THE FLAPPER'S BOYFRIEND: THE REVOLUTION IN MORALS AND THE EMERGENCE OF MODERN AMERICAN MALE SEXUALITY, 1910-1930

VOLUME I

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of the Ohio State University.

by

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* * * * * *

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To the Lane Avenue "Gang."
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Historians, even before the present generation of scholars of women, recognized the "flapper" as one of the major figures of early twentieth century American social history. H.L. Mencken’s memorable term referred to the stereotypical "New Woman" of the "Revolution in Manners and Morals" of the first decades of the twentieth century.¹ For early scholars of this period, changes in female behavior marked this revolution. The "flapper," in imitation of men, smoked, drank, swore, freely petted and dated, was obsessed with the new psychology of Freud (if only as misinterpreted by its American popularizers), and, when she married, built her relationship according to the strictures of companionate marriage. Reading these writers, one is reminded of F. Scott Fitzgerald’s conception of the "flapper" as "lovely and expensive and about nineteen."² She is a mere stereotype.

In recent years a number of women’s historians, aware of the inadequacy of descriptions of the "flapper," have begun to address the question of what the reality was behind this stereotype. The "flapper"
has thus become the "New Woman," the focal point of the feminist reinterpretation of the "revolution in morals." She appears in recent literature not merely as the "flapper," but as the "charity girl," the "Mannish Lesbian," the "Androgyne," to name but three of her guises. Understandably, her apparent difference from the Victorian stereotype of "passionlessness" and the "Cult of True Womanhood" has inspired much interest recently among women's historians. But her boyfriend has received less attention.

The pace of revolutionary change that had affected the social relations between the sexes in these years was the product of a number of factors. By 1920, over 50% of Americans lived in cities. Here a mass production, consumer-oriented economy replaced an earlier entrepreneurial society of small businessmen and farmers with a "new middle class" that in its growing leisure time embraced an ethic of therapeutic release and pleasure. The Victorian values of hard work, rugged individualism and thrift that had held sway, albeit ever more precariously, until the second decade of the twentieth century became less influential: a heterosocial leisure world that was geared towards youth and vitality emerged as amusements grew up in the cities to cater to the demands of young people. These were the changes which produced a New Woman, and, one might speculate, must have produced a "New Man."
For indeed the question of men's part in this "revolution in morals" is an important one. How were men affected when the bourgeois sexual system of Victorian America, which gave men the alternatives of either purity or use of prostitutes before marriage, crumbled? Surveys by Peter Filene and Joe Dubbert, as well as a number of works on the movies, marriage, divorce, college youth, courtship and the new amusements, touch on the roles of men in this cultural revolution and offer excellent reasons to expand on the problem which no work has yet addressed squarely: who was the New Man to accompany the New Woman?

Increasingly, we know more about the Victorian backdrop to the revolution. Steadily a picture is emerging of both men and women's position in the Victorian system of morality that was dominant among the middle class of American society up to around 1912. As America industrialized, the old Victorian Protestant bourgeoisie, the harbingers of this system of morality, presided over a dynamic expanding economy where the chances of class mobility were more real than in the twentieth century.6

Victorians believed in self-help, sobriety, thrift and rugged individualism: they, as George Mowry puts it, disliked "bigness, diversity, the exotic, leisure, elegance and personal indulgence. Restraint and moderation marked every aspect of their lives."7 The members of this production-oriented society were able to delay
gratification because of the genuine possibility of material rewards down 
the line if thrift were practiced in the present. Besides, the men of 
this class revelled in the pleasures and prestige of membership in it. 
Victorians devised a rigid system of morality which consisted of a 
separation of spheres between men and women and the twin pillars of the 
conspiracy of silence about sexuality and the sexual double standard. In 
short, here was a society designed to benefit its male members, who 
devised the system of social relations to accentuate their dominance 
within it and who constructed styles of masculinity to suit best the 
continuance of that system.

Thanks to the work of several scholars, we know more and more about 
the construction of Victorian masculinity. There were four great ideals 
of manhood—the "Masculine Achiever," the "Christian Gentleman," the 
moral "Masculine Primitive," and the underworld "Masculine Primitive." First, the "Masculine Achiever" was an ideal that was adapted to the 
nineteenth century production-oriented economy and suited best the small 
entrepreneurs who dominated within it. The "Masculine Achiever" was the 
nineteenth-century form of the self-made man, whom Irvin Wylie has 
described so eloquently as an American ideal:

The legendary hero of America is the self-made man. He 
has been active in every field from politics to the arts, 
but nowhere has he been more active, or more acclaimed, 
than in business. To most Americans he is the office boy
who has become the Head of a great concern making millions in the process. He represents our most cherished conceptions of success, and particularly our belief that any man can achieve a fortune through the practice of frugality and sobriety.9

But this American ideal of the "Masculine Achiever" demanded "strong, aggressive action," and "intense and enduring effort." A man need not rely on anyone else but rather had to free himself from "emotional dependence on others."10

This American ideal of masculinity seemed particularly appropriate in an ever-expanding and dynamic society, such as Victorian America. Dubbert has quite accurately described this period as "the masculine century."11 For the nineteenth century was the time when the ideal of the self-made man, or "Masculine Achiever," seemed most attainable. Anthony Rotundo has found evidence of the pervasiveness of these ideals in men’s actual writings. Indeed, he quotes one man who sounds almost like Horatio Alger or Benjamin Franklin, inspirers of this ideal: this man "resolved that he would improve his time so that he could spend every hour to an advantage, either in acquiring or getting wealth, or arising to some honorable station in life."12

The second, and dominant, Victorian ideal of masculinity was the Christian Gentleman, an ideal that, as Rotundo puts it, "discouraged self-seeking and condemned the rewards offered to successful men by a commercial society."13 This ideal was designed to temper the excesses of
the Masculine Achiever. The concept embodied not merely a set of negative values but rather "stressed love, kindness and compassion," which were not merely worthy "attitudes for a man--they also formed the basis for right actions on his part."¹⁴ Nevertheless, being a Christian Gentleman did not entail any fundamental rejection of the Masculine Achiever role. Rotundo writes that "Men who professed the virtues of the Christian Gentleman were not so much condemning a career in business as they were reacting to the greed, selfishness and dishonesty of the marketplace."¹⁵ Rather, in all its aspects, this ideal entailed, above all, as Warren Susman has pointed out, the development of "character," that is, the cultivation of "honor, reputation and integrity." This concept of "character" was indeed the key to understanding Victorian manhood, as it was the key to comprehending Victorian culture.¹⁶

In the area of sexuality, the development of "character" entailed the cultivation of "morals," that is of a single-standard of purity for men as well as for women.¹⁷ A man of "character" controlled his sexuality. Victorian marriage manuals lauded the advantage of continence. Indeed, men were expected to be very "athletes of continence."¹⁸ They attempted to establish procreation as the only justification for sexual intercourse, which was often described as an "unfortunate necessity."¹⁹ Ben Barker-Benfield has discussed the nineteenth century warnings that men not "spend" their semen for fear
that they should lose valuable energy that could be used to work.²⁰
Health Reformer Sylvester Graham went even further in believing that one
ounce of semen equalled forty ounces of blood. Sperm was men's very
life-force, such popularizers maintained, and therefore should not be
expended casually.²¹ Further, in keeping with this ideal of continence,
men were warned not merely about the dangers of masturbation or of sex
with prostitutes but, from 1830 on, about even the dangers of excessive
sex within marriage.

This insistence on male purity and continence was the very lynchpin
of the Victorian system of morality. Victorians were aware of the
aggressive nature of male sexuality. Charles Rosenberg quotes one
"self-consciously horrified physician" who in the early 1880s reported
that "some fathers tickle the genital organs of their infant boys until a
complete erection of the little penis ensued, which effect pleases the
father as evidence of a robust boy."²² Although the Victorian view of
women as suffering from "passionlessness" should not be taken as a
reflection of the reality of middle-class women's actual experience of
sexuality in the nineteenth century, the development of this ideology is
very revealing about the deep concerns of Victorians about male
sexuality.²³ For both the concept of "passionlessness" for women and of
continence and purity for men must be seen in their context as being
designed to protect middle-class women from the potential ravages of a
male sexuality that was uncontrolled. Victorians devised their moral system to protect women. Neil Larry Shumsky has recently described the "tacit acceptance" that Americans gave to the red-light districts which sprang up in most every city because without the district "respectable women would not be safe."24 He quotes the Mayor of San Francisco as saying that because of the district "any woman could walk on the streets of San Francisco at any hour of the day or night without insult or embarrassment."25 Mark Twain, in his 1880 story, "American Manners," insisted that in America, as opposed to Europe, "a lady may traverse our streets all day, going and coming as she chooses and she will never be molested by any man."26 True, this system ignored the concerns of working-class women who were sometimes forced into prostitution, just as it denied the reality of middle-class women's sexuality. But, nevertheless, it entailed a deep awareness of the dangers for women that were posed by rampant male sexuality. Ultimately, above all else, the Christian Gentleman or man of "character" had to be aware of the need to control his sexuality.

The ideology of the Christian Gentleman was also bolstered by the conspiracy of silence, which was a further means of controlling sexuality by limiting discourse about it, as French philosopher Michel Foucault has suggested.27 This public conspiracy of silence can be exaggerated. Victorian marriage and sex manuals were, as Charles Rosenberg has pointed
out, notable for their "ambivalence and inconsistency," but they were at least consistent after 1830 in their vivid obsession with the evils of one aspect of sexuality, masturbation.28 Further, there was communication about other areas of sexuality, too. But Victorians preferred to use euphemisms such as the need for "purity" or for "continence," the meaning of which must have passed by many of the readers of these tracts. Victorian society thus fairly deserves its reputation as a world characterized by reticence in discussing sexual matters publicly. Sex manuals were hardly graphic about the sexual act itself. One such manual, self-consciously entitled "Plain Talks on Avoided Subjects," still avoided discussing sexual technique.29 The conspiracy went beyond the famous observation of British visitor Captain Marryat of the covering of table-legs lest they suggest the female limb.30 Real evidence has survived of women's reticence in discussing sexual matters. Gynecologist Robert Latou Dickinson noted the striking willingness of the women he saw in the 1920s to talk about sex as compared to his female patients in the 1890s.31 In his article on the Progressive Era revolution in America attitudes towards sex, John Burnham quotes William T. Foster describing how "throughout the nineteenth century the taboo prevailed." Foster continued by stating that "Certain subjects were rarely mentioned in public and then only in euphemistic terms. The home, the church, the school and the press joined in the
On the rare occasion when there was public discussion of sex, the discourse was squeamish as when the Reverend Phillip Moxon spoke in 1890 to the "White Cross Purity League" of the YMCA, and declared that "this subject is not of my choosing, save as to the form in which it is put... How shall I fitly and plainly say what needs to be said without revolting those who hear from a subject which every one of us would gladly drop into oblivion? While the extent of its influence can be exaggerated, the conspiracy of silence was nonetheless real, especially in view of the burst of discourse on the subject of sex that flooded out in the second and third decades of the century and which elicited such shocked comment at the time. For in Victorian America, gentlemen were not supposed to discuss sex with other men and certainly not with women.

The public system of morality of Victorian America has received most attention from historians. Comparatively little is known about people's actual experience of sexuality in the private world of romantic love that recent research has revealed as important to Victorians. Yet this world served, too, as much as the public world, to control male sexuality. Here the Christian Gentleman was also ascendant, and an understanding of this private world is intrinsic to understanding the nineteenth century American conception of manhood. Beth Bailey has discussed the tradition of the "call." The upper and middle classes in
the cities in the 1880s relied upon this convention of the "call." A gentleman gave his card to a servant at the door, requesting to see the young lady in whom he was interested. If he was frequently received, he knew that he had her favor, but if she turned him down, he knew equally where he stood. This was a female-controlled ritual, a consequence of women's power in the domestic arena.35 Once the young couple saw each other a few times, they would be permitted out, traditionally with a chaperone. Yet, and this is important, men and women were permitted more than a little sexual experimentation in courtship as Ellen Rothman and, above all, Karen Lystra, have shown.36

Lystra has recently given the most detailed elaboration to date on the private world of Victorian courtship, a world in large part previously hidden to historians. In this world, young men and women engaged in an essentially female-controlled set of rituals that could include kissing, petting and even sexual intercourse so long as it was part of what was called romantic love. So long as men acted and behaved as Christian Gentlemen, that is, as long as they loved and respected their lady friend, and at least had marriage as an ultimate goal, a wide range of acts were permissible. Purity, as we understand it, was still an important aspect of romantic love.37 I would emphasize it more than Lystra does, especially because the vast majority of women entered marriage as virgins.38 But men and women, according to Lystra, could
also consider themselves pure, even if they had full sexual relations, if they held the attitude of romantic love. Thus, this female-controlled, structured private world complemented and fused into the public world's control of male sexuality. In the private world, even if the double standard was often challenged, gentlemanliness held ascendancy, and women were protected from less savory aspects of Victorian masculinity.

The third Victorian ideal of manhood was the Masculine Primitive. As the century advanced, this ideal was increasingly prevalent in the northern middle-class sample that Rotundo studied but was even more common on the expanding frontier. The proponents of the masculine primitive ideal looked on even civilized and cultivated men as " primitives." They admired, for example, the novels of James Fenimore Cooper with their depictions of white men like Natty Bumppo who were as brave as "savages." The Masculine Primitive especially valued physical vigor and stamina; young men became increasingly concerned with the cultivation of their bodies. Rotundo quotes a graduate student writing home from Germany telling his parents "the result of his self-imposed exercise program. He listed his chest, stomach, and hip measurements for them, exact to the quarter inch."39 The Masculine Primitive was popularized, too, in a number of male institutions such as the YMCA, which propagated a form of muscular Christianity.40
By the turn of the century, the Masculine Primitive grew to ever greater prominence in American society. John Higham in 1965 identified what has become known as the masculinity crisis of the progressive era, that is, a desire on the part of men to be "young, masculine, and adventurous" as the closing of the frontier, rising bureaucracies, and the feminization of American culture stifled male dominance.41 This crisis was reflected in Theodore Roosevelt's cult of the strenuous life. The future president advocated, in 1900, "the life of strenuous endeavor . . . the life of toil and effort of labor and strife to preach that highest form of success . . . to the man who does not shrink from danger, from bitter toil and who out of these wins the ultimate triumph."42 This analysis has also been developed in the case studies of David Graham Phillips and Walter Allen White by James McGovern and Dubbert, respectively.43 They have argued that the urge to strenuous endeavor was a result of men's fear of effeminacy. Yet this ideal remained entirely compatible with the single-standard. It was, after all, Theodore Roosevelt himself who famously thanked God he had stayed pure before marrying his first wife.44

Yet the darker side of the masculine primitive was always implicit in the rejection of civilization suggested by the glorification of men's primitive roots and in the cultivation of the body. For there was a fourth ideal closely related to the third: the Underworld Primitive.
This involved belief in male sexual necessity and in a rigid double standard of morality according to which men, and men only, could have sex before and even after marriage so long as it was with lower-class prostitutes.45 Men, after all, had to sow their wild oats. Judge Lindsey, as late as the 1920s, guessed that 50% of men in Denver had been with prostitutes, an argument for reform of the sexual system he was not alone in using.46 A study of seven hundred California couples in 1938 by psychologist Lewis Terman suggested that of people born before 1900, three times as many middle-class men as middle-class women had indulged in premarital sex, which suggests that some of the sex might have been with working-class prostitutes, but anyway confirms the pervasiveness of the double standard.47 For the double standard pervaded this system of morality of Victorian America.

This fourth concept of masculinity flourished in the Victorian underworld. Here the middle class joined in with working-class elements in a rough, tough, society where not only prostitution existed, but also gambling, drinking, swearing, and violence. Steven Marcus, in his study of this society in Britain, referred to this subculture as the "other Victorians." This was a male-dominated world, to which men of all classes had access, and where they could indulge whatever vice took their fancy. Here, male primitivism, the very antithesis of the high ideals of the Christian Gentleman, ran rampant and unchecked. After the 1880s, the
underworld ethos went increasingly public. This is perhaps summed up by
the popularity of the *Police Gazette* with its celebration of criminality,
dirty jokes, scantily-clad "ladies," anti-homosexuality, and reportage of
the underworld's favorite sport, boxing. In many ways, Theodore
Roosevelt helped bring the underworld to a wider audience with his crass
sparring session with boxer Mike Donovan in the White House in 1903.
There were, in fact, many signs of the growing public celebration of
underworld values. For example in 1899, Bernarr Macfadden bought
*Physical Culture* and began to spread the underworld ethos of male
muscularity and sexual expression to an ever widening audience. Further,
Jack London, in *The Call of the Wild*, turned primitivism against women,
especially with his portrayal of the female character, Mercedes, who
having been "chivalrously treated all her days," still made the lives of
her husband and brothers "unendurable" as a nag. London commented on
this throughout the text, referring to the way in which she "interfered"
and was "hysterical." Roderick Nash describes how the case of Joe
Knowles, who lived naked in the Maine wilderness for three months,
transfixed 1913 Boston, thus turning male primitivism firmly against
civilization. Edgar Rice Burroughs did the same in his "Tarzan"
stories.

This increasingly public celebration of Underworld Primitivism at
the turn-of-the-century was of enormous importance for American society.
It threatened the precarious balance between the Christian Gentleman and moral and Underworld Primitivism that made up the Victorian construction of masculinity and concomitant system of morality. Victorians in Great Britain and in the still essentially culturally British United States well understood the centrality of moral choices to men’s sense of themselves as men. Crucially, the choices for Victorian males were clear. A man of "character," a Christian Gentleman, controlled his sexuality both publicly and privately. If he could not control his sexual drives, he might visit a prostitute, but such behavior was only tolerated, it was never respectable, as Michel Foucault confirms.51 He must never admit it for fear that he might lose his "character," that is his very sense of what was best in himself as a man. The Christian Gentleman tempered the excesses of primitivism and of the underworld. The single standard still held ascendancy over the double standard. But as late as the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, the Victorian system of morality remained intact.

However, after about 1910, this sexual system crumbled. Agnes Repplier declared the "repeal of reticence." William Marion Reedy announced it was "Sex O’Clock in America."52 Put simply, society became more sexualized. This revolution was facilitated by the growth of cities. By 1920, New York was becoming the world metropolis that it is today, a city of five and a half million people, while three other cities
had more than one million inhabitants. In this environment, many of the old strictures and controls over sexual behavior, as Beth Bailey, Lewis Erenberg, Kathy Peiss, and Joanne Meyerowitz have recently noted, were breaking down. Mass production enabled more and more goods to be available than ever before. To sell them, advertisers emphasized desire, not rationality, and encouraged a therapeutic mentality of instant gratification through the creation of imagined need.\(^5\) As newspapers became mass-produced, they resorted to titillation in order to sell.\(^5\) Leisure time, too, grew among Americans in order to provide the time in which to consume. Mass entertainments—the movies, dance-halls, amusement—all provided increasingly sexualized environments in which an ever more middle-class audience could spend its money.\(^5\) Even attempts to regulate sexuality, as John Burnham has noted, in fact had the opposite effect. He has shown how the American Social Hygiene Association’s campaign against venereal diseases and prostitution helped open up a 'pandora’s box' of discourse on sex. This discourse, after 1910, seemed to aggravate an already sexually-charged atmosphere and undermined the conspiracy of silence and the double standard, those great bulwarks of the Victorian system of morality, for these changes constituted a genuine sexual revolution.

These changes must be understood in the context of alterations in the meaning of youthfulness in American society that gave greater
importance to the fifteen to twenty-four-year-old age group. Youth by the 1920s was moving towards our modern understanding of it as a subculture, stimulated by G. Stanley Hall's identification of a period of "adolescence." Young men were freed to embark on leisure activities with their girlfriends and "dates" of the same class because the economy required less manpower and more young people were in school: the work week dropped from fifty-six hours in 1900 to forty-one hours by 1920.

But courtship rituals changed steadily as urbanization proceeded and as the separation of spheres continued to break down. As from 1900 on teenagers began increasingly to go to high school and as more and more unmarried women obtained their own jobs, young people became more free to develop their own styles of courtship. Calling was hardly practicable for families crowded into one or two rooms. While it was true that girls of certain ethnic families were often kept secluded and chaperoned whatever their social status, more sought work outside of the home as well as amusement and leisure in the cheap dance halls that had long been features of male working-class urban life. A few of them became "Charity Girls," young women, who, in return for "treats," permitted the men who visited the dance halls a certain amount of casual sexual enjoyment—under the women's control. But more "dated." Beth Bailey had recently uncovered the origins of the term "date" in working-class
argot in Chicago in the 1890s, from which it was introduced to the middle
classes by George Ade. As the new century dawned, the middle classes
in the cities began to adopt dating as the most convenient mode of
courtship for independent men and women; and by 1930, the modern dating
system was firmly in place for high school students and for college
youth. Courtship had been transformed from a system conducted in the
home and under strict female-controlled conventions. The new dating
system removed these conventions, and women surrendered the power that
had gone with them in order to enjoy greater sexual freedom in the public
heterosexual leisure world which replaced the previously extant
homosexual one. Further, the change in convention was reflected in
changes in actual sexual behavior: women born after 1900 were two and a
half times more likely to have had sex before marriage than those born
before, according to Kinsey.

These changes clearly raise serious questions about the construction
of masculinity. Not merely do they raise the issues of how men reared
according to Victorian stricures responded to the New Woman, but also
they raise the question of what were the new masculinities which emerged
in the leisure world of the sexualized society. Once again, the central
question is, who was the New Man to accompany the New Woman? Who was the
flapper’s boyfriend?
I shall address these questions in a number of ways. Using a large number of cultural artifacts—movies, confession magazines, popular novels—I shall examine in chapter two the development of the modern ideal of male attractiveness. In chapter three I shall look at the changing styles of masculine behavior of the incipient youth culture, and in chapter four at the impact of the sexualized society on ideology about sex directed at men. Next, I shall turn to actual attitudes and behavior. In chapters five, six and seven, I shall examine two groups on the cutting-edge of the sexual revolution whose experience prefigured later developments in the broader middle class: the experiments of the men of the urban dance-hall subculture and of men married to feminist New Women. Finally, in chapter eight I shall look at the sexuality of middle-class male youth in the 1920s, whose experience I am arguing showed the influence of the new ideology of male sexuality as well as a later manifestation of the dilemmas and challenges faced earlier by the men married to feminist New Women and of the urban dance hall subculture. In this way I hope to determine how modern American male sexuality emerged in the early twentieth century.
Footnotes


4 The question of men's part in the "revolution in morals" simply has not been addressed, except, perhaps by Michael Kimmel, "Pro-Feminist Men in Turn-of-the-Century America," *Gender and Society* 1 (September 1987): 261-283. There are two surveys on the history of masculinity that cover the period: Peter Filene *Him/Her/Self*, 2d. ed. (NY: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1986) and Joe Dubbert, *A Man's Place: Masculinity in Transition* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1979). But these are speculative and show the need for further research, which, however, they have clearly helped to stimulate.

There are works that look at other aspects of the "revolution in morals." There is some work on American youth. John Modell's "Dating Becomes the Way of American Youth" (in David Levine, et. al., eds., *Essays on the Family and Historical Change*, [Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983]: 91-127) does raise the question of what happened when the
dating system started, and posits that, because the rules were made by women, there was a challenge to the double standard; as he states, "the boy who came calling had to pass . . . as a boy who would behave himself." While Modell has written on dating, Paula Fass has provided a very effective discussion of middle class college youths in the 1920s. (The Damned and the Beautiful: American Youth in the 1920s [NY: Oxford University Press, 1977]). Many of her insights are useful, but a difficulty with her book is that it is not her purpose to consider that men and women had different things at stake in the development of dating. There is work, too, on marriage. Christina Simmons, "Marriage in the Modern Manner: Sexual Radicalism and Reform in America, 1914-41" (Ph.D. diss., Brown University, 1982) focuses primarily on the role of sexuality in the new "companionate marriage." The standard work on divorce remains William O'Neill's Divorce in the Progressive Era (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), which, by stopping at 1920, does not fully concern itself with the revolution, but particularly useful for my purposes is Elaine Tyler May's excellent Great Expectations: Marriage and Divorce in Post-Victorian America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), which compares the causes of divorce in the 1880s with those thirty years later.


7Mowry, The Urban Nation, 3.


11 Dubbert, A Man's Place.


13 Ibid., 38.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.


17 Ibid.


21 Sylvester Graham, A Lecture to Young Men (Providence: Weedon and Cory, 1834), 17, 33; quoted in Dubbert, A Man's Place, 42.


using California evidence was developed by Robert Griswold, *Family and Divorce in California, 1850-90* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1982).


29F. A. David, *Plain Talks on Avoided Subjects*, (Philadelphia 1899.)

30Captain Marryat, *A Diary in America*, Vol 2 (London: Orme, Brown, Green and Longman's, 1839), 244-247. Carl Degler has argued, rightly, that this was hardly typical ("What Ought to be and What was: Women's Sexuality in the Nineteenth Century," *American Historical Review*, 79 [December 1974]: 1467-90). But it still represents the kind of extremes to which people would sometimes go.


34Burnham, "Progressive Era Revolution," passim.


37 Lystra, *Searching the Heart*, 3-37.


46 In Judge Ben B. Lindsey, *The Revolt of Modern Youth* (NY: Boni and Liveright, 1925), 56.


52 Agnes Repplier, "The Repeal of Reticence," *Atlantic* (March 1914), 297-304; "Sex O'Clock in America" *Current Opinion*, 55 (August 1913): 113-14. The author was anonymous, but the phrase is from William Marion Reedy, editor of the *St. Louis Mirror*, quoted in John C. Burnham, "Progressive Era Revolution," 163.


CHAPTER II

THE ORIGINS OF THE MODERN IDEA OF
AN ATTRACTIVE MAN IN AMERICA, 1910–1930

The changing construction and meaning of beauty has only recently begun to interest historians. For a change, most work in the area has focused on women.¹ In her work American Beauty, Lois Banner has, however, generously provided a chapter on men in which she discusses the "bucks" of 1860s New York. Nevertheless, only Jo Paoletti has specifically devoted a whole project to men. She has noted the 1880s emergence of the "dude," who was a self-consciously direct descendant of early nineteenth century English dandies such as Beau Brummell, with his flamboyant and colorful style of dressing.² Yet the "dude," a phenomenon of the 1880s and 1890s, was much laughed at and scorned. He hardly represented a challenge to the dominant Victorian patriarch and his somber asexual suits. Paoletti detects the beginnings of a less strait-laced approach to men's business clothing in the early twentieth century. This tempts us to explore further changes that the "revolution
in morals" wrought in the masculine image in these years. How did this cultural revolution alter conceptions of what was valued in men's personal appearance?

Recent studies have suggested ways to illuminate the experience of those of the male gender in the United States in the early twentieth century. Particularly compelling has been Warren Susman's influential essay on "Personality and the Making of Twentieth Century Culture," in which he convincingly argued that between 1890 and 1920, the United States moved from a "culture of character," in which men were expected to acquire, above all, "self-control" and discipline on the road to attaining "manhood," to a "culture of personality," in which the "performing self," that is "clothing, personal appearance and good manners" as well as "poise and charm," was given increasing importance and where the "keywords" to describe valued behavior included "fascinating, stunning, magnetic, glowing, masterful" and indeed where the acquisition of "personality," was encouraged. Susman's analysis seems particularly applicable to the impact of this "revolution in morals" on men as a gender because the overriding trend which emerges from a reading of the popular literature is that as the conspiracy of silence around sexuality broke down among the middle classes, men were encouraged increasingly to cultivate not merely "clothing and personal appearance," "charm," and "fascination," but also "sex appeal," that is
the cultivation of physical attraction and muscul arity. This term "sex appeal" was often used and, while it seems innocent enough to us, was rather daring at the time, especially as its use undermined so sharply the conspiracy of silence. "Sex appeal" became the lynchpin that defined male attractiveness in several areas of American culture, from the movies to advertising to sex/marriage manuals, as the "performing self" became ever more emphasized.

Sex appeal emphasized physical attractiveness, muscul arity, but, above all, youth. It helped in the 1920s to be young because, as Gilman Ostrander has noted, there was in that decade a "glorification of youth." Youth represented the cutting edge, the very vanguard of the culture of personality, because youth was best able to live up to its demands. As never before, the period of youth began to be comprehended as a distinctive time of life with its own pattern of mores, norms and values. Popular literature and writing geared itself to the young of the middle class and reflected its mood as it prescribed its behavior. After the novels of Fitzgerald, perhaps the most famous example of this to survive in the public's memory is Judge Ben Lindsey of Denver, Colorado's The Revolt of Modern Youth, a big seller in 1925. Lindsey, the Chief Justice of the Juvenile courts of Denver, produced the book with journalist and physical culturist Wainwright Evans in order to help adolescents who had gotten into some difficulties with the law. But
their lawlessness does not appear to have colored Lindsey's appraisal of youth, which was always uniformly glowing. He explained:

For twenty-five years, through more than ten of which I have had the sympathetic cooperation of my wife, whose desk is next to mine, and who there shares my confidences with youth, it has been my privilege and my delight to work in the midst of eternal childhood. Here despite moments of blackness, the wind still blows in the willows, Pan still pipes in the Springtime, and the very sky takes on a deeper azure from the large, large thoughts of youth.6

Lindsey thus set the tone for this glorification of youth. And indeed, in testimony to the broad appeal of Lindsey's conception of youth, his The Revolt of Modern Youth was serialized, appropriately enough, in Physical Culture.

In this chapter, I will therefore discuss changes in the masculine image in the early twentieth century through an empirical study of a variety of popular cultural artifacts. I have examined much material—popular novels, periodical literature, advertisements, and the MacFadden publications, True Story and Physical Culture, which especially set the pace in the mass market journalism of the 1920s and were widely read among the working and middle class youth of both sexes who were the first to be incorporated into the mass culture.7 These indicate the wide diffusion of the culture of personality after 1910. For men, the renewed emphasis on sexual attractiveness and "sex appeal" meant increasing sexual demands.
Images of male movie stars stressed youth and physical attractiveness. Perhaps the embodiment of the new masculine ideal was Douglas Fairbanks Sr. who, although around forty years old, played young rebellious roles. On the screen Fairbanks revelled in his continued youth and in his athleticism and physical appeal. Young men read avidly his popular tracts on how to attain success; "he was the dashing handsome boy, fearless, openly chivalrous," wrote pop psychologist James Oppenheim. Physical Culture, in November, 1921, featured an article, one of many in popular literature, on "Analyzing Douglas Fairbanks." It included a picture, "taken expressly for Physical Culture," of "Doug" jumping into the air. The author of the article proceeded: "What is Douglas Fairbanks anyway? He has "a dash that represents the spirit of American youth." The writer held Fairbanks up as a model for the American man:

And if you want to get the most out of life, even in respect to your physical condition, you could not do better than to cultivate first of all the Fairbank's psychology.

Though "Doug" was thirty-eight and had therefore reached the age where "so many men expand at the waistline--if not above the ears--and settle down to become ever softer and more physically flabby, Doug is as young as ever." Perhaps this was because "we have seen him fight whole bunches of villains, sometimes empty handed, sometimes with swords," but, crucially, "never with custard pies."
Rudolph Valentino, like Fairbanks, was a model for young men throughout the twenties, especially as he, too, attracted women. Physical Culture also ran an article on Valentino which featured his "exceptional physique"—"the big hunky and all around athlete that he is"..."Attention is especially called to the extraordinary development of the muscles across the small of the back, built up chiefly by rowing." The two stars exemplified the demand of the emerging culture of personality that men be young and that they have "sex appeal." As the critic Gilbert Seldes put it:

...sex appeal is in the main a masculine commodity and is perhaps the masculine revenge on the female of the movie species. He-vamp, sophisticated sinner, or great lover—it does not matter if he has sex appeal. Advertisements accentuated this trend. Having more money to spend on leisure and the time to imagine consuming the products of the mass consumer culture, youth constituted a major focus for the attention of innovative marketers. Revealingly, an ad in Life asked, "When do men start to get young?" The answer was "When they shave with Barbasol of course." Similarly, Colgate's "better shaving" could make "the middle aged man look young" if he used it everyday. If you patted a little Fougeré Royale lotion on your face, in "ten seconds you can knock ten years off your appearance." Aqua Velva would make you "young looking." Hair should not be "lacklustre" nor should it lack "the
healthy, youthful look you wish for."\textsuperscript{18} To make the face more attractive, men were encouraged to shave everyday.\textsuperscript{19} Gillette declared that "seventy out of every hundred men at Yale shave with Gillette."\textsuperscript{20} Everywhere in ads, it was young men who set the pace.

Thus, for men, advertisements stressed sexual attractiveness. Advertisers, the "Captains of Consciousness" of the emerging mass production consumer culture, touched nerves and aroused desires as they attempted to encourage the purchasing of their products.\textsuperscript{21} They promised fulfillment and therapeutic release to men or women who would consume their products. Ads of all kinds advised men how they could be attractive to women. Even ads for cigarettes gained erotic connotations: "Camel adds the glamour of its own romance to every memorable event."\textsuperscript{22} Milano pipes were advertised as "rakish and distinctive."\textsuperscript{23} Smoking would make men attractive to women: the actress Billie Burke was called in to declare that she "loved to see a man smoke a pipe."\textsuperscript{24} A 1926 Collier's ad used a quotation from a student at the University of California who had been converted to pipes when his girlfriend declared them to be "more manly looking than cigarettes."\textsuperscript{25} Buckingham tobacco even claimed that other products encouraged "the womanfolk to withdraw from the room" when the men lighted up. But with the aroma of Buckingham, there was "No feminine retirement now..." so "bewitching" was BUCKINGHAM.\textsuperscript{26}
Advertisers for perfumes declared that men should "keep the skin fresh, ruddy, and vigorous". 27  Eau de cologne was the "only really masculine toilet water," 28  while Williams perfume "delights in its man-style fragrance." 29  Men were advised to use talc:

Men, always reluctant to try anything that make them really comfortable, learned of the luxury of a Talcum shower after their bath--a silky film of talcum that made clothes feel loose on a hot day, that prevented collar chafing and underwear from sticking. 30

But it was still important that the talcum powder "didn't show." 31  Men were perhaps not ready yet to admit they used it.

Advertisers who marketed soap directed their ads at men. As one ad insisted: "The same fine palm and olive oil soap that has won recognition wherever beauty is prized in the world, is the favorite of men, too." 32  "He could be so attractive," declared an ad in Collier's in 1926, but when girls would "look him over carefully" they would "just as carefully overlook him" because of his "grimy-looking skin, spotted with blackheads and dull in appearance." 33  The solution to this dilemma was Pompeian Massage Cream. In one ad in Physical Culture, a woman is pictured next to her male dancing partner, thinking "A Good Dancer But . . ." There was:

no excuse now for perspiration odor--just wash and bathe with the hygienic toilet soap that keeps pores purified. We naturally think of perspiration odor as something other people may be guilty of, but never ourselves.
But the truth is that unless we are on our guard, everyone of us may offend at some time without knowing it. (Lifebuoy) purifies pores and gives lasting freedom from embarrassing odors.\textsuperscript{34}

Bad breath, too, was a must to avoid:

She hated to tell him. She was so proud of her big brother. But of late he seemed much discouraged. He was being left out of things--dances dinners--and somehow "the girl" never had an open date.

His sister knew the cause. She hated to tell him, because it was such a personal thing, but finally she did, and he was a good sport about it.\textsuperscript{35}

White teeth also increasingly became a concomitant of attractiveness. Pictures of young men with white teeth were used to illustrate the importance of dental hygiene: "Remove the dingy film that's clouding (your teeth) and you'll be surprised that your teeth are just as white and charming as any one's (if you brush with Pepsodent)."\textsuperscript{36} In even a relatively sedate paper like the \textit{Saturday Evening Post}, a bare-chested man was used to sell SS White toothpaste:

"In Ancient Athens lithe youths ran races and performed wondrous feats in the arena for pure joy in their abounding vigor." It went on: "Without health vigor is not possible. When the strength of the body is sapped, vigor dwindles and is lost..."\textsuperscript{37} In this way even ads for toothpaste gained erotic connotations as ads presented men with images of sexual success--and the implied message of failure if they did not buy the product.
Hair was crucial to an ideal man's appearance. Dandruff must be avoided at all costs—"Have you ever noticed how a white coat collar can mar the appearance of even the most fastidiously dressed man?" Advertisers advised shampoo for "healthy, attractive hair" with "fresh beauty and vitality," hair that must be kept "perfectly combed" or else "you cannot look well-groomed." Unsurprisingly, balding hair was ever an enemy, and ads against it were ubiquitous, "This new way MUST stop falling hair in three weeks. Must grow hair in ninety days or your money refunded," declared one ad.

Youthful standards of beauty and masculinity were intrinsic to the masculine ideals in advertisements. Fat was to be avoided. Successful men were after all "slender men." Such men realize "the danger of being stout—how excess weight saps their strength, slows down their thinking, mars their appearance and hinders their advancement." A good workout might help. Men were advised to get back their "winning muscles by being kept constantly fit with Absorbine Jr." The Burdick Body Culturor would "hold your weight down—to keep your stomach flat and your waistline where it belongs." Physically developed men were used to sell motorcar axles: "Confronted by new conditions, the world today as never before calls for concentration of thought and purpose in its industries." Once physically developed one could gain a tan. The formerly staid and strait-laced YMCA publication Association Men after
the mid-1920s contained ads for tanning solariums that would make a man
"look like six weeks in Florida" with a "deep healthy tan."46 The right
physical appearance was often blatantly equated with sexual success.
Swimming was the moment of truth for men, according to advertizers.
Spalding Suits declared: "How well can you look in a swimming suit?
You'll never know until you wear one of these new suits made by
Spalding."47 Another ad declared:

"The good old swimming days are here. Oh boy. But
its great to rip off your shirt, into your suit and
splash. But what a shock to some of the poor girls
when they see their heroes come out with flat chests
and skinny arms, instead of the big husky frames they
expected to see.

YOU ARE OUT OF LUCK.

Don't try to make excuses. You are just plain out of
luck. It's your own fault. You can't blame anyone
but yourself. But what are you going to do? She is
going to find you out.48

A swimming party might be an "emotional moment in the life of a
flapper." The solution when she saw her fiancee for the first time in
his bathing suit was to "light a Murad."49 (a cigarette). Thus, an
image of physical attractiveness, mild sensuality and youth emerges from
advertisements. In the emerging "culture of personality," as Marchand
put it memorably, ads stressed "sex appeal instead of mere soap" from the
turn of the century on.50 In this increasingly sexualized society, men,
too, like women, were expected to cultivate youthful sexual attractiveness, a concomitant of the "culture of personality."

Much the same trend applied in clothing. Clothing increasingly was specifically geared towards young men. Advertisers claimed to know "How Young Men Will Want their Spring Clothes."\textsuperscript{51} Clothes were designed to enhance physical attractiveness: "the shoulders will give you the look of a man who can pull an oar..." and "the waistline of a commuter who can still run for his train."\textsuperscript{52} The wearer of Society Brand Clothes could be:

\begin{quote}
\texttt{at ease—confident that the style of his clothes is faultless, the workmanship unexcelled, and that the all-wool fabrics are of unquestioned integrity. Such is the privilege enjoyed by wearers of Society Brand Clothes for young men and men who stay young.}
\end{quote}

After all,

\begin{quote}
\texttt{young men like these are going to wear clothes like these; they know what they want; they find it wherever our clothes are sold... Double-breasted types; belted styles; high roll fronts, smart pockets, all-wool fabrics.}\textsuperscript{53}
\end{quote}

Golden Arrow shirts declared that: "It is ready for you today at the good men's outfitters. Young Men will seize it. Frankly Golden Arrow was made for them."\textsuperscript{54} In the \textit{Saturday Evening Post}, a commentator noted how the "Milstande shoulder" had spread across the country that summer:

\begin{quote}
\texttt{Square, athletic, well-groomed looking, no finer interpretation of American briskness... has ever been developed... a shoulder that enhances the}
\end{quote}
erectness and set-up of the youthful figure by its
clean, energetic, parade-ground contour.\textsuperscript{55}

Even hats were equated with masculinity: "Lion hats the right hat for
Real Men."\textsuperscript{56} Young men wanted a coat that would "hug the hips."\textsuperscript{57}

Further, in this period designers began to sell "athletic
underwear," which was considerably lighter in weight and more practical
than nineteenth century underwear which could weigh as much as four
pounds.\textsuperscript{58} "No it isn't a new dance, merely underwear" declared one
advertiser--"Its hard to achieve a rhythmic grace when your underwear
threatens to cut you in two:"

Underwear for men, never mentioned save with blushes
has recently become less of an outlaw in the scheme of
attire. Artistic ether has seeped into the world of
unmentionables and imparted poetry to the most drab of
all elements of dress.
Men are drugging their senses with batik designs in
sleeping apparel and inhaling the stimulation of
contrasting shades of underclothes.\textsuperscript{59}

From the 1890s, sportswear became more and more popular for casual wear
when shirt styles previously worn for sports replaced older styles of
shirts.\textsuperscript{60} Men's clothes at last loosened up and became practical for
Summer wear:

The National Summer Suit for men. You can't look hot
and look well dressed but you can look well-dressed
and BE cool. Keep-Kool is the answer. In a Keep-
Kool suit a fellow can feel delightfully comfortable the length and breath of a hot Summer day. Light in weight--tailored in the best of fashion--correct in style and fit.\textsuperscript{61} Canvas shoes and sweaters also formerly worn for sports passed into casual wear. But there were limitations. Thus, while swimming trunks could be "very thin", they had to "dry at once on coming from water and . . . not cling to the body."\textsuperscript{62} The "Arrow Man" who advertised arrow shirts became the first of a long line of models to be seen as sex symbols: from 1905 on, the model received love letters from young women.\textsuperscript{63} Doubtless their gentlemen friends were jealous. These styles extended and developed to an ever wider audience the athletic, firm clean-shaven image of Richard Harding Davis, the Gibson Man, who had been popular in the first decade of the century. One article suggested that in 1919, men's clothes should be "sprightly without conspicuousness, dashing without verging on extreme; youthful in temperament and inspirational." Several articles celebrated the more flamboyant styles that prevailed in certain circles:

They are looking back to the days when Solomon was arrayed in considerable glory--or, with less strain to the eyesight, or a time when it was not unusual for the stronger sex to sport yellow breeches, a red waistcoat, a frilled shirt, a plum-colored coat, and a pearl gray top hat.\textsuperscript{64}
Fashion commentator Paul Nystrom predicted that if this trend continued, the "vivid colors of the eighteenth century might return to men's clothing." This tendency should not be exaggerated, but younger men were encouraged to abandon staid and strait-laced Victorian styles to a greater or lesser degree in all areas of life in favor of images of physical attractiveness, mild sensuality, and youth.

The shift to youth and sensuality reflected in the ads had a corollary in the devaluation of older men in popular culture. Freudian popularizer Samuel Schmalhausen declared that the "virtue of the old is the virtue of impotence. The wisdom of the old is the wisdom of frustration." One satirist lamented being forty:

When I doze in my chair I look like an alderman.
When I go out for a walk I roll just a little they say.67

Clearly, unlike Douglas Fairbanks, he had not kept up his youthful appearance. Writer David Seabury commented that "Many a grandfather reads wistfully of glandular therapy. He has sympathy with Faust."68 After all, there was "no merit in gray hair and glasses." Scott Vincent, in Warner Fabian's cheeky and notorious critique of upper class youth, Flaming Youth, was described as "adorably handsome and so romantic looking" but he is "quite old. Probably thirty;" while for Dr. Osterhout, aged forty, "age is against him" in the marriage market.70 In Sherwood Anderson's Many Marriages, the hero, at thirty-eight, has at
least "a body still slender" and looking "not too old." Further, G. Stanley Hall, the proselytizer of "adolescence," produced the prescriptive Senescence wherein he declared that "to learn that we are really old is a long, complex and painful experience," thus establishing a period of old age portrayed as negatively as earlier he had glorified the phase of adolescence. Men would lose "something of whatever attraction they had for the other sex generally." He strived to find a role for the old in a modern society that he admitted was increasingly youth-oriented. However, in the future, old age was not to be sagacious, an old man would not be "venerable." He must instead look "out on the world anew and involve (himself) in something like a rebirth of faculties, especially of curiosity and even of naivete." Hall continued: "age is in quest of first principles just as, though far more earnestly and competently, ingenious youth is." Pop psychologist W. J. Fielding declared:

the period of a man's life after sixty, whether it happens to be long or short, offers many possibilities for rich and vital experience, in some respects surpassed by no other stage of life. The important thing is to maintain sufficient contacts with life, to keep the viewpoints fresh and receptive and the mind clear and active.
Thus was old age redefined in the terms of youth; in comparison, it came out unfavorably.

Bernarr Macfadden, publisher of Physical culture and confession magazines such as True Story, was an important figure in affecting and reflecting these changes. Macfadden was the sickly child of Missouri settlers who left him while he was young to fend for himself. He had found a life of strenuous exercise and careful eating a solution to his poor health and his emotional problems. In the 1890s, he gave one-man shows, in which he posed his excellent physical development for what he regarded as frustratingly limited audiences. Determined to spread the word of his exercise techniques, he took over the exercise magazine Physical Culture in 1899. The Macfadden version of the journal was an immediate hit, reaching an audience of about one hundred and fifty thousand by 1906. Macfadden attempted with his most enthusiastic readers to start a Physical Culture City in New Jersey, where the physical culture way could be lived. He gave his journal the flagmast: "Weakness is a crime." Here he could rail at his enemies—"Corsets, muscular inactivity, gluttony, drugs and alcohol." But worst of all was "prudery"—"the most important of all evils." However, (quite well-founded) rumors of prurience and nudity at Physical Culture City led to an investigation which culminated in Macfadden’s being sentenced to prison for putting obscenities in the mail. Though President Taft
pardoned him, Physical Culture went into a decline. Macfadden himself relinquished the editorship in 1912 and went to proselytize his ideas in England for two years. Though he resumed the editorship in 1916, the circulation was at 110,000 in 1919, no greater than it had been in 1906. In response, Macfadden founded a new outlet for his ideas, True Story magazine, in 1919. This journal advocated his physical ideals in lurid "sex" confession stories devised by a group of hack writers, many borrowed from Physical Culture, though Macfadden claimed that the stories were sent in by readers. True Story was an immediate success, and it spread the physical culture ideal to a whole new generation of readers, both women and men—predominantly young—and of both the working and "new middle class." By 1926—when the editor decided to reduce the stories’ all but explicit sexual content in favor of "romance" stories—each issue of the journal was selling two million: True Story, like Physical Culture, according to the Lynds, was reaching between one in five and one in ten of the homes in the mid-1920s in Muncie, Indiana (Middletown). True Story spawned a host of imitators, both from the Macfadden camp and elsewhere. It also stimulated sales of Physical Culture itself, which virtually quadrupled, reaching 400,000 by 1926. This was one-fifth the circulation of True Story but still a major seller of the time, if not quite the publication phenomenon which describes True Story. 75 Physical Culture especially was read avidly by a whole generation of boys and
young men across the country. The physical culture way through these journals was offered as inspirational for an appropriate way of life for young American males.

In these influential journals, youth and physical attraction were equated and made into doubled benchmarks for happiness. As in ads, men had to be young and good-looking. Physical Culture was littered with pictures of almost naked but decidedly young-looking men—their ages emphasized in the blurb beneath the pictures—as apparently exemplary examples of physical development, described thus typically as "a sculptural and magnificent photography of a hundred percent physique" or "Leonard St. Leo dancer in the Music Box Revue, presents a fine study of masculine beauty. The pose suggests his exceptional athletic make-up."

To emphasize the youthful theme, a group of Oklahoma high school boys posed quite naked and were photographed from behind following an "Apollo contest."76 "Fatal beauty" was a distinct advantage as was to be "handsome in a tall, slim boyish way with a wonderful lot of black soft hair."77 The hero of one story, "The Price", was "wonderful to look at, so big in body and somehow one knew he was big in mind and soul as well." His eyes were "the eyes of a boy, blue as a cornflower and honest and open as a child’s." To be "startlingly boyish" was an advantage.78

Youth set the pace. Confession magazines featured stories in which an
older man was devalued in comparison with a more youthful counterpart. For example, in one story, seventy-year-old Dascom Fielding persuades the heroine to marry him, but after producing a eugenically defective child who dies, she divorces him and marries a younger man; on the day they marry, Fielding commits suicide clutching his dead son's shoe. In Physical Culture, the value of a man at sixty was based on how much like a twenty-five-year-old he looked. Heaven forbid that one look one's age. Thomas Marvin in True Story's "After the Eleventh Hour," may have had hair sprinkled with gray, "yet he was not old looking." Men, when older, had to try to stay young. One Physical Culturist crooned, "I feel like a youngsters at sixty-nine," while Colonel Henry Stevens of Chicago, at seventy-nine, has "more youth per year than any other man we have met." Dwight Clark was "eighty-nine years young," while underneath a picture of one man was posed the question—"How would you like to look like this at fifty years of age?" Another man was forty-nine years old and "spry as a boy." Further, men were constantly warned in the pages of Macfadden's journal that "Early old age shows at the waistline." Thus, "one must buy a new youth giving belt." An editorial in January 1924 implored:

Young men, do you get up in the morning, look in the mirror and remark how young you are? If not, it will be worth your while to do so. By young men I mean those from forty to a hundred. Look yourself over in the mirror and ask yourself "Am I Getting Old?" If
you are, then decide to drop fifteen to twenty years. You can do it.85

Further, Wainwright Evans explained "Why Athletes Grow Old At Thirty."86 If one followed the Physical Culture way, then "All the fire, snap and sparkle of youth will be yours once more by methods acknowledged superior to everything previously offered."87 Thus, one writer could proclaim—"My youth has come back to me."88 Another claimed that one must maintain "the pep of youth."89 Perhaps one might visit the "Isle of Unchanging Youth?"90 Ultimately, "youthful appearance means popularity."91

Throughout these journals, the need to be young or to stay young was hammered home to readers, a reminder that youth was best able to flourish in the "culture of personality."

Physical attractiveness was central to the Physical Culture ideal, too. Susman has indicated how words like "fascination, stunning, attractive, charming, popular, magnetic" epitomized the ideology of personality. Nowhere is this clearer than in Macfadden. If a man followed the Physical Culture way, "those who now laugh at you and smile will envy you for your physical charms."92 The heroine of True Story's "For His Brother's Sins" admires the hero, Jasper, because he is "a brilliant talker and very popular."93 Rose, in "The Heart of a Wife," meets Larry at a wild party; he is "fascinating and handsome."94 Because of this he could "vamp any woman this side of heaven." Though Apollo was
a "lady-bug," he was still "a fascinating devil." In "The Price of Fame," the heroine became a movie actress and she ambiguously enters into an affair with her Director who carried a "peculiar fascination, a thrill of exquisite delight when he touched her hand," though this was "followed by an aftermath of revulsion." Ultimately, in these magazines, what was most important was to have "good looks and charm": one must be "charming and fascinating." One needed a "magnetic touch" to be physically attractive in the culture of personality. For ultimately "personality" meant "sex appeal." So powerful was this force that in Lover or Husband, the heroine vowed that having been scorned by a flighty but attractive lover she:

... would marry the first man who asked me, provided he did not carry that sex appeal.

In "Just a Showgirl," the heroine speculated as to whether or not it was "the hero’s physical attractiveness" that came under my notice first," while another heroine lamented that that which she thought was love was "nothing but physical attraction."

Those men who did have sex appeal were compared favorably against those who did not, that is the "dead wood." One should on no account be a "fat boob" or a "young hippo." Professor Henry Titus declared that his graduates "were not merely pretty boys. They are strong." However, if one worked out properly, one might see "the Regeneration of a
'Big Slob.'  

One writer compared himself unfavorably as "fat and bald" to the hero "with curly hair and soulful eyes." Another writer, Todd Robbins, even felt it necessary to prove his own credentials for writing an appropriate Physical Culture story by posing in the nude in the pages of the paper.

He thus followed the lead of Macfadden himself, who endeavored to practice what he preached by becoming the living embodiment of the Physical Culture ideal. He would pose in the pages of his journal practically nude as the epitome of youth and beauty—well into his sixties. One eyewitness reported that:

"When lecturing Macfadden would employ his well-defined figure to fortify his message. Turning from the audience, the well-conditioned crusader would keep time with his back muscles to the music of the orchestra. It was all very impressive to the viewer."

He had, as one commentator noted, a "magnificent body."

According to his biographer, Clifford Waugh, "If my friends should refer to me as the old editor...I want them to understand that I am still YOUNG. (he was fifty)" Macfadden carried his own obsession with youth to absurd extremes. When he married for the fourth time at the age of eighty in 1948, he would allow only his youngest child—at 23—to attend for fear people would think him an old man.
Death was of course the achilles heel of such an ethos. When Theodore Roosevelt died in February 1919 at only sixty two, *Physical Culture* asked: "Did Mr. Roosevelt’s extra weight in any way lessen his length of life? What were the causes of his untimely death?" More sinister was the response of the Macfadden publications to the death of Valentino. When Valentino died in October, 1926, *Physical Culture* ran an article on "What Really Killed Valentino," articulating the shock that many experienced when such a leading exponent of the emerging cult of youth and beauty for men had died, especially when it was revealed that he "had not taken such good care of himself as he should have done" (this despite the fact that the star had died of peritonitis). But most bizarre was the reaction of Macfadden’s outrageous paper, the New York *Evening Graphic*. In a furor of excitement, on the day the star was operated on for his illness, the paper featured on the front page a composite of Valentino about to be wheeled into the operating theatre complete with the caption:

> To carry out the romantic theme a nurse is depicted caressing his head, while another uses the occasion to smile her prettiest.

On the star’s death the following day, the paper composed an imaginary picture of the dead star lying in state from a photo of his head and the body of a newsman.
Popular literature, too, accelerated the demands on men by constantly emphasizing the need for "sex attraction" in a relationship. In the *Plastic Age*, the central character, Hugh, finds what he thought was love to be "just sex attraction." Marriage reformer Ernest Groves noted that modern marriage had a tendency to "magnify sex attraction." For reformer Ira Wile:

> Nature... has endowed practically every man and woman with a certain amount of appeal for the other sex, like the pull between two electronically charged magnetic coils... We hear a lot about this sex appeal... Sex appeal so called is made up of many elements. There are not only the physical lures—the call of glowing health, beautiful face and body—but the emotional and intellectual charm, the attraction of mind and personality, which may be almost completely divorced from physical appeal.

The combination of youth and sex appeal was a larger cultural ideal. But Macfadden's journals added a crucial specific element to the ideology of masculinity, that is, the equation of "sex appeal" and manliness with muscles. *Physical Culture* is famous as the pioneer of the physique magazines of the thirties, forties and fifties and hence it featured models and readers displaying their physical development. This was self-consciously presented as worthy of emulation to middle-class youth. For example, the photo of one Mr. Frank Sobota presented "a pleasing combination of muscular development and artistic posing." Admirably, Mr. Andrews "gained twenty pounds of solid muscle in four
years." There was a sculptural beauty in the symmetrical development of Gaspar Di Giovanna of Brooklyn, NY. "Surely this is Apollo come to life again," declared one blurb. Of the athlete Adolph Nordquest, it was written:

I know other strong men and athletes with arms, chests and legs just as big as Nordquest's. I know men who excel his measurements in parts of the body, but I have never seen in the flesh or in portraits more than half a dozen men who approach him in all around development.

The pages of Physical Culture were full of vivid descriptions of male physiques. Men were advised on "strengthening the shoulders--Exercises by Clevio Massimo." The Milo Bar-Bell company declared "We can make you the man we would like you to be." "Have you a body to be proud of?" asked one ad written by an exercise specialist. Earl Liederman, perhaps the most advertised strong man of the twenties, declared, "When I'm through with you you're a real man, the kind that can prove it." And Charles Atlas, later so extensively advertised, emerged at this time, too. In March, 1926, the journal sponsored a male beauty contest:

Remember the purpose is not the frivolous one of gratifying personal vanity. Not merely that of decorating our pages in future with beautiful photographs. The purpose is that of improving the human race, holding forth ideals that will stimulate personal improvement and so help us to make the human race what it should be and may be.
In each and every issue, Macfadden advertised his *Manhood and Marriage*, in which he expounded further on the equation between true manhood and the ideology of physical culture:

Am I a complete man? It is certainly a good plan for a young man when he is doubtful upon such an important matter to ask himself some very plain questions. He should have a good plain talk with himself. "Do I possess all the strength health and manhood that I can attain? Have I wasted my vitality and vigor? In what way am I wanting? In what way am I defective? Am I doing all I can to build up superior virility? Am I as good a man as I can be?"

One reader agreed with Macfadden: "I believe we should prepare ourselves for companionship, so I have tried to make an all-round man of myself, swimming, diving, wrestling, light gymnastics and walking are my physical enjoyment." "Physical attraction" was indeed seen as being synonymous with muscularity, and he who lacked muscles was lacking in manhood. But what was so strikingly different about Macfadden's philosophy in this period was the equation of sexual success and indeed of sex appeal with the right physical attributes. In the 1920s, Macfadden was able to be more explicit than he had been earlier about the chances for sexual success which following his strategies offered. Hence he helped accelerate sexual demands on middle-class men. Material geared to the Victorian lower classes had carried such a message, as did material available in
the "Victorian underworld." But middle-class readers especially knew that, ultimately, such material was salacious and improper. If it was widely available, the message was firmly countered by the prescription that "character" was most important in attaining a wife. Yet never was such material so respectable openly and widely-read as it was in the emerging "culture of personality" and in the youth subculture that represented its cutting edge. Not only was Macfadden at his commercial peak after World War One, but also he got into far less trouble with the censors and keepers of the moral flame in the 1920s than he had before the breaching of the "conspiracy of silence" after 1910. If when MacFadden first began he was an oddity, by the 1920s he was mainstream—especially among youth.

Thus, by the 1920s, in True Story and Physical Culture Macfadden was able to emphasize ever more explicitly that it was always the physical culturist who got the girl. In the story "Her Morning After," the male character is described as having a "sleek plumpness" that "struck just the wrong note." Hence he is rejected. The tale, "A Greased Pig and My Romance," is the story of how an "all round physically perfect man" finds his feminine ideal. In "Love's Turmoil," Roscoe Warren, the physical culturist with the "rough bristles of his cheek" and the "stiff strong beard," was successful with women. And in Physical Culture, Jack "Cyclone" Adams, Athlete Detective, is described on account of his
physical perfection as a "demi-God, to be looked up to, worshipped and admired." Thus, when he meets the beautiful Elsie: "Both of them were embarrassed for a moment, but desire was too strong for any convention and they were in each other's arms." Macfadden gave advice in the pages of Physical Culture on selecting a husband:

Don't marry a clothing dummy, a mannikin, a make-believe. But when you are looking for a husband, beware of the white-collar weaklings. They may be alright in the drawing room. Their English may be perfect. But for husbands Ah that's different. (sic)

But perhaps more disturbing for men were articles like "I Want a Physical Culture Man says this Modern Girl":

Because I have read so many articles by both men and women on the modern girl, and very few, if any on that great and wonderful creation, man, I am impelled to write this letter.
1. He must be physically clean ... But he MUST be an athlete.
2. He must be mentally strong.

Further, in the November, 1918, issue of Physical Culture, men were offered "Her Choice Between a Man and a Weakling." Thus, Macfadden's message was clear and unequivocal as it perfectly fitted the emerging "culture of personality." Men were valued increasingly for what was outward, superficial, impermanent, and fleeting. Not only were men expected to be young, to remain young, to be physically attractive, and magnetic and to have sex appeal, they also were to be muscular—like
movie stars. If they failed to live up to this ideal, they rightly
deserved ridicule and further risked sexual failure. Again, Macfadden's
slogan rings down to us over the decades--"Weakness is a crime."

Another interesting component of the cultural ideal was the
idealization of particular lower class and immigrant styles of
masculinity, a sharp and striking contrast to the devaluation of working-
class male sexuality in Victorian America. From a wide variety of
sources, not just from the Macfadden publications but from popular and
periodical literature as well, there emerges evidence that society
spokespersons were infatuated with what were perceived as working class
and immigrant styles of masculinity. In Macfadden’s publications,
lower class or immigrant characters were shown to have more sex appeal
and to somehow be more naturally able to live up to the physical culture
ideal. In one story, Jones, "just a roughneck," is able to win the heart
of the woman he helps with her medical bills even though she is middle
class. In "Two Wives and One Roof," a man "of wild mountain strain"
wins a "city girl’s heart."

He looked down at me with his clear-seeing mountain
eyes and I caught my breath with sheer delight. He
stood six feet in his stockings with hair black as the
trunks of the mountain pines and blue eyes under black
brows. In his open rough corduroys, with his shirt
open at the throat, he stood awkwardly silent after
that first question.
Also, in "Through Many Waters," the burly sun-tanned sailor, Bill, after disappearing for years, wins the hand of the heroine over Paul, who was "not a big strong fellow."\textsuperscript{141} Further, in "Picking a Husband for Helen," Helen chooses the lower-class Bolton Wainwright over the middle-class Courtney Rhodes after the former saves her after a boating accident. Wainwright pleads "O No, You wouldn't want her to marry a roughneck like me. And she wouldn't even." Yet her brother insisted that: "Anybody can see that you're square and brave and kind and loyal. I guess there aren't many you can say as much for. I've never met a man I'd give my sister to as quickly as I would to you."\textsuperscript{142}

And immigrant underworld lower-class styles of masculinity were also shown in very attractive ways. In the "Man with the Club Thumb," the sinister but irresistible Italian Victoire "airily puffed his cigarette and eyed the women gathered in this fashionable restaurant for afternoon tea:

If his glances were not met with a cold stare, he would preen himself for their fuller inspection; never doubting that their verdict could be aught else than 'superb'.

And his tight-fitting clothes set off his slim figure to perfection. His oily black hair fringed a high, protruding forehead; while large ears set none too close to his head contrasted sharply with an insignificant nose."\textsuperscript{143}
Italians in particular were the focus of this infatuation. In "Her Awakening," a young divorcee meets an Italian, Raoul, at a show. They have a torrid and passionate relationship but when she suggests marriage to him he responds:

Why do you wish to take all the romance out of our beautiful love for each other? Do you know that romance ends when marriage vows are said?144

Chastened by his lack of commitment, Frances returns to her husband. In "Married for Love But. . . ," another Italian, Beppe, is able to awaken the passion of one Mrs. Williams, a feat which her husband Henry can no longer accomplish. They meet when Mrs. Williams goes to the movies alone. This "young fellow, quite handsome," steals her away from her husband for a while. The lower class figure is often best able to live up to the "physical culture" ideal and is therefore most successful at getting the girl.145

This theme of the more sexually potent lower-class male is repeated in other popular literature as well. Carl Van Vechten commented on the "sex appeal" of Gunnar O'Grady, an acrobat in his novel, Firecrackers. O'Grady is presented as an ideal of manhood in comparison with his suspiciously indecisive stockbroker friend Paul:

The attitude of the young man and his appearance would have fitted into a fantastic sylvan bullet. His hair was black and sleek, like the coat of a seal just emerged from the ocean, his figure slender, lithe and
taut, giving at once the impression of a distinguished grace and a superior strength. 146

Further, there was

". . . the refined beauty of his face, cut as cleanly as a roman sculptor might have carved it from marble . . ." 147

The attractive lower class flapper, Wintergreen, refuses to sleep with Paul but succumbs to Gunnar. Thus, the contrast could not have been greater with the Victorian devaluation of working-class male sexuality. For in the emerging consumer culture, demands on men were accelerated, too, as writers suggested that the secret of sexual attractiveness was to be like what they saw as working-class male sexuality.

Thus the emerging "culture of personality" imposed new demands on men in the most intimate areas of their lives. Wherever they turned, be it to the Macfadden publications or advertisements, they were confronted with ideals which stressed that men should be valued for attaining and maintaining sexual attractiveness and youth, a goal which, ultimately, all men must fail to realize. Under the old Victorian system, the young man who came to call had to project an aura of respectability and solidity and permanence. He had to look like a good potential patriarch, a solid breadwinner for his wife and future family, but he did not have to worry so much about his "sex appeal" as he did in the twentieth century "culture of personality." For casual dating and for the
romantic, gently-eroticized styles of courtship that were well in the process of development by the 1920s, having "sex appeal" was a major asset in a competitive game.\textsuperscript{148}

While some aspects of the sexual revolution no doubt benefitted men, the new sexual demands undermined male power by putting a premium on youth and good looks for men, too, as well as for women. Doubtless the demands were less accentuated for men than for women. Nor should their impact on men be exaggerated: they may have applied in dating, but when women were questioned about the characteristics of ideal husbands, they deemphasized looks, although they mentioned them as a criterion in choosing men.\textsuperscript{149} If the emphasis on male appearance was all the rage in New York, it was new in Middletown; but increasingly, it is clear, men were expected to have "sex appeal." Physical considerations thus loomed larger than ever in the ideals of what constituted an attractive man in this culture of personality and consumption.
FOOTNOTES


2 Jo Paoletti, "Changes in the Masculine Image."


5 Ben B. Lindsey and Wainwright Evans, The Revolt of Modern Youth (NY: Boni and Liveright, 1925), 13.

6 Ibid.

7 I have examined periodical literature in these years under several headings, esp. "youth", "men", "husbands" as found in the Reader's Guide; I have examined, too, advertisements in the huge-selling mass circulation
magazines of the 1920s: the American, the Saturday Evening Post, Collier's, Literary Digest, Life and the New Yorker, as well as the YMCA journal, Association Men; forty popular novels of the type Peter Filene has termed "fictional histories"; Benarr Macfadden's sex confession magazine True Story from Volume 1 in 1919 until Volume 15 in 1926, and his Physical Culture from the years 1919 to 1926.

8 Warren Susman, in "Personality and the Making of Twentieth Century Culture," uses Fairbanks as typical of the "culture of personality," too, but my illustrations are original ones and add to our understanding of this important figure in the twentieth century social construction of masculinity. My discussion of Fairbanks is also indebted to Lary May, Screening Out the Past: The Birth of Mass Culture and the Motion Picture Industry (NY: Oxford University Press, 1980); quotation is from James Oppenheim, How to be Happy though Married (Girard Kansas, Haldeman-Julius Co., 1927).

9 Physical Culture, November 1921, 21.

10 Ibid.

11 Physical Culture, February 1923, 27.


13 Life, June 25, 1925, 32.

14 American, August 1925, 141.

15 New Yorker, September 27, 1928, 89.

16 New Yorker, January 5, 1929, 91.

17 Literary Digest, April 24, 1926, 56.

18 Ibid., April 10, 1926, 59.

19 Life, June 15, 1922, 32.

20 Ibid., May 22, 1926.

Perhaps the most compelling area of recent American twentieth century cultural history has been work on America as a culture of consumption, provocatively gathered together in the essays in the 1983 volume, *The Culture of Consumption* Richard Wightman Fox and T. J. Jackson Lears, eds., (NY: Pantheon, 1983), but heavily influenced by the insights of the late Raymond Williams (see especially his *Culture and Society*, [London: Croon Helm, 1958]), and of David Potter (see *People of Plenty* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954]), and more recently of the work of the sociologist Ewen cited above. Perhaps the most fruitful aspect of the adoption of this framework for interpreting American culture has been the full grasping of the centrality of advertising as ideology in American life, and especially of its intrusion into personal life. See especially the studies by Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream, 1920-1940*, (Berkeley, LA,: University of California Press, 1985) and Jackson Lears, "Some Versions of Fantasy: Towards a Cultural History of American Advertising, 1880-1930," *Prospects*, 9 (1984): 349-405. The implications of advertising for sexuality are suggested but not fully realized in these works. However, John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman have recently placed the emergence of advertising as a full-fledged industry in its own right in the 1920s in its context as helping provoke the roots of what they usefully call the modern "sexualized society" at this time. (History of Sexuality in America [NY: Harper and Row, 1988]). Advertisers, by putting "sex on display," stimulated desire in the consumer, and they also stirred up insecurities about sexual attractiveness (though D'Emilio/Freedman confine their analysis of this to women).

22Quoted in Jackson Lears, "Some Versions of Fantasy: Towards a Cultural History of Advertising, 1880-1930".


24*American*, December 1925, 203.

25*Collier's*, July 3, 1926, 38.

26*Literary Digest*, April 10, 1926, 74.

27e.g. *Life*, October 16, 1931, 17.
28 Ibid.

29 *American*, September 1925, 80.

30 *e.g., Saturday Evening Post*, July 12, 1919, 140.

31 Ibid.

32 *Association Men*, November 1926, 423.

33 *Collier's*, August 14, 1926, 33.

34 *Physical Culture*, June 1927, 67.

35 *American*, July 1925, 130.


37 *Saturday Evening Post*, October 11, 1919, 86.

38 *Life*, April 23, 1925, 3.

39 *Vanity Fair*, June 1925, 79.

40 *American*, September 1925, 136.

41 *Life*, January 1, 1925, 29.

42 Ibid. 1923, 88.

43 *Vanity Fair*, May 1925, 117.

44 *Association Men*, December 1928, 327.

45 *Saturday Evening Post*, November 15, 1919, 108.

46 *Association Men*, December 1928, 327.

47 *Collier's*, July 3, 1926.

48 *Physical Culture*, November 1926, 5.

49 *New Yorker*, September 15, 1928.
50 Roland Marchand, Advertising the American Dream, 10.

51 Vanity Fair, April 1925, 21.

52 Life, September 4, 1924, 31.

53 Saturday Evening Post, July 10, 1925, 33.

54 Ibid., October 11, 1919, 14.

55 Saturday Evening Post, July 31, 1920, 16.

56 Ibid., November 1, 1919, 48.

57 Vanity Fair, May 1925, 104.


60 For this information, I am indebted to Jo Paoletti, "Changes in the Masculine Image, passim."


62 Physical Culture, July 1925, 25.


64 "Solomon's Sartorial Glory" 56.

65 Nystrom, Economics of Fashion, 345.

66 Samuel Schmhausen, Why We Misbehave (NY: Macaulay, 1928), 32.

67 Life, November 6, 1924, 38.

68 David Seabury, "Bogy of Sex," Century, September 1927, 228.

Warner Fabian, Flaming Youth (NY: Boni and Liveright, 1923), 57 and 25.


G. Stanley Hall, Senescence: The Last Stage of Life (NY: Appleton, 1922), 366.

E. W.Fielding, Man's Sexual Life (Girard, Kansas, Haldeman-Julius, 1924), 57-58.


Writing a "true story" became something of a joke among journalists in the 1920s. There were tales the tormented flappers, supposedly the writers of the confessions, were in fact sedate old gentlemen. See the several exposes of Macfadden, especially Mary Macfadden and Emile Gavreau, Dumbbells and Carrot Strips: The Story of Bernarr Macfadden (NY: Henry Holt, 1953), a revealing and quite reliable expose by his former wife; and Joseph Hershey's Pulpwood Editor (NY: Frederick A. Stokes, 1937). On Macfadden see also Harvey Green, Fit for America: Health, Fitness and American Society (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988) and Christina Simmons, "The Dream World of Confession Magazines, 1920-40" Paper Presented at the Fifth Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, June 1981.

These figures are from the Ayers Directory. Physical Culture's readership was solidly middle class. Macfadden was an important cultural figure in the 1900s and even in the 1890s (though not so in the 1910s) largely through this journal, which has been identified as one aspect of the masculinity crisis of the progressive era, that is the accelerating set of concerns about the definition of masculinity both physical and spiritual which accompanied the closing of the frontier, the growth of bureaucracies, and the rise of the first wave of New Women. See especially John Higham, "The Reorientation of American Culture in the 1890s," cited above, a theme developed by Dubbert and Filene in their surveys. Of course, Macfadden caused anxieties at this time but not necessarily about sex, because in the early years of the century he was not able to be as sexually explicit as he was in the looser atmosphere of
the 1920s when I am arguing that he gained renewed cultural importance--
and certainly a wider readership--in the context of the success of True
Story and of the more sexually demanding New Woman of the 1920s. True
Story has rightly been associated with a strong readership among working-
class women. However, in its early years, it was widely read by men
too. Certainly, ads in the journal were aimed at men and ads appeared in
Physical Culture for True Story. (e.g. p. 31 April 1919). In one study
of high school students in Columbus, Ohio, several of the students of
both sexes placed True Story on a list of their favorite magazines,
though several others were found to have crossed it out probably on
account of its low intellectual content and reputation. (Reginald
Stevens Kimball, "What Magazines do High School Students Read?" School
Milwaukee, it was the most popular journal among both boys and girls.
(See Gray and Munroe, Reading Habits and Interests of Adults [(MacMillan,
1930)] I am arguing, too, that the readership crept up into the middle
classes as is suggested by its wide readership in Middletown.

76Physical Culture, November 1925, 41 and December 1923 35.

77"His Fatal Beauty," True Story, July 1922; "When Memories Burn,"
August 1923, 79.


80"After the Eleventh Hour," True Story, April 1923, 74.

81Physical Culture, November 1920, 11.

82Ibid., June 1918, 80.

83Ibid., November 1925, 129.

84Ibid., September 1925, 17.

85Ibid., January 1924, 66.

86Physical Culture, May 1923, 36.

87Ibid., January 1926, 13.
88Ibid., November 1923, 38.

89Ibid., November 1925, 41.

90Ibid., February 1928, 43.

91Ibid., February 1921, 69.

92Physical Culture, June 1921, 95.

93"For His Brother's Sins," True Story, October 1923, 21.

94"The Heart of a Wife," True Story, December 1923 to January 1924, 56.

95"The Lady Bug," True Story, September 1923, 64.

96"The Price of Fame," True Story, February 1925, 93.

97"The Penalty He Paid," True Story, February 1920, 17; "Rainbow's End: Life is Sometimes What We Make It," September 1920, 45.

98"How I Lost My Husband," True Story, July 1920, 65; "Lover or Husband?" ibid., June 1923, 3.

99"Lover or Husband?" Ibid., June 1923, 33.

100"Just a Showgirl," True Story, November 1923, 23; "Can a Woman Come Back?" May 1924, 73.


102"A Life for a Love," True Story, October 1924, 59; Physical Culture, November 1926, 113.

103Physical Culture, January 1924, 117.

104Ibid., July 1920, 21.

105"Bullets and Oysters," True Story, February 1920, 34.
108. Ibid.
109. Ibid., 175.
110. Ibid., 221.


117. *Physical Culture*, November 1918, 36.
118. Ibid.

120. Ibid., January 1922, 22.
121. Ibid., March 1926, 103.
122. Ibid., June 1924, 17.
123. Ibid., October 1923, 23.
124 Ibid., January 1926, 87.

125 Ibid., March 1926, 103.


127 *Physical Culture*, November 1923, 92.


130 "Her Morning After," *True Story*, June 1922, 19.


133 *Physical Culture*, June 1918, 71.

134 Ibid.

135 *Physical Culture*, March 1925, 62.

136 Ibid., March 1922, 66.

137 Ibid., Nov. 1918, 10.

138 This tantalizingly suggests that the rich urban world of working class amusements discussed elsewhere in the dissertation and examined by Kathy Peiss, Joanne Meyerowitz, and Lewis Erenberg (cited above) were beginning to intrigue higher social groups; and it suggests ways by which these styles of amusements were spread to these groups by the 1920s.


143 "The Man With the Club Thumb," *True Story*, June 1920, 37-43.

144 "Her Awakening," *True Story*, July 1920, 41.


146 Van Vechten, *Firecrackers*.

147 Ibid.

148 In her study of twentieth century courtship convention, Beth Bailey discusses in detail (Ch. III) the competitive nature of courtship between the two world wars. This, of course, develops the analysis of Willard Waller in his classic, "The Rating and Dating Complex" *The American Sociological Review*, 2, (1937).

149 There were several studies of "Ideal Husbands" in *True Story* magazine; see also Paul Popenoe, *Modern Marriage* (NY: Macmillan, 1925), 82.
CHAPTER III

Models of Masculinity in the World of Youth,
1910-1930

We have seen the emergence within the incipient youth culture of the concept of an attractive American man who was at once young and blessed with "magnetism" and "sex appeal." This concept of what constituted an attractive man, previously most characteristic of the Victorian underworld, now entered the public sphere, accelerating sexual demands on men. But if the emerging culture of personality redefined concepts of male attractiveness, it also redefined ideals of male behavior. The popular literature of the youth culture spawned two new styles of masculinity, the male flapper and the tramp Bohemian, which I shall explore in this chapter.

The male flapper of popular novels of the 1920s was in effect an attempt to fuse the Victorian Christian Gentleman with the increasing sexual demands of the culture of personality. The male flapper was coy,
sensitive, gentle, but was capable of being sexual. He was ultimately responsible but hinted at irresponsibility and unwillingness to commit himself to a relationship. He was also capable of violence, not in defense of women, but rather against them. Thus, despite his superficial resemblance to the Christian Gentleman, he did not play the role of the foil and check to the second style of the youth culture, the tramp Bohemian. This model celebrated overt irresponsibility and violence against women in a blatant glorification of the Victorian underworld styles of masculinity. These two models of manliness represented the very public ideology of the emerging hetersexual youth culture. Such models were increasingly presented to young American men as appropriate styles of behavior with middle-class women. Within the peer-led youth culture, these styles set the pace and the trends, competing with and increasingly gaining ascendancy over the older Victorian styles. Put simply, the literature of the youth culture publicly advocated models of masculinity and masculine behavior towards women that had previously not been respectable.

The roots of the new public masculine models lay in the Bohemian sexual avant garde in New York’s Greenwich Village in the second decade of the twentieth century. In 1959 Henry May focused more precisely on the revolutionary nature of their thinking in *The End of American Innocence*, but this group of artists, intellectuals and Bohemians has
always been the focus of a great deal of attention.\(^1\) The proliferation of memoirs published in the 1920s and 1930s, and especially *Love in Greenwich Village*, dealt with sexuality.\(^2\) In the second decade of the century, these Bohemian men and women, not yet widely known to the public, were experimenting with the lifestyles and relationships of free love which they were later to celebrate. The subject of sex came up constantly, for example, in the renowned salon of Mabel Dodge Luhan.\(^3\) Here the ideas of Freud and Havelock Ellis, the "free love" ideals of the English socialist Edward Carpenter, and the theories of the Swedish feminist Ellen Key were regularly tabled for discussion.\(^4\) Within the Village, men and women struggled in deadly earnest to overcome their Victorian inhibitions and to practice what the free love advocates demanded of them. But they also looked to the other inhabitants of South Manhattan and to other parts of New York City—to the working-class leisure subculture—for models of sexual behavior that seemed very like those advocated by their European intellectual mentors. Some of them, too, such as Harry Kemp and Clement Wood, were graduates of Macfadden's Physical Culture College. In Greenwich Village, the atmosphere was right for experimental relationships that sought actively to break the bonds of Victorianism—albeit with limited success. A whole host of names stand out, but among the men, Floyd Dell, Max Eastman, Hutchins Hapgood and John Reed remain the most famous.
For intellectual historians, however, one very significant figure was Randolph Bourne, whose 1913 *Youth and Life* celebrated the youthful experience which he himself, because of his various disabilities, was so long denied. Bourne captured the mood and tenor of the Village at this time—and the ethos which it was to help later spread to the larger society. He devalued the old, writing that "Old men cherish a fond delusion that there is something mystically valuable in mere quantity of experience. Now the fact is, of course, it is the young people who have all the really valuable experience."\(^5\) He also recommended a redefinition of morality to suit the needs of youth, writing that "This temperature does not mean the same thing as the rigid self-control that used to be preached. The new morality has a more positive ideal than the rigid mastery which self-control implies."\(^6\) As Gilman Ostrander has pointed out, Bourne was the intellectual precursor of the 1920s "glorification of youth."\(^7\) He was one of the few Bohemians to be intellectually productive in the 'teens, and helped set the stage for the work of his peers after the war.

But until the First World War, the Greenwich Village Bohemians received little public attention. Their great journal, *The Masses*, was not widely read outside of the Village, and their free love antics were not broadcast beyond Washington Square except, perhaps, by way of ridicule. However, the opposition of some of them to the War and their
willingness to stand trial to defend their opinions attracted attention. Further, during the Red Scare following the war, the Bohemians were satirized widely in the popular journals as suspected Bolshevik sympathisers. For example, the *Saturday Evening Post*, in an article entitled "The Parlor Bolshevik. Greenwich Village A.D. 1919," portrayed Jerome and Cuthbert, two emancipated writers of free verse, as effeminate, sloppy, pretentious, and silly:

"Jerome: (a slender young man with a 32 inch chest, a flowing necktie and spots on his vest): 'By George old Chap, there must be an end of all this lying artificially with which we are surrounded etc.'

Cuthbert: (a plump individual with a large bald spot, large pouches under his eyes and a slight lisp): 'I sicken at the blindness of those who will not see the truth etc. etc.'

But the influence of the Greenwich Village Bohemians of the second decade of the twentieth century was to be much more pervasive in the 1920s. For, once the high period of Village life was over, the Villagers settled down to write a series of novels and memoirs in which they regarded themselves as representatives, celebrants, and precursors of the emerging youth culture. In 1921, Carl van Doren identified a series of books which he called the "revolt from the village." Works of this genre—often autobiographical—became standards for the emerging city/college subculture and set the tone for their generation much as *On the Road* or *Catcher in the Rye* did for the 1950s generation of
youth. In this way, the styles and patterns and models of masculinity celebrated in the Village were diffused into the broader culture.

I have analyzed about thirty popular novels which have been widely associated with the youth culture of the 1920s. Obviously, the pace was set by the most famous of all the writers of these works, F. Scott Fitzgerald, whose *This Side of Paradise* (1920) heralded the onset of both the new decade and of the popular novel of the emerging youth culture. But I have also examined the intriguing Floyd Dell, who published his first novel, *Moon-Calf*, in the same year and who was much the most perceptive and prescient commentator on the construction of masculinity at the time. I have further looked at other writers of the genre, including Carl Van Vechten, Stephen Benet, Ludwig Lewisohn, as well as lesser writers who commented on college mores such as Warner Fabian and Percy Marks, in order to gauge from a broad group the developing styles of manliness.

These works, along with the confession magazines, assumed the existence of a heterosocial youth culture. They assumed, too, that the New Man of this culture differed from the Victorian patriarch in that, in tandem with the New Woman, he was capable of being sexual as well as being more democratic. All the novels and the stories featured men whose roles had changed in this direction, and they discussed the implications of the role changes. These novels both affected and reflected the
changes in role. The central question about masculinity which they explored was what was appropriate behavior for men in the modern heterosocial youth culture, which demanded that men be both more sexual and more democratic.  

First of all, the male flapper was self-consciously young. Dell developed such characters in three novels. His hero, Felix Fay, fretted over the desperate search for a woman who "can be talked to and be kissed."  

After kissing, Fay and his girlfriend discussed their positions as members of the younger generation, declaring that "we've scorned the older generation. And we are ashamed, coming back to face them, because we've nothing better really to show for our lives than they have." By the time of Souvenir in 1927, disillusionment and the fear of growing older set in as Felix Fay, like Dell, entered his late thirties. At one point Fay begged his wife: "Don't let me get old." To this she pleaded "Don't let me get old, Felix."  

Dell himself continued to glorify youth, even as he came to fear its irresponsible side. In his Moon-Calf dedication to his wife B. Marie Gage, he referred to "the fantastic beauty of American youth." Further, in his poem, "Christopher Street" he declared: "Rash, rebel children of our time, wild lovers of lost truth, we might not make the immemorial promises of youth."
It was, however, Fitzgerald's Jay Gatsby who has subsequently gained more fame with his tragically adolescent faith that his youth and beauty could be retained by wealth. Yet the most famous lines reflecting the glorification of youthful styles of manliness belong to Gatsby's narrator, Nick Carraway: "I was thirty," he declared, "Before me stretched the portentous, menacing road of a new decade...Thirty--the promise of a decade of loneliness, a thinning list of single men to know, a thinning briefcase of enthusiasm, thinning hair." 19

The male flapper style of masculinity had other components besides its emphasis on the continuation of youth. The male flapper, especially Felix Fay, rejected the traditional prescriptions for an American male and, by not working, tried to prolong the period of youth. As a Bohemian, he sought artistic and creative satisfaction and rejected striving for money. One of his girlfriends asked him:

'Do you want to make a million dollars?' He replied, 'No, of course not.'
'Then you are a freak.' 20

Even more important than his lack of interest in the accumulation of money was his questioning of the work ethic. In the novel Moon-Calf, Fay took a job in a factory where he "was immediately hired at seven dollars a week" so that "a youth who had worked there since the preceding Summer" could "be laid off" as his wage had risen to fifteen dollars a week. 21 Along with his relationship with Comrade Franz Vogelsang, this experience
helped sensitize Fay to socialism. Fay increasingly detested his job as a press-feeder at the printing press, saying that "it was easy enough work but the air of the little coop was filled with the fine floating bronze-dust. He breathed it into his lungs and his throat became sore with it." After a week of this work, Fay rebelled and left the job. He visited Franz, his socialist mentor, who declared: "I've been waiting to see you throw up the job. You hate work, and so you do whatever comes along. That is silly. One must choose. You have begun by choosing to do something." 

Being a socialist involved rebellion against mindless capitalist work and choosing what work one wished to do. Fay chose to become a reporter. When at one point he feared he might lose this job, he visited his friend, Wheels, who told him: "The fact is that what we flatteringly call society insists upon our working. It may appear for a moment to relax that demand but, never fear, it will be at you again." And indeed while Fay rebelled at certain aspects of the demand that he work, he still could say, "The trouble is that the idiotic motions which I have seen going through conduce to my own sense of self-respect." Thus, while Fay became aware of society's prescriptions for him and indulged in limited rebellion against them, he still, ultimately, conformed to the work ethic.
Aside from fearing the ending of the period of youthful manhood, the
male flapper differed from the tramp Bohemian in his extreme
sensitivity. Dell's Fay coyly analyzed and tormented himself over every
move:

He remembered the game of post-office at a children's party to which he had gone and how one of the little
boys had called out and kissed again and again, amidst
much badinage, the same little girl. He would
probably have to take her to parties and behave like
that and the prospect dismayed him infinitely... What
he had read about love in books did not occur to his
mind in this connection; that was of a different
world. Painfully he groped among the thorny
realities, trying to find a path ... Yes, and he
would have to take her home from the party. Then he
would have to stand there by the gate and talk to
her—a long time. And then. O! Yes this
especially—he would have to "treat" her.26

For Fay, sexuality was a complex matter worthy of serious
intellectual attention. Of his girlfriend he said that: "We wanted her
to believe in his theories."27 So intense was he that he often became
deeply depressed. He was bewildered, lost, confused, declaring that "It
was time for him to learn to be like other people—to take such things
more lightly. If he could find the kind of solace which Victor was
suggesting ... and a part of his mind leaped to welcome the thought of
that release from a torment of loneliness."28 Thus, Dell presented in
Felix Fay an image of male youth who was sensitive, gentle, and
vulnerable to the rough and tumble of the modern search for a girl who
could "be talked to and be kissed."
Other male writers developed this theme under the influence of Dell and Fitzgerald. The hero, Hugh, in Percy Mark’s *The Plastic Age* was an especially good example of the male flapper genre. He displayed sensitivity and guilt about his actions with women during the period of "play-need" before marriage, refusing to discuss his behavior with his male friends. He mused that while "He told them most of it, especially about the dance [he] neglected to mention the kiss. Shyness overcame any desire that he had to strut. Besides, there was something about that kiss that made it impossible to tell anyone, even Carl." 29 Hugh was so upset about the kiss that he even wished at one point to cry. This would have meant breaking one of the greatest taboos. But he was not quite able to shed tears: as he said, he "wanted to cry; he had never wanted so much to cry—and he couldn’t. There were no tears." 30 Yet Marks had established his sensitivity.

Other popular novels of the time also advocated this style of the sensitive male flapper. Thus, in Stephen Benet’s *The Beginning of Wisdom*, the hero Phillip was described as "the thirteenth currant bun in the baker’s dozen" but was "sensitive worshipping beauty, humor, and friendliness as a Parsee worships the sun." 31 Ludwig Lewisohn’s *Stephen Escott*, like Felix Fay, was tormented by his sexuality. He wrote that "Since all the moral ideas amid which I had been brought up and to which I had no reason not to consent were wholly at variance with human nature
and rigidly refused to take it into account, the result of my inner life was shame and confusion.”³² Later, Lewisohn was quite explicit as to what this involved, pleading that he "had been wretchedly lonely, unmothered, cut loose from human ties; I was without admitting it to myself, sex-starved; more than that; nothing had fed the sexual self-estimation of the budding man.”³³ Escott traveled, like Fay before him, to New York’s Bohemia, where he explained the reason for his difficulties:

But I was in reality an underdeveloped and inexperienced country boy. All the influences of my life had been in favor of the frugal, the repressive, the stripped and the decent. I instinctively identified all that I saw on Broadway with the life of sin, of drunkenness, of death.³⁴

Like Fay, this sensitive young man found his sexuality a source of torment and anxiety. Fitzgerald’s Amory Blaine, from This Side of Paradise, displayed not only this sensitivity but gentleness as well. He was smitten with a "Puritan conscience" which "at fifteen . . . made him consider himself a great deal worse than the other boys. . . ." so that he was disturbed when he "saw girls doing things that even in his memory would have been impossible.”³⁵ This did not, as it turned out, prevent him from indulging in pleasures, but his guilt did not diminish at all.
If the male flapper was youthful and sensitive, he was also more democratic in his relations with women. Dell, as ever, set the pace. The ideal woman for the male flapper was a girl who could "be talked to and be kissed"\textsuperscript{36} For Dell, a relationship of companionship and of "friendship" replaced Victorian patriarchal roles.\textsuperscript{37} According to Stephen in \textit{The Beginning of Wisdom}, one of the criteria for the male flapper was to have a "genius for comradeship."\textsuperscript{38} In Katherine Brush's \textit{Young Man of Manhattan}, the hero pleaded with his girlfriend that, should they get married, he would not be "jealous," but, above all, would not be "domineering."\textsuperscript{39} For the male flapper must not only be able to discuss "the sunset" with his girlfriend, like Dell's couple from \textit{Janet March}, Jack and Pansy, but also "the universe," that is, they must be intellectual equals.\textsuperscript{40} In Ludwig Lewisohn's \textit{Stephen Escott}, one of the characters, David, warned Stephen Escott of his choice of wife that "the modern man wants more in the way of intellectual sympathy from his wife than that type of girl can give."\textsuperscript{41} As a result Escott did not marry this girl. In this way, in the popular novels of the youth culture of the 1920s, the Victorian patriarch was firmly laid to rest. The male flapper had to be democratic in his relations with women.

The male flapper still remained interesting because he more than hinted that he feared commitment. Dell discussed at length the problem of what he called men's "play-need," by which he meant a period of
experimenting with different relationships with women. Writing retrospectively in the 1920s, he focused in the Felix Fay trilogy, as in his other work, on the dangers of this period and how it tended to encourage irresponsibility in men, and thus aggravate the rejection of the central expectation that they get married and become breadwinners. Yet he recognized the value to Fay of the period of "play-need," and in his discussion of this phase of Fay’s life, before his marriage, mainly in Moon-Calf, he helped develop this youthful masculine ideal. Fay moved from one brief intense involvement to another, torn between the ultimate urge to commit himself and his wish for freedom. Of one relationship, he thought that "She is right. She wants her happiness now. Why don’t I? It’s so easy to fall in love. I’m more than half in love with her now and she with me. That’s why we’re quarreling. We want each other. Well, why don’t we take each other?" But Fay was not ready to commit himself. At twenty, he embarked on an affair with a thirty-five-year-old woman. Next he dated a woman he met in an amusement park, whom he decided he loved. For indeed the period of "play-need" was geared towards the ultimate goal of the attainment of love. All the same, even here, Fay hesitated to commit himself, stating that "Yet even as he thought of her, his mind braced itself, would not quite surrender to the profound restfulness of happiness, but held itself erect and proud as though indeed his soul perceived in her a beautiful and sweet
antagonism." He knew that although this was the first time he was to fall in love, it would not be his last. When he returned to Chicago after the end of the relationship, he discussed his attitude, declaring that "he did not want to fall in love, though he knew himself to be dangerously susceptible at this time." But, ultimately, he did settle down, albeit in what turned out to be a disastrous marriage, indeed, as the title of one of the novels would have it, a *Briary-Bush*. For when he married Rose-Ann, he rejected the freedom of the period of "play-need" as irresponsible by exclaiming that "freedom . . . It's not a nice word, not a pretty word . . . to me . . . don't offer me freedom, Rose-Ann." For the male flapper was differentiated from the tramp Bohemian in that he was, ultimately, a conformist who would eventually settle down.

Fitzgerald's Amory Blaine also insisted on having a good time; so unwilling to commit himself was he that his lover Rosalind "contemplated not marrying him for reliable Dawson Ryder." Like Fay, Hugh in the *Plastic Age* was unwilling to commit himself during the period of "play-need," declaring that "it doesn't seem quite right when I don't really love her." When he kissed his girlfriend for the last time before going to college, "he had a distinct feeling of relief. Well, that would be off his mind for a while anyway." Something prevented him from committing: "I don't know what love is. I can't find out." Hugh's ultimate goal, like Fay's, however, was love. Hugh declared:
"Whether love was something more than sexual or not, he wanted something more than that; his every instinct demanded something more." And by the end of the novel, he had regained his self-respect and had learned to love. While he was mildly irresponsible, ultimately he aimed at responsibility.

In the case of Lewisohn's hero Stephen Escott, it was only when his first wife Dorothy died that he was able to satisfy his "play-need," the lack of which had caused serious difficulties in his marital relationship. Through his girlfriend, Beatrice, he was able to satisfy this urge. She was experienced, having had many lovers. She could practice freedom only because of male willingness to accept women's right to it. This New Man of the world of youth was therefore the appropriate companion to the New Woman. Confirming this, Lewisohn wrote that "The casual man was necessary, doubtless. Without him her triumph could not exist."

But an emphasis on male sensitivity and democratic relations with women did not preclude aggressiveness and even violence. Male behavior could easily deteriorate into violence. Edith Summers Kelley's beautiful and moving Weeds featured the tragic decline of a youthful and idealistic marriage. The hero, Jerry, on being reduced to drunken dissipation, confronted his wife:
With a thick curse he sprang up, wrenched the stove lighter from her hand and flung it to the other end of the room. It fell into a pan of milk and the milk splashed in every direction. Then, grasping her by the shoulders he began to shake her. He shook her so violently that her teeth chattered and her furious screams of rage came in a shrill tremulo hideous to hear. 54

Dell would never have had his male flapper behave in this way. But it did not take long for Fitzgerald's heroes to become angry with their flappers. Anthony Patch, in The Beautiful and Damned, knew what he wanted--to assert his will against "this cool and imperious girl", to obtain with one magnificent effort a "mastery." 55 And indeed in an intense fight on a railroad station he succeeded: "Now if he wished he might laugh. The test was done and he had sustained his will with violence. Let leniency walk in the wake of victory." 56

In this way the male flapper of 1920s popular literature represented a genuine attempt on the part of male writers to create a New Man to accompany the New Woman. He was in some ways a direct descendant of the Christian Gentleman, especially in his gentleness and sensitivity. As such, he has to be seen as an attempt on the part of these writers to continue that tradition of manhood in the context of the youth culture and the New Woman. But the male flapper's very self-conscious youthfulness was the key to understanding how the model differed from the genre of the Christian Gentlemen. For, far from being repressed, the
male flapper was intent on sexual exploration and emphasized the period of "play-need." If, like the Christian Gentleman, he was, at least ultimately determined to be responsible, this could be delayed. If the male flapper was somehow more interesting in the light subversiveness of his ambivalence about commitment and conformity to the breadwinner role, then, unlike the Christian Gentleman, he was more democratic and companionable with women. But, in the final analysis, he remained firmly dominant and capable of violence against women, which a Christian Gentleman would never have considered except in order to protect a woman.

Thus, this New Man was a very precarious construct, caught, on the one hand, by Victorian demands for gentleness and sensitivity and, on the other, by the greater demands for sexual expressiveness of the youth culture. In many ways, this model can be seen as an attempt to convert an essentially Victorian man into one more suitable for the modern world. But, as the male flapper lacked the force of tradition behind him, it was all too likely that men would choose the second great ideal of masculinity, one which drew directly on primitivism.

The tramp Bohemian ideal represented not only a direct idealization of underworld styles of masculinity but a specific adaptation of those styles for the middle class. Floyd Dell, the best advocate of the sensitive male flapper Bohemian style, was also responsible in another context for the idealization of the tramp style. Dell entitled his bona
fide autobiography *Intellectual Vagabondage*. He also published a well-known story, "Hallelujah, I’m a Bum," which celebrated the life of the tramp. He quoted from the popular song:

Hallelujah, I’m a Bum
Hallelujah, bum again.
Hallelujah, give us a handout.
Revive us again.\textsuperscript{57}

Jasper Weed, the hero, took on perhaps the most distinctive feature of this style of masculinity. If the male flapper was, for a while, a rebel, ultimately he settled down to love and marriage. Not so Jasper Weed, the tramp. When an old man suggested that he get married, this was enough for him to run:

No doubt the old man meant well, but it scared me. I saw myself settling down in that little town and buying a house for that girl to live in, and spending the rest of my life paying off the mortgage.
The truth was, I was almost crazy enough about her to do something like that, and that was what scared me.\textsuperscript{58}

The life of the tramp was of course the solution:

On the road, of course, a man who is afraid of marriage can feel freer in his mind. A girl is not very likely to want to marry a tramp. But Jasper was a handsome lad, and his shy ways were just the sort that many a girl takes to. As a vagabond he could find pretty girls to exchange kisses with, and yet not be afraid of becoming involved in domestic slavery and misery. If danger threatened, he drifted along and kept his freedom.\textsuperscript{59}

Even in *Souvenir*, Fay’s son, Prentice Fay, was described as "seeing opportunities for enacting the role of charming vagabond."\textsuperscript{60} Thus, Dell
presented men with another alternative style of masculinity, one which was now possible, given the greater freedom available to men in the newly recognized period of relatively leisureed adolescence and youth. But the pragmatic Dell’s focus in the 1920s was increasingly on the sensitive and ultimately conformist male flapper. His advocacy of tramp styles represented his fantasy of another ideal masculine style.

In contrast, far and away the best example of the tramp genre and indeed its embodiment was Harry Kemp, the "Don Juan of Greenwich Village," author of the autobiographical Tramping on Life. This work directly inspired Jack Kerouac’s On the Road in the 1950s.61 Tramping on Life (1922) and its less commercially successful successor, More Miles (1926), were fascinating celebrations of this Bohemian style of masculinity. Using pseudonyms, Kemp discussed various important figures in the Village, as well as Bernarr Macfadden (under the pseudonym Stephen Barton). Kemp’s Tramping on Life and More Miles are pacans to life on the road. They self-consciously advocated the tramp style. Indeed, as one reviewer wrote of Kemp, "One does not get the feeling that Kemp is in the confessional. Rather he is on the rostrum."62

Like Dell’s Felix Fay, Harry Kemp embarked on his career as a tramp as a rebellion against the work strictures for American men. In his case, there was more of an element of abject laziness in his rebellion:
Once I worked, plowing—to drive the horses as far as a tall tree for shade at the end of the third day, sneak back to the house . . . and out to the highway with my bundle and my belongings kicking up my heels ecstatically glad to be freed from my work. 63

He preferred to read:

With a secondhand Shakespeare in one volume, of wretched print, with a much abused school copy of Caesar in the Latin (of whose idiomatic Latin I have never tired), an extra suit of khaki, a razor toothbrush and a tooth powder—and a cake of soap—all wrapped up in my army blankets. I set forth on my peregrinations as blanket-stiff or 'bindle-bum.' 64

Kemp embarked on his life as a tramp—albeit a clean one—in order to reject the prescriptions for his behavior as a man. Kemp in these works celebrated what he saw as lower class/underworld primitive styles of masculinity:

Paul and Josh were 'puddlers'—when they worked . . . in the open furnaces that were in use in those days . . . when you saw huge, magnificent men, naked to the belt, whose muscles rippled in coils as they toiled away in the midst of the living red of flowing metal. 65

Kemp worked hard as a sailor and, for a time, even became a tramp living in a boxcar. He strove for the sailor's masculinity, especially when he was described as the "skinny Yankee" who was given only a ginger ale when his companion was made a "man's drink" by a barmaid. 66 Later, in More Miles, when he took up boxing he wrote that he "was a bit frightened, but I pitched my timidity out. I summoned up all the lean hard wolf in me
that my regimen of daily exercise, my solitary outdoor life had fostered." Kemp advocated and imitated what he perceived as lower-class and romantic primitive styles of masculinity. Yet his infatuation with these styles extended into what most characterized the tramp style of masculinity. *Tramping on Life* and *More Miles* were celebrations not merely of the perceived physical aspects of lower class/underworld primitive styles of masculinity but also of what Bohemians imagined were lower-class styles of relationships with women. Kemp celebrated the joys of the single life, of short, sharp, sweet relationships that did not involve marriage. He declared proudly at one point that "at the table (he) delivered a long harangue against marriage." What is striking, though, in Kemp's work, apart from a rejection of marriage and commitment, is how unimportant women were to him. Although not from choice, he was a lonely fellow and, like many Bohemians of the time, he remained celibate until his late twenties on account of confusion about his sexuality. While he wanted a woman to be his mistress, his major interest in *Tramping on Life* and *More Miles* was himself, Harry Kemp, and, specifically, his (naked) body. At one point he "dreamed of myself as that savage, rushing gloriously through a forest, naked, and crowned with fire like some primitive Sun-God." Kemp was obsessed with his body. He commented that "the strangeness of my physical person lured me. I marvelled at, scrutinized intimately the
wonder of myself. I was insatiable in my curiosities."70 In Physical Culture, he found a solution to his problems:

I found in it a guide to what I was in search for. Faithfully I took up Physical Culture. Fanatically I kept all the windows open, wore as little clothing as possible . . . adopted a certain walk on tiptoe, like a person walking on egg shells, to develop the calves of my legs from their thinness to a more proportional shape. And, as I walked naked, I filled and emptied my lungs like a bellows. I kept a small statue of the Apollo Belvedere on top of my bookcase. I had a print of the Flying Mercury on the wall, at the foot of my bed. Each morning, on waking I filled my mind full of these perfect specimens of manhood considering that by so doing I would gradually pilot my body to physical perfection.71

This, too, because muscles stimulated female admiration. In More Miles, he commented on his girlfriend Ruth "flattering me by commenting on my big, fine chest."72 Kemp took up the life of Physical Culture because of his sense of physical inferiority in comparison with his perception of working-class styles of masculinity.

Kemp's relationships, however fleeting, had the element of perhaps the most sinister aspect of the tramp style of masculinity, that is the open depiction of violence against women. When he accused his lover Opal of interest in another man, he declared:

'To hell with the rest of the people in the House.' I caught her violently into my arms. I would plead and whine no more. I would take her by force. She fought hardly against me. 'I'll call for help, if you don't let me go--this instant.'
'Go ahead. Call for help. I don't care. I'm not going to let you torture me any longer.'
'We stumbled over a chair, just catching ourselves from falling. The flimsy chair, broke crackling 'You rotten cad.'\textsuperscript{73}

He continued by stating forcefully that "I love you and I'll kill you—or myself—or both of us—you've got to become my sweetheart."\textsuperscript{74} Kemp's violent sexuality even manifested itself in kissing. When he first kissed one girl, he revelled in her "shrill exclamation of virginal fright, not at me—but at my abrupt, hungry masculinity."\textsuperscript{75}

Violence as appropriate behavior extended not just into one's relationships with women; it was, also, appropriate for men to fight over women. In \textit{More Miles}, the Kemp character engaged in a fight with one Halton Mann (John Reed): "Two young men moved to preen and strut in rivalry in the presence of a desirable female."\textsuperscript{76} In this way, Kemp presented aggressive styles of masculinity in attractive ways; for the period of what he called "the cry of youth," was again, as for Dell, the peak of a man's experience.\textsuperscript{77} Quoting Shelley he wrote: "When will return the glory of your prime? No more . . . Oh, never more."\textsuperscript{78}

Kemp, like Dell, celebrated the period of youthful manliness. Kemp, a famous and well-known figure in the 1920s, spread and advocated his own experiences in the first decades of the century to the young men of the 1920s. He was not alone. There were other examples of the tramp Bohemian style of masculinity in the 1920s. In Sherwood Anderson's
chilling Winesburg, Ohio (1919), the popular novel of the 1920s youth
culture was further developed. This work, the author’s conscious effort
to come to terms with his own mysterious flight from the responsibilities
of his small-town Ohio family, featured the hero, George Willard, as a
link between several loosely connected short stories. These featured
several "grotesques" for whom "youth and life" was long over, from the
frustrated Alice Hindman, whose lover had deserted her, to Wing
Biddlebaum, the broken protagonist of "Hands", whose career as a
schoolteacher had ended after he was suspected of molesting his male
students. These were brought out in sharp contrast to George Willard
who, because of his "animalism of youth," was able to escape the stifling
small-town life of Winesburg and avoid the fate of these "grotesques."
Yet the style of masculinity of Winesburg, Ohio was again an aggressively
masculine one. As Willard thought of his lover, Belle Carpenter, he was
"half drunk with the sense of masculine power." 79 While holding her
after she "did not resist" his violent advances, he "holding the woman
tightly" whispered the words "Lust and night and women." 80 The hero of
Anderson’s bizarre autobiographical Many Marriages (1923), John Webster,
reminds us of many of the obsessions of Kemp’s John Gregory. Webster was
obsessed with his body. He would, like Gregory, walk around naked: "He
ran his hands over his naked body, over his breasts, arms and legs." 81
But this novel was much more blatant in its celebration of the violent
aspects of masculinity, as Webster symbolically raped his daughter to make amends for her mother's unwillingness to have sexual intercourse with him. Anderson wrote that "there was a kind of cruelty in nature and at the proper time that cruelty became a part of one's manhood," only underlining his enjoyment of violent masculinity.²²

Ben Hecht's Erik Dorn echoed a similar theme. Dorn increasingly became entrapped in an unsatisfactory marriage. After he embarked on an affair, he fantasized about murdering his wife when he said he "must kill her swiftly before she could know that prayers were vain. Easier to kill her body than to listen to this."³³ Leaving Anna set him off on the life of the tramp, and he declared years later he had been "moving since the night he had walked out of his home and there had been no looking back."³⁴ But his contempt for women did not change. He described a girl he met in a dance hall by writing that, "She's not a woman. She's a lust. No brain. No heart. A stark unhuman piece of flesh with a shark's hunger inside it."³⁵

In Gladys Johnson's 1929 spoof of Desire, the character Teal was a tramp Bohemian. This made Teal an unusual type of person "even for San-Francisco where cosmopolitan types abound."³⁶ He collected books and fine enamels, but he also collected women who "varied as widely in physical type as they did in social standing."³⁷ Every "unknown woman --in the least attractive--was a stirring challenge to Teal."³⁸ Yet once
that challenge was met, he did not want to commit himself to marriage. His lover, Janice, disappointed, responded to him that "when you said that you had to have me with you all the time that nothing in life would separate us I believed you. To me it meant that we were to be married." 89

In Warner Fabian's notorious Flaming Youth, there were several characters from the world of upper class youth. These included Leo Stanak, a Russian anarchist, who had "no belief in or use for society's instituted formulas: marriage, laws, government-- nothing but the eternal right of the individual to express himself to the utmost in his chosen medium of life." 90 In Carl Van Vechten's Firecrackers, the Swedish acrobat, Gunnar O'Grady, lamented falling in love because "with married couples [he] noted a constant suggestion of straining in the leash, a desire to break away, to console themselves with libidinous debauchery." 91 This was not the life for O'Grady, who "desired complete freedom." After all, "What was there to do in life? Conform to the act of the puppets, dull one's perceptions." When he found someone to love he could only comment that "I have lost my freedom again." 92

O'Grady was described as a "Don Juan," a term often used in popular novels and one analogous to the tramp Bohemian style. In Gladys Johnson's Desire (1929), the aptly named Don Chansellor was presented as irresistible to women, taking them away from less attractive men.

Johnson described how on the "First whistle from Don Chansellor" the
heroine "was away--with no thought of this tried but true friend." In Percy Marks' *The Plastic Age*, the hero, Hugh, met his new college roommate and was impressed with his exploits. As Marks explained it, "Carl dazzled and confused him. He had often listened to the Merrytown Don Juans but this good-looking, sophisticated lad was quite evidently unknown to Merrytown." Carl's exploits continued to dazzle and confuse Hugh throughout the novel. Although the Don Juan was widely discussed, he remained just beyond the bounds of respectability. Yet his success with women gained him admiration and envy. As one commentator put it: "Some men have the idea that what women admire above all else is a rake." The tramp Bohemian who did not want to commit himself to marriage or men's role as breadwinner was widely diffused in the literature of the youth culture in the guise of the Don Juan, who was, of course, not a new figure in literature. But in the 1920s he was admired and gained respectability as never before.

In this way, a group of writers associated with the youth culture of the 1920s advocated styles of masculinity that were heavily influenced by what they perceived as working-class styles and which were reminiscent of underworld styles of masculinity. These were, at best, flippant about violence against women; at worst, they presented it as titillating. Further, they displayed ambivalence about commitment to getting or staying married. Through writing about their Greenwich Village
experiences in the 1910s, the ex-Bohemians celebrated and sentimentalized their past while spreading it to middle-class youth. In the form of the tramp Bohemian, styles of masculinity which had not been openly encouraged before gained greater respectability as they gained ascendancy in the incipient youth culture.

Such models of masculinity reached an even broader audience through the medium of True Story, the most popular pulp magazine of the 1920s. Macfadden spread underworld and Bohemian styles of masculinity to an ever-widening audience of working and middle class youth. The portrayals of men in these stories are a rich resource. They present a cultural ideal of masculine behavior that is quite consistent with the Bohemian styles characteristic of the literature of the emerging youth culture. True Story, after all, reached a large audience. Designed for both men and women, it affected both male readers and men involved with its predominantly female readership.96 Macfadden's confession magazines helped set the pace for the social relations between the sexes in the 1920s when their outrageousness made them widely known. They presented underworld styles of behavior to both the youth of the working class and the consumer-oriented "new middle class" for whom their very non-respectability heightened their appeal, which accelerated their advance toward acceptance. The stories, scenes from the new public, heterosocial, youth-oriented leisure world, represented the very
intersection of the mores of the youth of the working and new middle classes in this period.

*True Story* presented the tramp Bohemian ideal in a less sophisticated, cruder manner, using vernacular. A typical story featured dissolute male characters whom the heroine found irresistibly attractive; the story, however, was ostensibly a warning that such men were to be avoided. The tramp Bohemians helped provide the spice which sold the stories and the titillation that was Macfadden's underlying goal.

Significantly, Bohemians from Greenwich Village appeared in several stories. In "How Life's Lessons Came to Me," the heroine avoided a Bohemian about whom she was warned by a friend:

> Allan is not a one woman man. He can love one woman but he cannot be true to her. That is his great weakness and he cannot overcome it. If he marries again, he will be faithful to his wife for a while; but the lure to intimate associations with one woman will be too strong.97

In typical Bohemian fashion, the character was quite unable to commit to one relationship, much less to marriage. In *The Little Cloud*, the heroine was cursed with a formerly monogamous husband who was converted to Greenwich Village style relationships, much to her chagrin. She pleaded that "the little cloud in my sky, at first no longer than a man's hand, had grown and grown and I have learned that our married life never will be quite the same again."98 In "Renee Finds a Link," the heroine
found that "offers of marriage in the village were few." They were notoriously unreliable, if always exciting. In "A Secondhand Bride," the heroine, bored in her marriage to her husband George, met an exciting Bohemian who was "so different from anyone I have ever known before." They developed a "tremendous friendship," exchanging both ideas and, of course, books. The Bohemian fell in love with her, but this was the signal for him to flee to the mecca for all his ilk--Paris. Thus Macfadden, via True Story, presented a model of masculinity reminiscent of the tramp Bohemian--unwilling to commit to more than short, sharp, sporadic relationships.

Such models of manliness were endemic in True Story. Macfadden's writers specialized in tales of the horrors of Broadway life. In 1922, Macfadden devoted a lot of space over several months to the saga, "A Chorus Girl Confesses," which detailed the dangers for women of male predators on Broadway from the point of view of a woman who had passed her prime. For example, when the heroine joined forces for a double-act, her partner, Rex, insisted on having an affair with her since "other partners before her had been his sweethearts." This was after all, Broadway, where, as one True Story put it, a woman could go to date "swells just like in the movies." But she could not expect love and commitment. The most pervasive Broadway character was the "Stage-Door Johnnie," the male groupy whom every chorus girl feared:
Often, as I passed them, I noticed that they were gazing at me with an air of appraisal that began at my feet and ended with an interesting stare at my face. I pretended not to see them at all, however and passed on with my head held high. Once I saw some young fellow nudge another and heard him say 'Some looker'. Inwardly I raged. What right had these men to stand there and look me over that way?  

When a woman became involved with one of these men, he would kiss her "against her will." For the Stage-Door Johnnie was quite incorrigible. In "His Yesterdays," the hero, Livingston, had "innumerable love affairs" that brought his family newspaper notoriety. Even when Livingston actually fell in love and "stopped drinking and carousing, cut loose from his former associates and showed a sudden unexpected interest in business," his friends "all doubted that his reformation would last. And it didn't."

True Story was full of men who were unable to commit themselves to love or who, once married, no longer wished to stay so. Significantly, many of these men were not just exotic Bohemians or Stage Door Johnnies but ordinary men. In "Can a Woman Come Back?," the heroine involved herself in a sorry affair with such a man: "As time went on, I found that love had indeed no deeper meaning to him. He seemed utterly incapable of seeing its spiritual aspect. Openly he boasted to me of his affairs with other women before we were married." Another woman
married a "lady bug." As she resignedly put it: "That's something I'll have to live with."\textsuperscript{110}

Macfadden's celebration of underworld and Bohemian styles of masculinity could not avoid a new and striking element that entered the ideology of masculinity. As never before in ideology that was read and digested by young Americans, especially those of the middle class, violence was, if not exactly glorified, then presented as a frequent part of interaction between men and women. Of course, violence had been a crucial part of the male ideology of high Victorian culture. The Masculine Primitive revelled in violence, and the vast number of dime novels and Westerns testified to the appeal of violence. But middle class women were always expected to be treated with the utmost reverence, even by the roughest cowboy. In respectable literature, violence was associated with deviant models. Thus, the lower-class drunken lover and husband was a common model in late Victorian respectable literature, one which kept a safe distance from the middle-classes, as appropriate for a society which emphasized the protection of women and the control of male sexuality.\textsuperscript{111}

Such protections broke down in Macfadden's world. Further, as with the tramp Bohemian of the youth culture writers, there was always the threat of violence. Actual male violence was frequently justified among men in protecting their claims on individual women. When the hero's wife
was approached by young "strong for the ladies" Spike Maynard, in "My
Guardian Angel," a fight ensued:

We were pretty evenly matched and honors were about
even until I happened to remember that someone had
told me he had a weak heart. I slammed him in the bum
organ with everything I had and had the satisfaction
of seeing his legs crumble under him as he sank to the
floor.112

In "The Story of a Warped Soul" the hero, Colgate, developed "vigorous
health and a taste for fighting" which enabled him to defeat Symthe, who
had taken away his lady friend. The hero "in [his] terrible
anger--seized him about the neck with an arm of steel, held him so and
drove [his] fist again and again into [his] face."113

Yet while male violence against the other men was positively
condoned, this paled by comparison with the flippant attitude of
Macfadden and his writers to violence against women. In "Suppose Your
Husband Did This?" the hero, Richard, was described as "almost too good
to be true--tall, slender, athletic, with clear, expressive gray eyes,
straight blood hair and a poise and calmness combined with gentleness
which endeared him to everyone. But when Richard’s eyes wandered, his
wife began "to flirt in a mild way in order to keep the interest of the
man," which stimulated the apparently exemplary Richard to declare: "I
said I would spank you and I will."114 He did. Yet, though this
inevitably caused problems in their relationship, Richard got away with such behavior when his wife again capitulated to his charms:

I felt utterly alone in a hateful world. After a long time of feeling mistreated and abused I suddenly started to think of Richard. I began to realize what humiliations I had subjected him to; what infinite consideration and patience he had shown; what deep love he had given.\textsuperscript{115}

Richard in this way escaped from the implications of his behavior. And this story was not an anomaly in Macfadden’s publications. The heroine of "Nearly Trapped" met Phillip Gaylor, who seemed initially attractive despite his "untidy room. . .in a dark, dingy building."\textsuperscript{116} Gaylor, however, turned violent. He to all intents and purposes raped the heroine, placing her in an uncompromising situation and declaring,

Say . . . I’ve been wondering right along whether all that innocent stuff you’ve been pulling is a fake or not . . . What are you going to do now? You’re all alone with me, remember. You could yell yourself hoarse without anybody ever hearing you.\textsuperscript{117}

Macfadden’s writers often presented aggressive male lovemaking as appropriate and attractive. In "Through the Valley of Death," the heroine’s lover, Fred, was described as an "ardent, aggressive lover" who "swept me along with him."\textsuperscript{118} In "The Fickleness of Men," the hero seized the heroine thus:

I snatched her into my arms and held her as in a vise. I smothered her face with my kisses. I was
madly infatuated, infatuated beyond vision or hope. I
could hold bounds no longer, nor did I want to. I
thrust her from me, tingling in every atom of my
being.119

In "The Girl Who Claimed My Husband," the heroine’s ex-husband stormed
into her room and she recalled that "the man then went mad. He seized my
two hands and forcibly wrenched the telephone from my grasp."120 "The
Brute Within Him" was typical of the Macfadden ethos. In this story, the
heroine was trapped by a violent husband, but still "the brute within
him" was seen as an attractive quality. The author wrote of the heroine
that "She could only lie there, panting and terrified until with a kiss,
that spoke only of satisfying passion and burned long upon her lips, he
released her." But this was, apparently, forgiveable. The heroine
insisted that "Brutal though his actions had been Phillip Tracey was her
husband, a husband whom she owed a wife’s duty."121 Indeed his wife
remained careful not to cross him. To her he "was like a big schoolboy
dependent on her for everything."122 Diligently, she awaited for his
return to her after he left her. In "Her Caveman Wooing," what appears
to be a rape was presented in very positive terms:

It was the early dusk of a February day as I hastened
home from my Philosophy lecture. An auto passed at
the curb and before I knew what was happening to me, I
was struggling vainly in an iron grip. The door
slammed, the car started. Desperately I tried to keep
my senses, everything was going blank. 'Do I have to
chloroform you or will you promise not to scream?' a
not unpleasing but firm voice asked.123
After this abduction, the hero declared "I did not ask you to marry me. 
I said you were going to." However, it all turned out well in the end, 
when the heroine insisted, "Now we are just the lovingest family." In 
a fit of passion in "Out of the Shadow," Lucifer Tombs grabbed his 
girlfriend Effie: "Let me go. Lucifer you are hurting me," she 
screamed. 

Also, should the heroine hesitate to marry the hero, violence could 
ensue: "Margaret . . . Either you agree to marry me or you die now and 
here. I do not know which is stronger in me at this moment, hate or 
love; but if it is love I will not be the first man to kill the thing he 
loved." The heroine agreed to marry the hero. Yet for the other 
woman the first night was always cause for violence. In "A Woman and 
Three Men," a sixteen-year-old girl had a horrendous time on her first 
night:

Dinner over, we were alone again, and his hot hands 
started to undress me. I was frightened and when he 
continued a little roughly, I became terrified. Then 
baldly he told me a few facts. I grew almost 
hysterical. It was not true, it was impossible. I 
was certain someone would have told me something if 
such hideous things were so. He grabbed hold of me, 
but I managed to break loose and lock myself in the 
bathroom. 'You're my wife,' he sneered brutally, 
'What did you suppose I married you for?'

These widely commented on, discussed, and read Macfadden publications in 
those ways spread the tramp Bohemian and underworld primitive ideal to an
ever broader group in the youth culture. This is of the utmost significance, because Macfadden operated as a direct conduit of Victorian underworld styles of masculinity to an ever widening audience of the working class and "new middle class." He brought such styles to greater respectability in broader groups of the population than the college groups who were probably more influenced by the popular literature that I discussed above.

In this way, the literature that was devoured by the young of the emerging 1920s youth subculture publicly presented styles of masculinity which had previously not been respectable, especially in the middle classes. Even Dell's coy, gentle, sensitive male flapper was not reputable by older standards because of his rebellion against them. Harry Kemp's Tramp Bohemian and the earthier but similar images in Macfadden's True Story certainly were not. Their relative respectability in the working class and "new middle class" youth culture presented men with ideals which, while they were advantageous in that they freed men to be more equal with women and to explore their sexuality with women of their own class, ultimately released men to misbehave.

The Victorian Underworld Primitive had been checked by the "conspiracy of silence" as well as by the ideology of the Christian Gentleman who had seen himself as determinedly reverent to the women of his own class. This had limited and confined and oppressed women, but it
had protected them from men. But now these new styles attained relative respectability and were prescribed as appropriate behavior with middle-class women. This was ultimately pernicious, because such models encouraged youthful male irresponsibility and, most unpleasantly, presented violence against women positively. The rough and aggressive ideals of the youth culture of the 1920s were checked only by the male flapper who, while he was gentle and sensitive and more democratic, otherwise shared the sexual expressiveness of the tramp Bohemian. Women, and particularly New Women who could be assumed to be sexually independent were thus left to the vagaries and whims of men, and men to their own worst behavior. Such behavior was, after all, presented as positive and attractive, which placed demands on men to act thus rather than according to the traditional codes of gentlemanly good behavior.
FOOTNOTES


2 Floyd Dell, Love in Greenwich Village (NY: George H. Doran, 1926).


6 Bourne, Youth and Life, 4.


8 Saturday Evening Post, January 15, 1919, 72.


14 Dell, *Moon-Calf*, 293.


18 Floyd Dell, "The Ballad of Christopher Street" in *Love in Greenwich Village* (NY: George H. Doran, 1926), 198.


20 Dell, *The Briary-Bush*, 34.


22 Ibid., 241.

23 Ibid., 263.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid., 63.

27 Ibid., 334.


30 Ibid., 268.
33 Ibid., 25.
34 Ibid., 49.
35 Fitzgerald, This Side of Paradise, 59.
36 Dell, Moon-Calf, 293.
37 Ibid., 289.
38 Benet, The Beginning of Wisdom, 342.
40 Dell, Janet March (NY: Knopf, 1923), 309.
41 Lewisohn, Stephen Escott, 44.
42 Dell, Moon-Calf, 210.
43 Ibid.
44 Ibid., 203.
45 Ibid., 322.
46 Dell, The Briary-Bush, 64.
47 Ibid., 123.
48 Fitzgerald, This Side of Paradise, 193.
49 Ibid., 95.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid., 318.
52 Ibid., 314.
53 Lewisohn, Stephen Escott, 162.
56 Ibid., 200.
57 Floyd Dell, "Hallelujah, I'm a Bum" from Love in Greenwich Village, 165.
58 Ibid., 160.
59 Ibid., 161.
60 Ibid., 217.
61 William Brevda, Harry Kemp, 120.
62 Ibid., 124.
63 Harry Kemp, Tramping on Life (NY: Boni and Liveright, 1922), 17.
64 Ibid., 22.
65 Ibid., 17.
66 Ibid., 96.
67 Harry Kemp, More Miles (NY: Boni and Liveright, 1926), 159.
68 Ibid., 27.
69 Kemp, Tramping on Life, 12.
70 Kemp, More Miles, 22.


73 Ibid., 59.

74 Ibid.

75 Ibid., 213.

76 Ibid., 202.

77 Quoted in Brevda, *Harry Kemp*, 121.

78 Ibid.


80 Ibid., 225.


82 Ibid., 185.

83 Ben Hecht, *Erik Dorn* (NY: Boni and Liveright, 1921), 166.

84 Ibid., 223.

85 Ibid., 236.


87 Ibid.

88 Ibid.

89 Ibid., 94.

90 Warner Fabian, *Flaming Youth* (NY: Macaulay, 1923), 256.


92 Ibid., 226.
93 Johnson, Desire, 34.


95 James Oppenheim, How to Be Happy Though Married (Girard, Kansas: Haldeman-Julius, 1924), 3.

96 William S. Gray and Ruth Munroe, The Reading Interests and Habits of Adults (NY: MacMillan, 1930), 45.

97 "How Life's Lessons Came to Me," True Story, October 1919, 23.


99 "Renee Finds a Link," True Story, September 1920, 79.

100 "A Second Hand Bride," True Story, August 1923, 42.

101 Ibid.

102 "A Chorus Girl Confesses," True Story, February 1922, 98.

103 "So this is Broadway," True Story, December 1922, 22.

104 Ibid.

105 Ibid.

106 "His Yesterdays," True Story, May 1923, 53-55.

107 Ibid.

108 Ibid.

109 "Can a Woman Come Back?" True Story, November 1923, 73-74.

110 "The Lady Bug," True Story, March 1922, 64.


112 "My Guardian Angel," True Story, September 1925, 37.

"Suppose your Husband Did This?" *True Story*, June 1923, 67.

Ibid.


Ibid.

"Through the Valley of Death," *True Story*, June 1923, 42.


Ibid.

"Her Caveman Wooing," *True Story*, March 1920, 12.

Ibid.


Ibid.


James Thurber and E.B. White in 1929 asked the question Is Sex Necessary?, thus encapsulating the confusion and frustration that many American men felt at the growing sexual demands of the previous two decades.¹ As the conspiracy of silence was undermined in a crescendo of sex films, sex plays, sex books, and sex education, the Victorian system of morality, designed to control male sexuality, cracked open in the 1910s.² Victorian males were taught to fear both their potency and impotency; male sexuality was both feared and celebrated. Now, a public ethic that emphasized heterosexual sexual expression over repression, and male potency over impotency, gained ascendancy.

In this chapter, I shall explore the emergence of this public ethic by the late 1920s in what several scholars have called the roots of the "sexualized society."³ The literature of the Freudian popularizers and
the youth culture glorified male potency and derided "Puritanism."

Further, the relative sexual obsessiveness of the culture was aggravated by the beginnings of mass market erotica. Two major groups of writers of marriage and sex manuals—the social hygienists of the 'teens and the companionate marriage writers of the twenties—added to the demands that men express themselves heterosexually. Indeed, by 1930, the companionate marriage writers had devised an elaborate, but contradictory, ideal that explained how men should express themselves sexually and which, by thrusting the onus for the success of the sex act onto men, further exacerbated the sexual demands on them.

By the 1920s there was widespread discussion of sex in American society. Writers exaggerated and accentuated the extent to which they differed from the Victorians and by doing so emphasized and encouraged the new demand for sex expression. Floyd Dell, in particular, liked to elaborate on the extent to which he thought the modern sexual world differed from the Victorian. Typically he referred to Victorians as "Puritans" as if there were no difference between the two. Thus, in Janet March, Dell's scandalous attempt to analyze the recent history of the American family, the hero, Roger, had his misgivings about sexual openness:

To go against what one believes to be right, because one cannot help it—Roger was altogether too much of a
Puritan for that. Any surrender to mere sensual propensity he scorned--he did not look like a wicked young libertine. He looked like an earnest young moralist.  

Roger would not sleep with a prostitute because it went against his romantic ideals. The hero of several of Dell's other novels, Felix Fay also rejected Victorianism. His sexual shyness with his friend Phyllis he blamed on old-fashioned ideals:

It was the fault of Romance, that suave peddler of spiritual poisons; and of Puritanism, that maniacal purveyor of chains and padlocks--it was the fault of these two that the situation should ever for a moment have seemed alarming. Over the scene, as he and Phyllis had stood together telling each other a secret that anyone else in the world could have read at a glance, there had brooded these two antique and ridiculous phantoms.

Dell expanded on his view in his 1930 *Love in the Machine Age*. He referred to a:

Puritanism . . . which took away that species of permitted relief for repressed sexual infantilism, exacerbated the feelings of guilt in connection with sex . . . it became instituted as a common middle-class trait forgetting and denying its occasional outbursts of infantilistic sexual gratification.

This "Puritanism" led directly to the "Victorian teaching of purity to young people." Such repression, for Dell, was at the root of all that was undesirable. Like others in the 1890 to 1940 period, as Warren Susman has pointed out, he used the word "Puritan" to refer to a "sterile
moralism"—"codes of conduct imposed from above without personal meaning or social purpose." In other words, he used the term to represent all that was bad in the old morality that youth rebelled against. Dell railed at examples of such "Puritans": "the ascetic reformer or cleric who professes complete sexual holiness and occasionally is guilty of homosexual practices which he promptly crosses off his record because he is 'not really that kind of person' or 'the conventional girl who professes complete chastity and is able to forget and deny her occasional lapses when under the sudden and overwhelming domination of her repressed sexuality.' For Dell advocated what he would have called "healthy sex adjustment."

Christina Simmons has referred to the phenomenon of exaggerating Victorian prudery in the interests of advocating sexual expressiveness as the "myth of Victorian repression." Other writers encouraged this myth of Victorian repression. Ben Hecht was especially trenchant. In Erik Dorn, the main character, Hazlitt, was described as a "prude" to underline his undesirability as a character: "For the paradox of Hazlitt was not that he was a thinker but a dreamer. His Puritanism had put an end to his brain." One writer termed "Puritanism" a "dignified neurosis": "The Puritan neurosis will probably pass away when the forces which support it have been fettered and made harmless and when the forces which carry out its decrees, the courts and policy, have been reformed."
Then men "will never need to hide their moral and ethical inferiority under the mask of sexual austerity."\textsuperscript{11} The Puritan was always portrayed as in reality sexually obsessed and perverse: "No normal craving can be normally repressed. Nor can it be normally sublimated. Sexual desire cannot be transformed into artistic achievement, philanthropy, social usefulness."\textsuperscript{12} Thus, in emphasizing this "myth of Victorian repression," such writers encouraged sexual expression.

True Story developed, too, the "myth of Victorian repression."

Prudery, as we have seen, had long been Macfadden's "number one enemy."

He stated in one work that "celibacy is unnatural."\textsuperscript{13} So, in "Rainbow's End," when a woman pleaded to a fresh suitor that "Hush! You have no right to talk so to me. I'm a married woman," he responded by insulting her: "I'm asking you for the right," he declared, "You're a little prude, but perfectly adorable."\textsuperscript{14} In one tale, entitled "The Vampire and the Puritan," a clergyman confessed to having succumbed to the temptations offered by a flapper. He continued to relate somberly the sad tale of how he became involved with a woman in his church and had an "hour of bliss."\textsuperscript{15} Unfortunately, because of the indiscretion of this "vamp," her continued presence in his congregation was "intoxicating and her little arts of coquetry maddening."\textsuperscript{16} By deriding this clergyman as a "Puritan" who was not merely sexually tempted but sexually obsessed, Macfadden's writer exaggerated Victorian repression and mocked Victorian
sexual control. In this way, True Story added to the demands for sexual expression, yet through True Story, the "myth of Victorian repression" reached an ever broader audience.

The ubiquitous discussion of sex aggravated the pressures on men to express themselves sexually by constantly inciting desire. Usually this trend has been associated with the influence of Freud and the popularizers of instinct theory in general. In fact, the Freudian popularizers contributed to the widespread glorification and encouragement of heterosexual expression for men. They comprehended Freud's insight into the centrality of sexuality in human life. As George Henry Green explained, "Sex colours the whole of life, and the powerful instinct draws into its service practically every other instinct with which we are acquainted." For one writer, the "holly man and woman who were fighting the flesh . . . exchanged normal reality for hallucinations, normal desires for perverse desires." Therefore, "the problem of sex expression in youth" was one of the "first importance." The need to express one's sexuality was urgent. "Sex expression" was a panacea for some commentators. The 1920s popularizers of instinct theory and of Freud left aside his respect for the power and force of male sexuality and his awareness of its need to be controlled if civilization were to be preserved. They misinterpreted Freud's insight that psychological adjustment and heterosexual adjustment were one to mean
that healthy psychological adjustment was facilitated by having lots of sex.\textsuperscript{20} An ideology which urged sexual expression gained ascendancy over an ideology which emphasized repression.

The Freudian popularizers brilliantly adapted Freud to the hedonistic consumption-oriented mood of the 1920s. As one commented, after the sexual revolution "the center of gravity shifted from procreation to recreation."\textsuperscript{21} This was the era of "passion's coming of age."\textsuperscript{22} In this way, sexual demands on men increased during this period as experts insisted on the importance of good sex for psychological health. American men could not only see youthful male heterosexual expression celebrated and glorified and equated with manliness, but they also saw purity denigrated as "neurosis" and even "psychosis."

Bernarr Macfadden, unsurprisingly, played a part in this development, not merely by denigrating Victorianism but by actively encouraging sexual expression. \textit{True Story} and other confession magazines were often called the "sex appeal" magazines, especially until 1926, when they shifted focus in favor of "romance" over "sex." And they were widely commented on at the time. Oswald Garrison Villard colorfully described them as "veracious narratives of titillating human experiences thrilling literally millions of readers."\textsuperscript{23} Frederic Lewis Allen noted \textit{True Story} as part of the "revolution in morals" that he identified in his \textit{Only Yesterday} (1931).\textsuperscript{24} These publications contributed, too, to the
general portrayal of sex expression in positive ways, which in turn
accentuated sexual demands on men and encouraged men to be more sexually
active. Through Macfadden, this ideology reached an ever broader
population. For example, the heroine of the "The Cost of a Lie"
artificially contrived a car accident in order to hook the hero. She
discussed how: "Frank picked me up, just as I hoped he would, and
carried me back to the sidewalk. I was trembling with joy over the
success of my ruse and with delight aroused by the pressure of his arms
and contact with his body."25 She went on to describe vividly how "he
kissed me, and stroked my hair, and whispered tenderness and love until I
was swept through with warm, sweet rushes of joy . . . my whirlwind
lover."26 In "A Midnight’s Memories" the heroine was swept away by the
hero’s passion. The author described how "Lower and lower the man’s face
dropped, while the woman waited in suspenseful bliss for the touch of his
lips. They brushed hers softly and her being thrilled."27 In the
"Jungle’s Shadow," the heroine was fortunate enough to have a lover "like
a tropical thunderstorm in his wooing."28 In "Keeping Up With the
Crowd," the subject of pre-marital pregnancy, which a mere ten years
before would have been unmentionable, was raised. Berry and his flapper
stopped off by a lake in an automobile: "It was still light when we
stopped there, but we stayed on and made love under the moon. Those
kisses seemed so innocent and perhaps would have been had our passions
not been inflamed by drink."29 The heroine became pregnant out of wedlock, though she was fortunately saved by the hero's willingness to marry her.

But the confession magazines were only the tip of an iceberg. In the 1920s there was an unprecedented public obsession with sex. In fact, the period after World War One featured open and mass market erotica (if not pornography) on an unprecedented and recognizably modern scale, facilitated by modern mass production and marketing techniques. "Sex" was increasingly, as John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman have observed, "on display."30 Macfadden himself was able, after the 1924 founding of the *New York Evening Graphic*, to go several steps lower on the level of smut than he had dared in his confession magazines or in *Physical Culture*. Here any pretense at morality was cast to the winds. It should be noted that the readership of this "newspaper" was most predominantly working class, far more than was the case with *True Story* or even more *Physical Culture*. But a significant number of its readers were middle class.31 And, unlike earlier material geared to the working class, the paper was widely known because of the increasing intermingling of classes in New York. Because it was everywhere available for whomever wanted to buy it, its notoriety spread; indeed it was known popularly with great accuracy as the "pornographic."32 The editors sought indeed to appeal to the red-blooded heterosexual male. One scandalous divorce case that
featured domestic violence elicited from the Graphic a composite of the husband beating up the wife. Macfadden even had his editors include a striptease in reverse in one issue under the guise of the "proper way to dress for the street." Oswald Garrison Villard, counting the column inches for November 10-21, 1925, discovered that 132 inches were devoted to foreign news and 144 and a half inches to editorials. But 554 and a half inches were devoted to what was really important to the Graphic, sex crime. Amid the increasingly sensational journalism of the 1920s, the Graphic stood out and was indeed widely reviled for its effort to arouse and incite male desires.

Sensational journalism such as that of the Graphic was one thing, but the increasingly wide availability of sexually explicit material quite another. Mark Gabor has dubbed the Victorian underworld Police Gazette the forerunner of the modern "girlie" magazine. But by the turn of the century, even relatively respectable magazines like Munsey’s and Cosmopolitan featured scantily clad women. Indeed, even the sensual, hourglass figure of Charles Dana Gibson’s "Gibson Girl" in Life broke away ever more decisively from the prurient restraints of the "Cult of True Womanhood" and of Victorianism in general. But, as Gabor has noted, after 1910, the Police Gazette went into sharp decline in an environment of increasing openness about sexuality and an accompanying burst of more outrageous magazines geared, significantly, to younger male
For what was available by the 1920s was something different altogether.

Oswald Garrison Villard, in a 1926 *Atlantic Monthly* article "Sex, Art, Truth and Magazines," expanded on four types of sexually explicit material that were widely distributed by the middle 1920s. The first was *True Story*. The second was the "'Snappy Story' group in which the sex motive is invariably a leitmotif—a way of guiding the steps of the wary into the proper path." The "Snappy Stories" variety was headed by William Randolph Hearst's *Snappy Stories* itself, with a circulation of 125,000, followed by *Breezy Stories*, with a circulation "probably nearly the same." This group of magazines—relatively moderate in content by our standards—accelerated and intensified the presentation of sex and sexual desire in attractive ways. These journals doubtless aroused their male readers, stimulating innate curiosity, and presented them with the message that sex expression was a positive thing, to be encouraged.

Villard identified a third, more explicitly sexual, group of magazines, the "Artists and Models" variety, which presented nudity in the guise of art. Joseph Hershey, in his analysis of these magazines in *Pulpwood Editor*, expanded in some detail on these journals. They included titles such as *Art Studies*, *Art Poses*, *Art Models*, and *Art Albums*. These journals justified the baring of female breasts in the name of art. They included captions underneath the photographs such as:
A graceful pose delightful to the lover of true beauty.

This lovely girl proves that laughter is as much a part of life itself.

Youth is an inspiration that should never die in the human heart.

This could easily be the subject of an immortal painting.

One holds one’s breath looking at this vision of radiant womanhood.43

Will Irwin, in Propaganda and the News, commented on how "the perils of young girls who hired out as artists' models served for years as a recurring theme" in the yellow press. In this way, they further titillated the masses around a familiar theme.44 Increasingly, by the late 1920s, such magazines as these and various movie magazines abandoned the pretense of having a moral purpose and simply offered "plain and simple pictures of nudes with no special technical or formal merit."45 In doing so they abandoned a further vestige of moralistic Victorianism and added to the sexualization of American society. There is some evidence that even Villard's fourth variety, which were the most intriguing and, easily, the most modern, also became widely available.

This group he dismissed with the conclusion that a representative issue was "the acme of vulgarity; its pages are lined with the kind of jokes commercial travelers have always revelled in and the coarse humor to be found in low music-halls the world over."46 This is not surprising, because these magazines came closest to traversing the delicate line
between erotica and pornography. They represented, in many ways, a
countant that never changed. If Villard railed at them in the 1920s,
Anthony Comstock had fought them in the previous two generations. Yet
Villard's insistence on their wide availability forces me to conclude
that it became harder for a respectable young man not to be lured by
their temptations. These magazines included Hot Dog and also Whiz Bang,
Paris Nights, Hi-Jinks, and Red Pepper, which "stuck to the burlesque
theme with huge success." But Hot Dog sold hundreds of thousands of copies
at a quarter a piece. According to Villard, such magazines were "openly
displayed on hundreds of stands." Nor were most of these stands merely
in New York but, quite the contrary, if Villard was to be believed, were
available throughout the country:

Let any Doubting Thomas go on a tour of inspection and
see for himself. Mr. Frank Kent took a venturesome
journey last Summer into a hitherto terra
incognito—the five thousand inhabited towns between
the Baltimore Sun and San Francisco, our only bulwark
against the immoral Japanese.

Mr. Kent, the famous journalist, testified to his horror that "a lot of
these little towns seems literally saturated with sex..." If
anything, this material was even better received among the middle classes
of Middletown than on the East Coast because "the small town people...
respond more keenly to the new literature because they, having more
leisure than big town dwellers, are always more avid readers of all sorts
of periodicals. He reported that in Steubenville, Ohio, "Out of 110 publications in a single store 68 were either out and out smut or bordering on the line." Villard concluded that "what Mr. Kent represents of the five-thousand-person town is true all the way up. The new publications are to be found everywhere." This was therefore hardly a phenomenon that was confined to big city dens of iniquity but had infiltrated the rural mid-West.

Material that had previously been confined to the Victorian underworld was now relatively more openly displayed and widely distributed among the middle classes. It was difficult for men of the middle classes, wherever they were in the United States, to avoid such encouragements of sexual arousal and sex expression. These magazines helped accentuate and accelerate the sexual demands on men after the war.

In general, the demands were for heterosexual expression. In one area only, and then only rarely and marginally, did the glorification of male sexual expression not identify as vehemently and aggressively heterosexual. This was in portrayals of masturbation. Mostly, writers at this time remained as strong in their opposition to masturbation as had the Victorians. Social Hygienist Winfield Scott Hall, for example, declared that the "natural process of development from youth to manhood could be seriously interfered with by the act of masturbation or self-abuse." Indeed, if he continued to practice it, "the youth might
almost have no testicles."55 Further, according to sex educator E. B. Lowry, "older boys who are masturbating usually get a sallow look and have a hang-dog expression.56 Clearly, there was disapproval in sex manuals of this kind of sexual practice. In some manuals, however, there were signs of liberalization. Social Hygienist Frederic Gerrish, in his A Talk to College Boys, admitted that "in general the health is not ruined, as is alleged in the quack adverts that deface and disgrace some journals." Nevertheless, he admitted that "the fact remains that the practice is low, filthy, bestial and degrading."57 But others were much less equivocal. Leading liberalizer W.J. Robinson could perhaps be described as relatively enthusiastic:

The evil results of masturbation have been shamefully and stupidly exaggerated. In the vast majority of cases masturbation leads to no disastrous results and it is better for a man who cannot satisfy his sex instinct naturally to indulge in occasional masturbation.58

Sex manual writer W.F. Robie agreed that "occasional masturbation is for many single people a necessity to prevent marital disorders or the moral contamination of promiscuous sex relations."59 But he also acknowledged that "the fact remains that most of the peculiarities and new disturbances of youth and many of those of adult years are due to masturbation. How do I explain the paradox? Quite easily. Practically all young people masturbate at one time or another."60 This was a very
significant admission. Masturbation was perhaps the greatest taboo in Victorian sex manuals, which devoted pages and pages to its ill effects and delineated it as the root of all evil. Although elements of the older attitude remained predominant, by the 1920s, the solitary vice was, if certainly not encouraged, much more tolerated. Even in this area, then, men were encouraged to express themselves sexually.

If masturbation did not explicitly presume heterosexuality, the vast majority of writings on sexuality did. In the 1920s, the term "heterosexual" came into widespread use. Floyd Dell used it throughout his Love in the Machine Age. (1930) And in 1925, over twenty years before Kinsey, Joseph Collins set the heterosexual ideal firmly against the homosexual in his popular sex manual, The Doctor Looks at Love and Life. The writers of the youth culture, too, in their advocacy of heterosexuality railed against homosexuality. The categorization of a homosexual person was a relatively new phenomenon. Until Victorian times, homosexuality was regarded in the West as a sin that anybody could commit: homosexual acts did not define a whole person. Victorians kept quiet about their homoerotic desires and relegated them with their other desires to the underworld. In the late nineteenth century, German technical writers Karl Ulrich and Richard von Kraft-Ebing first devised the "medical model" of homosexuality, attempting to identify particular types of persons who were homosexuals. By 1898, English sexologist
Havelock Ellis, in his *Sexual Inversion*, was discussing different types of homosexuals: in such a literature a person's homosexuality became central to his (or indeed her) identity. Indeed, what Michel Foucault described so well applied: "The Sodomite had been a temporary aberration: the homosexual was now a species." In effect, these writers took their ideas from underworld concepts of homosexuality, where the existence of a "homosexual pervert" was well understood, as George Chauncey, Jr. has shown. Ellis was extremely influential in the United States during this period, especially among sex manual writers. Indeed, his influence is a far more direct one than Freud's, whose ideas about the universal prevalence of bisexuality at certain stages of life were truly sensational at the time, as Gilman Ostrander has suggested.

The extent to which the medical model actually influenced popular discourse and practice remains unclear. But what is important for my purposes is that a view of the homosexual person—a view prevalent both in the medical model and in the underworld sexual subculture—appeared in respectable literature that was read by the young of the middle classes at this time. Further, the homosexual was specifically presented as the antithesis of the heterosexual, the male ideal. Indeed, in many ways, by the 1920s, men's fear of effeminacy, which had characterized the "masculinity crisis" of the Progressive Era, was diffused into a fear of the new category, the homosexual. This added a whole new dimension to
the sexual demands on men. For in the modern world not only were men pressed to be sexual more than ever, but any impotence or effeminacy was equated with homosexuality, which in public discourse was now regarded not as an occasional act or sin but as defining a whole person. Thus any homosexual desire a young man might feel now caused him to fear that he was a homosexual person rather than a person tempted merely to commit a sin, albeit a rather venal one.

Floyd Dell, for example, who found that his psychoanalysis revealed that he himself had "a great deal of unconscious homosexuality and a variety of other frightful sounding traits," featured occasional homosexual characters in his fiction to set against the heterosexual ideal. In the Briary Bush, Felix Fay, new to Chicago, after encountering one of the hazards of the city, a rather effeminate homosexual, discussed him with a girlfriend:

'But are these airs natural to him or is he just putting them on to impress people? Where is he from?'
'Guess?'
Felix thought he saw a light.
'London?'
The girl laughed again.
'Arkansas or what?'

Harry Kemp, too, featured several effeminate characters who were presented as the opposite of the "physical culture" ideal.

Buffin was clad in knickers of plum-colored velour, wore a plum-colored silk shirt. . . .
... An effeminate savage and cruel, not gentle and soft, shone smoothly as the surface of a mirror in his hard, strong, gleaming eyes.\textsuperscript{70}

One character, Jack Matthewson, "possessed a slight effeminateness about his too regular classic features—though the effeminacy extended no further than his features."\textsuperscript{71} In Percy Marks' \textit{The Plastic Age}, the hero, Hugh, speculates on why the fraternity initiation demanded "the freshmen strip." He concluded that "there was something phallic about the proceedings that disgusted him," which implied disgust at the homoerotic implications of the ceremony.\textsuperscript{72} There were several such characters in the fiction of F. Scott Fitzgerald, who was himself suspected of having homosexual tendencies by his wife Zelda, according to Gore Vidal.\textsuperscript{73} In \textit{Tender Is the Night}, the monocled Campion at least managed "somehow to restrain his most blatant effeminacy."\textsuperscript{74} But later he let go: "'I can't stand it,' he squeaked, almost voiceless. 'It's too much. This will cost me.'"\textsuperscript{75} Later psychologist Dick Diver interviewed the young character, Francisco, about his homosexuality. In this case, "there was some manliness in the boy, perverted now into an active resistance to his father. But he had that typically roguish look in his eyes that homosexuals assume in discussing the subject."\textsuperscript{76}

Sinclair Lewis also loathed homosexuals, although he added the typical twist of seeing the phenomenon as part and parcel of a decadent Europe. His semi-autobiographical \textit{Dodsworth} (1929) featured the upright,
uptight all-American, Sam Dodsworth, being dragged by the dubious German, Kurt, into what sounds like a gay bar:

Their new venture in restaurants was called 'Die Neuste Ehe,' --'The Latest Style in Marriage'-- and after two minutes' view of it, Sam concluded that he preferred the old style. Here, in a city in which, according to the sentiment of the American comic weeklies, all males were as thick as pancakes and stolid as plow-horses, was a mass of delicate young men with the voices of chorus girls, dancing together and whispering in corners, young men with scarves of violet and rose, wearing bracelets and heavy symbolic rings. And there was a girl in lavender chiffon--only from the set of her shoulders Sam was sure that she was a man.

There was worse in store for poor beleaguered Sam:

As they entered, the bartender, and a very pretty and pink-cheeked bartender he was, waved his towel at them and said something in a shrill playful German which Sam took to signify that Kurt was a charming person worthy of closer acquaintance, that he himself was a tower of steel and a glory upon the mountains. It was new to Sam.

He stood gaping. His fists half-clenched. The thick, reddish hair on the back of his hands bristled. But it was not belligerence he felt--it was fear of something unholy. He saw that Fran was equally aghast, proudly he saw that she drew nearer his stalwartness.

Robert McAlmon, in his short story "Distinguished Air," adopted a similar device but was even more viciously homophobic. He featured two Americans with what he called a "fag artist," Foster:

'Goodness me, Marjorie, I just love art. I love art.' Foster minced, unable to be directed for over a moment. 'Will there be some pictures of naked boys?
I just love art. It's too exquisite. So glad you asked me along.' 78

The narrator also went to Berlin where he met more such people:

'Whoops, dearie, I see you,' sounded a falsetto voice, faking feminine tones 'Sisters Adlon are with us.'
The speaker, I noticed was a man who had dined at a
table for hours when we were at the Adlon Hotel.
'I'll show these boys that us Americans aren't tight
with money.'

While he was there an elderly fairy well known to
various psychoanalysts in Germany came into the
place. This night he was dressed up as a blond-haired
doll, and his fat old body looked in its doll's dress
much like that of a barn-storming burlesque sobrette
grown a generation or so too old. 79

Writers often speculated about and perceived an increase in
homosexuality as an unfavorable development against the desirable
heterosexual goal. Ludwig Lewisohn, in Stephen Escott (1930), included a
lengthy discussion that directly suggested that the changes in women's
roles would lead to an increase in homosexuality among men. If women
could no longer uplift men, the result would be homosexuality:

Primitive men in the tribes I've mentioned would never
sustain that wound nor require its healing, nor would
an Arab who saves money and buys a wife and saves more
money and buys another. It is we who seek the angel
image; it is we who need our mates to uplift us from
the crushed estate of our youth. Or else the men of
the West, like the men of Greece, will find another
object for their ideal cravings and seek another
Eros. He stopped short. 'Am I shocking you?' David
had grown very grave. 'Not in the least. There is a
distinct increase in homosexuality already. Go on.' 80
As these witnesses and many more suggested, by the 1920s, men’s fear of effeminacy was diffused into a glorification of heterosexuality and a denigration of homosexuality in the literature of the youth culture. Effeminacy of any kind was placed under suspicion, for some of men’s fear of impotence, by the 1920s, took the form of a fear of homosexuality.

Similar evidence appeared in the sex and marriage manuals and the work of the Freudian popularizers of the 1920s. The ending of the conspiracy of silence about sexuality in general also meant the ending of the conspiracy of silence about homosexuality. The sex manual writers, like the youth culture writers, seized on the Underworld Masculine Primitive ideal and medical model of the homosexual as a person defined by his sexuality and made this model public. One popularizer, for example, diagnosed "the passive male homosexual" as "in every case the son of a widow or divorced mother, separated from her husband by death, desertion or legal proceedings soon after the boy’s birth." The flamboyant Samuel Schmalhausen was convinced that "for aught I know homosexuals may be winning armies of new recruits." He warned boys not to "frequent public toilets, for many perverts watch these places and entice boys into submitting to their desires." Even more influential, because of the millions of copies sold, were the works of Clement Wood, James Oppenheim, and William J. Fielding. Oppenheim, having referred positively to some homosexuals in The Common Sense of Sex, referred also
to the cause of homosexuality as "an excessive sexual craving." But what was perhaps even more disturbing to the middle classes was the widespread discussion of the prevalence of homosexuality in adolescence. Clement Wood, for example, went into great detail about this. He even provided figures. Thus in *Manhood, The Facts of Life Presented to Men*, he wrote of the boy of twelve's sex interests:

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Autosexuality------40%
Homosexuality------50%
Heterosexuality-----10%
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At puberty, the red-blooded heterosexual fathers had less to fear of their sons:

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Autosexuality------20%
Homosexuality------30%
Heterosexuality------50%
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It was, however, Joseph Collins's *The Doctor Looks At Love and Life* that was the biggest seller among sex manuals in the 1920s—five million copies. Yet Collins devoted relatively little space to homosexuality: a third of the book was given over to homosexuality, which firmly brought the subject into the American middle-class home. Collins stimulated the fear among young men that they, too, could be homosexual:

There are persons who indulge in unnatural sexual relations who are not homosexuals. They are the real degenerates. There are many potential and actual homosexuals whose intercourse with persons of their own sex is confined to emotional and intellectual contact; to establish romantic friendship with them.
Collins generally regarded the homosexual as effeminate. Any effeminacy in a man could make his sexual orientation suspect. But what was worse was that Collins established that one could be both masculine and homosexual. Any homosexual desire a young man might feel might make him suspect that he was a homosexual person:

Stangely enough, many people think that masculine (i.e. male) homosexuals are invariably timid, shy, retiring, fastidious, dainty even, and what is popularly called effeminate. Some are but many are not. I have known husky articulate, self-opinionated and even domineering ones. Indeed, most of them . . . have what is known as a superiority complex which they conceal when on guard.\footnote{86}

Contrasted to this, according to Collins, was "the other extreme . . . the man of broad hips and mincing gait, who vocalizes like a lady and articulates like a chatterbox, who likes to sew and knit, to ornament his clothing and decorate his face."\footnote{87} What is so striking in Collins' discussion is his suggestion that homosexuals were literally everywhere, which revelation can only have added to male anxieties:

I know that my counsel as physician has frequently been sought by them and that I see many persons in clubs, churches, theaters, busses and the street who have somatic and gestural manifestations which are frequently associated with it, and voices and manners that its victims often have.\footnote{88}

Gilman Ostrander has commented, rightly, on how this openness about adolescent homosexual desire was genuinely new at the time, and it therefore added to sexual anxieties.\footnote{89}
The portrayal of homosexuality was sometimes relatively sympathetic. Oppenheim referred to "a certain percentage of men, relatively small, who seem more like the victims than the willing practitioners of homosexuality. The overwhelming prejudice against them, the fact that they cannot escape their doom, the often effeminate traits that give them away, make them as a rule, pitiable objects." While W.J. Robinson thought homosexuality "a sign of degeneracy," he called for an end "to all stupid laws against homosexuality." Further, at this time the Chicago "Society for Human Rights" was formed, the first homosexual advocacy group. While undoubtedly the 1920s saw the beginning of a liberal view of homosexuality, the overwhelming tenor was still what we would call homophobic, as men were pressured to be heterosexual.

The emphasis on heterosexuality culminated in a celebration of male potency. Judge Lindsey revelled in adolescent male sexuality, describing it as "animal" and therefore healthy. Popular writers titillated their readers with descriptions of excited men. In Percy Marks's spoof of college life, The Plastic Age, the hero, Hugh, was "lashed by desire, he was burning with curiosity" at the prospect of visiting a prostitute. Warner Fabian's Flaming Youth was full of males experiencing their sexuality as their strongest urge: "the terrible fiery desire seized him to claim her there and then and there to bid her leave everything for
love and go with him to the ends of the earth, to overwhelm her with the force of his desire." 95 Fabian portrayed male potency positively, but not every writer was as explicit or romantic as Samuel Schmalhausen, who implored:

Can't youth be taught to accept his sex more sweetly? More proudly and more reverently? The wonderful phenomenon of his sexuality, wonderful as science, as poetry, as mysticism are 'love worthy.' His body is lovable, his young manhood inspiring, his sexual yearning the source of poetry and dream and gentleness.

Further, he went on:

In man's quivering limbs the fire of life burns luminous and strong. His sexual potency is remarkable,—if anything, in excess of human nature's civil demands. . . . His erotic delight in life immensely exuberant. . . . Sexually, man is still a wonderfully potent savage. 96

Male sexuality was thus publicly celebrated, while previously such an extremely positive view of male potency had been confined to the Underworld Primitive ideal. Though it was still not entirely respectable, its public visibility marked a sharp contrast from Victorian mores. No wonder one writer has quoted a wit as saying that Schmalhausen's tract Why We Misbehave should have been retitled Why We Should Misbehave. 97 Quite simply, male potency was celebrated more and more as it was feared less.
This trend continued in sex/marriage manuals. These mass-produced best-sellers, especially those of the Haldeman-Julius Company, publicly advocated the Underworld Primitive style of male sexuality. W.J. Fielding wrote that "in man the sexual impulse takes a more dynamic turn than is the case with women." William Robinson described male sexuality as "man's most dynamic urge," declaring that "in man the sex instinct is primary and the paternal instinct secondary and latent while in woman the maternal instinct is primary and the sex instinct secondary and latent." James Oppenheim wrote similarly that "the man is swift, ready, and active, the woman slow, unresponsive and passive." Also, as Clement Wood put it, "the average man comes to his passion quickly and after his orgasm, it dies as quickly. The average woman mounts far more slowly towards the crest of her passion." Because of the high value placed on male sexuality in these same popularizations, the loss of potency was man's worst fear. As Jungian popularizer James Oppenheim explained, "if the fear of impregnation is woman's chief fear that of man's is often the fear of impotence." Oppenheim thought that this was an appropriate fear because "the so-called he-men of America are fond of affirming that they are red-blooded and masculine through and through. Neither of these statements can bear any serious consideration." William Robinson was even more trenchant when he
wrote: "And I repeat . . . an impotent man is a more pitiable man than a
venereally infected one."104

Margaret Sanger saw the effeminization of men as a problem, too,
oberving that "the great danger in this day is not that it be too
recklessly romantic, but that it be too tamely accepted, too anemic, too
lifeless. The woman pursuing, the man passively accepting."105
Repression led to such effeminacy because "inhibited and restrained by
the false restrictions of so-called polite society, too many repressed
young men take up the task of love-making in too tame and effete a
style."106

No wonder two groups of writers were especially concerned with the
social relations between the sexes: in the 1910-20 decade, the social
hygienists, and in the 1920-30 decade, the companionate marriage
writers. According to Christina Simmons, the social hygienists, while
trying to preserve the old system of morality, in fact inadvertently
helped stimulate a new morality, while the companionate marriage writers
tried to devise new controls over male sexuality to replace the crumbling
barriers.107

The American Social Hygiene Association was a product of the growing
awareness of the presence of venereal diseases among prostitutes and the
realization that through the prevailing double-standard of morality it
was highly likely that men who had visited prostitutes could transmit
venereal diseases to their wives and offspring. This organization attempted to spread knowledge about the terrible effects of venereal diseases and, given this concern, they encouraged purity as an ideal for men. They insisted that "the prospective husband should be sexually just as pure as he expects his future wife to be." In other words, a single standard of morality was to be rigorously enforced. Thomas Galloway recommended "a continent life."

Irving Steinhardt was more unequivocal: "The sexual relation is absolutely unnecessary to you or to any other man." In this way, like Victorian advocates of the Christian Gentleman ideal of masculinity, the social hygienists emphasized a single-standard of morality. But similarities with Victorian purity advocates were only superficial, for social hygienists were one of the first groups to deride Victorianism by emphasizing the "myth of Victorian repression." They in fact mocked the lofty Victorian ideal of asceticism and purity as irrational. They preferred to enforce it by rigorous social control. Whereas Victorians were all too aware of the dangers of male sexuality, the social hygienists denied any religious or moral reasons for sexual control. As major social hygiene writer Max Exner put it, that sexual desire might be a "sin or a cause for self-reproach and shame is false and pernicious. Youth must not be taught that the sex nature is to be repressed because it is shameful but that it must be controlled and refined because of its dignity and
power."111 Social hygienists celebrated male sexuality. They favored purity before marriage but only as a means of better enjoying disease-free fulfillment in marriage. This accelerated demands on men; put simply, sexual pleasure in marriage was a desirable goal.

Also, ironically, as the first organization to breach publicly the conspiracy of silence about sex, most especially by giving sex education to children outside the home, the American Social Hygiene Association represents the very cutting-edge of the revolution in morals for men because by breaching this central tenet of the Victorian system of morality, it brought the Masculine Primitive right out on the center-stage of public discussion. Despite the emphasis on purity, social hygiene writers did not argue with the Underworld Primitive understanding of masculinity. Winfield Scott Hall, for example, declared:

Manhood has been called virility. For want of a better word this term has been applied to the sum total of the man’s qualities of any animal whatsoever, so that the man’s qualities of the stallion are also encompassed in the term virility.112

Thomas Galloway wrote that "in man...desires are strongly defined, can be aroused almost any time when in health."113 Thus the social hygienists attempted to establish a feeble public ethic that demanded male continence without the safety valve of prostitution. But perhaps even more significant was the almost cavalier way in which the social hygienists went about their sex education. True, much sexual instruction
remained euphemistic and squeamish though, crucially, it was even then innovative in that it was always public, but as John Burnham has shown, "the most pious and unsubstantial purity pamphlet might stand next to detailed medical works on sexual perversion by Richard von Krafft Ebing and Venyamin Tamowsky."\textsuperscript{114} This was unprecedented: here was a major, respectable organization that openly encouraged sexual fulfillment and even, sometimes, explained to Americans how to attain that fulfillment. In this way, the social hygienists inadvertently contributed to the undermining of the conspiracy of silence and hence to the undermining of the controls over male sexuality and accelerating of demands on men by suggesting the desirability of erotic liberation in a way not so entirely distant from Greenwich Village Bohemians.

For even their persistent and loud emphasis on purity accentuated the sexual demands, because men were told in no uncertain terms and with such an insistence that they must be pure so that their curiosity can only have been aroused. This was, after all, one of the great propaganda campaigns of American history. In particular, it is likely that the social hygienists' direct influence on the revolution in morals was not so much through sex education for children begun in 1913 but through their enrollment in the extraordinary anti-venereal disease campaign of the American army in World War One.\textsuperscript{115} This is worth examining in some detail. By this time the social hygienists had virtually become a branch
of the government and had taken several organizations under their wing. They had therefore gained confidence. The AEF adopted an elaborate policy designed to prevent men from taking advantage of French prostitution. Demands on men were again accelerated by the manner in which the social hygienists stressed purity. Victorian purity crusaders emphasized continence as part of a lofty, even religious, morality. But the social hygienists, especially in their guise as the large bureaucratic, government supported organization of World War One, emphasized purity as utility: obviously, the AEF had indeed to be "fit to fight," but also they encouraged airmen, soldiers and sailors to be chaste to preserve their health. Ultimately, the justification for avoiding venereal disease was to gain fulfilment in marriage. But in the meantime, the lurid discussion of sexual disease broke the conspiracy of silence and forced men to think about sex.

The strictures against VD were very powerful. Men could be prosecuted or court-martialed just for having a venereal disease, and they were subjected to vigorous propaganda to keep them celibate. "Will you be a free Man or in Chains?" declared one poster, while another picturing a family ordered, "Get back to them Physically Fit and Morally Clean." Here they were successful. The incidence of venereal disease in the U.S. army in the World War was remarkably low, although this may not have reflected the success of the social hygienists so much as the
discipline of the army. One third of unmarried white men were chaste, one survey showed, while for the year ending August 31, 1918, only 126 out of a thousand men were treated for venereal disease.\textsuperscript{117} Educator G. Stanley Hall was brought in to discuss how sports could reduce sex urges, for "every young man has athletic sympathies and he can be shown that purity is the best way of keeping the body at the very top of its condition."\textsuperscript{118} The social hygienists conducted studies of sexual behavior, distributed sex information to the troops, and made the film "Fit to Fight," which was unequivocal in its message and was one among many facets of the campaign. According to John B. Watson, who was involved in the making of the film, it sought to teach:

1. That continence is in no way injurious to health...
2. That seminal emissions are not harmful unless occurring more frequently than twice a week.
3. That venereal diseases are very serious and may lead to total disability.
4. That venereal diseases are the result of infection by microorganisms.\textsuperscript{119}

The film went on to show how syphilis could be transmitted "by a kiss from a prostitute."\textsuperscript{120} The movie also discussed the fact "that both gonorrhea and syphilis required persistent and long-continued treatment."\textsuperscript{121} The Hygienists advised that "the government maintains recreation rooms for soldiers and that various forms of wholesome recreation may serve as a substitute for the bawdy house."\textsuperscript{122} These strictures were certainly powerful. As David Pivar put it, they
reinforced "the old Puritan view that crime and punishment were mechanically related." But the threat that one might get a venereal disease was not as strong as the fear that one might, for example, go to hell. So loud was the insistence on purity that one cannot help but suspect that it aroused prurience.

Further, some more traditional purity campaigners were highly suspicious that many social hygiene administrators were "insensitive to moral considerations." To some extent this was justified. One hygienist in effect all but encouraged his soldiers to indulge: "Does any red-blooded man feel any doubt of his ability to preserve his manhood though tempted by the alluring seductions of voluptuous and beautiful women in the whirl and excitement of the gay metropolis, or the fascinations that may come to you from delicate and devoted attentions in the solitude of remote billets." However, sexual demands were most clearly accelerated in the sheer emphasis on ultimate sexual pleasure—"supreme experience"—which continence in the present would enable to occur in the future. Men's sweethearts were shown awaiting their arrival home still pure and undiseased. For social hygienists in the war were able to emphasize sexual pleasure in marriage to ever larger groups; as one pamphlet put it, "Sex power is not lost by laying off," that is pleasure was only to be deferred. In this way, through the film and the whole campaign in general, it was quite impossible for a doughboy not
to know about the centrality of passion and orgasm to sex. Expectations were aroused.

Yet the self-confident ASHA, in tandem with the government, in another way helped break down the societal controls against the fulfilling of such expectations. Not only did they try to prevent the troops from visiting prostitutes in France, they also in the U.S. rounded up thousands of prostitutes in a brutal, authoritarian manner that undermined this safety valve. They helped break down the controls around male sexuality by helping to remove the safety valve of prostitution. They thus, whatever their moralistic intentions, helped contribute to the exaggerated new cultural fear of impotence by helping lift the "conspiracy of silence," which had helped prevent the glorification of male potency so characteristic of the 1920s. Above all, perhaps, by stressing ultimate sexual fulfilment, they set the stage for the 1920s.

For in the materialistic, hedonistic, consumption-oriented, twenties, the breaking of the old sexual system accelerated. To cope with the "revolt of youth", the changing position of women, and the greater availability of birth control, a number of reformers attempted to redefine the sexual system. Like the Social Hygienists and Victorians before them, they found it desirable to control male sexuality. They therefore advocated purity for men before marriage.
But sex as erotic pleasure as well as spiritual union nevertheless came to play a greater part in marriage ideology in the 1920s. This is entirely consistent with the larger cultural celebration of sex expression, of which the companionate marriage writers were a part, despite their awareness of the need to control male sexuality. This further exacerbated the sexual demands on men. Samuel Schmalhausen, for example, asked: "What in truth is the meaning of marriage if it is not sexual felicity?" \(^{130}\) Haldeman-Julius company sex manual writer William Fielding declared: "But what is love, even in its noblest form, but the supreme refinement of the sexual impulse?" \(^{131}\) While the spiritual side remained important, the erotic side of sexuality was more and more emphasized. Marriage counselor Ira Wile wrote:

> Sex communion possesses esthetic and spiritual attributes that are far more significant than the sensual phases which at this time are seemingly in the foreground of public thought. This does not mean that the physical side of sex life is not of tremendous importance. \(^{132}\)

Margaret Sanger declared that for "Enduring happiness in marriage" to be attained "Love is essential. Passion is essential. Virility is essential." \(^{133}\) Thus was erotic sex foisted into an increasingly central situation in marriage.

These developments alone exacerbated demands on men. But, in addition, much of the onus for the success of the sex act was placed on
men. Men were expected to stimulate women. Marriage counselor Paul Poponoe declared in 1925 that "After marriage it is the husband's part to show his aptitude in arousing and maintaining the responsiveness of his wife." Ultimately, "the women's desire needs to be actively aroused". Above all, the emphasis in the manuals was on sex expression as pleasure for its own sake. In contrast, the late Victorian marriage manuals had emphasized spiritual union and referred to the physical aspects of sexuality euphemistically and not in the ever increasingly specific detail of the 1930s.

Writers in the 1920s attempted to devise a new masculine sexual ideal that was subtle, intricate, and complex. It was also genuinely demanding. Indeed, if men were to take the ideal seriously, it would require almost superhuman concentration and assurance. Directly influenced by the British writer Havelock Ellis, whose chapter VI of his The Psychology of Sex was entitled "The Art of Love", writers of marriage/sex manuals repeatedly emphasized the concept of "artfulness" and of "skillfulness." Thus, several writers followed Ellis in entitling a chapter of their manuals "the Art of Love." Writer Charles Malchow declared that if a man did not continue when a woman begged him not to, he had then "not progressed very far in 'the art of love;'." in this way he encouraged rape. Sanger insisted
that a man be a "skillful husband." For the Binkleys, the act of sex should be "fully developed aesthetically" and should reach its "full beauty." While this demand was onerous enough, the increasingly specific instructions for men required attention. Men were to be masterly. Every young husband had to learn that "to be the master of his passion instead of its slave is the first essential rule in love etiquette." He must juggle "passion with compassion." A "magic male manipulation" of women was the secret of the success of the sex act. This would be no hardship for the husband "if he be a true lover" But while being masterly, he was also supposed to display "tenderness" and "gentleness." He should thus be extra careful "not to permit the weight of his body to hold down his wife." He should "take plenty of time," avoid hurry," "avoid violence," be "gentle." A lack of tenderness could cause "alterations in the love-life" for the worst. Indeed, "only disaster can result". Not all of the experts brought out the contradiction in the ideal as clearly as Sanger, who at one point called for "aggressive gentleness." Ultimately, the call for "mutuality" was the most pervasive in the manuals, and this only served to accelerate the tensions and anxieties. The marriage manuals reflect the fact that women were expected to demand greater sexual satisfaction. Gone at last was the ideology of Victorian
'passionlessness'. Thus, for Paul Popenoe, after marriage, "Sexual intercourse plays fully as large a part in the life of the average wife as it does in that of the average husband." Poet and sex manual writer Clement Wood feared a "passion that leaves the woman unsatisfied." YMCA marriage expert Sherwood Eddy asked whether the sex act be "mutual or one-sided and does it mean the same thing to both parties?" For Paul Popenoe, complete "mutuality" was essential. This idea culminated in what Michael Gordon has called the "cult of the mutual orgasm." In the future, even the wedding night would be blissful:

Such a first meeting of bride and bridegroom will be no raping affair. They will mingle in a unity the most perfect and blissful that can ever be experienced by human beings in this world.

For the Binkleys, the most central part of the entire "artistry of marriage" was the mutual orgasm:

Should a mutual orgasm not be attained the woman will fail to experience orgasm at all. The man who understands the physiology of sex can often correct such disharmonies by taking pains more amply to stimulate the tumescent process in himself, thus compensating for physiological differences.

The growing sexual demands on men indeed culminated in the concept of the mutual orgasm, which grew pervasive in the 1930s. Men were forced to walk a delicate tightrope between masterliness and "mutuality", which must have created anxieties.
The secret of "happiness in marriage" was male control. Ira Wile well understood that for men, "real sex communion calls for self-control and for consideration of the interests of the loved one."160 For Margaret Sanger, the man's role was the most "controlled part" of the act of sex.161 As these writers called for a modern man, they expected him to control his sexuality which, like the Victorians before them, they saw as "active," "dynamic," and "urgent."162 They stereotyped their Victorian fathers and grandfathers as "derogatory, dominant and brutal," and hoped that there would be an end to the "master-slave" relationship they claimed had characterized relations between men and women in the past.163 They railed against "petty household tyrants" and hoped for a "modern man" who could conform to the new masculine sexual ideal.164 Sanger really believed that "(the Victorian) type of man is gradually disappearing."165 Sherwood Eddy insisted that "Man is not a beast" if "woman is not an iceberg."166 Even a cautious writer like Heinrich Wolf insisted that "'the New Man' is being born."167

The modern masculine sexual ideal called for male self-control as in the Victorian system, but in the context of an environment that made this more and more difficult to attain. And, in addition, men were expected to have acquired skills in bed. Purity and prostitution were de-emphasized. Men and women were placed in the bedroom where, if women were not making greater demands for sex expression, the marriage manuals
certainly were. There men were expected to be masterly yet tender and above all mutual, even to the point of orgasm. As artifacts of the Culture of Personality, the sex/marriage manuals stressed male performance. The public and open environment of sex discussion and sex demands that pervaded the United States in the 1910-30 period pressured men publicly to express themselves sexually, specifically heterosexually, as never before. Male sexual potency was celebrated as male impotency was shunned and equated with homosexuality. Suppliers of erotica brought their wares above ground and onto the newstands. Freudian popularizers insisted that everything was sexual and that thus good sex was vital to healthy psychological adjustment. So insistent were they on the need for orgasmic expression that the last and greatest taboo, that against masturbation, began to break down. But this was the exception rather than the rule. In general, the accelerating demands for male potency were vehemently heterosexual. Men were taught to judge their manliness against the unmanliness of the homosexual. The accelerated fear of impotency only added to the celebration of potency and the undermining of the older controls over male sexuality. If the Victorians were taught to fear both their potency and their impotency, increasingly the young men of the 1920s youth culture were taught to fear clumsiness as well as impotency. These prescriptions took the place of the older Victorian public moral strictures. This modern man was thus a precarious
construct, caught between the demand that he both control and express his sexuality. Symbolic of this sexual conflict, the hero of Is Sex Necessary? decided that he was "not cut out for kissing" after reading the new sex manuals; he left the city to raise fruit in Oregon. Such might have been the fate of many young American men in the 1920s had they taken the ideology of the sexualized society seriously.


4 Floyd Dell, Janet March (NY: Knopf, 1923), 275.


6 Floyd Dell, Love in the Machine Age (NY: Farrar and Rinehart, 1930), 250.


8 Dell, Love in the Machine Age, 250.


11 Andre Tridon, Sex and Psychoanalysis (NY: Knopf, 1923), 241.
12Ibid., 245. Well-educated people such as Dell would not have subscribed to such a perversion of Freud.

13Bernarr Macfadden, Manhood and Marriage (NY: Macfadden, 1916), passim.

14"Rainbow's Ends," True Story, October 1919, 57.

15"The Vampire and the Puritan," True Story, June 1919, 39.

16Ibid.


18Andre Tridon, Sex and Psychoanalysis, 241.

19Samuel Schmalhausen, Why We Misbehave (NY: MacCaulay, 1928), 14.


21Schmalhausen, Why We Misbehave, 14.

22Ibid.


26Ibid.

27"A Midnight’s Memories," True Story, July 1922, 112.

"Keeping Up With the Crowd," *True Story*, January 1923, 46.


Ibid., 32.

Ibid., 34.

Ibid.


Ibid.

Ibid.


Ibid., 389.

Ibid., 390.

Ibid.


47 Ibid., 397.
48 Ibid., 392.
49 Ibid., 388.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid.


54 Winfield Scott Hall, Sexual Knowledge, (Philadelphia: John Winston, 1918), 106.

55 Ibid.


60 Ibid.

61 Dell, Love in the Machine Age, 23.


George Chauncey Jr., "Christian Brotherhood or Sexual Perversion" *Journal of Social History* 9 (Winter 1985), 189-211.


Ibid.


Fitzgerald, *Tender Is the Night*, 149.

Ibid., 245.

Sinclair Lewis, *Dodsworth* (NY: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich); 1929, 223.

Robert MacAlmon, "Distinguished Air," in *Grim Fairy Tales* (Paris: Mountain Press, 1925). Only just over a hundred copies of this were made at the time but it was widely reviewed all the same. A copy is preserved in the Kinsey Institute for Research Into Gender and Sexuality, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.
79 Ibid.


81 André Tridon, Psychoanalysis and Behavior (NY: Knopf, 1923), 229.

82 Samuel Schmalhausen, "The War Between the Sexes" in V.F. Calvert, Women's Coming of Age (NY: Horace Liveright, 1931), 27.

83 James Oppenheim, The Common Sense of Sex (Girard, Kansas: Haldeman-Julius, 1924), 3.


85 Collins, The Doctor Looks at Love and Life.

86 Ibid., 73.

87 Ibid., 74.

88 Ibid., 65.

89 Ostrander, American Civilization in the First Machine Age, 136.

90 Oppenheim, The Common Sense of Sex, 53.

91 Robinson, Sexual Morality, 7.


93 Judge Ben B. Lindsey, The Revolt of Modern Youth, 13.

94 Marks, The Plastic Age, 165.

95 Warner Fabian, Flaming Youth, 205.

96 Schmalhausen, Why We Misbehave, 139.

97 Burnham, "From Narcissism to Social Control," 87.

98 W.J. Fielding, Man's Sexual Life (Girard, Haldeman-Julius, 1925), 5.

100 Oppenheim, The Common Sense of Sex, 19.

101 Wood, The Facts of Life Presented to Men, 44.

102 Oppenheim, Common Sense.

103 Ibid.

104 Robinson, Sexual Morality, 27.

105 Margaret Sanger, Happiness in Marriage (NY: Blue Ribbon, 1926), 47.

106 Ibid.


109 Ibid.


112 Winfield Scott Hall, Sexual Knowledge (Philadelphia: John Winston, 1918), 104.

113 Galloway, Sex and Social Health, 233.


116 Ibid.

117 Ibid.

118 G. Stanley Hall, "Education and the Army," *Journal of Social Hygiene* 5 (June 1919), 44.


120 Ibid.

121 Ibid.

122 Ibid.

123 David Pivar, "Cleansing the Nation," *Prologue* 12 (Spring 1980), 32.

124 Pivar, "Purity Crusade," 35.


126 ASHA, *Don't Take a Chance*; quoted in Brandt, *No Magic Bullet*, 64.


128 Brandt, *No Magic Bullet*, 84-95; Pivar, "Cleansing the Nation," passim.

129 Simmons, "Marriage in the Modern Manner," 105-149.

130 Schmalhausen, *Why We Misbehave*, 156.


Sanger, *Happiness in Marriage*, 27.


Van de Velde's *Ideal Marriage: Its Physiology and Technique* (NY: Random House, 1934) provides the revolutionary shift to vivid descriptions of technique; this was popular in the United States from the early 1930s.

This clearly reflects Ellis' influence. Ellis himself took the term from Ovid's "Ars Amatoria," but probably did not realize Ovid's work was satirical. (See Havelock Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* vol. 2, [NY: Random House, 1936], 514).


Malchow, *The Sexual Life*, 47.

Sanger, 144.

Robert C. Binkley and Frances W. Binkley, *What is Right with Marriage?* (NY and London: Appleton, 1929), 125. This manual is the best example in this period of what Dennis Brisset and Lionel S. Lewis have called "sex as work." (*Social Problems* 15 [Summer 1967]: 8-18). This is a provocative article for the period from the 1940s to the 1960s, but I do not generally see the tendency for an invasion into private life of a "work ethic" in my period as sufficiently developed. I am not arguing this, but simply saying that sex became more demanding for men.

Sanger, *Happiness in Marriage*, 122.

Schmalhausen, *Why We Misbehave*, 17.

Schmalhausen, *Why We Misbehave*, 146.


Sanger, *Happiness in Marriage*, 145.
147 Long, *Sane Sex Life and Sane Sex Living*, 118.

148 Long, *Sane Sex Life and Sane Sex Living*, 70.

149 Sanger, *Happiness in Marriage*, 122 and 125.


151 Long, *Sane Sex Life and Sane Sex Living*, 70.

152 Sanger, *Happiness in Marriage*, 126.


158 Long, *Sane Sex Life and Sane Sex Living*, 63.


162 These words are used especially in the Haldeman-Julius manuals e.g. Clement Wood, *Facts of Life*, 9; W.F. Fielding, *Man's Sex Life*, 2.


165 Sanger, *Happiness in Marriage*, 77.
166 Eddy, *Sex and Youth*, 129.


CHAPTER FIVE

The Working-Class Public Youth-Oriented

World of Leisure, Chicago and New York, 1900-30.

Within the working class in the cities in the early twentieth
century, there arose a public youth-oriented heterosocial leisure world,
first identified by Lewis Erenberg in his 1980 study of New York
nightlife. Here a vast array of amusements, dance halls and movie
theaters provided the backdrop for the redefinition of American
heterosociality.¹ Within this world, there emerged a New Woman who has
recently come to be equated with two groups, who were themselves
identified at the time by investigators. Kathy Peiss has drawn attention
to the New York "Charity Girl," who differed from a prostitute in that
she demanded not money but presents and a good time. When seen in tandem
with Joanne Meyerowitz’s "women adrift" in Chicago at the same time, what
was new about these women shifts more clearly into focus.³ The "Woman
Adrift," like the "Charity Girl," was a single woman who endeavored to
support herself. This was hardly new in itself; nor was her sexual
precocity. While a rigid double standard existed in the working classes with a clear distinction between "good" and "bad" women, that distinction was always blurred to some extent by working women's greater personal autonomy. But, as Daniel Scott Smith has shown, for the general population of working women, important changes in premarital behavior were underway during the late nineteenth century. Premarital sexual behavior in largely working-class Hingham, Massachusetts increased from 8.5 percent of women (1841-60) to 16.0 percent (1861-80) and in Lexington jumped from 3.6 percent (1854-60) to 19.3 percent in 1854 to 1860, as measured by premarital pregnancy. This confirms a greater willingness among working-class women to "go all the way" in the late nineteenth century. It confirms that, especially as regards behavior, some modification of the double standard occurred among the working classes earlier than it did in the middle classes. These figures set the tone. While we should not exaggerate the extent to which working-class sexuality changed, the erotic pace indeed accelerated at this time as the public, youth-oriented heterosocial leisure world identified by Lewis Erenberg, Kathy Peiss and Joanne Meyerowitz grew out of the Victorian underworld. If working-class women had often had the independence to be sexually expressive with men, they now had greater independence because they had more economic autonomy. And this was reflected in the declining double standard. Further, many of these women lived apart from
their families; this made them even more independent persons than their
Victorian precursors who had lived at home, because in some ways it gave
them greater autonomy and bargaining power.

The crucial backdrop to any study of the working-class public
heterosexual leisure world in the early twentieth century is, therefore,
the Victorian underworld, which has until recently received scant
attention from historians of the United States. Scholars have been
forced to rely on—admittedly comparable—studies of British society,
especially Steven Marcus’ *The Other Victorian* and Kellow Chesney’s *The
Anti-Society*. Although they have been helpful with context, these works
are obviously inadequate for the purpose of studying the United States.
But over the last years, scholars have steadily begun to unravel aspects
of the Victorian underworld in the United States. In particular, Eliot
Gorn’s work on boxing has exposed the centrality of this sport, the
"manly art," to the underworld. With its ethos of braggadocio,
masculine prowess, and violent defense of honor, boxing fitted perfectly
into the underworld male culture. The sport of boxing fused into the
underworld as one vice among many—prostitution, drinking, gambling; all
flourished there. This subculture acted as a contrast, even an
antithesis, to the dominant middle class. Here the Victorian working
class—be it German, Irish, Anglo-Saxon, or black, whether in separate
ethnic or racial groups or beginning to intermingle as "Americans"—
played hard and furiously in the face of exploitation and subservience to
the whims of ruthless and unscrupulous middle-class employers who all too
often paid them minimal wages. Yet the underworld was not confined
merely to the working classes. Large numbers of middle-class men chose
to participate in aspects of it at different times. As I have discussed
elsewhere, many of the male middle class visited prostitutes, but they
could also indulge in male social life as spectators of boxing and
baseball and participants in gambling and drinking. As men, they had
access to the entire public world, and so they could enjoy themselves how
they liked. The underworld also incorporated what we would call
"homosexuals" for whom there was no option but to enter into this
society, since the Victorian public morality of manly love precluded
consummation of homoerotic desire.\textsuperscript{8} The underworld ethos after 1880 was
captured in \textit{The Police Gazette}, where spoofing of homosexuality went
hand-in-hand with sports reports and pictures of scantily clad "ladies."
One hundred and fifty thousand men of the working and middle class read
this publication twenty years before Macfadden bought \textit{Physical Culture}:
as such, it represented a pivotal point, connecting with the darker and
seamier side of the ethos of underworld primitivism which united American
men across classes.\textsuperscript{9}

The underworld social relations between the sexes lacked the
decorousness that characterized the Victorian middle classes. There have
been several studies of prostitution which have captured the sordid essence of this subculture, but studies of other aspects of sexuality have been less readily forthcoming.\textsuperscript{10} Christine Stansell, in her study of working-class women and New York amusements between 1820 and 1860, has broken important ground for the Victorian period. Her work reveals among the working classes of New York an elaborate system of amusements where young men and women of the working class controlled the processes of courtship in a competitive game. A wide range of physical contacts were permitted: the options for sexual gratification for working-class men ran the gamut from prostitution through the "taxi-dancer" who demanded payment for limited "thrills" to women who demanded nothing in return for dates and relationships. Stansell has observed heterosocial relations in New York remarkably similar to those identified by Meyerowitz and Peiss fifty years later. She has noted in the New York of the 1850s, that, as new employment opportunities beyond domestic service emerged, "patriarchal controls over young women's leisure time, earning and sexuality weakened. In this new social space, single women helped to create a youth culture of sexual and commercial pleasures purchased with wages and time freed up from domestic obligations of family discipline."\textsuperscript{11} Differences should not be exaggerated with the public world which emerged fifty years later. This was, however, still a precarious world for women. In this society, as Stansell indicates,
single women abandoned the "protections that kin and neighbors provided in enforcing men's sexual propriety." Further, because "the heterosexual marketplace of leisure remained closely connected to the older men's dominant milieu of the bawdy houses, differing concepts of relationships between men and women had little chance to emerge."\textsuperscript{12} Thus, while there were strong similarities to the world described by Peiss and Meyerowitz, there were differences too. Above all, working-class sexuality in New York remained part of the underworld, the antithesis to the lofty, if hypocritical, middle-class system of morality.

Yet, after 1900, several important changes transformed the Victorian underworld. To start with, there is evidence that in New York and in Chicago and other U.S. urban centers, prostitution went into a sharp decline in the second decade of the twentieth century, in large part because of the efforts of reformers, one of whom, George Kneeland, commented that "in 1912, prostitution was open, organized, aggressive, and prosperous; in 1916 it was furtive, disorganized, precarious, unsuccessful."\textsuperscript{13} In New York State in 1919, 18,000 prostitutes were rounded up.\textsuperscript{14} Further, the report of the Committee of Fifteen in Chicago in April 1930 noted the decline of the "brothel" and the ascendancy of the dance halls.\textsuperscript{15} The attention which this change received from social hygienists helped bring working-class sexuality to greater public visibility. For the underworld in these years went public in the guise
of the heterosocial youth-oriented dance-hall subculture. In the great cities, amusement parks sprang up where young men and women went on dates. Entrepreneurs appreciated the potential in dance halls and ballrooms, which grew larger and more elaborate and glitzy than in Victorian times. Further, movie theaters emerged after 1900. Here working-class young men and women were the first to go on dates and to be stimulated by the darkened atmosphere and by the eroticism of the movies.

The expanding subculture was transformed, too, by immigration. The working class of mid-Victorian America was largely Anglo-Saxon, Irish, German and black: by 1900 it was also southern and eastern European especially in New York and Chicago. These first and second generation Jewish, Slavonic and Italian immigrants, eager for assimilation, saw the dance halls, movie theaters and amusements as quintessentially American, because they often contrasted so sharply and, for them, refreshingly with the mores of their indigenous cultures. Differences in ethnicity do not emerge as a major factor, for the dance halls seemed to offer greater possibility of sexual freedom for men who came from, to one degree or another, male dominant cultures where a rigid double standard applied. In the United States, for immigrant men of whatever ethnicity of origin there seemed ample opportunity to take advantage of the "bad" women of the dance halls. Their enthusiasm to
conform to what they saw as American mores only helped to accelerate the erotic pace.

For the purposes of this chapter, the area of transformation I have chosen to focus on is the dance halls. John D’Emilio and Estelle Freedman have suggested that they indeed perhaps best "capture the mood and environment of this new world of commercialized pleasure."¹⁹ As prostitution declined, there developed what may best be described as sleazy and less sleazy places. Most notorious, perhaps, were the "taxi-dance halls" and the closed dance halls which admitted only men (although women, of course, worked there). As sociologist Harvey Zorbaugh noted, "their appeal is frankly sexual."²⁰ Here men could buy tickets which entitled them to a dance or to an occasional "thrill" with a taxi-dancer. The practice at these institutions acted as a grotesque parody of the dating system, which was beginning to take shape at this time, especially as real relationships were formed sometimes from these liaisons: as in "dating" in general, the men paid and, in return, received "thrills," at the whim of women. Other types of dance halls, while they left some investigators aghast, do not shock us sixty years later. Walter Reckless, in his social hygiene classic, _Vice in Chicago_, described such a place:

Young people, some visibly under the influence of liquor, others apparently sober, were repeatedly seen
to dance or whirl about the floor with their bodies pressed tightly together, shaking, moving and rotating their lower portions in a way that undoubtedly roused their sex impulses. Some even were seen to engage in 'soul kissing' and 'biting' one another in the lobes of the ears and upon the neck.\textsuperscript{21}

And there were other less sleazy places in Chicago, like the Erie Cafe where, apparently, "the owners are more circumspect about selling liquor, the patrons are more orderly, there is less 'rough' dancing on the floor, there is better ventilation, the women are not so easy to 'pick up.'"\textsuperscript{22}

Trying to summarize the differences between these places, John Modell has recently suggested that what distinguished the working-class dance halls and middle-class dance palaces underlined the greater sexualization which existed in the working class: working-class males tended to go to dance halls in order to "pick up" women, while the middle class usually went to their places with their "dates."\textsuperscript{23} This is a useful but overly simplistic differentiation, especially as there was some class intermingling. In reality, the dance halls provided the cultural space for the operation of all three of the dance-hall subculture's forms of heterosexuality--serial monogamy, polygamy, and prostitution. A young man could bring his date to a dance hall, he could meet a "date" at a dance hall, or, he could make a "pick-up" at one. Whatever the case, the same kind of exchange went on: men paid women for treats in return for sexual favors, which were controlled by women.
The men of this working-class public heterosocial leisure world were on the cutting edge of change, and therefore, along with the New Men discussed in the next chapters, served as a vanguard in the revolution in morals. If young middle-class men sometimes frequented the working-class dives in the nineteenth century, increasingly they had no need to, because entrepreneurs devised movie theaters, amusement parks, and dance palaces especially to be frequented by young middle-class men and their middle-class dates along with an often working-class clientele. These institutions helped redefine middle-class sexuality on terms similar to those common in the working class. I have shown already how the working class influenced ideology directed at the new middle class and how middle-class men were infatuated with working class sexuality. This alone validates a study of working class male sexuality. To some extent I am arguing for a "trickle up" theory. I do not think that middle-class youth necessarily consciously copied working-class sexuality. But they were clearly influenced by it through their environment and subconsciously. One further point--this is not a study of working class sexuality. That would, for a start, be a huge topic.

The working class in general, especially labor elites, possibly followed the Victorian system of sexual morality. My study focuses on the men of a particular group: that youth-oriented heterosocial public leisure
world which grew out of the Victorian underworld within the working class in the large cities.  

This surely raises serious questions about the men of the emerging public world. How did they respond to the challenge to their power posed by women’s greater freedoms? How did men who were used to a rigid double standard of sexual morality which enabled them to indulge in sex with prostitutes or "bad" women before marriage respond when the New Woman blurred distinctions between the "good" and the "bad" woman as she demanded her right to thrills and pleasures in the world of city amusements and took on greater control of sexual interactions? To address these questions, I shall show how men in the dance-hall subculture leisure world behaved in essentially the same way as the men of the Victorian underworld from out of which the dance-hall subculture grew. As the early-twentieth-century New Woman emerged, men simply treated them as they had treated women who asserted their sexuality before. They lacked respect for such women. The male world continued its tradition of braggadocio. Men confirmed their masculinity by bragging about their conquests of women to other men. They regarded women as simply objects for their sexual gratification, and they celebrated acts of violence against them, treating rape as an ordinary part of life. Men also continued to be transient and reject marriage as involving excessive commitment. Further, men continued to define their
identities, sharply, against the emerging homosexual communities. Most importantly, men still believed in the "good" and "bad" woman, but they complained that it was becoming harder to tell the difference. Men used what financial power they had to buy sexual favors, but they resented the women for the exchange, accusing them of being "gold-diggers" when they did not get the favors from them that they expected. For, once exchanges began to include more than money, men were threatened. Men were confused and disturbed, for they could be rejected, too, in this world. Here youth and good looks were at a premium for men as well as for women.

Further, this system of heterosociality involved the cultivation on men's part of the "line" and of a performance in order to attract women, which upset men all the more. Such were the men who represented one major influence that, along with popular ideology and elite feminism, by the 1920s helped create what I am calling modern American male sexuality.

New York and Chicago were well-documented centers of ferment in the sexual revolution, and a rich and largely untapped record of life in these cities has survived. My discussion of Chicago draws on the 1920s studies of the Chicago sociologists, largely completed by the students of the distinguished pioneer of qualitative sociology, Ernest Burgess. Paul Cressey, for example, who published the classic Taxi-Dance Hall—an examination of Chicago's seamier dance-hall world--left a rich record of related investigations that were not quoted in the book.27 I have also
used earlier Vice Commission reports from the first decade of the century, as well as the stories of George Ade, who documented
working-class life in Chicago around 1900. For New York, I have used the
1910s reports of the Committee of Fourteen, a group of vice investigators
set up in order to free the city from vice. In addition, I have used the
Rockefeller Foundation’s Bureau of Social Hygiene reports from the 1920s,
as well as the reports of the American Social Hygiene Association
collected together in the Journal of Social Hygiene, which began in 1915.

There are, of course, certain dangers in using these kinds of
sources, especially those of organizations designed to investigate vice
with the intent of stamping it out. Whatever one thinks of their
moralistic purposes—and the importance of disease should not be
underestimated in a society where ten percent of Americans, mainly
working class, were infected with some sort of venereal disease—they had
a tendency to read more into situations than actually existed as well as
to exaggerate incidents. After all, the investigators’ credibility with
the organizations for which they worked depended on the uncovering of
vice. Yet these investigators have provided us with fascinating material
precisely because they themselves endeavored to participate in the
underworld. They have not, however, provided us with many life histories
and follow-up studies. This is a pity because we are left with an
incomplete picture of each case. There can be no certainty as to the
context of individual situations, a limitation that cannot be avoided. What can be attained, though, is a general picture of the dilemmas and power relations that existed in this social world, perhaps because what has survived is what was most shocking to the investigators. In addition, the validity of the vice investigators’ work is underlined by the similar conclusions of the Chicago sociologists, who lacked the ideological zeal of the vice reporters. While we cannot, of course, be sure that in doing so they were free of biases, they were more likely to get closer to an objective analysis of what was really going on in the dance halls. Further, while this study is strictly qualitative, the Kinsey material on the working class does provide a useful quantitative backdrop, especially as his findings in fact complement those of eyewitness investigators.

Kinsey’s was the major sex survey which made a significant attempt to gather a working-class sample. He defined the working class as encompassing those who had only received an education up to the eighth grade or those who were in blue-collar positions. We cannot know for certain, of course, that this was the group that actually frequented the dance halls and other amusements of the city. But the qualitative studies bear out that these were the kind of men who did, and Kinsey is a goldmine for male sexuality in America as it was around 1940. He also provided a generational comparison, the first generation of which
averaged 43.1 years of age at the time of their interviews and who were
thus "the individuals who were responsible for the reputation of the
roaring twenties," that is, they "experienced their youth between 1910
and 1925." Unfortunately, in the generational comparison, Kinsey
divided the groups only by educational level. But this is still useful,
as working-class males were more likely to be educated only up to or
below the eighth grade.

These figures reveal a world in which pre-marital intercourse was
much more common for men than in the college-educated group. Those less
well-educated, that is those educated only up to eighth grade, tended to
"go all the way" in pre-marital intercourse with companions. Thus,
pre-marital intercourse, as Table 1 shows, was a more common part of
working-class life for men and was also practiced earlier than among
Kinsey's college-educated groups, as Table 2 reveals. In general,
working-class men preferred to have full intercourse rather than to pet
to climax by comparison with college-educated groups. Kinsey noted that
it was usual for the men in the less-educated group to achieve an orgasm
as soon as possible after effecting genital union. There was thus little
concern for the niceties of foreplay. This suggests an experience of
sexual intercourse among the working classes which was very much geared
to male satisfaction, enjoyment and pleasure.
Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Least-Educated</th>
<th>College-Educated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adol.-15*</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>74.3%</td>
<td>37.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>72.5%</td>
<td>56.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*Adolescence means here onset of puberty.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Least-Educated</th>
<th>College-Educated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>51.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Kinsey data reveal also some differences in attitudes between the classes and generations as regards pre-marital intercourse. Among the least-educated, 33.9 percent of those aged 46+ at time of interview disapproved of pre-marital intercourse, while of those aged from "adolescence" to 25, only 18.9 percent did (the college group averaged 61.4 percent disapproval).29 Clearly, the working-class had fewer inhibitions about pre-marital intercourse. Only 13.5 percent of the whole sample, older and younger, feared public opinion (compared to 22.8 percent of the college-educated).30 Only 34.6 percent complained of lacking the opportunity for sex (51.6 percent of the college-educated), while 41.9 percent lacked interest in having more (18.8 percent of the college-educated).31 These figures are too striking to be dismissed. They suggest that the working class tended to see sex as something to be taken for granted as early as possible; and they imply that this group probably lacked the moral and religious inhibitions that generally helped define middle-class men's and women's behavior, which much more readily stopped at petting. The figures suggest that male sexuality was relatively less controlled among the working classes and that the tendency was for it to become, if anything, even less so.

All the frequenters of the taxi-dance halls and the other working-class heterosocial institutions had one thing in common: the seeking in leisure of relief from the grueling tedium of their work. As Jane Addams
perceptively and understandingly noted: "Looping the loop amid shrieks of simulated terror or dancing in disorderly saloon halls are perhaps the natural reactions to a day spent in noisy factories and in trolley cars whirling through the distracting streets."32 Similarly, New York observer Richard Henry Edwards declared that the wildness of youth "is the result of unbearable strains which a complexity of exploitations puts upon it. These young people are not infrequently exploited in their homes. They are widely exploited in their work and set to mechanical routines."33 Social hygienist Eleanor Rowland Wembridge sensitively observed that:

... the ignorant boy and girl, untrained to look forward to any constructive outlet of their feelings, find it only in the immediate fact, which is usually illicit and underhand. They find no joy in their work and see little of it in family life. Yet they long for joy as passionately as the rest of the world. How can the driving force of youth be harnessed to clean romance and family happiness, in one as in the other?34

Ultimately, the economic conditions which these men experienced provide the crucial backdrop to any examination of their leisure life. Leisure provided relief from a hard life. To illustrate this, John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman quote two social workers as commenting that "coming from the monotony of work and sometimes dreary home surroundings, the dance hall with its lights, gay music, refreshments and attractive surroundings seems everything that is bright and beautiful."35
The heterosocial relations of the dance halls must be understood as part of a male-dominated culture which began with the teenage "gang." This was a mainstay of the working-class male subculture of this time and was thoroughly explored, in all its many facets, in Frederic Thrasher's classic study, *The Gang*, as well as in Cressey's work. Within this social world, the men prided themselves on their success with women. A report on the Weiss Candy store at 4101 West Fifth Avenue saw it as "a congregating place for great numbers of boys and girls who used very improper language toward each other." As Cressey put it, "the boy's gang may lead to actual immorality." Another report commented on "much foul talk and boastful talk of sex conquests in the presence of girls by boys not over sixteen years of age," while the boys themselves were "given to betting on the color of girls' garters. Then when she is close someone contrives to raise her skirt--if necessary--and the awards are made." Frederic Thrasher talked of how in the gang:

stories of the most obscene character are related by a woman to a crowd of men and boys. Indescribably filthy jokes are perpetrated by a ventriloquist with the aid of a puppet. Degrading dancing vile beyond description is indulged in by girls, some of whom are apparently scarcely out of their teens, while a woman gives nude an unbelievably debasing dance.

As Cressey reported of another group, they were, "to put it plainly, moral degenerates. They have had the audacity to display their nakedness under the lamplight. Last night they had several young girls not over
thirteen there with them whom they were very evidently trying to get in a state of excitement."\(^4\) The gang around the Vernon Athletic Club had "its own girls comes to meet its especial fellow. . . . These girls must not dance with anyone outside the clique, and any outsiders who presume to transgress this rule were waylaid outside and convinced physically of the error of his ways."\(^3\) In the gang, male teenagers learned the moves which in youth and early adulthood they were to display in the dance halls.

Here, men confirmed their masculinity among other men by discussing their conquests. One dancemaster was an assiduous date-maker who would "go the limit."\(^2\) A group of clerks interviewed by sociology students Alinsky and Weinberger "seemed rather doubtful about getting it because [they] haven't a car. One said that if he had a car there would not be a single virgin left in town."\(^3\) Investigator Louise de Koven Bowen observed in Chicago dance-halls that "obscene language is permitted and even the girls among the habituées carry on indecent conversations."\(^3\)

One declared proudly that he "took a girl out boat-riding in the park and screwed her three times in a boat."\(^5\) Perhaps the epitome of this kind of self-confidence was Hutchins Hapgood's "tough" from his *Types From City Streets*: "But the tough is sure. He does not hold off from satisfaction. He reposes on the firm bosom of the early need of the
race, where there is no tremulousness or uncertainty. His footing is as firm as that of an aristocrat."

Indeed, women were simply the objects for the sexual gratification of men, if men's language was to be believed. A Committee of Fourteen investigator paraphrased a discussion he had with one man:

Twenty cunts hanging around here. I said last year there was always a chance of picking up a piece of gash in here, he said you can do it now, too, I said how, he said if they know you, you can go over and sit down with them or else take them for a dance." In Chicago in the 1920s, the term "hot babe" kept reoccurring; one fellow advised that "if you find a good hot baby that will show you a good time its better to go to some hall like the Marigold or the Columbia. There are a lot of hot babies, that go up there regularly." At the New American, it was possible to get some real "hot birds." This language demonstrates colorfully the sexual objectification of women that was part and parcel of the male culture.

These men supplemented their nocturnal activities with pornography. Saloons had pictures of naked women on their walls. The Bureau of Social Hygiene reported on one "Joe" who did not do much reading except sex books; he bought those "books that show all dirty pictures from friends of his that come round and sell them at a quarter a book." One Joe
Pete, among his many interests, discussed buying a lot of "Artists and Models books to see how the models look in the nude," hence gaining him the nickname of "Joe the Chronic Masturbator." A Bureau of Social Hygiene Investigator noted that "French pictures’ are passed around frequently in the pool halls and gin mills." Men's attitudes towards women encouraged violent behavior. The Bureau of Social Hygiene conducted an investigation in the New York University Boy’s Club and concluded that "The Neighborhood Credo" entailed that "most boys of this community believe that: the girls who accept gifts willingly give themselves up to be attacked." Violence directed at women was inherent in the working-class male sexual subculture. Several investigators commented on the "rough and uncouth" clientele of the places they visited. An investigator for the Committee of Fourteen commented that at Gilligan’s Cafe, "there is an indescribable air of hardness or toughness in their mannerism and personal conduct." Such sordidness was perhaps most accentuated in the observations of one Investigator in Chicago who observed behavior that most strongly contrasted to Victorian ideals. He described various "boys...who micturated while in the full view of the dancers," while, to their credit, "the more modest ones retired to a more secluded part of the field behind a dilapidated bandstand." Apparently the women did not in this case see the men's behavior as particularly peculiar. Indeed
they even walked up to a man and chatted with him "as though there was nothing unusual or embarrassing in his activities of the moment." A Committee of Fourteen investigator noted the violence of the social interaction between the sexes at a dancing school:

About 8:00 pm I arrived at Public School #65 where I attended a dance. Conditions didn’t improve [sic] here. Girls are still abused, insulted and hit if they disobey the orders of the loafers who hang out in this school. While I was here I was told that some boys are using itching powder while they dance with girls in here. They were caught last week with that powder on them but no action was taken. Bizarre individuals frequented the dance halls. Cressey described one experience of a "taxi-dancer" who on a date stopped the car and proceeded to declare that he wanted to brand his girlfriend: "He was the queerest fellow I ever knew . . . He didn’t seem to want to make love. He seemed to want nothing sometimes but go around hurting girls." The dance halls, however, encouraged an environment where violence could flourish. Two Investigators from the Committee of Fourteen, Mr. and Mrs. Hastings, "struck up an acquaintance with a young man who declared that "Well anything goes here. . ." which included tough dancing which often caused the patrons to become so obstreperous that a youth had to be ejected." Nevertheless, we should be careful of the evidence about violence, as Investigators were likely to exaggerate its prevalence. Still, they show that it existed which is, ultimately, what is most important.
In general, however, men regarded a "bad" woman as fit for anything. What is striking is that rape was regarded as quite normal in this subculture. A disturbingly common example was one investigator's discovery of the line-up," when a "girl or a woman . . . is induced to go in the back of a poolroom, down a cellar, up on a roof or into an empty apartment. With utter disregard for the laws of nature, the young men violate her, one after another until she can't stand it anymore."61 One of the most celebrated of the investigators, Louise De Koven Bowen, observed in Chicago in 1912 how ". . .In one case when the girl screamed the men choked her."62 At the Lafayette Casino on Saturday June 1, 1912, an investigator watched as "one woman was forced down on her back on a table by a man and kissed".63 Among William Foote Whyte's Italians, examined in mid 1930s Boston, the virginity of a "teaser" was "thought to be only a technicality and if she is raped it serves her right."64 The Syracuse Morals Commission noted the case of a man who treated one woman "to ice cream and took her to a nearby resort. There he attempted to assault her and she screamed."65 Thrasher described the phenomenon of the "gang shag" as beginning early in adolescence:

The gang shag is an institution peculiar to the gangs and clubs of this neighborhood. There are few sex perverts among the boys, but there is a great deal of immorality. . . .This number of boys have relations with the women in the course of a few hours. There is a common practice among young men in Chicago, and this is by no means confined to boys of the gangs or the
underprivileged classes, of picking up girls, utter strangers, on the streets and taking them for a ride in an automobile. During the course of this ride it is customary to indulge in passionate petting, and often the affair culminates in the sex act. If the girl refuses, it is commonly supposed that she is put out at some place in the country and asked to walk back. So widespread is this practice that allusions to it have become a common joke on the vaudeville stage.66

The dance hall environment encouraged a single-standard which left the distinctions between the good woman and the bad woman blurred, underscoring the arbitrariness of the categories:

It is a rare case of any young girl making a clean getaway after attending halls of this character. There are so many young men on the march that a chaste girl will general fall and a great many cases are forcible seduction, then the girl becomes an habitual rounder of this class of dance hall.67

W.J. Hooke of the Committee of Fourteen noted in detail the story of one "Newry," who urged "his girl Alice to give up her job to live with him: he kept her away for two weeks. He ruined this girl."68 Later he "raped another girl, Jessie Schneider, seventeen and a half years of age, who lived with her parents in the vicinity of 18th Street and 3rd Avenue and worked as a waitress. He pretended to be in a position to (give) theatre passes. This won her over and he eventually ruined this girl."69 Many accounts of this kind of treatment of women were given verbatim to investigators.
I had spent all kinds of money on her and would get her in a hotel do or die. I said further that I would take her to Pabst's Harlem some night, get her under the influence of liquor, take a taxi and rush her into a hotel before she would realize it.\textsuperscript{70}

This same man had had to take one woman out twenty times before she would have sexual intercourse with him. But then he simply "finally met her one day without ? and took her to Brooklyn Hotel where [he] had intercourse," this without the formality of a date.\textsuperscript{71} One Chicago man told an investigator how he had taken a woman on a boat:

He had been loving her up and asked for coitus. She refused and said she would call out. He said he would capsize the boat if she did and drown them both. She begged and pleaded with him. But he said he must have it. Finally, in spite of her protestations, he threw up her clothes. She cried at first and then suddenly burst out laughing and enjoyed. He felt she had been stalking him.\textsuperscript{72}

W.J. Hooke reported one of his interviewees as suggesting to him: "I'm afraid to take a chance in the grass or a hallway as she might yell and have me pinched. The only thing to do is to get upstairs and then she couldn't squeal. Can you fix it for me Henry?"\textsuperscript{73} Hooke, the Investigator, was able to pull out of a barman advice on how to get his girl to succumb to his ways when she "would not enter a hotel for fear of being observed by a friend or acquaintance:"

Oh, its easy with cases of that 'kind' and I've been up against them. All you have to do is to take her upstairs by the 124th. Street entrance and she won't
be wise. Just register, go in your room, lock the
door and then you’ve got her right.74

Thus the bad woman or the good who had merely taken a favor was fair game
for any kind of treatment, however forcible or violent it might have
been. Without the conventions of the middle class, rape was accepted as
a normal way of life in the public working-class world of youthful
leisure so that, ultimately, we are left with the impression that any
assertion—or perceived assertion—of her sexuality on a woman’s part
left her fair game.

It would be naive and erroneous to suggest that all of the men
necessarily shared these views—there were after all differences even in
the dance halls. Evidence suggests that men made these distinctions at
the time. In Chicago, a man declared to Alinsky and Weinberger, for
example, that the Dreamland crowd was "too tough."75 Paul Cressey
identified the "slummer" as a man who frequented the dance halls out of a
search for experience.76 But, as he put it:

Many young men who came expecting to be shocked are so
disgusted by the experience that they do not return. . .
A friend of mine told me about this place and I
thought I’d come up here to see what it was like.
Gosh, this is awful, its disgusting...Its a joke to
see that sign up there. ‘No improper Dancing
Allowed.’ This is no place for me. I wouldn’t hang
around a dump like this for anything... once is
enough."77

When one investigator for the Committee of Fourteen declared that he
was going to leave for "Diggs’ Place," "the man looked surprised and said
that was too tough for him, that he never went there, because he was afraid of getting into trouble." An older man declared to Cressey that "their [sic] too tough for me. I was out to the New American one night. That was enough." 

If the males of the dance-hall subculture thrived on braggadocio and violence, they also defined themselves against the homosexual communities which co-existed in the large cities. George Chauncey, Jr., has identified homosexual bars and networks in New York as early as the 1870s. The Chicago Vice Commission Report has identified a homosexual community in Chicago around 1911. The men of the world of youthful working-class leisure were aware of this community. Indeed, there is intriguing evidence from Kinsey that total homoerotic experience was growing among the working class at this time.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educ. Level 0-8</th>
<th>Older Generation</th>
<th>Younger Generation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adol. to 15</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>33.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In large part, the presence of a homosexual community unsettled the heterosexual working class, which defined its own community sharply against the homoerotic world even as the two communities interacted. One active dance-hall goer announced his feelings about "queers" to an investigator in Chicago, declaring that "when they shake hands with you they have that peculiar look in their eyes that have a wanting feeling of expression." The men of the dance-hall subculture had their own models of homosexual persons. George Chauncey, Jr. has discussed how the working class established the model of the masculine man who only temporarily practiced his proclivities for same-sex sexual activity. He was known as a "straight," which confirmed that he was not differentiated from other men. In the long term he was to be heterosexual. There was, in addition, the effeminate man who was permanently homosexual. Both groups were the butt of prejudice in the dance-hall subculture. Reporting on attitudes of men of the dance-hall subculture the Bureau of Social Hygiene’s study of boy’s clubs noted that men with "full faces, long delicate fingers are inverted." Further only if "he is a real sissy" does a "queer walk peculiar." One young man reported on one Chicago hotel:

A fellow doesn’t make acquaintances easy at the hotel except for a bunch of fellows that he doesn’t care to meet up with. They are easy, too easy, to get acquainted with. There is a bunch of prick-lickers at
the hotel. They are steady roomers, they don’t come
and go like most of the floors.\textsuperscript{84}

This man described one experience he had of an attempted seduction by a
homosexual to which he reacted violently:

One day he was in my room and was rocking himself back
and forth, while sitting down on the bed. He began by
praising my figure. 'What a fine physique you have.
What wide shoulders.' He got up and put one hand on
my chest and the other on my back. 'How broad you are
through the chest' Then he unbuttoned one or two of
the buttons on my shirt. What well developed
breasts.\textsuperscript{85} The man responded to this attempted seduction by declaring, "I said hold
off what are you trying to do . . . You red haired bastard. I told him
to stop that or I will beat you up."\textsuperscript{86} There were several other examples
of this kind of reaction reported to investigators. One boy said "F. . .
you." The man said "That's what I want you to do. The talk was of
fruits and fairies."\textsuperscript{87} For a man of the working class it was an
imperative that he did not look like a sissy: "I would go through some
of those sissyfied actions such as trying to look sissy. I found that I
just could not look that way. I was unsatisfied that I did not look like
a sissy even though I tried."\textsuperscript{88} Although both groups experienced
prejudice, intolerance was mostly directed at effeminate men and not at
more masculine men who engaged in same-sex sexual activity. Thus one man
talked of his feelings about his homoerotic experiences:
I think that many queens are born queer. Others acquire it. At many times I have felt to be able to make a pal of a queen, but on account of their likeness for men, I do not want a queen for a pal. I would be ashamed to be with them at a party and have to introduce them to a girl. I have never told a girl that I have browned or been frenched. She would think that I was queer.89

Yet what is indeed most striking because it is so much less predictable than the homophobia is the extent of overlap and interaction between the heterosexual and homoerotic worlds as well as the amount of homoerotic practice which resulted. It was in reality difficult to differentiate a heterosexual and a homosexual world. A degree of tolerance therefore developed among the working class. Not merely were the two worlds physically close to one another, but often both kinds of activities were pursued in the same bars. At 18th and 125th Streets in New York, for example, the NY Committee of Fourteen reported such a bar: "This place has two backrooms, one of which is for men exclusively and another for mixed couples. The section for men was vacant and the other contained three couples [and no one could] enter unless accompanied by women."90

The working class often in practice rejected simplistic definitions of who was homosexual/heterosexual. Kinsey commented on how many among his least-educated groups continued in both homosexual and heterosexual behaviors through major phases of their lives, resulting in greater
tolerance of homosexuality. The evidence from a study of Chicago homosexuals by Earl Bruce, a student of Burgess's, supports this conclusion. Bruce obtained a lengthy case history of a black man named Walt Lewis who moved between the two worlds. His enthusiasm for women was as great as that he felt for men. He saw little difference between his homosexual and heterosexual encounters:

Some of them you cannot tell from a woman if they never have whiskers or mustash, they take in the ass, French you, like to be called girls' names and if they like you will give you money, let you stay with them like a man and wife.
When they want to get married they go to a bulldiggar's ball, a bulldiggars married them put a mark on the fag, and they tell her next husband how many times she has been married.

Lewis commented on how homosexuals often would date women: "You can pick about four out of ten that have women but they may not be fucking them now. In a place like this people turn if they never get any cunt or never talk to girls or go any place."  

Another young man remarked to Bruce that "If I meet the right girl I will marry. Both sexes satisfy me equally." Still another young man moved between an affair with an older "temperamental" man while also conducting an affair with a woman. Movie theaters were places where young men who "otherwise regarded themselves as heterosexual practiced for money." A Bureau of Social Hygiene investigator asked one young man if he "ever ran across a fag?" "Plenty" he declared, "What do they
do? Blow you? (Ans) That is all."97 One young man confessed to Nels Anderson, the author of The Hobo, an early classic of sociology in the United States, that he preferred homosexual activities because they entailed less risk of disease.98 Further, a rather precocious young man named John Wade wrote extensively of his experiences with girls, women, boys and men. At age fifteen, "I discovered by accident that I could receive a great thrill by having sexual intercourse with boys: an enema."99 But he still insisted: "I did not receive a thrill from this like I did if I had intercourse with a girl."100 Further, while he sought out men largely to make money, he was sufficiently concerned about disease to write that he did not "intend to put on parties with any unless they look neat and clean."101 None of this should be surprising to us, but it should serve as a warning of the dangers of categorizing working-class sexual behavior, even according to categories created by the working-class themselves.

Yet even for those who did not share these proclivities, the encounter with homosexuals made for greater tolerance. One young man described at great length and somewhat sympathetically his experience with homosexuals. Although he thought one man's advances were "silly," when the man threw himself on top of him, he "resented" it but nevertheless was keen to go with him on "an evening's entertainment and be the man's friend," feeling "he could protect himself from any harm, he
might inflict on me." Another young man discussed how he first encountered homosexuals at a party and dance which was, apparently, heterosexual. "While I was dancing and enjoying myself at this party, I noticed there was one particular young fellow that always managed to give me a peculiar stare as though he wanted my friendship," he reported. This man began discussing with him "how he was interested in art and literature." But they both had girlfriends. Only after having walked home together did they begin homosexual activities. Although he, himself, enjoyed the experience, he was unable to reciprocate and thus "felt like a cad because he satisfied me and I didn’t reciprocate." Because the lines between homosexuality and heterosexuality were not clearly drawn, an element of relative tolerance developed in this world alongside the homophobia, as men of different inclinations befriended one another. The pragmatic, uninhibited approach to sexuality clearly affected attitudes toward homoeroticism, too. Kinsey confirmed this by observing in the lowest social level a great amount of tolerance of homosexuality. "Sex," as he put it, "whether it be heterosexual or homosexual is more or less accepted as inevitable." Indeed, attitudes towards homoeroticism have to be seen in the context of the larger attitude towards sexuality of the men of the dance-hall subculture. These men lacked restraint. They valued sensual experience for its own sake, especially orgasmic experience, and they cared little what gender
the object of desire was. There were few controls to check the
satisfaction of sexual urges around homoeroticism as there were few
controls around heterosexuality.

Yet while the public heterosocial working-class leisure world
operated as the very antithesis of the highest ideals of the Victorian
middle class, in that it encouraged a single-standard of sexual
expression, attitudes toward women held by men still reflected the same
dichotomy between "good" and "bad" women, except that they were not
always divided along class lines. Middle-class standards of purity
existed, too, in these working-class groups: one man at the Chicago
Coast Guard station declared of his "girl that he would never of (sic)
dreamed of any disrespectful behavior toward her. I thought too much of
her."107 Frederic Thrasher noted that men in the gang were also
stimulated by a bizarre sense of chivalry:

The boy who attempted to fight with a girl was
punished by the other boys. A girl might slap a boy
in the face and all he could honorably do was to dodge
the second blow, or, if he was very religious, as was
seldom the case, he might turn his head around and ask
to have the inequality rectified by a similar blow on
the other side."108

And middle-class women were always by definition good women:

In one case, considerable alarm was caused among women
workers in a social settlement by the fact that gang
boys followed them at night. The feat was alleviated,
however when it was found that the interest of these
boys was in protecting the women in accordance with
the Irish idea of chivalry.109
An interviewee of Alinsky and Weinberger, talking of the admittedly rather wild Dreamland, declared that "This ain't no place for a nice girl." A younger man discussing his attitude towards women declared that his "attitude towards girls at this time was the fact that some were respectable and would not indulge in parties of this kind and others were of the type that enjoyed only this kind of sport as they called it." It was important to determine whether a girl was decent or not. In William Foote Whyte's classic examination of the "Slum Sex Code," in which he focused on Italian-Americans in Boston in the mid 1930s, the dichotomy between the good and bad girl was most clearly discussed. There were first "good girls" who were the only ones fit to marry and who on no account could be defiled as "the corner-boy code strongly prohibits intercourse with a virgin" but who "may submit to a limited amount of kisses and caresses without compromising her reputation." However, she must not "be a tease" or she automatically became a "bad girl" or a "lay." These were fair game for anything and were divided into three groups--"one-man girls, the promiscuous, prostitutes." What is striking here and most important is how dominant the double standard was in the working class as opposed to the middle class. Whyte emphasized further that the ideals of the boys which they mouthed had little to do with their real codes and attitudes. They had learned middle-class rhetoric and platitudes; the reality was a double standard with a system
of at best serial monogamy. If the working-class male had a concept of a "good," pure woman, he lacked the lofty concept of "purity" for himself which many of the middle class had, and a concept of romantic love. Kinsey in fact shows that the trend was for the double standard to be waning somewhat in the working class, at least as regards attitudes to virginity. 59.3 percent of those with an eighth grade education or less aged 46+ wanted to marry a virgin, as compared to 40.9 percent of those adolescent to twenty-five at the time of the interview.\textsuperscript{115} Nevertheless, the good woman/bad woman dichotomy was still an important component of working-class male sexuality in the early twentieth century. And the likelihood was that in the dance halls of the early twentieth century, as more and more women asserted their autonomy, it became harder for men to draw the distinction between the two kinds of women, which caused confusion. For, despite the fact that working-class men were used to women who had a certain amount of personal autonomy and therefore some control over sexual relations, men were still confused about whether any given woman in the dance-halls was a good or a bad one. This distinction remained important to them. Should they encounter a good girl, men determined to respect her, declaring that sometimes they "would run into the respectful girls who wanted men to always think high of them so we would not suggest any further doings."\textsuperscript{116} Jane Addams touchingly described young men in dance halls as "standing about vainly hoping to
make the acquaintance of nice girls."117 One young fellow, Erickson, determined to establish "what kind of a girl (his girlfriend) was by talking dirty".118 Men continued to be confused by the often blurry distinctions between the good and the bad woman.

For if men remained structurally dominant, the trend was for women to be gaining greater controls over sexual exchanges. First, in a competitive game, women were often, in practice, able to be more choosy or discriminating as to whom they dated now that they had greater economic independence and personal autonomy than in the nineteenth century. The women of the working class sexual subculture were able to afford to be more choosy. In the "Roadhouse," according to one witness, "the girls two-thirds of the time come and leave alone. They do not want a date all night. Some good-looking little sheik might ask [them] and they would have to refuse."119 This could happen, too, if "some young man comes along that they like better," for men were subject to the same rules as the women.120 The women reserved the right to reject men. Once again, youth and good looks for men were at a premium. Paul Cressey noted that the presence of older men in the dance halls was seen as something of an oddity, and they were often resented by the younger crowd. Sociologist Daniel Russell, in The Roadhouse, observed an "old bald-headed, gray-haired man" dancing with a nineteen-year-old. Such a man, he noted, was often called "the cheat... because he is cheating
youth out of its beauty and its rightful belongings." Russell described this man as dancing "on the floor like a gay young boy of nineteen," trying "to make a few more classy steps than anybody else on the floor." An interviewee of Cressey's insisted that even though he was fifty four years old, he still "had a lot of good stuff to [me] even yet." Disliking the lack of reliability of flappers, this man sought "girls who are a little too old and steady to be flappers ... they appreciate a good steady man of mature years. Most of them have been married to some kid and found they weren't steady." But the general flow and pace of the dance halls worked to the disadvantage of older men.

Sex appeal, too, was acknowledged as an important key to success in this environment. A huge number of the patrons remarked on their muscle-building activities. They felt pleasure in being "built solid." Members of the dance-hall subculture admired their bodies and gained pleasure in their strength. One man commented in Chicago that "Wherever I go girls all seem to fall for me. One thing is that they know I'm strong and that I can satisfy any of them." In this world, young boys were proudly and overtly sexual both in attitude and behavior. Chicago sociologists Alinsky and Weinberger reported on "eight fellows," all steel workers in the same mill. They go to White City every Saturday and Sunday to "get a piece of tail. They acted rather conceited and claim they get what they came for always." One man
loudly proclaimed to one of Bruce’s investigators that "the queer people
tell you you have a big prick. That gives me lots of satisfaction with
the women because I know I will satisfy them." One young man
regularly presented what he called a "magnetic smile"— but what the
Investigator called a "silly grin" — at the better looking of two
girls. A New Yorker noted to reformer Hutchins Hapgood that "a
bloke ain’t got no show wid a gal if he ain’t good-lookin’ wid good
clothes, wid a fence (collar) round his neck." A Filipino-American in
Chicago, puzzled over his success with women, declared that: "It isn’t
because I’m good-looking because there are better looking Filipinos that
can’t get anywhere with these girls. They turn them down flat." The
only possible reason he could give for his success was that "I don’t know
what it is but I must have it." Men and women in the dance-hall subculture thus vied with one
another for favors in a competitive game. There were some genuine skills
to be learned. Men had to develop a "line" if they wanted to be
successful at dating. Thus, Daniel Russell reported that the men of the
Roadhouse had a number of "lines" that were designed to accentuate their
power with regard to women: one man might tell his partner whom he has
never met before that he "is the Chief Purchasing agent for the Pullman
company or Head Clerk in some bank downtown or the like." George Ade,
in a number of stories of working-class life in turn of the century
Chicago, featured several of his male heroes practicing their talent for the "line." Ade's hero, Artie, always made sure he impressed his girlfriend by telling her "he's on the Board of Trade." Or he might be even more direct, declaring that "he walked up to her brushed some imaginary bulge of her sleeve and said Hello girlerino. How's everything stackin'?" He bragged proudly of how he "put up with the tall talk, jollied her along, danced with her three times--well of course you can't blame her. I sprung them West Side Manners of mine on her and I had her won." Middle-class formalities were thrust aside at the Strand Cafeteria in New York, where the competitive game reached its apex: "Boys go right up to girls and are refused only if that dance is engaged. 'Can I have this dance?' or even 'Say kid, do you want to dance this one?' usually suffices for an introduction."

One group who were rejected were those who failed at the "line," who did not appreciate the need to "work slow and give them plenty of time," such as happened to one football player:

He was all hot and was working hard to get a girl for a party that night. He went the rounds and tried each of them, and proposed a ... party (for intercourse) but each of them backed out. One girl told me later that my friend was 'pretty fast.' He didn't know that you had to work slow and sure with these girls. He didn't seem to realize that they weren't regular streetwalkers and so couldn't be treated in that way.
As did not occur with prostitution, women associated with the dance hall sub culture endeavored to control the amount of thrills available to men.

Further, and most evidently, the date was an exchange: men spent money in order to secure companionship and sexual "favors" from women. Money limitations were a major problem for the working classes, as they were later to be for the middle classes. But it was the question of money which most reduced male power and which elicited the most complaints, so far as working-class men were concerned. This is extraordinary because men simply failed to grasp that their money was the very foundation of their power. But, as John Cumbler has noted, we should never overestimate the extent to which working-class male involvement in this world was limited by low wages.\textsuperscript{136} One male interviewee, an Italian, summed up the problem vividly when he proclaimed that when "You spend your money--you can't tell whether you're going to get anything."\textsuperscript{137} Even in a taxi-dance hall, a man could not be sure what he would get for his tokens. A thirty-year-old elaborated on this:

\begin{quote}
 Sometimes the girls make it difficult if not impossible for you to get anything. The trouble with taking out these girls is you never know whether you are going to get anything. Most of them are not regular prostitutes you know. If you strike them right you can get something but if you don't you just lose your time and your money.\textsuperscript{138}
\end{quote}

He went on to state that "whenever I want to dance I come up to a place like this but when I feel like I want to get relief I go to a place where
I can feel more sure of getting it."\textsuperscript{139} Further confirmation of this point is given by a man who commented to Hutchins Hapgood that "A bloke wat ain't got no money can't git a gal and if he does git her, den its all up in di air wid de money wot he's got."\textsuperscript{140}

To maintain a good line, as Alinsky and Weinberger indicated, required money: "There is necessity of maintaining this world of make-believe which is more difficult to do than in the case of the girls. For a boy to sustain the pretence of being what he's not, he must have money."\textsuperscript{141} Alinsky and Weinberger well understood the crucial point that money was a real difficulty. A St. Louis man talked of Chicago girls: "I don't trust these Chicago girls. All they want is a man's money. They will treat a person fine as long as they have tickets, but no longer. As soon as they find a man is through spending money on them they are through."\textsuperscript{142} Another man in Chicago declared bluntly "I don't have a girl. I don't want a girl. I don't want to be bothered by them or spend money on them."\textsuperscript{143} One interviewee for the Bureau of Social Hygiene explained what this meant quite vividly:

Fellows do not only go up there for the matter of dancing, but because they like the way they dance. The fellow holds the girl very tightly, especially in closing her to him in the abdominal parts . . . this, of course, causes the emotions to be aroused, and by the time the boy thinks he is having a good time his seven tickets are all gone and he goes after more.\textsuperscript{144}
Men trained in the disrespect for women that colored the male culture saw the exchange as entailing a right on their part to some kind of physical reward. The "gold-digger" was no mere figment of men's imagination as far as they were concerned. According to one woman:

If a girl knows her stuff she can make just as much if she don't 'put out' as if she does. I figure on working about four nights a week and playing the rest of the time. The first thing in being a successful gold-digger is to just choose the right fellow. He can be any age but they got to be ones who don't know too much.145

Men resented not only the blurring of distinctions between "good" and "bad" women but also women's greater control over the amount of "thrills" available to them in this dance-hall subculture.

All the same, men did not want to commit themselves. Whyte noted the unwillingness of men to commit. One of his interviewees declared that "if you go with a girl too long, even if she lays, you're bound to get to like her. That's human nature. I was going out with a girl, and I was hinging her every date. After about four months, I saw I was really getting fond of the girl, so I dropped her just like that."146 Relationships could be transient. One woman complained of her friend that "I go to the phone and give him a ring. An hour with him and I'm sitting on top of the world. But that's all he's good for. I know he doesn't mean it except for the moment."147 One man proudly admitted to
such behavior to a Committee of Fourteen investigator: "I said Grace must be sore at me, I dated her up some time ago for the following week and never showed up, I asked her if I couldn't take her out and said I won't give her a stand-up."148

Various types entered the dance halls. Cressey referred to the "foot-loose globe-trotter" who would move from town to town always making anonymous contacts.149 Similarly, one of Cressey's interviewees proudly declared himself a "traveling man," "because I am not in Chicago much, my social life is out on the road where I know people."150 One man declared to Cressey: "I'm through with girls for a while. All they seem to want to do is to get married."151 One of his interviewees summing it up declared that "you have more excitement when you are single."152 Nels Anderson noted as well the attitude of the hobo as being "as transient in their attitude to women as to their jobs."153 The hobo actively "wanted to avoid intimacies that complicate the free life to which they are by temperament and habit committed,"154 so he often embarked on homosexual relations as a conscious means of avoiding marriage, because he lived in a world that "attractive women" would not frequent.155

For another group, however, marriage remained an ultimate goal, one which was cast aside for the present. A Filipino-American, after discussing his personal life at some length, including the seduction of a virgin, discussed his ambivalence with the Investigator: "But what ought
I do? I don’t even know if I love her enough to marry her. That’s the trouble. We are entirely too intimate. We talk together just like a married couple.”156 The Filipino, even had he wanted to, would have feared trying to marry this girl because she was native-born. He could only conclude that he was “a real danger to society.”157 Another man felt that, even though it was “a lot better to be married . . . you have more excitement when you’re single,” hence his visits to the local halls.158 However, many of the men regarded the adoption of this lifestyle as less a choice than a necessity. Cressey interviewed one man who declared that he was earning $7 to $8 a day. Surely, declared Cressey “That was enough to get married on.” Apparently, he was wrong:

I don’t see how I can ever get married until I can get to making better money. The trouble with most of these girls is that they don’t expect to do anything after getting married. If I can get a girl who is willing to work it won’t be so bad, but unless I can get that I don’t see if I can get married. But then, there’s plenty of time, I’m twenty-six.159

But another, at thirty-one, felt the desire much more strongly: “I could get better-looking girls around my own neighborhood but they expect me to get married. I’d like to all right— I’m thirty-one now you know— but I don’t make enough money yet— so I come up here.”160

Thus, for the men of the world of working-class public leisure, little had changed from the Victorian underworld. Structural male dominance was intact. Central to the maintenance of this structural
dominance was the "gang," a wild and macho series of subcultures where male braggadocio thrived along with verbal disrespect for women. Here male violence flourished and rape was common. This world defined itself against the emerging homosexual communities as men, obsessed with orgasmic gratification, turned often themselves to other men for gratification of their sexual urges. They shared the same attitudes towards women and continued to divide them up into the "good" and the "bad". Yet women's increasing autonomy and relative financial independence served to accelerate male resentment towards women. Men had less respect for them, associated with them in public places where they did not know them, did not have to know them to try to have sexual intercourse, and used money to buy sexual favors. In these places it became harder to tell the difference between a "good" and a "bad" woman. Men used what financial power they had to buy sexual favors but they resented the women for the exchange; they did not know what they would get, and they could be rejected by the women in this world as they would not have been by prostitutes. As sexuality for the men of the world of youthful, heterosocial leisure became more complex, men rejected marriage and commitment.

Yet this sordid world was the one whose ethos of youth and sex appeal, violence and sex expression Macfadden and the youth culture writers celebrated, perceiving the dance-hall as a sexually vibrant
society, rightly understanding its primitivism as the antithesis of the Christian Gentleman of respectable society and as a perfect contrast to set against the "myth of Victorian repression." This was indeed the world that cultural radicals celebrated with such gusto and relish. But given the real nature of the subculture they, with only limited validity, perceived as "working class," what a can of worms they were opening up. Still, they helped spread the sexualized society of the underworld/dance-hall subculture to broader groups as this mass youth-oriented culture gained ascendancy in the United States. As a cutting-edge of the sexual revolution, this subculture boded badly for American society because it encouraged underworld primitivism and undermined gentlemanliness. Yet as this male primitive ethos rose to prominence, the feminist New Woman posed another challenge and option for men as the sexual revolution proceeded. Did this challenge offer promise of more fruitful relations?
FOOTNOTES


5. Working-class women, for example were doing less sweated labor and were moving into the clerical professions and into retail while between 1880 and 1920 "the general trend was toward shorter working days for female wage-earners in factories and stores." (Peiss, Cheap Amusements, 38-39).


Christine Stansell, *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York: 1789-1860*. (NY: Knopf, 1986), 83. Stansell argues unconvincingly for a class solidarity and hence relative equality—an at least "paternal" rather than "patriarchal" attitude on the part of men. I am not convinced by this, but have not found much evidence of cross-gender class solidarity in my period.

Christine Stansell, *City of Women*, 86, 89.

George Kneeland, *Commercialized Prostitution in New York City* (NY, 1917), xi.


16 Lewis Erenberg, *Steppin' Out*, passim.


21 Reckless, *Vice in Chicago*, 123.

22 Zorbaugh, "The Dweller in Furnished Rooms," 117.


25 Peiss, *Cheap Amusements*, 8, suggests she is not arguing for 'trickle-up.' Her evidence suggests otherwise.
Everybody uses it and I will too but I am wary of the term "working class." As regards underprivilege and the extent of oppression, these groups were part of a working class. But they lacked a class-consciousness. They cannot, for example, be compared to the contemporary class in England whose representatives by 1924 had formed the government. The fluidity and flux of these groupings, I think, is reflected in the "disorganization" of sexuality, which may itself be a concomitant of their economic oppression; these groups sought relief, from a brutalized life, in leisure.


30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.


35 D’Emilio and Freedman, Intimate Matters, 195.

36 Paul Cressey Notes, "Gang," Section 9, Box 129, Folder 5, Ernest Burgess papers, Special Collection, Joseph Regenstein Library, University of Chicago, Chicago. (hereinafter referred to as the Burgess Papers).

37 Ibid., Section 8.

38 Ibid., Section 10.

40 Ibid.

41 Investigator's Report, Vernon Athletic Club, Reel 6, Folder 129, Bureau of Social Hygiene Papers, Rockefeller Foundation, Microfilm edition.

42 Investigator's Report, Strand Roof Cafeteria, NY, May 16, 1915, Box 28, Records of the Committee of Fourteen, Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations (hereinafter referred to as COF).

43 Saul Alinsky and Constance Weinberger, "The Public Dance Hall," Term paper in Social Pathology, Fall 1928, under Professor Burgess, p. 3, Box 126, Folder 10, Burgess papers.


45 Paul Cressey Notes, "Sex Attitudes and History," August 7, 1919, Box 186 Folder 6, Burgess papers.

46 Hutchins Hapgood, Types From City Streets (NY: Funk and Wagnall's, 1911), 28.

47 Investigator's Report, Clare Hotel, 2150 8th Avenue, Tues. March 5, 1918, p. 2, Box 28, COF.

48 Investigator's Report, July 29, 1912, Box 28, COF.

49 Investigator's Report, July 8, 1913, Box 28, COF.

50 Paul Cressey Notes, New American, n.p. April 3, 1926, Box 129, Folder 6, Burgess papers.

51 Investigators Report, p. 275, Reel 7, Folder 234, Bureau of Social Hygiene papers.

52 Ibid.

53 NYU Boy's Club Study, p. 13, Reel 7, Folder 234, Bureau of Social Hygiene papers.
54 Ibid., Reel 6, Folder 229.

55 Investigator’s Report, 364 E. 149th Street, January 30, 1914, Box 28, COF.

56 Paul Cressey Notes, "Primary and Secondary Group Contacts at Gaelic Park," p. 34, Box 129, Folder 7, Ernest Burgess papers.

57 Ibid.

58 Investigator’s Report, Sept. 25, 1919, Box 28, COF.


60 Investigator’s Report, Terrace Garden, Sept. 16, 1911, Box 28, COF.

61 NYU Boy’s Club Study, p. 13, Reel 7, Folder 234, Bureau of Social Hygiene papers.


63 Investigator’s Report, Lafayette Casino, June 12, 1912, Box 28, COF.


65 Syracuse Morals Commission, The Social Evil in Syracuse (Syracuse, 1911), 44.

66 Thrasher, The Gang, 238.

67 Investigator’s Report, Lafayette Casino, June 12, 1912, Box 28, COF.

68 Investigator’s Report, Aug. 4, 1913, Box 28, COF.

69 Ibid.

70 Investigator’s Report, July 8, 1913, Box 28, COF.
71 Ibid.

72 Paul Cressey Notes, "Sex Attitudes and History," Young Man, New Orleans, 19 years old, p. 1, Box 186, Folder 6, Burgess Papers.

73 Investigator's Report, July 29, 1912, Box 28, COF.

74 Investigator's Report, 124th St./Lexington Ave, July 26, 1913, Box 28, COF.

75 Alinsky/Weinberger, The Public Dance Hall, 4.

76 Cressey, Taxi-Dance Hall, 123-24.

77 Ibid., 124.

78 Investigator's Report, 1910-12, Box 28, COF.

79 Paul Cressey Notes, Sam Collenberg, 59 years old, n.p. Box 129 Folder 6, Burgess papers.


82 Research Report, n.p., Homosexual Materials, Box 98, Folder 11, Burgess papers.

83 NYU Boy's Club Investigation, Reel 6, Folder 229, Bureau of Social Hygiene papers.


85 Ibid.

86 Ibid.

88 Ibid., 14.


90 Investigator's Report, 18th and 125th Streets, April-May 1913, Box 28, COF.


93 Ibid., 5.

94 Armin Minske, "My Experiences with a Homosexual Person," Social Pathology Class, Box 126, Folder 10, Burgess papers.

95 Research Report, p.1, Homosexual Materials, Box 98, Folder 3, Burgess papers.

96 Ibid., 4.

97 Ibid.


100 Ibid.

101 Ibid.

102 Ibid.

103 Ibid.


108 Thrasher, The Gang, 239.

109 Ibid., 223.


111 Research Report, p. 21, Homosexual Notebooks, Box 144, Folder 8, Burgess papers.

112 Whyte, "A Slum Sex Code," 25-44 Whyte's study is of Boston but, at least in Buffalo, Italian-Americans had "extraordinarily low illegitimacy rates" (D'Emilio and Freedman, Intimate Matters, 185) which indicated the "extraordinary" strength of the double-standard in this group. The men waited to marry their "good" Italian women but had fun with women of other races and ethnicities in the meantime.

113 Ibid., 26.

114 Ibid.


116 Research Report, p. 21 "Homosexual Notebooks," 1933, Box 144, Folder 8, Burgess papers.

117 Addams, The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets, 11.

118 Paul Cressey Notes, "Sex Attitudes and History," Box 186, Folder 6, Burgess papers.

120 Paul Cressey Notes, n.p. Box 129, Folder 6, Burgess papers.


123 Paul Cressey Notes, "Case of William Krueger," p. 1, Box 129, Folder 6, Burgess papers.

124 Ibid.

125 Ibid., 4.

126 Alinsky/Weinberger, "The Public Dance Hall," Section 2, Box 126, Folder 10, Burgess papers.

127 Ibid.

128 NYU Boy's Club Study, p. 3, Folder 229, Reel 7, Bureau of Social Hygiene papers.

129 Hutchins Hapgood, Types from City Streets, 28.


133 George Ade, Artie, 20 and 29.

134 Investigator's Report, Strand Cafeteria, Box 28, COF.

135 Ibid.

136 Cumber, Working-Class Community, 97.
137 NYU Boy's Club, p. 3, Folder 229, Reel 6, Bureau of Social Hygiene papers.


139 Ibid.

140 Hopgood, Types From City Streets, 36.

141 Alinsky/Weinberger, "The Public Dance Hall," p. 3, Box 126, Folder 10, Burgess papers.

142 Paul Cressey Notes, "Case of William Krueger," Box 129, Folder 6, Burgess papers.

143 Research Report, Case Study of X, p. 3, Box 186, Folder 5, Burgess papers.

144 NYU Boy's Club, p. 7, Folder 229, Reel 6, Bureau of Social Hygiene papers.

145 Alma Nelson Zeitler, Research Report, p. 4, Box 129, Folder 6, Burgess papers.


147 Cressey, The Taxi-Dance Hall, 103.

148 Investigator's Report, Clare Hotel, 2150 8th Avenue, Tues., March 5, 1919, p. 2, Box 28, COF.

149 Cressey, Taxi-Dance Hall, 121-23.

150 Paul Cressey Notes, Old Man Newell at Plaza Dancing School, n.p. Box 129, Folder 6, Burgess papers.

151 Cressey, Taxi-Dance Hall, 126.


154 Ibid., 147.

155 Ibid., 149.

156 Paul Cressy Notes, Box 129, Folder 8, Burgess papers.


158 Researcher's Report, New American, Ed Griffith alias, Dale, Box 129, Folder 6, Burgess papers.

159 Ibid.

160 Ibid.
CHAPTER VI

The Failure of the Feminist Option:

Men and the Feminist New Woman: Part I.

The most articulate, sophisticated, advanced embodiment of the changes in women’s roles which made up such a major part of the "revolution in manners and morals" was the feminist New Woman. Estelle Freedman, in her 1974 article "The New Woman," pointed out that to limit the New Woman to the flapper as previous historians had done is too "monolithic" a view.¹ The New Woman was more than a flapper. She was also a feminist who differed from most suffragists or feminists of the nineteenth century in her insistence on the right to self-fulfilment in both public life and in relations with men. Unlike previous feminists, she demanded both marriage and career. She proposed to solve the dilemma of how to "integrate women’s new access to economic and public life with private and personal fulfilment through the newly popular methods of Freudian psychology." She thus believed that a "healthy psyche [that balanced] the need for love and for achievement, was the goal of
modern' feminism." Many such women clustered around the National Woman's Party and the Greenwich Village organization Heterodoxy and thus represented the most articulate and advanced manifestation of the sexual revolution. The feminist New Woman was thus truly on its cutting edge.

The question of the impact of the feminist New Woman on the man she married therefore becomes an important one. Put simply, the feminist New Woman and her husband entered into marriages in which the issues raised by both feminism and the sexual revolution were center-stage. For the New Woman's husband, this meant that he went against the expectations for men in early twentieth century American culture in a number of ways. First, his wife was most probably a feminist activist (and he had to endure all the opprobrium involved in being identified as her husband). Second, his wife's quest for achievement meant that not merely was he no longer the sole breadwinner, but that he was no longer necessarily the center of his wife's life. Third, the feminist New Woman and her husband attempted a genuine relationship of equals in their private life. This implied intimacy, openness, and lack of domination. It also could imply non-exclusivity, that either one or the other involved in the relationship could have affairs with other people. Both could practice polygamy or polyandry, which they called "varietism," practices common in the underworld; many avidly read the works of Havelock Ellis, Edward
Carpenter, and Ellen Key, all of which expounded the ideal of free love for the twentieth century. This was a far cry from the Victorian world, where the dominant concept of "character" for men demanded a certain amount of sexual repression. Men were expected to be pure with middle-class 'good' women, who, themselves were expected to be passionless. This ideology had some impact on reality. But for pragmatic Victorians, "purity" in practice meant a certain amount of sexual activity in the private world of courtship in the context of a relationship of romantic love. But while women, in practice, controlled much of the interaction and defined the boundaries, male dominance remained firmly intact. Further, the onus was on romance, not on sexual pleasure and performance. And anything less than strict monogamy was absolutely de rigueur. Here the distinctions between a 'good' and a 'bad' woman were clear. A 'good' woman was pure, always middle-class, and remained pure and chaste in the world of courtship, even if there was some sexual activity because such activity remained private between the lovers and was considered under the veneer of romantic love. Obviously, marriage to a feminist New Woman challenged male identity at its very core. By emphasizing sexual pleasure for its own sake as a continuing and ongoing aspect of marriage as well as non-monogamy, feminist marriage blurred the distinction between a 'good' and a 'bad' woman. Was it really appropriate for a 'good' woman to be so openly sexually
demanding? The feminist New Woman defied stereotypes, for she wished to be fully human, emphasizing her right to sexual satisfaction on equal terms with men; she stressed erotic as much as romantic fulfilment.

Men involved in such self-conscious feminist experiments were on the very cutting edge of the sexual revolution because these relationships represented the most decisive break from Victorian mores—in their advocacy of equalitarianism and of sexual pleasure. Their experience pre-figured many of the changes which later affected American youth. Thus, they were part of a genuine erotic avant garde. Yet despite their importance the studies we have of such relationships have been of Greenwich Village Bohemians. These are important studies. But more than examinations of these groups are needed, because Bohemians were hardly typical of the rest of the population in the non-sexual aspects of their lifestyle. To show more convincingly that feminist relationships did have an impact on the rest of the population, studies of broader groups engaged in the feminist experimentation are needed, because, as I shall show in the last chapter, the dilemmas they faced pre-figured the problems of youth in the 1920s. While undoubtedly these couples were privileged and successful, and, thankfully, articulate, they read as ordinary people engaged in real people's struggles; above all, the women struggled to combine work and career, unlike most Bohemians. I have
therefore elected to study feminist relationships among couples who, while elite, cannot be strictly defined as Bohemian.

I first looked for marriages on the basis of availability of sources as well as the participants’ self-conscious attempt to practice what I am calling egalitarianism in gender relations. I found ten appropriate marriages and then discovered that five succeeded and five did not. In this chapter, I shall examine the five which failed. I shall look at how men responded to their wives in three crucial areas: feminist activism, work, and sexuality. The couples under consideration here are Elsie Clews Parsons and Herbert Parsons, Ruth Hale and Heywood Broun, Jane Grant and Harold Ross, Doris Stevens and Dudley Field Malone, and Marcet and Emmanuel Haldeman-Julius. Elsie Clews was a pioneer New Woman and anthropologist whose books explored women’s and men’s roles in both personal and public life. Her husband, Herbert Parsons, was a New York Congressman who died tragically in 1925 in a motorcycle accident. Ruth Hale was one of the founders of the Lucy Stone League, which fought for women to keep their names when married. She was a journalist, like her husband, the celebrated newspaper columnist. Jane Grant was a journalist and founder of the Lucy Stone League, and her husband, Harold Ross, co-founded the New Yorker. Doris Stevens was one of the leading activists in the National Woman’s Party. Dudley Malone, her first husband, was Collector of the Port of New York in the Wilson
administration, but he is best known as a divorce lawyer for the rich and famous in the Paris of the 1920s. Finally, Marcet Haldeman-Julius, an actress and suffragist, was the niece of Jane Addams, while Emmanuel Haldeman-Julius became known as the "Henry Ford of literature" on account of his cheap Little Blue Book editions of the classics.

All of these marriages started off promisingly with clear commitments to modern feminist ideals. There was little suggestion or implication of problems to follow. Elsie Clews would only agree to marry Herbert Parsons, according to her biographer, Peter Hare, once she could attain a degree of autonomy, having completed her education. Before she felt secure and able to enter into a relationship of equality, she had procrastinated. When she finally married, she had long since attained a doctorate and had already published a book.

When Dudley Field Malone and Doris Stevens married in 1921, their relationship was already five years old. Malone had long been identified in the public eye as one of the leading male supporters of women’s suffrage, and as probably the most colorful. His spirited defense of the White House suffrage pickets and his dramatic resignation from the Wilson administration had, rightly, given him this celebrity. Stevens, herself one of the White House pickets, was rapidly emerging as an exemplar of the modern feminist New Woman.
Their friends, Ruth Hale and Heywood Broun, were explicit in their marriage contract as to the feminist nature of their marriage. The two signed a contract that gave Hale the right to a career as well as to an independent private life. Further, either one or the other could attain immediate dissolution of their marriage upon request. Like Elsie Clews Parsons, Ruth Hale made certain that she had a job before entering marriage—on the Paris edition of the Chicago Tribune.

Emmanuel and Marcet Haldeman-Julius, who also had an unconventional relationship, hyphenated their names when they married. Marcet Haldeman-Julius wrote to her grandmother in March of 1916 that "we have decided to be completely independent of each other—each pay half of all our common expenses and each take care of our own personal ones—without consulting one another about the latter anymore than we do at present." Jane Grant and Harold Ross, like Ruth Hale, Heywood Broun, Doris Stevens and Dudley Malone, endeavored to keep their own names. Grant later wrote in her autobiography, Ross, The New Yorker and Me, that she and Ross "also agreed to give each other complete independence. We were by no means as one in our tastes. I had no intention of giving up dancing just because Ross couldn’t dance, and I knew he would like to have his evenings with the men." There can be no question that the men’s support of women’s feminist aspirations went beyond merely marrying a New Woman. Obviously, Dudley
Field Malone gave up a lucrative and prestigious post in the Wilson administration. He insisted in one letter to Stevens that "I am so fearful that you may get into bad news conditions because I literally feel the suffering in jail of these women." 10 Herbert Parsons tolerated Elsie Clews Parsons often controversial work and, as a Congressman, had to endure the outcry that followed her advocacy of trial marriage in The Family (1906). The Haldeman-Julius's took on each others' names. 11 Even Harold Ross, sympathetic but not a feminist activist, accepted the challenge of having a wife with a different name. Such support should not be underestimated; as Jane Grant pointed out, "registering at hotels as 'John W Doe and wife, Jane Brown,' was quite an oddity at first but we finally established the idea." 12 This was not, it is true, much of a sacrifice, but at least Ross's support was firm. Heywood Broun, however, went even further, becoming a member of the Lucy Stone League, which advocated women's keeping their names after marriage.

Yet, despite the professed feminism of these men, they failed fundamentally to understand the implications for themselves of their wives' feminism. For the men examined here, feminist goals lacked the urgency they had for the women they married. Men's support for feminism took second place to their support for other causes. In the classic column Broun wrote on the death of his ex-wife, he discussed where his priorities had lain:
Out of a thousand debates I lost a thousand. Nobody ever defeated Miss Hale in an argument. The dispute was about feminism. We both agreed that in law and art and industry and anything else you can think of, men and women should be equal. Ruth Hale felt that could only be brought about by the organization of men and women along sex lines. I think that this equality will always be an inevitable part of any thoroughgoing economic upheaval. 'Come on and be a radical,' I used to say, but Miss Hale insisted on being a militant feminist—all that and nothing more and nothing less.13

Their son, Heywood Hale Broun, summed up the differences between his and her approaches by declaring that "for her, as for Heywood, the goals were always clear. She could see her new world transformed by militant feminism, as he saw his transformed by economic revolution."14 In other words, for Broun, feminism was submerged as part of a broader socialist goal. For Ruth Hale, as for her friend, Doris Stevens, the interests of women always came first.

Likewise, Herbert Parsons probably regarded feminism as just another worthy reform. Peter Hare, who has studied the relationship extensively, has surmised that "...he would have said something to the effect that he admired everyone, men and women, with the grit and intelligence necessary to accomplish important things and believed that society should give them the opportunity to accomplish those things."15

Haldeman-Julius' concern for feminist goals can also be seen as being part and parcel of the broader belief that caused him to build up his enormous empire based on five-cent editions of the classics of world
literature; that is, his desire to "debunk," to make his life a realization of his belief that it was necessary to challenge prejudice head on and with determination. All forms of bias and superstition were to be wiped out. Women's shackles were to be unbound by these changes. Only by such debunking could progress be made. For Haldeman-Julius, all that was necessary was education, and all else, including women's rights, would follow. Feminism was purely incidental to his broader plan. Thus, without a deep grasp of feminism, he could not begin to confront the challenges posed by the New Woman. He could not begin to revise his role.

Haldeman-Julius' understanding of feminism was hardly profound, but at least he did not ignore it. Indeed, as both Jane Grant and Heywood Hale Brown report, it was Ross' boredom with feminist talk that led directly to the formation of the Lucy Stone League. As James Thurber put it, "When Harold Ross not yet of the New Yorker, had growled at Ruth and his wife Jane Grant as they plotted feminist strategy in his hearing—'For God's Sake, why don't you hire a hall?'—they went out and formed the Lucy Stone League." Ross was easily bored by feminism, even if that boredom indirectly had positive results. So was Dudley Field Malone, who seems to have tired of it soon after his suffrage activity was over. Thus, in December, 1925, Stevens wrote to Malone:
You have always been the one person since I have known you with whom I have wanted to share a joy. You will remember countless times when my enthusiasms have bored you. But I think you will be the first to say that I have never turned a cold ear to whatever enthusiasm or cause you brought to me as mate. I have a so (sic) wanted to share a great many more things with you than you have wanted to share with me. Obscure you think my world sometimes. But whatever it was it was yours too.\footnote{18}

This is reminiscent of Herbert Parson's attitude toward Elsie Clews Parsons' feminism and work. He showed minimal interest, which always upset his wife. As he wrote to her during a crisis in their relationship in 1909, when she accused him of being uninvolved in their work:

I think I have read all your articles, at least all that I have known about. The Family I did not read except in part. I suppose cowardice is my reason. I feared that there would be so many points on which we would not agree that life would run more smoothly if I did not cross them. I have tried to be tolerant in other ways and thought I had been, though I could not always smile at it. I should have read the book and now will. I never knew a second book had been published. I supposed that that event was still to happen and that the manuscripts you mysteriously gave me to take to Alice were of it.\footnote{19}

Despite the fact that, to be fair to him, he was a very busy Congressman, this passage is revealing of Parsons' lack of interest in his wife's feminism. Her dreams for a genuine sharing relationship could not therefore be established. To the above letter, Elsie Parsons' replied.
I think we have always had a different theory of companionship, although it has only been within the last two or three years that it has been apparent—to you. It is my new experiences, my new ideas, and feelings, my fresh impressions of persons and places that I have wanted to share with you. The more interesting or exciting or delightful a thing was the more I wanted you in connection with it. From the very beginning of life together it was a great distress to find you indifferent to so much that most mattered to me. It hurt awfully when you didn’t want me to hear you make a speech or when you wouldn’t read a paper I had written.20

Herbert Parsons, like Malone and Ross, did not share in his wife’s feminist aspirations. Because of this, a partnership was not possible, and a major goal for women could not be reached. Once again, these men showed that they had no deep understanding of the implications for them of their wives’ feminism. Such an understanding entailed the taking of their wives’ concerns seriously, that they open up to their needs and share in their aspirations, that they go beyond token support. They therefore failed; in fact, they did not even begin to revise their roles, for they even failed to grasp that a role revision was called for.

The case of Dudley Field Malone suggests a reason why men failed to grasp feminism. Malone’s support of feminism/suffrage must be seen in the context of his lifelong romantic attraction to unpopular causes. Malone saw himself as a stalwart for justice, freedom and democracy wherever they were threatened. Hence his support of Irish Nationalism
and his celebrated involvement on the Darrow side of the Scopes trial.
His support for feminism never went deeper than this; he never did
understand why feminism was so important to Stevens. His vigorous,
spirited support for women's suffrage must be seen in the context of his
infatuation for his wife. She became for him the embodiment of
"feminism," but it was a false image that went no further than sexual
affection, as is shown by the patronizing tone he adopted in their early
love letters. On one occasion he declared that he was "so proud and
thrilled at your wonderful speech and drawing-room meeting, you genius
girl of mine."21 After all, did she not "make stirring speeches about
how women should--must stand by--for--with--one another."22 He exclaimed
"you have a more marvelous mind that any human being I have ever known
and you and Bertrand Russell are my favorite writers."23 It is not that
Malone's support for feminism was not genuine, but that it was, for him,
just one of many causes which embodied his passionate belief in "justice"
and that he failed to divorce his involvement with feminism from his
passion for Stevens. In a letter he wrote to her on the eve of the
passage of the suffrage amendment, he asserted:

... the beautiful God of Heaven will hear from you
darling--for you have the greatest soul, the dearest
consideration of others, the most unshadowed love of
the masses of men and women, the most impartial spirit
of truth and justice and the most trustful
unselfishness of any human being.24
That Malone's intellectual grasp of feminism was shallow and that he therefore had no real commitment to it is shown very clearly in the manner in which he turned against Stevens as the marriage deteriorated. He would deliberately use Stevens' feminism to justify his involvement with other women. Stevens wrote:

You see I tried always not to blame the girls for their conduct because he told them all he had an extraordinary wife who represented a new era or some such tosh as that and they all thought it was true. It was a convenient legend for Dudley which he had erected for his own convenience (sic).²⁵

She wrote him that this was a blatant misuse of her feminist beliefs, proclaiming that she "was the poor apostle of freedom. You were the communicant who profited by my doctrine."²⁶ Thus, when Malone and his latest lover came round late into the night, Stevens would be told that she was "nothing but an old-fashioned woman and not modern," which was "his favorite appellation whenever he wanted to take liberty." She was constantly being told to "act like a modern woman and not a dependent wife."²⁷ The marriage collapsed, and Malone used feminism for his own ends.

The final cut was in his insistence in the press release following their divorce that the reason for the break-up was "the impossibility of two people of equally strong minds living together."²⁸ But that was precisely what marriage between a New Woman and her husband was supposed
to be about: the possibility of "two persons of equally strong mind
living together." This public humiliation of Stevens, the very public
feminist, serves to confirm that Malone’s feminism was thoroughly
shallow. And since it was personal, when the marriage broke down, his
support for feminism collapsed.

Dudley Field Malone was particularly vicious, so it is disturbing to
note that, of these five men, he was the one most involved in the women’s
movement. Marriage to a New Woman did not entail for the men a need for
a genuine sense of partnership in the way that it did for the women.
They did not see the need for any more profound grasp of feminism than
the superficial understanding they already had. As men growing up around
the turn of the century, they were not equipped for marriage to a
feminist New Woman. They loved their wives. They wanted to please
them. They wanted, indeed, to be Christian Gentlemen. But there were
few precedents for a feminist marriage. Faced with feminist women, these
men behaved no differently than if they had been married to truly
dependent wives.

It was, however, in the area of their wives’ need to work that their
failure to change manifested itself most strongly. In the marriages
examined here, only Malone felt threatened by his wife’s embarking on a
career, although even this was complicated by the fact that she wanted to
work with him. He would tolerate no rivalry from women in his own
trade. Parsons had the greatest tolerance of his wife's work. This seems less remarkable than it otherwise would (in view of the controversial nature of her work) when seen in the context of his casual attitude towards feminism. His was a passive rather than an active tolerance. However, what is most extraordinary is the way in which some of these marriages failed because the men, having greater access to the male-dominated public world, found it easy to advance their own careers and, in terms of success, soon overshadowed their wives. Thus, these marriages, which started off with promises of genuine equality, were rendered unequal by broader societal factors that favored men's getting ahead. This applied especially in the cases of Ross, Broun and Haldeman-Julius. In the cases of Haldeman-Julius and Malone, another factor entered in: they were able to control their wives' access to money because of the greater ease they had in obtaining it. In this way, inequalities rapidly manifested themselves.

Only recently has Jane Grant been recognized as co-founder of the New Yorker, yet her role in the founding of the magazine was considerable. Susan Van Ness has noted: "According to both Jane and Ross, it was actually Jane who convinced Raoul Fleischman to invest in their publishing venture."\textsuperscript{30} Further, Van Ness believes that it was Grant's idea to ask Janet Flanner to write the letter from Paris that became one of the magazine's most celebrated features. Yet it is clear
that Ross did not regard her work very highly. He wrote to her at the
time of the divorce that he should "continue to live here. I think it is
more important that I be efficient for the next six months than it is
that you be and moreover your work is not comparable to mine in volume
and complexity."31

In the Broun/Hale and Haldeman-Julius households, the consequences
of the husband’s ease at advancing his work as opposed to his wife’s were
more serious for the women. Both Ruth Hale and Marcet Haldeman-Julius
were probably more talented than their husbands (Heywood Broun even
admitted as much), yet they were both bitterly frustrated in their desire
for a career. As Haldeman-Julius began to develop his magazines, he and
Marcet had a genuine partnership. They wrote a novel entitled Dust
together, and she regularly wrote articles for his magazines. But
ill-health and care of children, in combination with Emmanuel’s
increasing conservatism about role experimentation, undermined her
career. Much like Stevens and Parsons, she wrote to her husband on June
30, 1925, that she wanted "so to work with you Emmanuel, in every way,
not pull against you."32 By this time the marriage was in trouble. As
Haldeman-Julius himself wrote in his Thoughts on my Thirty-Sixth
Birthday, he would marry Marcet Haldeman-Julius over again because she
was "so everlastingly ready to forget herself for the children and their
father." He went on to declare that it was "great to have such a
woman." 33 Thus, Marcet was brought to the level of apathy that increasingly demoralized her and may have contributed to her early death. The Haldeman-Julius's endeavored to keep their wealth separate. But with the public venture of the "Little Blue Books," as Haldeman-Julius' biographer, Andrew Cothran, put it, "their financial affairs had become hopelessly intertwined." 34 The sheer size of the Emmanuel-led Haldeman-Julius venture had overwhelmed their financial independence, which, in practice, meant that Marcet rather than her husband was the loser. For the next several years, there was endless squabbling about money--especially when the depression massively reduced the operation.

The case of Ruth Hale and Heywood Broun is even more tragic. On marrying, they were genuine equals. Both were successful journalists. But as Broun rapidly became one of the country's top journalists, Ruth Hale fell behind him. Yet his development as a social critic owed much to her. Commentators have noted how Hale facilitated Broun's talent by injecting his intuitive flare with her own clear logical thinking. Broun himself attested to her importance in the development of his work, writing that "I suppose that for seventeen years practically every word I wrote was set down with the thought that Ruth Hale was looking over my shoulder." 35 But as his career blossomed--thanks in part to her--her own career became increasingly difficult to sustain. Their son, Heywood Hale Broun noted that "I heard of many employers--although never by name--who
turned her down for jobs because Heywood’s wife didn’t need a job." 36

Mildred Gilman, a fellow journalist and mutual friend, commented: "It was impossible because he became increasingly famous and she became somebody that—she couldn’t make it in her own right, and this was really heartbreaking to her, because she was a brilliant, brilliant woman." 37

Though Broun well understood that his wife’s problem was "the inevitable bitterness of the person who projects herself through another person, even if that one is close of course," it was not he who made the most telling comment. 38 Journalist Westbrook Pegler commented on the irony of this for Ruth Hale, revelling in her fate as support for his own anti-feminism by writing that "the great feminist was no less submerged, if that word will do, than the conventional wives of the neighborhood, who called themselves 'Mrs.' and thought nothing of it." 39 As a man, Broun’s greater ease in achieving success as a journalist caused him rapidly to overshadow his wife—something they had not anticipated when they embarked on their marriage. Eventually, they agreed on a divorce explicitly to help her career—to avoid her being overshadowed by him.

But as Mildred Gilman indicated, it did not have the desired effect, for "when she left him she was the ex-Mrs. Heywood Broun, and she couldn’t get away from this." 40 Poor Ruth Hale was caught in a bind from which there was no way out. She continued to make little impact as a journalist and this contributed, according to Mildred Gilman, to her
death six months later: "Because she ultimately stopped eating. She
died of—it has a psychological name, this kind of suicide. She wouldn’t
eat at all, and he (Heywood) would try so hard to have her see friends or
doctors or psychiatrists, and she wouldn’t, and so she just died." 41
Thus Broun’s greater success destroyed their marriage when Hale died at
forty-eight.

Dudley Field Malone’s financial clout caused Stevens to have
financial problems. Disagreements about money were continuous in their
relationship. Malone, according to Stevens, never put into practice his
expressed beliefs about the sharing of money:

Furthermore he knows that I am on record as standing
for a proper division between husband and wife of
family income. He himself has publicly stated the
same belief before hundreds of people in New York. He
knows also that it was a source of great
disappointment and humiliation to me that he would
never consent to put my and his (publicly expressed)
belief into practice in our menage. If I had received
[sic] a proper share within marriage, I would not now
be without money... That has been one of the great
difficulties in our marriage. I was compelled to live
at a standard equivalent to a domestic, while his
expenses were unlimited, expenses for his own
pleasure. 42

Malone was always in charge of the money, even at the height of their
relationship. On February 9, 1919, he wrote about mortgaging Stevens’
house to get money for himself:

While I do not like the idea, my own girl, anymore
than you do, please do not think in the terms of your
ancient prejudices about mortgages. It really is the
most independent thing to do and there is no personal form in it as in a note. As a matter of fact, Doris dear, you are letting me use your house or in other words you are raising money for your house.  

In terms of the divorce settlement, Malone agreed to pay back the money he owed her, but in the Doris Stevens papers there are several letters from later years in which Stevens pleaded with him to give her the money that was her due. Once again, the man's greater access to power and money thwarted the feminist ideals of the original marriage.

Although there were historical precedents for efforts between men and women to establish egalitarian relationships, attempts in twentieth-century marriages differed from nineteenth-century attempts because for the first time, sexuality became a public feminist issue. These women rejected the ideology of passionlessness with which Victorian women were labeled and demanded the right to enjoy sex with men in a relationship of "modern love." This entailed a relationship of intimacy, of openness, of, above all, equality. It also, in the case of all these marriages, included the right for both parties to experiment with others in similar "feminist relationships." This had significant implications for men because it meant the abandonment of the double-standard in favor of a single-standard of sexual pleasure for men and women.

At the one extreme, there is evidence that Dudley Field Malone and Doris Stevens did not always have a satisfactory sexual life. Malone saw a psychiatrist who told him that "Doris is really and truly your wife and
you must make her quickly happy in the complete possession of you." Stevens asked her lover Jonathan Mitchell in 1923 about Malone's sex problem: "Can it be that Mr. Tebrick [i.e. Malone] has imposed his feelings of guilt about sex-love on me? Or is it simply that he is a very busy divorce lawyer?" This guilt may have reflected his Irish Catholic upbringing. In particular, Malone's letters to Stevens during their courtship reveal his attraction towards her as a dominant, even maternal, figure. During letters he wrote to her while on a hunting trip in 1916, he referred to his need for a "great, wonderful, lasting and controlling love," as well as to the "big love" he had attained from Stevens. Malone's need to be dominated is further revealed in a letter he sent to her before the trip in which he declared that he wanted "to be, just filled inside and hugged outside in the power of your love." But evidence suggests that Stevens was not as sexually attractive to Malone as his ideal. Stevens wrote in a letter to her lover, Mitchell, that Malone said to her "I love you but I don't want you." Further, Malone maintained an ambivalence about Stevens' personal appearance. According to Stevens he declared that "I was strange-looking. I looked like a man. I had a peculiar mouth. My eyes were badly set ... I was an Amazon." Though this was, admittedly, some years later when the marriage was troubled, it could well have reflected the expression of long-term frustrations. Malone, essentially a Victorian, could only see
women in terms of good or bad. He understood the bad woman as sexual, the good as pure; Stevens fitted neither stereotype. Faced with involvement with a feminist New Woman, these simplistic definitions became blurred and uncertainty was the order of the day; he balked. The case of Malone at least suggests that the sexual aspirations of feminist women might be thwarted because men did not find them sexually attractive enough. While they were prepared to accept women's right to sexual expression, sexual satisfaction with a New Woman was a different matter.

In the other marriages, about which there was no evidence of precise sexual difficulties caused by such repression, there is evidence that the men's Victorianism continued throughout the marriages. According to his son, Heywood Broun "in everything except his social views about the world" was timid. Physically, sexually, and intellectually."52 The move away from monogamy was especially difficult for him. Dale Kramer, Broun's biographer, noted that Broun was basically a moralist who had "doubts that so much abandon was really for the best."53 Kramer also suggests that Ruth Hale had practically to force him out on dates, as their ethos of sex freedom demanded that they have other friends. Broun's marriage to a New Woman did not therefore change his deeply rooted Victorianism.

Jane Grant has remarked of Harold Ross that "in the presence of women he was especially Puritanical and I always found him excessively
modest." James Thurber confirms this. He described a celebrated incident in which, as a reporter on the Salt Lake City Tribune, Ross began an interview with the Madam of a house of prostitution with the question "How many fallen women do you have?" Ross was Victorian because he regarded women traditionally: good women were worthy of chivalrous respect, but he could not see them as sexual. Thurber went on:

Sex, in or near the office, in any guise or context, frightened Ross. Sex was, to him, an ominous and ominous word that could mean anything from the first meeting of a man and a woman, through marriage and the rearing of children, to extramarital relations, divorce and alimony. When he swore, as he often did, that he was going to 'keep sex, by God, out of this office,' and then added, 'Sex is an incident,' he meant hand-holding, goo-goo eyes, fornicating, adultery, the consummation of marriage and legal sexual intercourse . . . Sex, normal and abnormal, legal and illicit, paid little attention to Ross and his imperious commands. It hid from him and went on about its affairs as it had been doing for thousands of years.56

Thurber's account does have to be treated with caution. Ross' biographer, Brendan Gill, reports that New Yorker writers E.B. White and Katherine Angell White, among many, disagreed with Thurber's portrayal of Ross.57 This portrayal—especially in the way Thurber satirized Ross's sexuality—has to be taken as exaggerated and probably was made so much of by Thurber because of his own enjoyment of sexual satire. Yet, in essentials, the portrayal is probably correct. As Brendan Gill himself
noted, Ross’s attitude may have reflected his upbringing in Aspen, Colorado, where discussion of sex was taboo. 58

Paradoxically, one suspects that Haldeman-Julius’ own avowed anti-Victorianism and anti-prudery, as obsessive as it was, may have reflected persisting Victorian tendencies. When someone needs to talk about and write about sex constantly, as Haldeman-Julius did, one suspects that he has not quite resolved his own discomfort with the subject; or at least that he is trying to prove to himself something of which he is not convinced—that he has resolved his difficulties. And Haldeman-Julius’ anti-Victorianism was certainly carried to excess. He talked about having a "naturalistic view of sex." 59 He admitted that he "suffered some limitations in the number of young women friends I had as a result of this forthright policy," but he added that "prudery and sex ignorance were being attacked from many sides and that the work would not be in vain." 60 Evidence of his personal life has not survived, but the sheer gusto with which Haldeman-Julius, a friend of Henry Miller, determined that the conspiracy of silence should not merely be breached but smashed makes us at least wonder about whether he really remained at heart a recalcitrant Victorian.

Victorianism reared its head in the case of Herbert Parsons, too. He had a great deal of difficulty with his wife’s penchant for swimming in the nude. In 1912, they had an argument about it after which Elsie
Clews Parsons wrote, "It is a pity you will never want to read Ellis' books on sex they explain so much. Why, for example, you and I have such different feelings about nakedness, about modesty etc." Herbert Parsons, too, therefore, had his prudish side, like the other men here who were married to New Women. Far from being liberated, Parsons continued to be a Victorian because, like the others, his essential view of women's role remained the same.

For many of these men, their sexual problems elicited a crisis of masculinity that reveals the deep fear of the feminine in themselves that Elsie Clews Parsons expressed as being typical of American men at this time:

It is such a confounded bore to have to act one part endlessly. Men do not resent being treated always as men because, in the first place, of the prestige of being a man and because in the second place, they are not treated always as men. And yet men too may rebel sometime against the attribute of maleness, applied even to the extent it is today. The taboo on a man acting like a woman has ever been even stronger than the taboo on a woman acting like a man. Men who question it are ridiculed as effeminate or damned as perverts. But I know men who are neither 'effeminate' nor pervert who feel the woman nature in them and are more or less tried by having to suppress it. Some day there may be a 'masculism' movement to allow men to act 'like women'.

One senses that she realized that it was this failure to recognize the feminine in himself that was Herbert Parson's problem, though if he himself appreciated the difficulty he never acknowledged it.
Paradoxically, this very lack of introspection may in fact prove the point that he did fear feminine elements in himself. The men who married these New Women in general were men who were made aware of a feminine side by their marriages and who did indeed try desperately to suppress it. They knew that marriage to a feminist New Woman challenged them because it demanded a new form of masculinity. But they were uncertain what form this should take. As Christian Gentlemen, they could develop sensitivity and tenderness towards women from a position of dominance. But in their new roles, they were expected to be egalitarian. For like William Allen and David Graham Phillips, whom Joe Dubbert and James McGovern respectively have studied, Malone, too, would make an excellent case study of the masculinity crisis of the Progressive era in his assertion of rugged machismo in the face of fears of effeminization.63 There is evidence that Malone did not feel comfortable in the rough-and-ready male world. While on a hunting trip in 1916, he wrote to Stevens how "wonderful it was to see again the gentle loveliness and magnetism of my beautiful love after having been in constant touch with very rugged vulgarity of thought."64 Like a Victorian, he looked to Stevens for a haven from all this, at the same time that, like a little boy, he assured Stevens of his ability as a hunter. When he bagged a deer, he bragged that "the antlers ... are the biggest that anyone has gotten in this country so far."65 Two days earlier, he wrote to her of how he was
"getting to look as rough and tough as the peasantry" and that "You have not seen how well I can ride. Yesterday, I spent all afternoon rounding up the eighteen horses and I felt like a real cowboy."\footnote{66}

On several occasions he attempted to assert his masculinity in the rawest, crudest manner: the fact is that Dudley Field Malone, husband of arguably the leading feminist advocate of the between-the-wars period, was a wife-batterer. Some of the abuse was merely verbal. Thus, on June 12, 1927, Stevens confided to her diary of an "evening telephone call from Dudley asking to see me--when I said no good would come of it he cursed over the telephone, was obscene, and threatened my life."\footnote{67}

However, the abuse did not long remain merely verbal. In a history of their relationship written for the divorce, Stevens expanded on the development of these violent incidents:

> He (Dudley) would return often drunk, from three to five in the morning and twice went out all night. On several such occasions he returned very violent and began to pull all the bed covers off me and throw me about . . . When I tried to leave he yelled lower (sic) so I sat down again. I got him out and home somehow and he continued to attack me first with words and, when I tried to protect myself against hearing, he attacked me physically. It was a devastating experience.\footnote{68}

Her diary accounts reveal even more vividly how "devastating" these experiences could be:

> When developed it was his party and he hadn't even invited me--he became violent. I ate something--left
table—went home in rain, alone, determined to leave. T (Malone) came in—continued scene—smashed my hat—thumped me, choked me down on the bed, kicked me black and blue on legs so was scarred for days, kept saying, 'I'll smash your jaw in'—I tried to pack to leave. He brandished cane. Threatening strike.\textsuperscript{69}

Malone's behavior as described so vividly by his victim suggests that the tensions caused by the issues raised by his marriage to a New Woman became overwhelming for him.

Harold Ross admitted fear of the feminine in himself which may have manifested itself in a form of abuse, as Jane Grant wrote to her mother-in-law, Ida Ross:

\begin{quote}
Yet I cannot continue to submit to the indignities that he is heaping upon me. I love him enough to understand that he is not well and not responsible, but when his strange behavior lasts for years, I become so weary . . . so I hope for a miracle that will restore him to normal. I feel that he still cares for me as he would not try to see me if he didn't. But then when he does see me he tries to justify his action, which of course can't be done, and then he becomes irrational.\textsuperscript{70}
\end{quote}

Another component entered into his fear of the feminine; he was also passionately anti-homosexual. According to Thurber, "he also wore anachronistic, old-fashioned, high-heeled shoes, because he thought Manhattan men dressed like what he called dudes."\textsuperscript{71} Any hint of effeminacy was suspicious. He "who secretly enjoyed being thought of as raconteur and man about town, was scared to death of being mistaken for a connoisseur, or an aesthete, or a scholar."\textsuperscript{72} He once remarked that
"Movies are for old ladies and fairies." His Rule 19 for the magazine was that "homosexuality is definitely out as humor and dubious in any case." As Brendan Gill has noted, Ross was what we would call homophobic:

If Ross was unreliable in his opinions about heterosexual relations, when it came to homosexual ones he was all bluff and harsh-tongued male arrogance. He thought of homosexuals as being effeminate—nances, pansies, fairies. (He died before 'faggot' became a popular form of derogation; he would have used it with pleasure). He saw them as failed women, and his estimate of women was far from high. He would not have believed that his stereotype of the homosexual as a limp-wristed lah-de-dah is but a small minority of the homosexual population as a whole; he would have scorned the notion that the majority of homosexuals are undetectable by mannerisms of dress, speech, or bodily movement and that many homosexuals are to be found playing the roughest and bloodiest of contact sports.

Yet Ross needed a certain kind of homosexual, "whom he thought of as the only kind." He seems to have actively employed homosexuals who were meekly subservient to him, that is "quiet and orderly nest builders, they took pleasure at being roared at and bullied and pushed to their limits."

Like many Victorian males, Ross preferred the company of masculine men to that of women. "He lived with men more comfortably and therefore much more happily than he did with women," explained Thurber. In fact he even moved into an apartment with an actor known as the "singing policeman." To him this was plainly more normal. Male homosexuals and
the strong independent women of New York clearly made him feel discomfort with the feminine world typical of male primitivism. It shows Ross as a very conventional man of his time, unchanged by his marriage to a New Woman.

Ross and Malone remained men of their time. They also showed symptoms of the turn of the century "masculinity crisis" pinpointed by Joe Dubbert.79 They used constant affirmation of the primitive side of their masculinity in a culture that was raising doubts about what their role as men should be. The Victorian system of primitivism tempered by gentlemanliness and "character" no longer seemed appropriate to them in the company of the New Woman. Doubt might take the form of ignoring feminine elements in their personalities, of obsessive fear of homosexuality, of a need to be seen as a casanova, or, at worst, of abuse of their wives. Either way, they failed to revise their role, and this contributed significantly to the failure of the marriages.

Although in all these marriages, sexual freedom had been agreed on, in practice this was just an excuse for the men to date more conventionally feminine women. Challenged by the New Woman to embark on a "feminist relationship," one of genuine equality, these men preferred to establish liaisons or relationships with women who did not expect as much of them as their wives. In effect, their attempts to adjust their
sexuality to the insight of the feminist New Woman failed. So they gave up. The greater temptations of the sexual revolution won out. Its promise of instant gratification proved irresistible; and the men indulged in liaisons with the flappers of the dance-hall subculture. Here they felt comfortable. Here was a world with which they felt familiar. Like Victorian men, they could find a woman to satisfy them sexually, without commitment—only now they did not have to pay, or they could pay and control.

Thus, Dudley Field Malone surrounded himself with "geisha girls" and was a constant frequenter of night clubs and various salons. In her unpublished autobiographical fiction, Primer, Doris Stevens noted how his interpretation of freedom in the marriage enabled him to continue to separate sexuality from love; she indicated that "there was something wrong with that party which she was slow to comprehend. One didn't mix wives with geisha girls. It wasn't done and she being superior should have known this."80 Thus, Malone as many Victorian men had done, divided women into bad women and wives. As he tired of Stevens, he created for himself a new version of the Victorian world in which he had been raised. For him, the sexual promise of the double-standard ultimately overcame any aspirations towards feminism in his relationships.
Harold Ross had much the same attitude, according to James Thurber:

Ross, as I have said, divided women into good and bad, but there was a subdivision of the bad, which, while not exactly good, was somehow privileged. These were the women of great talent, especially in the theater, whose deviations from convention and morality in their private lives were, by the very nature and demands of talent, excusable. 'I guess' he might have added.\(^{81}\)

Presumably, Jane Grant was one of these good 'bad' women. Although there is no evidence that he dated 'bad' women during the marriage, he certainly did so after the marriage was over. Like Malone and Broun, he took advantage of the allure of the flappers of the dance halls of New York. After the marriage ended:

As one of the town's more eligible bachelors, he was turning into something of a gay dog. Among his residences during the early years of his new bachelorhood were, fittingly, the Ritz and a Park Avenue apartment. He allowed his hair to grow longer and it more or less lay on his head.\(^{82}\)

He and his friends would make inept advances at debutantes. Thurber recalls an incident in a nightclub when "the charm of one of the ladies had caught Ross's fancy and he made a gallant, though misguided, effort to bend over and kiss the back of her head. The kiss ended up on the nape of her neck. Chairs were pushed back and the two men at the table stood up."\(^{83}\) Ross and his friends were asked to leave--"'I thought it was gay,' he said dejectedly," reported Thurber.\(^{84}\)
Haldeman-Julius behaved in a similar way. For him, too, there were
good and bad women, wives and mistresses. In her "What the Editor’s Wife
is Thinking About," Marcet Haldeman-Julius wrote of her husband that
"Women are invariably drawn to him . . . and their interest . . . is as
invariably reciprocated. That is if they are pretty or charming . . .
His attention is never held long by any one person . . ."85 These women
were always younger than she:

But, dear, I think you will understand that I cannot
keep my own self-respect if I let you come to me from
other women or caress me with the thought in my mind
that even so you caress young girls. I should be no
better than the fast women themselves and by
sanctioning the others I should be truly culpable.86

His second wife, Sue Haldeman-Julius, noted that "he was known around the
area for being a playboy. His extra-marital affairs sparked gossip over
a backyard fence."87

Of Broun, Dale Kramer has noted that "he liked to squire pretty
girls to speakeasies and night-clubs. In that day of considerable sex
emancipation and totally unrestrained talk about it--he went to some
pains to establish a reputation as a casanova . . ."88 Mildred Gilman
remarked: "he was like a little boy because he saw himself as the great
gay lover."89 Thus, Broun, too, in the face of the New Woman, merely
adjusted his sexuality to the modern sexual culture. He adapted but did
not change. There was his wife, a feminist New Woman. And there were
dance-hall flappers with whom he could have fun, but whom he could take
less seriously, just as in Victorian America, there had been wives and
prostitutes. When the divorces from their wives came through, Ross,
Brown, and Malone remarried women who were very definitely not feminist
New Women, but rather were women willing to be supportive of them and
partners in marriages that resembled in many ways traditional styles of
marriage. The feminist element in the marriages was thus greatly
reduced: significantly, the women took their husband's names. Edna
Johnson, third wife of Dudley Field Malone, was decidedly not a
feminist. She was in fact a showgirl. Mildred Gilman wrote of her as
cooing that "She hasn't any feministic leanings. But believes in women's
having their rights whatever they may be," while Malone, memorably,
declared in the same interview that he believed in women having their
rights "within the rules."90 Neither Connie Brown, second wife of
Heywood BROWN, nor Edna Johnson continued their careers as dancers. Nor
did Ross's second or third wife pursue a career. Heywood Hale BROWN
wrote of his stepmother that "It would take too long to catalogue all the
differences between Ruth and Connie, but perhaps they are best summed up
in the fact Ruth thought 'live and let live' was the motto of the damned
and Connie thought it was the golden rule."91 Quite simply, "if Ruth had
set out to improve Heywood, Connie set out to make him happy."92 In
middle age, Heywood Broun no longer wished to confront the challenges of modern love:

Praise is very hard to win in the world of perfectionist assessment, and for Heywood the cheerful, uncomplicated admiration he got as part of his second marriage was particularly welcome as the creaks of middle age became the voices of his phobias.93

Thus, Broun, like Ross and Malone, divorced from their feminist New Women wives, chose very different women for their second marriages, women who enabled them to live in a more traditional kind of marriage, one which suited better their Victorian socialization.

Intriguingly, in the case of Marcet and Emmanuel Haldeman-Julius, the transfer between feminist marriage and more traditional marriage occurred within the same relationship, and very consciously so. They saw the change as entailing a move toward Judge Lindsey’s then celebrated concept of "companionate marriage" or trial marriage, an attempt to adapt traditional marriage to the less rigid role dichotomies of the early twentieth century. It was a change which Marcet Haldeman-Julius herself supported, writing a long article in the Haldeman-Julius Monthly about it. This involved "a legal marriage entered into by two people with the deliberate intention of having no children for an indefinite period of time. But should a child be born, then automatically the marriage would become 'family marriage,' and the husband would be responsible for the
child and wife."94 The Haldeman-Julius' adopted daughter symbolically married her husband in a wedding that was billed as "the first companionate marriage."95 However, both Haldeman-Juliuses renewed their vows according to the new idea. Their marriage in this way went from "the equal rights and personal freedom status . . . through the companionate marriage stage"96 which left the husband ultimately in charge. Marcet and Emmanuel Haldeman-Julius thus symbolically abandoned the feminist component of their marriage.

Herbert Parsons established a successful alternative relationship with a woman called Lucy Wilson for several years during his relationship with Elsie Parsons. Thus, while still married to his wife, he was able to enjoy what was for him the benefits of a woman who did not have Elsie Clews Parsons' feminist expectations. Yet by doing so, he was still behaving according to the tenets of modern love. As Elsie Clews Parsons herself described the differences between the two women:

She (Elsie) was an intellectual woman and possessed of an extraordinary facility—unfeminine if you like—for detaching herself from her experience, for viewing it and even acting on it impersonally, so to speak. It was this facility that made her appear to the simple-minded so disquieting, to others so inhuman, and to still others so witty.

She (Lucy) was rather a quiet, self-effacing woman, but charmingly dressed, pretty and possessed of a delightful voice. Her voice was not merely cultivated; it had the lingering, caressing quality that comes only of happiness.97
Though Herbert’s marriage to Elsie Parsons continued, Lucy Wilson could provide nurturance and comfort, which clearly the distant Elsie Parsons did not. Herbert Parsons had the best of both worlds, a woman he could admire and a woman with whom he could enjoy a more traditional relationship.

Thus, Broun, Ross, Malone, Haldeman-Julius and Parsons went through several sexual responses to the New Women they married. The sexual demands of the New Woman brought out deep repressions and further accentuated a crisis of masculine identity. Because they were unable to overcome their problems, and because their view of women remained essentially the same, they found women who would give them sex without the demands and pressures of a "feminist relationship." The men’s involvement with the flapper New Women of the dance-hall subculture was essential a familiar world. Affairs with this kind of flapper were more socially acceptable and less expensive than affairs with prostitutes. The flapper thus became merely a new "bad" woman. But, like their Victorian fathers who had reared them, the men needed stability and security. This was provided by the marriages they entered after they divorced the feminist New Women.

Ultimately, I think the key to what men faced was uncertainty. There was no model for appropriate behavior for a New Man to accompany the New Women. How were men reared as Victorians able to enter a
relationship of equality with sexual expression? These men failed fundamentally to review their role. They could not live up to the high ideals with which they began their marriages. True, they accepted, if shallowly, their wives' feminism. They accepted, too, women's right and need to work, though they themselves did better in that area than their wives. They accepted, too, women's right to sexuality. But sex was the crucial problem on which these marriages floundered. At their onset, the marriages promised much, especially as all the couples encouraged outside relationships, involvement in what was called at the time "varietism."

These men found that erotic interest was greater outside the marriage where less complicated liaisons could be found. This contributed to the failure of the marriage, after which the men fled to more traditional relationships. Ultimately, these men remained typical men of their time, dividing women into the sexual bad woman and the nurturing good woman but unable to handle the feminist New Woman who demanded both pleasure and equality.

Given this failure among elite groups, what hope remained for the broader population? Certainly some, because what most caused these marriages to founder was the sexual experimentation with others, reminiscent of underworld behaviors. In the early twentieth century, this was easier for men to indulge in—because of the persistence of the double-standard—than it was for women. But, as I shall show in the next
chapter, while "varietism" was an issue among elites in the early twentieth century, some "feminist relationships" rejected it—to very positive effect.
FOOTNOTES


5Peter Hare, A Woman's Quest for Science: Portrait of Anthropologist, Elsie Clews Parsons (NY: Prometheus Press, 1986), 44.


9Jane Grant, Ross, the New Yorker and Me (NY: Reynal, 1968), 124.

11 Gene DeGruson, Head Librarian of Pittsburgh State University Library, Girard Kansas, personal correspondence with author, April 6, 1986.


15 Hare, *A Woman’s Quest for Science*, 50.

16 Haldeman-Julius’s writings are littered with this term.


18 DS to DFM, December 1925, Carton 2, Box 39, Doris Stevens papers.


20 Ibid.

21 DS to DFM, Valentine’s Day, 1917, Carton 2, File 37, Doris Stevens papers.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 DFM to DS Feb. 5, 1919, Carton 2, File 37, Doris Stevens papers.

26DS to DFM 4.00 Tuesday June 21 1927, Carton 2, File 40, Doris Stevens papers.


29Ibid.


31Harold Ross to Jane Grant, n.d., Box 1, Folder 3, Jane Grant papers, Special Collections, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon.

32Cothran, "Haldeman-Julius," p. 132 states that Marcet did the actual writing of their "joint" novel Dust.


34Cothran, "Haldeman-Julius," 239.


36Hale Brown, Whose Little Boy Are You?, 70.

37Mildred Evans Gilman, "The Reminiscences of Mildred Gilman," Transcript of Interviews conducted by P. Nadow for the Oral History Office of Columbia University, Part II, No. 72, 42.

38Brown, "Ruth Hale," 324.


40Mildred Gilman transcripts, Columbia University Oral History Collection, 42.

41Ibid., 29.
42 Doris Stevens to Mr. Connor, June 23, 1927, Carton 2, File 43, Doris Stevens papers.

43 DFM to DS, February 9, 1919, Carton 2, File 37, Doris Stevens Papers.


45 Term from Laurel Richardson, personal communication with author, Dec. 9, 1985.

46 DFM to DS, March 16, 1920, Carton 2, File 38, Doris Stevens Papers.

47 DS to Jonathan Mitchell, Mon., November 12, 1923, Carton 3, File 47.

48 DFM to DS, September 7, 1916, Carton 2, File 37, Doris Stevens Papers.

49 DFM to DS, August 28, 1916, Carton 2, File 37, Doris Stevens papers.

50 DS to Jonathan Mitchell, Mon., November 12, 1923, Carton 3, File 47, Doris Stevens papers.


52 Hale Broun, Whose Little Boy Are You?, 162.


54 Jane Grant, Ross, the New Yorker and Me, 7.


56 Ibid., 178.


60Ibid.

61ECP to HP, June 12, 1912, Elsie Clews Parsons papers.

62Elsie Clews Parsons, Journal of a Feminist 1913-14, in Elsie Clews Parsons papers.


64DFM to DS, September 8, 1916, Carton 2, File 37, Doris Stevens papers.

65DFM to DS, September 4, 1916, Carton 2, File 37, Doris Stevens papers.

66DFM to DS, September 2, 1916, Carton 2, File 37, Doris Stevens papers.

67DS Diary, June 12, 1927, Carton 7, Doris Stevens papers.


69DS Diary, May 23, 1924, Doris Stevens papers.

70Van Ness, "Jane Grant," 41.

72Ibid.

73Ibid.

74Ibid.

75Gill, Here at the New Yorker, 29.

76Ibid.
77Ibid.
78Ibid.

79Joe Dubbert, "William Allen White,"

80DS, Primus, n.d. Carton 7, File 210, Doris Stevens papers.

81Thurber, The Years With Ross, 182.

82Kramer, Ross, 2.

83Thurber, The Years With Ross, 183.

84Ibid.


88Kramer, Broun, 8.

89Mildred Gilman transcripts, p. 27, Columbia Oral History Collection.


91Hale Broun, Whose Little Boy Are You?, 173.

92Ibid.

93Ibid.


95As reported by Sue Haldeman-Julius, "Emmanuel Haldeman-Julius," 3.

CHAPTER VII

The Success of the Feminist Option?:

Men and the Feminist New Woman, Part II

The marriages between Elsie Clews Parsons and Herbert Parsons, Harold Ross and Jane Grant, Ruth Hale and Heywood Broun, Doris Stevens and Dudley Field Malone, and Marcet and Emmanuel Haldeman-Julius ultimately failed because of the couples’ failure to deal with the new sexual expectations. Most of the existing literature on feminist marriages in the early twentieth century confirms that such experiments were often unsuccessful.¹ Yet this material has not taken into account the success of several egalitarian marriages. Such experimental relationships were not without their problems. But some marriages worked because, even though the men in the partnership displayed symptoms of the early twentieth century masculinity crisis, they still achieved love, intimacy, and companionship in a relationship of equals. The women’s feminist aspirations in both public and private life were therefore realized.
In this chapter I discuss five examples of successful marriages. Once again, I chose these cases because sources exist that allow me to explore the personal dimensions of the relationships. Availability of material is a major consideration. All of the couples self-consciously identified themselves as feminist and succeeded in large part in maintaining the aspirations with which they began. These "feminist" relationships, as self-conscious attempts to realign the relationships between the sexes, were sharply differentiated from the Victorian system.

I focus here on the marriages of Fola LaFollette and George Middleton, Doris Stevens and Jonathan Mitchell, Inez Haynes Irwin and Will Irwin, Freda Kirchwey and Evans Clark, and Miriam Allen DeFord and Maynard Shipley. Fola LaFollette was the actress daughter of celebrated Progressive Robert LaFollette and married a minor Greenwich Village playwright, George Middleton, in 1913. Both were heavily involved in suffrage activities. Jonathan Mitchell was Stevens’ second husband (they became lovers in 1923 and married in 1935). He was (and remained) a minor journalist, though, by the 1950s, through his friendship with William F. Buckley, he contributed frequently to the National Review. Inez Irwin was a celebrated novelist, member of the National Woman's Party, and author of Angels and Amazons, a study of the suffrage struggle. Will Irwin, her second husband, was a prolific journalist who made his name in a series of articles from the scene of the devastation
of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. Freda Kirchwey was the editor of the *Nation* from 1935 to 1955. In 1915, she married Evans Clark with whom she endured enormous difficulties, elaborated on at length in letters between them. Yet they nevertheless managed to maintain a marriage which, ultimately, was a successful one. Miriam DeFord Shipley and Maynard Shipley divorced their respective spouses in order to marry in 1921; their relationship lasted until Shipley died in 1934. Shipley was a Socialist activist, physicist, and pamphlet writer, while DeFord was a suffragist and writer as well as a sometime-actress who played bit parts in Cecil B. DeMille movies.

Active support of their wives’ work was a crucial part of modern marriage, and these men were well able to provide it. For these men, in contrast to the men in failed marriages, adjustment to their wives’ work and feminist activities was not difficult. Their support went as far as active involvement in the suffrage movement and even sharing fully in household duties. In general, they displayed a rather deep sense of the implications of their wives’ beliefs for them as men, and an understanding of how men could best support women. The Irwins, for example, genuinely shared in one another’s writing. Inez Haynes Irwin wrote that they “read each other’s manuscripts, accepted each other’s suggestions amicably, or indulged in battles royal, as the case might be.”² George Middleton gave active support and encouragement to Fola
LaFollette in her work as an actress. In "What Feminism Means to me," an article based on a speech he made in support of women, he expanded on the importance of women's working:

The important thing about this whole matter of money in marriage is the potential power which lies in a woman's economic independence. Any husband with such a wife can bear witness as to how it tempered his attitude toward her. It's splendid for any husband just to know that his wife can go out and earn a living. It curbs his inherent sense of possession.³

In a manner that uncannily recalls the earlier failed marriages, he noted the importance of women's financial independence for the success of the marriage:

Money matters wreck more marriages than outsiders. Financial independence is the best safety valve I know out of some anti-feminist argument that this will take away men's incentive and sense of responsibility. My answer is that if love cannot supply both, then the marriage is a lie.⁴

There is no evidence that Middleton ever found his wife's career a problem, though this may reflect the fact that there was nothing unusual in a playwright having an actress wife. Middleton believed that a husband should support his wife while she was pregnant and while their child was very young, but, otherwise, that she should be financially independent. It is interesting that he even thought to mention that a husband should support his wife during such a time rather than taking this as a given, in view of the disastrous implications for other New Women examined here of their lack of financial independence.
While there is no evidence of how far Middleton put these beliefs into practice, he and Irwin were clearly not as sophisticated in their thinking as were Shipley and Mitchell. Shipley shared intimately with his wife in her feminism and her pacifism. He referred to their "real mission—nothing happens by accident—there are no accidents—we cannot fail. We shall yet do the work that was assigned to us because we were fit instruments for the work to be done. Be of good cheer." 5 Intriguingly, within the home Shipley and DeFord actually reversed their roles; as explained in Uphill All the Way, after Shipley’s illness in the 1930s, Miriam DeFord "had to learn to wash and iron, to sweep and clean windows and scrub floors and carry coal and ashes and dig in the garden." 6 Evidently, the success of their relationship was in part due to Shipley’s ability to take charge of household duties—a very unusual thing in the 1920s. This was something about which Shipley seems to have had no qualms, which was as well because he and DeFord could not afford servants.

Kirchwey and Clark also, apparently, shared domestic duties, though this was made all the more easy since they always had servants. As Sarah Alpern, Kirchwey’s recent biographer notes:

Part of the marriage’s strength may well have come from the couple’s shared domestic responsibilities of a two-career family. Evans’ diary entry expressed relief when one of the housekeepers returned to the household: 'Virginia began with us again—relief.' A returning maid meant less work for him too. 7
Clark gave Kirchwey active support in her every effort. In his diary, apparently, he commented on his wife's work. Different diary entries involved detailing her professional development. Clark clearly loved and admired his New Woman wife and was prepared continually to support her in her aspirations. Thus, when she returned to work at the Nation, he helped ensure that she would not have to work too many hours on account of her health. That she returned to domestic duties when their son, Jeffrey, was in his final illness was more a function of the sheer extent of the trauma than it was of any failure on Clark's part to support her career.

Mitchell's support of Stevens and interest in her work was also quite extraordinary. In a long analysis of their relationship (To D.C.S. Journal), he wrote to her of his concern that "Tebrick" (Malone) had undermined her work:

. . . Everything you have written is pure gold. The curious thing about it is this. Some of it is straight article stuff--Forum, Nation, Puckhurst and the two newspaper stories--they are shining work, but you took none of them and needed to take more than a few days. Say they account for a month out of two years. The rest are writing as able, exciting, arousing as has been done . . .

But for him the best of this work came when she had been away from "Tebrick." Mitchell also wanted to get involved in the movement: "I want to do feminist propaganda," he wrote. However, his support of
Stevens' work could sometimes sound like Malone's hero worship, "You know all this," he wrote "and you have already begun to find these answers and your work in my opinion is the most exciting thing that's happening in the modern world and the most revolutionary." And when she participated in a particularly militant action, he wrote her that "Oh it was stunning, dear, stunning, perfect, just everything. World opinion is rallied to you. Read the stories. They tell how you only wanted ten minutes . . . O, I'm glad you did it, it would have been rotten without this." But unlike Malone, he had a markedly sophisticated grasp of feminism--albeit one rather close to Stevens'. In 1927, they had an exchange on the origins of women's inferior position, following a heated argument that Stevens had had with Max Eastman at a friend's party. Like Stevens, Mitchell suggested that "physical inferiority" was not the reason for women's position but rather "sex fear" on the part of men--because "weakness was not a handicap among primitive peoples. Exceptional abilities such as those possessed by Kings, priests and women, were terrible handicaps." Thus, fear of the power of women, not anything that was innate, was responsible for women's inferior position. Though Mitchell's agreement with Stevens on this issue is insufficient to explain his success, and Eastman's failure, in his involvement with a New Woman, to admit that men are often afraid of women's powers is remarkable and shows great insight. It was a much less safe feminist position for a
man to take than Eastman's position that men oppress women because of
women's physical inferiority, because it implies that women do have power
that men do not have.

Further, Mitchell was not afraid to admit to Stevens the problems he
saw with feminism, declaring at one point that "the sticker for me has
always been--intellectually not emotionally--how to account for women's
acceptance of an inferior status." He was not afraid to be honest.
Women had always been perfectly capable of doing everything that men
could do:

That's why I've always had an unspoken cheer in my
insides when Dinsche [Stevens] says, 'I'll bet some
women went in the boats and walked in running water,
etc.' Of course I've always known there was some
fault with this male superiority argument; but I never
knew what it was.

He wrote that women, however, have been their own worst enemies: "Well,
ma'am. I'll betcha one million trillion dollars you can find that women
have been most downtrodden at the precise time that they have themselves
been most convinced of their own inferiority." Mitchell thus revealed
in no uncertain terms his enthusiasm for feminism.

Will Irwin's love for Inez Haynes Irwin also inspired him to support
her feminist (in this case her suffrage) activity to the point where, as
she remarked "... although I did not have to convince him to support
equal suffrage, I made a complete feminist of him." Inez Irwin was
well satisfied with her husband’s adjustment to her feminism. Thus, he
stumped for suffrage and put up with all the abuse doing so involved.
Ultimately, the Irwins were able to sustain a successful marriage by
humorous recognition of one another’s faults. This came across most
notably in Will Irwin’s Interview With His Wife:

(My husband) had just flitted to the U.S. from the
peace conference and was prepared to flit back again.
He was going to take me with him again.
'I notice your use of the word "take" Mrs. Irwin' said
he, 'Do you not consider such an expression in such a
sense as anti-feministic?'
'Oh I suppose even an advanced woman has to follow her
husband in some things,' she purred.
'Would you mind putting that in writing for future
reference?' he muttered.¹⁷

This could suggest that they probably had had problems but had become
well used to one another and had grown in mutual tolerance and
understanding. They knew the issues. To illustrate this, when the
interviewer left early, Mrs. Irwin proceeded to discuss with her husband
why he wanted to leave early. Could it be he wanted male company?

'If I may take the liberty of inquiring into your own
personal affairs . . . I will ask why this sudden
departure, and where are you going from here?'
'Since you have been so frank in asking me, I
responded, I will be equally frank in reply. To the
club, Kelly--pool begins.’
'Don't keep dinner for more than half an hour.’¹⁸

So well established was their relationship that they could even make fun
of Irwin’s retreat from the home to the male world.
George Middleton expressed a view of feminism as humanism that was shared by many men at this time. This view is in many ways a classic statement of a pro-feminist male position. And his response is in many ways an exemplary masculine adjustment to involvement with a New Woman:

We must recognize it has been an environmental not a biological necessity which in the past has differentiated the sexes in certain channels. Basically men and women are human and from that standpoint, we face feminism . . . It (feminism) asks primarily that men and women be considered as human beings. 19

This is a movement that can "benefit men too," because it was categorically "not an assault on trousers" and "marriage is a link, not a handcuff." 20

If the above adjustment was fairly conventional, the natural companion view to that of the feminist New Woman, Middleton's ideas were most intriguing when they went beyond the conventional. There was a need for a New Man, he thought:

Feminism frankly recognizes that industrialism and the pressure of modern life must breed a new man as well as a new woman to cope with new problems. It tries to instill in those men and women the belief that their goal is a common one of self-realization through equal opportunity. It asks that each sex must step with the other in time and not in conflict. It is earnest and determined. Its spirit is expansive. It asks that each sex separately may be able to give to the other more comradeship, more freedom, and, I believe, more justice. 21
While this sounds like the suffrage expression of any other Greenwich Village man—and does not address the problems that differences between men and women caused for other Village men in their attempt to attain success in marriage—the above discussion when seen in tandem with his espousal of monogamy makes his beliefs ring with truth: they sound like the work of a man who had attained the goals of his relationship, and who wanted to spread the news around. Indeed, it reads like the work of a true New Man.

Intriguingly, Middleton also saw himself not merely as a New Man but as a latter-day representative of a kind of man who had always existed. According to him, "the man who believes in women’s suffrage is not a New Man. He has always been with us. He has always welcomed any advance which women have wished to make . . ." In sharp contrast to, for example, Herbert Parsons, Clark took an active interest in his wife’s work and feminism; her book, Our Changing Morality, he was going to make required reading of himself a couple of times a year. And certainly he was prepared to support Kirchwey (as indicated earlier) despite the pain this caused him: "I felt all the while as if they were stripping and lashing me," he said of his family’s concerns about his involvement with an unconventional woman. His only comment, however, about what brand of feminism he might have supported was that he felt his wife’s was "in the future, rather than here and now." Of itself, this comment is
unrevealing until it is remembered what exactly her kind of feminism was. Kirchwey's feminism was strictly humanist. As Alpern has noted:

In her work for women's rights, she strove for political, economic and social changes to facilitate women's access to channels in which they could express their individual potentials. By the elimination of barriers to women, she saw the specific search for women's rights as a stage toward the attainment of human rights. The struggle to obtain equality of opportunity for women would, hoped Kirchwey, bring forth a society of co-equal persons.25

Kirchwey's feminism was part of her long-term goal of human improvement. Clark shared in this aspiration. Clark's feminist position was probably, therefore, vaguely humanist like his wife's--and like Middleton's. The fact that he never wrote on the subject or was active in the movement suggests that he simply stayed on the sidelines--implicitly supporting Kirchwey's feminism through his quiet support of her work, but never really getting involved. This represents a viable strategy on men's part, and one that, I suspect, has been adopted by men in many feminist marriages.

Thus, the five men examined here can be seen as the historically specific 1920s version of the pro-feminist man who was not able merely to support feminism in words and actions but also to put into practice those aspirations in his personal life. Those involved in these five "feminist relationships" knew very well that they were successful in attaining a new construction of love. They shared their lives as a consciously
political act. George Middleton wrote to Fola LaFollette that he did not "know what all these days will bring me but I want you to know that you will be with me always sharing with me in the things I know you love also."

Later, he could write to LaFollette of his satisfaction at the success of their relationship, declaring "Few people have had richer experience than I have had--through the people I have known and loved." The Irwins made a point of sharing their common interests:

- We had many interests in common: authorship, books, theatre, movies, radio, animals, prize fights, athletic meets, athletic events, dinner-going, and dinner-giving, hospitality of all kinds, motoring, walking, visiting historic spots, and exhibitions, art museums, art impulses, literature, history, isms, and ologies, always and forever Shakespeare.

In a sense, this may have contributed to their relaxed attitude to one area of contemporary feminism: Inez Irwin took her husband's name, remarking that this prevented her from the inconveniences that Ruth Hale had suffered. The difficulties may have stopped her from joining those pioneers who did not change their names, but it did not undermine her marriage's success.

As already indicated, Shipley and DeFord shared everything: so did Mitchell and Stevens:

- In our case, we came to find that a passive, but elevated venture, a visit to a museum, a concert or viewing scenery, followed by dinner, followed by play, the companionship of friends, the theater or, most
often, games at home led to a warm relaxed feeling between us. 30

Like Middleton and the Irwins, Mitchell and Stevens thus fully shared in the companionship that was so intrinsic to a modern "feminist relationship."

In the all-important area of sexuality, all five couples were also successful. All of the five men examined here enjoyed satisfying sex with their feminist New Women wives and proclaimed this satisfaction in their letters with all the openness of discourse that characterized the sexual revolution. Thus, George Middleton’s letters to Fola LaFollette reveal that sex was a very important and satisfactory part of their relationship. His letters to her were often blatantly erotic:

The only thing that has entered portals is the fever stick. A cold unresponsive thing which nonetheless registers a reaction. If it would only go down. How damn proud it is . . . But I don’t mind confessing I’d like those little red movements—wet with sharp reaches that in their touch symbolize the immersion of life. 31

Likewise, Evans Clark’s letters to Freda Kirchwey are, if not exactly erotic, then certainly sensual:

Last night I felt as if I was sleeping in a whirlpool. I didn’t get to sleep for a long while and had a broken night—O how I yearned for you and your life-giving touch, my precious one. My insides are fierce—I’m wondering when they’ll start working again on their own. 32
There is evidence that for Evans Clark, sex had been a problem early in the marriage. Like Malone and Ross, he was essentially a Victorian. Kirchwey was always worried by his "conscious objection to intense or overwhelming feelings." In a letter sent on February 1, 1930, she analyzed their difficulties in some detail:

At first I was probably more mature sexually than you. I was just as inexperienced, but more awakened, more expectant, less afraid. My maturity was not quite real or wholehearted, probably, because of a part in which independence and pugnacity combined to make me more inwardly unyielding. I needed experience and sureness and art--on your side--to complete my growth--But you were not sure or fearless--and you had had no experience. So we groped along together and found a lot of joy and some disappointment... There is evidence, too, that as Alpern has claimed, Clark "liked feminine women." Kirchwey, herself, remarked rather defensively that it was fortunate that she was "such a feminine creature--in spite of large doubts on that point? Knowing that, I may risk being a little more masculine." This suggests that Clark, like Malone, while he loved his wife, had initial difficulty adjusting to a woman who broke away from conventional expectations of femininity. But eventually Clark solved these difficulties through psychiatry. As Kirchwey wrote "... then you were analyzed and gradually you found yourself." And as I will show, their marriage was considerably more successful than that of Stevens and Malone.
In the case of Maynard Shipley, he wrote sex manuals for Emmanuel Haldeman-Julius. Fittingly, his letters were full of the sexual explicitness characteristic of the sexual revolution:

We are still in the flesh—and the flesh has its purposes, too. The body is not a mistake. I draw your body and soul terribly close to me now as I kiss you a passionate goodnight. I hold your lips against mine, long and long! I drink of the nectar of life! I repeat over and over again, 'Miriam, I love you, I love you.'

Jonathan Mitchell could be similarly sensual in his writings to Doris Stevens:

I love your hair and eyes and lips—and the defect and your neck, there are so many and so sweet spots by Dreka’s throat, and white arms and hands. I’ve always loved (crossed out) and Dreka’s narrow heels and legs—”O small white reindeer, I love your effortless, hard-driving minds, your eloquence, your gallantry.”

On Thursday March 3, 1927 he teased:

You are altogether glorious E-you-ah, like a sea-lion I love you. And come to think of it, I do feel a lot like the sea lion in the Battery Park Aquarium, swimming restlessly back and forth in his little tank, and barking. Only this sea-lion very presently is going to hop out of his cage. I guess maybe a sea lion is too magnificent—well, I feel like a plain seal, and ar-r-r-up, I want Dinsche.

However, there is also evidence that these men’s drives were well-controlled. For, ultimately, the major reason for the sexual success of these marriages was a very conscious rejection of polygamy, of
"varietism." Thus, George Middleton remarked how he resisted temptation many times. He wrote to LaFollette of his social meetings with women that "I'll wager I'll be the first one to take her away still a virgin."41 Similarly, DeFord remarked of Shipley's early life that "the girls had practically to offer themselves and twice when he found the girl was a virgin she went home the way she had come."42 While Shipley was probably shy, this is a sharp contrast in behavior from the men in failed marriages. For the men examined in this chapter, the choosing of monogamy over varietism was the key to the marriage's success. While they were prepared to accept the new sexual openness, they would not tolerate extra-marital affairs. Thus, the Irwins stuck resolutely to one another through their years of marriage. George Middleton railed against polygamists. He told his wife that he loved her; then he asked, "Am I too damn good? At least I don't make a virtue of vice. I think, as I told you, that is merely inverted Puritanism."43 For Miriam DeFord and Maynard Shipley, as for Kirchwey and Clark, there were more complex issues involved. In her biography of her husband, Uphill All the Way, DeFord wrote that both she and her husband were "essential monogamists."44 Apparently, he wrote to her at one point that "I have no more use for enforced monogamy than you have . . . I guess I am just naturally that way; perhaps many years of casual temporary affairs taught me to appreciate a real attraction when I found it."45 However, the
realization that he and she were "essential monogamists" was a lengthy and painful one. When they met, DeFord was married to anarchist John ("Armistead") Collier, a notorious polygamist. Shipley was expected to respect his relation to her, indeed to share her:

How dear and beautiful you are. Commend me to your noble and enviable husband. What a truly great soul he is! May the full powers of the unseen aid and comfort him in his work. I feel deeply honored to have his confidence and yours. Be assured, dear and rare Miriam, that what you hold high and noble shall be held sacred by me.46

On another occasion he referred to his rival as "dear, kind, generous, noble Armistead."47 Shipley grappled with the issue of monogamy in his letters to DeFord:

Monogamy [sic] is doomed. It is contrary to human nature when at its best, and we may as well be brave and honest enough to meet life and its problems as they are encountered. I am in perfect sympathy with you. Still, I believe if we were all brought up right, from adolescence onward, to look at things as they actually are, we would all be better prepared to enjoy ourselves under conditions as they really exist. I have suffered unspeakably because I approached life's problems from the wrong point of view. You have taught me a very great deal on this subject.48

But as he continued, his ambivalence about polygamy came through:

I realize that I have still more to learn (I believe I shall yet end up a varietist), As you say it is one thing to understand a thing philosophically and
another to meet a practical condition in the right spirit of unselfishness.\textsuperscript{49} 

Later, once the divorce with Collier was over, he claimed that he was not "uncomfortable sexually," but asked her why she did not arrange to leave him a "shock-absorber," (their euphemism for a casual affair.)\textsuperscript{50} Later he was tempted to have a "shock absorber".\textsuperscript{51} Despite this frank discussion and his assurance that it was "possible for you to be non-monandrous, or polyandrous, and be wholly 'true,' in the best sense of that much-abused work, to all concerned," he did not really like non-monogamy.\textsuperscript{52} Even his casual references to affairs suggest that neither in fact viewed them casually. In 1919, he wrote to DeFord: "Don't be alarmed, there is no danger of anyone wanting to shock-absorb me."\textsuperscript{53} The fact he remained a monogamist in practice contributed to the success of their marriage. Theirs was thus a rather bizarre situation. Shipley, to please DeFord, reluctantly tried to accept polygamy, a position DeFord herself held only half-heartedly, having learnt it from her first husband. But they did not practice it: instead, they had a successful monogamous marriage, once Collier's influence waned, as it did with time.

Similar things happened between Jonathan Mitchell and Doris Stevens. The continuation of Stevens' marriage to Dudley Field Malone was a cause of great consternation for Mitchell:
I did not like Mr. Malone and, until the last few days, I had never thought about the nature of his relations to Doris. Besides the obvious reason, my dislike came from my having been brought up in Maine at a time when Irishmen were regarded as Negroes are in Mississippi. 54

How traumatic it must have been for him is further illustrated by his insistence that "whenever I knew they were together, I sweated blood. For years I dreamed of meeting Mr. Malone on the street and hitting him in the eye." 55 Later, after Steven's death he explained this:

By this time I had begun to wonder whether I was not unfit to marry Doris, whether, if I really loved her, I ought not to marry her. In that mood, naturally enough, I no longer felt she belonged to me, and, if she didn't, other men had potential rights . . . While I was not sure of my own claim to her, the notion of other men's claims filled me with desperation. 56

Indeed, it made him doubt his own potency: he said that he "felt impotent once or twice. I felt impotent when Tebrick (Malone) said you (Stevens) had cabled, 'Mitchell is out of the picture.' I've felt impotent when I haven't been able to see you." 57 He tried to find ways of confronting this jealousy, and he was apparently successful, especially when he declared that he thought he had "discovered the cure. You get very close to the beloved, and love her very much, and when, as will happen unless something is very wrong—love is returned, you feel bursting with power and strength, and forget about jealousy." 58 But, ultimately, like Shipley and DeFord, the couple decided on monogamy.
Mitchell indeed later claimed that "with a single hardly avoidable and wholly unimportant exception, Doris had been utterly faithful to me from the day we met, and with one or two equally unimportant exceptions, throughout our lives together."\textsuperscript{59} This idea of "unimportant exceptions" is fascinating. But, whomever they were with, the marriage proved successful.

Freda Kirchwey and Evans Clark also came to similar conclusions. Although the tenets of egalitarian marriage often did imply that both sides had the freedom to date others, there is only limited evidence that these affairs were ever sexual. Their son, Michael Clark, has insisted that "his parents, despite their new-fangled theories and modern behavior," essentially were "models of bourgeois virtue and morality."\textsuperscript{60} He was right. This certainly was true after the crisis in their relationship at the time of the death of their son, Jeff, in 1930. But it was a hard won lesson. There is some evidence of extra-marital liaisons before this date. These were not necessarily consummated; they may well have been merely emotional. In the letter to Clark during Jeff's illness in 1930, Kirchwey discussed the issue of extra-marital involvements, writing that ". . . if you and I had more wholly fulfilled ourselves . . . we would have wanted outside emotional excitement much less."\textsuperscript{61} They had "gone out emotionally to other people."\textsuperscript{62} Yet their marriage survived. For Clark and Kirchwey, too, monogamy worked better.
Clark, like the other men successfully married to feminist New Women, by determining on monogamy saved himself from the problems which confronted those who tried polygamy: the sexual success of these marriages depended on this decision.

It was in his fearless rejection of Victorian primitive male roles that Mitchell was most interesting. These men were not frightened to reject the strictures of these roles. If they went through a crisis of masculine identity, they soon overcame any attraction that early twentieth century primitivism had for them. Thus, Mitchell wrote that, "After I had finished the last installment Wednesday night I began to struggle with a book review that I had promised for Thursday. It was a review of The Drifting Cowboy and full of nauseating male legend, about lean bronzed, wiry men."63 He, too, had some credentials as a feminist and was deeply wounded when, after he asked her to marry him, Stevens declared that "Men, in general, were difficult and that, instead of being an exception, I was behaving like all other men."64 This must have stung him because he was sufficiently aware of the element of truth in the accusations--"I must have thought there was something integrated and virile about being high-hat and saying 'here I am.'"65 As a man who identified as a feminist, it disturbed him if he, too, was implicated in men’s oppression of women. Yet he was able to admit calmly the truth of this to himself.
Further, even though he displayed homophobia, his was a different kind of homophobia from, for example, Harold Ross’. It did not emerge out of any fear of possible homoerotic tendencies on Mitchell’s part but rather seems typical of the curiosity that characterized discourse about homosexuality among those aware of the sexual revolution:

As I went down to find a place at table at the Majestic a tall and semi-distinguished old duck suggested that we eat together. I didn’t care much at that time whether we sank together and agreed. The next day at lunch he opened up about his sex-life in London and Munich and I discovered that my table-mate was Titana, Queen of the Fairies. Here I thought is a chance to be worldly and continental, so I asked him all the questions I could think of. He was very dull, however, and told the same story with few variations: there is a Turkish bath on New Oxford Street where you can pick up young men. All I found out was rendezvous and prices so I became insulted, and had the old boy exiled to a seat by himself.66

At worst, Mitchell was curious but not frightened. He went on that he was "still in the market for info about the whole horrid business; there may be pure and noble passions but I doubt it. Senator Walsh represents the only type I have ever seen and what a nice feller he is."67

A similar kind of homophobia is evident in Irwin’s autobiography, The Making of a Reporter, when he refers to his having regarded basketball as only a "sissy" imitation of football.68 Yet he did not fear taunts of "sissy" or "nance" directed at him as a male supporter of women’s suffrage.69 He dismissed such attacks in his autobiography quite
simply as "uninspired," referred to "one original spirit [who] broke
through the police lines and marched for some time beside me, asking in a
piercing falsetto, 'O Lizzie, do you wear lace on your drawers?'"\textsuperscript{70}
Irwin, like Mitchell, was sufficiently unconcerned not to be bothered by
such taunts. Why should he be? His reporting showed him to be a man of
courage and conviction. For him, as for Mitchell, being identified as
the husband of a feminist New Woman did not threaten his sense of
masculine identity. This was the case with Middleton and Shipley, too,
as their writings about feminism reveal. With Will Irwin, Middleton got
up at a suffrage meeting in New York City in June 1914 and talked on
"What Feminism Means to me." Further, Maynard Shipley published in such
major pro-feminist works as Calverton and Schmalhausen's \textit{Women's Coming
of Age}.\textsuperscript{71}

For his part, Evans Clark was prepared to go out of his way to
defend his seemingly unconventional wife to his family when some members
expressed their concern at Kirchwey's pursuit of a career. As he wrote
to Kirchwey during their courtship:

There was quite a fight over the wisdom of young girls
reporting for \textit{Morning Telegraphs} (as was
Kirchwey)--there seemed to be an awful lot of
dangers. But Ethelwyn, Uncle Howard Page and I backed
you to the last ditch--and further than I should have
in this particular instance under ordinary
circumstances. The opposition was finally downed by
someone calling for your 'three prayers' to show what
you really could do--and my reading it with my heart
in mouth and the fiery glows running riot in me. It was a poor session for me, dear, but I'm glad it happened for it'll open their eyes and hearts a little to the feminist adventure.  

Further, Clark was unafraid to discuss his wife's feminism, even with his journalism friends. He would "discuss feminism with a little salad on the side."  

Like the other men examined here, he understood support for feminism as an important prerequisite of a modern feminist marriage. Kay Trimberger has remarked on the importance of "psychic openness" as opposed to "personal distance and autonomy" in a man who successfully adjusted his sexuality to that of a New Woman. In Trimberger's study of Max Eastman, Hutchins Hapgood, and Floyd Dell, the men failed in their efforts. Evidently, the men in failed marriages either could not grasp the need for openness or else were unable to practice it. However, in the five successful marriages, the men categorically were able to step sufficiently out of their male roles so that they were able to discuss their relationship with their wives honestly and openly and frankly. They were able to accept criticism from their wives and even to respond to it by actively changing. In some cases, the men even developed a psychic rapport with their wives.

This certainly applied to Shipley. According to Miriam DeFord, he had always been open to psychic spirituality: "He was scornful of the contempt of most scientific men before the perplexing phenomenon roughly classed as 'psychic.'" Apparently, he had had a premonition of the San
Francisco earthquake. Even more intriguingly, he was able to tell who
had sent them mail even before they had checked their mailbox.

This extended to their relationship. There were constant references
in their relationship to what they called "soul-love," which to Shipley
was an elaborately defined mystical experience. He wrote, for example,
that he pressed his "feverish life to yours. I take firm hold of your
body—drawing you very close to my heart—very close so that the corporal
is almost at one with the spiritual, we cling very hard and also together
... rapturously." They were able to develop their physical and
spiritual unity by frank, open and honest discussion of their problems:

I realize that your point of view is the scientific
one, and that I am just a poor, stupid
sentimentalist. I shall try to reform ... Your
conquest of self is marvelous. I envy you, I shall
struggle to be like unto you. I loathe the primitive,
egotistic, brutally selfish conception of love.77

Shipley thus felt able to change in response to the criticisms of his
feminist wife, and is here seen at least saying he would do so.

Eventually Kirchwey and Clark were able to attain this psychic
openness with one another too. Kirchwey wrote to Clark that she had
always shrank from "analyzing too much the problems of our own
relationship—just as you always have." But the series of letters they
exchanged at the time of the illness and death of their son, Jeffrey, in
1930 broke the ice decisively. And Clark's psychoanalysis helped too.
A similar pattern is discernible in Jonathan Mitchell. His "To D.C.S. Journal" at the Schlesinger library is a lengthy discussion of his relationship with Doris Stevens. Here, he emphasized and put into practice complete openness and honesty, which had not always been practiced in their relationship. He wrote that "I can heap up instances of deliberate dishonesty in word and action of which I have been guilty in our relationship." But, as he indicated, "I think that is ended." They were going to be different. Now he emphasized personal change:

Henceforth I am going to decide when anything happens whether it is important or trivial. If I think it is important I am going to try to do something about it. If it is trivial, I am going to forget it. Reversed--I am not going to make light again of anything which I suspect is serious, nor struggle and fuss over things that don't matter. This is a resolution. Mitchell thought "that by henceforth doing them--all simply to improve myself--I shall be a better reporter, better feminist, more warming and definitely gayer. I shall be most of all a better mate." He was realistic about his chances of improvement, declaring that "I don't expect to become a better person or lover abacadabra, presto all at once. I was filled as a Spring tide fills an inlet, with a new will to be a better lover when I knew you had gone. But I know sudden regenerations aren't so good." Ultimately, his openness and honesty led him to grasp the way toward greater equalitarianism. Psychiatric help enabled him to reach this higher level of understanding:
But, as Parker talked, it became very clear. The important thing is not who belonged to whom, or who is preferred to whom. That is, not important now. The important thing is for us to be secure and gracious people, and I think the rest can and will be worked out. The important thing is for me to be a calm and fervent lover of Dreka (Stevens) and titles and crises don't matter.\footnote{83}

As Mitchell wrote much later in the 1960s (after Stevens died), they were able to develop an extraordinary psychic rapport with one another (indeed rather like Shipley and DeFord). Mitchell wrote that "one or the other of us would have a sudden wish to visit a museum, without conscious recognition of what he or she was wishing."\footnote{84}

A similar psychic openness can be seen in George Middleton and Fola LaPollette's relationship. He wrote her from London on June 24, 1942 that he needed to determine what should be his "best attitude towards you and (her) inner life." He needed to readjust if we are to go on in full comradeship.\footnote{85} The Irwins obtained psychic openness too. In The Making of a Reporter, Will Irwin described a "recurring nightmare" that he had of being trapped in Germany during the war.\footnote{86} Inez Haynes Irwin apparently had the same dream too.

But, nevertheless, to be fair, it is necessary to qualify the success of these marriages. Even after they had long been married, the men examined here still displayed some problematic characteristics. While this indicates the effort they must have made in order to attain
success in their marriages, it also indicates a very human failure to
attain the ideals of modern feminist love. Further, some of their
characteristics raise serious questions about what men had to give up in
order to attain success in love with a feminist New Woman.

The New Man could, for example, be aggressive. There is evidence
that Shipley could behave very badly with Deford when drunk. He was in
fact an alcoholic, though Deford insisted that "... he did not become
surlly or quarrelsome. Alcohol can only bring out what is in a man and
Maynard's sweetness of nature was as much his when he was drunk as when
he was sober."87 But later on in her biography of Shipley, Deford
admitted that alcohol could have a pernicious effect on him--"every
indiscretion with alcohol could be followed by dreadful remorse."88
Though there is no specific evidence of actual physical violence, this
sounds like Dudley Field Malone.

In his autobiography, Middleton remarks on his own instinctive
feelings at having his wife support him on a Summer lecture tour:

We were hard up. To carry me without further
borrowing, she went on this grueling Summer trip;
under chautauqa tents where the temperature was often
a hundred. I had had the usual male reactions about
being 'kept,' and so, for the first time, grasped how
some women have also felt. But, being a feminist,
what could I do? In fact, I got a little play out of
my own conflict.89

At least Middleton, not without these feelings, was able to overcome them.
Finally, Jonathan Mitchell at times comes across as so indecisive that we do not empathize with him. His patience is staggering. Why did he wait so long to marry Stevens? Why did he not act more aggressively towards Malone? His long note to Stevens (D.C.S. Journal) reads as if it were the culmination of years of frustration. Thus, he wrote that he was "trying to set down a charter for a union between a woman and a man which will be more complete than ever a union has been. I want desperately to know why I have not been a good mate to you."90 He harped extensively on his own failures:

I have done my job—sometimes well but often sloppily—and I think I am a more competent and workmanlike reporter. Beyond that I’ve written three Sunday pieces for the Post-Dispatch and story on Marcus Garvey which was refused by the New Republic. This record is simply disgraceful.91

Finally, he got to the most important point, writing to Stevens that he wanted "to talk to you about ourselves. Once we played a game called 'finding defects.' So darling a defect Dreka [Stevens] has."92 And then he finally proceeded to discuss her relationship with Malone.

The issue Mitchell’s passivity raises is an important one: did he and Stevens attain a genuine relationship of equals, or rather one in which Stevens really called the shots? Certainly the genuine equality that seems to have been achieved between Shipley and DeFord, the Irwins, and Middleton and LaFollette suggests that equality between the sexes was
and is possible. But the fact that the man who was most close to the feminist ideal was so deferent and weak in many ways raises the question of whether or not it was possible for a man to attain complete equality with women according to the feminist ideal. One could, on the one hand, argue that Mitchell and Stevens had redressed the power imbalance between men and women; but, on the other hand, one does rather get the impression that Stevens simply told Mitchell what to do. At the very least it suggests how precarious a thing it is to maintain any equality.

Nevertheless, despite these important qualifications, in general there is no denying the success of these marriages. They suggest a profile of a New Man. Clark, Middleton, Mitchell, Irwin, and Shipley attained love, intimacy, and companionship in a genuine relationship of equals. These men actively supported their wives in their feminism and work. They attained a deep understanding of the issues that surrounded women’s advance into the public sphere, despite the fact that they remained very much conventional men of their time in many ways. While they remained Christian Gentlemen, they emphasized the sensitive, tender, caring aspects of the male role and did not see the concept as conflicting with women’s demands for equality. For one way in which the men supported women was, indeed, by behaving according to the tenets of the Christian Gentleman. Mitchell’s impulse on knowing Malone battered Doris Stevens was that "my obvious duty was to protect my girl."93 On
one occasion, he felt it necessary to protect another woman friend of his when she got in a row with a taxi-starter; he hit the man. Maynard Shipley could be chivalrous too. On one occasion he said that "I shall again be near to love and comfort you--yes and to protect you if need be." But these men firmly rejected "primitive" behavior. They preferred "character" over "personality," responsibility over irresponsibility, and above all monogamy over polygamy or varietism or any of the other types of alternative sexual relationships that were part of feminist marriage at this time.

For monogamy really was the key to the success of the marriages examined here. These couples either never accepted the prevailing trend towards experimentation with others, or else learnt from experience that non-monogamy simply did not facilitate the success of a marriage. These men and women reached a pragmatic understanding that this aspect of feminist marriage, at this time, was not compatible with the success of their marriages. Put simply, like other couples before and after them, they worked out their problems.

Yet the difficulties they overcame were modern problems. They did not merely embrace monogamy as a response to the demands of modern love but also succeeded in attaining something close to genuine equality in their work lives. Further, the men supported their wives' publicly stated feminist aspirations. Their success in resolving their
difficulties therefore suggests the possibility of real success in modern feminist marriage, which these couples’ pioneered, especially because there was nothing unusual in the way in which they resolved their problems: they simply settled their differences as couples before and after them have done.

The five successful marriages show promise, but any optimism must be tempered by the evidence of the unsuccessful marriages discussed in the previous chapter. Here, the couples entering marriage with the best of intentions came unstuck. Men failed to support women’s aspirations for equality in work; nor did they support their feminist activity. Sexual demands proved too much as well for them. Their failure underlines how hard it was to attain feminist marriage very firmly, but it also warns of the difficulty of fusing the sexual revolution with feminist ideas of gender equality. Because it was easier for men to have affairs than women, non-monogamy resulted in greater gender inequality.

This is important because as the next chapter shows, the sexual revolution that began in the working class and was taken up by Bohemians and by the men who married feminist New Women by the 1920s was affecting broader middle-class youth. In turn, marriage was moving in the direction of greater egalitarianism, and therefore ever broader groups of young Americans were facing the issues discussed in the last several
chapters. How did such men cope as the issues raised by the sexual revolution and modern feminism moved to center-stage? This question will be the focus of my final chapter.


4 Ibid.


9 Ibid., 25.

10 JM to DCS, Friday, March 4, 1927, Carton 3, File 57, Doris Stevens Papers.
11JM to DCS, Tuesday August 28, Carton 3, File 62, Doris Stevens papers.

12JM to DCS, Thursday March 31, 1927, Carton 3, File 57, Doris Stevens papers.

13JM to DCS, Saturday, March 5, 1927, Carton 3, File 57, Doris Stevens papers.

14Ibid.

15Ibid.

16Inez Haynes Irwin, "The Adventure of Will Irwin", p. 573, Box 3, Folder 16, Inez Haynes Irwin papers.

17"Will Irwin Interviews His Wife," Biographical Catalog, SL.

18Ibid.


20Ibid.

21Ibid.

22George Middleton. A Play Extract, Box 67, George Middleton papers.

23Evans Clark to Freda Kirchwey. Before lunch (1915) Box 1, Folder 19, Freda Kirchwey papers, SL.

24EC to FK, 1915, Box 1, Folder 19, Freda Kirchwey papers.

25Alpern, A Woman of the Nation, 103.

26GM to FL. Thursday night Feb. 1924, Box 39, George Middleton papers.

27GM to FL, Nov. 29, 1938, Box 37, George Middleton papers.

29 Ibid., 574.


31 GM to FL, March 4, 1922, Box 37, George Middleton papers.

32 EC to FK, "1915, Wednesday after Supper," Box 1, Folder 19, Freda Kirchwey papers.

33 FK to EC, Saturday, February 8, 1930, Box 1, Folder 19, Freda Kirchwey papers.

34 Ibid.

35 Alpern, A Woman of the Nation, 66.

36 Freda Kirchwey, Memorandum, August 5, 1943, p. 161, Box 1, Folder 22, Freda Kirchwey papers.

37 Ibid.


40 GM to DS, Thursday March 23, 1927, Carton 3, Folder 57, Doris Stevens papers.

41 Shipley, Uphill All the Way, 6.

42 GM to FL, Paris 1922, Box 37, George Middleton papers.

43 Shipley, Uphill All the Way, 168.

45 Ibid.
46 Maynard Shipley, Alone Dec., 1 Miriam Shipley papers.

47 Maynard Shipley to MDS Saturday a.m., n.d. Miriam Shipley papers.

48 MS to MDS, Monday evening, n.d. Miriam Shipley papers.

49 Ibid.

50 MS to MDS, Wednesday evening, n.d. Miriam Shipley papers.

51 Ibid.

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid.


55 Ibid., 11.

56 Ibid., 31.


58 Ibid., 20.

59 Jonathan Mitchell, taped reminiscences of Doris Stevens, p. 31, Doris Stevens papers.


61 FK to EC Feb. 1, 1930, Box 1, Folder 19, Freda Kirchwey papers.

62 Ibid.


64 Jonathan Mitchell, taped reminiscences of Doris Stevens, p. 24, Doris Stevens papers.
65JM to DCS, Friday May 9, 1924, p. 3, Carton 3, File 51, Doris Stevens papers.

66JM to DCS, July 21, 1923, Carton 3, File 48, Doris Stevens papers.

67Ibid.


69Ibid., 198.

70Ibid.

71Samuel Schmalhausen and Vernon Calvert, Women's Coming of Age (NY: Boni and Liveright, 1931).

72EC to FK Monday Before Lunch (1915), Box 1, Folder 19, Freda Kirchwey papers.

73EC to FK, Sept., 9, 1915, Box 1, Folder 19, Freda Kirchwey papers.

74Trimberger, "Feminism, Men and Modern Love," 135.

75DeFord, Uphill All the Way, 244.

76MS to MDS, n.d. p. 13, Miriam Shipley papers.

77MS to MDS, Ms. 3526, Folder 13, Miriam Shipley papers.

78FK to EC, February 1, 1930, Box 1, Folder 19, Freda Kirchwey papers.


80Ibid.

81Ibid., 8.

82Ibid., 9.

83Ibid., 10.
84 Ibid., 20.

85 GM to FL June 24, 1942, Box 37, George Middleton papers.

86 Irwin, Making of a Reporter, 389.

87 Shipley, Uphill All the Way, 153.

88 Ibid., 196.

89 George Middleton, These Things Are Mine, unpublished autobiography, p. 123, Box 67, George Middleton papers.


91 Ibid.

92 Ibid., 15.

93 Jonathan Mitchell, taped reminiscences of Doris Stevens, p. 11, Doris Stevens papers.

94 NY Wed evening, JM to DCS July 21, 1923, Carton 3, File 48, Doris Stevens papers.
CHAPTER VIII

Modern American Male Sexuality: the 1920s

In early twentieth century America, men faced increasing demands that they be young and sexually attractive, that primitivism be emphasized over gentlemanliness, that sexual expression be stressed over repression. This ideology gained ascendancy in mainstream American culture, drawing inspiration from working-class sexuality as manifested in the dance-hall subculture in the cities. Not only was a sexual revolution in the air, but also a relative levelling of gender roles occurred among elite groups which reflected the impact of feminist ideas. To what extent, however, did these influences affect mainstream American middle-class men?

The recent work on early twentieth century sexuality has increasingly emphasized the importance of the development of an incipient youth culture by the 1920s. Influenced by David Riesman’s classic conception of a shift in this time from an inner-directed to an
outer-directed personality as a dominant goal of socialization, Paula Pass has observed the emergence of peer-led sexual mores among college youth in the 1920s: the peer group defined what was appropriate sexual behavior.\(^1\) Beth Bailey has recently refined this analysis by observing that the emerging practice of dating differed from the nineteenth century practice of "calling" most fundamentally in that in the former, young people, rather than parents or older people, guided one another; for her, "sex became the central public symbol of youth culture, a fundamental part of the definition that separated youth from age."\(^2\) John Modell has followed this analysis, too, in his recent work on the twentieth century path to marriage.\(^3\) But what these three writers have not fully appreciated is the precariousness, fragility, and faddishness of peer-led mores, especially as manifested among the young. The dating system, far from emerging in a consistent way over the period of the 1920s, as Modell suggests, was constantly in flux precisely because, as the creation of young people themselves, it ultimately thrust the onus of responsibility onto the individual daters. To break peer group sanctions was far less serious than to break the sanctions of the church or of parents. Therefore, the dating system moved from fad to fad, from "rating and dating," to "going steady," to a myriad of other approaches that individual men and women learned from one another. A variety of
different and always changing moralities replaced the hard and fast rules of chaperonage.

The vagaries and fancies of individual peer and family environment defined the nature of courtship. But this applied far more to men than to women. Beth Bailey has perceptively noted that the change from the system of "calling," of chaperonage, to the dating system entailed a move from a woman-controlled courtship which involved men’s entrance into a private women’s world to a system where women were thrust into the men’s public world. This gave men a great deal of power which they were ill-equipped to use and about which they were thoroughly uncertain. For if the early twentieth century was marked by growing sexual choice as new alternatives developed and older taboos declined, it was also marked by greater complexity and uncertainty around sexuality for men even more than for women. An individual man had to choose and to learn the sexual boundaries which worked best for him through trial and error, in response to peer pressure, in an environment in which the artifacts of the "culture of personality" increasingly set the pace. YMCA writer Sherwood Eddy analyzed the problem perceptively when he wrote that "Whatever its abuses, young people today cannot be forced back under the former conventional restraints but must find their safeguards in their own inward control." 4
In this chapter, I examine the response of the men of the mainstream middle class of the 1920s to the increasingly complex sexual culture of their time. For by the 1920s many of the dilemmas faced by the men married to feminist New Women and working-class men confronted the men of the broader middle class. How did men reared as Christian Gentlemen respond to the more sexually-demanding New Woman? Faced with a sexual culture that was ever more complex and demanding, men experienced confusion, uncertainty and anxiety as to what was appropriate behavior. On encountering the institutionalization of a homoerotic subculture, they balked. Dating stressed "performance" and the learning of skills. Men wondered how to perform, for they had not lost power, merely the guidelines on how to use it. In the peer-led youth culture, young men were exposed to a multiplicity of codes that left many of them wondering how far it was appropriate to go with women. Faced with this confusing moral crisis, many men were left to their own worst behavior. They proceeded to treat middle-class women much as they had been socialized to treat prostitutes. They used lewd language to describe middle-class women, they paid for "dates" and expected "thrills" in return. When thrills were not forthcoming, they protested. Increasingly, men, frustrated in dealing with the New Woman, rejected the commitment to marriage that was expected of them. Further, as marriage became more sexually demanding, it also became more democratic, if hardly feminist;
men fled too from the responsibilities that marriage entailed. In this way, by the 1920s, both marriage and dating among the population in general took on some of the dilemmas that the men of the working-class dance-hall subculture and elite men married to feminist New Women were then facing and had faced in the previous two decades. As in these worlds, however, men fundamentally did not change, for by 1930, male dominance remained firm and no New Man had emerged to accompany the New Woman.

These were the issues with which men were grappling by the 1920s. To explore the changes and confusions, I have examined a variety of sources that go beyond the college youth who have so far been the major focus of attention. First of all, I have made extensive use of twentieth-century sex surveys. Kinsey, of course, because of the sheer size of his sample, must remain the most valuable, but his bias towards the college-educated group and towards Indiana limit his worth significantly. He did, however, provide an invaluable generational comparison between those who matured between 1910 and 1925 and those who matured after that date. While this cannot make up for the inevitable lack of a survey from the Victorian period, it does reveal important trends. I have also used the 1938 study, Psychological Factors in Marital Happiness, by Lewis Terman, whose findings in some ways complement those of Kinsey. These studies provide the quantitative
framework for my analysis and give the best guides possible to changing sexual behavior.

Second, I have looked at a variety of sources that provide qualitative information on people's attitudes and behaviors. These include the personal advice columns from the *New York Daily News* (written by Doris Blake) and the first year of the Martha Carr columns from the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (1930-31); men's confessional stories, published in the periodical literature of the time; the in-house publications of the YMCA, which are a valuable calibrator of male attitudes towards women because these publications were written by independent young men living in the YMCA dorms, who were especially free to date young women; studies of the impact of the movies on youth carried out under the editorship of Ohio State psychologist W. W. Charters; and a series of about a hundred letters asking advice addressed to Judge Lindsey in 1925 to 1927, at the height of his influence (these have been preserved in the Library of Congress and are mainly from readers of *Physical Culture* to which Lindsey was a contributor). Taken together, these sources contain material about men's experiences across a broad spectrum of the middle class, from lower-middle to the upper-middle class.⁸

By the 1920s, sexuality was becoming more demanding and complex for men not merely in the terms of the cultural ideal of manliness that I have discussed already, but also as regards actual behavior. According
to Kinsey, among those women born before 1900, only 14 percent experienced premarital sex, while among those born after 1900, 36 percent had such experience. These figures set the pace for the changes in male sexuality. Put simply, the figures suggest that men were having sexual intercourse more often with women of their own class rather than with prostitutes. Writing in 1948, Kinsey observed that the average frequencies of intercourse with prostitutes are down to "two thirds or even one half of what they were in the generation that was most active twenty-two years ago." The middle-class male experience of sexuality was therefore fundamentally changed in these years. An expert on adolescence, J.L. Richmond, observed that "the normal youth in a good environment visits such houses [of prostitution] far less frequently than formerly." Figures from Terman's large study of 2484 California married people in the middle 1930s serve to confirm Kinsey. According to Terman, of women born before 1890, 8.7 percent had sexual intercourse with their spouses before marriage, but of those born after 1910, 45 percent had sexual intercourse with their husbands before marriage. Among those who had sexual intercourse with others as well as their future spouse, the figures almost exactly correspond with Kinsey: 5.8 percent of those born before 1900 had premarital sex with more than one partner, while among those born in the decade after 1900, 14.0 percent did. Figures from Terman also show that among those born before 1890,
50.6 percent of men were virgins at marriage, while among those born between 1900 and 1909, 32.6 percent were (among those few born after 1910, the figure is even lower—13.6 percent). John Modell has recently used the Kinsey figures to establish that among the men born before 1890, 66.3 percent had sex with their fiancées and others, as compared to 76.5 percent of those born between 1910 and 1919 (among those born after 1925, 80.1 percent had sexual intercourse with fiancées and others). Thus, men in general were having more sexual intercourse, whether with prostitutes or middle-class women.

A more general sexualization of the whole route to marriage was therefore occurring. More options, choices, and alternatives developed for men around sexual behavior. This trend is much more in evidence in Kinsey than had been noticed previous to Modell’s recent groundbreaking work. Sex surveys conducted in the 1920s do not reveal the practices of pre-marital cunnilingus or fellatio to be particularly widespread, but Kinsey’s 1954 study of women’s sexuality does support Modell’s contention that there was some variance of sexual practices among men with women of their own class: in those educated up to the age of seventeen and over born between 1900 and 1909 who had coital experience less than 25 times before marriage, 14 percent of women had experienced cunnilingus, while 26 percent of those born after 1910 did. Among those who had engaged in coitus over twenty five times, the figures for cunnilingus remained
fairly stable. As regards fellatio, instances tripled among the group which had coitus less than twenty-five times, from 7 percent to 23 percent, while among those who had had sexual intercourse over twenty-five times before marriage, the instance was stable. This suggests that during the 1910s, cunnilingus and fellatio became genuine petting options. This tendency was widely commented on at the time. Marriage counselor Ira Wile noted how "many have developed techniques of mutual stimulation which do not carry the danger of impregnation," while commentator Theodore Newcomb noted the "ample confirmation...of the general trend towards increased tolerance of formerly disapproved behavior in sex." Psychologists Blanchard and Marnasses declared that "even oral manipulations may come into sexual play activities." Thus not only did the whole path to marriage become more sexualized and eroticized in this period, but Americans engaged in a greater variety of sexual behaviors.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Age</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
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<td>6.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
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Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Older Generation</th>
<th>Younger Generation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>37.2%</td>
<td>48.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Intriguingly, Kinsey reveals, too, that men began their sexual lives at a younger age. As Tables 4 and 5 show, men petted to climax earlier. The increase in total petting experience shown in Table 4 seems particularly consistent—and significant. It seems to confirm that the hysteria of moralists in the 1920s was based on real changes in behavior. While these figures may be due in part to dietary/biological changes, yet, it is fascinating to note that they do suggest that the greater freedoms given youth were reflected in actual changes in sexual behavior.

Evidence of a greater variety of sexual behavior extended beyond heterosexual practices. Evidence suggests that men increasingly regarded formerly tabooed behaviors, masturbation and homosexuality, as sexual options, which further serves to illustrate the extent to which sexuality became more complex at this time. As I have shown in an earlier chapter, ideology about these sexual options was subtly changing. My qualitative
evidence of attitudes towards masturbation and homosexuality among youth confirms that, at this time, the cultural ideal was indeed altering towards making both homosexuality and masturbation more guilt-free, if hardly valued, alternatives.

Certainly men still worried about masturbation. Several young men confided to Judge Lindsey, for example, the extent to which masturbation was a concern for them. One young man who lived at the National Co-Operative Association in 1925 wrote that on account of past masturbation habits, he was "ashamed to look a girl in the face."20

Another young man desperately implored that he "would rather be an eunuch than continue this way. Oh, please help me."21 Almost as pathetically, a young man wrote from Phoenix, Arizona on December 20, 1926 that "ever since I was about ten years old I have abused myself--masturbation I think it's called. And many times I have tried to stop--by jumping under a cold shower."22 Yet others did not share such guilt feelings. One Cyrus H. Eshelman wrote to Lindsey on December 12, 1926 that the "practice is not harmful when practiced with restraint:

I know from twenty five years experience. I am married; we have one son who is away at college. I advise him to practice it when the appetite troubles him. I know that it does not weaken the enjoyment of intercourse with a woman and does not debase in any way. The supposed experts who advise to the contrary are liars, parasites who are exploiting the young people.23
Several of the early sex surveys sifted out attitudes towards masturbation. They suggest further the accuracy of my conclusions from the Lindsey letters. These sources illustrate the sheer terror that men felt if they practiced this "solitary vice." In Paul Strong Achilles' 1923 study of the effects of social hygiene literature, masturbation was far and away the biggest worry, even more so than fear of disease. In Peck and Wells' mid-1920s study of college men, only 7 percent indicated that they felt positive remorse over masturbation, although 19 percent admitted moral guilt. Only 25 percent felt no remorse at all, although for 50 percent, the physical effects of masturbation were a worry of some kind. In W.L. Hughes' 1922 study of 700 urban and rural boys in North Carolina, 74 percent said that they believed that the effects of masturbation were "bad." Gilbert Hamilton asked his one hundred married men whether masturbation had ever caused physical or mental injury. Twenty-two percent indicated that they felt it was "not injurious"; but 54 percent thought it was "mentally injurious." As these studies seem fairly consistent with one another, they confirm my conclusions from the Lindsey sample that masturbation was a worry for a large percentage of men, but many men were not bothered by it. This cannot be interpreted as indicating that a liberalizing of actual attitudes was occurring because comparisons with Victorian attitudes and practices are not available. Presumably even in the nineteenth century
there were men who were not affected by the rigid prescriptions of
ideology, but the later material indicates that the impact of ideology
was never so great as to be all-pervasive; and it is plausible that more
moderate attitudes towards masturbation were gaining ascendancy among the
middle class as they were doing in ideological artifacts.

Further, that this was the trend is illustrated by the intriguing
evidence provided by women journalists Dorothy Bromley and F. L.
Britten’s study of college men in the middle 1930s. Bromley and Britten
did not provide statistics on this subject but featured men commenting on
the perceived prevalence of masturbation in order to put across the
general attitude towards it. While “one man, apparently under the
‘delusion that masturbation was a perversion and that it might drive him
crazy,’ made extreme statements which left some question as to their
credibility,” several male interviewees referred to their own experiences
without embarrassment.28 Bromley and Britten emphasized their
observations that the old hysteria over auto-eroticism was dying by
ending their analysis with the statement that "modern medical thought is
fairly well agreed that whatever bad effects may result are largely due
to the individual’s sense of guilt."29 Evidence from the 1930s indeed
suggests the direction in which attitudes towards masturbation in the
1920s were headed. Masturbation, of course, had always been a choice,
but it was becoming more guilt-free, a more viable alternative behavior for American men.

Evidence of attitudes towards homoeroticism are less tentative. This is an important subject for discussion because, as I have discussed already, the pressure to be heterosexual was part of the increasing sexual demands on men. What kind of an impact did this attempt to define sexual boundaries have? Bromley and Britten argued that homoeroticism became a more widely-discussed subject about ten years before their study was published, i.e. about 1928. I have suggested earlier that discussion of homoeroticism was widely diffused among the American middle classes as the Freudian popularizers and the Haldeman-Julius sex manuals gained broad popularity. At present, there is little evidence beyond the anecdotal of actual attitudes towards homoeroticism outside of working-class groups. Gilbert Hamilton did ask his one hundred married men about their attitudes towards homoeroticism in the late 1920s. He wrote that "the majority of American adult males probably fear their own homosexual impulses more greatly than they fear all the other tabooed components of the human reactive equipment taken together," for Hamilton had clearly seen a tremendous amount of what we today call homophobia. But his conclusions belie a simplistic analysis. The prevalence of homoerotic activity among his respondents pre-figured Kinsey. Fifty six percent of the men he interviewed had had some kind of homoerotic
activity during their lives, while 17 percent had practiced after the age of eighteen. Yet this did not stop 75 percent of the men from stating that they unequivocally, even if they threw "aside all considerations of conscience" and "fear of public opinion," did not believe that any person of their own sex would "appeal . . . sexually." Further, 47 percent of the men stated that it made them "uncomfortable to have a person of their own sex put his arm about (him) or make other physical demonstrations." Others were more tolerant, however, in their views: 89 percent indicated that "to no extent" did "fear of perversion prevent (them) from getting close to men." Further, 37 percent indicated that they were not bothered by physical demonstrations of affection. These figures have to be treated with a great deal of caution, especially as the Hamilton sample is loaded towards theater people and as the sample was made up of couples whom he had been seeing at his psychiatric practice. Presumably such a group had had more opportunity to encounter homosexuals than other groups. Hence the extent—somewhat significant—to which they were not bothered may reflect this, since they are not an accurate sample of the broader population. However, as this survey is all we have, it suggests that in at least a kind of vanguard group there was reflected both accelerated homophobia as well as the incipient liberalism of the cultural ideal discussed earlier.
The only comparison that can be made to suggest the direction of the trend in attitudes towards homoeroticism comes from the Bromley and Britten survey conducted in the mid-1930s. Bromley and Britten noted that "over half of the men condemned the practice, some more severely than others." Some were horribly trenchant, one declaring "they should be hung," another that he would not even speak to "queers, pansies and fruits." But the rest were "variously tolerant," and "an enlightened ten percent considered homosexuality a matter of psychological adjustment." How "enlightened" this particular group was is debatable, but Bromley and Britten regarded their sample as "an object lesson in social change" with "thinking . . . clearly influenced by the new psychiatric humanitarianism stimulated by Freud."

Freud may indeed have actually liberalized attitudes towards homoeroticism, according to Bromley and Britten. These students' attitude was "live and let live." But not one of these men was prepared to admit that he had ever indulged in homoerotic practices. "For God's sake NO," one wrote and "Hell NO" and "What do you take us for?" However, Bromley and Britten praised these men as not sitting in judgment. They quoted some of the men's opinions. "Purely personal matter for those concerned . . . Don't approve for myself, but don't object to others." Some men, according to Bromley and Britten, had probably had their intolerance tempered by Freud: "Too bad for the guys
... An unfortunate social and family background is the cause." Some men indicated much stronger tolerance than mere psychologizing. One young man who was widely promiscuous with women even declared that it was "perfectly OK." Another young man declared that he was "disgusted impulsively by it, but have been able to rationalize myself to a tolerant attitude." 32

Though this study was completed later than 1930, it was only a mere six or seven years after the Hamilton study and does confirm his findings. Intolerance still predominated. The "discovery" of homosexuality really did create anxieties among middle-class heterosexual men. But equally as interesting are the roots of an incipient liberalism embedded in this qualitative material, reminiscent of working-class tolerance, and even suggesting homosexuality as an option for some men: Kinsey, of course, found that in his sample, 37 percent of men had had a homosexual experience to orgasm after puberty. This should not surprise us but it should warn us of the need for wariness regarding attitudes towards homosexuality as having been simplistic in the years before there was a "gay" movement. 33 Taboos in general were less great for men after 1920. Although it was taboos regarding heterosexual practices rather than homosexual ones which lessened first, the roots of homosexuality and masturbation as more tolerated choices for men were clearly laid in the 1920s. But we should be wary as to what this toleration and liberalism
actually entailed (and indeed still entails), especially as it was so
reminiscent of patterns in the dance-hall subculture. Certainly, in
part, it reflected for many men a liberated recognition of the
possibility of a healthful sexuality, whatever the object of desire. But
it also reflected the uncritical attitude of the men of the dance-hall
subculture that any means to orgasm was acceptable, whether in fact
psychologically healthful or not. That these behaviors grew as options
is anyway part of the developing, and recognizably modern, complexity and
uncertainty that developed around sexuality at this time.

The decline of Victorian structures and guidelines about sexuality
and the concomitant growing complexity and uncertainty in personal
relationships was perhaps best illustrated in the emerging heterosocial
"dating system," one of the most important legacies of the early
twentieth-century youth culture. Warren Susman has delineated how the
"culture of personality" stressed and valued "the performing self.\(^\text{34}\)
Above all else, the dating system, which by the 1920s had become the
dominant form of courtship in America, stressed "performance." The most
insightful analysis of this system at this time remains that of Willard
Waller, who in his classic 1937 article, "The Rating and Dating Complex,"
described the form that dating took among young people in the 1920s and
1930s as very different from the Victorian practice of calling.\(^\text{35}\)
Because dating was not immediately regarded as a first step on the route
to marriage, it demanded very different skills of men than had nineteenth
century courtship. In many ways, calling demanded "character" of men,
while dating demanded "personality." Waller’s description of what
constituted male success under this system is worth quoting in its
entirety:

Young men are desirable dates according to their
rating on the scale of campus values. In order to
have class A rating they must belong to one of the
better fraternities, be prominent in activities, have
a copious supply of spending money, be well dressed,
smooth in manner and appearance, have a good line,
dance well, and have access to an automobile.36

Waller has come under significant criticism in recent years. Michael
Gordon, in a 1981 article "Was Waller Ever Right?", has argued that
"going steady" was as prominent among girls and boys in the 1930s as was
"rating and dating."37 In other words, young men and women took each
other more seriously than Waller admitted. No doubt that was the case,
too, in the 1920s. The fact is, however, that despite Gordon’s caveats,
Waller was right about the values involved in the youth culture. The
initiation of any relationship increasingly turned on the
superficialities of the culture of "personality," which influenced
personal relations. "Performance" was of the essence.

Waller expanded, too, on the nature of the "performance" that was
required of young men. Dating was a competitive game in an even more
accentuated and accelerated way than Victorian courtship had been. To
meet the criterion for a valued male, according to Waller, one had to cultivate a "line." This "line" was a "conventionalized attempt on the part of the young man to convince the woman that he has already fallen in love with her . . . a sort of exaggeration sometimes a burlesque of coquetry."38 Not only was the "line" crucial in starting the relationship, it also was of importance to its continuation. It was vital to "invite the other to rapid sentiment formation—each encourages the other to fall in love by pretending that he has not already done so." The purposes of the game was to cause one or the other to "rise to the bait," that is, actually to fall in love.39 Waller emphasized "the principle of least interest" according to which he or she who was less interested in the continuation of the affair controlled the relationship.40 Continued use of the "line" could ensure for men that they got the upper hand. Further, "the line" guaranteed that the performance would continue throughout the relationship and, indeed, even into marriage.

No wonder young men aware of their need to perform and lacking guidance from other sources besides peer pressure turned to the artifacts of the "culture of personality" for inspiration, most notably to the movies and to personal advice columnists. The evidence for this is diverse and widespread. Most revealing is the evidence for the impact of the movies gathered in the late 1920s and early 1930s by Ohio State
University professor W.W. Charters and his associates. These studies offer astounding empirical evidence of the extent to which the movies influenced social relations in the United States. Their impact is an example of what Coughey has called "artificial social relations," that is, the identification with a person one has never met, such as a movie star, which in the age of mass media becomes an important part of a person's social experience.41 "Performance" involved literally performing as movie stars. Several young men in the study insisted that they took their cues from stars such as Rudolph Valentino and Douglas Fairbanks, Sr. One young man, a Jewish college student aged twenty, freely admitted that he wanted "to be Douglas Fairbanks Sr. or Tom Mix or William S. Hart this afternoon."42 A seventeen-year-old black high school student declared that "Douglas Fairbanks . . . seemed so carefree and light that he won nearly everyone with his personality." However, when he endeavored to "try some of my 'Doug's stuff' on one of my girlfriends," he knew he was awkward, and it proved more or less a flop."43 Similarly, a twenty-two-year-old white college junior looked to Valentino:

I studied his style. I realized that nature had done much less for me in the way of equipment than she had for the gorgeous Rodolfo, but I felt that he had a certain technique that it would behoove me to emulate. I practiced with little success. My nostrils refused to dilate--some muscular incompetency
that I couldn’t remedy. My eyes were incapable of shooting sparks of fiery passion that would render the fair sex helpless. I made only one concrete trial. The young lady who was trial horse for the attempt is still dubious about my mental stability. Worse yet, she made a report of the affairs to her friends. The comments that came drifting back to me left no doubt in my mind about the futility of carrying on any longer. I gave up.44

Such evidence suggests that the dating system caused men anxieties because, aware of the need to acquire skills and to “perform,” they were uncertain as to how to do so.

That this was the case is confirmed by the popularity of personal advice columnists such as Doris Blake in New York and Martha Carr in St. Louis. The new system promised success to a kind of man who would not have been respectable under the Victorian system. Many men who might have been successful in the nineteenth century now found themselves left out in the cold. One such young man, Jay, “not good-looking” but "somewhat athletic in appearance and called neat with a conservative taste for good clothes," could not find a date. He wrote that "I suppose I am overly civilized and with strong inhibitions but there you are. In five years I have not met as many girls with whom I could develop a friendship.”45 Another young man declared "I can’t get myself a girl. I am not much for parties and do not fancy dancing. What’s the trouble.”46

Success at dating required the learning of skills, and many young men just were not adept at acquiring them. One young man wrote in that
he liked a "certain girl and would like to know how I would ask her for a
date." Another declared that he "never had much to do with girls." The first date was a difficult time for a young man. "Anxious" wrote in
that he was "going to take a young lady out for the first time in my
life. What would you do to show her a good time?" Another man asked
Miss Blake, "On what subject should I talk when I take a girl out for the
evening?" Some men had difficulty even getting this far; men wrote in
explaining how they were "afraid to ask them out." For those who were
unafraid, the new emphasis on looks as central to the "performance"
caused embarrassment. "Heck" wrote in that he was "considered tall and
good-looking. I have a lady friend who keeps raving about my looks. It
embarrasses me. Should I correct her?" No wonder Miss Blake commented
that "male beauty can be an out and out handicap" for young men such as
"Heck" who were uncomfortable with their looks. Male anxieties about
how to get a date set the tone for the larger implications for men of the
emergent dating system. Characteristically, Waller believed the system
involved mutual exploitation for the attainment of "thrills" rather than
any kind of long-term commitment. Waller has been justly criticized for
being too "cynical" about dating. The emphasis on "thrills," for
example, did not preclude the possibility of long-term commitment as he
suggests; and long-term commitment was probably an ultimate goal even if
only in the back of the daters' minds. However, the stress on "thrills,"
by helping to eroticize the path to marriage, injected into pre-marital relationships a heavy responsibility on men. What kind of "thrills" were acceptable under the new system?

The Blumer and Peterson studies of how the movies affected conduct (which were part of the Charters' series) especially reveal just how influential the movies were in informing doubting young men exactly how to "perform" on a date. The movies helped establish "kissing" as an essential "thrill." A twenty-two-year old white college junior insisted that "in this matter of the technique of love-making I have been more influenced by the movies than by any other factor."55 Revealingly, this young man considered that "without it (the movie's influence) . . . I would have been an unbearable prude; with it I was encouraged into indiscretions which I have later come to regret. On the whole, I think it was an evil but as with most evils it was not unmixed with elements of good."56 The movies were a clear catalyst in accelerating the erotic pace and helping to define sexual boundaries. One young man declared that "I found that I, the pure virgin, actually conceived of the idea of kissing a girl, and actually enjoying it, too."57 Such men freely admitted that "ideas about kissing definitely came from the movies."58 Thus, a white Jewish college sophomore admitted that the movies caused him to "want to kiss and fondle any young lady that happens to be with me" and that his technique was so good on seeing his heroes that on
leaving the cinema he was often "successful in attentions that at other
times would have been taboo."⁵⁹ Noted expert on adolescence J.L.
Richmond observed how the movies "inflamed the boy's imagination."⁶⁰
Just as they altered and defined what constituted an attractive man in
the "culture of personality," the movies also set the pace for the new
emphasis on performance in dating. They helped to eroticize leisure by
expanding boundaries for the social relations between the sexes. The
movies were a central resource for the mores of the peer-led youth
culture. They could determine that at least kissing was an acceptable
"thrill" on a date. Indeed, they helped establish it as an essential
part of the "performance."

Petting, however, was another matter. The question of how to pet,
when to pet, even, "why they pet" was one which was constantly discussed
in the 1920s, reflecting the deep concerns the issue aroused at the
time.⁶¹ One of the characteristics of the "flapper" that was oft-quoted
was her willingness to pet. Yet the flapper who petted represented a
departure in clouding the distinction between a "good" and a "bad" woman;
she was prepared to go some of the way, but not perhaps all the way. Or
perhaps she was? The question of how far it was appropriate to go was
one which became central for men in the 1920s. What should be the nature
of the "performance'? Dating, as an institution did not incorporate a
means for a "good" woman to have sexual intercourse because of its
emphasis on sexual expressiveness rather than on "romantic love." As women were encouraged to be more sexually-expressive under the dating system, for men the distinction between a "good" and a "bad" woman became more and more blurred as young people claimed time for one another even in the early stages of courtship, long before a relationship could be firmly established. When was it appropriate to become sexually expressive? And how far was it appropriate to go? Was it all right for a "good" woman to pet? What were the sexual boundaries in the world of dating? They were no longer as clearcut as they were in Victorian society. To be sure, sex among engaged couples represented less of a contrast from Victorian mores and therefore less of a problem, but even this caused doubt because the lines between what constituted a "dating" relationship, "going steady" or "engagement" were not clearly drawn as the private world of nineteenth-century courtship was replaced by the public twentieth-century dating system.

This change entailed several kinds of difficulties for men. Once the dating system took hold, it became harder for men, themselves, to be "good," that is to conform to the single-standard of the Christian Gentleman, the "athlete of continence." For, unlike in the dance-hall subculture, in the middle class there were many men, who, like Victorians, were quite clear that chastity was an ideal. For these men, petting was unacceptable. Young men constantly wrote to Lindsey and the
personal advice columnists lamenting how hard it was to remain pure. If the men and the feminist New Women tried with differing degrees of success to overcome a socialization that demanded purity, evidence suggests that middle-class youths not only felt the demand for purity and for a single standard but accepted it readily. Victorianism lived on among youth. A young man wrote to Judge Lindsey of his father’s advice to him that he should "never indulge in sex relations until I married" and how glad he was that he had not. Another young man declared that "the thought of sex intimacy except as an expression of love . . . is obnoxious to me, not taking into account the dangers of vital venereal disease." To such men as these, flappers elicited nothing but contempt: 

The made-up flapper conjured up images of prostitutes and evoked the appropriate moral revulsion from some men. A country boy coming to the city wrote in to Doris Blake saying that he had heard "many stories about the girls and women of big cities--stories that have made me fear the acquaintance of any city girl." These stories actually caused this young man to avoid speaking to the women he worked with in his office for
fear that they might be "bad" women. Another young man wrote in to Doris Blake of his efforts to maintain his high ideals despite the peer pressure which drove him to behave to the contrary. "Every one of my friends," he wrote in, "tells me I'm a sissy . . . but no one has ever convinced me to the extent of making me indulge in their so-called fun." Men emphasized purity too in letters they wrote to Judge Lindsey. Typical was one young man who prayed that "God will give me strength to resist the temptation of which so far I am master." The double standard was an affront to these men, one commenting that "I don't need a girl who can gratify my passion and don't intend to until I can master it myself and be a fit subject to ask for it in the legal bonds of matrimony." Another young man noted that he seemed to be "able to control my sexual desires better when I am alone until I see some shapely woman, who happens to appeal to me in a sexual way and then it is much harder for me." This same fellow went on to declare that "This is especially so where the woman is scantily and gaudily dressed." One man chided Lindsey for "underestimating the extent to which people these days are over-sexed . . . they should think less about the subject." It was hard to maintain purity for those who were certain that they wanted to be celibate before marriage. And it was becoming harder as fewer and fewer people believed in chastity as an ideal. Confirming this
observation, among Read Bain’s sample of college men, only 3.3 percent in 1934 believed that sex was "dirty," while in 1928, 28.3 percent had believed it to be so.\textsuperscript{72} Further 33.4 percent of the older generation in the Kinsey sample said that they had lacked the opportunity for sex, while among the younger generation, 51.4 percent indicated that they had had opportunities.\textsuperscript{73}

It was clearly becoming more difficult to be pure. The sexual demands that made it so hard to maintain purity steadily withered away men's actual need to be so. In the Kinsey sample, of those with some college education, 76.2 percent of those aged 46+ at the time of interview believed in purity before marriage, while of those aged from adolescence to twenty-five, only 62.5 percent believed in it.\textsuperscript{74} Clearly, those who believed in purity were on the decline. Still, the fact that they were in the majority indicates the continuing strength of chastity as an ideal.

The dominant theme of the period was, however, uncertainty, especially because standards declined more slowly than practice. A variety of sources show the lack of clarity and the confusion at the time. Young men commented on the "many codes" available to them in the 1920s.\textsuperscript{75} A YMCA pamphlet, The Sex Life of Youth, declared that "The question for all thoughtful youth . . . is what type and degree of physical-emotional intimacy, if any, is advisable before the more
definite mutual commitment of one man and one woman to each other in
engagement."76

Multifarious social commentators observed the confusion over
changing mores. Theodore Newcomb discussed these contradictions:

'It is expected by both boys and girls that men should
prefer virginity in girls, but don't insist; 'Boys do
not expect nor particularly want the Victorian
conception of purity in the girl they marry;' 'it is
right and decent to have intimate relations with the
person you love, but you mustn’t be promiscuous--
that's cheap and vulgar.'77

Indeed, writing in the mid 1930s, he concluded that all the codes were
only united by an aversion "to pre-marital infidelity and pre-marital
promiscuity."78 In Middletown, the Lynds noted in 1925 that there was
"still a heavy taboo on sex relations before marriage."79 But by 1937,
they noted that "the range of choices is wider, causing confusion."80
Ultimately, Newcomb declared: "If there is a typical attitude of college
youth today, it is presumably one of conflict between codes which diverge
in greater or lesser degree in respect to the point beyond which one may
not go."81 The evidence shows that Newcomb was right.

The options and choices around petting, especially, increasingly
blurred the definitions of acceptable behavior for men. YMCA director
Clarence Robinson, with the insights of years of experience, captured the
dilemma of young American men:
The old advice used to be 'Treat every girl as you would want some other man or boy to treat your mother or sister.' And that was good advice. But translate it into a concrete situation. Five or six boys and girls are speeding along in a motor boat or an automobile, the night is splendid with glistening moon and tiny diamond like stars way up there in the blue sky . . . A question of conduct arises in a boy's mind . . . Someone is putting popcorn down his back just at the moment of decision and it is exceedingly difficult to deal with sticky popcorn, a pretty girl and an ethical problem all in a minute. Usually what happens is that the boy tends to the popcorn, also the girl, but the solution of the ethical problem goes a-glimmering.  

Robinson continued that "What he needs is a settled attitude toward all girls, sufficiently vital and chivalrous to grip him and direct his conduct in moments of wild hilarity or sudden desire."  

It was precisely this sense of structure which was lacking in the 1920s. Yet the evidence is strong that it was structure that men craved. With this in mind, Ira Wile called for "strong distinctions to be made in petting because erotic activity may or may not have coitus as a goal." Any and every level of petting could present problems. One young man wrote in to Doris Blake that, "One night I felt there was no harm in kissing a girl I know goodnight, which I did. The next morning she refused to speak to me." But kissing and hugging could lead to further stages of petting and all too easily to the still usually tabooed intercourse:
When we kissed and hugged a lot, I would become so
aroused as to forget my restraint and my unselfish
desire to help her and selfishly go as far as I
could. Just before we got to the point of intercourse
I again caught hold of myself and stopped seeing her
so frequently and avoided intimacy.86

Horace L. Herpes wrote in from Clarendon, Texas to Lindsey asking advice
as to whether having gained his girlfriend’s confidence and love—"Should
we hug and kiss now? Or will it endanger our manhood and womanhood?"87

Defining the appropriate sexual boundaries was a matter of great
importance for young men because the old double-standard lived on: it
was acceptable for many men to defile a "bad" woman but was unacceptable,
indeed, a very affront to manliness, to defile a "good" woman. Promises
to maintain purity were as nothing compared to the guilt which young men
felt once they broke their promise. Young men feared they had committed
a grave sin. One Donald J. Nicholson declared that he "had been fighting
all those years and was very proud of my record. I went with her, but I
felt ashamed later, for I had broken a resolution."88 Strongest was the
fear of defiling a good woman: "Dear God. that I had to do this to her
alone ... she of all girls whom I cared for alone, she who had been so
pure and sweet--blasted by my own damned uncontrollable passion."89

The question of how far the girl had gone before became a crucial
one, because men again and again were clear that they still wanted to
marry "good" girls. And the girl who had gone all the way before lost
credentials as a future wife. One young man wrote in to Judge Lindsey
that he was "looking for a nice girl that wants and will make a nice home, not any flirts."90  "I know 'em" wrote to Martha Carr that he was certain that many of the flappers were really "all just nice girls who want, some day, to marry and settle down."91  But not all men were as confident. According to the Kinsey survey of generational attitudes, the number of men who wanted to marry virgins actually increased from 41.6 percent of the 46+ group to 50.7 percent of those aged between adolescence and twenty five at the time of interview.92  Men were concerned as to whether their wives might not be virgins. In a mid-1930s study, 38 percent of college youth still insisted that sex before marriage was wrong. A young man wrote Lindsey from New York that ". . . in all this time I have not dared ask her as to her physical standing, and neither have I told her as to mine and all that, but I would like to know frankly just what is what."93  This young man admitted that he at least expected chastity of himself, but that he could not expect the same necessarily from a future wife was something genuinely new and confusing.

Most men, though, still held to the double standard. Katz and Allport's 1930 study of student attitudes found that men were much more concerned about women's indiscretions than their own.94  JN declared that:

Most codes are that a fellow will not if he knows it seduce a virgin, but any advances on their part will be accepted. But the sad part with most boys is, that if a good girl permits this, he thinks she has
conducted herself the same as when this is not the case and they will not believe her.95

In other words, if a girl petted with a man, he would assume that she had done it and more with other men and was perhaps not really suitable marriage material. But still, as the "many codes" increasingly showed a trend towards greater liberalism, so too did the double standard seem to be waning. In a Fortune magazine survey in 1937, one tenth of men interviewed considered intercourse all right for men only and a quarter to be all right for both men and women.96 The 1930 Katz and Allport study of undergraduate adjustment found that half of the men and 69 percent of the women agreed that "there are no acts which are worse for a woman than for a man."97 But the study found men to have "a keener consciousness of moral propriety when contemplating the behavior of women than when judging themselves."98 Yet males were confused. For no clearly defined New Man emerged to accompany the New Woman. Men were not able to imagine a new way of behaving in the new heterosocial world.

Clearly, men in the early twentieth century were ill-prepared for the revolution in morals. The breakdown of the rigid Victorian structures and therefore of the relative clarity as to what was right and wrong was a major problem for many of them. The greater choices available to men undermined older structures and resulted in confusion and uncertainty. But, perhaps most significant, the dating system gave
free rein to every "cad," "Shiek," and "bounder," not to say "masher,"
who sought his way. The dating system suited men for whom
gentlemanliness towards even a middle-class woman was unimportant, as it
made it harder for men to be "good." For such men the underworld
primitive ethos could now be given free rein with women of their own
class. For them the question of how far the flapper would go—would this
one "go all the way" or would she not?—became as in the dance-hall
subculture, a means of confirming manliness. Men validated themselves by
the number of their conquests, by indeed counting orgasms. The dating
system freed men to seek simple "thrills" with as many women of their own
class as they fancied. One young lady wrote in that she had "been going
with a young man who talks about nothing other than the girls with whom
he goes out." A girl complained to Doris Blake that her boyfriend was
"always telling me he loves me, but when we go out together he's always
talking about taking my girlfriend out." Another woman complained
that her boyfriend "has informed me that he has been going around with
other girls and wants me to do the same with other fellows, which I
refuse to do." Women wrote in to Martha Carr of male braggadocio on
this subject, declaring that dates with such men as these involved
chatter about their cars, dates, good times, etc. For example, one girl
wrote in of her boyfriend that he "talks constantly of his numerous girls
and how the girls all fall for him. I just can't get him off the
subject."¹⁰² Even when a man and woman had a steady relationship, the man might still flirt with other girls. Men took full advantage of the power that the dating system gave them. One defeated young lady introduced her "girlfriend to my boyfriend and he liked her. He left me and went with her."¹⁰³

Men had more choice than they could handle. One young man wrote in to say that he had "met two girls who are very close friends. They resemble each other in many ways. One of them is my friend's sister. I like both of them alike. Who should I go out with?"¹⁰⁴ Undoubtedly, the moving of courtship into the public sphere accentuated male power enormously. Men revelled in the opportunities for abuse of that power which the system gave them.

Nowhere is this more clear than in the use of language. Among the nineteenth century middle classes, men talked of middle-class women with the utmost respect and deference.¹⁰⁵ It was simply not respectable to do otherwise. But as middle-class women began to become more sexually available, men began to talk of them in ways they had talked previously of only working-class women or of prostitutes. The journal *West Side Men*, written and published by the New York West Side YMCA, is a rich source for male braggadocio about dating and the extent to which success in dating gave a man value with other men. Here country boys were
introduced to the wild ways of the city. Discussing an imminent dance, a
writer declared:

> Bring your favorite skirt with you . . . wife, sweetie, friend, acquaintance, or the other bloke's
girl. If you're a poor bum and you can't get a
chicken, remember you're coming to a pilot's affair.\(^\text{106}\)

In a questionnaire distributed in the once sedate and moralistic
YMCA, only four of a hundred men said there was any need for "more talk
about drinking parties and experience with wild women," so ubiquitous was
this kind of behavior.\(^\text{107}\) Men running the YMCA desperately tried to
improve manners, but it was a losing battle. Left to their own devices,
dorm writers described movie starlets to their friends as "beautiful but
dumb."\(^\text{108}\) They cheekily wrote of the "it" girl who had "wiles highly
developed for a collegiate."\(^\text{109}\)

Never before had such talk been so public. A girl (understandably)
"worried" wrote in to Doris Blake complaining that her boyfriend
"embarrasses me with smutty remarks."\(^\text{110}\) In Percy Marks' descriptive
*Plastic Age*, young college men gathered together to discuss their motives
for talking dirty as they had been doing to their "dates." On being
accused of being lewder than the others, one young man yelled: "Go to
hell. I'm no dirtier than anybody else . . . I admit I chase around with
rats but the rest of you do it on the sly. I'm no hypocrite."\(^\text{111}\) The
eminent Jungian psychologist Beatrice Hinkle noted that "when young men
are gathered together in easy familiarity. ... sexuality still dominates the minds of men even though its expression is so largely confined to the jocose and the obscene."¹¹² Victorian middle-class men undoubtedly indulged in such banter, but what was different now was the greater respectability of talking in such a way to middle-class women, as well as the public nature of such discourse. This was widely commented on at the time. One young man admitted frankly to Ira Wile of "the rough sort of attitude you need to take to the girls of [this] hard-boiled generation."¹¹³ Wile noted, too, how sex was "an open subject of discussion even among mixed groups."¹¹⁴ Psychologists Stoke and West, in their examination of the conversational interests of college students, noted how sex was the "greatest interest."¹¹⁵ Similarly, Walter Buck, in his study of differences in college student attitudes between 1923 and 1933, concluded that words with a "sex connotation" were less disapproved of generally, as was slang by a significant factor.¹¹⁶ While discussion of sex itself did not necessarily involve use of unclean language, seen in its context in the 1920s, especially as a heterosocial activity, it was daring indeed.

Men further accentuated their power. But the new freedom offered in the youth culture liberated them to abuse that power beyond mere use of language—in actual relations with women. What was to stop them? The reduction of the power of sanctions left men to their own vagaries and
moods. As the barriers and controls around male sexuality broke down, so men behaved in more sexually-expressive and impulsive ways. The dating system gave encouragement for them to behave so. Increasingly, as earlier among the lower classes, men came to expect that the money they spent on a date entitled them to a "thrill" in return. And they were affronted when women would not grant them their desires. "Frank" advised that he "gave a girl a good time but when I ask for a kiss she refuses. Don’t I deserve at least one?"\footnote{117} It was becoming ever more difficult for women not to pet, if they would rather not. Doris Blake in 1926 presented what she called a typical letter from a girl and her friend who declared "We are non-petters. So far we have upheld our views but we are becoming desperate. Every young man we have met so far we have found to be inclined toward petting."\footnote{118} Another girl quoted by Blanchard and Manasses complained that she "was not popular" for she had "yet to find (a man) who does not want a girl to pet the first time he meets her."\footnote{119} Another girl asked Doris Blake why she could not get dates--"I never kiss a boy--is that why?"\footnote{120} If women were not prepared to indulge men’s need for thrills, they had to suffer the consequences. One "Pat" confessed unashamedly that he had taken a girl out twice but that "the last time I was with her, I kissed her by force," even though he "esteemed her above any other girls."\footnote{121} One G.W. Lindsley wrote to Judge Lindsey of his experience with one girl ". . . I asked her to kiss me goodnight and she
refused in such an unnecessary way that I tried to force her to. I'm afraid it was pretty vulgar for she tried to resist me."122

There can be no question that, by driving courtship into the male world, the dating system accelerated and accentuated male power. The Victorian system of morality was designed precisely to provide a rigid structure of mores that tried to prevent, however imperfectly, male sexual exploitation of women. The precarious, relatively fluid and free-floating strictures of peer mores that replaced this system by the 1920s looked to the "culture of personality" to set its pace, which meant much less control of sexuality in general and of male sexuality in particular. It was a field-day for the least savory males who now could indulge their shallows selves all the more easily with women of their own class. Not merely did middle-class male behavior towards middle-class women become like that of the men of the working-class heterosocial dance-hall subculture, but so did mores. As eminent surveyor of campus habits, Eleanor Wembridge, commented perceptively, if perhaps a little patronizingly: "The sex manners of the large majority of uncultivated and uncritical people have become the manners for all."123

As male confusion abounded, male resentment accelerated. Dating was expensive. "John" wrote in to Doris Blake that "a certain young lady who accepts my gifts has a habit of disappointing me on the night of a date. Should I continue to go with her?"124 Martha Carr published a letter
from one "I Hatem" who declared that "Girls simply can't play fair.
Their creed seems to be not 'Give and take' but 'Always take' never
'Give.'"125 This letter touched nerves, and a debate ensued. One young
man wrote in a couple of weeks later that, with reference to "I Hatem's
item in your column I agree with him precisely so far as city girls go.
They are all gold-diggers and deceivers."126 The "gold-digger" became a
generic term for a woman who demanded a good time but gave nothing in
return. Doris Blake frequently warned men that they were dating
"gold-diggers" and to avoid them. The YMCA men constantly complained of
them:

2m. surplus flappers
   Both in and out of school
   Are turning fellows nappers
   But throughout it all I'm cool.
All through this year I'll ban 'em
And to overtures say no
For a surplus Eve per annum
   Needs more than surplus dough.127

As in the dance-hall subculture, men referred to women as
"gold-diggers" when they could not get from them what they wanted. If
some men regarded women as "gold-diggers" who were not prepared to offer
them "thrills" as payment for the cost of a date, other men increasingly
complained that they had been forced to abandon dating altogether because
of the "too high cost of courting."128 One young man who wisely chose to
remain anonymous wrote in the American magazine in September, 1924, that
he had spent $5000 on courting in the previous five years; in comparison, his parents had spent $300 on their entire courtship, marriage and honeymoon. Yet, despite the expense, he had still "not met a girl who cared if I made much of myself or little: "There is a point at which any commodity--even such a delightful commodity as feminine companionship--costs more than it is worth. In my life, that point has been reached and PASSED."129 This young man went on to declare a "one man buyer's strike" until the situation improved.130 Several young men wrote in to Martha Carr or to Doris Blake on the same theme, although no other had the spirit publicly to declare a "buyer's strike." Much like the author of the American article, one young man, "Iconclast," wrote in to Miss Blake of the financial demands on men, declaring, "nowadays when a young man is in love it is necessary for him to shower his sweetie with gifts of candy, flowers, theater tickets, jewelry, taxi rides and the like."131 It got worse once the engagement started, he continued; then the "spending orgy" really began.132 Another young man wrote that his girlfriend had been used to "good times" when taken out by her other boyfriends. Rather desperately, he asked "Do you think that she would enjoy herself with me if she went with me to less expensive places?"133 One young man wrote in to Martha Carr that he "hadn't much money to spend, but I do manage to scrape up enough."134 Yet the girl he was dating had a mother who preferred a richer man. Although having easier
access to money was the foundation of male power, clearly this power did not come without its problems. A chagrined girl wrote in to Doris Blake that her boyfriend had been forced to abandon her after "he explained that it will be a year before he can take me to any place of amusement."135 Men found that the demands made by the New Woman were not merely sexual, but financial as well.

Without dating, however, there could be no marriage. Men in the 1920s complained that they quite simply could no longer afford to get married. Commentators such as Robert Wiebe and T.J. Jackson Lears have noted the wide abundance of consumer goods, which created greater material expectations. At the same time, the position of the middle class became more precarious as the clerical workers and bureaucrats of the "new middle class" replaced the self-employed entrepreneur of the Victorian middle class.136 Material goods had great symbolic value for this class because they sensed they had less control over their destinies and thus were more afraid of losing class status than Victorians had been. The contemporary YMCA writers Grace Elliot and Harry Bone captured the dilemma of young couples very well:

A stereotyped idea especially among young men is that a man should be able to take care of his wife in the manner she is used to. In a majority of cases this will require postponement of marriage. Unfortunately, there is a widespread feeling that it is somewhat disgraceful to live on a restrained budget or to start a new home without all the comforts and advantages which a well-established couple are able to afford.137
The New Woman or "modern girl" was simply too financially demanding for men. One man wrote in to an advice columnist to complain that his girlfriend insisted upon marrying him although "I cannot see my way clear on $15 a week." One young lady hesitated to marry a young man because he could not "support a wife on $25 a week." This attitude was not helped by the advice columnists, especially Doris Blake, who frequently insisted that young men in such a predicament should "advance your career" or "raise your salary." A college fellow, on being asked if he ever thought of marrying, declared:

Get married. Why I can't even afford to go with any of the sort of girls with whom I would wish to associate... I can't afford to even see them. I am making only $40 a week. If I took a girl to the theater she would have to sit in the gallery, and if we went to supper afterward, it would be at a soda counter and if we rode home it would be in the street cars.

This could hardly have helped the poor man whose fiancé broke their engagement because he was "making only $20 a week." She declared that she wouldn't "marry a man making less than $35."

No wonder young men regularly used the term "gold-digger," not merely to refer to women who refused to offer them thrills on a date, but as a generic term for the perceived calculation of the modern girl. Typical of this genre and attitude was a "young man" who wrote in to Martha Carr:
I think the modern woman is too calculating. If she is a young girl with an eye to matrimony she coolly sits down and figures it out. What am I going to get? Where will I have to live? Can we afford a car? Will I have to cook? Does his mother have to live with us? Can we keep up to a certain set?  

So serious was the perceived problem that magazines held elaborate symposiums on "Why Men Won't Marry the New Woman". Endemic were complaints that the New Woman was "only looking for a good thing." One man insisted that while he was prepared to be a "good provider," he wondered whether the "modern girl" would be a "partner or a parasite." There were too many women who wanted to "eat their cake and have it too." If "physically they are attractive," said a thirty-four-year-old bachelor, "in all other ways I find them superficial, selfish, conceited or uninteresting." When women's expectations of marriage were so great, "no wonder we men hesitate," said another man. Few of the young men were as generous as the one who declared that the modern girl has "loads of common sense and I really do not doubt that she will gradually settle down and make a good wife." But, despite his optimism, he recognized that "the modern man isn't so sure." If men reared as Christian Gentlemen did not know what to expect sexually from the New Woman, they did not know what to expect in other areas either. This made men hesitate to marry.  

Male unwillingness to marry and their resentment over the financial demands of the New Woman was reflected, too, in the 1920s cult of
singleness. Marriage manuals appeared with titles such as "How to be Happy though Married." Bernarr Macfadden joined in the fray by publishing titles in True Story like "Under Sentence of Marriage." Men openly declared that they preferred the company of other men, one declaring that "Women have nothing to offer that he cannot obtain from a man." William Johnson, in an article in Collier’s, declared that "the general opinion seems to be that the young men of today do not wish to marry." He interviewed a Greenwich Village playwright by the name of Avery Hopwood who proclaimed:

Living conditions today are entirely favorable for the bachelor. He can be quite comfortable. If he possesses enough of this world's goods he can be just as comfortable as if he were married. The idea that a bachelor cannot get good food and service is a myth. I have seen several friends whose houses were run much better before they were married than they have been since.

A "Happy Bachelor" declared to Martha Carr that the modern girl was simply "cheap." Magazine articles revelled in the "joys of single blessedness" with renewed vigor. If a young man remained free, he could "take a blonde to dinner in a Bohemian restaurant." He could dance "on a table with her" and he could "vamp three other women." On Saturday he could dance "with all the debutantes and young married women at the country club." Bachelordom freed men from the commitments of marriage and the demands of the New Woman: to assuage loneliness, one might get
oneself "a female Mexican jumping jelly bean" (an abusive term for a "flapper"), declared Theodore Pratt in the New Yorker. Jungian analyst Beatrice Hinkle commented in Harper's in 1925 on this subject. She declared that "the disinclination of men toward marriage is not a recent development." Nevertheless, while "their former attitude was more of an egoistic unwillingness to give up the pleasures of bachelor freedom or to assume the responsibility and obligations of a family," the situation now was different, "frankly one of fear and uncertainty regarding women." Thus in a more articulate, more refined way, men of the middle class responded to the New Woman much as men of the working class did; that is, by hesitating to commit to marriage because of the perceived uncertainties of her behavior.

The American experience of marriage also was in transition, however. Marital expectations were directly relevant to the path to marriage and informed that experience. The moral revolution that affected dating also affected marriage, and married men were faced with confusion, uncertainties and anxieties as the trend towards egalitarianism and the undermining of patriarchal structures continued and as the urge to sexual fulfilment came to play a much greater role in marriage. It was under these circumstances that, as the male role in marriage became more democratic and sexual, "performance" was demanded,
and the explorations of the men and the feminist New Women were diffused
to a broader population—with similar uncertainties. For men reared as
Christian Gentlemen, such change demanded some adjustment.

One landmark was Lindsey’s book, *The Companionate Marriage*, which,
despite disclaimers to the contrary, advocated trial marriage, which he
called "companionate marriage." With the aid of birth control, the
arrival of children could be delayed so that the married couple could
determine their compatibility and, if necessary, obtain an easy divorce
should they decide they were incompatible. This approach to marriage was
not, for Lindsey, the same as "trial marriage." Lindsey insisted that
"companionate marriage. . .stoutly proposes to overcome ". . .the
awareness that "there is at least a possibility of failure ahead. . ."
which he insisted made companionate marriage different from trial
marriage. But Lindsey failed to realize that without the rigid and
rigorous codes that had existed before, trial marriage was all that
companionate marriage amounted to.

Lindsey’s concept of companionate marriage did not reflect either
the ideology or the reality of marriage in the 1920s, hence the
controversy it stirred. But Lindsey’s ideas are important because they
represent in their most accentuated form the trend and direction of
marriage in the period—towards easier divorce, a greater emphasis on
sex, and towards more democratic roles for men and women. Lindsey well
understood that marriage was simply becoming a less momentous event, while other advocates of "companionate marriage" such as the Chicago sociologists discussed the same trends but did not advocate trial marriage. In 1924, there was one divorce for every 6.9 marriages, as compared to one for every 17.1 marriages in 1890. As the Lynds put it in *Middletown in Transition*: "Marriage need not be final since divorce is no longer a serious disgrace."  

The cultural demands for sex expression in marriage had impact. Kinsey's evidence does not suggest that men were having more sex in marriage; his figures for total intercourse among the generations reveal no statistically significant differences. But couples continued the more esoteric practices they had begun before marriage. Among Kinsey's generational sample of those 46+ at the time of the interview, 41.4 percent of men practiced cunnilingus, while among those aged 26-45 at interview, 49.6 percent practiced it in marriage (13+ educational level). As regards fellatio, among the 46+ age group, 36.3 percent were fellated, while 45.5 percent of the 26-45 age group were fellated. All the same, most sex surveys conducted in the 1920s do not reveal these practices as widespread but of Hamilton's men, 20 percent varied their practices with fellatio, while 22 percent practiced cunnilingus, confirming that more esoteric sexual behaviors were not rare.
Terman provided further intriguing evidence of the impact of the cultural demands for sex expression in marriage. He suggested that:

the fault of excessive modesty is rapidly disappearing among women of the populations sampled by our group. The proportion of husbands reporting the wife to be overmodest or prudish decreased from 21.9% for husbands born before 1890 to 12.3% for those born after 1909.  

Again, this offers confirmation of the actual realization of increasing sexual demands. Even more suggestive, though, is the fact that men actually spent longer in performing the sex act. The amount of time spent having sex itself increased by around 30% from those born before 1880 to those born after 1905. This Terman himself equated with "the effects upon young people themselves of the widely popular literature dealing with sex technique." Further confirming this, Elaine Tyler May has found in her study of marriage and divorce in California that greater expectations of sexual felicity entered into people's conception of what made a successful marriage.

Many commentators also noted how the male role in marriage became more democratic. Instead of the Victorian family, held together by the often tyrannical dominance of the patriarch, Ernest Burgess stressed that the family was merely a "unity of interacting personalities." For men this meant abdication of some of the dominance they had traditionally enjoyed: "Why is it that the father who in the country was the center of
all the activities of the family, economic and cultural, is seen in many city homes to be reduced to the negative role of saying no to the other members of the family."166 Further, what the Chicago sociologists called "companionate marriage" was also a stop on the way to a greater egalitarianism. Thus, for Burgess’ student Ernest Mowrer, the trend of marriage was towards more careers for wives. In the future, he declared, the role of the wife will be characterized by a more widespread acceptance of the position realized in not a few experiences at the present time. She will find employment in some sort of vocation which is as interesting to her as her husband’s is to him.167

This would lead to a marriage on a "more equal basis."168 Pioneer marriage counselor Ernest Groves was even more unequivocal, writing that "the war changed the old idea that women’s place is in the home. Today women’s place is in the world side by side with the men."169

This trend away from patriarchy in marriage, as Margaret Marsh has recently shown, lay deep in the nineteenth century in the roots of the "new middle class." By 1912, a less patriarchal, more egalitarian form, which Margaret Marsh has called "masculine domesticity," was clearly visible in large sections of the population.170 This entailed male involvement in, rather than aloofness from, their families as men became "more nurturing and companionable."171 As Ernest Groves put it:

In spite of the fact that the mother must ordinarily be chiefly concerned with the care of her infant, it
is a mistake for the father not to take a serious
interest in the new household program if he has any
opportunity to share actively for caring of infant. 172

By the late 1920s, people other than the Greenwich Village Bohemians and
the men married to feminist New Women experimented with sex roles.
Companionate marriage was therefore only one step on the route to more
feminist roles for men and women. Many articles appeared about role
experimentation within marriage. Few men were as amenable to the changes
as "the 50/50 husband," writing in the Women's Home Companion in April,
1928, who discussed his attempts to divide up household duties equally
with his wife. "Yes," he wrote, "it seems to me that a 50/50 husband's
great reward lies in being married to a woman who because she has found a
satisfactory channel of self-expression is a well-balanced person." 173
Yet even this man declared that "I could not allow her to pay a waiter
when I am with her any more than I could allow her to open the door for
me and let me pass out ahead." And he continued that sometimes he
wished all the while that a wife in a gingham apron was doing the
job." 174

In contrast, the writers of "We Both Have Jobs" abandoned the
project altogether because, ultimately, the man saw housework as the
woman's responsibility. As they put it, "Jerry, good progressive though
he was, fell instinctively into the attitude by which the work of the
world has been done to date—the attitude that it is of first
importance." For Jerry, "the instinct was strong to be what his father
had been--sole provider for the family." 175 Other articles commented and
expanded on some of the problems of women's working. Good Housekeeping
in 1926 ran an article on whether or not husbands should do housework,
comparing the Jones family, "who were in order," and where only men
worked, with the Brown family, in which women worked and whose home was
therefore "in pure chaos." The article did, however, at least, conclude
that men "SHOULD do housework." 176

These symptomatic articles reflected the novelty of such
experimentation. The order of the day was uncertainty and transition.
In fact, in the 1920s there were several surveys that provide evidence of
what the implications were for those men in the middle classes who
followed the lead of the men and the feminist New Woman in abandoning
more patriarchal roles. In Virginia McMakin Collier's study of one
hundred couples involved in what were called "career marriages," in which
both the husband and wife worked, eighty-six out of a hundred men were
favorable to their wives' careers. Twenty-six of these men were
enthusiastic. Fifty-six of the husbands would do one or many of the
following chores: "help prepare the dinner, set the table, wash dishes,
give the baby his early morning bottle, start breakfast while the mother
does the ironing . . ." Not everyone was as lucky as one woman whose
"boys are always shooing me out of the kitchen." Of the fourteen men left, only one was definitely opposed and two more were "indifferent." On the other hand, Lorine Pruette's study of three hundred men who applied at a commercial employment office (i.e., men of a much lower social scale) came to very different conclusions. Two hundred and four regarded it as desirable that married women should stay at home, while 98 insisted that a married woman should work outside if she desired, "except when the care of young children demands her time." Of these, seven thought that "married women should earn part of income, the husband assisting her with household duties and the care of the children." Only five thought that "housework should be put out. Women, like husband, to be used in outside work." The contrast between the results of these two studies suggests that the practice of egalitarianism was first diffused through upper social groups, a pattern still discernible in the 1950s. It was still a rare thing, however. In 1920, 7 percent of married white women were in the labor force, and by 1930, that figure had only increased to 10 percent. Taken together, these figures serve amply to confirm that the 1920s was a period of flux and transition. But the overwhelming direction of movement remains clear: marriage was becoming more democratic.

Periodical literature, perhaps inexorably, picked up on and emphasized the anxieties of the period. In the 1920s, the genre of the
"neurotic husband" gained currency, replacing the image of the weak and ineffective husband of the turn-of-the-century and of the teens: the "nervous husband" reflected, too, the period of transition. The perceptive critic, Alexander Black, compared the American man unfavorably to the European:

He blends traits that do not belong together. He violates ethnological grammar. He is absurdly docile, yet fearfully self-centered. Professionally, he has imagination. Domestically, his mind is blankly plastic. Publicly, he is a pusher. Privately, he does what he is told to do. He is submissive without gallantry. He never really worships. He only offers sacrifice. Even his brutality, when it happens, lacks the grand style that belongs with a technique ripened under classical conditions. No woman with a caveman complex can hope to do anything with him.\(^{180}\)

In a similar vein, a writer in *Life* in 1917, declared the "decline and fall of the American husband," who was rapidly being forgotten.\(^{181}\) In response to this issue, psychiatrist Abraham Myerson detected that a "nervousness, a kind of neurosis normally associated with housewives," was spreading to men, that this entailed "in both, the same fatigue, easily arising and hard to dispel--changes in mood, loss of desire for food, restlessness."\(^{182}\) Myerson equated the nervous husband with the "triumph of feminism," whose greatest victory was "the taming of men."\(^{183}\) A similar article on this theme was Florence Woolston's "Delicatessen Husband," in which one man was portrayed desperately reading menus in the newspaper, dreaming of a time gone by when someone
would cook for him: "Menu for May 10, dinner cream of Asparagus soup,
roast stuffed veal, hashed brown potatoes, fresh string beans and
old-fashioned strawberry shortcake and whipped cream." For the man in
this sorry tale, Perry, "lives from can to mouth."184

Another rather torrid story was the tale of Maurice and Beatrice.
Maurice "collapsed as Beatrice went out to become a hairdresser." Writer
Smiley Blanton explained this phenomenon sensitively as part of the
transitional period:

In the meantime, while this modification of our
culture is going on, man, with his unconscious feeling
of superiority, his ignorance of women's subtle sex
life, his repression and shame at the art of love, his
insistence on domination by force or by infantile
methods, is undergoing a severe emotional strain that
is causing him to break down with an actual
neurosis.185

Further, to this genre of publications expressing concerns about the
husband belonged the series of lurid, embarrassing confessions by
husbands who had divorced or who were about to divorce their wives. One
such confession appeared in the journal Sunset: "End of the trail by a
bewildered husband": "This note of Jane's cuts to the marrow and at the
same time it makes me mad all over . . . There is a feeling of wounded
pride here in my breast, and it hurts as much as though I had been dealt
a stiff blow."186 Another man declared that he, compared to his wife's
young lover, "was built along lines of the proverbial beanpole, regret a
sprinkling of gray over my ears, shall probably be nearly bald within six
years and as a movie actor would make an admirable bookkeeper or
professor." He concluded that "the essential fact is plain. I have
failed to provide that subtle and supreme something . . . necessary in an
ideally reciprocal relationship between men and women, which my wife
feels it is her right to have from life."\(^\text{187}\)

What is striking in the arena of public discussion is how few men,
once married, genuinely critiqued their roles. Their silence is surely
significant if only because a few men did complain. When asked, ten of
Hamilton's men complained about how "irksome" marriage was because of its
"unfreedom and limiting duties."\(^\text{188}\) "My Wife Won't Let Me Be a Gypsy,"
complained Marcus Ravage in the \textit{American Monthly} in 1927, while Joseph
Hergesheimer asked in the \textit{Pictorial Review} of 1926 whether or not it was
possible to be "married and free?"\(^\text{189}\) The modern woman simply would not
allow a man to have the same freedoms he had before:

He has been made to face the most embarrassing and
damnable queries. He has been giggled at and waved
aside. Where once he had been in control, now he must
explain to unsympathetic ears just why he supposes he
is a Moses.\(^\text{190}\)

Men rarely gave an honest critique of the expectations of their role. It
took a woman, Suzanne LaFollette, to call, in a strikingly modern manner,
for "a movement for men's liberation."\(^\text{191}\) But the rare man, if he did
not quite suggest forming a movement, did complain about his
role. "Office Man" wrote in to Martha Carr that "women in general have a pretty soft time of it," but that was about the limit of his understanding. A San Francisco "husband" wrote in to the Nation in 1927 with an extraordinary analysis of his dilemma:

In youth and early manhood I took life seriously; now in midchannel it rests on me more lightly. I am infected by the spirit that is in modern youth, but I am no longer young and the conventions and duties of marriage do not permit one to behave too frivolously. For the first time, and far too late in life, I long to sow a few (carefully selected) wild oats. I should like to have one (or more) passionate love affairs. But every intimation of forbidden romance must be regarded as a danger signal. I should like to embark upon some voyage of adventure to the South Seas.

I am not arguing that life is harder on men than on women. I merely assert that from a masculine standpoint life is not necessarily that unending round of Sunday dinners without dishwashing, that ever verdant series of love affairs without responsibility, that continuing vaudeville of adventure and daring which literary ladies sometimes imply it to be.

"There is no salvation," he concluded, "in being born a man." But why did men not complain more? Ultimately, the key to why they did not may be that they still benefited enormously from their role. While male roles in marriage did become more democratic and more sexual, many men were not aware of a fundamental challenge to their power. And it may be that anyway men preferred the changes. Fifty-four percent of the men in Hamilton's survey felt that they were "well-mated socially and intellectually" with their wives. There was much satisfaction as well
as dissatisfaction: the precise amount must ever remain uncertain, but
the extent of "crisis" should not be overestimated, especially as
comparisons with Victorian America are not available. And besides, the
loss of power on men's part should not be exaggerated, either: it was
only relative.

Thus, by 1930, modern male sexuality was firmly in place among the
mainstream middle class in the United States. Men gained power as
courtship moved into the male world and lost it in the more democratic
expectations of companionate marriage. Greater sexual choice worked to
men's advantage while greater complexity and uncertainty worked against
them. The new morality prevalent in the cultural ideal of masculinity
had a real impact on male sexuality. Sexual mores for the middle class
began to be more reminiscent of the working class: behavior which was
not respectable in the Victorian middle class became the norm in the
youth culture of the 1920s. Mainstream middle-class male behavior and
attitudes had always been shared with the working class to some degree,
at least as regards the masculine primitive ideal and the
double-standard, but the emphasis on petting and "performance" meant that
middle-class men had to learn a new whole set of skills, reminiscent of
turn-of-the-century working-class patterns, which they had not needed
before. But, what all witnesses agreed on that was particularly new in
the middle-class youth culture was there was no real agreement on codes
and mores appropriate for youth. Above all else, the central difficulty was that no model of a New Man arose to complement the New Woman.

There remains one further question of significance. If men were still expected to be more sexual in dating, as in marriage, they were expected to be dominant. The dating system did not foster egalitarianism. In some ways it increased male power; in other ways, it reduced it. Yet within marriage, male power was unequivocally lost, and the home was expected to be more of a democracy. Surely there is a contradiction here. A gulf grew between the expectations of the youth culture—that is of the path to marriage—and the expectations of the husband's role. Dating therefore prepared men inadequately for marital responsibility. No wonder so many anxieties occurred, and articulate males floundered in attempting to express what a difference being married meant.

While the difficulties of the male role remained outside of the ability of middle class men to analyze, what is also significant is that so few of the men who did analyze their situation had any awareness of personal guilt or blame for their collective dilemma or for the condition of their spouses or girlfriends. Surely the converse of the general unwillingness of men to examine their situation in any deep or meaningful way was their inability to take the blame for where they had erred in
their relations with women. Men lacked a sense of guilt. Once again, their silence was deafening.
FOOTNOTES


6Kinsey specifically identifies the younger group with the men I am studying. Incredibly, he concluded that the samples indicated that "the sexual patterns of the younger generation are so nearly identical with the sexual patterns of the older generation." Kinsey seems to have missed entirely the qualitative implications of his sample (Alfred Kinsey et. al Sexual Behavior in the Human Male [Philadelphia: WB Saunders, 1948], 377). The Kinsey study was a study of 5300 males conducted between 1940 and 1948. The study is of men from all over the United States (not the world as the title suggests.) It is heavily biased to Indiana, not perhaps an atypical state. But it is more seriously biased towards college educated people. Further, Kinsey has been criticized for focusing so exclusively on quantitative material that concerns behavior. But, for my purposes, none of these problems is so significant as the possibility that those who volunteered to give their sex histories were
probably more active than the rest of the population. However, Kinsey was very careful about this. He emphasized that he examined a broad cross-section of the population, from lawyers, professors, clergymen, as well as pimps and prostitutes. He insisted, further, that he refused to take histories from "recognizable psychotics." He insisted too on the "altruistic motives" which guided most of his subjects in agreeing to interview for the survey. (Kinsey, Human Male, 3-34).

7Lewis Terman, Psychological Factors in Marital Happiness (NY: McGraw Hill, 1938). His subjects were largely professional or semi-professional. The major problem with Terman is his bias to California, surely not a very representative state.

8I think that this comment is a fair one. There may be some working class elements in the NY Daily News readership, as the NY Daily News had a working to middle-class readership, but the concern about etiquette revealed here suggests that these young men and women were not of the working-class subculture. Further, Blake's answers were geared to a middle-class audience. The St. Louis Post-Dispatch material is definitely middle class in tenor. The YMCAs have a distinct lower middle class mood [my thanks to Andrea Hinding, the YMCA of America's chief archivist for confirming this observation for me]. The tone of the periodical literature is distinctly middle to upper middle class. The letters to Lindsey were written by readers of Physical Culture, whose readership was largely middle class. The Charters material suggests a similar group, though his authors were not specific about the make-up of the groups they examined. Taken together, these items give a wide cross-section of 1920s middle-class youth.


10Kinsey, Human Male, 603.


12Terman, Psychological Factors in Marital Happiness, 321.

13Ibid., 321.

14Ibid., 323.
15 Modell, Into One's Own, 41.

16 Kinsey, Human Female, 281.

17 Ibid.


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21 Letter to Lindsey, January 8, 1925, Lindsey papers.

22 Letter to Lindsey, December 20, 1926, from Phoenix Arizona, Lindsey papers.

23 Cyrus H. Eschelman to Judge Lindsey, Dec. 12, 1926, Lindsey papers.

24 Paul Strong Achilles, "The Social Effects of Social Hygiene Literature," (NY: ASHA, 1923). 1449 men were studied. These were primarily high school and college students from the New York area.

25 M W Peck and F. L. Wells, "On the Psycho-Sexuality of College Graduate Men," Mental Hygiene 7 (1923): 697-714; and "Further Studies in the Psycho-Sexuality of College Graduate Men," Mental Hygiene 9 (1925): 502-520. This was a questionnaire study of 55 men who had been to college by the National Research Council's Committee for Research on Sex Problems, which Kinsey noted attained results which were "close to those obtained in our study."

26 W.L. Hughes, "Sex Experiences of Boyhood," Journal of Social Hygiene 12 (1924): 262-273. This was a group-administered questionnaire of unmarried fifteen to twenty-year-olds, from rural and urban South Carolina, which Kinsey described as "a fair cross-section."
27Gilbert Hamilton, A Research in Marriage, (NY: Boni and Liveright, 1929), 436-37. This study was of a hundred couples who had been through his psychiatric practice and who consisted of a number of New York theater people.

28Dorothy Bromley and F. L. Britten, Youth and Sex, (NY: Harper and Row, 1938), 143. Kinsey specifically states that these figures are unreliable for homosexuality and masturbation but he is referring to behaviors, for which "incidence was lower than for any other investigation." This only serves to confirm my observation of the strong homophobia.

29Ibid.

30Gilbert Hamilton, A Research in Marriage, 478. This quotation, I think rather neatly pre-figures Norman Mailer's famous remark thirty years later that "There is not a single heterosexual American male not obsessed with his latent homosexuality."

31Bromley/Britten, Youth and Sex, 498.

32Ibid., 210-12.

33"Gay" historians have mostly not fallen into this trap. But there is a popular misconception.


36Ibid., 730.


38Waller, "Rating and Dating Complex."

39Ibid., 733.

40Ibid.

42 Charles Peterson, Motion Pictures and Morality (NY: MacMillan, 1933), 254.

43 Ibid., 255.

44 Blumer, Movies and Conduct (NY: MacMillan, 1933), 53.

45 St. Louis Post-Dispatch, July 30, 1931.

46 NY Daily News, April 2, 1928.


49 NY Daily News, May 19, 1926.


51 NY Daily News, February 11, 1925.


53 NY Daily News, September 26, 1929.

54 By John Modell in Into One's Own, 366.

55 Blumer, Movies and Conduct, 55.

56 Ibid.

57 Peterson, Motion Pictures and Morality, 154.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid., 113.


63 From Central YMCA Binghamton, NY to Lindsey, March 2, 1925, Lindsey papers.

64 F. E. Uhl to Judge Lindsey, October 20, 1926, Lindsey papers.


66 NY Daily News, August 2, 1923.


68 Letter to Judge Linsey, May 8, 1925, Lindsey papers.

69 To Judge Lindsey from Chicago, May 10, 1925, Lindsey papers.

70 Letter to Lindsey, December 1, 1926, Lindsey papers.

71 Ibid.


73 Kinsey, Human Male, 364.

74 Ibid.

75 Donald J. Nicholson to Judge Lindsey, November 7, 1926, Lindsey papers.

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77 Theodore Newcomb "Recent Changes," 663.

78 Ibid., 663.


81 Newcomb, "Recent Changes," 663.

82 Clarence Robinson, A Boy and His Girlfriends, (NY: YMCA, 1924, 9.

83 Ibid.

84 Ira Wile, Sex Life of the Unmarried Adult, 247.

85 NY Daily News, February 11, 1926.

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107 Ibid.

108 Ibid.

109 Ibid., May 3, 1929.

110 NY Daily News, December 24, 1925.

111 Percy Marks, The Plastic Age (NY: Grosset and Dunlap), 1924, 155.


113 Ira Wile, Sex Life of the Unmarried Adult, 283.

114 Ibid., 133.


118 NY Daily News, September 7, 1926.

119 Blanchard/Manassas, New Girls for Old, 64.

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121 *Ny Daily News*, February 1, 1924.

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126 *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, June 19, 1931.

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129 Ibid.

130 Ibid.


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134 *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, November 16, 1931.

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152 Life, January 1920, 903.

153 Theodore Pratt, "If You Have a Bachelor Complex, Get Yourself a Female Jumping Jelly Bean.," New Yorker, October 8, 1927, 20.


156 Ibid., vii.


160 Ibid.

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162 Lewis Terman, *Psychological Factors in Marital Happiness*, 310.

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194 Hamilton, A Thousand Marriages.
THE FLAPPER'S BOYFRIEND: THE REVOLUTION IN MORALS AND THE
EMERGENCE OF MODERN AMERICAN MALE SEXUALITY, 1910-1930

VOLUME II

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of the Ohio State
University.

by

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** ** ** **

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CONCLUSION

Between 1910 and 1930, the Victorian construction of masculinity declined in favor of recognizably modern models of manliness that developed as a concomitant of the heterosocial youth culture. The key to understanding the change in the cultural ideal of masculinity in these years is the shift from a "culture of character," in which men were expected to be good Christian Gentlemen and in which the keywords to describe manhood were "morals, manners, integrity, duty, work," to a "culture of personality," in which men were expected to cultivate the "performing self."¹ The "culture of personality" placed greater sexual demands on men. Men were increasingly expected to keep up a youthful appearance and attain "sex appeal" and attractiveness. Movie stars such as Douglas Fairbanks, Sr., and Rudolph Valentino set the pace with their gently erotic and athletic images. Advertisements encouraged men to develop youth and sex appeal in order to make themselves attractive to women. Men’s clothing loosened up from staid and strait-laced Victorian styles. Especially influential in these developments were Bernarr
Macfadden's sex confession magazine *True Story* and his muscle magazine *Physical Culture*, which spread and celebrated lower-class and underworld conceptions of male attractiveness to a wide audience among the young. Sexual success was assured to those who followed these images: thus sexual demands on men grew because the new ideals differed so radically from the dominant Victorian ideal, the patriarch who had to worry far more about the substance of his "character," his integrity, and his success at work than about the cultivation of his appearance as part of his "personality."

The new ethos had a similar influence on the models of masculinity appropriate for the youth culture that were diffused in popular literature aimed at youth in sex confession magazines. I have identified two styles: the male flapper and the tramp Bohemian. The first style, the male flapper, had something of the Christian Gentleman about him in that he was gentle and sensitive, attuned to women's needs. Yet there the resemblance ended, for he, too, was opposed to the capitalist work ethic, even if he ultimately conformed to it. He was interested in sex and intellectual companionship with the same woman, though he could be a little promiscuous as well for he was ambivalent about long-term commitment and interested in fun. Ultimately, however, this was no more than a slight rebellion against commitment. For the Bohemian male flapper was only mildly controlled. Gently sexually expressive and more
democratic and boyish than his Victorian predecessors, he was more of a watered-down underworld Masculine Primitive than he was a Christian Gentleman. And, further, he was not beyond the use of violence against women when this seemed appropriate to him. While he was the perfect foil to the flapper, he would have been considered a little unrespectable and a dubious character in Victorian circles.

The second ideal model of masculinity in the world of youth was the tramp Bohemian. This model came directly, and self-consciously, from the idealization of the underworld primitive style of masculinity, and therefore encouraged an inward-looking celebration of rough, tough maleness. This style emphasized the body and looked positively towards the male world. It encouraged men actively to flee from commitment to women and, most disturbingly, encouraged an ethos of violence. This style was spread to even broader groups of the population through the Macfadden publications. In this way, styles which had not been appropriate or respectable in Victorian times and which, where they existed, did so in a context in which middle-class women were relatively protected from them, gained ascendancy in the youth culture, where the Victorian protections against male primitivism did not exist for the flapper. Further, such models hardly encouraged men to live the life of continence required of the Christian Gentleman.
Sexual demands for men also grew in the realm of sexual ideology. The increasingly open portrayal of sex that characterized the sexualized society brought underworld sexual expressiveness to a broader audience of middle-class youth. Bohemian writers and popularizers of Freud created what Christina Simmons has called "the myth of Victorian repression" in order to exaggerate what they called "Puritanism" and to encourage underworld sexual expressiveness.\textsuperscript{2} While they certainly did not emphasize the more extreme underworld behaviors, and while they even placed a veneer of morality on their stories, the Macfadden publications did so well because they presented titillating, mildly erotic, thrilling stories to a wide working and middle-class youth audience. Such stories would not have been respectable among the Victorian middle classes. Yet Macfadden’s popularity suggests an unprecedented mainstream acceptance, whatever the efforts of moralists. Similarly, even stronger erotica was more widely and publicly available by the 1920s. Crucially, this literature not only incited desire but encouraged men to celebrate their potency and fear their loss of virility in a way that Victorians certainly would have understood but would have tried to check by a rigorous emphasis on control.

Sexual demands also accelerated in other areas of men’s lives. Increasingly, men were expected to conform to a heterosexual norm which was set against a homosexual other. This accentuated anxieties because
of the artificial nature of such rigid dichotomies. Sexual demands were compounded by the sex and marriage manuals which further spread the "culture of personality" by emphasizing male sexual expressiveness and sexual performance. Thus, the underworld primitive ethos influenced strongly the sexual ideology of the emergent heterosocial youth culture.

But what of the reality of men's experience in these years? Did changes in the cultural ideal have any actual bearing on men's lives? How did men reared according to the Victorian system of morality respond to the new sexual system that the New Woman embodied? I have attempted to address these questions by examining men's experience in two groups which were on the cutting-edge of the revolution, the men of the heterosocial working-class public dance-hall subculture and men married to feminist New Women who demanded both sexual expressiveness as well as equality. The experience and dilemmas of men in these groups in the early twentieth century pre-figured the later experiences of a broader middle-class youth by the 1920s.

The working-class, heterosocial public dance-hall subculture of the early twentieth century, which so influenced the male ideology of the youth culture, remained essentially the same as its nineteenth century precursor—the Victorian underworld. Men celebrated a rich and vital homosocial world which defined itself in antagonism to women and homosexuals. Violence and lewd language, as well as non-commitment, were
the order of the day. An unrestrained and unchecked male sexuality ran rampant. The double standard predominated, and de facto prostitution and promiscuity were the rule; any behavior was appropriate with a "bad" woman, if "good" women were, however, expected to remain virgins. The tendency at this time was increasingly towards an undermining of the double standard in favor of a low single-standard of sexual expressiveness for men and women as the "Charity Girl" emerged in the growing world of city amusements and dance halls. Here men experienced a division between "good" and "bad" women that was much less clear than that to which they were used. This led to uncertainty and confusion for men who could not cope with a single standard as the competitive dating game gained ascendancy. Still, in its essential lewdness, this world remained unchanged as it became part of the public mass culture. Surely it was hardly a healthful model for a new sexual system.

The privileged and elite men who married feminist women went through a variety of similar experiences that resembled and yet differed from those of the less privileged members of the patriarchy. The marriages that failed essentially did so because, while the men empathized with their wives' feminism and right to work, on a fundamental level they failed to grasp that more than token support was needed. These marriages failed also because of sexuality. As Victorians, they had difficulty with a woman who did not conform to the category of "good" or "bad."
They had trouble with the high sexual demands of modern marriage. But, above all, it was the practice of "varietism" which caused the marriages to fail.

However, several of the marriages were successful, and, in being so, they genuinely suggested a way forward for men and women in the modern world. The men married successfully to feminist New Woman fully and actively supported their wives' feminism and work, but they also were able to resolve the sexual difficulties that the New Woman raised. The couples did this by rejecting outside relationships as an option and advocating monogamy. They were able in this way to fuse their socialization as Christian Gentlemen with the demand for equality posed by the feminist New Woman. Yet the strikingly traditional, if non-patriarchal, nature of these relationships indicates the real possibility of fusing the sexual revolution with feminist aspirations for equality so long as monogamy was practiced.

Yet by the 1920s, many elements of the sexual attitudes and behavior of the vanguard groups had reached a larger middle-class group. Ultimately, men reared as Christian Gentlemen faced greater complexity in their relationships. Further, much of the ideology directed at youth had begun to have real effect. Sex surveys show quite consistently that increasing sexual demands actually took effect in that the middle class
was having more sexual intercourse and practicing more varied types of
sex. Central to the changes was the emphasis on "performance" in the
emerging dating system. Men thought of interaction in dating between men
and women as a "performance," and they turned to the artifacts of the
"culture of personality" for advice on how to perform. In doing so, they
faced complexity and therefore uncertainty as they were exposed to many
different moral systems that replaced the dominant Victorian model which
stressed purity before marriage but permitted some sexual experimentation
in a relationship of "romantic love." Attitudes towards masturbation and
overt homosexuality softened. Men reared as Christian Gentlemen
complained about how hard it was to be pure. Others accepted the double
standard but feared that they might be defiling a "good" woman. The
great question for men was how far it was appropriate to go. It was in
this many-layered scenario that no clear model of the New Man emerged to
accompany the New Woman as men lost Victorian strictures and structures.

These confusions and uncertainties fueled male resentment. Evidence
suggests that middle-class men publicly used less respectful language to
describe flappers. Young men, too, celebrated bachelorhood, in many ways
emphasizing satisfaction and independence and fleeing from commitment to
marriage, at least in the rhetoric of periodical literature, much as the
men of the dance-hall subculture did, but in more traditional terms.
Within marriage, the trend in the 1920s was towards more egalitarian relationships. Marriages where both partners sought careers more and more were entered into by non-elite groups. Men were not especially bothered by women who worked. Evidence also suggests that more lovemaking and more varied lovemaking was practiced within marriage, too. Further, it seems that many American men experienced both the successes and failures of the men married to feminist New Women. The earlier trends thus were reflected in more marriages by the 1920s.

What is clear from all of this is that, by the 1920s—"modern times"—a recognizably modern American male sexuality had emerged in the United States. To what extent did the change benefit men? Men gained tremendously from the emergence of the modern construction of male sexuality. Young men and women were given greater freedom to explore their sexuality together without the elaborate system of etiquette that pervaded Victorian culture. They were liberated more and more from the sanctions against the breaking of taboos and therefore from guilt. Far better surely that young men explore their sexuality with various girlfriends than with prostitutes. It was young men who benefited most of all. Society, far from wishing to control them, geared itself to their every whim. If a man was young, muscular and sexually attractive, an erotic jamboree could await him, with a little bit of luck, as, increasingly, more and more varied alternative sexual practices lost
their auror of forbiddeness. Not merely were men freed to explore more esoteric heterosexual practices, but also they were liberated to investigate their homoerotic proclivities. Put simply, the emergent sexual system meant fun. Marriage lay a long way in the future and many men balked at it with greater respectability and less risk of sanction.

Yet marriage, too, became a more attractive proposition, as the responsibilities of marriage were downplayed in favor of its pleasures. "Companionate marriage" also freed men from the strains of patriarchal dominance and enabled them to enter the domestic arena where they could share, for example, not merely household tasks, but the bringing up of children. Further, should the marriage not work out, men could obtain a divorce without too much difficulty. No question, the new sexual system benefitted men.

Some qualification is, nevertheless, required. Each of the seeming advantages had its obverse. Central, of course, to this was the emergence of the more sexually demanding New Woman and the uncertainties which she helped cause for men. But the emphasis on youth, the sexualization of male images, the emphasis on sexual performance in sex and marriage manuals, the greater availability of erotica, the glorification of violence against women, what Barbara Ehrenreich has called the "flight from commitment," the greater visibility of anxiety-causing homosexuality, the liberalization of attitudes towards
masturbation, all worked against men, because the emerging sexual system
stressed only short-term gratification. As the "culture of personality"
encouraged men to go on a frantic search for sexual pleasure and
satisfaction, something very important was lost. As the veil of mystery
that pervaded sex and sexuality among men and middle-class women in
Victorian times was lifted, sex lost much of its transcendent importance
as an ultimate experience. Sex became merely commonplace and therefore
relatively ordinary; in this way, it literally came to have a whole
different cultural meaning in American society as "modern times" began.

There is other significance here. I have attempted to suggest why
male dominance was altered from its Victorian to its modern form in these
years and to delineate how a new social construction of masculinity
emerged. It is important for us to determine what drove social change
between the sexes in these years in order to comprehend what drives it
now. Barbara Ehrenreich and Donald Meyer have suggested, in very
different ways, that changes in men are major causes of alterations in
the social relations between the sexes. Other commentators, such as
William O'Neill, suggest that women are the main causes of such social
change. My work suggests a more complex model, a multiplicity of
interactions among capitalists, journalists, advertisers, writers, and
young men and women themselves, who were devoted to exploring and
exploiting the new opportunities for leisure. But it was above
all the development of a consumer culture which ignited the changes. A new therapeutic ethos emerged that was designed to placate young men and women caught up in dull and bureaucratic corporate positions. This ethos thrived by emphasizing leisure. Advertisers encouraged leisure in order to make people consume mass-produced goods. Ads for clothes, cars, and perfume proliferated. The need to encourage consumption thus literally fuelled the changes in the social relations between the sexes. To facilitate the growth of this consumer culture around the turn of the century, entrepreneurs began to see financial gain in making the Victorian underworld more public. Amusements and dance halls and later movies were developed for the urban working classes, whose system of morality was most immediately responsive to them. Increasingly, around 1910, facilitated by the development of the youth culture, entrepreneurs began to gear places towards the middle classes. In this social environment, the dating system developed much as it had done earlier in the working class. In such a context, a group of popular writers appeared who, aiming their works at young men and looking to the Victorian underworld primitive ideals of masculinity, encouraged an ethos of sexual expressiveness that was the antithesis of the Christian Gentleman ideal. The cross-class underworld primitive ideal in a modern form had gained ascendancy in the emergent middle-class heterosocial leisure world by the 1920s. At that point there occurred a move from a
society where the need to control male sexuality was understood and which at least tried to do so to one which increasingly celebrated the expression of male sexuality.

It is no coincidence that Nancy Cott has identified in these years "the grounding of modern feminism." What emerges from the pages of this dissertation most clearly is that the period from 1910 to 1930 saw the birth of what latter-day feminists have called the "rape culture." For not only does the dissertation delineate the benefits or otherwise of being male in America, but in that it explains the workings of male dominance, it is of significance to women as well as men. By helping explain the deep societal roots that created this phase of patriarchal dominance, as well as expanding on what were men's actual responses to the changing sexual system, that is, why they behaved as they did, it is possible to come to a deeper understanding of these problems.

For whatever one thinks of such a term as "rape culture," the breakdown of controls over male sexuality was surely dangerous for men, for women, and for society as a whole. Most disturbingly, however, for women, my research suggests that no sooner did women begin to assert their right to sexual pleasure than relations between men and women became more antagonistic and hostile. In alliance with consumer culture capitalists, male dominance--chameleon-like--literally recreated itself
in an adjustment to the changes in women's roles. And the progress of women was thwarted.

For ultimately there seems to be an inherent contradiction between the two major changes which affected men at this time—the impact of the sexual revolution and of feminism. For the majority of American men were expected to become more sexual, yet be more democratic. Just as the sex and marriage manuals demanded that men be both aggressive and gentle, society encouraged men to be aggressively sexual and dominant, while women's changing roles demanded a more sensitive yet tender man who did not mind a wife or girlfriend who was equal to him. Of course, it was possible to attain this model. But it was difficult.

Much too difficult for most men—for, clearly, my evidence suggests men's need for control, guidelines, and structures. With all their faults, the Victorians understood this and therefore their society was one which better handled maleness than our own. Yet what is equally clear is the virtual impossibility of the return of such necessary controls; we have, for a start, almost lost the language to describe the Victorian world, and, anyway, Victorianism with its hypocrisies does not necessarily represent a desirable model. Further, the major driving force behind the changes in sexuality was and remains the consumer culture, with its presentation of sexuality in multifarious ways and its
encouragement of "personality." This is so embedded in our society that censoring, for example, pornography is only to check the most extreme form of rampant "sex on display." Advertising nowadays, for example, relies on a stirring up of desires in a way that makes 1920s ads seem tame. A change in ideology would require nothing less than the overtoppling of the consumer culture.

In the meantime, more practical approaches need to be adopted. Several such approaches are being tried. The most compelling has been the concept of the "changing man," advocated so well by sociologists such as Clyde Franklin and Michael Kimmel, who insist that men really can change in response to women's demands and acquire sensitivity, tenderness, gentleness, and other apparently desirable traits. Yet such approaches are ultimately doomed to failure because they continue the trend which came to fruition in the 1920s—that is, to leave male control up to the vagaries of individual family and personality. Male primitivism cannot be countered by a few—usually privileged—men agreeing to be nice; more fundamental alterations in the mores of American society are needed.

The only way forward, surely, is to find a means to fuse the older concept of "character," which continues to live to some degree among American men, with the modern woman's demand for equality. Men need, in other words, to find a way to be gentlemen again without some of the
implications of male dominance that the concept implies. This will require, however, some degree of sexual repression. In the meantime, because society offers far less guidance today than it did in the 1920s, it will still be necessary for individual men and women to work out their problems together, as the men and the feminist New Women discussed here did—with all the inadequacies of such an approach. The difficulties they experienced were more similar than different to the troubles Americans encounter today. And their success gives cause for some optimism in a scenario that otherwise remains somewhat bleak.


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