenty.[14] Heterosexual behavior within the confines of marriage and modeled in parenthood indicated maturity and responsibility, and any deviancy of such was deemed weak and irresponsible.

This fear of deviancy and subsequent failure prompted the Lavender Scare, a state-sponsored panic that called for an invasive, destructive, and discriminatory war on those perceived to be homosexuals or gender nonconforming.[15] In 1950, red-baiting Republican Senator Joseph McCarthy aggressively warned that the postwar era was not a time of peace, but of "a final, all-out battle between communistic atheism and Christianity," citing not a threat of foreign enemies invading, but "the traitorous actions of those who have been treated so well by this nation" within the State Department.[16] Political conservatism, distrust of dissidence, and the desire for military and emotional security combined to create the mid-century gender ideology that feared delinquency in children, and believed it was the responsibility of all to fight deviancy on American soil.

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[13] Holt, 5.

[14] Daniel Horowitz, "Betty Friedan and the Origins of Feminism in Cold War America, in *Women's America: Refocusing the Past,* 569.

[15] Karl Whittington, "QUEER," *Studies in Iconography* Vol. 33, Special issue Medieval Art History Today- and Critical Terms, 2012, 1, www.jstor.org/stable/23924280.

[16] Joseph McCarthy, "Enemies From Within," (speech, Wheeling, West Virginia, 1950, in Digital History).

The United States government created a tradition of homophobic interrogation, social and economic exclusion at home which would be exported abroad. Events in Washington generated civilian concern across the country, and three-quarters of the letters that Senator Joseph McCarthy received revolved around alleged sexual deviancy in the government.[17]

He had claimed that 205 federal employees were communists, then further specified that 81 of these were "bad risks," a euphemism for homosexuals. In 1953, President Dwight D. Eisenhower bolstered these fears by drafting Executive Order 10450, which named "sexual perversion"—meaning homosexuality and homosexual associations— as a risk to national security and an acceptable reason for the termination of thousands of gay employees.[18] The state's linking of homosexuality with communism prompted widespread domestic homophobia in the nation as a result of congressional committees, investigations by the senate, hiring processes, and special investigative units to handle "homosexual and other moral" cases.[19]

In the same period of anti-communist homophobia, from 1946 to 1960, "almost 60 million children were born in the United States."[20] During the war, 183,000 American children had lost fathers, while others grieved the loss of other relatives and friends. With data that showed juvenile delinquency on the rise, parents were concerned, but postwar optimism provided a

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[17] David K. Johnson, "America's Cold War Empire: Exporting the Lavender Scare," in *Global Homophobia: States, Movements, and the Politics of Oppression,* edited by Meredith L. Weiss and Bosia Michael J., University of Illinois Press, 2013, 57.

[18] "Executive Order 10450 of Apr. 27, 1953, Security requirements for Government employment," National Archives, www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/10450.html.

[19] Johnson, 59.

[20] Holt, 6.

"general feeling that all would be righted with peacetime."[21] Adult concerns translated to children in a myriad of ways. Parents grappled with these issues in the home, where the "overriding fear of every American parent" was that their sons would grow to become "sissies," a slur indicating both homosexuality and a weakness for communism, and more susceptible to blackmail. Schools functioned as critical landscapes for preparing children for their adult lives, making "reading, writing, and arithmetic" no longer adequate preparation alone.[22] In Victoria Greive's book, she writes that the Cold War experiences of children are often "summed up" by references to wartime preparedness and "duck and cover" films. Yet teachers were expected to instruct children in matters of history and heritage, democracy, world politics, and economics alongside regular curriculum, thus providing "the most direct way" to craft patriotic citizenship in young Americans.[23]

Following the military's use of educational films to instruct servicemen, educators and policymakers alike pivoted the practice as a way to teach in public high schools. The instinct to politicize the American child was reaffirmed in the aftermath of global conflict, and in some ways was modeled after the practices of fascist regimes in the early twentieth century, citing the usefulness of educating children, with the caveat that in the United States they would be taught American propaganda instead. If children were conceived as "naturally innocent," then not only were children abroad deserving of humanitarian aid, but American children's voluntary labor at home could be defined as both "apolitical and impartial" instead of politically motivated.[24]

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[21] Holt, 5.

[22] Victoria Grieves, *Little Cold Warriors,* 1.

[23] Grieves, 163.

[24] Grieves, 3.

American society, not just white mainstream society, "but the broad spectrum of ethnic and racial groups," had immense expectations of their teenagers and struggled to create teenagers that were equipped intellectually, emotionally, and bodily for their interpersonal and civic relationships.[25] Parents wanted their children to pursue their talents and practice their own hobbies, as shown later in Chapter I's discussion of Coronet's *Better Use of Leisure Time.*

In 1950, president Truman highlighted the importance of both supportive parents and good teachers in making useful little citizens, but there were not enough teachers, classrooms, or funding to support this domestic agenda.[26] In classrooms across the country, adolescents were exposed to an explosion of "scare films" in the Cold War era, a nickname for some educational films in the 1950s that sought to establish social consensus and manipulate behavior that was deemed threatening. These guidance films explored a range of topics, all meant to promote the supremacy of parental instruction, like the teaching of proper dating etiquette and the pressure on daughters, sisters, and girlfriends to make wise choices. They were shown to a world of crowded classrooms that continued to increase in size, where the number of children in elementary schools rose at an annual rate of three percent, and by the end of the 1960-1961 school year, "over 25 million children were in school."[27]

Local school boards hired teachers and purchased textbooks, while state boards sometimes mandated specific curriculum, established course themes, and enforced teacher certifications. A combination of custom and state law decided when and if schools were segregated, and

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[25] Grieves, 8.

[26] Holt, 49.

[27] Holt, 50.

in President Eisenhower's (and Centron's) home state of Kansas, segregation was an uneven patchwork of regulation reminiscent of the earliest entrance of the state into the union in 1861, nicknamed "Bleeding Kansas," where law dictated that it was illegal in "second-class cities (defined as having a population of at least 2,000)," but legal in "first-class cities" which had a population of at least 15,000 people.[28] Lawrence boasts a history of the 1856 sacking of Lawrence, when proslavery troops attacked the city proclaimed "Southern Rites" and destroyed abolitionist press offices and anti-slavery establishments, but were later subject to retribution by legendary abolitionist John Brown.[29] Lawrence had integrated high schools far before *Brown v. Board of Education,* and most retail establishments were open to all.[30] While some spaces were integrated, Lawrence operated by a system of custom, not of law, a phenomenon made clear in the lack of non-white characters and students depicted in Centron's film catalog.

Brothers David, Alfred, and John Smart launched Coronet Films in 1934, following a trip to Germany where David Smart observed and admired the educational-propagandistic potential of films being produced by the Nazis, and resolved to mirror their efficiency back in the United States.[31] Coronet originally produced films to be used in wartime by the United States military, solidifying the imperial value of their work well before the Cold War began. In 1947, college friends Art Wold and Russell Mosser created Centron Films, picking the name due to their "cen-

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[28] Holt, 55.

[29] kansapedia: Kansas Historical Society, "Sack Of Lawrence: May 21, 1856," *kansapedia: Kansas Historical Society,* www.kshs.org/kansapedia/sack-of-lawrence/19754.

[30] Scott Schudy, "A history of segregation: City no different from others in discrimination," LJ-World.com *: Lawrence Journal-World,* January 14, 2007, www2.ljworld.com/news/2007/jan/14/history_segregation/.

[31] Geoff Alexander, *Academic Films for the Classroom,* 29.

tral" geography in the state of Kansas. From the company's dawn in 1947 to their end in 1981, they produced over 500 films for a variety of institutions including Kansas State University, the American Medical Association, Howard University, the Sears Foundation, and the United Methodist Board.[32] They produced both industrial and educational films, but the educational film market was far more lucrative due to the steady demand for work. Two-thirds of the company income came from educational films alone, making them an obvious emphasis on production.

Coronet consistently cited psychologists and contemporary research within their scripts, which was reinforced by later educational mandates and funding opportunities like the 1958 National Defense Education Act, which granted funding to public schools and created new requirements to follow in a Cold War World. The NDEA was launched in response to the Soviet Union's launch of *Sputnik,* and the subsequent debate over educational supremacy ensued. The act sought to "strengthen the national defense," and assist the expansion of educational programs to "meet critical national needs."[33]

These needs included a mandate that schools were to teach about Communism in a way that emphasized the superiority of American capitalism. As teachers worked with the curriculum, they implemented question-and-answer style lessons that utilized tools like role-playing and debate. An inquiry-based approach often guided the films produced by Centron and Coronet, showing the popularity of the format and subject before its mandated use in public schools. Narrators often left teen audiences with rhetorical and at times leading questions that emphasized problem-

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[32] Faye E. Riley, "Centron, an Industrial/Educational Film Studio, 1947-1981: A Microhistory in *Films That Work,* 221.

[33] House of Representatives 85th Congress, "National Defense Education Act," *History, Art, & Archives: United States House of Representatives,* August 21, 1958; www.history.house.gov/HouseRecord/Detail/15032436195.

solving and group thinking, making it a viable, government-qualified form of social education in the post-war era.

By the end of World War II, the ability to "see and hear" as a form of learning was considered a partial answer to postwar concerns of educators. The public wanted schools to teach "more than the traditional classroom subjects" while producing well-adjusted and well-rounded young adults, especially preparing them for matters of marriage and parenthood.[34] Education was an intersectional issue that cut across racial, socio-economic, and class boundaries. Out of all the youth-related debates of the postwar era, "education was the one most often addressed by law-makers, presidents, and federal agencies."[35] The believed need for change did not only include teaching philosophy but also sought to improve the delivery of material itself.

In a note from the publisher of the first volume of See and Hear: The Journal on Audio-Visual Learning in 1945, the introduction of video-based learning was heralded as an educational advancement of immense opportunity. The publication defined audio-visual learning as knowing through seeing and hearing as a means of creating meaningful education and understanding. The journal's purpose revolved around the study of film education as a means of making "more graphic, more easily retained, and more interesting those socially desirable learning experiences we as teachers wish to bring to the children of America."[36]

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[34] Holt, 64.

[35] Holt, 80.

[36] "See and Hear", *See and Hear,* Volume 1, 1945, 6.

Citing the success of film in military education, the journal argued that the "post-war job of education demands the best of teachers equipped with the best in teaching materials."[37] In many ways, these films mirrored media made for soldiers in World War I. Military film objectives usually centered around four main themes: the moral purposes of war and characteristics of other nations, the teaching of self-control, descriptions of military progress, and the instruction of skills.[38] Albeit tailored to postwar life and aimed at teenagers, relationships to the self, community, and country were approached in similar ways and tried to achieve similar goals. The military commandeered film as a tool to aid in wartime success, and in the years after World War II, social guidance filmmakers and educators alike would use the same framework to wage their own attempt at domestic containment. The 1950's film *How Do You Know It's Love?* provides a perfect example of subjects that warranted a new approach to education, where a teenaged couple and their surrounding community debate what love is, what is valuable in relationships, and what behaviors respectable couples engage in.

These films have been approached by few academics, leaving this rich source bank neglected in the broader history of girlhood in the Cold War Era. In 2014, Geoff Alexander coined the genre "academic film" in his *Academic Films for the Classroom.* While Alexander was concerned with similar production companies and audiences, he focused on the films that truly embodied what he deemed "academic." While mentioned briefly, it is clear that social guidance films are not considered academic, even as they are educational, and thus do not make up a substantial part of his analysis. In 2009, Joshua Garrison referenced teenage social guidance films in

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[37] "See and hear," 7.

[38] Geoff Alexander, Academic Films for the Classroom, 18.

"The Teenage Terror in the Schools," arguing that film motifs of traditional values acted as forms of education, meant to provide security when "forces of change were becoming quite disruptive."[39] While helpful, neither of the works in the academic film genre adequately focus on the experiences of women, the policing of sexuality, or the construction of gender, and thus new scholarship must be written to engage with the current historiography in a more meaningful way.

Thirty-three years of scholarship

In 1988, historian Elaine Tyler May published *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era,* a book that would come to define scholarship on the subject. May was concerned with the "nuclear family in the nuclear age: isolated, sexually charged, cushioned by abundance, and protected against impending doom by the wonders of modern technology."[40] She investigated the appeal of the "self contained home" as a promise of security in an "insecure world." She asserts that young post war Americans were homeward bound. Americans "of all racial, ethnic, and religious groups," "of all socioeconomic classes and educational levels," married younger, had more children, and did so more than any other generation in the twentieth century.[41]

For good reason, at least demographically speaking, marriages in the 1940s had generally been more stable, perhaps convincing young adults of their good fortune in the game of suburban family life. At the midpoint of the century, however many Americans worried that "the real dangers to America were internal ones: racial strife, emancipated women, class conflict, and familial

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[39] Joshua Garrison, "The Teenage Terror in Schools," 4.

[40] Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era,* 1988, 1.

[41] May, 3.

disruption."[42] According to May, the 1950s and early 1960s were flip sides of the same coin: a need to feel liberated from the past and a conflicting need to be secure in the future.

On an academic flip side, Joanne Meyerowitz reflects that in the face of "mounting historical evidence" it can be assumed that the postwar years were not nearly as "conservative as sometimes stated."[43] Meyerowitz asks the following: Were the postwar years an age of resurgent sexual conservatism, or were they forward strides win the long march of the sexual revolution? Although the debate is hardly over," she answers, the obvious conclusion is that it is both.[44] Joanne Meyerowitz defines sexual liberalism as an endorsement of sexual expression more than one of sexual restraint, and still a form of biopolitics. Sexual conservatism then is defined as a belief in sex regulation and a hope to remove sexual behavior that was deemed morally, socially, and reproductively damaging.[45] Meyerowitz argues that the overarching containment argument is simplistic, and instead promotes a focus on sexuality that prioritizes the discourse of sexual conservatives and liberals, rather than a deterministic stance on conservative containment.

Both of these arguments lack a perspective I believe to be essential: that of the postwar culture of teenage and adolescent girls. Marilyn Holt's 2014 book *Cold War Kids: Politics and Childhood in Postwar America, 1945-1960* and Victoria Grieve's 2018 book *Little Cold Warriors: American Childhood in the 1950s* speak to this slightly more, focusing on the experiences of children and teenagers in a specifically Cold War oriented context. Holt's work looks at the

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[42] May, 9.

[43] Joanne Meyerowitz, "The Liberal 1950s? Reinterpreting Postwar American Sexual Culture." 2014, 295.

[44] Meyerowitz, 296.

[45] Joanne Meyerowitz, "The Liberal 1950s? Reinterpreting Postwar American Sexual Culture," 297.

ways that governmental entities and the presidential administrations of President Truman and Eisenhower reacted to the "special problems" of American youth. She considers how Cold War state and federal governments became intimately involved with the "health, education, and welfare" of a baby-boom generation that saw "*all* children, not just the poorest and neediest" as deserving of government attention and support.[46] Grieve argues that as American children and teens were politicized by private organizations, consumer America, and public schools, they became "little Cold warriors," marking a generation as unwitting ambassadors to the United States imperial gaze.[47] Still, this study seeks to go further and specifically look at what kind of official pressures and influences were wrought on teenage girls.

By treating containment ideology as a significant force in girls' lives and also considering their moments of rebellion and cultural mediation, *Containing Teenage Femininity in Cold War Curriculum* treats girlhood as a significant and worthy pursuit of academic study. Throughout these chapters, this manuscript will examine three categories of educational film in the postwar era and glean the narratives for anti-communist rhetoric, constructions of gender, and explicit dating and sexual standards. This study investigates gender in the United States in general, looking at how masculinity and femininity are ever-changing co-definers of each other. In chapter one, national identity and political unrest take centerfold as the first layer of instruction, highlighting the immediate context of the nuclear age. In chapter two, implied constructions of gender shape their student audiences, with messages meant for teenaged girls in particular that placed longstanding conceptions of abnormality firmly in the contemporary moment. In chapter

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[46] Holt, 3.

[47] Grieves, 17.

three, sexual respectability and the rise of explicitly male-focused homophobia is blatant, reminding the reader that incidents of prejudice do not stay behind closed doors. In highlighting these categories we are able to see that the educational films produced from the 1950s to the 1960s created a multilayered, familiar form of media that consistently built upon lessons taught prior, all which served the idealized American family. While my main focus is teenage girls, I also examine sexual respectability in the lives of both men and women to provide a clearer picture of expectations in the postwar period.

The thesis concludes with a film index, complete with every film discussed, as well as follow up films and other areas of interest. My website, [insert link here] displays films, photographs, and an interactive display of *Containing Teenage Femininity in Cold War Curriculum.* Thanks to the work of Cosmo Taylor, this work is free for accessible public viewing.[48]

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[48] Cosmo Taylor, *Cosmo Taylor,* cosmoearl.com.

CHAPTER I. / Anti-Communism and Discussions of Race in Mass Culture, Educational Films and Social Mores

Coronet films released *Who are the People of America?* in 1953, one year before Brown v. Board and eleven years before President Lyndon B. Johnson would sign the 1964 Civil Rights Act. *Who are the People of America?,* Centron's *Better Use of Leisure Time (1950)* and *A Day of Thanksgiving (1951),* Coronet's 1952 release of *Communism,* and Centron's 1959 *What About Prejudice?* all ask high school students to consider national identity, Cold war imperial power and United States supremacy within the fifteen minutes of black and white accompanied rhetoric they received. These four films share expose becomes a continued theme in both Centron and Coronet productions: racial erasure and othering, historical misrepresentations, gendered divisions of labor, and explicit anti-communist propaganda. This chapter proposes the first layer of social education: Cold war conformity, consensus building, and the creation of national and racial identities. The two companies posit themselves in ways unique to their tastes, with Coronet looking at larger issues of popular culture, like demographics and political ideology and Centron prescribing more productive uses of time and a celebration of traditional American holidays.

The film generally emphasizes romanticized ideas of America as a melting pot, highlighting the roles of immigration, "sharing," and the value of different cultures interacting in the social and political landscapes of the United States.[49] However, the film neglects key aspects of the country's history, ignores women's existence beyond the designation of "housewife," and only vaguely signals them with the mention of children. The narrative only cares for a specific, sanitized version of the United States, its origins, and demographics. Choosing to highlight intercon-

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[49] Coronet Instructional Films, *Who are the People of America?*, Glenview, Illinois, 1953, film. https://archive.org/details/WhoAreth1953.

nected global power, clearly influenced by the Cold War, the narrator remarks that "much of that which is American is of the world." Specifically the film highlights the contributions of the *western* world. "Tennis, from central Europeans; ice-skating from northern Europeans," and "then there's our language, the clothes we wear," and "the books we read."

This scene in particular is filled with the use of education to establish a white hegemonic view of America, its past, and its present. The othering in the phrase "our language" is quick, but makes it clear who really holds the United States citizen moniker as it displays images of white children. When the film depicts shopping, it shows two white women looking at decidedly feminine fashions on a city street avenue. B-roll flashes of Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyan,* translated by Edward FitzGerald, and Dante Alighieri's *The Divine Comedy* flashes as the words "the books we read" sound from the invisible speaker.

Yet, for all its influences and amalgamations, the film assures, American exceptionalism remains supreme. With the evidence of American architecture, steel and concrete industries, American forms of dancing; tech like cinemas, jukeboxes, and an all-American ice cream cone, the film proclaims that "these are some of the things we share as Americans. For we have become Americans through this process of sharing."

"Sharing" in this case, is a nod to both consumer capitalism and whitewashed versions of immigration and assimilation. The film alleges that the United States "shares" its many races, religions, and nationalities, but neglects to comment on the fact that separate but equal doctrine had not yet been overturned by the Supreme Court, and that segregation would not be ended, at least legally, until 1964. It ignores the fact that a major tension of World War II among African

American soldiers was the goals of the Double V Campaign, originally penned by James G. Thompson in 1942, who asked "should I sacrifice to live 'half American?'"[50]

The film spouts the virtues of what, under critical inspection, amounts to a weak multi-culturalism. Fully knowing that it could be seen and taught to Indigenous children, as these films were employed broadly across middle America and the United States, Coronet Films and their funders endorse an inaccurate and potentially damaging history that praises the "settling" of the United States but glosses over who, and what, was actually required to do so.[51] The longstanding reputation of Hollywood as a leftist sphere could linger like smog over Centron and Coronet. The choice to produce such staunchly conservative media in light of their visual predecessors, out of Kansas and Illinois no less, could function as a form of market identification and safety signaling.

Indigenous girls in particular were subject to myriad forms of cultural degradation. Some, like the Campfire Girls, were explicitly created to relegate Indigenous people, culture, languages, and history as a thing of the past. Using white supremacist ideas of eugenics, founders Luther and Charlotte Vetter Gulick sought to "carry out, so far as possible, the ideal out-of-door Indian life."[52] This organization is significant to this conversation about social education in schools because of the beliefs that underscore the teachings of both mediums, and target similar audiences. For girls in the Campfire program, Indigenous imagery was used to invoke ideas of the female

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[50] James G. Thompson, "Should I Sacrifice to Live 'Half-American?': Suggest Double VV for Double Victory Against Axis Forces and Ugly Prejudices on the Home Front," *The Pittsburgh Courier,* Pittsburg, PA, 1942, 3.

[51] Coronet Instructional Films, *Who are the People of America?.*

[52] Jennifer Helgren, "Native American and White Camp Fire Girls Enact Modern Girlhood, 1910-39," 333.

sphere, emphasize gender difference, and confirm eugenicist ideas about race. Imperialist nostalgia, the motivation for the reworking of a history fundamentally rooted in gendered and racial violence, obscured Indigenous histories while violent cultural destruction raged throughout Bureau of Indian Affairs programs and Indian Residential Schools.[53] The obscured subject of the "Indian maiden" was chosen based on the idea that woman were members of an inherently "adolescent" sex, just as Indigenous people were an inherently adolescent race.[54] Heritage, the praising of settlers, and colonialism reeks as the film only references women once and uses African Americans and immigrants largely as tokens.

The film goes on to list things "we" cherish, ensuring the audience understands that any deviance from this appreciation is abnormal and not an opinion shared by their peers.[55] Americans, even young ones, are to love their government, their criminal justice system, the electoral college, food supply, job opportunities, freedom of speech to "say what we believe," freedom to hear whatever they want, "freedom to worship as we choose." While a white, male, upper middle class audience might relate to that list, the alleged "gifts" that come with citizenship in the United States were not accessible or not beneficial to all people, let alone all teenagers, a status with limited power and recourse in the face of the criminal justice system or even the punishment of their parents.

In light of the racial tension in the United States, Centron's 1959 production of their whitewashing spectacular, *What About Prejudice?,* a partnership with McGraw Hill, is remark-

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[53] Mary Jane McCallum, ""The Fundamental Things": Camp Fire Girls and Authenticity, 1910-20," *Canadian Journal of History,* April 2005, 130.

[54] Helgren, 340.

[55] Coronet Instructional Films, *Who are the People of America?.*

ably tone-deaf. In the opening moments of the film, the following text appears on screen: "Prejudice against an individual is often prejudice against a minority group which he represents… racial, socio-economic, or religious."[56] Notably, the film neglects to include sexism or misogyny as a form of prejudice, nor does it address the widespread and psychologically violent homophobia of the early Cold War. Brad Jones, a man who remains unidentified for the entirety of the film, is identified as a man walking in baggy clothing, meant to stand in for "any or all of the minority groups." Per Centron's creative and decidedly poor racial politics, the film asserts that "he will not be seen or identified… except in your own mind. You will probably know him."

For a film that is literally only about prejudice, which explicitly outlines race and discrimination, it does a fantastic job of obscuring issues of race. With a flick of an ellipsis, the film proceeds to wipe the past and present realities of American racism from the forty-one-second chalkboard. Brad, who "walked in a shadow of hate and suspicion. The shadow of what he was because of his background, over which he has no control," experiences racism at nearly every turn of the film. His white peers only become concerned for his life when it directly affects their material conditions, and even then the sentiment is not shared by all nor is it genuine.

One girl flashed her light eyes as she exclaimed that she couldn't understand why "they let people like him go to our school anyways?" "And I'm not alone," she remarked, citing her parents who didn't like it one bit. The complaint lodged by Bruce's classmate is significant, especially in a film that is, even though it conceals it considerably, about race. The invisible teenager was effectively a social pariah, and the people that knew him "agreed that it be better to shut the door to

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[56] Centron Films in Partnership with McGraw Hill, *What About Prejudice?,* 1959.

any effort he might make to be one of them," and thought it good to avoid him.[57] However, this avoidance was not always possible, and the next scene flashes to show Bruce fighting another teenager, a violent depiction of a racial minority, and an oft accused statistic of delinquency by predominantly white authorities.

One classmate named Tom, looking frustrated in his striped shirt, insisted that he couldn't see why Bruce would do such a thing without reason for vindication. The type-casted Black teenager is offered no recourse, affirming the idea that "he's not like us and he never will be."[58] This is ironic of course, coming from a production company that often touted assimilation as a remedy for cultural difference, continuing the trend of ignoring the socio-economic reality of the American suburbs around them. The teenager is called a "dirty crook" when he is accused of stealing another classmate's green sweater, as the accuser alleged that his own property had probably been stolen by the same thief.

As the film continues, Bruce manages to save the lives of two white classmates, one of them being Tom, the peer who had defended him earlier. Bruce lived near the main road, and late one night he heard a crash, which prompted him to run out and allegedly "tear the car door off" with brute force. However, as he was helping Tom, the gas station exploded and badly burned the rescuer. After a depressingly disingenuous display of sorrow, the blonde girl who had essentially called for segregation in an earlier scene was criticized, her friend remarking that "a week ago you are up in the air about having to go to the same school as him," and declared that he was not going to be a hypocrite, nor "act like this changes anything." All students shown in the film knew he was severely bullied and a victim of constant hatred, yet could not see the same behav-

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[57] Centron, *What About Prejudice?*

[58] Centron, *What About Prejudice?*

ior that emanated from themselves. One girl reveals this to be a story of self-awareness, when she monologues that

> I was the one, neatly fitting people into categories because of where they go to church, or what their fathers' do, or what the color of their skin is. You hear about other people's prejudice, but you never feel guilty unless you realize its you! *You're the one that's prejudiced!*

Another teen, this time a male, wondered aloud if "Bruce would want my blood, after what I did to him?," cluing the audience that this was the boy who had fought him at school earlier. In the beginning of World War II, Black Americans could not donate blood for the use of White Americans, and vice versa. Schools didn't have to desegregate until the very same decade. It was not until 1950, nine years prior to the production of this film, that the Red Cross stopped the practice of segregating blood, and the practice would remain legal up until the 1970s in states like Arkansas and Louisiana.[59] Hospitals had only been desegregated in recent memory, and odds are a notoriously racist group of high school students did not have the consent of their parents of offer blood on a Black child's behalf, nor did they know the legality of that potential choice.

In this way, much of their thought is performative and lacking in substantive change. The narrator goes on to proclaim that "Each of these people must find the answer only through the reexamining of his own feelings and attitudes. For this is the problem of the individual, more than of the group." This is a false narrative, especially in the face of such recent (and still ongoing) federal, legally protected segregation and remainder of legalized slavery through the legal provisions of the thirteenth amendment. As the film nears its end, the narrator supplies some

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[59] Thomas A. Guglielmo, "Desegregating Blood: A Civil Rights struggle to remember," February 4, 2018, www.pbs.org/newshour/science/desegregating-blood-a-civil-rights-struggle-to-remember.

suggestions, some reasons for the audience to consider why one might be prejudiced against others: a lack of understanding, beliefs learned from parents, or simply a matter of conforming with the group.

In 1950, Coronet partnered with sociologist Paul H. Landis to create *Better Use of Leisure Time* to encourage productive and healthy outlets at the mid-point of the century. According to the narrator, many, like the teenaged example in the film, use it to "mope" and sulk in their postwar abundance.[60] Prompted to imagine life one-hundred years ago, fifty years ago, and the contemporary moment, the audience can visualize a progressive historical narrative. The teenager considers his mother, and how fifty years ago, she might have been left to "the women's lot in life," "scrubbing clothes, carrying water," baking bread, and feeding animals. In the present moment though, she relies on a washer machine, praising the innovation as "a time saver!"

The boy concludes that his mother has more leisure time now, but still remains busy, often with household labor. Rather than washing her clothes by hand, the wonders of Cold War technology enable her to do other menial tasks, all dictated by her modern "lot in life." As the boy looked to his peers for guidance on his own use of time, he considered physical activity, reading, and doing things for a "long-range goal," a suggestion descended from parental and societal goals of creating useful and productive children. Ultimately, the film encourages hobbies that make one a better person, reminding the audience that time was a commodity not to be mismanaged. An ever lingering thought over the minds, homes, and classrooms of children who had grown up doing H-bomb drills, these teenagers had prepared bomb shelters with their families,

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[60] Coronet Instructional Films, *Better Use of Leisure Time,* 1950, film.

read in their gas masks, and faced the realities, or tranquilizers, of an era that made nuclear disaster seem inevitable, and time seem all the more precious.

Thanksgiving Erasure and Constructing Tradition

In 1951, Centron Productions released *A Day of Thanksgiving,* marking a moment where the treasure of Indigenous people for the sake of white identity formation is more blatant than others. Set in Lawrence, Kansas, on traditional Kansa, Kickapoo, Sioux, and Osage land, the film centers a white, middle-class family that couldn't afford a traditional Thanksgiving turkey.[61] Centron removes Native Americans from the historic landscape by actively centering the pilgrims, misguidedly praising colonization for "all the freedoms and privileges" that it gave them. The children sulked, with one huffing that "even the Indians had turkey," marking exactly one mention of Indigenous people in a film dedicated to a holiday that at least co-centers Indigenous people, albeit in a disingenuous way.[62]

The mother is the household moral authority, charged with breaking the news to her ever-so-emotional children, much to the relief of her husband. Her dominance in this arena showcases the women's role in budgeting, and the role of mothers in handling intimate matters by themselves, rather than with a husband. The father asks begs the question of his children, what exactly did the pilgrims do? This prompted me to ask: What *did* they genuinely advocate for in the name of freedom, and how does that relate to the contemporary definition in the Cold War era?

The cast answers, with responses ranging from "I'm glad to go to any church I want," and a loaded "I'm glad families are still important in America" from the family's nine-year-old

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[61] See https://land.codeforanchorage.org for more.

[62] Centron Productions, *A Day of Thanksgiving,* Lawrence, Kansas, 1951, film.

daughter. Their thankfulness is constructed in the format of Christian prayer and is ripe with anti-communist jabs and symbolism. The mother, a key figure for analysis, says that she is thankful for the "right to talk about anything we want to." Even though the initial statement seems rooted in defiance of suppression, the mother reveals that she uses that "right" for casual gossip with her neighbor, confirming her role as highly domestic and focused on immediate needs and social groups.

She goes on to say that she is grateful "dad doesn't work slave hours," an odd comparison in a series of films that regularly denies the existence, brutality of, and violence within America's "peculiar" institution, but is consistent with attitudes of the time, including those of President Truman who dubbed those coming of age in the Cold war a "struggle between freedom and communist slavery." The film makes the argument that by making do with what they had, practicing gratitude, and spending time as a family, they were falling back "on something old as the pilgrims."[63] It's important to remember that this is still a white middle class household, wanting for naught except the addition of an overpriced, dry American tradition. The mother, who cooked and cleaned "from daylight to dark," was thankful that her children had the "privilege of being born safely" and would grow up to "useful men and women" under her guidance, just as seen in the experience of the mother in *Better Use of Leisure Time,* who worked continuously in spite of technology that lightened her labor. In her opinion, it was the "American system" that made this kind of motherhood possible. "The washing machines, hot water out of a tap, and a telephone to call the doctor" were evidence of 'all the things free people" could produce. Both films emphasize the necessity of labor in the American household and don't obscure the expecta-

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[63] Centron Films, *A Day for Thanksgiving."*

tions of housewives in their depiction of family life. Perhaps sentiment like this explained Nixon's self-assurance in the Kitchen Debates eight years later, where "leaders championed their respective systems at a time of escalating global tension, disputing women's roles in society, stopping just shy of threats over the strength of their rockets."[64]

In 1952, the Illinois-based Coronet produced *Communism*: a film focused on the dangers of the Russian Kremlin. Among the many tips given for spotting a communist state, the narrator emphasizes the public display of political leaders in particular via large, ornate paintings.[65] He goes on to describe "the defense of their own nation" as the sole concern of Russian leaders, then rhetorically asks students: "Is this so? Or are they ambitious for world conquest?" After a brief and not particularly flattering description of Karl Marx, the film goes on to critique the government and the fact that millions "toiled in virtual slavery" to support the aristocracy. Amidst the background of tyrannical law, was "fertile ground for ideas of communism," where the people "have nothing to lose but their chains."

Lenin is described, then Trotsky, and finally the image of Joseph Stalin flashes across the screen. "While fully establishing their authority at home, created an International organization to stir up revolution throughout the world." The proletariat was subsequently granted a "new world" that was just as discouraging as the old one, with "virtually everything" belonging to the state, and little right to own property. The United States sought superiority in many ways, but especially so in matters of defining American identity through consumerism. The spending of the

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[64] James Bradshaw, "NIXON AND KHRUSHCHEV HOLD "KITCHEN DEBATE."" *The Globe and Mail* 2013, search-proquest-com.proxy.library.ucsb.edu:9443/historical-newspapers/nixon-khrushchev-hold-kitchen-debate/docview/1811384558/se-2?accountid=14522.

[65] Coronet Films, *Communism,* 1952, https://archive.org/details/Communis1952.

postwar era was taught as an antidote to communism, something to fight the "vast machine that powers the state." Children, taken early, allegedly do not search for truth. Ironically, the film disregards the fact that their film taught national allegiance in a similar manner. American freedom, was suburbia, consumption, heterosexual relationships, and social status, at least according to those educating young adults.

In all of these films, there is a discrepancy, a widening gap, between American ideals and reality. When speaking of those in communist countries, citizens who hold communist politics, and people of color, this gap is considerably larger. There are limits to the achievements of cultural conformity, ones that are not being acknowledged in these films, aside from the fact that they underscore the need for social education in the first place. This education encouraged white Americans to internalize revisionist histories and incorporate them closely into their own lives. Coronet and Centron both taught of a civil society that benefitted from its "melting pot" origins, yet denied the existence of race. These films show progress narratives and historical reconstructions, yet notably reject the existence of the working class, women, and people of color, to uphold a dominant American postwar identity, which was diverse in description only, not in practice.

CHAPTER II. / Implied Meaning in Social Education Films: Misogyny, Gender, and What Lies Below the Surface

Unlike films that prepared teens for life in the Cold War era *generally,* Centron and Coronet produced collections that implicitly enforced gender norms, whether or not that was the original purpose of the film. A preferred reading of these films offers unique insights into their creation, especially in the moments that enshroud standards of teenage femininity in the belly of otherwise unremarkable films. The entire purpose of these films was to inform contested or desired behavior, making the seemingly unintentional instruction to young women, including lessons like keeping quiet in the face of bullying and emphasizing specific forms of labor all the more meaningful. The distinction of implied versus intentional is an important one when considering the reception these films might incite, where a more blatant message like "you should have good sportsmanship" takes primacy in a landscape that thrives upon reinforcing already existing gender roles.

Issues of sex, good manners, and communism were deemed concepts that required explicit material be taught to students. Educational film producers dealt with a range of issues, but undercurrents of misogyny and patriarchy thrived in an environment that treated these standards as desirable and unremarkable otherwise. In the collection surveyed below, what is interesting is now what is said, but what isn't. What Coronet says about the debate team is not important, but what the team captain's interactions with his female peers says is very much so. *The Good Loser (1953), Why Study Home Economics? (1955), What About Juvenile Delinquency (1955) and The Snob (1958)* tell us about the teenage experience, or at least an adult's view of it. Misogynistic boys, homemaking girls, juvenile delinquents and academic debates abound in Centron's capsule

of conformity, informing the audience of exactly what kind of behavior they were to emulate, and what kinds they were supposed to avoid.

Lawrence W. Levine argues in his discussions of American popular culture, just because a culture is "mass" does not mean it is truly "popular."[66] Consumers of mass and popular culture are not blindly accepting, empty-headed folk who eat propaganda with a spoon, at least not completely. Levine makes it clear that the "asymmetry and diversity in popular culture" is vast and foregrounds an audience that engages in cultural mediation as they determine the meaning, value, and place of media.[67] In this chapter I argue that the subliminal nature of these messages could undercut the mediation of teenage girls and boys alike, creating an image of white middle-class cultural consensus, perhaps without their audiences ever taking notice of what was happening.

In 1953, Centron Corporation released *The Good Loser,* centering two high school students, Ray and Marilyn, as they navigate the hallways of high school, adolescence, and respectability. The film falls under the "Discussion Problems in Group Living" series produced by Centron, which sought to address common issues confronting American youth in the post-war era. Concern over bad attitudes made abstract principles, like being a morally qualified "good loser" something taught and emulated in mid-century American schools..[68]

The film begins with the election of Ray Medford as senior class president of Lincoln High School. In this scene, we see Ray's opponent, Dick, congratulate him on his victory, and

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[66] Lawrence W. Levine, "The Folklore of Industrial Society: Popular Culture and Its Audiences," 1373.

[67] Levine, 1399.

[68] Centron Corporation, *The Good Loser,* (1953), film.

assure any question of animosity to be false when he offers to help with special committees. In the next scene, the audience is exposed to Ray's debate coach Mr. Murry directly addressing the camera. He discusses the teenager's accolades before asking Ray to coach a sophomore recruit, Marilyn, and prepare her for competition. The narrator is sure to emphasize how patient, understanding, and kind Ray was as he trained his peer in public speaking. Throughout their work together, Marilyn is seen being nervous and insecure about her performance and perceived abilities. On the day of the district tournament, Ray is awarded second place in extemporaneous speaking while Marilyn, his younger female counterpart, comes in first. This loss causes feelings of rage, disappointment, entitlement, and bitterness in Ray that results in newfound rudeness for Marilyn.

His behavior towards her continues to worsen and he is eventually confronted by his coach about his lack of sportsmanship. The film fades to black without resolution of the issue, and leaves the audience questioning what Ray did as a result, but more importantly, what they would do in a similar situation.The piece was obviously fictional, and presents dramatized scenarios for the audience members to investigate. Yet, through analysis of gendered themes and language, *The Good Loser* is representative of a gendered and misogynistic culture. Marilyn is submissive, shy, timid, self-deprecating, and apologetic throughout the film, despite her ill-treatment at the hands of Ray being obvious to classmates, teachers, and viewers. While this may be interpreted as a creative choice to simply portray just how rude Ray was being in comparison to such an objectively nice girl, it signals a performance of idealized values that are predicated on existing gender assumptions. Even though Marilyn is consistently hurt, mistreated, and rejected by her friend, when the coach talks to Ray his only concern is how being a poor loser is af-

fecting the teenage boy committing the behavior in the first place. He neglects to discuss reconciliation and focused on Ray's social development as the primary issue. In this instance, Marilyn's trauma is being used as a mechanism to foster male improvement at her expense.

The language used by multiple parties in the film, including Ray, the coach, and their classmates is explicitly gendered. When Marilyn won the district tournament, the narrator commented on her troubled demeanor by saying "Marilyn had won fair and square, but when she saw the resentment in Ray's eyes, I'm sure she would rather have lost." This male figure of authority communicated that as a result of male entitlement , Marilyn would relegate herself to a submissive position and cater to the dominance of the male ego. When her friends congratulate her on her win, she is sure to remove herself from praise and remark that she "couldn't have won if Ray hadn't helped me." The day after the competition, Ray and Marilyn's classmates started teasing Ray, but one girl earnestly asked him to help *her* prepare for the next competition. A male classmate warned Ray against the idea and admonished him with the reality of his recent defeat, remarking "you just can't trust these women!"A different boy followed up the idea, warning "They'll learn all your techniques and beat you at your own game, just like Marilyn did." Although the statements are said in relative jest, they depict women as untrustworthy and ripe for betrayal.

This type of speech is important, because had a different plot been chosen for this film, one where perhaps Ray coaches a male peer instead of a female, the conversation would have been assuredly different. The suspicion of Marilyn's success was transferred to the teenage girls of Lincoln High broadly, and held not only by sulking poor losers, but also other older male classmates. At one point, Marilyn apologizes for her win once again, but Ray accuses her of dis-

tinctly gendered treachery, asking her "Is that why you smiled at the judges the way that you did?" Continuing to grow more irate and unreasonable he accused her of playing him the whole time, with her "old business of being so afraid!" Ray went on to mock her, pantomiming sympathy and muttering "Poor helpless little girl, didn't know a thing about speaking! Oh, what a laugh!" Here, he accuses her of winning due to her pretty smile and alleged seduction, cementing Cold War fears of subversive female sexuality in the foundation of *The Good Loser*'s narrative.

While this film was made to present Ray's behavior as an example of poor behavior, the narrative frames it in such a way that remarks upon his poor sportsmanship, not his misogynistic accusations against Marilyn. Throughout the film, the "good" sportsman, Marilyn, is an idealized submissive, apologetic, and considerate girl that values her peer's ego over her own. The training of gendered hierarchy in the post-war era is palpable, even if it the desired or direct reading of the film. The wary attitude towards female success and dominance present in the video mirrors ideals of womanhood that emerged in the post-war era as a means of redirecting society to its 'wholesome' origins.

Centron juxtaposed their good girl archetypes with depictions like *The Snob,* which depicts Sarah contemplating algebra homework on a Friday night despite the social dreams of her mother. After shutting her bedroom window to limit the volume of the party being held next door, it is clear her plans are not like that of her peers, far before she utters a word. Sarah's mother verbalized this as she swept into the room to confront her daughter about her plans, then almost instantly lamented her choice to do homework. Sarah's equally instant exasperation indicates this was a subject that had been discussed before, ignoring the crooning of her mother that advocated a "normal" social life that involved dating, partying, and far less studying.

The teenager went on to defend her choice, citing the amount of homework she had and the amount of time it would take to be punctual. She's committed, yet is portrayed as antisocial and even selfish for prioritizing her classes. Before the viewer meets anyone else, the subject has been identified as too bookish, antisocial, and abnormal by her own mother.

Not content to leave the issue alone, Sarah's mother arranged for Ron, the boy who lived next door, to invite her daughter out of the house. Swayed only by the wishes of his mother, Ron agreed to invite "high hat" friend to an upcoming get together, all the while insisting on the snobbery of Sarah. Instead of identifying the behaviors he found egregious, Ron crafted a timeline of Sarah's downfall that marked the root of her interpersonal issues with peers in the transition to middle school, as she began to deal with her inadequacy. He recalled that in grade school she was smart and sociable, but as she reached adolescence she couldn't handle not being a "big wheel!" Later in the film, other male classmates talk behind her back, saying "she's just sore 'cause we picked Bill's design for the yearbook cover instead of hers," again making the judgement that Sarah acts the way she does because of her insecurity, something obvious to those around her but not to the girl herself.

When doing dishes with her father Sarah expressed disappointment with her history test scores and wasted time spent on the rejected yearbook cover. He doesn't ask her about her struggles in school, or offer her help, making his sole concern her ability to engage on a social and romantic level with her peer group, whether she was interested in it or not. At Ron's party, Sarah rejects a dance offered by Bill Tyler, the artist whose yearbook cover was chosen over hers.

While certainly not nice, the quick rejection she gave him was far less brutal than the wringing she received from a peer who accused her of icing Bill out. Sarah at first declined to

entertain the idea that she owed him anything at all, retorting “I don’t know what business it is of yours if I don’t want to dance.” He speculated that she did want to dance, but instead couldn’t resist the temptation to be a snob. Sarah ran out of the party with Ron close on her heels, offering a moment of emotional vulnerability as she cried that other students “don't understand anybody who isn't one of their gang” or didn't do the things they did. Ron comforts Sarah soundlessness as the narrator finished the film with the shameful assertion that the snob was hurting everyone: “herself, her parents, her friends,” and other people. He asked the other people” audience a series of rhetorical questions about what they thought, about whether or not her peers were justified in their scrutiny of Sarah, but the earlier voice of the film indicates that is the case, that she is the problem, the abnormality, and would be treated as such until she conformed.

The criticism of Sarah’s behavior begins with her commitment to academics, an odd hobby in a culture that tried to relegate women to Tupperware parties and housewifery. Not only is Sarah deemed to be overly engrossed with her studies, she is also not getting good grades, which makes her insistence on studying rather than social interaction seem even worse to viewers. The production argues that girls should not dedicate all their time to school, or their eventual careers through the mouth of Sarah’s mother, who insisted “you’re only young once!” Girls in the classroom were reminded that their beauty, youth, and attractiveness were fleeting commodities, making it all the more important to go to parties, have friends, and acquire dates.

Education was not always looked down on by Centron, but for girls it was often a specific niche, as embodied in the 1955 film *Why Study Home Economics?* Using the conversation of two sisters, Janice and Carol, the film invited teenage girls to consider the value of domestic labor in an increasingly technological and professionalized world. Janice picked her class sched-

ule while Carol sewed on the couch, baffling her younger sister when she decided to register for home economics. Carol asked why anyone would waste the time on something they could learn at home, for free, from their mothers? Already resigning herself to being a lifelong homemaker, Janice goes on to that she needs to know what she's doing, and assures her sister spitefully that "so will you!"[69]

To put her sister's comments to rest, Janice seeks out the counsel of one Ms. Jenkins, her high school home economics teacher. Her teacher reveals that home economics is a science, or at least she incentivizes audience to think of it as one. Home maintenance was so important that she encouraged girls to devote their high school education and potential further time, money, and learning in college to the subject, if they decided to go at all.

All women were expected to learn the skills of domesticity, and even critics of the *study* of domestic labor still performed domestic tasks, like Carol. Ms. Jenkins argued that girls should always be prepared for one's future family. She reminds Janice that marriage is an inevitable conclusion for girls in her cohort, and while some might not get married young, all would at some point. The heart of the issue of home economics in this film is the creation of a healthy nuclear family in the future. Alongside budgeting, grocery shopping, and design, women were defined by their ability to develop "good household relationships," marking the significance of motherhood and the raising of American children.

The film mentions boys taking home economics for a brief moment, but the majority of this film is very obviously geared towards women, their decisions about life after high school,

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[69] Centron Corporation, *Why Study Home Economics?,* Educational Collaboration with Dr. Edna A. Hill, (1955), film.

reproductive futures and life partners. In a film that begs the question of a field of study, it operates off of the expectations of women already laid and then seeks to reinforce them. The pitch of the film is not about choosing the path of homemaker, rather, about being a "good" one, an educated one, and an efficient one in a world that expected housewives as a default.

In 1955, Centron released *What About Juvenile Delinquency?*, a quintessential 1950s scare film that depicted a teenage gang member's father being jumped, seemingly reaping the reward of his adolescent son's behavior.[70] When Jamie realized the yellow Buick his friends jumped was his fathers he denied any involvement, even when other students immediately identified him as a troublemaker. Outside of the class room, most Americans interacted with ideas of delinquency through film and television, with popular movies like *The Public Enemy* in 1931 and later films like the iconic *West Side Story.* Delinquency, or so the fear went, "destroyed potentially productive lives, tore apart families, and presented a challenge to law enforcement and the courts."[71] *What About Juvenile Delinquency?* engages with the relationship of white, middle-class juvenile delinquents to law enforcement, making sure to enforce proper channels of authority. Thanks to media coverage and congressional concern, the public heard and read a great deal delinquents and the juvenile court system. The teenagers in the film advocate for their own character, protesting that they aren't *all* delinquents, successfully advocating for the right of moral students to defend their generation against the pariah of a corrupt few.

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[70] Centron Productions, *What About Juvenile Delinquency?,* Lawrence, Kansas, 1955, film. https://archive.org/details/WhatAbou1955.

[71] Holt, 93.

White teenage boys were not the only youth moonlighting as juvenile delinquents, and in the 1950s adolescent girls were increasingly scrutinized for their sexuality. Venereal diseases had been a constant concern for the American military since the early years of World War I. Parents and authority figures sought to mechanize the criminal justice system as a means of uprooting sexual and behavioral habits deemed undesirable.[72] As psychology boomed, girls were pathologized for their supposed relational defects, just as men, and to a lesser extent, women, were being inspected and uprooted for the "condition" of homosexuality.

According to Rachel Delvin, sex offenses of the post war era are best described as status crimes, meaning they were constructed as criminal in nature, but punished or considered less harshly because of the age of the offender.[73] The female juvenile delinquent was unique, even in the postwar era that was concerned with delinquency of all kinds. Rebellious young girls were a manifestation of anxieties surrounding family structure and stability, and through their early sexual activity girls defied the authority of their parents and subverted the aims of dominant conservative culture.

Beginning in the era of progressive reform, middle-class reformers and families were increasingly concerned by daughter's sexual and social autonomy, especially those of the working class.[74] In an attempt to subvert the threat of urban environments and growing sexual variance in young women, these reformers began the tradition of female deviancy being deemed inherently

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[72] Rachel Delvin, "Female Juvenile Delinquency and the Problem of Sexual Authority in America, 1945-1965," New Haven, CT: *Yale Journal of Law and the Humanities 9*, 1997, 12.

[73] Delvin, 9.

[74] Mary E. Odem, *Delinquent Daughters: Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Seuxality in the United States, 1885-1920,* North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1955, 39.

sexual in nature and enabled the welding of the law by parents to control their adolescent daughters. In World War II and the post-war era this threat sexuality was brought by urbanization and the induction of women to the public sphere via the workforce. It was increasingly seen as a direct attack against the authority of the home and family, and sex offenses could range from staying out late, sex out of wedlock, pregnancy, or even holding association with other delinquents.[75]

The films discussed above indicate a contrived culture of domesticity that was enshrined in daily life of White middle class Americans, yet faced growing opposition as fears of juvenile delinquency, gender nonconformity, and issues of domestic labor consumed adults simultaneously. A adolescents were subject to an onslaught of preventative ideology to medicate against the ails of modern culture. Treating the second layer of instruction, that is, gender and misogyny, as a form of implicit messaging allows the films to act with a sense of familiarity. By reinforcing ideas already common in their lives, Centron and Coronet taught girls that quiet and happy women were made, and belonged in the home, away from the juvenile delinquents and bad attitudes that might tempt them otherwise. Understanding the underlying themes of this educational collection makes interpreting the next chapter, explicit messages on sexuality and dating, much easier.

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[75] Devlin, 155.

CHAPTER III. / "How Do You Know it's Love?," Sex, Dating, and Marriage in Social Guidance Films

"I love you Nora, do you love me?"
"Well I don't know Jeff."
"You're the only girl I've dated in two months, we get along fine, you do love me don't you?"
"I think so, but I'll have to think about it."[76]

In 1950, Coronet released *How Do You Know It's Love?* alongside other films like *Are You Ready for Marriage?, Are You Popular?, and Going Steady,* all of which focused on dating, marriage, and identifying sexual respectability in teenagers. The films show a pattern throughout their various plots; using power structures, coded language, and depictions of gender to make an argument for how an idealized society should function. In 1961, Sid Davis produced two twin films in California, *Girls Beware* and *Boys Beware.* Rooted in fears of the 1960s, the later installments show a consistent policing of girl's behavior, a suspicion of homosexuality, and a push to stop the onslaught of the incoming sexual revolution.

The first film, *How Do You Know It's Love?,* emerged out of a cultural moment specific to the adolescent culture of the postwar era, where teens were "going steady," at a seemingly streamlined rate, entering into marriages, and having children younger than ever. While marriage was ultimately the desirable outcome of a young woman's life, the film specifically encouraged a "mature love" that could be practiced by high school viewers in preparation for marriage.

After a date, Nora is seen talking to her mother, questioning "how did you know you were in love?" Her mother discloses she had been 'in love' several times, and assures her daugh-

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[76] Coronet Instructional Films, *How Do You Know It's Love?,* Educational Collaboration with Dr. Reuben Hill, (1950; Glenview, Illinois), film.

ter that many people "fall in love quite a few times." To "really be in love" however, is a different thing entirely. At the same time, Jeff discusses the matter with his brother, Bob, who is a few years older and engaged to a girl named Jean. While Nora relies on the lengthy advice of her mother, Jeff receives it from someone within his peer group. When asked why Jeff loves Nora, he only describes her as beautiful, which is instantly rebuked by his older brother for its lack of maturity. While both adolescents are informed of their naivety through their respective role models, Nora's instruction is far more detailed and precise, underlining a distinction in relational roles.

The female student viewers of *How Do You Know It's Love?* become the target of specifically feminine instruction that instills moral purity, leaving the onus of propriety on the shoulders of teenaged girls. The day after the couple's date, Nora's mother used a photo album to highlight different stages of her daughter's life in which different types of love were needed or desired, and how the "capacity for love grows and develops just as you grow and develop. Beginning with an image of Nora as an infant to illustrate parental or familial love, she describes a nurturing form of affection. This seemingly natural bond between children and their parents however, is qualified by the idea that these forms of love, however important, were transitional. The mother warns that, "Of course, some people expect that care and protection all their lives. They never grow up, but it is a kind of love."[77] This comment is a nod to fears of momism in the post war era, a charge that blamed overly involved and affectionate mothers for the creation of "sissies," a term for sons deemed to be weak, passive, and gay.

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[77] Coronet Instructional Films, *How Do You Know It's Love?,* Educational Collaboration with Dr. Reuben Hill, (1950; Glenview, Illinois), film.

Another photograph shows an image of six year old Nora drying dishes by her childhood sink, accompanying her mother's comments on learning how to return love and do things for others. While the frame is brief, it is intentional that the pictorial example of acts of service for girls is one of her younger self performing household labor. It illustrates how the pathway to marriage and domesticity was carved in the earliest years of childhood, foregrounding service to others far before any serious dating would take place and treating domestic chores as something rooted in the pathway to romantic love rather than self sufficiency or ability.

Love for one's friends is separated as another type of love, and so is the "special friend" a girl might have and a similarly homosocial stage for boys, "when they stick together in gangs and won't have anything to do with girls." These periods of friendship are included as an example of "normal" social development, signaling that intense relationships with members of the same sex were foundational at childhood, but would lose primacy as children aged and they practiced more emotionally developed forms of love within heterosexual relationships. When properly socialized, children could achieve the "desired result of an individual's emotional and psychic evolution."[78]

This need for normalcy dictated that adolescence should act as a training ground for adult life, making youth recipients of an active campaign rooted in the post war emphasis on psychology and belief in the ability to eradicate abnormal behavior. If these relationships lasted for too long, did not progress in their desired evolution, or did not concede in relation to heterosexuality, they were a developmental cause for concern. As discussed by Marie Louise Adams, psychological theories of sexuality began to blur the binary of normal and abnormal, adult fears of deviancy

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[78] Mary Louise Adams, 'Why Can't I Be Normal?': Sex Advice for Teens, 83.

manifested in strict expectations of gendered, white, middle class conformity. [79] The ultimate example of abnormality then, was homosexuality, a fundamental denial of well-adjustment, but one that could only be determined after "the transitional phase of adolescence was completed." [80] This idea validated certain types of homosocial affection, like same-sex peer groups and close interpersonal relationships while invalidating others like direct or non-platonic intimacy.

Unrequited love appears next, as Nora reminisces on the high school football captain she had swooned over two or three years before. His image is meant to represent the unattainable, when her mother assures her that "We all go through crushes like that, on teachers, or sports stars, or movie stars." The list typifies these three codings as either economically or morally impossible, symbolizing a difference of wealth, class, and status as important in compatibility between partners by saying sports and movie stars, and then signaling social guidelines by emphasizing that a crush on a teacher, or more broadly an authority figure was only meant to be felt, not acted on. Expanding on the topic of learning social boundaries through experience, young puppy love is introduced as practice in learning how to love and be loved, again highlighting the acquired nature of this process to mature love.

Nora recounts the capture of the next image with a giggle, thinking of when she "caught" a couple at camp last summer, a category of love where "the physical side dominates." Even as she remembers it fondly, the threat of damage to one's reputation that improper behavior brings is visible. Speaking of sex, her mother cautions that sexual activity is often mistaken for love, but

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[79] "Why Can't I be Normal?," 85.

[80] "Why Can't I Be Normal?," 92.

that mature love is more than just physical passions. Genuine affection is settled, tender, unselfish, and cooperative.

The film provides questions for teenagers to ponder when considering their relationship status, as given by Nora's mother.

> "Are we really interested in the same things?
> Do we feel at ease together?
> Are we proud of each other?
> Do we agree on the basic things such as religion, marriage, children, money, and so on?"

The questions seek to remind the adolescent viewer that cultural consensus, comfort and ease are important when deciding on a spouse and romantic partners in general. The suggestion that Nora conduct self evaluations on the value of her relationships is similar in practice to the interwar mandating health and beauty standards through the 4-H campaign of the USDA, which gave rural teenage girls ratings through health score cards and health club contests. Girls were taught to continue this system of critique in their homes, track their process, and ultimately rid themselves of defects and non-respectable behavior. In 1934, United States Department of Agriculture economist Oliver Edwin Baker declared that in the event of circumstances harmful to the "reproduction of the race," the primary policy aim of the government should be to restore reproductively viable conditions."[81] While initially concerned with improving agriculture in rural America, 4-H soon sought to mold the gender and sexuality of their members to foster allegiance to "the stabilization of cultural norms of gender, race and sexuality."[82] The United States sought

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[81] Oliver Edwin Baker, "Rural-Urban Migration and the National Welfare," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers,* Vol XXIII No. 2 1933, 92.

[82] Rosenberg, G.N. "A Classroom in the Barnyard: Reproducing Heterosexuality in American 4-H." *Queering the Countryside: New Directions in Rural Queer Studies,* edited by M. Gray et al., New York University Press, 2016, 89.

to solidify state control over bodies of rural American youth for the express purpose of continuing an economically prosperous, capitalist and white supremacist state.

Contemporary issues of divorce, birth rate decline, sexual deviancy, and a biopolitical need for adequate laborers and healthy mothers gave the United States justification for their intrusion into private sexual behavior and begin state created sex education for adolescents. This was a marked period in which the power of the state began to extend to issues of the bodies, metrics of sexual normalcy, family units, and reproduction that would be foundational to the state policing of sexual behavior and expansion of global homophobia during the Lavender Scare.

Nora resolved to observe Bob and Jean's relationship and compare them to the standards established by her mother during their double date. Bob and Jean, through Nora's internal narration, are evidently holders of a mature love, while her and Jeff are not. "We're not ready for that kind of attachment are we? But, we can still have a lot of fun, can't we?" Jeff asks her on a rollerskating date, the kind of fun she likes, and they end their date amicable with plans to see each other again, but having acknowledged that they are too young to claim mature love for one another.

That same year, Coronet Films released another film titled *Are You Ready for Marriage?* that addressed similar themes shown in *How Do You Know It's Love?*. The pseudo documentary was another attempt to stem the tide of young teens getting married in the aftermath of the war. Sue has recently graduated high school and in seemingly the same breath has accepted the marriage proposal of her older boyfriend, Larry. The pair had not been dating for long, with a record of three months, and her parents were less than pleased. Her parents disapproved of the affair, and with Sue being financially dependent on them, there is little room for compromise on the

matter. Sue tearfully tells Larry that they disapprove of the marriage, and in a fit of enthusiasm he tries to convince her to elope, but she adamantly refuses.

The impressionable and girlish mindset of Sue is clear when she solemnly repeats the warning, "A marriage without parent's approval is two strikes on it from the start," however, she quickly wavers in her conviction in favor of finding a way to follow her romantic desires.[83] The couple enlists the help of Mr. Hall, a marriage counselor at their local Christian church, hoping that he will help them get married and quench the fears and apprehension of Sue and her parents.

Instead of the quick solution they may have hoped for, the couple receives instruction on marital preparedness, maturity, and determining if a relationship is "the real thing" as they navigate the throes of early adulthood. In a similar structure of the previous film, the pastor asks them a series of "questions for cupid" to determine their preparation for marriage: Do you have similar backgrounds? Are you real friends? Do you both understand marriage? Ultimately, the film teaches young people about acceptance of social conditions and the morality of practicing submission to society's conventional wisdom.

The narrative then showcases the battle between pop culture and conservatism over social values by qualifying the question to mean "Not the kind in most movies or most popular songs, but the real everyday kind of marriage, between real people," indicating a need seen by adults and those in authority to create a distinction between proper channels of authority, like religious figures or educational films at schools, and anecdotal or fictional experience.

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[83] Coronet Instructional Films, *Are You Ready for Marriage?*, Educational Collaboration with Dr. Reuben Hill, (1950; Glenview, Illinois), film.

Sue and Larry are shown a marriage development board, a graph that tracks the "psychological distance" of a husband and a wife from their births until old age. At birth, a child is imbibed with traits of one's parents, and as they age they will go on to develop personalities corresponding to their performance of respective femininity and masculinity that dictate their ability to love. Hall warns the couple against a "boing" or initial physical attraction that can distract from issues like similar backgrounds and the sharing of a value system, much like Nora's mother in the previous film, and advises them to set their sites on relationships of quality, not immediacy or sexual gratification.

Where the film defers in content from its predecessor is in its use of pseudo science to establish its gendered claims, whereas previously the emphasis of proper learned behavior hinged on advice gained from a maternal figure. *Are You Ready For Marriage?* engages with broader issues of community and social discourses in relation to sexual relationships, both in and outside of the home. The next graph shown, titled "Age When Married - Men" shows an upward graph of the chance for romantic happiness corresponding to age, describing the ideal age for marriage as twenty-one, with the graph curving downward between the ages of thirty and thirty-five. For women, the ideal age for marital relations and assumed bliss sat between nineteen and twenty. These numbers are explained through the developing brains of adolescents, that if engaged too soon may perhaps doom an incompatible couple to a lifetime partnership. Even as the film foregrounds psychological theory as the basis for its instruction, the significance of furthering a functional nuclear family unit that involves parental opinion and supervision is underlined. As the film screens a montage of the couple later evaluating these questions in their relationship, a positive relationship with Sue's parents is strengthened and they eventually gain conditional

acceptance of their engagement, marking it as officially viable and far more than a sexually charged (and considerably dated) "boing."

The 1947 film *Are You Popular?* speaks to proper dating behavior, the confines of gender and femininity in the post war era, and the construction of social groups. The film takes place in a school cafeteria, where Jenny, "a girl who sits in parked cars with boys at night," faces social repercussions for her behavior. Sitting in cars was a euphemism for sexual promiscuity, and one that was evidently frowned upon by her peers. While the film generally addresses the subject of popularity among teenagers, much of the language and lessons within the film center dating, sexual norms and how they can impact a girl's reputation, dating prospects, and relationships.

After finding out that Jenny "dates all the boys," one adolescent beau of hers experienced an ego death, ruing the feeling of unimportance. The narrator allows the film to define the rules of dating and sex through a direct comparison of Jenny and Caroline Aims, another high school girl who is viewed very differently than Jenny is. The two high school girls represent two different dispositions towards sex and the subsequent effect on their social status, making *Are You Popular?* a source ripe for understanding the product of purity culture and desires for normalcy as they were supplemented by slut shaming tropes that emerged earlier in the twentieth century and would increase past the scope of this project. [84]

Jenny is rejected by her schoolmates in the lunch room, including the very same boys who she sat in the car with. Here, the audience can see a display of social power. While both herself and the men she associated with had performed the same action, only she faced criticism and

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[84] Coronet Instructional Films, *Are You Popular?,* Educational Collaboration with Dr. Alice Sowers, (1947; Glenview, Illinois), film.

was actually censured by the men themselves. As a woman her sexual purity is examined more closely than her male peers, a fact that ultimately leads to her shunning at their public school. After Jenny is dismissed, Caroline is immediately invited to the table because of her attractive features and dress, social capital, and her lack of social stigma. The message from the writers of this film is clear in their obvious juxtaposition of the two girls, threatening the loss of social status and friendship if one does not conform to the standards of their cohort or peer group.

Caroline's good character is highlighted by her later interactions with Wally, a boy from school who called her to ask her on a date. He gave her multiple options in his proposal, including a group date if she would be more comfortable with some accountability. She accepts the group skating option instead of a one-on-one movie, forgoing the potentially sexual nature of intimate outings with men. The narrator emphasizes the good practice of Wally providing financial expectations for the date, which allows Caroline to make a romantic choice based on the expenses spent by her partner and the class status of the men she dates, a skill needed by white women when it came to acquiring husbands that would serve as breadwinners and checkbooks. She accepts Wally's proposal, while rejecting another friend, Jerry's, citing the last minute nature of his request. Caroline reminds both Jerry and the viewer that the process of dating was competitive, and thus had to be intentional, respectful, and have clear boundaries.

Caroline's popularity relies on the fact that "she looks well, is friendly with everyone, and is considerate of their feelings." Her character establishment as the ideal teenage girl signals to female audiences that the dating etiquette she practices is ideal as well, and beckons them to recreate the same behavior. Some expectations are more loaded then others, such as a need to involve parents in one's dating life by ensuring that they meet any date of their daughters, or the

idea of repaying a boy for the entertainment of a date, not though sexual behavior, but through the alternative provisions of perhaps an invitation for a meal after their date, or by bringing another couple along with them so she would not be tempted to perform physical acts of reciprocation. The film also teaches male viewers of what qualities they should look for in the women that they date, encouraging the pursuance of the Carolines of the world and the rejection of the Jennys. This type of instruction first teaches girls of their place within their communities, their obligations, and then ensured that they would be measured by those same constrictive ideas by teenaged boys who had been exposed to the same instructional material.

In 1951, Coronet released *Going Steady?,* another inquiry on dating. A troubled and moping Marie lunges for her household phone to the chagrin of her mother, hoping for a call from her unofficial and seemingly uncommitted boyfriend, Jeff. Her mother warns against going steady with the wrong man, advising her daughter to be careful before limiting her options of eligible partners. It was especially important that Marie resisted the pressure to take sexual liberties, as any choice she made in that department would define her current relationships and the ones that were to follow. Teens were encouraged to socially date, as long as they obeyed curfews, the wishes of parents, and maintained an image of purity.

Jeff apparently was similarly dismayed with his state of romantic affairs, seen in the harsh schooling he received from Marie's mutual friend, Dianne, for the audacity to ask her to go with him to the senior class play. Dianne She refused, citing her monogamous coupling with another boy, then bringing up Jeff's obvious relationship with Marie. Later, Dianne and Marie are getting ready together and the former confides about Jeff's proposal, trying to get Marie to consider her options, just as the girl's mother had. The characters in the film warn against going

steady too soon for a variety of reasons, including the idea that "young people drift into marriage" and must learn a more intentional approach to martial coupling, to prevent premature sexual activity, and to remind girls that they must "have to know when to stop" the advances of their sexual partners.[85]

In spite of these critiques, the film seeks to offer a nuanced perspective on dating through Dianne's character, who describes her relationship to Hal as committed and dependable. She exclaims that "I never have to worry about if I will have a date, It's so good to know you belong to somebody! You don't have to make an effort to be at your best all the time" and portrays the emotional fulfillment and security that could come from maintaining a consistent partner, even at a young age. The film closes with an ambiguous ending, asking the audience to ponder "What are the advantages— and the disadvantages— of going steady?" The film neither completely advocates for or condemns going steady, instead trying to give teenage viewers a nuanced perspective to help them make their own decisions when the time arises. Heterosexual coupling is treated as inevitable, making the issue of going steady one of timing and emotional maturity rather than the choice to participate at all.

In 1961, a production company in California released *Girls Beware* and *Boys Beware.* Made by Sid Davis in partnership with the Inglewood Police Department and Unified School District, drawing comparison to other depictions of juvenile punishment and police involvement in *What About Juvenile Delinquency?*. *Girls Beware* is a classic scare film, with no happy ending in sight for any of the characters. The issues and fears of 1961 are blatant: girls are warned

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[85] Coronet Instructional Films, *Going Steady?,* Educational Collaboration with Dr. Judson T. Landis, (1951; Glenview, Illinois), film.

against rape, violence, premarital sex, getting "in trouble," and even death. The warning to girls focused decidedly more on criminal behavior and violence at the hands of men than other films that had shown similar topics, indicating a shift in tone in line with the shift from a rural to an urban location.

The worried mother of Judy Miller recounted the recent activities of her now missing daughter to policewoman and narrator Norma Nuefner. Judy worked as a babysitter regularly, and one evening she accepted a job offer for a couple she did not know in the event of a slow evening. Her body was found deceased and decomposing a week later. Sally and Elizabeth met two older boys during an evening at the movie theatre, and Sally decided to accept their offer to take her back to her parents' house. Elizabeth declined and Sally left with the two men. They drove to Lookout Peak, where both men sexually assaulted her, then left her stranded and confused. Mary, a sweet teenager accepts a ride home from her friend Robert, beginning an affair that led to her "getting in trouble," a euphemism for teen pregnancy.[86] The narrator, Officer Nuefner, cryptically concludes the tragic compilation with the reveal that Mary has since been placed under the care of juvenile authorities, describing her situation "too late for advice."

Boys Beware presented an alternative scenario, one that was deemed threatening to teenage boys: the homosexual predator. Lieutenant Williams narrates the film, warning his audience of hitchhikers and other dangers that "never meet the eye."[87] Jimmy Barnes hitchhiked home after a baseball game, something he'd done frequently in the past with no issue. His friendly ride, Ralph, struck up a conversation and engaged in some "off color" remarks, but the jokes

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[86] Sid Davis, *Girls Beware*, (1961; Los Angeles: Sidney Davis Productions, *Internet Archive,* Film.

[87] Davis, Sid. *Boys Beware.* (1961; Los Angeles) Sidney Davis Productions, *Internet Archive,* Film.

made Jimmy fee mature. Ralph would go on to show the teenager pornography, and over time Jimmy began to trade sex for emotional intimacy, gifts, and financial support from the older man. Ralph was eventually arrested and Jimmy was put on probation, a cruel punishment for a teenager who could not legally consent being the victim of something dubbed a disorder and a sickness simply because it had happened at all. Even under the care of his parents, the fact that Jimmy was punished at all for what amounted to grooming and statutory rape shows the ways in which legal systems were used against adolescents, often with the claim that their methods were in the best interests of the child.

Thanks to the psychological theories discussed earlier in pieces like "Why Can't I Be Normal," the idea that there could only be adult homosexuals dominated the discourse on sexual development.[88] Where girls were warned against a multitude of threats to their respectability and at times their lives, boys were warned against the prevalent stereotype of the adult homosexual pervert who would abuse them, kill them, or potentially convert them.

Williams then tells the story of Mike Merrick, a teenager that was sodomized and murdered by a young, attractive gay man after basketball practiced. In both cases, the boys are solicited at sites of familiarity to them, places they went with their friends and families and that were in broad daylight, at least at the beginning. In Jimmy and Mike's case, both boys were approached at some kind of sports practice, by seemingly normal men who appeared for all intents and purposes, fine specimens of masculinity. The assailants drove good cars, they had money, and they treated the boys with kindness and often extended the limits of their teenaged social constraints, whether it be permitting the use of profanity or letting one of the teens stay out later.

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[88] ,Adams 85.

The places they preyed on the boys were sites of American masculinity: the baseball field, the basketball court, and often located in the picture-perfect redlined and safe suburbs; all places that were normally associated with security but were constantly holding predators at bay.

Lieutenant Williams finishes the film with a warning against public restrooms, which could "often be a hangout for the homosexuals." Blonde haired, blue eyed and ruddy cheeked Bobby took the short cut under the pier to get home, but quickly changed his mind when he encountered a man under the pier that had been in the restroom while his friends and him had changed. Bobby changed routes accordingly, making a choice that "may have saved his life." The warning against both predators and homosexual activity in public restrooms was not without precedent, with well documented histories of anal and oral sex in North American public restrooms throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century.[89] Alleyways and bathroom stalls offered a site of both invisibility and hyper visibility, dependent on a community's ambivalence or ignorance, access to the news and spread of public outcry, sometimes coupled with the use of the police.

The officer ominously reminds his teenaged viewers that "the decision is always yours, and your whole future may depend on making the right one," stratifying a form of victim blaming that existed before a crime even had the potential to happen. In the same way that girls were told to be hyper vigilant against threats to their purity and physical bodies, boys were taught to be on guard, because one could never know when the fateful "homosexual is about." In a culture that saw the subversive in everything: communism, changing gender norms, homosexuality, and

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[89] Steven Maynard, "Through a Hole in the Lavatory Wall: Homosexual Subcultures, Police Surveillance, and the Dialectics of Discovery, Toronto, 1890-1930," *Journal of the History of Sexuality,* Vol. 5, No. 2, 1994, 220.

the Civil Rights movement, *Girls Beware* and *Boys Beware* makes a plea for public safety and the nation's health as a whole, warning against the ultimate punishment of going against the grain: to face social or physical death.

How Do You Know It's Love? (1950), *Are You ready for Marriage?* (1950), *Are You Popular?* (1947), *Going Steady* (1951), *Boys Beware* (1961), and *Girls Beware* (1961) comprise the third genre in this collection: one that explicitly deals with sex, dating, and marriage. Whether it be through lovesick high school sweethearts, an ostracized high school girl, or vulnerable teenaged boys, social guidance films gave direct, firm advice to students and young adults. At times, these sexual standards were enforced by the law, as is the case with the two Sid Davis films, but in every case they serve as an official beacon of authority, being dispersed through America's public school system at large. This category is the final layer of the socio-political instruction that was taught to teenagers, continuing to build upon the lessons taught in earlier chapters, like blatant Cold War propaganda and encroached gender roles. By the end of their instruction, the hope would be that American high school graduates of the 1950s and 1960s would go on to make mature choices, participate in the consumer economy, wed good spouses, and raise patriotic children. Joanne Meyerowitz makes the case that the 1950s were not as always sexually homogenous as they seemed, a case made clear by 1960s and 1970s era countercultural responses to conservatism.[90] Her argument is not without merit, but the level of influence that sexual conservatism wielded against sexual liberalism in the culmination of these fault lines were strong enough to warrant initiatives, especially ones in education, like these.

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[90] Meyerowitz, 298.

CONCLUSION /

Over the past three chapters, fifteen films from Centron Corporation, Coronet Films, and Sid Davis have taken center stage. In their heyday of 1945-1960, the two companies released around fifty social guidance films in total. Centron produced twenty-two social guidance films and Coronet released upwards of thirty. Under the *INTERNET ARCHIVE* domain, Rick Prelinger's video collection boasts twenty-two social guidance films from Centron and upwards of thirty from Coronet.[91] All fifteen of the films discussed in *Containing Teenage Femininity in Cold War Curriculum* are available for viewing there and on my website, insert link.

Against the background of Cold War Conformity, nuclear anxiety, and a streak of homophobia painted bright lavender, teenagers were given yet another set of standards. By identifying a multi-layered approach, I posit that teenage girls and boys were socialized through these films in ways that built on multiple years of instruction, effectively insulating adolescent proper social learning in the classroom. The scholarship of historians like Elaine Tyler May, Joanne Meyerowitz, David K. Johnson, Marilyn Holt and Victoria Grieve aided this project in many ways, giving me the tools to interrogate this history and create an argument of my own.

In Chapter I, I approached five films through the lens of anti-communism, race, and attempts to construct national identity. By placing these narratives in a broader discussion of cultural conformity, imperial policy, and historical reconstruction, it becomes apparent that these classroom materials in particular upheld a hegemonic, postwar American identity. In Chapter II, I dissect the heart of four Centron and Coronet films to excise a world of misogyny, sexism, and patriarchal supremacy. The culture, or cult, of domesticity was enshrined in the lives of white

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91 "Collections," Prelinger Archives, *The PUBLIC DOMAIN REVIEW,* publicdomainreview.org/collections/source/prelinger-archives.

middle class Americans, hiding an ever-growing fear of instability, delinquency, and diversion. Then, in Chapter III I consider the cultural significance of dating, marriage, and sex in an adolescent world encompassed by six films, progressively getting more threatening as the years go on. This final genre of film builds upon lessons taught earlier through displays of Cold War propaganda and idealized gender roles to create the well-adjusted American teenager that all audiences should to hope to be.

When public health, education, parents, teachers, and film interacted in diverse ways, teenagers were increasingly subject to intervention. The information leveled at adolescents of the 1950s and 60s remains relevant today, when potential recipients of these materials are anywhere from sixty-five to seventy-five years old, a striking number when one considers that the average age of Congress in 2018 was 57.8 years, and the Senate was 61.8.[92] Countless parents, grandparents, teachers and politicians that watched these films grew up in the same lifetime as segregation, *Obergefell v. Hodges*, the repeal of "don't ask, don't tell," and a continued growth of socialist ideals, marked by the rise counterculture movements and organizations like the *Democratic Socialists of America,* which has steadily drawn membership since 1971.[93] The fourteen-million plus Americans in that age range pull significant weight in electoral politics and in state and congressional leaders generally, a statistic marked by the most recent election where over eighty-

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92 Jennifer E. Manning, "Membership of the 115th Congress: A profile," *Congressional Research Service,* December 20, 2018; ii.

93 Joseph M. Schwartz, "A History of Democratic Socialists of America 1971-2017," *Democratic Socialists of America,* 2017, www.dsausa.org/about-us/history/.

million Americans didn't vote.[94] As sex-ed, abortion access, and gay rights continue to dominate courts and lives, this subject and the insight it lends persist in their relevance.

I conclude this work with the question: What are we teaching our teenagers and what does it tell us about policy, gender, and their lives? *Containing Teenage Femininity in Cold War Curriculum* answers this question in the light of a unique postwar culture and argues that social education films were used to shape political thought, enforce female domesticity, and regulate adolescent sexuality.

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94 Domenico Montanaro, "Poll: Despite Record Turnout, 80 Million Americans Didn't Vote. Here's Why," *NPR,* December 15, 2020; www.npr.org/2020/12/15/945031391/poll-despite-record-turnout-80-million-americans-didnt-vote-heres-why.

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