

‘Healthmania’

Diet, Supplements and the Pursuit of Health in America and Britain c. 1945-1980.

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Abstract:

This thesis explores the history of healthy eating in the mid-to-late twentieth century, providing insight into the roots of contemporary anxieties about healthy lifestyles, dieting, and the prevention of chronic disease in the UK and the US. This thesis argues that during the post-war decades, British and American societies experienced a fundamental shift that enabled new forms of cultural preoccupations about health and diet to flourish. This shift created an obsession within the media, science and society about safeguarding good health, youth and vitality, especially through dieting, specific foods, and the ingestion of supplements. This shift was enabled by the simultaneous promotion and representation of healthy eating as a solution to chronic diseases, by neoromantic notions of health, by anxieties about modern living, but also by the growth of ideas around individual agency and responsibility for health.

Drawing on a rich source base of self-help books, newspapers and magazines, advertisements, medical journals and comic books, chapters of this thesis explore the ways in which contemporary obsessions about diet and health were promoted, reported on and experienced in everyday life. Examining health obsessions in relation to gendered approaches to food and broader post-war concerns about the impact of modernity on health and lifestyle, on the valorisation of slim bodies and youth, and on chronic disease prevention and productivity, this thesis offers new perspectives on the multifaceted interactions between self-help advice literature, newspapers and magazines, mainstream medical thought, and comic books during the postwar decades.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Food has always been one of the most important aspects of everyday life. Food not only provides nourishment and satisfaction, but it can also be seen as a cultural symbol, a feature of religious abstinence, an indicator of wealth, a social activity, and an artistic expression. This thesis explores the history of healthy eating in the mid-to-late twentieth century, providing insight into the roots of contemporary anxieties about healthy lifestyles, dieting, and the prevention of chronic disease. The relation of diet to health captivated the interest of practitioners of humoral medicine in the ancient, medieval and early-modern worlds, but also preoccupied doctors and their patients during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This thesis argues that it was during the 1950s that British and American societies experienced a fundamental shift that enabled new forms of cultural preoccupations about health and diet to flourish. These preoccupations were produced, represented and promoted by a plethora of simultaneous developments in the Western world, including the re-introduction of consumer choice after the rationing of World War II, the baby-boom experienced by both the US and the UK, and increased leisure time and literacy. Other factors cultivated a moral panic about preserving health, including the compulsion by doctors and health professionals to ‘eradicate’ diseases, a spirit of providing ‘feel-good’ stories to the war-weary citizens, the scientific and medical race between Western democracies and Communism during the Cold War, and the growth of television that utilised medical themes as means of health education and entertainment.

After World War II, interest in food, diet and health expanded in various arenas of public life, becoming a regular topic of debate throughout the mass media. One of the questions this dissertation answers is how healthy eating and healthy lifestyles became popular in Great Britain and the US in the post-war decades. This dissertation analyses a

variety of primary sources: popular self-help books to explore the different kinds of advice offered to the readers of such publications; newspaper and magazine coverage of contemporary health related debates; clinical and laboratory studies of nutrition; and popular cultural representations of healthy eating that reveal the ways in which healthy lifestyles were imprinted into popular imagination.

Historians of food have written extensively about the evolution of cuisine, taste and eating practices. Many scholars have focused on the cultural history of food, symbolism, globalization, over-abundance and obesity, but few have focused on the history of healthy eating as a cultural preoccupation in the West. This dissertation expands on Rima Apple's research in her book *Vitamina*, where she traced and analysed the obsession of the United States with vitamins, an approach that has shaped this study of diet and health in Great Britain.¹ More specifically, it expands 'vitamina' to the notion of 'healthmania' in the late twentieth century. In the US and the UK not only were people concerned about vitamins in their diets, but they increasingly wanted to achieve better health. The notion of 'healthmania' refers to the obsession of the media, science and society with safeguarding good health, youth and vitality especially through dieting, eating specific foods, and the ingestion of supplements. This obsession did not arise out of a vacuum but as a response to contemporary debates about the rise of chronic diseases and attempts by US and UK governments to alter health policy, particularly in relation to old age.² As Gerald Grob argues, during the post-war decades there was an increasing number of Americans surviving beyond the age of sixty-five.³ This generated increased

¹ R. Apple, *Vitamina: Vitamins in American Culture* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1996).

² Chronic diseases were considered 'the nation's number one problem' according to G. Weisz, *Chronic Disease in the Twentieth Century: A History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), p. 102; G. Grob, *Aging Bones: A Short History of Osteoporosis* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014).

³ Grob, *Aging Bones*, p. 48.

concerns about aging and loss of youthfulness, vitality and energy, which increasingly became part of the everyday experience of middle-aged and elderly individuals.⁴

The starting point for this thesis is the 1950s, a decade that experienced what Derek Oddy refers to as ‘the revival of choice’. By the mid-1950s, war rationing came to an end and the British people were reintroduced to greater food choice.⁵ The 1950s also marked the beginning of what Eric Hobsbawm refers to as the quarter-century of the Anglo-Americans.⁶ Advances in home and store refrigeration and the gradual growth of expendable income brought new ways in which people consumed food.⁷ Increased incomes led to a rise in leisure activities, such as going to the cinema, and increased spending on household appliances such as colour televisions and refrigerators. The creation of new television channels and advertising put pressure on consumers to buy more. With colour TV, advertisers developed cartoon heroes and began to attract children as consumers. A significant feature of the 1950s was the rise of supermarkets, offering a greater variety of products, but also their own versions of branded products offering consumers cheaper alternatives. In the United States, a ‘Fast Food’ culture with McDonald’s and Burger King emerged with the growth of franchises, but also a counterculture with the health magazine *Prevention* by Rodale press first published in 1950. Medical research on nutrition made significant advances, with the preliminary results of Ancel Keys’ Seven Countries’ Study on serum cholesterol’s impact on cardiovascular health in 1952 and Denham Harman’s free radical theory of aging challenging traditional dietary facts.⁸ The 1950s brought changes in family dynamics too. The post-war environment became a difficult arena for soldiers returning to civilian life,

⁴ C. Carstairs, “‘Look Younger, Live Longer’: Aging Beautifully with Gayelord Hauser in America, 1920-1975, *Gender and History*, 26, no. 2, (2014), 336.

⁵ D. Oddy, *From Plain Faire to Fusion Food: British Diet from the 1890s to the 1990s* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2003), p. 169.

⁶ E. Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991* (London: Abacus, 1998), p. 258.

⁷ Oddy, *Plain Faire to Fusion Food*, p. 173.

⁸ D. Harman, ‘Aging: A Theory Based on Free Radical and Radiation Chemistry’, *Journal of Gerontology*, 11, no. 3, (July, 1956), 298-300.

leading to rising levels of divorce.⁹ However, families changed in other ways as Oddy noted ‘between 1951 and 1971, the number of married women working more than doubled from 2.7 to 5.8 millions’.¹⁰

During the 1960s various developments such as the Royal College of Physicians’ report on smoking in 1962 and the 1964 US Surgeon General’s recommendation of reducing smoking solidified public health initiatives focussing on individual behaviour through advertising, propaganda and sloganisation.¹¹ Concerns about environmental pollution and contemporary fears about pesticides, additives and chemicals intensified during this decade because of the 1958 Food Additive Amendment (or Delaney Clause) of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the monumental *Silent Spring* (1962) by Rachel Carson.¹² Radical activism and various changes in socioeconomic strata further challenged societal norms; the Women’s Liberation, Civil Rights, the organic food movements, and the rise of environmentalism dominated and redirected contemporary debates.¹³ Hobsbawm and Marwick argue that this decade marked the beginnings of a youth culture firstly in the growth of adolescents and young individuals as capital capable of production and consumption, but also the increasing power of university student demonstrations in shaping politics, and universal acceptance of blue jeans and rock n’roll

⁹ M. Jackson, ‘Self-help, Marriage Guidance, and The Making of the Midlife Crisis’, in M. Jackson and M. Moore (eds), *Balancing the Self: Medicine, Politics and the Regulation of Health in the Twentieth Century* (Forthcoming, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), 294-339.

¹⁰ Oddy, *Plain Faire to Fusion Food*, p. 183.

¹¹ V. Berridge, *Marketing Health: Smoking and the Discourse of Public Health in Britain, 1945–2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 52-80.

¹² M. Smith ‘Allergic to Innovation: Dietary Change and Debate about Food Allergy in the US’, in D. Gentilcore and M. Smith (eds), *Proteins, Pathologies and Politics: Dietary Innovation and Disease from the Nineteenth Century* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 46; M. Smith, *Another Person’s Poison: A History of Food Allergy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), pp. 97-101; M. Jackson, *Allergy: The History of a Modern Malady* (London: Reaktion, 2006), p. 141.

¹³ Warren Belasco argues that the food counterculture could be observed in the creation of 3,500 country communes in the US which were practicing organic farming between 1965-1970 in: W. Belasco, *Appetite for Change: How the Counterculture Took on the Food Industry* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2007), pp. 76- 86; A more in-depth analysis of the 1960s can be read in A. Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); S. Hall, ‘Framing the American 1960s: A Historiographical Review’, *European Journal of American Culture*, 31, no. 1, (1993), 5-23.

music as symbols of youth.¹⁴ During this period various food scares associated with the use of antibiotics, new food additives, salmonella and many more began to shake the confidence of consumers in modern food production processes.¹⁵ In this decade the ‘whole’ foods culture spread in the UK.¹⁶

The thesis ends in the 1970s when various developments changed societal values and practices in both the US and the UK. The Gay Rights movement further challenged existing family structures. The increased number of women joining the workforce increased the number of pre-packed/prepared meals eaten, but also brought changes to the traditional duties of cooking. In this period, Hollywood underwent a renaissance of the male action-hero; hard bodies, danger, explosions and women in danger waiting to be rescued were common themes.¹⁷ Perhaps as a way to support the on-going war of the US against Vietnam or as a reaction to the new social and occupational roles of women, popular culture reinforced youth and a slimming culture. Another significant development was increased mistrust towards the medical profession, with popular authors signalling a turn to alternative medicine and do-it-yourself approaches to health.¹⁸ This can be seen in Linus Pauling’s media exposure over the Vitamin C controversy. Pauling was a Nobel laureate who contested ‘orthodox’ medicine by recommending megadosages of Vitamin C against the common cold, which signalled a boom in Vitamin C supplement sales.¹⁹

Exploring research on heart disease, diabetes, obesity and cancer, this dissertation argues that the valorisation of science and what Ludmilla Jordanova refers to as the ‘medicalisation of society’ were key to the development of ‘healthmania’. The next

¹⁴ Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes*, p. 298; p. 326; Marwick, *The Sixties*, p. 129.

¹⁵ Oddy, *From Plain Faire to Fusion Food*, p. 231.

¹⁶ Anon., ‘Whole food and nothing but the food’, *The Guardian*, (7 November 1967), p. 6.

¹⁷ Some examples were: *Star Wars: Episode IV-A New Hope* (1977), *Superman* (1978) and *Rocky* (1976).

¹⁸ I. Illich, *Medical Nemesis* (Sydney: Australian Broadcasting Commission Science Programmes Unit, 1975).

¹⁹ Apple, *Vitamina*, pp. 75-84.

sections of this chapter explore the key historiographies that have influenced the development, argument and source base in this thesis. The first section provides an overview on histories of the medicalisation of society and the role that ‘risk factor’ epidemiology played in facilitating the increasing incorporation of everyday matters under the medical aegis. The following sections explore the various histories of food and cuisine and their prominent focus on the health food movement and vitamins. The final sections set out the range of sources and methods employed in this thesis, and provide outlines of the main chapters.

Histories of medicalisation, diet and risk

This thesis is situated within several historical sub-disciplines, including the history of medicine and food history, but also borrows methods and sources from art history, media studies, and food studies in general. The history of medicine was a driving force in the choice and analysis of primary sources here. In 1995 Ludmilla Jordanova emphasised the increasing medicalisation of society as ‘the process whereby domains of life that were not previously so, came under the aegis of medical practitioners and/or medical theories’.²⁰ The advancements that the medical profession made during World War II and in the post-war era generated greater confidence in the medical profession. This drove scientists such as Jerry Morris and Ancel Keys to study chronic disease through the use of large population studies and statistics. This zeal led to the rise of statistical epidemiological studies such as Ancel Keys’ Seven Countries’ Study and the Framingham Study. Dorothy Porter argues that in the Anglo-American world, especially from the 1950s onwards, social medicine embraced the notion of ‘lifestyle medicine’ focussing on individual behaviour, which in turn influenced statistics.²¹ The work of William Rothstein and

²⁰ L. Jordanova, ‘The Social Construction of Medical Knowledge’, *Social History of Medicine*, 8, no. 3, (1995), p. 361.

²¹ D. Porter, ‘How Did Social Medicine Evolve, and Where Is It Heading?’, *Public Library of Science Medicine*, 3, (2006), 1667-1672.

Virginia Berridge demonstrate the cultural currency of statistical models of health: Rothstein discusses how the Metropolitan Life Insurance statistics contributed to the categorisation of ‘risk factors’, while Berridge argues how ‘risk factors’ have driven public health initiatives on smoking.²² Drawing on this literature, this thesis focuses not only on the increased exposure of medicine in mass media, but also on professional and public discussions of dieting. It achieves this by providing in-depth analysis of newspapers and magazines on a decade by decade basis, sampling stories that captured the attention of news outlets and advertisements that companies thought would boost their sales.

During the post-war years, society itself was also often construed as ‘unbalanced’ or at risk. As Ulrich Beck argued in his seminal book *Risk Society*, ‘in advanced modernity the social production of wealth is accompanied by a social production of risks’.²³ Although technology, science and medicine offered rational ‘truths’ and the potential for new forms of medicine, they also brought death and destruction. One important concept driving the flow of this thesis is the analysis of the ‘risk factor’ by Charles Rosenberg, but also extensively written about by William Rothstein and Robert Aronowitz.²⁴ According to the *Oxford Dictionary of Public Health*, risk factors have been defined in the following ways:

A term first used in the 1950s in reports of results from the Framingham Study of heart disease, meaning an aspect of behaviour or way of living, such as habitual patterns of diet, exercise, use of cigarettes and alcohol, etc., or a biological characteristic, genetic trait, or a health-related condition or

²² W.G. Rothstein, *Public Health and the Risk Factor: A History of an Uneven Medical Revolution* (Rochester: New York University Press, 2003); V. Berridge, *Marketing Health: Smoking and the Discourse of Public Health in Britain, 1945–2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); V. Berridge and K. Loughlin, *Medicine, The Market and the Mass Media: Producing Health in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Routledge, 2005).

²³ U. Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, trans. M. Ritter (London: Sage, 1992), p.19.

²⁴ C. Rosenberg, ‘Pathologies of Progress: The Idea of Civilisation as Risk’, *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 72, no. 1 (1998), 714-730; Rothstein, *Public Health and the Risk Factor*; R. Aronowitz, *Risky Medicine: Our Quest to Cure Fear and Uncertainty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

environmental exposure with predictable effects on the risk of disease due to a specific cause, including in particular increased likelihood of an unfavourable outcome. Other meanings have been given to this term, such as a determinant of disease that can be modified by specific actions, behaviours, or treatment regimens.²⁵

This thesis, however, points out that even though the term did not come into being before its use in the Framingham Study, its concerns reflect the spirit of the 1950s and the confidence in medicine generated by the advent of chronic illness epidemiology. Drawing on Carsten Timmermann's study of the incorporation of and resistance to 'risk factor' medicine in East and West Germany in the postwar period, this project demonstrates how and why this concept emerged from the matrix of British and American medical authorities in relation to diet and health.²⁶ More importantly this thesis demonstrates how these medical issues and solutions were translated into the vernacular of the everyday UK and US citizen through coverage in newspapers, magazines, self-help books and in the representation of such topics in comic books. These sources did not always address the same audience; self-help books were largely read by women, and comic books were usually read by young boys.

The concept of the self also played a key role in the lives of people in the Western world, as the idea of 'being', 'becoming' or 'realising' yourself through education, leisure, and new patterns of consumption became more prominent during the middle decades of the twentieth century.²⁷ This thesis is influenced by the work of many scholars who have dealt with the topics of healthy selves and attractive bodies and the ways in which contemporaries associated attractiveness with health. As Jane Hand argues, in the

²⁵ 'Risk Factor' in J.M. Last (ed.), 'A Dictionary of Public Health', *Oxford Reference Online*, <http://www.oxfordreference.com> [accessed 15/11/2014].

²⁶ C. Timmermann, 'Appropriating Risk Factors: The Reception of an American Approach to Chronic Disease in the Two German States c.1950-1990', *Social History of Medicine*, 25, no. 1, (2011), 157-174.

²⁷ A. Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), p. 8.

post-war period diet and exercise were accepted as part of British identity and social worth, thus they were vehicles in the realisation of selves.²⁸ At the same time, as Giddens has argued, the process of ‘detraditionalisation’ associated with modernity meant that people increasingly came to rely on forms of expert knowledge and guidance in the construction of new selves through consumption practices.²⁹ During the period this thesis covers, multiple factors instilled notions and practices of self-preservation, self-care and self-help (especially from the 1960s onwards), as well as growing critiques of medical elitism and the power of the food industry.

Another facet of changing attitudes towards bodies as vehicles of expression of the self is what Margaret Morganroth Gullette refers to as gerontophobia; namely the fear of old age.³⁰ Thomas Cole and Pat Thane both point out that the perception of the number of elderly persons has changed from being ‘a few, valued, respected and cherished’ to many ‘helpless dependants, burdens of healthcare’.³¹ Cole argues that by the mid-twentieth century aging had become a problem to be solved by science, medicine and the state.³² Since the mid-nineteenth century, Cole and Claudia Edwards argue, there were two kinds of aging: good, healthy, and independent aging and bad, unhealthy and dependent aging which could be seen in popular books such as Bernard Van Oven’s *The Best Means of Attaining Healthful Old Age* (1853) and in Gayelord Hauser’s notion of graceful aging.³³ These developments introduced what Thane, Gullette and James Stark

²⁸ J. Hand, ‘Marketing Health Education: Advertising Margarine and Visualising Health in Britain from 1964 - c.2000’, *Contemporary British History*, 31, no. 4, (2017), 477- 500; J. Hand, “‘Look After Yourself’’: Visualising Obesity as a Public Health Concern in 1970s and 1980s Britain’, in Jackson and Moore (eds), *Balancing the Self*, 112-147.

²⁹ Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, p. 8.

³⁰ M.M. Gullette, *Declining to Decline: Cultural Combat and the Politics of the Midlife* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2004), p. 200.

³¹ P. Thane, ‘My Age is as a Lusty Winter: The Age of Old Age’, in P. Thane (ed.), *A History of Old Age*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 2005), 9; T. Cole, *The Journey of Life: A Cultural History of Aging in America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 187.

³² Cole, *The Journey of Life*, p. 236.

³³ T. Cole and C. Edwards, ‘Don’t Complain About Old Age: The Nineteenth Century’, in P. Thane (ed.), *A History of Old Age*, 245.

call the cult of youth.³⁴ Gullete argues that youth became the name for ‘fun, energy, sexuality, intensity and hope’.³⁵ Aging had to be hidden, or as Gullete contends, decline had to be combatted because of the growth of ageism and the cult of youth. Mike Featherstone and Mike Hepworth agree that since the mid-1960s there was an upsurge in public interest in aging as ‘older people who have preserved their youthful beauty, fitness, and energy are usually the subject of praise’.³⁶ One could achieve ‘good’ or graceful aging through the consumption of services and specialised products to combat the signs of growing old. Rejuvenation and anti-aging by the mid-twentieth century became attainable through diets, exercise, and lifestyle changes.

Interest in diet and nutrition expanded as a result of increasing preoccupations with slim, young bodies and the rise during the 1960s of what Levenstein refers to as ‘Negative Nutrition’, which shifted foods from being positive to becoming dangerous.³⁷ Like Jessica Parr’s work on dieting groups in 1950s in the US, this thesis argues that ‘negative nutrition’ and more specifically the “criminalisation” of obesity was already on the rise from the early years after World War II, not only in the US but in the UK too.³⁸ The growth of lipophobia, which Levenstein argues happened in the late 1960s and 1970s, began with postwar abundance and the growth of consumerism: as Catherine Carstairs argues, women in the 1950s were eager to purchase, read and follow advice in order to be slim and healthy.³⁹ Expanding on Carstairs’ studies, this thesis also considers self-help books on dieting, analysing the coverage of diets in the news media and the representation

³⁴ P. Thane, ‘I Do Not Think of Myself as Old: The Twentieth Century’, in P. Thane (ed.), *A History of Old Age*, 290; M.M. Gullete, *Aged by Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), p. 35; Gullete, *Declining to Decline*, p. 5; J. Stark, ‘The Art of Medicine: The Age of Youth’, *The Lancet*, 378, (2016), 2470-2471; and J. Stark, ‘Perspectives on Human Regeneration’, *Palgrave Communications*, 4, (2018), 1-6.

³⁵ Gullete, *Declining to Decline*, p. 5.

³⁶ M. Featherstone and M. Hepworth, ‘Images of Positive Aging: A Case Study of *Retirement Choice Magazine*’, in M. Featherstone and A. Wernick (eds), *Images of Aging: A Cultural Representation of Later Life* (London: Routledge, 1995), 29.

³⁷ H. Levenstein, *Paradox of Plenty: A Social History of Eating in Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 195.

³⁸ J. Parr, ‘Obesity and the Emergence of Mutual Aid Groups for Weight Loss in the Post-War United States’, *Social History of Medicine*, 27, no. 4, (2014), 768–788.

³⁹ Carstairs, “Look Younger, Live Longer”, 336.

of dieting in comic books that demonstrate that obesity was already seen as detrimental to physical and mental health.

Hillel Schwartz writing in 1986 argued that ‘weight watching and dieting have become part of the customary fabric of American society’.⁴⁰ These practises arose because, as Sander Gilman contends, obesity generated a moral panic in the twentieth century and dieting adopted both ‘the lexicon and characteristics of a religious movement’.⁴¹ Obesity began to be seen as a disease, and as Schwartz argues, part of the reason behind this was that statistical models developed by the Metropolitan Life Insurance between 1901-1941 demonstrated that extra weight ‘could be statistically implicated with death’.⁴² This negative view of obesity was reinforced by cultural preoccupations about body weight as Schwartz argues that in a 1950 survey 21% of men and 44% of women thought themselves to be overweight.⁴³ Gilman argues that dieting or what he refers to as ‘self-treatment’ was more prevalent in middle-aged women who experienced the shame of fat bodies.⁴⁴ This thesis borrows Gilman’s analysis of a popular book written by Lulu Hunt Peters (1873-1930) where she instructed women how to lose weight drawing from her own experience of weight loss. Another contention by Gilman that this thesis also explores and has contributed to the analysis of sources was that obesity was the outcome of ‘errors in mothering’.⁴⁵

Warren Belasco argues that historically salvation of the soul has been more important than the maintenance of healthy and slim bodies.⁴⁶ During the twentieth

⁴⁰ H. Schwartz, *Never Satisfied: A Cultural History of Diets, Fantasies and Fat* (New York, Collier and Macmillan, 1985), p. 5.

⁴¹ S. Gilman, *Obesity: The Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 77.

⁴² Carstairs, “Look Younger, Live Longer”, 333.

⁴³ On a similar survey from 1973 Schwartz revealed 38% of men and 55% of women thought of themselves as overweight see: Schwartz, *Never Satisfied*, p. 246.

⁴⁴ Gilman, *Obesity*, p. 83.

⁴⁵ Echoing Rima Apple on ‘scientific motherhood’: R. Apple, ‘Constructing Mothers: Scientific Motherhood in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries’, *Social History of Medicine*, 8, no. 2, (1995), 161–178.

⁴⁶ W. Belasco, ‘Body and Soul’, in A. Bentley (ed.), *A Cultural History of Food in the Modern Age* 2nd edition (New York, Bloomsbury, 2016), 165.

century, it was the body, not the soul, that became the central focus of efforts to maintain health and promote a positive self-image. The advertisements of the ‘Look After Yourself’ campaign examined by Jane Hand are demonstrative of the perception of obesity by the late 1970s.⁴⁷ The ugly/beautiful divide and the emphasis towards gender and attractiveness made obese bodies not only more visible but culturally unattractive.⁴⁸ As magazines such as *Playboy* began to sell pleasure and consumption, preoccupations with bodily fitness accelerated the quest for health, perhaps particularly amongst the middle-aged and elderly, who sought optimal diets, supplements and exercise routines that would promote health and longevity.⁴⁹ Emulating but also expanding on Hand’s work, this thesis also focuses on advertisements featured in newspapers, magazines and television, and on visual representations of healthy bodies in comic books, thereby linking to the work of the food studies scholar Fabio Parasecoli.

In *Bite Me: Food in Popular Culture*, Parasecoli applies critical theory to popular culture, to reflect on the impact of food on economics, politics, religion, race, class, gender and sexuality. The chapter entitled ‘Quilting the Empty Body: Food and Dieting’, has an interesting approach to understanding dieting.⁵⁰ Firstly it argues that science has been glorified, evident in the advice and wording of the popular dieting book of Dr. Atkins, a book that is explored further in Chapter II of this thesis.⁵¹ Parasecoli states that the Atkins Diet has been stereotypically viewed as masculine, especially by Western societies, because of its promotion of meat eating.⁵² But Atkins’ diet was only one of the many best-selling diet books of the 1970s; other self-help books also deserve analysis.

⁴⁷ Hand, *Marketing Health Education*, 477-500, Hand, “‘Look After Yourself’”.

⁴⁸ Schwartz has referred to fat as sexually neutering: Schwartz, *Never Satisfied*, p. 248.

⁴⁹ M. Jancovich, ‘The Politics of Playboy: Lifestyle, Sexuality and Non-Conformity in American Cold War Culture’, in D. Bell and J. Hollows (eds) *Historicising Lifestyle: Mediating Taste, Consumption and Identity from the 1900s to 1970s* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2006), 70-87.

⁵⁰ F. Parasecoli, *Bite Me: Food in Popular Culture* (New York: Berg, 2008), pp. 85-102.

⁵¹ Following also the example of the edited volume: L. Heldke, K. Mommer, C. Pineo, & W. Irwin (eds), *The Atkins Diet and Philosophy: Chewing the Fat with Kant and Nietzsche* (Chicago: Open Court, 2005).

⁵² Parasecoli, *Bite Me*, p. 88.

Parasecoli includes a small section on men's magazines and how the food and supplement industries attempted to create new customers through their pages. Additionally, he observes how statements on the front cover exploited readers' feelings of inadequacy. In the pages of these magazines, foods served a purpose to create the muscular, vascular and strong body; sweets along with desserts and uncontrolled appetites were feminine.⁵³ A muscular body became the physical manifestation of manliness and a triumph against feminine indulgence. Parasecoli notes that magazines insisted on perceiving men as consumers of food but not as cooks, as they provided the exact amounts of foods to be ingested but no advice as to how to prepare or cook them. Parasecoli argues that the use of precise quantities, supplements and the frequent citation of clinical research studies provided these magazines with the authority to push men to pursue this sort of lifestyle, which some of the men performed to the level of suffering from 'Adonis' Complex', which has been defined by Coleman as: 'Anxiety and insecurity experienced by boys and men about their appearance or body images. In extreme cases, the complex can meet criteria of body dysmorphic disorder. The term was introduced in 2000 by the US psychiatrist Harrison G. Pope Jr.'⁵⁴ As opposed to Parasecoli who draws most of his arguments from recent US sources, this thesis provides a longer history of dieting especially in the self-help and news media in the UK as well as the US.

Parasecoli has also explored the first two series (10 issues) of the comic book *Chew* (2009-2016).⁵⁵ He chose this comic book because it has a male protagonist who solves mysteries through the ingestion of food. Tony Chu, the main character, is a Philadelphia police detective who has the superpower of being able to identify all the

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Many of the conclusions come from F. Parasecoli 'Feeding Hard Bodies: Food and Masculinities in Men's Fitness Magazines', *Food and Foodways*, 13, no. 1-2, (2005), 17-37; 'Adonis Complex', in A. Coleman (ed.), *A Dictionary of Psychology Online* 4th edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), www.oxfordreferenceonline.com [accessed 5 November 2018].

⁵⁵ F. Parasecoli, 'Gluttonous crimes: Chew, Comic Books, and the Ingestion of Masculinity', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 44, (2014), 236-246.

information about the food he eats. According to Parasecoli, Chu is an unconventional hero (or anti-hero), as he is not muscular or strong and does not possess many of the masculine traits characteristic of other superheroes. Chu is an Asian man who is becoming bald. He usually appears sad and does not externalise emotions. He respects and enforces order and does everything according to the rules. Thus he is the opposite of many traditional superheroes who act like vigilantes. Another non-masculine trait of Chu is that he avoids violence as far as possible. In many cases Chu is overshadowed by the presence of stronger, smarter men, but on some occasions powerful women also serve to emasculate him.⁵⁶ Despite being a humble and peaceful character, Chu is like a cornered lion ready to attack, especially when stronger or more decisive characters oppose him. Parasecoli compares Chu with characters in other mainstream comic books in which Black/Asian/Hispanic men are widely misrepresented and where women often are passive and need to be protected. Furthermore, he compares Chu with *gurume* or *ryori* manga, which are the Japanese equivalent of comic books as he is:

expressing mainstream masculine behaviours. His dedication, his embrace of the rules of the game, and his desire to excel professionally reflect determination to succeed. In reality, however, the character complicates expectations for traditional male characters. Chu does his best to assert himself in a working environment that does not take him very seriously, due to his lack of brawn and his ethnicity.⁵⁷

Parasecoli's article does analyse foods, ingestion and bodies in one specific comic first published in 2009, briefly comparing Chu with popular superheroes such as Batman and Captain America and *gurume* manga heroes, but without in-depth analysis of other mainstream heroes with high circulation and readership. This thesis complements this

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 239.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 241.

field of scholarly research by analysing a selection of issues from more widely known and better selling comic books such as *Superman*, *Captain America*, and *Popeye*.

Deborah Lupton has argued that food is ‘the symbolic medium par excellence’ and in her book *Food, the Body and the Self* she identifies symbolism in eating practices.⁵⁸ Her work offers a broad, well-written and informative introduction to the theoretical issues surrounding food, and uses some interesting supportive material, incorporating evidence from an empirical study of ‘food memories’. Lupton writes about gendered ideas and practices, including the classification of philosophy as masculine and food/eating as feminine.⁵⁹ She argues that women historically have been deprived of food and that men ate bigger portions of meat, adapting Foucault’s technologies of the self (a way in which ‘individuals internalise modes and rules of behaviour, emotion and thought in their everyday lives’) to her study of food.⁶⁰

Food and its relationship with gender and sexuality is a central topic discussed by Lupton. For example, chocolate is thought to represent romance, luxury, reward and femininity.⁶¹ Food practices are also central: for example, the notion that men stereotypically slaughter animals, while women cook. An interesting observation in her empirical research is that working-class women valued a filling diet, whereas middle-class women tended to eat more balanced and healthy diets, which offers a good starting point in understanding societal variations in food preference. Lupton illustrates this point by quoting an interview with a middle-class woman: ‘I forced myself to like muesli and vegetables over chocolate, even though chocolate is more satisfying’.⁶² The interviews and group discussions of around 100 Australians provide a starting point for the exploration of these issues in Australia, but do not account for the food-related

⁵⁸ D. Lupton, *Food, The Body and the Self* (London: Thousand Oaks, 1996), p. 1.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p. 3.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p.15.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, p. 35.

⁶² *Ibid*, p. 82.

experiences of British people. Lupton's conviction that women were more concerned with slimming and self-discipline can be challenged, as men also became increasingly obsessed with their bodies in the late twentieth century. Healthmania was not restricted to women when discussing obesity and weight stigma: Lupton writes how men feel inferior when they are too thin ('runts' or 'scrawny' were terms used to describe them) or when they have a 'beer gut'.⁶³ Finally Lupton discusses various other elements that influence food choice such as nostalgia, advertising, parents and the home or reactions to these, the new subjectivity and spirituality found when eating 'natural foods', the somatisation of guilt over eating 'bad' foods, the fear of artificiality, and the valorisation of knowledge and science - all key themes in this thesis.

Histories of food and cuisine

Jean-Louis Flandrin and Massimo Montanari's *Food: A Culinary History from Antiquity till the Present* is one amongst a number of pioneering interdisciplinary studies of food. Dealing with different aspects of food, the analysis is not limited to a historical perspective but also includes sociology, geography, economics and politics. This volume represents the diversity of food studies, capturing key issues revolving around food through time. Nevertheless, contemporary anxieties about health and disease, and the popularity of health foods, dieting and supplements containing food extracts are not addressed. The chapters that deal with the twentieth century refer to the rise of consumer culture, fast food and obesity and the introduction of lean and fit body standards, but they do not explore in any depth the medical discourse surrounding these issues originating in the 1950s. In his chapter on the perils of abundance, Harvey Levenstein has briefly commented on the situation in the US and 'Vitamanía', but these are not directly applicable to the UK where cultures of eating and food consumption, and health

⁶³ *Ibid*, pp. 139-140.

regulations were different.⁶⁴ This thesis develops a more nuanced history of food and eating especially in regards to contemporary medical and health discourses otherwise excluded from Flandrin and Montanari's study.

Kenneth Kipple's and Kriemhild Coneè Ornelas' *Cambridge World History of Food* covers the history of all aspects of food, from individual food items, nutrients, eating disorders, chronic disease, food in different countries and continents, health and nutrition, and policy related food topics.⁶⁵ The range of topics and the number of contributing scholars is unparalleled. However, because of the multiple chapters written by various scholars this book is fragmented. Though chapters are historical they are mostly written by nutritionists and scientists who provide only limited interpretations of wider historical issues. Individual chapters on foods such as barley and rice, but also on specific nutrients and minerals, provide only a disjointed account of how these were perceived and how they were interconnected. More specifically, there is a lack of a distinct focus on science and press interactions, the significance of the self-help genre on eating, and how comic books represented the healthy food culture, dieting and obesity. Another way in which Kipple's and Ornelas' *World History of Food* could be criticised lies in the fact that it features many more US oriented histories than others and that post-war nutrition and health is only a fraction of the whole two-part book.

A Cultural History of Food in the Modern Age, edited by Amy Bentley, explores technical, geographical and economic factors contributing to eating in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The chapters cover issues such as abundance and obesity and how the Slow Food movement grew in response to a rising fast food taste.⁶⁶ Maya Joseph and Marion Nestle discuss how facts are being blurred as food advertisers use the same

⁶⁴ H. Levenstein, 'The Perils of Abundance: Food, Health and morality in American History', in J-L. Flandrin and M. Montanari (eds), *Food: A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present*, A. Sonnenfeld (trans.) (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 516-529.

⁶⁵ K.F Kipple and K.C Ornelas (eds), *The Cambridge World History of Food* 2 parts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

⁶⁶ A. Bentley (ed.), *A Cultural History of Food in the Modern Age* (London: Berg, 2012).

language and jargon used by public health campaigns.⁶⁷ Signe Rousseau describes the multiple ways in which food is represented in the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries.⁶⁸ Terms such as food writers, food bloggers, and celebrity chefs are only part of the picture on how significant food has become. Television and the Internet have multiple and diverse programmes and websites devoted to competitive eating or to solving the problems of obesity, demonstrating how food has been both revered and demonised by the media.⁶⁹ Bentley's volume, however, does not answer questions about how this compulsion of society to pursue and promote healthy eating emerged and how medicine influenced dieting and food.

An intriguing contribution to the field of food studies is Warren Belasco's *Food: The Key Concepts*. Belasco suggests that three factors shape food choice: 1) Identity - childhood, tradition, men eat steaks women eat salads; 2) Convenience - can I buy it, do I afford it, will it take long to prepare?; and 3) Responsibility - is it good for my health?⁷⁰ According to Belasco, when someone makes a food choice, they usually select a food that lies in two of the three categories. Themes that occur in this book vary from meat symbolising power, American antipathy to healthy food, sweets being associated with love, meat and seafood symbolising sex, women taming men through food, and the forgetfulness of consumers in relation to the crimes of the slaughterhouse. Belasco's analysis demonstrates how American food history has been researched by using sources such as fiction, music, art, political economy, agro-ecology, and especially popular culture and news media, which have not been well researched in the UK.

Rima Apple's *Vitmania* constitutes a seminal contribution to the field. Apple has undertaken a study of the culture behind the popularity of vitamins through advertising.

⁶⁷ M. Joseph and M. Nestle, 'Food and Politics in the Modern Age: 1920-2000' in Bentley (ed.), *A Cultural History of Food in the Modern Age*, 87-110.

⁶⁸ S. Rousseau, 'Food Representations', in Bentley (ed.), *A Cultural History of Food in the Modern Age*, 183-200.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ W. Belasco, *Food: The Key Concepts* (New York: Berg, 2008), pp. 8-10.

In her analysis of newspaper articles and advertisements, she illustrates how the concept of ‘scientific’ motherhood was imposed on women in the 1920s and 1930s. Scientific motherhood emphasised the need for women to take care of their children in the most scientifically accepted way and required science to illustrate how children were to be raised.⁷¹ To an extent, ‘scientific’ parenthood survives to this day, a fact that is exploited by big companies and advertising.⁷² The suggestion that the vitamin and food industries challenged medical authority can be illustrated today through the use of over-the-counter pills, supplements, and vitamins.⁷³ Another intriguing argument set out by Apple is that Linus Pauling undermined medical authority and boosted *Vitamina* to unprecedented levels; his legacy is that to this day Vitamin C is thought to be a preventative or a cure for colds and flu by the general public.⁷⁴

Harvey Levenstein encapsulates the most important changes in American food habits in his book *Paradox of Plenty*. He claims that by the 1930s, Americans had accepted healthy eating based on the necessity of consuming sufficient vitamins, and that the US government attributed malnutrition to the lack of education rather than insufficiency of food to some classes.⁷⁵ He also focuses on the paradoxical prevalence of dieting (especially among middle-class women) during the Great Depression, and the government's later, marginally successful campaigns to make nutrition a factor in national defence policy. Levenstein argues that Americans obtained their food advice from the mass media, the government, and the food industry itself, an assumption that this thesis also explores. The impact of medical opinion, self-help authors, and news media on food

⁷¹ Apple, *Vitamina*, pp. 19-20.

⁷² J. Hand, *Visualising Food as a Modern Medicine: Gender, the Body and Health Education in Britain, 1940-1992* (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Warwick, 2014).

⁷³ As seen in L. Songhurst's, *The Medicalisation of Happiness: A History of St. John's Wort* (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Exeter, 2010).

⁷⁴ Apple, *Vitamina*. pp. 54-55.

⁷⁵ Levenstein, *Paradox of Plenty*, pp. 64-65.

is mentioned only briefly and, despite some interesting references, there is little on obesity.

From Plain Fare to Fusion Food by Derek Oddy is a history of the British diet from the late nineteenth century through to the late twentieth century. Oddy discusses the nutrient system, which began gaining significance during World War I when participating countries experienced food shortages, leading to food regulations by governments during World War II.⁷⁶ Even though there was widespread malnutrition prior to the post-war era, male heads of households were often able to secure an adequate intake of energy at the expense of their self-sacrificing wives and children.⁷⁷ Oddy also noted the problems of increased comfort and fast food eating which gave rise to high cholesterol, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and obesity. However, he appears to blame modern lifestyle diseases on new production methods and food practices. He does not mention the organic/whole foods movement and neglects many other medical influences on food consumption.

Using Foucauldian theories, John Coveney defines nutrition as another power discourse where people needed to be told what to eat. By taking dietary recommendations and keeping up to date with the latest healthy food fads, people elevated food choice to a moral dilemma: a healthy food is good and an unhealthy one is evil.⁷⁸ Coveney suggests that this practice is a replacement of Christian asceticism for salvation: the modern source of truth is science, which requires abstinence and discipline for an athletic/beautiful and healthy body (which has become the new salvation).⁷⁹ Additionally, Coveney also demonstrates that over-eating became a problem after post-war affluence and debates about healthy and unhealthy lifestyles. Internalised models of behaviour and food choice

⁷⁶ Oddy, *From Plain Fare to Fusion Food*, p. 133.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ J. Coveney, *Food, Morals, and Meaning: The Pleasure and Anxiety of Eating* (London: Routledge, 2000), p.10.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

are an interesting approach to food studies. However, Coveney fails to demonstrate in more depth how medical discourse impacted society and influenced governmentality.

In *Appetite for Change*, Warren Belasco explains how J.I Rodale and activism in the US in the 1960s created distrust towards modern foods, which was initially a concern expressed by ‘hippies’.⁸⁰ Belasco argues that during the 1960s a counterculture against fast food, processed food and unnatural food spread rapidly: ‘young cultural rebels began to emerge against mainstream foodways...their rebellion deserves careful reconsideration, for it raised important questions about our food system and also suggested serious alternatives, a countercuisine’.⁸¹ Those rejecting mainstream foodways or criticising the power of orthodox medicine often targeted individual moral choice: eating organic and natural products or consuming alternative medicine was necessary to improve health and preserve the natural environment. Belasco discusses the impact of food journalists in promoting healthier food, but the main line of discussion focuses on how the US government was reluctant to push organic food practices. He explains how convenience food liberated women from the chains of the kitchen, but pays no attention to the advertising of such convenience foods as health foods. Belasco’s conclusions about the counter-culture of eating are mostly concentrated upon the food history of the United States. This thesis considers whether this applied also to the counter-culture in the United Kingdom. Changing practices were instigated by doctors and researchers, but also by the self-help authors that this thesis focusses on, which shows that the food counter-culture was thriving even in the 1950s as neoromantic notions and antimodernity influenced mainstream medical thought.⁸² ‘Scepticism’ towards foods was also covered by Harvey

⁸⁰ W. Belasco, *Appetite for Change*, p. 16.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, p. 4

⁸² The definition of neoromantic used in this thesis is the one set by Benjamin Trutt: ‘Neo-Romanticism is a call for humanity to connect with nature but in a way that rejects both modern living and pre-industrial tradition and embraces progressive social ideals’, in B. Trutt, ‘Neo-Romanticism: Music & Art’, *Study.com*, <https://study.com/academy/lesson/neo-romanticism-music-art.html#lesson> [accessed 15 December 2018]; The term ‘natural’ or ‘all natural’ was used and abused by the food industry see; D. Gentilcore and M. Smith, ‘Introduction’, in Gentilcore and Smith (eds), *Proteins, Pathologies and Politics*, 1.

Levenstein, who argues that the growth of the market economy created a fear in consumers about what happened to their food before it reached their homes.⁸³ This thesis borrows both these notions by tracing what, how and why fears of certain foods became more prominent in the mid-to-late twentieth century.

Marion Nestle's *Food Politics: How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition and Health* provides an insight into American politics relating to food. Nestle explores how food pyramids and regulations were lobbied to use euphemistic language and spread confusion to the consumer.⁸⁴ She identifies the ways in which the food industry attempted to target children as primary consumers of their products using advertisements and rewards such as toys, a point that recurs often in Chapter V of this thesis. The dialectic between the supplement industry and the FDA, which led to a deregulation of supplements, was also part of Nestle's narrative, but the ways in which dieting was being used and marketed for health benefits is not fully explained by Nestle.

Giorgio Scrinis has argued that the past thirty years of food consumption have been affected by what he labels 'nutritionism'; a reductionist approach of selecting food by focusing on food nutrients.⁸⁵ Nutritionism is further broken into three reductionist categories: health, nutritional and genetic. The first category revolves around selecting food with biological health-related functions. Nutritional reductionism elevates food into 'superfood' status or condemns them as unhealthy.⁸⁶ Genetic nutritionism refers to biomarkers such as LDL cholesterol, blood sugar, glycemic index and input/output energy equations.⁸⁷ Scrinis argues that this process is twofold: first order reductionism takes place by looking at foods at nutri-biochemical level; and second order reductionism

⁸³ H. Levenstein, *Fear of Food: A History of why we Worry About what we Eat* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

⁸⁴ M. Nestle, *Food Politics: How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition and Health* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013).

⁸⁵ G. Scrinis, 'On the Ideology of Nutritionism', *Gastronomica*, 8, no. 1, (2008), 39.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 40.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 42.

involves searching for specific elements at a nutri-biochemical level. In this article Scrinis introduces further terms such as the ‘myth of nutritional precision’ and ‘obesityism’ in order to argue that food facts are blurred, an element that is exploited by businesses along with governments that stand as their accomplices. This is another example of how popular news outlets and comic books are often ignored in studies of contemporaries’ food choices, a situation that this thesis directly addresses in subsequent chapters.

Sources and methodology

The sources used in this thesis are drawn from multiple domains. These are self-help books, newspapers and magazines, advertisements, general medical journals and comic books.⁸⁸ These primary sources have different audiences, reception and circulation figures that by themselves cannot paint a complete picture of the ideology of dieting in the postwar decades. Self-help books had usually a middle-aged female readership and even though sales figures give us numbers of books sold, they do not account pass-along circulation through lending, gifting or access to such books through libraries. Sales figures also do not paint a complete picture of whether other people had exposure to some of the advice and dieting rules through advertisements of these books, coverage about them in news media, everyday discussion or through browsing for books in bookstores. Sales figures of books cannot account for those consumers who bought these books but never read them or only read parts of them. Popular newspaper and magazine sales figures demonstrate that these publications had large readerships, but they also have similar drawbacks to sales figures of self-help books. Medical journals were read primarily by

⁸⁸ In the research done for this thesis popular television shows were also analysed by borrowing and facilitating methods and sources used in Leslie Reagan, Nancy Tomes, and Paula A. Treichler’s edited book *Medicine’s Moving Pictures* (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2007) - especially the chapter on doctors on television by Rachel Gans-Boriskin and Joseph Turrow. To complement the US focus of *Medicine’s Moving Pictures* the research for this thesis analysed popular UK television shows and juxtaposed them with US produced ones. The television shows used were: *I Love Lucy* (CBS: 1951-1957), *Hancock’s Half Hour* (BBC: 1956-1960), *The Dick Van Dyke Show* (CBS: 1961-1965), *Steptoe and Son* (BBC: 1962-1965, 1970-1974), *Happy Days* (ABC:1974-1984) and *The Good Life* (BBC: 1975-1978).

physicians and medical auxiliaries. The extent to which research, correspondence and editorial comment influenced medical practice cannot be known entirely, but it is certain that they had some impact upon it, as some of these studies were cases published by practicing physicians. Self-help authors and print media which became more specialised, having medical correspondents, managed to translate medical discourse into more approachable and understandable language that was read, so what was once the domain of medicine and science became more democratised. Comic books appealed to a category of readers that does not get sufficient attention: children. With increasing leisure, incomes and literacy, children and adolescents became a unique and distinct category of consumers. Comic books had to be perceived as wholesome and educational to get parents approval for them to be purchased by or for their children. Comic books shared patterns of absorption of medical discourse into storylines, representations of body forms, and contemporary anxieties about health. Comic books' public health initiatives and advertisements - as in newspapers and magazines - educated readers about diets, health and prevention of chronic disease.

The four main chapters of this thesis provide an analysis of sources that upon first observation might seem unconnected. However, self-help authors like Gayelord Hauser, DeForest Clinton Jarvis, Dr Spock and their advice, ideologies and methodologies could be read in newspapers, magazines and comic books. Medical researchers, nutritionists and doctors like Ancel Keys, John Yudkin and Richard Mackarness published self-help books blurring the lines between what constituted 'mainstream' and 'self-help' dieting and longevity advice. Physicians, scientists and studies within medical journals, with controversial or interesting approaches to dieting, were picked as newsworthy stories by the media. Other diet and medical experts such as Lord Horder, Robert Atkins, and Frederick Stare inserted themselves into the public eye to promote their ideas, to educate the 'public', and to criticise or discount other diet and health recommendations. In self-

help books, newspapers and magazines, medical journals and comic books obesity was increasingly seen as unhealthy and dieting was seen as a panacea. Aging, beauty and parenting were medicalised but also there was a reinforcement of certain bodily ideals. Heart disease and cancer began to be feared and became key foci of medical researchers in journals, but also topics to be covered by newspaper, magazines, and self-help books. Public health initiatives and various advertisements either facilitated the language of prevention or straightforwardly instructed readers about heart disease and cancer. Within these primary sources, it is evident that Anglo-American society experienced ‘cardiophobia’ and ‘carcinophobia’ which it perceived as products of modernity - especially modern eating - and preventable by the individual through correct nutrition, dieting, supplementation and avoidance of potentially harmful substances. Another point of interplay between the sources was the fact that neoromanticism and sentiments of anti-modernity achieved a high cultural currency, evident in mainstream medicine, self-help advice, the news, advertising, and in comic books.

The sources analysed in this thesis provide insights about how obsessions revolving around health and disease were represented and reinforced by various media and by popular culture. The books sampled from the self-help genre show the various diet, health, youth and longevity advice read mostly by women, but also food faddists. Newspapers included in this thesis are demonstrative of differences between broadsheet and tabloid publications but also of continuities and divergences in reporting between American and British publications. Even though primarily read by men, newspapers increasingly included news/sections for women (especially *The Daily Mail*). The magazines considered in this thesis had nationally and internationally high circulation figures and a brand recognition, but were also chosen because of their mixed readership (as opposed to women’s magazines). The medical journals discussed in this thesis were chosen because of name recognition, because of their long histories and reputations, and

their affiliations with professional bodies such as the British Medical Association (BMA) and the American Medical Association (AMA). These journal articles were mostly read by doctors (which at the time were mostly men) but also researchers and medical students, and they were written by similar persons who actively shaped medical opinion. The medical journals included here were also read by medical correspondents of various publications but also by politicians and lobbyists (such as organic farming and whole foods' activist Jerome Rodale) and by the various food, drink and supplement industries which wished to exploit the perceived image of science for better sales.

Comic books analysed in this thesis had high circulation figures. These comic books were not only popular in the US but across the entire world, as many of the stories were reproduced and translated in many languages. The characters, stories, storylines and contemporary ideas of writers and pencillers were not confined to the comic book genre as these have been reused, adapted and modified for television shows, films and advertisements to this day, reaching audiences, fandoms and readerships around the world. Comic books also provide a unique perspective on contemporary popular culture. As opposed to the rest of the sources included in the analysis of this thesis, comic books demonstrate contemporary preoccupations and anxieties about health and disease expressed by editors, writers and advertisers, but also how these were utilised to promote sales of comic books and other products. They illustrate what and how children and teenagers (especially boys) and later on young adults learned about science, medicine and healthy eating through a medium that struggled to continue being perceived as wholesome and educational.

This thesis is not a comprehensive account of every self-help book, newspaper, magazine, advertisement, medical journal and comic book but it allows a closer analysis of key issues around dieting, healthy eating and disease. Indeed, this thesis argues that these sources must be considered together to gain a full picture of breadth and depth of

‘healthmania’. For representations of food, health, supplements, and popular advice on dieting the thesis consults self-help books.⁸⁹ This thesis analyses some of the most popular self-help books - according to *Publishers’ Digest* and *The New York Times* best sellers’ list - between the 1950s and 1970s to provide insight into how popular dieting and health concepts were utilised by authors and understood by millions of readers. Focusing on language and terminology makes it possible to track the evolution of food science and to identify the persistence of certain terms across different media. Special focus is given to individual writers, such as Gayelord Hauser, Robert Plimmer, DeForest Clinton Jarvis, Robert Atkins and Linus Pauling, and how they claimed authoritative status through the use of medical and scientific credentials and the utilisation of medical and scientific jargon.

‘Healthmania’ was promoted by popular British newspapers, *The Times* and *The Daily Mail*, and *The New York Times* from the US.⁹⁰ These newspapers were analysed partly because their archives contain original images of advertisements and partly because of their large readership and international recognition. More specifically this thesis explores newspaper coverage of cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, and obesity. A special focus has been placed on the role of advertisements advocating ‘healthmania’; there was commercial interest in marketing the ‘healthy’ body as an ideal. Differences in coverage, language, science and terminology used by the press to promote or condemn the consumption of certain foods are also a special focus of this thesis, which

⁸⁹ G. Hauser, *Look Younger, Live Longer* (New York: Farrar Straus, 1950); R.H.A Plimmer and V.G. Plimmer, *Food Values At a Glance 9th edition* (London: Longmans, 1959); D. C. Jarvis, *Folk Medicine: A Vermont Doctor's Guide to Good Health* (London: Pan Books, 1968); L. Pauling, *Vitamin C and the Common Cold* (London: Ballantine, 1972); R. Atkins, *Dr. Atkin’s Diet Revolution: The High Calorie Way to Stay Thin Forever* (New York: Bantam 1972).

⁹⁰ *The Times* and *The Daily Mail* come from a conservative perspective but the reason they were chosen was to juxtapose differences between broadsheet and tabloid style newspapers. It would be interesting if in the future more newspapers from a liberal perspective are included in the analysis. In the research done for my MRes Thesis in 2014 I researched *The Manchester Guardian* and *The Guardian* which covered many of the topics featured by *The Times* and *The Daily Mail* in similar ways. See: N. Kefalas, *Superfoods and Healing in England and in Cyprus 1900-present* (Unpublished MRes Dissertation, University of Leicester, 2014).

demonstrates the fascination with healthy eating, similarities and differences in the language and terminology, and differences between tabloid and broadsheet newspapers across a thirty-year period. The analysis of magazines focusses on *Prevention*, and *Time*.⁹¹ *Prevention* was selected because it was a lifestyle magazine that supported naturalness. *Time* was chosen as it was popular, with easier to read news coverage of various topics. This thesis included analysis of articles, advertisements and editorials in order to identify representations of contemporary ideas about food and health or disease. Analysis compares and contrasts the different language and jargon employed in these publications, but also juxtaposes them with the contemporary preoccupations of science, self-help books, and the media. By carefully explaining the origins and coverage of these sources, this thesis brings a more nuanced historical understanding of the evolution of healthy eating and supplementation, and how magazines brought together notions of healthy eating and contemporary anxieties about disease.

Further sources include medical, clinical, laboratory and epidemiological studies published in mainstream medical journals from the UK and the US. More specifically emphasis is given to articles, editorials, letters to the editor and correspondence in *The British Medical Journal*, *The Lancet*, *The Journal of the American Medical Association* and *The New England Journal of Medicine*. By exploring these sources, this project develops a new understanding of the impact of scientific discovery on social attitudes about health and disease and how they were translated in other areas of life. By comparing and contrasting scientific and clinical studies, letters to the editor and correspondence relating to what newspapers and popular science promoted as healthy, we can explore the ways in which the food, supplement and news industries used scientific evidence to encourage sales or boost circulation figures. These studies can also direct us to the

⁹¹ The research included *Newsweek* and *Life* but these publications did not have as a wide reporting on science and medicine or in as in-depth coverage of such topics.

trending norms of scientific enquiry on food, diet and health, and how these changed across the post-war decades in the UK and US.

Finally, this dissertation examines representations of food, health and ‘healthy bodies’ in popular culture. More specifically it analyses a sample of comic books and advertisements within these produced in the United States. These low-brow and children-oriented publications were read by millions of children and adolescents around the world. The superhero stories were full of representations of contemporary ideas about health, diet and disease, but also symbolisms and instruction about such notions. Many of the stories from these comic books have been reproduced in popular television shows and movies. Comic book ‘canon’ has been discussed in front of newsstands, in comic book shops, and in comic book conventions (ComiCons). This enables analysis of how attitudes towards food in the United States entered the everyday lives of people around the globe. The comic books from which stories of food and health are taken include: *Superman*, *Captain America* and *Popeye*.

All these sources provide an original and novel way of understanding how and why Anglo-American society became so enchanted by the concept of preservation of health through individual lifestyles and dieting. Self-help books, newspapers, magazines, and comic books, as well as medical and scientific journals, are sources which provide a more balanced understanding of how ‘healthmania’ was accepted and promoted by the authors and producers of these media, various industries, and how they were translated into the consciousness of Britons and Americans during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. These sources demonstrate the extent of obsessions about various facets of health and certain body forms, such as slimness for women and muscularity for men, in discussions of diet and health. Self-help books, newspapers, magazines, advertisements, medical journals, and comic books represented and reinforced popular obsessions with diet and

health. These sources directly and indirectly allowed ‘healthmania’ to take root in Anglo-American culture.

Structure of thesis

This thesis is organised both chronologically and thematically. Chapter II is dedicated to ‘healthy’ eating, and lifestyle advice in self-help books. It tracks the history of healthy eating in self-help books by Gayelord Hauser, Robert Plimmer, DeForest Clinton Jarvis, Robert Atkins and Linus Pauling. More specifically the chapter focuses on the acceptance and distortion of scientific facts and alignment with health debates and initiatives. The differences and uniqueness of these publications will be considered, so as to identify their impact on science. This chapter argues that medical and scientific expertise of self-help authors was a means to establish their authority and legitimacy to their readers, making dieting more desirable. Self-help authors promoted agency and responsibility in their readers towards their own health. This chapter also argues that the growth of dieting and ‘healthmania’ stemmed from the increasing cultural currency of neoromanticism in the period covered by this thesis, and more specifically by sentiments of antimodernity.

Chapter III analyses newspapers and magazines and their eagerness to publicise medical and scientific studies, but also examines the incorporation of medical language in advertising campaigns. This chapter argues that news outlets had a growing fascination with medical and scientific studies in the US and the UK, discusses the growth in interest for diets, health and lifestyles by Anglo-American readers, and explores how advertisers promoted ‘health’ consumerism by using health promotion as a central platform in their advertising campaigns. It is noticeable how neoromanticism influenced contemporaries’ views on diet and health, making heart disease the ‘greatest enemy’ of humanity because of the Western world’s consumption of ‘unnatural’ foods and diets.

Chapter IV focuses on the history of healthy eating through the lenses of medical discourses in the most prominent general medical journals in the UK and the US. It argues that the rise of epidemiology of chronic disease was a significant driver of ‘healthmania’. In particular, during the 1950s the increasing interest of various doctors and scientists around the world drove the diet-heart hypothesis, making it amongst the most important topics of discussion in these journals. This chapter reinforces the argument used by Anne Karpf about the interaction between medicine and the media. Medical stories in journals made for good medico-dramas in the press. This chapter also argues that obesity became another concern of medical professionals during the 1950s, which provides a better frame of reference for understanding how concerns about weight originated and how ‘dietotherapies’, which were methods in which diets were facilitated as therapeutic means to treat certain diseases, became popular.

The final main chapter will be primarily concerned with food in popular culture. More specifically this chapter argues that representations of ‘healthy’ eating and lifestyles in comic books demonstrate the growth of ‘healthmania’ as early as the 1950s. This chapter argues that the concept of ‘scientific motherhood’, and the medicalisation of parenting and child-rearing, played a catalytic role in determining what children ate but also what was considered wholesome entertainment. At the same time, this chapter argues that the growing vilification of obesity and the adoration of slim bodies for women and muscular bodies for men were accepted and reinforced by these comic books. These sources facilitated the elevation of dieting as a cure, but also generated contemporary fears of certain foods. This chapter argues that entertainment was increasingly medicalised, as diseases and diet made increasingly frequent appearances in these media.

The conclusion to this thesis reflects on what can be learned from bringing these varied sources together into the same historical analysis. The thesis chapters were structured by source instead of by theme or chronologically, as in this way, more

emphasis was given to each source-base and their specific ideologies and discourse. There is an overlap of ideas and influential individuals but also specific nuances within these sources that reflected and reinforced contemporary anxieties about diet and health. By including discussions on means, tools, techniques of combating obesity, aging, chronic diseases but also the representation of diets, lifestyle, supplements and disease these sources were contributing to a cultural ethos of critiquing modernity, of promoting self-help and individual agency. As the subsequent chapters argue, this ethos revolved around maintaining an idealised - youthful, energetic and productive - healthy body, and facilitating disease prevention, slimming, and 'graceful aging'.

Chapter II

Self-help and self-promotion: scientism and agency in UK and US

popular advice literature

This chapter builds on research by Matthew Smith, Catherine Carstairs, Jill Kirby, and Mark Jackson by closely examining books published in a popular format for a wide audience.⁹² Specifically, it focuses on advice given to the public through various self-help books and how eating healthily and dieting became key issues in the promotion of health, productivity and youthfulness. Explaining the popularity of the self-help genre, heightened levels of literacy and increased cultural interest on diets and health, this chapter is focused on books that were featured in the *Publishers' Digest* non-fiction top ten per decade, but also on books that were reprinted multiple times. The selection of books is diverse with authors from various backgrounds including physicians, clinical researchers, nutritionists, and public figures. The self-help books used in this chapter illustrate differences in language, terminology and approaches to healthy eating from the 1950s, but also they clearly demonstrate the English-speaking world's preoccupation with healthy eating and supplementation.

This chapter deals with topics that were persistent throughout these books and themes that reflected contemporary preoccupations with food and health. Firstly, it

⁹² M. Smith, 'Into the Mouths of Babes: Hyperactivity, Food Additives and the Reception of the Feingold Diet' in M. Jackson (ed.), *Health and the Modern Home* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 304-321; M. Smith, *Hyperactive: The Controversial History of ADHD* (London: Reaktion, 2012); M. Smith, *Another Person's Poison: A History of Food Allergy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015); C. Carstairs, "'Our Sickness is a National Disgrace": Adelle Davis, Nutritional Determinism and the Anxious 1970s', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 69, no. 3, (2012), 461-491; C. Carstairs, 'Look Younger, Live Longer': Ageing Beautifully with Gayelord Hauser in America, 1920-1975', *Gender & History*, 26, no. 2, (2014), 332-350; J. Kirby, *Troubled by Life: The Experience of Stress in Twentieth-Century Britain*, (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Sussex, 2014); J. Kirby, 'Working too Hard: Experiences of Worry and Stress in Post-War Britain' in M. Jackson (ed.), *Stress in Post-War Britain, 1945-1985* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2015), 59-74; M. Jackson, *The Age of Stress: Science and the Search for Stability* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); M. Jackson, *Allergy: The History of a Modern Malady* (London: Reaktion, 2006).

provides a background on authors, their fields of expertise, and their motivations. One significant aspect of the analysis concerns which health problems, conditions or diseases these authors primarily wanted to prevent or treat. Promoting the agency of the individual for his or her own health is another theme that is evident in all of the books analysed. In addition, this chapter considers the growth of ‘antimodernity’ and neoromantic ideology, as most of the books condemned ‘modern’ foodstuffs or endorsed ‘natural’ foods. In promoting certain diets, foods or supplements, however, the authors of these books perhaps contradicted this emphasis on ‘naturalness’, as they argued for the validity of their views through scientific method, terminology, and jargon. The authors extensively supported their claims using charts, statistics, graphs, and the results of multiple clinical studies on humans and animals. One significant aspect of this ‘scientism’ is the fact that most of the authors had at least some connection with science and medicine, using their authority to promote agency.⁹³

Authors, readers and scientism

This section of the chapter introduces some of the principal self-help authors, such as Gayelord Hauser, Robert and Violet Plimmer, Linus Pauling, and Robert Atkins. Even though these authors advocated different diets, from a variety of scientific perspectives, they all had some key elements in common. All authors were scientists or had some form of affiliation with the fields of medicine, biology, chemistry, and other related subjects. Most of them had reputations and long careers in various health-related disciplines.⁹⁴ An almost universal element is what Matthew Smith has referred to as ‘grandfatherly charm’,

⁹³ Scientism refers to the methods in which the authors have used clinical and scientific data to support their arguments.

⁹⁴ Gayelord Hauser was a doctor of natural science (homeopathy and naturopathy), R.H.A Plimmer was a biochemist and a nutrition expert, Dr. Atkins was a doctor, Linus Pauling was a Nobel laureate in biochemistry and peace, Pearson and Shaw are researchers.

as most of the authors were at least in their forties when writing these books.⁹⁵ This reflects the cultural reverence of older and more experienced scientists, especially men, which might have played a significant role in the popularity of these books.⁹⁶

Supporting the conclusions of Matthew Smith and Mark Jackson, on Ben Feingold and Richard Mackarness respectively, this chapter suggests that the authors were all dissatisfied with, and leading a polemic against, contemporary regimes of scientific knowledge.⁹⁷ Feingold was a respectable allergist from San Francisco who argued that the ingestion of food additives caused hyperactivity and that the disorder could be alleviated with the additive-free Feingold diet.⁹⁸ Mackarness was a clinical ecologist who argued that mental conditions could be attributed to food allergies.⁹⁹ Both scientists published in popular platforms to promote their ideas; Feingold published his book *Why Your Child is Hyperactive* in 1974 and Mackarness' book *Not All in the Mind* came out in 1976. Other self-help authors were equally controversial. Robert Plimmer was dissatisfied with education on adequate nutrition, Gayelord Hauser was displeased with artificial foods and the illnesses of old age, Linus Pauling promoted Vitamin C supplementation and found 'regular' medicine inadequate and intrusive, and Robert Atkins argued that most nutritionists, fad food dieticians, and orthodox scientists were simply wrong.¹⁰⁰ A sense of urgency was another similarity between some of the authors discussed in this chapter. *Food Values*, by Robert and Violet Plimmer, was written in an environment of economic turbulence and reprinted during and after World War II. It aimed to 'educate' people to eat sufficient nutrients even if their incomes were low or were restricted by rations and limited choice. Dr Atkins' book followed the success of

⁹⁵ M. Smith, *Into the Mouths of Babes: Hyperactivity, Food Additives and the History of the Feingold Diet* (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Exeter, 2009), p. 213.

⁹⁶ Some examples: R.H.A Plimmer was 62 when he published *Food values*, G. Hauser was 55 when he published *Look Younger, Live Longer* and Dr. Atkins was 41 when *Diet Revolution* was printed.

⁹⁷ Jackson, *The Age of Stress*, p. 172.

⁹⁸ Smith, *Into the Mouths of Babes*, p. 9.

⁹⁹ Jackson, *The Age of Stress*, p. 209.

¹⁰⁰ The rest of the authors had similar discontent with various issues.

Pure, White and Deadly (1972), the exposé of sugar by John Yudkin, and it was aligned with its message: informing people about ‘carbohydrate poisoning’ and its consequences.¹⁰¹

It is notable that most of the authors were men. If women were involved, they were often the male authors’ wives. Some books in this genre were written by women, such as *Let’s Eat Right to Keep Fit* (1954) by Adelle Davis and the *Beverly Hills Diet* (1981) by Judy Mazel. Cookery books were primarily the domain of women writers such as Elizabeth David’s *French Country Cooking* (1951), Julia Child’s *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* (1961), and Dinah Shaw’s *Someone’s in the Kitchen with Dinah* (1971) and housekeeping books were also primarily written by women such as *Heloise’s Housekeeping Hints* (1965).¹⁰² Female scientists did not author as many self-help diet books as their male counterparts, however, perhaps because of their ‘lower’ status in academic and scientific fields.

Readership of these books also raises intriguing questions about gender, as from the mid-twentieth century till the 1970s, it seems that the targeted population for the self-help genre was primarily women.¹⁰³ As Catherine Carstairs argues, there was a tradition of men telling women how to perform femininity.¹⁰⁴ Rima Apple also contends that women in the 1920s and 1930s needed science to carry out their household duties correctly, or to perform what she calls ‘scientific motherhood’. This can be extended to a tradition of expert men instructing women how to be healthy, slim and young. Derek Oddy argues that single-person households gradually increased, which also affected

¹⁰¹ R.C. Atkins, *Dr Atkins’ Diet Revolution* (New York: 1972), p. 5.

¹⁰² A. Davis, *Let’s Eat Right to Keep Fit* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1954); J. Mazel, *Beverly Hills Diet* (New York: Macmillan, 1981); E. David, *French Country Cooking* (London: Penguin, 1951); J. Child, *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* (New York: Knopf, 1961); D. Shaw, *Someone’s in the Kitchen with Dinah* (New York: Doubleday, 1971); Heloise, *Heloise’s Housekeeping Hints* (New York: Pocket Books, 1965).

¹⁰³ G. Hauser targeted middle-aged, upper class white women and Plimmer targeted the literate housewife

¹⁰⁴ Carstairs, ‘Look Younger, Live Longer’, 336.

demographics.¹⁰⁵ This resonated with the increasing numbers of divorces in the UK as from 30,870 divorces in 1950, it nearly doubled in 1970, quadrupled in 1978 and reached 165,018 divorces in 1993.¹⁰⁶ If women - notably wives - were responsible for the health of the household, when they began joining the workforce or getting divorced, they created a new need for men to start thinking and learning more about food, cooking and health, and to take more care of their own health. The increasing numbers and visibility of people becoming professional athletes, performing artists, actors/actresses and singers brought nutrition, dieting and body shape to the forefront of debates about appearance and performance. These changes brought more men into the field of 'health food', or more explicitly the world of dieting, which was traditionally the domain of women.

Many of the self-help books this chapter considers were best-sellers and their authors often made public appearances in the media, thus attracting readers from all socio-economic and religious groups. Contemporary debates about an obesity epidemic, poisoning scares, food additives and chemicals, along with preoccupations about vitamins and frequent scrutiny of the medical establishment, were some of the factors that brought success to these books' sales. These authors and their antagonists in contemporary public debates about food and health also brought an explosion of interest in healthy eating in the late 1960s and early 1970s.¹⁰⁷ Readers turned to the self-help genre to educate themselves and their families, and some, as Carstairs argues, were searching for cures or solutions to problems.¹⁰⁸ These authors wrote in an era where popular science was a staple form of information in everyday life.¹⁰⁹ As Roy Porter argued about the popularity of

¹⁰⁵ D. Oddy, *From Plain Faire to Fusion Food: British Diet from 1890s to 1990s* (London: Boydell, 2003), p. 188.

¹⁰⁶ Office for National Statistics, *Statistical Bulletin: Divorces in England and Wales* (London: ONS, 2012), p. 2.

¹⁰⁷ Carstairs, 'Look Younger, Live Longer', 334; and W. Belasco, *Appetite for Change: How the Counterculture Took on the Food Industry* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

¹⁰⁸ Carstairs, 'Look Younger, Live Longer', 342.

¹⁰⁹ Popular science began reaching all parts of life since the 19th century as argued by J. Secord, 'How Scientific Conversation Became Shop Talk', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 17, no. 6, (2007), 129-156.

quacks in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the self-help authors this chapter will focus on, succeeded because of the contemporary interest, fears, and anxieties of a supposedly curious, gullible, and misinformed public.¹¹⁰

Increasing preoccupations with slim, young bodies and the rise of what Levenstein calls ‘Negative Nutrition’ led to a shift away from foods being something positive to becoming double-edged swords being both helpful and dangerous. This also expanded the readership of these books. Readers knew that foods could promote and sustain good health through vitamins and minerals, but they could also be detrimental to health, as they could contain too much sugar, excessive calories, unnecessary fat, or processed foods. The Western world began to be preoccupied with weight, or more specifically with what Levenstein calls ‘lipophobia’; the fear of extra weight and obesity, which resulted in the identification of multiple eating disorders.¹¹¹ Roy Porter suggested that the ‘sick by amusement’, or namely hypochondriacs and sceptics, were drawn to quacks in the past, but the same groups were drawn to the self-help genre in the twentieth century.¹¹² Women, especially mothers, bought these books to feed their children ‘correctly’, as well as wives who wanted to keep their husbands healthy.

This genre targeted middle-aged and elderly readers, as from Hauser to Andrew Weil, all books provided nutrition advice for better and more productive old-age, a notable feature which resembles advice to the middle-aged.¹¹³ With an increasing aging population, graceful and beautiful aging became a preoccupation of many people during the second half of the twentieth century. Partly imposed by the new individualism promoted by capitalism during the post-war era, and what Porter calls ‘the right and duty

¹¹⁰ R. Porter, *Quacks: Fakers and Charlatans in Medicine* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: NPI Press, 2003), p. 30.

¹¹¹ H. Levenstein, ‘The Perils of Abundance: Food, Health and Morality in American History’, in J-L. Flandrin & M. Montanari (eds), *Food: A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present* (Chichester, New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 528.

¹¹² Porter, *Quacks: Fakers and Charlatans*, p. 133.

¹¹³ M. Jackson, ‘Self-help, Marriage Guidance and the Making of the Midlife Crisis’, in M. Jackson and M. Moore (eds), *Balancing the Self: Medicine, Politics and the Regulation of Health in the Twentieth Century* (Forthcoming, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), 296.

to self-help in the culture of Protestant and Enlightened England', readers were eager to experiment with various diets.¹¹⁴

Discussing the popularity of dietary advice during the Renaissance, the early-modernist historian of food Ken Albala argues: 'A literate audience with enough leisure and money to be choosy about diet appears to have been a prerequisite for the genre to flourish'.¹¹⁵ This was partly the reason for the growth of the self-help genre from the 1950s onwards, but it was also energised by the fact that citizens who had experienced shortages and rationing during and after World War II were reintroduced to consumerism. Readers might have bought these books due to what Roy Porter calls fetishism of goods, to showcase their knowledge of contemporary health foods in their social circles, as an increasing number of people were diet book hobbyists.¹¹⁶ This can be seen in Olga Franklin's discussion of John Yudkin's *This Slimming Business*, which criticised the overly successful dieting self-help genre that sold books to gullible readers.¹¹⁷ Fabio Parasecoli has argued that the success of the 'health food' industry was the successful imposition upon society of the idea that a better body and health were commodities that could be bought. According to the anthropologist Jill Dubisch, 'health' food indeed became almost like a religion; it had its own system of symbols and meanings.¹¹⁸ By choosing to read these books or by following their advice, readers chose to be part of a wider belief system. This notion also resonates with Coveney's assertion that eating and dieting have replaced Christian asceticism in modern Western societies.¹¹⁹ Christian eternal salvation has been replaced by a secular earthly salvation: a healthy, young-

¹¹⁴ R. Porter, *Health For Sale: Quackery in England 1660-1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), p. 25

¹¹⁵ K. Albala, *Eating Right in the Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), p. 15.

¹¹⁶ Porter, *Quacks: Fakers and Charlatans in Medicine*, p. 50.

¹¹⁷ O. Franklin, 'The Prof. fills me with doubt... ABOUT DIET', *The Daily Mail*, (05 May 1958), p. 4.

¹¹⁸ J. Dubisch, 'You Are What You Eat: Religious Aspects of the Health Food Movement' in C. Delaney and D. Kaspin (eds), *Investigating Culture: An Experiential Introduction to Anthropology* 2nd edition (Chichester: West Sussex, 2011), 284-5.

¹¹⁹ J. Coveney, *Food, Morals, and Meaning: The Pleasure and Anxiety of Eating* (London: Routledge, 2000), p.10.

looking and thin body. Some of these books were targeted at informed audiences, but also at sceptical readers.

Readers were already familiar with dieting as a means to prevent disease. As Marion Nestle argues, the US government actively informed the public about healthy food choices; from home economics basics being taught in schools, to food pyramids and reports from the Surgeon General, similar developments have taken place throughout the Western world. The health conscious individual was formed from the matrix of public discourse and public health campaigns about health, such as the smoking campaigns discussed by Virginia Berridge.¹²⁰ These embraced the concept of ‘risk factors’ but more importantly the ideology of social medicine focussing on individual behaviour and the concept of prevention.¹²¹ Both the UK and the US reinforced the notion of ‘correct eating’ during World War II in order to circumvent the possible widespread malnutrition that could occur because of rationing and shortages.¹²² Correct nutrition and vitamins soon shaped the production of foods and pharmaceuticals, which readily employed scientists and researchers to ‘improve’ or fortify manufactured foods.¹²³ This change in food production also brought change in the advertising of such foods which were promoted as healthier to persuade people to purchase scientifically optimised products.

The first author this chapter focuses on is Gayelord Hauser. Hauser was a German immigrant to the US who as a teenager suffered from bovine tuberculosis, which he was finally cured from in Europe.¹²⁴ He claimed that he was taught about the healing

¹²⁰ V. Berridge, *Marketing Health: Smoking and the Discourse of Public Health in Britain 1945-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

¹²¹ D. Porter, ‘How Did Social Medicine Evolve, and Where Is It Heading?’, *Public Library of Science Medicine*, 3, (2006), 1667-1672; D. Porter & R. Porter, ‘What Was Social Medicine? An Historiographical Essay’, *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 1, (1988), 91.

¹²² R. Apple, ‘Vitamins Win the War: Nutrition, Commerce, and Patriotism in the United States During World War II,’ in D. Smith and J. Phillips, (eds), *Food, Science Policy, and Regulation in the Twentieth Century: International and Comparative Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2000), 135-149.

¹²³ S. Horrocks, ‘Nutrition Science and the Food and Pharmaceutical industries in Inter-War Britain’, in D. Smith (ed.), *Nutrition in Britain: Science, Scientists and Politics in the Twentieth Century* (London: Routledge, 1997), 53-74.

¹²⁴ Carstairs, ‘Look Younger, Live Longer’, 336.

properties of food in Dresden and Vienna in 1923, cities which were renowned for fringe medicine at the time.¹²⁵ He probably undertook his formal education, however, in the Chicago College of Naturopathy and the American School of Chiropractic.¹²⁶ Hauser was amongst the first advocates of whole grains and what he called ‘wonder foods’ and vitamin tablets and capsules.¹²⁷ These were yogurt, brewer's yeast, powdered skim milk, and blackstrap molasses, which to the present day are consumed for health purposes.

Hauser was a controversial figure as he firstly called himself: ‘Internationally Famous Young Viennese Scientist: Bengamin Gayelord Hauser’.¹²⁸ He sparked discontent from the American Medical Association (AMA) because he dismissed one of the most significant scientific initiatives of the time, fortified white bread, as devitalised. In turn the AMA seized copies of *Look Younger, Live Longer* on the grounds that it promoted only one brand of blackstrap molasses.¹²⁹ Although the AMA investigated Hauser, this did not prevent him from carrying on his health crusade, as he wrote more than twelve books on food, diet, health and beauty.¹³⁰

A significant element in *Look Younger, Live Longer* is the fact that Hauser refers to himself as a doctor, not of medicine but of natural science.¹³¹ This demonstrates that Hauser was aware of the reverence of the doctor and claimed nearly equal credibility. In *Look Younger, Live Longer* he writes in a quasi-scientific way, trying to maintain a level of readability appropriate for the general reader. Nevertheless, the book is filled with scientism; jargon, terminology and methodology are significant drivers and vehicles of

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, and P. Kerr, ‘GAYELORD HAUSER, 89, AUTHOR: PROPONENT OF NATURAL FOODS’, *New York Times Online*, (originally published 29/12/1984), <http://www.nytimes.com/1984/12/29/obituaries/gayelord-hauser-89-author-proponent-of-natural-foods.html> [accessed 15/01/2016].

¹²⁶ Carstairs, ‘Look Younger, Live Longer’, 336.

¹²⁷ G. Hauser, *Look Younger, Live Longer* (New York: Farrar Straus, 1950), p. 32.

¹²⁸ Carstairs, ‘Look Younger, Live Longer’, 336.

¹²⁹ V. Pope, ‘HEALTHY CELEBRITY. (cover story)’, *U.S. News & World Report*, (August, 2005), p. 62,

¹³⁰ Bureau of Investigation: ‘Bengamin Gayelord Hauser: Fruits, Vegetables -and Nuts’, *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 108, no. 16, (17 April 1937), p. 1360.

¹³¹ Hauser, *Look Younger, Live Longer*, p. 4.

his arguments.¹³² He also argued that he was qualified to advise because of his ‘great relish for living’, his ‘great relish for people’ and ‘great relish for longevity’.¹³³ Special mention should go to what he means by ‘great relish for people’, for which he states that he had met ‘royalty, society leaders, stage and screen stars, statesmen, business executives, sportsmen, writers, philosophers, doctors, artists, scientists, teachers, preachers and –yes- a Civil War veteran’.¹³⁴ Thus emulation of celebrity was one of Hauser’s most successful strategies to legitimise his methods. Since the elite were part of his social circle and some of them trusted his advice, everyday people were led to believe in Hauser’s credibility.

Hauser was an exceptionally popular public figure, often making appearances in the media and giving lectures. Being publicly opposed by AMA might have given him even greater notoriety. He was one of the best-selling authors in *The New York Times* for over a year in 1950 and one of the leading commentators on diet, health and beauty in Europe and the United States in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s.¹³⁵ *Look Younger, Live Longer* was not only popular when it was first published, but it was reprinted multiple times till the 1970s and translated into at least twelve languages.¹³⁶ In the UK it was published by Faber and Faber, an independent publishing house with a record of supporting bold new authors and ideas. Hauser’s diets are considered amongst the first ‘celebrity’ diets, as one of his early followers was a Swedish actress and international film star of the 1920s and 1930s, Greta Garbo, an association that helped his public

¹³² An example can be seen in his chapter on Bodily Resistance talking about how many grams of protein should be ingested and how much Vitamin C. *Look Younger, Live Longer*, pp. 54-55.

¹³³ *Ibid*, pp. 4-5.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 5.

¹³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 332. Also his book *Look Younger, Live Longer* was in at least the top three best-sellers in nonfiction, for two years in a row; in Berkeley’s Book of the Century initiative, which gives comprehensive lists of the Publishers’ Weekly best-selling books found at <https://www.ocf.berkeley.edu/~immer/books1950s> [accessed 01/11/2015].

¹³⁶ Carstairs, ‘Look Younger, Live Longer’, 332.

image.¹³⁷ Simon Doonan, the Creative Ambassador for Barneys (originally from Reading, UK) commented on Hauser's popularity:

His influence was far-reaching, as evidenced by the fact that in the 1950s my mother and my blind Aunt Phyllis both joined his cult, albeit trans-Atlantically. Following his advice, they rejected white sugar and white flour and began ladling Brewer's Yeast and molasses down their throats, and mine. They also favoured a rock-hard Hauser-approved breakfast cereal called Fru-Grains which resembled lumps of charred bark and played havoc with their dentures.¹³⁸

Hauser's diet and advice have persisted into the twenty-first century: in 2013, Rebecca Harrington from *New York Magazine* tried his nutritional plan for 10 days.¹³⁹ Some of the most intriguing parts of Harrington's article are the responses from readers at the bottom of the page. Some call him a 'quack', but others refer to him as the father of the 'real' or 'whole-foods' movement.¹⁴⁰

Catherine Carstairs attributes Hauser's popularity to his target audience, which was usually white, healthy and mostly middle-aged women.¹⁴¹ Carstairs argues that this segment of the self-help book market was eager for knowledge on beautiful aging and the preservation of femininity in old age and that 'Hauser was...drawing on a significant tradition of men teaching women, especially older women, on how to perform femininity'.¹⁴² Additionally, Hauser's sexuality may have been used as a marketing tool to enhance his status as a diet and health authority. Carstairs argues that by being gay,

¹³⁷ S. Doonan, 'Eating Gruel and Loving It: Strange Celebrity Diets, Explained', *The Slate Online* (March, 2012), http://www.slate.com/articles/life/doonan/2012/03/gayelord_hauser_the_man_who_invented_the_celebrity_diet.html [accessed 11/01/2016].

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ R. Harrington, 'Historic Diets: I Tried Greta Garbo's Strange, Horrifying Diet', *New York Magazine Online* (March, 2013), <http://nymag.com/thecut/2013/03/i-tried-greta-garbos-horrifically-strange-diet.html> [accessed 13/01/2016].

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ Carstairs, 'Look Younger, Live Longer', 332-333.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 335-336.

Hauser related to his audience as: ‘gay men, like women, were expected to take a special interest in style and performance’. *Look Younger, Live Longer* also resonated with the growth of auto-suggestion as a genre in self-help.¹⁴³ This can be seen in one of his paragraphs: ‘Relax. Remove the ugly tensions from your face and it will become more tranquil, more harmonious and attractive, no matter what your age or features’.¹⁴⁴

The authors of *Food Values at a Glance* were dissimilar to Hauser in many respects. Robert Hans Aders Plimmer and his wife Violet had a more solid claim to scientific credibility due to their qualifications and strong links with ‘orthodox’ medicine. Robert was a biochemist and Violet was a biologist, both in fields embedded in mainstream academic science.¹⁴⁵ Robert’s career as a prominent biochemist can be seen in the fact that at the age of thirty-four, he was one of the founding members of the Biochemical Society.¹⁴⁶ A fundamental aspect of Robert’s career and one of the main instigators of his professional curiosity about nutrition was his time in the Directorate of Hygiene, War Office during World War I.¹⁴⁷ His main duty was to analyse common foodstuffs, research that he published in 1921 as *Analyses and Energy Values of Foods*.¹⁴⁸ Plimmer was a legitimate professional who was hired by the government, and thus his authority was not questioned by professional bodies, bringing him success in the popular book world.

Food Values at a Glance was filled with scientific facts, figures, and graphs. Using the results from the Army report, Plimmer and his wife published multiple books within the genre of food, diet, and health. Similarly to Hauser, Plimmer gave public lectures and made appearances in the popular media, but with far less controversy than

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, 342; and N.V. Peale, *Power of Positive Thinking* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1952), <https://www.ocf.berkeley.edu/~immer/books1950s> [accessed 01/11/2015].

¹⁴⁴ Hauser, *Look Younger, Live Longer*, p. 123.

¹⁴⁵ J. Lowndes, ‘(R. H. A. Plimmer) Obituary Notice’, *Journal of Biochemistry*, 62, no. 3, (March, 1956), 353-357.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*.

¹⁴⁸ R.H.A Plimmer, *Analyses and Energy Values of Foods* (London: HM Stationary Office, 1921).

Hauser. The book was published by Longman Press, which had a tradition for publishing educational books. Longmans perhaps accepted the book purely on its educational character, or because they had already published academic material by Plimmer and thus approved his authoritative voice on the subject of nutrition and health.¹⁴⁹ *Food Values at a Glance* was popular as it was reprinted multiple times between 1935 and 1959; the copy this chapter focuses on is the ninth edition of 1959.

Of equal importance to the public image of their books was Violet's frequent appearance in the media as a commentator on food and health.¹⁵⁰ This had a twofold implication: first that the field of science was no longer a realm belonging exclusively to men; and secondly, that the female reader would be given advice by both a man and a woman, adding perhaps an element of trust to the nutritional information provided. This was significant as the book was mostly directed at women. Similarly to Hauser's books, *Food Values* was mostly read by upper-class white women. Even though their advocacy for more efficient diets was directed at the lower classes, it is possible that the lower classes did not possess the disposable income to buy such a book. This was even more true during and following the recession and the war along with the regime of rationing that was enforced at the time.

Even though *Vitamin C and the Common Cold* was not a dieting popular book, its cultural influence was (and still is) great. Following the example set by Rima Apple in her book *Vitmania*, this chapter will explore the influence of Linus Pauling on an emerging 'healthmania' in the UK. Linus Pauling was one of the most distinguished scientists of the twentieth century. He is to this day the only person to be awarded two unshared Nobel prizes: the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for "his research into the nature of the chemical bond and its application to the elucidation of the structure of complex

¹⁴⁹ R.H.A Plimmer, *Practical Organic and Bio-Chemistry* (London: Longmans, 1918).

¹⁵⁰ An example: V. Plimmer, 'Diet Fallacies in the Quest for Slimness', *The Daily Mail Atlantic Edition*, (31 February 1928), p. 10.

substances” (1954); and the Nobel Prize in Peace (1962) for his efforts to ban nuclear bomb testing.¹⁵¹ Pauling was thus a respectable scientist but also a peace activist who frequently had media exposure, which made his conviction about Vitamin C credible to the general public. In the UK, as in the US, the government had played an important role in popularising vitamins and nutrition facts during and after both World Wars. Pauling’s book found a receptive audience, waiting to read about the latest medical ‘wonder’. The UK general public had already been initiated into ‘vitamania’ and supplementation. Through the *Food Facts* campaign, the National Milk Scheme, the National Loaf, and through the provision of cod-liver oil, orange juice and rose-hip oil to lactating mothers, infants and young children, the state had prepared the groundwork for Pauling’s success.¹⁵² The UK was also undergoing what Belasco calls a food ‘counterculture’ as, in the 1960s and 1970s, health food stores began opening their doors in many cities.¹⁵³ In both the US and the UK a broader counter-culture was emerging between the late 1950s and early 1970s, which was advocating for a change in society with emphasis on dress, lifestyle, leisure activities and on fighting against conventional values and modes of established society.¹⁵⁴ Momentum, therefore, existed and Pauling was presenting his assertions to a receptive audience.

Pauling retold the story of how he had learned about Vitamin C from a letter he received from Dr Irwin Stone in his book as well as in interviews. Pauling stated that immediately after this incident he and his wife followed Dr Stone’s advice and found that the number of colds they suffered decreased. Demonstrating a willingness to undertake personal experimentation for the sake of scientific discovery, Pauling followed a long-

¹⁵¹ B. Marinacci, ‘Linus Pauling Biography’, *Oregon State University, Linus Pauling Institute*, <http://lpi.oregonstate.edu/linus-pauling-biography> [accessed 01/11/2015].

¹⁵² Oddy, *From Plain Faire to Fusion Food*, p. 163.

¹⁵³ W. Belasco, *Appetite for Change: How the Counter-Culture Took on the Food Industry* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2007), p. 21.

¹⁵⁴ A. Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy and the United States 1958-1974* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

tradition of scientists, such as Santorio Santorio (1561-1636), with his precision weighting tracing invisible perspiration, and George Cheyne (1671/2–1743), who published *An Essay of Health and Long Life* (1724) using his own experiments while he was trying to lose weight.¹⁵⁵ Upon finding Vitamin C and its efficacy in preventing and treating colds, Pauling wanted to bring this to public attention and so in 1969 he presented his findings in a lecture at Mt Sinai Medical School.¹⁵⁶ This incident attracted a reporter from the magazine *Mademoiselle*, who asked him whether she could write an article on what he presented; Pauling accepted. This article immediately generated opposition from nutritional science experts. Dr Frederick Stare - a nutritionist often reported on by the media, who saw himself as the principal opposition to food-faddism and quackery - responded in another *Mademoiselle* article.¹⁵⁷ Stare mentioned that a thorough study conducted by the University of Minnesota had concluded that Vitamin C did not prevent colds.¹⁵⁸ He also declared that Pauling, even though he was a great American man of peace and chemistry, was not an authority on nutrition. Pauling was controversial and as Rima Apple has argued, Pauling's critics' 'resort to *ad hominem* invective weakened their own claims to be objective, dispassionate observers of medical research and undoubtedly attracted even more attention to Pauling and his cause'.¹⁵⁹

There was an air of urgency with which Pauling tried to popularise his findings about Vitamin C. Like Ben Feingold, Pauling was already sixty-nine years old and did not want to wait until mainstream science and 'properly' conducted studies proved his own convictions.¹⁶⁰ Another aspect that he shared with Feingold was his 'grandfatherly'

¹⁵⁵ R. Porter (ed.), *George Cheyne: The English Malady (1733)* (London: Routledge, 2013).

¹⁵⁶ A. Serafini, *Linus Pauling: A Man and His Science* (San Diego: ToExcel, 2000), pp. 240-9.

¹⁵⁷ As pointed out by Matthew Smith, Frederick Stare also published in a popular platform as he and Elizabeth Whalen co-wrote *Panic in the Pantry: Food Facts, Fads, and Fallacies* (New York: Atheneum, 1975) see: Smith, *Another Person's Poison*, p. 99.

¹⁵⁸ R. Apple, *Vitamania: Vitamins in American Culture* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1996).

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ Feingold stated that his old age -being in his seventies- and failing health would not have allowed him to live long enough to see results of clinical trials. See M. Smith, *Hyperactive: The Controversial History of ADHD* (London: Reaktion, 2012), pp. 134-135.

charm.¹⁶¹ His old age and looks added an air of confidence to his image. In 1970 he published both an article in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (*PNAS*) and his popular book *Vitamin C and the Common Cold*. The academic world condemned his decision to publish in a popular format, which was evident in the way in which his study - co-authored with Ewan Cameron - was subsequently rejected from *PNAS*, which had a reputation of always publishing the research of its members.¹⁶²

Controversy surrounded Pauling for most of his life, as even before the publication of *Vitamin C and the Common Cold* he had experienced professional friction forcing him to leave the California Institute of Technology (Caltech), in which he had worked for nearly forty-two years, to become a research professor at the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions in Santa Barbara, California.¹⁶³ The hostility he faced from the bomb-test backers from within the American Chemical Society also forced him to resign from being a member. However, the rejection Pauling faced, both publicly and privately, institutionally and professionally, made him more passionate about Vitamin C. Indeed Pauling was running his own health crusade, as he gave interviews, made appearances on television and radio, and began researching vitamins for a range of conditions.¹⁶⁴

Pauling's writing style in *Vitamin C and the Common Cold* offers a teleological narrative of the history of the vitamin and its significance on human health. In places, however, Pauling resorted to exaggerations such as his aspiration to eradicate the common cold from human existence.¹⁶⁵ Like the eighteenth-century quacks discussed by Porter, Pauling found healthful uses of Vitamin C for a range of diseases, from back-pain

¹⁶¹ Smith, *Hyperactive*, p. 136.

¹⁶² Serafini, *Linus Pauling*, p. 249.

¹⁶³ R. Paradowski, 'Linus Pauling', *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Linus-Pauling> [accessed 20/11/2015].

¹⁶⁴ Apple, *Vitamania*, pp. 75-84; One of his most viewed appearances was on the popular US science television show: 'Linus Pauling: Crusading Scientist', *Nova*, PBS, 1 June 1977.

¹⁶⁵ L. Pauling, *Vitamin C and the Common Cold* (London: Ballantine, 1972), p. 7.

to cancer and from children's intelligence to replacing mainstream over-the-counter (OTC) medicines with Vitamin C supplements.¹⁶⁶ A fundamental aspect of his book was its inherent scientism; Pauling used scientific jargon, and more specifically clinical studies, to support his views. Readers were presented with cutting-edge research presented by a leviathan of science. Pauling was similar to Feingold in his 'Sherlock Holmes-like' induction and heroism.¹⁶⁷ Pauling was the determined and passionate scientist who persevered in discovering the truth. Not only did Pauling present the data available, but he also offered his own interpretations and evaluations of research studies. Readers were treated as fellow scientists who could evaluate clinical studies. For example, in response to Dr Frederick Stare's conviction that the Minnesota study demonstrated that Vitamin C does not cure the common cold, Pauling had his own interpretation of the data:

The study to which Dr. Stare was referring had been carried out by Cowan, Diehl, and Baker: the article describing their results was published in 1942. When I read this article I found that the study involved only about four hundred students, rather than five thousand, that it was continued for half a year, not two years, and that it involved use of only 200 milligrams of Vitamin C per day, which is not a large dose. Moreover, the investigators reported that the students receiving the Vitamin C had 15% fewer colds that those receiving a placebo.¹⁶⁸

Pauling not only appeared to know more about the study than his critic, but also used the study to prove his own argument, demonstrating both his experience in research and his analytic skills.

¹⁶⁶ Porter, *Quacks: Fakers and Charlatans*, p. 30; Pauling, *Vitamin C and the Common Cold*, pp. 35-38.

¹⁶⁷ Smith, 'Into the Mouths of Babes', p. 86.

¹⁶⁸ Pauling, *Vitamin C and the Common Cold*, p. 2.

Pauling's argument about Vitamin C penetrated all sections of society. Vitamin C was heavily researched in mainstream medical journals, and it was reported on by television, radio, magazines, and later on the Internet. Other self-help books recommended megadosages of Vitamin C too.¹⁶⁹ Celebrities and their preoccupation with fitness and health brought more attention to Vitamin C, which in turn made more people buy such supplements to remedy the cold and flu. For example Sofia Loren told *The Daily Mail*: 'The only pill I take is Vitamin C - I'm afraid of getting the flu'.¹⁷⁰ Another stream of support for Pauling came from the food and supplement industries, which used the opportunity to market their products to health-conscious consumers.¹⁷¹ Some products such as Ribena had been exploiting the belief that Vitamin C was 'protective' against the cold prior to the publication of Pauling's book, but this publication strengthened their advertising claims.¹⁷² The goodness of Vitamin C began to be incorporated into other health-related issues, almost to mythical proportions as it was dubbed a solution to all imaginable conditions.¹⁷³

Robert Atkins was perhaps the most controversial of the authors considered in this chapter. He was a descendant of Russian-Jewish immigrants to the US, undertook his pre-medical degree from University of Michigan and gained an MD from Cornell's Medical School in 1955. After the completion of his medical training, Atkins chose to specialise in cardiology, serving cardiologist residencies at the University of Rochester's Strong Memorial Hospital and Columbia University's St. Luke's Hospital in New York City.¹⁷⁴ According to his biography, written by journalist and author Lisa Rogak, Atkins always

¹⁶⁹ For example, R. Atkins, *Dr Atkins' Diet Revolution* (New York: Bantam, 1972), p. 126. Around one thousand milligrams of Vitamin C per day.

¹⁷⁰ L. Avedon, 'Look younger-longer', *The Daily Mail*, (31 May 1971), pp. 14-5.

¹⁷¹ For example, 'Big value Yeoman' potatoes enriched with Vitamin C, *The Daily Mail*, (26 April 1976), p. 4.

¹⁷² 'Ribena', *The Times*, (9 September 1960), p. 14 and 'Ribena', *The Daily Mail*, (12 November 1979), p. 14. (nothing like...Ribena for keeping out the winter cold and chill).

¹⁷³ An example: 'Contraception: Pill may cause vitamin deficiency', *The Times*, (7 August 1972), p. 9.

¹⁷⁴ L. Rogak, *Dr Robert Atkins, The True Story of the Man Behind the War on Carbohydrates* (London: Robson, 2005), p. 72.

wanted to work with patients rather than becoming a researcher. Early on, Atkins refused to work in hospitals, as according to Rogak, he despised hospital politics. Thus he wanted to establish his own medical practice and in the early days of his career he worked as a freelance cardiologist, acted as an on-call emergency physician, and filled in for other more established doctors, mainly at nights. Atkins had an entrepreneurial instinct, as he opened his first office close to Cornell, chose to cover night shifts as more celebrities and elite from New York's Theatre district had emergencies in the evening, and in 1962 he assisted in an electrocardiogram for the actor Edward G. Robinson.

According to the introduction of his book *Dr Atkins' Diet Revolution* (1972), Atkins' road to fame began when he was battling his own obesity. Atkins tried various diet plans available at the time and he felt that none of them helped him lose weight and that all of them promoted a painful state of hunger. Atkins' narrative of his own success also echoed a long tradition of scientists subjecting their bodies to self-experimentation. Using his findings, Atkins lost twenty-eight pounds in just six weeks. In 1964 in his capacity as a corporate physician he tested his diet on sixty-five executives working for the American telecommunications company AT&T. Lisa Rogak argues that sixty-four of the total lost weight and from then onwards Atkins' practice began to boom. Soon his diet would be mentioned on live television. Buddy Hackett answered the question put by the audience of *The Tonight Show* with Johnny Carson: "You know how I lost this weight? Dr Atkins used to call me every hour and say 'Are you eating?'"¹⁷⁵ By 1970, the popular magazine *Vogue* dubbed the Atkins' diet 'the *Vogue Diet*' - in a later reprint of the book Bantam changed its name to *Dr. Atkins Diet Revolution: The High Calorie Way to Stay Thin Forever the Famous Vogue Superdiet Explained in Full* by M.D. Robert C. Atkins - and Atkins became a diet icon.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p. 72.

¹⁷⁶ *Dr. Atkins Diet Revolution: The High Calorie Way to Stay Thin Forever the Famous Vogue Superdiet Explained in Full* by M.D. Robert C. Atkins (New York: Bantam, 1972). The diet devised using Atkins' framework and menus has been rediscovered by many internet lifestyle news sites and blogs during 2018.

In his search for the most efficient diet with less hunger, Atkins researched past medical journals where he found that a number of studies demonstrated that ketosis was an effective biological weight loss mechanism.¹⁷⁷ Ketosis, or the ketogenic diet, uses ketone bodies as fuel mimicking the body's reaction while fasting. While in ketosis the body switches its main source of fuel from carbohydrates to fat. Burning ketones instead of glucose, means that the body is burning stored fat. Ketogenic diets are rich in fats and low in carbohydrates and have been used to produce weight loss. Atkins was not the first author to recommend a low-carbohydrate diet, as in *Dr Atkins' Diet Revolution* he recognises the first documented promoter of such a diet: William Banting.¹⁷⁸ Banting was a nineteenth-century funeral director in St James's Street, London, who after following the advice of William Harvey - the famous surgeon - followed a high protein diet and lost a significant amount of weight. After that he published a booklet in the form of an open letter recommending his diet. *Letter on Corpulence* was so popular that Banting's name has been used as a verb to describe undergoing this diet (to bant).¹⁷⁹ Atkins was not the first to condemn carbohydrates in the twentieth century either, as Gayelord Hauser and Adelle Davis, for example, forbade the use of white sugar, white flour, and 'devitalised' industrial food.¹⁸⁰ Other books recommended similar restraint on carbohydrates, such as Frederick Allen's, *Total Dietary Restriction in the Treatment of Diabetes* (1919), Vilhjalmur Stefansson's *Not By Bread Alone: Eating Meat and Fat for Staying Healthy*

¹⁷⁷ Using Lisa Rogak's list of names, the studies Atkins probably consulted were: W. Bloom & G. Azar, 'Similarities of carbohydrate deficiency and fasting', *Archives of Internal Medicine Journal of American Medical Association*, 112, (1965), 333-7; the series of studies between the 1950s and 1960s by A. Kekwick & G.L.S Pawan all published in *The Lancet* beginning with: 'Calorie intake in relation to body weight changes in the obese', *The Lancet*, vol. 268, no. 6935, (01 December 1956), 155-161. In *Dr Atkins' Diet Revolution* it is evident that he was also aware of Dr John Yudkin's convictions, either by his popular book *Pure, White and Deadly* (1972) or most probably his series of studies again published in *The Lancet*, an example of this was: J. Yudkin & J.M Carey, 'The treatment of obesity by the "high-fat" diet. The inevitability of calories', *The Lancet*, vol. 276, no. 7157, (29 October 1960), 939-41.

¹⁷⁸ W. Banting, *Letter on Corpulence: Addressed to the Public* (London: Harrison, 1863).

¹⁷⁹ R. Harrison, rev. V. Smith, 'Banting, William (1796/7-1878)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1320?docPos=1>, [accessed 04/04/2016].

¹⁸⁰ Hauser, *Look Younger, Live Longer*, p. 63, A. Davis, *Let's Cook It Right* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace and World, 1947), p. 22.

(1946), Richard Mackarness' *Eat Fat and Grow Slim* (1958), Herman Taller's *Calories Don't Count* (1961), and Robert Cameron's *The Drinking Man's Diet* (1964).¹⁸¹

Ambition, determination and focus were qualities that Atkins possessed from the beginning of his career; he chose the path less travelled by his peers, working freelance, covering night shifts, opening his own practice and becoming a physician and diet advisor to celebrities. Buddy Hackett was not the only celebrity to follow the Atkins' diet. Celebrity endorsement has played a fundamental role in continuing his legacy later in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, as stars such as Jennifer Aniston, Renee Zellweger and Catherine Zeta Jones were amongst the many to follow his diet. Like Ben Feingold, Atkins was also impatient to promote his diet. All he needed to parade his convictions were the success stories of the AT&T executives, as for most of his life he did not conduct a clinical study or funded studies elsewhere.

Lisa Rogak argues that another reason for Atkins' popularity was his sexuality. He had a reputation for being 'a ladies' man', as he allegedly had sexual relationships with many female patients and nurses working at his practice.¹⁸² Rogak argues that many women began to visit his practice just to meet Atkins. Atkins was a well-dressed, handsome gentleman who spoke with confidence and authority.¹⁸³ Another dimension that was briefly discussed by Rogak was the element of masculinity: 'The best part was that these men who so prided themselves on their masculinity - some were veterans of World War II - could eat beef and still lose weight without being hungry.'¹⁸⁴ Atkins' diet presented an opportunity for men to act like men, but to achieve lower weight. With an

¹⁸¹ F. Allen, *Total Dietary Restriction in the Treatment of Diabetes* (New York: Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, 1919) for more on Allen see: K. Gardner, 'Nutrition, Starvation, and Diabetic Diets: A Century of Change in the United States', in D. Gentilcore and M. Smith (eds), *Proteins, Pathologies and Politics: Dietary Innovation and Disease from the Nineteenth Century* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 27-28.; V. Stefansson, *Not by Bread Alone: Eating Meat and Fat for Staying Healthy* (New York: Macmillan, 1946), R. Mackarness, *Eat Fat and Grow Slim* (London: Harvil Press, 1958), H. Taller, *Calories Don't Count* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1961); R. Cameron self-published his book, *The Drinking Man's Diet* (San Francisco: Cameron & company, 1964).

¹⁸² Rogak, *Dr Robert Atkins*, pp. 68-9.

¹⁸³ *Ibid*, p. 32 & 37.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p. 57.

Ivy League medical education, Atkins' authority was not questioned by the AT&T personnel at the beginning of his career, nor by his dieters later on. Atkins was strict and authoritative in his books, but also in real life, as some of the young female dieters of his practice saw him as a father figure, a status that Atkins often abused by bullying them when they cheated on their diets.¹⁸⁵

Hyperbole was a crucial element of Atkins' style, which can be seen in an episode in his life described by Rogak: he told a boy that the sugar in his sweets was dangerous, and the boy then asked: 'What's wrong with sugar?'; Atkins responded: 'Nothing, as long as you don't swallow it'.¹⁸⁶ Like an evangelist he used vivid language, imagery and exaggeration in his books, where he wrote about 'carbohydrate poisoning' and phrases such as 'no carbohydrates also means no hunger!'¹⁸⁷ Atkins was radical in his views and he opposed previous dieting rules - as he stated that eating more resulted in losing weight - and later on he opposed Western medicine altogether by opening Atkins' Centre for Complementary Medicine (now called the Centre for Balanced Health, run by Dr Keith Berkowitz MD). Another feature of Atkins' success was the controversy he attracted from orthodox medicine. Like Gayelord Hauser, his ideas were opposed by the AMA and the Medical Society of the County of New York. However, Atkins was a skilful debater and he publicly counter-argued his critics, revealing the AMA's hypocrisy, as one of the studies he used for his diet was published by *The Journal of the American Medical Association*. He also had feuds with other diet authors such as Nathan Pritikin, which brought further publicity and media exposure.¹⁸⁸ A keen opportunist and entrepreneurial maverick, Atkins accepted Oscar Dystel's book offer by Bantam publishing house, with a signing bonus of \$30,000.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid*, p. 60.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid*, p. 8.

¹⁸⁷ Atkins, *Diet Revolution*, p. 23.

¹⁸⁸ Rogak, *Dr Atkins*, p. 89.

Luck was on Atkins' side. Dystel was struggling to make Bantam Books profitable again and was willing to take big risks; *Dr Atkins Diet Revolution* was one of them.¹⁸⁹ Bantam Books hired a ghost writer to help Atkins write his book: Ruth West, who was instructed to write in the plainest way imaginable, with no footnotes or bibliography.¹⁹⁰ Atkins opposed this at the beginning, but the publisher convinced him that the book was meant for a lay audience and not the scientific community.¹⁹¹ Indeed his books were sensational; together, his books sold more than 45 million copies worldwide and in the UK he sold 1,054,196 copies.¹⁹² According to the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), in 2003 there were three million people in the UK who followed the diet.¹⁹³ To this day, *Dr Atkins' Diet Revolution* is the fifty-seventh best-selling book of all time in the UK and until 2004 it was the best-selling book in the category Fitness & Diet, later replaced by Gillian McKeith's *You Are What You Eat: The Plan That Will Change Your Life*.¹⁹⁴

The self-help genre was a publishing route that scientists, physicians and alternative and complementary authors took to facilitate and promote their ideas, whether they were mainstream or fringe. What the genre accomplished was widespread acceptance that every health problem and disease could be prevented or treated through correct nutrition and healthier lifestyles.

¹⁸⁹ D. Martin, 'Oscar Dystel, Who Saved Bantam Books, Dies at 101', *New York Times Online*, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/29/business/media/oscar-dystel-who-saved-bantam-books-dies-at-101.html?_r=0, [accessed 20/02/2016].

¹⁹⁰ Rogak, *Dr Atkins*, p. 75.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹² Nielsen Book Scan, 'Top 100 best-selling books of all time', https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1dhxblR1V17PbVP_mNhwEa3_lfUWiF__xSODLq1W83CA/edit#gid=0 [accessed 20/02/2016].

¹⁹³ Anon, 'Three million follow Atkins' diet', *BBC Online*, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/3197627.stm>, (1 September 2003) [accessed 12 October 2014].

¹⁹⁴ Nielsen Book Scan, 'Top 100'.

Dieting as panacea: health problems, eating and disease

One noticeable distinction between self-help books lay in the different conditions and diseases that self-help authors wanted to address. In Violet Plimmer's *Food Values at a Glance*, for instance, the most 'feared' condition was malnutrition.¹⁹⁵ This concern, reflects contemporary sentiments towards food, before, during and slightly after World War II. One of Plimmer's incentives was to inform and prevent malnutrition, especially malnutrition in men. This was due to the fact that malnourished and underfed men constituted inferior soldiers or even classified them as unsuitable for service.¹⁹⁶ In economic terms Plimmer wanted to help readers eat sufficient vitamins, minerals and nutrients, even in scarcity, to sustain productivity.

The majority of the self-help book genre was dissatisfied with processed food. The authors of self-help books held neoromantic views of health; they believed that 'civilisation' and the industrialisation of society had deteriorated food quality which resulted in the rising prevalence of chronic diseases.¹⁹⁷ Plimmer, for example, argued that the shipping of foods from long distances was 'an unnatural state of affairs' that had many dangers, and recommended that his readers ate 'natural foodstuffs' because they had more essential nutrients.¹⁹⁸ Atkins' view of contemporary diets was that they were unnatural and he idolised the Paleolithic man's diet:

Around 7000 B.C. ... Neolithic man began to plant grains and roots, and settle down. His diet began to contain a higher percentage of unrefined carbohydrates...Then came the food-processing revolution...Then came refined sugar- the killer carbohydrate.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁵ V. Plimmer and R.H.A Plimmer, *Food Values At a Glance* 9th edition (London: Longmans ,1959), p. 15.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 15-16.

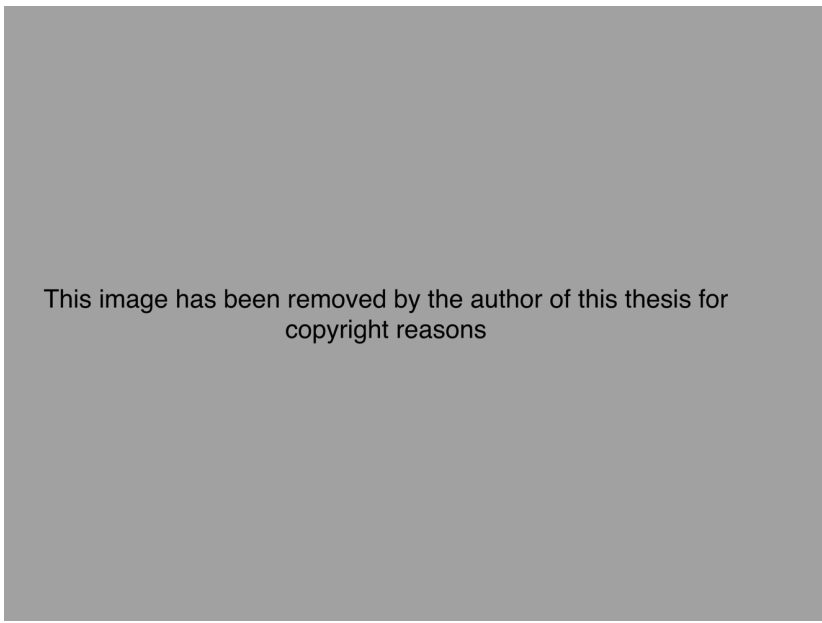
¹⁹⁷ G. Weisz, *Chronic Disease in the Twentieth Century: A History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), p. 102.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 11 & p. 31.

¹⁹⁹ Atkins, *Diet Revolution*, pp. 55-6.

Robert Haas used the same argument to make his case for a high carbohydrate diet: ‘ancient machinery turns modern foods into fat’.²⁰⁰ Readers were, therefore, initiated into a ‘cult’ that rejected modern and unhealthy foods through a narrative that they could understand: nature held the best solutions to health problems. Nature was the primary healer in Vermont-based physician D.C. Jarvis’ *Folk Medicine*, as he argued that it had preventative and curative powers, that orthodox medicine lacked.²⁰¹

Even though *Vitamin C and the Common Cold* by Linus Pauling had a similar subject and tone to the book by the Plimmers it solely targeted the common cold as the paradigmatic form of human suffering. The cold was an Anglo-American preoccupation during the 1950s and 1960s. This concern could be seen portrayed in some of the television programmes in this period. Two examples were the episode of *Hancock’s Half Hour*, ‘The Cold’, where Tony (Tony Hancock) was coming down with a cold and doing everything in his power to prevent it or shorten its duration; and the episode ‘The Meerzshatz Pipe’ of *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, where Rob (Dick Van Dyke) pretended to be in top-shape even though he was down with the flu. (Figures 1 and 2)



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Figure 1 ‘The Cold’, *Hancock’s Half Hour*, BBC, 4 March 1960

²⁰⁰ R. Haas, A. Cochrane (British adpt.), *Eat to Win* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1985), p. 157.

²⁰¹ D.C. Jarvis, *Folk Medicine* 2nd edition (London: Pan Books, 1968), p. 12.

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Figure 2 'The Meerzshatz Pipe', *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, CBS, 28 November 1961.

Tony purchased all sorts of OTC syrups, capsules and balms to get rid of the colds that afflicted him. Hancock believed in OTCs' advertisements on their efficacy as he said:

It's all been hospital-tested. I've seen them on television, in the adverts. Miracles worked every night. The diagram of the sore throat, the tonsils, throbbing away there. Arrows pointing toward them, while white circles coming out of them. Doiing, doiing, doiing, doiing, doiing. The cough sweet goes down, all the good arrows come piling up, knocking the bad arrows for six. The white circles get smaller and smaller and it's all gone.²⁰²

Tony also expressed great dissatisfaction at not being able to go to a party with his friend Sid: 'I'd be a sensation wouldn't I. I can just imagine all the birds snuggling up, swooning with ecstasy to the intoxicating scent of the camphorated oil coming out of my T-shirt'.²⁰³ When Rob went to his workplace he was called irresponsible for coming to work ill and was sent home.²⁰⁴ The worry of getting a cold persisted through the 1960s and 1970s as will be seen through advertisements by Ribena analysed in Chapter III. According to Pauling, the common cold not only caused suffering, but took a toll on the economy (echoing the fears of Rob Petrie's boss in *The Meerzshatz Pipe*), a line of thought that

²⁰² 'The Cold', *Hancock's Half Hour*, BBC, 4 March 1960.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁴ 'The Meerzshatz Pipe', *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, CBS, 28 November 1961.

Pauling shared with Plimmer. Pauling's book resonated with the wider context of the time, especially the commodification of health. The implications of this were significant, since good health and avoidance of disease could be bought by the 'educated' - those who kept up with the science of nutrition - and those who could afford better diets and supplements. There was another element to Pauling's book, which was public misinformation. Misinformation was presented almost as a disease itself, which demonstrates the power and influence of science, knowledge, and reason at the time Pauling was writing.

In Atkins' book we can observe a change in the conditions and diseases to be tackled. At the forefront, Atkins' book was a solution to the problem of obesity and extra weight. Even though other books had been written on the same topic, Atkins' book with its revolutionary tone highlights Sander Gilman's assertion about the increasing preoccupation of Western societies with slimness and the increasing vilification of obesity.²⁰⁵ The slim body became healthy and the overweight body became sickly and needed discipline and effort to be brought back to health. Although mildly overweight readers might not have immediate or long-term physical repercussions on their health, Atkins nevertheless addressed other reasons for following his advice by adopting a more inclusive approach, incorporating mental health into the picture. This can be seen early in his book where he states: 'Emotionally many people "fly high" from the very beginning'.²⁰⁶ Atkins expands on this notion by commenting on his experience with mentally ill patients:

this diet has sometimes been more effective than the drugs in stabilising the mental symptoms my patients have been suffering. In many cases, working with the patient's psychiatrist, we were able to reduce the dosage of these potent drugs, and, in some cases, discontinue them completely, as patients

²⁰⁵ S. Gilman, *Obesity: The Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 77.

²⁰⁶ Atkins, *Diet Revolution*, p. 10.

began to show a sometimes miraculous and dramatic improvement in their depression, anxiety, and adjustment problems.²⁰⁷

The diseases that Atkins' diet aimed primarily to prevent were diabetes, heart disease, and Vitamin B deficiency, demonstrating that the science of undernutrition was still relevant.²⁰⁸ Atkins' arguments resonate with Harvey Levenstein's notion of 'Negative Nutrition', by which dietetic regimes have shifted from tackling undernutrition and malnutrition to combating 'bad' nutrition and the effects of indulgence.²⁰⁹ All these were to be counteracted by an affirmation of each individual reader's obligation towards their own health, but also by a reinvigoration of their agency in promoting health.

Human Agency and Obligation

This section focuses on the ways in which human agency was reinforced and empowered by authors of self-help books analysed in this chapter.²¹⁰ The language and advice contained in self-help books emphasized and promoted the notion that readers had the power to manage their own health and a moral obligation to do so. This rhetoric stemmed from different cultural and societal ideals which emerged during the twentieth century. For example, notions of agency align with Martin Moore's argument that state neoliberalism allowed:

unfettered markets to deliver all goods and services - including welfare - in order to achieve a more efficient and equitable distribution of resources than possible under state direction. The only role for the state in these visions was in creating an efficient framework and incentive system for individuals and businesses to conduct economic exchange.²¹¹

²⁰⁷ *Ibid*, p. 10.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid*, p. 49 & 57.

²⁰⁹ Levenstein, *Paradox of Plenty*, p. 195.

²¹⁰ Kirby, *Troubled by Life*; Kirby, 'Working too Hard', pp. 59-74.

²¹¹ M. Moore, *A Question of Control? Managing Diabetes and its Professionals in Britain, 1910-1994* unpublished PhD thesis (University of Warwick, 2014), p. 267, n.13.

As Virginia Berridge and Jane Hand argue, the British state from the 1960s mobilised and exploited imagery, sloganisation, and persuasion as the cornerstone of the new public health.²¹² The neoliberal state distanced itself from many responsibilities by placing the obligation to maintain good health on individuals and the market in general. In theory, an individual's agency over their own health was reinforced by what Michel Foucault referred to as governmentality, which is the method that governments utilize to make their citizens more suitable to fulfil their policies.²¹³ Governmentality can also be extended to organized practices (mentalities, rationalities, and techniques) through which subjects are governed.²¹⁴ John Coveney has explored certain aspects of governmentality and its impact on food consumption, more specifically Foucault's technologies of the self: 'the way in which individuals internalise modes and rules of behaviour, emotion and thought in their everyday lives'.²¹⁵ Food and eating also constitute one category in which individuals make sense of their surroundings, emotions and their selves, and these books used advice that resonated with contemporary technologies of the self.

Self-help advice was presented as an opportunity to break free from ill health. Readers were no longer helpless or hopeless in their journey to healthy lives. Authors offered a narrative that readers could relate to and apply to their own personal stories towards slimmer and healthier bodies. Relatability was a key aspect about these books

²¹² V. Berridge, *Marketing Health: Smoking and the Discourse of Public Health in Britain, 1945–2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); J. Hand, 'Marketing Health Education: Advertising Margarine and Visualising Health in Britain from 1964 - c. 2000', *Contemporary British History*, 31, no. 4, (2017), 477- 500; J. Hand, "'Look After Yourself": Visualising Obesity as a Public Health Concern in 1970s and 1980s Britain', in M. Jackson and M. Moore (eds), *Balancing the Self: Medicine, Politics and the Regulation of Health in the Twentieth Century* (forthcoming, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), 112-147.

²¹³ I. Buchanan (ed.), *A Dictionary of Critical Theory* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010), *Oxford Reference Online*, <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199532919.001.0001/acref-9780199532919-e-299?rskey=LL54TT&result=8> [accessed 12 October 2015]; More can be read in: G. Burchell (ed.), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); U. Bröckling, S. Krasmann and T. Lemke (eds), *Governmentality : Current Issues and Future Challenges* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

²¹⁴ S. Mayhew, *A Dictionary of Geography* 4th edition (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009), *Oxford Reference Online*, <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199231805.001.0001/acref-9780199231805-e-1413> [accessed 25/01/2016].

²¹⁵ Coveney, *Food, Morals and Meaning*, p. 3.

that enticed readers to subject themselves to strict diets and exercise. Like the readers they were writing for, some authors themselves had struggled with weight problems in the past, such as Robert Atkins who lost twenty-eight pounds on his diet.²¹⁶ Testimonials of patients were another way in which these books emphasized the agency of an individual over health. Atkins used testimonials extensively in his book to complement his own success story. For example, one patient's story was: 'He lost that 90 pounds without hunger and without cravings' by eating one and a half pounds of meat and salads.²¹⁷ Taking Dr Andrew Weil's section on letters he received from followers as an example, the reader is told that he/she has the power to change:

And this from Shelley Griffith of Massena, New York: I was on a program of my own due to the tragic (suicide) death of my twenty-year-old son, which took my health down the tubes. Then I ran across your book when I was searching for advice to bring my physical body back to good alignment... Your consciousness-raising methods are so ahead of Western, sterile, nonspiritual methodology, anyone with any sense of the greater picture will take heed... I needed the Eight-Week Program to get rid of accumulated toxicity. I brought flowers indoors, did away with all vegetable oils, brought in extra-virgin olive oil, worked with garlic... And I went to the health food store for organic flours, grains, and beans. I decreased animal protein and bought green tea. I take echinacea and practice "news fasts." My personal development has been super, with renewed energy. The deep breathing has almost eliminated the grief, pain, and anxiety. Depression has lessened considerably, my weight has dropped, my chest pain has disappeared, and

²¹⁶ Atkins, *Diet Revolution*, p. 27.

²¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 19.

my circulatory system is back in balance. I also take some of the tonics you recommend, especially ginger and dong quai. I'm learning all I can.²¹⁸

Power thus lay within the individual; by taking simple steps such as changing elements of the diet, practising deep breathing, and buying health foods people could achieve good health.²¹⁹ By providing stories of 'everyday' and 'ordinary' individuals, the authors also implied that their advice could be followed by anyone and everyone. Some books adopted 'a strength by numbers' approach. For example, Stuart Berger used figures from his 3,000 patients who took responsibility for their health, consulted him, and had lost a total of thirty-seven tons of fat.²²⁰ The significance of such an approach lies in the fact that the authors stressed to their readers that they shared similar problems with many others, and that others in a similar position had managed to take control of their health.

Human agency and responsibility for self-health were accessible concepts for authors to promote. These concepts stemmed from a long tradition of Enlightenment ideology, by which the body needed to be tamed by the mind, that is by the rational element of our beings.²²¹ Cultural reverence of the rational, scientific truth provided by experts was an element utilised by the authors. They demystified the process of losing fat and demonstrated the illuminating 'truth' of science. The preoccupation with mind-over-body was influential to eating habits as a cultural distaste towards body fat, or lipophobia, was on the rise in the twentieth century. Sander Gilman argues that obesity increasingly brought a moral panic, which was generated by the perceived threat of obesity to societal values and interests.²²² Agency was provided by science, which replaced religion as the highest source of truth. Healthy eating could be interpreted as a religion which required

²¹⁸ A. Weil, *8 Weeks to Optimum Health* 2nd edition (London: Time Warner Press, 2002), pp. 11-2.

²¹⁹ This reflects the work of Ayesha Nathoo on therapeutic relaxation in 'Initiating Therapeutic Relaxation in Britain: A Twentieth-Century Strategy for Health and Wellbeing', *Palgrave Communications*, 2, (2016), 1-10.

²²⁰ S. Berger, *Dr Berger's Immune Power Diet* (New York: New American Library, 1985), p. 26.

²²¹ Gilman, *Fat*, p. 7.

²²² *Ibid.*

the individual to take responsibility for their spiritual life; for example, through asceticism the individual could gain eternal salvation. In the twentieth century, dieting could bring secular salvation: health, fitness and youthfulness. These books offered a rational method to conform to body ideals and standards. This was evident in Dr Berger's *Immune Power Diet*, which became one of the best sellers in the 1980s. Berger took a more direct approach than other authors to invoke a sense of responsibility in his readers. Berger's first section in his first chapter was titled 'The Immune Power Diet Commitment'. In this he urged readers to take their fates into their own hands, to move from passivity towards their wellbeing, to actively pursue better health. Health and fitness were attainable goals and the readers were given the power to pursue them.²²³

Even if readers were not facing health problems, there were still reasons to read these books. They promoted the 'best' possible diets and lifestyles for 'optimum' health, energy and productivity. For example, Dr Berger writes: 'CONGRATULATIONS! Why? Because you have decided to become a healthier, happier more vital person.'²²⁴ Gayelord Hauser's first page states: 'A new theory on the treatment and prevention of a wide variety of ailments - the common cold, hay-fever, arthritis, high blood-pressure, chronic fatigue, overweight and many others - and holds out a promise of zestful good health for young and old'.²²⁵ This reflects a wider cultural phenomenon, namely the preoccupation of the Western world with efficiency. The Protestant work ethic and capitalism needed healthy producers and consumers who actively ensured that their own health, productivity, longevity, energy and happiness were at their highest levels possible, or what John Coveney calls 'the formation of a self-reflective, self-governing individual or collective subject'.²²⁶

²²³ Berger, *Immune Power Diet*, p. 3.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

²²⁵ Hauser, *Look Younger, Live Longer*, front page.

²²⁶ Coveney, *Food, Morals and Meaning*, p. 23.

The moral responsibility and the obligation that citizens had towards their own health and the impact this had on collective health can be seen in some of the books. For example, Robert and Violet Plimmer argued that food was ‘the first line of defence against disease and in wartime against the enemy’.²²⁷ The woman’s obligation to provide ‘good nutrition’ to her husband and children was addressed often in *Food Values*. By discussing the effects of malnutrition on men, especially their physical unsuitability for joining the army and the impact of improper nutrition on school-children, Plimmer stressed that women could serve their country by providing proper nutrition at home. Plimmer also explored the impact of improper nutrition in terms of productivity by including facts provided by insurance companies: 30,000,000 weeks of productivity were lost in 1933 due to illnesses lasting from one to four days costing about or more than £300,000,000 per year.²²⁸ Linus Pauling discussed the obligation of individuals for ingesting adequate amounts of Vitamin C as: ‘the damage done by the common cold to the people of the United States each year can be described roughly as corresponding to a monetary loss of fifteen billion dollars per year and in the United Kingdom to a loss of seven hundred million pounds per year’.²²⁹ Central to Pauling’s discussion was also the obligation that people had towards the correct nutrition of children, as he argued that children taking Vitamin C had higher IQ scores in studies involving children attending kindergarten up to the age of leaving for college.²³⁰ Pauling also mentions that students with higher Vitamin C content in their diets had more ‘alertness’ and ‘sharpness’ than the control group to stress that humans should consume Vitamin C to be more productive and more effective in their jobs.²³¹ In his *Immune Power Commitment*, Berger also discussed the

²²⁷ Plimmer, *Food Values*, p. 7.

²²⁸ *Ibid*, p.17.

²²⁹ Pauling, *Vitamin C and the Common Cold*, p.13.

²³⁰ *Ibid*, p. 37.

²³¹ *Ibid*, p. 38; It resonates with the contentions in S. Currell, ‘Depression and Recovery: Self-Help and America in the 1930s’, in D. Bell and J. Hollows (eds), *Historicising Lifestyle: Mediating Taste, Consumption and Identity from the 1900s to 1970s* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 131-144.

benefits of his diet, especially in terms of productivity, memory, concentration, feeling positive about oneself, and having long, healthy and active lives.²³²

Fundamental to the reinforcement of agency was the issue of deprivation, or more specifically the fear of hunger. As Deborah Lupton argues, in modern societies hunger is not just a physiological response to the absence of food.²³³ People fear hunger, because when they are hungry they lose control of their bodies, and therefore, they aim to choose the most filling diets with fewer hunger pangs. Cravings and the state of hunger are thought to be irrational, especially in people with extra weight since they represent a lack of will; by fighting them one could assert power and control over bodies. Thus deprivation and cravings were among the central issues these books dealt with, assuring readers that they would not experience ‘negative’ emotions such as hunger by following their eating programmes. Robert Haas, for example, tackled the issue of hunger by recommending that his readers could eat unlimited raw or steamed vegetables with their meals and if they were active individuals that they should eat six times per day.²³⁴ To fight cravings, Haas instructed his readers: ‘There is no point in worrying about cheating occasionally. Enjoying a variety of foods is one of the luxuries of eating to win, as long as you stick to the Peak Performance Programme in the long run’.²³⁵

Berger also addressed the issue of deprivation by stating that his diet would bring the patient to a perfect state of *homeostasis*, which eliminated nutritional spikes and drops, removed cravings and stopped binges.²³⁶ According to Mark Jackson and Martin Moore: ‘homeostasis... emphasised the importance of the neuro-endocrine system in maintaining vital functions.’²³⁷

²³² Berger, *Immune Power Diet*, front matter; cover page; p. 237; p. 250.

²³³ Lupton, *Food, the Body and the Self*, p. 33.

²³⁴ Haas, *Eat to Win*, p. 39; p. 90.

²³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 75.

²³⁶ Berger, *Immune Power Diet*, p. 25.

²³⁷ M. Jackson & M. Moore, ‘Balancing the Self in the Twentieth Century’, in Jackson and Moore (eds), *Balancing the Self*, 38-75.

In his book *The Age of Stress: Science and the Search for Stability*, Mark Jackson argues that: ‘popular and scientific accounts of stress emerged from the traditional matrix of modernity and its preoccupation with stability’.²³⁸ Homeostasis was a significant concept, as Jackson argues that it constitutes the apotheosis of the modern urge to impose order and control on natural, social, and cultural systems.²³⁹ The authors of the books used in this chapter often alluded to the concept of stability and/or balance to promote their diets as optimal. The clearest example of this could be seen in Atkins’ book where humans were perceived to be always in ‘carbohydrate poisoning’ that needed to be brought back to ‘normal’ levels.²⁴⁰

Hunger was the most significant aspect of life that Atkins’ diet was aiming to eradicate; his argument was that hunger was merely the product of ‘carbohydrate intolerance and poisoning’.²⁴¹ The Atkins’ diet liberated readers from the responsibility of gaining weight and instead blamed the food industry, dietary institutions and their rules and medicine. Atkins offered his readers the ideal dieting scenario: ‘On this diet you’re allowed to eat truly luxurious foods without limit’, thus taking deprivation, hunger and cravings out of the picture of losing weight.²⁴² The authors reinforced their readers’ control over their own health by removing - or at least offering solutions and alternatives to - an element that prevented them from doing so. When the irrational part of dieting was banished, the ‘true’ and logical self could tame the body and readers would become active agents of their own health.

If the fear of hunger was not sufficient to initiate readers in a diet, the authors had to find ways to cope with what Belasco calls a cultural ‘antipathy towards ‘healthy’ foods’, which in itself was another obstacle to the agency of individuals over their

²³⁸ Jackson, *The Age of Stress*, p. 267.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁰ Atkins, *Diet Revolution*, p. 5.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

²⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 15.

health.²⁴³ The palate's aversion to 'healthy foods' could be catastrophic to diets; broccoli and Brussel's sprouts did not look as appetising as burgers, pizza and ice-cream, or at least this was the case for most people. Self-help books had to portray eating healthily as an easy process coming from filling, luxurious foods so as to provide an alternative to the variety and superior taste offered by unhealthy foods. For example, Gayelord Hauser recommended among others: 'Tomato and avocado salad, roast chicken, fortified potatoes, milk gravy fortified with powdered milk, fresh or honeyed fruit'.²⁴⁴ Atkins argued that people could lose weight on: 'Bacon and eggs for breakfast, on heavy cream in their coffee, on mayonnaise on their salads, butter sauce on their lobster; on spareribs, roast duck, on pastrami; on my special cheesecake for dessert'.²⁴⁵ By offering them good-tasting eating plans, these books gave readers the opportunity to eat healthily if they chose to do so, but also immunity to the seduction of 'unhealthy' foods.

One element worth noting is the commodification of health agency. These books reinforce the argument set out by Fabio Parasecoli about health increasingly being marketed as a commodity. Readers' control over their own bodies depended firstly on following the advice given by these authors, but also through purchasing recommended goods. These books urged readers to assert their power over health by purchasing specific foods, drinks and supplements. Their promotion of such goods stemmed from various arguments such as the fact that they were inexpensive, easy to obtain, and painless to ingest. Not only were these goods safe with no negative side effects, but they were attributed all sorts of different beneficial outcomes. According to Plimmer, 'headache, constipation, anaemia, dyspepsia, nervous debility, wasting, obesity, lung weakness and kidney trouble...were all signs of malnutrition', indicating that through a 'correct' diet of

²⁴³ Belasco, *Food: The Key Concepts*, p. 29.

²⁴⁴ Hauser, *Look Younger, Live Longer*, p. 254.

²⁴⁵ Atkins, *Diet Revolution*, p. 3.

purchasing and eating ‘healthy’ foods readers could nourish their bodies to a state of perfect health.²⁴⁶

The message was clear; readers were no longer helpless, but lived in an age of affordable wonders where they could combat not only malnutrition but almost every condition imaginable by buying ‘health’ foods and products. This can be seen in the way Linus Pauling urged his readers to have a life without colds by buying Vitamin C supplements. He argued that the common cold caused unnecessary suffering and resulted in the loss of productivity and damage to the economy.²⁴⁷ Pauling included a dedicated chapter with advice on how to prevent and ameliorate a cold, followed with a comparison of Vitamin C with other OTC medicines and prescribed antibiotics. Vitamin C was the easiest choice, the cheapest, and most efficient solution and with fewer side effects. In his book *How to Live Longer and Feel Better*, Pauling stated: ‘By the proper intakes of vitamins and other nutrients and by following other healthful practices from youth or middle age on, you can, I believe, extend your life and years of well-being by twenty-five or even thirty-five years’.²⁴⁸ These made ‘health’ foods and supplements desirable commodities that readers could purchase and ingest for their own health’s sake.

Language, tone, expressions and symbolism were a few of the methods by which the self-help genre encouraged readers to change their eating habits. Gayelord Hauser, for example, stated: ‘You are holding a passport to a new way of living... You are beginning a new adventure, a journey of discovery’.²⁴⁹ Symbolism was a key vehicle for Hauser to promote his ideas. His readers’ adoption of his diet almost resembled a religious change; his advice offered a reinterpretation of the cosmos surrounding them, or what the anthropologist Anthony Wallace called a ‘mazeway resynthesis’.²⁵⁰ Salvation was

²⁴⁶ Plimmer, *Food Values*, p. 14.

²⁴⁷ Pauling, *Vitamin C and the Common Cold*, pp. 11-13.

²⁴⁸ L. Pauling, *How to Live Longer And Feel Better* (New York: Avon Books, 1986), p. 4.

²⁴⁹ Hauser, *Look Younger, Live Longer*, p. 4.

²⁵⁰ A. Wallace, *Religion: An Anthropological View* (New York: Random House, 1966), p. 237.

promised by the ‘new religion’: youth and longevity lay purely in the hands of the follower. For example, Hauser’s promotion of what he called ‘wonder foods’ such as brewer’s yeast, powdered skim milk, yogurt, wheat germ and blackstrap molasses, and his demonization of bad foods such as white bread and sugar, gave readers the choice of taking control of their own health. Atkins used an alternative approach: with capitalisation of key sentences, he urged them to join his ‘revolution’. Such phrases were: ‘A REVOLUTION IN OUR DIET THINKING IS LONG OVERDUE’ and ‘WE ARE THE VICTIMS OF CARBOHYDRATE POISONING’.²⁵¹ Atkin’s phraseology urged his readers to stop being bystanders to the damage done to their bodies by carbohydrates and to start defending their health. These books were motivational, inspiring and easy to read; their conversational style made them appear more relatable and their explanations of scientific data using everyday language, educated and urged readers to care for their own minds and bodies. Inactivity and complacency would worsen readers’ health and thus were condemned by self-help authors. In these ways, readers were converted into empowered agents of their health.

Another way in which authors empowered readers’ agency was by stressing the fact that they alone could improve their own health without the need for doctors, expensive or invasive treatments, and pills. Taking D.C. Jarvis’ - a physician from Vermont - *Folk Medicine* as an example, one can see the promotion of alternative and preventative medicine. Jarvis promoted the different uses of apple cider, honey and kelp for the prevention or treatment of a plethora of health conditions such as chronic fatigue, headaches, high blood pressure, sleep disorders, and infertility.²⁵² Pauling’s belief in the efficacy of self-care can be seen in his discussion of a book by Dr. Eugene Robin: ‘do not see the “doctor as God”, you can avoid serious errors in your own care’.²⁵³ Pauling also

²⁵¹ Atkins, *Diet Revolution*, pp. 3-5.

²⁵² Jarvis, *Folk Medicine*, pp. 72-9.

²⁵³ Pauling, *Vitamin C and the Common Cold*, p. 5.

appeared as a cynic of the medical establishment and pharmaceutical companies as he compared Vitamin C supplements to commercial OTC remedies such as aspirin and phenylpropolanamine hydrochloride.²⁵⁴ Researchers Dirk Pearson and Sandy Shaw, in their book *Life Extension*, discussed consumer choice as a way for a person to take control over their health. More specifically, Pearson and Shaw questioned the guidelines set by the Food and Drug Agency's (FDA) recommended daily allowances (RDA) of vitamins and minerals.²⁵⁵ They insisted that readers should take the recommendations with caution and on multiple occasions they critiqued different aspects of the healthcare and food industries.²⁵⁶

Self-help authors appealed to readers' intelligence as a tool to reinforce their control. For example, Plimmer stressed that proper nutrition was not difficult to pursue, but that it was rather a commonsensical task: 'the ordinary person can plan his or her daily food without elaborate calculations'.²⁵⁷ Following the advice offered by these authors was easy, because the readers were already presumably capable. Gayelord Hauser's readers, for example, were constantly reminded that just by choosing to read his book they had already taken a smart decision to live longer and feel younger. Hauser offered his readers a way to eat 'intelligently'; after reading his books people expanded their knowledge of foods, vitamins and minerals, but also of other holistic methods to maintain their youth.²⁵⁸ Hauser's audience was told that after reading his book they would gain more knowledge and understanding than those who did not. Thus the message in the book was clear; readers were given the knowledge to make intelligent choices for their health. A similar message was put forward by Pauling, Atkins, and Pearson and Shaw, who presented all the available information about Vitamin C, and the detrimental effects of 'carbohydrate

²⁵⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 91-3.

²⁵⁵ D. Pearson and S. Shaw, *Life Extension* (New York: Grand Central, 1987), p. 398.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 3-8.

²⁵⁷ Plimmer, *Food Values*, p. 11.

²⁵⁸ Hauser, *Look Younger, Live Longer*, p. 36.

poisoning' and antioxidants respectively. Their readers gained knowledge of Vitamin C capsules and antioxidants, as well as ketosis, and could criticise the recommendations of orthodox medicine and the FDA and determine which recommendations to follow and which products or foods they should consume.

Reference to intelligence in some cases was taken a step further. Hauser, for example, recommended using all available scientific advances for maintaining youth including: plastic surgery, body hair removal, make-up and visiting podiatrists and chiropodists for better and healthier feet.²⁵⁹ Atkins offered his readers a way to monitor their weight loss in which he gave them the illusion that they acted as scientists. He urged his readers to purchase a home urine chemistry-kit called Ketostix, which they could use to track whether or not they were in ketosis, and to what extent.²⁶⁰ Rogak noted that Atkins told his patients that 'happiness is a purple stick', which was a physical manifestation of the results generated by taking care of their own health.²⁶¹ Pearson and Shaw also wanted readers to perceive themselves as scientists as they dedicated a whole chapter to life extension experiments in the home, such as the cooking-oil shelf-life test and Vitamin C urine test using C-stix.²⁶² These measures were not greatly different from what Martin Moore argues was the behaviour of the 'good' diabetic patient who did a daily urine test for glycosuria.²⁶³ The significance of these scientific endeavours lay in the fact that the readers actively sought ways to measure, quantify and evaluate their own health, which reinforced a sense of control and mastery over one's own body. Readers not only acquired knowledge but also learned how to measure their success: health and fitness became rational, observable and achievable phenomena, rather than impossible, irrational burdens.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 182-4.

²⁶⁰ Atkins, *Diet Revolution*, p. 14.

²⁶¹ Rogak, *Dr Atkins*, p. 73.

²⁶² Pearson and Shaw, *Life Extension*, pp. 390-1.

²⁶³ M. Moore, 'Balance and the "Good" Diabetic in Britain, c.1900-1960', in Jackson and Moore, *Balancing the Self*, 38-75.

Conclusion

This chapter has considered some of the most popular self-help books in the genre of diet and health to develop a more nuanced understanding of how 'healthmania' was extended and promoted in the second part of the twentieth century. The authors of these books had similarities. Firstly, they all possessed scientific backgrounds. Secondly, they proved the legitimacy of their arguments through science. In these books, there was an inherent scientism and evident similarities in the jargon, terminology, language and concepts used by the authors to prove their arguments. Thirdly, the reasons they used to explain the various illnesses of 'modernity', such as the obesity epidemic, processed and unnatural food and specific macronutrients, were similar. However, neoromantic and antimodernity notions were used in a selective manner; for example, Atkins supported the use of megadosages of Vitamin C, but condemned the use of white sugar.²⁶⁴ Their diet regimes were panaceas for most maladies, but they differed in that each author facilitated their own knowledge to find 'cures' for contemporary illnesses. Plimmer's book, for example, considered malnutrition as a life-threatening condition, while Andrew Weil focussed on stress. Even though the number of conditions expanded from the 1950s, the self-help genre always offered 'solutions' to contemporary problems.

The urgency of addressing health challenges and individual responsibility were significant for most of these authors, who like Feingold and Mackarness, published in popular platforms instead of scientific, peer-reviewed journals, which made them appear to their readers as pioneers and revolutionaries. These authors employed 'the Sherlock Holmes' narrative to support their claims: a brilliant scientist through sheer will and determination identified new ways of eating for health. These authors were convinced of the significance of their studies and had the authoritative voice required to be taken seriously. Race, age and gender might have played a part in their popularity as many of

²⁶⁴ Atkins, *Diet Revolution*, p. 89.

them were white men, who had what Matthew Smith calls ‘grandfatherly charm’.²⁶⁵ The youngest among these authors was in his early forties, which might demonstrate that there was a cultural reverence for the opinion of older and more experienced ‘experts’, but also that younger men rarely authored such books. Women also wrote advice books but they do not represent the majority of the authors in this genre.

The books explored in this chapter resonate with neoliberalist agendas, emphasizing that readers could take care of their bodies and have responsibility for safeguarding their own health. Foucault’s convictions about the multi-layered nature of governmentality also are evident in the advice offered by the authors of these books. The inclusion of insurance statistical figures by Plimmer and Pauling demonstrate that Western societies embraced and internalised the notion of self-reflective, self-governing individualism. This is linked to another preoccupation of ‘modernity’: efficiency, which most of the authors dealt with, even if indirectly. Plimmer emphasized the impact of malnutrition on productivity and on the strength of armies; Hauser promoted a graceful, youthful and productive old-age; and Atkins offered a way for people to escape from carbohydrate poisoning, hunger pangs, and mood swings, which in turn could cause illness and loss of productivity.

The legacy of Enlightenment ideology is also evident in these books, as the authors portrayed themselves as illuminators in the field of dietetics, supplementation, and health. Authors emphasized that rationality and intelligence could lead to better health; they constructed charts and graphs, recommended exact quantities and foods, and encouraged their readers to undergo specific tests, as well as purchasing supplements. Health, to these authors, was observable, quantifiable and measurable, and they were writing in a way to make it clear to their readers that good health was the product of the victory of mind over body and rationality over primitivism. As Parasecoli has argued,

²⁶⁵ Smith, *Another Person’s Poison*, p. 118; Smith, *Hyperactive*, p. 136.

through the promotion of specific foods, drinks, supplements, stores, products, tests and practices, these authors contributed to a mentality of commodifying health.²⁶⁶ Readers could inexpensively, with minimal effort and with some will power improve their health. This was another incentive for readers to avoid visits to the doctor. This aligned with the iatrosceptism and the food counterculture of the late 1960s, which was evident in the reduced trust towards the medical profession and towards the food industry. Many of the books in this chapter empowered their readers through the promotion of educated and rational self-care. Preventative, complementary and maintenance frameworks of health were often discussed and in this way the authors questioned and rejected the cultural authority of orthodox medicine, in a manner analogous to the ways in which reason and science had marginalised religion during the Enlightenment.

The media played a significant role in popularising these books; through advertisements, interviews, reviews and snippets of these books they brought more readers to the genre. The genre was controversial, which was a topic often picked up by the media. These books and consequently the opinions of their authors generated heated debate amongst their contemporaries. Hauser, Pauling, and Pearson and Shaw were all opposed by various professional bodies such as the AMA and the FDA and by various medical authorities such as nutritionists, chemists, and other experts. A notable example of the publicity received from the media was Atkins' book. In an article in *The Daily Mail*, written by Anthea Disney, she noted: 'Is Dr Diet dangerous?'²⁶⁷ Using arguments voiced by Atkins' critics - especially the AMA - she noted that Atkins' diet was considered nonsense, and that it could cause nausea and laziness.²⁶⁸ The following chapter develops these ideas by exploring the coverage of diet, supplements and health in *The Times* and *The Daily Mail* in the UK and *The New York Times*. It will build on the analysis

²⁶⁶ Parasecoli, *Bite Me*, p. 99.

²⁶⁷ A. Disney, 'Is Dr Diet dangerous?', *The Daily Mail*, (28 March 1973), p. 10.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

of self-help authors and their concepts, but will also identify persistent themes, terms and studies and compare them with those in the self-help genre. Along with newspapers, the magazines *Prevention* and *Time* are analysed for advice, imagery, and terminology. By developing some of the themes seen in this chapter, such as the commodification of health and scientism, the following chapter argues that the translation of knowledge into popular media was not always driven by science.

Chapter III

Promoting health: diet, science and medicine in the British and American press

This chapter concentrates on how ‘healthmania’ appeared and was discussed, developed and disseminated especially during the mid-twentieth century in the popular media. The press has been a major source of public information about contemporary news and events, including science and medicine. This chapter examines the history of healthy eating, supplementation and contemporary anxieties about disease through the lenses of daily British and American newspapers and a selection of popular US magazines. It is structured in both chronological and thematic sections discussing the various topics that rose from medical news stories and advertisements between the early 1950s and 1979. The publications considered here were *The Times*, *The Daily Mail* and *The New York Times*, *Time* and *Prevention*. The selection of print media is diverse with editors, journalists, advertisers, and readers from various backgrounds. The print media used in this chapter illustrate differences in language, terminology and approaches to the coverage of healthy eating during this period in feature articles, advertising and letters to the editors of these publications. This chapter also considers similarities and differences between the British and American press in both content and advertising. More importantly it analyses various health-related eating and supplementation concerns and trends in the popular press and the underlying forces and issues behind them.

The first section of this chapter focuses on the importance of newspapers in the dissemination of knowledge, why the three newspapers have been selected, and how these varied in terms of readership, content, style and tone. The second part of the chapter considers newspapers and magazines as sources of information and promoters of the medicalisation of diet. Through their selection of news and their immediate coverage of

sometimes inconsistent or contested medical and scientific studies, newspapers contributed to the valorisation of science, cultural preoccupations with expertise and statistics, and the cultivation of the interest of Britons and Americans in ‘healthy’ lifestyles. The third section focuses on the notion, prevalent in the 1960s, that civilisation carried inherent risks and was pathogenic. More specifically, this section argues not only that the British and American press often embraced an ‘antimodernity’ narrative in their medical reportage, but also that it was a rhetorical tool used by advertisers to sell their products. Central to the increased criticism of modernity were ideas about nature and its cultural currency and reverence, resulting in a form of neoromanticism, which saw a return to ‘primitive’ and stone age diets and lifestyles as healthier than civilised western diets.

The final section of this chapter considers the impact of the British and American press in promoting agency and responsibility among readers for their own health. The version of health they promoted was one free from heart disease, cancer and obesity, but most importantly slimness was portrayed as the epitome of health. Articles in these popular publications sought to educate or at least inform the general public about diet and health. Some gave specific advice to follow; others placed responsibility on wives and mothers. The food, supplement and self-help industries in an effort to boost sales, promoted the notion of health consumerism, whereby every health condition could be improved through the purchase of specific products. Readers, patients, and consumers read and participated in the contemporary popular culture, eventually becoming ‘healthmaniacs’.

Newspapers and magazines in the late-twentieth century

Print media are significant primary sources as they demonstrate both the contemporary business model of news and media companies, aimed at selling more copies to make more

profit, and the cultural and institutional coverage of various aspects of economic, political, cultural and social change. Contemporaries read newspapers and magazines to feel informed, to feel part of a larger group of ‘enlightened’ individuals.²⁶⁹ But print media have been read for many sociological, psychological, political and anthropological reasons; from social belonging, to national identity, as a pastime, and as a source of entertainment.²⁷⁰

In the period this chapter is considering, print media were gradually being displaced by radio and television. In the 1950s newspaper circulation was still high, which was the result and legacy of their popularity during WWII. According to Kevin Williams, during the war, 69% of the UK population was reading a daily newspaper and 82% reading a Sunday paper.²⁷¹ In a report written by the agency Communic@tions Management, in the 1950s the newspaper, both in the UK and the US, was the *de facto* source of news, as 140% of the households in the UK and 120% of the households in the US bought daily newspapers (these figures can be explained by the fact some households bought multiple copies).²⁷² It is also arguable that newspapers were largely unopposed as an information medium in the post-war years, as radio was the only other widespread source of news. Williams argues that the radio was listened to by the British people as a way to ‘fact check’ what the dailies were reporting.²⁷³ Magazines mostly served the purpose of entertaining readers, providing news and information to their specific niche. As Theodore Peterson has argued, the magazine was:

put together with less haste and more care than the newspaper or radio program, yet was more timely than the book. Its available space and the reading habits of its audience enabled it to give fairly lengthy treatment to the

²⁶⁹ K. Williams, *Read All About it! A History of the British Newspaper* (London: Routledge, 2009), p. vii.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. viii.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*

²⁷² Communic@tions Management Inc, *Sixty Years of Daily Newspaper Circulation Trends in Canada, United States, United Kingdom* (Canada: May, 2011), p. 14; p. 17.

²⁷³ Williams, *Read All About it!*, p. 152.

subjects it covered. It was not as transient as the radio program, as soon discarded as the newspaper; its issues remained in readers' homes for weeks or months—sometimes even for years. In short, the magazine by nature well met the requirements for a medium of interpretation for the leisurely, critical reader.²⁷⁴

Up until the late 1950s, television was also not yet a serious competitor, as it was only available to people residing in London from 1947 and only 6,000 television sets were in use in the US in 1946.²⁷⁵

As the effects of the Great Depression and World War II receded and the economy was recovering, the content and character of news reporting was undergoing an evolution too, competing to become a necessary commodity in what Eric Hobsbawm calls the Golden Age of Anglo-American capitalism.²⁷⁶ As David Abrahamson argues, in the 1950s the Americans had a mentality by which they wanted to replenish themselves in goods and spirits.²⁷⁷ This was further supported by the growth of the middle classes in both countries, but more importantly the dramatic growth of the middle class in the U.S. which accounted for 60% of the population by 1955.²⁷⁸ Education was also important as knowledge was shifting to become a leisure activity during the 1950s.

In the early 1940s one of the major reasons attracting readers to newspapers was World War II. War correspondence provided updates at national and international levels, but after the end of the war the newspaper as a medium had become a desired good,

²⁷⁴ T. Peterson, *Magazines in the Twentieth Century* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1956), p. 388.

²⁷⁵ M. Stevens, 'History of Television: From Grolier Encyclopedia' *New York University Online*, <https://www.nyu.edu/classes/stephens/History%20of%20Television%20page.htm> [accessed 28 February 2017].

²⁷⁶ E. Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991* (London: Abacus, 1998), p. 258; 'Chapter 9: Case Study: An Outline History of TV in the UK', *Routledge's The Media Student's Book Online* <http://www.mediastudentsbook.com/content/case-study-outline-history-tv-uk> [accessed 04 March 2017]; T. Vahimagi, 'TV in the 1950s', *British Film Institute Online* <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/tv/id/1321302/index.html>, [accessed 10 March 2017].

²⁷⁷ D. Abrahamson, *Magazine-Made America* (New Jersey: Hampton Books, 1996), p. 9.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid*, p.10.

coexisting with the newly emerged television set, which by the 1960s was present in ten million households in the UK and by 1955 was present in half of the households in the US.²⁷⁹ Print media had to evolve to become more entertaining, more inclusive and more interesting to larger sections of society in order to compete with, or benefit from, the rising popularity of television.²⁸⁰ Thus print media became more specialised or introduced specialised sections, and recruited specialist journalists and staff. They began reporting more often on categories such as sports, arts and culture, and cooking, but also increasingly on health, science and medicine.

The second half of the twentieth century is also crucial in understanding the press's contribution to the development of 'healthmania'. In the UK, wartime newsprint restrictions were lifted accompanied by the end of rationing in 1955.²⁸¹ The end of rationing provided industries related to food, drink, health and medicine opportunities to increase their advertising campaigns, and to exploit what John Burnham calls the post-war world of consumer culture and self-indulgence.²⁸² The growth of capitalism in the Western world forced the press to attract more readers but also use as much advertising space as possible to increase revenues. This pattern was evident in *The New York Times*. Pulitzer prize-winning journalist Nan Robertson (*New York Times*) stated that 'all the pious utterances by *Times* editors and publishers about the separation of news and advertising did not hold true for the coverage of fashion.'²⁸³ This was because *The New York Times* had a symbiotic relationship with the city of New York. *The New York Times* promoted the local interests of New York, where the most important manufacturing industry was fashion, which bought advertising spaces in *The New York Times*.

²⁷⁹ Williams, *Read all About it!*, p. 175.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁸¹ J. Tunstall, *Newspaper Power: The New National Press in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 9.

²⁸² J. Burnham, *How Superstition Won and Science Lost: Popularizing Science and Health in the United States* 2nd edition (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1988), p. 8.

²⁸³ N. Robertson, *The Girls in the Balcony: Women, Men and the New York Times* (New York: Ballantine, 1992), p. 82.

Since its inception, *The New York Times* had a mission to present the news objectively. *The New York Times* began as a penny conservative newspaper in 1851 and as many other penny newspapers it heavily featured advertisements, especially on patent medicines (however, it has not endorsed a Republican candidate for the presidency since Eisenhower in 1956).²⁸⁴ *The New York Times* was founded to provide newspapers devoid of sensationalism and ‘to report the news in a restrained and objective fashion’.²⁸⁵ Among the criticisms the penny-press received from the six-penny press (mainstream and ‘credible’ newspapers) was its ‘promotion of quackery’.²⁸⁶ This label, however, was ascribed by one penny newspaper to others as well.²⁸⁷ The hypocrisy of *The New York Times* in criticising others was evident, as it often included advertisements for doctors such as ‘the American Mental Alchemist’.²⁸⁸ After Adolph Ochs took the reins of the editorship in 1896, *The New York Times* was steered in a different direction than the rest of the penny press. Whereas most penny newspapers chose to be entertaining, *The New York Times* strove to uphold their mission statement and embraced factual reporting and objectivity.²⁸⁹ By 1911 it had already established a reputation for being a trustworthy newspaper, as the reporter and newspaper critic Will Irwin argued: “the nearest of any newspaper to presenting a truthful picture of life in New York and the world at large”.²⁹⁰ Another change brought about by Ochs was the realignment of the overall tone and business model of *The New York Times*. Since 1896 *The New York Times* had endeavoured to report on news with ‘conservatism, decency and accuracy’, a mentality

²⁸⁴ A. Brennan, ‘CNN Endorses Obama Again’, *CNN Political Ticker Blog*, <http://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com/2012/10/27/the-new-york-times-endorses-obama-again/> (27 October 2012) [accessed 5 November 2018].

²⁸⁵ ‘New York Times,’ *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-New-York-Times> [accessed 25 February 2017].

²⁸⁶ M. Schudson, *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers* (New York: Basic Books, 1978), p. 20.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁸ Medical Classified Advertisements, *The New York Times*, (22 July 1852), p. 3.

²⁸⁹ Schudson, *Discovering the News*, p. 107.

²⁹⁰ W. Irwin, ‘The American Newspaper VI: “The Editor and the News”’, *Collier’s*, 47 (1 April 1911).

attracting more wealthy individuals and the 'investing class'.²⁹¹ Michael Schudson argues that during the first decade of the twentieth century, *The New York Times* managed to also establish a reputation of being the newspaper for accurate financial and commercial information.²⁹² Under Ochs, *The New York Times* aimed, and managed, to attract and maintain a more cultured and intellectual readership instead of a mass audience, but through its history it evolved to become one of the most read newspapers not only in the United States, but across the world. Taking various agencies' estimations and data, *The New York Times* always belonged to the top five best-selling newspapers in the US. *The New York Times* resembles the London *Times* in terms of style and tone, rather than *The Daily Mail*. Yet *The New York Times* and *The Daily Mail* featured science, diet and medicine stories more frequently and in greater numbers than *The Times* between 1950 and 1979.

The two newspapers from the UK represent the differences between broadsheet and tabloid formats of publishing. *The Daily Mail* has always been one of the five best-selling newspapers in the UK, and historically it achieved greater circulation figures than *The Times*. Since its inception in 1896, *The Daily Mail* made linguistic, stylistic and content choices to stand out from other newspapers as more readable and relatable to a wider audience. The language in *The Daily Mail*, as opposed to *The Times*, was designed to cater to its primary audience, the working classes. The news selection also demonstrated that the *Mail* was writing for housewives, mothers and women in general, with more topics on cooking, housekeeping, raising children, and fashion. One of the most distinguishable differences between the two papers is that *The Daily Mail* incentivised its audience to buy it with prizes, competitions, offers and exclusive deals, as opposed to *The Times*, which offered serious journalism of high intellectual

²⁹¹ Schudson, *Discovering the News*, pp. 107-108.

²⁹² *Ibid.*

integrity.²⁹³ *The Times* appeared to be targeting educated middle-upper class readers, who concerned themselves with ‘objective’ journalism, as the topics, language and tone of the newspaper demonstrated. An example of the determination of *The Times* to report on the ‘truth’ was that up until 1967 it kept its journalists’ anonymity, to maintain journalistic objectivity, separating editorial opinion from reporting on views and events.²⁹⁴

In *The New York Times*, coverage of food, diet and health in the press was significantly larger in the number of articles published, in comparison to the coverage of these topics by *The Times*. All British newspapers had to adhere to a print rationing set by the government, which was only lifted in 1955, which might explain the limited coverage of diet-related topics in the UK.²⁹⁵ Another factor worth considering is that *The New York Times* had greater revenues and circulation figures than *The Times* and *The Daily Mail*, and employed a greater number of science and medical correspondents.²⁹⁶ A plausible reason, however, why *The New York Times* comprehensively reported on medical, scientific and nutrition news was the fact that dieting seemed to be more popular with Americans and that diets were more publicly scrutinised by various authorities. An example that demonstrates how many diets existed in the 1950s in the US and how they were marketed can be seen in an advertisement by Ruth Pfahler, an author of diet books. The advertisement was entitled ‘FAT GIRLS’ DIET: Tested practical ways to take off fat, rushed by return mail in plain wrapper at special prices.’²⁹⁷ Pfahler was selling a total of sixteen books on diet including ‘How to get rid of a double chin’, ‘Special diet for fat hips and thighs’, ‘Pound a day “MIRACLE DIET”’, and ‘Dehydration diet for those who

²⁹³ ‘The Times’, *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Times> [accessed 20 March 2017]; Williams, *Read All About It!*, p. 18.

²⁹⁴ A. Nathoo, *Hearts Exposed: Transplants and the Media in 1960s Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2009), p. 43.

²⁹⁵ D. Griffiths, *Fleet Street; Five Hundred Years of the British Press* (London: The British Library Press, 2006), pp. 286-291.

²⁹⁶ According to the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC) the combined circulation of *The Daily Mail* and *The Times* was 2,272,424 copies per day in 1956 as opposed to the 1,120,420 copies per day sold in the year 2007 by *The New York Times*.

²⁹⁷ R. Pfahler, ‘Display ad 231, FAT GIRLS’ DIETS’, *The New York Times*, (10 February 1957), p.106.

crave sweets'.²⁹⁸ Potential customers were offered discounts for buying in bulk as well as a money back guarantee. This tone and similar advertising tactics were used by other diet 'experts', including Gayelord Hauser and DeForest Clinton Jarvis, the authors featured in Chapter II.

The first magazine considered in this chapter is *Time* which was founded in 1923 by Briton Hadden and Henry Luce, ambitious Yale graduates who aimed to fill the need for a magazine that provided a guided synthesis of the news. *Time* managed to grow its readership substantially from the 1950s onwards and, according to the encyclopaedia of American journalism, by the mid-twentieth century, *Time* was the nation's most influential periodical. "I do not always agree with *Time*," President John F. Kennedy wrote in 1963, "but I nearly always read it."²⁹⁹ *Time* reported on domestic and global news but also ventured into topics such as medicine, science, and religion. Medical news in particular was a staple in *Time*, which chose to cover the latest and most controversial stories from the field of medicine. In many issues portraits of scientists, physicians, psychologists, and researchers were featured on the cover of the magazine, such as Nikolas Tesla, Albert Einstein, Sigmund Freud, Alexander Fleming, Jonas Salk, Irvine Page, and Ancel Keys. This tactic brought contemporary medical and scientific discourse to the public eye, putting a face to the names of researchers quoted elsewhere. In 1946, *Time* had a circulation of around 1.6 million copies and to this day has a circulation above three million. *Time's* coverage of news tended to align mostly with centrist Republicanism and its readership comprised mostly middle-class Americans residing in smaller cities or towns.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 106.

²⁹⁹ J. L. Baughman, 'TIME MAGAZINE', in S.L. Vaughn (ed.) *Encyclopedia of American Journalism* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2008), 537.

The second magazine considered in this chapter is *Prevention*, a publication aimed at preventing its readers from suffering ill-health. Jerome Rodale, a health-food enthusiast, had in 1940:

purchased a farm in Emmaus, Pennsylvania, and began to experiment... his own nutritional beliefs and insights into an argument for the health benefits of organic foods...Rodale wasted no time publicizing his discovery: in 1940 he started *Organic Farming*. He failed, however, to interest American commercial farmers, who were in the 1940s being bombarded with government and chemical industry advice to increase, not decrease, their reliance on artificial means. So Rodale repositioned the magazine as *Organic Gardening and Farming*. But even this was not an economic success until it was picked up by the counterculture in the late 1960s. Until then, its readership consisted mostly of small-town and suburban backyard gardeners, many of them first-generation immigrants. A so-called health food nut, Rodale did make money publishing *Prevention*, which combined consumerist and therapeutic advice. Routinely dismissed as a quack by the medical and agricultural establishments, Rodale did not appear that unhappy with his marginal status as intellectual gadfly.³⁰⁰

Prevention featured many kinds of nutritional, supplement and environmental advice, as well as advertisements for health products, exercising equipment, nutritional supplements, self-help books, slimming pills, and many more. Within two years of its first edition *Prevention* managed to attract more than 300,000 subscribers in the U.S. and within a year there was enough demand that it also launched a UK edition. Belasco contributes part of the success of the countercuisine, the organic food movement, and the

³⁰⁰ W. Belasco, *Appetite for Change: How the Counterculture Took on the Food Industry* 2nd edition (New York: Cornell University Press, 2007), p. 71.

emergence of health food to Rodale himself but also to his publications, especially *Prevention* that turned out to become a very popular magazine.³⁰¹

Scientism, heart disease and the medicalisation of lifestyle in the 1950s

Throughout the mid- to late-twentieth century, food and diet became increasingly popular subjects of debate, especially within public health, as they became a focal point of preventative medicine. As the sociologist Naomi Aronson has argued, one of the factors behind the ‘rationalisation’ of diets in the nineteenth century was a preoccupation with adequately feeding institutionalised populations in work-houses, jails, asylums and armies.³⁰² Since the discovery of calories by Nicolas Clément in 1824 and of protein, fat and carbohydrates by Lustus Leibig in 1840, nutrition and diet increasingly came to be considered a domain of science and medicine. Aronson suggests that diet was not only ‘rationalised’ to the individual, but also was expanded by nutrition experts and policy makers to correct social ills such as undernutrition or malnutrition associated with poverty in Britain and disproportionate spending on food by the American poor.³⁰³ As Rima Apple and Derek Oddy have argued, correct nutrition during the years of World War II became a form of patriotism: a productive and healthy ‘homefront’ ensured better support for the army and overall boosted morale in a time of crisis.³⁰⁴ Concerns about diet underwent another fundamental change between the discovery of various vitamins in the 1910s and the late 1930s. As Roberta Bivins argues, during the 1940s rickets was considered a

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*

³⁰² N. Aronson, ‘Comment on Bryan Turner’s “The Government of the Body: Medical Regimens and the Rationalization of Diet”’, *The British Journal of Sociology*, 35, no. 1, (1984), 62-65.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, 63.

³⁰⁴ D. Oddy, *From Plaine Faire to Fusion Food*, p. 151; R. Apple, ‘Vitamins Win the War: Nutrition, Commerce, and Patriotism in the United States During World War II’, in D. Smith and J. Phillips, (eds), *Food, Science Policy, and Regulation in the Twentieth Century: International and Comparative Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2000), 135-149.

disease of temperate ‘slumdom’ and ethnic minorities, and was discussed in prominent medical journals such as *The Lancet*.³⁰⁵

News coverage was also subjected to the medicalising process, especially from the 1950s onwards. All three of the newspapers considered in this chapter increasingly covered health related news. Arguably this was a legacy of the end of World War II, and the need for ‘feel-good’ stories, but there was also an element of ‘pride’ for the capitalist world and Western medicine against Soviet medicine during the Cold War. Developments in medical research from the late 1940s became interesting and profitable topics to be covered by newspapers, and they further reinforced the necessity for ‘medical journalism’ and ‘science news’ to appeal to interested audiences. The coverage of health and medical issues mostly used by these newspapers often facilitated what John Burnham calls the ‘heroes’ holding out against ‘witchcraft’ (heroes and villains) narrative, which also in many ways resembles the ‘Sherlock Holmes’ narrative used by self-help authors discussed in Chapter II.³⁰⁶ Reporting on medical issues, especially in the 1950s, carried an air of optimism and confidence but, most importantly, an element of trust in medical and scientific communities.

The 1950s could be viewed as the decade of coronary disease fascination by the media and rightly so as heart disease was the leading cause of death in the UK and the US.³⁰⁷ Nevertheless, there were other elements of heart disease that made it worthwhile to be reported. One was the fact that high levels of heart disease existed mostly in ‘prosperous’ countries and it fitted a narrative that blamed modernity for certain conditions. With many doctors researching the topic around the world and with the

³⁰⁵ R. Bivins, ‘Re-writing the “English disease”: Migration, Ethnicity and “Tropical Rickets”’, in M. Jackson (ed.) *The Routledge History of Disease* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2017), 257.

³⁰⁶ J. Burnham, *How Superstition Won*, p. 12.

³⁰⁷ See ‘Leading Causes of Death’, *US Centers for Disease Control Online*, https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/dvs/lead1900_98.pdf, [accessed 28 October 2018]; C. Griffiths and A. Brock, ‘Twentieth Century Mortality Trends in England and Wales’, *Health Statistics Quarterly*, 18, (2003), 11; L. Engel, ‘Research attacks the “coronary plague”’, *The New York Times*, (25 November 1956), p. 250.

frequent publication of studies in medical journals, there was an optimism that preventative measures were imminent. The topics of diet and lifestyle were appealing, especially to Anglo-Americans with their increased literacy and leisure time in the 1950s. In addition, the element of fear - that is, anyone could suffer from heart disease - brought more attention to heart disease news.

A crucial moment for the publicity of heart disease which facilitated the medicalisation of diet and its coverage by newspapers from the 1950s onwards was when the President of the United States Dwight Eisenhower suffered a heart attack. Eisenhower had been one of the most popular presidents of the US, who easily secured victory against the Democrat Adlai Stevenson in 1952. Amongst the reasons for his popularity and likeability was the fact that he was a hero of World War II, as Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces who secured victory against the Germans in 1945. As *Time* magazine put it: 'He is not idolised as many of the twentieth century leaders have been. He is not hated and feared as some have been. He is liked. He is understood.'³⁰⁸ Further demonstrating Eisenhower's popularity was the fact that he was so influential as to be voted ten times as Gallup's most admired man in the US between 1950 and 1960.³⁰⁹ On September 24th 1955 Eisenhower suffered an episode of coronary thrombosis, leaving the US, but also the rest of the world, in shock.³¹⁰ By this time only a few researchers and their studies on heart disease had been reported in the newspapers.³¹¹ However, the president's illness brought fresh publicity to the issue of heart disease, after which it became a frequent topic of debate in both the US and the UK.

With another general election around the corner, Eisenhower's heart attack created doubt and fear as to whether he would or should run for another term as president.

³⁰⁸ Anon, 'National Affairs', *Time*, (3 October 1955), p. 13.

³⁰⁹ 'Most admired Man and Woman', *Gallup Online* <http://www.gallup.com/poll/1678/most-admired-man-woman.aspx> [accessed 13 March 2017]. (he won 10/11 years between the 1950-1960).

³¹⁰ Anon, 'President Eisenhower's Heart Attack', *The Times*, (26 September 1955), p. 8.

³¹¹ Anon, 'Coronary Disease Prevention', *The Times*, (20 August 1955), p. 5; Anon, 'U. S. ACTS ON LABELING FOR LOW-SALT DIETS', *The New York Times*, (14 November 1953), p. 13.

His condition and updates about him were highly dramatized as the public was informed about him frequently and often in great detail. *Time* discussed the coverage of Eisenhower's condition:

From the president's bedside came homely details - so homely and so detailed as to be in bad taste in many another country...The U.S. was told what his wife read to him, what music he heard... A British reporter was horrified at the intimacy... "Imagine the BBC reporting that about the Queen!"... Press Secretary James Hagerty overheard him, replied: "Every American family has had a heart attack in it..." *i.e.* The president's.³¹²

An article in *The Daily Mail* had the title: 'America Prays for President', providing a more devastating reflection on the situation. Noel Clark, the reporter, used medical terms to convey a picture of the president's condition: 'The president yesterday had a moderate attack of coronary thrombosis without complications'. Details were not spared as he informed *The Daily Mail* readers: 'Mr Eisenhower was placed in an oxygen tent when he reached the hospital. He has since been on a fruit juice diet'.³¹³ Eisenhower was well known for his love of barbecues, especially steaks, ribs and hamburgers, and he was put on a low-calorie, liquid diet of fruit juice to recover.³¹⁴ Fruits were immediately perceived as healthier foods, especially with regard to heart disease. Given that the President of the United States, the leader of the Western World, was receiving first-class care and state-of-the-art treatment, every detail of his treatment or diet was released to the public. This to an extent humanised Eisenhower and demonstrated that if he could have a heart attack, so could the rest of the population, making heart disease an even more

³¹² Anon, 'National Affairs',

³¹³ N. Clarke, 'America Prays for President', *The Daily Mail*, (26 September 1955), p. 1.

³¹⁴ 'Ike's and Mamie's Favorites', *President Dwight D. Eisenhower: Presidential Library, Museum and Boyhood Home Online*, https://www.eisenhower.archives.gov/all_about_ike/favorites.html, [Accessed 19 March 2017]; Carl Anthony, 'The President's Cookout, Ike at the Grill: A Fifties Food Fave of Eisenhower', *Carl Anthony Online*, <https://carlantonionline.com/2015/05/20/the-presidents-cookout-ike-at-the-grill-a-fifties-food-fave-of-eisenhower/>, [Accessed 14 March 2017].

focal medical issue. Readers of *The Daily Mail* received a first-hand account of what was happening to Eisenhower, but more significantly of the procedures following a heart attack, including the diet prescribed to sufferers. Americans read about Eisenhower's condition with even more frequency, learning in detail about what he was wearing, what he ate and what he drank, sometimes on a daily basis. News outlets such as *The New York Times* traced the steps of the president during that day, reporting that he felt indigestion arising from eating Bermuda onions with his hamburger, after twenty-seven holes of golf.³¹⁵ *Time* provided an even more extensive list of meals eaten in the two days prior to the incident:

menus were hearty: a breakfast of fried corn-meal mush with chicken-giblet gravy and sausages, a dinner of spareribs and sauerkraut, corn bread and black-eyed peas. The weather was perfect...On Friday...Ike's breakfast....eggs fried sunny side up, rashers of beef bacon, sausages.³¹⁶

Some readers may have understood the causation or correlation between the President's lifestyle, activities and food habits and his health. This can be seen in the treatment of the episode by some news media, such as the *Evening Post*. In an advertisement in *The New York Times*, *The Evening Post* stated:

Doctors have new evidence that our high-cholesterol (high-fat) diet is the real villain behind coronary disease! In this week's Saturday Evening Post you'll learn how they think a low-fat diet could save thousands of lives this year. You'll find out why the incidence of heart disease among the Japanese and the Eskimos is so low! Discover an eminent doctor's recommendation for eventually cutting heart disease by fifty per cent! And you'll read how

³¹⁵ R. Bakers, 'EISENHOWER IS IN HOSPITAL WITH "MILD HEART ATTACK', *The New York Times*, (25 September, 1955), p. 1; S. Braswell, 'PRESIDENT EISENHOWER'S \$14 BILLION HEART ATTACK', *OZY*, <http://www.ozy.com/flashback/president-eisenhowers-14-billion-heart-attack/65157>, [accessed 07 March 2017].

³¹⁶ Anon, 'National Affairs', p. 14.

President Eisenhower had to change his eating habits after his coronary thrombosis! For a penetrating study of heart disease—and what you can do to avoid it—be sure to read “You Eating Your Way to a Heart Attack ?” in this week's Post.³¹⁷

President Eisenhower had taken the initiative to improve the nation's physical fitness, which was perhaps influenced by his own experience of heart disease but also by a recent study which stated that: ‘American children far less fit than children in other countries’.³¹⁸ An advertisement of Eisenhower's newly established Council on Physical Fitness read: ‘Is this the shape of things to come?’³¹⁹ This sentence was juxtaposed with a picture of the torso of an overweight man whose belt barely clipped together. In the text the advertisement asked parents to urge schools to include in their curriculum at least fifteen minutes of physical education daily.³²⁰ (Figure 3)

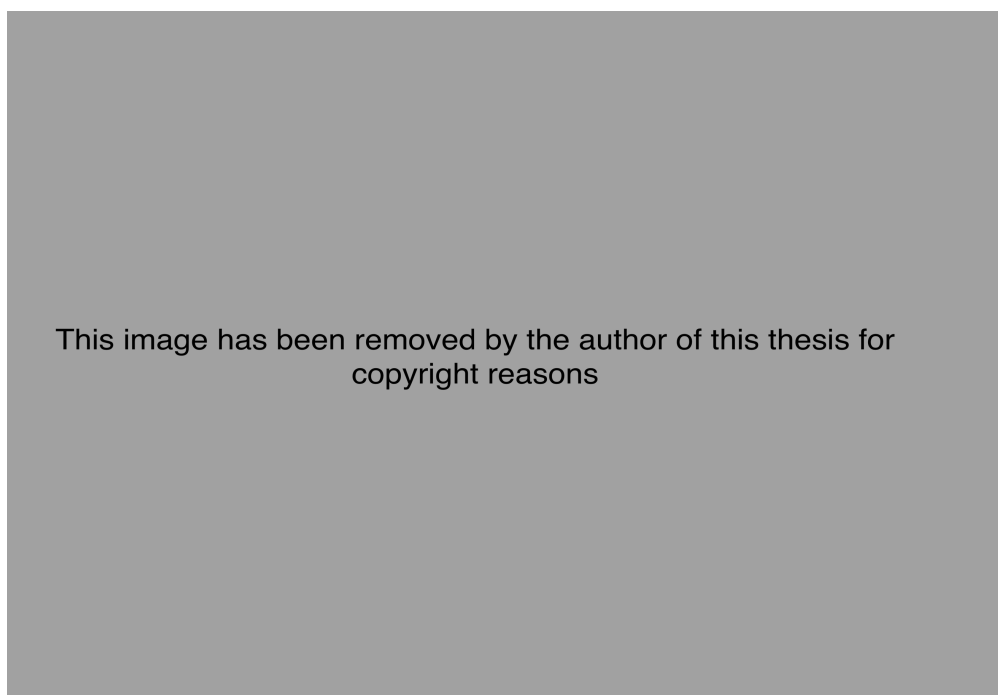


Figure 3 President's Council on Physical Fitness, 'Is this the shape of things to come?' Public Service Advertising Council, (1956).

³¹⁷ Display Advertising, ‘A Post Exclusive’, *The New York Times*, (27 November 1956), p. 20.

³¹⁸ ‘The Federal Government Takes on Physical Fitness’, *John F. Kennedy: Presidential Library and Museum Online*, <https://www.jfklibrary.org/learn/about-jfk/jfk-in-history/physical-fitness>, [accessed 04 December 2017].

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*

³²⁰ *Ibid.*

During the 1950s, in the three newspapers considered in this chapter, it was evident that the impacts of ‘modernity’ and the ‘civilising process’ were causes for concern. For example, one reader, Owen Ellum, wrote a letter to the editor of *The Daily Mail* to express his discontent with modern food production processes:

Sir- Having just had a holiday in a country where I was able to enjoy water “not purified” by chlorine gas, bread that was not artificially whitened, beer that had no chemicals, butter that DID go bad after a reasonable time, salads that had not been sprayed with D.D.T, cheese made of all the goodness of the milk, and noticing the beneficial effect on health, I am wondering if our Ministry of Health would not be wise to start a pure food campaign. Of course there are difficulties, but this craze for adulterating everything may have gone too far.³²¹

The Times incorporated the phraseology of ‘modern’ diseases in many of its articles. The wording of the article ‘Middle-Aged men’s mortality rate: Doctors comment on “modern epidemics”’ demonstrates how the news media, the medical profession and, in turn, the public began considering modern life as pathogenic.³²² This concern was not new. Thomas Beddoes had regarded modernity as pathogenic during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As Mark Jackson argues, Beddoes claimed:

that civilized society (including medicine) was itself now sick. Emphasizing the afflictions wrought by civilization and modern medicine as a gloomy counterpoint to the cheerful Enlightenment “song of medical progress”, discontents in Europe and North America advocated a return to more simplistic and more natural rural lifestyles.³²³

³²¹ O. Ellum, ‘Letters to the editor: Good Plain Food’, *The Daily Mail*, (15 August 1952), p. 2.

³²² Anon, ‘Middle-Aged men’s mortality rate: Doctors Comment on “Modern Epidemics”’, *The Times*, (9 July 1954), p. 5.

³²³ M. Jackson, *Allergy: The History of a Modern Malady* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006), p. 15.; A similar line of thought can be seen in C.E. Rosenberg, ‘Pathologies of Progress: The Idea of Civilization as Risk’, *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 72, no. 4, (1998), 714-730.

In the interest of having the latest medical news *The New York Times* dramatized research. This approach laid the groundwork for exploding levels of resentment at modern lifestyles and more specifically led to ‘cardiophobia’ during the 1960s. ‘Research attacks the “coronary plague”’ was one of the articles printed by *The New York Times* on the topic of ‘modern’ diets and their impact on health. The facts presented in this article were alarming:

In hardly more than a generation the form of heart disease known as coronary disease has become the leading cause of death in the United States. Last year it was responsible for no less than 400,000 deaths. Coronary disease, moreover, has an unpleasant predisposition for singling out men in the prime of life; it is the cause of a fifth of all deaths among men aged 35 to 44, and a third of among men aged 45 to 64.³²⁴

A year before this article was published, the World Health Organisation had hosted its first study group on ischaemic heart disease in Geneva.³²⁵ In this meeting prominent scientists, physicians and nutritionists discussed the growing peril of heart disease. Ancel Keys, one of the attendees, had endeavoured to research the heart-fat hypothesis in a longitudinal multi-country study. The language used in this article presented a state of crisis to the readers: heart disease, which was virtually unknown in the first half of the previous century, was becoming dominant in the mid-twentieth century.³²⁶ The implications were astonishing, as the death toll from heart disease increased. At this point of the century in most households, men were the breadwinners, and their increased mortality presented more challenges to working class families, but it could also create a

³²⁴ L. Engel, ‘Research attacks the “coronary plague”’, *The New York Times*, (25 November 1956), p. 250.

³²⁵ WHO, ‘Study Group on Atherosclerosis and Ischaemic Heart Disease [meeting held in Geneva from 7 to 11 November 1955]: report’, *World Health Organisation Online*, apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/40372 [accessed 12 August 2018].

³²⁶ Anon, ‘Increase of heart disease’, *The Times*, (25 February 1872), p. 7.

disruption in family lives.³²⁷ The other significant fact about the increased mortality in men was the loss of working manpower; as men in the 1950s constituted the largest part of the workforce, early deaths could have a catastrophic impact on the economy as well.

In a 1959 article covering the proceedings of an international congress on medical research, the medical correspondent of *The Times* introduced readers to a specific medical research method: twin studies. Sir Macfarlane Burnet, director of the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute for Medical Research in Melbourne, was a proponent of this line of approach, as he argued:

Coronary disease might be due to worry, over-eating, or excessive smoking, but the possibility should not be excluded that in any given case the really important factor was the patient's inherited constitution. If one identical twin could be found with heart disease and the other were healthy the problem would be clear cut: their inheritance would be identical. It would, therefore, be known that something from the environment had caused the sick man's disability, something the other twin had escaped.³²⁸

The medical correspondent's choice to cover potential research rather than discuss concluded studies demonstrates that medical journalism was more concerned to report 'feel good' stories, even if they were unsubstantiated. Readers of *The Times* were presented with medical affairs and informed about medical ideologies and methodologies. This article successfully painted an image of a sophisticated, ever-evolving, and adaptive medicine which fostered an environment of scientific inquiry and discussion.³²⁹ If successful, research studies involving twins would provide medicine with a clear image of the aetiology of heart disease, which then would provide a framework for a cure or at

³²⁷ Work itself was seen as a factor contributing to heart disease as seen in M. Jackson, *Age of Stress: Science and the Search for Stability* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p.208; F. Kerner, *Stress and Your Heart* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1961).

³²⁸ Anon, 'Coronary Prevention: Line of approach through twins', *The Times*, (20 August 1955), p.5.

³²⁹ The same argument was put forward by Anne Karpf in: *Doctoring the Media: The Reporting of Health and Medicine* (Barington, Oxon: Routledge, 1988).

least a line of prevention, providing what Karpf has called confidence ‘in a knowable and caring world’.³³⁰ Burnet’s credibility and public image were important in the way readers perceived him: he was a prominent immunologist and virologist, who was knighted for his service to biology.³³¹ Five years after this story made news, Burnet won a Nobel prize for his findings on acquired immunological tolerance.³³² Central to this article were other potential ‘culprits’ of heart disease: stress, obesity and smoking which gradually were medicalised. Even though Burnet did not explicitly vilify these, he nonetheless mentioned them as did other scientists, and readers were exposed to this kind of information through sensationalist medical reporting.

The medical correspondent of *The Daily Mail*, J. Stubbs-Walker, wrote an article in May 1956, which demonstrates the extent to which news underwent a medicalising process.³³³ Cultural reverence for science and medicine was evident in this article which summarised a BBC medical television show that had aired the night before.³³⁴ During this show an unnamed doctor had stated that there was no cure for lung cancer yet, but that ‘medicine had now found a drug that could cure other cancer complaints’.³³⁵ The implications of this statement by the unnamed doctor were immense; those Britons with television sets watched a trained medical professional discuss the ‘evolution’ of medicine and heard first-hand that cancer cures were being developed. Walker and *The Daily Mail* further transmitted this knowledge to readers with no television sets or those who had missed the show. To amplify the optimistic tone of the article, Walker concluded by stating that Professor Eric Boyland, a cancer research specialist, was at that time researching the link between smoking and lung cancer. By mentioning Professor

³³⁰ *Ibid*, p. 13.

³³¹ *The London Gazette*, (29 December 1950), p. 35.

³³² ‘Sir Macfarlane Burnet’, *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online* <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Macfarlane-Burnet> [accessed 27 March 2017].

³³³ J. Stubs-Walker, ‘Doctor talks of cancer cure’, *The Daily Mail*, (1 May 1956), p. 9.

³³⁴ After checking the BBC’s television schedule on the 30th of April 1956, the show was probably the investigative documentary series *Panorama* aired at 22:15.

³³⁵ Stubs-Walker, ‘Doctor talks of cancer cure’.

Boyland, Walker instilled more trust and greater faith in medicine. Boyland was a well-known, respectable and experienced researcher with a long reputation in cancer research. In 1932, Boyland had suggested that ‘as cancer-causing hydrocarbons were chemically inert, but often caused cancer tumours at sites far from their initial contact with the body, they must be converted - within the body - to more active compounds that initiated the process of carcinogenesis.’³³⁶ Walker here mobilised a ‘Sherlock Holmes’ narrative, whereby Boyland, a determined and talented medical researcher, sought to solve one of humanity’s medical problems. Instead of reporting how researchers at the laboratories of the Cancer Hospital were researching the connection between smoking and cancer, he specifically mentioned Boyland, supporting the argument that older, experienced men of science were perceived as more trustworthy and respectable during the 1950s.³³⁷

Cancer was frequently covered in *The New York Times* with the same amount of confidence and faith in science and medicine, contributing to the further medicalisation of lifestyle.³³⁸ However, the topic of cancer was covered in *The New York Times* through a different approach than *The Daily Mail* and *The Times*. This can be seen in articles such as Arnaldo Cortesi’s ‘Cancer is traced in Food Additives’. *The New York Times*, through its coverage of such news, contributed to the medicalisation of another aspect of society: diet. Cortesi informed readers of *The New York Times* about discussions that took place in an international symposium set in Rome.³³⁹ The subject matter of the symposium was food additives and their detrimental effect on health. Cortesi’s article was an alarmist piece of journalism, as from the title it is evident that regarded the topic as urgent: ‘CANCER IS TRACED TO FOOD ADDITIVES...Experts symposium...ASKS

³³⁶ J. W. Gorrod, ‘Eric Boyland’, *The Guardian Online*, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2002/jun/18/guardianobituaries.obituaries> [accessed 23 February 2017].

³³⁷ Which echoes Rima Apple’s ‘scientific motherhood’ and Catherine Carstairs ‘long line of men teaching women how to perform femininity’ see Apple, *Vitamina*; Carstairs, ‘Look Younger, Live Longer’, 336.

³³⁸ Anon, ‘Fat in Diet Linked to Heart Disease’, *The New York Times*, (8 May 1956), p. 67.

³³⁹ A. Cortesi, ‘Cancer is Traced in Food Additives’, *The New York Times*, (31 August 1956), p. 31.

LEGISLATIVE CURB'.³⁴⁰ The title alone demonstrates a journalistic style that Anne Karpf refers to as 'medico-dramas'.³⁴¹ The dramatization of the proceedings of this symposium did not halt at the provocative title. Cortesi argued that the experts classified additives as 'a serious public health problem' and that they called for the 'urgent necessity of international collaboration for the protection of mankind'.³⁴² This article presents a story where the 'heroic' group of experts unanimously agreed that 'villainous' additives were dangerous. The experts listed all harmful, potentially harmful and safe additives and called for international legislative action. This report was to be given to various governments, so as to legislate to avoid health risks. *New York Times* readers were informed that chemicals such as: 'thiourea, tioacetimide, 8-hydroxyquinoline...paraffines...radiation...oestrogens' and dyes were injected, added or introduced to their food.³⁴³ Excess food and obesity were discussed by all three of the newspapers in this chapter; however Cortesi's article pushed food preparation and processing increasingly under the scrutiny of science. This kind of news established a necessity for, and further consolidated the power of, governmental bodies such as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Also it further supported the evolution and growth of medical correspondence, as with the evolution of food packaging and preparation new dangers arose and news media had an 'obligation' to inform the public about them. The sensationalism of this article provoked feelings of mistrust towards various industries; it elicited fear in the consumer but simultaneously presented science and medicine as able to solve health problems. Cortesi's article and news coverage of similar topics blurred the line between the medical and the political, portraying doctors and scientists as agents of positive change.

³⁴⁰ Food additives and added chemicals have been central in discussions about ADHD and allergy which was written extensively about by Matthew Smith in *Hyperactive*, and Smith, *Another Person's Poison*.

³⁴¹ Karpf, *Doctoring the Media*, p. 9.

³⁴² Cortesi, 'Cancer is Traced in Food Additives'.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*

Alarmism was becoming increasingly popular in the coverage of medical issues by *Time* and *Prevention*. *Prevention*'s first issue, published in June 1950, concentrated entirely on poliomyelitis and more specifically on how bad diets and insecticides could intensify it and how natural foods and vitamins could reduce its severity. In the first article in this issue, which was reprinted from *Los Angeles Times*, the reporter blamed polio on 'wrong' diets or what was referred to as a 'variety of indiscretions'.³⁴⁴ These concepts originated in the discipline of clinical ecology formulated by Theron Randolph. As opposed to allergy, clinical ecological reactions could occur due to frequent exposure even to minute amounts of pollutants, irritants and chemicals that existed in the modern environments.³⁴⁵ Randolph perceived these as a 'major source' of chronic illness.³⁴⁶ Randolph's method of preventing ill-health caused by toxins was the adoption of diets avoiding individual patients' susceptibilities and creating homes free from pollutants.³⁴⁷

Whereas Cortesi's article made known the dangers of food additives, this article blamed 'artificial' food in general. More alarmism could be found in the same issue where John Plum named one section of his article 'Toxicologists Worried', in which he quoted Dr Paul Dunbar: 'chronic poisoning resulting from the long-time consumption of minute amounts of a poisoning which may eventually build up in the system to produce a serious physical disturbance.'³⁴⁸ What this implied was that modern food-production methods were increasing the incidence of various disease, bringing diet further into the medical realm. Plum argued that there were insecticides used that were stronger than DDT - which was later the main focus of *Silent Spring* (1962) by Rachel Carson - such as parathion, the symptoms of exposure to which resembled those of polio 'including headache, gastric

³⁴⁴ Anon., 'Growing Peril of Polio Blamed on Wrong Foods', *Prevention*, (June 1950), p. 8.

³⁴⁵ Jackson, *Allergy*, p. 205; M. Smith, *Hyperactive: The Controversial History of ADHD* (London: Reaktion, 2012), p. 16.

³⁴⁶ Jackson, *Allergy*, pp. 200-205.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p.202.

³⁴⁸ J.P. Plum, 'Many Prevalent Diseases Blamed on Insecticides', *Prevention*, (June 1950), pp. 11-12.

upset, tightness of the chest, vomiting and sometimes diarrhea.’³⁴⁹ These kinds of news covered by *Prevention* increased the necessity for bodies such as the FDA, and food-supply became increasingly more political as well.

The number of studies, reports, expert opinions, and government guidelines covered in the newspapers grew rapidly from the 1950s onwards. Terminology and medical jargon were frequently defined and discussed, arguably leading to their eventual incorporation into the vernacular. The types of scientific material considered were also broadened to include coverage of a multitude of research studies on health problems or scientific breakthroughs. Food and eating were no longer viewed on their own, but rather they became another domain of modern medicine. In a 1958 *The Times*’ article, the reporter stressed the significance of reducing fat in diets by stating death statistics from angina pectoris and coronary thrombosis: ‘In 1956, coronary disease accounted for 74,790 deaths in England and Wales, compared with 58,309 in 1951’.³⁵⁰ The presentation of these statistics made for a dramatic effect. However, it also demonstrates the valorisation of ‘facts’ and the significance of statistical models in Western medical thought. The article quoted Professor J.F. Brock’s recent review in *The Practitioner* (a medical journal targeting general practitioners) to claim that: ‘dietary fat undoubtedly does play a role in the increase of this affliction’³⁵¹

The choice of Brock’s review seems not unintentional as indicated by his title of ‘Professor’; he was experienced and had an authoritative voice on the matter. This resonates with acceptance of the mature male authoritative voice on health matters evident in self-help literature. The article then discussed animal studies and defined cholesterol. The definition of cholesterol used was broad and in no way made a substantial case for its impact on coronary disease. The article informed the reader about bad and

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁰ Anon, ‘Increase in Coronary Disease: A Major Challenge’, *The Times*, (14 February 1958), p. 13.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*

good fats (saturated and unsaturated fats) and discussed the theory of why consumption of the latter could prevent coronary disease. Those who read this article or similar articles became exposed to, and familiar with, scientific concepts and their implications. The reporter included Brock's conclusion from the review: 'the evidence is not yet decisive enough to justify altered general advice on food patterns and nutrition education for apparently healthy people', contradicting his earlier statement.³⁵² This article demonstrates that diet was increasingly investigated by medicine and science, and that coverage by the press both legitimised the power of medicine over nutrition and popularised the findings and language used by scientists. This further supports the contention that the press would report on any story on food, diet and health even if there was inconclusive data. The press itself injected an element of caution towards eating by immediately reporting on the latest dietary research, preparing the groundwork for the food counter-culture to gain momentum.³⁵³

Marketing health: health promotion and dietary campaigns in the 1950s

According to Dorothy Porter, 'following the anti-smoking campaign the strategy of preventing chronic disease through education relating to individual behaviour gathered momentum in the Anglo-American context. Subsequent post-war campaigns offered behavioural, lifestyle methods for preventing heart disease, various forms of cancer, liver disease, digestive disorders, venereal disease, and obesity.'³⁵⁴ These emerged from political discussions about health and especially the impact of the media on how medicine was practised.³⁵⁵ Whether coincidentally or intentionally, the newspapers, and the media

³⁵² *Ibid.*

³⁵³ Belasco, *Appetite for Change*, pp. 15-28.

³⁵⁴ D. Porter, 'How Did Social Medicine Evolve, and Where Is It Heading?', *Public Library of Science Medicine*, 3, (2006), 1667-1672.

³⁵⁵ V. Berridge and K. Loughlin (eds), *Medicine, the Market and the Mass Media: Producing Health in the Twentieth Century* (Abington: Routledge, 2005); G. Grob, *The Deadly Truth: A History of Disease in America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002), p. 250.

in general, also laid foundations for future public health campaigns for mass-education for the prevention of disease. As Burnham argues, in the twentieth century there was a ‘hunger for wonders’, and in the UK, *The Times* and *The Daily Mail* not only reported on every news story focusing on preventing disease and potential cures, but they also sold advertising space to organisations that aided research into chronic disease.³⁵⁶ An example of this can be seen in the case of the British Empire Cancer Campaign (BECC), which pleaded for contributions, but also ‘educated’ the public. One advertisement of the BECC that informed the public read: ‘Cancer - Is it infectious? Thankfully, we can answer “no”. But there are answers which have yet to be found in the field of cancer research’.³⁵⁷ The frequent pleas for contributions, the dispelling of cancer ‘myths’, and the promotion of cancer research by BECC, the Imperial Cancer Research Fund (ICRF) and the National Society of Cancer Relief (NSCR) in the 1950s contributed to establishing cancer as a focal issue of debate in the UK.

Similar developments took place in the US as well. However, the New York City Committee of the American Cancer Society (ACS) had a completely different tone and style from its British counterparts, when asking for contributions.³⁵⁸ As early as 1951, the ACS urged readers of *The New York Times* to take individual and collective action against cancer. ‘Strike Back’ was the motto of an ACS’ campaign which recommended that: ‘you and your family have an annual physical examination. Know cancer dangers...they are: Any sore that does not heal; a lump or a thickening in the breast or elsewhere; unusual bleeding or discharge...’.³⁵⁹ ACS promoted the notion of self-care and self-observation but simultaneously highlighted the necessity of medical examination, which was portrayed as crucial in many conditions. What was also considered as ‘striking back’ at

³⁵⁶ Burnham, *How Superstition Won*, p. 18.

³⁵⁷ BECC, ‘Cancer - Is it infectious?’, *The Times*, (12 December 1956), p. 5. The campaign ran simultaneously in other newspapers as well, eg.: BECC, ‘Cancer - What are you doing about it?’, *The Daily Mail*, (4 November 1957), p. 6.

³⁵⁸ Display Advertising, ‘Strike Back’, *The New York Times*, (6 April 1951), p. 21.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

cancer was the incitement of a collective responsibility of New Yorkers to financially support ‘the year-round program of research, education and service of cancer patients conducted by the New York City Committee’.³⁶⁰ The use of terms such as ‘Strike Back’ established a narrative of struggle between medicine and disease, which demonstrates the way in which militaristic language was used within medicine and the importance of notions of ‘victory’ and ‘defeat’ to Anglo-Americans during the post-war era. In the perceived iconography of disease, cancer was ‘demonised’ and its ‘exorcism’ was to be facilitated by human agency, determination and above all by science and medicine. The way newspapers and advertisers presented illness, Karpf argues, shifted the meaning of disease to ‘a metaphor for evil and aggression’.³⁶¹ John Coveney has argued that the replacement of Christianity with the new ‘religion’ of science promised ‘salvation’, which was the provision of athletic/beautiful and healthy bodies.³⁶² This narrative form facilitated an interest in developments concerning various diseases because they followed teleological scripts of human progress.

Another way in which the newspaper as a medium popularised science and medical knowledge was through the provision of advertising space to individuals, companies or organisations hoping to boost their sales by using health claims. Surely this practice is deeply rooted within capitalism and in trade in general, as demonstrated by Roy Porter who argued that ‘quacks’ of Georgian England used a variety of different techniques to sell their products: from forging university degrees, through filing their own patents, and carrying crests and seals.³⁶³ Nonetheless, the 1950s marked a decade in which industries became increasingly eager to adopt and popularise medicine and science. The

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁶¹ Karpf, *Doctoring the Media*, p. 11.

³⁶² J. Coveney, *Food, Morals, and Meaning: Food, Morals, and Meaning: The Pleasure and Anxiety of Eating* (London: Routledge, 2000), p.10; Burnham, *How Superstition Won*, p. 23.

³⁶³ R. Porter, *Quacks: Fakers and Charlatans in Medicine* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: NPI Press, 2003), p. 21; p. 52.

cultural authority of doctors was often invoked to promote various products. This can be seen in the advertisements of companies such as Ovaltine. (Figure 4)

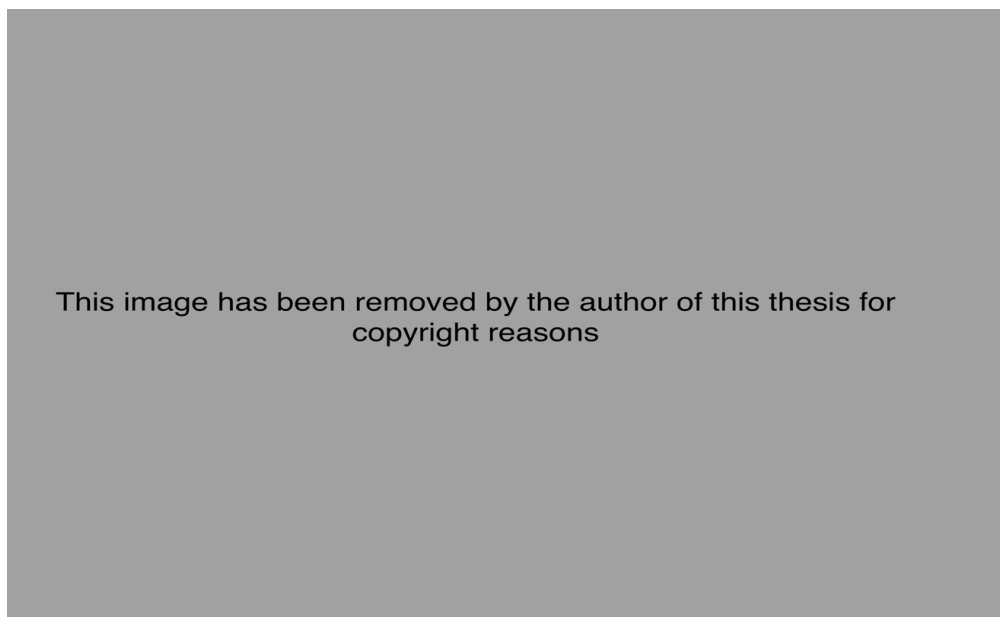


Figure 4 Display Advertising, 'So Your Doctor Recommends Ovaltine!', *The Times*, (22 February 1951), p. 5.

Important here was the imagery and language the 'housewife' used to promote Ovaltine. This image portrays the gendered role of the wife as the instigator, facilitator and maintainer of health in the household. According to Elaine Leong, during the nineteenth century, amongst literate households, housewives purchased various herbal taxonomies and commonplace books in order to make their own medicines.³⁶⁴ As Nancy Tomes argues, during the twentieth century advertisers were marketing their products to the lady consumer, promoting 'rational' consumption and 'skilled' shopping and continuing to place the responsibility for health on women.³⁶⁵ The twentieth-century woman did not have to make her own medicines, but rather she purchased new medicines and health-foods such as Ovaltine. The woman in the advertisement is holding a telephone to her ear using her left hand. Having a private telephone at the time was more a rarity than the

³⁶⁴ E. Leong, 'Making Medicines in the Early Modern Household', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 38, no. 1, (2008) 152-157.

³⁶⁵ N. Tomes, "'Skeletons in the Medicine Closet' Women and 'Rational Consumption' in the Inter-War American Home", in M. Jackson (ed.), *Health and the Modern Home* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2007), 177-183.

norm as the British Telecom Archives make clear; by 1952 nearly six million public telephones-stations were serving 50 million Britons.³⁶⁶ On her hand is a wedding band, further supporting the case that Ovaltine was targeting married women and housewives in particular. The woman also seems to have salon-groomed hair, eyeliner, mascara and lipstick, earrings and a pearly white smile, giving a sense that Ovaltine wanted women of higher economic status - or those who perceived themselves as belonging to that class - and with more disposable income to use the product. This also resonates with Porter's contention about the fetishisation of goods by the bourgeoisie who took pride in the ownership - in this case consumption - of things, and Paul Lloyd's argument about the performativity of class, identity, and the symbolism of foods.³⁶⁷ The language also demonstrates that Ovaltine wanted to convey to potential customers that its product was not only good for consumption, but also that it promoted good health and had been used in medical settings. Every medical term here has been capitalised, further demonstrating that Ovaltine was trying to benefit from the perceived image of the medical profession. The advertisement made it clear that product developers and dieticians had created the 'perfect' product through their will, determination and the optimal usage of nutrients.

Other advertising campaigns readily adopted the latest medical and scientific jargon. Such an example can be seen in advertisements by the British Trawlers' Federation (essentially the British fishermen union) which incorporated the term cholesterol in their campaign as early as 1956.³⁶⁸ More specifically an advertisement in *The Daily Mail* asked readers: 'How's your cholesterol content?'. Then it proceeded to educate those reading the advertisement:

³⁶⁶ R. Freshwater, 'UK Telephone History', *British Telephones*, <http://www.britishtelephones.com/histuk.htm> [accessed 15 March 2017] (Used BT archives); 'Overview of the UK Population', *Office for National Statistics*, (London, 05 November, 2015).

³⁶⁷ Porter, *Quacks*, p. 70; Paul Lloyd, *Food and Identity in England, 1540-1640: Eating to Impress* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2015), pp. 23-25.

³⁶⁸ Display Advertising, 'How's your Cholesterol Content?', *The Daily Mail*, (24 May 1956), p. 3; Display Advertising, 'Eskimos don't worry about heart attacks', *The Times*, (14 February 1957), p. 5.

Do you like bacon and eggs for breakfast?... The danger has a queer name. It's Cholesterol. It plays an important role in causing coronary thrombosis, that form of heart attack which is one of the chief killers of this modern age...Cholesterol furs up the arteries in your heart, and little clots of blood are liable to form in the already narrowed arteries. They cannot get through the channel. Circulation stops. You feel pain and shock. The heart muscle is starved of blood.³⁶⁹

The advertisement started by vilifying certain foods as 'dangerous'. The extent of the danger of eating these foods was dramatized, demonstrating to readers that negligence regarding their diets could have disastrous effects. British Trawlers used a recent journal article published in *The Lancet* to support their case and explicitly stated that the discovery of cholesterol was achieved by 'specialists' in Cape Town who had carried out human feeding trials, further demonstrating and promoting the cultural authority of science. The advertisement urged readers to eat as much fish as they wanted, as it was far less dangerous to the heart, echoing the tone used by self-help authors about filling and luxurious diets to invoke a sense of responsibility and to stress readers' agency over their own health. Thus the food industry further incorporated medical and scientific discourse into everyday dialogue.

In the advertising pages of *The New York Times* another difference from the UK newspapers can be observed. This was the frequent advertising of new books on diets, cancer, and heart disease. In numerical terms the number of books on diet and health-related topics advertised in *The Times* and *The Daily Mail* was a small percentage of the number published in *The New York Times*. There was a great variety of self-help books advertised in *The New York Times*. Books by DeForest-Clinton Jarvis, Gayelord Hauser

³⁶⁹'How's your Cholesterol Content?', *The Daily Mail*, p. 3.

and Ancel Keys were frequently advertised in the 1950s by *The New York Times*.³⁷⁰ Keys' and his wife's book *Eat Well and Stay Well* had a succinct, yet provocative style: 'Will you commit suicide this year?' and 'BUT THE AUTHORS SAID NO', were among the many techniques used by the Keys to draw in potential readers.³⁷¹ In the latter advertisement the Keys stated:

We don't have a revolutionary new diet plan. We're only part of the army of researchers who agree that obesity and high blood cholesterol levels are bad. and that practical diets can correct them. We do not guarantee to give everyone new vitality and save them from heart disease. "EAT WELL AND STAY WELL" simply brings the public up to date on the research front and shows how to reverse the trend toward a softer, fatter, and, we think, less healthy life.³⁷²

Ancel and Margaret Keys demonstrated to the public that they felt an obligation as scientists to popularise recent findings from medical studies. A contrasting element in the advertisement is the grounded and reserved sentence in which the Keys were admitting that their book was not a cure-all. Maybe this was due to the legal nature of advertising in the US or the overwhelming controversy faced by medical and health bodies, which resulted in the public denunciation, defamation, confiscation and destruction of health products and books containing false advertising by the Food and Drug Administration, but also lawsuits against hospitals, doctors, and self-help authors.³⁷³ The obligation of

³⁷⁰ Display Advertising, 'Gayelord Hauser's New Guide to intelligent REDUCING', *The New York Times*, (19 January 1958), p. 18; 'D.C. Jarvis: How would you like to "live to be a hundred"?', *The New York Times*, (02 February 1958), p. BR27.

³⁷¹ Display Advertising, 'Will You Commit Suicide this Year?', *The New York Times*, (05 April 1959), p. BR38; Display Advertising, 'BUT THE AUTHORS SAID NO!', *The New York Times*, (28 June 1959), p. BR19.

³⁷² 'BUT THE AUTHORS SAID NO!', p. BR19.

³⁷³ In Chapter II there is a brief discussion of Hauser's confrontations by the FDA, he was also investigated by the American Medical Association. Robert Atkins has also been involved in disputes with the AMA and at one point he had his medical licence revoked. See: D. Smith, 'Dr. Robert C. Atkins, author of Controversial but Best-Selling Diet Books, is Dead at 72', *The New York Times Online*, www.nytimes.com [accessed 21 August 2018]; The next chapter will discuss an episode where Frederick Stare was involved in a lawsuit for libel filed by Boston Nutrition Society.

scientists to popularise findings is a concept that Burnham traces back to the nineteenth-century ‘men of science’ and their sense of responsibility to educate the masses.³⁷⁴ The imagery invoked by stating that an army of researchers agreed on this topic reinforces Karpf’s concept of the medico-drama as a selling point. Clearly, the Keys or the publishing company behind this advertisement exaggerated the level of medical and scientific consensus on the matter. Even at the time they chose to popularise their findings, there were few physicians, researchers and dietitians who agreed with them. The Keys still had insufficient data to argue for the validity of their hypothesis, as their informal trial period ran from 1952 to 1956 and formal pilot studies ran from 1956 to 1957.³⁷⁵ In the 1950s there was already clear opposition to their hypothesis from John Yudkin in *Progress in Cardiovascular Diseases*, in which he questioned the research methodologies, the causation/correlation effect, and the unidimensionality of the hypothesis.³⁷⁶ The Keys presented their arguments in dramatic language and tone. Further valorisation of the medical profession can be seen in the fact they included quotes from physicians endorsing this book: ‘A splendid job of transmitting the ‘Why’ to the patient ... the tables and recipes are bound to be widely used.’ (SAN FRANCISCO).³⁷⁷ ‘The section on fats is the clearest exposition I have ever seen... seasonal menus are exceptional in imagination and palatability. I found myself salivating over the recipes. (LOS ANGELES).’³⁷⁸ The growth of the self-help genre, as well as the promotion of slimming and dieting, was made possible and reinforced by the frequent appearance of adverts for advice literature in news media.

³⁷⁴ Burnham, *How Superstition Won*, p. 31.

³⁷⁵ ‘About the Study’, *The 7 Countries Study*, <https://www.sevencountriesstudy.com/about-the-study/>, [accessed 19 March 2017].

³⁷⁶ J. Yudkin, ‘The Epidemiology of Coronary Disease’, *Progress in Cardiovascular Diseases*, 1, no. 2 (1958), 116-133; Also see Chapter IV for other competing ideologies.

³⁷⁷ BUT THE AUTHORS SAID NO!, p. BR19.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

Self-help, slimming and the medicalisation of diet in the press

By the 1950s the line between orthodox medicine and ‘self-help science’ was blurred. This can be seen in their treatment by *The Daily Mail* and *The New York Times*. For example, *The Daily Mail* featured an article by Olga Franklin entitled: ‘The Prof. fills me with doubt... ABOUT DIET’. In this story Franklin expressed mixed feelings about John Yudkin’s *This Slimming Business*:

Yudkin...Has me worried out of my wits. Because he’s such a clever chap for one thing. As Professor of Nutrition and Dietetics at the University of London, Professor John Yudkin is the man we fat-girl- reporters have turned to for help and guidance ever since rationing ended. When this Prof. (who used to guide the Ministry of Food too) said: Eat Carrots, we ate carrots. And we wrote in the papers to pass on the word. After all, he’s the expert. We trusted him. ALL we want is to slender and lissom, and lithe. And now he’s written this book in which he laughs at us for being so simple. Believing all that stuff about diet. . . about vitamins about weight charts. Ha ha ha ha. Besides, who says you’re too fat. eh? Tell me THAT, he chuckles. WHO says so ? Maybe you’re really too thin? Hee. Hee. Hee.³⁷⁹

The conversational style used by Franklin demonstrates differences between *The Daily Mail*’s coverage of health issues and that of *The Times* and *The New York Times*. This article and Yudkin’s book in general demonstrate how ‘expert men’ were instructing women how to perform femininity - in this case slimming was regarded as a female preoccupation - and how to use ‘science’ to do so.³⁸⁰ By writing in a popular platform, Yudkin brought confusion to contemporary debates about dieting and slimming, but also raised questions about the issue of credibility. In this article Franklin demonstrated that

³⁷⁹ O. Franklin, ‘The Prof. fills me with doubt... ABOUT DIET’, *The Daily Mail*, (5 May 1958), p. 4.

³⁸⁰ C. Carstairs, ‘Look Younger, Live Longer’: Ageing Beautifully with Gayelord Hauser in America, 1920–1975’, *Gender & History*, 26, no. 2, (2014), 336.

in his capacity as an adviser to the Ministry of Food, Yudkin was perceived as a credible and trustworthy figure.³⁸¹ Nonetheless, Yudkin wrote a popular book to criticise other popular 'self-help' books, in which he provided 'scientific' explanations and debunked myths about slimming.

The self-help genre permeated medical news in the US as well. Gayelord Hauser recommended eating blackstrap molasses to treat Vitamin B deficiency, constipation, poor digestion, menstrual abnormalities, menopause, sleep disorders, fatigue and neuritis. *The New York Times* reported that the FDA warned people by stating that Hauser's claims were exaggerated.³⁸² Also the FDA filed a complaint resulting in the seizure of twenty-five of Hauser's books and fifty gallons of molasses.³⁸³ But public discussion did not end there. Hauser issued a public statement where he commented on the actions of the FDA: 'my book in no way implies that any one food is a cure-all for all the ills that man is heir to'.³⁸⁴ Roger Straus, president of the publishing company that printed Hauser's books, called the seizure of the books unwarranted and unjustified. More significantly, however, Straus argued that publishers should preserve the constitutional right of the freedom of the press and fight any 'encroachment' upon that right.³⁸⁵ Hauser's books not only sold many copies, but his ideas were contested publicly by other nutrition specialists leading to the confiscation of products that Hauser sold or recommended. This led to a debate about censorship and freedom of the press, bringing even more attention to diets and nutritional advice. In spite of Hauser's controversial status and the public criticism he received, he was still featured in *The New York Times*.³⁸⁶ Other similar incidents appeared in the pages of *The New York Times*, such as when the American Medical Association

³⁸¹ Anon, 'Mr Food Hits the Fads', *The Daily Mail*, (05 May 1953), p. 5.

³⁸² 'BLACKSTRAP 'CURE' DISPUTED BY U.S.', *The New York Times*, (11 February 1951), p. 35.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁶ A.H. Weiler, 'A Tonic That's Free: BE HAPPIER. BE HEALTHIER by Gayelord Hauser', *The New York Times*, (7 December 1952), p. BR30.

(AMA) and the Bureau of Nutrition of The New York Department of Health jointly published an article in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* condemning the ‘Rockefeller’ diet or the “fabulous formula” diet.³⁸⁷

More interestingly, *The New York Times* advertised books written with the support or supervision of professional bodies such as the ACS, the AMA, the American Heart Association (AHA) and the Royal College of Physicians in the UK. In an effort to capitalise on increased interest in books on medical matters, these organisations could be accused of saturating the genre of self-help, and also for further confusing the boundaries of what constituted science. In the advertising sections of *The New York Times*, readers caught snippets of various books, written by authors with and without medical credentials. Nonetheless they all employed similar terms, language and tactics in order to entice readers to buy their books. For example, medical writer and publisher’s Blake Cabot’s *The Motion of the Heart* was advertised:

This book, a dramatic, exciting work of medical reporting, written in layman's language, tells what progress has recently been made in the laboratory and the operating room — and what seems to be promised for the future. No field of research is more vital, for more than 750,000 Americans die each year of heart disorders. Written under the auspices of the American Heart Association. Preface by H. M. Marvin, M.D., Associate Clinical Professor of Medicine, Yale University School of Medicine.³⁸⁸

In numerous other issues of *The New York Times*, professional bodies endorsed books and classified them as ‘necessary’ or ‘mandatory’ readings for everyone, further establishing an interest in and a readership for, medical and scientific news, diets, and

³⁸⁷ Anon, ‘NEW DIETS CALLED SOURCE OF DANGER’, *The New York Times*, (25 August 1956), p. 17.

³⁸⁸ Display Advertising, ‘The Motion of the Heart’, *The New York Times*, (7 February 1954), p. BR31.

nutrition plans.³⁸⁹ Equally important was the fact that in many books involving medical concerns, physicians or representatives wrote introductions and prefaces. ‘Experts’ gave endorsements to such books which were then used on advertisements to further boost public perception of the self-help genre in general. For instance, Charles Cameron, the medical and scientific director of the ACS, wrote a popular book entitled *The Truth about Cancer*.³⁹⁰ This was met with immediate support. Elmer Hess, president of the AMA at the time, ventured to provide comments about it: ‘Thoughtful reading of this book can double your chances of avoiding death from cancer’.³⁹¹ This kind of promotion raises questions about these organisations and their mutual efforts to support each other.

An interesting episode which demonstrated the degree to which dieting had been already medicalised in the 1950s arose in 1951, when the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) aired *Designed for Women* a show with two overweight women undergoing a nutrition regime for weight loss.³⁹² This demonstrates the interconnectedness of the media during the 1950s, but also how newspapers tried to remain relevant in the age of radio and television. William Francis Casey, editor of *The Times* at the time, criticised the BBC show, as it could be seen as indirect advertising of the British Dietetic Association (BDA). According to Casey the programme was not following the ‘British Code of Standards’(BCS): ‘slimming is among the conditions for which medicines, treatments, products or appliances may not be advertised’.³⁹³ Casey highlighted how BDA members were not allowed to prescribe a diet sheet without a prescription from the patient’s doctor.³⁹⁴ Another condition Casey states was that the

³⁸⁹ Display Advertising, ‘NOW THE MEDICAL FACTS ABOUT DISEASE’, *The New York Times*, (31 October 1955), p. 20; ‘THE TRUTH ABOUT HEART ATTACKS by a Well-Known Specialist’, *The New York Times*, (13 September 1959), p. BR57.

³⁹⁰ C. Cameron, *The Truth About Cancer* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1956).

³⁹¹ Display Advertising, ‘WILL YOUR FAMILY BE ONE OF THOSE HIT BY CANCER THIS YEAR?’ *The New York Times*, (25 February 1956), p. BR14.

³⁹² *Shedding the Load*, BBC, 26 February 1951; ‘Slimming Report’, *Designed for Women*, BBC, 22 March 1951.

³⁹³ W.F. Casey, ‘Treatment by Television’, *The Times*, (24 February 1951), p. 7.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

patient should be able to fully understand the parameters of the regime. BDA professionals were not yet perceived as ‘credible’ as doctors, or as independent from medical supervision. The point Casey made was clear: doctors were culturally respected and revered, influencing the opinions of non-medically or non-scientifically trained people about other professional health organisations’ advice. In this article, Casey also voiced a contemporary debate arising from *The British Medical Journal*, according to which self-imposed slimming diets in women could have been a factor in the increased levels of tuberculosis in the same group.³⁹⁵

Educated and informed, Casey used the findings of an academic medical journal to support his argument, demonstrating and reinforcing the cultural authority of science and medicine in the 1950s. Casey’s argument was also influenced by social medicine, which originated in nineteenth-century health and social reformers and hygienists’ efforts to develop a medicine with a political aim: the reduction of health inequalities and the production of egalitarian societies.³⁹⁶ This does not mean that Casey’s understanding of social medicine was derived from reading the latest publications of social medicine physicians such as John Ryle and René Sand, who in the 1920s and 1930s had established the new academic discipline of social medicine around the globe, but especially in Latin America.³⁹⁷ In 1945 Sand was amongst the first physicians in the world to be promoted to a professorship of social medicine. Sand’s *The Advance to Social Medicine*, first published in 1948 and later translated into English in 1952, defined social medicine as: ‘a mixture of the medical and social sciences, and their application to the health aspects of populations and social organizations’.³⁹⁸ Sand’s concept of social hygiene unified public and individual hygiene by combining medical conceptions of disease and notions

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁶ Porter, ‘How Did Social Medicine Evolve’, 1667-1672; Burnham, *How Superstition Won*, p. 53.

³⁹⁷ Porter, ‘How Did Social Medicine Evolve’, 1667-1672.

³⁹⁸ D. Porter & R. Porter, ‘What Was Social Medicine? An Historiographical Essay’, *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 1, (1988), 91.

of prevention.³⁹⁹ More importantly, Sand was concerned with the social roots of disease, with more focus paid to structural and social determinants of health than to individual responsibility.⁴⁰⁰ Ryle believed that social medicine ‘unified preventive and remedial services to encompass all chronic and occupational diseases and the whole question of hospital practice’.⁴⁰¹ The principal tool of social medicine, according to Ryle, was the use of statistics to define ‘normal’ and ‘abnormal’ health in population studies. As Dorothy Porter argues, the US and the UK embraced the notion of ‘lifestyle medicine’ which focussed on individual behaviour, which in turn influenced statistics.⁴⁰² Casey, however, was likely to have been affected by the legacy of the UK’s World War II policies on food and health issues (mostly targeting individuals), which might have driven his scepticism about the universal value of dieting.⁴⁰³ His editorial demonstrates that during the 1950s, the British Medical Association (BMA) held considerable influence in contemporary scientific thought, but most importantly that it was perceived as a legitimate source of ‘facts’, dictating which behaviours, diets, lifestyles were deemed to be right or wrong.

The BBC’s television show on weight loss became a subject of discussion in *The Daily Mail* as well. Nearly one week after it was seen, an article reported that already more than 20,000 women had ‘sent stamped addressed envelopes for the duration of the cure’.⁴⁰⁴ The fact that so many women had done so demonstrates that everyday diets were already viewed as the province of ‘medical’ experts. Even the language used by the reporter resembled the discourse of disease, requiring a cure. *The Daily Mail’s* language was simple and unapologetic, explaining the televised experiment in unsophisticated terms: ‘BBC’s slimming system consists merely of dieting; no exercise, no drugs...The

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁰ Porter, ‘How Did Social Medicine Evolve’, 1667-1672.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*

⁴⁰³ During the two world wars the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Food have carried out many public health initiatives such as the National Milk Scheme, the National Loaf and the Food information campaign, as well as rationing. At the time Casey is critiquing dieting these are still ongoing.

⁴⁰⁴ Anon, ‘20,000 fat women appeal to BBC’, *The Daily Mail*, (05 February 1951), p. 3.

two fat women will not be seen again in front of the cameras until March 22, by which time both are expected to have lost at least a stone'.⁴⁰⁵ The article also stated that the diet, if successful, could be applied to men as well.⁴⁰⁶ This raises the question as to why the BBC neglected a similar televised 'experiment' about men, reinforcing the view that during the 1950s gendered assumptions about weight and exercise dictated the media agendas. As the advertisement from the Public Service Advertising Agency indicates, there was a different language used to address extra weight in men, by focusing more on 'physical fitness'. Men constituted the majority of the workforce, specifically in physically demanding jobs, and had to be 'fit', whereas, as Lupton has argued, women were more preoccupied with being 'slim'.⁴⁰⁷ The sources demonstrate this phenomenon too as the majority of journal articles on heart disease were focused on men and special emphasis was placed on their physical activity, while self-help books - whose target audience was mostly women - were concerned with slimming.

In a second article published on the morning before the broadcast of the programme, *The Daily Mail* informed readers that Lord Thomas Jeeves Horder would warn the television dieters on behalf of the BMA. Lord Horder was a well-respected physician widely popular for serving as a chairman of the Ministry of Health advisory committee (1935–9), chairman of the committee on the use of public air-raid shelters (1940), and medical adviser to Lord Woolton at the Ministry of Food (1941).⁴⁰⁸ By the time this article was printed, 44,000 women had signed themselves up for the BBC diet, which the BMA did not support.⁴⁰⁹ Then seventy-eight years old, with his grandfatherly charm, his decorated status as a prominent physician and his authority in nutrition matters, Lord Horder warned doctors in *The British Medical Journal*: 'to "watch very closely" the

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁷ D. Lupton, *Food, the Body and the Self* (London: Thousand Oaks, 1996), p. 82.

⁴⁰⁸ L. J. Witts, 'Horder, Thomas Jeeves, first Baron Horder (1871–1955)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33985?docPos=1> [accessed 2 March 2017].

⁴⁰⁹ Anon, 'Horder to Warn 44,000 Women TV Slimmers', *The Daily Mail*, (22 March 1951), p. 1.

results of the BBC experiment', which again highlights the perceived authority of older and established men of science.⁴¹⁰ As Burnham argues, the experienced man of science had an obligation towards society, to 'advance people's health and fight quacks'.⁴¹¹ This episode supports the case that the BMA had established a medical hegemony in the UK, sufficient to make public endorsements or denouncements of slimming programmes.

The Daily Mail's coverage of diets and slimming was broader and more frequent than that in *The Times*. For example, *The Daily Mail* printed its own weight-loss diet plan a year before the BBC show came out, whereas in the 1950s *The Times* abstained from recommending any diet plans. 'And here is the doctor's diet sheet', *The Daily Mail's* weight loss plan, claimed credibility by emphasising the fact that it was compiled by 'expert dieticians'.⁴¹² The article was printed inside what seems to be a women's page as it also contained cooking instructions, recipes and an article on why men take too long to get married. This further supports the case that the media perceived men's weight as neither interesting, nor profitable, reinforcing Catherine Carstairs' and Deborah Lupton's assertion that slimming was only a concern of female readers, at least at that time.⁴¹³ An interesting feature of this diet was that it covered emotions, thoughts and the act of eating. For example, it stated: 'If you intend to diet begin at once...Acquire the "slimming frame of mind"...Do not discuss your diet with friends: it will bore them'.⁴¹⁴ Like Gayelord Hauser in *Look Younger, Live Longer*, *The Daily Mail* prescribed a certain performativity, emotionality and thought pattern to dieting for weight loss. *The Daily Mail* diet allowed an 'occasional lapse' so that dieters would not offend their hosts by not eating.⁴¹⁵ This statement raises questions about *The Daily Mail's* perceptions of its readership. Acquiring a 'slimming frame of mind' to a certain extent applied to people with disposable incomes

⁴¹⁰ Burnham, *How Superstition Won*, p. 31.

⁴¹¹ *Ibid* p. 53.

⁴¹² Anon, 'And Here is the Doctor's Diet Sheet', *The Daily Mail*, (9 February 1950), p. 6.

⁴¹³ Carstairs, 'Look Younger, Live Longer', 332-335; Lupton, *Food, The Body and the Self*, pp. 139-140.

⁴¹⁴ Anon, 'And Here is the Doctor's Diet Sheet'.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid*.

and leisure time to do so, and it was not easily followed by everyone. The diet included foods that were ‘musts’: ‘saccharin for sweetening...salad dressing to be made with lemon juice...foods to be either boiled, steamed, grilled, baked or roast...no fats or flour to be used in cooking’. The list of ‘forbidden’ food items was far more extensive including among many others: bacon, salmon, bottled fruit, sweets, chocolates, bread, butter, oils, cakes and pastries.⁴¹⁶ The recommended meal plan with a total of 600-800 calories in one day sounds extreme, even dangerous for some people, especially those at poverty level, people with existing medical conditions, children and the elderly. Nonetheless, no correction or comment was made in any future articles in *The Daily Mail*. Exact quantities, specific products, special cooking methods, avoidance of foods and the categorisation of the various food groups, their calories and virtues demonstrate that slimming was a quantifiable, measurable and rational experiment to be performed by anyone at home.

In a more reserved manner, *The New York Times* also offered its readers nutritional advice. In an article on diet, Jane Nickerson chose to cite the advice offered in a booklet published by the Nutrition Foundation, ‘a lobby group for the food, chemical, and pharmaceutical industries’.⁴¹⁷ Amongst its authors was Dr Frederick Stare, a prominent commentator on food and diet in the US. Stare had founded the department of nutrition of the Harvard School of Public Health in 1942, and often made public appearances and offered nutritional advice. Nickerson’s reliance on Stare’s expertise demonstrates the caution that she took to write about diet and the overall temperance *The New York Times* demonstrated in its coverage of slimming and diets in the 1950s and Stare’s perceived authority on nutrition. The booklet by the Nutrition Foundation also

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁷ J. Nickerson, ‘Good Balance in a Diet’, *The New York Times*, (01 February 1953), p. SM38; The Nutrition Foundation was ‘envisioned and funded by food producers’ and directed by Frederick Stare see: M. Smith, *An Alternative History of Hyperactivity: Food Additives and the Feingold Diet* (New Jersey, Rutgers University Press, 2011), p.70; p. 108.

demonstrates the cultural reverence of experts.⁴¹⁸ As opposed to the diet offered to the readers of *The Daily Mail*, Nickerson promoted a ‘balanced’ diet rather than a restrictive one. The main difference between *The Daily Mail*’s and the Nutrition Foundation’s diet was that the latter stressed that a ‘balanced’ diet was significant for maintaining overall health, as opposed to presenting slimming as a cure for disease. In a similar manner to the authors discussed in Chapter II, scientism was a fundamental element in the promotion of a ‘balanced’ diet: ‘What are these essentials? They are (1) carbohydrates (sugars and starches), which supply energy cheaply ; (2) fats, which also furnish energy; (3) protein, which builds, repairs and maintains body tissues; (4) vitamins and minerals which carry out the chemical reactions of the body’s operation.’⁴¹⁹ This information provided a foundation for what followed in the rest of the article.

Nickerson provided answers to questions that readers might have had on what was a ‘balanced’ diet, such as: ‘...how does one meet these requirements?... Is a balanced diet expensive? ...How do the food needs of children differ from adults? ... Do the elderly people in the family need special foods?’ Another theme that arose was how to avoid ‘errors of commission or omission’.⁴²⁰ ‘They are (1) skimping or omitting breakfast, (2) too many calories, (3) poor variety (4) lack of milk or milk products, (5) lack of vegetables and fruits, (6) spending too large a portion of the budget on one or a few food groups so that other items are scanty, 7) improper preparation.’⁴²¹ Diet was to be seen through its medical and preventative qualities, and scrutinised for its qualitative and quantitative nature in everyday life. The medicalisation of diet in this article did not halt there; it suggested that people in different life stages required different nutrients and cooking methods. Growing scientism created preoccupations about the quantities, vitamins,

⁴¹⁸ M. Jackson and M. Moore, ‘Balancing the Self in the Twentieth Century’, in M. Jackson and M. Moore (eds), *Balancing the Self: Medicine, Politics, and the Regulation of Health in the Twentieth Century* (Forthcoming, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), 1-37.

⁴¹⁹ Nickerson, ‘Good Balance in a Diet’.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*

minerals that should be incorporated and about the ‘mistakes’ that could render diets unscientific, or even worse, deficient.

Media, modernity and diet in the 1960s

Following the aftermath of World War II, Western societies increasingly realised the impact of civilisation on health. Ulrich Beck argued in his seminal book *Risk Society*, that ‘in advanced modernity the social production of wealth is accompanied by a social production of risks’.⁴²² Even though technology, science and medicine had progressed to offer rational truths and dispel illusions, they had also been used during World War II to bring death and destruction, and generated novel risks to human and environmental health. In discussions about various health problems and diseases featured in the press, there was an emphasis on the diseases faced by the ‘developed’ West and how less-developed countries had lower incidences of these diseases. Public and professional opinion in the UK and the US began expressing elements of neoromantic philosophy, which embraced the view that ‘modern life’ was not suitable for healthy human existence. Thus stories of the wisdom of the noble-savage, the lifestyle of the Mediterranean grandparent, and the longevity of the Japanese gained new cultural currency in the West.⁴²³

R.H.A Plimmer and Gayelord Hauser and many other contemporary commentators during the 1950s saw modernity as unnatural and pathogenic. Mark Jackson has argued that there is a long tradition of pathologising progress that has ‘been systematically expounded and exploited by a number of Enlightenment medical authors such as George Cheyne (1673–1743), William Cadogan (1711–1797) and Thomas Trotter

⁴²² U. Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, trans. M. Ritter (London: Sage Publications, 1992), p.19.

⁴²³ Ancel and Margaret’s famous book was a romanticisation of the Mediterranean lifestyle in their book: *Eat Well and Stay Well* (New York: Doubleday, 1959). But these could also be read in some of the articles to follow.

(1760–1832).⁴²⁴ Cheyne for example, raised the issue of obesity to a moralistic one.⁴²⁵ He argued that illness was the result of congestion, putrefication and blockages, which were evident in the bodies of the rich who ate too much and indulged in foreign delicacies like coffee and tobacco.⁴²⁶

The growing impact of modernity on health, especially ‘modern’ diets and foods, has been discussed extensively by historians of food. Harvey Levenstein argues that the late 1960s and early 1970s marked a new era of ‘Negative Nutrition’ in the US.⁴²⁷ Supporting the notion that diet continued to deteriorate in the latter part of the twentieth century, Emily Martin and Richard Cone have discussed the impact of global food economies and markets on health and on the value of local food.⁴²⁸ Levenstein argues that the scientific community and especially nutritional science shifted from undernutrition to overnutrition. This approach identified obesity as a disease of civilisation. Although ‘Negative Nutrition’ as a concept existed earlier in the twentieth century, it grew dramatically in post-war US and UK.

During the 1960s the downside of modernity was frequently invoked by the medical correspondent of *The Times*.⁴²⁹ In one 1966 article in the ‘Science and Medicine’ section, the first sentence set the tone of heavy criticism of modern life: ‘To the already heavy toll of the roads should we add a proportion of the increasing number of deaths from coronary heart disease? Is it possible that a diminution in the number of cars on the roads would be a major contribution to the health of the nation?’⁴³⁰ This article was an

⁴²⁴ Jackson, *Allergy*, p. 14; Rosenberg, ‘Pathologies of Progress’, 714–30.

⁴²⁵ G. Cheyne, *An Essay of Health and Long Life* (Dublin, 1725), p. vii.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 34.

⁴²⁷ H. Levenstein, *Paradox of Plenty: A Social History of Eating in Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 195.

⁴²⁸ E. Martin and R. Cone, ‘Corporeal Flows: The Immune System, Global Economies of Food, and New Implications for Health’, in Paula A. Treichler, Lisa Cartwright and Constance Penley (eds) *The Visible Woman: Imaging Technologies, Gender and Science* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 321–59.

⁴²⁹ According to Dr Tony Smith’s obituary (*The Times* medical correspondent) he replaced Dr William Thomson - *The Times* only began to include names of reporters since 1967 so it is possible that it was Thomson who wrote this article and all others in the 1960s.

⁴³⁰ Anon, ‘Lack of Exercise and Heart Disease’, *The Times*, (7 January 1966), p. 13.

amalgamation of various kinds of evidence to substantiate the contention that modernity was a double-edged sword. Clearly the reporter was expressing his personal opinion or was writing to make an original yet dramatic story by emphasising numbers, using twentieth-century medical thought and methodology to argue against twentieth-century science and medicine. The first pitfall of modernity was cars, which provided humanity convenience and easy transportation, but at a price: a detrimental effect on human health. To substantiate the claims, the correspondent chose to quote a Scottish physician, Dr Reginald Passmore, from Edinburgh University: 'In prosperous countries mechanization has led to a society in which less and less physical activity is needed to earn a living. For many the contemporary five-day 40-hour working week consists of repetitive processes offering little opportunity for creative powers and leads to boredom and frustration.'⁴³¹ More conditions, including emotional and psychological disturbances, were incorporated into the matrix of health and disease, and more effort was required by individuals and the state to ensure that the stress of modern life, mundane work, and monotonous routines did not impact on health. Passmore's argument did not stop there, as he wondered whether humans required a 'certain amount of physical activity' to prevent heart disease.⁴³²

The reporter went on to answer Passmore's questions about modern lifestyles by considering a journal article published in *The Lancet*, which had found that the Masai, a pastoral tribe from Tanzania, were 'remarkably fit...indeed many of them outperformed athletes of Olympic standard'.⁴³³ Albeit 'untrained' (that is without professional sports training), the reporter attributed their fitness to the fact that: 'They spend much of their lives as boys walking with the herds. As warriors, they are on the move almost daily, walking great distances in their surveillance of cattle, property, girls and distant friends'.⁴³⁴ This article raises significant questions about the interpretation of the evidence

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*

⁴³² *Ibid.*

⁴³³ Anon., 'Lack of Exercise and Heart Disease', *The Times*, (7 January 1966), p. 13.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*

provided by *The Lancet* and the translation of medico-scientific concepts into popular news, since there was no discussion of Masai women.

The second aspect of the Masai's virtuous 'naturalness' was diet. *The Times* correspondent's views on diet were crucial here. It is clear that 'the cholesterol hypothesis' set out by Ancel Keys and the rhetoric of the anti-cholesterol medical camp were known to the reporter, but most importantly they were accepted as scientific truth. 'In spite of living on a diet of milk and meat - and therefore one with a high intake of animal fat - they are almost free of coronary heart disease and have low levels of cholesterol in their bloodstream'.⁴³⁵ The author of this article greatly simplified *The Lancet's* discussion, paying no attention to the findings which considered synergistic elements of lifestyle, genetics, and cultural factors. Neoromanticism, scepticism about modernity, and discontent towards 'civilisation' were articulated in a more nuanced and perhaps reserved matter by the authors of *The Lancet* article, Dr George Mann, Dr Rey Shaffer and medical student Alan Rich, who argued:

It must be concluded that persistent walking with an expenditure-rate of no more than 300-500 cal. per hour is sufficient to maintain this high degree of fitness. The relation of work load or pulse-rate to oxygen consumption is linear until the limit of aerobic capacity is reached... As anaerobiasis begins to produce an increasing oxygen debt, lactate accumulates. Since this is an uncomfortable state the persistence in effort may depend on a performer's ability to endure the discomfort or perhaps on his competence in clearing tissue lactate. The Masai may be more stoic than others, and so more persistent, thus accounting for their high performance; or, because of the habitual diet of lactobacillus fermented milk, the Masai may have acquired an unusual tolerance for lactate, perhaps by enzyme induction, which allows

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*

them to persist to higher levels of performance even with anaerobic metabolism. Since neither lactate levels nor oxygen consumption were measured directly these explanations cannot be clarified. ...The Masai may, by habitual activity and a high protein, high lactate, and low carbohydrate diet, have all these stimuli at work for them. The association of this exceptional fitness with freedom from the signs of coronary heart-disease suggests, but by no means proves, a causal relationship-i.e., fitness protects against coronary heart-disease. There is no clear explanation for this hypothetical protective effect of exercise against coronary heart-disease. Conceivably, the local hypoxia of exercise induces growth of collateral circulation in the heart. Perhaps some by-product of exercise improves sterol metabolism, or vessel response to injury, or both. It is relevant that these Masai men have little or no hypertension and virtually no rise of blood pressure with age... We have found that physical conditioning lowers diastolic blood-pressure in American men... These findings suggest that physical exercise must have profound effects upon the integrity of blood-vessels as well as affecting sterol metabolism. The favourable effects of exercise upon glucose tolerance are well known... It is becoming increasingly clear that abnormal glucose tolerance is often associated with coronary heart-disease...and diabetes is well known to predispose to coronary heart-disease.⁴³⁶

It is worth noting that the medical correspondent of *The Times* in the 1960s reported on matters in much the same way as in previous articles. He employed similar alarmist, capitalised and sensational titles to entice readers to his articles and the medical section. One example is an article printed on the issue on 16 August 1963. Its title read

⁴³⁶ G. Mann, R. Schaffer and A. Rich, 'Physical Fitness And Immunity To Heart-Disease In Masai', *The Lancet*, 286, no. 7426, (25 December 1965), 1308-1310.

‘TRIBESMEN SET HEALTH EXAMPLE FOR EUROPEANS’ and its subheading was ‘VALUE OF TAKING MORE EXERCISE’.⁴³⁷ *The Times* did not often capitalise article titles, and by doing so it seems that the medical correspondent either wished to dramatize medical discourse or was influenced by the notion that civilisation was pathogenic. His careful selection of materials and evidence from prolific journals and doctors was astute, demonstrating *The Times* reporters’ awareness and perception of their own readership. The assumption was that readers of *The Times* were of above average intelligence with a sophisticated education. *The Times* not only summarised research studies, but gave the names of journals and doctors and went to the extent of describing how and why a study was conducted, and when, where and sometimes even by whom the study was sponsored. The reportage on health issues, medicine and science not only had antimodernist themes, but simultaneously promoted scepticism about ‘civilisation’ and ‘progress’.

With a distinct and large font in its title, an article in *The Daily Mail* asked readers: ‘Is the real killer civilisation?’ The author, Julian Holland, recalled a discussion he had had with a consultant surgeon from Sherborne named Lawrence Knights. Knights, who had operated on many patients, joked:

“I’m a hack”... “I’ve spent all my time taking things out of people and not putting them back...things we don’t know how to put right so we just take them out. But four years ago I went to West Africa and found myself looking after people who had none of these things that I’ve been dealing with here all my life. If we could stop all this surgery, the Health Services would be saved not millions but tens of millions ”.⁴³⁸

Knights’ words demonstrate a culture of self-reflexivity within science and medicine, but more importantly indicate that the ideology and philosophy of neoromanticism penetrated

⁴³⁷ Anon, ‘TRIBESMEN SET HEALTH EXAMPLE FOR EUROPEANS’, *The Times*, (16 August 1963), p. 6.

⁴³⁸ J. Holland, ‘Is the Real Killer Civilisation?’, *The Daily Mail*, (23 May 1969), p. 8.

contemporary medical thought, which in turn became embedded in public discourse through medical and science journalism. Knights' interview had a significant underlying message: 'modern' treatments were invasive and unnecessary, and if diet was addressed he and his craft would become mostly redundant. One conclusion that came out of his time in West Africa was that civilisation, especially 'modern' diets, gave birth to cancers, heart disease, diabetes, and degenerative diseases in general. Modern medicine was not only portrayed as unnecessary, but as harmful for not acknowledging and treating man-made disease and for not challenging contemporary emphasis on high financial gains. This medical matter became in turn political and economic as Knights focused on the savings the National Health Service (NHS) would make if new approaches towards disease took place. The culture of efficiency (a clear preoccupation of modern civilisation), and the prevention of wastefulness were embedded in Knights' medical thought. Misattribution of funds could be metaphorically viewed as a disease of its own, comparable to human suffering and death. His argument made sense to all political parties: government spending could be redistributed to other goods and services to be enjoyed by the majority of the population.

In the second part of the article, Holland interviewed another surgeon who was a one-time director of medical research at the Royal Navy Medical School, Tom Cleave, who was amongst the most outspoken surgeons during the 1950s offering opinions in *The Lancet* and *The British Medical Journal*.⁴³⁹ Holland reported that Cleave's current research project, which up until that point had lasted thirteen years, focused on the detrimental effect of 'modern' diets on health. By this time not only doctors began to embrace the belief that modernity produced more degenerative disease, but also a substantial body of research had been carried out to prove that notion. This article reflects the difference between *The Times* and *The Daily Mail's* medical journalism. As opposed

⁴³⁹ His letters to the editor of *The Lancet* will be discussed in the next chapter.

to *The Times*' empiricism aimed at highly educated individuals, *The Daily Mail* was concerned with simplification and dilution of news for working-class readers who were supposedly not concerned with jargon and facts, but rather with clarity and convincing conclusions. This can be seen in this article in which Holland chose to report more on the conversation he had with Cleave, rather than whether or not Cleave had published his findings in peer-reviewed scientific journals. No emphasis was placed on the empirical data in this article. Rather, the article took Cleave's assertion that sugar and refined foods caused disease *prima facie*.⁴⁴⁰

Holland's approach to reporting the conclusions of these two surgeons was informal, and conversational in tone. However, this article presented the views of these two surgeons to inform readers about a topic about which there was little medical consensus.⁴⁴¹ Furthermore, the choice of persons interviewed also demonstrates the extent of journalistic framing. Both Knights and Cleave were experienced and accomplished doctors, but more importantly surgeons. This reflects the ways in which Western, or more specifically British, society saw surgeons as an especially glamorous specialty within medicine during the 'Golden Age of Surgery'.⁴⁴² One of the reasons for surgery's elevated image was that during the year this article was written and two decades preceding it, 'miracle' cures were provided by surgery. Ayesha Nathoo has argued in her book *Hearts Exposed: Transplants and the Media in 1960s Britain* that the South-African surgeon

⁴⁴⁰ Holland, 'Is the real killer Civilisation?', p. 8.

⁴⁴¹ Whether intentionally, or not, Holland facilitated a journalistic method of coverage that today is referred to as framing. The Oxford Dictionary of Journalism defines framing as: 'The placing of events (such as those being reported within a news story) within a particular explanatory narrative or discourse. Precisely the same event might be framed in a number of different ways, so the death of a child could be reported variously according to a frame that essentially places blame on heartless capitalism, cuts to the health service, declining nutritional knowledge, the rise of the feckless poor, a breakdown in family values, or any number of alternative explanations.'

⁴⁴² F. D. Moore, *A Miracle and a Privilege: Recounting a Half Century of Surgical Advance* (Washington, D.C.: Joseph Henry Press, 1995), p. 198. This is true to a certain extent in present day as various websites discussed the reasons to why surgeons are more respected than physicians as seen in: *Quora Online*, <https://www.quora.com/Are-surgeons-more-respected-considered-more-glamorous-better-remunerated-than-physicians> [accessed 15/08/2017]; Anon, 'Why are Surgeons Held with Higher Esteem', *Student Doctor Network*, <https://forums.studentdoctor.net/threads/why-are-surgeons-held-with-higher-esteem-than-are-physicians.510837/> [accessed 14/08/2017].

Christian Barnard had brought attention to life-saving surgery.⁴⁴³ Nathoo contended: ‘Popular twentieth-century histories often single out this surgical endeavour as a great or defining moment in world history, as important as the moon-landing of 1969’.⁴⁴⁴ The omission by Holland of other commentators on diet, such as Gayelord Hauser or the nutritionist John Yudkin or Richard Mackarness, maintained the credibility of the article by accepting the opinions of ‘miracle producing’ classically-trained surgeons as opposed to so-called promoters of ‘quackery’. Articles like this one, however, did more than contribute to the emergence of neoromanticism and of anti-modernity; they also spread confusion and worry through fear-mongering.

In *The New York Times*, modernity was also frequently critiqued, but in a more reserved way than by the British newspapers discussed above. In fact, *The New York Times* during the 1960s treated modernity with less scepticism and had less content inspired by neoromanticism than British newspapers. Many articles concentrated on contemporary research on heart disease and cancer, all of which were trying to pinpoint which chemicals people were consuming too much of and of which too little. *The New York Times* still portrayed an image of a heroic medicine and progressive science which constantly improved health. This reflects a much wider historical and cultural phenomenon in the United States, which was a preoccupation with orthodoxy and its struggle against quackery.⁴⁴⁵

The US experienced a boom of self-help, alternative and radical diet commentators, which in alignment with what Warren Bellasco has defined as the food counterculture, aimed to disperse confusion and doubt. The FDA had no inhibitions or concerns when seizing diet books and diet products, defaming persons and organisations

⁴⁴³ Nathoo, *Hearts Exposed*, p. 2.

⁴⁴⁴ J. Bishop and Automobile Association, *Great Events of the 20th Century* (Basingstoke: Automobile Association, 1989), p. 251; N. Wenborn, *The Hamlyn Pictorial History of the 20th Century* (London: Hamlyn, 1999), p. 392.

⁴⁴⁵ J. Harley Warner. *The Therapeutic Perspective: Medical Practice, Knowledge, and Identity in America, 1820-1885* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986).

which it deemed fraudulent or misleading, or filing lawsuits against individuals or organisations. Arguably *The New York Times* embraced a less aggressive antimodernity sentiment and narrative as it did not want its reputation to be tarnished by public denunciations, lawsuits and criticisms from the medical and scientific elite. However, although in *The New York Times* there were many instances in which modernity was not explicitly blamed, a special focus was given to diets and environmental factors contributing to diseases of ‘civilisation’.

A clear representation of *The New York Times*’ more cautious attitude towards the ill-effects of modernity can be seen in Morris Kaplan’s article: ‘Experts to check tribe’s hearing’. Kaplan attributed the findings to a report of an investigation carried out by Dr Samuel Rosen on Mabaans in Sudan. Rosen found that these ‘primitive’ people ‘retained the hearing as they grew old’, as opposed to Westerners who ‘showed a sharply increased hearing loss with each decade of life’.⁴⁴⁶ Rosen had spent the winter of 1960 observing 541 Mabaans and found that their hearing was sharper and superior to people from the West. The following winter he intended to carry out an experiment to observe whether Mabaans’ hearing matched the hearing of animals such as dogs and cats. Dr Rosen’s credentials were displayed to demonstrate his authority on the matter: ‘Rosen an ear surgeon who in 1952 originated modern stapes surgery... His operation restores hearing in people whose deafness is caused by otosclerosis, a hardening of a tiny bone in the inner ear’.⁴⁴⁷ Kaplan then mentioned the group of experts who were to join Rosen to independently examine and review the experiment and its findings. Rosen’s contention was that the Mabaans’ hearing could be attributed to the fact that: ‘The peaceful Mabaans live in huts with straw-thatched roofs. They have no guns or drums. They hunt with spears...The villagers make their loudest noises during merry-making, singing and

⁴⁴⁶ M. Kaplan, ‘EXPERTS TO CHECK A TRIBE’S HEARING: AMAZED BY SUDAN PEOPLE’S KEEN AUDITORY SENSE’, *The New York Times*, (28 December 1961), p. 25.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

dancing'.⁴⁴⁸ More specifically Rosen thought that noise pollution in the West was the major reason why there was such a disparity in the hearing between the Mabaans and Westerners. Urbanisation, industrialisation and consequently civilisation, despite the many advantages and convenience they brought to the West, also had detrimental effects on health. Rosen's study was an example of how modernity began to be viewed as pathogenic and how nature and natural lifestyles began to gain cultural currency in the Anglo-American world.

The second part of the article by Kaplan had a more low-key yet clear point to make. Nowhere else in the article was it mentioned that the Mabaans diet could have been beneficial to their hearing. Yet Kaplan gave the readers some specifics on the Mabaans' diet: 'A staple of their diet is a sour, fermented, soft pasty bread made of durra...But their diet is monotonous and almost free of animal protein. They depend on trapping guinea fowl, rodents and wild game. They spear fish in the White Nile and they eat it with okra and oil extracted from the kernels of wild dates'.⁴⁴⁹ The narrative here is derivative of that reiterated many times by Ancel Keys and those who supported his notion that animal fats were unhealthy. Kaplan later contradicted this argument by only stating which meats and fish the Mabaans ate rather than describing in more depth how this diet was almost devoid of animal products. Nonetheless, Mabaans' diet resembled the stone age diet discussed by Matthew Smith in relation to food allergies.⁴⁵⁰ Diets such as this were praised by many self-help authors, such as Gayelord Hauser, Richard Plimmer, Richard Mackarness and DeForest Clinton Jarvis, who advocated no processed foods, more fermented foods, no sugar, and a lot of physical exercise. The issue of nutrition in a way unified the front against modernity and its diseases as each diet commentator and journalist had a specific

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁰ Smith, *Another Person's Poison*, p. 58.

view of the natural state of humanity and the type of diets that humans were intended to consume in order to achieve ideal health.

The decision to mention what the Mabaans ate, however, remains unclear. Kaplan may have tried to paint a more complete image of the Mabaans so that the readers learned more about them. But Kaplan was also influenced by his own neoromantic notions, that people are happier and healthier when hunting, gathering materials, and participating in community life. Perhaps this was an unintentional attempt at journalistic framing, for Kaplan's description of the Mabaans was only superficial at best: nothing was mentioned of the harsh conditions these 'primitive' people had to endure, such as disease, drought, and famine or the risks of hunting and gathering foods, including accidents or being poisoned by fauna and flora. Scepticism against modernity and the adoration of nature were embedded in American society and encouraged by this kind of reporting.

In magazines too, neoromantic criticisms of modernity featured frequently and forcefully. *Prevention* made naturalisation and anti-modernity its main platform even during the 1950s, but its condemnation of civilisation reached at its apogee during the 1960s. *Prevention* recommended 'natural' foods, methods, and supplements for almost any health issue, condition or disease. Taking infant feeding as an example, *Prevention* quoted a Doctor Levin to urge parents to begin feeding their babies with solid food 'as early as 10 days after birth...He advises that the mother try bananas first...try to mash and give by the spoon... Mother's milk is "Just Right"'.⁴⁵¹ Simultaneously to the promotion of 'natural foods', *Prevention* instructed mothers who could not breast-feed to supplement their babies' diets with home-made vegetable broth, brewer's yeast or crushing rosehips for extra Vitamin C in the formula, but also to follow Adelle Davis' advice to start giving nutritional 'natural' supplements to their infants.⁴⁵² In the same issue, *Prevention* criticised mental hospitals in London for increasing the severity of

⁴⁵¹ Anon, 'The Nourishment a Baby NEEDS', *Prevention*, (January 1960), p. 40.

⁴⁵² *Ibid*, p. 42.

mental disorders. The details of what mental patients were eating was provided by Dr D. Hanes in *The Lancet*.⁴⁵³ ‘What patients get to eat?... breakfast- porridge, marmalade, margarine and tea; dinner-meat pie, cauliflower, potatoes, stewed fruit, Blancmange...and French ice cream; tea...jam, buns, margarine, tea; supper-savory fish, pie, cocoa’.⁴⁵⁴ The author of this article complained that the diet had no ‘natural food’ such as fresh fruit and salad, and that the only vegetable was cauliflower. The author also critiqued the amounts of starch and carbohydrate fed to the patients and the lack of B vitamins, which were ‘proven to be a most important factor in the occurrence and cure of mental illness’.⁴⁵⁵

Like the articles on the Mabaans and the Masai, *Prevention* published an article on the Inuits. Referencing the work of Dr. Shaefer in *The Canadian Medical Association Journal* of 15 August and 1 September 1959, *Prevention* admired the diet and health achieved by “Eskimos”. Their diet almost entirely based on meat and fish caught locally and occasionally the inclusion of vegetables and some fruit resulted in no nutritional deficiencies. Shaefer also argued that ‘until recently... the Eskimos were regarded as being free of “degenerative and civilisation diseases”... most disorders of neuro-hormonal regulation (diabetes, arthritis, etc.), psychosomatic diseases, essential hypertension, presenile hardening of the arteries and some forms of neoplastic diseases (tumors) have never been observed in pure-blood Eskimos living in the old native fashion.’⁴⁵⁶ One more factor contributing to the overall health of the Eskimos was their high levels of physical activity, as the article argued the Eskimos had to fight for food or run away from danger ‘providing plenty of opportunity for blowing off steam’. According to the author of the article Shaefer pleaded for ‘further study of these primitive people before they were completely overwhelmed by the “blessings” of civilisation’, further

⁴⁵³ Anon, ‘What do our mental patients eat’, *Prevention*, (January 1960), pp. 43-45.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁶ Anon, ‘Life Among the Eskimos’, *Prevention*, (February 1960), pp. 83-85.

demonstrating the cultural currency of ‘nature’ and primitive lifestyles which was also accepted by various industries in the promotion of their goods.⁴⁵⁷

In January 1961, *Time* published an extensive article on Ancel Keys and dietary saturated fat. Keys at that time had a varied, yet prominent career: when he began his time at university he studied chemistry but in the end he switched majors and earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Economics and Political Science and then a Master’s Degree in Zoology followed by a Doctorate in Oceanography.⁴⁵⁸ This led him to study animal physiology in which he gained a second doctorate from Cambridge. Keys then experimented on himself regarding the effects of nutrition on high altitudes which made the US Army offer him the task of developing K-rations.⁴⁵⁹ His next endeavour involved studying the effects of starvation on thirty-six conscientious objectors to the war which he published in the influential *The Biology of Human Starvation* (1950). Ancel Keys during the 1940s had observed a peculiar phenomenon in The Twin Cities of Minnesota: many of the obituaries announced in newspapers referred to heart disease. This led him to study the sera of men, laying the groundwork for the Keys’ formula about the effect of saturated fat on blood cholesterol. Following correspondence with the Italian cardiologist Mario Mancini, Keys visited Naples where he found that heart disease was virtually non-existent in Italy, which then fuelled his ambition to prove his hypothesis.⁴⁶⁰ The *Time* article which spanned more than four pages - three pages longer than virtually every other medical story - brought American and Western diets in general under scrutiny. The article

⁴⁵⁷ One example is Display Advertising, Ribena, *The Times*, (9 February 1960), p. 12.

⁴⁵⁸ I. Oransky, ‘Obituary: Ancel Keys’, *The Lancet*, 364 (December, 2004), 2174; ‘Ancel Keys MS PhD’, *University of Minnesota Online*, <http://www.epi.umn.edu/cvdepi/bio-sketch/keys-ancel/> [accessed 28 August 2018]; J. Brody, ‘Dr. Ancel Keys, 100, Promoter of Mediterranean Diet, Dies’, *The New York Times Online*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2004/11/23/obituaries/dr-ancel-keys-100-promoter-of-mediterranean-diet-dies.html> (23 November 2004), [accessed 17 September 2018]; C. Reed, ‘Ancel Keys: The dietician who promoted the virtues of the Mediterranean diet’, *The Guardian Online*, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2004/dec/08/guardianobituaries1> (8 December 2004), [accessed 12 September 2018]; P. Sullivan, ‘Ancel Keys, K Ration Creator, Dies’, *The Washington Post Online*, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A7213-2004Nov23.html> (24 November 2004), [accessed 20 September 2018].

⁴⁵⁹ High calorie rations that were consumed by American soldiers during World War II.

⁴⁶⁰ Keys and his wife Margaret liked Italy and the Mediterranean lifestyle so much they used their books’ earnings to buy a beach house near Naples.

condemned high-fat, high-calorie diets of the West and promoted low-cholesterol diets. One of the chosen images was Cruikshank's *A Swallow at Christmas* which offered a vivid iconography of the perception of Western populations and diets by Ancel Keys.

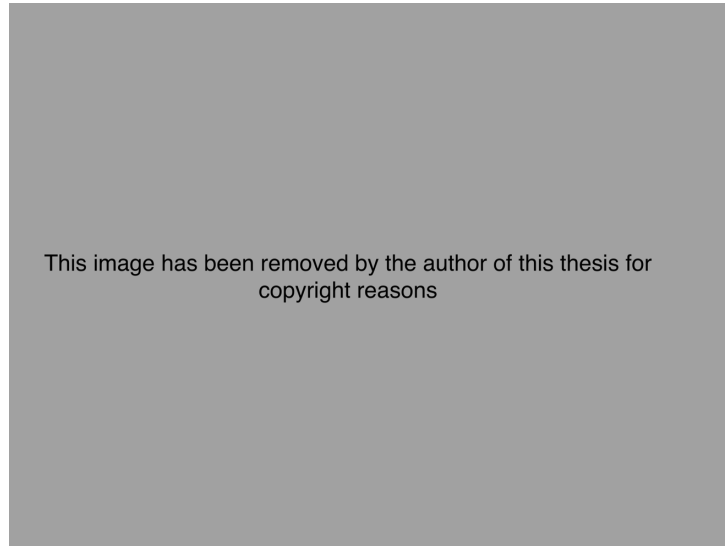


Figure 5 Cruikshank's *A Swallow at Christmas* (1841)

Keys' central premise was that 'modern' diets and lifestyles had created an obesity epidemic and health consciousness: 'The Metropolitan Life Insurance Co...48 million Americans are overweight...ten million Americans spend \$900 million on vitamins, tonics and other food supplements.'⁴⁶¹

Time's article stated that there was an increased market in, and curiosity for, diet and health which was addressed by Ancel Keys in his 1959 best-selling book *Eat Well and Stay Well*.⁴⁶² Keys was a prominent scientific commentator with a strong research and publication track record.⁴⁶³ Certainly the fact that he was part of the team developing K-rations that aided the war effort during World War II played a role in Keys popularity,

⁴⁶¹ Anon, 'The Fat of the Land', *Time*, (January 1961), pp. 48-52.

⁴⁶² *Ibid*, p. 48.

⁴⁶³ Ancel Keys seemed to have a similar personality and method of disseminating his ideas as Cesare Lombroso. According to David Gentilcore because of his frequent publications in various media, his in-depth laboratory and clinical research based on the dominant ideology of the late nineteenth century - bacteriology- (Keys based his on chronic disease epidemiology and population studies), and his perceived image and status managed due to expediency to convince the Italian government that his toxicozeist theory was the reason why people suffered from pellagra. See D. Gentilcore, 'Dietary Change and Epidemic Disease: Fame, Fashion, and Expediency in the Italian Pellagra Disputes 1852-1902', in D. Gentilcore and M. Smith (eds), *Proteins, Pathologies and Politics*, 53-66.

and so did his 1944-1946 Minnesota Starvation Experiment.⁴⁶⁴ Henry Blackburn, former division head of epidemiology at the School of Public Health of the University of Minnesota between 1983-1990, recalled another episode that gave Keys exposure but also opposition. Keys participated in a World Health Organisation (WHO) study group. This was the first ever group on ischemic heart disease that took place in Geneva in 1955, where Keys was especially challenged by Sir George Pickering, who asked him to provide evidence for his diet-heart hypothesis.⁴⁶⁵ Keys cited one study but the group was quick to dismiss it as insufficient and inconclusive. After suffering this humiliation, Keys set out to prove his hypothesis was correct. Nonetheless, as stated earlier - and as the following chapter demonstrates - by 1959, when Keys decided to publish in a popular platform, his studies were not yet completed and there was no uniform scientific consensus on the topic. Yet Keys had influential support, as for example the American Heart Organisation sanctioned his theory in December 1960, as well as Harvard Professor Frederick Stare and cardiologist Irvine Page - also an investigator in the Framingham study - who was also featured in the cover of *Time* on 31 October 1955. But the main factor in Keys' popularity and why *Time* chose his story was the fact that he and his theories captivated the imagination of the medical community and the public to the extent that his self-help book became a best-seller. *Time* had recognised a story that would delight 'healthmaniacs' which was bound to be discovered, perhaps by *Newsweek* or any other major news corporation, and decided to write about Keys first. Even though scepticism about modern diets and the valorisation of nature were already growing during the twentieth century, Keys being featured on the cover of one of the most widely circulated magazines in the U.S. and in the world brought the cholesterol-heart hypothesis

⁴⁶⁴ T. Tucker, *The Great Starvation Experiment: The Heroic Men who Starved so that Millions Could Live* (New York: Free Press, 2006), p. ix-x.

⁴⁶⁵ The Regents of the University of Minnesota, 'Health Revolutionary: The Life & Work of Ancel Keys', *University of Minnesota Libraries, University Archives Online*, <https://umedia.lib.umn.edu/node/88945>, [accessed December 1 2017].

unprecedented publicity. Not only were American diets criticised, but also the ‘ancient wisdom’ of the Mediterranean people and the naturalness of their diet were elevated to the highest status.

Advertisements and the valorisation of nature in the 1960s

Advertisements running in the pages of the newspapers considered in this chapter demonstrate the extent to which nature was increasingly valorised and exploited by companies who recognised the potential for financial gain. Neoromantic thought and the return to nature was evident in an advertisement by Ribena in *The Times*: ‘The *natural* protection against colds and flu is Vitamin C. Children especially need Vitamin C, for besides warding off infections, it helps build up strong bones and teeth...Doctors will tell you that Ribena is much more than just the delicious drink children think it is’.⁴⁶⁶ The word *natural* was repeated four times in a paragraph-long advertisement, and it was italicised three times and used in a capitalised sentence. Drawing attention to this word was not coincidental, as it was taking advantage of health biases and beliefs that ‘natural’ foods promoted immune systems. Ribena’s advertisement pointed out another ‘disease of civilisation’, which was the fragility of bones and teeth. Bad teeth was a topic frequently discussed during the 1950s and 1960s, as overconsumption of products containing sugar became more prevalent; in fact some commentators discussed ways in which to combat tooth decay in children. Manufacturers of Ribena regarded bad teeth (coming from ‘modern foods’) as an ‘unnatural’ condition, which was faulty reasoning as sweet fruit and honey - which are considered natural - also caused tooth decay. But Ribena presented its product as ‘natural’, although in reality it was mildly-processed. (Figure 6)

⁴⁶⁶ Display Advertising, ‘Ribena’, *The Times*, (9 February 1960), p. 12.

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Figure 6 Display Advertising, 'Ribena', The Times, (February 1960), p. 12.

The second point worth noting about Ribena is its decision to include a sentence stating that doctors thought Ribena was that so much more than a beverage. The cultural authority of the doctor had not diminished in the 1960s, and it is evident that nature and orthodox medicine complemented each other. This addressed another preoccupation of 'modern' parenthood, which was to ensure an educated and informed upbringing of children. The housewife no longer made her own medicines, but bought medicines and health products to facilitate health in the family. Modern women increasingly joined the workforce and with more time constraints wanted to buy healthy foods and drinks for their families.

Fathers too, who increasingly shared responsibilities for bringing up their children, faced similar preoccupations. Rima Apple's notion of 'scientific motherhood' incorporated more areas of expertise whereby parents needed help to 'scientifically' raise their children.⁴⁶⁷ What Ribena promoted was a new chimeric version of modernity where nature and naturalness were integrated with medicine into everyday life.

The image in Ribena's advertisement in Figure 6 alluded also to the benefits of naturalness. A blonde smiling woman in her thirties (the mother) looks at her blonde, beautiful, smiling daughter in horse-riding gear petting a horse while it chews hay. Ribena wanted to portray its product as one consumed by relatively wealthy families. This was to reinforce the perception of the product as a high status good, to sell to those who fetishized possession and consumption of such products. Both the mother and the daughter were Caucasian and blonde but also appeared to be healthy with straight white teeth, which many regarded as the epitome of wellness. Horseback-riding was a metaphor for the version of healthy modernity that Ribena was promoting.

Naturalness was also adopted by many of the advertisers in *The Daily Mail*. Like Ribena, Ovaltine promoted the naturalisation of modernity in its advertisements.⁴⁶⁸ (Figure 7)

⁴⁶⁷ R. Apple, 'Constructing Mothers: Scientific Motherhood in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', *Social History of Medicine*, 8, no. 2, (1995), 161–178.

⁴⁶⁸ Display Ad, 'Ovaltine', *The Daily Mail*, (8 January 1960), p. 1.

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Figure 7 Display Advertising, 'Ovaltine', The Daily Mail, (8 January 1960), p. 1.

Ovaltine presented its product as a remedy to modern life - which was unnatural - but more significantly portrayed it as one made from natural products. Its capitalisation of nature, malt, milk and eggs served the purpose of emphasizing the fact that Ovaltine was not 'chemical' or 'modern', but rather a natural product, made possible only by modern techniques. The advertisement contradicted its previous statement by stressing that Ovaltine was also fortified with extra vitamins, but nonetheless Ovaltine was selling an idealised - almost utopian - modernity founded on both nature and technological advancement. Natural foods were to treat the strains of modernity, provide energy and sustenance and benefit people of all ages.

The imagery of the Ovaltine advertisement was familiar. It portrayed what appears to be a wealthy family of four members at the dining table. The mother who is wearing a

tight shirt and skirt, with her hair groomed, lipstick and pearl earrings, holds a tray with Ovaltine and two mugs. Her husband, son and daughter sharply dressed in suits and a dress have wide smiles at the sight of the mother bringing Ovaltine to the table. This image not only demonstrates how Ovaltine wanted its product to be perceived in terms of higher socio-economic status, but also as a family good. The portrayal of this family was a central selling point as they were seemingly well-adjusted and functional, but more importantly a happy family. A significant element behind this 'perfect' family was the 'perfect' wife/mother who had sufficient time to take care of her appearance, take care of the family, and was intelligent in her choices of foods. The parents' gaze on the children might be interpreted as joyous, but also shared a sense of pride. The children look well-behaved, well-dressed and appreciative of the efforts of their mother, which was a selling point to mothers with energetic or disruptive children. By buying a 'natural' product, parents - but especially the mother - could ensure that their families were to be healthy and protected from the ailments of modernity such as the break-up of families, and ill-health from 'modern' life and 'unnatural' products.

In both *The Times* and *The Daily Mail's* advertising spaces there was another element contributing to the condemnation of modernity spreading fear and scepticism, namely public health campaigns. The British Heart Foundation's advertisements in both newspapers demonstrate the extent of cardiophobia or the cultural demonization of heart disease. (Figure 8)

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Figure 8 Display Advertising, 'British Heart Foundation Appeal', The Times, (18 August, 1966), p. 13.

The message in these campaigns and advertisements was that diseases of civilisation were on the rise and that the general public should be made aware of the dangers. At a time when heart disease and cancer were central points in public health discourse this further promoted sentiments against modernity.⁴⁶⁹ The image in this advertisement makes it clear that if 'healthy' lifestyles were not embraced many people would die prematurely. It also placed the family centre stage. Following almost two decades of reports that men were those who usually prematurely died of heart disease, this kind of advertisement vocalised it further. Readers were encouraged to eat more healthily and take care of their health to maintain the integrity and functionality of the family and to continue providing for children. For the wife it invoked fear for her own life but more importantly for her husband's, as even in the 1960s when women increasingly joined the workforce, men

⁴⁶⁹ G. Grob, *The Deadly Truth: A History of Disease in America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002), p. 250.

were still more easily employable, had more stable jobs, and earned more to support their families. This magnified wives' roles as health providers and facilitators.

The New York Times' advertising pages had many similarities with the British newspapers. In the advertisements displayed in the pages of *The New York Times*, however, the term 'natural' became increasingly problematic, as various companies indiscriminately claimed their products were natural, when they were in fact man-made. The concept of nature and its use in American advertising was more perplexing than in the UK. There was a significantly greater number of companies competing for consumers, as well as more diverse industries and more specialised products than in the UK. Portraying various commodities as natural created confusion as to what was natural and created more scepticism towards modernity. Many incorporated neoromantic notions in their advertising and marketing campaigns. One example of this was a meal-in-a-carton company called Borden's. Borden's promised its customers 'A full day's nutrition but only 900 calories... natural dairy-fresh taste' that would: 'quiet that hunger feeling with natural fullness of this fresh milk-base food drink'.⁴⁷⁰

The second way in which advertisers chose to promote their products was by blaming civilisation and modernity for various ailments, particularly the American way of living. Wesson's, a pure vegetable company, wanted to sell its product to counteract the impact of modern diets on health, thus having all the benefits of civilisation without the dietary consequences of modernity. Its advertisement took the role of educator as it included the latest statement by the American Heart Association: 'The reduction or control of fat consumption under medical supervision, with reasonable substitution of poly-unsaturated for saturated fats, is recommended as a possible means of preventing atherosclerosis, and decreasing the risks of heart attacks and strokes. This recommendation is based on the best scientific information available at the present

⁴⁷⁰ Display Advertising, 'Borden's', *The New York Times*, (3 November 1960), p. 33.

time'.⁴⁷¹ Wesson's then stated: 'In the usual diet eaten in the United States, a large part of the fat is of the saturated type. Too much of this type of fat tends to increase the cholesterol in the blood'. The advertisement then recommended its own product as a natural and healthy poly-unsaturated fat.⁴⁷²

In a similar manner to the British Heart Foundation, the American Heart Association ran frequent advertising campaigns. One of them stated that more than fifty years earlier, in 1915, there had been a crucial turning point for this organisation, as a group of doctors began realising the imminent threat of heart disease and decided to present a unified front against it.⁴⁷³ As John Burnham has suggested, scientists saw themselves as battling against the evil of disease. What is crucial about this advertisement is the fact that it fits reductionist narratives of the diseases of civilisation - prior to the twentieth century there was virtually no heart disease - but it fails to discuss the many infectious diseases that it replaced. Reading these advertisements in conjunction with reading the news generated fear of diseases to come and further discontent with civilisation.

Nature, naturalness and neoromantic notions also featured in the pages of *Prevention*. An example of this can be seen in Wagner's Creamed Papaya: 'Nature's aid to digestion... Nature's Wonder-Fruit, a delicious, tropical, melon-like fruit that is rich in Vitamins A and C and is an excellent source of a natural, digestive enzyme called papain...Natives of the tropics have referred to this melon as the "Fruit of the Gods"...a healthful food that aids stomach and intestinal disorders...Wagner's pure, unsweetened, unadulterated creamed Papaya is prepared from tree-ripened Papayas organically grown in the forest'.⁴⁷⁴ This advertisement promoted the adoration of everything 'natural', enhanced the status of the noble-savage knowledge, and simultaneously used science to

⁴⁷¹ Display Advertising, 'Wesson's', *The New York Times*, (12 December 1960), p. 12.

⁴⁷² *Ibid.*

⁴⁷³ Display Advertising, 'American Heart Association', *The New York Times*, (29 January 1967), p. 411.

⁴⁷⁴ Display Advertising, 'Wagner's Creamed Papaya', *Prevention*, (February 1961), p. 26.

promote this product. But the healing power of nature, organic foods, the outdoors and physical activity were focal points in the advertisements of most companies that chose *Prevention* to promote their products. (Figure 9)

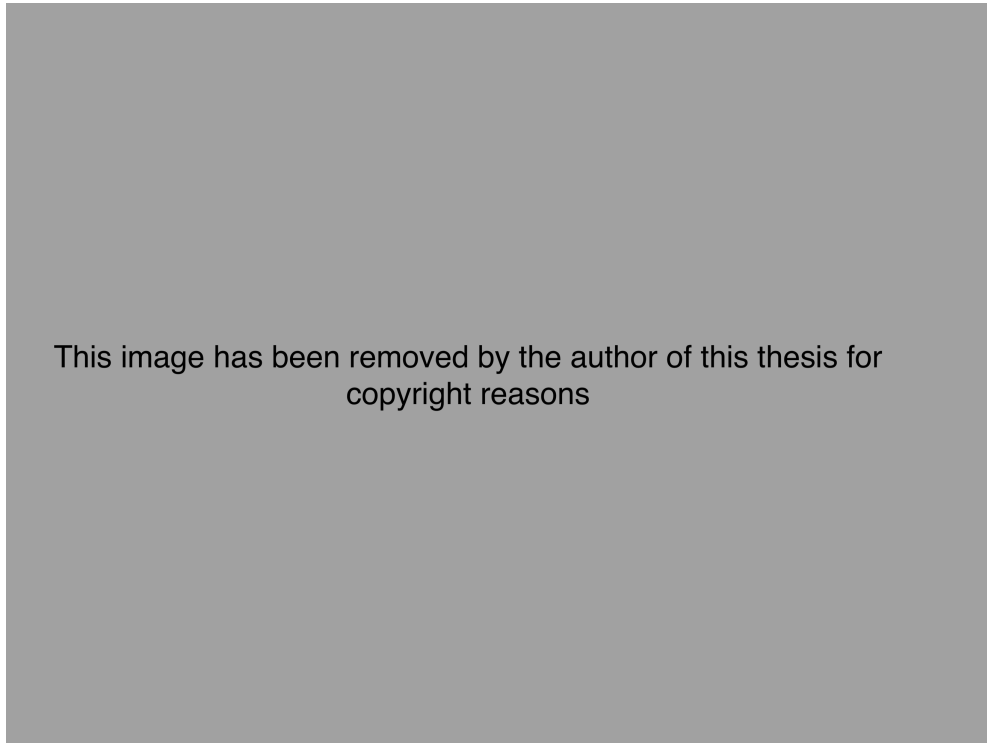


Figure 9 Display Advertisement, 'Rancho la Puerta', Prevention, (January 1960). n.111.

A fundamental difference between *The New York Times*, *The Daily Mail* and *The Times* lies in the fact that the former was heavily saturated by advertisements of books and celebrities from the self-help and slimming book genres. It is not precisely clear why the self-help genre advertised so much more in the US than the UK. In terms of absolute output, the US produced more self-help books than the UK.⁴⁷⁵ Nonetheless, the penetration of newspapers by the self-help and slimming genres contributed towards 'healthmania'. This is a significant point to be made as the self-help genre aimed to attract readers disillusioned with conventional medicine and with modernity and civilisation. Advertisements of different authors and books condemned modern lifestyles. One example was the book advertised in *The New York Times* on 30 October 1960. The title of the book was 'CANCER: DISEASE OF CIVILISATION' written by Vilhjalmur

⁴⁷⁵ Most of the books considered in the previous chapter were published in the United States.

Stefansson, a world-renowned anthropologist.⁴⁷⁶ Stefansson, after studying ‘primitive peoples’ in the Arctic, had found that cancer amongst them was ‘rare or non-existent’, that ‘cancer multiplies as civilisation advances and that a major cause may be white man’s diet’. The reference to ‘white man’s’ diet groups together different peoples and regions to provide a grand narrative whereby Western civilisation now faced the health consequences of modern lifestyles and diets.

Stefansson had written extensively on his experiences with Inuits and published his book on Inuit nutrition in 1946, which was expanded and published with a different name in 1956 and 1960 with a foreword by Frederick Stare and Paul Dudley White.⁴⁷⁷ But his argument and his book synopses compounded the self-help genre. Best-selling authors such as Ancel Keys and Gayelord Hauser also advertised in the pages of *The New York Times*, and books such as *Cancer: Disease of Civilisation* provided support to what other mainstream nutrition authorities promoted. However, this fact does not discount the education or intelligence of readers of *The New York Times*, who could have been able to distinguish orthodox and mainstream science from alternative and self-help nutrition. This line was already substantially blurred as many orthodox authorities embraced some or all of the alternative teachings on diet and health, but also many self-help authors used the same scientific language, jargon, and methods to prove their contentions. Regardless of affiliation and expertise, many of the advertisements echoed Stefansson by condemning modernity and promoting natural diets and lifestyles. In the US antimodernity, neoromanticism, and the countercuisine became prominent sentiments, a development that also occurred in the UK as seen in the situational comedy television show *The Good Life*, which revolved around the life of Tom (Richard Briers) and Barbara Good (Felicity Kendal) who tried to live a self-sustaining lifestyle. By the mid 1970s, UK

⁴⁷⁶ Display Advertising, ‘No Title’, *The New York Times*, (30 October 1960), p. BR47.

⁴⁷⁷ Appearances of Stefansson were seen in Richard Mackarness’ letters to the editor of *The Lancet* and in his self-help book. Stefansson’s book was not featured in best-selling lists though it is not unlikely that it performed well but was not as a big circulation success as the self-help books mentioned in Chapter II.

citizens were so influenced by the organic food movement and natural lifestyles that a television show comically portrayed the life of a couple who wanted to ‘exit the rat race’ to escape modern stress: they avoided eggs with ‘little lions on them’ which was a logo that from the 1950s onwards indicated eggs were British and laid by chickens who had been vaccinated for salmonella and they altered their perception of ‘chemical veg that tastes like cooked blankets’.⁴⁷⁸

Individual agency and responsibility in the 1970s

As in self-help books, newspaper articles, editorials, letters and advertisements were encouraging individuals to internalise health concerns and take agency for their own health. More so than the earlier two decades, the 1970s experienced a heightened promotion of the notion of self-care, but also greater personal, familiar and societal responsibility to follow ‘healthier’ lifestyles. During this decade the disparities between the two British newspapers grew, but also their reporting of health topics was substantially different from that of *The New York Times*.

During the 1970s, the urgency of addressing disease of civilisation was far greater in *The Times*. More articles were written on heart disease, cancer, diabetes and other degenerative diseases, but also political debate on how to combat these by educating and promoting individual agency and responsibility.⁴⁷⁹ Taking Eric Moonman’s ‘Fighting the West’s Man-made Epidemic’ as an example, it is evident that self-reflective and self-

⁴⁷⁸ Some contemporaries thought that other ingredients were injected into chickens and distrusted mass-produced poultry and companies went as far as advertising their eggs as free-range fraudulently to benefit from their ‘healthy’ image see: Anon, ‘Eggs not Free Range’, *The Times*, (5 November 1971), p. 3; Organic and health food became so popular it was reported frequently in *The Times*: E. Kendall, ‘A Taste for Health Food Fare’, *The Times*, (24 September 1971), p. 43; L. Buckley, ‘The Health Food Boom’, *The Times*, (24 June 1971), p. 10; The episodes mentioned here were: ‘Say Little Hen’, *The Good Life*, BBC, 11 April 1975; and, ‘Just my Bill’, *The Good Life*, BBC, 5 December 1975.

⁴⁷⁹ Mainly due to the interests of its new medical correspondent, Dr Tony Smith -who was also assistant editor to *The British Medical Journal*), from 1971 wrote on a range of diet and lifestyle topics including: estrogen replacement therapy, competitiveness and heart disease, the importance of diet and frequent coverage on cancer news. See Anon, ‘Obituaries: Dr Tony Smith’, *The Times*, (10 March 2009), p. 55. Smith devoted much of his time popularising medical and scientific facts as he even published popular books such as the one entitled: *The Medical Risks of Life* (London: Penguin, 1977), he also contributed articles in the magazine of the BMA *Family Doctor* frequently.

promoting individualism gained significant momentum in contemporary scientific thought in general, and more specifically in preventative medicine.⁴⁸⁰ Moonman was a Labour MP voicing his opinion in a popular platform to gain support and promote his ideas more widely. Moonman argued that ‘there is sufficient evidence to show the risks could be significantly reduced if only people knew the facts and acted on them’. Albeit being a member of the Labour party classically associated with government intervention and welfare, Moonman was discussing the financial benefits to the NHS of promoting prevention, which by this point became synonymous with self-care. Instead of proposing policies by which the government could force the food industry to produce healthier foods, in this case to lower cholesterol and sugar, Moonman argued that ‘you cannot blame the public for not knowing’ and stressed an argument put out in private conversation by Professor Jeremy Stamler: ‘People have a right to know’.⁴⁸¹ The pathway to health was to be achieved, by the government, through mass education and ‘sloganisation’; citizens, patients, and individuals were placed at the centre of health discussions.⁴⁸²

Moonman believed that mass-media campaigns could improve health as well-informed people would become active agents of their own health. This contention resonated with self-help and dieting advice which argued for the same principles. Moonman’s faith in people acting accordingly once they had been educated might have been naïve, as there were practical, economic, cultural and personal obstacles to wide

⁴⁸⁰ E. Moonman, ‘Fighting the West’s man-made epidemic’, *The Times*, (14 June 1976) p. 12. This notion of selfhood is discussed further in Jackson and Moore, ‘Balancing the Self in the Twentieth Century’, in Jackson and Moore (eds), *Balancing the Self*, 12-17; Moore, ‘Balance and the “good diabetic” in Britain, c.1900-1960’, in Jackson and Moore (eds), *Balancing the Self*, 38-75; Hand, ‘“Look After Yourself”: visualising obesity as a public health concern in 1970s and 1980s Britain’, in Jackson and Moore (eds), *Balancing the Self*, 112-147.

⁴⁸¹ Moonman, ‘Fighting the West’s man-made epidemic’.

⁴⁸² This resembles Alex Mold’s argument that focusing on the role played by the repositioning of the patient needs to be seen in the light of growing demands for greater patient autonomy and the application of consumerist principles to health. A. Mold, ‘Repositioning the Patient: Patient Organizations, Consumerism, and Autonomy in Britain During the 1960s and 1970s’, *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 87, no. 2, (2013), 225-49.

acceptance and practice of better nutrition and exercise. Previous advice, official announcements and reports had not managed to bring significant improvements in health, perhaps because of the confusion caused by diverging viewpoints. The promotion of individual agency failed to recognise that the science around lowering cholesterol was not uniformly accepted and that there were competing theories. Simply following government guidelines could also turn out to be problematic if the advice proved incorrect.⁴⁸³

The chasm between the reporting of health, science and medicine in *The Daily Mail* and that in *The Times* grew significantly during the 1970s. *The Times* promoted individual agency and responsibility in a more nuanced and reserved matter, whereas *The Daily Mail's* coverage of health issues embraced the practice of direct instruction. Furthermore, *The Daily Mail* continued an increasingly alarmist and sensationalised approach to its coverage of health issues, especially when compared to *The Times*. Readers of *The Daily Mail* were given knowledge, most of it written in plain and easy to understand language, reinforcing their agency over their own health. This can be seen in the article by *The Daily Mail's* medical correspondent John Stevenson on 8 April 1976. Its title was: 'The heart disease peril - fatty food and smoking', but more importantly above the title there was an advice column instructing the readers: 'Cut down on meat, eggs, cheese and butter, say twelve top doctors'.⁴⁸⁴ *The Daily Mail* wrote concisely and simply; it did not consider honorifics, or credentials, or provide its readers with unnecessary jargon and confusing terminology. *The Daily Mail* wrote for the working classes and those who wanted merely a summary of news rather than its entirety. The medicalisation of health and neoromanticism took centre stage in this article. Blaming British modern diets high in cholesterol and saturated fats by quoting the statement by a Royal College of Physicians, *The Daily Mail* made it clear: people should look after their

⁴⁸³ Chapter IV covers studies in the 1970s that showed that a low-fat diet could be carcinogenic.

⁴⁸⁴ J. Stevenson, 'How not to kill off your husband', *The Daily Mail*, (8 April 1976), p. 11.

own diets, cut down their cigarette smoking, and start exercising. Its readers were empowered by the knowledge given, and could now join the ‘fight’ against heart disease by taking responsibility for their health.

Along with the promotion of individual agency, *The Daily Mail* promoted the equally important notion of responsibility.⁴⁸⁵ This was closely entwined with ideas about performativity of gender, gender roles and parenthood. Influenced by conservative ideologies, *The Daily Mail* promoted the responsibility of the wife to keep husbands and children healthy. Many of the health articles were published in the women’s section or were aimed at female audiences, reflecting *The Daily Mail’s* perception of its readership. These articles were aimed at housewives and women in nuclear families who assumed more of a caregiver role. An article written by John Stevenson lectured wives to: ‘Nag fat and lazy husbands’.⁴⁸⁶ Stevenson argued that British wives failed to control their husbands’ diets and that they took no action to force their husbands to exercise. This aligns with the general consensus at the time that men engaged in more dangerous work and behaviour, took less care of their diet, and avoided check-ups by doctors.⁴⁸⁷ This narrative, employed in many other articles in *The Daily Mail*, made a clear statement about men: they were careless with their food and drink, they had no control over their impulses to smoke, eat and drink, and they lacked responsibility, common sense, and agency over their own health. Men were almost equated to other children in the household who needed nagging, reminders, and guidance from the wife. This description echoes the argument by Deborah Lupton and Rima Apple that women were most likely to lead healthier lifestyles and were the ones most preoccupied with diets, especially for

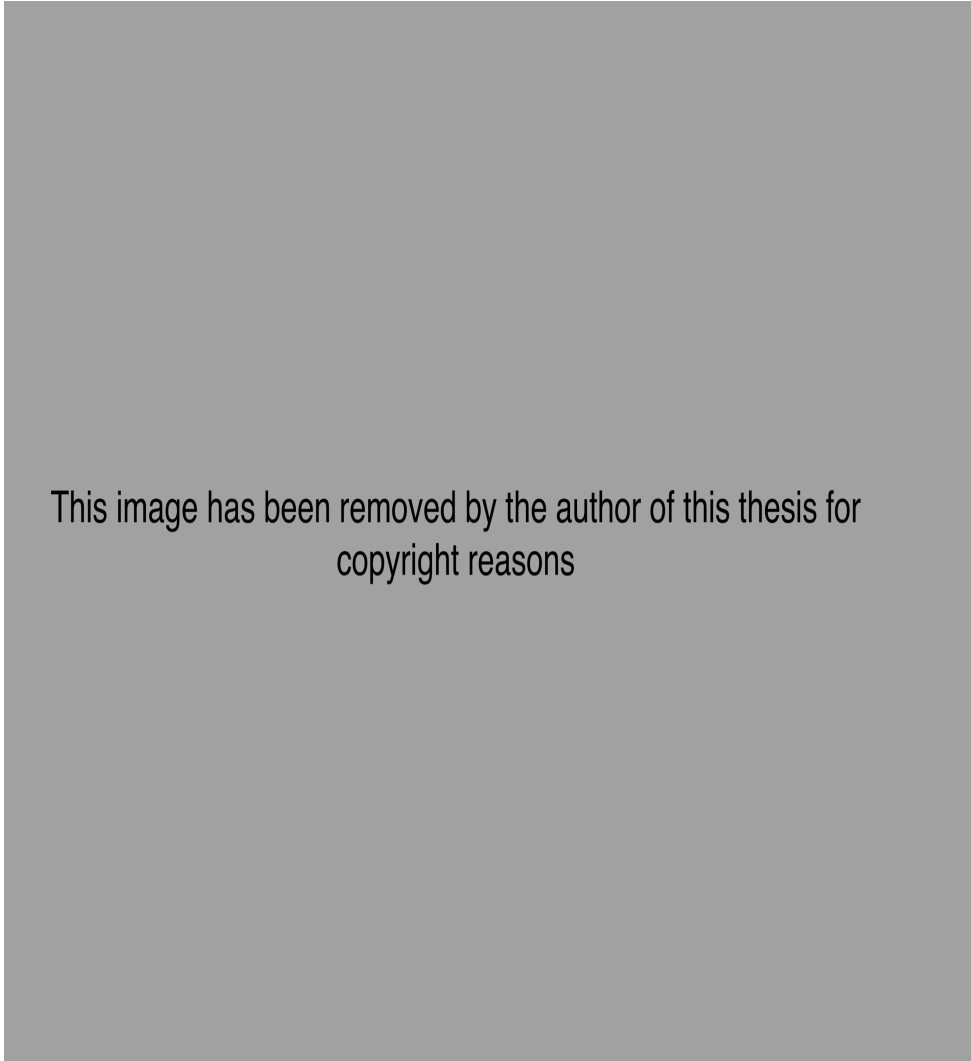
⁴⁸⁵ Instances of the promotion of individual agency: J. Stevenson, ‘Take heart...Butter may be best’, *The Daily Mail*, (25 February 1977), p. 11; Dr Joan Gomez, ‘HOW NOT TO DIE YOUNG...’, *The Daily Mail*, (17 September 1973), pp. 20-21.

⁴⁸⁶ J. Stevenson, ‘Wives Told: Nag Fat and Lazy Husbands’, *The Daily Mail*, (12 May 1972), p. 3.

⁴⁸⁷ R. O’ Brien et al, ‘It’s Caveman Stuff, but that is to a Certain Extent How Guys Still Operate’: Men’s Accounts of Masculinity and Help Seeking.’, *Social Science & Medicine*, 61, no. 3, (2005), 503-516.

slimming.⁴⁸⁸ In most families, women did the shopping for food and cooking and therefore directed their husbands' meals, portion size, the availability of snacks in the home, and frequency of eating.

Gender roles and stereotypes were reinforced by articles in *The Daily Mail* during the 1970s. Women were given an added responsibility to their repertoire of duties towards their families. In matters of nutrition, the mother/wife had to assume the role of the rational parent. This is another instance through which the 'scientific motherhood' of the 1920s and 1930s persisted, but more importantly it was one of the dominant preoccupations promoted by health experts, the food industry, and advertising. This can also be seen in another article warning mothers to take responsibility for their children's



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Figure 10 A. Linacre, 'Hi! Fatty', *The Daily Mail*, (8 November, 1973), p. 12.

⁴⁸⁸ Apple, *Vitamina*, p. 19; Lupton, *Food, the Body and the Self*, pp. 38-39; pp. 81-84; p. 110; See also Carstairs, 'Look Younger, Live Longer', 332-350.

health: ‘Hi! Fatty. Protect Your Child against these taunts’, by Anthea Linacre. The article’s argument was reinforced through visual narrative, evident in Figure 10. The article was either an advertisement for, or a quasi-endorsement of, the Weight-Watchers programme for children, yet the messages it conveyed were of great significance. Mothers were told: “prejudice against fat children goes even further than racialism” says one consultant psychiatrist... “He is Fatty” “Cry Baby” and “Mother’s Boy”... Boys, says the psychiatrist, are likely to suffer even more than girls’.⁴⁸⁹ This reveals another gender issue, namely differences in behaviour and expectations between boys and girls. Heavier boys not only had to face the physical drawbacks of being overweight, but they also apparently faced more bullying and in turn more psychological issues. This further ‘criminalised’ mothers for their neglect or lack of rationality in terms of correct nutritional education.

The New York Times also published an increasing number of articles focussing on individual choices, initiatives and attitudes for the achievement of health during the 1970s. In fact, *The New York Times*’ approach resembled closely the approach adopted by *The Daily Mail*, but used a more eloquent tone and empiricism similar to *The Times*. *The New York Times* promoted a stoic self-governing, self-promoting individualism by reporting on the individual experiences of people who had undertaken the task to improve their health. One instance of ‘survivorship’ coverage is the story by Ernest Holsendolph with the title: ‘Fighting Cholesterol. (Or: Diet, Diet, Diet)’. Holsendolph wrote a detailed account of his attempt to lower cholesterol. Holsendolph was chosen for a government sponsored twenty-six-week experimental programme for the reduction of cholesterol run by the Rockefeller Foundation. The programme involved weighing patients whose blood tests indicated a high cholesterol content and providing them with a twenty-five page information booklet with nutrition advice. These individuals were monitored throughout

⁴⁸⁹ A. Linacre, ‘Hi! Fatty’, *The Daily Mail*, (8 November 1973), p. 12.

the period of twenty-six weeks. The booklet contained detailed lists of approved foods and specific brands with low-cholesterol products. Holsendolph then went on to provide the readers with details about the diet he had to ‘endure’:

Butter, eggs, whole milk, those beautifully marbled steaks, cheeses- all those wonderful things were out... It was brutal. Absolutely no frankfurters (they have an astronomical fat content)...no hamburgers...Dining out became a problem. French restaurants are out because no French restaurant worth its escargot would cook without plenty of butter and cream...Other restaurants proved surprisingly cooperative when I asked to have haddock cooked dry with a slice of lemon on the side, rather than cooked in lemon butter... Then there was a day when I was invited to a swank restaurant only to find that the menu choice was *coq au vin*, sweetbreads, or steak dipping with cream sauce.

The chef was unmovable, so I dined in blissful guilt.⁴⁹⁰

This ‘treatment’ was solely based on the ‘educated’ decisions and ‘informed’ choices of the individual, and it was the duty of participants on the programme to adhere to the nutrition guidelines set by the booklet. A pharmaceutical intervention was only offered to those who saw no positive results at the end of the programme. The implications were clear: if patients like Holsendolph wanted to take care of extra weight and cholesterol count, they had to not only follow the instructions set out by the programme, but to internalise its teachings. They needed to act as thoughtful agents of their own health, plan their dinners out, and anticipate situations where they could not have control of what was served. More significantly they had to ascetically accept foods considered ‘bland’ or ‘unsavoury’, methodically prepare their food, and reduce bad foods in their diet. This was

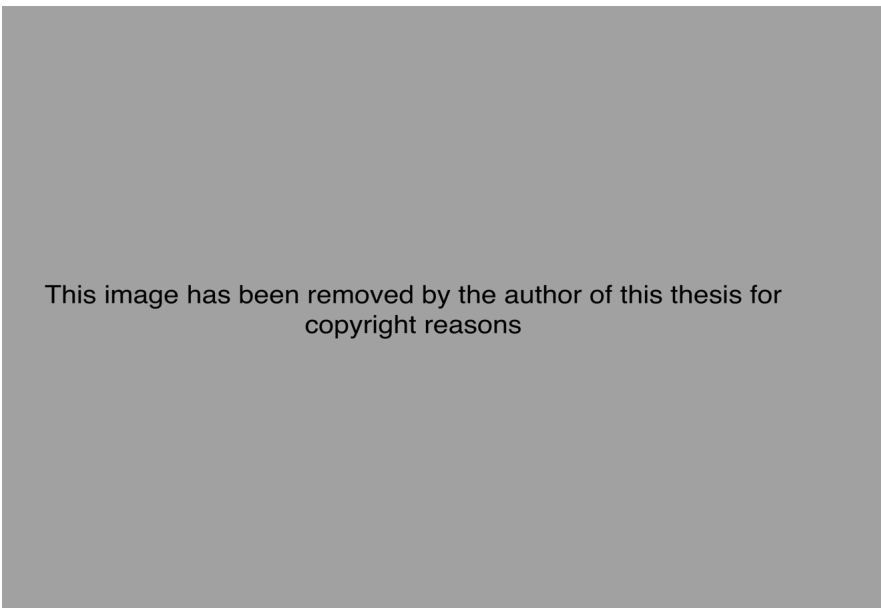
⁴⁹⁰ E. Holsendolph, ‘Fighting Cholesterol. (Or: Diet, Diet, Diet)’, *The New York Times*, (12 February 1975), p. 22.

also another technique that was promoted by self-help authors such as Gayelord Hauser, who urged his readers to make ‘intelligent’ choices.⁴⁹¹

Individual agency, responsibility, and ‘adequate’ education on food, supplements, health and environmental issues had been focal points of *Prevention* since its inception. In the 1950s and 1960s, *Prevention* took every opportunity to criticise orthodox medicine in articles such as ‘Our Medicine is Killing us!’, to denounce research studies as pseudoscience, condemning modern foods, advocating organic foods, and valorising nature.⁴⁹² By the 1970s, *Prevention* perceived its readers as intelligent, critical of mainstream science and the food industry, and empowered to live ‘healthier’ lifestyles; they were the ultimate ‘healthmaniacs’. In many of its articles, *Prevention* mainly reported on medical news or controversies, providing readers with many options or suggestions, leaving the choice of actions to be taken for health to readers. This style of coverage can be seen in the eleven-page article on research on supplements used against cancer in July 1972. *Prevention* readers learned that ‘a six-man team of West Coast researchers has now identified...that inhibitor...nicotinamide, or Vitamin B3’. In addition, they were given information about differences between normal cells and cancer cells, and about what happened when B3 supplementation was given to cancer patients. (Figure 11)

⁴⁹¹ G. Hauser, *Look Younger, Live Longer* (New York: Farrar Straus, 1950), p. 36.

⁴⁹² Anon, ‘Our Medicine is Killing Us!’, *Prevention*, (January 1961), p.77.



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Figure 11 Anon, 'Food Supplements Fight against Cancer', *Prevention*, (July 1972), p. 140.

Supplementation was one of the routes offered to 'modern' people by *Prevention* to let them know that they could take their health into their own hands, a responsibility that fell to the individual and the family. Another way in which individual agency was promoted could be seen in another section of this article. This was called 'Avoiding Cancer-Causing Agents', whereby readers were given information on what to avoid and what to eat: avoid 'colourings, preservatives, emulsifiers, artificial sweeteners, buffers, anti-foaming agents...stick to natural unprocessed foods...insist on foods grown organically...eliminate pesticide and defoliant residues and synthetic hormones'.⁴⁹³ What followed was the promotion of collective agency for health.

And, of course we fight for a better environment. For controls on auto exhaust and industrial smokestack emissions. For legislation to ban dangerous pesticides and food additives that have not been proven safe by rigorous and independent research. We join the mounting battle against nuclear power plants whose radioactive emissions under permitted levels is estimated to increase the incidence of cancer by 10 per cent.⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁹³ Anon, 'Food Supplements Fight against Cancer', *Prevention*, (July 1972), pp. 138-149.

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

Prevention concluded with an optimistic statement, that a natural diet that insures ‘against cancer-causing chemicals in food is the diet that gives cells the best biological structure to resist cancer-causing agents’. Readers were informed, they were empowered, and they belonged to a group that resisted diseases of civilisation, but also they were responsible for their own health and collective health, through purchasing healthy products.⁴⁹⁵

The 1970s marked an age of extreme health consumerism. Readers of *The Times*, *The Daily Mail* and *The New York Times* were bombarded with advertisements that urged them to start taking care of their own health. In *The Times* advertisement by Flora one can see a line of thought similar to the article by Anthea Linacre in *The Daily Mail*. Flora had only one demographic in mind when creating this advertisement: women consumers. Like the mothers of obese children in *The Daily Mail* article, wives reading this advertisement were given responsibility for the health of their husbands.⁴⁹⁶ As Jane Hand has argued, brands like Flora were ‘increasingly committed to utilising health as a means of creating market segmentation separate from ongoing concerns about flavour and nutritive quality throughout most of the second half of the twentieth century’.⁴⁹⁷ The same assumption about men not caring about their health, neglecting themselves and potentially harming themselves with bad habits was made by Flora, which provided wives with techniques to safeguard their husbands’ health and counteract any unhealthy habits. Health for the wife, the husband and potentially the children was an attainable good that could be purchased in the form of a plastic container filled with margarine. Flora’s marketing technique did not avoid scientific jargon and portrayed its margarine as tasty so that the husband would ‘like the change’, inspiring confidence in the taste, appearance and texture of its margarine.

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹⁶ Display Advertising, ‘Flora’, *The Times*, (6 June 1974), p. 15.

⁴⁹⁷ J. Hand, ‘Marketing Health Education: Advertising Margarine and Visualising Health in Britain from 1964-c. 2000’, *Contemporary British History*, 31, no. 4 (2017), 477.

In *The Daily Mail* readers could find advertisements for all sorts of ‘healthy’ products. One such product was Natrodale Naturavite which asked readers: ‘Are you getting most out of life?’. The question was not a philosophical or a rhetorical one. Naturavite answered:

To get most out of life you need good health and good health demands a full, varied and properly prepared diet. If your busy life means you often make do with hurried snacks, or skip meals altogether; if you are convalescing or “feeling low”- or particularly if you are on a slimming diet- you may be depriving your body of the essential nutrients it needs.⁴⁹⁸

The advertisement criticised ‘modern’ eating habits and dieting. Readers were reminded about the natural goodness of Naturavite and urged to prove that they made the most out of life through purchasing and taking this supplement, which was on special offer. Naturavite came with the gift of a free booklet on herbs, where to find them, and their properties, produced by J.I Rodale Press, the same company that published *Prevention* magazine.

Cultural distaste towards obesity and extra weight, or what Levenstein calls lipophobia, reached unprecedented levels during this decade.⁴⁹⁹ Advertisements offered weight loss programmes, self-help books, supplements, exercise bikes and advice on health foods. Slim bodies increasingly became equated with healthy bodies in the 1970s advertisements. As in the self-help genre, advertisements offered easy to follow diets, advice on how to eat large quantities of specific foods and foods perceived as luxuries, and how to manage to lose weight with minimal effort. In another *The Daily Mail* advertisement slimming was equated to becoming healthier. ‘GET SLIM BY EATING’

⁴⁹⁸ Display Advertising, ‘Naturavite’, *The Daily Mail*, (17 January 1978).

⁴⁹⁹ H. Levenstein, ‘The Perils of Abundance: Food, Health and Morality in American History’, in Jean-Louis Flandrin and Massimo Montanari (eds), *Food: A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present*, A. Sonnenfeld (trans.) (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 516-529.

read the title of a Simbix advertisement in enormous black letters. The advertisement then stated:

Surprising idea isn't it? Until now, perhaps you thought you could only get slim by starving...Not so, but of course what you eat is important. There is now a new slimming plan that lets you eat three good meals a day. Plenty of meat, fish, cheese and vegetables. Yes, lots of your favourite foods...And you can still lose weight. Case histories which have been controlled by Doctors show weight losses of 10lb. in 14 days.⁵⁰⁰

Readers could use this product to lose a large amount of weight, but still eat enough tasty food to be healthy as this product was 'endorsed' by doctors. Taking care of oneself was important but the purchase of specialised supplements could speed up the process and make losing weight more efficient and enjoyable. A slim body (a healthy body) could in essence be purchased.

As in the previous two decades, the 1970s *The New York Times*' advertising sections were populated by health foods and supplements, as well as a greater number of self-help book advertisements than the British newspapers. It seemed that there was an advertisement for every health problem that could be cured or prevented by following the advice of self-help authors. For example, one could 'drastically reduce the risk of heart attack - by following the simple, satisfying "Prudent Diet" developed in the famous "Anticoronary Club" research project'. Diet and its relation to mental health too appeared in the advertisements of many self-help books. Dr Richard Tyson M.D. urged readers of *The New York Times* to 'relax-and-lose', by following his 'Meditation Diet'. Tyson equated slim bodies with healthy bodies too and he let readers of *The New York Times* know that they had agency and responsibility for their health:

⁵⁰⁰ Display Advertising, 'Get Slim by Eating', *The Daily Mail*, (6 April 1970), p. 6.

Your mind must be programmed so that you can change the way you think about food and yourself. Meditations helps you remove the negative resistors in your mind that have made you fail in diet after diet. Actually meditation frees you to arrive at total fulfilment as a slim, trim, healthy person.⁵⁰¹

Agency and responsibility were important to combat contemporary carcinophobia. Not only was cancer one of the most feared conditions during the 1970s, but increasingly individual types of cancer were becoming ‘the enemy’ in self-help books’ advertisements. One advertisement read: ‘Now - America’s Foremost Nutritionist says YOU DON’T HAVE TO BECOME A BREAST CANCER VICTIM’. Under this title the advertisements offered all the reasons - especially for women - to purchase *Breast Cancer: A Nutritional Approach*. Strategies included taking birth control pills or estrogen and paying attention to diet:

Finally, he provides all the information you need to plan your own cancer-preventing diet, including a guide to buying vitamin and mineral supplements that meet your needs...especially food checklists, a chart that gives sugar contents...and a complete bibliography for further reading...BREAST CANCER: A Nutritional Approach may save the lives of countless women and improve the well-being of this and future generations. It belongs in every woman’s home including yours. Order your copy NOW.⁵⁰²

The effect of diet on health, regular reminders that healthy eating and supplements were required, and the placement of responsibility on the consumer encapsulated what Parasecoli has referred to as the commodification of health in Anglo-American societies.⁵⁰³

⁵⁰¹ Display Advertising, ‘Relax and Lose’, *The New York Times*, (2 May 1976), p. BR14.

⁵⁰² Display Advertising, ‘You Don’t Have to Become A Breast Cancer Victim’, *The New York Times*, (12 October 1977), p. 69.

⁵⁰³ F. Parasecoli, *Bite Me: Food in Popular Culture* (New York: Berg, 2008), p. 99.

Conclusion

Between 1950 and 1980, medical news became available to be read during the leisure time of Anglo-Americans. The increased reach of medicine and widespread literacy and education created a public who wished to learn more and improve their diets. Simultaneously the press increasingly produced such content to capitalise on the growing market for such stories. Episodes such as President Eisenhower's heart attack increasingly brought diet into the medical and public arenas. The studies reported, along with advertisements of products in the 1950s, contributed to a further cultural concern with medical facts and statistics.

During the 1960s the lipid-theory for heart-disease gained popularity in the Anglo-American press. Ancel Keys, the proponent of this theory, was featured on the front cover of *Time* magazine. By being discussed in such a popular and widely read publication, Keys' hypothesis gained greater significance in contemporary debates about heart disease. However, behind Ancel Keys' story in *Time* was a criticism of modernity and civilisation. Complemented by the various articles comparing 'Western' diets and lifestyle, but also the alarmist and fearmongering content in these newspapers, heart disease peaked in the contemporary preoccupations of Anglo-Americans. Neoromantic naturalism was embraced by advertisers as in the case of Ribena which promoted its product as natural. Industries chose to advertise their products to fit a new 'ideology': the naturalisation of modernity, which was the enjoyment of modern comforts and technology, but also of 'natural' foods and lifestyles legitimised by science.

During the 1970s, as diet was increasingly medicalised, scientism and neoromantic notions of health and individual agency towards health received renewed interest from the Anglo-American press. Capturing the sentiment of the movement for empowering citizens, commentators such as Moonman were arguing for widespread education of the public. *The Daily Mail* and *The New York Times* embraced a style of

reporting that instructed readers. More specifically, *The Daily Mail* promoted individual agency and responsibility for health, and reinforced the ‘familial’ responsibility of wives and mothers to maintain the health of their households.

Both the British and Americans read about the latest medical studies and were initiated into a mentality of cardiophobia and carcinophobia, but were simultaneously instructed about the value of taking care of their own health and that of their families. They were encouraged not only to purchase knowledge through pamphlets and self-help books, but also to buy health foods, supplements, exercising equipment, monitoring devices, and expensive tests. The Anglo-American press and the advertisements contained in its pages further turned the quest for health into an obsession. Various medical journals, studies, opinions and more importantly prominent scientists and researchers shaped what was reported in these newspapers during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Authorities like Brock, Cleave, Mann, and Keys published their findings in medical journals first, which framed the press coverage of health issues. The divergence of opinions and the vast number of studies within medical journals could not be comprehensively and accurately reported by the press. The next chapter will provide an analysis of the main medical themes and controversies published by the oldest and most established general medicine journals from the UK and US: *The British Medical Journal*, *The Lancet*, *The New England Journal of Medicine*, and *The Journal of the American Medical Association*. In doing so, it will explore the ways in which many of the stories presented in the press had originally been disseminated and debated in the medical and scientific literature.

Chapter IV

Linking health, longevity and diet: medical research in the UK and the US

The medicalisation of everyday life and diet seen in the popular press reflected a move towards lifestyle medicine. In this chapter, analysis of four prominent medical journals in the US and the UK demonstrate how contemporary debates and anxieties about health were initiated by the medical profession itself. Original articles, editorials and letters to the editors in the pages of *The British Medical Journal*, *The Lancet*, *The Journal of the American Medical Association* and *The New England Journal of Medicine*, help to explain why and how the press and the public focussed on heart disease and cholesterol during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s.

As in the self-help genre, during the 1950s discourses on heart disease were led by a few physicians, nutritionists, cardiologists, and epidemiologists. Ancel Keys, Frederick Stare, Paul White, Meyer Friedman, Ray Rosenman and Jean Mayer were a few of the prominent US scientists in these journals. In the UK, Jerry Morris, John Yudkin, Hugh Sinclair and Tom Cleave were amongst the most frequently published researchers. Each individual had their own ambitions and motivations, but their publications on cholesterol and their evaluation of other studies dictated the medical agenda in the US and the UK. Anglo-American research culture and methodology was replicated throughout the world as demonstrated by Carsten Timmermann in the case of the two German states.⁵⁰⁴ This chapter supports this view as many of the studies published in these journals were conducted by researchers around the world who embraced chronic disease epidemiology.

⁵⁰⁴ C. Timmermann, 'Appropriating Risk Factors: The Reception of an American Approach to Chronic Disease in the two German States c.1950-1990', *Social History of Medicine*, 25, no. 1, (2011), 157-174.

The first section of this chapter focuses on the rise of debates about diseases of civilisation, antimodernity and neoromanticism. Centre stage in the discussions during the 1950s was the issue of heart disease. The dominant theory on heart disease was built on the premise that Western diets were too rich and, by inference, unnatural. Many researchers compared Americans or Britons to ‘non-western’ ‘primitive’ people to test their hypotheses. This was paired with an increased promotion of ‘natural’ diets and ingredients. The next section concentrates on attempts to combat obesity, which again was viewed as a disease of modernity in the Western world. This section provides a window into developments during the 1950s that made obesity a focal point in modern medicine. More specifically, it analyses doctors’ and researchers’ discussions and studies, as well as controversies that arose during the 1950s. The following section explores the impact that diet therapies had on mainstream medical thought during the 1960s, focussing on the increased adoption of, and optimism for, the use of diets as therapeutic regimes for different social groups. The final section of this chapter analyses the increasing interest in risk factors in research studies on cancer and diabetes and the growing incorporation of women in what had formerly largely concerned men’s health. This section demonstrates the cyclical nature of the incorporation of vitamins in research studies, but also how researchers tended to cluster their research interests around the work of more established and revered scientists such as Linus Pauling.

The cardiac 1950s: neoromanticism, epidemiology and the medicalisation of diet and lifestyle

The medicalisation of everyday life is apparent in medical journals during the 1950s. Medicalisation was facilitated by advances in clinical research, by growing interest in social medicine, and by the ambitions of influential scientists to advance their careers and promote their own health ‘utopias’. Other than research on the causative nature of

cigarette smoking on cancer, no disease has incorporated more aspects of everyday life under medical aegis than cardiovascular research. During the 1950s, increasing levels of cardiovascular disease prompted medicine and science to study lifestyle and environmental factors on health. As Charles Rosenberg argues, there was an upsurge in acceptance of the idea that ‘late-twentieth-century chronic disease reflects a poor fit between modern styles of life and humankind’s genetic heritage as shaped in countless centuries of hunting and gathering’.⁵⁰⁵ During the 1950s there were three separate but complementary philosophies pushing the medical research agenda towards lifestyle medicine. These were the rise of large-scale quantitative and intrinsically social approaches to diseases, anti-modernity, and an increased adoration for supposedly ‘natural’ foods, lifestyles, and diets.

When reading contemporary research articles, editorials and correspondence in leading medical journals it is no surprise that heart disease, and more specifically the lipid hypothesis, achieved popularity in the US and the UK press during the 1950s.⁵⁰⁶ Close examination of these journals reveals that cardiovascular disease was rapidly becoming a popular research topic within the medico-scientific sphere. The term cholesterol in particular became a trending term in cardiovascular research as can be seen from the graph. (Figure 12) This graph only tells a part of the story of how heart disease figured in

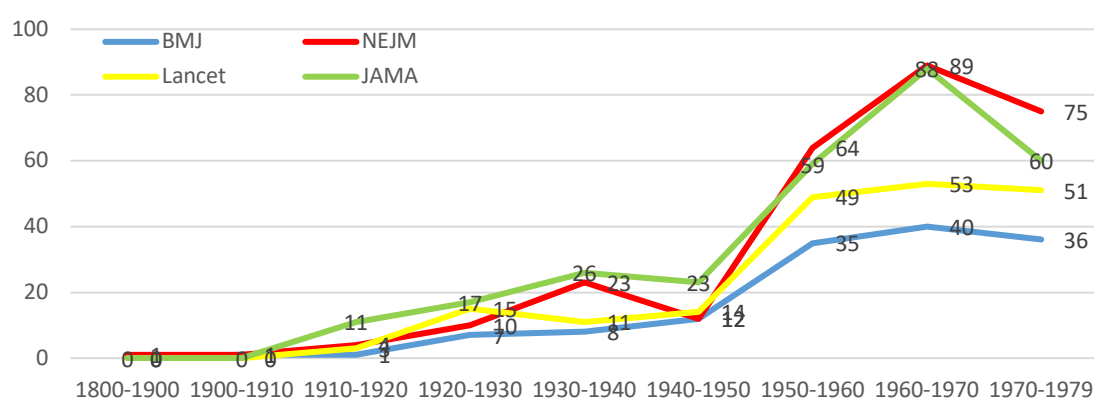


Figure 12 Cholesterol trends in major medical journals 1800-1980

⁵⁰⁵ C.E. Rosenberg, ‘Pathologies of Progress: The Idea of Civilization as Risk’, *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 72, no. 4, (1998), 714-730.

⁵⁰⁶ M. Spiess, ‘Food and Diet as Risk: The Role of the Framingham Heart Study’, in D. Gentilcore and M. Smith (eds), *Proteins, Pathologies and Politics: Dietary Innovation and Disease from the Nineteenth Century* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 81-94.

medical journals. Opinions and approaches were diverse. For example, there were articles focusing on physical activity, the influence of stress on heart disease, the relationship of obesity with cardiovascular disease, a hypothesis that heart disease might be related with a deficiency in Essential Fatty Acids (EFA), and the dietary cholesterol hypothesis.⁵⁰⁷ The topic of heart disease was simultaneously studied by researchers from all over the world with studies confirming or rejecting hypotheses from the US, Finland, Sweden, Italy, Israel, Japan, Uganda, Nigeria, and South Africa to name a few. There were multiple original research studies comparing Western diets with non-Western diets, studies on the relationship between aging and gender and cholesterol, studies on specific groups of people and their blood serum cholesterol content, but more importantly there were frequent exchanges of ideas within the correspondence. Researchers came from a range of medical backgrounds, such as: cardiologists, epidemiologists, nutritionists, surgeons, chemical engineers, biochemists and public health advocates, all equally concerned to understand the underlying causes of heart disease, not only because it was the main cause of death in the West, but also because it represented what Rosenberg calls ‘pathologies of progress’.⁵⁰⁸

Fascination with cholesterol as a primary risk factor for heart-disease led physicians to carry out feeding studies in which participants were given diets varying in fat content. Such an example can be seen in E. Van Handel et al.’s study, ‘A Diet Restricted in Refined Cereals and Saturated Fats: Its Effect on the Serum-Lipid Level of Atherosclerotic Patient’. Handel and his colleagues put thirty-four patients on a diet that restricted animal fats and degerminated flour with supplements of soy lecithin, soybean

⁵⁰⁷ Examples include: J. Morris et al, ‘Coronary Heart-Disease and Physical Activity of Work’, *The Lancet*, 262, no. 6796, (28 November 1953), 1111-1120; H.M. Sinclair, ‘Deficiency of Essential Fatty Acids and Atherosclerosis, Etcetera’, *The Lancet*, 267, no. 6919, (7 April 1956), 381-383; A.M. Master et al, ‘Relationship of Obesity to Coronary Disease and Hypertension’, *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 153, no. 17, (26 December 1953), 1499-1501; A. Keys, ‘Diet and the Epidemiology of Heart Disease’, *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 164, no. 17, (24 August 1957), 1912-1917.

⁵⁰⁸ Rosenberg, ‘Pathologies of Progress’.

oil and flour, peanuts, and peas or beans.⁵⁰⁹ Their study demonstrated that modifying diet was a successful strategy in managing blood cholesterol, but this study partially attributed the success of the regime to the supplements. Feeding trials also analysed the impact of different foods on blood coagulation. The egg for example - which continued to have a reputation as a coronary-disease-inducing food in the late twentieth century - was one of the foods researched by Ancel Keys.⁵¹⁰ One study focused on the impact of niacin - one element of Vitamin B - on blood cholesterol concentration and a few studies administered supplements containing either unsaturated or essential fatty acids to achieve lower serum cholesterol.⁵¹¹ What these studies contributed and promoted was the examination of food nutrients in specific and multi-variate testing for heart disease in general.⁵¹²

Neoromanticism was embraced by various writers in the self-help genre and it achieved an elevated cultural acceptance by the press. The medical profession might not have directly reinforced commitments to 'naturalness'. As this chapter demonstrates, however, doctors and scientists played a catalytic role in bringing neoromanticism into mainstream thought. At its essence, the lipid hypothesis - the main theory for cardiovascular disease - was a critique of modernity and of the West's detachment and distance from 'nature'. The central premise of the diet/heart hypothesis was that humans had deviated from 'natural' diets and lifestyles, by consuming too much saturated fat. Even the methodology chosen by many of the researchers were intended to show that

⁵⁰⁹ E.V. Handel et al, 'A Diet Restricted in Refined Cereals and Saturated Fats: Its Effect on the Serum-Lipid Level of Atherosclerotic Patient', *The Lancet*, 262, no. 6962, (2 February 1957), 245-246.

⁵¹⁰ E. Orma, D. Rhodes & A. Keys, 'Egg-Containing Meals and Blood Coagulation', *The Lancet*, 273, no. 7072, (2 May 1959), 388-390.

⁵¹¹ R. Altschul et al, 'Effects of Salts of Nicotinic Acid on Serum Cholesterol', *The British Medical Journal*, 2, no. 5098, (20 September 1958), 713-714.

⁵¹² Examples include: L. Kinsell, 'Essential Fatty Acids, Lipid Metabolism and Atherosclerosis', *The Lancet*, (15 February 1958), 334-339; L. Horlick and J. Oneil, 'Preliminary Communications: The Modification of Egg-Yolk Fats by Sunflower-Seed Oil and the Effect of Such Yolk Fats on Blood-Cholesterol Levels', *The Lancet*, (2 August 1958), 243-244; D. Ruthstein et al., 'Effects of Linoleic and Stearic Acids on Cholesterol-Induced Lipoid Diposition in Human Aortic Cells Tissue-Culture', *The Lancet*, (15 March 1958), 545-552; E. Handel et al., 'A Diet Restricted in Refined Cereals and Saturated Fats: It's Effect on the Serum- Cholesterol Level of Atherosclerotic Patients', *The Lancet*, (2 February 1957), 245-246; Anon., 'The Rice Diet in the Treatment of Hypertension', *The Lancet*, (11 November 1959), 509-513.

‘modern Western’ diets and lifestyles were to be blamed for the high incidence of heart disease, as well as many other diseases. The categorisation of specific diets as ‘Western’ was arbitrary; for example, calling the Neapolitan diet ‘Non-Western’ was problematic.⁵¹³ Italians lived with many of the same benefits enjoyed by the Western world such as modern agriculture, farming and meat-rearing. The dichotomy between ‘us’ and ‘them’, and ‘modern’ versus ‘natural’ arguably complicated the conundrum of healthy diets further. When people with advanced degrees, titles and positions - the scientific and medical elites - funded by the most prestigious institutions, government agencies and by industry, not only had doubts about, but actively worked to reverse ‘modernity’, they elevated neoromanticism to a cult-like philosophy. To demonstrate their hypotheses, scientists and doctors investigating the issue frequently studied other non-Western and ‘primitive’ people juxtaposing their diets and lifestyles to Anglo-American practices. These comparative studies represented a significant portion of the research published in the 1950s, especially in *The Lancet*.

Comparative studies into the epidemiology of heart disease - analogous to studies into the epidemiology of infectious diseases - compared populations afflicted with heart disease with those that were not. Research stemmed also from social medicine as it aimed to address health inequalities and to develop solutions through public health and social reform.⁵¹⁴ This research was representative of an intellectual movement based on the valorisation of quantitative, population-level studies. Carsten Timmermann traces this shift to epidemiological studies of heart disease in the US just before the mid-twentieth century; his work on medical research in East and West Germany but also in the UK demonstrates the perceived image of US medicine and the hegemony of American

⁵¹³ A. Keys et al., ‘Studies on Serum Cholesterol and Other Characteristics of Clinically Healthy Men in Naples’, *Archives of Internal Medicine of the American Medical Association*, 93, no. 3, (March 1954), 328-336.

⁵¹⁴ D. Porter, ‘How Did Social Medicine Evolve, and Where Is It Heading?’, *Public Library of Science Medicine*, 3, (2006), 1667-1672

research methodology in the post-war Western world.⁵¹⁵ This type of research stressed that ‘civilisation’ had inherent risks and that modern diets or lifestyles were unnatural and therefore pathogenic. According to Aronowitz, one of the reasons for the widespread appeal of epidemiological studies of chronic diseases lay in the fact that the methodology was multi-variate and open-ended, encouraging researchers to pursue this field.⁵¹⁶ Although the wide scope and numbers of participants in these studies concealed biases in the recruitment process, the method of checking diets, and generalisations, it should be recognised that these kinds of studies were difficult to carry out.

The hypothesis, methodology, and findings of the research study by Bronte-Stewart, Ancel Keys and J.F Brock conducted in Cape Town in 1955 are typical of epidemiological studies on heart disease.⁵¹⁷ The first sentence of this journal article read: ‘THROUGHOUT the Western World there is anxiety over the high and apparently increasing death-rate from coronary heart-disease.’⁵¹⁸ From the second sentence it was evident that the researchers felt an urgency and responsibility to solve the problem of heart disease: ‘Those in the professional, executive, and more highly skilled occupational classes are particularly susceptible (Registrar-General 1954) - men our community can little afford to lose.’⁵¹⁹ This reflects the spirit of research during the 1950s focussing primarily on men and considering them as archetypal medical subjects.⁵²⁰ Keys’ study comprised all staple ingredients of 1950s heart-disease research: a large sample of participants and three distinct racial groups, juxtaposing Western diet to South African

⁵¹⁵ Timmermann, ‘Appropriating Risk Factors’, 157-174; H. Valier and C. Timmermann, ‘Clinical Trials and the Reorganization of Medical Research In Post-Second World War Britain’, *Medical History*, 52, no. 4, (2008), 493-510; C. Timmermann, ‘Clinical Research In Postwar Britain: The Role of the Medical Research Council’ in C. Timmermann and C. Hannaway (eds), *Biomedicine in the Twentieth Century* (Amsterdam: IOS Press, 2008), 231-254.

⁵¹⁶ R.A. Aronowitz, ‘The Framingham Heart Study and the Emergence of the Risk Factor Approach to Coronary Heart Disease, 1947-1970’, *Revue d'histoire des sciences*, 54, no. 2, (2011), 286.

⁵¹⁷ B. Bronte-Stewart, A. Keys, J.F. Brock, ‘Serum-Cholesterol, diet, and Coronary Heart-Disease’, *The Lancet*, 266, no. 6900, (26 November, 1955), 534-537.

⁵¹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵²⁰ M. Jackson, ‘Men and Women under Stress: Neuropsychiatric Models of Resilience during and after the Second World War’, in M. Jackson (ed.), *Stress in Post-War Britain, 1945-85* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2015), 111-130.

diets. The three groups were: a) 'European', b) a 'native group', the Bantu, and c) the 'Cape-Coloured', who 'originated mainly from European, Hottentot, and Malay admixture. Only within the last few decades could any Bantu blood have been added'.⁵²¹ Out of the 600 participants, 364 men were selected to compare blood-serum concentrations of cholesterol which they then noted down in the following table:

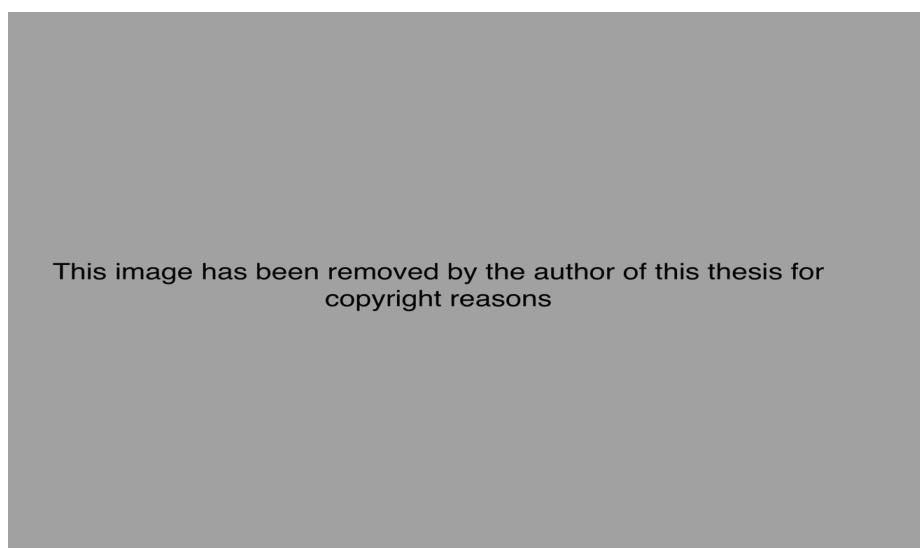


Figure 13 B. Bronte-Stewart, A. Keys, J.F. Brock, 'Serum-Cholesterol, diet, and Coronary Heart-Disease', *The Lancet* (November, 1955).

As seen from the table above, Bantu men ate 'food that is both cheap and bulky, and nearly all of them relied much on maize-meal porridge and bread'; with a diet low in both fat and protein, they had the lowest average cholesterol than the three groups. The 'Cape Coloured' diet had 'less monotony...than that of the Bantu' and was 'more like that of the European'. The Europeans ate 'more than twice as much fat - measured in the percentage contribution towards the total calories - as the Bantu.'⁵²² Even the vocabulary chosen, using words such as 'rich' or 'cheap and bulky' and 'monotonous' established or revealed a set of values about cholesterol and diet.

In Bronte-Stewart, Ancel Keys and J.F. Brock's study, class was another factor contributing to high cholesterol counts. The Bantu belonged in the 'lowest socio-

⁵²¹ Bronte-Stewart, Keys & Brock, 'Serum-Cholesterol', 534-537.

⁵²² *Ibid.*

economic plane' and when they earned more the amount of animal fat and protein they included in their diet increased. The 'Cape Coloured' were 'an intermediate between the Bantu and European', but the exact ratio of fats, protein and carbohydrates was not discussed. The picture of Europeans is consistent with these findings as the researchers classified them as 'economically privileged'. The study demonstrated that there was a relationship between income and consumption of fat. Higher levels of cholesterol could be found in the 'European' group, but no mention was given to overall mortality or any other metric within their study which demonstrated that cardiac problems arose because of high cholesterol. The underlying connotation of this study was that Western diets were too rich and resulted in heart disease. The significance of this paper lay in the fact that it compounded the literature already published on heart disease. It appeared in a prestigious journal, giving more visibility and credibility to the hypothesis set out by Ancel Keys, but also to these large-scale comparative epidemiological studies.⁵²³ Studies of this type further strengthened the narrative of diseases of civilisation and neoromanticism.

Another example of the ways modern lifestyles were criticised was the monumental study published by Jerry Morris, who measured the incidence of coronary heart-disease in public transport, civil service, and post office workers. More specifically the study compared the relationship between the incidence of heart-disease and the physical activity of different jobs within these services. An avid proponent of social medicine, Morris launched a series of epidemiological studies to uncover social determinants of heart disease. Morris had already published a study in *The British Medical Journal* where he demonstrated that general practitioners (who had a more sedentary job) were at greater risk of developing heart disease and had higher mortality

⁵²³ Examples include: L. Vogelpoel and V. Shire, 'Myocardial infarction: Its Racial Incidence in Cape Town' *The Lancet*, 266, no. 6900, (26 November 1955), 1108-1109; A. G. Shaper and K.W. Jones, 'Serum-Cholesterol, Diet, And Coronary Heart-Disease in Africans and Asians in Uganda', *The Lancet*, 274, no. 7102, (10 October, 1959), 534-537; and D. Brunner, G. Manelis and K. Loebel, 'Influence of Age and Race on Lipid Levels in Israel', *The Lancet*, 273, no. 7082, (23 May 1959), 1071-1073.

from such diseases than other doctors. Also he pointed out that doctors in general had greater risk of heart disease and death by coronary incidents than a miscellaneous non-medical group.⁵²⁴ This led him and his team to study the topic further.

‘Coronary Heart-Disease and Physical Activity of Work’ was the outcome of a large-scale study by Morris and his team, as well as other hospitals, general practitioners, insurance companies and other agencies. From London Transport, 31,000 men between 35-64 years old and 110,000 postal workers and civil servants between 35-59 years old were included in this study. The data used for the former group originated from a study of occupational morbidity undertaken by the London Transport Executive where ‘all sickness absences of any duration for these 31,000 employees are recorded in a Central Record of Staff Statistics maintained by the Staff Administration Officer.’⁵²⁵ The diagnoses, which were codified using a three figured-code, were obtained from ‘general practitioners and hospital certificates, and from the London Transport medical officers who examine men before they return to work if their absence exceeds twenty-eight days’.⁵²⁶ The findings of the study were that bus conductors who had more physically demanding jobs were more likely to suffer from angina pectoris (they described this as benign) and less likely to have myocardial infarction or ‘rapidly fatal’ thrombosis, than the bus drivers who had less physically demanding jobs. Morris and his colleagues spent great effort in addressing details that could be evaluated further or challenged by other researchers. One of them was the reliability of their observations, for which they argued:

The method of investigation involved primarily two sets of physicians—the men’s own general practitioners, and the medical officers of London Transport Executive. In addition, there is documented "confirmation" by a

⁵²⁴ J. N. Morris, ‘Coronary Heart-Disease in Medical Practitioners’, *The British Medical Journal*, 1, no. 4757, (8 March 1952), 503-520.

⁵²⁵ J. N. Morris, ‘Coronary Heart-Disease and Physical Activity of Work’, *The Lancet*, 262, no. 6796, (28 November 1953), 1111-1120.

⁵²⁶ *Ibid*, 1111.

specialist, or a hospital, or, in a few cases only, by an electrocardiogram, in over 90% of the non-fatal cases; this suggests that there was a reasonable standard of diagnosis. Because of the methods of collection of data in London Transport all diagnosed cases are likely to be included. The main point, however, is that this is an epidemiological study of the experience of different occupational groups. There is no reason to suppose that the standard of diagnosis, whether good or merely adequate, or the completeness of ascertainment, will differ in - the groups being studied. The population consists of men from the same part of the country, served by the same health and welfare services and living in broadly similar social circumstances during the same period of time. Conditions of sickness absence and sickness benefit are similar throughout. It seems reasonable and worthwhile, therefore, to compare the experience of various groups within London Transport.⁵²⁷

Results from the study of postal workers and civil servants similarly showed that postmen were less prone to heart disease than sedentary office workers. In one of their concluding paragraphs, Morris et al. admitted that their study was ‘still a hypothesis rather than established fact - at most an association has been established rather than a causal connection’, and recognised the need to study physical exercise being undertaken outside of work.⁵²⁸ Finally, they suggested that other factors such as psychological stress or social class and nutrition may contribute to heart disease. Morris’ view in his own findings, which can be applied to most epidemiological studies on heart disease, was that data did show correlation, but not necessarily causation, between physical activity and heart disease.

Morris and his colleagues set a new paradigm in medical cooperation and ‘big data’ medical research on cardiovascular diseases. In 1952 the Chief Medical Statistician

⁵²⁷ *Ibid*, 1111-1113.

⁵²⁸ *Ibid*.

of the General Register Office, W.P.D Logan, along with Jerry Morris, wrote a letter to *The Lancet* where they thanked all those practitioners in London who had participated in their study by sending additional information on patients over forty who had died from cardiovascular disease. They then concluded: ‘However, the value of an inquiry of this type is much enhanced if something like a 100% response can be obtained. We appeal therefore to any practitioner who received a questionnaire and has not yet returned it to do so now.’⁵²⁹ Morris and Logan’s statement reflects the ambition and confidence researchers had in finding a suitable treatment or prevention of cardiovascular disease. More importantly it reflects the preoccupation with efficiency and the philosophy of scientism, in which health could be quantified and measured with numbers, statistics and scientific facts.⁵³⁰

Paul Dudley White, President Eisenhower’s cardiologist, and a key figure in the Framingham study, used the same approach to gather quantitative data on coronary thrombosis in a letter he wrote to the editor of *The Journal of the American Medical Association* in 1955.

Since the current illness of President Eisenhower has brought acute coronary thrombosis still more into the limelight than it has ever been before and since it is important to have more information on the prevalence of this disease in the United States today, it occurred to me that the medical profession might afford at least a partial answer. I am, therefore, requesting all physicians of this country to answer the following questions. Answers should be signed but names will be kept confidential. I realize that many doctors may not see this

⁵²⁹ W.P.D. Logan & J.N. Morris, ‘Cooperation in Research on Heart-Disease’, *The Lancet*, 259, no. 6718, (31 May 1952), 1116.

⁵³⁰ Such contentions can also be seen in: L. Murard, ‘Atlantic Crossings in the Measurements of Health: From US Appraisal Forms to the League of Nations Health Indices’, in V. Berridge and K. Loughlin (eds), *Medicine, the Market and the Mass Media* (Abington: Routledge, 2005); G. Grob, *The Deadly Truth: A History of Disease in America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002), p. 222; W. Rothstein, *Public Health and the Risk Factor: A History of an Uneven Medical Revolution* (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2003); R. Aronowitz, *Risky Medicine: Our Quest to Cure Fear and Uncertainty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

notice, but enough may answer to make the effort worthwhile. I also hope that physicians who do see the notice will advise others about it and try to get as many as possible to send in their answers. If you have encountered no cases during the month write nevertheless and please so state.⁵³¹

A study published in *The British Medical Journal* is an example of how the culture of quantitative research and epidemiology impacted on public health and was embraced by many researchers in the 1950s.⁵³² George Mann, Bruce Nicol and Frederick Stare followed the example of Morris, and conducted a comparison between two groups: Nigerian and American men.⁵³³ In the introduction the article stated: ‘The resulting data resemble those obtained in Central America, and confirm the belief that primitive peoples, consuming largely vegetarian diets, with a high calorie turnover in relation to body size, show low levels of serum cholesterol coupled with beta-lipoprotein levels similar to those of urban United States citizens’.⁵³⁴ Mann, Nicol and Stare studied the concentration of beta-lipoprotein and cholesterol concentrations in the blood sera of forty-six Nigerian men to complement existing work by Mann on cultural discrepancies in the incidence of heart disease.⁵³⁵ In this study the prominent American researchers divided the forty-six Nigerians into three groups who ate characteristically non-Western diets:

Group A consisted of natives of the dry northern part of Nigeria, coming from Moslem tribes whose staple foods are sorghum and millet...who eat little fish or meat, and whose diet contains little fat apart from that present in the vegetables consumed. Group B was composed of natives of the Ibo tribe from the humid Eastern Region, whose staples are yams...and cassava...which

⁵³¹ P.D. White, ‘Information Requested on Acute Coronary Thrombosis’, *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 159, no. 11, (12 November 1955), 1148.

⁵³² V. Berridge, *Marketing Health: Smoking and the Discourse of Public Health in Britain, 1945–2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

⁵³³ Stare was then the head of the department of Nutrition of the Harvard School of Public Health.

⁵³⁴ G.V. Mann, B.M. Nicol and F. Stare, ‘The Beta-Lipoprotein and Cholesterol Concentrations in Sera of Nigerians’, *The British Medical Journal*, 2, no. 4946, (22 October, 1955), 1008-1010.

⁵³⁵ *Ibid.*

they supplement with reasonable quantities of green and leafy vegetables, fruit, and a little fish or meat. Their diet contains red palm oil, but the total fat content is low compared with that of North Americans. Group C was drawn from pagan tribes of the Middle Belt of Nigeria, that area which lies along the banks of the rivers Niger and Benue in their west-ward and eastward passage through the country. These people eat both roots and grain, a little fish, and red palm-oil.⁵³⁶

The study randomly matched the sera to samples from eighty-one North Americans according to age and relative weight, providing a match of thirty Nigerians and thirty Americans. Mann et al. went to particular lengths to describe each Nigerian group's diet, but also to specify the caloric content and macronutrient makeup of their typical diets by consulting previous studies on these diets and international studies on energy and macronutrient concentrations in various foods.

In their efforts to state how fundamentally different Nigerian diets were from American diets, inconsistencies arose. For example, Mann, Nicol and Stare's study did not appear to be thoroughly researched. To prove that heart disease was the product of Western diets, these researchers made multiple omissions to support their hypothesis. One omission was the exclusion of rich members of the tribes studied as a comprehensive image of the overall mortality needed to include people from all classes. Secondly, they argued that their 'impression' of Nigerian subjects reflected data on the incidence of heart disease from autopsies from another study about people from different cultures - which Mann, Nicol and Stare state were somewhat similar - in the Gold Coast, rather than citing data on Nigeria itself. In addition, the sample of participants was small, especially in the medical research environment of the 1950s. Like many other studies it excluded women, a fact that also limited its credibility. This was once more demonstrative of the medical

⁵³⁶ *Ibid.*

research culture during the mid-twentieth century, which placed focus on men and underestimated the incidence and severity of heart disease in women.⁵³⁷ Mark Jackson's work on stress reveals this trend in his discussion of a self-help book by Fred Kerner, *Stress and Your Heart*. According to Kerner men had to live in a constant state of competition and live up to their role as men; women's work in the home was not as stressful. This, Kerner argued, made men more prone to heart disease than women.⁵³⁸

Mann, Nicol and Stare's participant selection and data collection were questionable as they recruited 'subjects...in Kaduna General Hospital while there were convalescent from minor surgical procedures...individuals suffering from gross infestations or active disease were excluded.'⁵³⁹ No detail is given for the American subjects. In addition Mann et al. admitted that: 'The diets of the subjects forming the sample were not measured individually. When in hospital they ate food brought in by relatives living in Kaduna'.⁵⁴⁰ Justifying their decision not to measure individually what the Nigerian men were eating they stated: 'such is the conservativeness of these people regarding dietary patterns that their food intake, in whatever part of the country they happen to be living, differs little from that typical of their native tribe in its own environment.'⁵⁴¹ Instead of measuring the macronutrients and composition, these researchers relied on nutrition tables drawn from past studies conducted by Nicol and accepted that the food brought by relatives was similar to everyday foods. Compared with Morris' study, where data from two years was collected, this study made comparisons based on short-term convalescent diets. Again nothing was stated about the American subjects of the study in relation to health or line of work. The three researchers stated that

⁵³⁷ This can be seen in: Edgar Jones, 'Stomach for the Peace: Psychosomatic Disorders in UK Veterans and Civilians', in M. Jackson (ed.), *Stress in Post-War Britain* 2nd edition (London: Routledge, 2016), 141; and M. Jackson, 'Men and Women under Stress: Neuropsychiatric Models of Resilience During and After the Second World War', in M. Jackson, *Stress in Post-War Britain*, 112-113.

⁵³⁸ Jackson, 'Men and Women under Stress', 127-128.

⁵³⁹ Mann, Nicol and Stare, 'The Beta-Lipoprotein and Cholesterol Concentrations in Sera'.

⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴¹ *Ibid.*

the low-fat theory set out by Ancel Keys did not constitute a comprehensive explanation for heart-disease by itself and that muscle mass and muscular activity could be contributing factors. Yet in the entirety of the article no test was done, nor data discussed, about whether these variables contributed to heart disease. It is evident then that this study had methodological flaws, its design was not appropriate to its goals, and the conclusions made were unsubstantiated.

With the large number of studies on the topic, but also the discourse surrounding the topic and the multiple competing aetiologies suggested by scientists, finding a link between diet and heart disease increasingly looked like a race, in which participants strove for status, tenure, and funding.⁵⁴² Because of the popularity of the topic any study addressing cholesterol, heart disease and diet had a better chance of being funded and published. Symposia, conferences and congresses on the topic of heart disease research were frequent during the 1950s, with the World Health Organisation organising its first international conference on the subject in 1955.⁵⁴³ During this decade also there was increased funding available for heart disease research especially in the US. In a letter to *The British Medical Journal*, L.R.C. Agnew argued:

Over here in the States a remarkable situation has developed since President Eisenhower's attack of coronary thrombosis. It is now easy- too easy - to get vast sums of money for the support of research on vascular disease. Now there is nothing wrong with this except that these funds tend to be given to a small number of ringmasters who are fanatically conducting large cholesterol circuses to the exclusion of other studies that would appear at least as worthy of attention. I know of one department - that previous had a fine and diverse

⁵⁴² R. Aronowitz, 'The Framingham Heart Study and the Emergence of the Risk Factor Approach to Coronary Heart Disease, 1947-1970', *Revue d'histoire des sciences*, 64, no. 2 (2011), 263-295; L.R.C. Agnew, 'Correspondence: Cholesterol and Vascular Disease', *The British Medical Journal*, 1, no. 5009, (5 January 1957), 43.

⁵⁴³ Anon, 'Arteriosclerosis: International Symposium in Minneapolis', *The British Medical Journal*, 2, no. 4942, (24 September 1955), 786.

record of work in experimental nutrition - which now, alas, has become a cholesterol circus. How this came about is simple: an enormous grant was awarded for vascular studies, and that was the finish of those sturdy individualists who flatly refused either to add cholesterol to their experimental diet or, alternatively, to study serum cholesterol levels in their experimental animals. It is interesting to speculate what might happen if a future President were to die of gastric cancer- one suspects that the study of possible, and impossible, dietary carcinogens would boom alarmingly, and that this would have a disastrous effect on other equally promising lines of attack.⁵⁴⁴

It was not only cholesterol and cardiovascular disease that became the most ‘fashionable’ topics to be researched, but in the US the status of the cardiologist was boosted by the Eisenhower incident. An annotation in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* cardiologists read:

A questionnaire has been mailed by the American Research Foundation, Princeton, N. J., to all heart specialists listed in the Directory of Medical Specialists. The purpose of the questionnaire apparently is to get mass medical opinion on whether the President is physically able to run for another term. The following two questions are asked: 1. Do you think a man who has suffered a heart attack can be regarded as physically able to serve a term as President? 2. Based on what you have read about the nature of the President's illness, and assuming a normal convalescence in the next few months, do you think Mr. Eisenhower can be regarded as physically able to serve a second term? A self-addressed, air mail, special delivery envelope is enclosed for a

⁵⁴⁴ Agnew, ‘Correspondence: Cholesterol and Vascular Disease’, 43.

speedy reply. No signature is required and no hint given as to how the information is to be used.⁵⁴⁵

As Ayesha Nathoo argues, during the mid-twentieth century cardiology specialists, surgeons and researchers of heart disease became increasingly popular figures.⁵⁴⁶ The questionnaire effectively managed to give the already popular cardiologists unprecedented power. Whether or not their opinions were considered seriously by the American Research Foundation, they potentially held the US political future in their hands. So men of science became public figures and the medical was increasingly intertwined with the political, further reinforcing the medicalisation of everyday life.

During the late 1950s, researchers also studied emotions and psychological influences on heart disease. A study by Meyer Friedman and Ray Rosenman set out a new paradigm in incorporating personality studies into medical thought. In 1958 they published a study in *Circulation* on the impact of occupational stress on coronary heart disease and in the following year they published ‘Association of Specific Overt Behavior Pattern with Blood and Cardiovascular Findings’ in *The Journal of the American Medical Association*. They followed a ‘lead’ from a survey given to 209 executives and doctors, who answered that, among other contributing factors; ‘drive’, ‘competition’, ‘meeting “deadlines”’ and ‘economic frustration’ also influenced cardiovascular health.⁵⁴⁷ What was interesting in this study was that again women were not addressed in any capacity by the researchers. This might have been influenced more by the tangible aspects of everyday life during the 1950s, such as the fact that at the time men dominated the work force. Another factor that might have played a role, however, was researchers’ dissociation of

⁵⁴⁵ A. Smith, ‘Questionnaire Sent to Cardiologists’, *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 160, no. 1, (7 January 1956), 52.

⁵⁴⁶ A. Nathoo, *Hearts Exposed: Transplants and the Media in 1960s Britain* (Hampshire: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2009), p. 2. This fact can be read also in: C. Lawrence (ed.), *Medical Theory, Surgical Practice: Studies in the History of Surgery* (London: Routledge, 1992); P. Fleming, *A Short History of Cardiology* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

⁵⁴⁷ M. Friedman and R.H. Rosenman, ‘Association of Specific Overt Behavior Pattern with Blood and Cardiovascular Findings’, *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 169, no. 12, (21 March 1959), 1286-1296.

these behaviours and characteristics from women - who were mostly housewives and according to Friedman and Rosenman had no deadlines and competition.⁵⁴⁸

Friedman and Rosenman followed other epidemiologists and researchers of the decade in conducting a large-scale multifactorial research project. In this study they assessed whether personality and behaviour contributed to heart disease, categorising participants into three personality patterns:

Pattern A: '(1) an intense, sustained drive to achieve self-selected but usually poorly defined goals, (2) profound inclination and eagerness to compete, (3) persistent desire for recognition and advancement, (4) continuous involvement in multiple and diverse functions constantly subject to time restrictions (deadlines), (5) habitual propensity to accelerate the rate of execution of many physical and mental functions, and (6) extraordinary mental and physical alertness.' Pattern B: 'Essentially the converse of pattern A, it was characterized by relative absence of drive, ambition, sense of urgency, desire to compete, or involvement in deadlines' and 'Pattern C: characterized by its similarity to pattern B but also including a chronic state of anxiety or insecurity'.⁵⁴⁹

Albeit that the three behaviour patterns examined in this study were subjective, Rosenman and Friedman attempted to give the study scientific validity. Eighty-three pattern A men, eighty-three pattern B men and forty-six pattern C men were given a diet survey which they answered anonymously in order to accurately report alcohol usage. The participants had interviews to obtain family incidence of heart disease, 'past and present illnesses, hours of work and sleep, smoking habits, physical activity of all types, and dietary

⁵⁴⁸ Jackson, 'Men and Women Under Stress', 127-128; Aronowitz, 'The Framingham Heart Study', 263-295.

⁵⁴⁹ Friedman and Rosenman, 'Association of Specific Overt Behavior Pattern'.

habits.’⁵⁵⁰ Friedman and Rosenman also gave the participants blood tests and electrocardiograms. The findings confirmed their ‘hunch’:

The total calorie and fat intake and the amount of physical activity were approximately the same in all groups, and the age, height, and weight of men in the three groups were comparable. Despite these similarities, the average serum cholesterol level was much higher in group A than in the other two groups. A hastening of blood clotting time was not observed in all men of group A, but only in those exhibiting the most fully developed form of the behavior pattern... The possible role of cigarette smoking, exercise, working hours, alcohol ingestion, and heredity was studied in the pathogenesis of the cases of clinical coronary heart disease, but none, per se, appeared to have pathogenic relevance.⁵⁵¹

Following this study other researchers carried out studies to replicate or refute Friedman and Rosenman and letters were exchanged on the topic in the medical journals.⁵⁵²

The majority of studies published in these journals during the 1950s used evidence only from male participants. Given the overwhelming incidence of coronary heart disease in men than in women (4.6 to 1), perhaps this made sense.⁵⁵³ One factor influencing the preponderance of studies on men lay in the fact that many studies were conducted on various professional groups that were dominated by men. Research on women’s coronary disease incidence was rare. One theory that circulated was that female sex hormones had a protective effect against heart disease - and there were studies conducted where men

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵² H. Russek, ‘Role of Heredity, Diet, and Emotional Stress in Coronary Heart Disease’, *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 171, no. 5, (3 October 1959), 504-508.

⁵⁵³ D. Aldersberg et al., ‘Age, Sex, Serum Lipids, and Coronary Disease’, *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 162, no. 7, (13 October 1956), p. 621 states: ‘All available evidence indicates that coronary atherosclerosis is more common in males than in females in the younger age groups, that about 90% of persons under the age of 50 years who suffer from coronary artery disease are men.’

were given female hormones.⁵⁵⁴ A picture coming from studies and letters in the medical journals considered here was that masculinity itself was the deciding factor that made men more prone to heart disease. A physician named William Dock wrote an article in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* entitled: ‘Why are men’s arteries so sclerotic’. Dock concluded: ‘The fault lies not in sex but in the masculine love for rich food, alcohol, and tobacco that in our civilization men die chiefly from coronary disease. As Osler pointed out half a century ago, this is the “nemesis through which Nature exacts retributive justice for the transgression of her laws”’.⁵⁵⁵

Despite the popularity of serum cholesterol studies and frequent publications on heart disease, nutrition and exercise, a consensus on the reduction of the consumption of dietary fat hypothesis was not yet feasible. Hugh Sinclair, a nutritionist who was among the first scientists to facilitate nutritional surveys assessing national food policy, wrote a letter to *The Lancet* where he set out his own hypothesis for heart disease and most chronic diseases in general. As opposed to Ancel Keys, Sinclair believed that there was a minimum requirement of Essential Fatty Acids (EFA) in humans and that promoting a low-fat diet was not the solution to elevated levels of heart disease. His second contention was that:

Vegetable oils, in many cases rich in EFA, are hardened by hydrogenation: margarine and shortenings are produced by hydrogenation of cotton-seed and soybean oil, some peanut-oil, and certain other oils; during this hydrogenation much of the EFA are destroyed and unnatural trans fatty acids are formed. Unnatural fatty acids are formed not only during hydrogenation but also during the practice of deep-frying. Whale-oil is sometimes added to margarine, and this, like other marine oils of plant and animal origin which

⁵⁵⁴ Oliver, M. F., and Boyd, G. S.: Thyroid and Oestrogen Treatment of Hypercholesterolemia in Man, read before the Conference on Hormones and Atherosclerosis, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1958.

⁵⁵⁵ W. Dock, ‘Why are Men’s Arteries so Sclerotic’, *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 170, no. 2, (9 May 1959), 152-156.

contain a variety of highly unsaturated fatty acids, is deodorised and hardened by hydrogenation.⁵⁵⁶

Other researchers, such as the Americans Edward Ahrens and Laurence Kinsell, also opposed the low-fat diet, but were more interested in the relationship between the degree of saturation of fats and heart disease. The latter agreed that diets containing EFA lowered cholesterol and led to a ‘clinical improvement in patients with cardiovascular disease.’⁵⁵⁷ Kinsell also concluded ‘that the prescription of a low-fat diet is biologically unsound’.⁵⁵⁸ Sinclair faced both further support and criticism from other researchers. Ancel Keys, who often took every chance he had to defend his hypothesis but to also discredit others, wrote a lengthy letter to the editor mocking Sinclair:

Dr Sinclair’s argument obviously suggests that we solve the coronary problem, without retreating from our high-fat diet, by taking a daily swig of linoleic acid and a few vitamin pills. I wonder whether this is a responsible answer to a serious question... To some of us, at least, it appears that this response to prosperity can go too far. The problem has been complicated by the enterprise and ingenuity of food producers and technologists who provide a super-abundance of all kinds of fats and then persuade us to eat them. Are we now going to ask them, please, to put some more EFA in their wares? Perhaps with a modest increase in cost ? This could be the shape of things to come. Continue, or increase, your high fat consumption but be sure you get a

⁵⁵⁶ H. Sinclair, ‘Deficiency of Essential Fatty Acids and Atherosclerosis, Etcetera’, *The Lancet*, 267, no. 6919, (7 April 1956), 381-383. Sinclair and other researchers rightfully suspected what the 2015 Russell De Souza et al. meta-analysis – along with systematic reviews, meta-analyses assess multiple laboratory, clinical and double-blind placebo controlled studies (the gold-standard of research methodology) - concluded: ‘Trans fats are associated with all-cause mortality, total coronary heart disease, and coronary heart disease mortality’.

⁵⁵⁷ L.W. Kinsell et al, ‘Essential Fatty Acids, Lipid Metabolism, and Atherosclerosis’, *The Lancet*, 271, no. 7016, (15 February 1958), 334-339.

⁵⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

lot of corn oil, sesame-seed oil, fish oil, and the like and be careful to swallow it fresh and in the virgin liquid state!⁵⁵⁹

It is clear that the editor of *The British Medical Journal*, Hugh Clegg, was not convinced about low-fat diets. The first indication of this comes from the fact that compared to *The Lancet* and also to the two American journals, *The British Medical Journal* had less content on the topic of cholesterol. In the last two paragraphs of an editorial on dietary fat and coronary disease, Clegg argued:

With this welter of conflicting opinion, the picture is far from clear. Even if it were conclusively shown that a high-fat diet, or a high intake of certain fats, does produce a permanent hypercholesterolaemia, it has still to be proved that the hypercholesterolaemia causes faster blood coagulation. Evidence on this is also conflicting. According to H. W. Fullerton and colleagues, after a fatty meal the clotting time is accelerated. But in a recent paper C. Merskey and H. L. Nossel state that the amount of fat in the diet has no effect on the coagulation time of blood... These different diets did not significantly affect blood coagulation... The stypven time of the blood of patients on the high-fat diet was lower than that of blood from patients on a low-fat diet. Merskey and Nossel conclude that present evidence is insufficient to indict either saturated or unsaturated fats as a cause of accelerated blood coagulation. What advice on diet is to be given to patients who fear getting coronary disease? It should be to eat in moderation and to avoid getting overweight. Until we have more precise information on the relationship, if any, between dietary factors and coronary disease, there is no need for the middle-aged man to forgo his

⁵⁵⁹ A. Keys, 'Deficiency of Essential Fatty Acids', *The Lancet*, 267, no. 6922, (28 April 1956), 576-577.

breakfast of eggs and bacon in favour of cereal and skim milk, followed by toast and marmalade with a scraping of butter.⁵⁶⁰

The British Medical Journal's publication of cholesterol and heart disease studies also reflects Clegg's editorial style, with a reluctance to publish sensational studies about cholesterol. An article reflecting Clegg's careful curation of medical studies published in the 1950s was one authored by R.P Malhotra and N.S Pathania.⁵⁶¹ In this study Malhotra and Pathania dispelled the 'illusion' of Western writers that 'Asiatics are far less prone to fall victim to this malady'.⁵⁶² They presented the data from 867 cases out of 3057 patients seen by them in the period 1948-55. In their conclusion Malhotra and Pathania argued:

The role of the fat content of diet in the aetiology of coronary disease is a controversial point. It may be of some significance to mention that the fat content of diet taken by the vast majority of our cases is poor as compared with European standards. Consequently, we find it difficult to believe that dietary fat can play any significant part in the causation of coronary disease. Our observations show that vegetarians are no less prone to develop coronary disease, and the same is true of nonsmokers. No less than one-half of our cases belonged to the Sikh community, whose religion forbids smoking.⁵⁶³

Malhotra and Pathania further argued that obesity has been 'long been recognised as an important predisposing factor'.⁵⁶⁴ This statement reflects the growing demonisation of obesity as a cause of chronic disease. This shift towards addressing obesity as a factor in heart disease figured strongly in these medical journals, setting the groundwork for

⁵⁶⁰ H. Clegg, 'Dietary Fat and Coronary Disease', *The British Medical Journal*, 2, no. 5036, (13 July 1957), 89-90.

⁵⁶¹ From the Department of Clinical Medicine and Cardiology, Victoria Jubilee Hospital and Medical College, Punjab, India

⁵⁶² R.P. Malhotra & N.S. Pathania, 'Some Aetiological Aspects of Coronary Heart Disease', *The British Medical Journal*, 2, no. 5095, (30 August 1958), 528-531.

⁵⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

slimness to become a popular topic in the press and a desirable 'healthy' state to be pursued by increasing numbers of 'healthmaniacs'.

The attack on fat: obesity and health in the 1950s

During the 1950s, interest in diet and nutrition was directed to closer studies of obesity and its impact on other chronic diseases. The perception of obesity by contributors to the journals considered in this chapter is evident in the words of Hugh Sinclair:

If obesity were unimportant there would be little need to measure it. Apart from mechanical inefficiency and aesthetic undesirability, it is the cause of disease and premature death. It is somewhat trite to mention that a person who is 40 lb. (18 kg.) overweight carries around an extra 40 lb.; this means that extra energy is expended extra food is eaten, and there is some muscular hypertrophy. There is an increased incidence of degenerative arthritis of the lumbar spine, hips, and knees, and of course hernias, varicose veins, and fractures; accidents are more frequent, presumably because the obese are slower in their movements and clumsy. The postural changes cause respiratory and circulatory inefficiency, with emphysema and decreased vital capacity... Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. New York... shown that at all ages men and women who are overweight have a higher mortality than the average; and the greater the degree of obesity the greater the mortality. Obese men had higher death rates from degenerative cardiovascular and renal disease, diabetes mellitus. and cirrhosis of the liver; obese women had relatively the greatest excess mortality from diabetes mellitus and diseases of the gall-bladder, especially gall-stones. The mortality is relatively worst among those under 45 among both men and women the number of observed deaths from degenerative diseases of the circulatory system and kidneys is

70% more than the expected. and it is at least double the expected among those under 45. In the course of pregnancy and childbirth obesity is a hazard: there is a greater frequency of complications, deaths, toxæmia, and large babies.⁵⁶⁵

During this decade researchers in both the US and the UK studied obesity through a variety of lenses and different fat-loss regimes were compared and contrasted. Many authors researched or commented upon the aetiology of obesity focusing on physiological, nutritional, and psychological factors.

The reorientation towards obesity as an ‘unhealthy’ state during the 1950s saw an increase in editorials, articles and letters on the topic, with commentators such as Clifford Barborka referring to it as ‘the obesity problem’,⁵⁶⁶ one that was seen to affect women in particular as extra weight was thought to be culturally undesirable. A.W. Douthwaite, physician at Guy’s Hospital, wrote a ‘refresher course for general practitioners’ on obesity. Douthwaite’s assertion that it was mostly women who consulted doctors about obesity reinforces the assertions of Deborah Lupton and Catherine Carstairs that historically women were more preoccupied with weight than men. Douthwaite’s reasoning for this phenomenon was:

The married woman who has "run to fat" after several pregnancies is assailed with fears that she will lose her attractiveness and thus her husband. It is not often that men complain of fatness on social grounds, partly because fat young men are rare compared with women and partly because, once married, their wives practise the age-old tradition of furthering their corpulence by

⁵⁶⁵ H.M. Sinclair, ‘Assessment and Results of Obesity’, *The British Medical Journal*, 2, no. 4851, (26 December 1953), 1404-1407.

⁵⁶⁶ C.J. Barborka, ‘Present Status of Obesity Problem’, *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 147, no. 11 (10 November 1951), 1015-1019.

overfeeding. A "comfortably" obese male is alleged to be easier to live with and less likely to stray from the path of virtue.⁵⁶⁷

This echoes Mark Jackson's research on self-help books and marriage advice which also highlighted women who failed to care for themselves as a cause of marital tensions.⁵⁶⁸

Douthwaite's reasoning explains why BBC's slimming show included only women.⁵⁶⁹

The preoccupation of women with obesity and body image seen in the 1950s reinforces what Jane Hand argues about healthy behaviours being gendered and often coded in terms of bodily attractiveness in public health initiatives during the 1970s.⁵⁷⁰

A notable example of experimentation on various weight-loss regimes was the study published by A. Kekwick and G.L.S Pawan in *The Lancet*. In the first data series, Kekwick and Pawan gave 'normal' diets of protein (20%), fat (33%), and carbohydrate (47%) to six patients for seven to nine days at a time, but ranging from 500, 1000, 1500 and 2000 calories, demonstrating the fact that the lower the calorie content the greater the fat loss.⁵⁷¹ In the second data series, fourteen patients were placed on 1000 calorie diets, with 90% of each diet comprised of either carbohydrates, protein, or fat. This proved that isocalorically high-fat produced the greatest weight-loss, followed by the high-protein and then high-carbohydrate diets.⁵⁷² In their third data set, Kekwick and Pawan demonstrated that patients could maintain a constant weight (some even gained a little weight) at 2000 calories per day of normal proportions and then they placed them on high-fat and high-protein diets of 2600 calories per day. (Figure 14)

⁵⁶⁷ A.H. Douthwaite, 'Refresher Course for General Practitioners on Obesity', *The British Medical Journal*, 1, no. 4701, (10 February 1951), 291-293.

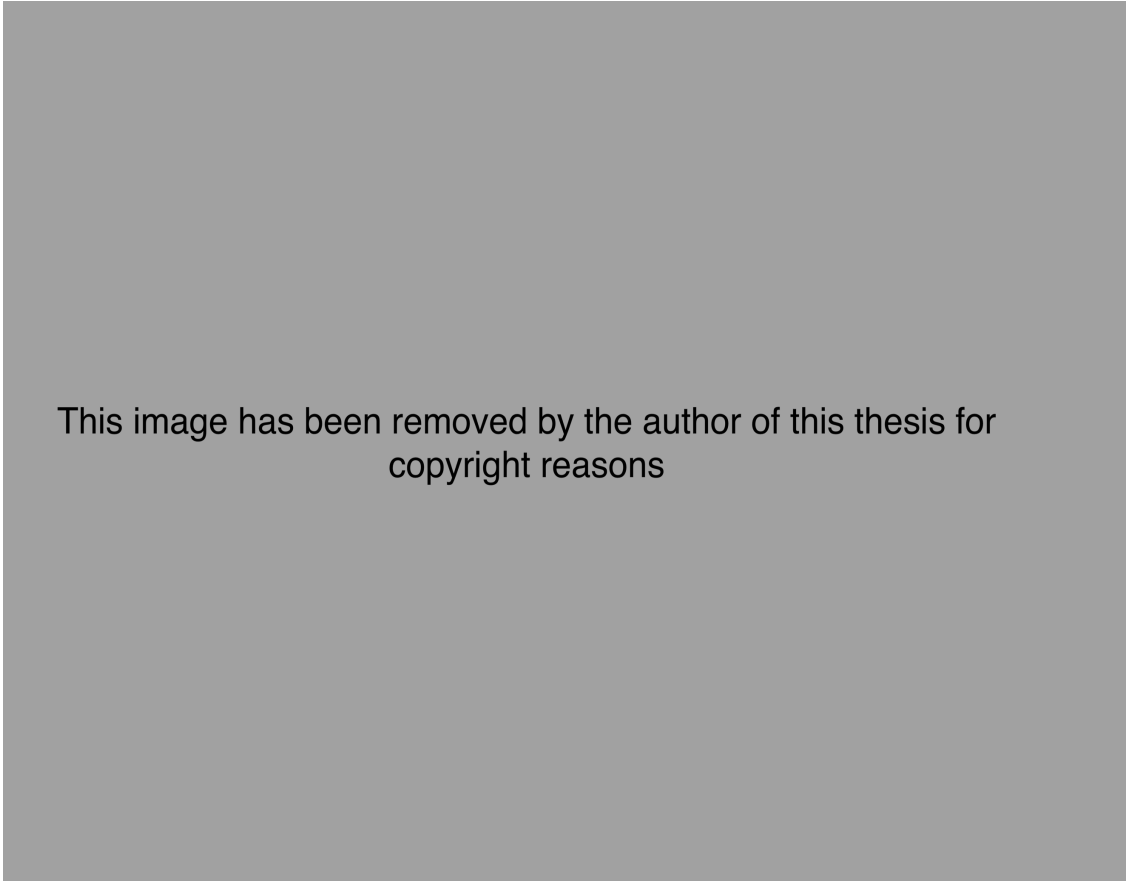
⁵⁶⁸ M. Jackson, 'Self-help, Marriage Guidance and the Making of the Midlife Crisis' in M. Jackson and M. Moore (eds), *Balancing the Self: Medicine, Politics, and the Regulation of Health in the Twentieth Century*, (Forthcoming, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), 294-339.

⁵⁶⁹ A more in-depth discussion of this can be found in Chapter III.

⁵⁷⁰ J. Hand, "'Look After Yourself': Visualising Obesity as a Public Health Concern in 1970s and 1980s Britain', in Jackson and Moore (eds) *Balancing the Self: Medicine, Politics and the Regulation of Health in the Twentieth Century*, 112-147.

⁵⁷¹ A. Kekwick & G. L. S Pawan, 'Calorie Intake in Relation to Body-Weight Changes in the Obese', *The Lancet*, 268, no. 6935, (28 July 1956), 155-161; According to Rogak this was one of the studies that inspired Robert Atkins to develop his diet see: L. Rogak, *Dr Robert Atkins, The True Story of the Man Behind the War on Carbohydrates* (London: Robson, 2005), pp. 48-49.

⁵⁷² *Ibid.*



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Figure 14 A. Kekwick & G. L.S Pawan, 'Calorie Intake in Relation to Body-Weight Changes in the Obese', The Lancet (28 July 1956), 155-161.

Even though the sample size was small and the trial period was short, Kekwick and Pawan concluded that high-fat diets could produce more weight loss than normal, high-protein and high-carbohydrate diets even with a higher caloric value.

Other experts felt the need to define and further explain obesity. In 1959 John Yudkin wrote a special article giving his professional opinion on the issue. In his conclusion he pointed out:

We can thus explain the causes of obesity in terms of a variety of factors acting on the appetite centre so as to cause excessive eating. The two commonest of these factors seem to be: (1) very low physical activity; and (2) the temptation to eat too much, especially of sweet prepared food. Rational treatment of those who really desire to lose weight must also be aimed at affecting the appetite centre, so as to cause decreased eating. The chief aims

of treatment will thus be to increase physical activity, and to give a diet designed to be lower in calories while still of optimal satiety. This in practice means a diet which need be restricted only in carbohydrate. As a help in the early stages, when the new dietary habits are being acquired, it may be found useful to take methyl cellulose or possibly some other preparation which decreases appetite.⁵⁷³

It seemed, however, that advice on obesity was inconsistent, as Douthwaite for example recommended a very different diet for weight-loss:

Breakfast.—Two cups of tea or coffee. One slice of toast or bread, not more than 1 oz. (28 g.) in weight. Butter thinly spread. Boiled or poached egg or fish (boiled or steamed) or tongue. No sausages. Fresh fruit except banana.

Luncheon.—Clear meat soup if desired. Any green vegetables, celery, salsify, asparagus ad lib. No root vegetables, rice, or macaroni. Fish or lean meat, including fowl, ad lib. (no bread crumbs or bread sauce). Fresh fruit, except banana. Half an ounce (14 g.) of cheese. Bread and butter as for breakfast. Water or soda water.⁵⁷⁴

Taking this diet as an example, obese people were instructed to almost never include fat in their diets. This kind of advice could be seen also in the self-help genre, and more specifically in Gayelord Hauser's work. These two instances and the synergism of the promotion of low-fat diets by some commentators during the 1950s enabled the ideology of low-fat to conquer America but also the UK.⁵⁷⁵

Charles Rosenberg's theory of civilisation at risk, or the cultural preoccupations of contemporary writers in the post-war era with 'diseases of civilisation', further

⁵⁷³ J. Yudkin, 'The Causes and Cure of Obesity', *The Lancet*, 274, no. 7112, (19 December 1959), 1135-1138.

⁵⁷⁴ A.H. Douthwaite, 'Refresher Course for General Practitioners on Obesity', *The British Medical Journal*, 1, no. 291, (10 February 1951), 291-293.

⁵⁷⁵ A. La Berge, 'How the Ideology of Low Fat Conquered America', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 63, no. 2, (2008), 139-177.

criminalised obesity and laid down the foundations for the ideology of low-fat diets to dominate Anglo-American societies in the late twentieth century. Although contemporary commentators did not necessarily agree on the low-fat hypothesis or with each other, they all agreed that obesity was dangerous and needed to be combated. Like Hugh Clegg, the editor of *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, Austin Smith, wrote an editorial on cholesterol intake and vascular sclerosis. He concluded:

sufficient data already are available to suggest that of immediate importance in the control of arteriosclerosis is the need for curbing obesity. This condition should be regarded as a disease. It is widespread and contributes heavily to the devastating effects of vascular disease as well as other diseases. Evidence is accumulating which indicates that obesity is associated with abnormalities of cholesterol metabolism, perhaps far more so than the dietary intake of cholesterol.⁵⁷⁶

Theodore Fox, editor of *The Lancet*, held opinions similar to Clegg and Smith. He was not convinced about the value of the low-fat diet and yet he regarded it as a treatment for obesity:

On the practical side, there is so far no satisfactory evidence that the lowering of serum-cholesterol levels: either by diet or by other means, reduces the liability to myocardial infarction; and until such evidence obtained there is no clear case for drastic measures, dietetic or otherwise, to reduce cholesterol levels. ... "strong emotional devotion to corn-oil diets" will do no good. Nevertheless, it is wise to repeat to many middle-aged people, whether or not they have had a myocardial infarct, that "men dig their graves with their teeth" In this country the average intake of dietary fat is high and getting higher; and one can reduce it substantially without becoming a crank, upsetting the

⁵⁷⁶ A. Smith, 'Cholesterol Intake and Vascular Sclerosis', *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 144, no. 6, (7 October 1950), 469.

normal routine of a family kitchen, or forgoing social engagements. The serum-cholesterol level is likely to fall if one eats sparingly of butter, cream, and pastries, chooses only the lean portions of meat and bacon, and makes fried food a luxury rather than a regular daily feature of the diet. Such moderation can do nothing but good.⁵⁷⁷

Three of six editors of these journals during the 1950s attributed obesity to high fat consumption, which was regarded as a product of 'civilised' societies. Not only was obesity increasingly viewed as a risk factor for heart disease, but many of the commentators on such topics accepted the low-fat diet as a crude solution. Frederick Stare's commentary on heart disease demonstrated this clearly:

If for no other reason than the avoidance of obesity there will probably be a trend in this country to "less rich diets," which means "less calories" in the diet. Because fats are such a concentrated source of calories, a moderate reduction of fat intake will result in a generous reduction in calories. Since most of us enjoy eating, there will be "room" in our diets for foods of lower caloric content. These foods might well be cereals and grains and their products, and vegetables and fruits—foods, incidentally, that are commonly used by many groups of people throughout the world who have a lower incidence of coronary thrombosis than we do.⁵⁷⁸

Not long after the editorial by Smith was published in 1950, a study by A.M. Master and his colleagues confirmed: 'The literature and our own findings, in this and previous investigations, clearly indicate the importance of avoiding obesity in cardiovascular disease. In patients who are overweight, the mortality rate is twice that of average or underweight patients. Obesity increases the basic work of the heart and thus places a strain

⁵⁷⁷ T. Fox, 'Coronary-artery disease', *The Lancet*, 271, no. 7022, (22 March 1958), 625-627.

⁵⁷⁸ F. Stare et al, 'Nutritional Studies Relating to Serum Lipids and Atherosclerosis' *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 164, no. 17, (24 August 1957), 1920-1925.

on it.⁵⁷⁹ The combined forces of nutritionists, epidemiologists and cardiologists were demonstrating that obesity - which was regarded as a disease of over-eating and insufficient exercise - was a product of civilisation and its occurrence constituted a societal threat.⁵⁸⁰ Even though it was never explicit, it seemed that many of the commentators on health saw this as a moral shortcoming of the West: Western people were overweight and too well-fed, which in turn caused more chronic diseases.⁵⁸¹ In an editorial entitled 'Too Solid Flesh', Clegg quoted Boswell's *Life of Johnson* to sum up his view on obesity:

“Talking to a man who was grown very fat, so as to be incommoded with corpulency, he said, ‘He eats too much, Sir.’ BOSWELL: ‘I don’t know, Sir; you will see one man fat who eats moderately, and another lean who eats a great deal’ JOHNSON: ‘Nay. Sir, whatever may be the quantity that a man eats, it is plain that if he is too fat, he has eaten more than he should have done. One man may have a digestion that consumes food better than common; but it is certain that solidity is increased by putting something to it. ‘BOSWELL: ‘But may not solids swell and be distended?’ JOHNSON: Yes, ‘Sir, they may swell and be distended; but that is not fat’”⁵⁸²

This notion is deeply rooted in the ideology of neoromanticism, which deemed ‘modern’ eating, or overindulgence, as unnatural, a notion that influenced medical research in the 1950s. Richard Mackarness wrote a letter to the editor of *The British Medical Journal* in 1959, where he referenced recently published evidence and studies from previous decades

⁵⁷⁹ A.M. Master et al, ‘Relationship of Obesity to Coronary Disease and Hypertension’, *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 153, no. 17, (26 December 1953), 1499-1501.

⁵⁸⁰ The topic of obesity has been discussed Sander Gilman in *Fat, A Cultural History of Obesity* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009) and in S. Gilman, *Obesity: The Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

⁵⁸¹ A similar contention can be read in Grob, *The Deadly Truth*.

⁵⁸² H. Clegg, ‘Too Solid Flesh’, *The British Medical Journal*, 2, no. 5112, (27 December 1958), 1581-1582.

criticising Clegg for oversimplifying the problem of obesity.⁵⁸³ This is one example of wider interest in obesity, but also of the divergence of opinion in medical correspondence.

In 1958, Theodore Fox published an editorial entitled ‘Banting up to date’, which was also the subtitle of Richard Mackarness’ self-help book *Eat Fat and Grow Slim*.⁵⁸⁴ Fox criticised John Yudkin and Richard Mackarness for publishing books in the popular self-help genre. He likened their books to Banting’s *Letter on Corpulence*. In what can be described as a tone of mockery, Fox argued:

The size of the problem posed by obesity may be obscured to some extent by its very familiarity. Any effective and practicable system proposed for its solution will depend for its success on placing the responsibility for its execution where it belongs—on the shoulders of the patient. For this purpose, the greatest need is to enlighten the patient, and both YUDKIN and MACKARNESS have provided palatable and even entertaining statements of the problem, garnished with appropriate advice. Both will appeal to some of the patients for whom they were designed.⁵⁸⁵

The low-fat versus low-carbohydrate diet controversy persisted, with prominent names on either side of the debate. Fox’s opinions indicate that he was in the low-fat camp, which can be further demonstrated by the fact that he never criticised Ancel Keys for publishing a self-help book or appealing to the ‘faddists’. Following this editorial, a number of commentators felt the need to respond. Kekwick and Pawan, who were often referenced in the Mackarness book, argued that their study was not intended to be used in mass-scale implementation but rather to examine various diets and their efficacy. At the time Kekwick and Pawan were not as established as other commentators and distancing themselves from ‘fringe’ opinions allowed them a level of respectability.

⁵⁸³ R. Mackarness, ‘Too Solid Flesh’, *The British Medical Journal*, 1, no. 5119, (14 February 1959), 439.

⁵⁸⁴ R. Mackarness, *Eat Fat and Grow Slim* (London: Harvill Press, 1958).

⁵⁸⁵ T. Fox, ‘Banting Up to Date’, *The Lancet*, 272, no. 7050, (11 October 1958), 785-786.

Between 11 October and 6 December 1958, many commentators, including Hugh Sinclair, Thomas Cleave and Major Hamilton, further criticised Mackarness, who did write to defend his work. Mackarness used a recent speech by the chairman of the Section of General Practice of the American Medical Association, G. Thorpe, on the 100th Anniversary of the American Medical Association: ‘The simplest to prepare and most easily obtainable high-protein, high-fat, low-carbohydrate diet...and one that will produce the most rapid loss of weight without hunger, weakness, lethargy, or constipation, is made up of meat, fat and water. The total quantity eaten need not be noted’.⁵⁸⁶

Correspondence went beyond criticism of Mackarness to fuller discussion and disagreements between various commentators. Cleave, in his letter on the topic on 25 October, partially agreed with the premises set out by Yudkin and Mackarness’ books on the ground that the consumption of too much sugar was unnatural:

A simple example will make this clear. A bar of chocolate often contains more sugar than a dozen English apples. The instinct of appetite would indicate just when to stop eating the apples - say, after the third. But it cannot indicate just when to stop eating the concentrated chocolate. Who stops one-quarter the way along the bar?⁵⁸⁷

But Cleave did not agree that humans could eat more fat either, because it increased the risk of developing heart disease.⁵⁸⁸ Mackarness responded to this by arguing that he believed that a person’s appetite for fat was finely adjusted to metabolic needs and that it was impossible to eat it beyond an appetite for it without feeling or becoming sick and that he did not encourage people to eat fat beyond this limit.⁵⁸⁹ Mackarness made it clear that Cleave’s line of thought was not all too different from his own: ‘to eat foods in their

⁵⁸⁶ R. Mackarness, ‘Banting Up to Date’, *The Lancet*, 272, no. 7051, (18 October 1958), 849-850.

⁵⁸⁷ T. Cleave, ‘Banting Up to Date’, *The Lancet*, 272, no. 7052, (25 October 1958), 908-909.

⁵⁸⁸ T. Cleave, ‘Banting Up to Date’, *The Lancet*, 272, no. 7056, (22 November 1958), 1125-1126.

⁵⁸⁹ R. Mackarness, ‘Banting Up to Date’, *The Lancet*, 272, no. 7055, (15 November 1958), 1066.

natural state, which in the case of civilised man permits simple cooking ", he says " this leads mainly to avoiding two groups of food-white flour and commercial sugar, and all products made from them".⁵⁹⁰ Mackarness pointed out Cleave's hypocrisy: Cleave had argued that Mackarness was promoting a dangerous fallacy, but he himself adhered to some aspects of this 'fallacy', and promoted a diet for which there was still insufficient supporting data.⁵⁹¹ Major Hamilton criticised Cleave for his acceptance of 'naturalness':

The natural man, who can still be found, in diminishing numbers, does not present an encouraging contrast. Natural selection is eliminating him. If he does not suffer from obesity, it is probably because he is diseased and has nothing much to eat. Concentrated carbohydrates may be responsible for obesity but all our food is more or less unnatural. Naturalism is a false god. Taoism, Stoicism, and Epicureanism are attractive religious philosophies containing the seeds of their own decay. Science is observation and the answers to medical problems are not to be found in metaphysics.⁵⁹²

Discussion did not end there. Sinclair likened Mackarness and Yudkin, especially the latter, to women's magazines diet promoters,⁵⁹³ and pointed out to Cleave that obesity in humans was a phenomenon happening as early as 30,000 years ago.⁵⁹⁴ He further criticised the *British Medical Association* that had hired 'Dr Clyde' - who was not in the medical register - to write a booklet on nutrition and for allowing Yudkin's ideas to be published in *British Medical Association* booklets. This lengthy discourse on diets and obesity demonstrated the divergence of medical opinion on the matter, but also that -

⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹² D. Hamilton, 'Banting Up to Date', *The Lancet*, 272, no. 7053, (1 November 1958), 963.

⁵⁹³ H. Sinclair, 'Banting Up to Date', *The Lancet*, 272, no. 7055, (15 November 1958), 1065. More specifically Sinclair argued: 'The earliest known statue of Man is a woman, circular, obese, pregnant, and hideous, the Venus of Willendorf now at least 30,000 years old; in those days women lived in caves eating and breeding while men chased woolly rhinoceroses'.

⁵⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

despite their differences in ideology - these commentators saw obesity as a disease and shared a common goal of eradicating it 'scientifically', efficiently, and safely.

This call to arms against obesity can be seen in the work of other experts such as Jean Mayer, who was researching the physiological aspects of obesity and metabolism. Mayer and his colleagues proposed the glucostatic theory of food intake with the central premise that blood sugar levels had an impact on hunger, appetite and satiation, which later in the century was proven to be one of the many factors contributing to obesity.⁵⁹⁵ Other aspects of obesity were also examined. In an editorial piece for *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, Henry Brosin informed readers about yet another factor contributing to obesity: psychology. He based his argument on Claude Bernard's and Walter Cannon's self-regulating mechanisms in relation to hunger and appetite.⁵⁹⁶ Brosin focused on another aspect of Cannon's work, which was that some behaviours in humans were learned and did not have straightforward protective functions that were immediately known to the observer.⁵⁹⁷ Brosin argued: 'Current psychiatric belief holds that compulsive overeating is a meaningful process to attain a goal. The goal may be hidden from conscious thought and may seem to be thoroughly unreasonable to common-sense values even after it is uncovered by careful study'.⁵⁹⁸ Brosin was urging physicians to ask these questions: 'What is this patient attempting to accomplish?'; "What does he want most?"; "What is he afraid of?"; "What is he guilty about?"; "What causes him to be depressed or morbid, and how does he handle it?"; and "What is he most hostile about?".⁵⁹⁹ As with allergy and asthma, which Mark Jackson argued were increasingly

⁵⁹⁵ J. Mayer, 'Glucostatic Mechanism of Regulation of Food Intake', *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 249, no. 1, (2 July 1953), 13-16.

⁵⁹⁶ Especially in Walter Cannon's, *Bodily Changes in Pain, Hunger, Fear and Rage* (New York: Appleton and Company, 1915).

⁵⁹⁷ H. Brosin, 'The Psychiatric Aspects of Obesity', *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 155, no. 14, (31 July 1954), 1238.

⁵⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

viewed through psychology, obesity had to be seen and treated in holistic, psychosomatic terms.⁶⁰⁰

Physicians were urged to classify patients who overate in one of four categories devised by Dr. W. Hamburger: '(1) overeating as a response to nonspecific emotional tensions; (2) overeating as a substitute gratification in intolerable life situations; (3) overeating as symptom of an underlying emotional illness, especially depressions and hysteria; and (4) overeating as an addiction to food'.⁶⁰¹ Brosin urged doctors reading the piece to refer patients in the third or fourth categories to psychologists and, depending on the severity of overeating, to psychiatrists. Brosin eloquently demonstrated to his readers - mostly physicians - that patients might cheat on their diet, or relapse under a stressful event, and the editorial was preaching patience and understanding. This could be seen in another part of the article where Brosin stated:

The contrast between the patient's sincere intention to lose weight and the inner resistances to giving up the satisfactions of taking in food or of being large is often puzzling to an observer. Some obese persons regard their enlarged body as a fortress against a hostile world. It may also be a symbol of independence or strength (especially in rebellious adolescents) or importance. It may be an intimidation to enemies and a mask for emotions. In some girls it has been found to be a symbol of a wished-for pregnancy, but the obese state can also be used as a means of discouraging suitors and depreciation of their femininity. Obesity may help the patient live a more passive life, so that he risks less in open competition with others and consequently is less anxious. These and similar conflicts may be discovered

⁶⁰⁰ M. Jackson, "Allergy con Amore" Psychosomatic Medicine and the "Asthmogenic Home" in the Mid-Twentieth Century', in M. Jackson (ed.), *Health and the Modern Home* (Abington: Routledge, 2007), 153-174.

⁶⁰¹ Brosin, 'The Psychiatric Aspects of Obesity'.

by means of sympathetic interviewing, in which the patient is given freedom.⁶⁰²

Physicians and medical researchers in these journals had thus awakened interest in the utilisation of dieting as a therapeutic treatment, a concept that was taken even further during the 1960s.

Dietotherapy and anti-quackery during the 1960s

Studies in the 1950s had reignited interest in multiple aspects of diet. Medical research in the 1960s continued to place an increased focus on the reactions of the human body to various diets and specific foods.⁶⁰³ More importantly this development demonstrates the fading effect of Keys' theory - at least in these medical journals - but also the rate at which researchers on either side of the Atlantic advanced their methodology to include other variables. These variables could be as wide as categories of foods such as carbohydrates, but as specific as individual foodstuffs such as oats or coffee. Throughout many issues of these journals, specific foods, diets, and lifestyle were frequent topics. This development made journals' content increasingly resemble self-help books in terms of topics and style, offering similar advice. A medical news reporter reading these journals, and more specifically *The Lancet* and *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, could deduce that the new frontier in solving health problems was nutrition.

Dietotherapy or healing by the use of diet was an area of increasing fascination for biomedical researchers during the 1960s.⁶⁰⁴ One article by J.F. Munro is

⁶⁰² *Ibid.*

⁶⁰³ The fascination of biomedical research with cardiovascular disease blossomed, but one phenomenon that occurred during the 1960s was that Ancel Keys' voice and research declined in the pages of the journals considered in this chapter. This might indicate on one part that Keys strategically published in a multitude of journals -thus avoiding publishing in the same - to get his theory visible to many different medical and para-medical audiences. Keys' reduced visibility in the journals considered here, however demonstrates the questionability of the diet-heart hypothesis and the reluctance of editors to reiterate Keys' points.

⁶⁰⁴ The main title of a book published by Michael G. Wohl, M.D., Chief of Human Nutrition, Division of Biological Chemistry, Hahnemann Medical College and Hospital, Philadelphia, and Robert S. Goodhart, M.D. who was Scientific Director of the National Vitamin Foundation: M.G Wohl and R.S Goodhart,

demonstrative of this turn to dietotherapies, using one specific parameter about diets - frequency and timing of meals. Munro hypothesised that “refractory obese” individuals failed to lose weight on many diets because they were affected by hunger pangs which were the result of meals following each other after a number of hours.⁶⁰⁵ He devised a diet in which thirty-nine obese women with at least twenty per cent excess body fat- most of whom were housewives - ate five 200 calorie meals instead of the traditional three meals during a twelve-week period.⁶⁰⁶ The selection of this group of women illustrates the perception of obesity in women during the 1960s. These women were selected using these criteria:

All had attended the dietetic out-patient department regularly for at least the previous 12 months, during which time their attempts to adhere to prescribed subcaloric diets containing approximately 1,000 calories had met with little or no success and resulted in no significant loss of weight in the three months immediately preceding the trial.⁶⁰⁷

The women were offered a list of seventy different items which they could eat and they were followed up every fortnight, when the physicians weighed them and asked questions to classify their adherence to the diet as ‘strict’ or ‘not strict’. Despite the fact that four women found the diet too difficult to follow, six who actually gained up to 2lb, and three who remained unchanged, the rest of the women - both strict and not-strict followers to the plan - all lost weight. The medical profession already recognised that reducing the

Modern Nutrition in Health and Disease: Dietotherapy (London: Henry Kimpton, 1964). It was reprinted four more times until 1975.

⁶⁰⁵ J. F. Munro et al., ‘Treatment of "Refractory Obesity" With a Diet of Five Meals a Day’, *The British Medical Journal*, 1, no. 5493, (16 April 1966), 950-952; Munro and his colleagues use the definition of “refractory obesity” set by Duncan and his colleagues in a double-blind study prescribing appetite suppressants which was: stubborn obesity in patients who ‘...are either unable or unwilling to curb their appetites sufficiently, despite continued dietetic advice and encouragement’ in L. Duncan et al., ‘Phenmetrazine Hydrochloride And Methylcellulose In The Treatment of "Refractory" Obesity’, *The Lancet*, 275, no. 7137, (11 June 1960), 1262-1265. There was a different view where patients were given only two meals a day.

⁶⁰⁶ Munro, ‘Treatment of "Refractory Obesity"’, 950.

⁶⁰⁷ *Ibid.* 950-951.

amount of calories resulted in weight loss, but in the 1960s they were increasingly preoccupied with the most efficient weight reduction strategies.

During this decade there was also interest in a completely opposite strategy as the best slimming regime, namely fasting.⁶⁰⁸ During the 1960s there was an upsurge in the curiosity and willingness of the medical profession to experiment using such controversial methodologies. *The Lancet*, in particular, featured many articles with novel nutritional therapies further demonstrating that dietotherapy was an increasingly popular and lucrative research topic. This turn to therapeutic dieting could also be attributed to the over-eagerness of patients to participate in cutting-edge treatments or the extent to which obesity was seen as a pathogenic condition. As Sander Gilman suggests, obesity was a twentieth century concept which branded overweight individuals as ‘unhealthy’, a danger to themselves, and a burden to society.⁶⁰⁹

It is arguable that T.J Thomson et al.’s , ‘Treatment of Obesity by Total Fasting for up to 249 Days’, was catalytic in steering research towards the benefits of complete abstinence from food. In Thomson et al.’s study, thirteen individuals - ten women and three men - chose to participate in the study which entailed that they stayed at the hospital so that they could be closely supervised for a period of 25 to 249 days.⁶¹⁰ The ratio of women to men once again supports the contention by Deborah Lupton that women historically have been more preoccupied with their body weight than men.⁶¹¹ While on

⁶⁰⁸ T. Thomson et al., ‘Treatment of Obesity by Total Fasting for up to 249 Days’, *The Lancet*, 288, no. 7471, (5 November 1966), 992-996; G. Tewfik et al., ‘Prolonged Total Fasting For Obesity’, *The Lancet*, 290, no. 7529, (16 December 1967), 1310-1311; G. Duncan, ‘Correction and Control of Intractable Obesity: Practicable Application of Intermittent Periods of Total Fasting’, *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 181, no. 4, (July, 1962), 309-312; Anon., ‘Fasts Used Effectively with Obese Diabetics’, *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 189, no. 7, (August, 1964), 31-32; M. Wishnofsky, ‘Intermittent Fasts’, *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 185, no. 3, (July, 1963), 219; A. MacCuish et al., ‘Follow-up study of refractory obesity treated by fasting’, *The British Medical Journal*, 1, no. 5584, (13 January 1968), 91-92; J. Mayer, ‘Some Aspects of the Problem of Regulation of Food Intake and Obesity’, *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 274, no. 12, (24 March 1966), 662-673; and W. Bortz et al., ‘Weight Loss and Frequency of Feeding’, 274, no. 7, (17 February 1966), 376-379.

⁶⁰⁹ Gilman, *Fat*, pp. 2-3.

⁶¹⁰ T. Thomson et al., ‘Treatment of Obesity by Total Fasting for up to 249 Days’, *The Lancet*, 288, no. 7471, (5 November 1966), 992-996.

⁶¹¹ Lupton, *Food, The Body and the Self*, p. 35.

this fasting regime the participants were allowed ‘unlimited amounts of tap-water, acaloric flavoured drinks, and unsweetened tea or coffee without milk’.⁶¹² An important point made by Thomson et al. was:

The most important factor ensuring success in any weight-reducing regimen is the patient's motivation. The desire to lose weight may stem from cosmetic reasons or from a determination to improve the physical wellbeing. Medical advice and exhortation from relatives are notoriously ineffective in producing sustained reduction of weight by dieting. By contrast, the rapid weight-loss on this regimen presents to the patient, often frustrated and distressed by ineffective dieting, the solution to a hitherto intractable problem. This boost in morale is of inestimable value in ensuring their subsequent cooperation.⁶¹³

This paragraph perfectly encapsulates the sentiments of participants, further indicating that by the 1960s obesity penetrated public consciousness, making individuals determined to participate in such a study without even knowing what the side effects could be. Thomson and his colleagues took extensive notes on the effects of fasting on blood chemistry, physiology, and side effects. One patient developed oedema of the face, legs and hands and another had an episode of hypotension, but all other side-effects reported on were minor and unimportant.⁶¹⁴

In *The British Medical Journal*, a frequent theme of discussion and a topic researched in more depth was the issue of children's weight. An example of this phenomenon can be seen in an editorial in the issue of 22 October 1966, ‘Management of the Fat Child’.⁶¹⁵ The editorial argued that overweight children were becoming an increasingly common phenomenon. The definition of childhood obesity was taken from

⁶¹² Thomson et al., ‘Treatment of Obesity’, 992-993.

⁶¹³ *Ibid.*, 994.

⁶¹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶¹⁵ M. Ware, ‘Management of the Fat Child’, *The British Medical Journal*, 2, no. 5520, (22 October 1966), 961-962.

Jean Mayer: 'a child who is too fat for his or her own good.'⁶¹⁶ Children affected by 'simple obesity' were the result of 'simple' overconsumption of calories, rather than having Cushing's disease or Fröhlich's syndrome. The editorial argued that being overweight was not just a physical ailment, but also a psychological one as fat children were taunted by other children by being called "'Fatty,'" "Tubby," "Fatso"'.⁶¹⁷ Amongst the most legitimate strategies was to persuade mothers of such children to act, since children themselves would not accept a reduction in their favourite foods. More specifically the editorial argued: 'The best hope of success is to persuade the child's mother to alter the dietary habit of the whole family towards a lower-calorie intake'.⁶¹⁸ Rima Apple's notion of 'scientific motherhood' had high cultural currency during the 1960s. As Jane Hand demonstrates, this was used as a marketing strategy by Flora in the 1960s and expanded to the notion of 'scientific wifeness' in the 1970s.⁶¹⁹ In *The British Medical Journal* editorial, the role of the mother as an 'encourager' of the adolescent overweight child became part of the 'treatment' team. Another fact worth noting was that mothers were to be instructed to prepare low-calorie and low-carbohydrate meals for their families. This resonates with the advertising campaigns by Ovaltine discussed in Chapter III, in which the mother was portrayed as responsible for the health of the entire family, which was to be achieved through the purchase of healthy food. Keeping children at healthy weights was advisable as the editorial argued that 80% of obese children were obese in adulthood, which in itself was a 'risk' factor for other diseases.⁶²⁰

One example of the trend of extensive nutrition studies can be seen in the low-carbohydrate approaches to heart disease and obesity. Although this debate had a long

⁶¹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶¹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶¹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶¹⁹ R. Apple, *Perfect Motherhood: Science and Childrearing in America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2006); J. Hand, 'Marketing Health Education: Advertising Margarine and visualising health in Britain from 1964- c.2000', *Contemporary British History*, 31, no. 4, (2017), 477- 500.

⁶²⁰ Ware, 'Management of the Fat Child'.

history beginning in the nineteenth century, during the 1960s it increasingly focussed on the effect of sugar on heart disease and chronic diseases.⁶²¹ Therapeutic diet regimes such as the low-carbohydrate diet were seen as a solution to obesity, diabetes and more importantly heart disease and during this decade for the first time sugar received considerable attention.⁶²² One such study was by Aharon M. Cohen et al. published in *The British Medical Journal*. Cohen and his colleagues published an article based on one case report, juxtaposing it to previously published material. The patient was a 50-year old Jewish woman from Romania who appeared to have ‘milky’ blood. She:

was treated as an out-patient in the dietetic kitchen of our metabolic unit while she pursued her normal daily activities. Food was prepared by trained dietitians and consisted of three meals served in the dietetic kitchen, and a small snack taken home by the patient to be eaten in the late evening. Unconsumed food was returned so that the daily caloric intake and composition of the food could be calculated. The patient was weighed daily. The diets were prepared from natural foodstuffs, and were adjusted to the special needs and habits of the patient as much as possible.⁶²³

The precise order of the three diets fed to this woman were: a diet rich in starch, a diet relatively rich in unsaturated fats, and a diet high in sucrose. The first diet which lasted for twenty-four days resulted in a decrease in cholesterol and triglycerides, the second diet followed for twenty-seven days resulted in a continuing drop in these blood

⁶²¹ The low-fat against low-carbohydrate debate was also prominent in R. Meach, ‘From John Yudkin to Jamie Oliver: A Short But Sweet History on the War Against Sugar’, in Gentilcore and Smith (eds), *Proteins, Pathologies and Politics*, 95-110; Sugar was under continuous investigation in the UK such as: J. Yudkin, ‘Carbohydrates and Adiposity’, *The British Medical Journal*, 1, no. 5389, (18 April 1964), 1041; B. M. Rifkind et al., ‘Effect of Short-Term Sucrose Restriction on Serum-Lipid Levels’, *The Lancet*, 288, no. 7478, (24 December 1966), 1379-1381; Anon, ‘Obesity and Sugar Addiction’, *The Lancet*, 281, no. 7284, (6 April 1963), 768. and J. Yudkin, ‘Dietary Fat and Dietary Sugar in Relation to Ischaemic Heart-Disease and Diabetes’, *The Lancet*, 284, no. 7349, (4 July 1964), 4-6.

⁶²² Diet Regimes were frequently used in clinical practice as seen in the work of M. Moore, ‘Balance and the “good” diabetic in Britain, c.1900-1960’, in Jackson and Moore (eds), *Balancing the Self*, 38-75.

⁶²³ A. Cohen et al., ‘Effect of Starch and Sucrose on Carbohydrate-induced Hyperlipaemia’, *The British Medical Journal*, 1, no. 5483, (5 February 1966), 339-340.

biomarkers, and finally the twenty-six-day period of the high-sucrose diet resulted in an overall increase in blood cholesterol and triglycerides.

Cohen and his colleagues vindicated what John Yudkin had been arguing for many years about the effects of sucrose on heart disease.⁶²⁴ Although this study was carried out in Israel, it was funded by the U.S Department of Agriculture, indicating that focusing on the role of sugar was evident internationally.⁶²⁵ John Talbott in an editorial in *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, decried the state of research:

For nearly fifteen years, an almost embarrassingly high number of researchers boarded the "cholesterol bandwagon" in pursuit of understanding of atherosclerosis. This fervent embrace of cholesterol to the exclusion of other biochemical alterations resulted in a narrow scope of study of a disease which is probably multi-faceted in causation. Fortunately, other fruitful approaches have been made possible in the past few years by identification of the fundamental role of such factors as triglycerides and carbohydrate metabolism in atherogenesis.⁶²⁶

The increased popularity of nutrition studies during the 1960s was not limited to cholesterol and sucrose studies. If the 1950s set the foundation for what Gyorgy Scrinis calls 'nutritionism', which was a culture in which people increasingly became aware of broad categories of nutrients, it was during the 1960s that individual foods, 'health' foods, drinks, and supplements were increasingly investigated to evaluate their impact on health.⁶²⁷ *The Lancet* and *The Journal of the American Medical Association* took the lead in publishing studies on therapeutic dietetic regimes or observations of nutrient influences

⁶²⁴ *Ibid.*; and J. Yudkin, 'Dietary Fat and Dietary Sugar in Relation to Ischaemic Heart-Disease and Diabetes', *The Lancet*, 284, no. 7349, (4 July 1964), 4-6.

⁶²⁵ P.T. Kuo, 'Hyperglyceridemia in Coronary Artery Disease and Its Management', *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 201, no. 2, (10 July 1967), 87-94; The study took place in Metabolic Unit, Department of Internal Medicine B, and the Out-patient Dietetic Service, Hadassah-University Hospital, and the Israel Government College of Nutrition, Jerusalem.

⁶²⁶ J. Talbott, 'Coronary Heart Disease and Carbohydrate Metabolism', *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 201, no. 13, (25 September 1967), 164-165.

⁶²⁷ G. Scrinis, 'On the ideology of nutritionism', *Gastronomica*, 8, no. 1, (2008), 39-48.

on health.⁶²⁸ For example, J. Alick Little and his colleagues studied the effect of coffee on cardiovascular disease.⁶²⁹ Their study was supported by grants from the Department of Veterans Affairs, Canada and the Ontario Heart Foundation, and is another indication of international cooperation on the issue of heart disease.⁶³⁰ Little's summary of the findings were:

Significant correlations between coffee drinking and serum lipid and lipoprotein concentrations were found in men with coronary heart-disease but not in healthy controls. Tea tended to have negative correlations with the serum lipids and lipoproteins in the patients. Other nutrients had no consistent correlation in either group. The data suggest that coffee contains a substance which elevates serum-lipids in susceptible persons and that such persons may be liable to coronary heart-disease.⁶³¹

Healthmania in the 1960s was facilitated by the willingness of researchers to study as many variables as possible to promote good health.⁶³² In the medical news section of *The Journal of the American Medical Association* a new method of enhancing the effect of anti-coagulants was discussed. Armand J. Quick's new trial involved the excessive consumption of leafy greens for two-weeks by a post-myocardial infarction patient who had been taking an anticoagulant Dicumarol for three years.⁶³³ Because of the high-concentration of Vitamin K, the leafy greens resulted in a lower prothrombin time from (20-30 seconds to 19) and the serum-corrected time of the patient dropped to 12 seconds,

⁶²⁸ In *The British Medical Journal* and in *The New England Journal of Medicine* there were studies on individual foods but not as frequent and not in such great numbers.

⁶²⁹ J. Alick Little et al., 'Coffee and Serum Lipids in Coronary Heart-Disease', *The Lancet*, 287, no. 7440, (2 April 1966), 732-733.

⁶³⁰ The fact that the Ontario Heart Foundation provided funds for this study demonstrates the appeal of a multi-faceted research on heart disease and dietotherapies even to funding bodies during the 1960s.

⁶³¹ Little et al., 'Coffee and Serum Lipids'

⁶³² W.C Watson, 'Long-Term Administration of Corn Oil in Management of Patients after Myocardial Infarction: A Four-Year Study', *The British Medical Journal*, 2, no. 5369, (30 November 1963), 1366-1369.

⁶³³ A. Quick, 'Leafy Vegetables in Diet alter Prothrombin Time in Patients Taking Anti-coagulants', *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 187, no. 11, (14 March 1964), 27.

which demonstrated that such amounts of vegetables could reverse the effects of anticoagulants and should be avoided.

A letter to the editor of *The Lancet* demonstrates the evolving research culture. As opposed to other researchers focusing on the impact of specific oils on cholesterol, A.P. de Groot et al. from the Central Institute for Nutrition and Food Research T.N.O., Utrecht, Netherlands chose to experiment with rolled oats. Groot and his colleagues discussed their findings of feeding rolled oats in order to lower blood cholesterol. Groot and his colleagues discovered that feeding mice a hypercholesteremic diet of rolled oats had a hypocholesteremic effect and they then devised a trial with humans to investigate if it had the same results. Twenty-one volunteers ate daily a 300g loaf of bread of which 140g was from flour coming from rolled oats for three weeks (instead of their regular bread). The effects were similar to the rat model: the mean cholesterol fell from 253mg per 100ml of blood to 223 per 100ml at the end of three weeks and replacing it again with normal bread for two weeks resulted in an immediate rise to 246mg per 100ml.⁶³⁴

Another legacy of the cardiophobia of the 1950s was the extent of research in the 1960s on ‘modified’ foods, more specifically the substitution of saturated fats with unsaturated fats in everyday foods. As Jane Hand argues, between 1964 and 1968 the margarine business, specifically Flora, began to market its products as ‘health’ foods, and more importantly as cholesterol-reducing foods.⁶³⁵ Flora closely studied recent reports in which animal fats were substituted by vegetable fats; nutritional science provided the ‘health’ food industry with a rationale to sell more products. A study published in *The Lancet*, which was carried out in Finland, also demonstrated the movement towards ‘health’ foods within medical science. Osmo Turpeinen et al. compared the effect of substituting milk and butter with milk and margarine containing soybean emulsions on

⁶³⁴ A. De Groot, ‘Cholesterol-Lowering Effect of Rolled Oats’, *The Lancet*, 282, no. 7301, (10 August 1963), 303-304.

⁶³⁵ Hand, ‘Marketing Health Education’.

two different groups of patients in two separate mental hospitals.⁶³⁶ After randomly selecting those who took the ‘enhanced’ foods and the controls, Turpeinen and his colleagues took blood tests before and after the two different diets. The summary of this study read as follows: ‘After this dietary change the mean serum-cholesterol value of the 35-64-year-old male patients decreased from 236mg to 215mg. per 100ml. serum. This decrease was statistically highly significant.’⁶³⁷ On the other side of the Atlantic, *The Journal of the American Medical Association* published a similar article by J.G. Green and his associates. They summarised their findings:

A large variety of common fat-containing foods can be modified by food processors and manufacturers; saturated fats can be deleted and, in certain instances, replaced with polyunsaturated oils. The use of these altered foods, with only a minimal amount of diet instruction, can result in significant modification of diet. In the present study, the substitution of polyunsaturated fats for saturated fats was virtually isocaloric, that is, the total fat intake was essentially unchanged. Most of the altered foods were quite acceptable; some were indistinguishable from the usual saturated variety. Foods of this type offer a practical approach to palatable fat-modified diets for clinical and research use. The average reduction in serum cholesterol levels achieved by this type of diet manipulation was 14% and this effect was sustained over a 10-month period.⁶³⁸

Medical research also contributed to the promotion of ‘specialised’ products to treat obesity. In 1964 D.A. Seaton et al. used ‘the formula diet’ to treat refractory obesity. The formula diet comprised:

⁶³⁶ O. Turpeinen, ‘Effect on Serum-Cholesterol Level of Replacement of Dietary Milk Fat by Soybean Oil’, *The Lancet*, 275, no. 7117, (23 January 1960), 196-197.

⁶³⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶³⁸ J. Green, ‘Use of Fat-Modified Foods for Serum Cholesterol Reduction’, *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 183, no. 1, (5 January 1963), 5-12.

2-lb. (227-g.) tin of formula diet, containing 70g. of protein, 20g. of fat, and 110g. of carbohydrate, provides about 900 calories. The preparation is fortified with various vitamins and minerals and is supplied in several flavours - plain, vanilla, butterscotch, orange, and chocolate. It is prepared for use by adding about 2 pints (1,140ml.) of water to the contents of one tin and stirring to obtain a smooth mixture. This provides four large glassfuls, each of which replaces a main meal.⁶³⁹

The thirty-seven of forty-six women who replaced their meals with shakes underwent this 'diet' for twelve weeks. Thirty-two of the thirty-seven women managed to lose weight by the end of the trial.⁶⁴⁰ These developments enabled the food and supplement industries to begin producing 'health foods' and to promote their food as healthy by converting medical and technical jargon into easily understandable advertising campaigns.

The growth of the organic movement, the health food industry and the self-help genre produced a unique phenomenon in the US, namely an increasing preoccupation with the perils of quackery. In the US the medical profession, the FDA and the government in general were preoccupied with combating quackery.⁶⁴¹ By the 1960s, 'healthmania' was exploited by multiple industries. So many publications, self-help books, advertisements and products existed in the US market during this period that patients and consumers were apparently confused and misled. In *The New England Journal of Medicine* an editorial entitled 'Here a Quack, There a Quack' perfectly captured American anxieties:

To combat present-day quackery, particularly in the fields of nutrition, weight reduction and cancer, the Food and Drug Administration, the American Medical Association and the Better Business Bureaus have combined forces

⁶³⁹ D. Seaton et al., 'Treatment of "Refractory Obesity" with a Diet of Two Meals per Day', *The Lancet*, 284, no. 7360, (19 September 1964), 612-614.

⁶⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴¹ See earlier discussions about Gayelord Hauser and Robert Atkins.

and talents. Their opponents: “health food” peddlers, who have \$500,000,000 per year business...weight reducing schemers who are making \$100,000,000....and fake cancer-cure practitioners who...are pocketing \$10,000,000.⁶⁴²

One example of the cooperation this editorial referred to comes from a letter to the editor of *The Journal of the American Medical Association* with the title: ‘Mayo Diets are not from the Mayo Clinic’. The chairman of Mayo Clinic H.N Hoffman wrote: ‘We are anxious to disclaim any connection with the numerous bizarre diets which usually are circulated from person to person...and we would appreciate receiving any information regarding their source. We are sure that the readers of THE JOURNAL can be of help informing the dieting public of the uncertain origin of these diets’.⁶⁴³

Within *The Journal of the American Medical Association* there was a section reviewing the latest popular books, which the AMA condoned or condemned. Books published by ‘respectable’ medical authorities received more favourable reviews. One example was the book *Eat Well and Stay Well* by Ancel and Margaret Keys, which was reviewed by Philip White. He argued:

The patient who attempts to follow a modified-fat diet should welcome this book. To follow a low-saturated high-polyunsaturated-fat regimen, the patient must be informed properly. The physician who prescribes modified-fat diets should first read *Eat Well and Stay Well* to be sure he is in harmony with Dr. Ancel Keys' concepts. If so, the Keyeses' revised edition can be recommended with confidence. I was impressed with the soundness and the

⁶⁴² H. Hoxsey, ‘Here a Quack, There a Quack’, *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 262, no. 1, (7 June 1960), 43-44.

⁶⁴³ H. Hoffman, ‘Mayo Diets are not from the Mayo Clinic’, *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 192, no. 8, (24 May 1965), 727.

depth of the chapters on over-weight, obesity, and reducing. These chapters will be most helpful to anyone with a weight problem.⁶⁴⁴

Even though *Eat Well and Stay Well* was arguably as problematic as many other self-help books of the time, White did not identify a single criticism apart from the fact that the Keys were 'occasionally somewhat dogmatic'.⁶⁴⁵ But no concern was expressed that the Keys recommended their diet as a panacea. This indicates the blurring of lines between orthodoxy and 'quackery' and the increasingly difficult task of separating the two.

A prime example of criticism of the self-help industry by the medical profession was the review of the best-selling *Calories Don't Count* by Dr Taller. A snippet from White's comments on *Calories Don't Count* sets the tone for what was argued in the rest of the review:

He proposes that obese people metabolize fats and carbohydrates differently than do people of normal weight. Thus, it is claimed that such a person's carbohydrate intake must be restricted drastically if any weight reduction program is to be effective. Taller attributes some miraculous property to fats from vegetable sources which mobilises what has been called a "washing out of adipose tissue." Consequently, he recommends unlimited amounts of vegetable oils, special high-linoleic acid margarine, and, to be sure, 2 safflower capsules before each meal...In summary, this book is a grave injustice to the intelligent public and can only result in considerable damage to the prestige of the medical profession, of which Dr. Taller is a member.⁶⁴⁶

White's review was not limited to mockery and criticism; he also referred to the fact that the FDA had seized copies of Taller's books and two safflower oil products on the

⁶⁴⁴ P. White, 'Eat Well and Stay Well', *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 184, no. 2, (13 April 1963), 164.

⁶⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴⁶ P. White, 'Calories Don't Count', *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 179, no. 10, (10 March 1962), 828.

grounds that it promoted ‘false and misleading claims’ for such products.⁶⁴⁷ However, White’s criticisms were unjust at worst, as Taller had referenced research on the topic and there was an increasing number of studies in prestigious journals that demonstrated the effectiveness of fasting and ketogenic diets.⁶⁴⁸ This review further shows the extent to which medical science attempted to re-establish its authority and to silence conflicting views.

As mentioned in Chapter II, Harvard nutritionist Frederick Stare did not hesitate to criticise Linus Pauling’s book on the common cold. Seeing himself as ‘a critic of food quackery, faddism, and nutrition nonsense’, Stare was interviewed about an open letter from the Boston Nutrition Society.⁶⁴⁹ This letter condemned the use of white flour that had been ‘grown on poor soil, and fertilised with water-soluble commercial fertiliser of low-protein content. This is then bleached with a powerful oxidizing agent, chlorine dioxide (which is a poison); and to this lifeless mess, a few dead synthetic chemicals (improperly called vitamins) and inorganic iron are added.’⁶⁵⁰ Part of Stare’s response to the letter was: ‘These scare tactics are typical of the food-faddist organizations. The name ‘Boston Nutrition Society’ sounds good, but, if you were to telephone them, you would discover, as we did, that the phone number is the same as for the Copley Square Diet Shop, purveyors of so-called ‘health foods.’ The faddists want you to believe that the food industry is forcing white bread down the throats of the American public.’⁶⁵¹ The BNS

⁶⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴⁸ A. Kekwick & G.L.S Pawan, ‘Calorie Intake in Relation to Body-Weight Changes in the Obese’, *The Lancet*, 268, no. 6935, (28 July 1956), 155-161; W. Bloom and G. Azar, ‘Similarities of carbohydrate deficiency and fasting’, *Archives of Internal Medicine Journal of American Medical Association*, 112, (September 1963), 333-7; T. Thomson et al., ‘Treatment of Obesity by Total Fasting for up to 249 Days’, *The Lancet*, 288, no. 7471, (5 November 1966), 992-996; J. Yudkin & J. Carey, ‘The treatment of obesity by the “high-fat” diet. The inevitability of calories.’, *The Lancet*, vol. 276, No. 7157, (1960), 939-41.

⁶⁴⁹ F. Stare, ‘Nutritional Challenges for Physicians’, *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 175, no. 9, (2 December 1961), 924-927; F. Stare, ‘Special Communication: Boston Nutrition Society, Inc., Plaintiff vs Fredrick J. Stare, Defendant’, *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 184, no. 8, (25 May 1963), 635-639; Along with Elizabeth Whalen, Stare paradoxically also published in the self-help genre: E. Whalen & F. Stare, *Panic in the Pantry: Food Facts, Fads, and Fallacies* (New York, Atheneum, 1975).

⁶⁵⁰ Stare, ‘Special Communication: Boston Nutrition Society, Inc., Plaintiff vs Fredrick J. Stare’, 635.

⁶⁵¹ *Ibid.*

subsequently filed a lawsuit against Stare for libel, which demonstrates the ongoing battle between orthodoxy and 'health food' activism. Stare was found not guilty.⁶⁵²

Struggles between orthodox medicine and 'quackery' and support for prophylactic nutrition laid down the foundations for 'healthmania' in 1970s research. During this decade researchers studied heart disease in greater depth, placing new emphasis on women's experiences, and showed a heightened interest in diabetes and obesity in general. In the 1970s, the prevention of cancer too was beginning to be seen as possible through the adoption of diets.

Diabetes, women's hearts, Vitamin C and cancer in the 1970s

The chart at the start of this chapter showed a decrease in interest in the term cholesterol during the 1970s, but research on coronary disease, risk factors and cardiovascular disease was higher than in previous decades. The number of specific topics, researchers and the frequency of articles and correspondence on heart disease also grew during the 1970s. It seems, however, that the medical profession had not given up the low-fat, high-polyunsaturated fat and low-carbohydrate diets debate. 'Lipophobia', or the cultural distaste towards fat, was prominent during the 1970s, which can be seen in the focus on obesity in medical journals. More specifically, diabetes increasingly had a pivotal role in cardiovascular and obesity studies, especially in *The British Medical Journal* and *The Lancet*. Ian-Douglas Wilson, editor of *The Lancet*, presented data from multiple studies to make the case that diabetes was directly related to obesity in an editorial printed in 1971. Wilson's contention was: 'It seems ... that the overall prevalence of maturity-onset diabetes in a community is largely determined by the prevalence of obesity, but that, in communities where obesity is common, other environmental and genetic factors interact

⁶⁵² *Ibid.*

with obesity'.⁶⁵³ In the Therapeutic Conferences section of *The British Medical Journal*, an article with the title 'Diabetes Mellitus - Obesity and Dietary Management' also demonstrated the eagerness to treat diabetes safely. This could be seen in the opening statement by Dr J.C. Petrie who argued: 'It has been estimated that 30-40% of all recognized diabetics could be managed satisfactorily by dietary measures alone if the patients were sufficiently encouraged and motivated', which resonates with Martin Moore's contention about contemporary interest in the 'good' diabetic.⁶⁵⁴

Proper nutrition and diets not only were promoted, but by the 1970s they had become idealised therapeutic treatments. In 'Diabetes Mellitus', Dr. Petrie discussed the potential treatment of a forty-three-year-old woman who was admitted to the hospital because of symptoms of heart disease.⁶⁵⁵ Tests indicated that the woman had no indication of myocardial damage but that she had glycosuria, a sign of diabetes mellitus. Dr Wood then argued: 'This patient is more than 10% over her ideal weight. This makes her a very suitable candidate for strict dietary treatment and at this stage there is no need for oral hypoglycaemic therapy'.⁶⁵⁶ Dr Stowers responded that: 'Carbohydrate often needs to be restricted to about 100 g/day' and suggested that the patient should be instructed about the quantitative aspects of diets.⁶⁵⁷ Stowers argued that it was of great significance that the doctor should spend time with the diabetic patient and frequently re-emphasise the importance of diet. As seen by this article the boundaries between orthodox science and self-help were blurred. The scientism evident in the notion of 'intelligent eating' promoted by Gayelord Hauser during the 1950s, was not far removed from instruction about quantities and 'exchanges' by doctors during the 1970s. Patients were also

⁶⁵³ I. Wilson, 'Obesity and Diabetes Mellitus', *The Lancet*, 297, no. 7695, (20 February 1971), 381-382.

⁶⁵⁴ Anon, 'Therapeutic Conferences: Diabetes Mellitus - Obesity and Dietary Management', *The British Medical Journal*, 2, no. 5815, (17 June 1972), 706-708; M. Moore, 'Balance and the "Good" Diabetic in Britain, c.1900-1960', in Jackson and Moore (eds), *Balancing the Self*, 38-75

⁶⁵⁵ Anon, 'Therapeutic Conferences: Diabetes Mellitus', 381-382.

⁶⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

encouraged to be active agents in the pursuit of their own health by testing their own urine using the Clinitest kit.⁶⁵⁸ As mentioned in Chapter II, Atkins urged his ‘patients’ to use Ketostix to monitor their blood ketone levels, so self-help ‘treatments’ for obesity matched their orthodox counterparts. Treatment relied on the same factors as the slimming regimes offered by self-help books, notably individual agency and responsibility. Stowers concluded:

We have made the point very plainly to this woman that she must lose weight and we will not contemplate giving her oral drugs until she has made a determined effort to lose weight. She will be seen fairly frequently by the dietitian and medical staff at the diabetic clinic and we may even need to warn her about possible complications.⁶⁵⁹

The only difference in the medical treatment was the fact that there was at least some monitoring by dietitians, as opposed to the completely self-directed ‘treatments’ featured in the self-help genre.

Diabetes was not only studied by nutritionists, metabolic researchers and obesity experts, but it became another frontier to be conquered by cardiovascular researchers. N.G. Soler et al. argued in 1974 that: ‘little attention has been paid to the influence of treatment used for control of diabetes (diet, oral hypoglycaemic drugs, insulin) on the outcome of myocardial infarction’, demonstrating how researchers were pursuing ‘novel’ investigations and finding connections between different, but related, physiological phenomena.⁶⁶⁰ One constant feature in the 1970s, however, was that cardiovascular research was still expanding and articles were likely to be published in prestigious journals. There was also more than adequate funding for cardiovascular research from governments - such as the Public Health Service and Ontario Department of Health - and

⁶⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶⁰ N. Soler et al., ‘Coronary Care for Myocardial Infarction in Diabetics’, *The Lancet*, 303, no. 7856, (23 March 1974), 475-477.

from non-profit organisations such as the American Heart Foundation, Burroughs Wellcome Fund, and Tarrant County Heart Association.⁶⁶¹

In the study by Soler and his colleagues, the main focus was why diabetes sufferers had a higher hospital mortality, between 40%-60% higher, within thirty days of a myocardial infarction than the normal population. The investigators followed this method to research different variables that contributed to this higher mortality:

Ill patients suspected of myocardial infarction are admitted to the coronary-care unit (c.c.u.) of the General Hospital, Birmingham, independent of social class, age, sex, and general condition. During the period January, 1967, to August, 1973, 184 consecutive diabetics (120 men and 64 women) were admitted to the c.c.u. with acute myocardial infarcts which were confirmed by electrocardiographic and enzyme changes... The diet, oral and insulin groups included 27, 90, and 67 patients, respectively. Patients treated with dietary carbohydrate restriction alone had never received any other treatment whilst patients in the oral therapy group had been treated with diet alone for a mean of 1.7 years and received oral hypoglycaemic drugs in addition for a mean of 5.7 years... In the insulin group the mean duration of treatment with insulin was 12.9 years.⁶⁶²

The results were in line with dietotherapies of the 1960s, especially with the low-sucrose and low-carbohydrate diets. The group of patients who were treated with carbohydrate restriction alone had the lowest hospital mortality of just 15%, which was similar to the 'normal' value of eighteen percent; the second group had a 40% hospital mortality and

⁶⁶¹ Examples include: T. Anderson, 'Mortality from Ischemic Heart Disease: Changes in Middle-Aged Men since 1900', *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 224, no. 3, (16 April 1973), 336-338; M. Friedman, 'Coronary-Prone Individuals (Type A Behavior Pattern): Some Biochemical Characteristics', *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 212, no. 6, (11 May 1970), 1030-1037.

⁶⁶² Soler et al., 'Coronary Care for Myocardial Infarction in Diabetics'.

the insulin group 37%.⁶⁶³ This kind of study not only demonstrated that nutrition was key for better cardiovascular health, it also instilled the sentiment that those who dieted had a better chance of surviving a myocardial infarction, further boosting the status of dietotherapies.

The world famous Framingham study concurred with the notion that diabetics had a higher incidence of heart disease. In epidemiological data gathered from a large population over twenty years, William Kannel and Daniel McGee set out to provide conclusive evidence on the uncertain role of diabetes in cardiovascular health. Kannel and McGee stated: ‘The foregoing findings confirm prospectively in a general population sample the clinical observations that more peripheral arterial, coronary and cerebrovascular disease develops in diabetics. These findings also point to the high relative risk of congestive failure in diabetics, a less appreciated fact.’⁶⁶⁴ The Framingham study data also demonstrated that risk of heart disease was higher in women diabetics than men -which constituted a break from the norm.⁶⁶⁵ Kannel and McGee argued that it would be dangerous to generalise data from studies that had focussed largely on men, as smoking had a more ‘pernicious influence’ on men’s heart disease and diabetes on women.⁶⁶⁶ So during the 1970s there was an even greater focus on risk, but more importantly a clearer distinction between the risks for heart disease in men and women.

The Framingham study and other studies indicate how medical research in the 1970s was turning to women’s heart disease. There were studies on women before this decade, but the frequency and scope of studies during the 1970s was on the rise, especially in *The British Medical Journal* and *The Journal of the American Medical Association*. The incidence of heart disease in women was rising - even if it was proportionately lower

⁶⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶⁴ W. Kannel and D. McGee, ‘Diabetes and Cardiovascular Disease: The Framingham Study’, *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 241, no. 19 (11 May 1979), 2035-2038.

⁶⁶⁵ The Framingham had a high currency in medical circles and in policy making as seen in: Timmerman, ‘Appropriating Risk Factors’, 157-174; and Aronowitz, ‘The Framingham Heart Study’, 263-295.

⁶⁶⁶ Kannel and McGee, ‘Diabetes and Cardiovascular Disease, 2035-2038.

than that of men - and it was a relatively uncharted area in medical research. One example of the renewed interest in heart disease in women was R.G. Wilcox's article published in *The British Medical Journal*. Wilcox set out to disprove assertions made in a booklet published by the Royal College of Physicians that obesity in women had a correlation with serum cholesterol.⁶⁶⁷ In the introduction, Wilcox references both the Framingham study and Keys' Seven Country Study to support his assertion that obese women should not be immediately diagnosed as having increased 'risk' of heart disease and that individual blood profiles should be made to assess such risk. In the first part of the study, forty women 'took part in a randomised double-blind crossover trial to compare the anorectic properties of a fenfluramine derivative and a placebo, both taken in conjunction with a 1000 kcal... diet'.⁶⁶⁸ Before the study, Wilcox had taken blood samples to provide baseline mean serum-cholesterol values. In both groups the loss of weight did not trigger a statistically significant decrease in serum-cholesterol, even in women who lost a considerable amount of weight. Wilcox's study, as opposed to the Framingham and Seven Countries studies, did not include data from both men and women but focussed only on the impact of body weight on women. As opposed to other studies which observed populations and analysed large data sets, this study concentrated on a small group of women to establish whether there was a link between serum cholesterol, weight, and heart disease.

Obese women were not the only group of women studied by researchers during the 1970s. Attention was directed at young women who also demonstrated susceptibility to heart disease. H. Jurgen Engel and his colleagues undertook a study to determine which 'risk factors' were identified in cases of women with chest pains. Before revealing their findings Engel et al. discussed how rare cases of heart disease were in younger women:

⁶⁶⁷ R. Wilcox, 'Serum Lipid Concentrations and Blood Pressure in Obese Women', *The British Medical Journal*, 1, no. 6126, (10 June 1978), 1513-1515.

⁶⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 1513.

‘Among 3,200 coronary arteriograms performed in our laboratory, 69 were in women 40 years of age or less. Of these 69 arteriograms, 21 demonstrated stenotic lesions that decreased the diameter of one or more coronary arteries by at least 50%’.⁶⁶⁹ Engel and his colleagues did not find an oestrogen deficiency that might have indicated that these women did not have the cardioprotective effects of this hormone. They did acknowledge a body of research on the detrimental effect of birth-control pills on young women’s heart-disease and stated that four of the twenty-one women took the pill, but they did not attribute significance to this number. Rather, the study concluded that the most important risk factor was family history followed by hyperlipidemia, hypertension, diabetes -which could be addressed nutritionally - and smoking.⁶⁷⁰ This demonstrates the concern of cardiovascular researchers to combat coronary disease in every demographic group.

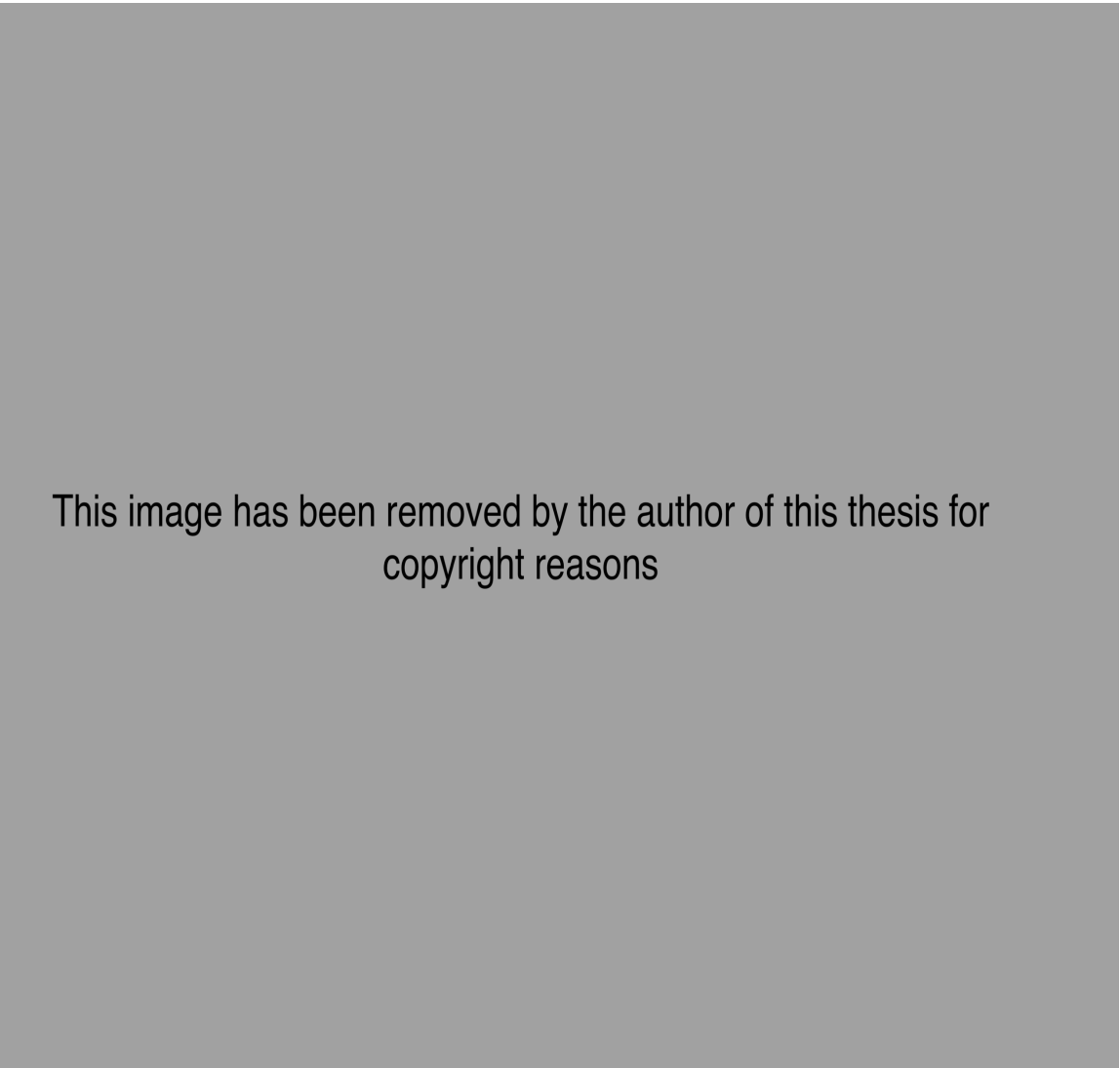
A new group especially susceptible to ‘risks’ for cardiovascular disease, but not previously studied, was postmenopausal women. Elizabeth Barrett-Connor and her colleagues measured the mean serum cholesterol of nearly 1500 women who had either received female hormones or not. This study was carried out to confirm whether oestrogen had a cardioprotective effect following a study published in *The New England Journal of Medicine* which suggested that oral oestrogen and progestins increased the high-density cholesterol values in postmenopausal women.⁶⁷¹ Using data from the La Jolla Lipid Research Clinic’s white, upper-middle-class community, Barret-Connor et al. compared post-menopausal oestrogen receiving women against women who did not take

⁶⁶⁹ J. Engel, ‘Coronary Artery Disease in Young Women’, *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 230, no. 11, (16 December 1974), 1531-1534.

⁶⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷¹ E. Barrett-Connor et al., ‘Heart Disease Risk Factors and Hormone Use in Postmenopausal Women’, *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 241, no. 20, (18 May 1979), 2167-2169.

oestrogen supplements. The findings were summarised in these three tables. (Figure 15)



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Figure 15 E. Barrett-Connor et al, 'Heart Disease Risk Factors and Hormone Use in Postmenopausal Women', The Journal of the American Medical Association, 241, no. 20, (18 May 1979), 2168.

The group receiving post-menopausal estrogen (PME) even with all other variables considered had lower serum cholesterol, triglycerides and heart pressure than their non-PME counterparts. This study also demonstrated that non-PME women had almost double the obesity than PME women.

The search for 'risk factors' began to penetrate other areas of research into diet and health during the 1970s, and this was most evident in studies of cancer. Ian-Douglas Wilson has argued that: 'About five years ago dietary fibre burst into the consciousness

of the medical world, having smouldered at the back of some minds for decades.⁶⁷² A study published in *The Lancet* in 1977 was one example of growing interest in fibre and its role in the development of colon cancer.⁶⁷³ This study published by the International Agency for Research on Cancer Intestinal Microecology Group was a large scale comparative investigation carried out in Denmark and Finland. In methodology and style this study resembled the studies on heart disease during the 1950s. The two populations studied had a 'shared Scandinavian culture', but what differentiated them was that they recruited men from Copenhagen (an urban area and with high incidence of colon cancer) and Kuopio (a rural area in Finland with low incidence).⁶⁷⁴ The men participating also fell into categories reminiscent of Jerry Morris' study in the 1950s. The urban men of Copenhagen were more sedentary than the men of Kuopio, and for the men of Kuopio a large part of what they ate was self-produced.⁶⁷⁵ The study comprised an initial interview, a period when participants wrote a food diary, then a period when they would purchase food according to the diary and bring it to the research facilities to be consumed for the experimental period. Some of the results were:

the Copenhagen men consumed significantly ($P < 0.05$) more white bread, meat (mainly pork), beer, wine, and spirits, and less potatoes and milk. These differences were less than 2-fold, except for milk (4-fold) and beer (9-fold). String beans were eaten only in Copenhagen, but in small amounts (mean 5 g. per day in the autumn only). Although total rye bread consumption was similar, less whole-grain rye bread seems to have been eaten in Copenhagen... However, meat consumption was greater in the high-

⁶⁷² I. Wilson, 'Dietary Fibre', *The Lancet*, 310, no. 8033, (13 August 1977), 337-338.

⁶⁷³ International Agency for Research on Cancer Intestinal Microecology Group, 'Dietary Fibre, Transit-Time, Faecal Bacteria, Steroids, and Colon Cancer in two Scandinavian Populations', *The Lancet*, 310, no. 8031, (30 July 1977), 207-211.

⁶⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 207.

⁶⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

incidence areas. Higher intakes of dietary fibre and milk in the low-incidence area suggest a possible protective effect.⁶⁷⁶

Notions of neoromanticism were evident in cancer research in *The Lancet* in the 1970s, as Martin Ware the editor of *The British Medical Association* in an editorial published in 1974 summarised: ‘some feature of the Western Diet seems to increase the likelihood of cancer of the large bowel... Though fat has received particular attention it is by no means the only distinctive component of Western diet. Indeed it is noteworthy that national mortality rates are closely correlated with the consumption of animal protein as well as fat.’⁶⁷⁷ Therefore we see that the ideology of ‘risk factors’ not only was beginning to be accepted in cancer studies, but soon established a firm presence demonstrating growing interest in diet as a therapeutic regime during the 1970s.

Other developments in cancer research had a deleterious effect on the image of medical research. These were studies that demonstrated that previously researched and implemented therapeutic diets for cardiovascular disease had an effect on the development of specific cancers. As Virginia Berridge argues, during the 1970s there was a proliferation of ‘radical critiques of medicine’ by Archibald Cochrane, Thomas McKeown, and Ivan Illich; these were made possible by a number of studies.⁶⁷⁸ Fred Ederer et al.’s ‘Cancer Among Men on Cholesterol-Lowering Diets’ was one of the studies published on the carcinogenic effect of cholesterol-lowering diets. Ederer and his colleagues were writing to refute Morton Lee Pearce and Seymour Dayton’s ‘Incidence of Cancer in Men on a Diet High in Polyunsaturated Fat’. In their study, Pearce and Dayton summarised their findings:

In an eight-year controlled clinical trial of a diet high in polyunsaturated vegetable oils and low in saturated fat and cholesterol in preventing

⁶⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 208.

⁶⁷⁷ M. Ware, ‘Diet and Colonic Cancer’, *The British Medical Journal*, 1, no. 5904, (2 March 1974), 339-340.

⁶⁷⁸ Berridge, *Marketing Health: Smoking*, p. 17.

complications of atherosclerosis, 846 men were assigned randomly to a conventional diet or to one similar in all respects except for a substitution of vegetable oils for saturated fat. Fatal atherosclerotic events were more common in the control group. However, total mortality was similar in the two groups: 178 controls v. 174 experimentals, demonstrating an excess of non-atherosclerotic deaths in the experimental group. This was accounted for by a greater incidence of fatal carcinomas in the experimental group. 31 of 174 deaths in the experimental group were due to cancer, as opposed to 17 of 178 deaths in the control group.⁶⁷⁹

Ederer and his colleagues compared the findings of four more studies and combined the data. In an attempt to justify the fact that one out of the four studies they considered had similar results to Pearce and Dayton's study they combined all the studies together and found only a slight increase in the chance of cancer incidence and cancer death. Ederer et al. concluded:

The ultimate question to be asked of serum-cholesterol-lowering diets is, are lives being saved or endangered? Total mortality (i.e., mortality from all causes) is, therefore, a critical endpoint. Four of the studies (including Los Angeles) show an estimated relative total mortality risk for the diet phase of less than unity... indicating a 15% lowering of total mortality for the men on diet.⁶⁸⁰

These studies demonstrated why the media were covering the latest nutritional studies. Research was ever-changing; new studies contradicted previous studies, encouraging the media to follow controversies within medical science. This practice was strengthened by the publication of *Vitamin C and the Common Cold* by Linus Pauling.⁶⁸¹

⁶⁷⁹ F. Ederer, 'Cancer Among Men on Cholesterol-Lowering Diets: Experience from Five Clinical Trials', *The Lancet*, 298, no. 7717, (24 July 1971), 203-206.

⁶⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 206.

⁶⁸¹ L. Pauling, *Vitamin C and the Common Cold* (London: Ballantine, 1972).

Like L.R.C Agnew's contention that medical research during the 1950s conducted large cholesterol circuses, it is arguable that during the 1970s researchers were conducting a large Vitamin C circus.⁶⁸² The publicity Linus Pauling received during the 1970s established yet another research 'fashion'. Large vitamin-supplement corporations increased their research funding to capitalise on the new trend of vitamin consumption. One study which demonstrates the fascination for Vitamin C during the 1970s was Henry Pitt and Anthony Costrini's paper published in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* in 1979. The study was on 862 recruits in the US Marine Corps, who were split into two groups, Vitamin C and placebo users. Part of the many parameters by Pitt and Costrini were:

Each recruit was instructed to take two tablets each morning and two each evening, and pill taking was supervised and observed by the drill instructors in each platoon... During the eight-week study period, each recruit completed weekly questionnaires with respect to the previous week's cold history. The symptoms listed on this questionnaire were (1) fever or chills, (2) headache, (3) stuffy or runny nose, (4) sore throat, (5) dry or productive cough, (6) nausea or vomiting, (7) diarrhea, and (8) stomach pain. The duration and severity of each cold was also ascertained. The criteria necessary for a cold to be included as an episode were (1) the presence of either runny or stuffy nose, sore throat, or dry or productive cough, (2) at least two days of symptoms, and (3) at least three symptom-free days between episodes. The recruits were also asked to report weekly any suspected side effects and any lapses in pill taking.⁶⁸³

⁶⁸² Agnew, 'Correspondence: Cholesterol and Vascular Disease', 43.

⁶⁸³ H. Pitt & A. Costrini, 'Vitamin C Prophylaxis in Marine Recruits', *The Journal of the American Association*, 241, no. 9, (2 March 1979), 908-911.

The study concluded that: 'There was no difference between the two groups in the incidence or duration of colds. The Vitamin C group rated their colds as less severe, but this was not reflected in different symptom complexes or in fewer sick-call visits or training days lost. This study and the literature do not support the prophylactic use of Vitamin C to prevent the common cold.'⁶⁸⁴ Pitt and Costrini were sceptical about Pauling's claims. As with the controversy about unsaturated fats in the 1950s and the low-carbohydrate debate in the 1960s, the medical research community was again in conflict. A study by Wilson et al. published in *The Lancet* contradicted Pitt and Costrini's study. The difference in Wilson's study was that the trial participants were children attending four boarding schools in Dublin. The children in the study recorded daily:

whether or not they had a sore throat (symptom 1), cold in head (2), cough (3), headache (4), ache in back and limbs (5), fever (6), nasal obstruction (7), or nasal discharge (8), or felt " out of sorts " (9). The children were randomly divided into two groups in each pair of schools and each child took one tablet daily on a double-blind basis: girls MG, placebo or 200 mg. Vitamin C; girls CG, 200 or 500 mg. Vitamin C; boys MB, placebo or 200 mg. Vitamin C; boys MO, 200 or 500 mg. Vitamin C. Precautions were taken to ensure that the forms were correctly completed, that the tablets were taken according to instructions, and that no other supplementary Vitamin C was taken during the trial. School diets were not altered during the trial.⁶⁸⁵

The findings of the study contradicted Pitt and Costrini's paper. Wilson and his colleagues found that the severity and duration of colds was lessened in girls receiving 500mg of Vitamin C.⁶⁸⁶ Studies focussing on children's health attracted considerable attention,

⁶⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 911.

⁶⁸⁵ C. Wilson et al., 'Common Cold and Vitamin C', *The Lancet*, 301, no. 7804, (24 March 1973), 638-641.

⁶⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 640-641.

making the news frequently and increased the pressure on mothers to promote health through diet and supplementation.

The Vitamin C and common cold link was explored in various populations during the 1970s. In 1970, for example, John Coulehan et al. first published a report on Navajo schoolchildren with similar results to Wilson:

DURING a 14-week period in 1973, we conducted a double-blind study among Navajo schoolchildren to evaluate the effects of large Vitamin C supplements on acute illness, respiratory and otherwise. Although we noted no prophylactic influence, our findings suggested modest symptomatic benefit in that children taking 1 or 2 g of Vitamin C daily had about 30 per cent fewer total days of morbidity from respiratory illness, and 26 per cent fewer symptom-days of cough or nasal complaints, than those taking a placebo.⁶⁸⁷

However, in a subsequent study Coulehan et al. concluded that they could not recommend Vitamin C as a common cold remedy.⁶⁸⁸

Twins too became participants in studies of the therapeutic or the prophylactic value of Vitamin C. One study published in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* was summarised as follows:

Three different dosages of Vitamin C, dependent on body weight, were administered to 44 school-aged monozygotic twins for five months using a double-blind, co-twin control study design. The mothers recorded daily observations of cold symptoms, and multiple biochemical, anthropometric, and psychological measurements were made at the beginning and end of the study. Paired comparisons showed no significant overall treatment effect on

⁶⁸⁷ J. Coulehan et al., 'Vitamin C and Acute Illness in Navajo Schoolchildren', *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 295, no. 18, (28 October 1976), 973-977.

⁶⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 976-977.

cold symptoms, but the response was not uniform in all sub- groups. Treated girls in the youngest two groups had significantly shorter and less severe illness episodes, and an effect on severity was also observed in the youngest group of boys. The seven treated twins in the latter group also grew an average of 1.3 cm more than their untreated co-twins during the five-month period of the study.⁶⁸⁹

Not only did Vitamin C alleviate the symptoms of the cold and its duration in girls but it was found to promote growth in children, which added to the ‘panacea’-like status of this vitamin. Another group that was used to study the effects of Vitamin C were the elderly. C. J. Schorah et al. carried out such a study which found out that: ‘1 g of Vitamin C given daily for 28 days was shown to be associated with slight, but significant, clinical improvement and weight-gain when compared with placebo therapy.’⁶⁹⁰ Across the 1970s the potential benefits of Vitamin C were extensively investigated, but disagreements about Vitamin C persisted in editorials, correspondence and book reviews of *Vitamin C and the Common Cold*.

In *The British Medical Journal* two editorials were dedicated to Vitamin C during the 1970s. The first one summarised various findings on Vitamin C and concluded: ‘At present there is no rational basis for the dose, and too little is known about the possible harmful effects of taking too much’.⁶⁹¹ The second editorial published in 1976 stated:

What practical recommendations emerge from this new evidence? Major advances in treatment are usually apparent after a few well-conducted studies, and at present no strong evidence can be found to support the routine prophylactic use of ascorbic acid in well-nourished people. Apart from the

⁶⁸⁹ J. Miller et al., ‘Therapeutic Effect of Vitamin C: A Co-Twin Control Study’, *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 237, no. 3, (17 January 1977), 248-251.

⁶⁹⁰ C. J. Schorah et al., ‘Clinical Effects of Vitamin C in Elderly Inpatients with Low Blood-Vitamin-C Levels’, *The Lancet*, 313, no. 8113, (24 February 1979), 403-405.

⁶⁹¹ M. Ware, ‘Ascorbic Acid and Common Colds’, *The British Medical Journal*, 3, no. 5875, (11 August 1973), 311-312.

possibility of long-term side effects, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that most of the administered vitamin will be lost in the urine within a few hours of eating it once tissues are saturated. Uncertainty continues about a possible reduction of symptoms and disability from therapeutic ascorbic acid, but there is little likelihood of toxicity with large doses over a short period. Perhaps the most valuable outcome of the recent interest in ascorbic acid has been that it has stimulated research into the role of this vitamin in tissue healing and our defence mechanisms against disease.⁶⁹²

This editorial confirms that Vitamin C research was revived and intensified during the 1970s. Correspondence about Vitamin C was frequent in both *The British Medical Journal* and *The Lancet*, with letters focussing on the impact of the vitamin on fertility, mental illness, and cardiovascular disease. Wilson and H.S. Loh, for example, discussed studies on the impact of Vitamin C on fertility:

We have shown that large quantities of ascorbic acid are utilised when the ovum is released in women. We have administered daily doses of 500-2000 mg. of supplementary Vitamin C to three women who were unable to conceive. We showed that the urinary ascorbic-acid excretion on the large dose of ascorbic acid in one of these women began to show the preovulatory peak. This woman subsequently conceived following artificial insemination. In a few unpublished studies we have demonstrated that tissue ascorbic-acid levels are greatly depleted after successful fertilisation of the human female.⁶⁹³

In another letter to the editor of *The Lancet*, Loh also commented on a recent study 'showing the strong negative association between dietary Vitamin C intake and the risk

⁶⁹² S. Lock, 'Vitamin C and The Common Cold', *The British Medical Journal*, 1, no. 6010, (13 March 1976), 606.

⁶⁹³ C. Wilson & H. Loh, 'Vitamin C and Fertility', *The Lancet*, 302, no. 7833, (13 October 1973), 859-860.

of dying from atherosclerotic diseases'. This, he argued, confirmed that Vitamin C is associated with cholesterol metabolism and the risk of developing atherosclerosis'.⁶⁹⁴ This was complemented by a study on cancer and Vitamin C by Ewan Cameron and Linus Pauling in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*.⁶⁹⁵ When Pauling was hired by the University of Stanford he founded the Institute for Orthomolecular Medicine (later the Linus Pauling Institute). Pauling continued to research the connection between diet, vitamins and cancer, especially after his wife was diagnosed with stomach cancer in 1976 and after her eventual death in 1981. With Cameron, Pauling ventured again in popular publishing in 1979 with the book *Cancer and Vitamin C* and later in 1986 *How to Live Longer and Feel Better*.⁶⁹⁶ Diets, supplements and lifestyle became key tools for preserving health, prolonging life and maintaining productivity, all of which were aspects of everyday life that required the agency and responsibility of the individual.

Conclusion

This chapter has focussed on changes in medical ideology and research methodology between the 1950s and the late 1970s. In the decade following World War II, physicians and medical researchers around the globe appropriated the research methods of chronic disease epidemiology and published their findings in medical journals. In a similar way to the self-help genre, medical journals were dominated by a handful of doctors and researchers such as Jerry Morris and Ancel Keys, who through large-scale research projects generated confidence in statistics in addressing public health issues. Simultaneously, researchers were influenced by and promoted neoromantic notions of health, placing the blame for the prevalence of chronic disease on civilisation. By

⁶⁹⁴ H. Loh, 'Mortality from Atherosclerosis and Vitamin-C Intake', *The Lancet*, 302, no. 7821, (21 July 1973), 153.

⁶⁹⁵ E. Cameron and L. Pauling, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*, 73, no. 10, (October 1976), 3685–3689.

⁶⁹⁶ C. Mead and T. Hager, *Linus Pauling: Scientist and Peacemaker* (Corvallis: Oregon State University, 2001), p. 96

analysing some of the most prominent research studies in the 1950s, it is evident that heart disease was becoming a central issue within medicine. Research at that time focussed primarily on men, largely because of the assumption that heart disease occurred mostly in male executives. Researchers often limited their studies to affluent Western subjects, but also compared Western and non-Western populations.

The ‘modern’ aspect of life that received the most criticism in relation to health was obesity. In the 1950s, modern diets were perceived as over-indulgent because of excessive amounts of fat, and during this decade new diet therapies, supplementation, and healthy lifestyles were promoted as a way to combat chronic disease. In the same way that research studies on heart disease focussed primarily on men, obesity studies primarily focussed on women, as a result of beliefs that women were more influenced by notions of the beautiful or ugly body, as Jane Hand suggests.⁶⁹⁷ During this decade researchers also began to think of obesity as a psychological issue, evident in the work of Friedman and Rosenman on how personality affected body weight and heart disease. In the 1960s researchers regarded dieting as the solution to multiple diseases. Studies involved total fasting, supplementation, specific micronutrient content analysis, and the consumption of individual foods and drinks such as coffee, tea and oats. The medical and scientific community experimented with fat-substitute health products; a development that was probably observed closely by companies like Flora which was reoriented as a health food during the 1960s. Also during the 1960s, childhood obesity became another prominent issue. Advice on childhood obesity was directed at mothers, maintaining the concept of scientific motherhood into the second half of the twentieth century, an issue explored further in the next chapter.

During the 1970s, ‘healthmania’ or obsessions with promoting and maintaining health continued to influence medical research. Women’s heart disease was increasingly

⁶⁹⁷ Hand, “‘Look After Yourself’”, 112-147.

covered, with studies including both young and older women. During this decade connections between diabetes and cardiovascular disease became more prominent, and the language of risk factors was increasingly applied to cancer. Studies demonstrated that the ingestion of more fibre was protective against colon cancer. Dr Denis Parsons Burkitt was amongst the first to link 'modern' diet, lack of fibre and cancer and went on to popularise his findings in *Eat Right to Keep Healthy* (1979), but simultaneously there were studies that questioned low-fat diets because of possible higher risks for cancer.⁶⁹⁸ Linus Pauling's assertions about the preventative nature of Vitamin C were not only cautiously accepted by other researchers, but they were also applied to other diseases such as cancer and heart disease. In this period, the medical profession was simultaneously using diets, supplements and healthy lifestyles as curative frameworks, but also promoted these as part of orthodox medicine. This concept was picked up and propagated by the self-help genre, newspapers and magazines, but most importantly it penetrated and was disseminated through stories and advertisements in comic books. Comic books increasingly became vehicles for educating the public about dietary health.

⁶⁹⁸ D.P. Burkitt, *Eat Right to Keep Healthy and Enjoy Life More* (London: Arco Publication, 1979) and D.P. Burkitt, *Don't Forget Fibre in your Diet: To Help Avoid Many of our Commonest Diseases* (London: Martin Dunitz Ltd, 1979). His fibre hypothesis became very popular as it is still informing health guidelines around the world.

Chapter V

The medicalisation of entertainment:

healthy eating and chronic disease in popular comic books

This chapter focusses on representations of various diet, lifestyle and health issues in comic books including *Popeye*, *Superman*, and *Captain America*. These were all comic books produced in the US but were redistributed and translated into multiple countries of the world including the UK. Among the main researchers of comic books Umberto Eco - an Italian - and Jean-Paul Gabilliet - a French man - focussed mainly on US produced comic books as they have dominated comic book sales and influenced its readership and culture in other countries. In Cyprus too US comic books were the ones mostly read by children and teenagers from the 1950s onwards. British and Greek comic books might have been read, but Greek Cypriots called comic books 'Mikimaus' after the popular Dell comics featuring Disney's characters which demonstrates the influence of US comic books and culture around the world, and James Chapman discusses the association of the comic book (even those produced in the UK) with American culture.⁶⁹⁹

As a source comic books were fundamentally different than the rest of the sources considered in this thesis as they were targeting and read mostly by children and adolescents. The consideration of comic books helps to explore how contemporary debates and anxieties about dieting, chronic diseases and health infiltrated various parts of popular culture and how comic books reinforced 'healthmania' through exposing individuals to such ideologies from an early age. The first section of this chapter will introduce popular comic books, providing some context and circulation figures. The subsequent subsections of this chapter, rather than primarily chronological, explain key

⁶⁹⁹ J. Chapman, *British Comics: A Cultural History* (London: Reaktion, 2011), p. 3.

themes across the period. The second section explores the increasing medicalisation of entertainment and how the role of scientism in popular entertainment became evident in, and facilitated by, comic books. The third section is devoted to a discussion of how parents were encouraged to raise children ‘scientifically’ to keep them healthy, and how advertisers found ways to address and exploit contemporary anxieties about health through their campaigns. One key theme that emerged from the primary sources considered in this chapter was the impact of obesity on health. More specifically, the following section therefore revolves around representations of dieting, body standards, and gender preoccupations with healthy bodies. The final section addresses how the adoration of youth realigned perceptions of old age, shifting from a period of distinction and reverence to an age in which people could not live life to the fullest without appropriate advice and support.

Comic books in the late twentieth century

The comic book’s success in the second half of the twentieth century was the product of multiple persons, events, industries, and cultures. As Jean-Paul Gabilliet argues in his book *Of Comics and Men*, the comic book as a medium had a disputable starting point in the visual narratives in hieroglyphs in ancient Egypt or the *Bayeux* tapestry, but its form and storytelling was also influenced by English caricaturists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries such as Hogarth, Woodward, Gillray, Cruikshank and Rowlandson.⁷⁰⁰ Gabilliet states that there is some consensus as to who was the first comic strip author (at least in a modern form), namely the Swiss Rodolphe Topfer, who published his *Histoire de Mr. Jabot* in 1837; a story narrated through several consecutive images individually captioned and juxtaposed to the previous image. During the late nineteenth century, Richard Felton Outcault’s *The Yellow Kid* (1895) was the first comic

⁷⁰⁰ J. P. Gabilliet, *Of Comics and Men A Cultural History of American Comic Books* trans. B. Beaty & N. Nguyen (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2010), p. vii.

book published in the United States. Nevertheless, many historians of comic books such as Gabilliet, Umberto Eco, Richard Reynolds, and Bradford Wright agree that the genre did not become a staple of popular culture before 1939 when the first issue of *Action Comics* - with stories featuring Superman - made its debut in US news-stands.⁷⁰¹

This chapter considers popular comic books between the 1950s and 1980 as a widely circulated commodity. Comic book scholars and fans describe the first phase of the evolution of comic books as the ‘Golden Age’ which began in 1938 and reached its apogee before the mid-1950s. In terms of circulation and readership, that seemed to be the case, as for example, the magazine *Yank* cited the estimates produced by the Market Research of America in 1945, concluding that seventy million Americans - almost half the population at that time - read comic books. This did not consider whether readers were one-time purchasers or subscribers; as Randy Duncan and Matthew J. Smith argue, between ten and twenty percent of readers were ‘fans’ who regularly bought specific titles, while the rest bought them only occasionally or sampled different titles.⁷⁰² However these numbers still demonstrate that reading comic books during the Golden Age was becoming an essential pastime in the US. As Gabilliet and Wright argue, from the late 1930s onwards the comic book was becoming the first commodity directly targeting younger audiences and children.⁷⁰³ Gabilliet asserts that ‘comic books were the first kind of periodical publication deliberately and specifically designed to be purchased by youngsters, thereby becoming part of the long-term transformation of youths into active consumers as of the 1930s.’⁷⁰⁴ Comic books provide unique insights into the representation of diet, health and disease that complement the analysis of self-help books which were mostly read by women, middle-agers and older individuals, the newspapers

⁷⁰¹ B. Wright, *Comic Book Nation: The Transformation of Youth Culture in America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

⁷⁰² R. Duncan and M.J. Smith, *The Power of Comics: History, Form and Culture* (New York: Continuum, 2009), p. 173.

⁷⁰³ Gabilliet, *Of Comics and Men*, p. 44.

⁷⁰⁴ *Ibid*, p. xviii.

and magazines which were read by adult readers, and the medical journals read by doctors, scientific researchers and medical journalists.

Comic books followed specific narrative formulas and were considered ‘low-brow’ artistic expressions, but as Bradford Wright argues they have been part of American childhood - arguably the childhoods of people everywhere - since the 1920s.⁷⁰⁵ This chapter considers comic books as repositories and expressions of popular culture and popular understandings of health, diet, disease, and medicine. Historians of the genre attributed the early success of comic books not only to the low price of periodicals, nor merely to the fact that it was a commodity targeting children and adolescents, but also to the great demand for comic books by American GI’s fighting in World War II. Comic books’ significance does not only lie in the fact that they were mostly read by children and teenagers, but also that they were read by young adults especially from the 1960s onwards. They created ‘fandoms’ with comic book collectors, generated all kinds of comic book memorabilia products, and encouraged comic book conventions attracting millions of fans from around the world every year.⁷⁰⁶

The choice to analyse comic books - especially superhero titles - was based on a specific theme that they all had in common: science. The superhero genre was one cultural expression of the adoration for science and progress. In the very first issue of *Action Comics* Jerry Siegel explains that Superman was able to jump over buildings and lift heavy objects because he was from a planet where humans were more evolved. He explained the science behind it as follows: creatures such as ‘the lowly ant can lift weight hundreds of times its’ own...the grasshopper leaps to what to man would be the space of several city blocks’.⁷⁰⁷ Captain America’s super abilities were the outcome of a military

⁷⁰⁵ According to James Chapman, in the UK comic books were considered the lowest form of artistic expression -an opinion shared by Richard Hoggart because it Americanised (‘degraded’) British culture in his *Uses and Abuses of Literacy* -, Chapman, *British Comics: A Cultural History*, pp. 4-6.

⁷⁰⁶ Wright, *Comic Book Nation*, p. 252.

⁷⁰⁷ ‘Superman’, *Action Comics*, no. 1, (New York, National Publications, June, 1938).

scientific experiment involving the injection of a super-serum into the body of a scrawny and sickly Steve Rogers, who was rejected for service in the US army during World War II. Popeye's strength and his episodic 'super strength' were the result of eating spinach which was considered a nutritious food because of its vitamin and mineral contents. The concept of scientism mentioned in Chapter II and the cultural currency science and medicine achieved in the middle of the twentieth century helped to make such comic books and their storylines popular.

Despite having to compete with the new and more exciting television during the early 1950s, reading comic books continued to be a popular pastime for Americans. Bradford Wright demonstrates the popularity of comic books during the early 1950s:

By conservative estimates, about 300 comic book titles published in 1950 generated an annual industry revenue of \$41 million. In 1953 over 650 titles grossed \$90 million. Average monthly circulation had grown from 17 million in 1940 to nearly 70 million in 1953... *Publishers' Weekly* reported that the American public in 1953 spent over \$1 billion on comic books.⁷⁰⁸

Comic book sales only provide a low estimate of the real readership of these publications. Gabilliet recognised the importance of 'pass along circulation', which meant that the 'purchase of a comic book involved not a single individual but several...The typical multiplier given by publishers to their advertisers, on the basis of empirical observation that has never been scientifically validated, was five'.⁷⁰⁹ Other comic book historians have stressed the fact that some libraries established children's and youth sections and usually purchased major comic book issues to entice children and adolescents to

⁷⁰⁸ Wright, *Comic Book Nation*, p. 155

⁷⁰⁹ Gabilliet, *Of Comics and Men*, p. 191.

participate in a culture of reading and learning.⁷¹⁰ Important were news-stands where comic books were ‘sampled’, but also the comic book stores where collectibles, memorabilia, and literature about comic books created a physical space for reading and discussing the books. It is also worth noting that many of the comic books initially produced in the 1940s were either rebooted or reproduced in the 1960s and 1970s, bringing different generations to read issues from the past. The persistence of comic book heroes as cultural icons was also furthered by the development of television series, films and memorabilia adding to their value as primary sources to be examined in this chapter.

Between 1954 and 1956 comic books faced a difficult stage in their development which, along with television, halted their growth as an entertainment medium. Fredric Wertham - a German immigrant to the US and a respected psychologist working at Johns Hopkins’ psychiatry department (and one of the key opponents of Jim Crow laws) - had been a fervent opposer of comic books since the late 1940s and publicly decried the genre for its impact on children and youth.⁷¹¹ More specifically, Wertham’s invective concerned a topic that deeply concerned contemporaries in the 1950s: childhood and teenage delinquency. Many at the time criticised the best-selling author Dr Benjamin Spock’s *The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care* for introducing permissive parenting, which they blamed for childhood and teenage delinquency.⁷¹² Wertham had another explanation for the surge of violent and rebellious youths which he published in his sensational *Seduction of the Innocent* in April 1954 that managed to shake the comic book industry.⁷¹³ Like the authors of self-help books, Wertham used his medical credentials to invoke his status as an authority on the topic and wrote a book about how young people replicated what they read in violent and horror comic books. His style resembled that used by Atkins,

⁷¹⁰ *Ibid* p. 207; Comic books have been used to teach US history as seen in: M. Pustz, *Comic Books and American Cultural History: An Anthology* (New York: Continuum, 2012), p. 3.

⁷¹¹ Wright, *Comic Book Nation*, pp. 93-98.

⁷¹² D. Fingerioth, *Superman on the Couch: What Superheroes Really Tell Us About Ourselves and Our Society* (New York: Continuum, 2004), p. 22.

⁷¹³ *Ibid*.

who used militaristic and evangelical language to demonize carbohydrates. Wertham also reported anecdotal ‘cases’ of children and teenagers who consulted him in his clinic in Harlem, New York, to demonstrate that rebelliousness and lack of respect for authority stemmed from reading comic books.⁷¹⁴ Wertham’s book raised legitimate concerns in the US government, leading to discussion by the Senate’s Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency. This resulted in a reaction from comic book editors who wrote a code to self-regulate the industry.⁷¹⁵ The comic book code expected writers to portray authority in a positive light, to avoid the terms terror and horror, to avoid women being drawn in ‘salacious’ or suggestive dress and postures, and to portray characters demonstrating ‘honourable behaviour’.⁷¹⁶ As Bradford Wright argues, the Senate Committee considered Wertham’s arguments, accepted the code, and agreed to watch the development of the industry closely.⁷¹⁷ This episode in comic book history demonstrates the perceived power and cultural authority of the genre.

After World War II, increasing leisure time, increased literacy, technological advancements and innovations in transportation, the commercialization of organized entertainment such as the cinema, and a simultaneous persistence of participatory and interactive manifestations of popular culture maintained a market for comic books even though they were in competition with the television.⁷¹⁸ During the 1960s counterculture that dominated the Western world, comic books were more widely accepted as ‘alternative’ reading especially by young people and those who read them because of nostalgia for their childhood years. Even though comic book readership was not as high as it was during the Golden Age, Marvel and Detective Comics (DC) sold issues in the hundreds of thousands.⁷¹⁹ It was no coincidence that the 1960s were part of what comic

⁷¹⁴ Gabilliet, *Of Comics and Men*, p. 230.

⁷¹⁵ Wright, *Comic Book Nation*, pp. 172-179.

⁷¹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷¹⁷ Wright, *Comic book Nation*, p. 172.

⁷¹⁸ Duncan and Smith, *The Power of Comics*, p. 48.

⁷¹⁹ Gabilliet, *Of Comics and Men*, p. 63.

book historians and fans called the ‘Silver Age’ of comic books as the genre experienced a renaissance. Many point to the rise of Marvel as the dominant force in circulation figures; Marvel managed to sell a total of thirty-three million comic books per year, placing DC in second place after decades at number one.⁷²⁰ Comic book scholars attribute Marvel’s success during the 1960s to the fact that Stan Lee, Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko either created or rewrote superheroes with ‘flaws’. The *Fantastic Four*, for example, was about a dysfunctional family of superheroes; Spiderman was a teenager who often fell into traps and lost fights against his opponents; the Hulk was the anger-fuelled monstrosity that put national security at risk; and Captain America was a relic from World War II who experienced existential crises and the re-evaluation of his beliefs and morals. The fact that for the first time a hero was the same age as most readers and had the same worries and fears revolving around school and relationships with girls made Spiderman the cornerstone of the ‘Silver Age’.⁷²¹ Frequent prize competitions, the ‘cool’ and ‘hip’ way readers were induced into Marvel fandom by reading essays and opinions by Stan Lee, who also responded to letters to the editor in a casual and enthusiastic manner, and the frequent meet and greets and question and answer sessions in these events, enabled Marvel to redefine the genre. DC comics realised that their ‘perfect’ superheroes had lost their appeal especially when compared to Marvel’s more approachable, more human superheroes, which encouraged DC to replicate Marvel’s success by also creating ‘flawed’ superheroes.

Comics during the 1970s once again reached a stagnation point as many of the superheroes either appeared on television or film. Comic book historians attribute the decline of comic books in the 1970s to the big two, Marvel and DC, oversaturating the market with superhero comic books in an attempt to maintain sales. However, further

⁷²⁰ M. Costello, *Secret Identity Crisis: Comic Books and the Unmasking of Cold War America* (New York: Continuum, 2009), p. 21.

⁷²¹ R. Duncan and M. J. Smith, *The Power of Comics*, p. 171.

factors contributed to the decline in comic books during this decade, one being the fact that readers were following their favourite writers, artists and characters sticking to their own 'fandom'.⁷²² Another reason was the fact that the rebirth of comic books had created more artistic, stylistic and story expectations from readers, who quickly became discontented with repetition and clichés. Readers also expected social and political commentary: Marvel portrayed Ironman as having doubts about the Vietnam War and tried to capture the civil rights movement by creating characters such as Luke Cage, the Black Panther, and Ms Marvel. Nevertheless, it is important to state that *Superman* still managed to sell 512,000 copies per month in 1971 and *Captain America* sold 225,000 issues per month in 1970.⁷²³

The first comic book considered in this chapter is *Superman*, which has been studied as a unique phenomenon by comic book scholars as the title's success from the very first issue elicited a response from other publication houses to either mimic or replicate it to capitalise on a new market. Superman was the creation of two young, second generation Jewish immigrants from Cleveland, Ohio: Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster. Bradford Wright argues that Siegel and Shuster belonged to the 'nerd', 'geek' or 'fanboy' groups before these terms came to prominence in popular culture.⁷²⁴ Siegel and Shuster were both fascinated with the emerging genre of science fiction and together they wanted to create comic strips for newspapers.⁷²⁵ Critical to the inception of Superman was the fact that Siegel and Shuster were both avid readers of body building magazines such as those published by Charles Atlas, which provides a better understanding of the Clark Kent/Superman dichotomy.⁷²⁶ Clark Kent - Superman's civilian identity - was a caricature of the personalities of Shuster and Siegel, and Superman was their idealised

⁷²² Wright, *Comic Book Nation*, p. 252.

⁷²³ J. Sacks, *American Comic Book Chronicle: The 1970s* (North Carolina: TwoMorrows Publishing, 2014), p. 27.

⁷²⁴ Wright, *Comic Book Nation*, pp. 1-2.

⁷²⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷²⁶ *Ibid.*

self. Superman was an example of the personification and embodiment of a ‘healthy’ man; strong, fearless, smart, and always ready for action, but he also promoted a moral, just, and altruistic ethos, linked to his evident masculinity.

Superman was not created in a vacuum as demonstrated by Jerry Siegel: ‘I am lying in bed counting sheep when all of a sudden it hits me. I conceive a character like Samson, Hercules and all the strong men I have ever heard of rolled into one. Only more so.’⁷²⁷ *Superman* was not immediately seen as profitable, as the idea was rejected a few times before his rise to a popular cultural icon. Siegel’s writing combined with Shuster’s drawing managed to create a combination that appealed to young audiences. Max Gaines, an executive at McLure Syndicate, rejected Superman, but Sheldon Mayes, a much younger editor at McLure, sent the artwork to Harry Donnenfeld who along with Jack Liebowitz was about to launch *Action Comics*. As Richard Reynolds points out in his book *Super Heroes: A Modern Mythology*, Donnenfeld was sceptical at first about Superman but he did eventually realise that ‘he had a phenomenal success in his hands’.⁷²⁸ His editor for *Action Comics*, Vincent Sullivan, convinced him to make Superman the centrepiece of the first issue and in 1938 *Action Comics* jump-started the comic book industry: soon after its release it steadily sold 900,000 copies per month.⁷²⁹

The second superhero comic considered in this chapter is *Captain America*. This comic book traces its roots back to World War II and more specifically to the discourse surrounding whether, or not, the US would pursue an interventionist or an isolationist stance. Nine months before the US entered the war, Simon and Kirby published the first volume of *Captain America* in which the Captain punches Hitler. The origin story of Captain America is interesting, especially for the themes of this thesis, as it provides insight into the perception of male bodies during the decades considered in this thesis.

⁷²⁷ Fingerroth, *Superman on the Couch*, p. 13.

⁷²⁸ R. Reynolds, *Super Heroes: A Modern Mythology* (London: Batsford Ltd, 1992), p. 17.

⁷²⁹ Wright, *Comic Book Nation*, p. 13.

Steve Rogers, a skinny and ‘sickly’ man, was given the chance to participate in a top-secret scientific experiment which if successful would make him stronger and faster, demonstrating a continuing cultural reverence for science and medicine.⁷³⁰ *Captain America* was selling almost a million copies per month during 1941 to 1945, but gradually its circulation figures dropped.⁷³¹ Marvel attempted to resurrect *Captain America* during the 1950s but the patriotic ‘supersoldier’ narrative did not find great appeal. It was not until 1963 that Captain America would be rebooted in the Marvel universe and more specifically in the newly assembled team of superheroes in the comic book *The Avengers*, the success of which launched the Captain into having a publication dedicated to solely him from 1968. Captain America, a man who had grown up in the 1930s and 1940s, but was living in the 1960s, made this character match the rest of Marvel’s ensemble of ‘dysfunctionals’, as he constantly felt out of place and out of time.

The last comic book considered in this chapter is *Popeye*, a character that captivated audiences of every medium since the 1930s. In 1918, Elzie Crisler Segar was discovered by publishing tycoon William Randolph Hearst and produced his first popular feature ‘Looping the Loop’ in the *Chicago American*.⁷³² Hearst was so pleased that he hired Segar in 1919 to produce a new comic strip for his major publication *New York Journal*.⁷³³ The new feature was *Thimble Theatre*, which revolved around the lives of members of the Oyl family. Popeye did not make an appearance in *Thimble Theatre* for another ten years. At first Popeye was not going to be a recurring character, but as Thomas Inge argues ‘his aloof independence, uncontrollable temper, and desire to speak his own mind (albeit in an odd, ungrammatical dialect) made him the center of attention’.⁷³⁴

⁷³⁰ ‘Meet Captain America’, *Captain America Comics*, no. 1, (New York, Timely Comics, March, 1941).

⁷³¹ Wright, *Comic Book Nation*, p. 36.

⁷³² T. Inge, ‘Segar, Elzie Crisler’, *American Dictionary of National Biography Online*, <http://www.anb.org/view/10.1093/anb/9780198606697.001.0001/anb-9780198606697-e-1602832?rskey=MBa9Ju&result=1> [accessed 12 July 2018].

⁷³³ F. Gardinetti, *Popeye: An Illustrated Cultural History*, 2nd edition (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company, 2004), pp. 5-12.

⁷³⁴ T. Inge, ‘Segar, Elzie Crisler’.

Popeye could be considered as a proto-superhero or a pre-superhero character as from his inception he demonstrated incredible feats of strength and resilience, being able to survive after bullets had penetrated his body. Popeye quickly captured public curiosity in cartoon clips and film before the superhero genre even arose in comic books. The narrative device of the ingestion of spinach as his source of strength was introduced a whole three years after his original appearance, and it had a positive impact on the sale of canned and fresh spinach.⁷³⁵

After Segar's premature death in 1938, Bud Sagendorf took over the writing and drawing of *Thimble Theatre. Popeye* came late in the arena of comic books when Dell hired Sagendorf to produce them in 1948.⁷³⁶ The circulation figures were not as high as *Superman* and *Captain America*, and it did not make the top ten in best sellers in the same way as other superhero comics, but the stories were later reproduced in comic strips in newspapers, television cartoons, and film. Dell, the company that produced *Popeye*, focussed on children's comics based on Disney characters and other cartoon characters and was historically in the top three publishers in the US. Gabilliet attributes Dell's popularity during the early 1950s to the fact that it accounted for one third of comic books sold in the US and eleven of its titles achieved a circulation of 950,000 to 2 million copies per issue.⁷³⁷ Being produced by one of the largest and most well-known publishers with a solid distribution network ensured that *Popeye* was displayed on news-stands and sold a sizeable number of copies. The fact that *Popeye* persisted through the 1970s (even though it switched hands from Dell to King's Syndicate, and then to Charlton Comics) and that CBS produced a 1978 television show and in 1980 a blockbuster film with Robin Williams as the lead actor demonstrates that even though sales of the comic book did not

⁷³⁵ King's Features Syndicate, 'Timeline', *Popeye Online*, <http://popeye.com/timeline/> [accessed 20 July 2018]; S. Padnick, 'Consider the Spinach Can', *Tor Online*, <https://www.tor.com/2013/10/25/consider-the-spinach-can-how-popeye-influenced-pop-culture/> [accessed 21 July 2018].

⁷³⁶ Gardinetti, *Popeye: An Illustrated Cultural History*, p. 13.

⁷³⁷ Gabilliet, *Of Comics and Men*, p. 40.

match *Superman's* or *Captain America's*, Popeye remained culturally relevant. Popeye's significance, however, lies in the fact that he provided the industry with an archetype of heroic behaviour. Joe Shuster and Jerry Siegel openly admitted that Popeye was one of the inspirations behind *Superman*. Each of these comic book heroes simultaneously was affected by the increasing cultural acceptance of medicine, but also in turn promoted public allegiance to the power of medicine and science.

The medicalisation of entertainment

Between the 1950s and 1980, the comic books considered in this chapter demonstrated a cultural shift towards science and medicine, but also revealed the self-help mentality of the Anglo-American world in the post-war era. In an issue of *Popeye*, Sagendorf explored the increased medicalisation of society during the 1950s.⁷³⁸ Popeye was captured by a mad scientist who devised an experiment to transform humans into dogs.⁷³⁹ This reflected scientific and public interest in, and concerns about, many discoveries in the 1940s and 1950s, including the atomic bomb, penicillin, the smoking-cancer link, computers, and jet engine aircrafts. Contemporaries had a perception of heroic science and medicine enabling developments that were previously thought to be impossible. The 'mad scientist's' quest to pursue an 'immoral' research project to prove his theory was not only imagined. Ancel Keys' Minnesota starvation experiment, whereby conscientious protestors of World War II were placed on starvation diets to test the limits of the human body without adequate nutrition, were also ethically problematic.⁷⁴⁰ Participants in the

⁷³⁸ B. Sagendorf, 'Popeye in Animal Talk', *Popeye*, no. 15, (King Features, New York, January/March, 1951).

⁷³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴⁰ T. Tucker, *The Great Starvation Experiment: Ancel Keys and the Men who Starved for Science*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006); A. Keys, *The Biology of Human Starvation*, (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1950).

great starvation experiment experienced both mental health and physical health problems for the sake of science.⁷⁴¹

The experiment on Popeye failed but it gave him the ability to communicate with animals. Soon Popeye was treating animals in his own house giving him little rest but also no money as he did this *pro bono*. All the animals had minor complaints about their health such as a chicken feeling its feet always damp and cold, which Popeye treated by giving the chicken a pair of boots. It could be argued that Popeye's veterinary practice symbolised a 1950s doctor's practice, overwhelmed with patients, hypochondriacs, and 'healthmaniacs'. Through this story, Sagendorf was therefore critiquing contemporary society for over-worrying and for visiting doctors unnecessarily. Another theme linked to Popeye's work with animals was parenthood. Olive Oyl told Popeye that he was healing animals but not earning enough to buy fortifying foods such as milk and eggs for Swee' Pea. The story ended with all the animals bringing different foods to Popeye and his family, almost as if they were chosen from a list of foods in Ancel and Margaret Keys' *Eat Well and Stay Well*.⁷⁴² (Figure 16)

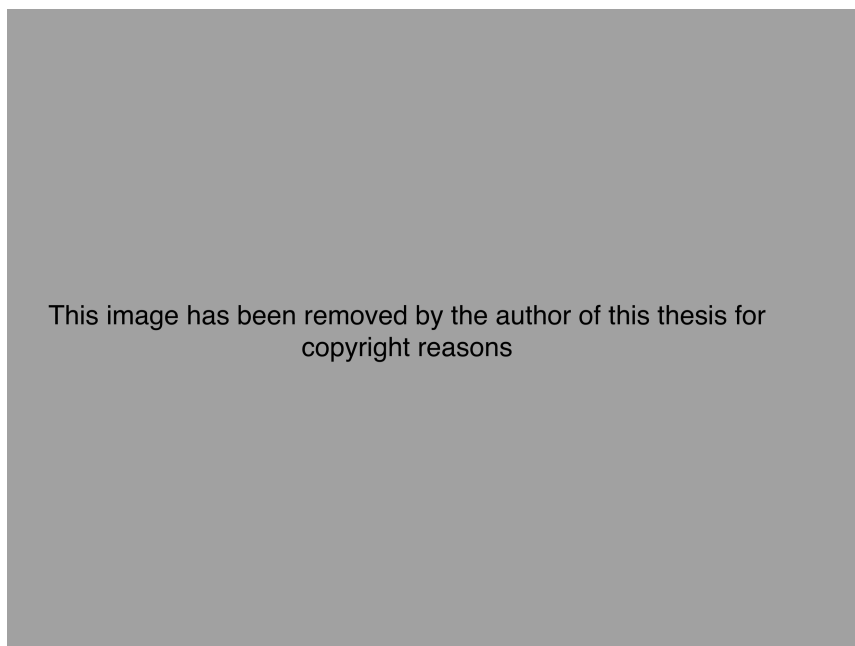
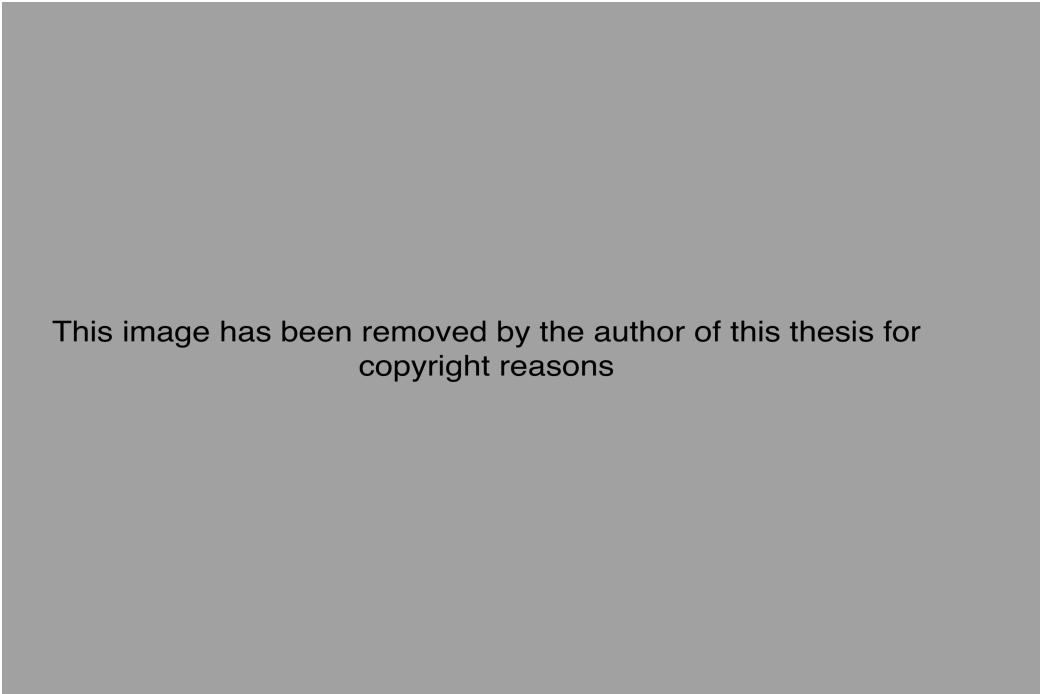


Figure 16 B. Sagendorf, 'Popeye in Animal Talk', *Popeye*, no. 15, (New York, Dell, January/March, 1951).

⁷⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴² Most importantly the exclusion of meat and a preference given to fresh vegetables and fruit. In A. Keys, M. Keys, *Eat Well and Stay Well* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1959).

Readers of comic books were increasingly initiated into what could be referred to as a ‘cult’ of valorising medicine and health-related fields. Superman’s willingness to promote the pursuit of health was a regular theme in the comic book. On many occasions Superman was portrayed researching or aiding scientific and medical research. In *Superman 65* (1950), Superman agreed to be studied by a doctor to thank him for saving Lois. The tests included trying to penetrate his skin with artificial lightning and spinning Superman as the head of a drill on a rock.⁷⁴³ In *Action Comics 241* (1958), Superman conducted his own medical experiment wearing a suit of armour made with lead which made him immune to Kryptonite rays, and he tried to develop glasses that could allow him to see through lead with his x-ray vision.⁷⁴⁴ But, he also helped a scientist stress-test a new kind of metal that the scientist had invented. The image and methods of medicine also had a profound impact on how stories in comic books were written. In *Action Comics 262* (1960), Super Girl tested the theory that she could gain immunity to Kryptonite if she gradually exposed herself to it. (Figure 17)



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Figure 17 ‘Super-Girl’s Greatest Victory’, *Action Comics*, no. 262, (New York, National Comics Publications, March, 1960).

⁷⁴³ ‘The Testing of Superman’, *Superman*, no. 65, (New York, National Comics Publications, July, 1950).

⁷⁴⁴ ‘The Super Key to Fort Superman’, *Action Comics*, no. 241, (New York, National Comics Publications, June 1958).

This reasoning was influenced by the concepts of therapeutic inoculation and specific desensitization, leading approaches to infectious diseases and allergy on both sides of the Atlantic for much of the twentieth century.⁷⁴⁵

Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, the creators of Superman, conceptualised what humanity could become in the future; strong, fit, fast and healthy, but with the capacity to conquer disease like the inhabitants of Krypton. Kryptonite was the only material in *Superman* and *Action Comics* that could make Supergirl vulnerable; resistance was the last frontier to be conquered to achieve perfect invulnerability. Like additives producing cancer in humans, referred to in Cortesi's article in *The New York Times*, Kryptonite reflected contemporary anxieties about environmental toxins and pollutants, and helped to reinforce the fundamental principles of clinical ecology and environmental preservation.⁷⁴⁶

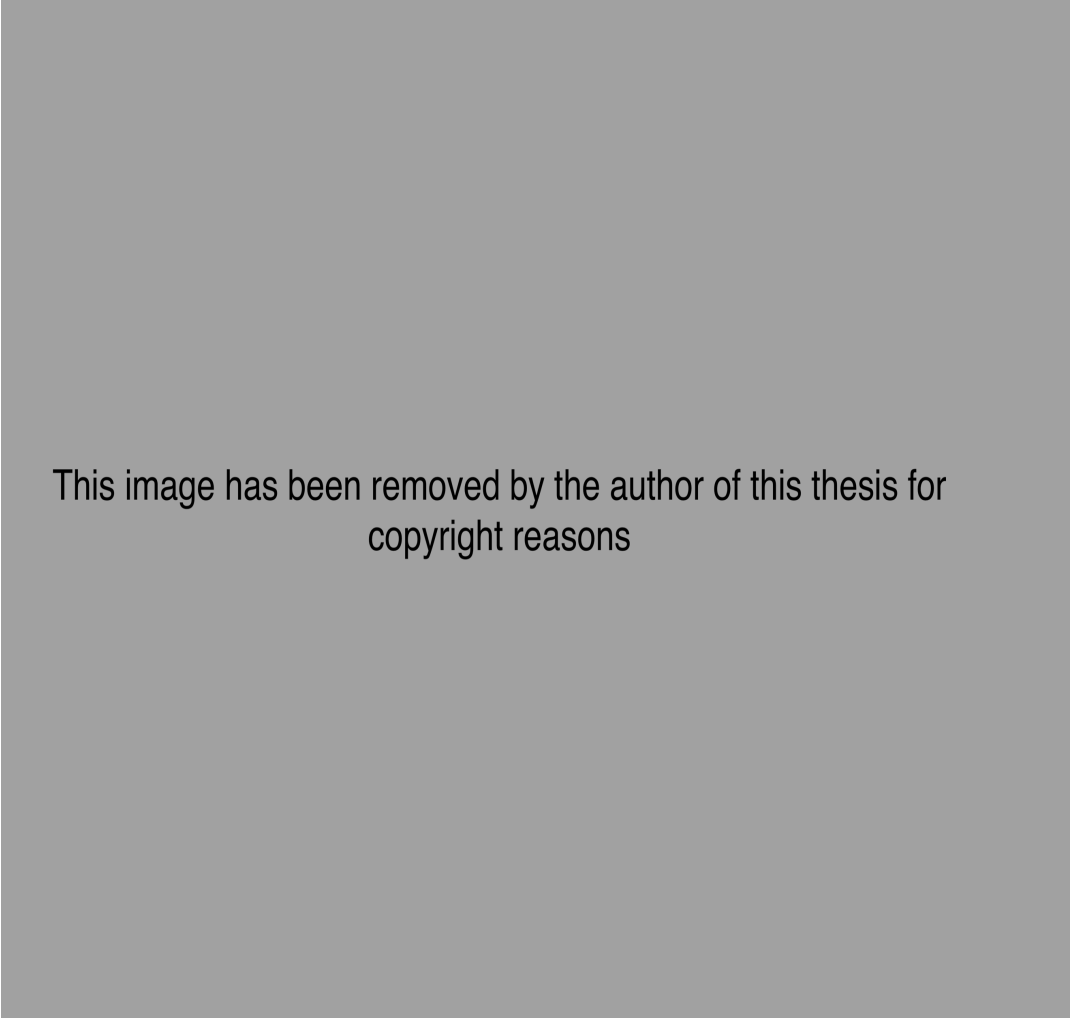
One advertisement displayed in *Action Comics* 205 (1955) was demonstrative of the image of the doctor, medicine, and the increasing promotion of health. Published by National Social Welfare Assembly (NSWA) - of which aims were 'to define and study problems of broad social policy affecting the needs of people, and to plan action to meet these needs and, to serve national organizations and local communities in developing effective programs, operations, and administration in the field of social welfare'⁷⁴⁷ - this advertisement valorised the pursuit of medical and health-related careers. (Figure 18)

⁷⁴⁵ A. Cortesi, 'Cancer is Traced in Food Additives', *The New York Times*, (31 August 1956), p. 31;

M. Jackson, *Allergy: The History of a Modern Malady* (London: Reaktion, 2006), p. 69.

⁷⁴⁶ Jackson, *Allergy*, pp. 200-205.

⁷⁴⁷ 'National Social Welfare Assembly', *Victoria Commonwealth University Library Online*, <https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/organizations/national-social-welfare-assembly/> [accessed 11 July 2018].



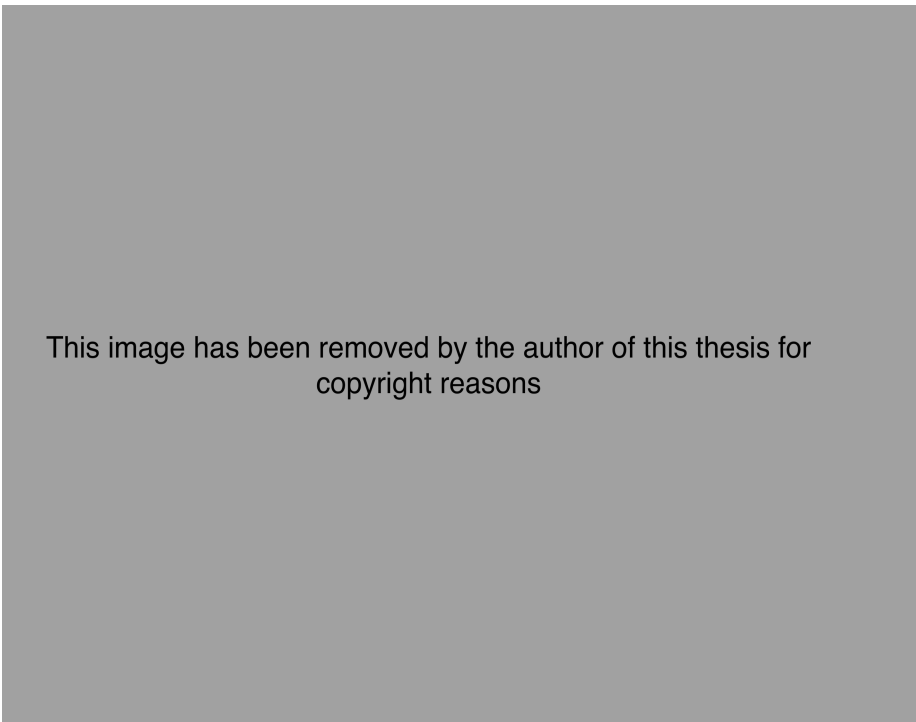
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Figure 18 NSWA, 'Buzzy Says', Action Comics, no. 205, (New York, National Comics Publications, June, 1955).

The advertisement typified 'Healthmania' during the 1950s: readers not only had to promote their own health, but should also consider becoming health professionals.


Comic books also featured puzzles, quizzes, trivia, stories and stories incorporating different heroes to add variety. (Figures 19 and 20) In the various alternative sections of these comics, knowledge of science was part of the staple information presented to readers. This was one way to captivate younger audiences' curiosity, but it also contributed wholesome forms of entertainment that promoted the value of learning and schooling (giving a reason for parents to purchase them for their children), providing more value for money, and capturing the cultural preoccupation with science during the

'golden age' of science, technology and medicine. In this way, comic books played a part in the widespread acceptance of science discussed in Chapter II.



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Figure 19 'Quick Quiz', Action Comics, no. 172, (New York, National Comics Publication, September, 1952).



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Figure 20 'Quick Quiz', Superman, no. 98, (New York, National Comics Publication, July, 1955).

Figures 19 and 20 demonstrate the dissemination of scientific facts by the editors of *National Comics*. Figure 20 simultaneously promoted knowledge about the quantification of foods and nutrients and the distaste towards obesity by instructing readers on what Gyorgy Scrinis calls ‘nutritionism’.⁷⁴⁸ The calorie difference between carbohydrates and fats was one of the main reasons why many researchers in Chapter IV accepted the low-fat diet proposed by Ancel Keys. Readers of *Superman* - primarily children - were taught to vilify foods based on the sugar/fat dichotomy, supporting John Coveney and Jill Dubisch’s contentions about the healthy, fit body becoming the highest moral good.⁷⁴⁹

Diet and the fear of chronic disease

Healthmania was deeply embedded within society, and evident in comics, in another explicit way: namely the fear of disease. During the twentieth century, cancer and the fear of cancer became more common and more prominent in Anglo-American culture.⁷⁵⁰ By 1975 the physician F.J Ingelfinger asserted:

When it comes to cancer... American society is far from rational. We are possessed with fear. Cancerphobia has expanded into a demonism in which the evil spirit is ever present but furtively viewed and spoken obliquely.

⁷⁴⁸ G. Scrinis, ‘On the Ideology of Nutritionism’, *Gastronomica*, 8, no. 1, (2008), 39-48.

⁷⁴⁹ J. Coveney, *Food, Morals, and Meaning the Pleasure and Anxiety of Eating* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 156.; J. Dubisch, ‘You Are What You Eat: Religious Aspects of the Health Food Movement’ in C. Delaney and D. Kaspin (eds), *Investigating Culture: An Experiential Introduction to Anthropology* 2nd edition (Chichester: West Sussex, 2011), 279- 288.

⁷⁵⁰ Virginia Berridge discusses the anti-smoking campaigns to prevent cancer in *Marketing Health: Smoking and the Discourse of Public Health in Britain, 1945–2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 15-17; Carsten Timmermann focusses on the problem of smoking in *A History of Lung Cancer, The Recalcitrant Disease* (London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2014); David Cantor discusses the increasing preoccupations about cancer and especially how movies have been enthusiastically used by ASCC as a public education tool in *Cancer in the Twentieth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), pp. 42-50; and Elizabeth Toon argues that there was a post-war pressure to educate the public about cancer in the UK by using American style public health campaigns in ‘Cancer as the General Population Knows It: Knowledge, Fear, and Lay Education in 1950s Britain’, *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 81, no. 1, (2007), 116-138.

American cancerphobia, in brief, is a disease as serious to society as cancer is to the individual and morally more devastating.⁷⁵¹

A prime example of carcinophobia could be seen in a NSWA advertisement against smoking. (Figure 21)

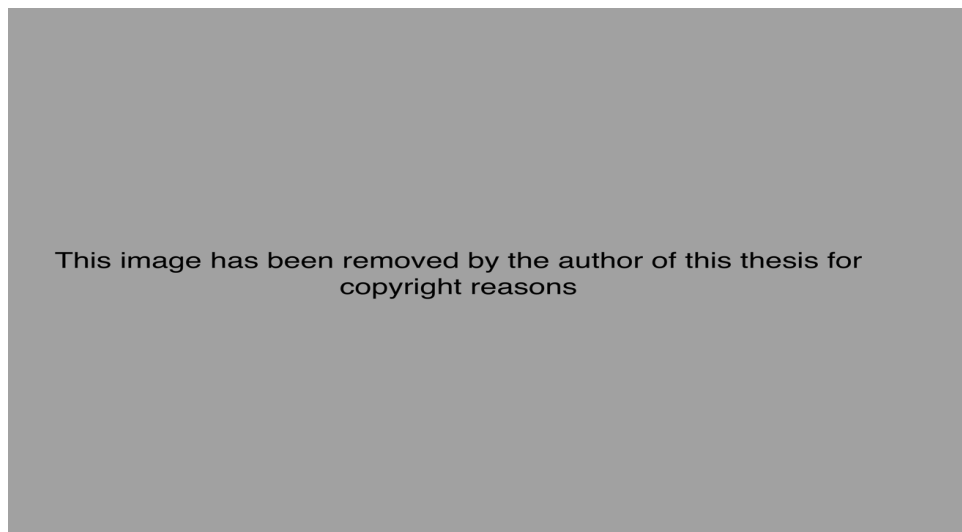


Figure 21 NSWA, 'Smoking is for Squares', *Action Comics*, no. 317, (New York, National Comics Publications, October, 1964).

NSWA published this campaign immediately after the Surgeon General's recommendation that Americans should quit smoking after the smoking-cancer link had been established.⁷⁵² NSWA believed that the way to convince readers that smoking was bad for them was to be instructed by a celebrity. Paulette Breen, who won the Miss American Teenager contest in 1963, urged boys not to start smoking by using a 'smoking is uncool' rhetoric to prevent boys indulging in risky behaviours to demonstrate their masculinity. A significant note about this campaign was the use of a beautiful teenage girl 'saying' that smoking was for 'squares', demonstrating to teenage boys - the primary audience of comic books - that girls of a similar age did not find smoking acceptable or desirable.⁷⁵³

⁷⁵¹ F. Ingelfinger, 'Cancer! Alarm! Cancer!', *New England Journal of Medicine*, 293, no. 25, (18 December 1975), 1319-1320.

⁷⁵² V. Berridge, *Marketing Health*, pp. 15-17

⁷⁵³ Display Advertising, NSWA, 'Smoking is for Squares', *Action Comics*, no. 314, (New York, National Comics Publications, October, 1964).

One example of the extent to which cancer was feared during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s was in *Superman* 148 and 149 (1961). Lex Luthor was in prison because of a lifetime of evil deeds and crimes. However, he was soon pardoned because he invented a drug that cured cancer.⁷⁵⁴ This accomplishment made Superman see Lex Luthor in another light, which made him lower his defences against him. When talking to the press, Luthor discussed his next research project focusing on finding a cure for another major health concern, heart disease (Figure 22).

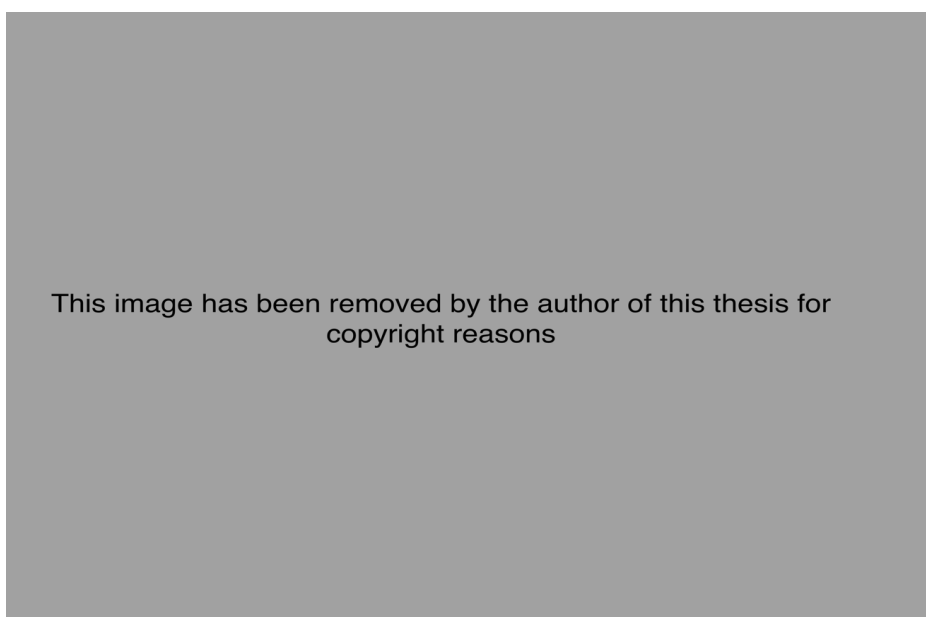


Figure 22 'Lex Luthor Hero', *Superman*, no. 148, (New York, National Comics Publications, November, 1961).

In the post-war years, chronic diseases were perceived as humanity's greatest challenges, as Gerald Grob, George Weisz and Robert Aronowitz have suggested.⁷⁵⁵ Although Lex Luthor could have used his money to end poverty, eradicate communicable diseases or promote pacifism, instead he chose to find cures for cancer and heart disease.

⁷⁵⁴ 'Lex Luthor, Hero', *Superman*, no. 149, (New York, National Comics Publications, November, 1961).

⁷⁵⁵ G. Grob, *The Deadly Truth: A History of Disease in America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002); G. Weisz, *Chronic Disease in the Twentieth Century: A History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014); R. Aronowitz, *Risky Medicine: Our Quest to Cure Fear and Uncertainty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

Superman demonstrates clearly the concept proposed by Harvey Levenstein in his book *Fear of Food*, namely the anxieties about the damage that certain foods could cause.⁷⁵⁶ Superman's health served as a metaphor for human health in the twentieth century as he became weaker through two pathways: either through the ingestion of green and red Kryptonite, metaphors for the ingestion of 'unhealthy' or 'modern' foods' for humans; or, reflecting Ulrich Beck's notion of 'risk society', Superman could become sick through exposure to Kryptonite rays in similar ways to humans exposed to modern stresses or chemicals like DDT or radioactivity. There was a more explicit symbolism between Kryptonite and 'unhealthy eating': having Superman ingest Kryptonite was a technique used frequently in *Superman* and *Action Comics* as a way to counteract Superman's strength.⁷⁵⁷ (Figure 23)

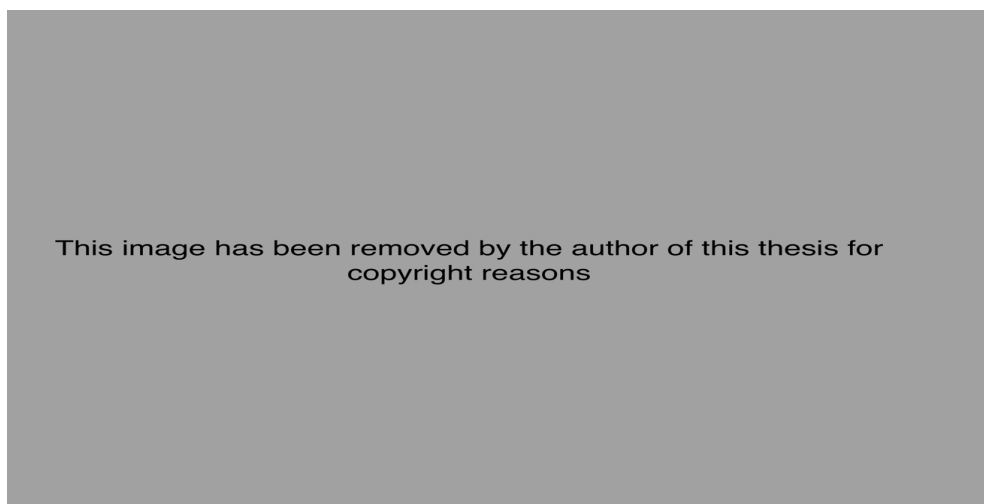


Figure 23 'The Jury of Super-Enemies', *Action Comics*, no. 286, (New York, National Comics Publications, March, 1962).

Even though Superman did not have to eat food, he nonetheless ate because he enjoyed it, also allowing him to keep his identity secret, but exposing him to danger. The alien Superman Revenge Squad, by poisoning Superman's burger, made him become drowsy leading him into a deep sleep where he had nightmares of dangerous situations in the future; the elaborate dreams ignited by the red Kryptonite became distressing for him.

⁷⁵⁶ H. Levenstein, *Fear of Food: A History of Why We Worry about What We Eat* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

⁷⁵⁷ Superman gets tricked into eating chocolate covered cherries infused with poison made by Kryptonians, which could harm him in 'The Kryptonian Connection', *Action Comics*, no. 234, (New York, Detective Comics, 1974).

After Superman had three dreams of this nature, the Superman Revenge Squad set up futuristic props to make him think that he was in yet another dream, using robots to fire anti-chlorophyll acid which converted the vegetation on earth to an alien plant. This echoed other critiques of environmental pollution influenced by the writings of Rachel Carson and the anxieties about pollution published in *Prevention*.⁷⁵⁸ The way in which Superman was poisoned was also a critique of modern foods and fast-foods. With the dietary fat hypothesis making appearances in mainstream media - remembering president Eisenhower's heart attack triggered by a meal of hamburgers with Bermuda onions, or Ancel Keys' cover story of *Time* - the burger, a food emblematic of Western eating, was increasingly perceived as unhealthy.

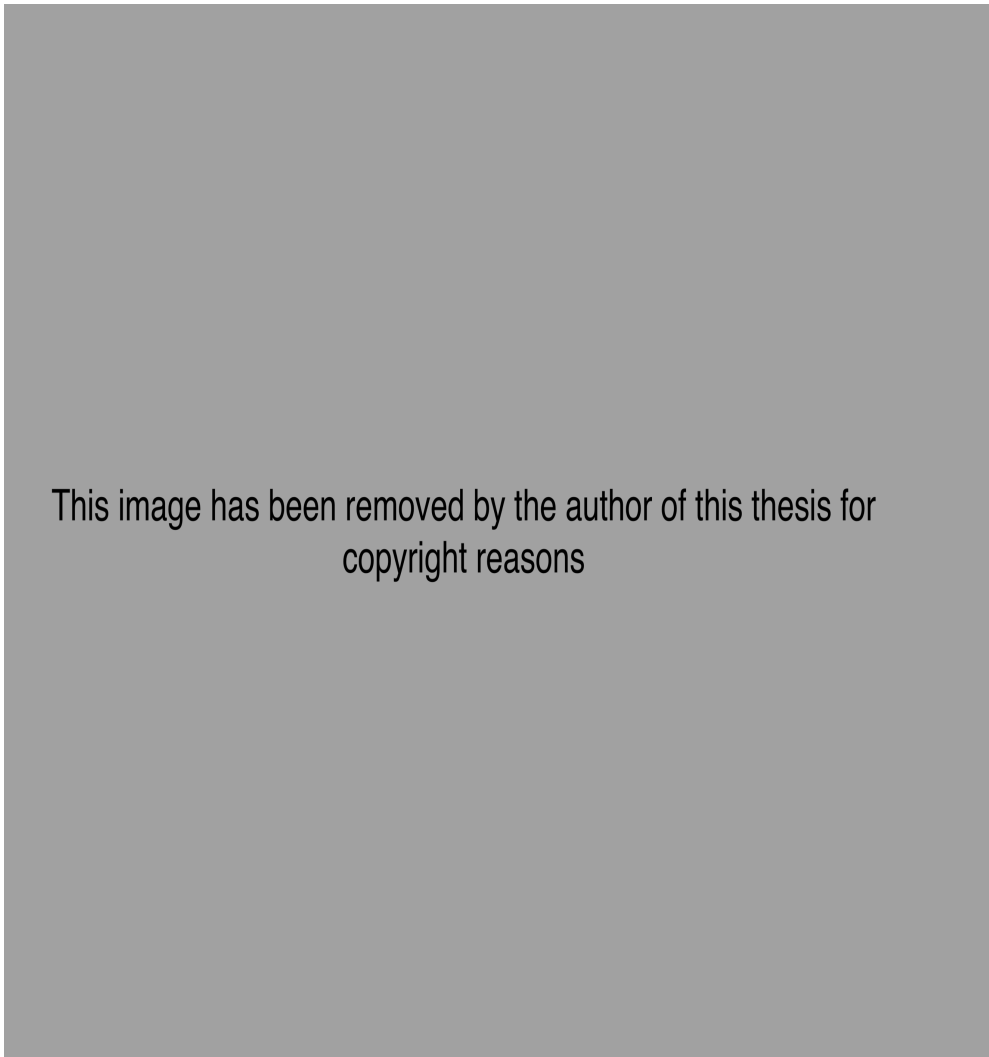
As Warren Belasco argues about the 1960s proliferation of health food stores during the post-war period, the preoccupations of the organic movement and the food-counterculture were beginning to emerge, as publications such as *Prevention* grew in circulation.⁷⁵⁹ Meat and especially beef - the presumed culprits of heart disease according to those physicians and researchers who ascribed to the dietary fat hypothesis - were the masculine foods *par excellence*.⁷⁶⁰ Superman ate his favourite meal beef *bourguignon* as often as he could, as well as roasts, steaks, burgers and hotdogs. The women in Superman's life often cooked roasts or beef *bourguignon* to win his affections and when Superman was shown cooking he was frying eggs and grilling steaks. He also ate pancakes and pizza in copious quantities. It is therefore no wonder that Dr Atkins's *New Diet Revolution* was such a success with male dieters, as it gave them the chance to lose weight, be healthy and look good whilst eating masculine food in generous quantities, as opposed to the salads and boiled food featured in other diets.⁷⁶¹ (Figures 24-27).

⁷⁵⁸ R. Carson, *Silent Spring* (Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1962); Anon, 'These Toxic Times', *Prevention*, (November 1951); Anon, 'Our Poisoned World and Cancer', *Prevention*, (March 1961).

⁷⁵⁹ Belasco, *Appetite for Change*, p. 16. See also the discussion in Chapter III.

⁷⁶⁰ Lupton, *Food, The Body and the Self*, p. 1.


⁷⁶¹ Also Superman was portrayed as cooking eggs for breakfast (not caring then about cholesterol) in: The Amazing Super-Baby', *Action Comics*, no. 217, (New York, National Comics Publications, June, 1956).



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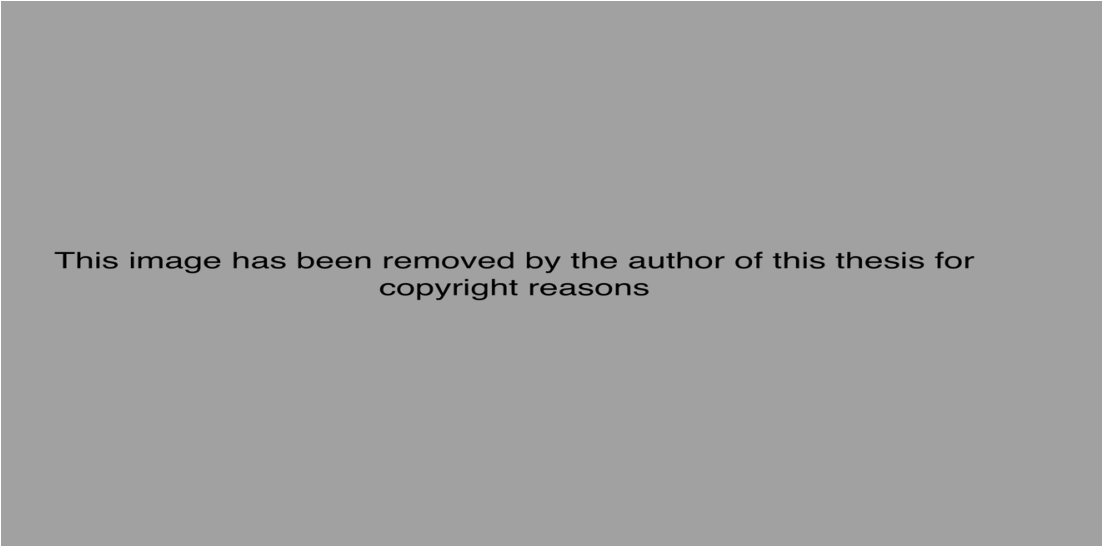
Figure 24 'The Prankster's Apprentice', Superman, no. 69, (New York, National Comics Publications, July, 1954).

In another issue Superman gets married and is shown barbecuing steaks as a part of his everyday life in: 'Superman's Wife', *Superman*, no. 131, (New York, National Comics Publications, August, 1959). In another issue two women are pursuing Superman to be their husband, one of the women cooked steak *bourguignon* in: 'The Day Superman Married', *Superman*, no. 120, (New York, National Comics Publications, March, 1958).



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*Figure 25 'Introducing the Son of Man of Steel- Superman Junior', Action Comics, no. 232,
(New York, National Comics Publications, September, 1957).*



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*Figure 26 'The Battle Between Super-Lois and Super-Lana', Superman's Girlfriend, Lois Lane, no. 21, (New York,
National Comics Publications, November, 1960).*

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Figure 27 'Clark Kent in the Big House', *Action Comics*, no. 323, (New York, National Comics Publications, April, 1965).

Concerns about Superman's diet were expressed by readers, as can be seen in a letter to the writing team by a reader named Gordon Price:

Dear Editor:

In one of your recent publications (LOIS LANE) you showed Lois and Lana Lang both with super-powers, trying to "win" SUPERMAN by cooking treats for him. You showed them bringing him a giant pizza pie and piles and piles of pancakes. Does SUPERMAN always eat like this?

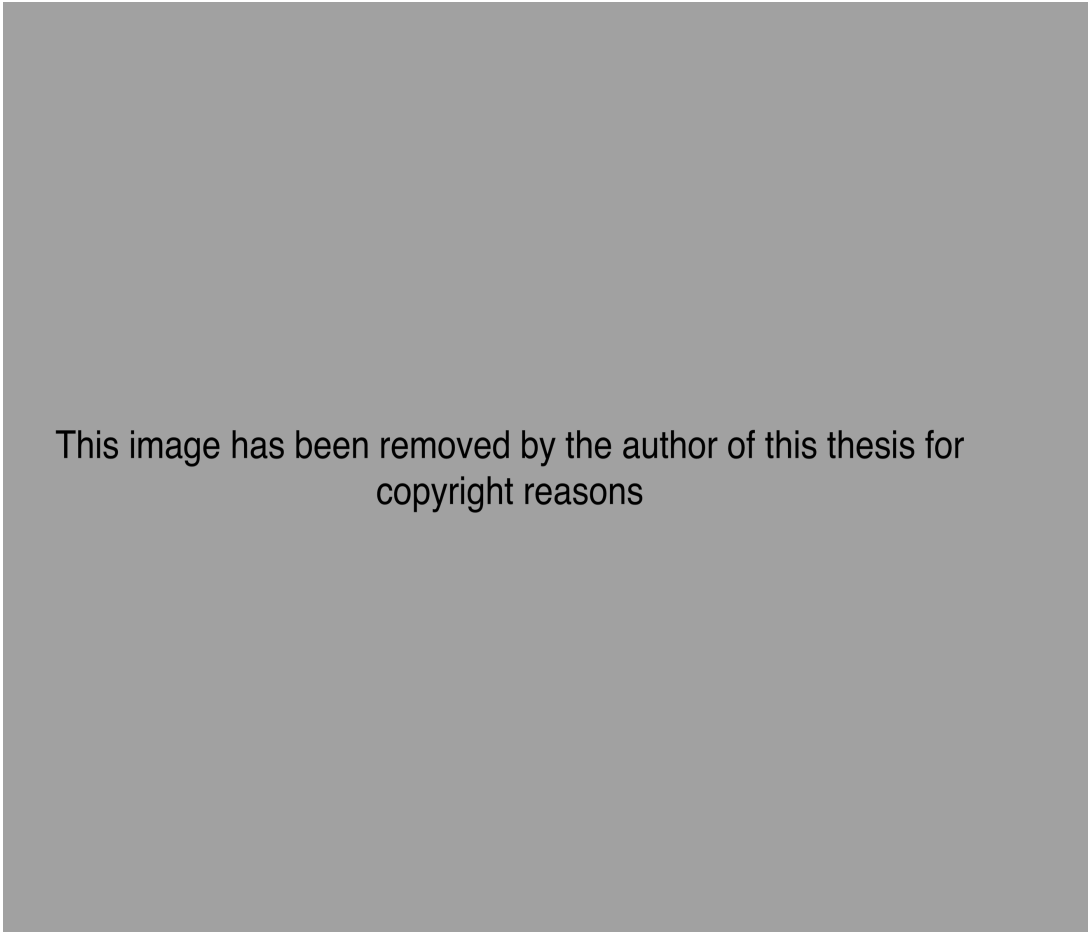
Gordon Price. Brooklyn. N. Y. ⁷⁶²

Superman's diet was surprising not only because healthy eating was promoted everywhere else, but also because other comic book heroes like Popeye ate healthily to maintain their 'superhero' powers. Even Captain America commented in one issue that in the army they were given bland food - reflecting, as Belasco has argued, the antipathy towards healthy foods - and he wished they gave them 'rich' meals, which in this case could have been considered unhealthy.⁷⁶³

⁷⁶² 'Letters to the Editor', in 'Mr. Mxyzptlk Goes To College', *Superman*, no. 46, (New York, National Comics Publications, July, 1961).

⁷⁶³ W. Belasco, *Food: The Key Concepts*, p. 29

Antimodern sentiments also appeared in comic books. One instance of this was when Superman was returning to Earth from a mission in the distant universe. He saw a planet that was moving irregularly, and decided to move towards it. When he was nearing the planet, it resembled Krypton making Superman want to land. While he was descending a flock of birds attacked him. Superman escaped from this situation by vibrating in a fast manner (a technique he learned from the superhero Flash), which made it possible for the birds to communicate with him.⁷⁶⁴



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Figure 28 'The Fiend in the Fortress of Solitude', Action Comics, no. 407, (New York, DC, December, 1971).

As seen in Figure 28, the birds helped Superman escape the planet life form as human life had minerals, which when digested, poisoned their atmosphere. This issue reflects what Gyorgy Scrinis refers to as the ideology of nutritionism, which made people aware of macro- and micro-nutrients making them more selective in what they ate. More importantly this issue provides more evidence that the organic, slow-food and the food

⁷⁶⁴ 'The Fiend in the Fortress of Solitude', *Action Comics*, no. 407, (New York, DC, December, 1971).

counterculture movements had a significant impact on the way ‘modern’ diet was perceived and represented during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, a phenomenon that led to increasing faith in vitamins and supplements as intelligent solutions to enable health.⁷⁶⁵

Vitamins, or faith in their potential to provide good health, were also evident in comic books. In *Action Comics* 251 (1959), Clark Kent went to the Metropolis Research Centre to interview Professor Vance who was on the brink of a scientific breakthrough involving vitamins. (Figure 29)

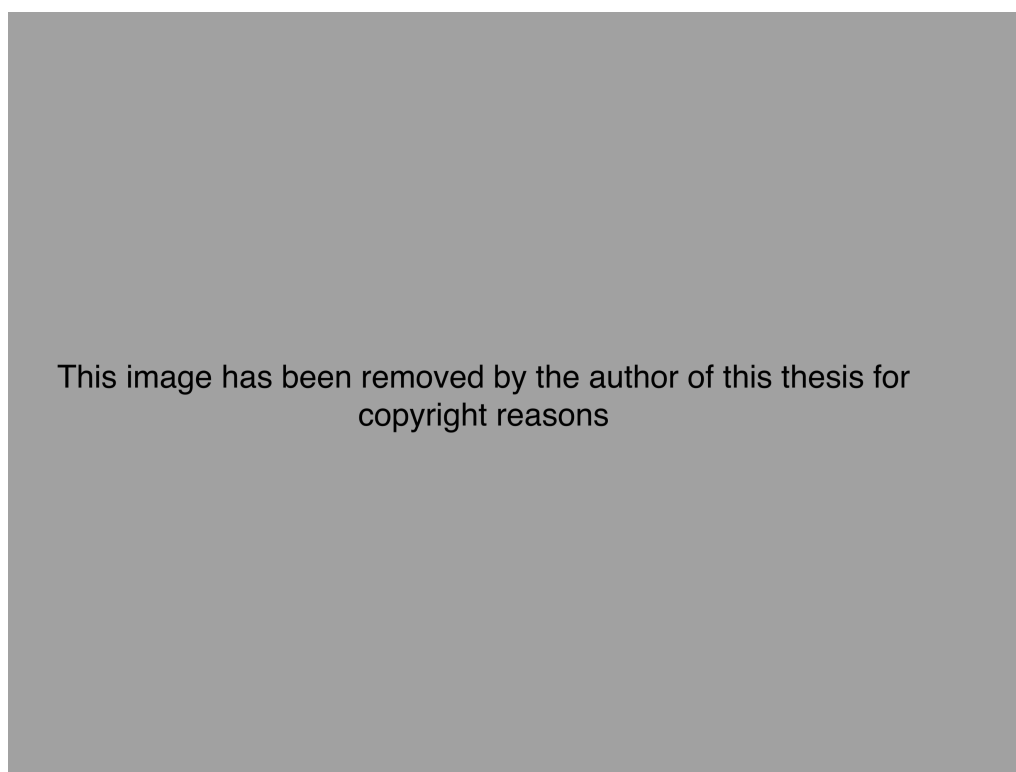


Figure 29 'The Oldest Man in Metropolis', Action Comics, no. 251, (New York, National Comics Publications, April, 1959).

This image indicates how scientists, public health initiatives, advertising and the media continued to internalise and advocate what Rima Apple calls ‘Vitamanía’.⁷⁶⁶ It is probable that the writer of this issue of *Action Comics*, Robert Bernstein, wanted to make this story easy to follow so that even younger children who bought it would understand it. This made him use a story about a vitamin serum which was a concept that children were learning about from an early age either from their parents, in schools, or from

⁷⁶⁵ More on the food counterculture can be read in Belasco, *Appetite for Change*.

⁷⁶⁶ R. Apple, *Vitamanía: Vitamins in American Culture* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1996).

advertisements. This issue of *Action Comics* demonstrated that vitamin supplementation was already embedded in popular culture in ways that made sense to children. The extent of vitamin supplementation can be seen in the story of Professor O.G. Wotasnozzle 'The Hydrogen Pill' in *Popeye* 53 (1960). (Figure 30)

Sappo and Wotasnozzle in this episode represented 'health-seeking' individuals who took

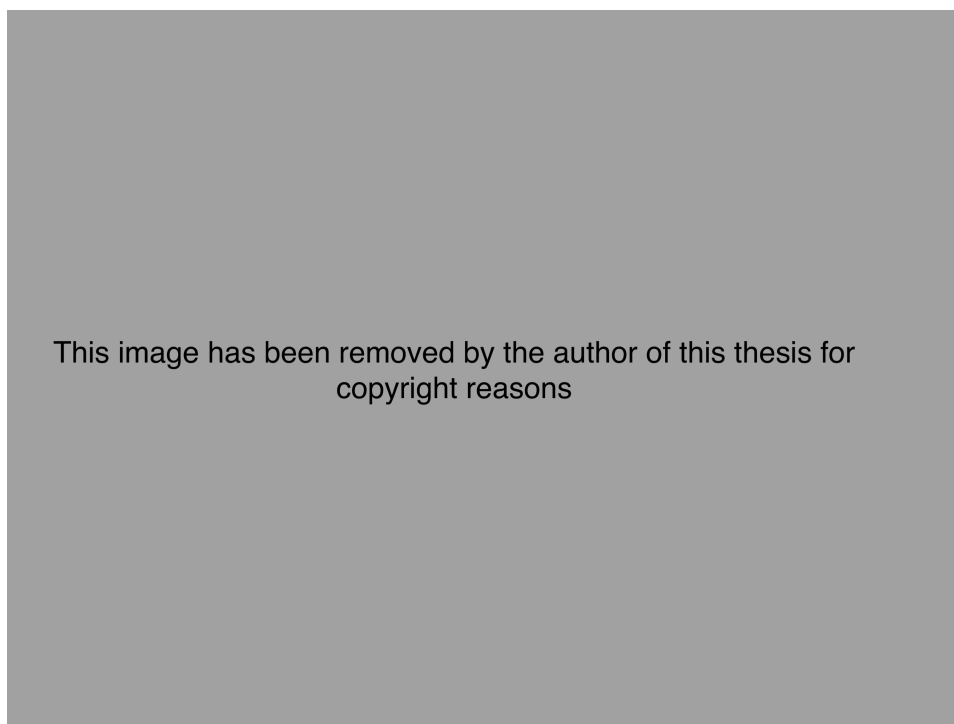


Figure 30 'Professor O.G. Wotasnozzle: The Hydrogen Pill', in 'Popeye in Jeep Island', Popeye, no. 53, (New York, King Features, June, 1960).

vitamin supplements daily. Sappo could not let his day go by without taking his vitamins and felt angry when he discovered that they had run out of them. Another important element in this story line was that Sappo considered vitamins so harmless that he did not hesitate to ingest Wotasnozzle's pill - which was in fact a mini hydrogen bomb. In addition to continuing interest in food supplements, anxieties about 'scientific' parenthood and the 'healthy' upbringing of children were re-emerging between 1950 and 1980, a trend that could be observed in popular culture as well.

‘Scientific’ parenthood and self-help

Medicalisation had a particular effect on one arena of everyday life, namely parenthood and child-rearing. Many of the themes explored in previous chapters of this thesis made appearances in comic books. One theme was the ideology of self-help. Olive Oyl purchased a self-help parenting book in order to provide the best possible upbringing for Swee’Pea, Popeye’s adopted son. Resembling the general movement towards recognising the significance of emotions and psychology during the 1950s, as seen in the work of Gayelord Hauser, newspaper articles such as ‘And here is the doctor’s diet sheet’ in *The Daily Mail*, and research in medical journals such as Friedman and Rosenman’s papers on behaviour and heart disease, this issue of Popeye presented a comedic story that reflected contemporary Western values. Swee’Pea was having a tantrum because he wanted a cowboy hat and Olive Oyl gave him one. Swee’Pea continued crying and then wanted a horse. Olive Oyl advised Popeye to read Dr. O.B Sunk’s *How to Grow Kids*, which recommended permissive parenting.⁷⁶⁷ Popeye and Olive continued buying Swee’Pea more dangerous ‘gifts’ including a horse, a gun and bullets which ended up with Swee’Pea causing chaos within the house. ‘Scientific motherhood’ not only was successfully imposed on women, but in the 1950s also extended to ‘scientific parenthood’.

The story in this issue of Popeye had another background theme which has been explored in previous chapters of this thesis; antimodernity. In a similar way to Gayelord Hauser who condemned modern foods, articles in newspapers about the effects of civilisation on health, and journal articles by Ancel Keys about the effect of ‘civilised’ and ‘Western’ diets, Bud Sagendorf - the artist, penciller and story-writer of Popeye - was taking a critical view of modern parenting, which was thought to contribute to increased

⁷⁶⁷ B. Sagendorf, ‘Kid Raisin’, *Popeye*, no. 26, (New York, Dell, October/December, 1953).

numbers of rebellious teenagers and adults. This story was also demonstrative of the compulsion of parents to bring up children with the help of ‘experts’.

More interestingly, *How to Grow Kids* was a humorous title that mocked the best-selling book by paediatrician Dr Benjamin Spock *The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care* published in 1946, which became one of the best-selling books of all time.⁷⁶⁸ Dr Spock was a Columbia University alumnus who specialised in paediatrics and was influenced by his wife’s psychological work at the Presbyterian Constitutional Laboratory.⁷⁶⁹ Spock became interested in psychoanalysis because of frequent concerns from patients’ parents about mental health, but also because of his opposition to the strict scheduling and harsh punishments proposed by one of the leading figures in parenting advice, Luther Emmet Holt.⁷⁷⁰ Bud Sagendorf was sceptical of psychoanalytical theories of parenting and he opposed permissive parenting, a style of parenting defined by the American Psychological Association as: ‘the parent or caregiver is accepting and affirmative, makes few demands, and avoids exercising control’.⁷⁷¹ Spock was one of the first doctors recommending that parents needed to look after their children on an individual basis and according to their specific needs, rather than parents forcing sleeping, eating and playing schedules. This new movement of parental permissiveness considered strictness as limiting or traumatic to the child. Olive Oyl convinced Popeye to read the book, which insisted that: ‘Great desires should be satisfied or children will grow up to hate their parents’.⁷⁷² The fact that Olive Oyl bought and kept this book in the house, and the fact that she was the one that convinced Popeye to read it gives another insight into women’s role on the wellbeing of their families, but also into the readership of self-help

⁷⁶⁸ By the end of the century it had sold 50 million copies worldwide see T. Maier, *Dr Spock: An American Life* 2nd edition (New York: Basic Books, 2003), p. 463.

⁷⁶⁹ D. Opitz, ‘Spock, Benjamin’, *American Dictionary of National Biography Online*, <http://www.anb.org/abstract/10.1093/anb/9780198606697.001.0001/anb-9780198606697-e-1202101>, [accessed 29 September 2018].

⁷⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷¹ American Psychological Association, ‘Dictionary of Psychology: parenting’, *American Psychological Association online*, <https://dictionary.apa.org/parenting> [accessed 10 June 2018].

⁷⁷² B. Sagendorf, ‘Kid Raisin’, *Popeye*, no. 26, (New York, Dell Comics, October/December, 1953).

books during the 1950s. Olive Oyl appeared to be a woman between twenty and forty years old, a lower middle-class mother loosely fitting the category of readers that bought the self-help books discussed in Chapter II. Post-war affluence and leisure had provided the space for a particular form of consumerism evident in Olive Oyl's life.

Another indication of the rise of the 'healthmaniac' parent could be seen in one of the extra stories printed in *Superman* 68 (1951). As Warren Belasco argues, reactions towards modern foods were evident at the beginning of the twentieth century,⁷⁷³ and these sentiments were internalised by parents, especially by mothers who wanted to feed their children the healthiest diets possible. (Figure 31)

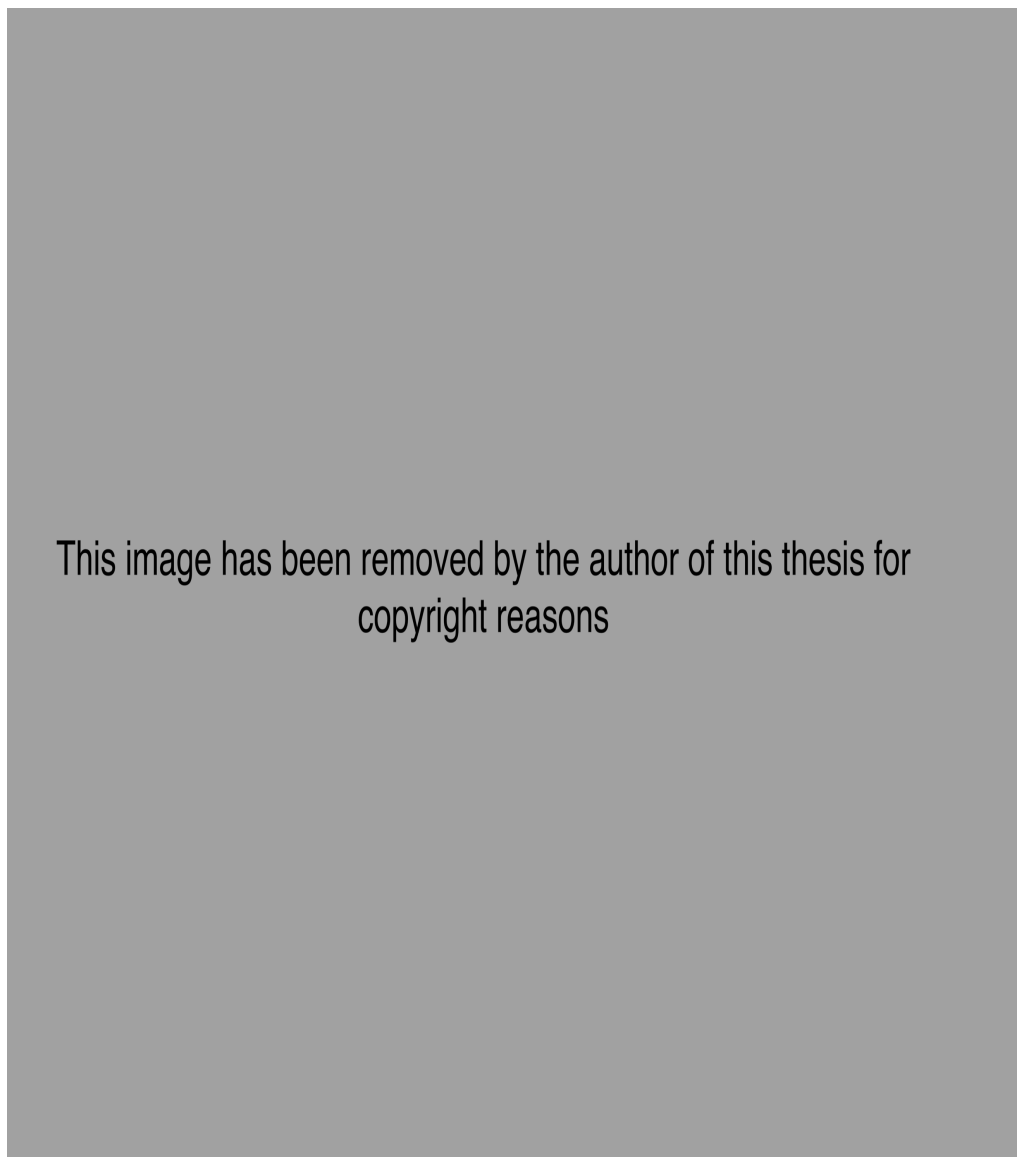


Figure 31 'Little Pete', in 'The Six Elements of Crime', *Superman*, no. 68, (New York, National Comics Publications, 1951).

⁷⁷³ Belasco, *Appetite for Change*, pp. 15-16.

As a 'modern' woman, Little Pete's mother either baked cookies - which were an indicator of affluence or post-war consumerism and abundance - or bought them from the supermarket and hid them from her son. This story reflected how middle-class mothers wanted to promote healthy eating habits in their children as early as the 1950s. Children's predisposition towards 'unhealthy' foods, which then suppressed the appetite for 'nutritional foods', had to be curbed. The educated and 'intelligent' mother knew that Pete would try to break the healthy eating rules. Little Pete's conduct demonstrated the risk behaviours that social scientists attributed to masculinity. The health 'rules' were set and enforced by a woman and Pete did not care about the impact of an 'unhealthy' diet on his health nor about the risk of climbing on the kitchen counter.

Health-promoting food figured in Popeye's life. One of the earliest and most frequent devices used in the comic was Popeye's ingestion of spinach which gave him superhuman powers. This was intended to encourage more vegetable eating by children who usually had an aversion to leafy greens and healthy food in general. In this way comic book heroes could help parents to promote healthy eating as fun and 'magical', making spinach a far more appreciated food by children. Popeye in one sense was the ultimate 'self-help' healthmaniac character who was preoccupied with his diet and whether he had enough spinach to provide strength. Another lesson for readers of Popeye was that unhealthy lifestyles could be detrimental to health, energy and wellbeing. Wimpy was an example of this as he was the moral and dietary antithesis of Popeye: he ate unhealthily, including consuming excessive numbers of hamburgers, food that Ancel Keys and others were condemning from the 1950s onwards. But Wimpy was not only overweight, he was also a glutton, lethargic, lazy, deceitful, and not as brave as Popeye. One example of how diametrically opposed Wimpy was from Popeye could be seen in *Popeye* 34 (1955), in which Popeye and his gang were stranded on an island after a storm.⁷⁷⁴ The inhabitants

⁷⁷⁴ B. Sagendorf, 'Popeye in Nothing', *Popeye*, no. 34, (New York, King Features, October/December, 1955).

of the island were invisible so they managed to kidnap Olive Oyl and attack Popeye.⁷⁷⁵ Meanwhile, Wimpy was gathering materials to cook hamburgers.⁷⁷⁶ Ironically perhaps, Wimpy's cooking gathered a crowd of invisible people and treated them to burgers which later made their mouths smell like onions and made it possible for Popeye to smell them coming towards him and defeat them. Healthy eating though was the centrepiece of *Popeye* which introduced youngsters to the ideology of dieting and a preoccupation with health.

In most *Popeye* stories, Popeye was demonstrating how spinach could improve his strength, vitality and energy, but in issue 43 (1958) the story shifted to what happened to Popeye in the absence of spinach from his diet. As the anthropologist Jill Dubisch argues, healthy eating increasingly resembled religious dietary laws, which could be clearly seen in *Popeye*.⁷⁷⁷ In one issue the Sea Hag sent her son Brutus, who pretended to be a doctor, to Popeye's home to wage 'psychological warfare' against Popeye.⁷⁷⁸ Brutus had diagnosed Popeye with 'bonkus of the konkus', a humorous take on medical diagnoses.⁷⁷⁹ Brutus ordered Olive Oyl to only give Popeye dry bread and water to recover. Olive Oyl was ecstatic saying: 'At last my sailor boy really needs me...now I can nurse him back to health', which again demonstrated how the role of women as caregivers or the facilitators of health in the household was engrained into contemporary culture. After three weeks of following a non-spinach diet, Popeye became increasingly weak and felt ill. At that point the Sea Hag visited him to challenge him to a boxing match against her son for the sailor's championship title of the world.⁷⁸⁰ The importance of physical health during the 1950s could be seen in Popeye's plan to nurse himself back to

⁷⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷⁷ J. Dubisch, 'You Are What You Eat: Religious Aspects of the Health Food Movement' in C. Delaney and D. Kaspin (eds), *Investigating Culture: An Experiential Introduction to Anthropology* 2nd edition (Chichester: West Sussex, Wiley, 2011), 279- 288.

⁷⁷⁸ B. Sagendorf, 'Mind Over Muscles', *Popeye*, no. 43 (New York, King Features, January/March, 1958).

⁷⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

health by starting to train to feel better and gain strength. He tried working out but could not keep himself up without the help of a balloon tied to his hand.⁷⁸¹ However, on his way to the boxing ring Popeye passed a spinach canning factory and just the smell of spinach was enough to give him strength to defeat Brutus. This story taught readers that they were responsible for their own health and provided them with sufficient knowledge (like readers of Gayelord Hauser's *Look Younger, Live Longer*) to eat intelligently. This notion of learning to eat intelligently and healthily can also be seen in the following short comic book story. (Figure 32)

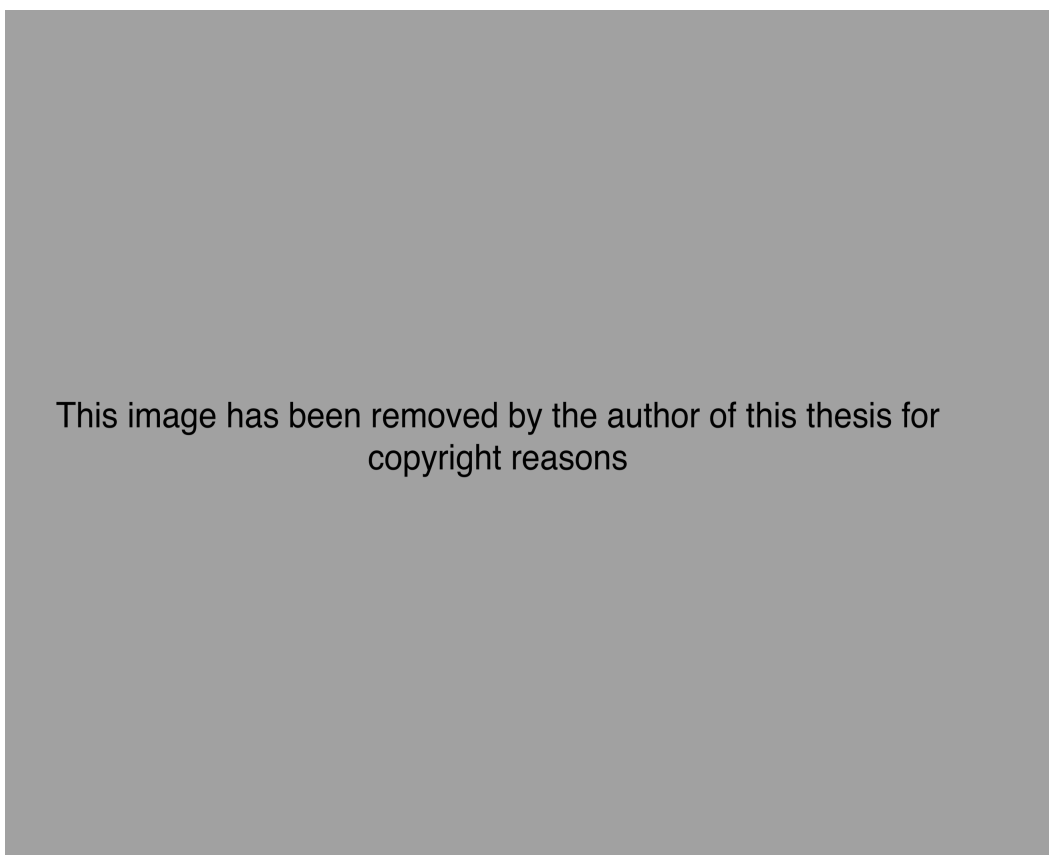


Figure 32 'Varsity Vic', in 'The Toughest Job in the World', *Superman*, no. 88, (New York, National Comics Publications, March, 1954).

The girl that Varsity Vic was courting encapsulated perfectly the extent to which parents were keen to teach their children 'healthy' eating. The images reinforce Warren Belasco's contention that Americans had an aversion to 'healthy' foods.⁷⁸² Parents reinforced 'healthy' eating by making their children eat healthy foods, by rewarding them

⁷⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸² W. Belasco, *Food: The Key Concepts*, p. 29

when they did, or by hiding ‘unhealthy’ foods. As the following excerpt from a letter from Tommy Adair to the editor of *Captain America* demonstrated, parents gave children smaller allowances forcing them to choose entertainment or snacks:

Dear Stan,

To start off with. last year I pulled a double no-no. I HAD to stop buying all comic mags ... for the past two years you at Marvel were putting out such great mags that I started buying every one. Unfortunately, this exhausted my funds. I didn't even have enough left to buy a candy bar! So I stopped buying them until I could bouy-up my savings account and come back to stay. ⁷⁸³

Whatever the strategy, parents seemed to pursue a style of parenting that was encouraged by forms of science and medicine that could also be seen in public health advice in advertisements about healthy eating.

Healthy eating in advertisements

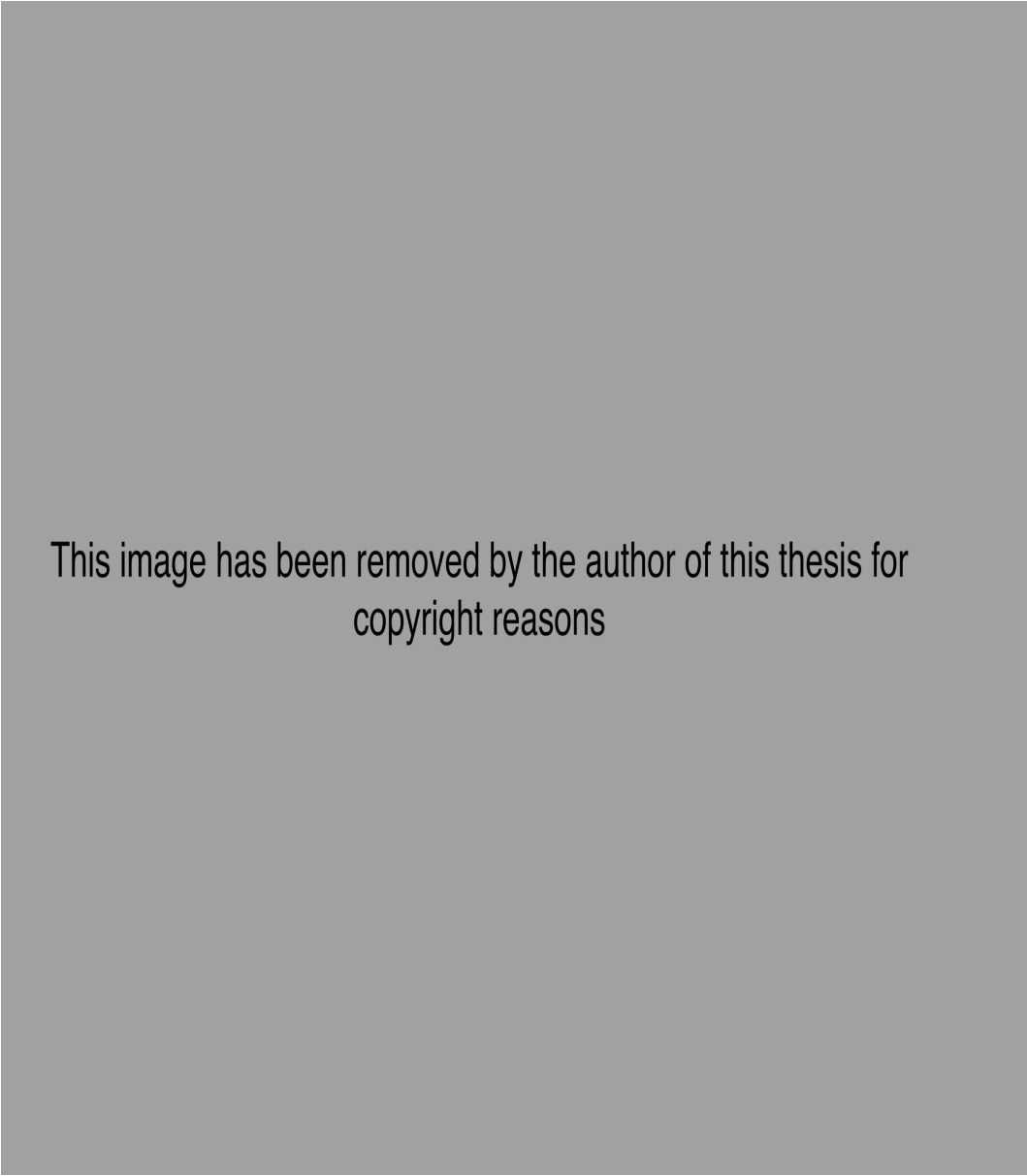
As Virginia Berridge, Roy Porter and Dorothy Porter argue, in the second half of the twentieth century there were increasing public health preoccupations targeting individual behaviour.⁷⁸⁴ Work by Alex Mold and Jane Hand on public health campaigns through advertising have demonstrated how different strategies were used to educate people.⁷⁸⁵ These could be also seen in advertisements in *Superman* and *Action Comics*, especially ones from NSW. The NSW published a number of advertisements within comic books - probably targeting parents - informing readers about a range of topics including hobbies, jobs, psychology, and diet. Such examples were the advertisements ‘Buzzy says start the

⁷⁸³ ‘Letters to the editor’, in ‘Power to the People’, *Captain America*, no. 143, (New York, Marvel, November, 1971).

⁷⁸⁴ D. Porter & R. Porter, ‘What Was Social Medicine? An Historiographical Essay’, *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 1, (1988), 91 and V. Berridge, *Marketing Health: Smoking*, p. 23.

⁷⁸⁵ Hand, ‘Marketing Health Education, 477-500; Hand, “‘Look After Yourself’: A. Mold, “‘Everybody Likes a Drink. Nobody Likes a Drunk.’” Alcohol, Health Education and the Public in 1970s Britain’, *Social History of Medicine*, 30, no. 3, (2016), 612–636.

day off right!’ and ‘It’s fun to be healthy says Wonder Woman’, in which children were informed about the value of a good breakfast and a healthy lifestyle. (Figures 33 and 34)



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Figure 33 NSWA, ‘Buzzy Says Start the Day Off Right’, in ‘The Terrible Trio’, Superman, no. 88, (New York, National Comics Publications, March, 1954).

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Figure 34 NSWA, 'IT'S FUN TO BE HEALTHY says Wonder Woman', in 'Achilles vs Superman', Superman, no. 63, (New York, National Comics Publications, March, 1950).

These public information advertisements resembled comic book stories and usually involved heroes like Buzzy to convey their message. In Figure 33, Danny - a classmate of Buzzy - experienced mental fogs in class when he was asked questions by his teacher. Danny also lacked energy and performed poorly in a basketball game disappointing his team-mates. Dick - the boy in Figure 34 - also experienced negative health effects because he did not live the 'healthy' way. It is interesting to notice what constituted ill-health in these advertisements. Fatigue, lack of mental and physical energy, and the common cold were the conditions that prevented children living to their fullest potential. This reflects wider societal phenomena including healthy lifestyles, the valorisation of education, and athleticism. In similar ways to Gayelord Hauser's appeal to intelligent eating and his motivational language ('You are holding a passport to a new way of living... You are beginning a new adventure, a journey of discovery'),⁷⁸⁶ the NSWA was using the powerful figures of comic book heroes as role models to insist that readers were responsible for, and had agency over, their own mental and physical energy. Wonder Woman's last panel also resonated with teachings from the self-help genre as patience and common sense were vehicles invoked to teach children how to make themselves healthy; if they used their minds and followed 'healthy' rules they would be fit, with mental clarity and energy. The title 'It's fun to be healthy' once more reiterates how agencies like the NSWA and self-help authors had to portray healthy diets as both fun and easy to follow.

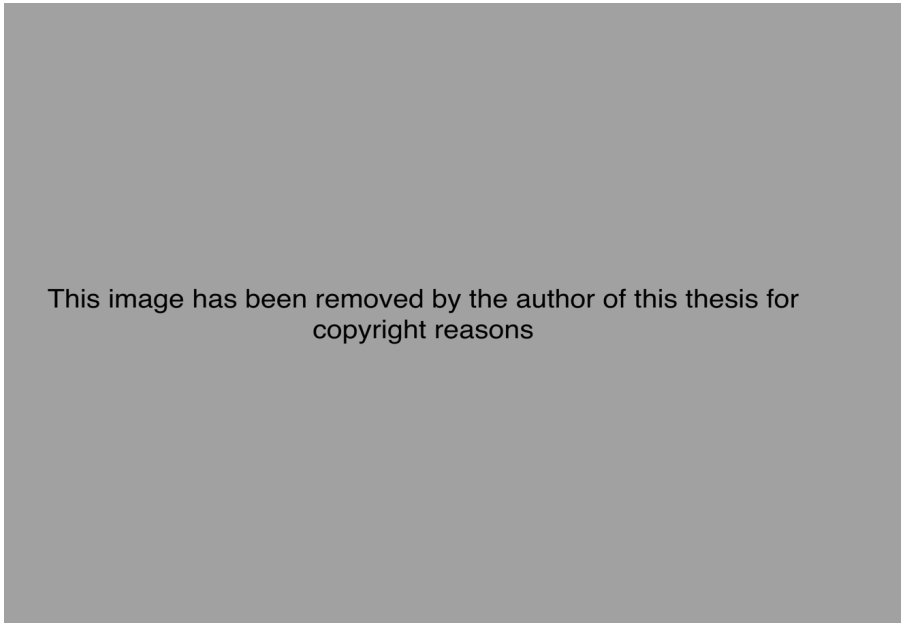
Preoccupations with health, diets, exercising, and scientific facts was also evident in advertisements for everyday products. Like Ovaltine's advertisements considered in Chapter III, which portrayed Ovaltine as healthy because it included natural foods and vitamins, advertisements in the pages of comic books used similar strategies. One such example was for the breakfast cereal Wheaties. (Figure 35)

⁷⁸⁶ G. Hauser, *Look Younger, Live Longer* (New York: Farrar Straus, 1950), p. 4.

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Figure 35 'Wheaties', in 'The Unfunny Prankster', Superman, no. 72, (New York, National Comics Publications, September, 1951).

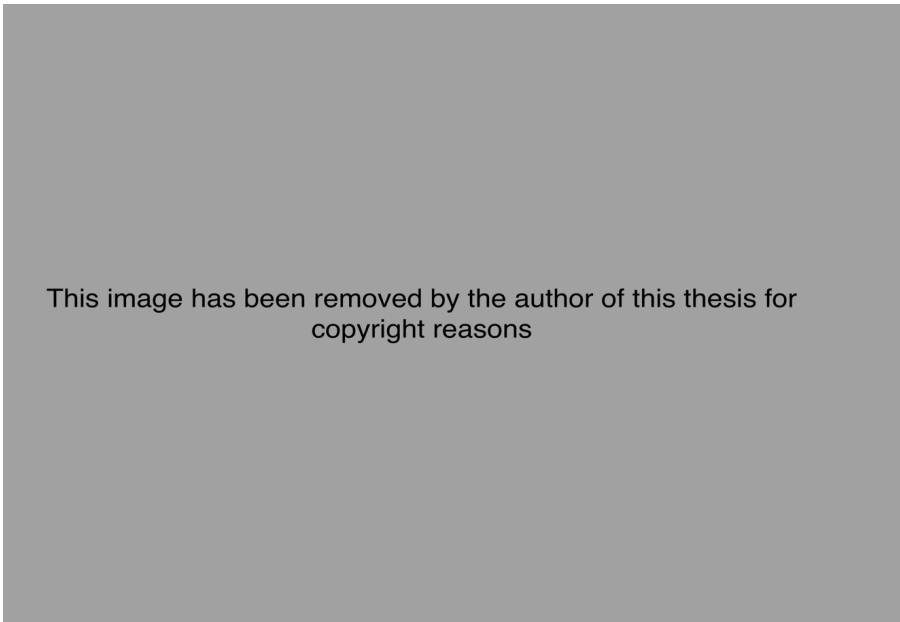
Wheaties' advertisements used multiple techniques to promote their product. The endorsement and portrayal of Phil Rizzuto, who was named the American League's most valuable baseball player, exploited his athletic prowess and performance. As Nancy Tomes argues in *Medicine's Moving Pictures*, celebrity illness brought certain diseases into the public imagination through figures such as the baseball players Lou Gehrig or Christy Matherson, who suffered from ALS and tuberculosis respectively.⁷⁸⁷ Athletes were traditionally perceived as the exemplars of good health and discipline. They were role models especially to children and their testimony that a product was helping them to perform better made it more likely that children would want to buy those products. Also important in this advertisement is the fact that Wheaties advertisements employed scientific jargon demonstrating how the valorisation of science persisted in different media across the period. Portraying their product as healthy and including drawings of both a healthy athletic boy and girl, Wheaties was capitalising on specific contemporary preoccupations with energy and vitality.



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Figure 36 'Luden's', in 'The Man who Conquered Superman', *Action Comics*, no. 165, (New York, National Comics Publications, February, 1952).

⁷⁸⁷ N. Tomes, 'Celebrity Diseases', in L. J. Reagan, N. Tomes, P. A. Treichler (eds), *Medicine's Moving Pictures: Medicine, Health, and Bodies in American Film and Television* (New York: Boydell and Brewer Press, 2007), pp. 36-68.



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Figure 37 'Red Ryder', in 'Black Magic on Mars', Superman, no. 62, (New York, National Comics Publications, January, 1950).

Advertisements targeting only boys had a different modality than those targeting both sexes. Such an advertisement was one for Luden's cough drops which specifically targeted boys in Figure 36. The advertisement focussed on the value of the product by targeting young readers wishing to boost their masculinity. Taking a cherry flavour cough drop (that had a red/pink colour) may have been perceived as feminine by boys at the time and this was one way to change the image of the product. The advertisement used male role models because most of the readers of comic books were young boys. Indeed, companies rarely advertised for female-only products in the pages of comic books. The advertisement by Luden's invoked the image of the 'cow-boy' who rides broncos. (Figure 37) This advertisement displayed an image of the resilient and tough man that boys aspired to be. Like superheroes in comic books, these advertisements portrayed their characters as strong, virtuous, and most importantly replicable. This also resonated with the fact that comic book heroes occasionally were portrayed as eating healthily or exercising or taking care of their health in general. Luden's advertisement exploited the fears young boys had that if they were ill then they could not enjoy life to the fullest. In addition, chewing gum in class at the time of the advertisement was not permitted in schools and Luden's provided boys a way to still be defiant to the 'no-food', 'no candy'

or ‘no-chewing gum’ rules, further helping them to demonstrate their tough ‘rule-breaking’ and ‘danger-defying’ masculinity.

Another approach in advertising can be seen in the Cheerios advertisement. (Figure 38) This advertisement promoted ‘health’ in a similar fashion to Gayelord Hauser.

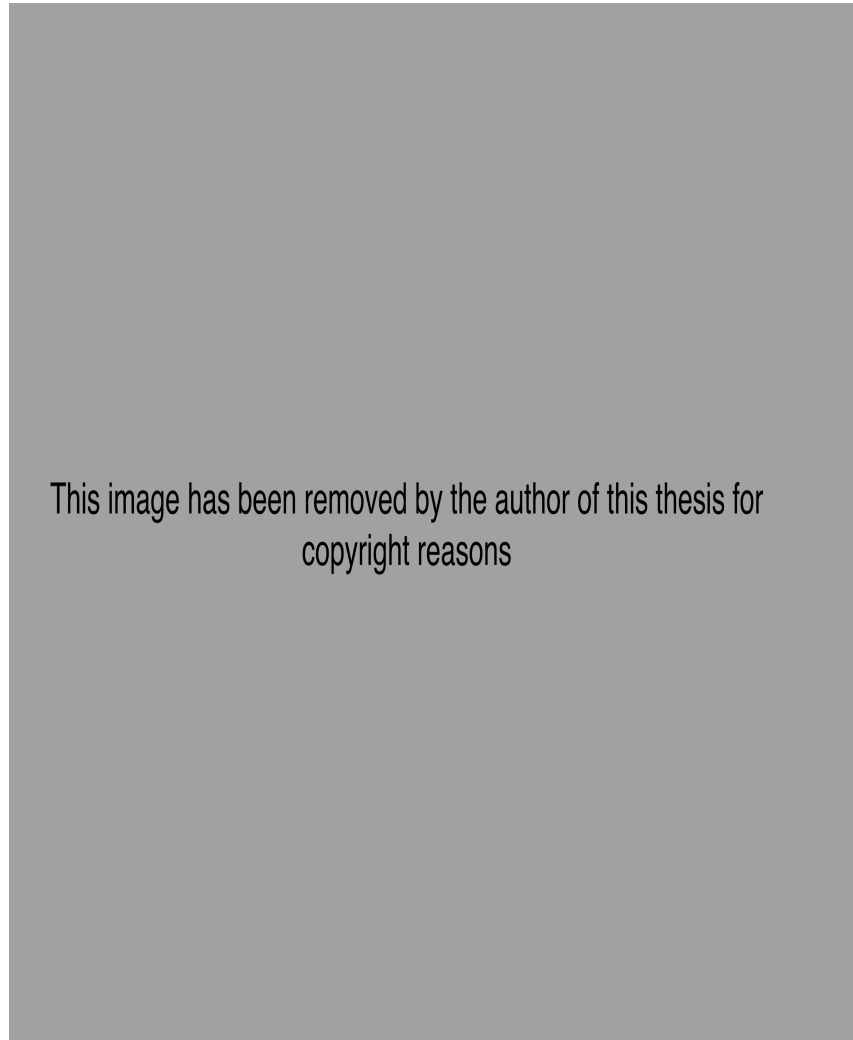


Figure 38 ‘Cheerios Kid’, in ‘Behold... The Vision’, Avengers, no. 57, (New York, Marvel, October, 1968).

Cheerios taught readers scientific facts about the fastest aircraft, thus assuming the role of scientific authority, and then showed an image of a ‘super’ boy who was fuelled by the cereal. The method of enticing readers to buy Cheerios was to show them that the Cheerios Kid was a normal child: ‘Like you, he needs a fresh supply of energy everyday’. Even if the reader could not read the text in the advertisement, it was still easy to decipher

its main point which was that consuming Cheerios would make them faster, stronger and more energetic, which were regarded as critical components of healthy lifestyles.⁷⁸⁸

The Wheaties and NSWA advertisements aimed to teach children about healthy lifestyles so that they would acquire them and practice them into their adulthood, although at the same time Wheaties was trying to sell more products. However, these advertisements had other strategies within them. As it has been argued in Chapter III and earlier in this chapter, women have been primarily responsible for the health of the household. Children were the primary audience of comic books, but had little influence on what they ate or what activities they participated in. This suggests that Wheaties, Luden's, Cheerios and NSWA advertisements were all enticing children to take an interest in healthy eating, so that they would in turn ask their mothers to buy healthy products. As the NSWA was preoccupied with solving social issues, its advertisements were probably targeting low-income or working-class parents - most likely mothers - who were thought not to be sufficiently educated or had insufficient time or energy to ensure healthy lifestyles for their children. Wheaties did not just have the endorsement of the athlete, but also instructed children about its benefits so that mothers would decide to purchase Wheaties. This contention is in line with Nancy Tomes' argument that twentieth-century advertisers marketed their products to the lady consumer, with 'rational' consumption and 'skilled' shopping continuing to place the responsibility for health on women.⁷⁸⁹ With the increasing amount of 'health' foods or 'health promoting' foods, women no longer had to prepare elaborate meals. The most important meal of the day - breakfast - which Buzzy clearly supported, could be a bowl of cereal such as Cheerios with milk, which had Wonder Woman's stamp of approval. Cheerios in the

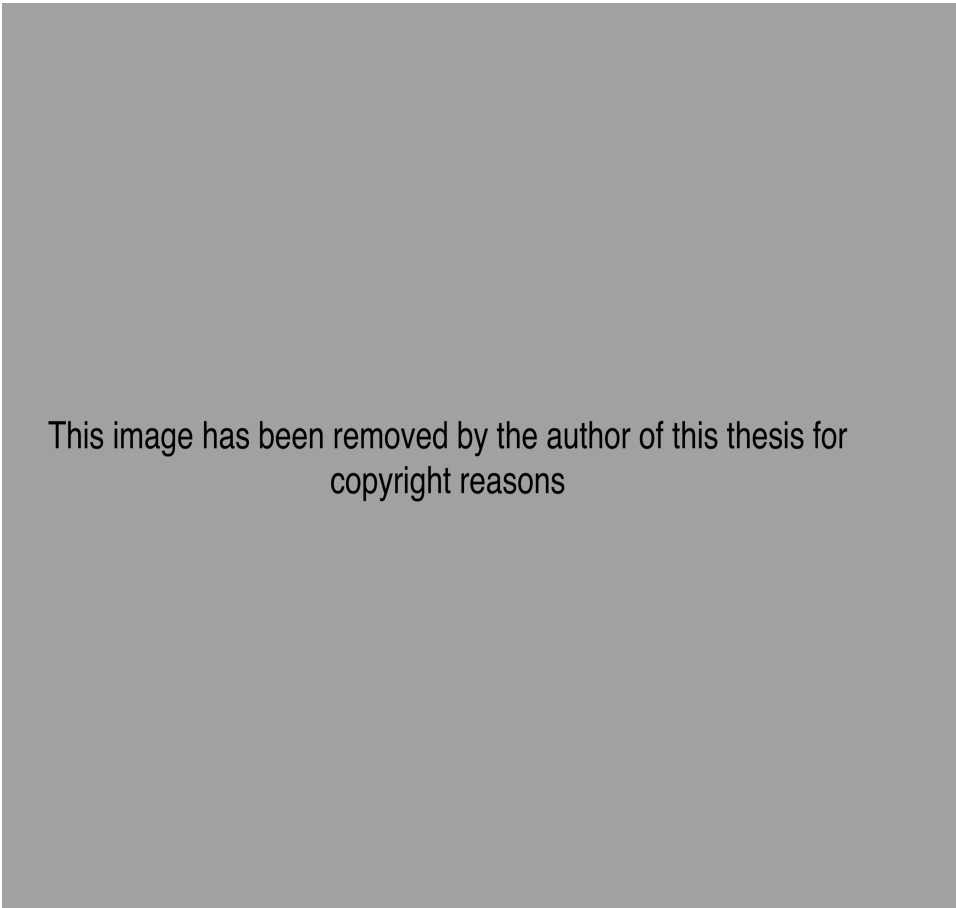
⁷⁸⁸ A. Offer, 'Body Weight and Self-Control in the USA and Britain since the 1950s', *Social History of Medicine*, 14, no. 1, (2001), 79-106; J. Parr, 'Obesity and the Emergence of Mutual Aid Groups for Weight Loss in the Post-War United States', *Social History of Medicine*, 27, no. 4, (2014), 768-788.

⁷⁸⁹ N. Tomes, "'Skeletons in the Medicine Closet' Women and 'Rational Consumption' in the Inter-War American Home, in M. Jackson (ed.), *Health and the Modern Home* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2007), 177-183.

above advertisement was capitalising on anxieties of contemporaries about energy but was simultaneously promoting its product as muscle-building,⁷⁹⁰ in the process exploiting the preoccupation of young boys with strong and muscular bodies.

Gendered standards of diet, exercise and obesity

Obesity and extra weight were not only vilified in Quick Quizzes but also in the alternative heroes' stories. Such a story was 'Peg' in *Superman* of March 1951. (Figure 39)



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Figure 39 'PEG', in 'The Prankster's Apprentice', *Superman*, no. 69, (New York, National Comics Publications, March, 1951).

⁷⁹⁰ More on energy can be read in: A. Schaffner, *Exhaustion: A History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016); N. Feiner, 'Pilot fatigue and the Regulation of Airline Schedules in Post-War Britain', in M. Jackson and M. Moore, *Balancing the Self*; Especially the energy economy discussed in advertisements and selling points of 'nerve' tonics' in M. Jackson, *Age of Stress, Science and the Search for Stability* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 27; 32-33.

The writer/penciller of the story was referring to the popularity of dieting amongst girls and women during the 1950s, such that even slim girls were following some sort of diet to be thinner.⁷⁹¹ This preoccupation could be seen in the popular television situational comedy *I Love Lucy* where Lucille Ball's character Lucy Ricardo thought of herself as overweight and resorted to an extreme dieting plan of raw celery sticks, a whole-day exercise regime and the utilisation of a sweating machine. (Figure 40)

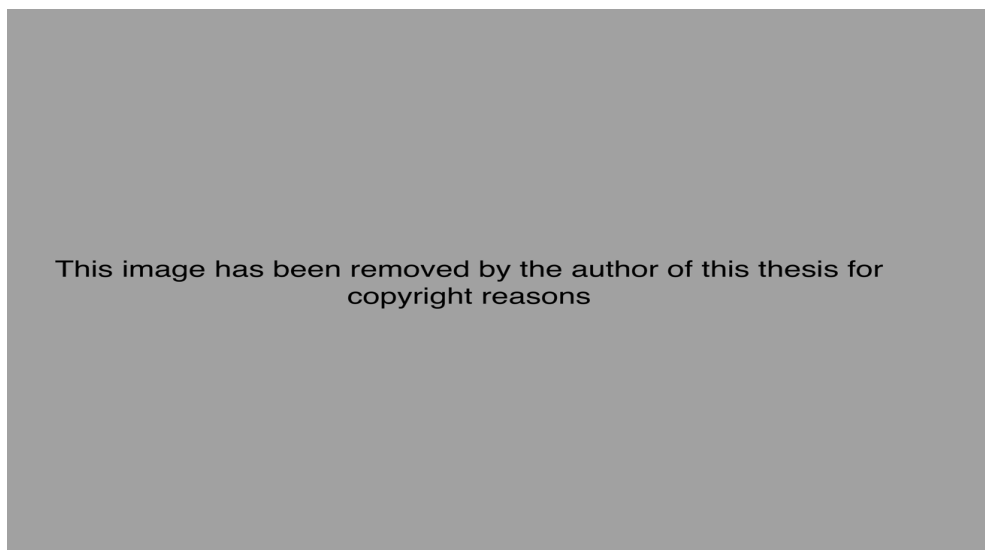


Figure 40 'The Diet', *I Love Lucy*, CBS, 29 October 1951.

This aligns with the discussions in previous chapters about the vilification of obesity and with Jessica Parr's work on the rise of mutual aid groups for weight loss in the US.⁷⁹² The popularity of dieting in these images echoed and reinforced the BBC's televised diet plan which led thousands of women to send letters to obtain dietaries, the fact that *The Daily Mail* and *The New York Times* offered their own diet plans, and the multiple self-help books that were published on the topic. Women in popular culture were portrayed as thin, usually with a smaller waist giving an hourglass figure to heroines. Olive Oyl - who was much thinner than other female characters in comic books - was an object of desire for many suitors; and Lois Lane as well as Lana Lang were portrayed as slim. Even

⁷⁹¹ 'The Diet', *I Love Lucy*, CBS, 29 October 1951.

⁷⁹² Parr, 'Obesity and the Emergence of Mutual Aid Groups', 768-788.

advertisements reflected the notion that women were preoccupied with weight loss.

(Figure 41)



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Figure 41 'Fat Folks', in 'The Return of the Human Torch', Young Men, no. 24, (New York, Atlas Comics, December, 1951).

The same strategies for encouraging women to lose weight were evident in the Health Education Council's (HEC) 1978 'Look after yourself' advertising campaign discussed by Jane Hand.⁷⁹³ By playing on the beautiful/ugly dichotomy, an advertisement entitled 'Do You Hold Your Breath When a Man Looks at You?' by HEC motivated women to take a more balanced approach to their diet, in contrast to Meltabs, which facilitated only the 'idealised' slim and hourglass body and described fat as ugly. This not only reinforced contemporary female body standards, but also promoted new notions of selfhood revolving around idealised body shapes and the commodification of beauty. Simultaneously the Meltabs advertisement was criminalising obesity and, like self-help books, promised easy weight-loss with the help of science. (Figure 41)

A short story with the title 'Diet' in *Popeye* 43 revealed another phenomenon about dieting and gender in the 1950s. This was the fact that if the husband and the children dieted, they did so because the wife decided so. In 'Diet', Mrs Smith who was an educated 'rational consumer' decided to put the entire family on a vegetable diet, a fact that saddened Mr Smith since he was an avid roast beef eater.⁷⁹⁴ Mr Smith was so desperate to eat meat that he took his dog's bone and began to cook a stew with it.⁷⁹⁵ The children joined Mr Smith; although Mrs Smith was angry, she also liked the stew and ended the diet. This story explains in part why self-help books, newspaper diet plans and televised dietaries increasingly became popular, because dieting was perceived as a demanding endeavour. As argued in Chapter II, one of the reasons why readers bought dieting self-help books was to find easy, fun and luxurious ways to lose weight. This was more evident in men who did not share the health seeking qualities of women as seen in the article by John Stevenson in 1972, who urged wives to 'Nag fat and lazy husbands'.⁷⁹⁶ As Lisa Rogak argued in her biography of Dr Atkins, more men bought and followed the

⁷⁹³ Hand, 'Marketing Health Education', 477-500; Hand, "'Look After Yourself'", 112-147.

⁷⁹⁴ 'The Diet', in 'Mind over Muscle', *Popeye*, no. 43, (New York, Dell, January/March, 1958).

⁷⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹⁶ J. Stevenson, 'Wives Told: Nag Fat and Lazy Husbands', *The Daily Mail*, (12 May 1972) p. 3.

Atkins diet because of its main feature, heavy meat eating, which was seen as part of masculine identity and was also evident in ‘Diet’. This story also demonstrates that women internalised notions of scientific motherhood, such as those promoted by Ware’s article in *The British Medical Journal* on the management of obese children, or the newspaper article by Anthea Linacre entitled ‘Hey Fatty’, which put the responsibility for health directly on mothers.⁷⁹⁷

In both DC and Marvel comic books, preoccupations about body image could be seen in both genders. However, there was a difference between the desired body type between the two. Thin men were perceived as scrawny, non-energetic and weak, a prime example of which could be seen in Captain America’s origin story but also in the alternative stories published in *Superman* and *Action Comics*. (Figures 42 and 43)

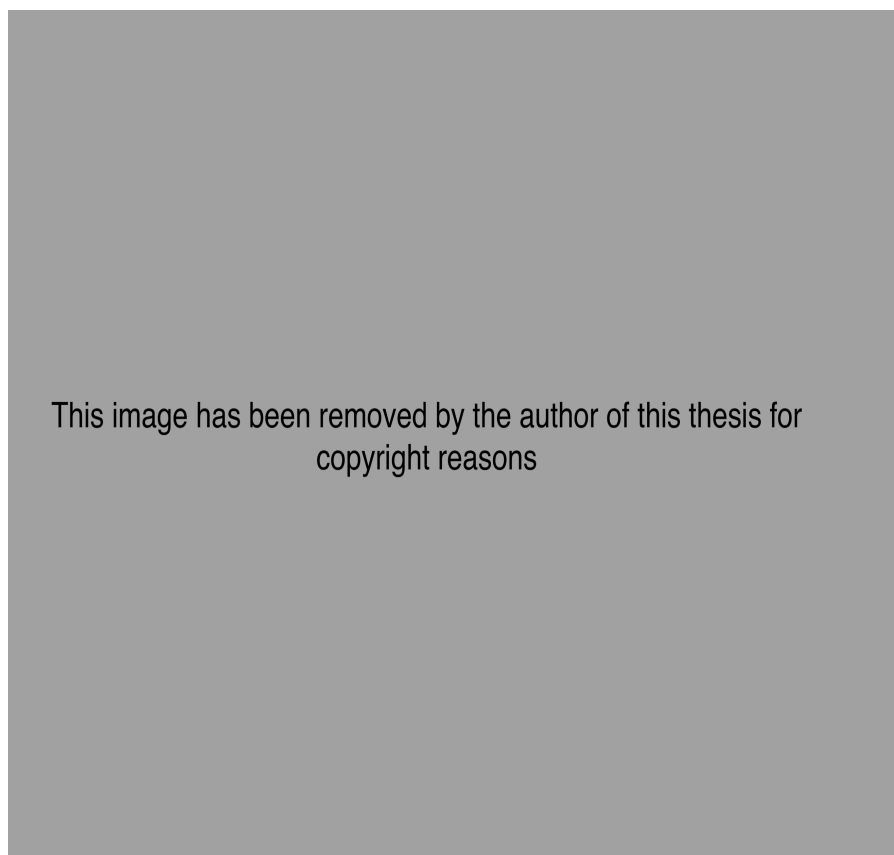


Figure 42 ‘Jerry the Jitterbug’, in ‘The Unfunny Prankster’, *Superman*, no. 72, (New York, National Comics Publications, September, 1951).

⁷⁹⁷ M. Ware, ‘Management of the Fat Child’, *The British Medical Journal*, 2, no. 5520, (22 October 1966), 961-962; A. Linacre, ‘Hi! Fatty’, *The Daily Mail*, (8 November 1973), p. 12.

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Figure 43 'Meet Captain America', Captain America Comics, no. 1, (New York, Timely Comics, March, 1941).

In Figure 42, the creator of Jerry the Jitterbug - who was usually portrayed as nervous - satirised another cultural preoccupation which the insecurity that skinny boys and men had about their bodies. Jerry's friend Alan was so insecure about his body that he resorted to wearing football shoulder pads under his jacket to appear more muscular.

In issue 225 of *Captain America*, once again the overly slim male body appeared as a negative quality. Steve Rogers used a memory machine developed by the most prominent mind and memory scientist, Dr Harding, to recover lost memories of his identity before he became Captain America. Reliving his memories triggered an emotional response that returned Captain America to his former scrawny self, demonstrating again the mind-body connection discussed earlier in this chapter. (Figure 44)

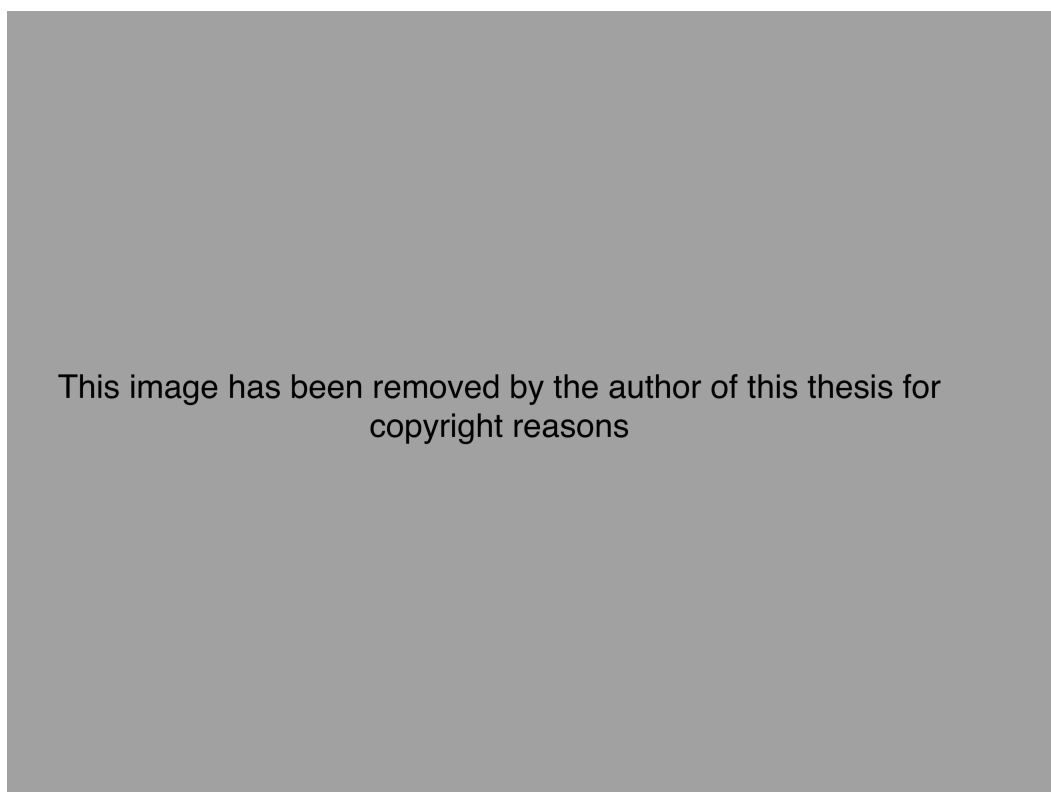



Figure 44 'Devastation', Captain America, no. 225, (New York, Marvel, September, 1978).

As his skinny self, Captain America was defeated by a training robot. In the end the android captured Captain America and electrocuted him which stressed his body enough to make him again strong, fast and muscular which enabled him to defeat the android.

The story in Figure 45, where Peg insisted that her suitor went to the library to check out a self-help book on bodybuilding, was another comedic representation of contemporary views on skinny male bodies. The writer of Peg was emphasising the increasing popularity of body building.⁷⁹⁸ The story in Professor O.G. Wotasnozzle in *Popeye* as seen in Figure 46 was also a commentary on the perception of muscular men as more attractive, especially in the dating world. In this issue, the Professor was tired of being small and weak and used his superior intellect to build himself a mechanical muscular body to impress women.⁷⁹⁹ The same theme appeared in the pages of other comic books such as *Superman* 71. (Figure 47) The advertisements in Figures 48 and 49 exploited this insecurity in order to sell body-building books and guides.




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Figure 45 'PEG', in 'The Prankster's Star Pupil', *Superman*, no. 75, (New York, National Comics Publications, March, 1952).

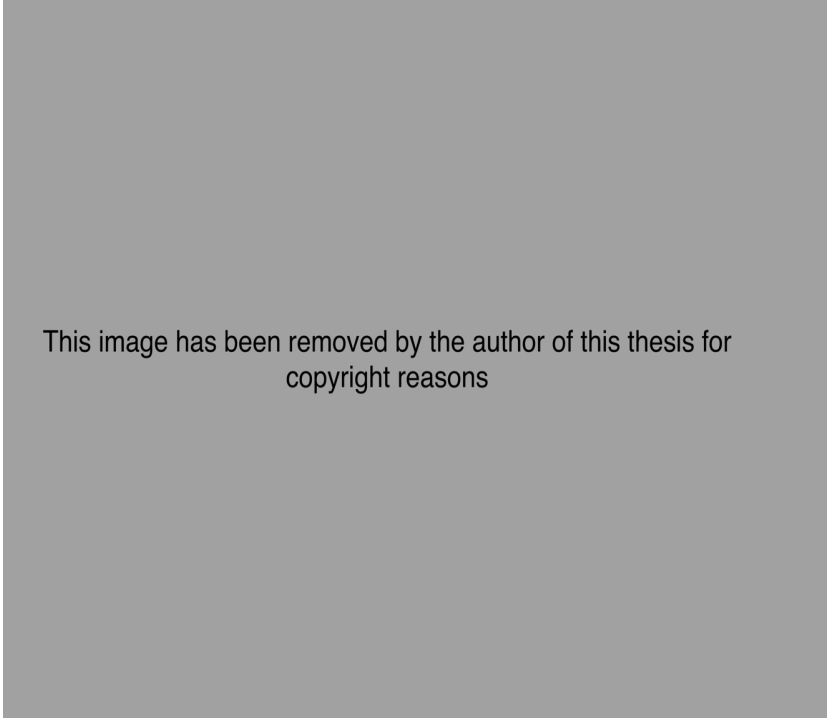
⁷⁹⁸ 'PEG', in 'The Prankster's Star Pupil', *Superman*, no. 75, (New York, National Comics Publications, March, 1952).

⁷⁹⁹ 'Professor O.G. Wotasnozzle', in 'Popeye meets the Queen of the Gorillas', *Popeye*, no. 58, (New York, Kings Features Syndicate, April 1961).



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Figure 46 'Professor O.G. Wotasnozzle, in 'Popeye Meets the Queen of the Gorillas, Popeye, no. 58, (New York, King Features Syndicate, April, 1961).



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Figure 47 'The Anti-Superman Club', in 'Clark Kent's Super-masquarade', Superman, no. 71, (New York, National Comics Publications, July/August, 1951).

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Figure 48 Who Charles Atlas could provide help in: 'Charles Atlas', 'Superman's Other Life', Superman, no. 132, (New York, National Comics Publications, October, 1959).

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Figure 49 'Charles Atlas', in 'Bus Ride to Nowhere', Action Comics, no. 430, (New York, DC, December, 1973).

In the second half of the twentieth century, all forms of exercise were portrayed as beneficial to health and wellbeing. Good behaviour, such as helping a neighbour, and exercising, were strategies promoted by comic books to maintain a 'wholesome' image. *Captain America* demonstrated the development of the 'wellness movement', since Captain America coped with sadness and depression by exercising.⁸⁰⁰ The positive effects of exercise might have been exaggerated but the story demonstrated that during the 1960s there were contemporary critiques of the lack of exercise and a spirit of 'healthy lifestyle' promotion, as even to comic book writers exercise was a preventative measure. More importantly this story demonstrated that even superheroes could experience negative emotions and low self-esteem and that they took care of their physical and emotional health, echoing and reinforcing the popularity of psychosomatic medicine from the 1940s to 1960s.⁸⁰¹ It seemed that comic books shared Gayelord Hauser's view that the reader could be empowered, facilitating acceptance of wholesome messages such as 'Work-out more frequently', and reinforcing individual agency and responsibility for health. In a similar educational tone, in *Superman* 170 President Kennedy asked Superman to teach children about the value of physical education. The story was written before president Kennedy's death but this issue came out in July 1964. It was postponed by request of President Lyndon Johnson who asked National Comics to release the issue as his administration continued pursuing Kennedy's programmes. (Figure 50)

⁸⁰⁰ 'Enter... Dr Doom', *Avengers*, no. 25, (New York, Timely, February, 1966).

⁸⁰¹ M. Jackson, *Age of Stress: Science and the Search for Stability* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 89-95.

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Figure 50 'Superman's Mission for President Kennedy', Superman, no. 170, (New York, National Comics Publications, July, 1964).

The 1960s as Virginia Berridge and Kelly Loughlin have argued marked an age of new public health initiatives which focussed more on individual determinants of health.⁸⁰² Like the Royal College of Physicians' report on smoking in 1962 and the Surgeon's General report on smoking in 1964, the Kennedy and Johnson administrations aimed to extend Eisenhower's approach to obesity and inactivity using mass media education.⁸⁰³ One such approach was the nationally televised fifty-mile hike:

Many Americans took the hike as a challenge from their president. The Kennedy council capitalized on this enthusiasm with a national publicity campaign on physical fitness. The campaign was organized, extensive, media-savvy, and above all, countrywide. Material was produced for print, radio, television, and display advertising. For broadcast alone, 650 television kits and 3,500 radio kits were sent out. All of this was in addition to the continued encouragement through public relations outlets. The physical fitness theme even appeared in the comics page, as seventeen major syndicated cartoonists took up the subject, including Charles Schulz of "Peanuts" fame.⁸⁰⁴

By the mid-1960s, extra weight, inactivity, and lack of physical strength were demonised by the US government. This can be seen in the Federal government-sponsored composition of an exercise song to be sung during physical education:

Touch down every morning - ten times! Not just now and then
 Give that chicken fat back to the chicken. And don't be chicken again
 No, don't be chicken again. Push up every morning - ten times

⁸⁰² V. Berridge, 'Medicine and the Public: The 1962 Report of the Royal College of Physicians and the New Public Health', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 81, no. 1, (2007), 286-311; V. Berridge and K. Loughlin, *Medicine, the Market and the Mass Media; Producing Health in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Routledge, 2005).

⁸⁰³ See the advertisement 'Is this the shape of things to come' in Chapter III.

⁸⁰⁴ 'The Federal Government Takes on Physical Fitness', *John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum Online*, www.jfklibrary.org [accessed 20 July 2018].

Push up starting low. Once more on the rise, nuts to the flabby guys!

Go, you chicken fat, go away! Go, you chicken fat, go!

Now, touch your toes with me. Ready! Hit the dirt! Hit!

Push ups next, nice and steady. Not too fast, ready?

Left! Left! Left! Left! Left a good pound and a quarter

Was it right, right that it should be left? Yes, I left! Left! Left! Left!

Left a good pound and a quarter. It was right (left), right (left) that it should be left!⁸⁰⁵

The medicalisation of everyday life, growing concerns about the healthy upbringing of children, and the proliferation of dieting, body-building and exercise were all attempts to address the increasing concern about physical degradation. In the decades between 1950 and 1980 comic books also dealt with one of the preoccupations seen in the pages of Gayelord Hauser's *Look Younger, Live Longer*, namely graceful aging.

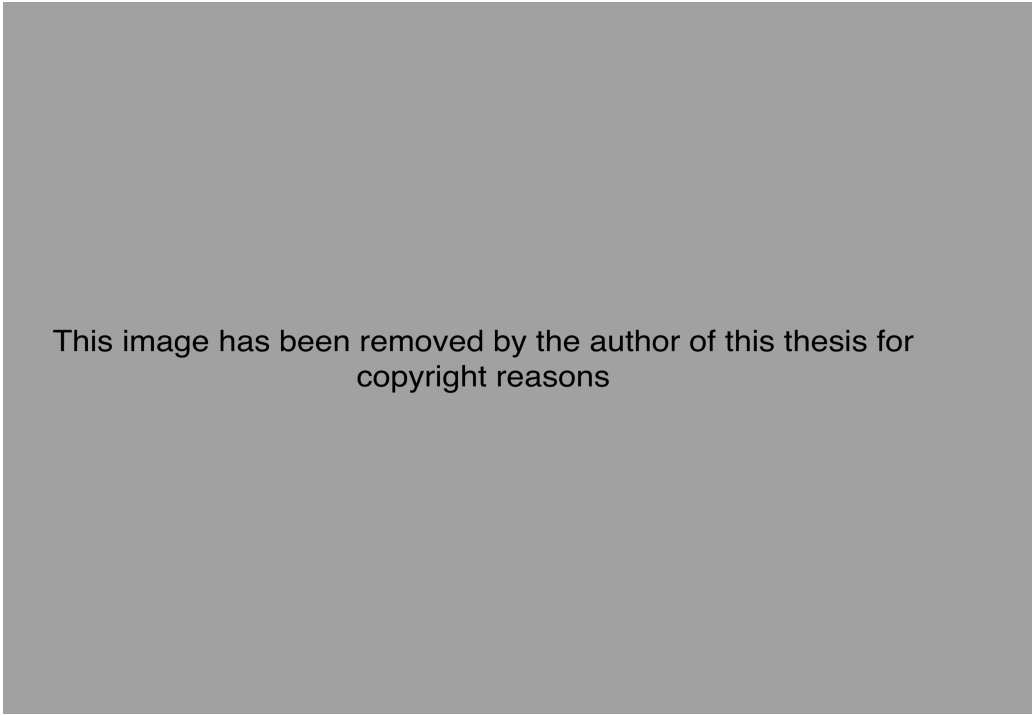
Aging

Gayelord Hauser's notion of graceful aging was the product of a society concerned about age-related decline.⁸⁰⁶ Thomas Cole, argues that in modern America science has replaced the mainstream attitudes towards aging and created two kinds of aging - good, youthful and independent aging and bad, convalescing, immobile and depended aging - placing the responsibility on individuals to maintain youthfulness. In comic books aging was something clearly detested, as old-age was associated with chronic diseases, declining fitness, the deterioration of the young athletic body, the loss of productivity, and the loss of self-worth. In *Action Comics* 251, Clark Kent interviewed Professor Vance, who was

⁸⁰⁵ Meredith Wilson, 'Chicken Fat or The Youth Fitness Song', performed by Robert Preston, Capitol Records, *President's Council on Physical Fitness*, 1962.

⁸⁰⁶ T. Cole, *The Journey of Life: A Cultural History of Aging in America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Pat Thane also writes about the history of old age in *Old Age in English History: Past Experiences, Present Issues* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

on the brink of discovering a vitamin serum that would add years to human life. Professor Vance was going to test the serum on himself first before using it on other human participants. Clark Kent volunteered to be the first subject, but when he took a sample of the serum back to the fortress of solitude he saw particles that resembled Kryptonite isotope. Superman then ingested the serum and slept. The next morning he experienced what is seen in Figure 51, namely weakness and memory loss.



This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons

Figure 51 'The Old Man of Metropolis', Action Comics, no. 270, (New York, National Comics Publications, November, 1960).

Another example of anxieties about aging can be seen in *Action Comics 270* when Superman reaches light speed while defending Metropolis against a missile. Superman found himself in the future, but his body was one of an old man. He still tried to help a person who was stuck under a car, but he no longer possessed super-strength. Superwoman (who was Supergirl in 1960) reminded Superman that because of multiple exposures to Kryptonite throughout his life his body was no longer as strong as it used to be. (Figure 51) Like normal people in old age, Superman lost his super-sight and had to wear reading glasses, he lost his immunity to low temperatures, and needed constantly to seek warmth when he was near the fortress of solitude. Ungraceful aging and the loss of

youth was not only explored in Detective Comics, but made an appearance in *Captain America* as well. After booking an appointment with Dr Faustus, who was a psychiatrist, Captain America was given some pills that would help him sleep without nightmares from the past. When he was walking in the streets, actors who were paid by Faustus wore masks - one a mask of Red Skull and one a mask of his 1940s girlfriend, Sharon - to make Captain America think that he was going insane. Faustus' plan was to make Captain America drink the pills he invented in order to weaken and defeat him. (Figure 52)

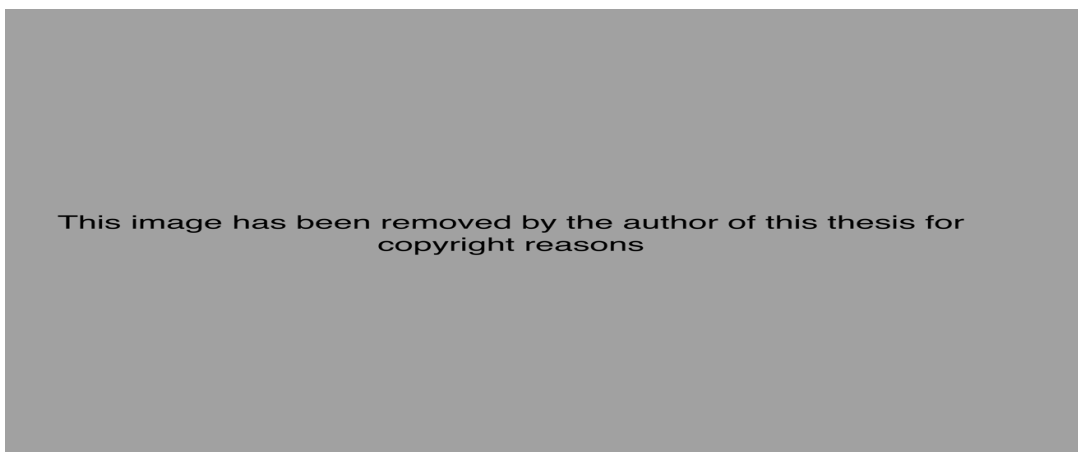


Figure 52 'If the Past Be Not Dead', *Captain America*, no. 107, (New York, Timely, November, 1968).

The Captain's transformation into an older, frailer man was one of the most dramatic scenes in the comic book. The commonality between the stories about elderly superheroes was the fact that old age seemed an inevitable and inescapable condition. Not only did superheroes reach old age, but they clearly lost some of their super-powers, along with their muscles, agility, and stamina.

Conclusion

Analysis of a wide range of comic books, storylines and advertisements provide a more detailed account of how the medicalisation of health and well-being were portrayed in popular culture around the world. In the 1950s science and medicine were portrayed as being able to bring about any benefit possible, including the ability to talk to animals in Popeye. Scientism penetrated entertainment and became a frequent means of invoking

readers' interests, to make parents perceive comics as educational and wholesome, and to promote careers in science and medicine. Although 'risk factor' medicine was applied to heart disease, cancer also became an issue addressed by bodies like the NSWA.⁸⁰⁷ Carcinophobia was so prominent in the Western world that DC comics decided to pardon its most hated villain, Lex Luthor, for inventing a cure for cancer. The second part of this chapter demonstrated that the combined forces of the diet-heart advocates, the budding organic food movement, and scares involving pesticides brought about what Harvey Levenstein calls 'Negative Nutrition', the notion that food could be damaging to health.⁸⁰⁸ Ancel Keys and his followers managed to vilify red meat to the extent that the writers of *Superman*, included his eating habits and diet in their narratives.

The discussion also explored the rise of the health food and supplement industries and the proliferation of the messages of the self-help genre within comic books. More specifically, it is evident that scientific motherhood persisted, as women-consumers were shown buying self-help books and healthy foods for their families.⁸⁰⁹ In addition, various advertisements targeted women as the caregivers and safekeepers of health in households.⁸¹⁰ Even the content of television shows and comic books had to be carefully designed so as to appeal to the post-war mother, who under the new pressures of consumer culture had a variety of entertainment media to choose for their children.

Central to post-war discussions of health was the topic of obesity and extra weight. As Sander Gilman, Hillel Schwartz and Peter Stearns have noted, during the mid-twentieth century dieting proliferated in the Western world, a phenomenon that can be

⁸⁰⁷ Aronowitz, *Risky Medicine*; W. Rothstein, *Public Health and the Risk Factor: A History of an Uneven Medical Revolution* (Rochester: New York University Press, 2003); and C. Timmermann, 'Appropriating Risk Factors: The Reception of an American Approach to Chronic Disease in the two German States c. 1950-1990', *Social History of Medicine*, 25, no. 1, (2011), 157-174.

⁸⁰⁸ H. Levenstein, 'The Perils of Abundance: Food, Health and Morality in American History', in Jean-Louis Flandrin and Massimo Montanari (eds), *Food: a Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present*, A. Sonnenfeld (trans.) (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 516-529.

⁸⁰⁹ R. Apple, *Vitmania*, pp. 19-20.

⁸¹⁰ Reflecting Nancy Tomes argument in: "Skeletons in the Medicine Closet", 177-195.

observed in contemporary comic books.⁸¹¹ Comic books embraced A.W. Douthwaite's views on how extra weight was perceived as a problem mostly by women and that "'comfortably" obese males are alleged to be easier to live with and less likely to stray from the path of virtue'.⁸¹² Men displayed different worries about body image, namely not wanting to be too thin. The origin story of Captain America and many other stories and advertisements discussed here illustrate that a strong, muscular and athletic body was the ideal for many readers of comic books. Cultural preoccupations with exercise were supported by the Federal Government in the US.⁸¹³ These body standards and the adoration of youth made aging undesirable, and encouraged contemporaries to adopt healthier lifestyles and diets in order to retain youth and vitality.⁸¹⁴ In these ways, comic books and their superheroes, like self-help literature, the media, and academic publications, helped to promote modern obsessions with health, or 'healthmania'.

⁸¹¹ S. Gilman, *Fat, A Cultural History of Obesity* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009); S. Gilman, *Obesity: The Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); H. Schwartz, *Never Satisfied: A Cultural History of Diets, Fantasies and Fat* (New York: Free Press, 1986); P. Stearns, *Fat History: Bodies and Beauty in the Modern West* (New York: New York University Press, 2002). Others agree such as: A. Offer, 'Body Weight and Self-Control', 79-106; and J. Parr, 'Obesity and the Emergence of Mutual Aid Groups', 768-788.

⁸¹² A.W. Douthwaite, 'Refresher Course for General Practitioners on Obesity', *The British Medical Journal*, 1, no. 4701, (10 February 1951), 291-293.

⁸¹³ As seen by the efforts of the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations.

⁸¹⁴ M.M. Gullete, *Aged by Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), p. 35; M.M. Gullete, *Declining to Decline: Cultural Combat and the Politics of the Midlife* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2004), p. 5; J. Stark, 'The Art of Medicine: The Age of Youth', *The Lancet*, 378, (2016), 2470-2471; and J. Stark, 'Perspectives on Human Regeneration', *Palgrave Communications*, 4, (2018), 1-6; See also P. Thane, 'My Age is as a Lusty Winter: The Age of Old Age', in P. Thane (ed.), *A History of Old Age* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2005); T. Cole, *The Journey of Life*; T. Cole and C. Edwards, 'Don't Complain About Old Age: The Nineteenth Century', in P. Thane (ed.), *A History of Old Age*.

Chapter VI

Conclusion

Since the 1950s, members of Anglo-American societies have become increasingly health conscious. Multiple factors made the pursuit of health and longevity a cultural concern in the Anglo-American world. These included the dramatic growth of the self-help genre and readership of advice literature in Anglo-American societies. Contributing to this growth were the personal ambitions of scientists and self-help authors who wanted to popularise their opinions and enhance their respectability, authority, and financial gain. Equally important was the increase in medical, diet, and health news as newspapers, magazines, and advertisements exploited public interest in health to boost sales, especially in an age when they had to compete with television. While medical journals clearly constituted the prime location for debates about diets and health, television shows also incorporated medical, health and diet themes or storylines as well, aided by the comedic potential of diets or the common cold. In comic books, which were mainly designed for children or adolescents, the promotion of health, dieting and exercising also figured. This was to make comic books seem more wholesome to parents and children. Comic books' stories revolved around science, medicine and health, reflecting growing interest in both entertaining and educating children.

This thesis has addressed a range of health issues and contemporary anxieties about the body, modernity and disease by analysing various primary sources. It did so by analysing in depth best-selling self-help books, which not only sold thousands (if not millions) of copies in the US and the UK, but which were also internationally famous. Many of the self-help books were translated into other languages and distributed to other countries. The ideas and advice of self-help books were reproduced in various other media and had a reach that many other non-fiction books did not. There were many other self-

help books that either belonged in the best-selling lists or sold relatively high numbers of books, but did not reach the notoriety of some the self-help books analysed in this thesis. One of the main strengths of using self-help books as primary sources lies in the fact that their primary audience was women. By close analysis of the self-help genre we can explore the ways in which authors and publishing houses tried to cater to their core audience's sensibilities, anxieties and preoccupations about health, beauty, aging, childrearing and even marriage. The self-help books used in this thesis, but many others which could be included in future work, promoted and reinforced dieting, healthy eating, supplementation and lifestyle changes as panaceas for all sorts of physical and mental health.

The newspapers and magazines chosen here represent similarities and differences between broadsheet and tabloid, American and British, and mainstream and countercultural news media during this time period. Other newspapers could have been included (perhaps a liberal publication from the UK or a conservative newspaper from the US), but the news media analysed in this thesis were chosen because of their high circulation numbers, international recognition and distribution.⁸¹⁵ *Time* was chosen for similar reasons but also because it provided more succinct and easily readable news and because magazines were kept longer in households, and were often read in waiting rooms of various establishments.⁸¹⁶ *Prevention* on the other hand was chosen because of its differences from mainstream publications, because it had and managed to maintain a high circulation despite of its alternative character, and because of its specific readership (exemplified and humourised by the Goods in the British television series *The Good Life*).

⁸¹⁵ In the research for my MRes dissertation, Cypriot newspapers such as *Simerini*, *Eleftheria*, *Foni Tis Kiprou*, and *Fileleftheros* translated articles from these newspapers and magazines in Greek and included them in their pages with a recognition that they were reprinted. See: N. Kefalas, *Superfoods and Healing in England and in Cyprus 1900-present* (Unpublished MRes Dissertation, University of Leicester, 2014).

⁸¹⁶ The research of magazines included *Newsweek*, which was *Time*'s liberal counterpart which did not report frequently on the topics and issues covered in this thesis.

The medical journals analysed in the thesis were also chosen because they are among the oldest, most prestigious and well-read medical journals by physicians, researchers and medical correspondents in the US and UK, but also in the world. The comic books analysed in this thesis were all US high circulated publications, which did not only sell millions of copies in the US but also the entire world. The comic books analysed in this thesis informed and were imitated by other comic books around the world, but also they inspired, were adapted and improved for television and film (Blockbuster films and Netflix shows are still produced using the same characters and often same storylines). *Superman*, *Captain America* and *Popeye* are important as primary sources as they demonstrate what kinds of scientific and medical concepts and storylines children, teenagers and especially young boys were exposed to, laying the groundwork for ‘healthmania’. All these sources provide a cross-section of their respective categories. They have been analysed in order to develop a comparison between them, but also to bring the issues together across different source types. These sources allowed this thesis to recognise the different domains and to understand how the interactions between them enabled obsessions about health to emerge.

Accompanied by the removal of rationing and the reinstatement of consumer choice, the post-war period prompted increased interest in food, diets, and health advice in the self-help genre. After World War II, increased leisure time and literacy enabled self-help authors to sell millions of copies in the US and UK. The resumption of capitalist and consumerist practices created ‘a literate audience with enough leisure and money to be choosy about diet... a prerequisite for the genre to flourish’.⁸¹⁷ Obesity was on the rise, as many medical authorities argued in US and UK medical journals, and was linked to overconsumption of calories and sedentary lifestyles. These developments

⁸¹⁷ K. Albala, *Eating Right in the Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), p. 15.

simultaneously made the body a vehicle of self-expression, which encouraged individuals - mostly women - to turn to the self-help genre.

Readers purchased self-help books because authors were controversial and provided easy solutions by following step-by-step advice. Self-help authors frequently made public appearances or were mentioned in popular media drawing further attention and improving book sales. They also had faith in the value of dieting as an antidote to obesity and as an elixir of health, youthfulness, and longevity. Gayelord Hauser's best-seller, *Look Younger, Live Longer*, was a quintessential example of this belief, as Hauser recommended a range of different diets, specific foods and lifestyle changes.⁸¹⁸ The authors of self-help books promoted self-care and individual agency over health by flaunting their scientific credentials and by defending their arguments with medical evidence. Readers were assured that they could and should take care of their own bodies and safeguard their own health. At the same time self-help authors based their diet plans and advice on notions of neoromanticism and the rejection of modernity. They emphasized how rationality, education, and intelligence could lead to better health, utilised charts and graphs, recommended exact quantities and foods, and encouraged readers to undergo specific tests and to purchase supplements. These regulatory measures were often prescribed by doctors, as seen in Martin Moore's work on the 'good' diabetic, but also by public health initiatives focussing on individual determinants of health and lifestyle interventions.⁸¹⁹ Health, according to self-help authors, was observable, quantifiable and measurable: good health was the product of the victory of mind over body, of rationality over primitivism.

⁸¹⁸ G. Hauser, *Look Younger, Live Longer* (New York, Farrar Straus, 1950).

⁸¹⁹ M. Moore, 'Balance and the "Good" Diabetic in Britain, c.1900-1960', in M. Jackson and M. Moore (eds) *Balancing the Self: Medicine, Politics and the Regulation of Health in the Twentieth Century* (Forthcoming, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), 38-75; D. Porter, 'How Did Social Medicine Evolve, and Where Is It Heading?', *Public Library of Science Medicine*, 3, (2006), 1667-1672.

The self-help genre increasingly included books written by mainstream medical commentators, including John Yudkin's *This Slimming Business* (1958), which criticised self-help books and extreme diets, Richard Mackarness' *Eat Fat and Grow Slim* (1958) and Ancel and Margaret Keys' *Eat Well and Stay Well* (1959). Although not everyone read these books, the ideologies and the advice of self-help literature were not confined to these books. Authors of self-help books made frequent media appearances and celebrities such as Greta Garbo, Buddy Hackett and Sofia Loren publicly endorsed their advice.⁸²⁰ Sometimes self-help books received increased media exposure due to criticisms they faced from mainstream medical authorities such as Hauser's confrontation with the American Medical Association and the Food and Drug Administration; Robert Atkins' demonization from the Medical Society of the county of New York; and the personal attack on Pauling by Frederick Stare. Self-help advice could be read and seen in multiple media, but its adoption by celebrities made it appear even more trustworthy. Celebrities appeared to be thin and healthy and to age gracefully; as a result their diets, exercise regimes, supplements and lifestyle choices were emulated. Self-help diets were also discussed or promoted in newspapers and magazines such as *Time*, *Prevention*, and *Vogue*.

Televised experiments, such as the one carried out by British Dietetic Association on two overweight women, brought a significant interest in dieting, as more than 40,000 women sent letters to the BBC requesting the diet plans.⁸²¹ The inclusion of diet plans in *The Daily Mail* and *The New York Times*, in advertisements, and also in *Prevention* brought more publicity for dieting, but also created an environment where different diet authors presented diverging opinions on dieting. Their books' advertisements often were portrayed as having 'new' or 'revolutionary' methods for dieting, slimming and

⁸²⁰ L. Rogak, *Dr Robert Atkins The True Story of the Man Behind the War on Carbohydrates* (London: Robson, 2005), p. 72; R. Harrington, 'Historic Diets: I Tried Greta Garbo's Strange, Horrifying Diet'; L. Avedon, 'Look younger- longer', *The Daily Mail*, (31 May 1971), pp. 14-5.

⁸²¹ Anon, 'Horder to Warn 44,000 Women TV Slimmers', *The Daily Mail*, (22 March 1951), p. 1.

prolonging youthfulness, further sparking the interest of healthmaniacs who wanted to be up-to-date with medical and scientific advances in lifestyles. Snippets of self-help books along with endorsements of medical professional bodies could be read in advertisements, reviews of books, or interviews.

Doctors and researchers were also exposed to self-help ideas through book reviews and the criticisms of self-help authors in *The Lancet* and the *Journal of the American Association*. As seen in the reception of the editorial by Theodore Fox, 'Banting Up to Date', prominent physicians and medical researchers engaged in heated dialogue through the correspondence section.⁸²² Some individuals supported ideas and advice by John Yudkin and Richard Mackarness, whilst others criticised them. But there were those who agreed in part with what Yudkin and Mackarness promoted or wrote to defend their own work. Ideas, diets and methods promoted by self-help authors also penetrated popular culture, as seen in Chapter V. Overall, the impact of self-help books on the perception and practice of dieting, exercising and lifestyle change is difficult to assess. However, their sales figures and persistence in different media demonstrate significant public interest. The decision to publish in a popular platform blurred the lines between self-help dieting and medically-endorsed dieting, but further legitimised diet as a therapeutic or preventative measure in Anglo-American societies.

Newspapers and magazines too embraced and promoted emerging interest in medicine and science in order to gain more readers. *The Times*, *The Daily Mail*, *The New York Times*, *Prevention* and *Time* did not miss an opportunity to report on the latest medical and scientific breakthroughs, especially on dieting and supplementation as routes to better health. For the press, medical stories about food, diet and health offered opportunities to maintain relevancy, to gain or maintain readership, and to make profits. The press frequently published articles and the advertising campaigns of medical research

⁸²² T. Fox, 'Banting Up to Date', *The Lancet*, 272, no. 7050, (11 October 1958), 785-786.

bodies on the rise of heart disease and cancer, promoting widespread fear of these diseases, but also creating a common enemy that was to be defeated through research studies. Aspects of everyday life were brought under medical aegis, and the press coverage of such stories promoted and reinforced worries about lifestyle choices and the need to follow medical and scientific advice. Nonetheless print media managed to reinforce the interest in dieting and health of Anglo-Americans by frequent coverage of such stories. Combined with advertisements by self-help books, the efforts of the food, drink, and supplement industries to promote their products as healthy created 'healthmania'.

Perhaps because of the need for what John Burnham called 'feel-good stories' of medical triumphalism or Western superiority in medical matters over Communist regimes or the increased interest in diets, health and lifestyles in general, news media fully embraced science and medical reporting.⁸²³ The most notable example of this was the coverage of the coronary thrombosis of President Eisenhower, especially in publications based in the US. The launch and maintenance of a steady readership by the magazine *Prevention* in both US and the UK demonstrated that there were publics interested in reading and adapting the latest scientific breakthroughs in their pursuit of longevity and preventative nutrition. Advertising in the pages of popular newspapers and magazines also exploited new medical breakthroughs as seen in the advertisements by the British Trawlers, Wesson's Pure vegetable oil, and Flora - all of which assumed the role of the educator. Commercial companies instructed readers about the benefits of low-fat and cholesterol-reducing diets to promote their products. These advertisements were often seen side-by-side with publicity campaigns run by official medical research bodies that also diluted complicated scientific and medical concepts into easily digestible information, often followed by a plea for contributions.

⁸²³ J. Burnham, *How Superstition Won and Science Lost: Popularizing Science and Health in the United States* second edition (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1988).

As with the self-help genre, the news media from the 1950s and 1960s demonstrated and reinforced sentiments of anti-modernity and neoromanticism. The medical correspondents of newspapers and magazines often reported on ‘diseases of civilisation’ or on studies of non-Western Civilisations such as the Masai, Mabaans and Inuits.⁸²⁴ Many of these correspondents were influenced by neoromantic notions and were able to attribute diseases and obesity to Western diets while valorising natural and ‘primitive’ diets. The choice of topics was by itself antimodern as they covered exercise levels, the necessity of surgery as opposed to lifestyle changes, and the consumption of ‘natural’ foods. Most importantly, *Time* and *Prevention* emphasised Ancel Keys’ lipid theory - the quintessential example of antimodern medical thought.⁸²⁵ Keys was a very prominent figure in the field of nutrition as he was part of the team at the Mayo Clinic that developed K-rations during World War II and achieved notoriety in *academe* for his work on starvation with conscientious objectors of World War II. *Time*’s decision to make Ancel Keys its cover story in January 1961 brought even more attention to his belief in the romanticised version of the Mediterranean diet.⁸²⁶ His main arguments were summarised in advertisements of *Eat Well and Stay Well*, along with endorsements from various medical authorities including Paul Dudley White (Eisenhower’s cardiologist) and the American Heart Association. In *Prevention*, readers were informed about organic gardening and produce; about food supplements and ‘natural’ remedies; about preventative measures for chronic disease and age-related conditions; and about the

⁸²⁴ Anon., ‘Lack of Exercise and Heart Disease’, *The Times*, (7 January 1966), p. 13; M. Kaplan, ‘EXPERTS TO CHECK A TRIBE’S HEARING: AMAZED BY SUDAN PEOPLE’S KEEN AUD’, *The New York Times*, (28 December 1961), p. 25; M. Kaplan, ‘EXPERTS TO CHECK A TRIBE’S HEARING: AMAZED BY SUDAN PEOPLE’S KEEN AUD’, *The New York Times*, (28 December 1961), p. 25.

⁸²⁵ Anon., ‘Unsaturated Fatty Acids: What They Are and Where Will You Find Them’, *Prevention* (July 1956), pp. 44- 48; Anon., ‘Using Unsaturated Fats For Health’, *Prevention*, (July 1956), pp. 48-52.

⁸²⁶ Contributing to the already high relevancy of heart disease because of President Eisenhower’s heart attack, was Irvine Page’s cover story *Time* (31 October 1955) and Milton Friedman’s cover story *Time* (19 December 1969).

dangers of modern ‘chemical’ foods.⁸²⁷ *Prevention* was promoting a new chimeric version of modernity where nature and naturalness were integrated with diets, specialised health foods, and supplements to promote longevity and health. This new modernity was embraced by the various advertisers in these publications.⁸²⁸ Advertising in news media exploited contemporary anxieties about ‘modern’ foods by promoting products in a language and imagery that made them seem ‘natural’. Ovaltine and Ribena - both manufactured and processed products - were promoted as a part of a new natural modernity, one where convenience, science, and nature coexisted.⁸²⁹ Newspaper and magazine articles and advertisements promoted neoromantic and antimodern lifestyles using specific gender and familial roles; especially the role of the woman as the instigator and facilitator of health of the household. As Nancy Tomes argues, in the late twentieth century advertisers wanted to attract the intelligent lady consumer who needed to make the appropriate choices for her family.

Criticisms of modern diets and lifestyles emerged from the matrix of self-help, newspapers, magazines, advertisements and public health initiatives. In newspapers, magazines and advertisements the notion of individual agency and responsibility over health - the trademark ideology of self-help authors - became an increasingly appealing concept during the 1970s. *The Daily Mail*, for example, embraced individual agency and responsibility and frequently featured articles including instruction on matters of diet, nutrition and health. *The Daily Mail* also exploited and reinforced gender roles in relation to health. Women, notably wives and mothers, were encouraged to nag lazy husbands and to manage portion sizes for their children; advice that could also be read in books by

⁸²⁷ Anon., ‘10 Years of Chemical Foods: Following the Story of Food Additives Down Through the Years is a Discouraging Business’, *Prevention*, (June 1960).

⁸²⁸ Display Advertising, *Ribena*, *The Times*, (9 February 1960), p. 12.

⁸²⁹ Agnes Arnold-Forster concluded that by the beginning of the twentieth century cancer was understood as a by-product of ‘civilisation’ but the spirit of the time could be encapsulated in a quote by John Harvey Kellogg: ‘we need not to return to savagery to be healthy’ demonstrating the same sentiment promoted here see: A. Arnold-Forster, ‘The Prehistory of the Paleo Diet: Cancer in Nineteenth Century Britain’, in D. Gentilcore and M. Smith (eds), *Proteins, Pathologies and Politics: Dietary Innovation and Disease from the Nineteenth Century* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 23-24.

Plimmer and Pauling. *The New York Times* similarly promoted self-promoting, self-governing individualism, offering ‘survivorship’ stories to demonstrate that following a diet was feasible and worthwhile. Like Gayelord Hauser’s ‘I’ll do it mindset’ or ‘the slimming frame of mind’ from *The Daily Mail*’s diet plan from 1950, *The New York Times* reminded readers that through their own agency, intelligence and skilful planning as well as manoeuvring in social situations they could eat healthily and avoid temptation.⁸³⁰ Following critiques of medicine by Cochrane, McKeown and Illich, *Prevention* advised readers to take nutritional supplements, follow natural lifestyles, eat organically, and remain critical of mainstream science and medicine.

Dieting, longevity and individual agency influenced many of the research studies featured in mainstream medical journals and print media. Increasing amounts of prepared, mass produced and manufacturer-enhanced foods alongside the rise of the fast-food industry, increasing sedentary lifestyles and increases in chronic diseases, such as heart disease and cancer, created a moral panic about diets in Anglo-American societies. For medicine, chronic disease presented the next frontier to be conquered; with the confidence acquired after the successes of sanitation, vaccinations and antibiotics, humanity was thought to be closer to achieving ‘total health’. While confidence was elevated further by the rise of large-scale epidemiological studies on chronic disease in the 1950s, such studies began to embrace neoromantic notions and display increasing discontent with modernity. Advances in epidemiological studies of smoking and its correlation with lung cancer by Richard Doll and Bradford Hill in the UK, and Cuyler Hammond and Daniel Horn in the US moved public health initiatives towards individual behaviour, a pattern also evident in UK studies showing a correlation between physical activity and the incidence of heart disease.⁸³¹ Through data collection and comparative studies medical

⁸³⁰ Hauser, *Look Younger, Live Longer*, p. 113.

⁸³¹ A similar argument is made by Virginia Berridge in *Marketing Health: Smoking and the Discourse of Public Health in Britain, 1945–2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 25. For the catalytic studies see: R. Doll and B. Hill, ‘The Mortality of Doctors in Relation to Their Smoking Habits. A

scientists reinforced ‘healthmania’ by contrasting active and sedentary jobs, Western diets compared to non-Western and ‘primitive’ diets, personality types, and job-related stress. Even though their central argument was that Western lifestyles damaged health, physicians and researchers had diverging opinions about which specific element made modern lifestyles pathogenic.

From the 1950s heart disease became a popular if not the most ‘fashionable’ research topic. Interest stemmed from the fact that heart disease was mostly seen in men - who were the majority of the workforce - and that finding solutions to heart disease could improve productivity. Heart disease received even more attention when US President Eisenhower had an episode of coronary thrombosis, which ignited greater interest in heart disease in the medical profession. Heart disease also became a popular research topic because Ancel Keys and other prominent scientists maintained that it was a disease of over-abundance and high fat diets. Others researched the impact of modified fats on the body and Friedman and Rosenman demonstrated a correlation between personality, psychology - in relation to high-stress occupations - and heart disease. As Robert Aronowitz argues, epidemiological studies on chronic diseases became increasingly fundable.⁸³² Researchers on diet and its relation to heart disease managed to increase people’s faith in diet as a general therapeutic measure.

The post-1950s search for answers to heart disease reinforced the increasing medicalisation and demonisation of obesity. As Jessica Parr and Aver Offner argue during the 1950s there was a re-emergence of dieting and dieting-groups as the slim body was perceived both as healthier and more attractive particularly for women. Even though

Preliminary Report’, *The British Medical Journal*, 1451, no. 1, (26 June 1954), 1451–5; C. Hammond and D. Horn, ‘The Relationship Between Human Smoking Habits and Death Rates’, *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 155, no. 15, (7 August 1954). Physicians like Jerry Morris and nutritionists like John Yudkin took part in discussions of the COMA on food policy so their prominence went beyond the field of medicine, and for the latter self-help, into political aspects of healthy lifestyles.

⁸³² R.A. Aronowitz, ‘The Framingham Heart Study and the Emergence of the Risk Factor Approach to Coronary Heart Disease’, 1947-1970’, *Revue d’histoire des sciences*, 54, no. 2 (2011), 263-295.

many physicians and researchers did not agree with Ancel Keys that low-fat diets could reduce the risk of myocardial infarctions, they accepted that a reduction in calories brought by a low-fat diet could result in weight-loss and thus a reduction in obesity - which they deemed as a major factor contributing to heart disease. As we have seen in Chapter III, there were debates reported on and simplified by the press and advertisers which distributed facts about diets and lifestyles that reinforced 'healthmania'. This led to new weight loss regimes, but also interest in treating obesity holistically by studying personality types and psychological issues that influenced body weight.

Like the quasi-endorsement of Weight-Watchers by Anthea Disney, physicians increasingly involved wives and mothers as part of the treatment team, therefore accepting and reinforcing women's role as health facilitators in the home. Specific food nutrients and specialised food products and diet formulas were developed by the medical profession itself, a move later replicated by food, health and supplement industries such as Flora and Simbix. During the late 1950s and 1960s medical journals from the UK and US demonstrate that self-help books received sufficient notoriety to attract the attention of prominent physicians and researchers, who both applauded and criticised self-help authors, depending on whether they shared the same ideas about slimming, the prevention of heart disease and cancer, or prolongation of youth.

The medicalisation of entertainment and obsessions with the health of the whole population were evident in comic books. Even though all three comic books discussed in this thesis originated in the early twentieth century, their characters, plotlines and themes from the 1950s increasingly revolved around medical and scientific topics, especially in *Action Comics*, *Superman*, and *Popeye*. Healthy eating, dieting and supplementation became popular topics in comic books, evident for example, in Popeye's ingestion of spinach to overcome adversity and triumph against enemies. Superman's numerous attempts to aid scientific and medical research demonstrate the idolised image of

medicine and science and the growth of ‘healthmania’. Comic books taught various health and dieting facts to their readers, while stories within comic books demonstrated the cultural anxieties and preoccupations of writers/artists and editors in relation to heart disease, cancer, environmental pollution, dieting and good parenting. Advertising in comic books also assumed the role of the educator. Both Wheaties and the NSWA promoted healthy eating and instructed children about food facts in similar ways. They popularised superheroes, comic book characters, and sports figures as role models, encouraging children and their parents to internalise medical, scientific, and body norms.

As bodies became more visible in mass media, obesity became more undesirable. This can be seen in the mockery of over-weight dancers and the over-weight suitor by Tony Hancock in *Hancock’s Half Hour* or the extreme diet and exercise regime undertaken by Lucy Ricardo in *I Love Lucy*.⁸³³ Many self-help books on dieting focussed on weight-loss, a concept that *The Daily Mail* and *The New York Times* capitalised on as they published their own weight-loss programmes in order to appeal to female readers. In television shows one could see more clearly the cultural preoccupations with illness: the purchase of over-the-counter medicines by Hancock or antiseptic spray and face-mask by his friend Sid, and Rob Petrie’s expulsion from the television studio when he had the flu demonstrated that the cold and flu were also perceived to be preventable through individual behaviours. Fear of illness was not confined to heart disease, cancer and old age. In *Steptoe and Son* Harold was disgusted when Albert put pickled onions that fell into bath water back in their jar and in *The Good Life* Margo protested the Goods’ decision to rear pigs because they were ‘diseased’.⁸³⁴ Anxieties about living healthily encouraged some people, such as the readers of *Prevention* (exemplified by Tom and Barbara Good)

⁸³³ ‘The Cruise’, *Hancock’s Half Hour*, BBC, 30 October 1959; ‘Hancock’s Forty-Three Minutes’, *Hancock’s Half Hour*, BBC, 3 December 1957; ‘The Diet’, *I Love Lucy*, CBS, 29 October 1951.

⁸³⁴ ‘The Bath’, *Steptoe and Son*, BBC, 10 January 1963; ‘Pigs Lib’, *The Good Life*, BBC, 25 April 1975

to abandon the rat race and the stress of modern life and to detest chemical vegetables and battery eggs.

Together the primary sources in this thesis reveal only some of the medical and cultural preoccupations about body weights, diets, supplements, and the prevention of chronic disease. The selection of sources explored in this thesis demonstrates that from the 1950s onwards Anglo-Americans were concerned about their diet and their health, which in turn was reproduced and reinforced by commercial and state institutions. Indeed, part of the argument presented in this thesis is that the complexity of obsessions with diet and health can only be fully understood by analysing these sources together. These sources indicate that neoromantic notions, concerns about modernity, individual agency over health, and growing faith in dietotherapies and supplements together created the conditions for the growth of Anglo-American obsessions with the pursuit of health, or 'healthmania', across the postwar decades.

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