"Thank Goodness We Have a He-Man's School": Constructing Masculinity at the Vancouver Technical School in the 1920s

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ABSTRACT
This article investigates how the male students of the Vancouver Technical School (VTS) learned to become citizens of Canada and the British Empire, focusing particularly on the ways in which the boys re-imagined modern men's relationships with women and femininity. The 1920s climate of nation-building, women's increased presence in the paid workforce, and advances in industrial capitalism meant that the cornerstone of the VTS's male citizenship project was the construction of males as worker-citizens. In particular, the technical school became a place to reassert men's monopoly on the "breadwinner" image. This meant that boys were socialized to perceive women and femininity's encroachments on male spaces as threats to their own masculine development — and thus as dangerous to the social order as a whole. While this often manifested itself as subtle wariness of deviant masculinity, it could also mean overt chauvinism and misogyny.

RÉSUMÉ
Cet article explore comment les élèves masculins de la Vancouver Technical School (VTS) ont appris à devenir des citoyens du Canada et de l'Empire britannique en s'intéressant particulièrement aux moyens qui permettaient aux jeunes hommes de réinventer leurs relations avec les femmes et la féminité. Durant les années 1920, dans l'esprit de l'édification d'une identité nationale, la présence accrue des femmes sur le marché du travail et les avancées du capitalisme industriel, tout cela signifiait que la pierre angulaire du projet de formation à la masculinité de la VTS s'orienta vers celle de citoyens travailleurs. L'école technique, en particulier, préconisait l'image de l'homme seul pourvoyeur du foyer. Par conséquent, les garçons étaient éduqués à percevoir les femmes et leurs empiètements dans l'univers masculin comme des menaces à leur propre masculinité en développement et par conséquent comme un danger à l'ordre social en général. Cette attitude a souvent été perçue comme une manifestation subtile de masculinité déviante, mais elle pourrait aussi être interprétée comme du chauvinisme et de la misogynie mal déguisés.

> *We do not go in for entertainment at the Tech. We are workers down*
> *here! […] Nix on the lady stuff round a he-man school.*
> — Anonymous, *Vantech*, 1922

Introduction

In 1919, the School Board Trustees of Vancouver and its surrounding municipalities agreed that "Vancouver was the logical place for the very first Technical School" in British Columbia.[1] The Vancouver Technical School (VTS) then opened as an independent institution, enrolling 284 students—all male. Like all public education then and now, one of the primary functions of the school was to inculcate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions associated with good citizenship.[2] In addition to changing over time and across cultures, the meaning of "good citizenship" has always varied across class, ethnic, sexual, and gendered lines *within* a given time period or culture.[3] As such, the conception of citizenship instilled in the boys at the VTS throughout the 1920s hinged closely upon a particular and narrow notion of masculinity. However, Canada's post-World War One socio-cultural landscape modified this understanding of masculinity. This article investigates how the conception of masculinity that informed the Vancouver Technical School's construction of male citizens throughout the 1920s re-imagined men's relationships with women and femininity.

There is currently little work on how vocational secondary schools (those focusing on technical, commercial, or manual training) constructed male citizens beyond the strictly vocational aspects of their education. Dunn has superbly traced the development of vocational education in British Columbia's public school system, framing its history through a working-class lens.[4] However, he treats questions of gender as secondary concerns. Jackson and Gaskell's work is also highly useful for examining the shift in the gendered nature of white-collar vocationalism in British Columbia, but they focus on commercial rather than technical education.[5] This work is also more interested in young women's socialization than the construction of male citizens through vocationalism. Similarly, where gender is concerned in Coulter and Goodson's volume on the rise of vocational education, the history of young women in early vocational education takes precedence.[6] In a different vein, Anstead and Goodson bridge the lack of information about the day-to-day student experiences and structure at the London (Ontario) Technical and Commercial High School.[7] This article's treatment of gender disparities within the school is limited to a descriptive narrative, and no similar accounts exist for BC vocational schools. Sharman's study of gender and class in an Ontario technical school is excellent for its critical examination of masculinity within a gender-binary context, but the school's coeducational development in an industrial Ontario setting does not always parallel the all-male environment of Vancouver's first technical school.[8] In short, scholarly treatments of masculinity in BC's technical schools are scant or incomplete. In addition, understanding men's attitudes towards women requires an examination of sexuality. However, despite the small but growing body of works exploring male heteronormativity and gay subcultures in early twentieth-century Canada,[9] virtually none identify

vocational schools as sites where this took place. This article moves beyond superficial understandings of gender, taking into consideration students' socio-economic classes, ethnicities, and sexualities, as well as students' selective appropriation of dominant conceptions of masculinity.

Throughout this article, I contend that the VTS provided space for working- and middle-class, heteronormative,[10] and British-Canadian constructions of masculinity that operated, in part, on perpetuating the "natural" hierarchies of the Victorian gendered order. But while modern conceptions of masculinity overlapped quite readily with the Victorian man, the 1920s witnessed a divergence from some of these older ideals. Canada's nation-building project, the advances of industrial capitalism, and women's more assertive claims to paid work outside the home meant that masculinity became increasingly tied to men's "breadwinner" image. I thus argue that the cornerstone of the VTS's male citizenship project was the construction of modern men as worker-citizens. One corollary to this construction is that it positioned femininity alongside dependency, which helped reinforce young men's narrow conceptions of women as girlfriends or wives who required financial support. The VTS's construction of masculinity also encouraged the exclusion of women and femininity from male spaces. Boys were socialized to perceive women's and femininity's encroachments on male spaces as threats to their own masculine development and thus as dangerous to the social order as a whole. While this often manifested itself as subtle wariness of deviant masculinity, it could also mean overt chauvinism and misogyny.

To determine which conceptions of masculinity the students at the VTS articulated, this article draws primarily on the 1922–1929 issues of the *Vantech,* the VTS's annual yearbook.[11] The yearbook was always published by "The Staff and Students of the Vancouver Technical School," although it may have been entirely student-run in 1923 under the editorship of students O. B. Ellis and F. S. Rice. While students submitted content voluntarily, the editors—who may have been staff or students—moderated the submissions.[12] Thus, it is difficult to determine the degree to which the yearbooks adequately represent the students' voices. Yearbooks act as "souvenir remembrances" and repositories of institutional memory,[13] but they are also performance-oriented media. Not only were students aware that their submissions would influence how their classmates remembered them, but yearbooks also "shaped how students ultimately valued their [school experience]."[14] As Comacchio states, "However much—or little [yearbooks] reflect majority experience, these publications self-consciously promoted ideas and behaviour representing the official institutional culture … they were hardly unmediated expressions of adolescent views."[15] This limits our understanding of how gender really factored into students' accounts. However, it reminds us that yearbooks reflect how students believed they were "supposed" to think. As such, yearbooks reveal much about the climate in which students were socialized and, more importantly, how students normatively re-inscribed these climates for posterity.[16]

The *Vantech* has been invaluable for this project not only because it enshrines officially sanctioned discourses, but also because it tells us what other official documents cannot. This is partially due to the rich variety of textual forms present, including

photographs, short stories, jokes, student profiles, and alumni submissions, among others. The yearbooks provide a window into students' day-to-day lives, complete with their friendships and their trials, illuminating a more human aspect of their school experiences as they wanted to remember them. In so doing, these narratives reveal how students accepted or resisted official policies, carving out spaces beyond their prescribed courses and extracurricular activities to explore their identities as students, citizens, and human beings. They remind historians that it was the students who ultimately determined their own relationship to the world around them, inundated as they were with social and cultural expectations from "above."

Figure 1: *Exterior of Union Temple, ca.1910. Photograph courtesy of the City of Vancouver Archives, AM54-S4-2:CVA371-2131. The VTS opened downtown in the former Union Temple at Homer and Dunsmuir in 1921 before moving to Cedar Cottage at East Broadway and Clinton in 1928.*

Changing Expectations for Youth

Public and Vocational Schooling

The 1920s drenched young men and women with waves of exciting new ways of exploring their identities, just as schooling was becoming a central part of youth's lives. Schooling's centrality was principally due to the gradual but significant socio-economic changes to the family economy and juvenile employment. The "household" or "family-wage" economy — that is, the shared labour within the domestic sphere, supported by (predominantly male) wages from outside the household — had been a part of working-class life since the onset of industrial capitalism. Towards the 1860s and 1870s, as it became more difficult for the urban working class to survive off household earnings, youths were often pushed into the wage economy to supplement the primary wage-earner.[17] This meant that BC's working-class youth often eschewed school attendance in favour of work, even when schooling became legally compulsory.[18] However, the turn of the century saw elementary schooling become "a

fact of life."[19] It nevertheless took longer for working-class Vancouverites to perceive secondary schooling as a necessity, but they soon realized that only skilled male workers could provide the elusive family wage.[20] By 1921, over 90 per cent of boys and girls were attending school until the mandatory age of 15.[21] Still, roughly half of boys and one-quarter of girls took on full-time work at age 16 or 17.[22]

Of students who enrolled at the secondary level in 1920, roughly one quarter pursued vocational degrees.[23] Secondary schools had previously aimed to provide the academic elite with preparation for university, but now viewed academic *and* vocational schooling as necessities for modern life. As one 1908 Vancouver School Board (VSB) trustee inquired, "Not one out of ten pupils goes to the University; and why should the interests of the remaining nine be sacrificed for the one?"[24] From the turn of the century throughout the 1920s, the VSB (along with most Canadian provinces) was making concerted efforts to increase enrolment by diversifying secondary school programs.[25] Renewed interest in vocational schooling at this time was partly an offshoot of the earlier evangelical "New Education" movement. New Education immersed young children in manual training to teach them respect for labourers and factory workers, and aimed to socialize immigrant or minority youths.[26] Furthermore, Canada's 1913 Royal Commission on Industrial Training and Technical Education had reported that Canada fell behind nations like Germany and Britain in "developing [students'] ability for industrial life."[27] The commissioners accordingly recommended a Parliamentary grant to support the provinces in modifying their educational institutions.[28] This gave rise to the 1919 *Technical Education Act*, which emphasized the need for vocational schooling for nation-building. Vocational education thus aimed to fulfill new, modern needs for specialized and efficient labour — a trend that some contemporaries and present-day Marxist historians have denounced as a capitalist means of social control of working-class youth.[29] All the same, we will see that the VTS students voiced pride in being future leaders in this increasingly specialized labour market; the idea of bringing home the increasingly elusive "breadwinner wage" resonated with them.

Vocational education was also a cornerstone of Canada's nation-building project. Buttressed by a new sense of national pride after wartime victories and flourishing cultural production, Canadians enjoyed considerable prosperity during the reconstruction period and the last five years of the 1920s.[30] Meanwhile, Vancouver became the "manufacturing, processing, and service centre of the West Coast" and developed into Canada's third-largest city.[31] Politicians and business leaders did everything they could to capitalize on its success; their preoccupation with "efficiency" during this time bordered on obsession. Efficient banks, efficient transportation systems, efficient families, and, perhaps most importantly, efficient workers would build the foundations for Canada's new, modern identity. How better to produce a well-oiled labour force than through vocational education? Politicians held forth about how vocational schools would help Canadian workers compete with other modern nations and nurture a unified, democratic citizenry.[32]

Vocational education in nineteenth-century BC had primarily been restricted to non-mainstream apprenticeship programs, white-collar commercial or business

schooling, and industrial or domestic science classes in elementary courses of study.[33] However, in the first decade of the 1900s, the VSB installed separate Manual Training buildings in five of its schools to cater to growing demand for technical education within existing schools.[34] By 1910, the board also offered "overcrowded" night courses for men and women in eleven subjects.[35] These courses were not only for skill development and economic health; the board praised them for increasing the pupils' efficiency, self-government, and "industrial democracy."[36] Their popularity also helped justify the board's decision to establish its first technical school — the VTS. After all, complained Mrs. Chairman Macaulay, "In the matter of Technical Education," [BC is] almost the last province in the Dominion of Canada to provide for the young people who are desirous of using their hands as well as their brains."[37] Despite these avowed benefits, the shift towards popular schooling gained traction only until the Great Depression of the 1930s — largely because working- and middle-class parents could scarcely afford to send their children to school.[38]

The Roaring '20s

The growing centrality of public education, especially secondary schooling, meant that modern youths' dynamism was increasingly concentrated in a common space. The results were explosive; this space, combined with post-war economic inflation and commercial diversification helped youth culture emerge in full swing. In schools, students were increasingly barraged with pressure to perform appropriately for one another, being labeled "popular" or "unpopular" according to gendered, class, and ethnic norms.[39] Young Canadians were carving out spaces in and outside of school for leisure, courtship, crime, consumption, and self-expression, and in so doing, they defined fresh parameters for the "modern" man and woman. Youth, armed with more disposable income from part-time or full-time work, now proved themselves avid consumers.[40] Automobiles, cinemas, and dance halls became alluring distractions from school.

In response, school officials attempted to mitigate these "generational insubordinations" in favour of familiar, middle-class values.[41] Extracurricular activities, more deeply institutionalized and under more direct supervision than ever before, provided recreational pastimes that the middle classes approved of. The VTS generally provided activities that complemented Canada's post-war nation-building project and which reinforced existing ideas about ideal middle-class, masculine behaviour. Team sports, radio clubs, and cadets were still popular — but then, so were school dances, now set to "nerve-wrecking jazz-music."[42] Secondary schools of the 1920s were thus sites of unprecedented competition between the old and the new. Increasingly, schools fostered peer cultures that encouraged youths to look to one another (rather than their elders) to define and reinvent their gender identities. However, youths' changing attitudes about gender were deeply informed by their socio-cultural and economic backgrounds.

But attitudes towards gender were already changing, particularly with regards to labour. By the 1920s, a combination of industrialization (including the deskilling

of labour and the decline of the household economy), lower wages for women (often 40–60 per cent of men's), vocational education, and feminist efforts meant that there was more work available to English-speaking women outside the home than ever before.[43] Most women in this period sought employment out of necessity or for personal fulfillment, which many men perceived as a threat to their traditional role as breadwinners.[44] The pushback had consequences for women and men alike. The vast majority of women did find paid work, but male and female anti-feminists alike ensured that women's work remained ghettoized, underpaid, and left little room for advancement. Most women still stopped working after they married.[45] Since women principally took on work in low-wage commercial and unskilled sectors, men still remained the primary breadwinners. But where men's jobs were "threatened" by women, they made concerted efforts to reassert their place in the labour market by differentiating their labour from "women's" work. Masculinity increasingly became tied to the notion of men's "innate" leadership abilities, and, as we will see at the VTS, to the nature of their work.

Men as Worker-Citizens and Breadwinners

The Ideal Man and His Relation to Women

The man's role as a respectable breadwinner was an essential element of British-Canadian masculinity as it related to women and femininity, but it also had religious roots. Anglo-Saxon Protestantism since the seventeenth century had relied rather heavily on the notion of "patriarchal domesticity," which held that men were naturally dominant in- and outside the household. Men were the main link between God, community, and the nuclear family,[46] and thus upheld the "primary principle of obedience upon which all social order was founded."[47] However, as the Canadian state slowly came to replace the church and family as the main nation-building force in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,[48] education became the dominant power with which to reproduce masculinity. This form of masculinity remained consistent with the idea of "patriarchal governance."[49] Patriarchal governance was a complex conception of masculinity less dependent on religion and spirituality than in the past, though it balanced men's more modern civic individualist duties with their communitarian role as the patriarch of their families.[50] This form of masculinity supported the more economically oriented conception of citizenship that had become increasingly entrenched since the late 1800s,[51] since both perceived the male breadwinner as essential for upholding the natural social order.[52]

Class Conceptions of Masculinity and Work

There was little to distinguish the ways in which Vancouver's working and middle classes conceived of the ideal man.[53] The VTS provided space for working- and middle-class character to develop, and an individual student might easily have incorporated aspects of each into his masculine identity. Both classes upheld the notion of men as worker-citizens but they differed about the nature of men's respectability. First, the middle class expected men to have a more genteel, orderly character,

whereas ruggedness was more acceptable among working-class men. Following from Victorian ideals, the middle-class man was deemed respectable if he held knowledge of the modern industrial world and could employ it both competitively and rationally, yet still be sexually virile — all while "moderat[ing] instinct with a cool head."[54] But middle-class men in the 1920s were beginning to value outward appearance more than character, and personality over quiet virtue.[55] Working-class masculinities did not require the same moderation; according to middle-class ideologies, the inability of working-class men to restrain themselves was the very reason they belonged to a "degenerate" class.[56] Indeed, the streets were the best places for working-class truant boys to "demonstrate, learn, and assert" more rugged masculinities since "the restrained and obedient masculinity demanded by middle-class teachers differed in form and function from traits held in high regard by street companions."[57]

Both classes also felt that women were beginning to threaten their status as breadwinners but there were differences in how this wariness manifested itself. From the late nineteenth century onward, Canadians began to draw more distinct lines between the "virile" and "industrious" nature of manual work and the "idle" and thus effeminate work of the upper classes.[58] By the early decades of the twentieth century, many came to perceive the intellectually oriented, white-collar positions into which lower-middle-class men tended to enter as women's work (as they were far removed from workingmen's "brawny" labour).[59] Vancouver's economy in the 1920s relied more heavily on "men's" resource extraction work than did other Canadian cities, so women's claims to workingmen's jobs — while still present — were less pronounced than elsewhere.[60] Thus, it was principally white-collar men who felt inclined to keep women from taking "their" clerical or office work. These men responded by keeping women out of managerial or leadership roles, and remained the primary breadwinners.

Workingmen's comparatively rugged character was partly a result of a late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century "crisis of masculinity," born out of industrial capitalist relations.[61] Unlike middle-class men, skilled working-class men did not fear that women would replace them; their dangerous, specialized work was considered a man's domain. But advances in technology rendered many workers' skills obsolete. At the same time, the business-oriented middle class had an interest in delegitimizing working men's casual labour by conceding respectability, and thus liveable wages, only to skilled workers.[62] This economic context increased pressures on workingmen to maintain their status as the financial head of their households. If an unskilled (or formerly skilled) man could not earn a family wage, his wife and children could now supplement his income outside the home. While men may have been grateful for this income, they may also have considered the loss of their breadwinner status a humiliating blow to their masculinity.[63] Working-class masculine work became based not only on considerations of ruggedness as before, but now also on skill. Identifying as "skilled" (a constructed term, to be sure) was crucial for working-class men to engage in "two interconnected struggles: one to resist the power of capitalist over worker and another to maintain male dominance over women."[64] Thus, workingmen's attitudes towards women were distinguishable from middle-class men's. The former aspired to

masculine, industrial work in hopes of remaining the sole (or primary) breadwinners, while the latter monopolized the higher-paying leadership roles within the increasingly feminized domains of commercial and clerical labour.

The consequence of this divide for technical education was that business interests "won" the ability to define the ideal male in these particular spaces—if only from the top down. Technical schools, by definition, further prepared students for a future in skilled work. By virtue of its founding, the VTS internalized and legitimized the discourse that the ideal male had good character and stability in his work, was thus more employable, and therefore better able to support a wife and family. In the words of one VTS student, "It can be said, without exaggeration, that the boy graduating from Tech is better able to take his station in life than the average high school student by 25% […] Technical training is a practical man's training."[65] While middle-class attitudes towards labour respectability were fairly common at the VTS, we will see that not all students performed according to this discourse. Rather, the students demonstrate that there was room for working-class resistance to administrators' ideals.

Students' Conceptions of Masculinity

The VTS's annual yearbook helps demonstrate that students often articulated a form of masculinity that excluded women and femininity from male spaces, asserted chauvinist dominance over them, or even embodied hostility towards them. While there were some exceptions to this rule, the vast majority of submissions unsurprisingly presuppose conceptions of masculinity consistent with British-Canadian understandings. More striking, however, is the extent to which students identified with their skill and future careers. The VTS created spaces in which masculinities typical of the working and middle classes could thrive and compete for dominance, espoused by different students in varied contexts for diverse purposes.[66]

The Male as Breadwinner
The boys' rhetoric in the *Vantech* is highly consistent with dominant notions that men were to be the primary breadwinners. Recurring entries in the yearbook remind students that the "True man" is industrious and contributes to the commercial success of the social order.[67] The nuances in the various texts espousing this view indicate slightly different emphases on the character required to be a good breadwinner. It is during this period that middle-class Victorian emphases on men's restraint and discipline became less important for their intrinsic value or in service to the Empire. As the 1920s wore on, students articulated virtues like "hard work" and "industriousness" in terms of what employers wanted.[68] One 1923 submission urges students to ensure thorough workmanship so that "each piece of work [is] well done; so that we may, with pride point to our efforts. Let us give the best that is in us," he continues, "not for our own aggrandizement, but for the benefit and encouragement of those who follow us."[69] These submissions were increasingly overshadowed by those like the 1927 survey of business leaders, that detailed what it meant to be a good worker.[70]

Other entries suggest that it is the skill of a worker that makes the man. These

submissions most often compared the quality of vocational education at the *Vantech* to other institutions, claiming that "young men who have not had their training [here] feel that these trained boys are better men than themselves."[71] In a select few instances, however, students rejected the notion of academic prowess and restraint in favour of anti-intellectualism. A 1928 submission, for example, provides a list of students' (evidently contrived) alibis for not attending class.[72] Another entry dictating "Etiquette for Tech Boys" actively encourages poor study habits.[73] Nevertheless, together with assertions that men should pay for dates[74] and provide for their children,[75] there is every indication that many VTS boys believed their "natural" place was as breadwinner heads-of-households with female dependents.

Masculine Dominance of Male Spaces

The *Vantech* offers glimpses of male spaces, both real and imagined. The real male spaces included the school's grounds, the sports fields, and end-of-the-year outings. The imagined spaces were fictional representations of manly pursuits (for example, camping trips) and the students' future workplaces. The boys' writing indicates that they welcomed women in some spaces but only as long as they did not threaten masculine dominance of those spaces. Aside from their role as breadwinners, the VTS boys articulated their masculinity in these spaces to one another and to women through two main themes. The first, and less prevalent, was through bodily appearance and performance. Fit boys who played sports were considered manlier, although men's body image had only recently become a defining feature of the "modern" middle-class man.[76] However, sports remained more popular at the VTS than intellectually oriented extracurricular activities like the Literary and Debate Society.[77] The more important theme at the VTS was students' assertions of their heterosexuality.

Defining Heteronormativity and Heterosexuality

It is important to note before continuing that heterosexuality and homosexuality were still relatively new concepts in the 1920s. Same-sex erotic partnerships were not uncommon before this time but men and women were just beginning to articulate hetero- or homosexual *identities*.[78] Capitalism was key for creating the conditions for mid-nineteenth century middle-class white men and women in urban spaces to experience sexuality in new ways. The decline of the household economy meant that waged work, no longer reliant on an "interdependent family unit," could now be separated from one's personal life at home. Many came to consider sex an intimate act of pleasure first and an act of procreation second. This meant people were freer "to organize a personal life around an erotic/emotional attraction to their own sex, [allowing] homosexual desire to coalesce into a personal identity."[79] More important was the medical and psychoanalytic communities' essentialization of "normal" heterosexuality and "deviant" homosexual identities.[80] There was a clear sense that homosexuality or same-sex acts were to be hidden, objects of shame, and subject to policing in ways that heterosexuality was not.[81] Now, however, the modern secondary school created spaces where youth were forced on a daily basis to redefine the boundaries between

homosexuality and homosociality. This was complicated by the fact that many men who engaged in same-sex erotic or sexual encounters did not consider themselves any different from other men.[82] Moreover, even adolescent boys could use sex with both female and male peers as tools of power or for financial gain, and those endeavours were not always indicative of desire.[83]

Heteronormativity and Men in Male Spaces

Given the prevalence of homosexual subcultures in Vancouver and other Canadian cities at the time,[84] and evidence for same-sex partnerships at schools elsewhere,[85] there were almost certainly boys who experienced same-sex erotic attraction at the VTS. It is nevertheless unsurprising that students never articulated same-sex attraction extending beyond friendship in the *Vantech*. The yearbook was an official school publication in a temporally and culturally heteronormative context so students would have been wary of submitting or publishing texts with homosexual themes. This heteronormative culture made it equally likely that students preferred to keep any same-sex attractions or encounters covert.

Any deviations from familial, heterosexual masculinity were considered gravely dangerous to the socio-economic order as a whole. Aside from the rejection of Christian familial values that same-sex sexual attraction signified, even single workingmen (or simply married workingmen living away from home) were associated with the more licentious elements of urban life. When unmarried men in the new industrial economy clustered in bourgeoning urban environments, they tended to bring with them the social "evils" of disease, crime, and commercialized sex.[86] Importantly, these same urban environments were also sites of (homo-)sexual exploration for both the working classes who lived there and for the middle classes who went "slumming" to escape the constraints imposed by their class.[87] Many imperialist Vancouverites in the 1920s attempted to maintain the dominance of the family unit in a post-war climate of social change. They had trouble envisioning how homosexual people could fit into the capitalist socio-economic order, since the older household economy had meshed so well with Protestant ethics, gendered divisions of labour, and heterosexual child-rearing practices. However, some VTS students were not outwardly concerned with upholding familial masculinity, and some even rejected marriage.[88] Still, the *Vantech* reveals that many students felt the need to reassert their heterosexuality, as well police deviance from this perceived norm.

Heteronormativity and Women in Male Spaces

Recreational spaces (not including athletics) are some of the only instances in the yearbooks where young women were evidently welcome. This is understandable, given that recreational activities provided boys an informal space where they could interact with young women outside the confines of their inherently masculine institution. The *Vantech* reports on the school's annual picnic in each issue, an event that always entailed interaction with male and female students from other schools. One

account frames women as admirers of the Vantech boys when they "came to see us sing."[89] More often, however, young women are positioned as the objects of the VTS boys' desires. The girls' footraces on Bowen Island ended with the "judges [catching] the winner and [forgetting] the rest," and one girl in particular, Eileen Whittaker, "made the boys run, even faster than they usually do."[90] Even Principal Lister reportedly took "pictures of all the pretty girls."[91] In another submission, a 1928 student recounts how he got to dance to jazz music for the first time with a girl at his sister's party. He preferred the upbeat, loose style of dance and favoured "a snappy Jane" over a girl who "would sink daintily into her seat [after a dance] and hide her blushes behind her fan" as a young lady of his father's generation was expected to do.[92]

Another highly heteronormative entry from the yearbook describes The Bachelors' Club meetings:

> The Club holds its daily meetings … in Mr. Fairey's room, from which a good view of the street and a better view of St. Ann's [girls'] Academy can be obtained … The president holds down the seat of honour; namely the end of the table nearest the window … Its vice-president … can look over the president's head and see as well as he … The greatest folly appears to be the tendency toward too much sport, such as baseball played by St. Ann's.[93]

Particularly striking about this last example is that The Bachelors' Club acted as a space in which young men could dictate women's behaviour, even outside of male spaces. Students' submissions about the school's only female staff member, Miss Barrs, reinforce a similar idea. A number of entries note how boys made excuses to pass by her office to see the "beautiful stenographer," who "smiles so nicely."[94] Some women, then, were more welcome than others—provided they were both unthreatening and physically attractive.

The school play of 1926 provided yet another recreational opportunity to entrench heteronormative culture in the school. In the performance, a boy from another school accuses the VTS protagonist of going to an all-male school because he doesn't "like girls." The VTS boy rebukes, "I love the girls. My heart beats fast when one approaches me, beats so rapidly that I become unnerved … I came to Tech for the repose of my soul."[95] This suggests that young women in school environments could be perceived as distractions, reinforcing that the VTS boys did not equate homosocial environments with homosexual ones. More specifically, this literal public performance of masculinity was a calculated defence against the perception that boys who chose not to associate with girls, especially when a coed alternative was commonplace, must have done so out of a disinterest in women. This example is particularly indicative of the fine line between homosociality and (perceived) homosexuality that young men trod while defining the accepted boundaries of sexuality. The accusatory student's presumption was also demeaning for its implication that the VTS boys' disinterest in women indicated their sexual deviance, whether as homosexuals or as lesser males who were unable or unwilling to participate in heterosexual customs of masculinity.

The *Vantech* was the perfect space for students to announce their heterosexuality to one another. In so doing, they reproduced a rigidly gendered society in which young women were more easily construed as romantic or sexual objects. These examples also demonstrate that the VTS students did not reject women or femininity outright. Rather, they welcomed young women — or, more accurately, performed, through writing, their welcoming of young women — in particular contexts where women did not threaten their dominance. The entries also suggest that young women could only be welcomed in these spaces when they could be reduced to objects of desire, particularly where the distractions they presented were aesthetic instead of disruptive.

Exclusion of Femininity from Male Spaces

Female Instructors as Threats

In many cases, it was not real women but femininity that was excluded from male spaces. This distinction is important because it provides an explanation for some women's exclusion. The influence of female instructors and role models, for instance, had long been deemed threatening to young men's character formation (and thus, even their patriotism) for their tendency to instil in males overly "feminine" qualities.[96] Some psychologists feared that the "feminization" of education and rising rates of women teachers would damage boys' masculinity, and that women's lack of experience in public life would impede boys' socialization as good citizens.[97] J. S. Gordon, the Municipal Inspector of Schools, even declared that it was teachers' "biggest and most important task" to ensure that students were trained to be "strong … manly men and womanly women."[98] The notion that women teachers threatened masculinity helps explain the perceived need for exclusively male instructors at an all-male school.[99]

Deviant Motherhood as Threat

However, it was not just female instructors who posed threats to boys' masculinities; deviant mothers shouldered a heavy responsibility, as well. Nationwide, the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries witnessed calls for "efficient" and "scientific" motherhood. These terms described the need for uniform, calculated mothering to bring up strong, healthy children who could work in and fight for the Empire.[100] Mothers with "deviant" children were blamed if they failed to adhere to these stringent standards. Modern women's child-rearing duties now carried weight for realizing the tightly interwoven ideals of nationalism and economic stability. Efficient motherhood also involved inculcating proper family values, bringing beauty and happiness to the home, and ensuring the country's "national thrift" aspect.[101] Of increasing importance was mothers' responsibility for their children's psychological well-being and normalcy.[102] Psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers policed women's child-rearing practices to determine whether they were too nurturing. Single mothers were particularly dangerous.[103] In short, there was a very fine line mothers could walk without being pathologized. Even effeminacy and same-sex attraction were blamed on deviant mothering.

In Vancouver, school administrators and students alike articulated the importance

of proper motherhood for inculcating good, male citizenship. For instance, the truant officer for the VSB cited single motherhood as the greatest cause for boys' absences.[104] Similarly, a 1923 submission to the *Vantech* argues at length that boys who are coddled by their mothers end up doing "everything they are told" and are thus "not really boys."[105] These non-boys were "not really dangerous" because they ended up becoming "decent citizens … School Board members and aldermen." For this student, being a *real* boy meant misbehaving once in a while, and not growing up to work deferentially in office jobs (as women now did). A 1927 submission echoes this sentiment, noting that his mother's "lickings" (beatings) and the work she forced him to do were excusable because "she was only doing her duty by me and shaping me into a good citizen."[106] This last example is particularly demonstrative of students' awareness that proper citizenship depended quite heavily on good motherhood. Both *Vantech* entries also emphasize that it was "overly feminine" mothers who posed a danger for both their sons and the social order because it was their responsibility to shape the citizens of the future.

Policing Feminine Males

Focusing on the exclusions of femininity rather than exclusions of women is also useful because it emphasizes the degree to which masculinity was policed at the VTS. There is evidence that boys who did not conform to certain standards of masculinity were viewed with suspicion, having their masculinity and perhaps even sexualities questioned. The *Vantech* provides caricatured descriptions of the graduating students each year, listing what the editors perceived as their most defining qualities. While it was common to describe their fellow students as handsome and even vain, this was a compliment; these boys were portrayed as womanizers.[107] However, more rarely, some students were policed through humour for having crossed the boundary dividing masculine and feminine vanity: "Lockwood—Will make his mark on the world with his beautiful face and nice complexion. But keep off the powder puff."[108] In a similar vein, boys' intelligence and studiousness were praised as long as they were also athletic—but over-athleticism could be encouraged even where intellectualism was absent.[109] At the 1922 annual picnic, for example, the boys of South Vancouver High School were labelled as "sissies" for not partaking in sports with the VTS boys.[110] In another instance, a 1928 graduate and Rhodes scholar was praised for overcoming his disinterest in sport and for " 'buckling down' to make himself like it."[111]

A more sombre entry in remembrance of two boys who had passed away in 1926 suggests that this attitude towards masculinity carried through even in memoriam:

> — "E. G. Leech was a clean, courteous and manly boy, a true sportsman, who had endeared himself to us. He sustained an internal injury, but such was his grit and pluck that he suffered in silence for a few hours before his untimely death."
> — "Willie Firth, [although well liked], was a quiet, studious boy, who never appeared too robust. He caught a severe cold, which developed into pneumonia, from which he failed to recover."[112]

The markedly different tones toward both boys are almost entirely based on their performance of masculine able-bodiedness and stoicism. While Leech, an athlete with good character, is granted a heroic death, Firth is remembered more curtly for his studiousness and sickliness. The masculine codes pertaining to intellectualism hint that students aimed to perform academically according to working-class standards. Devotion to one's studies was more acceptable among middle-class males, but this form of restraint and rationality could only be exercised in the VTS without jeopardizing one's masculinity if it was tempered by an interest in activities deemed masculine by working-class mentalities.

Male Chauvinism and Hostility Towards Women

It was not uncommon for students to assert their masculinity in even more overtly chauvinist terms that could sometimes result in hostility towards women. The most common of these chauvinist ideas was that some students took pride in attending a "he-man school." One 1922 *Vantech* entry tells the story of a mother who brings her son to school on the Open Day. Upon inquiring whether the event would include entertainment such as teatime, the mother is rebuked by her son, who asserts, "We do not go in for entertainment at the Tech. We are workers down here! … Nix on the lady stuff round a he-man school."[113] Another boy's poem draws on similar masculine pride. For him, "The Best School is Tech" because it is a space "Where guys get killed … And there ain't no single dame … [It is a school of] countless sheiks ["hunks"] … Where boys must learn / To work and earn / And live on their resources."[114]

A third student submitted a piece describing how long it takes girls to put on makeup: "Now you know why I object to girls in our school. Just imagine having to sit in class with a bunch of shebas [girls] doing that kind of thing every morning—it would make me sick."[115] While it is unlikely every student possessed these attitudes, there are virtually no submissions articulating the opposite. Moreover, the publication of these texts indicates that the school provided institutional space for boys to develop and reinforce these views. It is thus clear some students were proud to learn to become workers in a homosocial, male environment where women and femininity were excluded for their allegedly distracting and irrational nature.

A particularly strong example of this attitude appears in the 1924 *Vantech*. One boy states that girls are too fussy, much like cats.[116] The writer continues to detail that a cat is "a nice plaything so long as you stroke and pat it. Pull its tail—things happen. That's what happens when you get married." For him, girls are just a "necessary nuisance" because despite these annoyances, girls save boys the trouble of "dusting and dish-washing and playing the piano."[117] His purpose in writing to his fellow students was to emphasize that girls' absence from their "he-man school" contributed to his satisfaction with the institution. That references to a "he-man school" appear fairly frequently should not be understated. As in other all-male spaces, the VTS students espoused pride in their institution's masculinity. This was because "he-man" spaces represented, among other virtues, freedom from feminine restraints on masculine manner or discourse.[118]

This attitude of unconcealed misogyny and paternal dominance was by no means rare. Indeed, the *Vantech* is interspersed with jokes, the vast majority of which play on sexist stereotypes about girls and women. The imagined restraints that accompanied marriage were commonly the butt of the students' jokes:

— " 'I tell you, my boy, the man that marries my daughter gains a prize!' 'By Jove, jolly good idea — is it a cash prize or a silver pot?' "[119]
— " 'Does yoh take this woman foh yoh lawf'lly wedded wife?' inquired the negro parson. 'Ah takes nuthin'. I's bein tooked.' "[120]

Students' wariness of marriage is paradoxical, as unmarried workingmen were considered socially dangerous, yet the institution of marriage seemed to young men a necessary evil. Their circumspection regarding marriage likely reflected their (imagined) unwillingness to constrain themselves to a sole woman, especially not an unattractive one. These jokes thus reinforced narrow, heterosexual norms, not only for presuming males' eventual union with women but for making assumptions about men's virility. They suggested, for instance, that men's unfaithfulness to their wives, particularly if it involved female employees, was not uncommon:

— "Jones: Why is your wife jealous of your stenographer? Smith: Because she used to be my stenographer."[121]

Similarly, they make clear that female administrative assistants should be hired for their allure and not their skill, for there was an expectation that inter-office romances (or sexual advances) were likely to occur:

— "Manageress: 'Yes, in teaching shorthand and typewriting we are strong on accuracy.' Inquirer: 'But how are you on speed?' 'Well the last girl we sent out married her employer in three weeks.' "[122]

Other jokes reinforce similar attitudes to those of the students above, namely that women are too talkative, ditzy, unintelligent, and/or financially dependent:

— "Sheba [girl]: 'If you men told the truth, you'd have to admit, that you like talkative women just as much as the others!' Dougherty: 'Others? What others?' "[123]
— "Bill: 'No harm, Joe — but don't you think your wife talks a lot?' 'Well yes, Bill, and sometimes I think that the doctor used a phonograph needle when he vaccinated her.' "[124]
— "Merchant: 'Before I can engage you, you will have to pass an intelligence test.' Girl Candidate: 'Intelligence test? Why, the advertisement said you wanted a stenographer!' "[125]

It is problematic to regard these jokes as "just humour"; denigrating humour reflects

and reinforces prejudicial social norms in a context where the consequences and criticism of such prejudices are alleviated, while also bolstering prejudicial behaviour outside of that humorous context.[126] Labour historians have also pointed to sexist humour among workingmen as a means of conforming to and punishing others' deviance from heterosexuality.[127] Surely, these jokes were popular in white-collar jobs as well. In other words, the VTS students' sexist jokes served to reinforce their paternalistic and heterosexual conceptions of masculinity in ways that buttressed their ideas about women's and femininity's "natural" place in society and the household.

Until now, I have argued that the vast majority of VTS students tended to conform to an exclusionary form of masculinity that positioned them as breadwinners prepared to support their dependent wives and children. This presumed heterosexuality and paternalism left little room for deviant masculinities, whether this meant general effeminacy or disinterest in women. In practice, then, many of the boys at the VTS came to perceive women's intrusions on male spaces as distracting and dangerous—not only to their own masculinities, but as threats to the patriarchal, heteronormative, and capitalist social order in which they developed their identities. Occasionally, the students expressed more explicit male chauvinism and misogyny. However, the degree to which these attitudes were inculcated from above (that is, from formal curricula and school administrators) is as yet unclear. We will see that students "played with," or selectively negotiated, appropriated, and interpreted official policies, rather than accepting them outright.[128] This analysis paints a more complex portrait of class and sexual masculine identities, and is addressed throughout the remainder of this article.

Officially Espoused Conceptions of Masculinity

Masculine Tenets of the Formal Course of Study

The VTS course of study was designed and implemented with male students in mind. Its requirements for a three-year degree reveal which characteristics the school tried to instil in its students, many of which have consequences for the conception of masculinity that school officials were attempting to inculcate. As a technical school, the courses the VTS offered were inevitably designed to prepare boys to become worker-citizens. This goal was no doubt highly gendered, meshing well with the British-Canadian and heteronormative conceptions of masculinity that informed good male citizenship. However, it is possible to draw more connections about the specificities of this form of masculinity, particularly with regards to class.

The programs of studies for the VTS throughout the 1920s reveal that the course requirements were fairly rigorous.[129] The school offered two streams: matriculation and technical.[130] The matriculation stream prepared students to become engineers and was less popular.[131] According to one student, the matriculation course had "all the ordinary high school subjects with about five extra subjects," making it "the most difficult program of study in the city."[132] The general technical course prepared students for a life of work in industrial sectors. This did not necessarily mean students would become labourers; the *Vantech* indicates that virtually all graduates either went

to university or found skilled, manual work after leaving the VTS.[133] The students consistently reminded one another that the Victorian-style character the VTS environment promoted, such as "ambition and aim" and a proclivity towards "hard, honest work, and fair play," gave them "a grounding for, and impetus towards, the higher positions such as no other High School in the city can give."[134] Thus, although the courses were designed to produce industrial workers, the school environment aimed to produce leaders in this sector.

The program of studies remained largely unchanged throughout the 1920s, but grew slightly more theoretical and ordered as the decade drew on.[135] In their first year, all students took English; citizenship and economics; mathematics; (applied) mechanics; physics; metric system; heat; drawing and design; and shopwork.[136] Second-year students took the same courses at a more advanced level, plus chemistry, and later, electricity. Third-year courses carried the same titles as second-year, but added both theoretical and applied knowledge. Matriculation students in their second and third years took all these courses plus matriculation English and mathematics, as well as their choice of three matriculation subjects: history, chemistry, physics, biology, French, German, Greek, or Latin.[137] Compared to the general courses of study at regular high schools, the general VTS courses were practically oriented. The VTS boys learned more mathematics and science at a higher level of difficulty than elsewhere, and took fewer liberal arts or language courses at generally lower levels of difficulty.

Figure 2: *Vancouver Technical School Matriculation Class, 1925. Photograph courtesy of the City of Vancouver Archives, AM1535-:CVA 99-3588, Stuart Thomson.*

For example, the general VTS course did not include classics as general high school courses did, but its regular chemistry and physics courses were equivalent to regular high schools' matriculation science courses.

These courses reflect a gendered element of students' intended learning outcomes that extend beyond the VTS's aim to produce male breadwinners. Principal Sinclair asserted in 1935 to prospective students that "certain types of boys," such as those at the VTS, were not interested in classics or literature courses or other "ordinary classroom studies."[138] Intellectual curiosity was more acceptable among middle-class males, while working-class masculinity often eschewed this more "feminine" intelligence in favour of applicable skills.[139] Although the VTS boys were praised for their intelligence, it was important that their "brain, eye, and hand" be trained together.[140] Males' intelligence according to the VTS therefore did not equate to the more "bookish" emphasis on academic subjects offered in regular high schools — unless accompanied by skill in athletics. Rather, the administrators positioned it as a practical sort of intelligence that balanced independent thinking with knowledge applicable to the worksite.

However, this sort of intelligence did not fit squarely into either working- or middle-class conceptions of the term. While the courses seemed more aligned with working-class masculinity, Sinclair's address also suggested the school's business-oriented agenda. He announced that the school was "no place for the mentally unfit, and certainly not a place where boys are taught a trade."[141] In other words, the VTS boys were reared to become leaders, even managerial leaders, among those who worked in skilled labour. In short, by virtue of developing a technical school, the VTS administrators brought increased respect to skilled, manual work and in doing so, implicitly retrenched working-class efforts to increase the respectability of casual labour. The course of studies fostered middle-class attitudes towards workingmen's labour and, by extension, towards masculinity.

Administrators' Conceptions of Masculinity

Analyzing the conception of masculinity that the VTS administrators attempted to instil in students helps determine how and why students "played" with related policies. The school board trustees were instrumental in creating official policies. As elected officials, they worked closely with district committees, superintendents, inspectors, medical staff, school staff, and community members to implement provincial curricula, manage finances, and envision how best to shape students into good citizens. It is helpful to keep in mind that the VSB's trustees were all of British origin,[142] predominantly (but not overwhelmingly) male, and largely middle-class with a few working-class members.[143] It is also noteworthy that the trustees' socio-economic characteristics roughly represented those of the Downtown and South Vancouver School District populations (its respective locations before and after its 1928 relocation).[144] It is difficult to ascertain precisely how class figured into the trustees' conceptions of masculinity from the limited information available, but their statements about manual training and technical education strongly favour a British-Canadian and implicitly heterosexual male citizen.

The trustees perpetually avowed that manual and technical training was to ensure that students "will be prepared to take their places efficiently in any trade or industry."[145] This was clearly intended as a goal for males only, since men were to become workers and women, housekeepers.[146] The administrators met demands for more technical education not only to meet students' increased interest in the subject,[147] but more importantly, to reduce school leavers' unemployment and hooliganism.[148] Indeed, the trustees framed idleness and unemployment as among the greatest threats to social stability,[149] and believed technical education would "decrease the number of those who leave school [from becoming] lost in the great mass of inefficients."[150] While the desire for higher levels of employment was not an idea particular to working- or middle-class Vancouverites, that it was the primary aim of technical education reinforces conceptions of masculinity that position boys as stable breadwinners. The trustees took for granted that technical education was always intended to produce worker-citizens, whom they always presumed to be male.

Of all school administrators, Principal J. G. Lister, also known as the "Father of Technical Education in BC," had the greatest impact on the VTS's birth and development.[151] Lister, a middle-class man of Canadian-British origin, was also co-founder and the first president of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF).[152] He believed that there were "the three great aims of education—cultural or academic, commercial, and technical." He stressed the need for all, especially that a good technical education should include a cultural or academic dimension "contributing to commercial success for individuals and businesses."[153] However, he also believed strongly that to benefit individuals, BC, and the Empire, schools needed to work closely with businesses and that this goal was of greater importance than "academicism."[154] As such, Lister perennially reminded his students that employers "want to know whether you have been playing the game"—that is, to establish themselves as employable men of sound character with practical skills.[155]

Lister's business-oriented discourse may not be as paternalist as Marxist historians might paint it; Barman argues that Vancouver labour activists in the 1920s

> understood the conundrum inherent in schools' reproductive function but, due in part perhaps to their self-confidence emanating from a firmly based class identity […] turned their attention to the city's schools, not to overturn the system but rather to obtain for their children fairer consideration within it. By opting for social reform over class confrontation, working people became allied with like-minded individuals most generally characterized as middle class.[156]

Having worked closely with organized labour himself, it is likely that Lister aimed to provide working-class students an opportunity for social advancement through the existing school structure. His insistence on "playing the game" thus reflected his desire to teach students that, "life is one long keen race, not to merely get what you want but to keep what you get *when* you have gained it."[157] Reading closely into these assertions, Lister *did* desire working-class students' upward social mobility, but this message came at the cost of preserving the existing hierarchical social structure and

isolating casual workingmen from their identities as respectable breadwinners. The discourses he employed were thus nevertheless consistent with business's attempts to decasualize workingmen's labour.

There is also some evidence that teachers and administrators attempted to dissuade boys from embodying characteristics usually associated with the working class. For instance, a *Vantech* article from 1922 reminds boys that courtesy is natural to all men, not only the upper classes.[158] The school play, written by two teachers, espouses stronger evidence of their biases against working-class masculinities since it attempts to break the stereotype of the technical worker as a rugged man. A character in the play, a boy from a neighbouring school, states that, "Ma wanted me to be educated and to associate only with nice boys and girls. She thought the Tech was only meant for rough-necks."[159] He is quickly corrected by the upstanding technical student, who notes that, "the harder they work us the more we like it," continuing on to note some characteristics of the evidently superior VTS boy.[160] The staff's aim to replace rougher masculinities with more industrious ones reflects an attempt to bring more respectability to the specialized program of studies the VTS espoused, and is thus rather consistent with a business-oriented middle-class outlook.

Concluding Remarks: Playing With Masculine Identities

Overall, the VTS students constructed their masculine identities rather similarly to the conception of the ideal, modern man that school officials attempted to instil, particularly as it pertained to women. The boys' attitudes towards women's societal role were also consistent with British-Canadian notions of the heterosexual, nuclear family. Most students articulated the importance of leadership, good character, and skill in their work, aligning easily with administrators' business-oriented, middle-class conception of the ideal male. Nevertheless, other students espoused working-class attitudes; they questioned middle-class demands for students' good character and orderliness, and favoured more practical, hands-on courses—but none articulated pro-labour defences of casual work. The other noticeable disconnect between administrators and students is that the *Vantech* provides no evidence that school officials promoted overtly hostile attitudes towards women. Still, students did espouse hostility towards women and femininity in select instances.

Throughout this article, I have theorized the Vancouver Technical School as a space where boys could construct their masculine identities according to highly circumscribed ideals. Any variations on "acceptable" ideals may have competed with or meshed comfortably with one another, depending on the contexts and circumstances. Moreover, despite the similarities to the ideal Victorian man, the modern conceptions of masculinity espoused in this vocational school environment privileged the construction of young men as worker-citizens and breadwinners. This new emphasis was born in response to the advances of capitalism, Canada's modern nation-building project, and women's mounting claims to the paid workforce. Accordingly, the *Vantech* reveals how the school created space for students to conceive of women and femininity as dependents, and even as threats. Students' articulations suggest their

compulsion to police femininity (and thus, deviant masculinities) through exclusion, chauvinism, and sometimes, hostility. The consequences of the feminine threat were not just to boys' individual identities as men, but were believed to jeopardize the national, capitalist, heteronormative, and patriarchal order that informed those identities.

Notes

1   Vancouver School Board, Annual Reports of Vancouver City Schools, 1919, Box 60-E-1, Volume 1, Vancouver School Board Fonds, 1919, City of Vancouver Archives, Vancouver, BC, 6-7.
2   Timothy A. Dunn, "Work, Class and Education: Vocationalism in British Columbia's Public Schools, 1900–1929 (Ph.D. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1978); Ken Osborne, "Public Schooling and Citizenship Education in Canada," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 32, no. 1 (2000): 8-37.
3   Robert Menzies, Robert Adamoski, and Dorothy Chunn, *Contesting Canadian Citizenship: Historical Readings* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002).
4   Timothy A. Dunn, "Teaching the Meaning of Work: Vocational Education in British Columbia, 1900–1929," in *Shaping the Schools of the Canadian West*, ed. David C. Jones, Nancy M. Sheehan, and Robert M. Stamp (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 1979), 236-256; "Vocationalism and its Promoters in British Columbia, 1900–1929," *The Journal of Educational Thought (JET),* Special Issue: Western Canada, 14, no. 2 (1980): 92-107.
5   Nancy S. Jackson and Jane S. Gaskell, "White Collar Vocationalism: The Rise of Commercial Education in Ontario and British Columbia, 1870–1920," *Curriculum Inquiry* 1, no. 2 (1987): 177-201.
6   Rebecca Coulter and Ivor F. Goodson, *Rethinking Vocationalism: Whose Work/Life Is It?* (Toronto: Our Schools/Our Selves Education Foundation, 1993).
7   Christopher J. Anstead and Ivor F. Goodson, "Structure and Mediation: Glimpses of Everyday Life at the London Technical and Commercial High School, 1920–1940," *American Journal of Education* 102, no. 1 (1993): 55-79.
8   Kael Rodrique Sharman, "Gender, Class and Curriculum at WD Lowe Technical Secondary School, 1923–1973: A Study in Continuity and Change" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Windsor, 2014).
9   John D'Emilio, "Capitalism and Gay Identity," in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader,* ed. Henry Abelove, Michèle Aina Barale, and David M. Halperin (New York: Routledge, 1993); John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate matters: A History of Sexuality in America,* 3rd edition (New York: Harper and Row, 1988/2012); Steven Maynard, "Rough Work and Rugged Men: The Social Construction of Masculinity in Working-Class History, *Labour / Le Travail* 23 (1989): 159–169; Steven Maynard, "Though a Hole in the Lavatory Wall: Homosexual Subcultures, Police Surveillance, and the Dialectics of Discovery, Toronto, 1890–1930," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 5, no. 2 (1994): 207–242; Steven Maynard, " 'Horrible Temptations': Sex, Men, and Working-Class Male Youth in Urban Ontario, 1890–1935," *The Canadian Historical Review* 78, no. 2 (1997): 191-235. Mike O'Brien, "Manhood and the Militia Myth: Masculinity, Class and Militarism in Ontario, 1902–1914," *Labour / Le Travail* 42 (Fall, 1998): 115–141.
10 Gayle Rubin, "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of Politics and Sexuality," *Deviations: A Gayle Rubin Reader* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1984/2011), 137-181. My use of the term, "heteronormativity" is largely consistent

with how Rubin's foundational works employ it. I refer not only to the expectation that male students were heterosexual; heteronormativity presupposes the inseparability of students' policed sexualities and their reinforcement of hetero-patriarchal norms.

11   The yearbook was distributed under the title of *Tech Annual* for five years before its name changed to the *Vantech*. Throughout this article, I refer to the yearbooks of both names as the *Vantech* because this is the name under which they are filed in the Vancouver Archives.

12   *Vantech*, 1926, Vancouver Technical School, City of Vancouver Archives Library Collection (LH 3.V35 T32), 54.

13   E. Lisa Panayotidis, "Visual Interpretations, Cartoons, and Caricatures of Student and Youth Cultures in University Yearbooks, 1898–1930,**"** *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 19, no. 1 (2008): 196.

14   Ibid.

15   Cynthia R. Comacchio, *Dominion of Youth: The Making of a Modern Canada, 1920–1950* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006), 116.

16   Panayotidis, "Visual Interpretations."

17   Craig Heron, "The High School and the Household Economy in Working-Class Hamilton, 1890–1940," *Historical Studies in Education/Revue d'histoire de l'éducation* 7, no. 2 (1995): 217-259.

18   Ian Davey, "The Rhythm of Work and the Rhythm of School," in *Egerton Ryerson and His Times*, ed. Neil McDonald and Alf Chaiton (Toronto: MacMillan, 1978), 221-253; Philip Oreopoulos, *Canadian Compulsory School Laws and their Impact on Educational Attainment and Future Earnings* (Ottawa: Family and Labour Division, Statistics Canada*,* 2005).

19   Jean Barman, " 'Knowledge Is Essential for Universal Progress but Fatal to Class Privilege': Working People and the Schools in Vancouver During the 1920s," *Labour/Le Travail* 22 (Fall 1988): 22.

20   Heron, "The High School," 224.

21   The mandatory schooling age was rising, as businesses and policy-makers recognized the necessity of education for the modern economy — but also to keep troublesome children off the streets.

22   Barman, "Knowledge Is Essential," 56-57.

23   Ibid., 22.

24   Vancouver School Board Annual Reports, 1908, cited in Barman, "Knowledge is Essential."

25   Barman, "The High School."

26   Larry Prochner, *History of Early Childhood Education in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009), 139, 243.

27   Canada, *Royal Commission on Industrial Training and Technical Education: Report of the Commissioners* (Ottawa: C.H. Parmelee, 1913), 10.

28   Ibid., 11.

29   James Simpson, "Inaugural Address of James Simpson, Esq., Chairman of the Board of Education for The City of Toronto, 1910," *Toronto Board of Education Minutes 1910*, Toronto, 3-8; Dunn, "Teaching the Meaning."

30   Alan Bowker, *A Time Such as There Never Was Before: Canada after the Great War* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2014).

31   Ibid., 273.

32   Dunn, "Teaching the Meaning."

33   Jackson and Gaskell, "White Collar Vocationalism."

34   Vancouver School Board Annual Reports, 1910–1914, 24.

35   Vancouver School Board Annual Reports, 1910–1914.

36   Vancouver School Board Annual Reports, 1915–1919, 12-13, 16.

37 Ibid, 1919, 8.
38 Comacchio, *Dominion*, 106-110.
39 Ibid., 125.
40 Jane Nicholas, "Representing the Modern Man: Beauty, Culture, and Masculinity in Early Twentieth-Century Canada," in *Canadian Men and Masculinities: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Christopher John Greig and Wayne Martino (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2012).
41 Ibid., 112.
42 *Vantech* 1924, 15.
43 Veronica Strong-Boag, "Working for Pay," *The New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919–1939* (Mississauga: Copp Clark Pitman, 1998), 41-80.
44 Nancy Christie, "By Necessity or By Right: The Language and Experience of Gender at Work," *Labour/Le Travail* 50 (2002): 127. Even early feminists tended to accept "that women … should work only out of necessity and should relinquish their jobs for the preeminent right to work of men," until after the 1940s.
45 Ibid.
46 Nancy Christie, "Introduction: Families, Community, and the Rise of Liberal Society," in *Households of Faith* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 3-36.
47 Ibid., 8, 10.
48 Mark Moss, *Manliness and Militarism: Educating Young Boys in Ontario for War* (Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2001), 92; Ken L. Draper, "Redeeming Choices: Saving the Social in Late-Victorian London, Ontario," in *Households of Faith,* ed. Nancy Christie (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 264-289.
49 Draper, "Redeeming Choices."
50 Christie, "Families," 14.
51 Jackson and Gaskell, "White Collar Vocationalism," 187; Cloyd Heck Marvin, *Commercial Education in Secondary Schools* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1922), 10.
52 Christie, "By Necessity," 126.
53 Vancouver's class system was complex, with working-class and liberal middle-class educational interests aligned against the conservative middle class throughout the 1920s. The conservative middle class usually represented business interests concerned with short-term economic benefits (Jean Barman, "Knowledge Is Essential").
54 Peter N. Stearns, *Be a Man! Males in Modern Society* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1979), 101.
55 Tom Pendergast, " 'Horatio Alger Doesn't Work Here Any More': Masculinity and American Magazines, 1919–1940," *American Studies* 38, no. 1 (1997).
56 George Chauncey, Jr., *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Makings of the Gay Male World, 1890–1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 38.
57 Bryan Hogeveen, " 'The Evils With Which We Are Called to Grapple': Élite Reformers, Eugenicists, Environmental Psychologists, and the Construction of Toronto's Working-Class Boy Problem, 1860–1930," *Journal of Canadian Labour Studies* 55 (2005): 48.
58 Angus Maclaren, *The Trials of Masculinity: Policing Sexual Boundaries, 1970–1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 33.
59 Ibid., 34.
60 Robert A. J. McDonald, *Making Vancouver: Class, Status and Social Boundaries, 1863–1913* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1996), 104.
61 Maynard, "Rough Work."

62   Andrew Parnaby, *Citizen Docker: Making a New Deal on the Vancouver Waterfront, 1919–1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008).

63   Lara Campbell, *Respectable Citizens: Gender, Family, and Unemployment in Ontario's Great Depression* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).

64   Ibid., 165.

65   *Vantech*, 1923, 16.

66   Vivian Glyn-Jones, "Changing Patterns in School Location, Vancouver School District" (MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 1947). Glyn-Jones suggests that the VTS moved from its downtown location not only to accommodate the growing demand for technical education, but because the new Cedar Cottage site was more accessible to the children of industrial and commercial, working-class families (95, 105).

67   *Vantech,* 1923, 40, 44.

68   Ibid., 1923, 35; *Vantech*, 1924, 32; *Vantech*, 1926; 20.

69   *Vantech*, 1922, 25.

70   *Vantech*, 1927, 10.

71   *Vantech*, 1924, 21.

72   *Vantech*, 1928, 33.

73   Ibid., 24.

74   *Vantech*, 1923, 44.

75   *Vantech*, 1925, 22-23.

76   Pendergast, "Horatio Alger," 1997.

77   *Vantech*, 1927, 62.

78   Maynard, "Through a Hole."

79   D'Emilio, "Capitalism," 469-470.

80   D'Emilio and Freedman, *Intimate Matters*; Mona Gleason, "Prelude to the Postwar Agenda: Psychology in Early Twentieth-Century Canada," in *Normalizing the Ideal: Psychology, Schooling, and the Family in Postwar Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999); Bert Hansen, "American Physicians' Earliest Writings About Homosexuals, 1880–1900," *The Milbank Quarterly* 67, no. 1 (1989): 92-108.

81   Julia Grant, *The Boy Problem: Educating Boys in Urban America, 1870–1970* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 145-146.

82   George Chauncey, Jr., "Christian Brotherhood or Sexual Perversion? Homosexual Identities and the Construction of Sexual Boundaries in the World War One Era," *Journal of Social History* 19, no. 2 (1985): 189-211; Maynard, "Through a Hole," 210.

83   Grant, *The Boy Problem*, 142-146.

84   Robert Campbell, "Managing the Marginal: Regulating and Negotiating Decency in Vancouver's Beer Parlours, 1925–1954," *Labour/Le Travail* 44 (Fall 1999): 109-127.

85   Steven Maynard, " 'Horrible Temptations': Sex, Men, and Working-Class Male Youth in Urban Ontario, 1890–1935," *The Canadian Historical Review* 78, no. 2 (1997); E. Anthony Rotundo, "Romantic Friendship: Male Intimacy and Middle-Class Youth in the Northern United States, 1800–1900," *Journal of Social History* 23, no. 1 (1989): 1-25. Maynard makes the case that boarding schools served as sites where same-sex attractions could flourish, and middle-class males found more opportunity to attend them. Homosexual subcultures for working-class boys were more prevalent on the streets, though they too used day schools as sites to explore their sexualities.

86   Chauncey, "Christian Brotherhood"; D'Emilio and Freedman, *Intimate Matters*.

87   Chauncey, "Christian Brotherhood," 36; Maynard, "Through a Hole."

88   *Vantech*, 1924, 22; 1929, 44.

89   *Vantech*, 1922, 38.

90   *Vantech*, 1925, 49.

91   Ibid.

92   *Vantech*, 1928, 48.

93   *Vantech*, 1925, 50.
94   *Vantech*, 1924, 10.
95   *Vantech*, 1926, 18.
96   Moss, *Manliness and Militarism*, 99–100; George S. Tomkins, *A Common Countenance: Stability and Change in the Canadian Curriculum* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1986), 123.
97   Grant, *The Boy Problem*, 69.
98   Vancouver School Board Annual Reports, 1914, 25.
99   Robert M. Stamp, "Evolving patterns of education in English-Canada from the 1870's to 1914," in *Canadian Education: A History*, ed. J. Donald Wilson, Robert M. Stamp, and Louis-Philippe Audet (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1970), 317.
100 Nancy Christie, " 'A Peaceful Evolution of Industrial Citizenship': Maternalism, National Efficiency, and the Movement for Mothers' Allowances," *Engendering the State: Family, Work and Welfare in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 94-130; Marta Danylewicz, "Domestic Science Education in Ontario," in *Gender and Education in Ontario,* ed. Ruby Heap and Alison Prentice (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 1991), 127-146; Kari Dehli, "For Intelligent Motherhood and National Efficiency: The Toronto Home and School Council, 1916–1930," in *Gender and Education in Ontario,* ed. Ruby Heap and Alison Prentice (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 1991), 147-164.
101 Dunn, "Teaching the Meaning," 252.
102 Elizabeth Rose, "Taking on a Mother's Job: Day Care in the 1920s and 1930s," in *"Bad" Mothers: The Politics of Blame in Twentieth-Century America*, ed. Molly Ladd-Taylor and Lauri Umanski (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 67-98.
103 Grant, *The Boy Problem*, 137-142.
104 Vancouver School Board Annual Report, 1919, 78.
105 *Vantech*, 1923, 18.
106 *Vantech*, 1927, 53.
107 *Vantech,* 1922, 34-35.
108 Ibid.
109 Maclaren, *Trials,* 33; Stearns, *Be a Man!,* 101. By "intellectualism," I am referring to some students' bookish dispositions, especially associated with a passion for ideas of the less technical, practical, or pragmatic sort. It could also mean prioritizing academic success, particularly if athletics and boisterous laddishness were lower priorities as a result of intellectual interests.
110 *Vantech,* 1922, 38.
111 *Vantech*, 1928, 27
112 *Vantech*, 1926, 34
113 *Vantech*, 1922, 7.
114 *Vantech*, 1926, 59, v. 3-5.
115 *Vantech*, 1928, 52.
116 Readers should not dismiss the double-entendre here, as its connotations remain the same today.
117 *Vantech*, 1924, 22.
118 Adam Tomczik, " 'He-Men Could Talk to He-Men in He-Man Language': Lumberjack Work Culture in Maine and Minnesota, 1840–1940," *Historian* 70, no. 4 (2008): 695-715.
119 *Vantech*, 1923, 11.
120 *Vantech*, 1928, 28.
121 *Vantech*, 1922, 12.
122 Ibid., 28.
123 *Vantech*, 1927, 51.

124 Ibid., 60.
125 *Vantech*, 1929, 38.
126 Thomas E. Ford, Christie F. Boxer, Jacob Armstrong, and Jessica R. Edel, "More Than 'Just a Joke': The Prejudice-Releasing Function of Sexist Humor," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 34, no. 2 (2008): 159-170; Charles S. Gulas, Kim K. McKeage, and Marc G. Weinberger, "It's Just a Joke: Violence Against Males in Humorous Advertising," *Journal of Advertising* 39, no. 4 (2010): 109-120.
127 Ava Baron, "Masculinity, the Embodied Male Worker, and the Historian's Gaze," *International Labour and Working-Class History* 69 (2006): 153.
128 Jill P. Koyama and Hervé Varenne, "Assembling and Disassembling: Policy as Productive Play," *Educational Researcher* 41, no. 157 (2012).
129 British Columbia Department of Education, *Courses of Study for the Public, High, Technical and Normal Schools*. Victoria, British Columbia: 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924–25, 1927–28.
130 The matriculation stream was dropped or re-added depending on the year.
131 Dunn, "Teaching the Meaning."
132 *Vantech,* 1922, 14.
133 *Vantech*, 1924, 37, 44.
134 Ibid., 30.
135 In 1923, history and French were added to the original program of studies while the metric system and heat courses were rolled into physics. History was removed by 1927, and French was taught only in the upper years.
136 BC Department of Education, *Courses of Study*, 1921, 1922.
137 BC Department of Education, *Courses of Study*, 1927–28.
138 J. G. Sinclair, "Technical Education and Citizenship," *The B.C. Teacher* 14, no. 6 (1935): 24.
139 Grant, *The Boy Problem*, 144; Maclaren, *Trials*, 33; Stearns, *Be a Man!,* 101.
140 Sinclair, "Technical Education," 23.
141 Ibid.
142 Only property-owners and tenants of British descent were allowed to run in school board elections.
143 Barman, "Knowledge is Essential," 32.
144 Jean Barman, "Neighbourhood and Community in Interwar Vancouver: Residential Differentiation and Civic Voting Behaviour," in *Vancouver Past: Essays in Social History*, ed. Robert A. J. Macdonald (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1986), 121. The VTS opened downtown in the former Union Temple at Homer and Dunsmuir in 1921 before moving to Cedar Cottage at East Broadway and Clinton in 1928.
145 Vancouver School Board Annual Reports, 1912, 53.
146 The strictly female equivalent of Manual Training courses for males (the precursor to the VTS) was Domestic Science which, if perfected, "would result in great benefit to not only the present generation, but also to future generations" (Vancouver School Board Annual Reports, 1912, 12). In 1911, female students at King Edward High School were for the first time permitted to take woodworking courses but this was framed "as an experiment at the request of the Principal" (ibid., 49). While there was also vocational education aimed at constructing female citizens outside the home, this was largely confined to commercial education. Commercial education presumed women's paid work was to be temporary and secondary to men's, while also reproducing women's subordination in the workplace (Jackson and Gaskell, "White Collar Vocationalism").
147 Vancouver School Board Annual Reports, 1910; 1919.
148 Sharman, "Gender, Class, Curriculum," 56.
149 Vancouver School Board Annual Reports, 1914, 14.
150 Vancouver School Board Annual Reports, 1912, 53.

151 *The B.C. Teacher,* 1930, 6.
152 King Edward High School, "Mr. J. G. Lister," *King Edward High School Annual,* Vancouver, 1914, 7.
153 Wayne Charles Nelles, "From Imperialism to Internationalism in British Columbia Education and Society, 1900–1939" (Ph.D. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1995).
154 Ibid., 101.
155 *Vantech,* 1925, 3.
156 Barman, "Knowledge is Essential," 14, 52.
157 *Vantech,* 1922.
158 Ibid., 28.
159 *Vantech,* 1926, 18.
160 Ibid.