This is to certify that the

thesis entitled
The Making of the Self-Made Man:

the Development of Masculine Roles and Images

in Ante-Bellum America
presented by

Ronald Preston Byars

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Ph.D. degree in History

Peter Levine
Major professor

Date January 31, 1979

O-7639

THE MAKING OF THE SELF-MADE MAN: THE DEVELOPMENT OF MASCULINE ROLES AND IMAGES IN ANTE-BELLUM AMERICA

By

Ronald Preston Byars

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of History

1979

ABSTRACT

THE MAKING OF THE SELF-MADE MAN: THE DEVELOPMENT OF MASCULINE ROLES AND IMAGES IN ANTE-BELLUM AMERICA

By

Ronald Preston Byars

This study focuses on middle-class masculine roles in the United States between 1820 and 1860, examined against the background of extensive social and economic change for which these years are noted. Borrowing from the insights of sociologists who have studied the phenomena of rapid change and "modernization" in contemporary societies, it seeks to understand the nature of the impact of such phenomena upon such institutions as the family and the work place, and the affect upon masculine roles.

Advice books for young men, marriage manuals, children's literature, medical commentary, popular novels, travelers' accounts, popular literature and other literary materials comprised the major primary sources for this study. Secondary sources were also consulted, particularly those which offered special insight into the primary materials, or reflected on aspects of social change in the nineteenth century. Other secondary sources provided perspectives on the relationship between men and women in

contemporary society, and on problems associated with current images of masculinity. Some use was made of relevant psychological material, including studies of the socialization process.

The results of this investigation indicate that masculine roles changed perceptibly in contrast to earlier periods in American history, and that those changes were closely associated with a polarization of sex roles resulting from the impact of economic and social change on the family and the work place. When work became disassociated from the family setting, men left home to pursue economic opportunities. They adopted a time-discipline approach to work and life which distinguished them from their fathers, and separated them from their home-bound wives. At the same time, the family suffered the loss of traditional social functions as those were increasingly taken over by institutions such as prisons, mental hospitals, and poorhouses. The family was redefined as an emotional refuge, with women as its custodian. The result was that roles of men and women were more sharply separated than they had been. Child-rearing increasingly took place in a home setting from which men were absent or distant. For children growing up in this period, women were the primary figures in the formation of the conscience.

Under pressure from new economic opportunities, and reinforced by a subtly altered puritan ethic, men adopted systematic ambition as a virtue. They learned to use time with great care, to defer gratification, to exercise self-control, and to sublimate parts of their personality in order to channel all available energy into the pursuit of success. Men carried heavy emotional burdens, and suffered significant losses as they attempted to live up to the conventional masculine roles. In return, they achieved remarkable results in American economic development.

Since the male conscience was shaped by women, women assumed the role of super-ego figures. The voice of conscience was a feminine voice. In consequence, men began to experience ambivalent feelings toward the feminine. The study explores the apparent hostility of men towards the opposite sex, and considers evidence that men were involved in a psychological "flight from woman."

Other aspects of the study examine male sexuality. It is hypothesized, for example, that masturbation phobia stemmed in part from an unconscious anxiety about the possibility of the development of complete autonomy between the sexes. Men sublimated sexual feelings, to a large extent, to invest that energy in other areas. Sexual expression was often identified with threats to order.

A final chapter draws comparisons between issues of the nineteenth century and issues current in our own time. The suggestion is made that hostility between the sexes is a continuing problem today, and that there continues to be a need to reshape both child-rearing practices and role expectations.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks is due to Professor Peter Levine for his guidance throughout this study; to my wife, Susan, and sons, Stephen and Matthew, for their patience and encouragement; and to the congregation of the United Presbyterian Church of Okemos for their gift of time and moral support.

* * * * *

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

What was it like to be a man in a time dominated by what Barbara Welter has called "The Cult of True Womanhood"?[1] As more attention is given to the roles available to women in the middle period of the nineteenth century, it becomes more urgent to discover what were the roles of middle-class men, and what were the current images of acceptable masculine behavior.

In recent years women have charged that Western society has presumed that male history is the only history. Certainly history has been written largely by and for men. And yet, what is meant to be male has typically been taken so for granted that often the cultural evolution of masculine roles has been overlooked. It is as though masculinity were an absolute which did not change over time.

This study examines masculine roles and images in the United States between 1820 and 1860, a period of significant social and cultural change. The study will focus chiefly on white, middle-class American men living for the most part in the North. These men either lived in urban areas or were influenced by changes emanating from the

---

[1]Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860," American Quarterly 18 (Summer 1966): 151-174.

growing cities of the period. They were either born of middle-class parents, or had taken the middle-class as a model for their personal aspirations. The men studied were overwhelmingly Protestant. Some brief attention will be given to Southern men of the planter class, Northerners of the upper class, the urban poor and immigrants, but chiefly as contrasts to the prevailing middle-class masculine ethos.

White, middle-class northern American men will form the chief focus not only because the abundance of source materials makes them easier to study, but because they were culturally dominant. They set the standards which the more modest classes chose, or were strongly encouraged, to emulate.

Although I began this project motivated chiefly by academic curiosity, I discovered along the way that my interest was in fact rather more personal. Growing up in a conservative midwestern town, I discovered very early that certain roles were highly admired in boys and others barely tolerated. To be interested in books and to be unskilled or uninterested in athletic competition was a damning combination of traits. It was, for me, not a question of being ignorant of what acceptable masculine roles were. They were made only too clear. It was a matter of finding myself--for whatever reasons--unable to be comfortable with the roles that were most lavishly

rewarded. When the roles do not fit the individual, they crowd and pinch and hurt. The individual--and a child particularly--is not able to ascribe the pain to roles perhaps unjustly required of him. He feels that in some undefined way, he is personally inadequate and therefore legitimately subject to blame. This is so even though he is powerless to make changes substantial enough to satisfy others and free him from negative feedback. Persons handle this kind of stress in various ways, more or less effective, more or less healthy. In our own time, when gender roles are being questioned, and, in some cases, reshaped, a new openness offers some new hope. Those for whom traditional roles have worked well and those for whom they have not worked may have the opportunity to establish at least a measure of personal distance from the roles commonly taken for granted in our society. To become aware of roles as historically and culturally conditioned can reduce their power to intimidate. For some today this may ease the pain of a bad fit, and perhaps it may even offer some personal freedom to participate in redefining sex roles so that they function more effectively and humanely for everyone.

The primary sources consulted for this project have not been confined to any single genre, but represent a great variety of examples of the mind of the period. Children's literature, books of advice to young men, and popular literature (mostly books but some magazines) were used most

extensively. Marriage manuals, novels and short stories, etiquette books, medical commentary, biographies, foreign travelers' reports, and social commentary were consulted.

There are, of course, problems and difficulties in historical research which attempts to describe something as elusive as "roles and images." While certain masculine roles and images were defined explicitly enough to be easily apparent in the primary sources, others were considerably more subtle and ambiguous. In some cases, articulate observers offer direct and precise statements of what they perceive a masculine role or image to be. In other cases, statements about or allusions to masculine roles seem to be an idealized version of reality. It is even more treacherous to try to explain how any given roles or images evolved within our culture. The student is forced to bring to the sources a subjective judgment informed not only by historical training, but one which taps the resources offered by the social sciences as well. The research of anthropologists, sociologists, and psychologists have been most useful in helping to understand the period and to provide insight into some of the social and individual dynamics involved. Neither historical study, nor the social sciences are, of course, exact sciences. This means that such a study requires a certain degree of "reading between the lines." Sometimes the most eloquent statement

about masculine roles and images is drawn from silences and omissions rather than from direct statements. Conclusions, then, are always tentative, and can rarely be considered to have been absolutely proven.[2]

Before attempting to describe masculine roles and images, it seems appropriate to offer some definition of what is meant by those terms. Role definitions exist by consensus of a significant portion of any population. They describe what kinds of behavior are appropriate for men, women, various social and economic classes, vocational groups, children, or other identifiable groups within society. While many of these role expectations may become formalized and enforced by the legal system, or by the defined rules and regulations of social institutions, many others are simply informally understood. However, role definitions are not merely platonic abstractions. They have a tangible reality as limits or boundaries. Particular

---

[2]I am particularly appreciative of a point of view expressed by John Demos in A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. xiii, who says, "But the demand for certainty--or at least 'proof'--while reasonable and laudable as a long-range goal, need not be rigidly maintained at every stage of historical inquiry. Proof is relative in any case--and scholars should never, in my opinion, dismiss an important problem because of 'insufficient data.' . . . We must be ready to ponder what is likely to have happened--when more certain knowledge is lacking. We may then hope that future research into the same general area will turn up materials that serve to strengthen such interpretations, or to modify them, or to put them down for good."

persons must either conform or become conspicuous in their deviation.

Sex roles, in particular, are carefully, although often indirectly, defined in most societies. Male and female roles, from earliest times, have clustered around the social contexts of reproduction and child-rearing.[3] Sex roles are taught during the socialization process with the use of both positive and negative sanctions.

A "role," then, is a pattern of behavior, or a constellation of behavior patterns which have become expected norms for all the individuals within the defined group. An example of a male role would be that of husband, protector, provider. Roles are considered to serve some socially necessary purpose. They are enforced by social groups more or less rigorously, depending on how crucial a particular role is perceived to be for the well-being of society as a whole.

An "image" is a less precise term. I use it to refer to a subjective point of view which judges whether any particular behavior is "masculine" by the informal definitions of the society. A male image would be a judgment, for instance, about whether a taste for music could be considered more nearly "masculine" or "feminine" by the unwritten standards of a particular society.

---

[3]Jetse Sprey, "On the Origins of Sex Roles," Sociological Focus 5 (Winter 1971-72): 6.

No doubt there are people who feel that gender roles are totally negative and oppressive and should be abandoned altogether. However, when roles are styled close to the realities of a given culture, they serve a useful purpose. It would be socially chaotic and personally disastrous if each individual were forced to invent his/her personal roles from scratch with no help from society. The utilitarian value of any kind of socially realistic and reasonably fair role is that to the degree that it is learned successfully, it becomes automatic. When persons are able to make a role part of themselves, a great deal of psychic energy becomes available for other things. To have to design one's own roles every day seems attractive, but the necessity of continually facing options drains energy which might otherwise be employed more creatively.

Roles serve a positive purpose insofar as they manage to define realistically the various functions necessary to make the society work. A society as a whole does have a right to define what roles are essential to its health and survival, as long as no group is singled out to bear more than its share of the social burdens. A healthy society, furthermore, can tolerate exceptions to its standard role definitions.

However, role definitions tend to survive past the point where they fit the current needs of society. When

the standard roles begin to stifle individuality or demand too much of society's energy to be maintained, they become dysfunctional (from the standpoint either of the individual or of society). Or, when roles are more often defied than followed, they have become socially dysfunctional and demand to be redefined if the society is to survive in healthy condition.

"Redefining" roles, however, is not a simple matter. Social roles--and perhaps especially sex roles--emerge within a society without being negotiated by some explicit or democratic process. Where do sex roles come from? By what authority do they exist? Why do they have so much power over us?

There are several theoretical approaches to the question of sex roles. Some students of the subject believe that sex roles are deeply rooted in the biology of the two sexes.[4] Others hold that sex roles as we know them have their roots in primitive conditions rather then in biology.[5]

---

[4]Lionel Tiger in Men in Groups (New York: Random House, 1969) believes that primitive society required of each sex specialized functions, which in time left a physiological imprint which is genetically carried from one generation to another.

[5]John Gagnon suggests that the differences in physical strength between men and women created a functional distinction between sex roles which, in time, became a moral distinction as well. Such "moral distinctions" are transmitted culturally from generation to generation; see, e.g., his article "Physical Strength, Once of Significance," in Joseph H. Pleck and Jack Sawyer, eds., Men and Masculinity (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974).

Another point of view is that sex roles are somehow related to our bodies and the images we have of ourselves physically.[6] Still another way of understanding sex roles is to see them as strictly learned behavior. The latter point of view attempts to explain the origins of sex roles chiefly in terms of environmental factors, evolving social customs, and cultural conditioning. In other words, almost all sex roles are learned rather than genetically based.

And yet, even those who most strongly emphasize roles as culturally conditioned make some concessions to genetics. Janet Saltzman Chafetz, for instance, who is a teacher and feminist, acknowledges that findings concerning the functions of hormones and chromosomes demonstrate the need not to neglect the biological component when studying the roots of human behavior, including sex roles.[7] However, Chafetz believes that the great majority of behavioral and

---

[6]Margaret Mead, in Male and Female: A Study of the Sexes in a Changing World (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1949), holds that the reproductive process and patterns of nurturing children are basic to the different ways that men and women learn to perceive themselves, their relation to the opposite sex, and their relation to society.

[7]For example, there is research to indicate that males may have a greater inherent tendency towards agressive, even violent behavior--at least those males with extra X chromosomes or testosterone. Similarly, there are aspects of maternal behavior--especially shortly after childbirth--which may be innate to the female endocrine system; see, e.g., Chafetz's Masculine/Feminine or Human? An Overview of the Sociology of Sex Roles (Itasca, Ill.: F. E. Peacock, Inc., 1974).

psychological characteristics considered to be masculine or feminine in any given culture are not innate to males and females. She cites in support the enormous amount of cross-cultural variation reported by Margaret Mead and others, which would be virtually impossible to explain were cultural conditioning not far more significant than heredity. Some few innate differences probably do differ by gender. It is also quite probable, however, that socio-cultural factors can be institutionalized in such a way that they virtually obliterate the effects of any such innately different tendencies between the sexes. This is because these traits are, at most, predispositions to behave in certain ways rather than instinctual. They are, therefore, modifiable. Chafetz's conclusion is that learned sex roles are far more crucial than biological gender. Any innate differences between the sexes are a matter of degree, not of kind.

Sex roles cannot be understood without examining the given culture in which they have developed. Chafetz, following Margaret Mead, traces a significant number of learned gender roles to "womb envy." She speculates that in primitive societies, the birth process must have seemed spectacular, awesome, and even mystical. Males, by way of compensation, tried to appropriate for themselves everything else which was mystical, or conferred status, or was

culturally defined as creative.[8] The result was that cultural patterns came into being which were actually rooted in the need of males to find compensation for their own inability to give birth. Mead gives evidence for this in her examples of the initiatory rites of various primitive cultures, all of which are clearly patterned after the birth process.[9]

The patriarchal pattern emerged in part as a result of innate differences in physical strength and bodily function. It is also rooted in attempts by males to fashion for themselves roles equally enviable and creative as those of women. However it may be defined, creativity is a basic need to be found in all human beings. While women found psychic fulfillment in child-bearing and nurturing, men felt a need to seek a similar fulfillment in other ways.

If one could discover the original context in which particular sex roles were formed, they would probably be found appropriate and functional to that specific setting. Jetse Sprey believes that elements of exploitation and subjugation probably did not characterize the original family setting.[10] Generally speaking, they met the needs of both sexes in a way that was realistic for that cultural setting, without doing any great injustice to either.

---

[8] Ibid., p. 22.

[9] Mead, Male and Female, pp. 102-104.

[10] Sprey, "Origins of Sex Roles," p. 6.

Sex roles emerge organically rather than by an overt and explicit negotiation. That is, they grow and change in response to a great diversity of stimuli and a variety of cultural needs. For this reason, while they are nearly always in process of changing, they change slowly and unevenly. In any time of rapid social change, sex roles are likely to change rapidly also. Due to the unevenness of social change, they will be out of phase at many points with the new social context. This is bound to cause stress.

It seems safe to say that even when gender roles are most carefully synchronized with the social context, they will not work well for everybody. Ruth Hartley suggests that whatever the sex roles may be in any culture, they all share one difficulty. That is that they have been defined by cultural forces outside the individual, without any particular reference to his or her particular personality, needs, or native endownments. Since roles are defined by forces external to particular persons, they may or may not be appropriate for any one individual. The individual is nevertheless required to fit into the pattern of roles prescribed by the culture.[11]

---

[11] Ruth E. Hartley, "Sex-Role Pressures and the Socialization of the Male Child," Psychological Reports 5 (1959): 457-468.

Explaining that social systems need to delimit people's behavior in order to keep the systems functioning, Sidney M. Jourard says that no social system can use all of a person's self and still keep the system functioning well. This is the purpose of roles of all sorts--occupational, age, and familial roles as well as sex roles. The socially defined roles help men and women to learn just what they are expected to do or refrain from doing for the sake of keeping the social system functioning properly. Jourard adds that a person should not feel constrained to root out every aspect of self which is neither useful, moral, nor in vogue![12]

Margaret Mead has also noted the potential dangers inherent in the limitations of sex roles. She says that in all civilization there is a tendency to limit an activity to one sex or the other by making artificial distinctions. Thus the actual capacities of human beings are suppressed. The result is that both men and women are limited, and the activity itself cannot be developed as fully as it might be.[13]

The cost to individuals may be quite high. Sex roles are terribly difficult to deal with. Although they are defined by forces outside the individual, they have been

---

[12] Sidney M. Jourard, "Some Lethal Aspects of the Male Role," in Pleck and Sawyer, eds., Men and Masculinity, p. 28.

[13] Mead, Male and Female, p. 374.

programmed into each person's unconscious by the socialization process. While the socially defined roles may not be altogether appropriate for particular individuals, the demand to conform will seem to come from within one's own conscience as much or more than from outside. The nonconformist is likely to be punished as severely by his own psyche as by social sanctions. It will be shown later that socialization into sex roles poses peculiar difficulties for males, and in some respects is more complicated than for females. Deviation from masculine roles carries penalties which strike at the roots of a male's self-image. Sex roles, then, are binding both externally and from within. Even for those who manage to live with the socially defined sex roles, there is often a cost to be paid in terms of shutting off certain segments of one's personality or forcing one's self to exaggerate other elements. Nearly everyone will find sex roles uncomfortable and confining at some point or other, even where they have been well-tuned to the realities of the culture. Society itself loses when conformity exerts its priority ruthlessly. If this is true when gender roles are most carefully meshed with the needs of society, how much more so when traditional roles must adapt to a rapidly changing social context!

It will be presumed in this study that sex roles are largely culturally conditioned. Although there may in fact

be certain innate temperamental differences linked to gender, sex roles themselves are not rigidly defined by "laws of Nature." Therefore, it is important to understand the social context in which middle-class white men had to learn to live between 1820 and 1860.

Historians have described the period between 1820 and 1860 as deeply influenced by geographic mobility, growing urbanization, the transportation revolution, the creation of national markets, and the growth of economic opportunities. It was a period in which traditional patterns of life and work were breaking down, and new ones were slowly emerging. Douglas Miller has described this period as The Birth of Modern America.[14] Richard Brown, borrowing the concept of "modernization" from the discipline of sociology, has tried to apply it to the American historical experience in his book, Modernization: The Transformation of American Life, 1600-1865.[15] While Brown believes

---

[14] Douglas T. Miller, The Birth of Modern America, 1820-1850 (Indianapolis/New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1970).

[15] Richard D. Brown, Modernization: The Transformation of American Life, 1600-1864 (New York: Hill & Wang, 1976). Other works which help to set the background for this period are Walter W. Rostow, The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: University Press, 1971); George Rogers Taylor, The Transportation Revolution, 1815-1860 (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1964); Thomas C. Cochran and William Miller, The Age of Enterprise: A Social History of Industrial America (New York: Harper & Row, 1942); and Nancy F. Cott, The Bonds of Womanhood: "Women's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835 (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1977).

that the process of "modernization" began in America long before the nineteenth century, he sees the period 1820-1860 as a key time in which many forces coalesced to create significantly different patterns of life and work.

Brown is particularly interested in the changing work patterns of the nineteenth century. A symbol for those changing patterns is the clock, which became omnipresent after 1820. There began to be a preoccupation with the careful, measured, use of time in a way that marked this period as different from previous American experience. While the new concern for the efficient use of time was not welcomed enthusiastically by everyone (it was, in fact, often resisted), it overcame previous patterns. It became a distinctive feature of the period, and had a remarkable shaping influence on all values associated with work.

The changes of the first half of the nineteenth century had great impact at the point of work. Changes in work patterns were key to the transformation of sex roles. As improvements in transportation linked formerly separated regional markets, and merchant capitalists began to devise methods of meeting the needs of those markets, the old style of home-based work centered around a master craftsman, apprentices, and assorted family members dis-integrated. As markets expanded, the need for efficient production grew, and had an effect even on the working patterns of the farmer. The old, leisurely, task-oriented

ways no longer served well in an economy increasingly attuned to growth and the pursuit of new opportunities.

Observers during the first half of the nineteenth century commented on the restless and energetic ways that men responded to what seemed, at least, to be unlimited opportunities to improve their condition in life. Men proved capable of developing remarkable habits of self-discipline and perseverance in the pursuit of economic success. Drawing on the old Puritan values, they turned the virtues associated with righteousness into formulas for personal achievement.

While the period was one of great optimism, it was, paradoxically, also a time of considerable anxiety. An editorial in the Graham Journal in 1837 worried over the mounting pressures of the times. It offered the opinion that "the artificial wants" of society were aggravating the evils complained of by pulpit, press, and popular opinion. The editor suggested that everyone could have their needs met and have energy left over for others, if people would merely get their priorities in order. Americans should consider what their basic needs really were, and discipline themselves to "indulge in nothing but what is requisite for health and comfort, disregarding the extravagance of civic life,"[16] and all would be well.

---

[16] David Campbell (ed.), Graham Journal of Health and Longevity I:9 (1837): 72.

David J. Rothman has discovered that nineteenth-century medical superintendents of mental asylums looked nostalgically back to the stability of the eighteenth century.[17] It seemed to these men that in the past, men had taken their place in an hierarchy, had known their place in society, and had not engaged in competitive action to change their stations in life. Children had been content, the medical directors believed, to follow in the footsteps of their fathers without entertaining ambitions to rise above the stations into which they were born.

Historian Marvin Meyers believes that the Jacksonians were both anxious over change, and at the same time among the most volatile agents of change.[18] They were deeply involved in the continuous stimulation of a process which, on the other hand, caused them considerable anxiety. Meyers has used the term "adventurous conservative" to describe one who struggles to advance himself, and then, when he has achieved some of his goals, reverses his attitude and becomes conservative of the property and position which a fluid and mobile society has made it possible for him to gain. That curious ambivalence, combination of optimism and anxiety, runs through the

---

[17] David J. Rothman, The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic (Boston/Toronto: Little, Brown & Co., 1971).

[18] Marvin Meyers, The Jacksonian Persuasion: Politics and Belief (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957).

writings of the period. People seem to have reveled in the personal freedom and optimism they experienced while at the same time feeling a certain intimidation by growth in the scale of society, with its accompanying impersonality and remoteness.

The anxiety of persons living in the mid-nineteenth century was real, and deep. Walter E. Houghton's study of Victorian England between 1830 and 1870 suggests some parallels between the two societies. Houghton describes English society in that period as characterized by serious unrest and anxiety. This, he remarks, is contrary to popular notions, which tend to view the Victorian era in England strictly in terms of excitement and optimism. Houghton attributes this anxiety to several factors: The "habit of doubt," which was bred unconsciously in response to the proposal of one radical program after another, was one. The result was a continual hubbub of contending theories, with the consequence that one was left with an uneasy feeling that his beliefs were no longer quite secure.[19] Another factor was the vast increase of scientific and historical knowledge, often overwhelming in its effect. It often left the Victorians baffled by the sheer number and complexity of its implications. Other factors were

---

[19] Walter E. Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870 (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1957), p. 12.

the ever-present possibility of failure and the increasingly apparent sense of loneliness and alienation.[20] Houghton believes that it was in the nineteenth century that the feeling of isolation and loneliness, with which we are so familiar, first appeared. It was the consequence of the breakup of a long-established order and the resulting fragmentation of both society and thought. The old bonds that united people were broken, and they became acutely conscious of separation. Thus there emerged a loneliness for a lost companionship (both human and divine); nostalgia for an earlier, simpler, more peaceful world and a unifying belief.[21]

What Houghton says of England was true also for the United States if one makes allowances for the fact that Americans had been undergoing the experience of breaking with traditional society to some extent throughout their history on the continent. Nevertheless, the acute changes

---

[20] "In a period when hectic booms alternated with financial panics and there was no such thing as limited liability, the business magnate and the public investor were haunted by specters of bankruptcy and the debtor's jail." But fear of failure was moral and spiritual as well as financial. "Conscientious souls who tried to achieve a life of absolute purity and self-denial might experience an almost daily sense of failure, distressing in itself and frightening in its implications; or at least they were dismayed to find quite different ideas glaringly apparent in the world around them." (Houghton, ibid., pp. 61-62.)

[21] Ibid., p. 77.

of the mid-nineteenth century were experienced both as liberating and as threatening to Americans of the time. Their commitment to the new was at the same time thoroughly mixed with attachment to values of long standing which were then enduring severe challenge.[22]

Writing in 1850, Maria McIntosh expressed her view of the times when she noted that in the Northeastern and Middle states, "the rapid variation of fortune resulting from commercial enterprise, have a tendency to engender feverish dreams and wild speculations. Life under such circumstances, becomes a great game of chance."[23]

Anxiety about change and what seemed to be threats both to social order and to traditional values caused many contemporaries to worry about the American future. This period saw the birth of a number of movements which proposed

---

[22] Richard Weiss supports this conclusion. He writes in The American Myth of Success: From Horatio Alger to Norman Vincent Peale (New York/London: Basic Books, Inc., 1969), pp. 29, 35, "By the 1830's conduct-of-life literature begins to reflect a certain concern over the threat which changing patterns of American life posed for traditional values. . . . In the context of a choice between capitalism and socialism, self-help literature certainly would support the former. These, however, were not the alternatives Americans faced. Instead the choice was between the values of an old and traditional capitalism, and those of a new and innovative one. . . . Self-help writers were caught squarely in the middle of the conflict, and their books reflected the tension and ambivalence of the world around them. They attempted to reconcile the values of the old with the energies of the new at a time when the two were becoming hopelessly incompatible."

[23] Maria J. McIntosh, Woman in America: Her Work and Her Reward (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1850), p. 128.

radical alternatives to the mainstream. Nevertheless, most middle-class Americans sought other means of preserving essential values. They turned to women and the institution of the home as the first lines of defense against the loss of traditional morality and standards. Between 1820 and 1860, a good many writings appeared giving advice on domestic relations between husbands and wives, child-rearing, and personal discipline. These represent both an effort to hold on to the best from the past, and to accommodate to a changed and changing social situation. Women and the home were the linchpin holding together old and emerging values in a new synthesis. In such a situation, what was happening to men, and to masculine roles?

The study of masculine roles between 1820 and 1860 among Americans of the middle-class will begin with a review of the affect of social change on families during this era, with particular attention to masculine sex roles: "Reordering the Family: Consequences for Males." The second chapter will be a broad survey of masculine roles and images, describing "How to Be a Man," as middle-class people of the nineteenth century saw it. "Men and Women," the third chapter, will be concerned with a look at the relations between two sexes in the Jacksonian era and the growing tension in that relationship. "Men and Sexuality"

will be the major focus of the fourth chapter, and the fifth, "Class and Regional Variations of Masculine Roles," will be a review of masculine roles and images apart from the Northern, urban-influenced middle-class. The concluding chapter, "The Situation Today," will look at some of the issues raised by the study and reflect on their implications for today.

CHAPTER I

REORDERING THE FAMILY: CONSEQUENCES FOR MALES

During the first half of the nineteenth century, there were significant changes in the social functions of the family, and in the relations between husbands and wives, parents and children. These changes helped to reshape the basic patterns of masculine and feminine roles, and to alter the traditional pattern of socialization into sex roles. They also contributed to new images of masculinity and femininity, and ultimately heightened the degree of tension between the two sexes.

Most important, the urban family began to lose its economic function. This happened gradually, but was certainly well underway by the 1820s. The independent craftsman had begun to feel pressure from new ways of organizing production. In earlier times, a shoemaker, for example, relied on his whole family for help in making shoes. With the 1820s, this pattern of teamwork had begun to break down. The independent shoemaker was being replaced by central shop manufacturers who hired journeymen and

binders on an individual basis.[1] The merchant capitalist bought piece goods from various sources and sold them himself. Fewer artisans created their own product from beginning to end, or sold them personally. Products were no longer made only on order for specific customers. Instead, large orders were made up on speculation. These were sold by the merchant capitalist in regional and national markets as well as local ones. Gradually, the master craftsman lost control over his markets and his methods. Under the pressure of the new system, the apprentice system also began to break down.

By the 1820s, the household was losing its position as the primary link between the economy and the society. In some places (e.g., Lowell) the entire production process was being moved under one roof. Mass-production manufacturing had become a reality, even though on a small scale. After 1815 there was a sharp decline in household manufactures. Between 1820 and 1840, the number of people engaged in manufactures increased 127 percent, while those occupied in agriculture increased only 79 percent.[2]

---

[1]Alan Dawley, Class and Community: The Industrial Revolution in Lynn (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 45.

[2]Ann Douglas, The Feminization of American Culture (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), pp. 50-51.

Changes in manufacturing, in the trades, and in the methods and extent of marketing had two major effects: they created a displaced class of persons suffering from loss of control over their own livelihoods and a corresponding loss of status; and they created new economic opportunities for ambitious entrepreneurs. In both cases, economic production was separated from the household and the family setting. This contrasts, to some degree, with the pattern of earlier generations. The colonial family generally functioned as a social and economic unit. Whether farming, retailing, or artisan, the economy was based in the household. Everyone in the family participated in the family's "work" in one way or another. John Demos' study of Plymouth Colony makes it clear that in that early period work was a natural extension of family life. It was intermingled with all the other activities of the household.[3]

Since the household was not sharply separated from society at large, neither were masculine and feminine roles sharply separated. There was an overlapping of roles in colonial society significant enough to furnish a contrast with later developments. The need to establish a foothold in the New World and guarantee survival required the labor of women alongside that of men. Nice distinctions between

---

[3]Demos, Little Commonwealth.

sex roles became superfluous in the face of such conditions.[4] In colonial times women were relatively more free to take on economic roles which in the nineteenth century became restricted to men.[5]

The nineteenth-century family was also in the process of losing other traditional functions. In the decades after 1820, penitentiaries began to be erected for the criminal, asylums were built for the "insane," almshouses were constructed to house the poor, orphan asylums were opened for homeless children, and reformatories were set up for delinquents. David J. Rothman suggests a reason for this sudden turn to specific institutions to replace functions formerly located in the household. The creation of institutions and asylums in the Jacksonian period was "first and foremost a vigorous attempt to promote the stability of the society at a moment when traditional ideas and practices appeared outmoded, constricted,

---

[4]Writing about Plymouth Colony in particular, John Demos has said, "In short, this does not seem to have been a society characterized by male dominance. There is no evidence at all of habitual patterns of deference in the relations between the sexes. John Robinson and many others, too, may have assumed that woman was the 'weaker vessel' and that 'subjection' was her natural role. But as so often happens with respect to such matters, actual behavior was another story altogether." (Ibid., p. 95.)

[5]Elizabeth Anthony Dexter, Colonial Women of Affairs: A Study of Women in Business and the Professions in America before 1776 (Boston/New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1924).

and ineffective."[6] Family patterns had begun to change, and the population had grown larger and more mobile. Households could no longer serve effectively as social welfare institutions, as they had in colonial times. This was so particularly in growing urban areas. Mobility meant a greater number of displaced persons, not known to the people of the new community. It also meant an increase in the number of persons who were judged to be dysfunctional in one way or another. The family was already vulnerable because of its own changing roles. It was simply not able to bear the increased burden of serving as a welfare institution under the mounting pressures of the times. The creation of special institutions began as an attempt to recreate, on an institutional scale, the environment of a disciplined household.

It was roughly 1820 when the family began to experience the dismantling of its traditional economic and social functions. As the workplace was transferred outside the home, and as other institutions were created to replace the household as an asylum, the role of the middle-class family in urban settings began to shift rather radically. The family as such ceased to be a unit of production, and became instead a unit of consumption.

---

[6]Rothman, Asylum, p. xviii.

The shift of traditional social and economic functions from the home had an important impact on the ways that men and women perceived the world. Women of the middle and upper classes remained in the home and, in fact, became more nearly confined in it. Men moved out into a bustling, ambitious milieu in which a different perspective and mind-set from earlier generations was developing. Up until this time, all work in America, whether done primarily by men or women, had been what E. P. Thompson has called "task-oriented."[7] That is, people moved from task to task as each seemed necessary, indifferent to time or clocks or schedules, except perhaps nature's own. When men followed their work out of the home, women continued to work in a task-oriented fashion. Child care and housekeeping lent themselves to a task-orientation. On the other hand, men were moving into a world in which production was becoming systematized and routinized. The world of work had made a leap of consciousness into what Thompson has called a "time-discipline orientation."[8] Men's habits, their perception of the world, their orientation in space and time began to be reshaped according to the demands of schedules. Men and women were beginning to experience a

---

[7]Edward Palmer Thompson, "Time Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," Past and Present 28 (1967): 56-59, 60, 70-79.

[8]Ibid.

separateness at a level perhaps not quite conscious, but close to the springs of behavior.

It is as though the dismantling of the formerly integrated functions of the household into domestic and economic divisions, private and public parts, had also divided the one world once shared by men and women together. Men, whether consciously or not, could not have helped but notice that women's orientation was different from what theirs had become. Nancy Cott speculates that men may have been drawn to those aspects of women's household work that were still "premodern." The premodern, task-oriented style of work was easily understood, because it responded to immediate needs. It appealed because it represented not strictly "work," but "life," a way of being. But at the same time, the premodern character of most women's work seemed inefficient, nonurgent, not carefully planned. Men began to distinguish women's work from their own and designating it as women's "sphere."[9]

This curious word "sphere" began to be used widely at the beginning of the period, and soon became commonplace. It seems no accident that the word "sphere," in its primary definition, refers to a globe. This special designation was used to indicate the separateness of men's and women's

---

[9]Nancy F. Cott, The Bonds of Womanhood: "Women's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835 (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1977), pp. 58-59.

worlds. Men were to have uninhibited domain over their "sphere," their world; and women over theirs. One was wide and expansive, one narrow and restricted. One was efficient and unemotional, the other rich with feeling.

Timothy Shay Arthur, writing in 1850, had developed a perspective which rationalized the separate spheres of men and women as genetically predetermined. He wrote, "In man we find a peculiar development of brain,--the organ by which the mind acts,--that marks his difference from the woman; and in woman there is a peculiar development that marks her difference from the man. . . ."[10] Arthur elaborated on the physiological differences that supposedly distinguished the two sexes--differences relating particularly to the brain.

> In man, the intellectual region shows a larger development, and in woman, that region of the brain by which the affections of the mind come into activity. . . .
>
> The affections of a man are, as a general thing guided by his reason; and the reason of woman, as a general thing, is guided by her affections.[11]

Nineteenth-century sex roles had become, in the minds of many, fixed by nature. Physiology itself could be cited to prove that men were destined to function in the world

---

[10] Timothy Shay Arthur, Advice to Young Men on Their Duties and Conduct in Life (Boston: Phillips, Sampson & Co., 1840), p. 166.

[11] Ibid., p. 167.

where impersonal logic and reason were preeminent, while women were destined to take charge of those areas of life having to do with feeling and sentiment.

The feminine sphere, to which women and girls were restricted, embraced principally the home, religion, and culture. The masculine sphere included everything else, although males did not thereby relinquish their claim to authority in the areas reserved for women. It was absolutely clear that the world of politics and business lay within the masculine sphere. In a series of lectures to young men given by E. H. Chapin in 1840, the alignments of the two spheres were described. Chapin wrote,

> Both have their appropriate spheres of action, and in their spheres exercise a deep and powerful influence. Man is placed more immediately in contact with the tide and turmoil of existence; woman has a more obscure and peaceful lot. . . . It is for man to struggle and toil in the noontide and with the multitude--to stand forth in the perilous battle of life and bear the brunt of the stormy shock; it is for woman to bind up the wounded, to breathe a Sabbath rest upon the troubled spirit--to nerve the weary with strength and the desponding with fortitude.[12]

Men, for their part, observed women's separate "sphere" with mixed reactions. Men felt drawn to idealize the home (women's "sphere"), which in its premodern aspects was so deeply attractive, and at the same time to scorn it.

---

[12] E. H. Chapin, Duties of Young Men, Exhibited in Six Lectures; with an Anniversary Address (Boston: Abel Tompkins & B. B. Mussey, 1840), p. 164.

Throughout the literature of the period there is a strong sense of ambivalence about what was happening to middle-class society. If the novelists, writers, and lecturers of the time could be lined up, there would be, at one extreme, those who embraced the new entrepreneurial culture in toto, and at the other extreme, those who rejected it altogether. However, these extremes are hard to find. The majority of persons whose writings are available to us come from nearer the center of the continuum.

It is often the same persons who reaffirm the disappearing values of the past on the one hand, and offer their up-to-date formulae for the pursuit of success on the other. The same writers--or, at least, writers with similar backgrounds and commitments--ignore the role of husband and father when giving advice to young men, and then turn around and underscore the sanctity of the domestic relationship. The reason for this seems to be that many people simultaneously dreaded the passing of cherished old ways, and were fascinated with the promise of the new ways. As many of us often are, they were, in fact, of two minds. It occurred to them that their society might be decaying, but they were fascinated with the new possibilities nevertheless.

This should not be considered utterly inconsistent. Clergy, doctors, schoolteachers and others who had a

responsibility for helping people to understand themselves and their social role were trying to deal constructively with a given situation. Both when they succumbed to the temptation to make nostalgic preachments and when they constructed disciplines for getting ahead, they wanted to hold together the values of both worlds--the one that was passing, and the one that was evolving. They were trying to be consistent in an inconsistent situation, and were not entirely successful. Caught in a time of transition, they tried to create a new synthesis, but no new synthesis emerged. They had underestimated the dimensions of the changes underway in the middle period of their century. Looking back at their writings from the perspective of the twentieth century, we see inconsistency and ambivalence. From the same circles came both blessing and condemnations on polarized sex roles and the pursuit of systematic ambition.

The family, and people's feelings about the family, were among the first to register the influence of the changes taking place in society at large. In many sources, the home was clearly not valued as an arena for men. In Charles C. B. Seymour's 1858 biographical studies of Self-Made Men, none of his sketches offered any more than passing reference to wives, children, or homelife.[13] Seymour's

---

[13] Charles C. B. Seymour, Self-Made Men (New York: Harper & Bros., 1858).

subjects were celebrated for private, personal virtues and for public achievement, but not for anything domestic. Here could be seen the dichotomy between a man's "real" life--the life of private virtue and public accomplishment--and that segment of his life which was shared with women and children.

The Rev. William G. Eliot, Jr., a Unitarian minister in St. Louis (and T. S. Eliot's grandfather) wrote as though his young readers were going to remain single forever.[14] Throughout his book of advice to young men, which purported to be comprehensive counsel, marriage was scarcely mentioned. Fatherhood was ignored. The virtues Eliot commended to young men were strong ones, admirable, and socially responsible. They were fair and even-handed. However, human intimacy seemed beyond the scope of the author's interest.

The Rev. Joel Hawes, pastor of the First Church (Congregational) in Hartford, Connecticut, shared a similar myopia with Eliot and many others. In his essay on the formation of character, Hawes exhorted his readers to be responsible to the larger community, to the church, to the world of business, to one's peers, and to God. The only significant community to be left out of this catalogue was

---

[14] William G. Eliot, Jr., Lectures to Young Men, 7th ed. (Boston: Crosby, Nichols, & Co., 1858).

the family, which he mentioned only once throughout the course of his lectures--and that in passing. The formation of character was apparently irrelevant to the roles of husband, lover, or father.[15]

Even a relatively sensitive author like T. S. Arthur described the glories of home without so much as a hint of father or brothers.[16] In many books of advice to young men, children's stories, magazine stories, and novels, writers celebrated the home as the cherished domain of mothers and sisters. There was a persistent sense that home was an appendage to a man's life. It had sentimental significance, but was not a major factor in his life. It did not contribute much to his sense of personal identity.

And yet, this minimizing of the home was balanced by an almost exaggerated reverence for the home and family. Some writers expressed the conviction that it was imperative for men to value home life. Those who idealized the home and those who ignored it often came from the same stratum of society. Clergymen and others who wrote advice for young men could ignore the home in one work and laud it when they wrote marriage manuals. Those who most consistently neglected to mention wives and children in any significant way were

---

[15] Joel Hawes, Lectures to Young Men on the Formation of Character, 3rd ed. (Hartford: Cooke & Co., 1829).

[16] Arthur, Advice.

biographers. The home was most consistently glorified in stories, novels, and children's literature.

Marriage manuals, usually written by clergymen, repeatedly urged men to value the home, and some collections of advice for young husbands also encouraged males to take home and family seriously.[17] This literature was interested in love, but not in sex. It was apparently presumed by the authors that everything their readers wanted to know about sex would be picked up by word of mouth, or by trial and error. They offered neither information nor advice in print. These authors were concerned, rather, with the structuring of a positive married relationship. According to the Rev. John Bayley, author of Marriage As It Is And As It Should Be, "beauty and delicacy" were the women's contribution to the marriage, "courage and strength" were the man's. And yet, even though the marriage manuals accepted the basic notion of separate masculine and feminine "spheres," they were eager for men to value their wives and their homes. Husbands were frequently exhorted to be a real presence in the home, offering

---

[17] See, for example, William Alexander Alcott, The Young Husband, or Duties of Man in the Marriage Relation (Boston: George W. Light, 1839); Arthur, Advice; John Bayley, Marriage As It Is And As It Should Be (New York: M. W. Dodd, 1857); and George W. Quinby, Marriage and the Duties of the Marriage Relations, in a Series of Six Lectures, Addressed to Youth, and the Young in Married Life (Cincinnati: J. A. & U. P. James, 1852).

emotional support to their wives and taking a significant role in child-raising responsibilities. The good husband, for example, must never do anything to cause his wife to lose face before the children or domestics. Rather, he should support her and undergird her influence with them. And, "the faithful husband looks without severity, and with much charity, upon any imperfections or defects of character that he may discover in his wife."[18]

The Rev. George W. Quinby, writing in 1852, agreed that while the husband had the ultimate authority in the marriage, "he must never rule over his wife otherwise than with the gentle sceptre of affection."[19] This author interpreted Scripture to say that husband and wife were yoked--that is, they were meant to be joined equally so as to carry the load. He wrote,

> Some husbands think they have a right to lord it over their wives and treat them like inferiors and slaves, rather than companions and equals. But there is nothing either in nature, common sense or scripture to support such an idea.[20]

He conceded no inferiority to the wife in either intellect or virtue--only in physical strength. He did, however, perpetuate the conventional view of men as courageous and

---

[18] Bayley, Marriage, p. 156.

[19] Quinby, Duties, p. 175.

[20] Ibid.

strong, and women as beautiful and delicate. This author insisted that each partner should confide in the other. A husband would be most unwise to keep from his wife information about financial matters. He should share even bad news with his wife. Husband and wife should treat one another as equals. Troubles and difficulties should be poured out to the other. And, he said,

> If the husband is drawn away from the path of rectitude by the wiles of temptation: if he falls into evil company, or is induced by pressing circumstances to do a wrong, let him never withhold a knowledge of it from his wife--never.[21]

Quinby also described the male role in such a way as to include domestic responsibilities and child-raising within the husband's job-description.

William Alcott, a member of the famous Alcott family and author of The Young Husband, expected a husband to love his wife, and insisted that love needed constant maintenance. Writing in 1839, Alcott lamented the fact that some insensitive men treated their wives as virtual slaves. He asked, "and is not human happiness retarded by every step which is taken to keep the female sex in bondage, and promoted by every thing which is done for their redemption and improvement?"[22] Alcott believed that love between marriage partners could be nurtured by an

---

[21] Ibid., p. 173.

[22] Alcott, Young Husband, p. 352.

intimate sharing of personal feelings. He suggested that each keep a journal which was personally revealing. Wife and husband should then each read what the other had written. It was common in this literature for the authors to urge men to treat their wives with tenderness, and to cherish them--not just to provide a living and consider their duty to be done. The husband should even seek his wife's advice on business matters!

There is no doubt that the authors of the marriage manuals highly valued home and the man's role in the home. And yet, indications are that repeated stress on equality in marriage was an expression of anxiety over the growing inequality of husband and wife. Although the authors placed a premium value on the home, they sensed that many in their society did not. The marriage manuals functioned as reinforcements for traditional values in a society where men's and women's roles had been so distinct that they scarcely overlapped. Their authors felt that the home was no longer an equally shared domain. They felt the need to urge men to stay at home, not to be driven out of the house by noise or confusion or sickness. Hand-wringing over the wicked ways of the city, and the celebration of the rural virtues are an indication of concern over change. Urban areas, where change was felt first and most intensely, seemed to threaten the old home-centered values. The remedy many

authors proposed to stem the tide of change was merely to repeat the eighteenth-century formulas, but in a louder voice.

It is not surprising that change in family organization engendered widespread anxiety in nineteenth-century America.[23] Many of the great issues involved, in one way or another, concern with the family and its future. One obvious example was the proliferation of various Utopian communities and new movements. For instance, the Oneida community practiced disciplined sexual relations outside of marriage and the Shakers, by contrast, were entirely celibate in practice. These are a mere sample of the possible approaches to marriage and family relationships offered by various movements. The Utopian communities were trying to suggest improvements in the relationship between the sexes. They were also concerned with making changes in child-rearing practices. They experimented with forming new kinds of ties between family and large social units.[24] The marginal groups and the mainstream of society

---

[23] Ronald G. Walters, in "The Family and Ante-Bellum Reform: An Interpretation," Societas (Summer 1973): 225, has remarked that "it is surprising, but important, that feminists and anti-feminists, abolitionists and anti-abolitionists, reformers and anti-reformers all directed their attention to the same institution. . . . Concern for the family was bound up with the most serious social and cultural debates in ante-bellum America."

[24] Ibid., p. 222.

were agreed that the family had some kind of "redeeming value." At the same time, all agreed that this value was somehow in peril.

The tremendous upsurge of romanticism and sentimentality surrounding the idea of home and family was a clue to the intensity of feeling about these areas of life. Novels, short stories, and poetry glorified the home in unrealistic ways. Counsel to both men and women exhorted in urgent tones to take care to devote themselves to the establishment of orderly Christian homes. The very intensity of this romanticizing of home seems suspicious. Would such urgent appeals have been necessary if everyone felt secure about the family and its roles in society?

Anxiety about home and family seems entirely normal, even predictable, given the climate of the time. Rapid change was indeed touching the family in dramatic ways. The anxiety betrayed a desire to rediscover a usable definition to secure the future of the family. This was felt to be necessary particularly because the family was considered to be an essential bulwark in a sea of change.

What, then, was the meaning of "family" in a society in which a household was less and less a functional economic unit? What was a "family" when so many of its traditional social functions had been reassigned to schools, factories, and asylums? How did one define a "family" when the

partnership of husband and wife, parents and children had become obscured? It was during this period--roughly from 1820 to 1860--that the American family began to be redefined in ways that are still familiar today.

New definitions of the family were already in process of formation. "Home" and "family" came to stand for that which was safe, while society represented all that was dangerous. In How to Be a Man, Harvey Newcomb warned that "young men and boys should cultivate a love of home as a defence against the temptations to frequent bad company and places of resort dangerous to their morals."[25] Family life was set apart, given a kind of moral halo, and charged with a new responsibility: providing warmth and intimacy in a cold and threatening world. It may be that in men's minds, family was associated with their own childhood and with a blessed state of innocence. Or perhaps family represented the simple, community-oriented agrarian past, a state of primitive harmony. In his 1840 book called Duties of Young Men, E. H. Chapin asked whether "home" might not be a kind of retreat into nature. "Is it your inner adytum, where you hold your sweetest communion, and treasure up your best affections, and where they cling, fresh and

---

[25] Harvey Newcomb, How to Be a Man: A Book for Boys Containing Useful Hints on the Formation of Character (Boston: Gould & Lincoln, 1860 [original ed. 1847]), p. 42.

green and unwithering, amid all the blasts and changes of the outward and variable world?[26] The idea of home was transformed by the light of a pastoral imagination. It seemed to be a realm of peace and innocence where life was kind and its duties came naturally. It was a symbol for that longed-for condition in which life and work were integrated comfortably. The world, by contrast, could be symbolized by the city, with its inhuman scale and overwhelming proportions.

Once integral to society, the family, in its new definition, was distinguished from it. It was essential to the new understanding of the family and the home that they not be integrated with the larger society. Instead, they must be set apart from it. Home and family had found a new function as refuge, as haven, as retreat from the world. Why? The rapid growth of economic opportunities and economic individualism had created a situation in which competitiveness and personal ambition were rewarded. Men followed production out of the home in pursuit of work and success. They were both exhilarated and appalled by the world and its ways. They found the search for success both exciting and frightening. The ways of the world in a time of growing opportunities seemed threatening and fearful because those ways seemed often amoral, if not immoral.

---

[26] Chapin, Duties of Young Men, p. 63.

In retrospect, at least, the old communities seemed stable, characterized by cooperation, mutuality, and humaneness. It was hard for men to feel comfortable in an arena in which persons were separated from their human contexts and measured only in individualistic and strictly functional terms. The chance to improve one's condition was terribly attractive. Nevertheless, men were often shocked to discover the callousness of which they were capable when set in competition with others. In a world where closeness, community, and personal consideration seemed to be minimized, men felt a need to find some corner of refuge. There, in that safe place, they might rest and wash off the taint of a way of life which they had embraced, but with which they could not be entirely comfortable. That little corner of refuge was home and family.

The redefinition of family and home served more than one purpose. As well as a place of refuge, the family could also function as a kind of plumb line. It served as a given standard by which to measure what was good and bad, moral and immoral, in a world in flux. A man might find in the family a resource for refuge and healing when he was weary of the world. However, the family served social as well as individual needs. Family and home served society by functioning as the one bedrock reality in a changing world. They found purpose as a stabilizing influence when

everything else threatened to fly apart. One reason for the hostility against the feminist movement, for example, was that the movement was perceived as threatening to the family. The movement seemed to eradicate the distinction between the spheres of men and women.[27] The family had become sacred ground, especially because people felt that there was no other reliable anchor in a time so marked by turbulence and change. The ambition and individualistic opportunity-seeking of the times were considered to be necessary for progress. At the same time, people felt in danger of falling into barbarism or total confusion without the stabilizing influence of the home and family.

Paradoxically, the new definition of the nineteenth-century urban family would have to be one in which the father was noticeable by his absence. Certainly it is true that in children's literature and in magazine stories, men continued to play strong and commanding roles as committed husbands and fathers. No doubt there were actually many such men. Nevertheless, there were signs that for middle-class men in the cities, family was in danger of being neglected. Marriage writers were almost strident in urging men to be good husbands and fathers. Advice

---

[27] Aileen S. Kraditor, ed., Up From the Pedestal: Selected Writings in the History of American Feminism (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1968), pp. 12-13.

writers neglected to mention the home as they directed young men in planning their lives. Foreign travelers reported that American men were preoccupied with work and politics. The Parisian traveler, Henri Herz, described the following scene, similar to many others in the literature of the period. He had observed a Philadelphia merchant, who "dines silently with his family in a quarter of an hour and spends the evening in a little room reserved for his own use, or else goes to a club of which he has long been a member."[28]

The increasing absence of the father from the household was one of the most significant changes in the family in terms of its consequences for male roles. When the household ceased to be a productive unit, the husband and father left the homestead to pursue his work. Not only did husband and wife cease to share labor in the household economy, but the husband no longer did his unique work within the family setting. Numerous commentators between 1820 and 1860 remarked about the father's absence from the home. Even when he was at home, he was likely to be preoccupied with thoughts of duties in the world outside. John Bayley felt it necessary to counsel fathers that

---

[28] Quoted in Oscar Handlin, This Was America: True Accounts of People and Places, Manners and Customs as Recorded by European Travelers to the Western Shore in the Eighteenth, Nineteenth, and Twentieth Centuries (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), p. 194.

it was their duty to spend time at home in spite of the children's crying and occasional disruptions of the family circle. He advised,

> Instead of making the boisterous merriment of the children a pretext for absenting himself from home, he will rejoice in it as an indication of their health and happiness. And if the family circle should be invaded by sickness, or affliction of any kind, the presence of the father is imperatively demanded.[29]

James Fenimore Cooper complained about the defects in American deportment, and most particularly, the insubordination and rudeness of children. Cooper attributed the faults of the children to the absence of instruction from their fathers, who were preoccupied with business.[30] As early as 1821, the Saturday Evening Post attacked the prevalence of gambling houses, noting particularly their affect on the family by keeping the husband and father away from the family until late at night.[31]

While many writers lamented the father's prolonged absences from home, others interpreted them as natural and to be expected. Writing in 1853, William Thayer described

---

[29] Bayley, Marriage, pp. 121-124.

[30] James Fenimore Cooper, The American Democrat or Hints on the Social and Civic Relations of the United States of America (Cooperstown: H. & E. Phinney, 1838), p. 202.

[31] The Saturday Evening Post 1:8 (22 September 1821): 2.

the husband's domestic duties, but characterized his business obligations as "still more pressing."[32]

Harriet Martineau joined other foreign travelers in commenting on the low visibility of males in the home. She was negatively impressed by the fact that American men, whether well-to-do or of the working classes, had very little time to spend at home. Martineau seriously questioned the values of a people who put such a high premium on earning a living that domestic pleasures were sacrificed.[33]

The relative distance of the father from the home is part of a larger pattern. The circumstances of the American experience had for some time tended toward the reduction of the authority of the father. The American environment itself had always exerted a kind of stress upon the traditional family which threatened paternal authority. The presence of empty land was one such stress. While there was land available, sons were no longer absolutely dependent on their father for land of their own. Certainly there had not been a collapse of the father's authority all at once under colonial conditions. Still,

---

[32] William M. Thayer, Hints for the Household; or Family Counsellor (Boston: John P. Jewett & Co./Cleveland: Jewett, Proctor, & Worthington, 1853), p. 52.

[33] Harriet Martineau, Society in America, ed., abridged, and with an introductory essay by Seymour Martin Lipset (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1968), p. 268.

the presence of empty land had exerted a constant pressure. After the Revolution and the termination of British authority, the West had been opened up to settlement. Many young men left their families to live out their lives hundreds of thousands of miles from the homes of their fathers. The really remarkable mobility, however, was in the direction of the cities. The beginnings of industrialization meant that in the urban areas there were new jobs, and new opportunities of an amazing variety.

The presence of the West and the magnetic pull of growing cities with their opportunities to be explored significantly altered paternal authority. Dr. Isaac Ray, writing at the end of the period, lamented that American men were not content to follow in the footsteps of their fathers. He remarked, disapprovingly, that for young men,

> the domestic circle is entirely too small to bound their affections, their interests, or their wishes. . . . The sons quit the shelter of the parental wing at an early period, and rush to the principal marts of business, where a happier fortune seems to await them.[34]

Dr. Ray felt that the emergence of a broader division of labor was creating stress for American men. "Much of the mental activity that characterizes our people," he noted, "arises from the abundant opportunities that are offered

---

[34] Isaac Ray, M.D., Mental Hygiene (Boston: Ticknor & Fields, 1863), pp. 281-232.

for the pursuit of wealth, and the consequent variety and novelty of the enterprises undertaken for this purpose."[35]

William A. Alcott was sensitive to pressures being exerted on the family by mobility. He was pained by the breakdown of parental authority, and tried to fashion a persuasive argument that would keep married children near the original family nest. He regretted that wives must leave their own parental home, but conceded that there was no arguing with custom. However, the new husband owed it to his wife and children to "remain for a time in his father's house."[36] Alcott expressed his disapproval of westward migration. His plea was a simple one, but given the vast changes of the times, unrealistic: "All I wish is, that grandparents, and children would remain together . . . till they have assisted to educate the latter."[37]

Even when sons remained at home after beginning work, the work and training of young men was seldom under the supervision of their fathers. Rowland Berthoff points out that many young men did not want to serve as apprentices to their fathers even if this was an option. Instead, they were ambitious to rise above their fathers' occupations and

---

[35] Ibid., p. 245.

[36] Alcott, Young Husband, p. 52.

[37] Ibid., p. 53.

to achieve superior social standing, if possible. Many fathers could only approve of their sons' aspirations.[38]

The pressures of mobility tended to break the functional continuity between the generations of father and son. In fact, as the pace of change escalated, it became normal to expect that the future would be considerably different than the present. The father, then, lost his status as a guide to his sons' futures. Repeating the anomalous situation of the first settlers, it was almost as though the children had become guides to the new world. In many cases, when the sons felt the attraction of mobility--geographic or social--they left their fathers behind. In time, American fathers came to expect their sons to leave them behind. They even learned to celebrate the advancement of their children.

Mobility--whether in reality or in myth--encouraged the development of an ethos of "every man for himself." The resulting economic individualism tended to erode the fixed relationships between family members, especially between parents and their children.[39] In The Gentleman's Book of Etiquette, Cecil B. Hartley summed up the new family reality: "In this country, where each bird leaves the parent

---

[38] Rowland Berthoff, An Unsettled People: Social Order and Disorder in American History (New York/Evanston/London: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 211.

[39] Ibid., p. 206.

nest as soon as his wings will bear him safely up, there are but few who stay among the friends at home."[40]

Economic individualism and mobility--both horizontal and vertical--had reduced the father's role and influence in the development of his own children. To the extent that he still served as a model for his sons, he was a model of a new kind of man. His ties to "home" were loosened in every way, and he had adopted a new goal: the aggressive, systematic exercise of personal ambition in the search for "opportunity."

While paternal authority declined and the father's role in the household was diminishing, the mother's role was growing. Certainly the father was still generally considered by all to be the de jure head of the household. Nevertheless, his wife was the de facto head. This is quite understandable, since the family had become almost the exclusive domain of women. The male role in the home had been narrowed to the point where it was best described as "provider" or "breadwinner." While women had always borne the chief responsibility for childbearing, they had carried it out at least in the company of the man of the house. This was so however much or little he may have participated in it directly. Now, the situation was different to the

---

[40] Cecil B. Hartley, The Gentlemen's Book of Etiquette, and Manual of Politeness (Boston: G. W. Cottrell, 1860), p. 4.

extent that the husband and father was a less powerful presence in the household than ever. He was often absent (physically or emotionally), and his status as the chief guide to his sons' futures was increasingly insecure. Daily decision-making in the household had been turned over to his wife. She became the central figure in the family.

One student of this period suggests that women had struck a tacit bargain with men.[41] Women would accept a limited role in society if they could take unlimited control of the domestic sphere to which they were confined. In the stories, poetry, novels, and advice literature of the period there is a strong sentimental emphasis on the roles of women--wives, sisters, but especially mother. Ethical counsel was driven home and reinforced by an appeal to be loyal to mother. Mother became the teacher, nurturer, disciplinarian, and the priestess of the home. She represented goodness, purity, heaven, and God. Even after leaving home, mother's voice was always with the child. Mother was the force which protected her children even after they had grown.[42] Women themselves, to the extent

---

[41] Kathryn Kish Sklar, Catharine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1973), p. 113.

[42] See, for example, Catharine Sedgwick, who indicates the continuing influence of mother in Means and Ends, or Self-Training, 3rd ed. (Boston: Marsh, Capen, Lyon & Webb, 1839), pp. 270-271. The character of the adult man was

that they had accepted the bargain that confined them to the home, encouraged other women to think of the child-rearing role as a position of power and influence.

The implications of the relative absence of father from the childrearing process, and the increasing dominance of the mother were far reaching. What this meant was that children--male as well as female--were experiencing the socialization process primarily at the hands of women. Research indicates that both male and female children make their first and principal identification with the mother. For the little girl, this is no problem. The little boy, however, faces the hurdle of shifting his identification from the mother to the father, or at least to the masculine role. Twentieth-century studies of this process indicate that in our society, this necessary shift poses serious difficulties because of the relative absence of the father from the home so much of the time. The male child, then, is forced to learn the masculine role from his mother and by piecing together information from peers. In both cases,

---

formed at home by his mother. It was her duty "to infuse the generosity and the self-sacrifice that makes the patriot warrior; . . . that qualifies men to be judges, to love justice and truth, and give him a generous sympathy"; and also, Lydia Sigourney, The Child's Book: Consisting of Original Articles, in Prose and Poetry (New York: Turner & Hayden, 1846), unpaged. A little boy says, "My mother says that the greatest and best men have always treated females with respect and kindness; and that God intended the strong should protect the weak. I believe that her rule is a good one, and shall obey it now, and when I grow to be a man."

he must learn what it is to be masculine by a process of abstraction. Furthermore, for the male child, the teaching of the appropriate sex roles is usually done by the use of negative sanctions. The mother, who herself usually is working from conventional, stereotyped patterns, is able to signal the little boy what he ought not to do or be, but finds it more difficult to teach the masculine role positively. The male child learns a masculine role identification by a process of elimination, stumbling into one unacceptable behavior after another. In the process, he is punished without warning. This results in considerable anxiety in the young male, and often also in a strong distaste for anything associated with the feminine.[43]

What is known about socialization into sex roles is sufficient to sustain the argument that the relative closeness or distance of the father in the family is a significant factor in the development of sexual identity. It is also important in terms of how males learn to feel about the feminine. It is logical to presume, then, that

---

[43] Studies by Ruth Hartley, in "Sex-Role Pressures," Margaret Mead, in Male and Female, and David B. Lynn, in Parental and Sex-Role Identification (Berkeley, Calif.: McCutchan Pub. Corp., 1969) give evidence indicating the peculiar difficulties for the male child in the formation of a sexual identity. There is evidence that young boys markedly surpass girls in psychological disturbances, which seems to be associated with the difficulties of making an adequate identification with their own sex. It is also true that more males than females make an identification with the opposite sex from their own.

a major historical development in which fathers were to a large extent removed from the daily family setting would have an important effect on the process and content of developing male roles.

As woman increasingly became the chief figure at home, she became predominantly responsible for childrearing. At the same time, the number of female school teachers escalated dramatically.[44] A foreign traveler in the United States made note of the number of women teachers. In 1853, Fredrika Bremer wrote that "woman's increasing role as a

---

[44] Thomas Woody, in A History of Women's Education in the United States, vol. 1 (New York/Lancaster, Pa.: The Science Press, 1929), pp. 496-499, and Michael B. Katz, in The Irony of Early School Reform: Educational Innovation in Mid-Nineteenth Century Massachusetts (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968) provide information on the growth in the number of women teachers. Traditionally, from the time when common schools had first been established, women had been believed capable of handling summer sessions, but not those in winter when big boys attended. However, with the onset of industrialization and the increasing diversification of job opportunities, fewer men were available to teach at the low salaries offered. What began to happen was that school boards turned to women teachers because they could be paid less. In 1830, the vast majority of school teachers were men. The population, expanding at the same time that male teachers were less available, demanded more teachers. The creation of a leisured middle class of women, the rise of the tax-supported common schools, the expansion of population in the West, and the glorification of female qualities of nurture worked in favor of opening teaching opportunities to women. By the early 1840's, the ratio of women teachers to male teachers was increasing rapidly in women's favor. By 1837, women teachers outnumbered their male counterparts in Massachusetts three to two, and two to one by 1842. Growth in the number of women teachers was particularly rapid in the east and in urban areas, including the cities of the west. At the same time, the number of students enrolled in public school was increasing.

teacher, and the employment of her as such in public schools, even in those for boys, is a public fact which greatly delights me. Seminaries have been established to educate her for this vocation."[45] Catherine Beecher and others viewed teaching as an extension of the domestic role, and saw it as a potential means of public influence for women. Perhaps the most important consequence of the increase in the number of women schoolteachers was that the male conscience was more and more being formed and programmed largely by females. They accomplished this task by drawing upon conventional sexual stereotypes as their resource. There is the strong suggestion that from this period in American history, it became most common for the voice of the male conscience to be a feminine voice.

Some writers reacted with alarm to the increasing distance of the father from the home. They urged men to repossess their traditional role as a preeminent force in the training of their own children. Perhaps the most remarkable of these was a book addressed directly to fathers. Although much childrearing counsel did presuppose the participation of fathers, none spoke to fathers so directly or so exclusively as did Theodore Dwight, Jr.'s The Father's Book.

---

[45] Fredrika Bremer, The Homes of the New World; Impressions of America (New York: Harper & Bros., 1853), p. 191.

Dwight, writing in 1835, was eager to see that fathers lived up to their traditional responsibilities as heads of their households. His book instructed fathers in great detail about how to govern their homes and shape the minds and spirits of their offspring. In The Father's Book, the mother of the family was only a shadowy figure, scarcely visible, while the father played the central role in the family with magnificent Christian grace.

The Father's Book is a curious species of literature not so much because of its content, but because Dwight addressed to fathers the kind of counsel which was usually addressed to mothers. One cannot read the book without wondering where a nineteenth-century father would get the time to spend supervising his children so minutely from the time they awoke through play time, meal times, and bedtime. It may be that Dwight's own profession continued to be largely home-based. He was, in fact, a clergyman. His study would have been in his home. In contrast with many other middle-class men of the time, clergy were likely to spend the bulk of their day at least under the same roof with their family. Dwight, apparently, found it possible to function as a direct influence on nearly ever aspect of the lives of his children.

However, except for other clergy or men with independent incomes, Dwight's advice was likely to have been

largely useless to the average nineteenth-century man, whose days were spent working long hours away from his family. With great determination, the ordinary man may have put into effect some of Dwight's advice. For the most part, however, he could have done little more than to express his opinions, values, wishes, and preferences to the person who actually spent the most time with his children--his wife.

The Father's Book represented the earnest wish of Theodore Dwight, Jr., and others like him that the omnipresent clock might be turned backward to another time--a time when the patriarch of the family had been in a position to be its head in fact, and not merely as an ideal. Dwight himself seems to have known that his image of family government was more of a nostalgic idea than an actuality in his time. Expressing a measure of discouragement, Dwight wrote of "the lax discipline, and lax views of duty, fashionable with many fathers of the present day. . . ."[46]

However much paternal influence had diminished as women were left to raise the children alone, in children's literature the father tended to function according

---

[46] Theodore Dwight, Jr., The Father's Book; or Suggestions for the Government and Instruction of Young Children on Principles Appropriate to a Christian Country, 2nd ed. (Springfield: G. & C. Merriam, 1835), p. 129.

to Dwight's ideal. Jacob Abbott, a Connecticut schoolmaster who wrote a number of children's stories, pictured the father as the primary socializing force for his sons. In Abbott's stories, male roles were taught to boys explicitly and verbally, and by their fathers. Along with a great deal of advice of all kinds, Rollo's father told his son,

> I want you, when you grow up to be a man, to be bound by your agreements. Men will hold you to your agreements when you are a man, and I want you to be accustomed to it while you are a boy.[47]

In the Abbott stories the father, like the ideal father of Timothy Dwight, Jr., was always at home. It is not clear why this was so: whether he was a gentleman farmer, or managing his investments for a living. The ever-present father of children's fiction, for whatever reason he was at home, played the role of leader in the family. Particularly, he was the moral leader and trainer of his children. It is clear, however, that the literary effort to salvage the father's leadership role in child-raising did not paint a true picture. Fathers were in fact becoming more absorbed with their work and with outside activities. The traditional patriarchy was honored more in the breach than in reality. The children, daily discipline, religious training--all were becoming absorbed into women's "sphere"--that

---

[47] Jacob Abbott, Rollo At Work (New York: Sheldon & Co., 1868 [original ed. 185-]).

separate world over which she ruled, and in which men were often little more than visitors.

Except for those who still held some hope of reversing the course of the times and returning to an idealized pattern from the past, nineteenth-century people generally conceded the role of the mother to be paramount in child-rearing. Women like Catharine Beecher, unwilling to rebel against the conventional Jacksonian sex roles, attempted to make the best of an uncomfortable bargain by emphasizing the crucial importance of the mother in forming future generations. Some contemporary females began to be hopeful about the improvements that could be made in the human race at the hands of committed women. Women who were involved in the moral reform movement made much of the possibilities for future improvement by means of the socialization process. The mother, using religious education of a pietistic sort as her main instrument, should teach her son to give unquestioning obedience to his mother's will. Carroll Smith Rosenberg, commenting on the views of women involved in moral reform, reports that mothers were expected to instill in their sons a love for the quiet of domesticity. Boys were to be taught to reject the excitements of the theater and the tavern. They should learn to prefer home and the companionship of pious women over the varied temptations of bachelor

life.[48] Unfortunately for such women, the father's interest in the outside world outweighed his wife's admonitions. Their son soon learned that his own "sphere" of destiny was the whole world--except for his mother's house. Nevertheless, the mother's efforts were not completely in vain. Her voice was programmed deep in his unconscious. His enjoyment of the male "sphere" would be dampened by the ever-present inner voice which sounded strangely like his mother's.

It may very well have been, however, that the voice of a man's conscience was not always in conflict with his life in the world. If women programmed the male conscience, they imprinted on their sons their own mixed feelings about the life of the world and about masculinity. Mothers may, indeed, have trained their sons for virtue. But at the same time, women often shared with men the same conventional ideas about success and the pursuit of opportunities. They also shared with men the cultural stereotypes about what it meant to be masculine. Although they were shut out of men's "sphere," women more often than not wanted their own sons to live in it and to make the most of it.

The Reverend William M. Thayer lamented the fact that so many parents were raising their children to seek

---

[48] Carroll Smith Rosenberg, "Beauty, the Beast and the Militant Woman: A Case Study in Sex Roles and Social Stress in Jacksonian America," American Quarterly 23 (October 1971): 574.

the goals either of becoming wealthy or marrying wealth. He felt that parents were teaching their children false values. He wrote,

> It is not established principles, strict integrity, pure aspirations and shining virtues, so much as tact at accumulation, and energy and enterprise in worldly business, for which some parents discipline their children. Shrewdness at striking a bargain, foresight and sharpness to anticipate fluctuations and discover fraud, are often lessons to be learned before honesty and truth.[49]

Thayer specifically disapproved of the practice of providing children with banks and teaching them to hoard. It would make them stingy, unbenevolent, and less than Christian. The practices and values that Thayer and so many others--particularly clergy--lamented had a momentum, however, that was not easily reversed. It may be that the roots of Jacksonian ambivalence lay in the conscience formed by parents--particularly mothers--who felt a loyalty to the old moral tradition but, at the same time, a vicarious ambition for their sons.

Childraising practices themselves were ambivalent. Consider, for example, the conflict between two values: obedience and independence. In the childrearing literature of the time, and children's stories as well, parents were advised to form their children's consciences in such a way that they would respond immediately to a parental command.

---

[49] Thayer, Hints, p. 70.

There was, in most of this material, a high valuation on respect for authority. Obedience was to be extended not to parents only, but also to parental figures such as teachers. In stories for children, obedience was always rewarded, at least in the long run. The disobedient came to no good end. The authors of children's stories were seldom subtle in their praise of the virtues of submission. One author, writing for children in 1846, wrote that "the children who live in this log house are happy, because they are good and obedient. They are loving to each other, and obey the words of their kind parents."[50]

At the same time, there was a good deal of evidence that parents were actually rather permissive with their children. European travelers commented on disorder in families and the lack of parental control. British travelers, in particular, considered the American child to be indulged. They blamed his home environment--particularly his mother. Travelers usually held the opinion that American parents deliberately chose not to discipline their children, but preferred to let them develop a measure of independence.[51]

---

[50] Sigourney, Child's Book, unpaged.

[51] Richard L. Rapson, "The American Child As Seen By British Travelers, 1845-1935," in The American Family in Social-Historical Perspective, ed. Michael Morgan (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973).

Tocqueville, Martineau, and other visitors from abroad all noted this early training in independence. They commented particularly on the precocity of American boys. It was noted especially that boys early adopted adult assumptions and aspirations in the area of economic values. It seemed, frankly, as though ambition was honored more than complacency. Obedience apparently was far less valued than the ability to make independent decisions and the taking of personal responsibility. Parents encouraged their children to be independent, hoping that their sons would rise on the social and economic scale. One author, lamenting the lack of personal discipline, wrote,

> The asceticism of our ancestors was infinitely less injurious than the license which characterizes the domestic training of their descendants. How many of this generation complete their childhood, scarcely feeling the dominion of any will but their own, and obeying no higher law than the caprice of the moment.[52]

How can this dual emphasis on obedience, on the one hand, and childhood independence on the other, be accounted for? One possible explanation is that these two separate emphases were the characteristic marks of two distinct groups within the society. Those who emphasized obedience may have represented evangelical circles, in which the traditional Puritan values were appreciated. Childhood independence may have represented the practice of those who had

---

[52] Ray, Mental Hygiene, p. 260.

most heartily adapted to the values of the booming nineteenth century. To a certain extent, these separate and contradictory emphases did indicate the existence within society of at least two groups, each gathered around a very different constellation of values. And yet, there was considerable overlapping where persons espoused traditional values and yet practiced the new ones.

The ardent advocacy of an ethic of obedience was probably, in part, a response to the lack of obedience observable in children of the period. The obedience ethic was an expression of anxiety in a society which seemed disorderly almost to the point of disintegration. Because parents themselves were ambivalent about obedience, and inconsistent in enforcing it, some writers felt the need to emphasize it. What was thought to be the traditional method of child-raising was resurrected--at least on paper--in hopes that it might save the day when traditional forms of order seemed threatened. Certainly, training of male children to be independent and self-assertive best matched the emerging patterns of the culture of that time. Particularly since the sons were expected to leave their fathers behind, create a new social status for themselves, and become, in effect, pioneers and guides to the future, training in independence served a useful purpose. It would have been surprising in such a volatile society

if traditional values suited to a more stable condition could actually have formed child-rearing practices consistently on a widespread basis. The key to survival had become adaptability. At least in the middle-classes, and among those who aspired to become middle-class, adaptability meant learning to be independent, self-confident, and imaginative. The language of obedience was, in most cases, the rhetoric of those made anxious by the instability of the times.

It is debatable whether Jacksonian society was as open and as fluid as people of the times believed it was. Nevertheless, for the urban middle-classes, personal achievement--for oneself or for one's children--had become a prime value. Children's readers registered a rise in achievement imagery throughout the nineteenth century.[53]

---

[53] Achievement motivation has been linked with a child-rearing style that encourages independence. According to Richard De Charms and Gerald H. Moeller, in "Values Expressed in American Children's Readers: 1800-1950," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology 64:2 (1962): 141, "men who take risks and engage in entrepreneurial activity are those who have high achievement motivation. Recently economists have noted the importance of motivation and personality structure in economic growth. Thus Hagen (1958) discusses the role of the need for achievement, for autonomy, for aggression, for dominance, for affiliation, for dependence in the beginning of economic growth. These motivational variables interact with economic and political variables to produce cultural changes. . . . Briefly, achievement motivation appears to be associated with early parental stress on independence training and mastery, coupled with a warm acceptance of the child. . . ."

For Americans between 1820 and 1860, social position was important. In contrast to the European situation, social position was linked with personal achievement rather than inherited status. Achievement, then, became a kind of badge of one's intrinsic worth. If one was successful (defined most often in economic terms), one could expect social approval and a satisfying status. In popular and children's literature, success came only to the virtuous. For children, achievement and virtue were intermixed. It takes little imagination to visualize the emotional penalties for those who did not manage to achieve, according to the standards of the time.

While obedience rhetoric, laissez-faire child-rearing practice, and training for achievement were not always sex-specific, it was nevertheless true that the affect was considerably different for males than for females. For the female, obedience rhetoric was dominant in the long run. Submission (first to parents, then to one's husband, and always to things as they were) was the prime virtue. However indiscriminately the female child may have been exposed to independence training and achievement motivation, she knew that they were not meant for her. There was for her an unwritten, but nevertheless perfectly understood corollary that distinguished those as masculine values. However much little boys may have been exposed to

the rhetoric of obedience, it was just as obvious that something else was expected of them. They understood that for males, society valued the kind of independence that led to achievement, and that achievement would be rewarded. For males, obedience extended no further than accepting the dominant values of the society. The socialization process involved sending signals to boys and to girls which guided them in the process of sorting out which values belonged to whom. The little girl, observing the role and function of her mother, came to understand the nature and limitations of her "sphere." The little boy, noting the absence of his father from the domestic sphere, and being taught the masculine role in principle, began to learn that it was his role to achieve. Each sex, however comfortably or uncomfortably, sensed the direction in which it was to develop.

Obedience (in the sense of accepting the dominant values of society), independence, personal ambition, achievement, and the development of inner controls all come together at the focal point of conscience: what one ought and ought not to do. In a society in which people were experiencing a sense of rapid change, a loosening of ties and controls, and fears of disintegration, it became a matter of importance to establish inner controls--a kind of built-in personal gyroscope to keep the individual stable

and on course. There was a strong emphasis on the building and shaping of personal character of a kind that could withstand pressure. The conscience was perhaps the chief symbol of that "character." The man of character, led by his conscience, would be able to find his way even amidst a bewildering variety of choices and options. By means of the individual conscience, each man was expected to internalize the goals and values of which society approved. Once inwardly assimilated, these goals and values would be pursued more vigorously than if they had been considered as strictly optional to the individual. The development of character and conscience also protected a man from being destroyed as he faced the perils of a disordered and often threatening new situation.

The man of character, furthermore, would not pose a threat to the social order. Encouraging the development of internal controls was another way of responding to the perceived threat of a democratic ethos. The theater, novels, alcohol, gambling, and sexual temptations represented a threat to inner controls and a threat to character. They endangered both individuals and a society which seemed all too vulnerable to disruption. Men who could not control their passions were felt to be dangerous to the social order. Theodore Dwight, Jr., expressed the feelings of many others of his generation when he insisted that "the

child must be his own chief disciplinarian through life, and the art of self-government must be taught him, as a regular part of his education, and that both by precept and example. . . ."[54]

Because conscience played such an important role in the nineteenth-century ethos, it is not inconsequential that the male conscience was formed largely by women. It was the task of women to abstract the principles appropriate to males in a volatile, disorderly, threatening, promising, open, opportunistic society. It was the task of women to impress those principles, directly or indirectly, upon young consciences. It is this process of learning even one's own identity from women which leads to the development of a super-ego (to use Freudian terms) which speaks in a feminine voice. For male children as well as female, duty, right conduct, morality, religion, culture, and the obligation to succeed--all alike--became more and more associated with the feminine. This phenomenon could not help but have implications for male roles and for the relations between the sexes. The reordering of the family, under pressure of social change, contributed to the reshaping of masculine roles and images.

---

[54] Dwight, Father's Book, p. 124.

CHAPTER II

HOW TO BE A MAN

The polarization of sex roles for middle-class people between 1820 and 1860 guaranteed that masculine roles and images would be defined, overwhelmingly, by the fact of extended opportunity, the hope of improving one's status, and the systematic values which seemed to offer the only means of realizing ambition. Whether upward mobility was as certain or even as frequent as it was considered to be at the time does not alter the fact that masculine roles became organized around the possibility of change of status. Without the firm conviction that society was open and fluid, and that a man could rise or fall, become wealthy or destitute, be honored or degraded as a direct consequence of his own efforts, masculine roles of the kind that emerged in this period would have been wholly out of place. The conventional male roles, which required the gathering of personal determination and the organizing of effort, were perfectly suited to social conditions as popularly perceived and frequently experienced.

The title of C. B. Seymour's 1858 book summed up one of the most consistent themes of the period: Self-Made

Men.[1] "Self-made" men were those who were determined, who set high goals, and who denied themselves for the sake of those goals. A man became "self-made" by practicing self-reliance and self-help. He achieved success--usually defined rather concretely as respectability and prosperity--by personal effort, without the prior advantages of wealth or leisure or special preference. The "self-made" philosophy obviously placed the emphasis on the individual and his powers and personal vitality. There was little consideration of the social matrix in which individuals grow.

The idea of the self-made man was of enormous significance in the nineteenth century. In her study of nineteenth-century schoolbooks, Ruth Elson came to the conclusion that this theme was one of the most prominent in these texts.[2] Nineteenth-century children were taught to admire the self-made man and take him as a model for their own lives.

Life offered amazing opportunities to the Jacksonian male who would put aside temptations to pleasure and idleness and tackle life soberly, systematically, and earnestly. The Mechanic's Advocate, a magazine for working

---

[1]Seymour, Self-Made Men.

[2]Ruth Miller Elson, Guardians of Tradition: American Schoolbooks of the Nineteenth Century (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964).

men, frequently spurred its readers on to great achievement by the careful use of system. In an 1846 article, young men were given the following advice:

> Wishing, and sighing, and imagining, and dreaming of greatness will never make you great. . . . But cannot a young man command his energies? . . . You must gird up your loins and go to work with all the indomitable energy of Hannibal scaling the Alps. It is your duty to make the most of talents, time, and opportunities. . . .[3]

Then, to bolster the advice, the author cited Franklin, Frederick the Great, and Napoleon as examples! William A. Alcott's Young Man's Guide urged its readers to "expect great things and attempt great things."[4] He directed young men to depend on their own efforts.

Throughout the period 1820-1860, the middle-class masculine ethos centered around an active, aggressive, planned approach to life. There was a decided conviction that life should be directed towards a goal and a purpose. During this time, economic opportunities were expanding, the frontier lured many who were eager to meet a challenge, and it seemed that even the most exaggerated ambitions might actually be realized. Writing in an 1853 edition of McGuffey's Reader, the Rev. Joel Hawes described this

---

[3]"A Word to Young Men," Mechanic's Advocate 1:1 (3 December 1846): 28.

[4]William Alexander Alcott, The Young Man's Guide (Boston: Lilly, Wait, Colman & Holden, 1834 [original ed. 1833]), p. 25.

as an age of great mental excitement. Society, as he saw it, was improving rapidly on a variety of fronts. Hawes wrote enthusiastically that

> the road to wealth, to honor, to usefulness, and happiness is open to all, and all who will, may enter upon it with the almost certain prospect of success. In this free community, there are no privileged orders. Every man finds his level.[5]

Many of those who wrote for young men instructed their readers in the techniques of reducing everything to a methodical system. Along with offering moral advice, these authors encouraged men to be ambitious. One of the theme words was "improvement." They described how a man might adopt a disciplined, frugal, studied, systematic approach to everything from shaving to choosing a wife.[6]

One of the most important traits of the systematic, ambitious man was an aggressive activism. A passive or fatalistic approach to life was wholly uncharacteristic of the middle-class male. He did not wait quietly to see what might happen; he intervened in the course of events. In Jacob Abbott's biography of Benjamin Franklin, written especially for children, he commends Franklin for his qualities of "industry, his forethought, his enterprise,

---

[5]Joel Hawes in McGuffey's Newly Revised Eclectic Third Reader, Containing Selections in Prose and Poetry, ed. William H. McGuffey (Cincinnati: Winthrop B. Smith & Co., 1853), p. 184.

[6]See, for example, Alcott, Young Man's Guide.

his courage, and the steady and determined energy with which he prosecuted the plans that he formed. . . ."[7] A man of this period was told by his teachers and advisers that he could shape his own destiny if he would take the initiative. Activism was considered a moral duty. The Rev. John Todd insisted that "the state of the world is such, and so much depends on action, that everything seems to say loudly to every man, 'Do something'--'do it!'--'do it!'"[8]

Not unexpectedly, one result of this active, systematic striving was that some men became trapped by the pursuit of success and continued to be driven by it long after their goals had been reached. Henri Herz, a Frenchman traveling in this country, described one such man.

> Mr. G. now has a fortune of three or four million . . . but continues his business and has not modified his mode of life in any respect. At the height of winter he gets up before sunrise, has a cup of tea, and leaves his sumptuous residence to go to the dingy little rooms in a sort of immense barracks which he calls his office. In this miserable retreat, badly furnished, badly ventilated, and always littered with cases of merchandise, Mr. G. daily carried on his affairs,

---

[7]Jacob Abbott, Franklin, The Apprentice Boy (New York: Harper & Bros., 1855), p. 159.

[8]John Todd, D.D., The Student's Manual; Designed to Aid in Forming and Strengthening the Intellectual and Moral Character and Habits of the Student (Northampton: Bridgman & Childs, 1868 [original ed. 1854]), p. 392.

> large and petty, with that calm and righteous spirit characteristic of the Anglo-Saxons. Neither rain, nor snow, nor ice will keep him from this task.[9]

A staple of the systematically ambitious was the doctrine of "self-improvement." Men of the time were confronted with a value-system which placed extraordinary emphasis on the future and its potentialities. The present was comparatively insignificant except as a time of preparation and training to meet the tests which determined future success. Most of Jacob Abbott's children's books breathe an atmosphere of upward striving. They focus on strenuous efforts to master one's environment and oneself. The systematic, ambitious character used the present diligently to create his own future.

Self-improvement usually implied private study--not just reading, but a diligent pursuit of knowledge. One should study in every little crevice of time available during the day or night. Studying geography, history, arithmetic, chemistry, grammar, composition, travel reports, and biography was meant to "improve" a man. This implied not so much improvement in the breadth of one's vision as improvement of one's capacities to meet the various tests that stood between a man and success. He who applied himself to a continual effort at self-improvement would soon

---

[9]Henri Herz, in This Was America, ed. Handlin, p. 194.

overcome obstacles and disadvantages. He would surpass peers who were not personally disciplined.

T. S. Arthur promised dedicated young men that "to rise above the great mass, who will not apply themselves, is the unfailing result of patient and thorough self-education."[10] The editor of the Mechanic's Advocate, commenting on the opening of a new State Library, congratulated young mechanics who were ambitious to improve themselves by using the new facility to acquire useful knowledge which could be turned to their personal advantage.[11]

Young men were encouraged to think of time as a precious and constantly dwindling asset. He must help himself and his prospects by "improving" his time. In 1847, a book for boys exhorted its readers, saying,

> Suppose there are five persons at the table, and you hinder them all by your tardiness three minutes, you waste fifteen minutes of precious time. To those who set a proper value on time, this is a great evil.[12]

Men considered the very idea of leisure to be unacceptable. At an age when time should have seemed endless, and available in quantities almost too vast, little Alonzo said to

---

[10] Arthur, Advice, p. 64.

[11] "The State Library," Mechanic's Advocate 2:1 (7 January 1847): 45.

[12] Newcomb, How to Be a Man, p. 52.

his teacher, "I wish to improve my time, and learn as much as I can, so as to be useful when I am a man."[13]

It was imperative that the man who aspired to upward mobility learn how to postpone personal gratification for the sake of achieving high goals. No man who lived spontaneously or seized the pleasures of the moment could hope to become successful. A standard feature of advice to young men and of children's stories was that of deferred gratification as a positive virtue. Jacob Abbott told a story about two young friends, John and Jack, who were eager to go to sea. John, the successful one, had determined to learn a trade first and get himself well-established in business. He could then expect to earn enough money to go wherever he pleased. The other ran away from home, impatient to begin life at sea. When the two met again, many years later, Jack was still a menial deckhand on a ship in which his old friend John was traveling as a first-class passenger.[14] In another work by the same author, Rollo's father instructed his son in the need to put work and duty before personal enjoyment.

> There is a great pleasure in doing work, as I have told you before, when it is well and properly done, but it is very different from

---

[13] Jacob Abbott, The Way to Do Good (New York: Harper & Bros., 1874 [original ed. 1852]).

[14] Jacob Abbott, Jonas' Stories; Related to Rollo and Lucy (Boston: William D. Ticknor, 1839).

> the pleasures of play. It comes later, generally after the work is done. While you are doing your work, it requires exertion and self-denial, and sometimes the sameness is tiresome.[15]

The doctrine of deferred gratification meant depriving oneself of pleasures and amusements that might be taken for granted as part of the richness of life in most societies. The Child's Newspaper instructed youngsters that "you have to deny yourself the amusements enjoyed by most young men, if you would prepare yourself for being a respectable old man."[16] "Respectable" translates into "successful" or, more specifically, "rich."

The masculine virtues most strongly commended in the literature of the period happened to be also business virtues. That is, they would contribute to a man's success in the world of business if they were carefully cultivated. In The Father's Book, Theodore Dwight, Jr., instructed fathers in how to teach their children habits that, if mastered, would make them successful men. For example, children should be made to learn how to keep track of their money. Writing in 1835, Dwight argued that "the keeping of an account of expenses and receipts will afford many opportunities for questions and suggestions on the proper use of money, the tendency of industry, foresight,

---

[15] Abbott, Rollo at Work, p. 125.

[16] "A Word to Apprentices," The Child's Newspaper 1:1 (7 January 1834): 4.

economy, etc., the way to avoid poverty, the real value of property, its abuses, and many other subjects. . . ."[17] The qualities of the successful businessman were apparent in William Alcott's advice to young husbands. He suggested that they schedule the entire twenty-four hours of the day, including the profitable use of conversation at mealtimes.[18] In some quarters it was even suggested that it was good for business to cultivate a reputation for good behavior. In the children's stories of Jacob Abbott, the father, in the author's idealized image, systematically rewarded and punished his child to socialize him into the conventional work patterns. And in one of McGuffey's stories, a young boy, the son of a poor mother, shoveled snow to earn the money for a textbook. Readers were told that "he knew no such word as fail, but always succeeded in all he attempted."[19]

If a young man took seriously the stories he read as a child, and the advice of those who counseled young men, he would find himself preoccupied with orderliness, almost to the point of compulsiveness. In The Way to Do Good, Jacob Abbott offered the following advice:

---

[17] Dwight, Father's Book, p. 189.

[18] Alcott, Young Husband, p. 131.

[19] William H. McGuffey, McGuffey's New Fourth Eclectic Reader: Instructive Lessons for the Young (New York/ Cincinnati: Van Antwerp, Bragg & Co., 1857), p. 32.

> I say then that the great rule for the securing of your own personal happiness, is, to reduce all your worldly business, your affairs, your property, your domains, your employments, your pleasures--reduce every thing to order. Without it, you can not have a peaceful mind, and, of course, you can not be happy.[20]

Happiness was linked with keeping everything in order. Order meant reducing the incidence of the unexpected. No doubt this uneasiness with the spontaneous reflected an instinctive wisdom. It would be difficult to marshal the energy for great accomplishments if a man were distracted by other things, and the Jacksonians anticipated great accomplishments and valued achievement above everything else. However, when order becomes compulsive, it not only represents the efficient organization of limited energies, but it also betrays anxiety about disorder. The same society which offered fabulous rewards for achievement was also a society of constant change, with all the confusion that change implies. Change and confusion are disorderly, and many people were made uneasy lest society itself fall into chaos. The preoccupation with order may very well have been a kind of talisman against chaos as well as a disciplined way of focusing energies. A compulsive need for order resulted in a carefully rationalized, routinized approach to life. That offered a great deal of security, but threatened to cut off entire portions of the human personality.

---

[20] Abbott, Way to Do Good, p. 97.

Apparently, that was a trade-off which many nineteenth-century males were willing to make.

In his book, How to Be a Man, Harvey Newcomb urged his young readers to hold back chaos by an exertion of the will and by personal self-control. Newcomb extended the need for self-control to include a strict discipline over one's own body.

> Now, if you early accustom yourself to exercise a strict mental supervision over the body, so as never to make any movement whatever, except what you mean to make, you will find this habit of great consequence to you; for besides saving you the mortification of a thousand ungraceful movements which habit has rendered natural, it will enable you to control your nerves. . . . Make the will the ruling part of your body, so as never to do anything but what you mean to do, and you will never get the reputation of being nervous.[21]

Newcomb's advice went so far as to encourage young men to "strive to acquire such self-control, as to keep a calm, serene expression upon your countenance; and you cannot tell how much it will add to your appearance."[22] This sounds like a virtual recipe for everything from nervous tics to a complete breakdown!

Newcomb is not an isolated example. Theodore Dwight, Jr., in The Father's Book, expressed concern that children be trained in such a way as not to experience

---

[21] Newcomb, How to Be a Man, pp. 101-102.

[22] Ibid., p. 108.

violent emotions. It was the parents' duty to teach self-control. He said,

> Not a hasty expression, not a step, nor a motion, nor a look, ought ever to be seen in the parent, indicative of passion. The constant study of a model of self-possession in a father, or a mother, will do more to control the temper of a child, than any series of punishments.[23]

William Alcott described anger as "a species of disease."[24] In 1860 Cecil B. Hartley advised young men to "learn to restrain anger."[25]

Self-discipline was the linchpin which held together all the virtues of the self-made. Many writers spelled out practical definitions of self-discipline. In a magazine published by the Cincinnati Sunday School Union, apprentices were advised, "First, be industrious in your business; never complain that you are obliged to work; go to it with alacrity and cheerfulness; and it will become a habit which will make you respected and beloved by your master or employer. . . ."[26]

Self-discipline included the expectation that men should use their inner strength in the suppression of natural

---

[23] Dwight, Father's Book, p. 20.

[24] Alcott, Young Man's Guide, p. 84.

[25] Hartley, Etiquette, p. 195.

[26] "A Word to Apprentices," The Child's Newspaper 1:1 (7 January 1834): 4.

urges. They were to swallow anger, hold back tears, take strokes of ill fortune and refuse to be crushed by them. A story in The Child's Newspaper featured a little boy who had to have his leg amputated. He was offered as a model for young boys because he had gone through the entire operation without groaning once.[27]

Still another dimension of self-discipline involved the suppression of impulses and temptations which might distract from the main task. The Rev. Sylvester Graham suggested abstinence from certain kinds of food and drink in order to keep sensual passions subdued.[28] The Rev. John Todd is an example of a man deeply concerned for the control of sexual appetites.[29] Many authors condemned the influence of "bad books," which presumably also were subversive of self-control insofar as they aroused sexual feelings.[30] Temperance literature and children's stories were permeated

---

[27] "The Patient Boy," The Child's Newspaper 1:5 (4 March 1834).

[28] Sylvester Graham, A Lecture to Young Men, on Chastity, Intended Also for the Serious Consideration of Parents and Guardians (Boston: George W. Light, 1839 [original ed. 1834]).

[29] Todd, Student's Manual.

[30] See, for example, Henry Ward Beecher, Twelve Lectures to Young Men, on Various Important Subjects (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1901 [original ed. 1844]); Eliot, Lectures; Newcomb, How to Be a Man; and William Howard Van Doren, Mercantile Morals; Thoughts for Young Men Entering Mercantile Life (New York: Charles Scribner, 1857 [original ed. 1852]).

with advice about suppressing physical temptations.[31] Young men were advised to be temperate in eating and drinking and regular in all their habits. Desires, appetites, and passions were to be kept under strict subjection. In the Young Man's Guide, William Alcott encouraged young men to marry early, presumably before they lost control of their passions.[32] T. S. Arthur's Advice to Young Men, like many similar works, was concerned for young men's purity of mind and action.[33] Referring to slavery in the South, Harvey Newcomb warned that where white men grew up without becoming accustomed to working, they were vulnerable to idleness and vice. "They grow up with strong and fiery passions, and vicious inclinations unsubdued."[34] The same author urged his readers to "abstain from intoxicating drinks, tobacco, gaming, and profane language."[35] In his biography of Benjamin Franklin, Jacob Abbott suggested that as a young man in Philadelphia, Franklin avoided the idlers in the streets who spent their time smoking and drinking.[36] Energy was not limitless, and

---

[31] See especially the works of Jacob Abbott and the McGuffey Readers.

[32] Alcott, Young Man's Guide.

[33] Arthur, Advice.

[34] Newcomb, How to Be a Man, pp. 117-118.

[35] Ibid., p. 99.

[36] Abbott, Franklin, p. 78.

self-discipline was necessary to prevent loss of energy which might be detrimental to men who dreamed of great achievement. John Todd insisted that sports drained time and energy, and could not be considered equivalent to useful exercise.[37]

The need for self-control became particularly urgent in the face of temptations to various forms of vice and self-indulgence. It was at this point that many people of the period became most anxious. Included on the list of dangers to be avoided were card playing and gaming (they were a waste of time). Other dangers were profanity and vulgarity, Sabbath-breaking, and drinking. T. S. Arthur, whose advice was usually rather moderately pitched, warned against sensual pleasures. "Let a young man, then, keep his desires, his appetites, and his passions, under proper subjection, and he will be in no danger of running into those excesses which sow in his physical system the seeds of all destruction."[38] One of the more curious items on the list of the forbidden was "late suppers!" Whenever the author of a story or novel wanted to warn the reader

---

[37] Todd, Student's Manual. Todd does not say how he distinguishes between "sports" and "exercise," but the impression is given that exercise would be something undertaken purposefully, in a disciplined way, and not for amusement. In other words, if one is having a good time, he is probably draining time and energy!

[38] Arthur, Advice, p. 152.

of impending moral disaster, the hero was described as accepting an invitation to a "late supper." These suppers usually took place somewhere where alcohol was also served--an association which obviously made them so dreadful. Staying out at night or going to the theater were also signs that a young man was straying beyond his depth and courting serious danger. Since their "budding passions" were difficult to keep under control, young men were particularly vulnerable to vice and sensuality. Reading between the lines, it is clear that the stiff and controlled masculine image projected in the literature did not describe male behavior as it was--at least not universally. In some circles, at least, the behavior of young men was not terribly different than in some circles today. The frequent warnings of their elders made that clear. T. S. Arthur reminded his readers in 1850 of times they had been in the company of other young men whose virtue was questionable. "You can remember the ribald jest, the obscene allusion, the sneer at virtue, the unblushing, acknowledgement of licentiousness."[39]

Many writings of the period saw evil as so powerfully alluring that men could scarcely resist it. The almost hysterical fear of sensuality and vice made evil seem bigger than life. It appeared to be so overpowering

---

[39] Ibid., p. 108.

that its male victims were hardly able to muster any resistance. In Henry Ward Beecher's lectures to young men, the author hinted that the evils which lay in wait for young men were almost magnetic.[40] Perhaps this is why Beecher attacked them in such a heated and exaggerated way. Not only Beecher, but other lecturers--including other clergy--seemed utterly convinced that "good" and "virtue" were strictly on the defensive among males. The defenders of the ascendant social values gave every indication of feeling doubtful and uneasy about the power of religion and conventional morality to support men successfully in the contest against temptation. Their feeling that the prevailing social values were in a precarious position was an indicator of the level of their anxiety. They feared that society might fall into chaos, with all the traditional values becoming jettisoned in favor of the indulgence of unbridled impulse. T. S. Arthur told a story about two young men, one domesticated and "good," according to all the standards of the time; the other wild and undisciplined. The result of their friendship was that the "good" young man was easily and almost without resistance corrupted by the "bad" one. This illustrates men's basic vulnerability to evil, Arthur believed, and exposes their essential moral weakness. Arthur offered a philosophical explanation for

---

[40] Beecher, Twelve Lectures.

this phenomenon when he wrote that "temptations to evil are far more powerful than allurements to good, because the former appeal to inherent evil tendencies."[41]

When self-discipline failed, men's moral vulnerability and fragility were exposed. Succumbing to temptation or failing to carry a burden, men collapsed completely, demonstrating a fundamental moral weakness. For example, men were more likely to be wayward than women (although nothing could equal the wickedness and the moral monstrousness of a wayward woman). Since their passions were so difficult to govern, men were vulnerable to corruption and sensuality, and easily misled.

Those who counseled young men offered specific devices and disciplines for helping in the struggle to maintain control. They suggested manual labor, physical exercise, and dietary regimens. Sylvester Graham's program of diet, instructions about what items of clothing to wear close to the skin, ways of bathing and scheduling the day was, perhaps, one of the most methodical attempts to deal with anxiety aroused by the strangely unmanageable demands of the body.[42] By controlling what went into the body, one might control the feelings that emerged from it. Physical means were invoked to subdue the physical self and bring it

---

[41] Arthur, Advice, p. 93.

[42] See the Graham Journal, passim; and Graham, A Lecture.

under control. Along with psychological and social constraints, Graham and others added their own ingenious programs as further buttresses against the breakdown of control, with all of its terrifying consequences for society as well as for individuals.

Home and women were an institutionalized means of assisting men in the terrible burden--both social and personal--of control. Although men were stronger in most ways, morally they were not as strong as women. Men depended on women to protect them from themselves. Women served to keep men on the straight and narrow so that they could achieve success. It was a woman's duty to bring a man back on course if he felt himself becoming too aggressive and too fiercely competitive, or, on the other hand, if he began to retreat from the battle into vice and sensuality, or just plain laziness. In Maria McIntosh's novel, Two Lives, she wrote,

> The letter which Mr. Falconer had desired to read, was from his mother; and he had spoken to Isabel of her . . . of his regret that nature had denied him the sweet companionship of a sister, of his conviction of the necessity of woman's influence to the formation of true and complete excellence in man.[43]

In one of Catharine Sedgwick's novels, Harry Aiken sent a love letter to Susan May, in which he wrote,

---

[43] Maria J. McIntosh, Two Lives: Or, To Seem and To Be (New York: D. Appleton & Co./Philadelphia: Geo. S. Appleton, 1846), p. 9.

> I am sure my affection for you has made me diligent in business, frugal, earnest in my pursuits, and patient in my disappointments. If I had felt (which, thank God, I never did) any inclination to forbidden pleasures, to dangerous company, to dissipation of any sort, the thought of you would have been a shield to me. Knowing you and Charlotte so well, and the memory of my excellent mother, have given me a reverence for female virtue--a belief in the power and beauty of goodness in a woman--and to this, Susan, love naturally follows. . . .[44]

Still, as much as men may have needed to rely on the feminine influence, self-discipline was at bottom a matter of exerting the power of the will. By will-power a man could overcome everything within himself that might threaten to subvert the achievement of his goals. The repeated message was: avoid the pitfalls of vice and sensuality; work hard and do whatever your employer asks without complaining. Sacrifice, live austerely, exercise your determination to be successful and you shall be. Even sloth could be overcome by an exertion of the will, and it must be. Idleness was an enemy perhaps even more formidable than vice. The lazy man virtually forfeited his claim to humanity.

While there was, on the one hand, an emphasis on being tough, determined, aggressive, and iron-willed, there was at the same time a concern that men be able to function

---

[44] Catharine M. Sedgwick, The Poor Rich Man and The Rich Poor Man (New York: Harper & Bros., 1836), p. 70.

acceptably in society and in the family.[45] The latter function required sensitivity to others and the ability to restrain aggressive impulses. The ambivalence resulted in an interior conflict which threatened to tear a man apart unless he could hold himself together by a sheer effort of the will. It was necessary, then, for a man to steer a middle course. Somehow he must hold in tension his need to compete and the equally urgent need for self-control. Society demanded both, and unless a man could manage both, he was doomed to failure or disgrace.

The tense balance between competition and self-control was a major struggle throughout the entire period. It represented the difficulty of holding together the interests of the individual and those of society. The burden of holding together this potentially explosive combination fell chiefly on men. They felt it primarily as the need to triumph over self.

---

[45] John William Ward, in Andrew Jackson: Symbol for an Age (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955) says that "enemies of Jackson suggested that as a man of 'iron will,' he might prove a threat to the liberties of his country" (p. 191). Ward also wrote that "the age admired the self-reliant man. . . . What was needed was not a denial of the self-reliant man, but assurance that the self-reliant man was on the side of society and not against society" (p. 200).

For middle-class men, masculinity was defined not only in terms of expected roles, but also in terms of cultural images of what was masculine. For example, the literature of the period projects an image of males as basically rational. This contrasts with an image of women as controlled by emotion. "Man" was associated with the intellect, the head, the conscious, while "woman" was identified with feeling, instinct, the heart, and the unconscious. Writing in 1850, Timothy Shay Arthur summarized this view when he declared that "in the graver things of life, a man's judgment is more to be relied upon than a woman's because here a regular course of reasoning from premises laid down is required, and this a man is much more able to do than a woman. . . ."[46] Such distinctions were not inevitable, but the exceptions were regarded with contempt.[47] It would not be true to say that emotion was associated exclusively with females. However, for men, emotion was decidedly secondary to logic and rationality. Reason was cold and objective, and could serve as a reliable guide in the "real" world, the world of action and progress. Emotion was soft and subjective, and confined to the sentimental sphere of life--the sphere

---

[46] Arthur, Advice, p. 112.

[47] Ibid., p. 167. "Of course, there are exceptions, as in masculine women, so called, and effeminate men; but these are looked upon as social monsters. . . ."

given over to women. If permitted to exert influence in the "real" world, emotion would surely misguide and subvert. Men were to live rationally, then, guided by principle. Paradoxically, men were considered to have far more urgent passions. Dr. Edward Jarvis held that

> men have stronger passions and more powerful appetites and propensities. Their inclinations and propensities, or whatever nature, intellectual, moral, or physical, are more powerful and uncontrollable.[48]

In addition to images of men as basically rational and, at the same time, more passionate, a commonly held image of men was that they were less capable of bearing suffering than were women. Men might easily break down under it, but women were great sufferers! In their courageous suffering, women took a redemptive role--a Christlike role which men relied on and accepted on their own behalf. Sometimes men accepted women's suffering with guilty consciences, but often merely as something to be taken for granted.

The self-image of American men was of persons who were practical and down to earth, drawing upon the resources of ordinary experience rather than formal education. Thomas Hamilton, a Scottish visitor to the United States, confirmed this self-image in his 1833 statement,

---

[48] Edward Jarvis, M.D., "On the Comparative Liability of Males and Females to Insanity, and Their Comparative Curability and Mortality When Insane," The American Journal of Insanity 7 (1850): 150.

> In that knowledge . . . which the individual acquires for himself by actual observation, which bears an immediate marketable value, and is directly available in the ordinary avocations of life, I do not imagine the Americans are excelled by any people in the world.[49]

An example of the American preference for the practical over book-learning can be seen in Emily (Chubbuck) Judson's story, Allen Lucas.[50] The hero in Judson's story gave up plans for higher education so as to spare his family the sacrifice. He studied on his own. The anti-hero, Robert May, drained his family's resources so that he could have a college education. He was a selfish character whose life ended up a shambles, while the hero, Allen Lucas, prospered and flourished. The clear implication was that practical, self-disciplined learning was superior to formal education. Formal education, it was implied, appealed to the selfish and the elitist. It tarnished one's masculine image.

In popular image, the Jacksonian male was moral and religious--but not to the point of fastidiousness. Allen Lucas' essential goodness was shown as he made personal sacrifices but refused to accept them from others. He was cheerful, uncomplaining, but above all, moral. His morality was a quality which the author wanted to be sure

---

[49] Thomas Hamilton, Men and Manners in America (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1833), p. 130.

[50] Emily (Chubbuck) Judson, Allen Lucas; the Self Made Man (Utica: Bennett, Backus & Hawley, 1844).

the reader would not miss. In the closing scene of the book, one incidental to the story, Lucas gives a coin to a blind beggar. It was Allen's essential righteousness that the reader must finally remember. It had to be made clear that morality and goodness would be rewarded. To demonstrate the point, Allen was blessed with prosperity and success.

Stories by women, in particular, depicted men as religious, humane, charitable, and unimpressed by wealth or ostentation. Perhaps these qualities appealed to those women who felt drawn to men who were "safe" and nonthreatening. The men in such stories lived by basic principles. They were unmoved by the proud or the showy. Their basic integrity and their firm, consistent gentleness posed no threat to the family. In fact, these qualities offered protection for the home and the sphere of women. Neither home nor women were safe from the sorts of men who gave such a high priority to personal ambitions that all else gave way. The heroes of popular literature were inflexibly moral, and apparently sexless. Women were in no danger from any intense or demanding passions from such men.

Women's literary heroes were devoted to the fairer sex, but only in the most chaste way. They might fall in love, but if they had any physical passions at all, they

were carefully hidden beneath a perfect self-control. On the surface only devotion and loyalty showed.[51] Anti-heroes, on the other hand, were inclined to keep sordid company and try to introduce the innocent to corrupt ways. For example, a story in The Columbian Lady's and Gentleman's Magazine in 1844 reported the attempts of a group of such men to draw a decent fellow named Henry Armour into their circle. They met once a week to eat, drink, smoke, and "corrupt each other by ridiculing those salutary moral restraints which, once laid aside, leave the thoughtless youth in imminent danger of ruin."[52] Such men were dangerous to all the values prized by women, particularly because they might break down the resistance of those men on whom women counted for protection and support.

The only evidence that a man of moral principles had any sexual dimension at all, according to many stories in the popular literature, was that he occasionally appeared in the role of a father! This was often, although not always, true also of the more enduring literature of the period. Natty Bumppo, for example, was as moral and as sexless as the heroes of the sentimental novelists.

---

[51] See, for example, McIntosh, Two Lives.

[52] Timothy Shay Arthur, "The Brother's Temptation," The Columbian Lady's and Gentleman's Magazine 1:3 (March 1844).

A recurring characteristic of those real-life men who were the heroes of popular biographies was that they were all said to be religious. However, the reader is struck by the fact that the biographers are so often eager to qualify their assertions of the subject's piety. They rush to insist that he was not "sectarian," but sympathetic to all religious groups. For example, in Freeman Hunt's Lives of American Merchants, the men whose lives he treats were uninterested in dogma or the fine points of doctrine.[53] For these "heroes," or at least for their biographers, religious commitment did not mean loyalty to a belief, a community, or a style of worship as much as to a mildly generous ethical commitment. That ethical commitment was more or less vague in content, but it seemed to imply some kind of loyalty to moral principles of the sort that were universally honored. These same heroes were scrupulously honest, according to their biographers, and made generous--but not rash--contributions to worthy causes.

Honesty was an important part of the masculine image. Male heroes in children's and popular literature were required to be scrupulously honest. Most advice books addressed to young men also emphasized this trait. Even though it must often have seemed a doubtful premise, these authors firmly and dogmatically insisted that the dishonest

---

[53] Freeman Hunt, Lives of American Merchants, vol. 1 (New York: Derby & Jackson, 1858).

flourished only in the short run. A New York clergyman, writing for would-be businessmen in 1852, insisted that "honesty--strict, undeviating, inflexible honesty--alone can secure peace of mind."[54] Nineteenth-century values extolled the man who persevered in goodness even when opposed or criticized. A man must discipline himself for honesty under every kind of stress.

It is impossible to understand the intensity and earnestness behind masculine roles and images between 1820 and 1860 without being aware of their roots in Puritanism. What has come to be called the "Protestant ethic" was in its original context a serious commitment to be faithful to God. That faithfulness included taking seriously one's calling in life. The devout Protestant of Calvinist stripe considered the whole of life an arena in which to bear witness to the glory of God. By being careful and responsible in his daily work, he demonstrated the seriousness with which he took God's calling to serve others. Faithfulness in life and work then became a testimony that the individual did not belong to himself, but to his God. One's personal salvation was "worked out"--i.e., manifested publicly--in the faithful discharge of one's work. As a result, those who lived out of the Protestant faith often found themselves

---

[54] Van Doren, Mercantile Morals, p. 143.

becoming prosperous. While wealth had not been their primary goal, wealth frequently was the unexpected by-product of their systematic "faithfulness." Their careful style of organizing work and "tending to business" readily commended itself to others who were uninterested in the faith that supported it but envied the results.[55]

Jacksonian America was an age of revivalism. Nevertheless, for most people, the theological underpinnings of the "Protestant ethic" became disconnected from daily experience. What had been part of a lifestyle, carefully integrated into a whole, had become simply a set of impersonal techniques. And yet, this transformed Protestant ethic continued to carry the aura of the holy. Men who adopted systematic ambition as a way of life did so with the same earnestness as an act of religious dedication. No doubt many believed that it was God who required this sustained and strenuous effort from them and blessed them when they persevered. But it was not the same.

Originally, Puritan values had been deeply rooted in a community. The feeling and flavor of those values

---

[55] According to W. Fred Graham, in The Constructive Revolutionary: John Calvin and His Socio-Economic Impact (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1971), pp. 193ff., the Protestant ethic was not the only (or the earliest) source of systematic, rational styles of life and work. According to Graham, a similar rational approach had developed in Florence and other commercial cities before the Reformation. However, the Protestant ethic was certainly the most vital shaping influence in the experience of most Americans.

reflected that rootedness. The Puritan ethic was an ethic for life in community. It took most seriously the mutual obligations people owed one another, as well as the obligations owed to God. The Puritan ethic matured within an ethos which valued the corporate whole more than it did the individual. The individual was expected to make sacrifices for the larger group.

By the 1820s, most of that original context had disappeared. The Jacksonian man required an ethic for the individual. The notion of a covenanted community was no longer relevant to the pluralistic, urbanizing, secular United States. Nor was it relevant to the man who became converted in a revival meeting. The great value of the nineteenth century was competition--the individual competing in a great race to improve his condition. Mutual obligation had been muted, as had the sense of individual sacrifice for the welfare of the whole. This individualism was not challenged by revivalism, but was rather reinforced by a religious ethos that focused on one's private salvation. The Puritan ethic became pulled loose from the milieu in which it had been shaped, and was applied to isolated individuals. The force and direction of that ethic were redirected. What had served rather well in a communally-oriented setting became distorted and often ugly when used to measure the lives and worth of competing individuals in a society of increasing scale and complexity.

The inherited religious values were redrawn to accommodate to new circumstances. The Puritan ethic became a valuable resource which could be used by the Jacksonians to assist in the adjustment to changing conditions. The availability of the traditional ethic, blessed by association with the colonial forefathers, made it easier to adapt to the values of a modernizing society. Nineteenth-century men could embrace the new, work-related virtues without feeling a sharp sense of discontinuity with their own past. And yet, as much as it may have seemed that the traditional ethic was still operative, that ethic was in fact being redefined, and transformed in the process.

The transformation of the Puritan ethic, in many cases, into a caricature of itself is terribly significant for the understanding of masculine roles in this period. Men had adjusted their lives to the disciplines required to become "self-made." In the process, they felt the full impact of the transformed Puritan values impinging on their lives. Women, however, had become crucial transmitters of the altered ethic to subsequent generations.[56] From

---

[56] Women were particularly hard hit as the chief victims of the sentimentalization of the old ethic. Very probably their suffering was greater than that of men, who not only felt the pressures but were often able to enjoy the rewards of the new virtues. My point is not to argue that men suffered more than women, but that they suffered--and that we, their heirs, also suffer--from those dimensions of the human personality which were in that period suppressed or distorted.

childhood, men were pressured to live a systematized, routinized life. They were taught to sublimate all aspects of the personality which did not serve some "practical" (i.e., economic- or status-giving) purpose. If they did not succumb to these pressures, they were forced to pay the cost of their rebellion by being subjected to a public judgment that they had been "effeminated."

Even worse than the judgment of the community was the self-accusation from which they could not escape. The judgment of a man's own conscience against him could be devastating. His conscience had been shaped by his mother, who passed on the conventional values of society. But as a virtual saint, his mother could certainly never be questioned. The sanctions of the male conscience had been reinforced by subsequent experience of the community's judgments made against others. Most troublesome of all, the "oughts" and "ought nots" still carried the weight of religious sanctions, even though they had often been secularized.

If the ethic of the "work-related" virtues had developed in the United States de novo between 1820 and 1860 simply as an efficient response to modernization with all its pressures and promises, that ethic could not have carried nearly the emotional charge that it did carry under the circumstances. But because the work-related virtues

were, in fact, a transformed version of an already existing ethic--an ethic that was believed to stem from Scripture and ultimately from God Himself--they had overtones of righteousness and guilt. A nineteenth-century man could scarcely have been expected to sort out those "virtues" objectively or impersonally. It was not the transformed Puritan ethic that faced judgment, but he.

The importance, then, of this historical transformation is that all the sanctions of religious faith were transferred to an ethic that resembled, but was in fact a distortion, of Puritan faith. What had been a "Protestant ethic" had been stripped from its original context and become simply a "work ethic." Men were driven forward with promises of future rewards, or threats of failure, but there was no grace and no mercy. The "work ethic" was a doctrine of salvation by work(s).

Under pressure of historical conditions, an ethic which began as a life-enhancing invitation to faithfulness had become something quite different. It had, in a different time-period, become guilt-inducing. Guilt was one of the burdens that men carried among many others in an age when men were supposed to be "self-made." There were substantial costs to being masculine in such a time.

To be a man implied the ability to carry the burden of survival. T. S. Arthur described something of the nature

of this burden when he urged young men to pay a debt of affection and respect to their fathers in return for having supported their families. Speaking of the average young man, Arthur said,

> Not until his own life-trials come on will he fully understand how much he owes his father. It is no light task which a man takes upon himself--that of sustaining, by his single efforts, a whole family, and sustaining them in comfort, and perhaps in luxury. You have an education that enables you to take a respectable position in society; you have a groundwork of good principles; habits of industry; in fact, all that a young man need ask for in order that he may rise in the world; and for these you are indebted to your father. To give you such advantages has cost him labor, self-denial, and much anxious thought. Many times, during the struggle to sustain his family, has he been pressed down with worldly difficulties, and almost ready to despair.[57]

Arthur went on to speak of a father perhaps broken in health, disappointed in his worldly prospects, and nearly despairing of the outcome of it all. And yet, he is largely unappreciated by his children.

The necessary cost of demonstrating one's manhood was the ability to persevere even under the burden of such heavy role requirements. Somehow, finding success in the marketplace was the equivalent of personal fulfillment. Men sacrificed parts of their own selves and certain vital

---

[57] Arthur, Advice, p. 103.

ties with other human beings to live out their commitments to becoming successful providers.[58] Dr. Isaac Ray reported that "many a man immersed in the active pursuits of civic life, finds his faculties strained to a degree of tension apparently inevitable, while the idea of relaxation seems to be equivalent to that of dissolution."[59] All the male virtues of the period presupposed that it was a man's duty to work hard, to apply himself, to be industrious. It was more than duty. It was, in fact, crucial to one's masculine identity. "We may safely conclude, then," said Harvey Newcomb in 1847, "that, whoever despises labor is a fool; for he despises the only thing that can make him a MAN."[60] Hard work and some kind of economic "success" were a necessary minimum in proving one's masculinity--masculinity which otherwise could not be taken for granted.

Dr. Edward Jarvis insisted that men were more subject to nervous disorders than women. He attributed this to poverty, destitution, or the fear of it, anxiety about business, and hopes and disappointments relating to property.

> But they affect the sexes unequally, for the reason that men are more bent on the acquisition of wealth. . . . They are more engaged in those

---

[58] Dawley, Class and Community, p. 39.

[59] Ray, Mental Health, p. 117.

[60] Newcomb, How to Be a Man, p. 115.

> pursuits which have an uncertain issue; they have more plans to fail, and hence they are more exposed to disappointments, and misfortunes connected with business, speculation, and money.[61]

The fear of failure weighed heavily on men. They lived constantly under its threat. And in failure, men lost not only their hopes and aspirations, they lost their very manhood. In The Young Man's Way, Anthony Atwood made the stakes clear: "You may make yourself effeminate and idolent, or brave and persevering."[62] Warnings against effeminacy are frequent in the literature, and to be judged "effeminate" was a damning judgment. One writer, after denouncing "diversion, pleasure, and amusement," said,

> A life thus spent is a life lost. It is utterly inconsistent with all manliness of thought and action; and while it forms a character of effeminacy and feebleness, it is sure to bring on its possessor, the contempt of all worthy and good men.[63]

Effeminacy did not mean merely having delicate habits or demeanor. It was a description of personal character, and a judgment that the man so described had failed to live up to the expectations of masculine roles and had slipped over into the feminine sphere. The contempt in

---

[61] Jarvis, "Comparative Liability," p. 156.

[62] Anthony Atwood, The Young Man's Way to Intelligence, Respectability, Honor, and Usefulness (Philadelphia; J. W. Moor, 1857 [original ed. 1850]), p. 122.

[63] Hawes, Lectures, p. 69.

such a judgment was especially clear in a statement by one of the characters in Emily Judson's novel, Allen Lucas. "You needn't shake your head at me, Allen, everybody knows that old Mr. May is working himself to death, for the sake of sending his lady-son away to school."[64] Robert May was careless of others, absorbed his family's sacrifices without gratitude, was cynical about others' potential for success, and sought special favors. He was not "physical," did not work with his hands, was not rugged or athletic. He was formally educated in a college. He married money calculatedly and cold-bloodedly. He was described as frail, pale, and "effeminate." By deviating from the contemporary standards of manhood, a male effectively became a woman.[65]

Angelina Grimké, familiar with suffering and no stranger to the punishments meted out to those who differed from society's norms, was gifted with insight into some of the painful side-effects experienced by those who tried to live up to the images of masculinity. She wrote,

> The fallacious doctrine of male and female virtues has well nigh ruined all that is morally great and lovely in his character: he has been quite as deep

---

[64] Judson, Allen Lucas, p. 110.

[65] Ben Barker-Benfield, "The Spermatic Economy: A Nineteenth-Century View of Sexuality," in The American Family in Social-Historical Perspective, ed. Michael Gordon (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973), p. 360.

> a sufferer by it as woman, though mostly in different respects and by other processes.[66]

The spectre of failure was omnipresent in children's literature and in lectures to young men. Those who failed to study, to work hard, and to "improve their time" would ruin all their prospects, and fail utterly. To look for shortcuts was a sure sign of failure ahead. Life must be tackled carefully and systematically, or a man might become "worthless."

There were palpable risks and penalties for being male in the period 1820-1860. The enormous burdens carried by females in this same time are already well-documented. None of the conclusions about the difficulties of being male are intended to minimize them. Whatever the difficulties for females, and whoever may have suffered more deeply, the fact remains that masculinity was also a burden to be carried. For some, it was a burden easily lifted; for others, it was crushing. Masculinity was not something settled from birth, as maleness was. Masculinity had to be earned; and it was precarious. For those men who failed to exert a sufficient effort, or who failed to win the coveted respectability and success, sexual identity itself was thrown into question. Subsequent anxiety and insecurity

---

[66] Angelina Grimké, quoted in Up From the Pedestal, ed. Kraditor, p. 66.

had negative repercussions for men's lives. They also negatively affected men's relations with the opposite sex.

It is a fact that home, and the women who dwelled there, also contributed to the tension men had to bear. The severe dichotomy between the values of the market place and the social values represented by women and domesticity added to the pressures requiring the gigantic effort of self-control. Women could only lose in such a situation: because they bore the awful burden of propping up men under pressure, and being blamed when they failed.

Idealized woman, given the task of socializing sons into the virtues which shaped a masculine self-image, became an accomplice in requiring conformity to roles which carried an emotional super-charge. Only a monstrous son could rebel against sentimentalized and idealized woman. Even the impulse to rebel, though quietly hidden, must have had its emotional penalties. Thus masculine roles, as they evolved between 1820 and 1860, carried a peculiar intensity. They were advocated with a singular earnestness, in large part because they were a transformed version of a primarily religious ethic. Furthermore, they were transmitted by women, who had become symbols of the conscience.

CHAPTER III

MEN AND WOMEN

The mid-nineteenth century witnessed a growing alienation of "masculine" and "feminine" at many points. This alienation had both personal and cultural dimensions. The polarization of sex roles created a situation in which women were forced to become symbols for the conscience. Males responded with covert, but real, ambivalence toward women and the feminine. One component of this ambivalence was hostility--a hostility which women returned. On an unconscious level, men turned away from women and the values they represented. Fleeing from the feminine, men preferred, both in reality and in fantasy, to seek escape and the companionship of their fellows.

In order to understand what was happening to males, it is necessary to consider the roles that women played in this period. At the heart of the problematic relation between men and women was that venerable institution, motherhood. Motherhood had never been insignificant. However, between 1820 and 1860, the role of mother had become exaggerated out of proportion to other roles. No doubt the diminishing role of the father had created this out-of-balance emphasis on motherhood.

Between 1820 and 1860, mothers more and more frequently passed on to their sons their own ambivalence. They communicated a simultaneous fascination with and revulsion from the hard-driving American society of the period. The mothers featured in the literature did not reject the prevailing values. Mothers demanded that their sons try hard, be ambitious, and use will power to master themselves and the environment. In short, they expected their sons to become successful in a man's world. Success promised satisfaction to young men and a vicarious fulfillment for their mothers. Furthermore, the sons' achievements would offer proof of the mother's accomplishment in her special child-rearing role. (If she were allowed to compete in nothing else, she could compete in mothering.) At the same time, she implanted in her sons a sense of the need to be moral, sensitive to others, and virtuous.

These dual expectations--of success, on the one hand, and virtue, on the other--were taught both directly and indirectly. While transmitting the conventional activist values of masculine culture, mother herself served as a symbol of self-effacement and moral carefulness. In Jacob Abbott's story, Hoaryhead and M'Donner, this ambivalence comes through with particular clarity since there was no father on the scene at all. The widowed mother was concerned that her son, Gilbert, learn the work-related

virtues of regularity, dependability, self-discipline, and the careful use of time. At the same time, she was just as concerned that Gilbert learn to be gentle, fair, and religious.[1]

These two needs--for success and for virtue--often came in conflict. When that happened, the male conscience faced a moral dilemma. Being a bad boy, one's conscience said, meant hurting mother. Didn't the children's literature and McGuffey stories frequently warn against wounding mother by one's "bad" behavior? But how did one hurt mother most? By breaking her rules of morality, or by failing to become a success?

Twentieth-century studies indicate that boys raised primarily by women often have difficulty learning their sex roles and frequently experience hostility toward the feminine. David Lynn, a student of sex roles, believes that males tend to feel hostility toward females in greater degree than women will feel hostile to males.[2] With the increasing absence of men from the home, women became identified with heavy, often conflicting demands, and with censoriousness. The more women were set apart and

---

[1]Jacob Abbott, Hoaryhead and M'Donner (New York: Harper & Bros., 1855).

[2]Lynn, Parental and Sex-Role Identification, p. 63.

idealized, the more they seemed to men to play the role of judge.[3]

With child-raising left almost entirely to the mother, the mothering role became exaggerated. Nineteenth-century males heard mother's own accents in the voice of the conscience. In his account of boy life before the Civil War, William Dean Howells remarked that

> the mother represented the family sovereignty; the father was seldom seen, and he counted for little or nothing among the outside boys. It was the mother who could say whether a boy might go fishing or swimming, and she was held a good mother or not according as she habitually said yes or no.[4]

In popular literature and in advice books, women represented the super-ego. This little verse by Lydia Signourney captures the feeling associated with "mother."

> What then will you do for the mother
> Who hath done so much for you?
> Who hath never forgotten you for a moment
> Who loveth you night and day?[5]

---

[3]In Male and Female, Margaret Mead remarks that "because it is the mother's and not the father's voice that gives the early approval and disapproval, the nagging voice of conscience is feminine in both sexes--that voice which says, 'You are not being the success you ought to be.' The man who feels he is failing is a man who is angry with women, and angry with those values for which women stand. . . . And it is not only the man who is failing who finds himself angry with women, but also the man who is paying too high a price for his success. . . ."

[4]William Dean Howells, A Boy's Town (New York/London: Harper & Bros., 1890), p. 75.

[5]Sigourney, Child's Book, unpaged.

It is little wonder that nineteenth-century men had a difficult time coming to terms with women. To some extent the idealization of womanhood served to justify her confinement in the home, where she could remain untainted from the world as she presided over the cult of domesticity. However, this process of canonizing womanhood, and installing a halo around her head, meant that she became bigger than life at those points where her influence was still strong. Her very sanctity ruled out the possibility of questioning her authority over the conscience. Since it was not permissible to challenge such authority, feelings of resentment and hostility found no satisfactory outlet. Such feelings were very likely repressed only to find expression in indirect ways. Hostility toward women sought and found means of expression sufficiently disguised that they could be slipped by the ever-watchful and punishing conscience. It is unlikely that many men ever consciously thought of themselves as bearers of hostility toward the idealized opposite sex. And yet, this appears to be the reality of the situation.

There was, after all, a certain ambiguity in attributing to women the kind of moral strength which made her a moral barometer and watchdog over males. On the one hand, her moral monitoring was celebrated and complimented. Writing in 1847, Harvey Newcomb urged young men to

> accustom yourselves to make confidants of your sisters. Let them understand your feelings and know your designs; and pay suitable regard to their advice. By this means, you may be, saved from many a snare, and you will secure their affection and sympathy. Never form any design or engage in any enterprise, which you are ashamed to divulge to them. If you do you may be sure it will not end well.[6]

William G. Eliot also lifted up the society of women as a purifying influence, which would elevate the male character. The company of virtuous and well-educated women would teach men to find virtue attractive and sin hateful. Young men needed to associate with good women quite as much as they needed to read good books, and the neglect of either was equally dangerous. "Everyone knows that it is a good trait in a young man, to be fond of ladies' society . . . he who can enjoy the refined pleasure which comes from female society is not likely to enjoy himself in the haunts of dissipation."[7]

But, if good and virtuous women could exercise such an extraordinarily positive influence, could they not also exercise a negative, even perverse, influence? If it was really true that men were ultimately dependent on women to keep them on the straight and narrow, what judgment should be made of women who failed in that task?

---

[6]Newcomb, How to Be a Man, p. 39.

[7]Eliot, Lectures, p. 124.

Here lay the hidden catch in ascribing to women such unusual powers of influence, and such disproportionate responsibility for male morality. If she were a great power for good, she could also be the cause of a man's downfall. Men (and many women) were convinced of that. Eliot wrote,

> But in proportion as she exerts a good and purifying influence when well educated and virtuous, her influence becomes pernicious if her character is perverted. . . . When wicked, she is the most successful minister of ruin. The best things perverted, become the worst. . . . Take from woman's character her love and practice of virtue, and her presence becomes death to the soul.[8]

In the exaggeration of women as moral beings and as the keepers of morality, there was a hidden accusation: women might build men up, but they might also tear them down. To assign to the female gender such comprehensive responsibility for male morality was surely a veiled expression of anger.

Another covert expression of such hostility was the inability to forgive the female who fell from grace. Such an instance can be found in a popular novel written in 1847, Arthur Martin; or, The Mother's Trials.[9] The main character in the novel was Arthur Martin, who became the man of the house after his father's accidental death. Although

---

[8]Ibid.

[9]Charles Burdett (Esq.), Arthur Martin; or, The Mother's Trials (New York: Harper & Bros., 1847).

well meaning, Arthur began to go astray in the absence of parental control. He never thought of his mother's welfare; he spent his badly needed salary on foolish trifles; he learned to play pool, gamble, drink, and stay out for "late suppers." He began covering for himself by lying to his mother. Perhaps worst of all, Arthur arranged "accidental" meetings between Jenks, a co-worker who should have given him cause for suspicion, and his younger sister, Annie. Annie had also wandered from the paths of virtue, bewitched by her own love of "Saturday walks," and her desire to have a new shawl and hat! Both Arthur and Annie neglected their mother and lived "carefree" lives. While Arthur began stealing from his employer to pay his debts, Annie was "married" to the rotten Jenks in such secrecy that no record of the marriage was ever found. Jenks refused to support his wife. Annie very quickly came crawling back to her mother, while her brother skipped town to avoid arrest. After some passage of time, Arthur Martin returned to his mother and sister, older, wiser, and thoroughly penitent. He reported that he had served on board a whaler, and saved up enough money to repay his wronged employer. The result was that Arthur was restored to grace. He established a regular advisory relationship with Mr. Hammond, his benefactor and his father's friend, and he was restored to his former position. Arthur's mother took him back and he

became prosperous, eventually earning a partnership in Mr. Gamble's firm.

The striking element in this story was that Arthur's sister Annie did not ever experience the kind of restoration that he did. In the end, there was redemption for Arthur, with no apparent permanent penalty. To the contrary, he became a successful man. Annie, however, remained at home with her mother, paying the cost of her rebellion in a perpetual dependency, a permanent state of childhood. Her sin was so great that the most she could ever hope for was inner peace. Why was this so? No doubt it was partly due to the fact that her sin was sexual. The more serious reason for this failure of grace seemed to be that, as a woman, Annie was more responsible for herself than Arthur was. In fact, she was morally responsible for him as well!

T. S. Arthur's story What Can Woman Do? also dramatizes the decisive roles that females played for good or for evil.[10] The novel contrasts two families, the Penroses and the Eldridges. In each case, the men of the family are morally weak or faint of heart. The little boys in the story are so marginal as to be of little interest. The women of the two families clearly are completely responsible for providing moral strength in their

---

[10] Timothy Shay Arthur, What Can Woman Do? (Philadelphia: G. G. Evans, 1859 [original ed. 1856]).

respective households. Even the little girls play similar roles, becoming deeply responsible for the development of their older brothers, and significantly influencing their fathers. In one of the families, Mrs. Penrose plays an angelic, even Christlike figure of moral worth and sinlessness. In the other, Mrs. Eldridge represents the opposite--a degraded character. T. S. Arthur, writing for a female audience, was mainly interested in the weakness and dependency of the men. The negative character, Mrs. Eldridge, is nevertheless symbolic of the intensity with which women are blamed for male weakness. William Alcott summed up women's power when he wrote in The Young Man's Guide,

> If we examine the character and conduct of woman as it now is, and as history shows it to have been in other periods of the world, we shall see that much of the good and evil which has fallen upon mankind has been through the mediation of female influence.[11]

Men also felt a degree of hostility toward women as consumers. It was true that the confinement of women to the domestic "sphere" served as a symbol of the male's ability to provide. When personal prosperity could no longer be displayed in the form of fields and woodlands, barns and granaries, flocks and herds, urban men looked for other symbols to demonstrate their success. The chief

---

[11] Alcott, Young Man's Guide, p. 215.

such symbol became the housewife, who stayed at home and did not participate in the process of production.[12] Her husband, however, had to go out and meet the world each and every day. The Rev. James Bean, whose counsel for married couples was published in 1832, admonished wives not to expect too much in the way of attention from weary husbands. If her husband seemed preoccupied and failed to show affection, a woman should find reassurance in the fact that it was normal for men to become fatigued in the struggle to earn a living. Women, by implication, had an easier lot. "It is a serene region in which a woman moves; not so that into which the head of a family is often driven for the support of those who depend on him. . . ."[13] The author of Marriage As It Is and As It Should Be commented that "many gentlemen are afraid to marry, because as they affirm it, it costs so much to support a wife."[14] He lamented the fact that so many women, loaded with "trinkets and gewgaws," failed to serve as suitable companions for good men, and fell short of their calling as "ministering angels."

---

[12] Janet Saltzman Chafetz, writing in Masculine/Feminine or Human? p. 116, indicates that the growing economy of the period required high levels of consumption to maintain growth and prosperity. As production of goods became less labor intensive, women could serve the larger social purpose by staying home and becoming consumers.

[13] James Bean, The Christian Minister's Affectionate Advice to a Married Couple (New York: American Tract Society, 1832), p. 12.

[14] Beyley, Marriage, p. 142.

It seems that while men needed women at home to serve as symbols of their success, husbands not infrequently felt resentment toward the sheltered, consumer-oriented women who waited for them there. The pressures of life and work in a success-oriented age created anger in men. This anger was occasionally displaced and projected onto women, for whom, supposedly, all these pressures were endured. Some men, at least, saw women as inordinately fond of luxuries. Such women constantly added to the pressure on men who would otherwise be content with their lot. James Fenimore Cooper, writing of the classes of people who had not yet made it into the middle-class wrote,

> The men, who are nowhere so apt at imiation as the other sex, are commonly content with garments that shall denote the comfort and ease of their several conditions in life, but the females are remarkable for a more aspiring ambition.[15]

Not only did men resent women as excessive consumers, but they also criticized women for so often being "sickly." Particularly in the 1850s, men grumbled that sickly females were unpleasant companions and were often emotional burdens to their husbands. Women, some suggested,

---

[15] James Fenimore Cooper, Notions of the Americans Picked Up By a Traveling Bachelor, vol. 1 (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1963 [original ed. 1828]), p. 189. Not only men, but also women, were sometimes disturbed by women as consumers. Maria McIntosh, in Women in America, passim, deplores the pretentiousness of those who imitated European style and lavishness. She urged women to lead the way back to an appreciation of republican simplicity and unpretentious virtues.

were responsible for their unhealthy condition. Bayley wrote in a derogatory fashion about the woman who was a "whining, sickly sentimentalist," and added that

> the lady of enlightened piety will feel it a sacred duty to give the weight of her influence and example against that enervating and sinful course--that soft and needless self-indulgence, which if persisted in will make this a "nation of hospitals."[16]

A physician, Dr. Augustus K. Gardner, was even more devastatingly critical of women. In an 1860 article for The Knickerbocker magazine, Gardner declared that it was not his intention to eulogize women, but to reveal why she was "a haggard creature, dull-eyed and sallow, pinched in form, an unfit mother, not a help-meet, but a drag on the energy, spirits and resolution of her partner in life."[17] Dr. Gardner charged that women were personally accountable for their own physical decline. Part of the reason for it could be attributed to fashions that crimped and restricted proper physical activity. He described women as having become "dolls," to be "decked and draped and carried out," instead of active, working, help-meets to men. Gardner then revealed his hidden agenda. He was opposed to the movement for women's rights. He denied that he doubted

---

[16] Bayley, Marriage, p. 145.

[17] Augustus Gardner, M.D., "Physical Decline of American Women," The Knickerbocker or New-York Monthly Magazine 55 (1860): 52.

the native capacity of females. Instead, he attributed his opposition to women's lack of personal strength and independence. He condemned "her own slavery to form, and customs, and observances, from being tied down by fashion and folly. . . ."[18]

The hostility many men felt toward women was often indirectly expressed. The author of A Christian Minister's Affectionate Advice gently urged young wives, in effect, to keep out of their husbands' business. The Rev. James Bean said,

> The disposal of his time, or his property, his journeys, his connections, etc. are things to be regulated by the circumstances of his calling; a subject which probably he best understands. I cannot but advise her, therefore, for her own sake as well as his, to leave those things entirely to his management; and to remember, that it is her province to soften, to cheer, and to refresh that mind on which the weightiest cares of a family press.[19]

There was among middle-class men a fear of the clinging woman, and anxiety lest one be virtually possessed by her, as a vampire possesses its victim. What should one conclude about some man's attitudes toward women when it seemed necessary for William Alcott to warn them not to avoid "female society"? Alcott felt that there were grounds for him to admonish young men not to join in "wit or sarcasm"

---

[18] Ibid., p. 52.

[19] Bean, Affectionate Advice, p. 15.

against the female character. Are not some male attitudes toward the opposite sex exposed when Alcott must say, "Let us be careful that we do not degrade the sex, in the same manner, by disrespectful language, or actions or thoughts?"[20]

If men harbored a measure of hostility against women, women fully returned the feeling. Viewing men as simultaneously inclined to sensuality and dependent on women, females use these images against men in subtly hostile ways. Just as slaves had created their own camouflaged culture of resistance, so did nineteenth-century women. As women returned the hostility of males, there developed something of a covert "war between the sexes."

One of the most important arenas for this battle was the popular novel. Helen Papashvily has made an impressive study of such novels written by and for women in the nineteenth century.[21] She concludes that in fiction, women endlessly embarrassed, exposed, and humiliated men. Leslie Fiedler, another student of American literature, agrees. He argues that the seduction fable, for example, typically ended with the defeat of the seducer. This was

---

[20] Alcott, Young Man's Guide, p. 216.

[21] Helen Waite Papashvily, All the Happy Endings: A Study of the Domestic Novel in America, The Women Who Wrote It, The Women Who Read It, in the Nineteenth Century (New York: Harper & Bros., 1956).

a symbol of women's desire to emasculate American men.[22] Whether or not the seducer prevailed in the beginning, he was conquered in the end. Helen Papashvily adds that in the popular domestic novels, heroine and reader were united in the memory of how men boasted and swaggered and threatened and commanded. They also recalled how frequently men failed when all was said and done. Papashvily concludes that the domestic novels were handbooks of a hidden, but nonetheless real, feminine revolt against the male establishment. "These pretty tales reflected and encouraged a pattern of feminine behavior so quietly ruthless, so subtly vicious, that by comparison the ladies at Seneca appear angels of innocence."[23]

One of the few male novelists of the period who had any idea that there was a serious sex struggle going on was T. S. Arthur. Arthur sympathized with the role of women. He castigated husbands for their almost total absorption in work and business, to the detriment of their responsibilities to their families. He scolded men for their insensitivity, and urged them to be better husbands. He encouraged them to give more time and energy to their wives and children, to try to be helpful and understanding with

---

[22] Leslie A. Fiedler, Love and Death in the American Novel (New York: Criterion Books, 1960), p. 62.

[23] Papashvily, Happy Endings, p. xvii.

their spouses. Arthur wanted men to share their interests and recreation with their wives. He wanted them to learn to express their appreciation and affection more often and more directly.

Some of Arthur's writing attempted to speak to women's sense of being badly used by men. He tried to appeal to women's own quiet conviction of superiority. In What Can Woman Do? Arthur had Mrs. Eldridge express her conviction that the female sex was tougher and more determined than the male.[24] Women were stronger willed and more experienced in perseverance. They could hold out longer in any contest. Men gave up, exhausted, after awhile, but a woman would never give up. In the same novel, the two main male characters, Dr. Penrose and Mr. Eldridge, were portrayed as weak and utterly dependent on their wives. Mrs. Penrose saved their home from being sold by the mortgage-holder when her husband showed himself so spineless that he could not face up to the situation. When Mrs. Eldridge neglected her duty, her husband fell into ruin almost immediately. Their crippled little daughter, Katy, transformed into a saint by her quiet suffering, managed to redeem her otherwise helpless father. It is as though Arthur were appealing to women's conviction (or need to believe) that it was the male sex which was

---

[24] Arthur, What Can Woman Do?

really weak and dependent (effeminate). Morally, it was women who were strong and "masculine." The novel speaks to women's secretly cherished opinion that they had an indirect power to manipulate men for good or for ill. At bottom, it was women who ran things!

If women ran things at home, some at least dreamed of the possibility of influence in other areas. Catharine Sedgwick revealed her negative, if not hostile, bias toward the world of men when she wrote, "And may we not hope there will be less folly and corruption in those places where men most do congregate, when women are so educated, that men may hold more communion on their great social duties with their mothers, wives, and sisters?"[25]

One consequence of the "war between the sexes" was that men sought means of escape from women, either in fact or in fantasy. Along with the appeal of home and family life, some men experienced a fear of or revulsion against marriage. "Ik Marvel" (a pseudonym for Donald Grant Mitchell) was a popular writer of the period. He wrote a little book called Reveries of a Bachelor, in which the main character entertained a series of daydreams about the possibility of marrying.[26] While he had

---

[25] Sedgwick, Means and Ends, p. 271.

[26] Donald Grant Mitchell [Ik Marvel], Reveries of a Bachelor or A Book of the Heart (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1863 [original ed. circa 1851]).

positive and appealing fantasies about a loving wife who would be a devoted companion and comfort in trouble and sorrow, he also imagined some horrible possibilities. He might marry someone who would grow ugly with the passage of time; or a rich woman who would hold him in subjection by her wealth; or a penniless woman who might pester him for money. He might find himself married to a poor cook; or yoked to a woman who did not love him, but had married him for convenience's sake. He might be married to a woman who preferred books to housekeeping. Marvel projected all the saddest prospects of marriage. Each fantasied marriage was called off at the final moment or blighted by the death of the bride. Marvel revealed his fear of female domination and the loss of his personal freedom. Even though these "reveries" were bittersweet, the bachelor breathed a sigh of relief at the end, content to go on being as he was: free, rough, uncoralled by wife or children.

A similar story of male flight is Melville's "The Paradise of Bachelors." The short story described a dinner attended by nine bachelors in an apartment at The Temple in London. There they enjoyed plenty of food, good conversation, and apparently much to drink.

> It was the very perfection of quiet absorption of good living, good drinking, good feeling, and good talk. We were a band of brothers. Comfort--fraternal, household comfort, was the grand trait of the affair. Also, you could

> plainly see that these easy-hearted men had no wives or children to give an anxious thought. Almost all of them were travelers, too: for bachelors alone can travel freely, and without any twinges of their consciences touching desertion of the fireside.[27]

Between the lines of the bachelor's self-congratulations, or in the married man's fantasies of bachelorhood, one can read male hostility toward women. Often, a negative view of women was expressed even more directly. One author wrote, "The prosperous man has an economical and industrious wife; while the wife of the unfortunate one is an extravagant and faithless woman. . . ."[28] The same man offered the opinion that "a scold for a companion is the bane of domestic bliss, and worst of all if it be the WIFE."[29]

One of the most astonishingly open expressions of hostility toward the female sex was quoted in John Bayley's 1857 handbook on marriage. According to Bayley, the quote appeared originally in the New York Times. The article was copied with Bayley's apparent approval. It reads,

> Talk of the moralities of false issues of stocks, and the host of other fraudulent transactions! Talk of railroad manias, etc. . . . The evil is not with them. It is not in Wall-street. It is

---

[27] Herman Melville, "The Paradise of Bachelors," Selected Writings of Herman Melville (New York: The Modern Library, 1952), p. 193.

[28] Thayer, Hints, p. 36.

[29] Ibid., p. 43.

> not in banks and bankers. Look to your splendid avenues--your fine palaces, named hotels--your five thousand-dollar parties--your silks and wines--your whole system of modern American show. There you have the root of this consuming cancer--there and there only, the flesh and blood that feed its spreading poison. What is the use of wasting words on our system of business--on excessive credit--on fictitious negotiations, so long as vain and silly wives are urging on their vainer and sillier husbands to this all-endeavouring ruin! The cure is needed at home; and, until our domestic vices are reformed, we are whistling down the wind in every effort made to rectify the monstrous error. A great part of this tremendous evil is due to our women. It is hard to think it--harder to write it--but, nevertheless, it is plain, honest truth. They are the money-maelstroms--they, and their silks, wines, carpets, hangings, and equipages--and in them are swallowed up the millions that are reported in our financial disasters. Psalms for their souls--liturgies of sorrow--requiems of death--any thing in the way of thunder and lightning would be, just now, the next thing to a gospel, if it would arouse our women to arrest the enormous draughts they are making on the exchequer of the world.[30]

This was a remarkable statement. It blamed women for financial pressures on their husbands, an accusation already familiar enough. But then it blamed them for financial disasters and scandals which were disrupting the entire economy of the nation! The possession of women as symbols of one's prowess as a provider had backfired. This lovely, Christlike creature had become "all-devouring." The sexual symbolism in the statement is striking. Women were a "maelstrom," swallowing up everything; they were draining

---

[30] Bayley, Marriage, p. 141.

men dry with "the enormous draughts they are making on the exchequer of the world." Evidently the writer felt inadequate to supply the needs of this insatiable creature. Woman, when she had lost her virtue, had become completely perverse. The hostility in the article was carried so far as to wish that some violent intervention would threaten or actually destroy this creature whom no man could satisfy. That would put an end once and for all to her perverse and extravagant appetite.

In varying degrees, authors disclosed similar hostility toward women, and indicated a pattern for men's flight from females. Washington Irving illustrates something of the nature of this hostility in his story of Rip Van Winkle. This story, which first appeared as early as 1819, was the account of Rip's escape from his wife. Irving wrote, "A termagant wife may therefore, in some respects be considered a tolerable blessing; and, if so, Rip Van Winkle was thrice blessed."[31] In the eyes of Rip and of Washington Irving, woman was at her worst in the role of shrew. She was the mouthpiece of a bothersome conscience, the spokeswoman for duty, virtue, cleanliness, and respectability at their worst. Men, in the person of Rip, played the role of the absentee, and the irresponsible fugitive, who failed in all of his domestic duties. "But as to doing family duty,

---

[31] Washington Irving, The Works of Washington Irving, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1840), p. 198.

and keeping his farm in order, he found it impossible."[32] Rip made his escape from conscience and its female embodiment by falling asleep for twenty years! When he awakened and learned what had happened, and that his wife was dead, Rip

> had got his neck out of the yoke of matrimony, and could go in and out whenever he pleased, without dreading the tyranny of Dame Van Winkle. Whenever her name was mentioned, however, he shook his head, shrugged his shoulders, and cast up his eyes; which might pass either for an expression of resignation to his fate, or joy at his deliverance.[33]

James Fenimore Cooper's Leatherstocking Tales also represented a subtle hostility to women and a longing to escape their ever-vigilant scrutiny. These stories celebrated male characters who experienced adventure and isolation, and often an escape to a remote place--an island, a forest, or some mountain retreat where mothers, wives, and civilization did not intrude. It is unlikely that Cooper, the proud father of daughters, was ever consciously aware of his revolt against the feminine, but it was a covert and recurring theme in his novels. The female characters in his books were the flawless, idealized creatures whose fragile delicacy was celebrated with such extravagance in American rhetoric. Cooper has portrayed all upper-class, white, Anglo-Saxon women as sinless.

---

[32] Ibid., p. 198.

[33] Ibid., p. 205.

These wooden characters were, in a sense, his revenge against their sex. Only the supposed Indian, the symbolic voice of the unconscious, was allowed to put the male's repressed hostility into words.[34] One such character said of Faith, the character in The Wept of Wish-Ton-Wish, "'Tis a woman of the Pale-faces, and, I warrant me, one that will never be satisfied till she hath all the furs of the Americas on her back, and all the venison of the woods in her kitchen."[35] Netty Bumppo, in his perennial bachelorhood, was another symbol of Cooper's hidden protest against femininity. Since women in the nineteenth-century United States had become symbols of civilization, decency, and order, and Natty represented the primitive and free, it would have been unthinkable for him to marry. Natty's masculinity was not specifically sexual. It consisted, rather, in his strength and heroism. This kind of masculinity could never have survived in the bonds of marriage.

Men's resentment and hostility toward women was real, though usually below the level of consciousness.

---

[34] In Leslie Fiedler's opinion, in Love and Death in the American Novel, p. 190, "the Indian represents to Cooper whatever in the American psyche has been starved, whatever genteel Anglo-Saxondom has most ferociously repressed, whatever he himself had stifled to be worthy of his wife and daughters."

[35] James Fenimore Cooper, The Wept of Wish-Ton-Wish (New York: Hurd & Houghton, 1868 [original ed. 1847]), p. 292.

It was never utterable in public except so indirectly as to be ambiguous. But how was male hostility and flight reconcilable with the rhetoric of female perfection? How was it compatible with the idolization of the mother and an ethic of male protectiveness and duty to shelter the female? Certainly, according to all witnesses, women did enjoy a status that was remarkable. After traveling in a stage coach for some distance and observing the treatment of women, Harriet Martineau said,

> The degree of consideration shown to women is, in my opinion, greater than is rational, or good for either party. . . . I do not think it rational or fair that every gentleman, whether old or young, sick or well, weary or untired, should, as a matter of course, yield up the best places in the stage to any lady passenger.[36]

Martineau's observation of the deferential treatment offered to women was supported by many other witnesses. How does this square with a theory of covert male hostility? Bearing in mind that hostility was only <u>one</u> element in the total attitude of males toward women (there was also appreciation, love, a need for the feminine), it may nevertheless be useful to consider an explanation suggested by Freudian psychology.

---

[36] Martineau, <u>Society</u>, p. 284.

The phenomenon called "reaction-formation" is a mechanism of over-compensation. For example, if one feels an emotion, impulse, or attitude so unacceptable to the conscience that it is consciously inadmissible, one may censor that feeling and unconsciously over-compensate for it by manifesting a diametrically opposite emotion, impulse, or attitude. Should a man feel anger toward a person for whom anger is an unacceptable feeling, that man might adopt the pattern of reaction-formation: he may become excessively sweet and solicitous toward the object of his anger. To a nineteenth-century male, conditioned as he was to believe that woman represented all that was pure and wholesome, mother would certainly be an example of an unacceptable object of anger. Wives, sisters, and other females would share in that immunity. Nevertheless, every human being, no matter how important to us, arouses our anger at some point during a prolonged relationship. It is when such anger is inadmissible that it must be swallowed--turned inward toward oneself--or disguised. The pattern of extreme deference to women--mother-representatives--is quite likely an example of reaction-formation: anger in disguise. No one has entirely unmixed feelings toward others, particularly toward others who are super-ego figures. The deferential behavior itself suggests its opposite. Beneath the laudatory rhetoric, and mixed in

with genuine appreciation of the feminine, there was quite widespread and general resentment, hostility, and a desire to escape from women.

What should be done about men's hostility and flight? Some nineteenth-century writers tried to remedy this awful situation in what was probably precisely the wrong way: by putting pressure on the male conscience. In a December 1846 magazine short story, Mary Leman Gillies wrote a tear-jerking tale about a 22-year old wife with a small child. They lived in drab rooms on an upper floor in a large city. The young husband cared for his wife and child only in the sense that he provided the mere necessities of life, and short personal appearances. The young woman was aware that she was dying from loneliness and inattention, but she bravely swallowed her feelings, saying nothing to disturb her husband. After she dies, the husband finds the diary recording her pitiful wasting away and, of course, he reproaches himself bitterly. "He had grown up to regard women as the mere mechanics of domestic life," commented the author, "with neither necessity nor capability for higher things. . . ."[37] One cannot help but see the wife's "brave" refusal to speak to her husband of her discontent and her ultimate punishing

---

[37] Mary Leman Gillies, "The Mechanic's Wife," Mechanic's Advocate 1 (17 December 1846): 17-18.

demise as her own perverse way of evening the score--indeed of doing the absentee husband one better. The female author, portraying the neglectful husband as a callous son-of-a-bitch, returned anger for anger. The essential prerequisite for such a story was the husband for whom wife and home were to be escaped.

Fair or not, men wanted to establish some distance from females. They sought refuge in the companionship of other men. For instance, the novels of Cooper introduce, in most cases, another male in addition to the main character. Often the additional male is a companion who represents the spirit of the wilderness place. Leslie Fiedler describes the relationship between the white man, in flight from society, and the primitive man, as a kind of "pure marriage of males--sexless and holy, a kind of counter-matrimony."[38] This pure relationship was a substitute for the castration of men in heterosexual marriage. Symbolically, it restored the man to wholeness--a wholeness which had been destroyed and had become impossible in American society, where raged the battle of the polarized sexes. The relationship between the white man and the primitive companion joined the refugee from civilization to his own unconscious, without requiring the sacrifice of

---

[38] Fiedler, Love and Death, p. 209.

his freedom. The "pure marriage of males" was not to be mistaken for homosexuality as such. It was a sexless passion.

Herman Melville, in Moby Dick, also chose the model of the "pure marriage of males." Marriage to a woman would have been intolerable for Ishmael, but he could be joined to Queequeg without sacrificing his inner self. Leslie Fiedler concludes that the pure marriage of males is a protest against domesticity. It is men's way of saying "no" to women and to the role of father. It provides an alternative to families and civilized society. Fiedler believes the substitution of male companionship for the society of women is deeply appealing to the American mind and is basically congenial to the American experience.[39] This accounts for the immense appeal of such themes to the reading public. The flight of the male from women and civilization was satisfying as fantasy and cathartic as it symbolically expressed the reader's own hostilities and resentments. Finally, however, it was not to be taken seriously as real life.

For nineteenth-century middle-class men, approval and recognition of self-worth came primarily from one another. Secretive clubs like the Masons and Odd Fellows

---

[39] Ibid., p. 346.

helped to serve this purpose for middle-class men.[40] Interacting with one's fellows was considered of prime importance. It served as a frame of reference by which to evaluate other kinds of relationships. Foreign visitors and other observers reported that in some places, gambling was the favorite recreation of the gentlemen, but that it was kept extremely well out of sight. Even though it was illegal in many places, billiards were played. Men in groups liked to drink, play cards, smoke and chew tobacco--all forbidden in the presence of women.[41] These "forbidden" activities became a kind of symbol of male independence, fraternity, and quiet rebellion.

Men sought to find more elbow room, to make a comfortable distance between themselves and women. European visitors noted that even at social occasions where, in Europe, men and women would have been together, the two sexes were separated in the United States. Mrs. Trollope noted,

> In America, with the exception of dancing . . . all the enjoyments of the men are found in the absence of the women. They dine, they play

---

[40] Ronald W. Hogeland, "Charles Hodge: The Association of Gentlemen and Ornamental Womanhood: A Study of Male Conventional Wisdom, 1825-1855," Journal of Presbyterian History 53 (Fall 1975): 239.

[41] Frances Trollope, Domestic Manners of the Americans (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949 [original ed. 1832]), pp. 218-219.

> cards, they have musical meetings, they have suppers, all in large parties, but all without women.[42]

She added that mixed dinner parties of men and women were rare. The British visitor was critical of the usual dinner arrangements, where the men were nearly always grouped at one end of the table, and the women at the other. Even at balls, she said, where everything was most lavish and expensive, it was not uncommon for the gentlemen to sit down to dinner in one room while the women ate, standing, in another. Of New York dinner parties, Thomas Hamilton, the Scots visitor, confirmed her observations.[43] Trollope concluded,

> The two sexes can hardly mix for the greater part of a day without great restraint and ennui; it is quite contrary to their general habits; the favourite indulgences of the gentlemen (smoking cigars and drinking spirits) can neither be indulged in with decency, nor resigned with complacency.[44]

The alienation of the sexes from one another had social as well as personal significance. Males not only experienced a desire to escape from the dominion of women; they also tended to separate themselves from those aspects

---

[42] Ibid.

[43] Hamilton, in Men and Manners, p. 118, says that "it is not the fashion to invite the fairer part of creation to entertainments so gross and substantial, and it rarely happens that any ladies are present on such occasions, except those belonging to the family of the host."

[44] Trollope, Domestic Manners, p. 299.

of life which had become associated with the feminine. Two specific examples are religion and "culture." "Culture" is not used here in the sociological definition of the word. Rather, "culture" is meant to describe those things popularly lumped together under the rather inaccurate label: "culture." For example, it is common for people to group under that category, literature, the arts, humane learning, and music. Cut off from religion and "culture," as defined above, men viewed both patronizingly. Once again, they became losers for it. They became alienated from those aspects of their humanity which permitted, approved, and blessed sensitivity. They became alienated from that part of human experience which offered more holistic and humane ways of weighing values than those provided by the priorities of business or pragmatism. Men sought to protect their precarious masculinity by disowning the feminine and everything associated with femininity. In their defensiveness, they diminished the boundaries of their humanity, narrowed the roles available to them, committed themselves to a world where only success counted, and set themselves up to become Philistines. They could not so limit themselves without experiencing both loss and anger over their loss. That anger, when turned inward, became a heavy personal burden; when turned outward, it found a convenient target in women and everything identified with the feminine.

Until the nineteenth century, both religion and that which is popularly called "culture" (humane learning, literature, art, music) had been acceptably masculine in character. Not only did men dominate the church as an institution, but they considered religious faith to have a significant bearing on issues of importance to the public. It was the common pattern for churches and clergy to address issues which concerned society as a whole--including political issues--and to be taken seriously.[45] It was seldom considered that religious spokesmen should restrict themselves to some limited, fenced-off area of life. However, the period between 1820 and 1860 was one in which both religion and culture became more and more firmly removed from association with the masculine, and were increasingly located almost exclusively within the female "sphere."[46]

---

[45] During the Puritan ascendancy, it was certainly the pattern for religious leaders to apply theological reflection to practical public issues. As the American Revolution approached, it continued to be a common practice for ministers and church bodies to address issues before society. Rosemary Reuther, a theologian and church historian, has written, in a book co-authored with Eugene C. Bianchi, From Machismo to Mutuality: Essays on Sexism and Woman-Man Liberation (New York/Paramus, N.J./Toronto: Paulist Press, 1976), p. 18, that "between the 17th and 19th centuries secularism eroded the established relationship of Church and state and relocated religious life in the private sphere of personal life. . . . The Church, too, gradually found itself located primarily in the private domestic sphere as an extension of the home rather than in the public sphere as spiritual mentor of kings."

[46] See, for example, Ann Douglas, The Feminization of American Culture (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977); and Barbara Welter, "The Feminization of American Religion:

All of the marginal interests of men gradually came to be permanently associated with one another: women, religion, the domestic, and "culture." Lumped together on the periphery, safely within the feminine "sphere," these values and interests received at least some indirect recognition of worth as they were stored away in the keeping of women against some possible need for them another time. While men became steadily more preoccupied with business and politics, religious faith and culture became associated with femininity and stamped with inferiority in fact, though not in rhetoric. Religion and culture began to be altered in character in order to speak to the special circumstances of a caste of people to whom the mainstream of life was closed. Mrs. Trollope and Harriet Martineau were among those who commented on the symbiotic relation that had developed between women and the clergy. Trollope declared that she "never saw, or read, of any country where religion had so strong a hold upon the women, or a slighter hold upon the men."[47] On Sunday in New York, the churches were almost entirely full of women, while the parks were full of men. Wrote Trollope,

---

1800-1860," in Clio's Consciousness Raised: New Perspectives on the History of Women, eds. Mary S. Hartman and Lois Banner (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), p. 137.

[47] Trollope, Domestic Manners, p. 75.

> It is impossible not to feel, after passing one Sunday in the churches and chapels of New York, and the next in the gardens of Hoboken, that the thousands of well-dressed men you see enjoying themselves at the latter, have made over the thousands of well-dressed women you saw exhibited at the former, into the hands of the priests, at least for the day.[48]

Martineau believed that at least the better sort of clergy must have regretted, as she did, "the evil of women being driven back upon religion as a resource against vacuity; and of there being a professional class to administer it."[49] In her opinion, clergymen were not ordinarily taken seriously in matters that had to do with the life of the world. They were considered by sophisticated people to be naive and insulated. One man said to her, "You know the clergy are looked upon by all grown men as a sort of people between men and women."[50]

The church and its clergy appealed to their predominant constituency by privatizing the faith and narrowing it to the concerns of the domestic. Some ministers recognized what was happening and protested it. Writing in 1840, E. H. Chapin appealed to young men not to consider religion to be confined to church and family.

---

[48] Ibid., p. 345.

[49] Martineau, Society, p. 354.

[50] Ibid., p. 352.

> Are human responsibility and exposure limited to any one sphere of action--to the church or to the domestic circle--or to the range of the gross and sensual passions? Are not men daily making shipwreck of their conscience in trade and politics? And wheresoever conscience goes to work out its perilous problem, shall not the preacher follow it?[51]

Chapin confessed to being unable to understand how preachers could feel they must steer clear of great issues just because they had been labeled as having to do with business, social issues, or politics. His contention was that the church should address any and all issues of life in society, as it had been accustomed to doing in western society from time immemorial.

Clerical defensiveness about the association of religious faith and the sphere of women was expressed occasionally. Such a posture implied that to be linked with the feminine was indeed a badge of inferiority. In an 1837 sermon, the Rev. Jonathan Stearns said, "It is the standing sneer of the infidel, and his last resort when arguments fail, that the religion of Christ is chiefly prevalent among women, and chiefly indebted to them for its spread. . . ."[52] In 1857, the Rev. John Bayley

---

[51] Chapin, Duties of Young Men, p. 135.

[52] Jonathan F. Stearns, "Female Influence, and the True Christian Mode of Its Exercise: A Discourse Delivered in the First Presbyterian Church in Newburyport, July 30, 1837," in Up From the Pedestal, ed. Kraditor, p. 48.

admitted, however, that "more than two-thirds of the pious belong to the female sex."[53]

During this period, religious faith began to be associated, as women were, with passivity, dependence, resignation, submission, and self-sacrifice. Religion and women alike were seldom identified with strength, action, or confidence. Nineteenth-century religion began to emphasize feelings and the softer emotions, accenting the tendency of the period toward sentimentalization and anti-intellectualism. If to know God was a matter of feeling, inspiration, and sensitivity, then a theological training, or a knowledge of Greek and Hebrew were superfluous. Thus the feminization of religion supported revivalism and undermined clerical authority. The association of religious faith with the feminine sphere linked morality and femininity in such a way as to minimize the relation of morality to the masculine sphere of interests--at least in the popular mind. The church, like women, became a symbol of the ability of men to provide. In the eyes of men, the church had become a consumer rather than a partner in creative production. Those churches which consumed most impressively reflected favorably on the status of their members, thus offering a means of establishing or enhancing one's social standing. The church's

---

[53] Bayley, Marriage, p. 98.

mission in this period was characterized by organizations concerned with purity, temperance, education, foreign missionary work, and moral reform--often extensions of particularly feminine interests. The church had become an extension of the domestic sphere and its values. It had become the spokesman of an oppressed caste: women. Although men ran the religious institutions, women used activity in the church as a means to exert power and influence. The church became another element in women's culture of resistance, just as it was for blacks.

The consequence of the removal of religion from the masculine "sphere" was that religious faith came to be regarded as utterly separate from larger social concerns. It was irrelevant to those matters which preoccupied men. Its advocates were forbidden to "meddle" in any areas not basically private or domestic.[54] Religious institutions were believed to be, along with women, irrelevant to the "real" life of the world. Furthermore, they were dismissed as incompetent to influence that life of which, in their innocence, they could know nothing.

For many nineteenth-century men, reading and culture had become resources for "self-improvement," and had only a utilitarian purpose. There was little sense of "art for art's sake," or for beauty's sake, or for the sake of

---

[54] See Bianchi and Reuther, Machismo to Mutuality, p. 20.

cultivating one's essential humanity. The Rev. John Todd illustrated this point of view in his Students' Manual.

> Music, painting, drawing, and the like, are appropriate and very desirable, in their places; but how many have wasted their time in the pursuit, and thus not merely thrown away their opportunities for making solid attainments, but acquired wrong habits which clung to them through life![55]

A young American entrepreneur named Ullman, who became a promoter for a European concert pianist on tour in the United States, offered the following definition of music: "Music is the art of drawing into a given hall, by means of accessories which often become principals, as great a number of curious people as possible and in such a way that the receipts will exceed the expenses."[56] Certainly there were others who placed a value on culture and education more than strictly utilitarian. Todd and Ullman expressed unusually crass points of view. And yet, they were in touch with the spirit of the age. For males, "culture" and education had to be justified. If they did not produce a profit or put one in a position to seize some potential advantage, they were not likely to be valued or considered sufficiently "masculine." They slipped over the line into the feminine "sphere," and any male who pursued them there ran the risk of slipping over that line himself.

---

[55] Todd, Students' Manual, p. 181.

[56] Handlin, This Was America, p. 192.

CHAPTER IV

MEN AND SEXUALITY

There is no question but that for middle-class people, both men and women, sexuality was seriously repressed during the nineteenth century. The prevailing mythology held that women were only minimally interested in sex. It was clearly understood, however, that men--particularly young men--often experienced urgent sexual needs. Spokesmen during this time expressed anxiety lest male sexuality not be adequately restrained. Should adequate controls not be exercised, men were in danger of becoming a threat to women, to the prevailing social goals, and to themselves. Masturbation, or "solitary gratification," was particularly condemned. Nevertheless, it was not masturbation only that was feared. Any sexual expression--including lawful intercourse within marriage--posed a danger if carried to excess. The awful consequences of sexual excess included both physical and mental deterioration, extending even to subsequent generations.

These anti-sexual themes were articulated with special passion by the Rev. Sylvester Graham and William Alcott, M.D. Their outspokenness on these matters draws

the attention of the student, with the possible danger that their opinions might obscure other men's points of view about sex. It is quite possible that many middle-class men expressed their sexuality in ways quite opposed to the principles of Graham or Alcott. In fact, the near-hysteria of these two about sexual excess, masturbation, and purity strongly indicates that such was the case. Nevertheless, these spokesmen do repeat with fidelity the sexual warnings which can be found in the writings of other articulate people. In other literature, however, the warnings are rarely so specific or explicit. Nevertheless, they do not differ in kind so much as in tone. Most literature of this period demonstrates both directly and by omission, the same discomfort with sexual themes, the same suppression of sexuality, the same concern for purity and for control. Graham and Alcott simply deal more directly with these themes than others do.

All nineteenth-century opinions about sexuality have in common the age-old conviction that by nature, men are more highly sexed than women. Beneath all the controls imposed by society and its values, an almost irrepressible passion boils. In fact, the idealization of women between 1820 and 1860 had the effect of heightening sensitivity to male concupiscence. While females were, according to the conventional wisdom, pure and holy, men bore the burden of

all the negative sexual stereotypes. Sexuality became exclusively of the male "sphere." Alcott insisted that "wherever impurity can be found, man is, directly or indirectly, the cause."[1]

There was a special concern, not surprisingly, for the dangers of youth. It was believed that sexual urges became most demanding in young men who, if they could not restrain themselves, might seriously threaten the dominant values. It was in young manhood, wrote the Rev. Joel Hawes, that "the passions, budding and hastening to ripeness, acquire a new vigor, become impatient of restraint, and eager for gratification."[2] Young men posed a particular threat to themselves for two reasons: their sensual passions were strong, and they were less practiced in self-control. T. S. Arthur warned that too many young men thought they could "run into various excesses, and indulge themselves inordinately in sensual pleasures for a few years, during the brighter days of their early springtime, and, after that, assume the more important and real business of life."[3] Arthur was convinced that young men who believed they could sow their wild oats first and become respectable later were mistaken. Either they would injure

---

[1]Alcott, Young Husband, p. 249.

[2]Hawes, Lectures, p. 36.

[3]Arthur, Advice, p. 21.

their health, or form habits that would make it impossible for them ever to become respectable or successful. In nineteenth-century America, sexual passion always meant danger; and those most likely to fall victim to it were those who most needed to hoard their energies and steel themselves to attack life aggressively.

For the middle-classes, who were devoted to the energetic pursuit of success, it was terribly important that male sexuality be effectively controlled. Both social restraints and virtuous woman were expected to serve the cause. In the literature of the period there frequently appear anxious warnings and condemnations of licentiousness, sensuality, and forbidden pleasures. Although the common image of the Jacksonian male is of a strait-laced, puritanical character who always kept the fastidious sexual rules laid down for him, his lapses from that model were not insignificant. Prostitution was sufficiently visible to the public that it earned condemnations and became the special target of reform movements.[4] Neither was the nineteenth century without its share of illegitimate births. Writers like T. S. Arthur believed that far too many young

---

[4]See, for example, Carroll Smith Rosenberg, "Beauty, the Beast . . ."; and Charles E. Rosenberg, "Sexuality, Class and Role in Nineteenth-Century America," American Quarterly 25 (May 1973): 131-153.

men were dangerously self-indulgent. He offered the following advice: "Let a young man, then, keep his desires, his appetites, and his passions, under proper subjection, and he will be in no danger of running into those excesses which sow in his physical system the seeds of all diseases."[5]

Sexual excess was considered dangerous for any man, young or not, married or unmarried, but unmarried men ran extraordinary risks. Sylvester Graham suggested that premarital sex was a greater threat to health than intercourse within marriage, because for the unmarried man, sex was bound to be more exciting! The greater excitement was apparently related to the presumption that for the unmarried man, sexual contact was infrequent. Nevertheless, even the married man must be careful. Graham urged husbands to keep a rein on their sexual appetites. He was ready with a carefully planned program to help men do just that. A proper regimen of work, sleep, and exercise formed part of his discipline, but diet was important too. Graham promised that "a pure and well regulated vegetable diet serves to take away or prevent all morbid or preternatural lust."[6] Graham denounced what he called "connubial intemperance,"

---

[5]Arthur, Advice, p. 152.

[6]Graham, A Lecture, p. 187.

predicting that it would bring down terrible consequences upon a man, his wife, and even their children.

For the risk that one ran when indulging in sexual excess affected not only oneself; it extended to one's posterity as well. An article quoted in the Graham Journal warned that "it is not unfrequent, yes, it is common, for the effects of this sin in parents, to be felt for several generations, in the shattered constitution, and vicious propensities and the feeble health of their children."[7] It was Graham's personal opinion that a healthy and robust man who wanted to avoid sexual excess should probably not have intercourse more than once a month. Certainly, if he indulged himself more often than once a week, the penalty would be dreadful.

Despite all the warnings against licentiousness and sexual excess, it was difficult for the nineteenth-century male not to discover somehow, in spite of all the rhetoric of purity, that the age-old, predatory male ethos applied to him.[8] Perhaps it was in the denunciation of it that he learned that, from time immemorial, physical strength and aggressive sexual behavior were characteristic of real he-men. However he absorbed it, the young male knew that the

---

[7]Quoted from the Journal of Public Morals in the Graham Journal 1:7 (1837): 56.

[8]Charles E. Rosenberg, "Sexuality," p. 145.

image of the absolutely pure-minded gentleman who had never felt the slightest trace of sexual passion could not possibly describe him. The frequent warnings themselves must have drawn attention to the urgency of his own physical needs.

American women sensed the continued powerful presence of the traditional masculine ethos and were hostile to it. This ancient masculine sexual code was considered to be inimical to the interests of females. Certainly it was contrary to society's explicitly avowed values of purity and domesticity.

Some women set out to expose and uproot this covert masculine ethos. The New York Female Reform Society's newspaper, The Advocate of Moral Reform, had as a major theme the "angry and emphatic insistence upon the lascivious and predatory nature of the American male."[9] The Society believed that mothers, who were in fact doing nearly all the child rearing in any case, should take special pains to see that they, and not their husbands, supervised the sex education of their sons. If done conscientiously and carefully, a mother could train her sons in such a way as to protect him from learning the age-old aggressive sexual ethos of masculinity, and accept feminine ideas of sexuality instead. The power of the mother could ultimately be used

---

[9]Carroll Smith Rosenberg, "Beauty, the Beast . . . ," p. 570.

to reshape male sexuality in such a way as to make men safer and more acceptable to women.

Other women reshaped the masculine image fictionally by creating models of ideal masculine figures. The ideal male, according to many such authors, was religious, gentle, solicitous, solidly moral, and had total control over any sexual impulses he might, or might not, have. As such, he was, of course, no threat to women or to himself.[10]

---

[10] See, for example, Helen Papashvily's study of the nineteenth-century domestic novel, All the Happy Endings. Papashvily finds that it was common for women who wrote the sentimental novels to "maim" the male sex in one way or another to render them harmless to women. She remarks, for example, that "few whole men appeared in Mrs. Hentz's [Mrs. Carline Lee Hentz] novels. . . . Heroines found it easier to love a man if, like Marcus Warland, he was stricken with fever." (p. 91)

Other women novelists removed the husband entirely. Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth typically described men who deserted their wives and went off to war, the legislature, the far West, or "some equally remote corner of the world and stayed there until needed for the dramatic reunion in the closing chapter. . . ." (p. 116)

Another way of rending the male harmless was demonstrated in Mrs. Southworth's technique of centering her stories around a "child bride," a wife "in name only." "Mrs. Southworth's child brides were the pampered, petted darlings of compliant and undemanding old men--with a comfortable, independent widowhood in reversion." (p. 117).

In much of the literature, men were rendered harmless to women by the male's own perfectly controlled commitment to a pure and noble-hearted chastity of mind. The chaste male, who offered women protection and an elevated kind of companionship, was, of course, an idealized image rather than a commonplace figure in real life.

Even some male authors were sensitive to the threat posed by aggressive male sexuality both to women and to society, and urged men to exercise personal control.[11] Many believed that one could control both body and mind by an effort of will.[12] Control of appetites was considered essential to prevent the unleashing of forces destructive to the values of the Jacksonian social order. The uncontrolled seeker of pleasure was the enemy of God and potentially inimical to an ordered society.[13] The dangers to order posed by the indulgence of sexual appetites seemed perhaps most threatening among the lower classes and immigrants who lived crowded into urban areas, and followed sexual standards different from the native-born, middle class. The middle-class establishment tried to reshape the sexual mores of these other classes by means of reform efforts such as those of the American Tract Society.[14]

But if sexual excess, and aggressive male sexuality, and alien mores posed a threat to men, women, and society, so did "solitary gratification." One of the more persistent

---

[11] Eliot, Lectures, p. 126.

[12] Newcomb, How to Be a Man, pp. 101-102.

[13] Harvey George Neufeldt, "The American Tract Society, 1825-1865: An Examination of Its Religious, Economic, Social, and Political Ideas" (Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1971), pp. 274-275.

[14] Ibid., p. 286.

themes running through the literature of the Jacksonian era was that of masturbation phobia.[15] In 1833, William Alcott

---

[15] According to Robert Sunley, in "Early Nineteenth-Century American Literature on Child Rearing," in Childhood in Contemporary Cultures, eds. Margaret Mead and Martha Wolfenstein (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1955), pp. 157-158, "European doctors were apparently the originators of such warnings, at least in the literature. The European works referred to by American writers were by Tissot, Hufeland, and Lallmand, all of whom wrote between 1760 and 1836."

G. J. Barker-Benfield, in The Horrors of the Half-Known Life: Male Attitudes Toward Women and Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century America (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), p. 167, says that masturbation phobia emerged in Britain in the early 1700s, amid conditions similar to nineteenth-century America. "But pervasive and obsessive masturbation phobia in America took hold during the early nineteenth century, possibly in the early 1830's, and was extraordinarily intense through the first third of the twentieth century."

Barker-Benfield's discussion of masturbation is carried on largely in the context of an analysis of the life and work of the Rev. John Todd. In Todd's writings, Barker-Benfield has discovered, he believes, frequent indirect, Freudian clues to Todd's preoccupation with masturbation. Barker-Benfield develops his discussion of masturbation and masturbation-phobia in two main ways: (1) He considered masturbation to be a response to the pressures of democracy, in which personal identity had been obscured by the loss of every measure of worth except for achievement. Men masturbated apparently to reassure themselves of their basic masculinity. (2) Barker-Benfield developed the idea that subconsciously, men had made an identification between the economic system and their own male sexual physiology. He cites the fact that in the nineteenth century, ejaculation was described as "spending." Thus, masturbation (spending) threatened the basic values to which nineteenth-century males were devoted: values which centered around accumulation rather than expenditure. The anti-mastubation spokesmen unconsciously translated masturbatory practice into economic terms and saw it as running counter to the careful pattern of husbanding resources for the sake of success.

My own discussion of masturbation differs from Barker-Benfield's mainly in emphasis. His study, which considers the entire nineteenth century, probes individual

described the horrible consequences of masturbation: physical illness, insanity, and divine punishment.[16] Writers often denounced "reverie," day-dreaming or fantasizing that all too often led to masturbation. Indeed, according to Sylvester Graham, even if they did not,

> . . . LASCIVIOUS DAY-DREAMS, and amorous reveries, in which young people too generally--and especially the idle, and the voluptuous, and the sedentary, and the nervous--are exceedingly apt to indulge, are often the sources of general debility, effeminacy, disordered functions, and permanent disease, and even premature death, without the actual exercise of the general organs![17]

Masturbation, otherwise variously described as "solitary gratification," "self-pollution," and "onanism," was said to be "wholly unnatural."[18] Among the supposed causes leading to masturbation were the pernicious influence of servants, and influences in public schools, boarding schools, and colleges.[19] The worst physiological effects of masturbation were said to be black teeth, pimples,

---

personalities using a Freudian analysis to demonstrate masturbation phobia and hostility toward women. My study is more interested in how masturbation, and sexuality in general, relates to masculine roles. I find most of his arguments plausible, but somewhat exaggerated.

[16] Alcott, Young Man's Guide.

[17] Graham, A Lecture, p. 59.

[18] Ibid., p. 88.

[19] Ibid., p. 92. See also Sunley, "Literature on Child Rearing," p. 158.

hardness of hearing, cancer, and death.[20] The emotional penalties included the possibility of being haunted by unclean thoughts and eventual insanity.[21] The masturbator would become melancholy and even suicidal. Furthermore, the genital organs would likely wither away and become useless.[22] Even if one who indulged in this terrible vice should mend his ways, he would nevertheless be afflicted to some degree. If they were not aborted, the masturbator's children could be expected to be weak and puny, and susceptible to disease and death.[23] Dr. Edward Jarvis, a physician at a New York mental asylum, blamed men for excesses of all kinds. He reported from his experience that men, more often than women, could trace the cause of their insanity to vice, sensuality, intemperance, and masturbation.[24]

The frequent suggestion that masturbation would lead to insanity may have been the result of pure speculation. Certainly, many people had an emotional vested interest in believing that some catastrophe must inevitably follow such

---

[20] Graham, A Lecture.

[21] Alcott, Young Man's Guide; Ray, Mental Hygiene (especially p. 275); Jarvis, "On the Comparative Liability of Males and Females to Insanity."

[22] Graham, A Lecture.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Jarvis, "Comparative Liability."

wicked behavior. There are, however, other possible explanations for the linking of masturbation and insanity. For instance, sensuality was frequently associated with "excitement" of other kinds. Medical doctors warned that excessive "excitement" produced dangerous stress on the mind as well as on the body.[25] It may have seemed inevitable that such repeated self-indulgence would prove too much strain on the nervous system.

Still another possible explanation for the frequent linking of masturbation with insanity may be related to the creation and expansion of mental institutions during this period. It is a logical presumption that in an institutional setting--particularly in a mental asylum where privacy is seldom provided for, and where inhibitions are often relaxed--masturbation will be observed occasionally.[26] No direct evidence of such observation is available for this study. Nevertheless, it remains a serious probability that medical observers were likely to have seen and noted masturbation in their patients.

---

[25] Amariah Brigham, M.D., Remarks on the Influence of Mental Cultivation and Mental Excitement upon Health, 2nd ed. (Boston: Marsh, Capen & Lyon, 1833); and also Jarvis, "Comparative Liability," especially pp. 150, 151, 157, and 358-359; and Ray, Mental Hygiene, pp. 158-159, 222-223.

[26] This line of argument is merely a logical deduction suggested by my own experience working as an aide at the Yale Psychiatric Institute in 1960-61. It was not uncommon for patients being held in seclusion, for example, to be observed masturbating--sometimes in a condition of sexual frenzy.

Such observation would not have been so likely before the rise of mental asylums.

Outside of an institutional setting, masturbation is more often presumed than actually seen. Seeing "insane" persons masturbate may have led to a conclusion in the minds of observers that went something like this: since the insane masturbated, those who masturbated might become insane. In any case, the association of masturbation and insanity was consistent. It seems as though every symptom which could be seen in the mentally ill was used to warn the young against "solitary gratification."

That there was shame and guilt connected with masturbation cannot be doubted. Shame and guilt can be attributed not only to the frequent warnings against it, which most often must have come too late, but to the conspiracy of silence about all things sexual. From no person of authority--parent, teacher, or minister--was the young boy likely to receive any kind of intelligent explanation of the true function of the genital organs. No doubt this heavily loaded silence on a subject of great curiosity was in part an attempt on the part of adults to preserve the child's innocence and protect him from temptation.

Since sex, in the minds of adults, was associated with concepts such as "duty," or making concessions to one's baser nature, it was rarely if ever considered an

innocent and potentially joyful experience. The conspiracy of silence about an area of life which the parents associated with shame probably created in most children an instinctive awareness that this was a forbidden area. They could sense that it was heavily burdened with frightening emotions.

At school, it is probable that the boy would acquire his first sexual knowledge in whispers and amid snickers, confirming his earlier impression that sex was basically nasty. His first experiences of sexual pleasure would have heightened the conflict and tension in his own mind, and activated his sense of guilt. This guilt would be reinforced when, at puberty, he suddenly became exposed to solemn warnings and vague lectures about "uncleanness" of body and mind. By this time the boy, who may already have experienced nocturnal emissions or masturbated, was vulnerable to any and all dire threats of physical and mental disaster. Despite every warning, he may have been powerless to avoid the forbidden.

One can imagine the fears, shame, and conflict which would have accompanied many a young man into marriage, where he took as his wife a young woman who, in popular belief at least, was utterly chaste of mind. Emotional conflict was bound to lie at the very heart and center of the most intimate married relationship.

If masturbation by males was associated with shame and guilt, it was considered even more horrible when practiced by females. The common mythology, after all, held that the female sex drive was low. "Nice" women were sexual beings only for the sake of satisfying the needs of their husbands or for procreation. It is predictable, then, that masturbation by women would hold a particular horror and earn a special contempt. In an article strongly complaining about the sickly and self-indulgent condition of many American women, a physician suggested that the cause was masturbation.

> Why hesitate to say plainly and without quibble that personal abuse lies at the root of much of the feebleness, nervousness, pale, waxen-facedness and general good-for-nothingness of the entire community? . . . This is one of the greatest evils of our boarding-school educational system.[27]

Masturbating women both defied the common images of the feminine and insulted men by calling their adequacy into question. The same writer who accused women of "self-abuse" also charged them with resorting to abortion and contraception, which he equated with infanticide. By their vile practices, such women threatened the health and welfare of their unborn children. They also threatened to disrupt the generation of white, middle-class sons and heirs. Husbands could not consider such practices with equanimity.

---

[27] Gardner, "Physical Decline," p. 45.

Masturbation may well have suggested the fearful possibility that the two sexes, already polarized in terms of sex roles, might become autonomous, neither needing the other. Masturbation, after all, is a kind of "self-reliance" carried further than expected by those who sang such virtues. If men were to become "self-made," without help from anyone, might they not eventually withdraw from women altogether? Might they not forsake home, family, and all that held society together and guaranteed its future? According to psychologist June Singer, masturbation can be a kind of androgynous experience, in which the masturbator is both the lover and the beloved simultaneously.[28] From childhood and youth, masturbation is a kind of declaration of independence from the unnecessary partner. It can also be an act of self-assertion against super-ego figures such as parents. In masturbation one is not bound by the needs of interest of another. The conflict and anxiety at the heart of marriage in the nineteenth century, centered in the sexual transactions of husband and wife, were sufficient to arouse fears that some men would foreswear matrimony completely. It was men who were threatening the social order by their ambition and acquisitiveness. It was men who had established political

---

[28] June Singer, Androgyny: Toward a New Theory of Sexuality (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1976), p. 305.

autonomy, and perhaps they who had repudiated the political authority of Great Britain would also forsake their heterosexual obligations. Men had removed themselves from many of the domestic roles that they had previously accepted, and who could say that they would not break those ties altogether? Such fears of the development of a sexual autonomy were not, so far as I know, expressed directly or explicitly during this period, but it is possible that they underlay the extreme anxiety over masturbation. Such fears are further indicated by the frequently expressed concern that men were not marrying as soon as they ought.

As noted in an earlier chapter, many observers during the period expressed a discomfort about men's slowness and apparent reluctance to settle down and get married. Men were advised to marry young, and were scolded for believing that they needed to become settled in their careers first. Some, like William Alcott, urged early marriage as a remedy for "solitary gratification." The Rev. George Quinby recited a whole stream of arguments in favor of early marriage (age 21 for men, 18 for women), as though he expected considerable resistance. Furthermore, everyone should marry. Quinby expressed his anxiety over male autonomy when he wrote in 1852,

> There are men in society in our day--men who voluntarily choose a state of isolated loneliness--violating the laws of nature, and

> becoming very sour and dreary as time adds to their wrinkles, and no wife or children are near to smile upon and comfort them. . . .[29]

Harriet Martineau was struck by the number of American men who delayed marriage in the middle period of the nineteenth century. She offered the opinion that "men do not choose to marry early, because they have learned to think other things more important than the best comforts of domestic life."[30] Martineau noted the number of New England women married to men old enough to be their fathers. She attributed this to the absence of young men due to westward migration, making it necessary for young women to marry widowers twice their age.

Many commentators believed that men postponed marriage because of the luxury and rivalry of fashion and the indolence and extravagance of young women. In an introduction to the American edition of a French romantic novel, Timothy Flint justified the need for the translation when he declared that "our country swarms with bachelors, the most useless of the bipeds, and, apparently, only born to eat up the corn."[31] It would not have been surprising, amidst all the strenuous advice that men work, save, and

---

[29] Quinby, Duties, p. 23.

[30] Martineau, Society, p. 300.

[31] Timothy Flint, The Bachelor Reclaimed, or Celibacy Vanquished (Philadelphia: Key & Biddle, 1834), p. iii.

make their fortunes, had young men of character put off marriage for years. Statistics of the period do not show with precision whether men were actually delaying marriage or remaining unmarried in significant numbers or not. Probably there was a gradual increase in age of men at marriage, but this was primarily true mostly of urban dwellers and the more affluent classes.[32] There is no doubt, however, that concerned observers had the impression that there were more bachelors and that many men were delaying marriage--an impression sufficient to arouse anxiety. This anxiety can be linked to masturbation phobia, probably unconsciously and indirectly, at the point where some observers had become unsettled about the polarization of the sexes. At an irrational level of the mind, they feared the development of male sexual autonomy. This fear

---

[32] Referring to the nineteenth century, Thomas P. Monahan wrote in The Pattern of Age at Marriage in the United States, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Stephenson-Brothers, 1951), p. 104 and pp. 112-113, that "increasing singleness and delay in marriage called forth public comment, but remarks to this effect must be appreciated as probably not applying generally, but to urban dwellers and certain special classes. . . . Genealogical studies extending back to the colonial period would seem to show a probable slight upward trend in the age at marriage up to 1900, but allowance must be made for some bias in the data. . . . All in all, the data are not sufficient to draw a satisfactory conclusion respecting any large area or segment of our population. It may be that the upper classes, who form a small part of the population, may have delayed their marriage since Colonial times, but what happened in the general population cannot be known from the studies. . . ."

partially accounts for the extreme intensity and uneasiness centered around masturbation.

It is not surprising that there was anxiety in this period focused on the whole area of sexuality. What happens to the innocence and mutuality of sex in marriage when woman is spiritualized to an extent that she is more angel than flesh and blood human being? And how can there be an easy and simple sexual relationship between man and wife when she has become a super-ego figure--a surrogate, as far as the male conscience is concerned, for Mother? Here was a problematic situation. In her innocence and in her role as moral figure and Mother, no man could make love to a woman without arousing an Oedipal conflict. Though permitted and licensed, sex in marriage bordered emotionally on the forbidden. How could it be enjoyed with a free conscience? The answer, of course, is that it was not. It was suffused with a sense of shame and guilt. How could a man marry, and take to bed, an angel or Mother? Melville had his character Pierre reflect,

> This to be my wife? . . . I to wed this heavenly fleece? Methinks one husbandly embrace would break her airy zone, and she exhale upward to that heaven whence she hath hither come, condensed to mortal sight. It cannot be; I am of heavy earth, and she of airy light. By heaven, but marriage is an impious thing![33]

---

[33] Herman Melville, Pierre or, The Ambiguities (New York: Hendricks House, Inc., 1962 [original ed. 1852]), p. 68.

This conflict represented the backfiring of the development of polarized sex roles in which the female was required to play out in real life an idealized identity. Having been given charge of the male conscience, and become responsible for his morality and virtue, she could hardly also play the part of sexual partner without causing her male spouse shame and guilt. If she were more angel than human being, woman should inspire awe and worship rather than sexual desire. Love, then, became detached from sex. If woman was at some level of the mind, feared and forbidden, then what legitimate beloved was there other than the self? It may well have been that masturbation was particularly disturbing because it was intuitively sensed that it could be a potentially disastrous flight from the forbidden woman.

Some anxiety about sex--both masturbation and sexual "excess" within marriage--was related to physiological theories of the times. It was generally believed that the body was a closed system. If energy were drained from one part, other parts of the physical system could become debilitated. Or, if one organ were overstimulated, it could cause damage to other parts of the system. In his Lectures to Young Men, Henry Ward Beecher warned his audience,

> Experience shows that, within certain bounds, excitement is healthful and necessary, but beyond this limit exhausting and destructive. Men are allowed to choose between moderate but long-continued excitement and intense but short-lived excitement. Too generally they prefer the latter.[34]

Beecher described various vices in terms of the degrees of "excitement" they aroused. He wrote of flushed cheeks and the "heat" of excitement as though all vices--gambling, drinking, the theater--were all sexual at bottom. Medical doctors responsible for treating the insane often described the "excitement" of the fast-moving times in almost sexual terms.[35] Whatever the source of excitement, it threatened to debilitate the physical system, but most especially the brain. Sensual excitement, according to another author, quickened the action of the brain and burned it out prematurely. "The results," he said, "are hundreds of painful diseases, which shorten life, hasten death, and burden the soul with unspeakable guilt."[36]

The excessive use of an organ such as the brain could cause the depletion of vital energies.[37] The

---

[34] Henry Ward Beecher, Twelve Lectures to Young Men, on Various Important Subjects (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1901 [original ed. 1852]), pp. 106-107.

[35] Brigham, Remarks, p. 88; Jarvis, "Comparative Liability," p. 359; Ray, Mental Hygiene, pp. 158-195.

[36] Van Doren, Mercantile Morals, p. 341.

[37] Ray, Mental Hygiene.

association of excitement and over-stimulation with the debilitation of various organs within the body ultimately connected the brain with the reproductive system. Expressing his disapproval of early mental stimulation of children, Sylvester Graham warned that education of the young could cause "a disproportionate exercise of the brain, which leads to a general debility of the nervous system, involving the genital organs, and greatly increasing the reciprocity of influence between them and the brain."[38] The reciprocity of physical systems meant that the loss of semen was a loss of vital fluids and vital energy. The ejaculation of semen, whether by masturbation or sexual intercourse legitimate or illegitimate, was a dangerous threat to a young man's health.[39] Frequent ejaculation, even in marriage, could be weakening. Nocturnal emissions were a source of concern. They were not treated as normal, but as the result of some pathological condition. It was the mind, the brain, the mental faculties which were believed to suffer as a result.

---

[38] Graham, A Lecture, p. 47.

[39] Sylvester Graham quoted an unnamed source who said that "the emission of semen enfeebles the body more than the loss of twenty times the same quantity of blood,--more than violent cathartics and emetics. . . ." (A Lecture, p. 52) Graham himself considered this to be an exaggeration. See also Charles Rosenberg, "Sexuality." Henry Ward Beecher, in Twelve Lectures, p. 206, used a revealing image when he wrote, "It is strange to see how men will drain themselves of vitality in the ways of vice."

Sylvester Graham recommended certain regimes of diet, exercise, and other practices as the way to health. He believed,

> All kinds of stimulating and heating substances, high-seasoned food, rich dishes, the free use of flesh, and even the excess of aliment, all, more or less--and some to a very great degree--increase the concupiscent excitability and sensibility of the genital organs, and augment their influence on the functions of organic life, and on the intellectual and moral faculties.[40]

Graham recommended that, to avoid unhealthy physical or mental stimulation, people should ignore the quack remedies and follow the "natural" treatment he prescribed: no wine or liquor, little meat, no stimulants, exercise, and fresh air.

The probable reason for the anxiety over the loss of vital energies was that with the polarization of sex roles and the idealization of women, the whole area of sexuality became one of increased tension. If the loss of semen or over-excitement were threatening to the health of the physical system, then not only masturbation but women as well posed a threat to men.

Women represented that carnal temptation which could ruin a man if he were not strong enough to suppress his urges. In contrast to the male, women could function sexually without erection or excitement, and they could do so indefinitely. There is an age-old fear in man that

---

[40] Graham, A Lecture, p. 47.

women cannot be satisfied sexually, and that, once she is awakened, she will drain him dry or turn to others for satisfaction. This primitive awareness of the comparatively greater sexual capacity of women has always made men somewhat anxious about their relationship to the female.[41] Historically, females have been considered sexually insatiable. In the mid-nineteenth century, by contrast, popular theory held that women had a very low sex drive if any at all. Either point of view arrived at the same conclusion. If the female was insatiable, she could not be satisfied; if she had no great need for sexual contact, then no man could be considered inadequate if he could not arouse her. Either way, the male was not responsible either for satisfying, or failing to satisfy, a woman. A quotation in Bayley's 1857 work, Marriage As It Is and As It Should Be, cited in an earlier chapter, expressed hostility toward women as consumers and described them as "money maelstroms," and condemned "the enormous draughts they are making on the exchequer of the world."[42] These images, while overtly economic, were covertly vaginal. They symbolized the male fear of the demands made by women--emotional, ethical, and sexual--on their limited energies.

---

[41] Myron Brenton, The American Male (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1966), p. 175.

[42] Bayley, Marriage, p. 141.

The tremendous growth of economic opportunity between 1820 and 1860 opened up great possibilities for men who could discipline themselves to take advantage of them. The exhortations centering around the theme of systematic ambition were similar to the warnings against over-stimulation or the loss of semen. Deferred gratification, self-reliance, the cautious and measured expenditure of time, exercise of a disciplined will--with only slight alterations these values could as easily represent nineteenth-century attitudes toward male sexuality as toward the pursuit of economic success. Just as a man was to order nature and conquer technological or merchandising problems, he was to command the passionate part of his being in order to channel it into socially acceptable ways. The same effort of will which mastered sexual impulses could tackle obstacles to success. Sexual energy and social energy were intimately related, and either could be drawn upon and reinvested in the other.

Some students of the period have seen rather direct connections between the accumulation of semen and the accumulation of money.[43] The rationalist system

---

[43] See, for example, Barker-Benfield, Horrors; and Charles Rosenberg, "Sexuality," in which he describes, but is suspicious of such views if pushed very far. Peter T. Cominos, in "Late-Victorian Sexual Respectability and the Social System," International Review of Social History 8 (1963): 18-48, writing particularly of Victorian England, suggests direct connections between popular sexual theory and economic theory.

of capitalism, some say, was closely related to the rationalist view of sexuality as a system of careful saving and cautious "spending." ("Spending" was a colloquial term for orgasm.) Although these may be linked, it was an unconscious association rather than a relationship of cause and effect. In any case, the values of the times included diverting vital energy from sexual activity into efforts at becoming a success. Success usually meant success in economic terms. The sexually-controlled, repressed male was also the thrifty, ambitious (not to say driven) entrepreneur.

The rechanneling of sexual energy was not without implications for men's relation to women. Sigmund Freud believed that what psychic energy men invest in building a civilization or in creativity, they withdraw from their sexual lives and from women. He also suggested that men's constant association with other men, and their dependence on one another in the world of affairs cause an estrangement from their duties as husbands and fathers.[44] It seems that between 1820 and 1860, middle-class American men did, in fact, withdraw energy from women in order to invest it in the achievement of socially encouraged ambitions. Sylvester Graham put into a formula: "Remember that the higher capabilities of man qualify him for more exalted and exalting

---

[44] Sigmund Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents, translated by Joan Riviere (London: Hogarth Press, 1930), p. 73.

pleasures than lie within the precincts of sexual enjoyment!"[45]

Men, though judged to be basically passionate and sexually aggressive, had sublimated this dimension of their humanity. They had, in a sense, put it aside in order to concentrate their energies on the pursuit of success. While they certainly did not cease to function sexually, satisfaction of the sexual impulse was given a relatively low priority. It was, of course, psychic energy rather than vital fluids that was being husbanded.

Insofar as men's primitive instinct still recognized in woman a drain on vital powers and a test of masculinity, she was a threat--an obstacle standing in the way of their commitment to ordering the world, subduing nature, and getting ahead. The idealization of woman and redefinition of her as the symbol of domesticity served not only to create an island of familiarity and stability in a sea of change; it served also to reduce the level of temptation. Woman as moral barometer, the watchdog of virtue, as "Mother" and super-ego figure could not be easily conceived as a sexual being.

Insofar as all wives represented Mother, the mythology of the times defined them as virtually asexual. They were creatures without passions, cheerfully willing,

---

[45] Graham, A Lecture, p. 84.

however, to do their duty as they must when necessary to answer man's natural urges and to reproduce the species. The prevailing mythology of passionless woman served as a counterpressure against the primitive fear that woman might actually be insatiable. The woman who merely "submitted" and "did her duty" left a man free not to be put to the test. He was free to invest the bulk of his energies and attention in his own ambitions. The more he left his wife alone, the higher his esteem in a husband's own eyes, as measured by the convenient prevailing mythology.

Men withdrew from women, in all but forms and manners, and tried to compensate by their deferential rhetoric and ritualized behavior. Of course, in the literature no man was ever counseled to withdraw from women. They were strongly urged to relate only to "virtuous" women, which unmistakeably meant women who would make no sexual demands. The horror of masturbation, while no doubt traceable to other, more comprehensive origins, nevertheless also served as a similarly convenient discouragement of the wasting of energies. What man withdrew from his sexual life, he could reinvest in the active life of the world. Insofar as he indulged his sexual appetites, he threatened the prevailing priorities and put himself in danger of failure.

Women and "self-gratification" were saboteurs in the project of sublimating sexual energies. But there was also another enemy in the form of "bad books." Nothing was more consistent in nineteenth-century advice literature than the warning against dangerous reading. One author warned,

> Thousands who cry out against visiting the theatre, the gaming salon, and the brothel, have not inquired how many were made the patrons of these abodes of infamy by the fascinating, impure works of fiction. The man who walks at midnight the "path that takes hold on hell," was there in the glowing pictures of imagination long before when his passions kindled over the obscene romance. How many have first imbibed a taste for the grossest forms of vice, how many were really made the slaves of burning passion by the unchaste novel we shall not know until the Judgment Day.[46]

The warning against bad books was very often linked to a warning against masturbation. John Todd took his stand against reading bad books and insisted that "it is almost inseparable from the habit of reverie. . . ."[47] Some authors strongly discouraged juvenile books of any description written specifically for the young. Dr. Isaac Ray expressed the conviction that young men should read adult books, as had been the pattern in the past. Books especially for the young over-simplified, he said, and also over-stimulated. Such books aroused licentiousness in young men and led to masturbation. Ray reported that one

---

[46] Thayer, Hints, pp. 212-213.

[47] Todd, Students' Manual, p. 147.

could see patients in every hospital for the insane whose pathology could be traced to the reading of "bad books." These patients suffered from "a form of disease pre-eminently loathesome and difficult to cure," he said.[48]

What were these "bad books?" Although they were seldom specifically identified, it was clear that quite often they were novels of an ordinary kind which would be considered quite innocent by twentieth-century standards. The single author most often named was Lord Byron, who was almost universally condemned.[49] Clearly, not all "bad books" were so judged on the grounds that they were lewd or suggestive. Some were condemned because of their religious skepticism. The single author most often praised was Walter Scott, but even Scott had his critics. And yet, some commentators who warned against "bad books" seem to have had in mind something quite different. Henry Ward Beecher warned of "EVIL BOOKS" and "EVIL PICTURES," and

---

[48] Ray, Mental Hygiene, p. 277.

[49] Samuel Goodrich [Peter Parley], in Recollections of a Lifetime, or Men and Things I Have Seen: In a Series of Familiar Letters to a Friend, Historical, Biographical, Anecdotal, and Descriptive, vol. 2 (New York: Miller, Orton & Mulligan, 1856), pp. 140-141, describing the poet James Gates Percival, remarked that Percival had been cold and withdrawn, living an isolated and loveless life. Goodrich remarked, "I think he had been deeply injured--nay ruined--by the reading of Byron's works, at that precise age when his soul was in all the sensitive bloom of spring, and its killing frost of atheism, of misanthropy, of pride, and scorn, fell upon it, and converted it into a scene of desolation."

complained in knowing terms about French and English pornography.[50] During this period, a considerable volume of pornographic works were published in England, some of which apparently had found their way to the United States. Nineteenth-century English pornography was quite as vivid and explicit as anything published today.[51] To those who had found it important for social and personal reasons to sublimate their sexuality, pornography or other "bad books" posed a particularly terrifying threat. As one man wrote in 1852, "It is thus bringing unholy fire to the collected tinder in every unsanctified heart which kindles all the

---

[50] Beecher, Twelve Lectures.

[51] Steven Marcus, in The Other Victorians: A Study of Sexuality and Pornography in Mid-Nineteenth-Century England (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1964), p. 284, says that "during the [middle and later decades of the nineteenth century] pornographic writings were produced and published in unprecedented volume--it became in fact a minor industry. The view of human sexuality as it was represented in the subculture of pornography and the view of sexuality held by the official culture were reversals, mirror images, negative analogues of one another. For every warning against masturbation issued by the official voice of culture, another work of pornography was published; for every cautionary statement against the harmful effects of sexual excess uttered by medical men, pornography represented copulation in excelsis . . . for every effort made by the official culture to minimize the importance of sexuality, pornography cried out--or whispered--that it was the only thing in the world of any importance at all. It is essential for us to notice the similarities even more than the differences between these two groups of attitudes or cultures. In both the same set of anxieties are at work; in both the same obsessive ideas can be made out; and in both sexuality is conceived of at precisely the same degree of consciousness."

passions, and produces such disaster to a sound mind."[52] But it took much less than explicitly sexual books to arouse horror. Even ordinary romances were bad enough.

"Bad books," like alcohol, were a threat to self-control and self-direction. They undermined will power, sabotaged self-discipline, and released feelings and impulses which threatened disorder in the life of the individual and chaos in a society where all strong feelings but ambition had been sublimated for the sake of conserving and concentrating energies. Thus, the perennial advice to young men was to check with authority: "Make it a rule never to read any book, pamphlet, or periodical, till you have first ascertained from your parents, teachers, or minister that it is safe, and worth reading."[53]

Condemnation of the theater represented a similar fear of a stimulus which might break down sexual self-control. In reference to the theater, a clergyman wrote, "In our theatres actresses are frequently applauded by the audience for introducing licentious gestures in their actings, whoever may be present."[54] Bad books, the theater, masturbation, "reverie," and female sexuality together represented a common threat to the masculine ascetic commitment

---

[52] Van Doren, Mercantile Morals, p. 354.

[53] Newcomb, How to Be a Man, p. 160.

[54] Van Doren, Mercantile Morals, p. 399.

to achieve. If they had been allowed, these pernicious influences would have undermined the Jacksonian male's almost monastic commitment to a kind of spiritual celibacy--celibacy not for the sake of the kingdom of heaven, but for the sake of untold kingdoms waiting to be built by the hands of single-minded, undistracted men.

Of course, not all Americans during this time-period shared the values of the dominant culture. Some Americans were in search of alternatives to the current social consensus on sex roles and sexuality as such. Some perfectionists and believers in religious sanctification experimented with forms of free love. John Humphrey Noyes gathered a community which practiced a controlled type of sexuality almost like group marriage. Led by the revelations of Joseph Smith, the Mormons began to practice polygamy, while the Shakers cut the Gordian knot and put all sex aside once and for all. These and other experimenters indicated their dissatisfaction with the role of sex in the culture of nineteenth-century America. They tried to pioneer the way to new solutions of the tense relationship of men and women. Significantly enough, these communal experimenters also sought alternatives to the prevailing individualism, personal ambition, and competitiveness of the United States between 1820 and 1860. In their cooperative work patterns, and frequently communal

ownership, they attempted to challenge what they often conceived to be the destructiveness, or dehumanization of life in their times. They saw, or discovered, consciously or unconsciously, that work patterns and patterns of sexual relationship were interrelated. As in many other centuries, work and sex were, in one way or another, the primary themes during this era.

In what way did the nineteenth-century treatment of sexuality differ from the attitudes of previous generations? In the popular mind, at least, the Puritans are usually blamed for narrow and austere sexual views and harsh, rigid practices. This opinion must have been current in some circles even in the nineteenth century, judging by such works as Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter. Recent students dispute this view of Puritanism. John Demos believes that the Puritans probably took sex more in their stride than most later generations of Americans.[55] Edmond Morgan agrees. He states his belief that the Puritans were neither blindly zealous nor narrow-mindedly bigoted in matters of sex, as they are commonly supposed to have been.[56] The Puritans did, in fact, establish a code of laws which demanded perfection. Their theology,

---

[55] John Demos, "Infancy and Childhood in the Plymouth Colony," in The American Family, ed. Michael Gordon, p. 184.

[56] Edmund Scott Morgan, "The Puritans and Sex," in The American Family, ed. Michael Gordon, p. 294.

however, took a view of human nature which did not expect human beings to be able to achieve anything like perfection. They were not surprised at incidences of fornication, rape, adultry, or even homosexuality. Nor were they so severe with offenders as their code of laws would lead us to expect. Given their theological insight, they tolerated such violations of the law as predictable human weakness. In fact, such violations were all the more likely to appear in a devout community where the normal course of wickedness was frustrated by godly laws. Although the Puritans believed in absolute, God-given values when it came to sex, their doctrine of sin preserved them from naiveté about human nature. They knew that the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve could never perfectly obey the laws of God. Trusting in God's grace, they treated offenders more patiently and leniently than the text of the laws would indicate. They concentrated their efforts on prevention more than on punishment. Leslie Fiedler suggests that it would not have occurred to the Puritans to ignore sex or to ban sexual vocabulary from literature, as it did to nineteenth-century people.[57]

It is true that authorities in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries also spoke against sexual excess, but they did so in a much calmer, even a bland, tone. A

---

[57] Fiedler, Love and Death, p. 52.

collection of lectures given between 1805 and 1819 by Eliphalet Nott, the president of Union College in Schenectady, New York, illustrates the difference between counsels about sex before and after 1820. Nott's point of view was intensely religious, but strikingly generous in its sentiments. He did issue the standard warnings against vice, but they were much milder than their later equivalents. There was in Nott's lectures a pre-Jacksonian view of work. There was no entrepreneurial tone, no celebrating of iron-willed systematic ambition. Few similar lectures after 1820 would have been capable of saying, as Nott did, that

> the senses . . . are a real source of enjoyment; nor would I wish you either to despise or undervalue them. The God of nature has not thought it derogatory to his wisdom, his goodness, or his sanctity, to bestow on you this class of enjoyments; and surely it cannot be derogatory to yours to receive them at his hand.[58]

Nott condemned those who used religion as a means of spreading gloom or of denigrating the legitimacy of sensual pleasures. Religion required no sacrifices except disease, pain, and infamy. True, he wrote, "You may not steal at midnight to the infamous pleasures of the brothel; but you may cherish at your homes the refined, the hallowed pleasures of connubial friendship."[59] In Nott the earlier, more

---

[58] Eliphalet Nott, D.D., Counsels to Young Men on the Formation of Character, and The Principles Which Lead to Success and Happiness in Life (New York: Harper & Bros., 1850 [original ed. 1840]), pp. 27-28.

[59] Ibid., p. 36.

easy-going attitudes prevail, and they are less intense, more humane than later views.

What were the causes of the growing anti-sexual and repressive patterns of the mid-nineteenth century middle class? No single explanation seems adequate to explain those patterns fully. Many historians believe that revivalism played a major role. While revivalism did address issues with social dimensions, its emphasis was on the regeneration of the individual. Each person was called to make an evangelical decision which was to become the first act in a major reform of his or her own life. Millenial expectations sparked the perfectionist movement, which included a call for a tightly-controlled and disciplined sexuality.

In addition to revivalism, the sexual repressiveness of Victorian England may also have exerted an influence across the Atlantic. Historians have often identified the sublimation of sexuality with the Evangelical movement in Britain.[60] Steven Marcus associates it with a major attempt by the lower classes to rise above their degradation and become respectable.[61] Marcus tells the story of a young girl who was repeatedly met in the street by a well-to-do

---

[60] For example, Peter Gabriel Filene, Him Her Self: Sex Roles in Modern America (New York/London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974), p. 93; and Houghton, Victorian Frame of Mind, p. 359.

[61] Marcus, Other Victorians, p. 148.

gentleman who offered her money in exchange for discreet sex play. With this and similar stories for background, he suggests that the values of "chastity, propriety, modesty, and prudery" may have functioned as positive and humanizing moral values. This was, after all, an era when the London masses were generally immoral and promiscuous in a context of poverty and degradation. Sexual repression was the result of a kind of self-restraint which amounted to a refusal to accept the indignities of exploitation. Such restraint helped enormously in a self-administered program to humanize a class of persons who had been considered so degraded as to be almost sub-human. Marcus links sexual self-restraint with learning to defer gratification and to rationalize and systematize one's daily activities to reach a given goal. While it does not seem possible to see a parallel in American society (even if one attempts to find similarities between the London masses and the American urban poor), Marcus' position does suggest that the rigid and controlled masculine character in the United States might have emerged in exchange for some other value. While men were required to shut down parts of their human nature, they paid this cost for an almost unparalleled focus of human energy on economic development and the ordering of a whole continent. It may be--and the hypothesis cannot be proven--that sexual sublimation was essential to produce

the kind of personality that made possible the economic development of the United States in the nineteenth century.

Other students of the period suggest that Americans were alarmed by the extent of freedom in the young nation.[62] More than any other nation, America had encouraged economic and political freedom. Many people exercised that freedom by movement--to the West, to the cities, beyond the reach of their childhood communities and the control they represented. The "Benevolent Empire" set up by Protestant churches had as one purpose to attempt to impose some order on American freedom. The churches were concerned that freedom not degenerate into license and anarchy. They followed people to the various frontiers--western or urban--attempting to establish institutions and to develop inner restraints which would protect the people from themselves. Sexual excess symbolically represented the flight from authority and the tendency towards personal autonomy. As the London masses practiced repression to establish their humanity, the American middle class embraced a philsophy of self-restraint as a form of protection against a breakdown of social order. Suppressed emotional needs found alternative means of expression through such mechanisms as revivalism and in other movements, programs, and enthusiasms.

---

[62] For example, Douglas Miller, in conversation.

It seems likely that middle-class sexual repression derived from multiple causes. One further explanation for the anti-sexual patterns of the period supplements, but does not contradict, others. That explanation ties the patterns of sexual repression more directly to the process of modernization. Economic changes and changes in work patterns significantly reordered the northern middle-class way of life. There was a redefinition of sex roles and a redirection of personal and social goals and energies. If the penalty of women's new role as keeper of the cult of domesticity and mothering figure was that her sexuality was redefined and minimized, it was men's loss. Paradoxically, however, it was also men's gain. Men lost a free and easy access to their own wives as sexual partners--and also lost access to their own sexuality--but they gained freedom from distractions. With that freedom, they could devote themselves to another mistress--the single-minded pursuit of success.

CHAPTER V

CLASS AND REGIONAL VARIATIONS

Not all men between 1820 and 1860 were restless, ambitious entrepreneurs who unconsciously sacrificed parts of their own humanity to get ahead. This study has focused on those men who were, or aspired to become, middle-class. There were, no doubt, individual men of that class who did not embody the Jacksonian consciousness, and lived by other roles. As we have seen in Chapter I, there were whole groups of people who experimented communally with alternative ways of perceiving the world, structuring their values, and designing sex roles. But there were differences, also, that could be ascribed primarily to class or regional variations. Upper-class men, immigrants and urban poor males, and southern men might be expected to have at least somewhat different images and expectations of themselves as men.

This chapter provides a rough survey of masculine roles and images among men of these various class and regional sub-groups. It is not based on extensive research in primary materials and by no means pretends to be definitive. However, it does provide contrasts with the main

themes of the study, sketching a background which will highlight middle-class masculine roles and images as historically relative and culturally conditioned.

At least during the earlier years of the period under study, there continued to be a self-conscious upper class, consisting of gentlemen who were descendants, by heredity and point of view, from the upper classes of the colonial and early national periods. To the pre-1820 gentleman, the hero to be admired was not the entrepreneur, but the "neo-classic" hero. Magazines and biographies in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries lifted up a view of life which celebrated the classic tradition of duty, order, and social obligation. There was, in such a tradition, a concern for the nation as a whole and for the welfare of society rather than for the individual career. The qualities of mind most admired by the upper classes before 1820 were those fitting to the gentleman and the scholar, "a strong, active, comprehensive mind 'improved by education and embellished by taste.'"[1] The ideal man of such a class aspired to be a gentleman, conscious of his duty, moderate in all things, and regular in practice of religious faith. Such a man admired

---

[1]Theodore P. Green, America's Heroes: The Changing Models of Success in American Magazines (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 47.

self-restraint more than self-expression, modesty rather than ambition, dignity rather than forcefulness, and responsibility to one's duty rather than making one's mark on the world in new ways.

The most admired figures of the pre-1820s gentleman were those in occupations serving the state, the military, or the church. Many of the early heroes were educators, and classical education was universally appreciated in them. In the lectures given by Eliphalet Nott at Union College between 1805 and 1819, this classic view of masculine roles was obvious. He warned against the dangers of aspiring to wealth, and simply presumed that the young men in his audiences would go into some public-spirited profession. In an 1811 commencement address, Nott advised the young college graduates to strive to imitate--not merchants or bankers--but men noted for their impact on society as public-spirited servants of social justice. The address mentioned particularly four British men who were held up as models: Howard, Sharpe, Clarkson, and Lancaster.[2]

---

[2]Sharpe was an advocate on behalf of Negroes; Clarkson was involved in emancipation efforts; Howard was an advocate for prisoners; and Lancaster's concern was to make education accessible to the poor.

According to Nott, in Counsels to Young Men, p. 88, "animated by the purest virtue, and bent on being useful, they seized on the miseries of life as the world presented them; and by deeds of charity and valour performed in relieving those miseries, they converted the very abodes of ignorance and wo into a theatre of glory."

The speaker then urged the "young gentlemen" to go out into the world imitating the example of these worthies: correcting prejudices, instructing the ignorant, reclaiming the vicious, and alleviating misery. Nott's lectures and speeches represented the point of view of the traditional American upper classes--a point of view which prevailed in the print media before about 1820.

The pre-1820 values of the upper classes persisted among their descendants after 1820, but they were no longer the dominant values expressed in the culture, and they were not the model set before the lower and middle classes. The new model, which dominated the print media, had become that of the systematically ambitious character, who was almost ascetically devoted to the work-related virtues. The upper-classes, representing only a minority point of view within the culture, very probably enjoyed a sense of identity and personal status which made achievement less emotionally urgent than for the middle and aspiring classes. It is tempting to speculate, furthermore, whether upper-class men would have turned quite so readily from a task-oriented to a time-discipline ethos; or whether their sons, dependent in many cases on a future inheritance, soon departed from paternal authority. In any case, evidence indicates that among the upper-classes, male perspectives were much less likely to have been as radically polarized from those of women as they were in other classes.

Women were definitely idealized, deferred to, and treated as dependents. Nevertheless, there was more overlapping of the feminine and the masculine among the upper classes than in the middle classes, as had been true in earlier society. In a book such as Cecil B. Hartley's Gentlemen's Book of Etiquette, one is struck by the fact that many--certainly not all--of the qualities encouraged in men who saw themselves belonging to the "gentlemanly" class would probably have been considered "effeminate" by the standards of the average Jacksonian entrepreneur.[3] The enjoyment of reading for its own sake, rather than as a means of self-improvement; the appreciation of good conversation; and the enjoyment of good music were more typically associated with upper-class men than men of other classes. It was true, nevertheless, that however much masculine roles may have overlapped with roles associated with the feminine "sphere," upper-class women were equally as restricted as they were in other social classes. Ronald Hogeland says that "ornamental womanhood," the most conservative and restrictive of several distinctive life-styles available for women between 1820 and 1860, was associated (in addition to the South) with the upper classes in New England and the cities along the Atlantic

---

[3]Hartley, Etiquette.

coast.[4] The restrictions of women's roles to the "decorative" and consuming roles may have represented a continuation and intensification of traditional practice in this social class, and served as a model for men with upwardly mobile ambitions, thus contributing to the polarization of sex roles among the emerging middle class.

James Fenimore Cooper was perhaps the most articulate spokesman for the point of view of upper-class males during the Jacksonian era. In his advocacy of that perspective, Cooper was influenced by the defensiveness he felt in a society where democratic values obviously prevailed. In Cooper's novel Home As Found, the upper classes are contrasted with the middle and aspiring classes.[5] The image of the upper-class man was of one who treated women with great formality and delicacy; who was traditional in outlook, and quite comfortable in a deferential system; who was personally controlled and always proper. Such men were sensitive to the feelings and needs of others. Etiquette and good manners were instinctive, but not pompous or overdone. Money was taken for granted, and a passionate

---

[4]Ronald Hogeland, "'The Female Appendage'": Feminine Life-Styles in America, 1820-1860," in Our American Sisters: Women in American Life and Thought, 2nd ed., eds. Jean E. Friedman and William G. Shade (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, Inc., 1976), p. 134.

[5]James Fenimore Cooper, Home As Found (New York: Hurd & Houghton, 1865 [original ed. 1838]).

interest in it was considered quite vulgar. There was, among the upper-class men in the novel, no question of having a career or of justifying the lack of one. Some men were merely "gentlemen." Learning, taste, and refinement were valued by men of this class. A gentleman was distinguished from others by his "attainments, practices, and principles, which if they are not always moral, are above meanness, and he has . . . no pride in the mere vulgar consequence of wealth."[6] An upper-class male valued his individuality, and resisted the conformity which seemed to be required by democratization.

To Cooper, the concept of "gentleman" was associated with virtue, but also with the stable wealth of land ownership. Wealth in commercial capital did not conform to his image of an authentic "gentleman." For that reason he exulted when Jackson broke Biddle's bank. Cooper described the role of the gentleman when he wrote,

> The social duties of a gentleman are of a high order. The class to which he belongs is the natural repository of the manners, tastes, tone, and to a certain extent, of the principles of a country. . . . If the laborer is indispensable to civilization, so is also the gentleman. While the one produces, the other directs his skill to those arts which raise the polished man above the barbarian. The indulgence of [the gentleman's] very luxuries encourages the skill that contributes to the comforts of the lowest.[7]

---

[6]Cooper, American Democrat, p. 150.

[7]Ibid., pp. 147-148.

The upper-class gentleman was not ambitious for himself or committed to striving for personal gain. Rather, he placed "service" before anything else. In fact, to be ambitious, to want anything except to serve was to call in question one's standing as a "gentleman."

Learning was the mark of a gentleman.[8] Education was not a meal-ticket, but a means of shaping leaders of civilization. This was a strong contrast to the estimate of the value of education by the middle classes. The Scottish traveler, Thomas Hamilton, accurately described the role of education from the point of view of the ordiniary man.

> Even to the present day, the value of education in the United States is estimated, not by its result on the mind of the student, in strengthening his faculties, purifying his taste, and enlarging and elevating the sphere of thought and consciousness, but by the amount of available knowledge which it enables him to bring to the common business of life.[9]

The tradition of Benjamin Franklin, which had come into its own in the mid-nineteenth century, celebrated the down-to-earth, the practical, the utilitarian. Franklin, who was frequently offered as a model for middle-class masculine roles during the period, represented the opposite

---

[8]Edwin Harrison Cady, referring to an opinion voiced by Cooper, The Gentleman in America: A Literary Study in American Culture (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1949), p. 117.

[9]Hamilton, Men and Manners, p. 362.

of the "gentleman's" or the "high-brow's" values. Anti-aristocratic rhetoric illustrated a significant hostility which had developed toward the upper classes and their values. Such rhetoric was increasingly accepted in the United States over the first third of the nineteenth century. Professional men, particularly, came to be targets of the hostility of upwardly mobile people, who wanted access to professional standing on terms less stringent than had developed in the latter part of the eighteenth century.[10]

Individual achievement of an outstanding nature was valued less than standardization of performance. Being respectable was better than being outstanding. "Culture" and learning were devalued for men except as they were common to all or served a utilitarian purpose that all could admire. At least one student believes that the tradition of the gentleman represented, for one thing, a battle against Philistinism. Edwin Harrison Cady suggests that

---

[10] Daniel H. Calhoun, in Professional Lives in America: Structure and Aspiration, 1750-1850 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 188, points out that "the result was a kind of mediocritization of law, medicine, and ministry. . . . Legislators in many states abolished compulsory medical licensure, withdrew recognition from medical associations, discarded hierarchic distinctions among lawyers, loosened restrictions on who could practice law, or weeded out mystifying common-law elements from the forms of legal practice. Congregations asserted preferences for a warmer, more exciting, but less authoritative ministry."

the struggle of thinking Americans to prevent the loss of the heritage of European culture represents a kind of "genteel tradition" in America. He argues that "civilization" exists in America now in large measure because of the gentleman and his traditions.[11]

James Fenimore Cooper and others of his class felt the loss of their own status as "democratization" proceeded. They resented the encroachments of those who had apparently become blind to class distinctions or hostile towards them. In Home As Found, Cooper caricatured the classes who were so determined to display their conviction of equality and also those who aspired to upper-class status. The egalitarians had little respect for authority of any kind. Cooper described a group of young apprentices who chose the front lawn of the Effinghams as the place to organize their ball game, and refused to move it when asked. The town barber, summoned by Mr. Effingham, refused to take the trouble to come to his home, replying that Effingham could as easily come to him. Cooper saw the barber's independent reply as another instance of arrogance in the lower classes. He was afraid that the rights of the majority were in danger of eroding the rights of the individual. Of those who aspired to higher status, Cooper remarked,

---

[11] Cady, Gentleman, p. 17.

> He who would have learning, and taste, and sentiment, and refinement of every sort, ought to respect its possessors, and, in all things but those which affect rights, defer to their superior advantages. This is the extent of the deference that is due from him who is not a gentleman, to him who is; but this much is due.[12]

Cooper's understanding of masculinity as an upper-class gentleman was quite different from the understanding of masculinity held by those who aspired to higher status. He particularly resented those who thought that the status of a gentleman could be bought for cash, and who believed that being a gentleman had no particular value except for establishing a newer and more desirable status. To Cooper and the traditional upper classes, masculine roles centered around "service," taste, and personal culture, and not around money or personal ambition. Understandably, the traits associated with the systematic pursuit of personal ambition and "self-improvement" would be irrelevant to the life of an upper-class man, who was already in possession of status and some sort of financial security, even if not always wealth. The resentment aroused in the gentleman by the spread of the egalitarian ethos and the breakdown in respect for the values he represented made him seem defensive, peevish, and snobbish from the perspective of the aspiring classes. Under such circumstances the values

---

[12] Cooper, American Democrat, p. 148.

advocated by the gentleman lost much of their attractiveness and seemed mainly to serve as marks of class-distinction.

One of the traditional marks of what has been called the "age of Jackson" was a growing egalitarianism--that same quality which in its crasser forms, Cooper and other upper-class men had found so abrasive. Nevertheless, it was not true that all class-consciousness had melted away during this era of heightened democratic zeal. Writing in 1829, the author of A Description of the Etiquette at Washington City made the following observations:

> Every individual of every community looks up or down upon all the others that compose it, according to the grade he presumes that he stands in; and, however, indistinct the different grades may appear to others, yet, in almost every instance, each one thinks himself something superior or inferior to those even with whom he associates, as his daily and most intimate companions.[13]

Nowhere is this class-consciousness more apparent than in the attitudes toward those men who violated the "respectable" canons of the middle class. Virtue had become so specifically associated with the ethos of the "self-made" and "self-improving" that those who lived by a different structure of values--whether the idle rich or the urban poor--could not be thought of as virtuous.

The urban poor consisted for the most part of an increasing immigrant population. The values by which they

---

[13] E. Cooley, M.D., A Description of the Etiquette at Washington City (Philadelphia: L. B. Clarke, 1829), p. 20.

lived were much different from those of the upper classes, yet they did have something in common. The way of life of the urban poor and the ethos of the upper classes were similar in that both were reminiscent of an earlier era. In that commonality, they were distinguished from middle-class values, which were very up-to-date in that they had been formed in response to current social and economic conditions. The habits, mores, and work-style of the urban poor resembled those which had been widespread throughout the entire population before the Jacksonian era. Immigrants, for example, had brought with them to the new country their traditional attitudes toward work. As Herbert Gutman points out, each new wave of newcomers had to begin over again at point zero to learn the values associated with modernization and industrialization.[14] Immigrants found it difficult to absorb the time-discipline, systematic attitudes which had become commonplace among native Americans when home-based work was left behind. The newcomers continued their age-old, task-oriented approach to work, punctuated by time for socializing and celebrating. Immigrants were not, at the outset, either consumed with ambition or preoccupied with work. They had not lost the ability to be comfortable with leisure time.

---

[14] Herbert Gutman, "Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America, 1815-1919," American Historical Review 78 (June 1973): 531-588.

Even among many native Americans during this period of transition from a more nearly traditional to a more nearly "modern" consciousness, there were those who preferred the old ways. Writing of Lynn, Massachusetts in the 1820s and 1830s, Alan Dawley and Paul Faler describe a developing polarization between what they call "modernists" and "traditionalists." This polarization extended across all classes. What distinguished the "modernist" was that he embraced the newly developing middle-class ethos organized around the disciplined use of time and the pursuit of personal ambition. The "modernist" was, in a sense, a "true-believer," who had accepted the doctrine that those who carefully organized their energies could conquer obstacles and rise in the world.[15] The modernist might be either an employer or an employee--both types were represented in this group. The "traditionalist," on the other hand, did not adopt the new point of view. He continued living and working with the same basic outlook as his father or grandfather had had. The traditionalist did not believe that gigantic effort would bring great rewards, or was not interested in the sacrifices necessary in the attempt. He continued to live in a more traditional style whether at

---

[15] Alan Dawley and Paul Faler, "Working Class Culture and Politics in the Industrial Revolution: Sources of Loyalism and Rebellion," Journal of Social History 9 (June 1976): 437.

work or at leisure--a style which Dawley and Faler describe as a more "libertine" morality.

Those who subscribed to the new middle-class values were not able to understand or appreciate the ways of the immigrants or the traditionalist natives. The middle class did not perceive the ways of the lower classes as vestigial remains of an earlier ethos which were, perhaps, worthy of respect. And yet it is true that the more easy-going way of life of the lower classes, including the enjoyment of alcohol, had been typical for ordinary middle-class people in 1800. By the middle period of the nineteenth century, however, that sort of relaxed approach to life and conviviality had been left behind by the ambitious classes. With the beginnings of modernization and time-discipline consciousness, a way of life which had been quite respectable at the turn of the century had become associated in the public mind with lazy habits. After all, the poor immigrant enjoyed taking a holiday from work and spending time with his cronies at the tavern. His relaxed approach to work was bad enough, but his enjoyment of a drink associated him with "vices" that seemed inimical to middle-class discipline and the need for stringent personal controls.

Increasingly, the urban poor began to be associated with a pattern of life in which achievement was not a

central goal around which life was organized. In 1835, over 50,000 European immigrants landed in the United States, many of whom brought along their traditional attitudes and points of view. The volume of immigration of Irish peasants increased considerably in the 1840s and 1850s. The immigrants' attitudes toward the use of time, toward education and drinking were often at odds with most of the native population. When they became employed, immigrants were forced into an encounter with a modern consciousness, particularly in factory work. The conflicts and difficulties of this meeting between representatives of traditional society and a modernizing society worked to the special disadvantage of the immigrants. The native American middle-class saw the immigrants and their work patterns not merely as different, but as inferior. They were regarded as ethically deficient because they did not embrace the morally laden work-related virtues of the time, as reinforced by a lingering Puritan morality. The forces of temperance and moral reform saw the urban poor as objects to be reformed, so that they might better fit middle-class images of propriety. Richard Brown states that insofar as immigrants behaved like modern, middle-class men, they found acceptance. He further suggests that native disdain toward the immigrants may very well have been related to the fact that the newcomers represented the traditional

values that the natives had been working so hard to leave behind. The ways of the Irish, for example, in their love of family and community, in their church allegiance and tavern-haunting, reminded the natives too much of their own grandfathers. To the native-born, the ways of the immigrants seemed a step backward.[16] The presence of a sizeable number of people representing the discarded values of the past may have threatened the middle-class men who were struggling so hard to put temptation behind them in order to invest all their energies in the struggle for progress. The urban poor, with their easy-going ways, may have seemed to pose a danger to the middle-class experiment.

The values by which the urban poor lived were connected with poverty as cause to effect. The middle-class point of view was that poverty was not circumstantial, but directly related to lack of personal morality and an improper attitude toward work. Jacob Abbott, for instance, instructed his young readers that in the vast majority of cases, poverty was the result of "idleness, mismanagement, or vice."[17] Poverty, he said, was a punishment from God. Abbott ruled out environmental factors almost completely by insisting that anyone could provide a comfortable living

---

[16] Brown, Modernization, p. 153.

[17] Abbott, Way to Do Good, p. 120.

for himself in almost any country of the world if he had good character, was industrious and prudent. He conceded the faint possibility that a man might be both poor and virtuous, but such circumstances were rare. In nearly every case, poverty was directly correlated with personal attitudes and habits. Therefore, if one wished to escape from his condition of poverty, he should first consider his faults and failings, and then repent. In nearly every case, a change of attitude would result in an improvement in a man's economic condition.

The Connecticut schoolmaster assured his readers that charity only exacerbated the problem of poverty, because it merely treated symptoms and did not deal with the moral character of the poor. Abbott suggested that his young readers should not allow themselves to be terribly touched by the poor. After all, those who lived in poverty had become toughened to hardship, and could not feel the pain of it as a middle-class person would. Attitudes like Abbott's were typical, and provided a rational structure which served to protect the middle class from having to deal with the poor or come to terms with the phenomenon of poverty.[18] Thus the middle class tried to reassure

---

[18] David J. Rothman, in Asylum, pp. 156, 188, says that "the poor not only lost their former status as neighbors in a stable community, but their position in an hierarchical order. As a result, they became suspicious and culpable characters." He described the almshouse as

themselves of the virtue of their own values. The poor, by their misery, served as living proof that systamtic ambition was the way of righteousness.

The specific vice most often associated with poverty was excessive drinking. In a barroom conversation in T. S. Arthur's classic Ten Nights in a Bar-Room, a man claimed that if the temperance party scored a political victory in an upcoming election, the local poorhouse would be closed, and his uncle, the superintendent, would lose his job.

> "Only, they say, they're not going to have a Poor-house in the county at all."
> "What! Going to turn the poor wretches out to starve?" said one.
> "Oh no! (hic), "and the fellow grinned, half shrewdly and half maliciously, as he answered--"no, not that. But, when they carry the day, there'll be no need of Poor-houses. At least, that's their talk--and I guess maybe there's something in it, for I never knew a man to go to the Poor-house, who hadn't (hic) rum to blame for his poverty. . . .[19]

The next dialogue concerned the local jail, and made the very same point. Poverty, crime, and ruin were almost always attributable to intemperance. All the middle-class values--orderliness, neatness, enterprise, discipline, fidelity--were dissolved by drink. Poverty was treated

---

an institution which would teach and enforce middle-class values. "The new [Jacksonian] almshouse would insist upon order, discipline, and an exacting routine."

[19] Timothy Shay Arthur, Ten Nights in a Bar-Room: And What I Saw There (Boston: L. P. Crown & Co., 1855), p. 128.

by mid-nineteenth century persons as attributable to drunkness, never vice versa.

As poverty was associated with drinking, drinking was associated with an outcast or low social position, and contrasted with abstinence as the symbol of middle-class life. The drinker was said to lose his industrious devotion to work. He lost his reputation for reliability, and finally he became unemployed. He could be restored, but, according to the temperance literature of the times, only by reform, sobriety, pledging to abstain, and a return to the work-related virtues (in short, the middle-class values), could he hope to return to respectability.

Just as drinking and poverty had become associated in the middle-class mind, so had poverty and sexual license. Sylvester Graham was not atypical in his suggestion that children often learned to masturbate from servants. He wrote that "servants and other laboring people of loose morals, often become the secret preceptors of children in this debasing sin."[20] A loose attitude toward work, enjoyment of drinking and conviviality, poverty, and a lack of sexual inhibition had become characteristics associated with the under classes. These traits all symbolized, to the middle-class mind, a lack of personal discipline and self-control, and a threat to social order.

---

[20] Graham, A Lecture, p. 92.

Since the prevailing masculine ethos was so strongly tinged with a sense of its own morality, those who dissented from it could not be viewed from a neutral perspective. Middle-class men considered indifference to their values to be the equivalent of immorality.[21] The urban poor. and men who had not embraced the "modern" values of systematic ambition represented a tacit dissent from the masculine ethos of the middle-class. Such dissent, which was associated with lack of moral energy, was perceived by the middle-class as a threat to their fundamental values. As immigrants and other lower-class men acquired the ambition to become accepted in American society, they learned to imitate the middle-class. They adopted the modern outlook and the system of masculine values that stemmed from it.[22]

---

[21] Joseph R. Gusfield, in Symbolic Crusade: Status Politics and the American Temperance Movement (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1963), p. 57, writes specifically of the temperance ethic as a symbol of middle-class values. He says, "Out of the political conflicts of the 1840's and 1850's nondrinking had become more and more a symbol of middle-class, native American respectability. The urban, immigrant, lower class had emerged as both the counter-image to the Temperance hero and a political opponent of significant concern." Jacob Abbott, T. S. Arthur, and others clearly represent the point of view which identifies the life-style of the lower classes with lack of personal discipline and moral deficiency.

[22] Stephan Thernstrom, in Poverty and Progress: Social Mobility in a Nineteenth Century City (New York: Atheneum, 1972), p. 137, describes how members of the working-classes, particularly Irish immigrants, adopted middle-class values, including the desire to acquire

Far away from the northern urban poor and from middle-class men, the southern male also was subject to an ethos and image of masculinity which differed from the standard northern middle-class pattern. The "southern" male, of course, is a broad term. Southern males included black slaves, poor whites, and independent farmers, as well as the masters of plantations. This study will describe masculine roles chiefly in relation to the planter class.

The evolution of society had been different in the South than in the North, with important consequences for masculine roles. The modernization process in the South had been retarded. The transportation revolution, the availability of capital for investment in development, and industrialization were slow to materialize. The persistence of the plantation agricultural economy reinforced the traditional social patterns. By 1860, southern children attended school only about ten days per year, which approximated the level of the whole nation in 1800. Northern children averaged more than five times as many days in school.[23] Southerners grew up with minimal exposure to the modernizing

---

property, to save money, and even to form temperance societies. He writes, ". . . it was no coincidence that a Roman Catholic Temperance Society was formed in Newburyport at just the time that the Irish immigrants began their climb upward into the propertied sector of the working class."

[23] Brown, Modernization, p. 140.

systems of school or factory. There was no temperance movement and there were no significant reform movements in the South. The paternalistic master/slave relationship undercut the development of a significant middle class. Thus in that region the cultural milieu tended to reinforce traditional, pre-modern values and habits of thinking and working.

This is not to say that the southern planter was ignorant of or indifferent to the capitalist values such as industriousness and efficiency. Whatever his own personal outlook and preferences, the planter valued the modern, systematic, disciplined model--at least for his employees and his slaves. In Time On the Cross, Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman take the point of view that the southern planter was as fully indoctrinated into capitalist values as his northern counterpart. They argue that since investment in slaves, according to their research, was profitable, slaveholders must be credited with shrewdness in making a dollar exactly as northern middle-class males were. In fact, Fogel and Engerman deny that southern slaveholders were "precapitalist," or that they subordinated a desire for profit to considerations of power and lifestyle.[24] They see the planter as a hard-headed

---

[24] Robert William Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman, Time On the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery (Boston/Toronto: Little, Brown & Co., 1974), pp. 71-73.

businessman, no less than the entrepreneurs of the urban North.

Eugene Genovese's research, while not completely discrediting Fogel and Engerman's point of view, finds the southern planter more complex than they do. Genovese sees the planters as, indeed, deeply attached to the traditional, premodern values and habits. They had not internalized the capitalist values, even though they did in fact push their slaves toward the modern style of work-discipline akin to the achievement orientation of the northern urban middle class. While the planters, as businessmen, accepted the capitalist values, as individual human beings they resisted adopting for themselves the efficient, hard-working, entrepreneurial way of life. In Roll, Jordan, Roll, Genovese writes that the problem of the planters was essentially how to preserve for themselves the traditional way of life while convincing their slaves to leave it behind. The planters would have liked to instill a factory-like discipline into their slaves, but found it immensely difficult. For all the efficiency with which the plantation might be organized, agricultural work remained tied to the rhythms of nature and to pre-modern attitudes toward the use of time and the enjoyment of leisure.[25] Genovese maintains

---

[25] Eugene D. Genovese, Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made (New York: Vintage Books, 1976), p. 286.

that the slaveholders carried out their enterprises within the context of a capitalist world market; they presided over the production of commodities; and they had to be concerned with profit and loss. Therefore, they did in fact develop a commitment to what is commonly considered to be the "Puritan" work ethic. That commitment, however, extended only to their slaves. As far as their personal ethos was concerned, the planters developed a counter-culture to that which prevailed in the western world at that time in business circles. Certainly they did not live lives of leisure, sipping mint juleps and courting the lovely young belles. They carried heavy responsibilities, and worked hard enough in their own way. But, says Genovese, they could hardly be accused of Puritanical steadiness, or of bourgeois respect for time and attention to duty, or of single-minded devotion to business as a holy calling.[26] The slaveholders, like the northern men "on the make," and like the great landed classes of medieval and early modern Europe, had a strong acquisitive spirit and were happy to pursue opportunities to make a fortune. However, unlike the rising urban middle-class males of the North, they saw money as a means to a particular kind of good life, not as an end in itself. They showed little respect for the methodical, systematic, sustained effort

---

[26] Ibid., p. 296.

of the northern entrepreneur. In fact, southern intellectuals almost uniformly pointed to this distinction as being fundamental to the southern ethic, and the mark of the superiority of the southern culture.[27]

The plantation economy encouraged the survival of the preindustrial, task-oriented pattern rather than a time-discipline approach. Since the plantation economy was tied to land ownership, the pattern of relations between fathers and sons continued to follow the traditional fashion. The fathers maintained authority based on the dependence of their sons, who waited to inherit family estates. This pattern gave the fathers considerable control of their sons' futures. The kind of mobility which in the North had created discontinuity between the generations and encouraged the development of systematic ambition was less evident. The complaints of southern women indicate that there persisted in the South a very pronounced double-standard of sexual morality.[28] This suggests that fathers may have played a somewhat larger role in the formation of their sons' consciences than they did in the urban North, or at least that Mother did not have a completely free hand

---

[27] Ibid., pp. 296-297.

[28] Anne Firor Scott, "Women's Perspective on the Patriarchy in the 1850's," The Journal of American History 61 (June 1974): 60.

in the programming of her male child's sense of right and wrong. It seems quite likely that the father, in a plantation economy, would have been more accessible to his sons since he was not obligated to leave home for the bulk of every day. If so, he would have provided a living model of what it was to be a man, making it less necessary for his wife to spell out for the child an abstract version of the conventional masculine roles.

The lack of a Puritan background in the South meant that there was relatively less emphasis on a morally reinforced work ethic. The presence of slavery further desanctified work as a value among planters. The distinctive nineteenth-century middle-class ethos emphasizing willpower, self-discipline, deferred gratification, ambition, and achievement was not personally accepted by southern planters because it did not fit their image of themselves.

Among the planters, the traditional values were romanticized even more consistently than they were lived. The southern gentleman cultivated the image of the chivalrous gentleman who embodied the rural values of the English landed gentry. This view of himself became incorporated into popular images of the planter in both the North and the South. This image portrayed him as a horseman, a military officer, a man of courage and honor. He was not acquisitive, but aloof from money-making. The southern

gentleman was conceived as a domestic patriarch, ruling benevolently over family and slaves. His life was believed to be gracious and unselfish; he supposedly spent his money grandly and generously, hardly noting the cost. The image of the southern planter was of a man of disinterested service, but also a man who enjoyed his leisure. He was not defined by his work. This image of the southern gentleman, so highly devloped in nineteenth-century fiction, seemed fact to some foreign visitors. Thomas Hamilton believed that in style of life, southern gentlemen were decidedly superior to all other American men. They had, he believed, more spirit and vivacity, and were inhibited by a less prudent caution. Speaking of the "opulent" and "educated" Southerner, Hamilton wrote that he

> is distinguished by a high-mindedness, generosity, and hospitality, by no means predictable of his more eastern nieghbors. He values money only for the enjoyments it can procure. . . . I think it probable that Englishmen unconnected with business would generally prefer the society of gentlemen of this portion of the Union to any other which the country affords.[29]

The conventional image of the patriarch included the picture of him as a fine physical specimen, tall, slender, athletic, and finely formed. He was, according to the ideal image, highly educated, firm, commanding, in possession of a natural dignity, one for whom the use of authority was

---

[29] Hamilton, Men and Manners, pp. 283-285.

habitual, and thus a perfect patriarch. He was virile, and the master of his environment. The southern gentleman was believed to be strong, chaste, decisive, and wise. In addition to planting, politics and military service were his preferred occupations rather than the professions.

No doubt the popular images of the southern male were based on some real differences between northern and southern men, but from the very beginning there existed a certain tension between the ideal of the southern gentleman and reality. The reality of the southern gentleman differed somewhat from the myth. Southern novels in the nineteenth century, written when the process of rapid change was under way in the North, disclosed some of the reality. The gentleman was no longer depicted in chivalrous terms, but rather as a spendthrift, a gambler, or the dupe of his overseer. Southern novelists in the period pictured the gentleman in such a way as to call his usefulness into question. He was revealed as improvident, almost childishly impetuous, and irresponsible. His inflexibility and inability to adapt to the times seemed to spell his doom. According to William Taylor, in the 1850s the southern gentleman came to be characterized as a symbol of "honorable failure and the lost cause."[30] Some southern writers pictured him

---

[30] William R. Taylor, Cavalier and Yankee: The Old South and American National Character (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1963).

as a kind of southern Hamlet, introspective, given to brooding, one for whom resignation had somehow replaced motivation to action. The southern novelist revealed the gentleman to possess an obvious lack of vitality and masculinity, those qualities most emphasized in the romantic legend.

Southern women were particularly aware of the gap between the legend of the southern gentleman and the husband of reality. The writings of southern women revealed that the sexual promiscuity of men was deeply troubling, and particularly when it crossed the racial barriers. Divorce petitions submitted to the Virginia legislature frequently recounted stories of husbands who had had sexual relations with black mistresses. Anne Firor Scott says that even apart from miscegenation, southern women deeply resented the general sexual freedom society accorded to men.[31]

The image of the wise, benevolent, and genial patriarch was also a distortion of reality. Not only did southern men often turn over many of their responsibilities--temporarily or permanently--to their wives, they held the reins of patriarchy defensively and insecurely. Southerners felt fearful as they observed changes in northern society which emphasized individual capacity. The increasingly open society threatened an eventual adjustment of status

---

[31] Scott, "Women's Perspective," p. 60.

for everyone. The planter gentleman, already bewildered and discouraged by the decline of the plantation economy in the tidewater region, had begun to feel a measure of self-doubt, an inability to believe in his own effectiveness. It was, perhaps, this sense of insecurity which partially accounts for the fact that southern males to such a large extent habitually carried lethal weapons--pistols sometimes, but more often fighting-style knives--in court, legislative chambers, barrooms, or wherever they might meet a challenge.

While aristocratic life had often made the male seem weak and ineffective, the southern woman appeared strong by contrast. Her responsibilities extended over the entire plantation, white and black alike. The heavy demands made on the planter's wife enhanced her dignity and increased her status. And yet, the ideal of "ornamental womanhood" was most prominent in the South. In fact, womanhood as such was romanticized and idealized in the South to an even greater extent than in the North. As in the North, idealization served to set women aside and remove them from significant influence in men's exclusive world. In the North, women had been assigned the task of protecting men from self-indulgence and acquisitiveness. In the South, the emphasis was slightly different. Women were to protect men from self-indulgence and from idle pleasure. Southern

men, Anne Firor Scott believes, were afraid of women. Their overinsistence on praising her supposedly God-given dependent status gave away their fearfulness. And why were they afraid? Scott believes that part of the reason was that women, to whom men had granted the custody of conscience and morality, might actually apply that conscience to the male's way of life. In other words, she might turn her judgment against his sharp trading in the market place, his inordinate fondness for alcohol, or his nocturnal visits to the slave quarters.[32] Furthermore, men were aware that women who had been restricted to the home had often shown unusual power within their limited domain. They had managed the family, watched over the slave population, and set standards for behavior. If women could accumulate and use so much power even in such a restricted position, there was a risk that she might do far more, given more freedom. Southern men, at some level aware of the incipient power of their own women, identified the hated abolitionism with the work of "strong-minded" northern women. Maria McIntosh, who lived in the North but had been raised in the South, saw southern men as compromised by their condescending attitude toward labor and their cultivation of leisure. She believed that southern women could make men over into

---

[32] Anne Firor Scott, The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930 (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 19.

a more industrious pattern. "The Southern Woman," said McIntosh, can

> make it a law of the social life in which she rules, that nothing so surely degrades a man as idleness, and the vices to which it almost inevitably leads. Thus she will proclaim the dignity and worth of labor, and she will find her reward in the new impress made on the yet ductile minds of her children.[33]

Despite the conventional images of feminine and masculine roles in the South, the aristocratic, patriarchal system had actually served to emphasize women's inherent ability and strength, and men's weakness and ineffectiveness. Women's unadmitted and unacknowledged strength made it possible for men to maintain the illusion of their own, despite their growing insecurity and self-doubt. The southern male felt the pressures of the changes of the modernizing period, but mostly at a distance, as those changes took shape in the North. The pressures of change increased his insecurity and defensiveness, which served to heighten his attachment to his own images of proper southern planter masculinity.

These few, brief examples of alternatives to, or variations on the northern, middle-class definitions of masculinity illustrate that there was no uniformity of masculine roles between 1820 and 1860. No doubt there were

---

[33] McIntosh, Woman in America, p. 125.

an even greater number of alternatives or variations than those discussed here. And yet, as urban, industrial, commerce-oriented society spread its influence gradually throughout the United States, its values and its point of view slowly brought about an increasing conformity to the middle-class masculine ethos. The process of modernization itself, as it made its influence felt in every corner of the nation, was probably the single most important factor in the stimulation of a homogeneous masculine ethos in the setting of American society. However, Kathryn Kish Sklar suggests that the spread of the cult of domesticity may itself have had a homogenizing influence. In her study of Catharine Beecher, Sklar argues that Beecher had perceived that the home and domesticity provided a perfect vehicle for national unity, because it was almost the only universally experienced institution.[34] The growing homogeneity of women's

---

[34] In contrast to the rest of American society, women, by their role in the home, formed a homogeneous group. Sklar writes, in Catharine Beecher, pp. 160-161, that "employing Tocqueville . . . Catharine noted further that most of American society acknowledged the homogeneous identity of women by generalizing the domestic relationship between men and women throughout the culture. Thus the whole culture was in a sense made 'safe' for women, so that wherever they moved in it, the ideology of male protection and female dependence would be maintained."

Every woman, then, became a purveyor of middle-class culture. "The emphasis given to gender identity can be viewed as an attempt by a society laden with class and regional anxieties to compensate for these divisive factors."

roles contributed to a kind of cultural consistency across class and regional boundaries. At the same time, it also contributed to the growing polarization of sex roles. This very homogeneity abetted the spread of the corresponding masculine roles which had developed among those who first felt the impact of modernization. Certainly variations--and even alternatives--continued to coexist with the prevailing middle-class description of masculine roles. However, the roles that had developed and been shaped under the influence of modernization were destined to become those most characteristic of American society, whether for good or for ill.

CHAPTER VI

THE SITUATION TODAY

The study of nineteenth-century masculine roles has important implications for our understanding of male roles and relationships between the sexes today. I believe that nineteenth-century developments helped significantly to shape the situation in which we find ourselves at this moment. The polarization of the sexes and the partition of the world by sex created a highly-charged emotional climate which is still with us. Though circumstances have changed in many ways, these changes have not been such as to de-fuse the potentially explosive relationship between men and women. This chapter will explore some of the issues that still face us, will ask some questions about responsibility, and will make some tentative predictions and prescriptions for the future.

Dating particularly from the period 1820 to 1860, American children have suffered from too much mother and too little father. This remains a fact of life in American society even though the relations between the sexes are quite different, in some ways, than they were 125 years ago. In most societies, the father plays a much larger

role in socializing his sons than he does in ours.[1] In this country more than in almost any other, the role of the father is a vestigial one. As in the nineteenth century, middle-class men today continue to be absorbed in their work and in the advancement of their careers. Even though more men may change diapers and share babysitting tasks now than in the last century, they are still marginal to the emotional lives of their children. Women are the primary shapers of the conscience. The distinctive characteristic of the conscience of American males is that it speaks with a feminine voice.[2] To men, women are super-ego figures. It is this role, into which women are thrust by default, that is key to understanding the strained relationship between the sexes even today.

The conscience with a feminine voice is the peculiar legacy of the era between 1820 and 1860. There is evidence that both in the period under study and today as well, men feel an element of hostility toward women and the feminine. Dr. Karl Stern, a psychiatrist, has described men who fit the pattern of "hustler," "go-getter," managerial and executive types. He is convinced that at the root of their

---

[1]Geoffrey Gorer, The American People: A Study in National Character (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1948), p. 54.

[2]Ibid., p. 56.

activism there is typically a maternal conflict and a rejection of the feminine.[3] The feminine voice of the conscience urges a man on to success, but also accuses him of not being as successful as he ought to be. He reacts with internal conflict and hostility. Julius Fast, a contemporary commentator who wrote The Incompatibility of Men and Women, insists that once they stop speaking of women in idealized terms, most men see women as bitchy and castrating.[4]

This hostility toward women and the feminine has repercussions in areas of life which initially seem far-removed. Margaret Mead suggests that men who feel they are failing are particularly likely to feel anger toward women and the values they represent. Those values may be symbolized by laws designed to protect the weak, such as welfare or social-security legislation.[5] But it is not only men who are failing who experience hostility toward the feminine. The man who feels he is paying too high a price for his success is liable to remind himself frequently of how hard he has to work, and to complain about how soft

---

[3]Karl Stern, The Flight from Women (New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 1965), pp. 1-2.

[4]Julius Fast, The Incompatibility of Men and Women (New York: M. Evans & Co., Inc., 1971).

[5]Mead, Male and Female, p. 312.

things are for others. Business and politics have been considered the exclusive domain of males, arenas where the nagging female conscience does not belong. Geoffrey Gorer suggests that a great deal of the animus felt and expressed against the New Deal by businessmen and their spokesmen was related to the fact that its social legislation seemed to be introducing the "meddling female morality" into areas reserved for masculine judgment.[6]

These areas, after all, had come to represent the "real world" in the minds of most men. When masculine and feminine roles became polarized and designated as belonging to separate "spheres," the feminine world was defined in terms of the home. The masculine world, defined exclusively by material values, became the "real" world. This "real," masculine world was hard and tough and impervious to sentiment or moralizing.[7] Humanistic education and the arts became an extension of the feminine sphere, as did religious institutions. Therefore they were privatized and set apart. Altruistic morality was believed to belong only in the private sphere of person-to-person relationships, like marriage and the family. In the "real" world of business and politics, much morality was considered "unrealistic." Whoever tried to bridge the two worlds by

---

[6]Gorer, American People, p. 60.

[7]Bianchi and Reuther, Machismo to Mutuality, p. 49.

applying moral judgments in politics and business was dismissed as unrealistic and sentimental, and his masculinity was questioned.[8]

A similar pattern exists today. Not only are liberal social programs identified with "bleeding hearts" (i.e., the sentimental and effeminate), but institutions which advocate social responsibility are also considered to be biased by a feminine perspective.

This helps to explain men's widely felt aversion to churches and other religious institutions addressing themselves to public issues. The battle-cry most often used to justify restriction of the church's concerns to the boundaries of private (i.e., more or less domestic) life is the shibboleth upholding the separation of church and state. For example, when the churches joined the movement for civil rights for American blacks, they were widely condemned--often by their own laymen--for breaching the barrier between church and state. They were similarly criticized when they took positions against United States involvement in the Vietnamese War. The hostility aroused in men--within or outside religious institutions--when those institutions or their officers become concerned with issues popularly conceived as political or economic cannot be accounted for by loyalty to the "separation" formula.

---

[8]Ibid., p. 50.

In any case that formula refers only to institutional relationships between government and ecclesiastical systems, rather than limiting the areas with which churches may concern themselves. This hostility stems not from passion for a principle so much as from the association of the churches with the feminine, the domestic, and the delicate. It is a further symptom of the generally unacknowledged hostility of men toward the feminine. Church leaders and others, such as educators, who may support progressive public policy are labeled as having ventured outside of their proper "sphere." They are called naive and accused of being unaware of what life is like in the "real world." Like women, they are judged incompetent beyond the domestic sphere and its extensions. This covert hostility, directed originally towards women but displaced onto individuals and institutions which have become associated with the feminine, has played a significant role in the history of American religion and politics. Although this attitude has changed and is changing, it has not disappeared. It has more often simply moved underground.

As in the nineteenth century, male hostility toward women is matched, if not surpassed, by women's hostility toward men. Helen Papashvily believes that this hostility is apparent even in twentieth-century American literature. Women find it difficult to love a whole man, she suggests,

so in literature men are emasculated. The male figures in women's writings often suffer from blindness, amnesia, paralysis, and other afflictions which reduce their threat to women and women's interests.[9] Leslie Fiedler also contends that throughout American fiction, males are frequently humiliated.[10] The hostility between men and women is a continuing reality with both personal and social repercussions, and yet, with the exception of the recent feminist movement, that hostility has seldom been expressed openly. The dichotomies between church/world, "culture"/business, private/public all reflect the polarity between masculine and feminine roles. The intensity with which the boundaries between them are guarded is an indicator of the strength of feeling dividing men and women. Although the hostility runs both ways, the probability is that, because of the circumstances of socialization into masculine roles, men are more hostile toward females than women are toward males.[11]

The changing pattern of relationships between the sexes today makes it likely that, for a time at least, hostility between them may increase rather than decrease. The angry rhetoric stemming from some segments of the

---

[9]Papashvily, Happy Endings, p. 212.

[10]Fiedler, Love and Death, p. 64.

[11]Lynn, Parental and Sex-Role Identification, p. 63.

women's movement; demands that men share in domestic tasks and in child care; competition from women for jobs traditionally reserved for men; affirmative action; the increased aggressiveness of women in sexual relationships--all make it likely that men will feel crowded and become defensive. Their level of latent anger toward women is likely to escalate. Although in some cases men may be able to admit their anger and deal with it, generally it will be impolitic to do so. Many men, intimidated by the case made against them by militant women, will make a great effort to conform to the expectations laid out for them by those women seeking a redress of grievances. The likelihood would seem to be that for many such men, yearning for a clear conscience, women will continue to function as super-ego figures, although inducing guilt in new ways.

What is the likely result of increasing men's defensiveness and/or heightening their sense of guilt as they believe themselves to be trying perpetually to please women, and constantly failing? It would seem that in the near future, the relations between the sexes would continue to be problematic. The hostility of men toward women is likely to grow and to be reciprocated. There are likely to be increasing strains on family life, on single persons, and on the culture as a whole because of it. It is also quite conceivable that men's covert anger toward women may

seek acceptable surrogate targets in institutions, attitudes or programs which are identified with femininity either directly or symbolically.

Study of the period 1820-1860 reveals that it was not only women who suffered from the polarization of sex roles during the modernizing period. As was noted even by some perceptive observers at the time, men also suffered deeply from the narrowing of sex-role possibilities. This suffering was not always registered on a conscious level (nor was the suffering of women always consciously recognized), but was frequently a suffering of diminishment. It was a suffering of a loss which could not be measured by those experiencing the loss, akin to that of one born blind. Raised in a culture where one's work became a fundamental mark of identity, achievement, status, and worth, men learned to withdraw much of their energy and interest from other things to invest in their vocations, professions, or daily work. Work came to consume a disproportionate share of one's life and vitality.

Although American culture has learned and is still learning to value things other than work, it is still true that for many middle-class men, work gives them their basic definition of identity and absorbs their best energies. Myron Brenton has observed that men are more likely to be immobilized by the loss of their jobs

than by a death in the family. Certainly men do suffer terribly from divorce and from personal tragedies, but they react much more drastically when things are going badly with their work.[12] The same author points out that intense devotion to one's work is a way of reaching a goal, but it is also a way of running away. The more one is devoted to one's work, the more acceptable an excuse for avoiding other commitments elsewhere--often commitments demanding a deeper level of intimacy. A man avoids those deeper, more demanding commitments because he feels less than adequate to handle them. Without being consciously aware of it, men may become highly active in some aspects of their functioning as a way of remaining passive in others. The passivity denotes a feeling of inadequacy. In other words, men often prefer to take small satisfactions rather than bigger ones, because the bigger ones are frightening and arouse anxiety. Men's work, whether in the nineteenth century or the twentieth, offers opportunities to escape facing up to one's own felt inadequacy. This is perhaps even more true for middle-class men in the twentieth than in the nineteenth century. Today, middle-class men are more likely to be committed to work which is capable of absorbing far more time and energy than can be consumed in a scheduled working day. The problem was and is that

---

[12] Brenton, American Male, p. 20.

work itself is not always a successful escape. Men felt and feel anxious and insecure in the world of work. They feel constantly put to the test. This is the steep price paid for the chance to better themselves.

What are twentieth-century men fleeing from? They are fleeing from intimacy, from close personal relationships in which their weaknesses and their emotional neediness may be exposed. Men have been trained to be strong, protective, and to prove their strength by achievement. In the process, they learn that it is unmanly to be seen as they know they are: not always strong, but sometimes weak; not only adequate, but sometimes dependent on others; not only protective, but at times and in certain ways in need of protection. Dr. Karl Stern describes men who are particularly devoted to these conventional masculine images as especially likely to be embarked on a "flight into work," while fearful of being loved. In such persons there may be noted an extraordinary denial of feeling. There is a tendency to avoid tenderness. Such men exhibit a fear of dependence or passivity.[13] For such men, the thought of being dependent is almost terrifying. In observing such men who were diagnosed as suffering from peptic ulcer of the stomach, medical researchers found that many were hard-working and Spartan in their habits. They shied away from any pleasures of "receiving," from

---

[13] Stern, Flight from Woman, p. 2.

accepting tenderness, from all forms of passivity--even healthy ones. However, deep down they exhibited a need to be mothered, to be fed. The term "deep down" is literal as well as figurative, because the conflict they were expe-riencing manifested itself deep down in the body. The patient's whole lifestyle was a protest against "being fed," while their stomach revolted at not being fed. These men were not able to be nourished emotionally. They could not allow themselves to be open to love, to trust in a childlike way. Their flight from dependency may manifest itself in terms either of an aggressive activism or by undue intellectualism. Stern says that some psychiatrists describe such men in terms of a "frigid character." They tend to be rationalists, and to shy away from all interior means of communion. They are great believers in the mechanics and manageability of human relations.

Stern has described extreme cases, perhaps, although everyone knows such men, or men who tend in that direction. And yet, it is the extreme case that clarifies the pressures felt by most American men. A young man, commenting on his own experience, writes,

> I, like all male children, was taught that my value as a person depended on my power over others. I was taught that I must compete for personal power, and that to be successful I

> must conceal feelings of weakness, tenderness, and dependence, and present myself to other men as self-sufficient and insensitive.[14]

A student of sex roles has discovered that intimacy has been discouraged among American men by two aspects of the masculine role which are learned early on. One is that it is not "manly" to show most emotion or to express dependency needs. Another is that one is to be aggressive and successful, which almost requires that males regard one another as competitors for status. It is unwise, of course, to reveal weakness to the competition. Among males, sexual prowess is more acceptable as a conversational topic than emotional commitment.[15] The stereotype of a virile man as the "strong and silent" type grows out of male vanity rather than the impulse to protect women. It is a vanity that says, in effect, that "no one must see me hurt or upset, because that would destroy for both of us my image of invulnerability which I struggle to live by and which is all I want others to see in me."

In a culture like ours, in which competition is extremely important, and where a man's self-esteem and personal happiness have been made dependent on his acquisitive success or lack of it, physical contact and the emotional response it creates may be a severe

---

[14] Michael Silverstein in Men and Masculinity, eds. Pleck and Sawyer, p. 107.

[15] Chafetz, Masculine/Feminine or Human? p. 183.

disadvantage.[16] Because of the male requirement of competition and success, the culture in which he lives discourages interpersonal closeness. Physical contact, simple touching, are shied away from. It is probable that males learn to recoil from physical closeness while still infants. They learn this reaction from their own mothers, who have been culturally conditioned to handle them differently than female infants precisely to discourage physical intimacy as a male trait. Ironically enough, it may be that men have a greater need for such personal contact than women do.[17]

Thanks in large part to the women's movement and its spin-off of "male liberation," it is becoming less shameful for men to show or admit dependency needs, weaknesses, and emotions. Even physical contact has become more acceptable for males. Nevertheless, the "stiff upper-lip" mentality is strongly embedded in American masculine culture, and it continues to affect men's lives. Since the onset of industrialization men have learned to shut down part of their vital humanity. They have traded it for the sake of living up to role expectations centered around toughness, determination, and achievement. The gains from

---

[16] Michael Lewis, "Culture and Gender Roles: There's No Unisex in the Nursery," Psychology Today 5 (May 1972): 57.

[17] Ibid., p. 57.

that trade-off are obvious. All around us we see a highly developed economy, a society which is highly sophisticated in business and technology, and enormously powerful militarily. These are the results of an intense concentration of energy and a heavy investment in human emotion on the part of American men. (Women, too, have shared the cost, as should be obvious.) Quite apart from the question of whether the trade-offs were worth it or not is the question of whether it is now possible for men to begin to recover what they have so long been required to stifle in the interests of "progress." This is the real issue before us, and it is a complex one.

The pressures to conform to a narrow, rigid, sex-typing pattern for males are applied beginning almost in infancy. The little boy who shows interest in "girls'" activities causes his father to break out in a cold sweat, and makes his mother terribly nervous, too. Both--but particularly the mother--will work to discourage the boy from any and all interest in things labeled "feminine." The little boy will receive a message, heavily charged with parental emotion, that something is wrong with him, or will be if he fails to live up to expectations. This conformity continues to be reinforced as he grows older. It is masculine and thus acceptable to play ball and read the sports page; it is not quite masculine to play the

piano well or to be interested in drama. Teachers, coaches, other children of both sexes, and other adults join the parents in enforcing a conformity to conventional masculine images no matter what price the boy must pay. Sex roles are stereotyped even in psychological testing. When the young man goes to college or graduate school and takes vocational interest tests, his interest may be labeled "masculine" or "feminine" depending on whether his responses lean in the direction of engineering or of poetry.[18] If the warnings and signals from parents and others are shrill enough, the boy will become more doubtful than ever about his masculinity. In America, for a male to be in doubt of his masculinity is to be in doubt of his acceptability as a human being. Margaret Mead has stated that in America, maleness has to be re-earned on a daily basis.[19]

Fortunately, the pressure to conform to masculine stereotypes is being reduced, at least among the middle-class. There is more room for diversity under a broader canopy of masculinity than there used to be. It is

---

[18] This is rapidly changing under the pressures of the times. However, according to Dr. Ralph Kron of the Counseling Center at Michigan State University, the Minnesota Multi-Phasic Inventory continues to use these categories. Until six or seven years ago, the Strong Vocational Interest test definitely employed stereotyped masculine and feminine categories in interpreting results. The Strong test has since been replaced by another instrument, but personal experience reveals that the old test has continued to be used here and there at least as late as 1976.

[19] Mead, Male and Female, p. 318.

beginning to be understood that masculinity cannot be so narrowly limited to specific roles. It remains true, however, that males are far more likely to identify masculinity (as socially defined) and adequacy. There continues to be significant anxiety centered around one's success or failure in living out the masculine roles.

Since men have to prove their masculinity by achievement in the "real" world (the world of work and other men), they make a much higher emotional investment in that world than in home and family. Certainly, in every known human society there is some form of the family. There is everywhere some set of permanent arrangements by which males assist families in caring for the young. Men can and do learn how to share in nurturing behavior. And yet, in our society, the role of fatherhood differs from that of motherhood in three crucial ways. Janet Saltzman Chafetz describes those dissimilarities. First, the role of father is a very minor part of the total masculine role constellation. It ranks low on the list of priorities males are supposed to have, and they are not strongly rewarded or punished for playing this role either well or poorly. Second, American society does not have a clear consensus concerning the definition of the fatherhood role, except for the omnipresent expectation that a man "provide" for his children financially. Third, practically nothing is

provided males in their fatherhood experience to orient and equip them for the father role. Chafetz goes on to say that the "masculine mystique" discourages men from learning to relate to people, including children, in a warm, open, compassionate way. Men have been taught all their lives to place a value on achievement. This orientation leads them to praise their children's successes, but makes it difficult for them to sympathize with their weaknesses, errors, and failures. Fathers are typically able to offer what seems to be only a conditional affection. Furthermore, if the father is not particularly successful at his work, he is apt to join his wife in pressuring his children--especially the boys--to succeed. It is hoped that their success will offer him vicarious satisfaction for his own failures and frustrations. His own success needs are likely to have a decisive influence on the way he relates to his sons, thus perpetuating the syndrome centered on success and anxiety over failure.

Both children and their fathers suffer from the limitations of masculine roles and stereotypes. Fathers do not ordinarily share actively in the petty daily problems and needs of their children. Although they are involved in the great and special moments of excitement or disaster, fathers tend to be marginal to the intimate lives of their children. Since they are not well equipped

by their own training in masculine roles to deal with their children on a deep emotional level, and caught as they usually are in all-consuming devotion to work and "success," fathers are not able to involve themselves in their children's lives very fully. At least, not fully enough to develop the more compassionate and humane aspects of their own personalities. If they did, they might, in turn, learn to relate to their children better. The American ethos has assumed that father never knows best. The father has come to expect his sons to reject him both as authority and as model. Geoffrey Gorer believes that the immigrant experience has affected all relations and expectations between American fathers and sons. The son of the immigrant father was transformed into an American--something the father could never quite become. Even if the father was not an incomplete American, he was almost certainly old-fashioned. Fathers do not expect their sons to follow in their footsteps or to be like they are. In fact, they look forward to their sons' rising socially or professionally, and achieving a higher status than their own.[20]

The marginal role which fatherhood plays in a man's life can be traced in part to the undervaluation of the home as an arena for males. Since the period

---

[20] Gorer, American People, pp. 45-56.

1820-1860, the home has been considered indispensable, but, paradoxically, not very important. The result is something of value lost between fathers and children, and a perpetuation from one generation to another of stereotyped, conventional roles and diminished humanity.

Cultural change clearly has an impact on personality, with ramifications affecting society as a whole. This study has traced the changes of the modernizing period to changes in character structure in the middle period of the last century. The United States in the latter quarter of the twentieth century is experiencing rapid change. Speed of communication, the advent of computerization, the technological utilization of space, the energy crisis, changes in the status of minorities, and the economic success of other nations have combined to stimulate rapid change in American society--so rapid that in reaction to it, some persons show personality changes as a result of the difficulty of coping with their experience.

One characteristic which appears under such conditions is nostalgia for coherence and consistency. Such nostalgia may make persons vulnerable to religious or political movements of the kind which offer simplistic solutions to all problems. Certainly nostalgia for an apparently simpler past is a very real feature of American life in the 1970s. There are an abundance of movements

offering unitary solutions, from "dropping out," and communal movements both religious and secular, to Scientology, est, the charismatic movement, and political ideologies of the extreme left or far right. A second characteristic of the personality under the impact of social change is that discrepancies develop in habits of disciplining children, organizing domestic relationships, and managing work. There will also be an unevenness in the ways that people grasp the culture in which they are living. As a result, people will tend to turn to "inner rhythms" as ways of coping with the pressures of change. Rapid social change puts strains on the personality. Some manage to live with those strains and turn them to a creative use (for example, the abolitionist during the last century), while others do their best to avoid facing reality. We can find examples of both in the period 1820-1860 and today. A polarization of sex roles emerged out of such change 150 years ago, and we may expect that similar pressures today will not leave the American personality unaffected. Sex roles are likely to register the impact of social change as they did then. Certainly, some will find the ambiguities of such a time so intolerable that they will be driven to some narrow dogmatism to ease the strain. Others may turn to creative purpose the contradictions they experience in society.

We are living in a time of change, in which nearly everything once thought settled is open to question. Among the social arrangements which have been under attack in recent years are the stereotyped sex roles which, in their major outlines, are descended from their prototypes of the nineteenth century. These conventional sex roles have been under attack chiefly by women, who, in spite of changes in women's roles, have felt that they have continued to be bound and oppressed by practices and attitudes derived from the traditional roles. The form of their protest against oppressive roles has often been an attack against men as the oppressors. The public discussion of the oppression of women has opened for consideration the whole issue of sex roles. It has spawned a minor movement for "male liberation" which has taken the view that the conventional roles do not serve men any better than women. Some men are ready to presume that it is their own sex which must bear the chief responsibility for the roles which have become a burden to both sexes. Who is to blame? Or is it possible at all to fix historical responsibility for the development of the roles which by now have long been conventional? Are American men historically guilty for the roles which have been judged inappropriate and unfair? In my opinion, it is not possible to fix historical responsibility for the current dilemma. Men are no more "guilty"

than women for the uncomfortable alignment of sex roles among middle-class Americans. Margaret Mead has pointed out, quite rightly, that the world has not been made by men alone. It is historically and socially naive, as well as insulting to women, to believe that females are merely passive and helpless when it comes to defining roles.[21] From culture to culture, sex roles have been styled in ways that function well or badly for one sex or both. Sometimes the masculine role has been defined in such a way that males have seemed to have an easier time. Sometimes women's roles have seemed to offer females the advantage. At times, sex roles have been reasonably balanced and well coordinated with the realities of life in a given society, and other times not. Whenever the roles of either are too narrow, or demand a perfection not easily attainable, then both men and women suffer. When this suffering finds a voice, leverage for change is exerted. Roles can and do change as historical situations change. Due to cultural inertia, role changes do not always keep pace with the development of a society. When the discrepancy becomes wide enough, special efforts become necessary to create pressure for a more appropriate alignment. The periodic resurgence of the feminist movement in this country has served that purpose. Nevertheless,

---

[21] Mead, Male and Female, p. 200.

while the rhetoric which is sometimes heard indicting men as oppressors may serve as a useful political instrument, as well as heightening awareness of needed changes in role definitions, it ought not to be taken literally.

The polarized roles which developed in the nineteenth century, of which we are indirect heirs, did not emerge as a conspiracy of either men or women. They developed piecemeal as a response to social patterns which did not appear all at once, but coalesced over a period of time. The new roles were never visualized as a whole before they appeared, nor could they have been anticipated. It is not at all clear that when men first followed their work out of the home that they were eager to go or that their wives were eager to follow them. Some families no doubt lamented the new developments while others greeted them with enthusiasm. It is certainly true that the roles which developed in the Jacksonian era gave to men more freedom and more choices. This indicates that the new roles served the interests of men better than of women. Freedom and choice are greatly prized in our culture, but no doubt there were men who found that both increased the difficulty and complexity of their lives. Surely there were women who preferred not to be faced with either. Although men had a relative advantage over women, it was not one they could enjoy without paying a heavy price. It is by no means

certain that every individual male would voluntarily have chosen to pay the price in exchange for the benefits. Whether men gained more than women in this period finally involves a whole series of value judgments. Was it a fair exchange to sacrifice whole dimensions of one's affective life, to lose contact with needs, instincts, and feelings, to depersonalize one's relationships with wife and children in trade for a chance at making a mark in the world economically, professionally, or politically? Was the cost that had to be paid when that chance had failed or aborted a reasonable price to pay? Those questions can be answered in the affirmative and with confidence only if one presumes that active life in the world is a value that always takes priority over a multitude of other human values. If one has any doubts about that, one is forced to be somewhat hesitant before rushing to the conclusion that one sex or the other sacrificed more from the sex roles prescribed by society between 1820 and 1860.

A danger today is that if we too quickly jump to the conclusion that the losses of women were vastly greater than those of men, we may contribute to the point of view that the traditionally masculine "sphere," the arena of activity in the world, is the only arena in which a human being may express himself or herself creatively and find some measure of fulfillment. The issue before us is not

whether one sex or the other ought to be restricted in some way, required to sacrifice themselves for the "good" of the whole. The issue is rather whether those aspects of human life traditionally associated with the feminine sphere are going to continue to be undervalued by both sexes. If so, the tragic result will be that the maimed and reduced humanity organized around systematic ambition and associated with the masculine sphere will become the universal model of what it is to be an optimal human being. The truth is that both men and women made enormous sacrifices as a result of the polarization of sex roles. Those polarized roles were dehumanizing for both sexes. Out of them emerged tension and covert hostility between men and women which continue today and have further complicated their relationship.

Probably most nineteenth- and twentieth-century men have perceived themselves to have had the advantage in the distribution of sex roles, without consciously counting their own losses. However, men may also be unconsciously aware that they have left something valuable in the keeping of the opposite sex. Men may not be eager for a reconsideration of the conventional sex roles, for fear that those values which have been entrusted to women for safekeeping may become permanently lost.

Although American men do not always respond positively to movements to reexamine or redesign sex roles, we live in a time when inherited sex roles have come under critical scrutiny. Some observers, like Ruth Hartley, are fearful that the observable prevalence of male hostility toward females will make it very difficult for some males to adjust to a society where feminine roles are changing substantially.[22] The adjustment for men and for many women may indeed be a difficult one, and for some, impossible. And yet, the "renegotiation" of sex roles might reasonably be expected to be a continuing process which can only be evaluated in the long run. The redefining of sex roles is necessary for men's sake as well as for women's. When men feel required to conform to masculine stereotypes which conflict with their real temperaments, frustrations and anxieties are multiplied. Distorted compensatory behavior increases. Justifiable or not, when men are required to adjust to stereotypes that do not fit them personally, they respond by becoming hostile to women or overdependent on them.[23]

---

[22] Ruth Hartley, in "Sex-Role Pressures," p. 466, comments that "the frequency and intensity of cross-sex hostility in our male subjects, their manifest anxiety about their adequacy, and the prevalence in them of marked inflexibility, suggests a dismaying prognosis for their future adjustment in a society where feminine roles are changing rapidly."

[23] Brenton, American Male, pp. 40-41.

For the sake of a healthier relationship between the sexes as well as for the sake of human individuality, roles need to be reconsidered. Every individual needs to have the freedom to make role choices which are suitable to his or her own personality. Some crucial social roles must be shared by men and women, particularly child-raising. If the relations between men and women are to be drained of hostility as much as possible, men can no longer turn over child-raising so exclusively to women. They must find ways of offering direct models for their children. The choice to have children must be accompanied by a mutual commitment to raise them. Just as stigmas need to be removed from women who seek active, aggressive roles in the world, they need also to be removed from either men or women who seek quieter styles of life and work. Masculinity and femininity must be recognized to have infinite variations. Masculinity must no longer be something which has to be earned or defended. A crucial factor in the redefining of sex roles must be a positive consideration of those roles traditionally associated with the feminine "sphere," so that both men and women may affirm their value and incorporate them into their own lives as individually appropriate. The values symbolized by "domesticity," for example, ought not to be rejected as symbols of bondage and subordination. They ought to be embraced by both men

and women in balance with other values. What the shape of future roles will be, and to what extent roles will be more or less specifically associated with one sex or the other, is impossible to predict. It is unlikely that any arrangement will be absolutely final for all time, since the historical process itself requires continual adjustments. The goal of the process of rethinking sex roles should be the recovery, for both sexes, of a fuller humanity; and of a positive, healthy, and creative relationship between men and women.

June Singer, a psychologist and follower of Carl Jung, says that we begin our lives as infants in a kind of "psychological hermaphroditism," growing out of an undifferentiated union with the mother. We then grow into our sexual identity as male or female, and in the course of ego development tend to polarize the sexes and sex roles. The development of polarized sex roles overrules the tendency toward what she calls "androgyny," a realization of "masculine" and "feminine" aspects within a single individual. Nevertheless, says Singer, creative and imaginative people of every age have managed to cross the boundaries of gender roles. Furthermore, as one grows older, rigidly stereotyped roles have less and less power over us. Both men and women find that in old age, they no longer have to prove their identity or their adequacy as

human beings. They become more able to turn inward and let themselves be who they really are.[24] Androgyny, or the discovery within oneself of traits characterized by society as "masculine" and "feminine," is perhaps a fitting symbol for the recovery of the fullness of humanity. A complementary relationship between men and women, unburdened by the hostility created by polarized sex roles, is a necessary ingredient for the discovery of one's own essential androgyny.

The agenda before both men and women is to create a climate in which the essential tasks and opportunities of life are shared equitably. Men must no longer be symbols for oppression or aggression, and women must no longer be symbols of a harsh and nagging super-ego. Whether sex roles as they developed between 1820 and 1860 were appropriate for that time, place, and situation or not, they are no longer functional in a highly developed society where rapid growth is not needed, but creativity and humaneness in the solving of social problems and the enrichment of our common life has become essential.

Even in the nineteenth century there were a few far-sighted souls, men as well as women, who were keenly aware that polarized sex roles and the division of the

---

[24] Singer, Androgyny, p. 321.

world into mutually exclusive "spheres" was dehumanizing and costly. In a letter to Elizabeth Cady Stanton written in 1855, Gerrit Smith wrote that

> believing man and woman to have the same nature, and to be therefore under obligation to have the same character, I would subject them to a common standard of morals and manners. The delicacy of man should be no less shrinking than that of woman, and the bravery of woman should be one with the bravery of man. Then would there be a public sentiment very unlike that which now requires the sexes to differ in character, and which, therefore, holds them amenable to different codes. . . .[25]

---

[25] Gerrit Smith, quoted in Up from the Pedestal, ed. Kraditor, p. 128.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Advice to Young Men

Abbott, Jacob. The Way to Do Good. New York: Harper & Bros., 1874 (original ed. 1852).

Alcott, William Alexander. The Young Man's Guide. Boston: Lilly, Wait, Colman & Holden, 1834 (original ed. 1833).

Arthur, Timothy Shay. Advice to Young Men on Their Duties and Conduct in Life. Boston: Phillips, Sampson & Co., 1850.

Atwood, Anthony. The Young Man's Way to Intelligence, Respectability, Honor, and Usefulness. Philadelphia: J. W. Moore, 1857 (original ed. 1850).

Beecher, Henry Ward. Twelve Lectures to Young Men, on Various Important Subjects. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1901 (original ed. 1844).

Chapin, E. H. Duties of Young Men, Exhibited in Six Lectures; With an Anniversary Address. Boston: Abel Tompkins & B. B. Mussey, 1840.

Eliot, William G., Jr. Lectures to Young Men. Boston: Crosby, Nichols, & Co., 1858 (original ed. 1853).

Graham, Sylvester. A Lecture to Young Men, on Chastity, Intended Also for the Serious Consideration of Parents and Guardians. Boston: George W. Light, 1839 (original ed. 1834).

Hawes, Joel. Lectures to Young Men on the Formation of Character, etc. Hartford: Cooke & Co., 1829.

Newcomb, Harvey. How to Be a Man: A Book for Boys, Containing Useful Hints on the Formation of Character. Boston: Gould & Lincoln, 1860 (original ed. 1847).

Nott, Eliphalet, D.D. Counsels to Young Men on the Formation of Character, and the Principles Which Lead to Success and Happiness in Life. New York: Harper & Bros., 1860 (original ed. 1840).

Peacham, Henry. The Compleat Gentleman. London: Francis Constable, 1634 (reissued by Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906).

Stanhope, Philip Dormer. Lord Chesterfield's Letters to His Son and Others. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1959.

Todd, John, D.D. The Student's Manual; Designed to Aid in Forming and Strengthening the Intellectual and Moral Character and Habits of the Student. Northampton: Bridgman and Childs, 1868 (original ed. 1854).

Van Doren, William Howard. Mercantile Morals; Thoughts for Young Men Entering Mercantile Life. New York: Charles Scribner, 1857 (original ed. 1852).

Biography

Bloomer, Dexter C. Life and Writings of Amelia Bloomer. New York: Schocken Books, 1975 (original ed. 1895).

Goodrich, Samuel G. Recollections of A Lifetime, or Men and Things I Have Seen: In a Series of Familiar Letters to a Friend, Historical, Biographical, Anecdotal, and Descriptive. 2 vols. New York & Auburn: Miller, Orton, & Mulligan, 1856.

Hunt, Freeman. Lives of American Merchants. Vol. 1. New York: Derby & Jackson, 1858.

Seymour, Charles C. B. Self-Made Men. New York: Harper & Bros., 1858.

Children's Literature

Clark, William. The Boy's Own Book: A Complete Encyclopedia of All the Diversions. Boston: Monroe & Francis, 1834.

Abbott, Jacob. Franklin, The Apprentice Boy. New York: Harper & Bros., 1855.

_____. Hoaryhead and M'Donner. New York: Harper & Bros., 1855.

_____. Jonas' Stories; Related to Rollo and Lucy. Boston: Wm. D. Ticknor, 1839.

_____. Rollo at Work. New York: Sheldon & Co., 1868 (original ed. 185-).

Knight, H. C. No Gains without Pains: A True Life for the Boys. New York: American Tract Society, 1856.

McGuffey, William H. McGuffey's New Fourth Eclectic Reader: Instructive Lessons for the Young. New York & Cincinnati: Van Antwerp, Bragg, & Co., 1857.

_____. McGuffey's New Third Eclectic Reader: For Young Learners. Cincinnati: Winthrop B. Smith & Co., 1857.

_____. McGuffey's Newly Revised Eclectic Fourth Reader: Containing Elegant Extracts in Prose and Poetry, and Exercises in Articulation, Defining, Etc. New York: Clark, Austin & Smith, 1853.

_____. McGuffey's Newly Revised Eclectic Third Reader, Containing Selections in Prose and Poetry. Cincinnati: Winthrop B. Smith & Co., 1853.

Sigourney, Lydia (Mrs. L. H.). The Child's Book: Consisting of Original Articles, in Prose and Poetry. New York: Turner & Hayden, 1846.

Etiquette Books

Cooley, E., M.D. A Description of the Etiquette at Washington City. Philadelphia: L. B. Clarke, 1829.

Hartley, Cecil B. The Gentlemen's Book of Etiquette, and Manual of Politeness. Boston: G. W. Cottrell, 1860.

Hervey, George Winfred. The Principles of Courtesy with Hints and Observations on Manners and Habits. New York: Harper & Bros., 1852.

Foreign Travelers' Accounts

Bremer, Fredrika. The Homes of the New World; Impressions of America. New York: Harper & Bros., 1853.

De Tocqueville, Alexis. Democracy in America. In two volumes with a critical appraisal of each volume by John Stuart Mill. New York: Schocken Books, 1961.

Hamilton, Thomas. Men and Manners in America. Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1833.

Handlin, Oscar. This Was America: True Accounts of People and Places, Manners and Customs as Recorded by European Travelers to the Western Shore in the Eighteenth, Nineteenth, and Twentieth Centuries. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949.

Martineau, Harriet. Society in America. Edited, Abridged, and with an Introductory Essay by Seymour Martin Lipset. Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1968.

Trollope, Frances. Domestic Manners of the Americans. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949.

Literature

Cooper, James Fenimore. Home As Found. New York: Hurd & Houghton, 1865 (original ed. 1838).

_____. The Last of the Mohicans or a Narrative of 1757. Boston & New York: The Riverside Press, Cambridge, n.d. (original ed. 1826).

_____. Notions of the Americans Picked Up by a Traveling Bachelor. 2 vols. New York: Frederick Ungar Pub. Co., 1963 (original ed. 1828).

_____. The Pathfinder or The Inland Sea. Boston & New York: The Riverside Press, Cambridge, n.d. (original ed. 1840).

_____. The Wept of Wish-Ton-Wish. New York: Hurd & Houghton, 1868 (original ed. 1847).

Dana, Richard Henry. Two Years Before the Mast: A Personal Narrative of Life at Sea. New York: Doubleday, 1907 (original ed. 1840).

Howells, William Dean. A Boy's Town. New York & London: Harper & Bros., 1890.

Irving, Washington. The Works of Washington Irving. Vol. 1. Philadelphia: Lea & Blanchard, 1840.

Melville, Herman. Moby-Dick or, The Whale. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1956 (original ed. 1851).

_____. "The Paradise of Bachelors." In Selected Writings of Herman Melville. New York: The Modern Library, 1952.

_____. Pierre or, The Ambiquities. New York: Hendricks House, Inc., 1962 (original ed. 1852).

_____. "The Tartarus of Maids." In Selected Writings of Herman Melville. New York: The Modern Library, 1952.

Poe, Edgar Allan. "The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym." In The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe. Edited by James A. Harrison. New York: Society of English and French Literature, 1902 (original ed. 1838).

Magazines

The Child's Newspaper (Cincinnati). Vol. 1, 1834.

The Columbian Lady's and Gentleman's Magazine (New York). 1844.

Godey's Magazine and Lady's Book (Philadelphia). Vol. 49, 1854.

Graham Journal of Health and Longevity (Boston). Vol. 1, 1837.

The Knickerbocker or New-York Monthly Magazine (New York). Vols. 7 and 53, 1836 and 1859.

Mechanic's Advocate (Albany). Vol. 1, 1846.

Merry's Museum and Parley's Magazine (New York). Vol. 1.

The Saturday Evening Post (Philadelphia). Vol. 1, 1821.

Marriage Manuals

Alcott, William Alexander. The Young Husband, or Duties of Man in the Marriage Relation. Boston: George W. Light, 1839.

Bayley, John. Marriage As It Is And As It Should Be. New York: M. W. Dodd, 1857.

Bean, James. The Christian Minister's Affectionate Advice to a Married Couple. New York: American Tract Society, 1832.

Quinby, George W. Marriage and the Duties of the Marriage Relations, In a Series of Six Lectures, Addressed to Youth, and the Young in Married Life. Cincinnati: J. A. & U. P. James, 1852.

Thayer, William M. Hints for the Household; or Family Counsellor. Boston: John P. Jewett & Co.; Cleveland: Jewett, Proctor, & Worthington, 1853.

Medical Comment

Brigham, Amariah, M.D. Remarks on the Influence of Mental Cultivation and Mental Excitement upon Health. 2nd ed. Boston: Marsh, Capen & Lyon, 1833 (Delmar, N.Y.: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1973).

Gardner, Augustus K., M.D. "Physical Decline of American Women." The Knickerbocker, or New-York Monthly Magazine 55 (1860): 37-52.

Jarvis, Edward, M.D. "On the Comparative Liability of Males and Females to Insanity, and Their Comparative Curability and Mortality When Insane." The American Journal of Insanity 7 (1850): 142-171.

_____. "On the Supposed Increase of Insanity." The American Journal of Insanity 8 (1851-2): 333-364.

Ray, Isaac, M.D. Mental Hygiene. Boston: Ticknor & Fields, 1863.

Miscellaneous

Abbott, Jacob. Gentle Measures in the Management and Training of the Young. New York & London: Harper & Bros., 1871.

Alexander, Archibald, D.D. Practical Sermons: To Be Read in Families and Social Meetings. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1850.

Dwight, Theodore, Jr. The Father's Book; or Suggestions for the Government and Instruction of Young Children on Principles Appropriate to a Christian Country. Springfield: G. & C. Merriam, 1835.

Egan, Pierce. Sporting Anecdotes, etc. Philadelphia: H. C. Carey & I. Lea, 1822.

Hunt, Freeman. Worth and Wealth: A Collection of Maxims, Morals, and Miscellanies for Merchants and Men of Business. New York: Stringer & Townsend, 1856.

Hunt, Thomas P. The Book of Wealth; In Which It Is Proved From the Bible, That It Is the Duty of Every Man to Become Rich. New York: Ezra Collier, 1836.

McIntosh, Maria J. Woman in America: Her Work and Her Reward. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1850.

Sedgwick, Catharine. Means and Ends, or Self-Training. Boston: Marsh, Capen, Lyon & Webb, 1839.

Waterston, Robert Cassie. Thoughts on Moral and Spiritual Culture. Boston: Crocker & Ruggles, & Hilliard, Gray & Co., 1842.

Popular Literature

Arthur, Timothy Shay. What Can Woman Do? Philadelphia: G. G. Evans, 1859 (original ed. 1856).

Burdett, Charles (Esq.). Arthur Martin; or, The Mother's Trials. New York: Harper & Bros., 1847.

Flint, Timothy. The Bachelor Reclaimed, or Celibacy Vanquished. Philadelphia: Key & Biddle, 1834.

Judson, Emily Chubbuck. Allen Lucas; the Self-Made Man. Utica: Bennett, Backus, & Hawley, 1844.

McIntosh, Maria J. Two Lives: Or, To Seem and To Be. New York: D. Appleton & Co./Philadelphia: Geo. S. Appleton, 1846.

Mitchell, Donald Grant [Ik Marvel]. Reveries of a Bachelor or A Book of the Heart. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1863 (original ed. circa 1851).

Sedgwick, Catharine M. The Poor Rich Man and The Rich Poor Man. New York: Harper & Bros., 1836.

Social Comment

Arthur, Timothy Shay. Ten Nights in a Bar-Room: And What I Saw There. Boston: L. P. Crown & Co./Philadelphia: J. W. Bradley, 1855.

Chipman, Samuel. The Temperance Lecturer: Being Facts Gathered from a Personal Examination of All the Jails and Poor-Houses of the State of New York, etc. Albany, 1842.

Cooper, James Fenimore. The American Democrat or Hints on the Social and Civic Relations of the United States of America. Cooperstown: H. & E. Phinney, 1838.

Secondary Sources

Articles

Angrist, Shirley S. "The Study of Sex Roles." Journal of Social Issues 25 (January 1969): 215-232.

Banner, Lois W. "Religious Benevolence as Social Control: A Critique of an Interpretation." The Journal of American History 60 (June 1973): 23-41.

Barker-Benfield, Ben. "The Spermatic Economy; A Nineteenth-Century View of Sexuality." In The American Family in Social-History Perspective. Edited by Michael Gordon. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973.

Booth, Alan. "Sex and Social Participation." American Sociological Review 37 (April 1972): 183-192.

Brown, Richard D. "Modernization and the Modern Personality in Early America, 1600-1865: A Sketch of a Synthesis." The Journal of Interdisciplinary History 2 (Winter 1972): 201-228.

Cominos, Peter T. "Late-Victorian Sexual Respectability and the Social System." International Review of Social History 8 (1963): 18-48.

Dawley, Alan, and Faler, Paul. "Working-Class Culture and Politics in The Industrial Revolution: Sources of Loyalism and Rebellion." Journal of Social History 9 (June 1976): 466-480.

DeCharms, Richard, and Moeller, Gerald H. "Values Expressed in American Children's Readers: 1800-1950." Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology 64:2 (1962): 136-142.

Demos, John. "Infancy and Childhood in the Plymouth Colony." In The American Family in Social-Historical Perspective. Edited by Michael Gordon. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973.

Demos, John, and Demos, Virginia. "Adolescence in Historical Perspective." In The American Family in Social-Historical Perspective. Edited by Michael Gordon. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973.

Douglas, Ann. "Heaven Our Home: Consolation Literature in the Northern United States, 1830-1880." American Quarterly 26 (December 1974): 496-515.

Farber, Bernard. "Family and Community Structure: Salem in 1800." In The American Family in Social-Historical Perspective. Edited by Michael Gordon. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973.

Gordon, Michael. "The Ideal Husband as Depicted in the 19th Century Marriage Manual." The Family Coordinator 18 (July 1969): 226-231.

Gordon, Michael, and Bernstein, M. Charles. "Mate Choice and Domestic Life in the Nineteenth-Century Marriage Manual." Journal of Marriage and the Family 32 (November 1970): 665-674.

Greven, Philip J., Jr. "Family Structure in Seventeenth-Century Andover, Massachusetts." In The American Family in Social-Historical Perspective. Edited by Michael Gordon. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973.

Groenseth, Erik. "The Husband Provider Role and Its Dysfunctional Consequences." Sociological Focus 5 (Winter 1971-72): 10-16.

Gutman, Herbert. "Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America, 1815-1919." American Historical Review 78 (June 1973): 531-588.

Harris, Barbara. "Recent Work on the History of the Family: A Review Article." Feminist Studies 3 (Spring-Summer 1976): 159-172.

Hartley, Ruth E. "Sex-Role Pressures and the Socialization of the Male Child." Psychological Reports 5 (1959): 457-468.

Henretta, James A. "'Modernization': Toward a False Synthesis." Reviews in American History 5 (December 1977): 445-452.

Hogeland, Ronald W. "Charles Hodge: The Association of Gentlemen and Ornamental Womanhood: A Study of Male Conventional Wisdom, 1825-1855." Journal of Presbyterian History 53 (Fall 1975): 239-251.

_____. "'The Female Appendage': Feminine Life-Styles in America, 1820-1860." In Our American Sisters: Women in American Life and Thought. Edited by Jean E. Friedman and William G. Shade. Boston, London, Sydney, & Toronto: Allyn & Bacon, Inc., 1976.

Inkeles, Alex. "Making Men Modern: On the Causes and Consequences of Individual Change in Six Developing Countries." American Journal of Sociology 75 (1969): 208-225.

Lantz, Herman R.; Britton, Margaret; Schmitt, Raymond; and Snyder, Eloise C. "Pre-Industrial Patterns in the Colonial Family in America: A Content Analysis of Colonial Magazines." American Sociological Review 33 (June 1968): 413-426.

Lantz, Herman R.; Keyes, Jane; and Schultz, Martin. "The American Family in the Preindustrial Period: From Base Lines in History to Change." American Sociological Review 40 (February 1975): 21-36.

Laslett, Peter. "The Comparative History of the Family." In The American Family in Social-Historical Perspective. Edited by Michael Gordon. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973.

Lewis, Michael. "Culture and Gender Roles: There's No Unisex in the Nursery." Psychology Today 5 (May 1972): 54.

Mathews, Donald G. "The Second Great Awakening as an Organizing Process, 1780-1830: An Hypothesis." American Quarterly, Spring 1969, pp. 23-43.

Mead, Margaret. "Character Formation and Diachronic Theory." In Social Structure: Studies Presented to A. R. Radcliffe-Brown. Edited by Meyer Fortes. New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1963.

Morantz, Regina. "The Lady and Her Physician." In Clio's Consciousness Raised: New Perspectives on the History of Women. Edited by Mary S. Hartman and Lois Banner. New York, Evanston, San Francisco, & London: Harper & Row, 1974.

Morgan, Edmund S. "The Puritans and Sex." In The American Family in Social-Historical Perspective. Edited by Michael Gordon. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973.

Rapson, Richard L. "The American Child as Seen by British Travelers, 1845-1935." In The American Family in Social-Historical Perspective. Edited by Michael Gordon. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973.

Rosenberg, Carroll Smith. "Beauty, the Beast and the Militant Woman: A Case Study in Sex Roles and Social Stress in Jacksonian America." American Quarterly 23 (October 1971): 562-584.

Rosenberg, Carroll Smith, and Rosenberg, Charles. "The Female Animal: Medical and Biological Views of Woman and Her Role in Nineteenth-Century America." The Journal of American History 60 (September 1973): 332-356.

Rosenberg, Charles E. "Sexuality, Class and Role in 19th Century America." American Quarterly 25 (May 1973): 131-153.

Scott, Anne Firor. "Women's Perspective on the Patriarchy in the 1850's." The Journal of American History 61 (June 1974): 52-64.

Sprey, Jetse. "On the Origins of Sex Roles." Sociological Focus 5 (Winter 1971-72): 1-8.

Sunley, Robert. "Early Nineteenth-Century American Literature on Child Rearing." In Childhood in Contemporary Cultures. Edited by Margaret Mead and Martha Wolfenstein. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1955.

Thompson, Edward Palmer. "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism." Past and Present 38 (1967): 56-59, 60, 70-79.

Walters, Ronald G. "The Family and Ante-Bellum Reform: An Interpretation." Societas, Summer 1974, pp. 223-323.

Welter, Barbara. "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860." American Quarterly 17 (Summer 1966): 151-174.

_____. "The Feminization of American Religion: 1800-1860." In Clio's Consciousness Raised: New Perspectives on the History of Women. Edited by Mary S. Hartman and Lois Banner. New York, Evanston, San Francisco, & London: Harper & Row, 1974.

Books

Ariés, Philippe. Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962.

Bailyn, Bernard. Education in the Forming of American Society: Needs and Opportunities for Study. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1960.

Barker-Benfield, G. W. The Horrors of the Half-Known Live: Male Attitudes Toward Women and Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century America. New York, Evanston, San Francisco, & London: Harper & Row, 1976.

Berthoff, Rowland. An Unsettled People: Social Order and Disorder in American History. New York, Evanston, & London: Harper & Row, 1971.

Bianchi, Eugene C., and Reuther, Rosemary R. From Machismo to Mutuality: Essays on Sexism and Woman-Man Liberation. New York; Paramus, N.J.; & Toronto: Paulist Press, 1976.

Brenton, Myron. The American Male. New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1966.

Brown, Richard D. Modernization: The Transformation of American Life, 1600-1865. New York: Hill & Wang, 1976.

Bruchey, Stuart. The Roots of American Economic Growth, 1607-1861: An Essay in Social Causation. New York: Harper & Row, 1965.

Cady, Edwin Harrison. The Gentleman in America: A Literary Study in American Culture. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1949.

Calhoun, Arthur W. A Social History of the American Family: From Colonial Times to the Present. New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1945.

Calhoun, Daniel H. Professional Lives in America: Structure and Aspiration 1750-1850. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965.

Chafetz, Janet Saltzman. Masculine/Feminine or Human? An Overview of the Sociology of Sex Roles. Itasca, Ill.: F. E. Peacock, 1974.

Cochran, Thomas C., and Miller, William. The Age of Enterprise: A Social History of Industrial America. New York: Harper & Row, 1961.

Cott, Nancy F. The Bonds of Womanhood: "Women's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1977.

Dawley, Alan. Class and Community: The Industrial Revolution in Lynn. Cambridge, Mass. & London: Harvard University Press, 1976.

Demos, John. A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony. New York: Oxford University Press, 1970.

Dexter, Elizabeth Anthony. Colonial Women of Affairs: A Study of Women in Business and the Professions in America before 1776. Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1924.

Douglas, Ann. The Feminization of American Culture. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977.

Elson, Ruth Miller. Guardians of Tradition: American Schoolbooks of the Nineteenth Century. Lincoln University of Nebraska Press, 1964.

Fast, Julius. The Incompatibility of Men and Women. New York: M. Evans & Co., Inc., 1971.

Fiedler, Leslie A. Love and Death in the American Novel. New York: Criterion Books, 1960.

Filene, Peter Gabriel. Him Her Self: Sex Roles in Modern America. New York & London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974.

Fogel, Robert William, and Engerman, Stanley L. Time On the Cross. Boston & Toronto: Little, Brown & Co., 1974.

Freud, Sigmund. Civilization and Its Discontents. London: Hogarth Press, 1930.

Furnas, J. C. The Americans: A Social History of the United States, 1587-1914. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1969.

Genovese, Eugene D. Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made. New York: Vintage Books, 1976.

Goode, William J. World Revolution and Family Patterns. New York: The Free Press, 1963.

Gordon, Michael, ed. The American Family in Social-Historical Perspective. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973.

Gorer, Geoffrey. The American People: A Study in National Character. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1948.

Graham, W. Fred. The Constructive Revolutionary: John Calvin and His Socio-Economic Impact. Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1971.

Greene, Theodore P. America's Heroes: The Changing Models of Success in American Magazines. New York: Oxford University Press, 1970.

Gusfield, Joseph R. Symbolic Crusade: Status Politics and the American Temperance Movement. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1963.

Himes, Norman E. Medical History of Contraception. Baltimore: The Williams & Wilkins Co., 1936.

Houghton, Walter E. The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1957.

Hunt, David. Parents and Children in History: The Psychology of Family Life in Early Modern France. New York & London: Basic Books, Inc., 1970.

Katz, Michael B. The Irony of Early School Reform: Educational Innovation in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Massachusetts. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968.

Kraditor, Aileen S., ed. Up From the Pedestal: Selected Writings in the History of American Feminism. Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1968.

Lewis, R. W. B. The American Adam: Innocence Tragedy and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century. Chicago: & London: University of Chicago Press, 1955.

Lynn, David B. Parental and Sex-Role Identification. Berkeley, Calif.: McCutchan Publishing Corp., 1969.

McKinley, Blaine Edward. "The Stranger in the Gates: Employer Reactions Toward Domestic Servants in America, 1825-1875." Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1969.

Madow, Leo, M.D. Anger. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972.

Marcus, Steven. The Other Victorians: A Study of Sexuality and Pornography in Mid-Nineteenth-Century England. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1964.

Mead, Margaret. Male and Female: A Study of the Sexes in a Changing World. New York: William Morrow & Co., 1949.

_____. The School in American Culture. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951.

_____. Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies. New York: William Morrow & Co., 1935.

Meyers, Marvin. The Jacksonian Persuasion: Politics and Belief. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957.

Miller, Douglas T. The Birth of Modern America, 1820-1850. Indianapolis & New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1970.

Monahan, Thomas P. The Pattern of Age at Marriage in the United States. Vol. 1. Philadelphia: Stephenson-Brothers, 1951.

Morris, Richard B. Studies in the History of American Law with Special Reference to the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries. New York: Columbia University Press, 1930.

Mott, Frank Luther. A History of American Magazines, 1741-1850. New York & London: D. Appleton & Co., 1930.

Neufeldt, Harvey George. "The American Tract Society, 1825-1865: An Examination of Its Religious, Economic, Social, and Political Ideas." Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1971.

Papashvily, Helen White. All the Happy Endings: A Study of the Domestic Novel in America, The Women Who Wrote It, The Women Who Read It, In the Nineteenth Century. New York: Harper & Bros., 1956.

Persons, Stow. The Decline of American Gentility. New York & London: Columbia University Press, 1973.

Pleck, Joseph H., and Sawyer, Jack, eds. Men and Masculinity. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974.

Reed, James. From Private Vice to Public Virtue: The Birth Control Movement and American Society Since 1830. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1978.

Roberts, Gerald F. "The Strenuous Life: The Cult of Manliness in the Era of Theodore Roosevelt." Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1970.

Rogin, Michael Paul. Fathers and Children: Andrew Jackson and the Subjugation of the American Indian. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975.

Rostow, W. W. The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto. 2nd ed. Cambridge: University Press, 1971.

Rothman, David J. The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic. Boston & Toronto: Little, Brown & Co., 1971.

Scott, Anne Firor. The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1970.

Sexton, Patricia Cayo. The Feminized Male: Classrooms, White Collars, and the Decline of Manliness. New York: Random House, 1969.

Singer, June. Androgyny: Toward a New Theory of Sexuality. Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press/ Doubleday, 1976.

Sklar, Kathryn Kish. Catharine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1973.

Smelser, Neil J. Social Change in the Industrial Revolution: An Application of Theory to the British Cotton Industry. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959.

Stern, Karl. The Flight from Woman. New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 1965.

Taylor, George Rogers. The Transportation Revolution, 1815-1860. New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Toronto, & London: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1964.

Taylor, William R. Cavalier and Yankee: The Old South and American National Character. New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1963.

Thernstrom, Stephan. Poverty and Progress: Social Mobility in a Nineteenth-Century City. New York: Atheneum, 1972.

Tiger, Lionel. Men in Groups. New York: Random House, 1969.

Ward, John William. Andrew Jackson: Symbol for an Age. New York: Oxford University Press, 1955.

Wecter, Dixon. The Hero in America: A Chronicle of Hero-Worship. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1963.

Weiss, Richard. The American Myth of Success: From Horatio Alger to Norman Vincent Peale. New York & London: Basic Books, Inc., 1969.

Wishy, Bernard. The Child and the Republic: The Dawn of Modern American Child Nurture. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968.

Woody, Thomas. A History of Women's Education in the United States. New York & Lancaster, Pa.: The Science Press, 1929.

Wyllie, Irvin G. The Self-Made Man in America: The Myth of Rags to Riches. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1954.