

THE PRESIDENT IN THE GRAY FLANNEL SUIT:  
DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER AND POSTWAR AMERICAN MANHOOD

By

PETER MARK NADEAU

Bachelor of Arts in History  
Salem State University  
Salem, MA  
1996

Master of Arts in History  
Tufts University  
Medford, MA  
1997

Master of Arts in Theological Studies  
Reformed Theological Seminary  
Oviedo, FL  
2005

Submitted to the Faculty of the  
Graduate College of  
Oklahoma State University  
in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for  
the Degree of  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
May, 2016

THE PRESIDENT IN THE GRAY FLANNEL SUIT:  
DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER AND POSTWAR AMERICAN MANHOOD

Dissertation Approved:

Dr. Brian Frehner  
Dissertation Adviser

Dr. John Kinder  
Committee Member

Dr. Elizabeth Williams  
Committee Member

Dr. Stacy Takacs  
Committee Member

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

During the window of years that this dissertation was conceptualized, researched, written, and edited, my wife gave birth to our three children. A dissertation, much like a newborn, requires constant attention, a large savings account, and the assistance of many to survive the long hours and sleepless nights. I was blessed to have a large group of supporters that made this project possible. Among my most valuable backers were Dan and Terry Van Syoc, Erica Van Syoc, Jonathan Dorst, Marion Carroll, Shirley Campbell, and Anthony Bocciardi.

My graduate committee at Oklahoma State University was top-notch and offered plenty of helpful advice and skill to insure that my project entered the world alive and well. John Kinder is a superb scholar who was the first to inspire me to think about gender and the presidency. His comments and encouragement were invaluable to my project. Brian Frehner served as a longsuffering advisor and provided me with the conversations about history, writing, and the profession that I needed to keep going. Others scholars who offered valuable criticism include Elizabeth Williams, Stacy Takacs, Richard Rohrs, James Huston, and Michael Logan.

Numerous men and women working at different archives and libraries assisted me in finding valuable documents and materials. The staff at the Eisenhower Presidential Library made each of my visits to Abilene highly enjoyable. I particularly wish to thank Kevin Bailey, Chris Abraham, and Chalsea Millner for their assistance and kindness. The ladies of the Abilene Public Library made my visit memorable and pleasant despite the seemingly endless rain outside. The entire library staff of Edmon Low Library at Oklahoma State University demonstrated remarkable skill in locating and securing primary and secondary sources for my project. Other librarians and archivists who proved to be special include those at Harvard University, Columbia University, the University of Central Arkansas, and the *Stars and Stripes* Library in Bloomfield, Missouri.

My name may be on the cover of this dissertation, but I struggle to identify much in my life that does not in some form bear the influence, support, or encouragement of my parents, Donald and Diane. Sadly, my father passed away in the middle of this project. I would have enjoyed reading and discussing it with him.

Sarah has been a model of patience and encouragement while her husband spent long hours in dusty libraries and staring at a flashing cursor. My work on this manuscript often left her alone to tend to an infant while enduring another pregnancy. I could never thank her enough for her support during this time. Our three children, Luke, Kate, and Jace, provided hours of free comedy and entertainment that made living on a graduate student's budget more bearable. Our children's growth and my success as a historian are due primarily to Sarah's love and perseverance. It is to her that this manuscript is dedicated.

Name: PETER M. NADEAU

Date of Degree: MAY, 2016

Title of Study: THE PRESIDENT IN THE GRAY FLANNEL SUIT: DWIGHT D.  
EISENHOWER AND POSTWAR AMERICAN MANHOOD

Major Field: HISTORY

Abstract: In recent years presidential historians and men studies specialists have combined their fields of study to examine how conceptions of male identity have informed, shaped, and altered the American presidency. Dwight Eisenhower and his administration has thus far been neglected in these studies. This dissertation endeavors to examine the history of Eisenhower's construct of maleness, identified as dutiful manhood, and how that construct emerged, challenged, supplanted, and eventually surrendered to its more common construction of American male identity, identified as masculinity.

Dwight Eisenhower's conception of male identity stemmed from his small town, rural upbringing in a religious home that emphasized the virtues of duty, self-control, and maturity. This dutiful manhood was the predominant conception of manliness in nineteenth-century America and was not supplanted until the contemporary conception of masculinity, denoted by virility and toughness, became popular in the nation's urban areas at the beginning of the twentieth century. Eisenhower absorbed little of the new masculinity in his persona. Rather, the tradition-bound institutions of West Point and the interwar military incubated the previous century's manhood in him and others. Whereas the Great Depression significantly weakened prevailing notions of masculinity, the Second World War rallied the masculine ethic of American males. Mass social dislocations, the horror of combat, and anxiety surrounding the nascent atomic threat, however, made a return to prewar masculinity seem reckless and dangerous.

World War II sparked a renewed interest in dutiful manhood and its postwar product bore a strong resemblance to the previous century's model. Veteran adjustment literature hastened the adoption of manly virtue on a national scale. Eisenhower's virtual draft into the presidency and his perspective on the office reinforced the necessity and popularity of manhood well into the 1950s. Yet, even as the late forties and fifties preached the duties of men, a whole bevy of new male identities emerged to challenge the supremacy of dutiful manhood and succeeded in usurping its men and the White House in the 1960s and 1970s.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
INTRODUCTION.....	1
I. MANLY MEN.....	17
Manhood Established.....	18
Manhood Promoted.....	29
Manhood Reared.....	40
II. MASCULINE MEN.....	50
Masculinity Flexed.....	51
Manhood Derided.....	64
Manhood Preserved.....	70
III. MILITARY MEN.....	85
Masculinity Depressed.....	86
Masculinity Drafted.....	93
Masculinity Disillusioned.....	105
Manhood Commanded.....	117
IV. DUTIFUL MEN.....	135
Manhood Revived.....	136
Masculinity Lamented.....	145
Manhood Elected.....	158

V. CONTAINED MEN.....	174
Masculinity Contained.....	176
Manhood Sheltered.....	187
Manhood Enforced.....	200
VI. MATURE MEN.....	216
Masculinity Patronized.....	218
Manhood Matured.....	225
Manhood Administered.....	232
VII. OLD MEN.....	243
Manhood Besieged.....	244
Masculinity Revived.....	257
Manhood Aged.....	266
Masculinity Elected.....	275
Manhood Taps.....	283
EPILOGUE.....	291
REFERENCES.....	308

## INTRODUCTION

I am not sure when I first began to think about the duties of being a man. It was probably when the last bits of meat were being pulled off of a turkey and the last bites of apple pie were being scraped off a desert plate at one of the holidays I spent growing up around the “greatest generation.” My grandfathers, uncles, and great-uncles were enormously proud of the stories they had to share about surviving the Depression, making it through the war, and achieving success in the immediate aftermath. They spoke about doing what needed to be done, enduring difficulty, and providing for their families during tough times. They drew a clear distinction between those who did the right thing for family and country and those who did not.

More recently, my considerations regarding male duty were piqued when I began to read nineteenth-century advice literature that detailed the moral expectations for boys aspiring to be men. Stemming from the reformist culture of the antebellum period, novelists, businessmen, preachers, and moralists contributed to a substantial body of literature that endeavored to coach young men towards mature manhood. Some advice manuals, such as T.S. Arthur’s *Advice to Young Men on Their Duties and Conduct in Life* (1848) and W. W. Everts’s *Manhood: Its Duties and Responsibilities* (1854), overtly delineated a young man’s duties. Other sermons and pamphlets more subtly directed a young man towards proper virtue and steered him away from the temptations that could

compromise his character. Antebellum commentators did not completely agree regarding a young man's duties, but they all agreed he had them.

Dutiful manhood more fully engrossed my interest when conducting graduate research in presidential studies at Oklahoma State University. I was struck by the discovery that Dwight Eisenhower held a conception of himself as a man that was starkly different than some of his contemporaries such as Douglas MacArthur, George Patton, and John Kennedy. Eisenhower too seemed to demonstrate a prevailing concern with manly character centered on duty that extended well beyond his military career. He considered his run for the presidency a call to duty rather than satisfying ambition. He was not a politician, he frequently remarked. He was a career soldier. He would not condescend to the level of other candidates and curry support for a candidacy. He needed a call to duty from the American people. When that call to duty came through the "Draft Eisenhower" movement, the General grumbled regarding the shrewdness of his boosters and his inability to resist them. "This whole group has always played upon my sense of duty," Eisenhower confided to his diary. "All that an individual has to say to me is 'the good of the country' and even where I am involved in things that I dislike and even resent, I probably yield far too easily to generalizations instead of demanding proof of their assertions."<sup>1</sup>

I started to wonder if Eisenhower's conception of duty was related to the performance manhood of the Depression-World War II generation and, in turn, if both were connected to nineteenth-century conceptions of moral manliness. This dissertation argues they were.

---

<sup>1</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, diary, November 20, 1954, in *The Eisenhower Diaries*, ed. Robert H. Ferrell (New York: W.W. Norton, 1981), 290.



In the pages that follow, I will endeavor to provide an answer to a question that most men and many women have been asking for a long time. *What does it mean to be a man?* I cannot offer the final answer to the question. Whatever the complete answer is it would probably take more than one dissertation to explain. What I do offer is a glimpse at an answer to the question that is often overlooked today and what that answer meant to one of the most prominent national figures of the twentieth century.

It may surprise some that the question has been answered differently at various times in United States history. For if you ask almost any American male today what it means to be a man, you will almost certainly receive a reply that includes something about being “masculine.” Press your unwitting subject further for a definition of masculinity and invariably the answer will include mention of toughness, power, or ruggedness.

I discovered that this was not the exclusive answer to the question for much of United States history. Conceiving of male identity as something centered on the performance of power and toughness is a relatively recent development. In fact, even the word “masculinity” did not enter the American lexicon until late in the nineteenth century. “Until about 1890, literate Victorians rarely referred to individual men as ‘masculine’,” historian Gail Bederman explains. “Instead, admirable men were called ‘manly.’ After 1890, however, the words ‘masculine’ and ‘masculinity’ began to be used far more frequently – precisely because they could convey the new attributes of powerful manhood which middle-class men were working to synthesize.” Bederman demonstrates that *The Century Dictionary* (an American version of the *Oxford English Dictionary*) published in 1890 bore witness to this lexical change regarding manliness. The dictionary

defined “manly” in accordance with the nineteenth-century understanding of the term as “character or conduct worthy of a man.” The attention to virtue and self-control consonant with the Victorian understanding was inherent to the definition. The same dictionary defined the word “masculine” as “having the distinguishing characteristics of the male sex among human beings, physical or mental . . . suitable for the male sex; adapted to or intended for the use of males.” Masculine was thus used as an adjective to describe a male’s walk, occupation, or body, and, in the aggregate, these traits came to be understood as masculinity. This new understanding of maleness as masculinity rather than manhood did not take hold immediately, but quickly worked itself into the national vocabulary and was often used interchangeably.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, manhood and masculinity have not always been synonymous. “Manhood” and its adjective “manly” was a nineteenth-century conception of maleness that emphasized a man’s *character*. “Masculinity” and its correlating adjective “masculine” is more of a twentieth-century concept of maleness that emphasizes a man’s *characteristics*. The difference is significant even though the terms “manhood” and “masculinity” and “manly” and “masculine” are frequently conflated in contemporary speech with little regard for their historical difference. I intend to focus primarily on the concept of

---

<sup>2</sup> Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 19. Several other historians have identified this significant shift in popular understandings of manliness near the end of the nineteenth century. In *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Free Press, 2011), Michael Kimmel acknowledges Bederman’s analysis and titles his discussion of this era as the “The Unmaking of the Self-Made Man at the Turn of the Century.” Speaking of this period, Howard Chudacoff writes in *The Age of the Bachelor: Creating an American Subculture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 224-225, “men found themselves engaged in a balancing act between domestic masculinity – the still-valued responsibilities to home and family – and a preoccupation with virility – the competitive independence of the nondomestic male sphere.” E. Anthony Rotundo considers the shift in American manhood between 1770 and 1920 to be “from service to community and cultivation of the spirit to improvement of the individual and concern with his body” in “Body and Soul: Changing Ideals of American Middle-Class Manhood, 1770-1920,” *Journal of Social History* 16:4 (Summer 1983): 29.

manhood and its disparagement, revival, and eventual blurring in twentieth-century America.

A construction of gender cannot be studied in isolation. It is problematical to tell a story about men without considering women. It is also insufficient to discuss one conception of maleness without considering others. Therefore, the story I tell incorporates other conceptions of male as well as female identity.

Gender historians are generally careful to distinguish between sex and gender. Sex delineates the biological components historically divided into the two categories of male and female. Gender references the traits in the aggregate that describe maleness and femaleness. Whereas sex is often considered static, gender is portrayed as fluid and changing. Thus, historians J.A. Mangan and James Walvin argue that manliness is not “a simple, single, coherent concept linked to a single locality,” but rather “a portmanteau term which embraced a variety of overlapping ideologies regionally interpreted, which changed over time and which, at specific moments, appear to be discrete, even conflicting, in emphasis.”<sup>3</sup> Michael Kimmel tersely concludes that manhood “is neither static nor timeless . . . it’s socially constructed.”<sup>4</sup> Anthony Rotundo defines a gender ideal as “a cluster of traits, behavior and values that the members of a society believe a person should have as a woman or a man.”<sup>5</sup> Thus, scholars have largely rejected essentializing a set of male or female traits as natural and requisite expressions of male or female bodies. While acknowledging the reciprocal influence and interplay of sex and gender, historians

---

<sup>3</sup> J.A. Mangan and James Walvin, eds., *Manliness and Morality: Middle-class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1987), 3.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Free Press, 1996), 5.

<sup>5</sup> E. Anthony Rotundo, “Learning about Manhood: Gender Ideals and the Middle-Class Family in Nineteenth-Century America,” in *Manliness and Morality*, ed. J.A. Mangan and James Walvin (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1987), 35.

usually prioritize the shifting definitions of maleness and femaleness rather than the fixity of biological determinants.

Yet, James Gilbert counsels against neglecting biology as a basis of gender presentation remarking, “a socially constructed masculinity is nevertheless limited by and dependent upon biology as much as it is articulated in culture, social interaction, and imagination.” He acknowledges that designations such as “masculine” are “fluid, changing, evolving, and always performative,” but rejects the notion that such constructs are “infinitely flexible or entirely constructed.” Such a proposition would be “a form of essentialism and a sort of apriorism, as ahistorical as the notion that masculinity always and everywhere is the same.” Gilbert reminds us that gender is conditioned by primary and secondary sex characteristics as well as developmental stages such as boyhood, midlife, and old age. Disease, disability, race, and ethnicity also situate gender construction. Therefore, gender must be negotiated within the boundaries established by biology. Otherwise, it would be incoherent to examine a male identity that privileged propriety above flamboyance, continence above indulgence, and maturity above childishness.<sup>6</sup>

The development, crystalizing, and reformulation of manhood should not be conceived of as a distinct sequential development absent of overlap. Socio-cultural trends often occur across a broad span of time and are subject to unexpected declensions and accelerations based on the exigencies of events. Even though multiple trends of gender development can be occurring simultaneously, it is still possible to identify the dominant arc in a given period. In the United States, for most of the nineteenth century and for a

---

<sup>6</sup> James Gilbert, *Men in the Middle: Searching for Masculinity in the 1950s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 15, 22.

brief period in the middle of the twentieth century, the dominant arc for male identity was a formulation centered on duty.

To help us understand the shifting-yet-linear and social-yet-biological development of male identity, I have decided to use the iconography of the male suit. Employing an article of clothing to tell a story about identity may seem predictably static on the one hand or precariously fluid on the other. Yet, it is precisely because of this dual nature of the suit that it effectively symbolizes the constancy of manhood's basis in morality even as the nature of that morality has changed for decades. Postmodern scholars have maintained for over half-a-century that the body is a canvas or an object, or, perhaps for my purposes, a mannequin, for the performance of gender.<sup>7</sup> How individuals attire their bodies at a specific cultural moment communicates a great deal about that society's values and moral code. Ever since the first male reached for fig leaves in the garden to cover his nakedness, males have been covering their nudity with accessories, behaviors, traits, and props to provide them with a propriety and morality that would also bestow upon themselves maleness. Much like a suit ensemble, maleness is composed of component parts that are borrowed, swapped out, rearranged, and discarded. It may feature elements of race, class, sexuality, and religion with each part offering another layer of fabric that is requisite to meet the standard of manhood. Because concepts of maleness are constantly being put on and taken off as much as a hat, jacket, tie, or shoes, we cannot perfectly identify the essential elements of one male identity. Any definition of maleness is replete with contradictions, inconsistencies, and

---

<sup>7</sup> See Anna G. Creadick, *Perfectly Average: The Pursuit of Normality in Postwar America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010), 18; Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), introduction and chapter 6; Mary Jacobus, Evelyn Fox Keller, and Sally Shuttleworth, *Body/Politics: Women and the Discourses of Science* (New York: Routledge, 1990), introduction.

fluctuations. However, it is possible to identify some recurring features of maleness and suggest possible ways the male body speaks for itself necessitating specific behaviors as much as it demands specific coverings. The suit helps us to link the two apparently contradictory poles of social and biological construction. For even as males are bound by the very determinants that they seek to challenge such as age, anatomy, health, and disability, the suit consists of a certain essentialism to remain a suit even as its numerous cuts, colors, and components vary season to season. A complete suit ensemble was and, at times, remains the consummate symbol of dutiful manhood proclaiming its wearer's professionalism, arrival, success, propriety, containment, and maturity even as those very character traits have evolved from decade to decade.<sup>8</sup>

Suits like gender studies remain rather lifeless if they do not feature a human subject. The subject I have chosen to illustrate my analysis is Dwight D. Eisenhower. Eisenhower is an effective character to articulate a story about cultural identity because he was a national figure whose enormous popularity extended across three decades in the twentieth century. As Kenneth Morris and Barry Schwartz put it, Eisenhower was a “cultural object”<sup>9</sup> and as such drew meaning from what one sociologist identifies as the “capacities of the object itself and the perceptual apparatus of those who experienced it.”<sup>10</sup> Thus, Eisenhower will be considered as an agent of cultural change and also as a talisman his contemporaries venerated even as they negotiated their own fluctuations in male identity. I endeavor to highlight when Eisenhower was actively working to promote

---

<sup>8</sup> David Kuchta traces the origins of the modern three-piece suit to Restoration England, when upper and middle-class males sought to distance themselves from the decadent consumption and flamboyance of the aristocracy. The suit served as a medium to certify a male's character and moderation. See David Kuchta, *The Three-Piece Suit and Modern Masculinity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

<sup>9</sup> Kenneth E. Morris and Barry Schwartz, “Why They liked Ike: Tradition, Crisis, and Heroic Leadership,” *The Sociological Quarterly* 34: no. 1 (Spring 1993): 147.

<sup>10</sup> Wendy Griswold, “The Fabrication of Meaning: Literary Interpretation in the United States, Great Britain, and the West Indies,” *American Journal of Sociology* 92 (1987): 1079.

his vision of manhood and when as a national figure others used him as a symbol to promote or disparage dutiful manhood.

Each of my chapters is organized with a measured balance between a broader story about gender change and biography about Eisenhower himself. For each chapter it seemed to make the most sense to describe the broader landscape of male identity in a given period and then examine how Eisenhower reflected or contrasted with developments during that timeframe. Readers seeking a comprehensive history of male identity in the twentieth century will be disappointed, as probably will readers looking for a story exclusively about Eisenhower. Yet, I hope by combining a macro-level examination of gender history with a micro-level look at one individual's biography, I can deliver a new perspective on how larger social trends and the historical generalizations scholars often make about them may or may not align with individual lives. After the first two chapters examine manhood and masculinity separately, subsequent chapters will observe how these two male identities interacted for the middle decades of the twentieth century and how Eisenhower reflected, reproached, or reacted to these identities as the interactions occurred.

There are few studies that examine a president as a symbol for which and against which gender change occurred, but they are growing in number. Large gaps exist in the scholarship and the existing studies focus on administrations during which the most transformative shifts in gender relations transpired. Mark Kann in *A Republic of Men: The American Founders, Gendered Language, and Patriarchal Politics* examines the use of gendered language in the writings of the nation's founders and how the architects of the republic sought to block men lacking virtue and self-restraint from civic participation

while simultaneously advancing men of character and probity to positions of authority.<sup>11</sup> Kristin Hoganson establishes the primacy of masculine rhetoric in the national haste towards the Spanish-American War in *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars*.<sup>12</sup> Theodore Roosevelt identified imperialism, expansion, and war as exercises in masculinity which, if not practiced regularly, would result in national weakness and decay. William McKinley's reluctance to confront Spanish atrocities in Cuba or avenge the destruction of the *Maine* provoked doubt about the president's backbone (read "toughness"), that the office now required at the beginning of the twentieth century. Masculine rhetoric also occupied a significant place in the reformism of the Progressive Era. Kevin Murphy demonstrates how gendered language categorized urban reformers in New York City as Red-Bloods and Mollycoddles in *Political Manhood: Red Bloods, Mollycoddles, and the Politics of Progressive Era Reform*.<sup>13</sup> Theodore Roosevelt invigorated the Red Bloods with a civic militarism that drew on the concerns of working-class whites and immigrants and brought a tough mindedness to urban reform. While not strictly a gender study of Franklin Roosevelt's administration, James Tobin's *The Man He Became: How FDR Defied Polio to Win the Presidency* explores issues of corporeality, disability, and Roosevelt's toughness in the face of a debilitating illness.<sup>14</sup>

Several studies have examined the relationship between male identity and presidential politics among recent occupants of the White House. These works primarily

---

<sup>11</sup> Mark Kann, *A Republic of Men: The American Founders, Gendered Language, and Patriarchal Politics* (New York: New York University Press, 1998).

<sup>12</sup> Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

<sup>13</sup> Kevin P. Murphy, *Political Manhood: Red Bloods, Mollycoddles, and the Politics of Progressive Era Reform* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

<sup>14</sup> James Tobin, *The Man He Became: How FDR Defied Polio to Win the Presidency* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2013).



assess maleness as masculine toughness and its use particularly in Republican campaigns and foreign policy. Jackson Katz tracks the use of masculine rhetoric in presidential campaigns from Richard Nixon to Barack Obama in *Leading Men: Presidential Campaigns and the Politics of Manhood*. Katz concludes “the presidency itself has become a kind of cultural flashpoint about the state of manhood in the US, as media-driven constructions of presidential masculinity have played an increasingly prominent role in contemporary US culture and politics.”<sup>15</sup> Susan Jeffords writes in *Hard Bodies: Hollywood Masculinity in the Reagan Era*, “Ronald Reagan became the premiere masculine archetype for the 1980s, embodying both national and individual images of manliness that came to underlie the nation’s identity during his eight years in office.”<sup>16</sup> Brenton Malin asserts in *American Masculinity Under Clinton: Popular Media and the Nineties “Crisis of Masculinity,”* that a crisis in male identity occurred in the 1990s that positioned competing understandings of manliness against each other in popular culture and presidential politics.<sup>17</sup> In *The Wimp Factor: Gender Gaps, Holy Wars, and the Politics of Anxious Masculinity*, Stephen Ducat applies a psychological analysis to the George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush administrations and concludes a “femiphobia” (fear of being perceived as feminine) revitalized a strutting masculinity in the White House that buttressed right-wing policies and unilateral military actions.<sup>18</sup>

The most significant work on male identity and American politics during the 1950s is K.A. Cuordileone’s *Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War*.

---

<sup>15</sup> Jackson Katz, *Leading Men: Presidential Campaigns and the Politics of Manhood* (Northampton, MA: Interlink, 2013), 20.

<sup>16</sup> Susan Jeffords, *Hard Bodies: Hollywood Masculinity in the Reagan Era* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994), 11.

<sup>17</sup> Brenton J. Malin, *American Masculinity Under Clinton: Popular Media and the Nineties “Crisis of Masculinity”* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2005).

<sup>18</sup> Stephen J. Ducat, *The Wimp Factor: Gender Gaps, Holy Wars, and the Politics of Anxious Masculinity* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004).

Cuordileone argues that postwar liberals, smarting from the foreign policy setbacks of the Truman years as well as the charges of being soft on national security issues by Joseph McCarthy's investigations, resolved to reinvent themselves as masculine supermen who, through courage and toughness, would lead the nation away from the complacency of the Eisenhower years. American men of the 1950s experienced an identity watershed in which male identity proved elusive amidst the growing threats of corporatization, suburbanization, female employment, feminist activism, juvenile delinquency, and a nascent homosexual movement. Kennedy supporters castigated the Eisenhower administration with accusations of impotence, conformity, and blandness. A young, vigorous John Kennedy would be able to provide the nation with the tough anticommunism, diplomacy, and national vision the previous administration lacked. Cuordileone offers a convincing narrative on the transformation of the Democratic liberal in the postwar period, but bypasses any analysis of Eisenhower's conception of manhood apart from the Kennedy campaign's depictions.<sup>19</sup>

Robert Dean also examines the birth of a new masculine liberal in *Imperial Brotherhood: Gender and the Making of Cold War Foreign Policy*. Dean traces the development of a "patrician masculinity" based in the late nineteenth century that gained prominence in elite boarding schools and universities. Many members of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations were eager to prove their courage through a tough imperial anticommunism. Their masculine ideology "demanded relentless defense of boundaries and an utter rejection of appeasement."<sup>20</sup> Such a foreign policy obsessed with toughness

---

<sup>19</sup> K.A. Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

<sup>20</sup> Robert Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood: Gender and the Making of Cold War Foreign Policy* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), 239.

and devoid of nuance contributed to the Kennedy and Johnson administrations' refusal to appear weak and withdraw from Vietnam. Dean adeptly describes the reborn masculine liberal, but contributes little regarding the Eisenhower presidency.<sup>21</sup>

Cuordileone's and Dean's works are consistent with the majority of masculinity studies which have traditionally focused on the contrasting poles of hardness versus softness, toughness versus weakness, and aggression versus passivity.<sup>22</sup> Consigning males to only one of these two categories ignores the diverse formulas men of disparate religion, race, class, and region have employed to understand themselves as men. A large number of American men in the 1950s would fail to see themselves fitting into either side of this masculine binary. Rather, as I argue, many American men in the aftermath of the Great Depression and World War II coopted nineteenth-century manhood in an effort to return to a more traditional gender order that prioritized stability amidst the burgeoning threats of the cold war.

Amidst the seemingly limitless studies on Eisenhower as a general and president, Eisenhower as a man during a time of great change for men has largely been absent.<sup>23</sup> A more comprehensive understanding of fifties males requires a consideration of how these

---

<sup>21</sup> Dean does correctly connect the dutiful manhood of the nineteenth century with its reemergence in the 1950s. "Kennedy's upper-class and 'aristocratic' identity narrative differed in many respects from the middle-class masculine ideal of the 1950s, with its emphasis on 'maturity,' sexual 'containment' within marriage, and the role of men as toiling breadwinners for the family. Kennedy was equipped with an elite ideology of masculinity, focused on heroic deeds of masculine will and courage in the 'public' sphere, and masculine sexual privilege and power in the 'private' sphere." Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood*, 179.

<sup>22</sup> See R.W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Roger Horrocks, *Masculinity in Crisis: Myths, Fantasies, and Realities* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994); David Savran, *Taking it Like a Man: White Masculinity, Masochism, and Contemporary American Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998); Gabriele Dietze, "Gender Topography of the Fifties: Mickey Spillane and the Post-World-War II Masculinity Crises," *American Studies* 43, no. 4 (1998): 645-656.

<sup>23</sup> General biographies of Eisenhower include Geoffrey Perret, *Eisenhower* (Holbrook, MA: Adams Media Co., 1999); Joann P. Krieg, *Dwight D. Eisenhower: Soldier, President, and Statesman* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1987); Jean Edward Smith, *Eisenhower: In War and Peace* (New York: Random House, 2013). Despite significant source citation issues, Stephen Ambrose's two-volume biography, *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, 1890-1952* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983) and

changes related to the era's most prominent and popular political figure. I am not suggesting that gender explains the entirety of Eisenhower's appeal or that every decision of his administration had a gendered component. I do argue that a significant element in the man's popularity and his executive decisions was rooted in his own conception of being male, which coincided for a little over a decade with the nation's own vision for its men. I hope to add to the small body of literature in Eisenhower studies that consider the famous Kansan as a symbol, an ideal, and to what extent these abstractions included a gendered component.<sup>24</sup>

Separating Eisenhower the man from the abstraction of "Ike" in the famous slogan "I Like Ike" is just as important as understanding the real postwar men who donned suits apart from the image of such men in Sloan Wilson's popular novel, *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*. It may be convenient shorthand to broad brush the fifties as full of men in gray suits declaring their support for Ike, but the postwar years defy such simplified generalizations. We cannot understand the transition from the World War

---

*Eisenhower: The President* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1984), remains an important work. Significant works on Eisenhower as a general include Carlo D'Este, *Eisenhower: A Soldier's Life* (New York: Henry Holt, 2002); Mark Perry, *Partners in Command: George Marshall and Dwight Eisenhower in War and Peace* (New York: Penguin, 2007); Norman Gelb, *Ike and Monty: Generals at War* (New York: Quill, 1994). Key works examining the Eisenhower presidency include Robert A. Divine, *Eisenhower and the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981); William Bragg Ewald Jr., *Eisenhower the President: Crucial Days, 1951-1960* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1981); Fred I. Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency: Eisenhower as Leader* (New York: Basic Books, 1982); David A. Nichols, *Eisenhower 1956: The President's Year of Crisis: Suez and the Brink of War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011). The exception may be Shane J. Maddock, who discusses some connections between fifties male identity and Eisenhower's arms control policy in a chapter titled, "The President in the Gray Flannel Suit: Conformity, Technological Utopianism, Nonproliferation, 1953-1956" in his book *Nuclear Apartheid: The Quest for American Atomic Supremacy from World War II to the Present* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

<sup>24</sup> This small group includes John Gunther, *Eisenhower: The Man and the Symbol* (New York: Harper and Row, 1952); Marquis Childs, *Eisenhower: Captive Hero: A Critical Study of the General and the President* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1958); Arthur Larson, *Eisenhower: The President Nobody Knew* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968); Morris and Schwartz, "Why They liked Ike," 133-151; Mary E. Stuckey, *Defining Americans: The Presidency and National Identity* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004).

II GI to the multiplicity of masculinities in the sixties if the tropes and abstractions of fifties manhood are not broken down and examined. Consistencies and disparities abound between Eisenhower and the image of “Ike” as they do between postwar males and their gray-flannelled image. I will endeavor to strike a balance between telling the story of the symbol of each as well as the subject of each.

There is nothing particularly new about the sources I employ. I am convinced that the sources that reveal the most about gender in the past are the ones that a majority of males accessed and experienced. To that end, popular magazines, newspapers, literature, films, leisure activities, and clothing fashions make up a large portion of my source material. Examining these resources gives us a glance at some of the messages regarding maleness surfacing in popular mediums. It is always difficult to determine to what extent readers adopted these messages, but the popularity of these mediums reveals something at least about what ideas were in demand. I have also tried to let Eisenhower’s own words serve as the best indicator of what he thought of others and himself as men. To my knowledge, Eisenhower did not spend much time musing about gender identity, but he did have a fair amount to say about being a man and his assessments of others as such. His correspondence, coupled with popular culture resources, and rounded out by public assessments of Eisenhower as a man, comprise a majority of the materials for my story.

Eisenhower had a habit of evaluating the character of other men. On several occasions, he listed close associates in his diary and proceeded to assess their strengths and weaknesses. He gave high marks to those who had a strong sense of duty, demonstrated self-control, and could handle mature responsibilities. He tersely dismissed the self-serving, overly-dramatic, and vainglorious. Not surprisingly, he prized men who

demonstrated the same dutiful manhood he imbibed as a child, reinforced in the military, and promoted as president. Eisenhower's evaluation of others' dutiful manhood was designed to understand others for future use. I hope this evaluation of Eisenhower illuminates our understanding of the man as well as the types of men that occupied his days and ours.

## CHAPTER ONE

### MANLY MEN

I was raised in a little town of which most of you have never heard. But in the West it is a famous place. It is called Abilene, Kansas. We had as our marshal for a long time a man named Wild Bill Hickok. If you don't know anything about him, read your Westerns more. Now that town had a code, and I was raised as a boy to prize that code.

It was: meet anyone face to face with whom you disagree. You could not sneak up on him from behind, or do any damage to him, without suffering the penalty of an outraged citizenry. If you met him face to face and took the same risks he did, you could get away with almost anything, as long as the bullet was in the front.

And today, although none of you has the great fortune, I think, of being from Abilene, Kansas, you live after all by that same code in your ideals and in the respect you give to certain qualities. In this country, if someone dislikes you, or accuses you, he must come up in front. He cannot hide behind the shadow. He cannot assassinate you or your character from behind, without suffering the penalties an outraged citizenry will impose.<sup>25</sup>

On November 23, 1953, President Eisenhower attended the annual B'nai B'rith Dinner in Washington, D.C. to receive the America's Democratic Legacy Award. Although the dinner was organized to mark the fortieth anniversary of the Anti-Defamation League's fight for civil and religious rights, the president unwittingly employed a metaphor that revealed much about his perspective on gender, particularly manhood. While referencing the rugged image of a western showdown, Eisenhower appropriated the metaphor to extol a more traditional virtuous manhood. The president's

---

<sup>25</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Remarks Upon Receiving the America's Democratic Legacy Award at a B'nai B'rith Dinner in Honor of the 40th Anniversary of the Anti-Defamation League," November 23, 1953. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=9770> (accessed December 5, 2014).

re-characterization of a Wild West face-off into a Victorian gentleman's refusal to slander his enemy demonstrated Eisenhower's consistent aversion to male bravado and his esteem for male responsibility. Eisenhower, like his fellow male residents of Abilene, Kansas, may have enjoyed stories about cowboy and pioneer prowess, but they conceived of their own identities as males according to the duties of manhood.

### **Manhood Established**

Dutiful manhood was a construction of male identity that proliferated in nineteenth-century rural towns like Abilene. Manhood focused on the imperatives of manliness. Manhood required something from its members; it carried with it obligations. The success or failure of participants of all races, classes, and stations to meet its requirements structured debates over who was truly manly. Those who neglected to do so were not just failures, but failures as men. Descriptions of their responsibilities varied across age, class, and context, but the understanding that men were culpable went undiminished. In a word, nineteenth-century manhood was about duty.<sup>26</sup>

Dutiful manhood emphasized responsibility, self-control, and maturity. Responsibility necessitated meeting domestic and occupational obligations while

---

<sup>26</sup> Mapping nineteenth-century manhood is a task that has generated significant disagreement. It is clear that manhood was important to the century, but interpretations diverge as how best to describe constructions of male identity in the 1800s. E. Anthony Rotundo, in "Learning about Manhood: Gender Ideals and the Middle-class Family in Nineteenth Century America" in *Manliness and Morality*, ed. J.A. Mangan and James Walvin (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), asserts the three most important ideals of manhood for middle-class men in the century were the Masculine Achiever, the Christian Gentleman, and the Masculine Primitive. In *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Free Press, 2011), Michael Kimmel argues earlier paradigms of Genteel Patriarch and Heroic Artisan eventually gave way to the concept of the Self-Made Man. Kimmel suggests the last has been the most enduring as well as the most fluid concept of male identity in American history. Gail Bederman distinguishes nineteenth-century manhood from turn of the century masculinity in her book *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). Manhood or manliness concerned the proper virtues of a male and masculinity delineated the traits or characteristics of a male. Each of these authors identifies character as intrinsic to nineteenth-century manliness. I find Bederman's explanation most convincing and have incorporated her approach in my work.



simultaneously demonstrating a number of essential virtues. Self-control required a man to master his appetites, subdue his urges (particularly sexual ones), and avoid the extremes of indulgence or indolence. Proper men matured sufficiently to don their role as husband and father and provide for one's own through diligent labor.

Duty, responsibility, charge, obligation, and requirement were designations often used interchangeably in the nineteenth century to describe ideal manhood, but duty is the most accurate title to assign to the period's understanding of manliness because of its martial connotations. Compliance with the requirements of manhood was replete with images of battle, fighting, or contest. It was a struggle to demonstrate the appropriate virtues. The inner conflict to suppress lust or anger was a daily battle. Maturity would require beating back the inclinations of childishness. Manhood would not come easy. Men would have to fight for it.

Dutiful manhood originated early in American history. Indentured servants understood their freedom was contingent on fulfilling a set of requirements. Puritan writers often conceived of sanctification through an enumeration of obligations: a list of what was required of them for God and for others. Cotton Mather's *Essays to Do Good* (1710) spelled out appropriate behavior for the man of God. The Enlightenment corroded the authority the established churches had in the colonial period, but the embrace of rationalism among Unitarians and Universalists accentuated a focus on moralism, albeit shorn of Puritan predestination. Benjamin Franklin's writings frequently expounded on enlightened morality. His *The Art of Virtue* (1726) and *Poor Richard's Almanac* (1759) coherently detailed for the aspiring man the path to success based on virtue and responsibility. Temperance, silence, moderation, resolution, frugality, industry, sincerity,

justice, cleanliness, order, chastity, tranquility, and humility were the qualities Franklin believed the well-ordered man should exhibit. George Washington's *Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior in Company and Conversation* was the first president's favorite guide for manly behavior. Maxims such as "use no reproachful language against any one" and "let your recreations be manful not sinful" reflected a concern with proper behavior for the gentleman and equated virtuous behavior with true manliness. The efforts of Franklin and Washington to list and explain strategies of behavior reveal a confidence in the Revolutionary period that proper execution of a man's duties would lead to success and advancement.<sup>27</sup>

The most celebrated claim of manhood in the nineteenth century was that of the self-made man. Politicians and businessmen enthusiastically brandished their credentials as independent producers of their manhood even when it was unsolicited. The ability to accomplish, advance, and produce apart from the aid of kin, community, or the state provided proof of a substantive and enduring manhood. The self-made man arrived at his independence by faithfully meeting his obligations. He fulfilled his responsibilities and managed circumstances by doing his duty towards creditors, investors, or voters. He satisfied the appropriate moral and ethical criteria. Henry Clay acknowledged as much when, upon his introduction of the title self-made man on the Senate floor, the Kentuckian explained these men had earned this designation by their "patient and diligent labor." Their adherence to responsibility had made them successful men of their own

---

<sup>27</sup> Benjamin Franklin, *The Art of Virtue* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2012); George Washington, *Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior In Company and Conversation* (Bedford, MA: Applewood Books, 1988), #49, #109.

creation. All men could replicate this model of self-construction through the same diligence.<sup>28</sup>

Pastors, newspapermen, and moralists discussed, debated, and revised the duties of men, particularly the self-made man, before the Civil War. Efforts to generate a list of criteria recalled Franklin's interest in virtue and forecasted Horatio Alger's attention to responsibility. Irving Wyllie identifies some of the most esteemed qualities of the self-made man as the primacy of work, sacrifice, perseverance, sobriety of habits, moderation, punctuality, obedience to employers, and thoroughness. The organizing principles of the self-made man were his ability to meet his duties to others, exercise self-restraint, and demonstrate the mature handling of responsibility.<sup>29</sup> "In order to merit the esteem of others," the Reverend Enos Hitchcock wrote in *The Farmer's Friend* (1793), "we must become acquainted with the duties of our particular professions, occupations or stations in life, and discharge the duties of them in the most useful and agreeable manner."<sup>30</sup> Abraham Lincoln connected a man's moral duty to preventing the expansion of slavery in his Cooper Union Address in February 1860. "If our sense of duty forbids this then let us stand by our duty fearlessly and effectively." Lincoln warned one could not find a man who would seek a middle ground between the right and wrong of the issue. It would be as vain "as the search for a man who should be neither a living man nor a dead man; such as a policy of 'don't care' on a question about which all true men do care."<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> John G. Cawelti, *Apostles of the Self-Made Man* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 10, 31.

<sup>29</sup> Irvin G. Wyllie, *The Self-Made Man in America: The Myth of Rags to Riches* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1954), 43-54.

<sup>30</sup> Hitchcock quoted in Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Free Press, 2011), 20.

<sup>31</sup> Lincoln quoted in Harold Holzer, *Lincoln at Cooper Union: The Speech that made Abraham Lincoln President* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004), 283.

The most comprehensive description of dutiful manhood in the nineteenth century was W. W. Everts's *Manhood: Its Duties and Responsibilities* (1854). Everts was a Baptist minister who wrote a series of books on the maturing male entitled "The Voyage of Life." The series offered volumes on childhood, youth, manhood, and old age. His exposition of manhood presented exhortations to fulfill all the duties of men, resist temptations, and flee youthful amusements. The duties Everts enumerated included self-duties, family duties, patriotic duties, philanthropic duties, and religious duties. Self-control received particular emphasis from Everts because he associated "ungoverned passion" with "weakness, as well as meanness and degradation." The "sensual appetite is as important as that of an irascible temper" to be brought under the "high duty" of self-control. Hard work was a universal duty of all men that none should consider wearisome. "In the care of the body, the culture of the mind, in the discipline of the thoughts, and subjection of the passions . . . show yourself a man. Become what man is capable of becoming, and consummate a character which may adorn earth, and shine in the ranks of heaven." Any man entrusted with an office "from policeman to president" should faithfully meet his duties. Everts urged males to conform to "the existing system of society," to minimize differences and promote unity. Consequently, "the "system may be improved, in industrial pursuits, in politics, and in religion, and not be destroyed." Community uniformity would be the by-product of discharged duties.<sup>32</sup>

Along with other preachers and moralists of the century, Everts issued dire warnings regarding the temptations of the city and its threat to a youth's manhood. "Cities are the world's chambers of darkness—its assignation places of wickedness and

---

<sup>32</sup> William W. Everts, *Manhood: Its Duties and Responsibilities* (Louisville: Hull and Brother, 1854), 18, 26, 27, 29, 32, 39, 44, 60.

crime. The depraved and the designing flock to them from every part of the land and the globe, to consummate and practice their villainies [*sic*] unknown and unsuspected.” Cities distinguished themselves through “an extreme and artificial levity of character.” The “anti-domestic” tendencies of urban areas demonstrated “an apparent ambition to be free from the cares and restraints of the family.” If not for the continual supply of physical, intellectual, and moral character from the country, then the race would deteriorate and “sink to the lowest effeminacy.” A young man could only preserve his virtue through numerous conflicts and victories. For the city was a battlefield and “the warfare of human life rises to its intensest [*sic*] moral conflicts in a large community.” Only the rural home could nurture a young man’s virtue for the battle.<sup>33</sup>

A traditional gender order stabilized the rural home, making it a school for character. Domestic commentators demarcated the duties of males in contradistinction to the responsibilities of women. The term “breadwinner” was coined somewhere around 1820, assigning the role of provision to the husband/father. The doctrine of “separate spheres” which placed men outside the home in the world of commerce and women in the home to tend to children and homemaking was a delineation of the century’s emphasis on duty applied to each of the sexes. If members fulfilled their assigned duties, moralists assured a stable and happy home. Fathers were to work hard and provide. Wives were to tend to the children and home. Children were to obey their parents and do their chores. The division of familial labor promised a domestic serenity that, although often elusive, would prove appealing well into the future.<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 197–98, 202, 273, 282–83. For more on the efforts of antebellum reformers to promote male virtue in northern cities, see Bruce Dorsey, *Reforming Men and Women: Gender in the Antebellum City* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2002).

<sup>34</sup> Robert L. Griswold, *Fatherhood in America: A History* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 48–49.

Domestic duties were not completely absent from the responsibilities of nineteenth-century men. “It is far more needful for children that a father should attend to the formation of their character and habits, and end in developing their social, intellectual and moral nature, than it is that he should earn money to furnish them with handsome clothes and a variety of tempting food,” opined the Beecher sisters, Catharine and Harriet. Theodore Dwight composed *The Father’s Book* in 1834 to encourage men to meet their responsibilities to their children. “The responsibility of the home is not [the wife’s] alone, but equally the husband’s,” the editor of *American Homes and Gardens* declared later in 1905. “There is no reason at all why men should not sweep and dust, make beds, clean windows, fix the fire, clean the grate, arrange the furniture and cook.”<sup>35</sup>

Central to dutiful manhood was the mastering of impulses. The responsible man may exhibit an abundance of esteemed virtues, work hard, provide for his family, and advance in respectability, but if he could not suppress his primitive urges, he compromised his manhood. T. S. Arthur asserted an inextricable link between the duties of manhood and impulse control in *Advice to Young Men on Their Duties and Conduct in Life* (1848). “Every young man can see how great is the responsibility resting upon him as an individual,” Arthur wrote. “If he commence with right principles as his guide, — that is, if in every action he have regard to the good of the whole, as well as to his own good, — he will not only secure his own well-being, but aid in the advancement towards a state of order.” Yet, responsibility was not enough. “If he . . . follow only the impulses of his appetites and passions, he will retard the general return to true order, and secure for himself that unhappiness in the future which is the invariable consequence of all

---

<sup>35</sup> Quotes in Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 158-159.

violations of natural or divine laws.”<sup>36</sup> Commentators produced an abundance of guidebooks in the century to teach men young and old how to gain mastery over themselves such as William Alcott’s *The Young Man’s Guide* (1848), George Burnap’s *Lectures to Young Men* (1848), and George Peck’s *The Formation of a Manly Character* (1853). The MacGuffey *Readers* combined pedagogical instruction with clear moral lessons. “By gaining the manly strength to control himself,” Gail Bederman points out, “a man gained the strength, as well as the duty, to protect and direct those weaker than himself: his wife, his children, or his employees.”<sup>37</sup>

For moral reformers, the need for men to bring their passions under control was obvious. Drunkenness, brawling, gambling, and prostitution attracted the righteous indignation of reformers in the cities. Blood sports, dueling, gambling, and cursing incurred the animus of circuit riders and wives in the country. The promotion of dutiful manliness reflected the interests of middle and upper-class men to provide an ethic that would keep the poor, drifters, destitute, and working classes in line. Democratizing what was previously considered gentlemanly reserve was an effort to corral dangerous men into the realm of acceptable behavior.

Control of the body’s desires motivated much of the dietary and health reforms of the antebellum period. Self-proclaimed health authorities warned against the pernicious power of certain foods that could arouse lust and wantonness. For Sylvester Graham, eating meat aroused such passions in young men that he urged his followers to shun its temptations and practice vegetarianism. Anti-masturbation literature at mid-century catalogued a long list of debilitating effects the practice of “self-pollution” would inflict

---

<sup>36</sup> T. S. Arthur, *Advice to Young Men on Their Duties and Conduct in Life* (Boston: Barton, 1848), 178.

<sup>37</sup> Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, 12.

on its practitioners. The “wretched transgressor,” according to Graham, would experience “premature old age! – a blighted body – and a ruined soul!” The anaphrodisiac of the graham cracker and later J.H. Kellogg’s corn flakes would help the young man control himself.<sup>38</sup>

In addition to responsibility and self-control, nineteenth-century moralists added maturity as the third requirement of dutiful manhood. Commentators distinguished the mature man from the child by his ability to do hard work and provide for his family. The child was a dependent. Only the mature man could serve as a breadwinner. Writers described work as exceptionally arduous and a demonstration of sacrifice on behalf of wives and children. Work, according to Robert Griswold, was also “a trade-off: men accepted the responsibility of supporting a family in exchange for the power, prestige, and joy that came with fatherhood.” The struggles of the breadwinner earned him “respect and deference from wives and children.”<sup>39</sup>

Horatio Alger’s tales frequently played on this distinction between mature patron and young dependent. Alger often described his hero as a young man embodying the “traditional manners and morals” of the middleclass. The villain or foil to the hero is the unambitious, the snob, or the poor dimwit. The hero’s condition does not improve until he is the recipient of a stroke of luck from an older benefactor who has resources the young hero lacks. Through a measure of pluck and luck, the young man demonstrates responsibility and proves he is worthy of his good fortune. He is well on his way to maturity and doing the same for others.<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> Graham quoted in Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 45-48, 128-131.

<sup>39</sup> Griswold, *Fatherhood in America*, 48-49.

<sup>40</sup> Cawelti, *Apostles of the Self-Made Man*, 117-121.



Demonstrating the maturity to provide for one's family was a duty working-class men found particularly daunting. Machine tenders and agricultural laborers often lived somewhere between poverty and moderate subsistence. Low wages, injurious conditions, and the fluctuations of the economy often compromised the ability of working-class men to provide for their families. Surrendering to the necessity of a wife entering the workforce or borrowing a child's savings could often contribute to male feelings of inadequacy and immaturity.

A prominent indicator of a man's maturity was his dress. Despite fears of effeminate consumerism, Victorian men took particular interest in display and dress to signify role and status. The first purchase Alger's heroes made after their lucky break was usually a new suit. The successful Victorian man advertised his responsibility and maturity through a suit because its cost and style indicated an escape from the working class. Kenneth Wayne warned his young readers that even though they may have "tons of virtue, talent, and ability," nobody would look at them through "soiled, shabby dress." Young men who did not tend to their appearance would be "at a disadvantage among a group of well-groomed young men applicants for a position."<sup>41</sup> "By the end of the nineteenth century," one fashion historian writes, "virtually every American male owned at least one ditto sack coat suit," which was "the ubiquitous masculine business uniform."<sup>42</sup> The suit was the uniform of duty, responsibility, self-control, and maturity. Those without it were ignored.

Dutiful manhood developed in the early republic, became defined in the nineteenth century, and established itself as the predominant ideology of manhood in the

---

<sup>41</sup> Wayne quoted in Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 123-124.

<sup>42</sup> Daniel Delis Hill, *American Menswear: From the Civil War to the Twenty-First Century* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2011), 48-50.

Victorian era. Moralists considered the straight, white, middle and working-class, married father as normative. The indigent, unmarried, colored, homosexual, hedonist was the other that juxtaposed the norm. The lot each experienced in life stemmed from a possession of the requisite behaviors of responsibility, self-control, and maturity. Performance of duty differentiated men from each other and from children.

Demarcation of duty particularly served to accentuate existing racial and ethnic attitudes. A lexicon of duty emerged to prop-up stereotypes already fashioned out of racism and ethnocentrism. Immigrants, Indians, and blacks were marked as irresponsible and thus lacking manhood. Drunk Irish, scheming Chinese, thieving Indians, and lazy blacks were all labels that establishment males could use to understand the lack of upward mobility in other groups. Individuals who embraced regional animosities employed the language of duty to reinforce local prejudices. A 1909 editorial in the *Atlantic Monthly* summarized widespread perceptions of black dereliction of duty: “[Negroes] are incapable of adopting the white man’s moral code, of assimilating the white man’s moral sentiments, of striving toward the white man’s moral ideals.” Blacks were an “uncivilized, semi-savage people, living in a civilization to which they are unequal, partaking to a limited degree of its benefits, performing in no degree its duties.”<sup>43</sup> Blacks were often listed with women and Native Americans as “dependents” not able to take part in the manly duties of voting, sitting on juries, holding office, or joining the military.<sup>44</sup>

Booker T. Washington believed black Americans would only be able to improve their lot by discharging the duties of manhood. He discouraged blacks from believing

---

<sup>43</sup> Quincy Ewing, “The Heart of the Race Problem,” *Atlantic Monthly*, March, 1909, 389.

<sup>44</sup> Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, 28.

their condition would improve by fleeing the country or ignoring southern whites. Rather, he urged them to “cast down your bucket where you are – cast it down in making friends in every manly way of the people of all races by whom we are surrounded. Cast it down in agriculture, mechanics, in commerce, in domestic service, and in the professions.” Only then, Washington promised, “we shall prosper in proportion as we learn to dignify and glorify common labour and put brains and skill into the common occupations of life.”<sup>45</sup>

The ideology of duty also explained the condition of the homosexual. Contemporaries believed the effeminate male found the duties of manhood too taxing and consequently lapsed into a negligence of his gender’s responsibilities. They were the consummate example of gender inversion. They had turned the obligations of manhood away from women and delivered them to other men. To nineteenth century observers, inordinate desires prevented them from performing their duties as husbands and fathers.<sup>46</sup>

### **Manhood Promoted**

Nineteenth-century manhood continued to endure in rural small towns into the twentieth century. There were multiple reasons for its staying power. In small towns, pragmatism governed by a strict morality remained the expedient male identity. Dutiful manhood also served as a moral delineator for rural residents between themselves and the city’s new consumerism, promiscuity, and violence. The smaller size of rural towns

---

<sup>45</sup> Booker T. Washington, “To Live By the Productions of Our Hands” (1895) in Sonya Michel and Robyn Muncy, *Engendering America: A Documentary History 1865 to the Present* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1999), 94-95. For more on widespread efforts to reform black men at the turn of the century, see Marlon B. Ross, *Manning the Race: Reforming Black Men in the Jim Crow Era* (New York: New York University Press, 2004).

<sup>46</sup> William Benemann, *Male-Male Intimacy in Early America: Beyond Romantic Friendships* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Graham Robb, *Strangers: Homosexual Love in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2003).

accommodated a community of accountability, whereas larger population areas struggled to mandate virtue and self-restraint. It was easier for churches and evangelical Christianity to hold sway over the smaller and more homogenous populations of rural towns than the larger ethnically and religiously diverse populace of the city.

The *Saturday Evening Post* was the most popular publication clinging to the gender values of the fleeting rural past. As late as the 1890s, the *Post* featured the subtitle, “The Great Pioneer Family Paper of America.” The magazine’s celebration of common virtues, a traditional gender order, and the working family in small towns appealed to a population that watched with dismay as blacks migrated to northern cities, urban tenements expanded with non-Anglo immigrants, and lurid tales proliferated regarding city life. Rural working and middleclass families with strong religious convictions found in the *Post* an affirmation of their values and virtues. Small town residents endeavored to distinguish the hard-working members of their communities from the sloth and vice of the city. David Eisenhower’s acceptance of the magazine in his home spoke to its conservative content. His son Dwight remembered the fights that ensued between his brothers each week to be the first to read its pages.<sup>47</sup>

The *Post* reinforced a traditional nineteenth-century gender order. In the 1890s parallel columns entitled “Masculinities” and “Femininities” appeared on the same page containing maxims, jokes, and anecdotes for each gender that affirmed distinctions even as they poked fun at the behaviors of the other. Despite being entitled “masculinities,” the designation that described urban manliness, the column actually reinforced rural manhood. The segment regularly preached such axioms as “The man who nurses his wrongs carefully finds that they grow rapidly” and “He is a good man who has done half as much

---

<sup>47</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, *At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1967), 34.

good as he meant to do.” Women were instructed to “Speak with calmness on all occasions, especially in circumstances which tend to irritate” and to remember, “Women are to be measured, not by their beauties but by their virtues.” Homey yarns about men losing their authority in marriage, wives who talked excessively, and the power of feminine beauty over the male ego smirked at the incongruities of the sexes even while reaffirming their assigned roles.<sup>48</sup>

The *Post* viewed the male as the key for domestic success and gender stability by emphasizing the performance of one’s duties, controlling the passions, and providing for a family. Articles on the “Duties and Privileges of Wealth,” “The Making of Character,” “Shall We Return to the Rod?” and “Good Conduct and School Study” harkened back to the importance the concluding century placed on virtuous men. A sermon published by Reverend James McClure in August 1898, titled “The Safeguard of Manhood,” reminded male readers that “a young man cannot let any bodily passion run away with him and expect to be safe” and instructed them that “happy the man who early acquires reverence for purity.” The *Post*’s alignment with the closing century’s concept of manhood was complete with its celebration of work, male breadwinners, and fleeing childishness in such articles as “The Measure of Success” and “Why Young Men Fail.”<sup>49</sup> An 1898 piece titled “A Man’s Work in the World,” reminded readers of the primacy of work for achieving mature manhood, declaring, “no noble career is possible when once the fibre [*sic*] of manhood, with its spirit of hope, and courage, and determination to do something noble

---

<sup>48</sup> *Saturday Evening Post*, December 11, 1897; November 27, 1897; October 16, 1897; November 13, 1897.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, February 26, 1898; September 10, 1898; August 12, 1899; December 16, 1899; August 20, 1898; December 3, 1898; October 7, 1899; November 18, 1899.

and worthy, has lost its virile strength and purpose.”<sup>50</sup> A poem published in 1899 combined all three emphases of dutiful manhood: virtue, self-control, and maturity.

How oft in my dreams I go back to the day  
When I stood at our old wooden gate,  
And started to school in full battle array,  
Well armed with a primer and slate.  
And as the latch fell I thought myself free,  
And gloried, I fear, on the sly,  
Till I heard a kind voice that whispered to me:  
‘Be a good boy; good-by.’

‘Be a good boy; good-by.’ It seems  
They have followed me all these years.  
They have given a form to my youthful dreams  
And scattered my foolish fears.  
They have stayed my feet on many a brink,  
Unseen by a blinded eye;  
For just in time I would pause and think:  
‘Be a good-boy; good-by.’

Oh, brother of mine, in the battle of life,  
Just starting or nearing its close,  
This motto aloft, in the midst of the strife,  
Will conquer wherever it goes.

Mistakes you will make, for each of us errs,  
But, brother, just honestly try  
To accomplish your best. In whatever occurs,  
‘Be a good boy; good-by.’<sup>51</sup>

The *Post* regularly ran advertisements for men’s suits that reflected contemporary demands for the male uniform of mature responsibility. Tailors advertised custom fittings that would express an individual’s personality as the ready-made suits stemming from the mass production of the Civil War proved uncomfortable and stiflingly alike. Yet, even as merchants promised “noticeable elegance of style and distinction of appearance,” they also assured customers that their clothes would accentuate their mature manhood and

---

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, December 3, 1898.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, September 23, 1899.

responsibility.<sup>52</sup> “The fine, strong, clean young man wears Kuppenheimer Clothes as a matter of pride and principle,” declared a 1911 advertisement. “They’re an intimate part of his healthy, vigorous personality. They stand for the things *he* stands for – real worth, correctness, character.”<sup>53</sup> The Kahn Tailoring Company informed potential buyers in the same year that “self-reliant men – you among them – scorn to be ‘dittos’ in dress. They must have their personality stand up and out.” The proper suit proclaimed the propriety of the man.<sup>54</sup>

Defining manhood by the imperative of duty spawned a conformity that authors sought to mitigate and advertisers endeavored to exploit. Monotonous discharge of duty showed up particularly at a man’s job, according to a 1910 *Post* editorial. In “The Routine Man,” the author lamented the man who was “always good and ready for his own specialized work,” but is “very seldom good and ready for anything that deviates in any degree from the methodical, insistent columns of figures, or the sales policy, or the automatic machine with which his brain, his muscle and his entire list of activities for earning have been absorbed and confined.” The unfortunate consequence of such a man is his tendency “to drift with the tide instead of laying out his own course and following it.”<sup>55</sup>

Featured alongside the *Post*’s veneration of dutiful men, were frequent alarms to its rural readers that urban areas were falling into dissolution because of unchecked male indulgence. Small town residents nodded in agreement with the distinction the *Post* often made between the hard-working members of their communities and the vice-ridden men

---

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, February 4, 1911.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, April 15, 1911.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, March 25, 1911.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, October 22, 1910.

of the city. The *Post* served to reinforce this perceived distinction between rural and urban males in the nineteenth century.

Abilene, Kansas rejected the male culture of the city because it had experienced the raw and contentious ethics of cowboy culture in its early years. Stationed at the terminus of the Chisholm Trail, Abilene was the longed-for destination of many fatigued, thirsty, lonely cattle drivers with a little bit of money in their pockets. Abilene prospered for the first time in the late 1860s when cowpunchers directed their herds to the stockyards of the fledgling town and then to the railcars that carried them to Chicago and its slaughterhouses. The men who lived on the open range practiced what Dee Garceau called an “all-male nomadic subculture,” which thrived on alternatives to Victorian middle-class domestic values and accepted the shame of being condemned by preachers and reformers.<sup>56</sup> In his memoirs, Eisenhower remarked that his hometown was originally nicknamed the “Cow Capital of the World” and “for a time it maintained its reputation as the toughest, meanest, most murderous town of the territory.”<sup>57</sup> The saloons, brothels, and gunfights that gave Abilene’s Texas Street its uninhibited reputation outraged and frightened the town’s other residents, particularly when their children had to walk through its unruliness on their way to the schoolhouse.

Parents and preachers successfully tamed the male indulgence of Abilene after the town no longer served as the railhead for cattle shippers. When the railhead moved to Ellsworth, Newton, and Wichita, Abilene lost its purpose and its customers. Entire building frames which were previously saloons, brothels, and gambling houses were

---

<sup>56</sup> Dee Garceau, “Nomads, Bunkies, Cross-Dressers, and Family Men: Cowboy Identity and the Gendering of Ranch Work,” in Matthew Basso, Laura McCall, and Dee Garceau, eds., *Across the Great Divide: Cultures of Manhood in the American West* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 149–54.

<sup>57</sup> Eisenhower, *At Ease*, 65.



shipped on railcars south and west, commemorated in the phrase “Hell on wheels” to describe the transport of Abilene’s wickedness. In addition, the success of winter wheat planted in Abilene’s surrounding prairie spurred Dickinson County’s passage of a herding law by the county commissioners in 1872. The herding or fencing law prohibited the free ranging of cattle on land that was now more valuable to grow wheat and that needed to be protected from trampling longhorns. The change in Abilene was almost immediate. The *Abilene Chronicle* reported in May 1872, “the town of Abilene is as quiet as any village in the land. Business is not as brisk as it used to be during the cattle season—but the citizens have the satisfaction that Hell is more than sixty miles away.”<sup>58</sup>

Into hell’s void a more domesticated gender order replaced male license by the wheat farmers, mechanics, shopkeepers, and tradesmen who stayed behind. “They might have missed their chance at developing a metropolitan Sodom, but the people settled down into occupations that made for a slower but steadier growth,” Dwight Eisenhower wrote in his memoirs.<sup>59</sup> “These Kansans were religious, dedicated, hardworking, folk—quite unlike the bold, blazing, he-man types featured in the old dime novels,” wrote a family biographer.<sup>60</sup> Working and middleclass males prevented Abilene’s disappearance as a bypassed trail town through a devotion to work, church, and home. Employment at local businesses and farms consumed the majority of a male’s waking hours and church

---

<sup>58</sup> Stewart P. Verckler, *Cowtown-Abilene: The Story of Abilene, Kansas, 1867–1875* (New York: Carlton Press, 1961), 67–71. See also Jim Hoy, “Joseph G. McCoy and the Creation of the Mythic American West” and Thomas D. Isern, “Theodore C. Henry: Frontier Booster and Nostalgic Old Settler” in Virgil W. Dean, ed., *John Brown to Bob Dole: Movers and Shakers in Kansas History* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006). For more on violence and the establishment of municipal government in Abilene, see Robert R. Dykstra, *The Cattle Towns* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968).

<sup>59</sup> Eisenhower, *At Ease*, 65.

<sup>60</sup> John McCallum, *Six Roads from Abilene: Some Personal Recollections of Edgar Eisenhower* (Seattle: Wood and Reber, 1960), 22; “For all its humor, sexual license, alternative relationships, and challenge to Victorian mores, over time cowboy culture shifted with changes in the cattle industry. As family ranches gradually replaced open-range herding, cowboys traded the masculine privileges of the margins for the class privileges of the mainstream.” Garceau, “Nomads, Bunkies, Cross-Dressers, and Family Men,” in *Across the Great Divide*, 163.

functions and domestic chores dispersed the rest. Across the West, towns like Abilene, which briefly profited from the wild frontierism of pioneers and cattle drovers, were gradually abandoned or managed to survive by adopting the domestic morality of Victorian gentility. The cowboy code governed the open range, the Bible the respectable town.

The two concepts of manliness that had struggled for Abilene's identity from its inception found themselves at odds again at the end of the nineteenth century, but now those who held a religious devotion to dutiful manhood vastly outnumbered those who reveled in an open-range virility. Baseball and football were the innocent amusements for boys like the Eisenhowers in redeemed Abilene. There were numerous churches and Dwight remembered everyone in town attending. The only exceptions were those "we thought of as the toughs – poolroom sharks, we called them." "The Herd" was a spot north of town where the non-churchgoers would drink and shoot craps. His parents forbade the young Dwight from even going near, but it did not prevent him from wondering about the vices that occurred there.<sup>61</sup>

Abilene's rural identity was pivotal in developing the imperatives of virtuous manhood. Settlers who had been converted by evangelical revivals or had adopted the morality of eastern Victorian elites now outnumbered the town's founders. Working and middleclass males who aspired to the wealth of eastern elites reflected their aspirations in their efforts to conduct themselves as established Victorian gentlemen, even if their salaries were not equivalent. Manual laborers and white collar workers who disparaged the cities for their crime, corruption, and immorality viewed the farms, shops, and mechanical plants of towns as character building for the arduous demands they placed on

---

<sup>61</sup> Eisenhower, *At Ease*, 67-68.

aspiring men. The endless tasks of the farm, chores around the house, and community projects needing assistance kept a young man from idleness, consumed the hours of his day, and steered him away from the tempting amusements of the city. Dwight Eisenhower acknowledged as much when he wrote in his retirement that “in the transformation from a rural to an urban society, children are . . . robbed of the opportunity to do genuinely responsible work.” Even while President of Columbia University, he viewed New York City “as a place to live, [it] seemed to me an environment out of which, only with difficulty and exceptional effort, much good could come.” He acknowledged that the “farm boy and tenement boy are one at heart” and that parental love exists in both homes, but he considered a rural town a far better incubator for male character than squalid urban neighborhoods. Abilene as “a microcosm of rural life at that time” was a far better environment for nurturing dutiful men.<sup>62</sup>

The collective commemoration of one of the town’s more famous lawmen revealed the eagerness of Abilene’s residents to escape its wild past. Thomas J. Smith was appointed town marshal in 1869 for his reputation as a fearless law officer and willingness to confront frontier toughs with his fists or guns. Smith incurred the hatred of Texas Street’s cowboys for successfully enforcing a “no guns in town limits” law, overwhelming two large men with his fists, and surviving two assassination attempts. When Smith attempted to serve a warrant against two local farmers accused of murder, the outlaws overwhelmed him in a gunfight. He was shot, struck with a rifle butt, and decapitated with an axe. Outraged residents of Abilene launched a search party for Smith’s murderers and brought them to justice. Smith was given a public funeral in which the majority of Abilene’s citizens followed behind the horse-pulled hearse to a

---

<sup>62</sup> Eisenhower, *At Ease*, 33, 53–54, 76.

cemetery north of town. Smith was buried with a wooden headstone and a small fence surrounding the grave. Yet, as Abilene prospered from local wheat crops, Smith's grave fell into disrepair and became so overgrown that it was almost completely lost. Almost three decades later, a local resident identified the grave and had the cast iron casket disinterred and moved to a more prominent place in the town's cemetery. On Memorial Day 1904, a ceremony was held honoring Abilene's famous marshal and a large stone was placed over his grave. A bronze plaque attached to the stone demarcated Smith's final resting place and Abilene's rejection of lawless masculinity in favor of a more dutiful manhood. The plaque read:

THOMAS J. SMITH  
MARSHAL OF ABILENE, 1870  
DIED A MARTYR TO DUTY NOV. 2ND, 1870  
A FEARLESS HERO OF FRONTIER DAYS  
WHO IN COWBOY CHAOS  
ESTABLISHED THE SUPREMACY OF LAW<sup>63</sup>

Abilene's dutiful men borrowed from the closing nineteenth-century's gender order to restore stability. This traditional formulation delineated gender differences even as it extolled complementary responsibilities of the sexes. Boys were trained in chores and outdoor manual tasks, completing minimal schooling until they abandoned the classroom completely to begin work on a local farm. Girls remained in school longer and became acquainted with housework, cooking, and childcare as they approached their high school graduations. Such gendered expectations created a sex disparity at Abilene High, where girls outnumbered boys two to one. Dwight Eisenhower's graduating class numbered twenty-five girls to nine boys. Eisenhower later attributed this disparity to the small community's notion that education would not yield "practical results" and "it was a

---

<sup>63</sup> Verckler, *Cowtown-Abilene*, 41–50; Nyle H. Miller and Joseph W. Snell, *Great Gunfighters of the Kansas Cowtowns, 1867–1886* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1963), 415–19.

male-run society and schools were predominantly feminine.” Eisenhower’s observation in his memoirs that “Abilene was in those days just another rural town, undistinguishable from scores of others dotting the plains” no doubt included a congruence with gender relations common to the nineteenth century.<sup>64</sup>

Abilene’s daily newspaper reflected the town’s embrace of a traditional gender order and endorsement of virtuous manhood. Like many small-town papers, portions of the *Abilene Daily Reflector* were reprints from sections crafted in large cities. Local editors still decided what they included in their dailies, though, and the papers spoke to local residents’ values. The *Reflector* catered to its patrons’ attention to virtue by emphasizing the character qualities of local merchants and tradesmen. In an 1894 advertisement for G. C. Sterl & Co., shoppers were told “‘The Strong-arm Man’ in the Clothing Business Today is the Value-Giver, Promise-Keeper.” The paper informed readers in July 1901 that Landes’s barbershop offered “cleanliness, skill and gentlemanly treatment.” During a ban on public meetings in 1901, the paper remarked that “Abilene men have spent more whole evenings at home this week than in any week for a decade.” The paper anticipated that “the men ought to acquire some good habits.” The *Reflector* also extolled male self-control, offering cures for drunkenness, chewing tobacco, and an unregulated tongue. Boys aspiring to mature manhood could read about the onset of adult responsibilities at the end of schooling, the Christian work ethic of deceased residents, and encounter a bevy of advertisements for custom-fitting suits.<sup>65</sup> Eisenhower later remarked about the *Reflector*, “there is no other paper in the world that I read for so many

---

<sup>64</sup> Eisenhower, *At Ease*, 65, 99.

<sup>65</sup> *Abilene Daily Reflector*, May 25, 1901; December 15, 1894; July 29, 1901; September 4, 1890; January 21, 1898; January 2, 1890; September 17, 1894; June 7, 1911; May 10, 1898.

years at a stretch as I did that one.”<sup>66</sup>

### **Manhood Reared**

The Eisenhowers were one of the many rural working-class families with strong religious convictions common in Abilene and in many non-urban areas across the country at the beginning of the twentieth century. The Eisenhower parents’ conception of gender roles reflected the traditional division of the sexes into a male breadwinner and a female homemaker. Although David and Ida Eisenhower had markedly contrasting personalities, their commitment to nineteenth-century gender roles provided stability in their marriage and parenting. David undergirded his stern demeanor with a religious devotion to principled manhood. “He was inflexible and expected everyone to have the same standards as he had,” wrote his granddaughter.<sup>67</sup> “He was an inflexible man with a stern code,” his son Edgar later explained. “He expected everyone else to conform to his standards and high ideals, even people he read about in the newspapers. Even historical characters. He wanted people to be neat and decent and self-respecting, the way he tried to be.” Edgar described his mother as “a versatile woman” whose domestic roles included “cook, baker, laundress, scrubwoman, dressmaker, milliner, valet, lady’s maid, waitress, and chambermaid.”<sup>68</sup> She was also the family doctor, nurse, preacher, teacher, lawyer, judge, jury, policeman, banker, accountant, and carpenter. Despite Ida’s profound influence on each of her sons, it was clear that David was the head of the house. Dwight later concluded that such a clear delineation of roles explained the absence of quarreling

---

<sup>66</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Remarks at the National Editorial Association Dinner," June 22, 1954. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=9929> (accessed February 10, 2014).

<sup>67</sup> Kaye Eisenhower Morgan, *The Eisenhower Legacy: A Tribute to Ida Stover Eisenhower and David Jacob Eisenhower* (Mesa, Ariz.: Roesler Enterprises Publishing, 2005), 88.

<sup>68</sup> McCallum, *Six Roads from Abilene*, 31, 35–36.

and peace in the home. “Father was the breadwinner, Supreme Court, and Lord High Executioner. Mother was tutor and manager of our household. Their partnership was ideal.”<sup>69</sup>

Christianity was the single greatest reference point in the Eisenhower home. David and Ida were members of the River Brethren sect, an offshoot of the Mennonites. Despite their conservatism, the Brethren believed their better-known brothers had strayed from true doctrine and had allowed outside influences to sully their theology. The Brethren made large profits selling their Pennsylvania lands and took advantage of the lower acreage costs in Kansas. There, the Brethren prospered and developed reputations as hard-working, devout, and honorable citizens. When David and Ida lost their fifth son to diphtheria in 1895, they felt abandoned by the somber Brethren who failed to comfort them in their grief. David and Ida visited several local churches before becoming closely connected to the Bible Students or Russellites, an early form of the Jehovah’s Witnesses. The Eisenhower parents spent several years with the sect hosting Bible study and hymn singing meetings in their home. David dropped away from the group around 1916, but Ida remained devoted to the movement until shortly before her death.<sup>70</sup>

The Eisenhowers’ sectarian commitments may not have been entirely orthodox according to mainline American Christianity, but the execution of their faith at home was very orthoprax for the nineteenth century. David’s close association of Christian faith with virtuous, self-controlled manhood would be recognizable and quite often affirmed by other contemporary males. David’s grand-daughter described his sense of religion as

---

<sup>69</sup> Eisenhower, *At Ease*, 31.

<sup>70</sup> Morgan, *The Eisenhower Legacy*, 105-106.

encompassing “personal cleanliness, truthfulness, self-discipline and absolute honesty.”<sup>71</sup> His son Edgar described his father’s religion as performed in a “quiet and undemonstrative manner.” His father endeavored to “live up to” his beliefs and expected his children to do likewise. “Faith was more than religious conviction,” Edgar remembered. “Our parents applied its principles to every problem.”<sup>72</sup> Dwight later mused that strict discipline from his father was necessary in a family of active boys. “He certainly was never one for spoiling any child by sparing the rod,” the third son later wrote.<sup>73</sup>

Ida was as equally determined as her husband to infuse a dutiful manhood into her six sons through religious discipline. Family lore related that Ida had disciplined herself enough when she was younger to memorize a startling 1,365 Bible verses in six months. “She deeply believed in self-discipline and she preached it constantly,” Dwight recalled. “Each of us should behave properly not because of the fear of punishment but because it was the right thing to do. Such a philosophy was a trifle idealistic for a platoon of growing boys but in later years we came to understand her ideas better.”<sup>74</sup> Determined to satisfy appetites while avoiding overindulgence, Ida gave her boys apples to hold them over until mealtime. The pacifism that Ida inculcated from the River Brethren spurred her to label Dwight’s choice of a military career as “not of God, but of Satan.” Yet, the future general acknowledged during World War II, “if I have done or will do anything in the

---

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>72</sup> McCallum, *Six Roads from Abilene*, 29.

<sup>73</sup> Eisenhower, *At Ease*, 32.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*



service of my country during this conflict, it will be because of the principles of life and conduct that she drilled into all her sons during all the years they lived under her roof.”<sup>75</sup>

Appropriating a manhood centered on diligent work and controlling excess was particularly practical for families like the Eisenhowers. Their subsistence lifestyle did not lend itself to waste or indulgence. As in many rural small towns, Abilene working-class families lived on tight budgets and any interruption in the breadwinner’s work schedule could mean additional debts or deprivations. Boys were, therefore, urged to pursue sources of income when they were not in school and often left formal education before high school. All family members were expected to participate in chores including tending animals, nurturing crops, home maintenance, and accepting local jobs. Parents punished theft and laziness particularly severely as they represented a threat to the entire family’s economic survival.

Dwight recalled the primacy assigned to work in Abilene. Esteeming its value above any amusements or distractions represented one of the greatest differences between American society at the end of his life compared to his childhood. He wrote that a fundamental change had occurred in attitudes towards the temporal role of man: “that role was once expressed in a single word: Work.” He recalled the minimal expectations residents of Abilene had for education. Primary schooling informed students about civic problems, but “beyond that, schools served to prepare the student for little more than the ordinary round of jobs. Physical work was done by almost every male.”<sup>76</sup> Edgar recalled his mother exhorting her boys “you must do like your father and work hard if you want to make a success of your lives.” All of the Eisenhower sons adopted the demanding work

---

<sup>75</sup> Morgan, *The Eisenhower Legacy*, 96, 114, 143.

<sup>76</sup> Eisenhower, *At Ease*, 79–80.

ethic of their father, but each of them did so apart from manual labor. Edgar later remarked that when he was struggling in law school at the University of Michigan and considered withdrawing, observing a street sweeper and pondering the prospect of a lifetime of manual labor motivated him to complete his degree.<sup>77</sup>

A multitude of variances from the century's domestic ideal characterized the Eisenhower family. Among them was the absence of daughters. Consequently, the boys took on an unusual number of domestic tasks including cooking, dishwashing, laundering, and cleaning. Not all rural homes were as religious as the Eisenhowers, but most were strongly influenced and even shaped by the nineteenth-century Christianity that buttressed contemporary understandings of sex roles. Small communities like Abilene did not characterize all nineteenth-century families, but enough distinction still remained between towns and cities at the end of the century to distinguish competing notions of manliness. Neither did all small town families match the Eisenhowers' financial situation. Dutiful manhood crossed class, religious, and regional demarcations, though less evenly between urban and non-urban spaces.

Near the end of his life, David tearfully expressed regret that he could not pass on a financial inheritance to his sons and that his boys were supporting him and Ida at the end of their lives. Edgar tried to reassure his father, "Dad, you probably don't appreciate what you're leaving us. You're really leaving us, in my opinion, a very great heritage. We have all got good clean healthy bodies. We have all got good clean healthy minds. We have all got a very deep feeling of appreciation and gratitude for the inheritance which we have already enjoyed from you and Mother." Dwight's reflections about his father upon his death read as an obituary for the ideal man of virtue.

---

<sup>77</sup> McCallum, *Six Roads from Abilene*, 58, 94.

He was a just man, well liked, a thinker. He was undemonstrative, quiet, modest, and of exemplary habits – he never used alcohol or tobacco. He was an uncomplaining person in the face of adversity, and such plaudits as were accorded him did not inflate his ego. . . . His finest monument is his reputation in Abilene and Dickinson Co., Kansas. His word has been his bond and accepted as such . . . Because of it, all central Kansas helped me secure an appointment to West Point . . . I'm proud he was my father. My only regret is that it was always so difficult to let him know the great depth of my affection for him.<sup>78</sup>

Dwight Eisenhower's childhood transpired in a context of dutiful manhood. While significant change was underway in cities regarding male identity, Abilene and the Eisenhower home still preached a traditional notion of manliness that survived in rural working-class homes. His brother Edgar later wrote of their childhood, "our lives as youngsters were full and purposeful. There was plenty of fun and good old-fashioned pranks. We played games that kept us happy and exuberant. But behind all of this activity was a stern daily routine of constant discipline and the solid exposure to the principles of life and the values that were planted and developed in our minds."<sup>79</sup> Although future promoters of his candidacy capitalized on the nostalgia of his childhood, Dwight believed that his upbringing was not unusual and that many of the nation's earliest settlers had upbringings similar to his own.<sup>80</sup>

Dwight conceived of athletics as an arena to sharpen manly character. Athletics were Dwight's primary passion during his high school years. He played baseball and football at Abilene High School. He was proud of his school's undefeated football season his junior year. When the Abilene High baseball team played the University of Kansas freshman team in 1908, Dwight misjudged a fly ball and allowed it to go over his head.

---

<sup>78</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The War Years: 1*, Alfred D. Chandler et al., eds. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970), 184.

<sup>79</sup> McCallum, *Six Roads from Abilene*, 49.

<sup>80</sup> Eisenhower, *At Ease*, 51.

His team ended up losing, seven to three, and, later, he said that he carried the regret over the error for a long time. He helped organize the Abilene High School Athletic Association. The Association collected dues to purchase sporting goods which most of the kids could not afford. In his senior year, the members elected him president. Joe Howe, who edited the *Dickinson County News* and attended most of Abilene High's games, later wrote that Dwight "had self-assurance but never in all my contact with him did he ever show any conceit. He resented this in other boys more than anything else. In fact, he would dislike a boy for being conceited much more than for something he had done."<sup>81</sup> He also insisted on fair play even in football. "Eisenhower would experience a surge of anger when he detected someone, even one of his own teammates, violating the rules," biographer Stephen Ambrose wrote. "If it were an opponent who was cheating, he would block or tackle him just a bit harder; if one of his side was guilty, he would sharply reprimand the player."<sup>82</sup>

Dwight's childhood also contained several lessons in the importance of self-control and the consequences of its neglect. When he was ten, his parents prohibited him from going trick-or-treating one Halloween with his two older brothers. Despite pleading and begging his parents to let him go, their decision was final. Dwight flew into an uncontrollable rage, ran into the yard, and started punching a tree stump with his fists. His tantrum continued until his father grabbed him and demanded Dwight get a hold of himself. With bloodied and bruised hands, he was sent to bed where he sobbed in anger. When his mother eventually came in and rubbed salve on his knuckles and bandaged his

---

<sup>81</sup> Howe quoted in Francis T. Miller, *Eisenhower: Man and Soldier* (Philadelphia: John C. Winston, 1944), 80.

<sup>82</sup> Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, 1890–1952* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 34.

welts, she spoke to him about his temper and soothed his damaged pride. “He that conquereth his own soul is greater than he who taketh a city,” she quoted from the Bible. She pointed out that the only consequence of his rage and bitterness was injury to himself. He would never gain mastery over his life if he could not master his passions. Recounting the event in his memoirs, Dwight identified the conversation “as one of the most valuable moments of my life.”<sup>83</sup>

Eisenhower recalled that when he was twelve his father discovered Edgar was skipping school and working for the town doctor to earn some extra money. His father began to whip Edgar violently with a leather strap in the family barn. Frightened by the unusual intensity of his father’s anger, Dwight screamed loudly from the barn hoping that his mother would come running. When she did not, Dwight endeavored to intervene and prevent his father from applying further blows on his brother. Dwight tried to grab at his father’s arm until his father turned towards him and exclaimed, “Oh, do you want some of the same. What’s the matter with you, anyway?”

“I don’t think anyone ought to be whipped like that . . . not even a dog,” Dwight protested.

Dwight’s father dropped the strap and walked away. Father and son were both surprised by David’s momentary lack of self-control, but recalling the incident many years later Dwight sympathized with his father for punishing Edgar. Dwight conjectured that his father was fearful Edgar would “seriously damage all the years of life ahead” by neglecting his education and end up as “an unhappy handyman in Kansas,” which, of course, was essentially his father’s job at the Belle Springs creamery.<sup>84</sup>

---

<sup>83</sup> Eisenhower, *At Ease*, 51–52.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 36–37.

David and Ida refused to influence the career choices of their sons. The Eisenhower parents probably resented their own parents trying to steer them towards farming and intentionally avoided making similar demands on their own children. As long as their sons demonstrated hard work and mature character, David and Ida did not reject their sons' career choices. Despite initial reservations about Edgar's choice to pursue law at the University of Michigan, David supported his son's decision. Even more egregious, Dwight's decision to accept his appointment to West Point violated Ida's staunch pacifism. His mother did not block Dwight's leaving, but as he walked in his suit to the train station in Abilene his brother Milton recalled their mother retreating to her bedroom and hearing her sob behind the closed door.

One month before Dwight walked to the station, the *Abilene Daily Reflector* ran an advertisement for Harry C. Litts, a local Abilene clothes merchant. The ad featured a boy with a drum and was entitled, "For the Boy's Last Days at School." The ad encouraged consumers to fix their child up in an "Xtragoood" suit, the uniform of mature manhood, for his last days of school. For "he will appreciate it and will some day be a president of a railroad or president of the U.S. You don't know."<sup>85</sup>

Dutiful manhood shaped Dwight Eisenhower's concept of manliness for the rest of his life. The manhood lessons he imbibed in Abilene were reinforced in his education at West Point where the motto remains, "Duty, Honor, Country." A lifetime military career confirmed the value he placed on responsibility, self-restraint, and maturity. Eisenhower only assented to run for the presidency when his supporters convinced him it was his duty. His administration is remembered for presiding over a decade in which white middleclass males were labeled as conformists. If conformity describes

---

<sup>85</sup> *Abilene Daily Reflector*, May 19, 1911.

Eisenhower's male constituents in the 1950s, their uniformity was born of a conformity to the ideals of nineteenth-century manhood - a manhood that preached to its rural small town inhabitants the responsibilities, restraints, and maturities of male duty.

## CHAPTER TWO

### MASCULINE MEN

During his second year at the United States Military Academy at West Point, Eisenhower took on the presumptive air of one who had endured all the hazing of a first-year cadet and was now intent on inflicting the same upon incoming classmates. Yearlings (second-year cadets) routinely treated plebes (first-year cadets) harshly, avoided anything except official contact with them, and roughly addressed them as Mr. Ducrot or Mr. Dumgard, using their actual names only when it was necessary. Condescending yearlings would also endeavor to humiliate their underlings by toughly asking them, “Mister, what’s your P.C.S. (Previous Condition of Servitude)?” in an effort to expose what was usually menial or humiliating labor. In Eisenhower’s estimation, there was “no individual in the world more serenely arrogant” than a West Point yearling.

On one occasion, a fellow Kansan cadet was rushing across the grounds to fulfill the orders of an officer and he crashed into Eisenhower. Stunned and feigning indignation, Eisenhower lit into the frightened plebe. “Mr. Dumgard, what is your P.C.S.?” he asked in a scold. Attempting to heap further contempt, he pronounced, “You look like a barber.”

Meekly, the plebe stood up and replied, “I was a barber, Sir.”

It was Eisenhower who was put back on his heels. He retreated to his tent where his roommate played priest to the confessing hazer. “I’m never going to crawl another



plebe as long as I live,” Eisenhower professed sheepishly. “As a matter of fact, they’ll have to run over and knock me out of the company street before I’ll make any attempt again. I’ve just done something that was stupid and unforgiveable. I managed to make a man ashamed of the work he did to earn a living.”<sup>86</sup>

This encounter during Eisenhower’s West Point years, as well as his ability to recall the event in vivid detail many decades later, reveals two ethics of maleness that he felt caught between at the beginning of the twentieth century. A new masculinity emerging in urban centers challenged the dutiful manhood Eisenhower inculcated from his rural upbringing, and many American males experienced a similar compulsion towards toughness that Eisenhower demonstrated against the plebe. Yet, the duty ethic of his rural youth that prized virtue, self-control, and hard work constrained him from fully adopting the new masculine persona. The internal conflict was palpable for Eisenhower as it was for many American males in the new century. The establishment of a rugged masculinity to replace the hegemony of dutiful manhood at the turn of the century marked one of the most significant transitions in American male identity.

### **Masculinity Flexed**

Masculinity replaced manhood. Whereas the ethos of manhood prized virtue, self-control, and maturity, the ethics of masculinity were a compulsion to demonstrate physical strength, sexual prowess, and individual freedom. For most of the nineteenth century, the imperatives of manhood had gripped American men and they sought to demonstrate their manliness through proper behavior. In the last three decades of the century, however, a virile masculinity became the standard by which men measured

---

<sup>86</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, *At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends* (New York: Doubleday, 1967), 17-18.

themselves according to the dictates of strength, toughness, and durability. Whereas practitioners of manhood feared exposure of character weakness, practitioners of masculinity feared exposure of physical weakness. Robert Baden-Powell, an early founder of the Scout movement in Britain, declared, “God made men to be men.” Scouting was a necessity for young boys “if we are to keep up manliness in our race instead of lapsing into a nation of soft, sloppy, cigarette suckers.”<sup>87</sup> Henry James, who was intrigued sufficiently by the transitions in gender identity occurring in his time to incorporate them in his novel *The Bostonians* (1886), had his primary male character, Basil Ransom, declare his desire to preserve “the masculine character, the ability to dare and endure, to know and yet not fear reality, to look the world in the face and take it for what it is.” Lest his female companions think that they might play a role in the discovery, Ransom remarks, “I don’t in the least care what becomes of you ladies while I make the attempt.”<sup>88</sup>

Whereas traditional manhood had distinguished itself from childhood, masculinity defined itself in contrast to femininity. Foolishness and childish irresponsibility were sufficient to discredit an individual’s manhood in the 1800s. Poor self-control or inability to demonstrate gentlemanly authority in the home could incur the insult that one was not truly manly. Yet, by the close of the century, demonstration of specific masculine traits became more important for proving manliness than meeting the dictates of virtuous behavior. Baden-Powell declared “manliness” could only be conveyed by men and not by

---

<sup>87</sup> Baden-Powell quoted in Allen Warren, “Popular Manliness: Baden Powell, Scouting and the Development of Manly Character” in *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940*, J.A. Mangan and J. Walvin, eds. (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1987), 203.

<sup>88</sup> Henry James, *The Bostonians* (New York: Modern Library, 1956), 343.

imposters who were “half men, half old women.”<sup>89</sup> Dr. Alfred Stillé, a president of the American Medical Association, brought the authority of his office to bear on male identity declaring “a man with feminine traits of character, or with the frame and carriage of a female, is despised by both the sex he ostensibly belongs to, and that of which he is at once a caricature and a libel.”<sup>90</sup>

During the Gilded Age, differentiating masculine from feminine traits prompted the creation of gender specific clothing, colors, toys, and products for children. Infants and small children of both sexes had previously worn a unisex loose-fitting dress. Consistent with the emerging trait-based gender identities, clothing manufacturers marketed separate articles of clothing for boys and girls. Blue became the standard color for boys, pink for girls. Toy guns were created specifically for boys and dolls for girls. Advertisers targeted the adult male body with specifically masculine products: barbells, work-out manuals, hunting gear, camping equipment, shaving cream, razors, beers, and formulas for male potency. An enlarged male culture of drinking, swearing, brawling, and gambling enabled men to build their masculine résumé and deflect charges of feminine softness. Traits rather than virtues differentiated the genders. The new focus was not character, but characteristics. The nineteenth-century gender ethic of duty was recast. Women had a duty to be soft. Men had a duty to be tough.

The masculine ethic had its origins in urban working-class neighborhoods as well as the rugged lawlessness of the frontier. The Bowery district in New York City demonstrated as early as the 1850s a masculine culture that would spread beyond its

---

<sup>89</sup> Baden-Powell quoted in Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Free Press, 2011), 157.

<sup>90</sup> Stillé quoted in Morris Fishbein, *A History of the American Medical Association, 1847-1947* (Philadelphia: Saunders, 1947), 82-83.

confines after the Civil War. Of the antebellum Bowery district Richard Stott writes: “masculinity was an essential part of working-class culture; indeed, working-class culture *was* basically male.”<sup>91</sup> Stott points to the preference for the term “workingman” during the antebellum period as evidence of the masculine tenor of this class. Similar expressions of male bravado and ruggedness were evident in the pioneer culture of the American West. Although cowboy chaos came to be shunned in Abilene, a romanticized version of masculine pioneerism continued to capture the imagination of Gilded Age men. Frederick Jackson Turner attributed its enduring appeal to the West’s ability to offer “an exit into a free life and greater well-being among the bounties of nature, into the midst of resources that demanded manly exertion.”<sup>92</sup> These constructions of virile masculinity moved from the periphery of nineteenth-century male culture to the center with the growth of urban populations, the popularity of strictly male spheres, and the end of an untamed frontier during the Gilded Age.

There were many reasons for the emergence of hard-bodied toughness among American males. Turn of the century males hoped exaggerated notions of brusqueness would break the gender blurring that urbanization, bureaucratization, and industrialization seemed to be accelerating. “The whole generation is womanized,” lamented Henry James’s character in *The Bostonians* (1885).<sup>93</sup> Others voiced similar concerns about the expansion of women in the workplace, higher education, and the voting booth. Coupled with the confinement of men in new corporate bureaucracies and

---

<sup>91</sup> Richard B. Stott, *Workers in the Metropolis: Class, Ethnicity, and Youth in Antebellum New York City* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 256.

<sup>92</sup> Frederick Jackson Turner, “Contributions of the West to American Democracy,” *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Holt, 1921), 261.

<sup>93</sup> Henry James, *The Bostonians* (New York: Modern Library, 1956), 343.

an emasculating depression in the 1890s, anxious American males at the turn of the century were receptive to redefining their maleness towards a set of traits that could be exhibited and measured. Self-control was an impediment if men who were risk-takers, aggressive, and unbothered by moral scruples could accumulate unprecedented wealth. For many, performing masculinity proved far more enticing than subscribing to a well-worn ethic of duty.

The development of a bachelor subculture also abetted the emergence of a masculine ethic in the cities. The number of unmarried men increased substantially in most urban centers at the end of the century. Strictly masculine spaces such as saloons, boarding houses, pool halls, bath houses, and barber shops provided homosocial forums that reinforced male interests and the experiences of unmarried men. The unprecedented number of bachelors weakened the traditional stigma of the unmarried male as selfish, unattractive, a misfit, and possibly homosexual. The attractions of Gilded Age cities made any talk about the duty of marriage or sexual abstinence seem confining. In 1888 *Forum* magazine claimed that “men’s matrimonial discouragements and bachelor compensations are many; they can have more pleasures outside marriage, they are almost chartered libertines, so lax is sentiment.”<sup>94</sup> Urban spaces provided unmarried men with the venues for a masculine ethic that could flout Victorian virtues and restraints. Freedom and independence could be experienced through what was previously condemned as indulgence and immaturity. The masculine bachelor replaced the Victorian gentleman as the exemplar of maleness.<sup>95</sup>

---

<sup>94</sup> *Forum* quoted in Arthur C. Calhoun, *A Social History of the American Family* (New York: Barnes and Noble reprint, 1960), 3:210.

<sup>95</sup> Howard P. Chudacoff, *The Age of the Bachelor: Creating an American Subculture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 3-7, 48.

Many churches, which previously were the strongest purveyors of dutiful manhood, co-opted the masculine ethic to appeal to urban youth. Books ascribing a hard-bodied, rough masculinity to Jesus included *The Manliness of Christ* (1900), *The Manly Christ* (1904), *The Masculine Power of Christ* (1912), and *The Manhood of the Master* (1913). Bruce Barton's best-seller, *The Man Nobody Knows* (1924), portrayed Jesus as a skillful artisan and a rough outdoorsman, but particularly a successful, innovative businessman. "He picked up twelve men from the bottom ranks of business and forged them into an organization that conquered the world."<sup>96</sup> Jesus was a role model for corporate executives.

Sports offered the most prominent delineation of masculine prowess at the turn of the century. In *Boy Life and Self-Government*, G. Walter Fiske pointed to sports as an aid to youth in the "struggle for manliness."<sup>97</sup> Boxing held a dubious reputation late in the nineteenth century due to its associations with gambling, rioting, and its Irish participants, but the emergence of celebrated champions and the sheer demand for matches aided its popularity. The expansion of football beyond Ivy League campuses to state colleges and universities offered young men another forum for sanctioned violence as long as helmets, pads, and rule changes kept ahead of protests against the number of injuries and deaths that resulted from the game. The creation of the National League in 1876 and the American League in 1901 provided baseball with the governing bodies the sport needed to maximize revenues, streamline scheduling, and construct larger ballparks. Urban males with expendable time and money could use local gyms as an arena to build,

---

<sup>96</sup> Bruce Barton, *The Man Nobody Knows: A Discovery of the Real Jesus* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company Publishers, 1925), unnumbered preface.

<sup>97</sup> Fiske quoted in Donald J. Mrozek, *Sport and American Mentality, 1880-1910* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1983), 207.

tone, and compare their bodies against those of other males. Dog and cock-fighting rings never attracted large crowds, but nevertheless proffered another venue for male socialization and met the demand for bloodletting and conflict. Popular publications rallied male veneration of specific sports and athletes into a national fan-base for masculinity. Standardized rules, public scheduling, and larger venues provided men with the outlines for a common discourse on celebrated teams, notable players, and an escape from domestic responsibilities.

Concurrently, as men strove to accentuate their masculinity, contrasting types were marked as deviant and degenerate. At the same time as the word masculinity entered the national vocabulary, the terms “sissy,” “pussyfoot,” and “wimp” also emerged as epithets directed against men who fell short of the vaunted qualities. Edgar M. Robinson, who oversaw early Y.M.C.A. work in the United States and Canada, conflated manhood and masculinity by declaring modern society had created the sissy who was “more effeminate than his sister, and his flabby muscles are less flabby than his character.”<sup>98</sup> More often, though, masculine voices derided as weak and soft the same propriety and self-reserve that was previously esteemed. A young Harry Truman feared he would be labeled a sissy because of his eyeglasses, books, and female companions.<sup>99</sup>

The replacement of manhood with masculinity witnessed the same exclusion of non-white races, but with a new argument. Manhood had dismissed other races as inferior due to their perceived inability to be virtuous and exercise self-control. Now men of other races were inferior because they were weak, effeminate, and soft. They were too feminine.

---

<sup>98</sup> Robinson quoted in David I. Mcleod, *Building Character in the American Boy: The Boy Scouts, YMCA, and Their Forerunners, 1870-1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), 48.

<sup>99</sup> David G. McCullough, *Truman* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 45.

W.E.B. Du Bois struck back at the perception of black weakness by articulating masculine resolve to promote racial equality. In a 1912 issue of *The Crisis*, the journalistic organ of the N.A.A.C.P., Du Bois detailed a list of resolutions for himself that reflected the masculine tenor of urban males.

I am resolved in this New Year to play the man – to stand straight, look the world squarely in the eye, and walk to my work with no shuffle or slouch.

I am resolved to be satisfied with no treatment which ignores my manhood and my right to be counted as one among men.

I am resolved to be quiet and law abiding, but to refuse to cringe in body or in soul, to resent deliberate insult, and to assert my just rights in the face of wanton aggression.<sup>100</sup>

The masculine ethic also excluded homosexual men from claiming complete manliness. Manhood had dismissed homosexuals for their perceived aversion to marital and paternal duties and lack of sexual self-control. They had inverted their duties to others into indulgence for themselves. Masculinity similarly castigated homosexuals as inverts, not for being negligent in their duties, but rather for inverting masculine performance into feminine mannerism. The homosexual seemed to exhibit an aversion to the rough forums of masculine power and sought the delicacy of the feminine sphere. Early sex researcher Havelock Ellis wrote extensively on “sexual inverts” and their rejection of a masculine persona in preference for more feminine traits. Speaking of homosexual males, Ellis declared, “there is a distinctly general, though not universal, tendency for sexual inverts to approach the feminine type, either in psychic disposition or physical constitution, or both.” Even though the invert may mask his feminine characteristics, he can never completely dispel their wide prevalence. A sexual invert could be identified by his youthful appearance and child-like face, devoid of the chiseled

---

<sup>100</sup> Du Bois quoted in Sonya Michel and Robyn Muncy, eds., *Engendering America: A Documentary History, 1865 to the Present* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1999), 97.



features to be found on a truly masculine countenance. Besides the more obvious masculine feats performed in the ring and on the ball field that inverts were unable to perform, Ellis believed homosexuals also lacked more subtle masculine traits. He concluded inverts were frequently unable to whistle and “even smoke in the same manner and with the same enjoyment as a man; they have seldom the male facility at games, cannot throw at a mark with precision, or even spit!”<sup>101</sup>

As the bar for masculine performance continued to rise above the reach of most aspiring males, those who could not measure up practiced a “spectator masculinity” to live out fantasies regarding athletics, strength, and sex.<sup>102</sup> Gilded Age corporatization and urbanization generated a sense of anonymity that masculine promoters sought to mitigate. Reading Wild West novels and cheering on sports heroes enabled males to participate in athletic feats from a distance. Eugene Sandow, the internationally renowned German body-builder, earned an enormous following in the United States advertising his musculature as the “perfect physique.” The popularity of Tarzan as the untamed primitive male enabled domesticated males to fantasize about releasing their raw masculine impulses.<sup>103</sup> The popularity of Sigmund Freud’s writings indicated that males were living out their sexual fantasies in ways that would have left their virtuous fathers aghast. Unlike the previous century’s moralists, early psychologists in the new century warned against sexual repression rather than indulgence. Freud warned continence and not expenditure was neurotic. Havelock Ellis declared sexual abstinence “unreal and

---

<sup>101</sup> Havelock Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*. 2 vols. (New York: Random House, 1936), 1:287-291.

<sup>102</sup> James Gilbert, *Men in the Middle: Searching for Masculinity in the 1950s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 31.

<sup>103</sup> See John F. Kasson, *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man: The White Male Body and the Challenge of Modernity in America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001).

negative, in the strict sense perhaps impossible.”<sup>104</sup> Dr. William Robinson’s *Sexual Impotence* (1912) went through thirteen editions and offered counsel and solutions for the loss of male virility. National and local periodicals advertised products that promised to restore male virility and rejuvenate ageing men to be more like masculine youth.<sup>105</sup>

The most popular men’s publication of the time showcased sensational examples of masculinity’s stars and flops. Commencing publication in 1845 and lasting well into the twentieth century, *The National Police Gazette* offered its readers vivid accounts of crime, sports, and other masculine feats. Reports on notable boxing matches celebrated the brute power and skill of winners and slyly alluded to the manly inadequacies of losers. Pictorials of scantily-clad women with exposed ankles, legs, and breasts hastened the growing object-based conception of sexuality. Stereotypes of Chinese, black, and Indian villains served as a foil to the *Gazette*’s accounts of white masculine heroics. Warnings against gold-digging girlfriends and vengeful wives played on male insecurity and foreshadowed *Playboy* editorials several decades later. The hyperbolic masculinity and femininity of *The National Police Gazette* represented a break, even boredom, with dutiful manhood and celebrated the distinctions of toughness, aggression, and suggestive bodies.<sup>106</sup>

Traditional gender roles were not completely overhauled by the turn-of-the-century transition in male identity, but were often reinforced by assigning stricter boundaries and delineating definitive traits for males and females. Theodore Roosevelt was the most prominent practitioner and prophet of the new masculinity while

---

<sup>104</sup> Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, 2: 215.

<sup>105</sup> E. Anthony Rotundo, “Body and Soul: Changing Ideals of American Middle-Class Manhood, 1770-1920,” *Journal of Social History* 16:4 (1983): 32.

<sup>106</sup> Guy Reel, *The National Police Gazette and the Making of the Modern American Man, 1879-1906* (New York: Palgrave, 2006).

simultaneously reinforcing nineteenth-century roles and values. Roosevelt was not a simplistic, vacuous presentation of masculinity. His father instilled a strong Victorian morality in him from a young age. When the young Theodore departed home for college at Harvard, his father's advice was to guard his morals. Theodore carried a strong sense of nineteenth-century duty with him throughout his political career that bore strong resemblance to his father's strict Dutch patrician propriety. "Bodily vigour is good, the vigour of intellect is even better," the younger Roosevelt wrote, "but far above both is character."<sup>107</sup> In addition, Roosevelt delineated stark differences between the sexes and believed strenuous performance of each gender role was necessary for vibrant national life. "The man must be glad to do a man's work, to dare and endure and to labor; to keep himself, and to keep those dependent on him," Roosevelt declared. "The woman must be the housewife, the helpmeet of the homemaker, the wise and fearless mother of many healthy children. . . . When men fear work or fear righteous war, when women fear motherhood, they tremble on the brink of doom."<sup>108</sup>

The transition from manhood to masculinity was evident in the national dialogue regarding William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt. Campaign biographies had described McKinley as a responsible, self-restrained soldier who fulfilled his duty to his country during the Civil War. "When battles were fought or service was to be performed in warlike things," wrote one account, "he always took his place."<sup>109</sup> Yet, such a responsibility-oriented manhood had grown into disfavor as the national fervor for war with Spain grew more intense. National doubt about McKinley's resolve to address

---

<sup>107</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, "Character and Success," in *The Strenuous Life: Essays and Addresses* (New York: Century Co., 1905), 113.

<sup>108</sup> Roosevelt, "The Strenuous Life," in *The Strenuous Life*, 3-4.

<sup>109</sup> Quoted in Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 96.

Spanish atrocities in Cuba or avenge the destruction of the *Maine* provoked questions about the president's backbone - read toughness - which the office now required. The Spanish ambassador's letter, which referred to McKinley as "weak and catering to the crowd," validated a previously held public perception of the president. When Roosevelt remarked that McKinley had no more backbone than a chocolate éclair, he was not alone with that assessment. "McKinley did not embody the new standards of active, athletic, aggressive manhood," writes historian Kristin Hoganson.<sup>110</sup> Virile, young American men reveled in Roosevelt's youth and dynamism when he became president in 1901 upon McKinley's assassination. The country's disillusionment with an older president preaching a dutiful, self-controlled manhood led to a national embrace of a younger chief executive who publicly proclaimed a masculinity of youth, courage, and toughness. The transition would occur again sixty years later.

War supporters promoted the Spanish-American War as a masculine adventure which if not fought would result in national weakness and decay. Hoganson has established the primacy of masculine rhetoric in the rush towards the Spanish-American War. Gendered discourse regarding the conflict with Spain offset American brusqueness from European daintiness. Congressmen and journalists cast the United States as a virile young male whereas Spain was depicted as a sated, effeminate aristocrat. The decaying European power was "the most effete of European powers" and "as full of smirks and smiles, of courtesies and tricks, as a coquette of six seasons at least."<sup>111</sup> In contrast, the American people, according to Senator Albert Beveridge, had "reached its young

---

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>111</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 53.

manhood” and “they naturally look beyond their boundaries for their energy and enterprise.”<sup>112</sup>

The participation of the United States in World War I provided another opportunity for young males to demonstrate masculine heroism, but it required soft “doughboys” to go “over there” and forsake the leisure and security of home for Europe’s hostile fields. War propagandists borrowed the language of duty from manhood to launch what was largely cast as an opportunity to prove one’s masculine credentials through adventure and conflict. “Today we leave the seat of ease and we enter the arena of blood and lust, where true men are to be found,” celebrated Representative Augustus P. Gardner, son-in-law of Henry Cabot Lodge, on American entrance into World War I.<sup>113</sup> Critics derided Woodrow Wilson’s reluctance to draw the United States into the conflict as cowardice and weakness. However, once the president secured a declaration of war from Congress, the Wilson administration supported a distinctly masculine propaganda effort to summon the nation’s men to the battlefield. Wartime posters reflected the masculine martial spirit the war invoked by portraying conquered nations like Belgium as a helpless damsel in distress, a victim of the violent, raping Hun. One poster featured a ravished, bloodied female nailed to a wall with the caption, “They Crucify: American Manhood – Enlist.” In a blow against the suited virtuous male who feared the masculine enterprise of fighting, a poster featured a father in a three-piece suit with his daughter on his knee asking him, “Daddy, what did you do in the Great War?” One U.S. Navy poster tantalized viewers with a seductive woman dressed in a sailor’s suit alluringly remarking, “Gee, I Wish I Was a Man. I’d Join the Navy. Be a Man and Do It.” The most famous

---

<sup>112</sup> Beveridge quoted in *ibid.*, 158.

<sup>113</sup> Gardner quoted in *ibid.*, 206.

poster of World War I featured a very masculine looking Uncle Sam pointing at American men declaring, “I Want You For U.S. Army.” Eisenhower trained the army’s nascent tank corps at Camp Colt in Gettysburg during the First World War and feared he would never live it down to his fellow officers for failing to get into the real fight overseas.<sup>114</sup>

### **Manhood Derided**

Manhood did not supplant the hegemony masculinity held over American males after the signing of the armistice in 1918. Rather, the roaring twenties celebrated males of leisure, affluence, athletics, and modernity. Although the war was cast in moral terms against the plundering Hun, American involvement was largely viewed as a mistake, particularly after the bitter fight over participation in the League of Nations. Wilson’s moral manhood expressed itself in his foreign policy endeavoring to promote ideals that were lost in the mud of the war’s trenches. The postwar retreat towards isolationism suffocated any rhetoric about American males playing a moralizing role for contentious Europe. Unlike after the Second World War, no super weapon existed after the First World War to prevent Americans from trusting in their surrounding oceans to keep them safe. The retreat to fortress America and the rush to make money and enjoy oneself was rampant. Returning vets often remained in the cities where they were discharged, swelling the urban population. The limited sexual revolution of the subsequent decade discouraged soldiers from taking up domestic life and its duties. Unlike after the Second World War, American males would not return to the dutiful manhood of the previous

---

<sup>114</sup> Pearl James, ed., *Picture This: World War I Posters and Visual Culture* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 286, 289, 325.

century. Rather, urban notions of masculinity were boosted in the twenties and sparked a derision of “hayseed” males and their rural virtues.

Twenties urbanites caustically dismissed rural traditionalists and their moral imperatives. The intrusion of urban values into previously isolated rural communities included a distinct gendered element which not only featured the new woman and new Negro, but also the masculinized male who made the rural man of virtue seem soft and weak. “A first-class revolt against accepted American order was certainly taking place,” wrote Frederick Lewis Allen at the end of the decade. “A whole generation had been infected by the eat-drink-and-be-merry-for-tomorrow-we-die-spirit.”<sup>115</sup> The celebration of illegal drinking and the popularity of young women wearing less clothing, smoking cigarettes, and riding unaccompanied in cars with boys demonstrated that the looseness of wartime morals carried over into peacetime. “The man’s man is a jolly old Dick, who leads his friends to his den where his choicest drinks, smokes, and stories are dispensed,” observed *Vanity Fair* in 1928.<sup>116</sup> Editorials in *Life* magazine criticized efforts to create a moral man as the dismissal of manhood coincided with popular fatigue with progressive reform and moral causes. Film stars, theater performers, and novelists adjusted their plots away from an attention to character towards an emphasis on personality. “The vision of self-sacrifice began to yield to that of self-realization,” historian Warren Susman perceived of the era.<sup>117</sup> Early movie stars Douglas Fairbanks and Rudolph Valentino displayed a masculine physicality accompanied by a virile personality. Acerbic columnist for *The Baltimore Sun*, H.L. Mencken, reflecting upon the death of “The Great

---

<sup>115</sup> Frederick Lewis Allen, *Only Yesterday: An Informal History of the Nineteen-Twenties* (New York: Blue Ribbon Books, 1931), 88, 94.

<sup>116</sup> Erma Paul Allen, “Classified Husbands,” *Vanity Fair*, June 1928, 65.

<sup>117</sup> Warren I. Susman, “‘Personality’ and the Making of Twentieth-Century Culture,” in *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Pantheon, 1973), 276.

Commoner” William Jennings Bryan, lamented “he liked country lawyers, country pastors, all country people. He liked country sounds and country smells. . . . What moved him, at bottom, was simply hatred of the city men who had laughed at him so long, and brought him at last to so tatterdemalion an estate.”<sup>118</sup> Two years earlier, Mencken had written that a “good man” did not truly exist. After searching around the world he declared, “I have never met a thoroughly moral man who was honorable.”<sup>119</sup>

Some novelists mocked rural manhood as an outdated relic of a hypocritical past. A new American literati replaced Victorian authors and their conventions in the 1920s and made small town life with its accompanying moral scruples a target for frequent satire. Authors such as Sherwood Anderson portrayed the small rural town as a stale and staid community that suffocated personality, self-discovery, and individuality. Anderson’s characters in *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919) yearn for release from the monotonous loneliness and isolation of their lives, but their stunted attempts at risk are often foiled by their own inability to dream and express desire. The novels of Theodore Dreiser suggested virtue was not a guide, but a snare to the innocent in a dangerous world. It is the undisciplined man, not the dutiful one, who gains fame and fortune in *The Financier* (1912), *The Titan* (1914), and *An American Tragedy* (1925). The moral ambiguity of Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* (1925) communicates a refusal to associate virtue with success and happiness. The suited, conformist, dutiful male was one of Sinclair Lewis’s favorite targets in his novels. In *Main Street* (1920), Carol finds her husband “incurably mature” and daydreams he was more masculine, “a man of the bold free West” or one of

---

<sup>118</sup> H.L. Mencken, “In Memoriam: W.J.B.,” in *The Vintage Mencken*, Alistair Cooke, ed. (New York: Vintage, 1955), 163-165.

<sup>119</sup> Mencken, “The Good Man,” in *The Vintage Mencken*, 126-127.



“the hairy-chested heroes of the motion-pictures.”<sup>120</sup> Readers are informed in *Babbitt* (1922) that “there was nothing of the giant in the aspect of the man” who was named George F. Babbitt. Although as a boy he had aspired to the presidency, he was now “no longer greatly interested in the possible and improbable adventures of each day.” He is a husband, a father, and a real estate agent. He is dutiful. His attempt to display masculine bravado in his speeches and with women are posing and halting. He is an organizational man who wears a gray suit that “was well cut, well made, and completely undistinguished. It was a standard suit” and part of his “uniform as a Solid Citizen.” Lewis calls the dutiful corporate males who labor in Babbitt’s building “rustics,” equating their bland corporatism with ignorant laborers in the country. Only Babbitt’s friend Paul can see through his moral veneer, chiding that “you . . . love to look earnest and inform the world that it’s the ‘duty of responsible business men to be strictly moral, as an example to the community.’ In fact you’re so earnest about morality, old Georgie, that I hate to think how essentially immoral you must be underneath.”<sup>121</sup>

*Babbitt* was an immediate and runaway success for Lewis because the novel accurately depicted the modern corporate male as a conflation of nineteenth-century manhood and twentieth-century masculinity. Angel Kwolek-Folland has demonstrated how executives in the financial and insurance industries converted middle-class, nineteenth-century social ideals of manhood into a conservative model for a corporate work ethic. Notions of a calling to work hard, to demonstrate character, to please clients with exceptional service, and through pluck and perseverance, achieve success coopted the language of manhood for the urban, corporate workplace. However, the growing

---

<sup>120</sup> Sinclair Lewis, *Main Street* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2003), 109-110.

<sup>121</sup> Sinclair Lewis, *Babbitt* (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2003), 2-3, 7, 25, 49, 58.

presence of women in corporate offices impacted what was previously an entirely male sphere. Previously undifferentiated work was now distributed according to gender. Women worked as typists, stenographers, and secretaries. Men worked as bookkeepers, executives, and salesmen. The strenuous salesman was the masculine hero in the corporate ring who achieved great feats and proved he could meet the match of a brutal market with his own toughness and grit. Executives expected the dutiful organizational man to demonstrate manly virtue on behalf of the corporation alongside virile masculinity to increase the company's bottom line.<sup>122</sup> "The need for character and leadership ability, the proof of character in business success, and the emphasis on virility tested in the competitive arena of production all circulated around men's role as participants in the public world of business."<sup>123</sup> The competing presence of the manhood and masculine ethic in corporations is evident from a pledge taken by the employees of the Pacific Electric Railway in 1922.

Our New Year's Resolution  
The Pledge

To be loyal each day to Our Company.  
To conserve its material and protect its well-being.  
To strive diligently to better its financial interests and there-by safeguard our own.  
To be more courteous and considerate of all our patrons and there-by earn their increased respect and good-will.  
To make the Golden Rule a fact and not merely a precept.  
To be a Man, filling a Man's place in a man's game, and prove our's [*sic*] the best manned industry in Southern California.

Signed  
Every Employee<sup>124</sup>

---

<sup>122</sup> Angel Kwolek-Folland, *Engendering Business: Men and Women in the Corporate Office, 1870-1930* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 47, 51, 54, 84.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 182.

<sup>124</sup> "Our New Year's Resolution," in Michel and Muncy, eds., *Engendering America*, 104.

Twenties suits reflected the contest between traditional manhood and modern masculinity. For all of youth's rebellion against traditional ruralism and the maxims of manhood in the 1920s, well-dressed young men did not completely dispense with their fathers' suits. Their designers did, however, incorporate the preferred masculine persona of the decade. World War I rationing as well as army uniforms inspired designers to tailor a youthful, lean warrior cut in their fashions by forsaking padding and extra material. The mid-twenties witnessed the advent of the more muscular, broad shouldered suit with a tapered waist, slim hips, and athletic "V" silhouette for jackets. Rolled lapels and pleated pants gave the illusion of athletic muscularity without compromising movement and comfort. Embracing the end of wartime sobriety and color restrictions, affluent males in the twenties wore dark blue flannel jackets smartly complemented by white flannel trousers, art-deco shoes, and a straw boater hat in summer. The proliferation of color and the look of leisure and athleticism reflected the twenties male assertion of masculine prowess through pleasure, sports, and outings with single females.<sup>125</sup>

Eisenhower's wardrobe reflected little of the interwar trends in men's fashion. Besides his uniform, it featured gray, blue, and brown suits as well as a tuxedo for formal occasions. Solid-colored conservative ties and strictly white shirts rounded out his ensembles. Sergeant Mickey McKeogh, his orderly, later recalled that Eisenhower wore "the sort of clothes a conservative professional man would wear."<sup>126</sup>

The occupants of the White House in the 1920s also reflected the tension in male identities endemic to the decade. Warren Harding enjoyed the masculine camaraderie of

---

<sup>125</sup> Daniel Delis Hill, *American Menswear: From the Civil War to the Twenty-First Century* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2011), 128-135.

<sup>126</sup> Michael J. McKeogh and Richard Lockridge, *Sgt. Mickey and General Ike* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1946), 14.

his “Ohio gang” while his running mate Calvin Coolidge was a nineteenth-century Victorian living in a distinctly modern decade. When Coolidge ascended to the White House, he felt compelled to appeal to rural supporters by being photographed on a wagon filled with hay stabbed by a pitchfork. Close observers, however, observed shiny dress shoes beneath the president’s overalls. The photo seemed even less authentic with a Secret Service agent lurking in the background waiting for the picture to be taken and the charade to be over. Herbert Hoover hailed from rustic Iowa, but his wealth from international mining ventures as well as his cosmopolitan résumé, which included organizing the relief of Europe after the war, made him seem less like a hayseed up against the very urban cut of Al Smith, his Democratic challenger in the 1928 election. The three Republicans presided over a booming economy and boisterous urban change largely permissive of the masculine indulgence taking place on Wall Street, inside speakeasies, and in the backseats of Ford Model Ts.

### **Manhood Preserved**

Despite its proximity to the nation’s largest urban center, the United States Military Academy remained a repository and promoter of nineteenth-century manhood. West Point had changed little since superintendent Sylvanus Thayer instituted reforms after the War of 1812. The cloistered regimen permitted only one furlough during a cadet’s four years. Christmas leave was granted only to students who excelled at their studies and followed the discipline guidelines. Cadets could not hold personal cash or receive it from the outside. Rote memorization of mathematics, chemistry, physics, and

engineering made the classroom experience a monotonous routine of boring repetition.<sup>127</sup> Hugh L. Scott, who became superintendent in 1906, later affirmed, “I . . . brought to West Point no arrogant project of drastic reform. . . . West Point is not a subject for reform in that sense. It goes forward on its majestic course from year to year toward the fulfillment of its destiny, moving serenely under its traditions of ‘honor, duty, country,’ . . . without need of radical alteration.”<sup>128</sup> Rule infractions were punished through a demerit system with frequent violators forced to march with rifle and pack for two hours on the grounds. Serious offenders were forced to report to the commandant of cadets who denied ninety percent of appeals. “It hardly seems possible,” recalled Colonel Joseph C. Haw, a graduate of the class of 1915, “that a grown man was actually reported for touching a lady’s arm, but it is an undisputable fact. So zealously did the Tactical Department guard our manners and morals that a contemporary of ours was actually ‘skinned’ [assessed demerits] for assisting his own mother across the street.”<sup>129</sup> Cadets could also receive demerits for “strong odor of perfume in room,” “displaying indifference at [horseback] riding,” and “highly unmilitary conduct . . . allowing a guard tent to be used for the amusement of ladies.” Character formation was the Academy’s primary goal for its graduates, what General John J. Pershing called, “the greatest advantage of West Point.”<sup>130</sup>

Eisenhower scoffed at the rigidity of the demerit system and his encounter with the plebe who was formerly a barber indicates he was familiar with the masculine tenor

---

<sup>127</sup> Michael E. Haskew, *West Point 1915: Eisenhower, Bradley, and the Class the Stars Fell On* (Minneapolis: Zenith, 2014), 40-41.

<sup>128</sup> Scott quoted in Stephen E. Ambrose, *Duty, Honor, Country: A History of West Point* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 250.

<sup>129</sup> Haw quoted in Carlo D’Este, *Eisenhower: A Soldier’s Life* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 2002), 61.

<sup>130</sup> Pershing quoted in Ambrose, *Duty, Honor, Country*, 262-263.

of the city. Several decades later he admitted “in matters of discipline” he was “far from a good cadet.”<sup>131</sup> Eisenhower compiled almost ten pages of demerits during his years as a cadet from 1911 to 1915. The number of infractions, however, does not tell the whole story. Although he ranked thirty-ninth in discipline his plebe year, he received a promotion to corporal, which was the highest rank a yearling could earn. He acquired 100 of his 307 total demerits his senior year indicating his attention was on his post-graduation plans and receiving a commission.<sup>132</sup> Although Eisenhower found the demerit system excessive, it is clear that the disciplinary code impacted him. After his second year when he returned on furlough to Abilene, local resident Charlie Harger believed Eisenhower was different. He was “more mature, more sedate. He felt the responsibility placed upon him. However, he was still the same high-spirited and attractive youth who had won the town’s admiration in his boyhood days. He never showed the least touch of superiority in social activities.”<sup>133</sup>

Despite his lackluster discipline record, Eisenhower devoutly adhered to West Point’s honor code as it echoed the dutiful manhood of his Abilene boyhood. The honor code was simple and straightforward: “A cadet will not lie, cheat, or steal.”<sup>134</sup> A cadet’s word was to be his bond. Cadets were to conduct themselves as gentlemen. Nonconformists would be punished. Violators were usually dismissed. Eisenhower once compared adhering to the honor system akin to defending a mother’s or sister’s virtue. He later claimed no cadet was more zealous than he for West Point’s reputation and honor code, but he just did not get caught up in the “little things” the demerit system punished.

---

<sup>131</sup> Eisenhower, *At Ease*, 10.

<sup>132</sup> D’Este, *Eisenhower*, 10, 73, 82.

<sup>133</sup> Harger quoted in *ibid.*, 74.

<sup>134</sup> Haskew, *West Point 1915*, 41.

Eisenhower saw no incongruity in his behavior at West Point. For someone raised in the dutiful manhood of rural America, moral prohibitions against lying, cheating, and stealing resonated with far greater authority than bans against perfume, smoking, and socializing. Eisenhower understood West Point targeted the vestiges of independence and indulgence that cadets brought with them before their appointments and sought to mold them into soldiers who would not only be able to obey orders and conform to regulations, but also train future civilian conscripts to perform likewise. “The young American is naturally independent, I think, and has been raised to feel entitled to live his own life in his own way,” Eisenhower later reflected. “We soon understood that at West Point we were going to do it West Point’s way or we were not going to be there at all.”<sup>135</sup> The Academy began a period of modernization after the appointment of Douglas MacArthur as superintendent in 1919, but the West Point Eisenhower graduated from in 1915 was still an institution disseminating the duty-conforming ethic of nineteenth-century manhood.<sup>136</sup>

Eisenhower’s marriage to Mamie Doud in 1916 reflected the young officer’s conventional values and belief in distinct gender roles. Mamie was reared in a much wealthier family than her husband after her father became a millionaire from a meat-packing business and retired in his thirties. She was accustomed to servants, vacations, and shopping excursions with little regard for prices. Despite warnings from her father

---

<sup>135</sup> Eisenhower, *At Ease*, 5-6.

<sup>136</sup> As superintendent, MacArthur loosened the strict regulations and gave the cadets more freedom. He codified the honor system and established a committee to report violators to the commandant. Alumni feared he was abandoning the Academy’s historic emphasis on order and discipline, but MacArthur recognized that graduating cadets would need to lead an army of citizens who were more concerned with their rights than their duties. Before MacArthur, the Academy suppressed uniqueness and insisted on dogmatic conformity. After his tenure, the Academy gave at least a nod to the 1920s emphasis on individuality and personality. See Ambrose, *Duty, Honor, Country*, 261-290. Eisenhower’s class became known as “the class the stars fell on” of which half of the 115 graduates who served in WWII became generals including two of the five-star rank (Eisenhower and Omar Bradley).

about the austerities she would experience as an army wife, Mamie agreed to marry the young officer. However, when he had to leave on orders a month after the wedding, Mamie protested. “There’s one thing you must understand,” her husband instructed her. “My country comes first and always will. You come second.”<sup>137</sup> The couple would move almost thirty times during Eisenhower’s army career, and Mamie taught herself to endure her husband’s long absences and exhausting workload, the constant packing and unpacking, the acclimation to new posts, making the acquaintance of other officers and their wives, as well as the long bouts of loneliness and boredom. “I’ve kept house in everything but an igloo,” she quipped in her later years.<sup>138</sup> Twice the privations of a post proved too much. She fled the insects, bats, and reptiles of the Panama Canal Zone to bear her second child in Denver in 1922, and refused to accompany her husband for the first year of his assignment to the Philippines in 1935. She realized her recalcitrance could not dissuade him from obeying orders and eventually returned to his side to support his career.

Eisenhower’s relationship with his two sons bore similarities with the manhood ethic he inculcated from his Abilene upbringing. Doud Dwight, often called “Icky” by his parents, was born in 1917 in San Antonio. The delight the boy brought to his young parents was cut short when the child died from scarlet fever three years later. Reflecting typical Victorian reserve, Eisenhower rarely discussed the child or his untimely death and concealed his debilitating grief through hard work and suppressed emotion. Only in the last years of his life was Eisenhower able to put his grief into words and write that Icky’s

---

<sup>137</sup> Lester David and Irene David, *Ike and Mamie: The Story of the General and His Lady* (New York: G.R. Putnam’s Sons, 1981), 66.

<sup>138</sup> Susan Eisenhower, *Mrs. Ike: Memories and Reflections on the Life of Mamie Eisenhower* (Charleston, SC: Ferrous, 2011), 4.



death was “the greatest disappointment and disaster in my life, the one I have never been able to forget completely.”<sup>139</sup> Mamie gave birth to a second son, John, in 1922 much to the delight of her husband, but Eisenhower’s joy over John’s birth was tempered by fear of another devastating loss. John later wrote that his father was often a terrifying figure. He only spanked his son once probably out of fear his anger would cause him to lose control, but he could verbally upbraid his son when he was disobedient. Father and son became close subsequently, but only many years after the death of his firstborn.<sup>140</sup>

Eisenhower’s interwar army career with its frequent assignments and mundane responsibilities reinforced the dutiful manhood of his youth. Early in his career, he resolved “to perform every duty given me in the Army to the best of my ability and to do the best I could to make a creditable record, no matter what the nature of the duty.”<sup>141</sup> Known as a strict disciplinarian, Eisenhower was popular among most of his men, but some chafed at the conformity and probity their commander represented. During World War I, Eisenhower trained reservists in trench warfare at Ft. Oglethorpe, Georgia where F. Scott Fitzgerald was one of his trainees. The aspiring writer grew weary of the monotonous drilling and frequently retreated to writing a novel in his barracks. Eisenhower assumed command of the ten thousand men who comprised the tank corps at Camp Colt at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania in March 1918 and was responsible for training tankers going to France. Eisenhower won the Distinguished Service Medal, the highest award for non-combat duty usually reserved for general officers, for his efficient handling of the men’s training. His orders came to leave for France on November 18, 1918 and he made preparations for the corps’ departure including keeping them so busy

---

<sup>139</sup> Eisenhower, *At Ease*, 181.

<sup>140</sup> D’Este, *Eisenhower*, 188.

<sup>141</sup> Eisenhower, *At Ease*, 118.

that they had no time for the barrooms and fleshpots of New York City.<sup>142</sup> The signing of the armistice on November 11 however made his own deployment to France unnecessary. Much to his annoyance, Eisenhower was assigned several times to coach a camp's football team, orders he obeyed only reluctantly. Realizing it was in vain to buck the decisions of the War Department, Eisenhower resolved, "when I go to a new station I look to see who is the strongest and ablest man on the post. I forget my own ideas and do everything in my power to promote what *he* says is right."<sup>143</sup> He continually earned grades of "excellent" and "superior" and was in demand among senior staff officers as one of the best aids in the wartime army. His friend Brad Chynoweth attributed Eisenhower's success at the Command and General Staff School, the Army War College, and the Army Industrial College to him being "100 percent conformist."<sup>144</sup> Eisenhower expected a similar conformist ethic in his own commands, setting standards, anticipating compliance, managing dissenters, earning him the moniker "chairman of the board."<sup>145</sup>

The contest between masculinity and manhood was evident between the wars in the army's officer corps. Interwar officers starkly exhibited the two styles of command extant in the American army's history. The first was the pre-industrial aristocratic officer who led armies unencumbered by democratically-elected civilian leaders and who could project a dramatic, flamboyant image as the man on horseback in sole command. The second was a product of industrialized total war and served more as a "military businessman" coordinating the civilian-industrialist-soldier relationship and maintaining

---

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

<sup>143</sup> Eisenhower quoted in D'Este, *Eisenhower*, 173.

<sup>144</sup> Chynoweth quoted in Jonathan W. Jordan, *Brothers, Rivals, Victors: Eisenhower, Patton, Bradley, and the Partnership that Drove the Allied Conquest in Europe* (New York: Caliber, 2011), 24.

<sup>145</sup> Alden Hatch, *General Ike: A Biography of Dwight D. Eisenhower* (Chicago: Consolidated Book Publishers, 1944), 144; Omar N. Bradley and Clay Blair, *A General's Life: An Autobiography by General of the Army Omar N. Bradley* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 130.

strong ties to civilians while subsuming his authority to that of a democratically-elected leader. Morris Janowitz designates the two as the warrior and the manager.<sup>146</sup> John Keegan refers to the two styles as the heroic and unheroic.<sup>147</sup> In an article in *The American Mercury* in 1952, T. Harry Williams called them the “Macs” and the “Ikes.”<sup>148</sup> If these two officer identities are considered as gender constructions, then they could also be labeled masculine officers and manly officers.

The interwar army contained few masculine officers who reflected the tradition of the aristocratic warrior. Joseph Stillwell, George Patton, and Douglas MacArthur exhibited in their command styles an embodied forcefulness that alienated subordinates and superiors alike even as they garnered headlines for stimulating the public’s fascination with robust, magniloquent generalship. Stillwell was legendary for the surly and critical persona that earned him the nickname “Vinegar Joe.” Displayed on his desk was the motto *Illegitimi non carborundum*, translated as “Don’t let the bastards grind you down.”<sup>149</sup> Even at West Point, Patton realized his martial masculinity rubbed his fellow cadets the wrong way. Writing to his father, the aspiring soldier confessed, “[I] am not very popular not because there is any thing the matter except that I am ‘Too damed [*sic*] military’.”<sup>150</sup> Patton met Eisenhower at Camp Meade, Maryland in 1919, and their similar ideas about tank warfare forged an instant bond, but the two officers had differing visions of their roles in a future war. Shortly after the armistice, Patton wrote to Eisenhower, “This war may happen just about twenty years from now. This is what we’ll

---

<sup>146</sup> Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait* (New York: Free Press, 1971), 3-21, 39, 126-145.

<sup>147</sup> John Keegan, *The Mask of Command* (New York: Penguin, 1987), 1-10.

<sup>148</sup> T. Harry Williams, “The Macs and the Ikes,” *The American Mercury*, October 1952, 32-39.

<sup>149</sup> Barbara Tuchman, *Stillwell and the American Experience in China, 1911-45* (New York: Macmillan, 1970), 4.

<sup>150</sup> Patton quoted in Jordan, *Brothers, Rivals, Victors*, 20.

do. I'll be Jackson, you'll be Lee. I don't want to do the heavy thinking; you do that and I'll get loose among our #0&%\$# enemies."<sup>151</sup> Yet, characters like Patton did not represent the typical officer of the interwar period. National regret over involvement in World War I and massive reductions in the War Department's budget in the following decade generated the impression that the army was a career path only for the unambitious and a forum where few men like Patton could thrive.

Eisenhower's most sustained exposure to a masculine officer occurred as an aide and then chief-of-staff for Douglas MacArthur.<sup>152</sup> As Army Chief of Staff, MacArthur wrote articles about "red-blooded and virile humanity" standing against pacifism and communism. Franklin Roosevelt called MacArthur one of the most dangerous men in the country and the president's aides referred to the chief of staff as a "martinet," "polished popinjay," "bellicose swashbuckler," and "warmonger."<sup>153</sup> Eisenhower respected MacArthur's abilities and valued the administrative experience he gained under him, but Eisenhower was often driven to exasperation by MacArthur's propensity for flamboyance, self-promotion, and deflection of responsibility. Eisenhower bitterly opposed MacArthur's insistence on donning his uniform and appearing at the head of troops routing the Bonus Army from their encampment in 1932. Eisenhower served under MacArthur in the Philippines from 1935 to 1939 endeavoring to build, supply, and train the Philippine army. MacArthur's chief aide, however, grew frustrated with his boss for refusing to go to Washington and request weapons for the Filipino army, his poor

---

<sup>151</sup> Patton quoted in *ibid.*, 16.

<sup>152</sup> See Laura A. Belmonte, "No Substitute for Virility: Douglas MacArthur, Gender, and the Culture of Militarism," in *MacArthur and the American Century*, ed. William M. Leary (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 436-465.

<sup>153</sup> Mark Perry, *The Most Dangerous Man in America: The Making of Douglas MacArthur* (New York: Basic Books, 2014), xi, xiv, 3.

work ethic, and recurrent tardiness. Eisenhower frequently took responsibility and made excuses for his chief's absences even as MacArthur maneuvered to receive the title of field marshal from the embryonic Philippine army. "I wonder whether egotism, exclusive devotion to one's own interests . . . can finally completely eliminate a person's perception of honesty, straightforwardness, and responsibility to the Philippines for whom he is working," Eisenhower fumed in his diary.<sup>154</sup> By 1939, the relationship had soured to such a degree that despite the pleadings of MacArthur and the Filipino president, Eisenhower refused to remain in the Philippines and returned stateside. The differing conception of male identity he had with his boss was not lost on Eisenhower who stressed, "I certainly don't want to be put in the same class with MacArthur. What makes anyone think MacArthur is a great man?"<sup>155</sup>

More prevalent in the interwar period was the manly officer who considered unquestioned execution of duty as the highest military virtue. Fox Conner, George Marshall, and Omar Bradley were not household names between the wars because they distinguished themselves only to their superiors as reliable managers of budgets, supplies, subordinates, and mundane tasks and not as grandiloquent self-promoters who attracted the attention of reporters. Fox Conner first met Eisenhower at the Infantry Tank School at Fort Meade, Maryland, in 1919. The two formed a mutual respect and when Conner was assigned to command the 20<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade in Panama, he chose Eisenhower to join his staff. In Panama, Conner mentored Eisenhower in military history and strategy and had the young officer write regular orders of the day. "The man who made Eisenhower"

---

<sup>154</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, diary entry, October 8, 1937, in *Eisenhower: The Prewar Diaries and Selected Papers, 1905-1941*, Daniel D. Holt and James W. Leyerzapf, eds. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 363.

<sup>155</sup> Eisenhower quoted in Kerry E. Irish, "Dwight Eisenhower and Douglas MacArthur in the Philippines: There Must Be a Day of Reckoning," *Journal of Military History* 74, no. 2 (2010): 473.

earned a reputation for setting high standards and holding everyone to them without preference.<sup>156</sup> He used his influence in Washington to get Eisenhower approved to the Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, where Eisenhower graduated first in his class of 245 in large part due to Conner's mentoring. "In a lifetime of association with great and good men," Eisenhower later wrote, "he is the one more or less invisible figure to whom I owe an incalculable debt."<sup>157</sup> Eisenhower could say the same of George Marshall for his later army career. Eisenhower perceived that Marshall "was a man who had many of the characteristics of Fox Conner."<sup>158</sup> Marshall kept a little black book as Army Chief of Staff with the names of responsible officers he deemed would be invaluable in a future war. Eisenhower's name appeared in the book, as did that of his West Point classmate and rural Missouri product Omar Bradley.<sup>159</sup> Bradley became one of Eisenhower's most trusted subordinates even though others labeled him "managerial."<sup>160</sup>

Eisenhower's dutiful manhood bore a similar resemblance to that of most other officers between the wars. While stationed in Washington in the early 1930s, Eisenhower recorded "notes on men" in his diary, which were reflections on officers and officials he came in contact with in the capital, particularly the War Department. He observed there were no "great men" – men whose minds were all embracing in their grasp of events, flawless in their logic, and able to render perfect decisions. There were no "super-men" as he and his playmates believed there to be when they were kids. Nevertheless, he

---

<sup>156</sup> D'Este, *Eisenhower*, 167-168, 174, 177; Jerome H. Parker IV, "Fox Conner and Dwight Eisenhower: Mentoring and Application," *Military Review* 85, no. 4 (July 2005), 92-95.

<sup>157</sup> Eisenhower, *At Ease*, 187.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 195.

<sup>159</sup> Mark Perry, *Partners in Command: George Marshall and Dwight Eisenhower in War and Peace* (New York: Penguin, 2007), 4.

<sup>160</sup> Adrian R. Lewis, *Omaha Beach: A Flawed Victory* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 263.

believed it was useful occasionally to make assessments of important figures in Washington, evaluating their character, abilities, and weaknesses to see if those impressions changed over time. In nearly all of his evaluations of individual men, he positively appraised army officers for their character and negatively appraised political figures for their character flaws. Majors, colonels, and generals were described as “honest,” “responsible,” “hard working,” “modest,” “gentlemen,” and full of “moral courage.” Cabinet secretaries and government officials were described as “verging toward pomposity,” “small,” “effeminate,” “petulant,” and lacking “bigness.” He further noted that the Secretary of War was reported in the press to be a “dandy” and “fop.”<sup>161</sup> He commended the males who exhibited the moral manhood he espoused, but employed the lexicon of masculinity to describe those with character deficiencies. Weakness and effeminacy for Eisenhower did not mean an absence of physical toughness, but, consistent with his nineteenth-century conception of manhood, a shortcoming in moral behavior.

Owing to the limited number of masculine officers, the predominance of manly officers fashioned the interwar army into a repository of manhood despite broader cultural trends preferencing masculine identities in the early decades of the twentieth century. “The new American professional officer had an inbred respect for the integrity of the chain of command” and duty as “the Army’s highest law” superseding all other law, wrote Samuel Huntington of the interwar officer.<sup>162</sup> In an article entitled “The American Professional Soldier,” *Infantry Journal* reported in 1940 that the professional

---

<sup>161</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, diary entry, June 15, 1932, in *Eisenhower: The Prewar Diaries and Selected Papers*, Holt and Leyerzapf, eds., 224-231.

<sup>162</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1957), 259.

soldier exhibited three uncommon virtues. Besides being absolutely honest and having faith in American democracy, he also retained “a clean-cut conception of what the word ‘duty’ means, and, drolly enough in this modern age, he uses it in all seriousness.”<sup>163</sup> If there was a change in the soldierly virtues emphasized among the officer corps in the interwar period, it was a new emphasis upon loyalty. Monotonous objective obedience of the prewar years was modified, with a new attention to initiative promoted under the virtue of loyalty. The Great War demonstrated the importance of individual initiative and now it was reconciled with obedience through loyalty. Loyalty also distinguished professional soldiers from a civilian population celebrating its blatant individualism in the 1920s. In his later study of civilian-military relations, Huntington wrote, “probably seldom in their history did the American people feel less inclined towards the syndrome of values associated with loyalty than during the halcyon days of the twenties and the experimental environment of the thirties.”<sup>164</sup>

While Eisenhower found satisfaction in an extensive military career, critics derided and dismissed the American army of the 1920s and 1930s as an obstruction to personal growth and individual expression. The *New Republic* called West Point a “so-called educational institution” and suggested the Academy was only capable of producing “a standardized product to receive and pass on orders.” The magazine bemoaned that the institution crushed all forms of self-expression and fashioned a man who cherished “an attitude toward life that belongs to the dark ages. He is totally ignorant of modern trends in thought, undeveloped emotionally, motivated by set prejudices and burdened with a

---

<sup>163</sup> J.H. Burns, “The American Professional Soldier,” *Infantry Journal* 47 (September-October 1940): 422.

<sup>164</sup> Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 303-305.



naïve belief in his own importance.”<sup>165</sup> Popular opinion viewed the army as a career for the unimaginative and compliant. Military personnel stationed in Washington, D.C. often wore civilian clothes and kept a low profile. Huntington later wrote of these decades that “military standards of honor, obedience, and loyalty were adjudged either hypocritical or positively dangerous” and there was “a renewed awareness of the gulf between military values and those values prevalent in American society.”<sup>166</sup> Historian and sociologist Lewis Mumford labeled the army as a “negative producer” of “illth.”<sup>167</sup> *Infantry Journal* in 1940 lamented the disgust intellectuals had for the professional soldier. The virtues of the soldier – Honesty, Duty, Faith – disqualified “him utterly from ever being a modern intellectual.” In the same article, the author queried, “Strange, wasn’t it, how this heterogeneous list of writers, speakers, idealists, scientists, religionists, philosophers, pseudo-philosophers – practically all the vocal parts of our population – had one powerful emotion in common? They disliked the professional soldier.”<sup>168</sup> *New Republic* pleaded for more masculine figures to replace the dutiful officers overseeing the interwar army. “Couldn’t we get officers in our army who were intrinsically bigger men, better men, more forceful and dominating as real personalities, so that they would not have to depend upon the trappings of an artificial social caste in order to bring from the men under their command the best that was in them in loyalty, obedience, subordination of the individual to the common good – discipline, in a word?”<sup>169</sup>

Popular derision of the army persisted as Europe descended into war in 1939. Peace and isolationist activists suspected the president was moving the country closer to

---

<sup>165</sup> Margery Bedinger, “The Goose Step at West Point,” *New Republic*, September 24, 1930, 144-146.

<sup>166</sup> Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 292, 309.

<sup>167</sup> Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilization* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1934), 93.

<sup>168</sup> Burns, “The American Professional Soldier,” *Infantry Journal*, 419-423.

<sup>169</sup> F.B. Johnson, “Discipline,” *New Republic*, July 2, 1919, 280-283.

another European entanglement, and they opposed increasing the War Department's budgets, expanding recruitment, and donating weapons to European allies. As long as the war remained Europe's fight, American males could continue to enjoy the masculine pleasures the interwar decades provided them. Yet, as a paralyzing economic depression crippled the nation and the world's war clouds came to American shores, the cacophony of male bravado would be challenged to maintain its powerful grip on American male identity.

## CHAPTER THREE

### MILITARY MEN

On December 7, 1941, Eisenhower was taking an afternoon nap when a phone rang him from his slumber. He was serving as chief of staff for the Third Army in San Antonio, Texas and had recently been promoted to the temporary grade of brigadier general for helping the Third Army win the Louisiana Maneuvers – the largest peacetime Army exercises in U.S. history. He had gone to his office that morning to catch up on some paperwork, but when exhaustion overcame him he returned home and told Mamie he wanted to sleep and not be “bothered by anyone wanting to play bridge.”

“Yes? . . . When? . . . ,” Mamie heard him ask into the phone. “I’ll be right down.”

Emerging from the bedroom and buttoning up his blouse with its recently pinned stars, Eisenhower informed Mamie that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor and that he was going back to his office.

As the officers of his headquarters slowly began to gather, Eisenhower remarked, “Well, boys, it’s come.”<sup>170</sup>

The war that came to Dwight Eisenhower and the United States in December 1941 held profound changes for the man and the rest of the nation’s men. National masculinity, recently lulled to sleep by a debilitating depression that prevented men, even

---

<sup>170</sup> Kenneth S. Davis, *Dwight D. Eisenhower: Soldier of Democracy* (Old Saybrook, CT: Konecky and Konecky, 1945), 276.

the most masculine of men, from finding steady work was now awakened from its bed of lethargy and inaction to the greatest of conflicts. The call for revenge against Japan and the prospect of rescuing England and the rest of Europe from Nazi tyranny was an adventure enticing enough to awaken American males from their masculine torpor. Although only one of the many brigadier generals in the Army, Eisenhower's record of efficiency and duty earned him the appointment of Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force, five stars on his shoulder, and the title of "General of the Army" by the war's end. The war brought into vivid conflict the two ethics of maleness that battled each other in the first half of the century with duty finding renewed consideration amidst a wartime culture that lauded toughness. Masculine males charged the fields of battle after Pearl Harbor, but out of the smoke and shock of war emerged anonymous, bloodied, fouled, and disillusioned men who longed to return home and considered the war nothing but a job to be done. A duty.<sup>171</sup>

### **Masculinity Depressed**

The Great Depression dealt a debilitating blow to the masculine hegemony of the twenties. Investors and brokers who strutted on Wall Street for a decade stumbled and fell in 1929 with the collapse of the stock market. The Depression did not simply disgrace overextended shareholders, but also male consumers who boasted they could deliver the dream life to a girlfriend, wife, or child. The economic collapse generated a bankruptcy in savings accounts as well as male identities. With as much as one-quarter of the

---

<sup>171</sup> For more on World War II as a masculine endeavor, see Christina S. Jarvis, *The Male Body at War: American Masculinity during World War II* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010); John V.H. Dippel, *War and Sex: A Brief History of Men's Urge for Battle* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 2010); Bernard F. Dick, *The Star-Spangled Screen: The American World War II Film* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1985); Matthew L. Basso, *Meet Joe Copper: Masculinity and Race on Montana's World War II Home Front* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

workforce deprived of employment by 1932, the workplace failed to provide the customary arena for breadwinning males to demonstrate success. Frank Walker, president of the National Emergency Council, recalled seeing “old friends of mine – men I had been to school with – digging ditches and laying sewer pipe. They were wearing their regular business suits as they worked because they couldn’t afford overalls and rubber boots.”<sup>172</sup>

The Depression particularly broke down masculine personas. As two researchers studying the effect of the Depression on Chicago families wrote, “the development of a crisis often involves disorganization, that is, a breakdown in the organization of the family or person.” The loss of income could cause individuals to become “personally disorganized over the loss of accustomed activities, a lowering of status, or a failure to meet responsibilities.” Evidence of this disorganization could include “worry, ‘nervous breakdowns,’ excessive fears, or demoralization.”<sup>173</sup>

Unemployment significantly undermined a husband and father’s claim to authority in the home. One social scientist observed: “Those men who were able to work but could secure nothing, fretted both over the fact that their wives had work and at their own inability to find any.” The shift in gender roles that disturbed such homes was indicated by “the wife’s distress at her husband’s misery, and his worry over her heavy burden, and the perturbation of the children under the air of distress in the home.”<sup>174</sup> The testimony of failed breadwinners bore witness to this domestic distress. “Before the

---

<sup>172</sup> Walker quoted in David M. Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 160.

<sup>173</sup> Ruth S. Cavan and Katherine H. Ranck, *The Family and the Depression: A Study of One Hundred Chicago Families* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938), 5-6.

<sup>174</sup> Katharine D. Lumpkin, *The Family: A Study of Member Roles* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1933), 115.

depression, I wore the pants in this family, and rightly so,” confessed one unemployed man. “During the depression, I lost something. Maybe you call it self-respect, but in losing it I also lost the respect of my children, and I am afraid that I am losing my wife.” Another admitted, “there certainly was a change in our family and I can define it in just one word – I relinquished power in the family.” He previously believed a man “should be boss in the family . . . But now I don’t even try to be the boss. She controls all the money. . . . I toned down a good deal as a result of it.” Still another confessed, “it’s perfectly true that my word is not law around here as it once was.” In the words of one wife, “I still love him, but he doesn’t seem as ‘big’ a man.”<sup>175</sup>

For some families, the disruption of gainful employment resulted in a reordering of traditional domestic roles. The failure of men to secure adequate employment while women were able to find consistent, albeit low paying, jobs heightened the crisis. Fathers stayed home to tend to children while wives left in the morning to bring back whatever meager income they could manage. Most Americans expected that when the crisis was over gender roles would be restored to their traditional places. Men would return to work and women would return to the home. But until that occurred, the stability of gender roles as well as the wellbeing of future generations was threatened. “Under ideal circumstances,” the psychiatrist George W. Henry wrote in 1937, “the father should be an understanding, tolerant but virile and decisive male.” The mother should demonstrate the traditional traits of womanhood including “gentleness, patience, and passivity.” Any mixture of an effeminate father and an aggressive mother would trouble a child and

---

<sup>175</sup> Mirra Komarovsky, *The Unemployed Man and His Family: The Effect of Unemployment Upon the Status of the Man in Fifty-nine Families* (New York: Dryden, 1940), 23, 31, 41, 98.

advance “homosexual tendencies.”<sup>176</sup> Philip Wylie pointed the finger at overbearing mothers who being “organization-minded” used their organizations to make their sons into “a lifelong sucking-egg” and were responsible for “the mealy look of men today.”<sup>177</sup> *Harper’s* also fretted over a perceived national softness, lamenting “we live in a far daintier world than did our fathers, but also a far less virile world.”<sup>178</sup> The absence of work, the threat of female employment, and the acquisition by the state of responsibilities previously the sole domain of breadwinning males birthed an eager determination to return to a traditional gender order.

The resolve to restore American masculinity was evident in popular culture during the 1930s. Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster introduced a comic book character in 1938 who seemed like a dutiful organizational man, but was in reality a fabulously strong and muscular hero. Superman quickly became popular during the Depression for the masculine ideal he represented, his knack for rescuing the independent-minded Lois Lane, and his fisticuff heroics against criminals and corrupt businessmen. The “Man of Steel” with the giant “S” on his chest represented a longing for male empowerment similar to that found in the short story, “The Secret Life of Walter Mitty” (1939). James Thurber’s character envisions himself in adventurous and dangerous roles such as a Navy pilot, a brilliant surgeon, an assassin, a bomber pilot, and the target of a firing squad.

---

<sup>176</sup> George W. Henry, “Psychogenic Factors in Overt Homosexuality,” *American Journal of Psychology* 93 (1937): 904.

<sup>177</sup> Philip Wylie, *Generation of Vipers* (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1942), 203, 209-210.

<sup>178</sup> Roy Helton, “The Inner Threat: Our Own Softness,” *Harper’s Magazine*, September 1940, 338. A letter to the editor published in *The American Mercury* in March 1938 interpreted the New Deal along gendered lines. The author asserted reactions to Roosevelt’s program reflected an essential difference between the sexes, writing “the typical male is chiefly interested in effort and achievement; while the female is more concerned with safeguards, craving the guaranty of an established order.” See Clarence Stone, “Adam vs. Eve,” *The American Mercury*, March 1938, 381-383.

Many male readers could relate to Thurber's character on two levels: a male emasculated by his circumstances and the longing for a more heroic existence.

Government publications and ambitious promoters of the New Deal also capitalized on the image of the masculine worker to support Franklin Roosevelt's programs and the unprecedented involvement of the state into the life of the common worker. New Deal publications showcased muscular male bodies building dams, constructing roads, and engaging in rugged industrial work. Barbara Melosh points out the image of the masculine worker served dual purposes as propaganda for the New Deal. "The figure used venerable cultural ideals of individualism and self-sufficiency to celebrate the expanding role of the state," an image that would appeal to working-class males, and, in addition, "the insistent gendering of the image provided an appeal that reached across class lines," that is, to middleclass audiences.<sup>179</sup> James McEntee, the second director of the Civilian Conservation Corps, wrote in his book *Now They Are Men* (1940) that the CCC was a "man-building agency" whose members wore their spruce-green suits "as proudly as West Point cadets."<sup>180</sup> Equally channeling the values of masculinity and manhood, McEntee celebrated the hard-muscled appearance of the men as well as their renewed sense of character, discipline, and work ethic.

The president himself had to fend off suspicions regarding his masculine virility in the 1930s and did so by adeptly turning his crippling polio into an exhibition of his physical vitality, will power, and endurance. Whisperings regarding Roosevelt's infirmity arose early in the 1932 campaign and many who knew of Roosevelt's disability believed

---

<sup>179</sup> Barbara Melosh, *Engendering Culture: Manhood and Womanhood in the New Deal Public Art and Theater* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 87.

<sup>180</sup> James J. McEntee, *Now They Are Men: The Story of the CCC* (Washington D.C.: National Home Library Foundation, 1940), 39.



it would compromise him politically and weaken any chance he had to be elected president. James H. MacLafferty, a former congressman from California and Herbert Hoover supporter, wrote in his diary on April 21, 1932: “Frank Roosevelt will likely be Hoover’s opponent and God knows the country is beginning to laugh at his pussy-footing. He is a pussy-footer and in politics he has always been one.”<sup>181</sup> Hoover believed Roosevelt should not run for president, that he was a very sick man, and would not last a year in the White House. To quell the doubts surrounding Roosevelt’s health, Earle Looker, a backer for the candidate, wrote a piece for *Liberty* magazine titled “Is Franklin Roosevelt Physically Fit to be President?” The subtitle of the article promised, “A Man to Man Answer to a Nation Wide Challenge.”<sup>182</sup> Assuming a man could not be completely a man and, therefore, president if he was not physically fit, the article offered numerous medical reasons why Roosevelt was physically up to the job. What was not mentioned was that the candidate himself had paid for the medical evaluations. James Tobin has demonstrated how Roosevelt did not hide, but rather used his disability to prove the strength of his mind and will-power to overcome the disease. Roosevelt’s campaign staffers handed the press stories about the growing strength in the candidate’s legs, and accounts to the contrary were labeled as political mudslinging and lies. Like his distant cousin before him, the president was said to have rebuilt his body through strenuous exercise and he would do the same for the enfeebled nation. The candidate stricken with a

---

<sup>181</sup> MacLafferty quoted and Hoover cited in Davis W. Houck and Amos Kiewe, *FDR’s Body Politics: The Rhetoric of Disability* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2003), 69-70, 81-82.

<sup>182</sup> Earle Looker, “Is Franklin Roosevelt Physically Fit to be President?” *Liberty*, July 25, 1931, 6-10.

disease that atrophied and weakened his legs promised to be “Dr. New Deal” for a stricken, atrophied, and weakened economy.<sup>183</sup>

The urgency of strengthening atrophied American men became more apparent as burgeoning fascist regimes beat their chests to the rhythms of militarism, racism, and masculinity. R.W. Connell has called fascism “a naked reassertion of masculine supremacy.”<sup>184</sup> This reassertion was expressed through a rapid arms build-up to demonstrate the supremacy of the nation, a virulent racism that advertised the racial supremacy of the Aryan and Japanese races, and a masculine preeminence that celebrated youthful musculature, strength, and potency. The Nazis spoke of creating a “New Man” and “men of steel” who would fight back against the effeminizing and emasculating influences of the Weimar Republic. For most of the Nazi party’s existence the party was overwhelmingly male. Only eight percent of party members before 1933 were female, and the proportion of female party membership did not reach one-third until near the end of World War II.<sup>185</sup> Joseph Goebbels proclaimed that Nazism was “in its nature a masculine movement.”<sup>186</sup> In a February 1942 fireside chat, Franklin Roosevelt reminded Americans, particularly American men, that the Axis nations had called them “soft and decadent,” “weaklings,” and “playboys” unwilling to fight.<sup>187</sup> Thus, the war that came to the United States in 1941 was about empires, resources, and racism, but also male identities.

---

<sup>183</sup> For FDR’s adroit political handling of his disability, see James Tobin, *The Man He Became: How FDR Defied Polio to Win the Presidency* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013).

<sup>184</sup> R.W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 193.

<sup>185</sup> Martin Durham, *Women and Fascism* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 168.

<sup>186</sup> Goebbels quoted in Dippel, *War and Sex*, 175.

<sup>187</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Fireside Chat,” February 23, 1942. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=16224> (accessed March 16, 2015).

## Masculinity Drafted

In the same fireside chat, Roosevelt responded to the charges of national softness by pointing to the masculine heroics American soldiers and sailors had performed in the Pacific during the early months after Pearl Harbor.

Let them repeat that now!  
Let them tell that to General MacArthur and his men.  
Let them tell that to the sailors who today are hitting hard in the far waters of the Pacific.  
Let them tell that to the boys in the Flying Fortresses.  
Let them tell that to the Marines!<sup>188</sup>

To meet the challenge of fascist machismo, American masculinity was roused to action after its Depression-era slumber. “Muscles will win this war,” the famed body-builder Charles Atlas declared in 1942.<sup>189</sup> Jonathan Daniels, FDR’s future administrative assistant, remarked during the martialling of American men after Pearl Harbor that the nation was “magnificently male again.”<sup>190</sup> Army recruitment posters featured a muscular Uncle Sam rolling up his sleeves, bearing his fists, and declaring “Defend Your Country” in one and “Jap . . . You’re Next!” in another. A navy poster urged American males to “Join the Navy Now” and “Avenge Pearl Harbor” as a broad-shouldered sailor angrily reflected on the surprise attack against the American fleet. Another poster featured paratroopers boldly landing with their parachutes and firing their weapons surrounded by the slogan, “They’ve Got The Guts . . . Give ‘Em More Firepower.”<sup>191</sup> Similar to World War I, masculine calls to action through selective service and volunteering drew

---

<sup>188</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Fireside Chat," February 23, 1942. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=16224> (accessed March 16, 2015).

<sup>189</sup> Atlas quoted in Christina S. Jarvis, *The Male Body at War: American Masculinity during World War II* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010), 10.

<sup>190</sup> Daniels quoted in Joe L. Dubbert, *A Man’s Place: Masculinity in Transition* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1979), 230.

<sup>191</sup> William L. Bird, *Design for Victory: World War II posters on the American home front* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998).

American males to induction stations. Yet, this time the number of inductees was far greater. Approximately four million men served in the Great War of 1914. Sixteen million donned a U.S service uniform in the Second World War.

In order to build an army of soldiers, the government appointed an army of psychologists and physicians to examine the recruits' fitness for military service. Lee Kennett notes that draftees were eager to pass the examination as though it were an affirmation of their masculinity. Examiners observed a pattern of "negative malingering" in which subjects endeavored to conceal physical infirmities or conditions that would disqualify them for service. Psychiatrists struggled to develop a practical test to assess the initiative and aggression combat conditions required. One Army psychiatrist suggested evaluators look for those who possessed "a spirit of adventure, a zest for competition, and 'a love of blood sports.'"<sup>192</sup>

The draft classifications developed to assess would-be servicemen constructed a masculine hierarchy as the basis for availability. Registrants available for general military service, those physically, mentally, morally fit and devoid of physical defects and diseases, were granted the highest and most admired designation of 1-A. Registrants who were physically fit, but essential for war production and therefore non-combat roles, were designated 2-A to C. More domestic-minded draftees, that is, those with dependents, were classified as 3-A to C. The lowest category of registrants assigned 4-A through 4-H included those older than forty-five, aliens, ministers, conscientious objectors, and the "mentally, morally, or physically unacceptable to the armed forces." Draft classifications thus served as a masculine report card, evaluating an American male's physicality,

---

<sup>192</sup> Lee Kennet, *G.I.: The American Soldier in World War II* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 27, 39.

intellect, and usefulness for waging war. A popular song released in 1941 titled “He’s 1-A in the Army (And He’s a A-1 in my Heart)” featured a woman boasting of her man who “ain’t missin’ nothin’” and “passed the toughest physical.” A correlating song titled “4-F Charley” impugned such a designee’s physicality and virility, asserting “his blood is as thin as water, / He can never be a father.”<sup>193</sup>

Basic army training specifically targeted the weak musculatures of flabby inductees. “How about those few pounds of excess fat on that manly frame of yours?” asked an orientation manual written by a veteran bearing the paternal nickname of “Old Sarge.” “If you walk 120 paces a minute, several miles each day for two or three months, with your chin up, chest out, stomach sucked in and breathing regularly, you’ll be surprised at the soldierly bearing you’ll develop. The blubber will disappear.” Old Sarge informed inductees that some of their muscles were so seldom used that they had forgotten about them and they had fallen asleep. “The Army’s physical-training program will be their alarm clock. And if they are awakened suddenly you’re going to get a shock.”<sup>194</sup> Most recruits found basic training physically and emotionally arduous. The same word appeared repeatedly in letters home describing training as “hot and tough,” “mighty tough,” and “plenty tough.” An Indiana inductee at Camp Croft in South Carolina wrote, “right now I feel better than I have in a year. Most of the soreness has gone from my aching muscles and I can see the results from the ‘toughening up’

---

<sup>193</sup> See Matthew L. Basso, *Meet Joe Copper: Masculinity and Race on Montana’s World War II Home Front* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 105-106. Basso argues convincingly for the persistence of a working-class masculinity that came into conflict with the more celebrated masculinity of the American soldier during the war. His examination of Montana copper miners and smelters leads him to conclude that a local masculine identity, that defined itself against women, minorities, and even the GI, resisted what he calls the “sacrificial masculinity” popularly demanded from home front workers. Both soldiers and miners were able to claim during and after the war that they had performed their duty as men.

<sup>194</sup> Old Sarge, *How to Get Along in the Army* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1942), 6-7.

process.”<sup>195</sup> Historian John Costello has called the World War II military environment “a brutalizing process” that was “oppressively masculine, emphasizing the break from the feminine and ‘civilizing’ influences of civilian life.”<sup>196</sup> A poem published in the military newspaper *Stars and Stripes* in 1943 celebrated the masculine identity of the soldier and his distance from the feminine.

### Roughnecks

Your boy can't stand the army?  
It's much too tough for him?  
You think he's any better  
Than Molly's Tom or Tim?

You raised him like a lady.  
He doesn't swear or brag.  
If other lads were like him  
Who then would guard our flag?

You say his girl won't like  
His going with the rest.  
I wonder how she'd take  
An enemy caress.

Thank God, stars in Old Glory  
Will never bear such strains;  
Because a million roughnecks  
Have red blood in their veins.

So let the tough boys fight.  
They're used to beans and stew,  
And every blooming roughneck  
Loves his Red, White, and Blue.

They'll fight in any weather,  
A grin on every face.  
Keep darling Percy home  
While brave men take his place.

Yes, we are young and tough.

---

<sup>195</sup> Indiana inductee quoted in Kennett, *GI*, 54.

<sup>196</sup> John Costello, *Virtue Under Fire: How World War II Changed Our Social and Sexual Attitudes* (New York: Fromm, 1987), 76.

We'll fight like Grandad did.  
Go warm the milk for Percy-  
We won't need such a kid.<sup>197</sup>

Thus, the hard-bodied, rugged masculinity that was standard issue for American males at the beginning of the century, but weakened by the Depression and awakened by Pearl Harbor, became government-issued masculinity as the War Department delineated the characteristics for the ideal soldier. The 1-A GI would be a young, non-alien, single, childless, nonessential agricultural or industrial worker, non-clerical, male who could wield a weapon, was free of any mental, moral, or physical defects, and could be toughened-up by basic training and the adversities of battle. White non-ethnics were ideal, but ethnic groups such as German-Americans would not be ostracized as they had been in the last war. European ethnic distinctions lent credence to the image of the Army as a melting-pot of diffuse races and cultures. Soldiers with last names like "Eisenhower" gave the Army the appearance of an inclusive citizens' army even if the nation's largest minority was generally restricted to non-combat roles.

Blacks who often earned lower assessment scores due to poor education and nutrition confirmed the prevailing opinion among much Army leadership that they were inferior soldiers. Secretary of War Henry Stimson believed blacks would only be effective if white officers commanded them. General George Marshall mourned their "relatively low intelligence average." General George Patton did not believe blacks could think fast enough to participate in armored warfare.<sup>198</sup>

In addition, homosexuals were "sissies" and "queers," too effeminate to play the role of the masculine warrior. One psychiatrist recommended rejecting any male who was

---

<sup>197</sup> Anonymous, "Roughnecks," *Stars and Stripes*, London ed., August 22, 1942.

<sup>198</sup> Marshall and Patton quoted in Kennett, *GI*, 35.

“so effeminate in appearance and mannerism that he is inevitably destined to be the butt of all the jokes in the company.” Government-issued masculinity would fight this war. The least that males falling short of the standard could do was support the real men in the field.<sup>199</sup>

GIs were recruited and trained to be masculine, but not necessarily to be manly. A masculine call towards tough bravado was more effective for meeting recruitment quotas than the virtuous call of manhood. To be sure, government officials and war promoters invoked the rhetoric of male duty to draw men to induction stations, but it was a rhetoric couched in masculine expectations rather than manly virtue, self-control, and maturity. Only after the social upheavals of the war and the horrors of the battlefield jolted the nation did the good-natured, all-American GI replace the masculine warrior as the ultimate symbol of wartime maleness. In the meantime, those deemed morally acceptable to the armed forces and therefore 1-A were not necessarily virtuous, but at least innocent of any significant crimes. The morally acceptable were not particularly sexually self-controlled, but at least innocent of rape and free of venereal disease. And government-issued masculinity certainly did not require maturity. One sociologist observed, “the perfectly trained soldier is one who has had his civilian initiative reduced to zero” and was encouraged by the military “to be a dependent of the [military] institution” which kept him in an “infantile state.”<sup>200</sup> Many contemporary observers commented on the immaturity of the American GI, not just in age, but also in habits. American journalist

---

<sup>199</sup> Psychiatrist quoted in Kennett, *GI*, 29.

<sup>200</sup> August B. Hollingshead, “Adjustment to Military Life,” *American Journal of Sociology* 51:5 (March 1946): 441-442.



Eric Sevareid said the American GIs “had the minds of simple children.”<sup>201</sup> Noting the GI’s penchant for comic books, chewing gum, drinking Coke, playing ball in the street, and fascination with nude pin-ups, many British citizens believed American soldiers were more like children who had grown up in innocence removed from the horrors of war.

Many British residents were also put off by the Americans’ proclivity for bragging. As tens of thousands of GIs landed in Britain to prepare for the cross-channel invasion, American soldiers struggled to conceal their doubts about British fortitude and tenacity. More than a few cocky GIs boasted that they had crossed the ocean to come win the war for the British. A guide for American servicemen in Britain, however, reminded troops that “the British are tough” and the English language did not spread across the globe because their men were “panty-waists.” British citizens did not need to be told to “take it,” because they had “plain common guts” and were ready to “start dishing it out to Hitler.”<sup>202</sup> Working for the National Research Council, Margaret Mead reported, “I was asked in one form or another, over and over again, why Americans talked so big.”<sup>203</sup> The British sociologists of “Mass Observation” conducted a survey shortly after the first American troops arrived. The characteristic that forty-eight per cent of those polled most disliked about the Americans was their “boastfulness.”<sup>204</sup> Many British residents were not surprised to discover that some of the American troops had been trained at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. To British complaints that the Americans were “over-paid, over-sexed,

---

<sup>201</sup> Sevareid quoted in Michael C.C. Adams, *The Best War Ever: America and World War II* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 91-92.

<sup>202</sup> *Instructions for American Servicemen in Britain, 1942* (1942; repr., Oxford: Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, 2012), 7.

<sup>203</sup> Meade quoted in Juliet Gardiner, *Overpaid, Oversexed, and Over Here: The American GI in World War II Britain* (New York: Canopy Books, 1992), 61.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*

over-fed, and over-here,” the boastful GI retort was the British were “under-paid, under-sexed, under-fed, and under Eisenhower.”<sup>205</sup>

In addition to boasting, GIs earned a reputation for swearing and profanity. American sociologist Willard Waller noted in 1944 the frequent use of a single four-letter word used by American soldiers “to express practically everything and anything. It is the universal verb of our army, for ex-teamsters in uniform as well as ex-professors in uniform.”<sup>206</sup> The word did quadruple duty as adjective, adverb, verb and noun and enabled a GI to tout his sexual proficiency, real or imagined, in any conversation. Famed war correspondent Ernie Pyle who moved constantly among the troops privately remarked, “if I hear another fucking GI say ‘fucking’ once more, I’ll cut my fucking throat.”<sup>207</sup>

The excessive smoking and drinking of American GIs also drew the shocked attention of their British hosts. Seventy-one percent of American males smoked some type of tobacco in 1944. American troops smoked thirty percent of the cigarettes manufactured during the war even though they represented only ten percent of the population. Kenneth Rose suggests the United States became a nation of smokers during World War II.<sup>208</sup> Cigarettes were freely dispensed at recruiting and induction stations. Ernie Pyle was amazed at the number of cigarette packages that littered the Normandy beaches. Eisenhower himself smoked up to four packs a day. Lighting a cigarette was an ironic but effective symbol of male swagger as was excessive drinking. Intoxicated behavior repelled many European observers particularly because, in contrast to their

---

<sup>205</sup> Victor Hicken, *The American Fighting Man* (New York: Macmillan, 1969), 296.

<sup>206</sup> Willard Waller, *The Veteran Comes Back* (New York: Dryden Press, 1944), 35.

<sup>207</sup> Pyle quoted in Burgess Meredith, *So Far, So Good: A Memoir* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1994), 153.

<sup>208</sup> Kenneth D. Rose, *Myth and the Greatest Generation: A Social History of Americans in World War II* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 40.

British counterparts, the higher rates of pay among American troops enabled them to binge spend on binge drinking, preventing much fraternization between the troops of Allied nations. Additionally, most combat troops admitted they needed to keep drinking to keep killing. “Drinking in the Army,” sociologist Henry Elkin wrote in 1946, “was a symbol of virility and facilitated the forgetting of the self and the release of impulses to self-assertion and aggression.”<sup>209</sup>

The “release of impulses” among American GIs was most often directed towards women: the idealized ones in pin-ups and the available ones in Europe. As one GI observed, “army conversation has a beautiful simplicity and directness. It is all on one solid, everlasting subject . . . women, women, women.”<sup>210</sup> For combat soldiers who were cut off from customary contact with the opposite sex, frequent graphic references to women and sex reassured them that they were still sexually adequate. Pin-ups of barely-clad actresses, beauty queens, and swimsuit models painted on planes and hung in barracks reflected the youthful GI’s interest in feminine corporeality apart from a more mature intimacy. As hyper-sexualized depictions of feminine domesticity, pin-ups also betrayed a longing to return to a traditional gender order. The provocative pictures accentuated the regions of the female body most associated with fertility (hips and breasts) reinforcing traditional expectations and duties assigned to the female body.<sup>211</sup> Curvy hips and large breasts eroticized the female body’s role in reproduction. Displaying pin-ups on weapons allowed GIs to show the enemy what they were “fighting for.”<sup>212</sup>

---

<sup>209</sup> Henry Elkin, “Aggressive and Erotic Tendencies,” *American Journal of Sociology*, 51 (March 1946): 410.

<sup>210</sup> Soldier quoted in Joshua S. Goldstein, *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 334.

<sup>211</sup> Gabriele Dietze, “Gender Topography of the Fifties: Mickey Spillane and the Post-World War II Masculinity Crises,” *American Studies* 43, no. 4 (1998): 653.

<sup>212</sup> See also Kennett, *GI*, 77 and Costello, *Virtue Under Fire*, 154.

Troop build-up and training in England gave American GIs numerous opportunities to cavort and copulate with British girls. One British woman recalled, “with their smooth, beautifully tailored uniforms, one could hardly tell a private from a colonel. They swaggered, they boasted and they threw their money about, bringing a shot in the arm to business, such as it was, and an enormous lift to the female population.” A younger British male remembered: “The nasal accents went down well with the girls because they gave them the glamour of film stars . . . they smoked glamorous, luxury-smelling Camels and Lucky Strikes . . . and many GIs traded on their Hollywood image by claiming acquaintance with film stars and owning huge ranches or large mansions – it went down well with the British girls.”<sup>213</sup> American GIs seemed like Hollywood stars to British girls for whom their only previous exposure to American males were the movies. Their neat haircuts, sharp uniforms, exaggerated talk, willingness to spoil a girl, and proficiency at dancing (particularly the jitterbug) made them attractive suitors. As a British Home Office study concluded, “they ‘picked-up’ easily and even a comparatively plain and unattractive girl stood a chance.”<sup>214</sup> British and French prostitutes were at times amused by the GI’s sexual immaturity, but always willing to thank them for their sacrifice and relieve them of their extra pay in exchange for their favors. British girls wryly remarked that American GIs “lived well and lay warm.” An oft-repeated joke in England was “Have you heard about the new utility knickers? One Yank and they’re off!” British prostitutes nicknamed “Piccadilly commandoes” and “Hyde Park Rangers” conducted their business with GIs “Marble Arch Style” in the doorways adjacent to Rainbow Corner and other popular American nightclubs.

---

<sup>213</sup> British civilians quoted in Gardiner, *Overpaid, Oversexed, and Over Here*, 110-112.

<sup>214</sup> Home Office cited in Costello, *Virtue Under Fire*, 206.

The reordering of traditional sexual mores was a product of wartime dislocations. An army survey conducted in the final year of the war revealed that over eighty percent of American servicemen who had been overseas for two years admitted to having sex with women they met abroad. Three-quarters of men who had wives or girlfriends they intended to marry back in the states did not consider the “girls they left behind” a deterrent from sexual attachment overseas.<sup>215</sup> A GI from Oklahoma recalled, “we would go from one pub to another, drinking just about anything on offer. From some place or other, the inevitable lady of the night would appear and I guess that many of us took advantage of their favors. It was the ‘live for today, tomorrow we die’ mentality, I guess.”<sup>216</sup> A Canadian soldier observed, “we were going to open a Second Front. Everyone knew that and that a lot of men were going to die. . . . I won’t describe the scenes or the sounds of Hyde Park or Green Park at dusk and after dark. They just can’t be described. You can just imagine, a vast battlefield of sex.”<sup>217</sup> French prostitutes eager to service their liberators as well as German girls who greeted their conquerors in nearly-sheer dresses often proved too enticing for battle-weary Americans.<sup>218</sup> *Stateside Time* magazine discussed the difficulties of shutting down brothels located near military bases.<sup>219</sup> Ultimately sexual engagements mitigated the fatalism inherent in war as well as the loneliness.

The masculine persona of the GI, who was recruited, promoted, and trained early in the war, was also attributed to the Supreme Commander of the European Theater of

---

<sup>215</sup> Costello, *Virtue Under Fire*, 97-98.

<sup>216</sup> Oklahoman quoted in Gardiner, *Overpaid, Oversexed, and Over Here*, 124.

<sup>217</sup> Canadian quoted in Paul Fussell, *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 109.

<sup>218</sup> Kennett, *GI*, 216.

<sup>219</sup> “Redlight for Redlights,” *Time*, April 27, 1942, 55-56.

Operations (ETO). *Time* awarded Eisenhower its highest honor for 1944 by featuring an imposing illustration of the general on its cover above the text: “Man of the Year: He took more than Hitler gave him.”<sup>220</sup> In the same year *Life* proudly recorded the testimony of the Germans that Eisenhower “has an athletic appearance, full health and strength, a well-formed head and jaw showing great will, and is a man whom his countrymen would call a he-man.”<sup>221</sup> Kenneth Davis, Eisenhower’s first biographer, included a physical description of the general that met the masculine expectations for an American soldier.

He stood now on the threshold of his fame, a large man who, symbolically, did not seem large until one saw him in perspective, with other men. Save when he was tired, he looked fully ten years younger than his fifty-one years, erect, broad of chest and shoulder, hard physically, giving an impression of unusual mental and physical poise. He walked with a springy step, poised on the balls of his feet. His arms, slightly bent at the elbows, moved always in a controlled swing. He carried his hands like a boxer. He was almost completely bald now, with only thin strands of blond hair around and across the back of his skull. He had a wide, mobile mouth, with a flat, slightly-overhanging upper lip. His eyes were bright blue; generally they were as soft and pleasant as a summer sky, but on occasion they could be as hard and cold as a glacier. The direct candor of his gaze was one of the two things most likely to impress a man meeting him for the first time. The other thing was his voice, and his manner of speech. He had a deep voice and used it with authority. He was remarkably articulate, with an unusually wide vocabulary range, and though he spoke with machine-gun rapidity he chose his words carefully and well.<sup>222</sup>

Eisenhower himself got a kick out of a story that appeared in *Yank* supposedly describing his headquarters in England where he ate his favorite sandwich: “raw beef and onions and plenty of pepper.” One London newspaper wrote that Eisenhower was “a Texan and former cowboy himself when he worked his way through the University of Texas.” The Supreme Commander’s chain-smoking attracted the interest of the press as did

---

<sup>220</sup> *Time*, January 1, 1945.

<sup>221</sup> “Gen. Eisenhower Inspects Allied Invasion Forces,” *Life*, May 15, 1944, 22.

<sup>222</sup> Davis, *Soldier of Democracy*, 276-277.

exaggerated accounts of his swearing.<sup>223</sup> When *Life* magazine stirred rumors that Eisenhower was having an affair with his British driver Kay Summersby by referencing his “pretty Irish girl,” the attributions of a masculine persona to the Supreme Commander were complete.<sup>224</sup>

### **Masculinity Disillusioned**

Masculine bluster may have mustered American soldiers to the front, but the realities of combat and the dislocations of war quickly deflated their bravado. American troops were horrified by the extreme slaughter of the battlefield, the indiscriminate killing from modern weaponry, and the suffering one man could inflict upon another. Conditions in the field - whether it be the scorching heat in North Africa, the mud in Italy, or the impenetrable hedgerows of Normandy - further disillusioned troops from believing soldiering to be an adventure like camping or scouting. The usual privations of war, including loneliness, hunger, exhaustion, sleeplessness, filth, dirt, putrid smells, decaying flesh, appalling scenes, and a dreadful sense that one’s death was imminent, divested the American GI of much talk about masculine heroics. Rather than a supreme feeling of brash virility, an overwhelming sense of helplessness, vulnerability, and despair

---

<sup>223</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, *At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1967), 257-258. The general’s orderly later explained that Eisenhower did use “a good deal of profanity,” but “it isn’t the kind of talk a good many men use in the Army. His profanity is pretty clean.” Michael J. McKeogh and Richard Lockridge, *Sgt. Mickey and General Ike* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1946), 51.

<sup>224</sup> *Life*, November 9, 1942. Scholars have almost unanimously rejected the existence of a wartime affair between Eisenhower and Summersby. Summersby herself rejected the story as wartime gossip until the end of her life when she assented to the publication of her second memoir titled, *Past Forgetting*. Summersby only contributed a portion of the book from her deathbed. Multiple ghostwriters completed and published the memoir after her death. Noted U.S. Army historian Forrest C. Pogue has remarked regarding the memoir, “almost everything there is slippery. There is nothing that can be impartially checked by scholars.” For detailed examinations of the Summersby rumor, see Geoffrey Perret, *Eisenhower* (Holbrook, MA: Adams Media Co., 1999); Lester David and Irene David, *Ike and Mamie: The Story of the General and His Lady* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1981); Carlo D’Este, “The Myth of Ike and Kay Summersby,” *Armchair General*, <http://www.armchairgeneral.com/the-myth-of-ike-and-kay-summersby.htm> (accessed March 4, 2015).

consumed the GI in the field. One named Sandford Africk wrote a loved one after fighting in Italy:

So many buddies gone and so many wounded! My lieutenant got off easy with a scratch on the arm. He is the only officer alive except for the company commander who will have a stiff arm for the rest of his life. Oh, darling, it was hell having my friends falling all around me and all we could do was say goodbye with a salute, and kill more Germans. We walked straight into death, not one man flinched or tried to save himself. I am proud to say, darling, that I was one of the brave lost children. We were only children after all. The dead boys were cuddled up, the wounded cried for dead friends. All children, after all.<sup>225</sup>

Ernie Pyle who moved with GIs across North Africa, Italy, and France wrote that a soldier who had been a long time on the front line had a “look” in his eyes that was easily discerned. “It’s a look of dullness, eyes that look without seeing, eyes that see without conveying any image to the mind . . . [A look of] exhaustion, lack of sleep, tension for too long, weariness that is too great, fear beyond fear, misery to the point of numbness, a look of surpassing indifference to anything anyone can do.”<sup>226</sup> It was a look Pyle came to dread seeing in men. Sergeant John H. Parks was one who had the “look.” Even though Parks was only twenty-four and dressed in full tank gear, he was the face of war-weary enervated masculinity: weary, lonely, dirty, exhausted. A photo of Parks, who had been voted man of the year by his fellow GIs, appeared on the front page of the December 22, 1944 issue of *Stars and Stripes*. The day after publication, Parks was killed in a tank battle during the Battle of the Bulge. When one reporter asked infantrymen on the line what they most wanted from the States right now, most soldiers stared at him with sullen, disgusted glares. Finally one infantryman spoke up, “I’ve got something to say. Tell them it’s too damned serious over here to be talking about hot dogs and baked

---

<sup>225</sup> Africk quoted in Kennett, *GI*, 148.

<sup>226</sup> Pyle quoted in John Ellis, *The Sharp End: The Fighting Man in World War II* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1980), 217.



beans and things we're missing. Tell them . . . they're [*sic*] men getting killed and wounded every minute, and they're miserable and they're suffering. Tell them it's a matter more serious than they'll ever be able to understand." Choking back sobs, the soldier finished, "Tell 'em it's rough as hell. Tell 'em it's rough. Tell 'em it's rough, serious business. That's all. That's all."<sup>227</sup>

The horror of battle made caricatures of the masculine soldier repellent to the GI. Sanitized images of the front were the only accounts that made it past censors and onto newsreels, magazines, newspaper columns, and feature films. *Stars and Stripes* cartoonist Bill Mauldin drew a Willie and Joe cartoon that featured his two slovenly GIs observing a smartly-dressed and fast-walking soldier above a caption that read: "That can't be no combat man. He's lookin' fer a fight."<sup>228</sup> John Wayne, who launched his film career starring in dozens of "B" Westerns in the 1930s as a rugged cowboy, spent three months touring military bases and hospitals in the South Pacific in 1943-1944. William Manchester recalled "the enormous pleasure of seeing Wayne humiliated in person," while recovering from his wounds in a Hawaii hospital. The hospital staff promised the wounded Marines a surprise before the evening movie. "Before the film the curtains parted and out stepped John Wayne, wearing a cowboy outfit – 10-gallon hat, bandanna, checkered shirt, two pistols, chaps, boots, and spurs. He grinned his aw-shucks grin, passed a hand over face and said, 'Hi-ya, guys!' He was greeted by a stony silence. Then somebody booed. Suddenly everyone was booing." Manchester reflected, "this man was a symbol of the fake machismo we had come to hate, and we weren't going to listen to

---

<sup>227</sup> Infantryman quoted in Charles B. MacDonald, *Company Commander* (New York: History Book Club, 1947), 49-50.

<sup>228</sup> Bill Mauldin, *Up Front* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000), 141.

him. He tried and tried to make himself heard, but we drowned him out, and eventually he quit and left.”<sup>229</sup>

The social and moral upheavals that occurred on the home front also fomented disillusionment with the war. The Second World War triggered gender and sexual turmoil in American society to a degree of which had not been seen during the Great War, the Roaring Twenties, or even the Great Depression. The roles of husbands, wives, and children were often scrambled by deployment, employment, and childcare. Traditional gender assignments for men and women were at times unfeasible and impossible. Accepted notions of sexuality and sexual behavior were challenged and at times understood to be malleable because of wartime disruptions. Marginalized groups discovered the distractions of total war allowed them to step into hitherto prohibited spaces. Some of these developments were already in motion before the attack on Pearl Harbor, but the sweep and duration of the war accelerated destabilizing trends. The net result was that the war created a gender maelstrom in which concepts of masculinity and femininity were being redefined almost daily. Constructions of domesticity, work, marriage, sexuality, parenting, and race experienced similar deconstruction and remodeling. All of these disturbances carried with them a distinct moral urgency prompting many Americans to ask, as WOR radio station’s Forum on the Air did, “Are We Facing a Moral Breakdown?”<sup>230</sup>

---

<sup>229</sup> William Manchester, “The Bloodiest Battle of All,” *New York Times*, June 14, 1987, 84. Wayne was originally classified by Selective Service as 3-A (family deferment), but was reclassified as 1-A in 1944 amid manpower shortages. Apparently his employer Republic Studios successfully lobbied to have him reclassified as 2-A claiming his USO tours were necessary for the war effort. Wayne’s widow later speculated that his super-patriotism stemmed from guilt over failing to serve during the war. See Pilar Wayne and Alex Thorleifson, *John Wayne: My Life with the Duke* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1987), 43.

<sup>230</sup> Costello, *Virtue Under Fire*, 259.

The question did not seem outrageous when contemporaries considered the enormous pressures that husbands and wives bore from war dislocations. *Woman's Home Companion* declared in 1944 that "normal patterns of family life are being destroyed" as men entered the military and women the workforce. The sexual adventurism of GIs overseas, common among what two psychiatrists in *Ladies' Home Journal* designated "emotionally immature persons,"<sup>231</sup> meant homecomings featured loved ones returning with unprecedented rates of syphilis, gonorrhea, and other venereal diseases. VD rates among GIs in Britain tripled from twenty cases per thousand to almost sixty per thousand in the early months of 1943. At three times the rate higher than among troops stationed in the United States during the same period, the rates continued to soar during the closing months of the war in Europe. The entire army's VD rate rose from fifty cases for every thousand soldiers at the beginning of 1945 to five times that ratio by the end of the year.<sup>232</sup> Infected soldiers returned to the war brides they had hastily married after Pearl Harbor or while on leave - wives they often barely knew when they were at the altar, wives who were eighteen or nineteen at the time, wives who quickly birthed "good-bye babies" after their husbands left, and wives who had changed while their sweethearts were fighting the war. One-third of US servicemen were married by the end of the war, but there was also a doubling in petitions for divorce in 1946 and thirty-one couples were legally separating in 1945 for every hundred getting married. Americans set a new marriage rate as well as a new divorce rate in 1946.<sup>233</sup> As one war bride explained, "it's very easy for some women to say 'I didn't let the war destroy my marriage.' I tried not to let it destroy mine, but it takes two to make a marriage and if a man's responsibilities are

---

<sup>231</sup> "Promiscuity and VD," *The Ladies' Home Journal*, August 1945, 6.

<sup>232</sup> Kennett, *GI*, 216.

<sup>233</sup> Rose, *Myth and the Greatest Generation*, 110-111, 248.

taken from him, he soon finds it easy to let ‘out of sight be out of mind’.” And as a GI in Italy reflected, “Army life overseas wrecks these old emotional ties when it takes a man away from his wife and sweetheart, and leaves him a set of memories and occasional letters. In its place, he has new dangers and lots of frustration and uncertainties. . . . There is a new set of accepted ‘rights’ and ‘wrongs’ in this overseas situation.”<sup>234</sup>

The right or wrong role for women may have been the most contested social question during the war. The demand for industrial workers as well as the need for large clerical staffs to manage a large military bureaucracy meant a hitherto unthinkable number of women were drawn out of the home and onto the factory floor or headquarters. The female labor force increased by more than fifty percent during the war. The proportion of all women employed increased from 27.6 to 37 percent. Women constituted 36.1 percent of the labor force by 1945. Three-quarters of the new female workers were married and by 1945 one of every four wives was employed. Industry leaders defended female work as only “for the duration” of the war, a temporary expedient, a task that did not compromise their femininity, and a patriotic sacrifice for their families and the nation. An additional 140,000 women served in the Women’s Army Corps (WAC) and 100,000 in the navy’s WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service).<sup>235</sup> In his war memoirs Eisenhower wrote that “an army of filing clerks, stenographers, office managers, telephone operators, and chauffeurs had become essential” to sustain the modern war effort and that “it was scarcely less than criminal to recruit these from needed manpower when great numbers of highly qualified women were available. From the day they first reached us their reputation as an efficient, effective corps continued to

---

<sup>234</sup> War-bride and GI quoted in Costello, *Virtue Under Fire*, 14, 223.

<sup>235</sup> Susan Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond: American Women in the 1940s* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982), 21, 23, 32.

grow.”<sup>236</sup> The WACS’ fervent supporter also predicted during the war, “after an enlistment or two enlistments women will ordinarily – and thank God – they will get married.”<sup>237</sup>

The introduction of female industrial workers and WACS into the previously exclusively masculine spheres of the factory and the army led to negative speculations regarding the state of American masculinity and femininity. Contemporary skeptics worried that women would lose their femininity participating in heavy industrial work. One female war worker disillusioned with riveting recalled, “I rode to work with a bunch of ‘Rosie the Riveter’ types, and boy, were they a tough crew. Really tough customers.”<sup>238</sup> Worse than losing their femininity, home front observers were also convinced that women were becoming indifferent to morality and sexual propriety. One male worker recollected, “the plant and the town were just full of working girls who were on the make. Where I was, a male war worker became the center of loose morality. It was a sex paradise.”<sup>239</sup> WACS too were rumored to be sexually promiscuous, frequently drunk, covert lesbians, or secretly pregnant. One irate congressman raged, “I think it is a reflection upon the courageous manhood of the country to pass a law inviting women to join the armed forces in order to win a battle. Take the woman into the armed service, who will then do the cooking, the washing, the mending, the humble homey tasks to which every woman has devoted herself? Think of the humiliation!” The congressman wondered what was wrong with America’s men.<sup>240</sup>

---

<sup>236</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe* (New York: Doubleday, 1948), 133.

<sup>237</sup> Eisenhower quoted in Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond*, 43.

<sup>238</sup> Female worker quoted in Costello, *Virtue Under Fire*, 185.

<sup>239</sup> Male worker quoted in Rose, *Myth and the Greatest Generation*, 102.

<sup>240</sup> Congressman quoted in Costello, *Virtue Under Fire*, 41.

Many commentators were also wondering what was wrong with America's children. Between 1939 and 1945 the illegitimacy rate in the United States rose from 7.0 to 10.0 per thousand births. An estimated 650,000 babies were born out of wedlock during the war. As fathers went overseas, mothers moved in with parents or in-laws, and children were dispatched to daycare centers, the nuclear family was reconfigured. In 1944 the *Washington Post* declared, "From Buffalo to Wichita it is the children who are suffering most from mass migration, easy money, unaccustomed hours of work, and the fact that mama has become a welder on the graveyard shift."<sup>241</sup> An advertisement for the Adel Manufacturing Company ran in *The Saturday Evening Post* in May 1944 with a young child looking imploringly at her mother dressed in overalls asking, "Mother, when will you stay home again?"<sup>242</sup> *Fortune* magazine wrote, "child neglect is verging on a national scandal."<sup>243</sup> The nickname "latchkey kids" was coined during the war to describe children who wore a key around their necks to let themselves into their homes after school, as both parents were absent. In 1945 Martin Neumeyer published "Delinquency Trends in Wartime" and concluded that wartime with its "tensions, frustrations, restlessness, relaxation of social control, adventurous spirit, mental disorganization, the effects of military life, [and] the imbalance of the sexes in the community" provoked a spike in juvenile delinquency.<sup>244</sup> Among the delinquents were Victory Girls: young women (often teenagers) who prostituted themselves to servicemen for sometimes no more than a bottle of Coke or a movie ticket. In 1941 Congress passed the May Act that banned brothels near military bases. Consequently, young prostitutes were forced to walk

---

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, 192, 203.

<sup>242</sup> Adel Precision Products Corporation advertisement, *The Saturday Evening Post*, May 6, 1944, 99.

<sup>243</sup> Rose, *Myth and the Greatest Generation*, 111, 113.

<sup>244</sup> Martin H. Neumeyer, "Delinquency Trends in Wartime," *Sociology and Social Research* 29 (March-April 1945): 269.

the streets and linger around movie houses, drug stores, bus stations, and train depots. The *New York Times* asserted, “the girls of high-school age are not prostitutes in the professional sense of the word. They are the victims of lower moral standards and of their own recklessness.”<sup>245</sup>

The proliferation of nascent homosexual communities seemed to be the most jarring evidence of lower moral standards. The amount of actual homosexuality in the military was little and some could be attributed to “deprivation homosexuality”: same-sex attractions due to the absence of the opposite sex.<sup>246</sup> American Selective Service boards had rejected only one percent of draftees as homosexuals unfit for military service and less than .5 percent were discharged for homosexuality. Yet, as the necessities of war repositioned large numbers of men and women into army units, onto naval ships, and into war plants, hitherto isolated gay men and women discovered others with similar sexual affinities. Historian John D’Emilio suggests that even though the war did not accomplish “a shift from heterosexuality to homosexuality,” the contingencies of the conflict removed men and women “from familial – and familiar – environments” and “freed homosexual eroticism from some of the structural restraints that made it appear marginal and isolated.”<sup>247</sup>

African-American males also remained largely marginalized from combat units in Europe and served primarily as cooks, launderers, and truck drivers. Over 1,500 black soldiers provided the manpower for the “Red Ball Express,” the supply line for the

---

<sup>245</sup> *New York Times*, January 27, 1945.

<sup>246</sup> Costello, *Virtue Under Fire*, 103.

<sup>247</sup> John D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 38. See also Allan Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War Two* (New York: Plume, 1990).

campaign across northern Europe. Altogether 125,000 black soldiers and pilots served overseas during the war and were usually commended for their military service, received solid endorsements from commanding officers, and praised for the faithful discharge of their duties. A short piece in *Stars and Stripes* in April 1943 called them “A Fighting Race” and went on to observe: “Negro troops have fought in every war in American history from the Revolutionary War until the present world struggle, and reports coming in from ‘hot spots’ the world over indicate they are fighting today with the same courage, distinction and valor their forefathers displayed in all the wars in which this country has engaged.”<sup>248</sup> Responding to burgeoning tension between white and black troops over black fraternization with white English women, Eisenhower’s headquarters declared on September 5, 1942: “The spreading of derogatory statements concerning the character of any group of United States troops, either white or colored, must be considered as conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline and offenders must be promptly punished.”<sup>249</sup> Such an order was necessary as some British women detected a significant difference between white and black American troops. One Marlborough woman wrote, “everyone here adores the Negro troops. All the girls go to their dances, but nobody likes the white Americans. They swagger about as if they were the only people fighting this war, they all get so drunk and look so untidy, whilst the Negroes are very polite, and smarter.”<sup>250</sup> The mandatory segregation of troops often hampered manpower distribution during the war and undermined the democratic crusade, but the responsible performance

---

<sup>248</sup> Anonymous, “A Fighting Race,” *Stars and Stripes*, London ed., April 10, 1943.

<sup>249</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The War Years*, ed. Alfred D. Chandler, Jr. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970), 1:544.

<sup>250</sup> Marlborough woman quoted in Gardiner, *Overpaid, Oversexed, and Over Here*, 152.



of black troops during the war sparked conversations about integration and inclusion for all Americans who had done their duty during the war.<sup>251</sup>

The shocking brutality of combat as well as the significant social dislocations at home muted the brash masculinity that urged American men to leave their family responsibilities behind and don the role of the heroic warrior. In the absence of a masculine crusade, an ideological vacuum took its place. As the years passed after Pearl Harbor and casualties mounted while the home front seemed to be in moral free fall, soldiers and citizens exhibited little understanding regarding the war's purpose. The Research Branch of the Army's Information and Education Division interviewed half a million young army men and concluded that "beyond acceptance of the war as a necessity forced upon the United States by an aggressor, there was little support of attempts to give the war meaning in terms of principles and causes involved, and little apparent desire for such formulations."<sup>252</sup> Sociologist Herbert Blumer observed, "the evidence is all too convincing that the American people . . . are not animated by the sense of a cause, of engaging in a crusade, of carrying out a sacred mission; or of affirming new conceptions of themselves in terms of glory, prestige, power, or esteemed position."<sup>253</sup> Daniel A. Poling, editor of the *Christian Herald*, found "overwhelming indifference to organized religion" among the troops.<sup>254</sup>

Viewing the war as a job to get done was about the extent of a civilian or soldier's idealism during the war. Getting it over with by doing one's job so that life on the home front could be restored was a common sentiment. General James Doolittle explained, "if

---

<sup>251</sup> Neil A. Wynn, *The Afro-American and the Second World War* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1975), 38.

<sup>252</sup> Research Branch and Blumer quoted in Rose, *Myth and the Greatest Generation*, 62.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>254</sup> "The Church Came Out To Us," *Time*, January 3, 1944, 73.

you are put in a position where you have a responsible thing to do, you don't do that for God and country – you do that because it's your job.”<sup>255</sup> Pilot John Muirhead declared, “I'm employed to fly a bomber from here to there. I drop some bombs there, and then I come back here – if I'm lucky. That's my job.”<sup>256</sup> Correspondent Eric Sevareid found that troops in Italy “did not hate the concept of Fascism because they did not understand it.” They fought the war due to “pride in their outfits” and on “the sheer American ‘pride in competence,’ for in the American tradition to be guilty of incompetence is the one unbearable disgrace.”<sup>257</sup> Sgt. Carwood Lipton of Easy Company, 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division recalled, “We fought as a team without standout stars. We were like a machine. We didn't have anyone who leaped up and charged a machine gun. We knocked it out or made it withdraw by maneuver and teamwork or mortar fire. We were smart; there weren't many flashy heroics. We had learned that heroics was the way to get killed without getting the job done, and getting the job done was more important.”<sup>258</sup> Competence, responsibility, group conformity, and getting the job done were the few scraps of ideology servicemen adhered to by the end of the war. This fragmented creed would find fuller development after the war, but while the war continued and the guns still blazed and blasted the fortifications of American masculinity, a small force of dutiful manhood was able to establish a beachhead on the contested continent of American male identity.

---

<sup>255</sup> Doolittle quoted in Rose, *Myth and the Greatest Generation*, 65.

<sup>256</sup> Muirhead quoted in *ibid.*

<sup>257</sup> Sevareid quoted in *ibid.*

<sup>258</sup> Lipton quoted in Stephen E. Ambrose, *The Victors: Eisenhower and His Boys, The Men of World War II* (New York: Touchstone, 1998), 93.

## Manhood Commanded

For the Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force, the war was a crusade carrying moral and religious overtones. In an April 1943 letter to his son John, the general wrote, “I have one earnest conviction in this war. It is that no other war in history has so definitely lined up the forces of arbitrary oppression and dictatorship against those of human rights and individual liberty. My single passion is to do my full duty in helping to smash the disciples of Hitler.”<sup>259</sup> Immediately after the war, in a toast to Russian General Georgy Zhukov, Eisenhower declared “this war was a holy war, more than any other in history this war has been an array of the forces of evil against those of righteousness.”<sup>260</sup> Eisenhower called himself “a crusader”<sup>261</sup> and believed the greatest transgression of the war would be the failure of soldiers and civilians to do their duty. The discovery of Nazi death camps strengthened this notion for Eisenhower, as he believed it should for every American soldier. After viewing the atrocities at the Ohrdruf camp, the general remarked “we are told that the American soldier does not know what he is fighting for. Now, at least, he will know what he is fighting *against*.”<sup>262</sup> Those on the home front charged with war production, rationing restrictions, and purchasing war bonds were also essential. Eisenhower informed his brother, “We have got a fearful job to perform and everybody has got to unify to do it. We have got to win and any individual in this country, so far as I am concerned, that doesn’t do his very best to fulfill his part of the job is an enemy.”<sup>263</sup> Total war demanded total duty from soldier and civilian alike.

---

<sup>259</sup> Eisenhower to John S.D. Eisenhower, April 8, 1943, *Papers*, 2:940.

<sup>260</sup> Harry C. Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946), 862.

<sup>261</sup> Eisenhower to Edward Everett Hazlett, April 7, 1943, *Papers*, 2:1082.

<sup>262</sup> Eisenhower quoted in Rose, *Myth and the Greatest Generation*, 65.

<sup>263</sup> Eisenhower to Edgar N. Eisenhower, March 30, 1942, *Papers*, 1:218. For Eisenhower’s ideological interpretation of the war, see Ira Chernus, “Eisenhower’s Ideology in World War II,” *Armed Forces and Society* (Summer 1997): 595-613.

When Eisenhower was appointed Supreme Commander of the European Theater of Operations in June 1942, the massive military bureaucracy he commanded bred a homogenous organizational culture for the American serviceman in which discipline and duty were the measuring sticks of commanded conformity. The uniform culture of the Allied Expeditionary Force did not go unnoticed by participants. The government-issued masculinity that drew men to induction stations evolved into a government-issued uniformity once a soldier became part of the larger organization. Lee Kennett notes that sociologists studied the expression “GI” and concluded that it “implied little or nothing by way of human qualities or values, but rather symbolized a mass-production commodity, a faceless creation as devoid of character as a bottle cap. Whoever took the label was thus putting himself down, and one early definition of ‘GI’ was ‘a good-humored expression of self-deprecation by the citizen-soldier’.”<sup>264</sup> Watching troops file aboard a ship with their round, potlike helmets, John Steinbeck thought they looked like mushrooms; vegetables without identity or choice.<sup>265</sup> One sociologist wrote the year after the war ended that “the recruit is no longer an individual, with the right of personal choices, alternatives and decisions. Rather, he is ‘a body’ and this ‘body’ is trained to act without question or hesitation to institutional stimuli. The loss of choice and initiative develops in him a sense of dependency on the institution for decisions.”<sup>266</sup> The mass mobilization, mass production, mass recruitment, mass training, and mass casualties of the war made the claims to individuality and personality stemming from the twenties untenable. Eisenhower saw such obsession with individualism as potentially distracting from personal responsibility. “It seemed to me that constant stressing of the individual

---

<sup>264</sup> Kennett, *GI*, 88.

<sup>265</sup> Steinbeck quoted in Adams, *The Best War Ever*, 82.

<sup>266</sup> A.B. Hollingshead, “Adjustments to Military Life,” *American Journal of Sociology* 51 (1946): 441-442.

rights and privileges of American citizenship had overshadowed the equally important truth that such individualism can be sustained only so long as the citizen accepts his full responsibility for the welfare of the nation that protects him in the exercise of these rights.”<sup>267</sup> Citizens and soldiers became aware of their anonymity and minuteness as a part of the larger war. The feeling of insignificance was inescapable.

The uniform of the anonymous GI reflected Eisenhower’s undemonstrative and restrained tastes. In May 1943 he wrote to Marshall about the impossibility of the American soldier appearing neat in his field uniform. Viewed together the troops looked like a “disorderly mob.” The slovenly appearance was compromising discipline and needed to be rectified. Eisenhower requested GIs be issued a “smarter looking” uniform made of rough wool which would conceal dirt and be easier to keep in a respectable condition.<sup>268</sup> In the summer of 1944, Eisenhower’s headquarters received one of the first new uniforms consisting of trousers and a new short jacket. The general despised it and said the jacket was too long and poorly cut. Summoning a tailor he ordered his jacket be cut shorter with a snug fit creating the popular “Eisenhower jacket.” Many of his staff made the same alterations to their jackets.<sup>269</sup> The army’s quartermaster seems to have also followed the Supreme Commander’s lead, for in November 1944 the M-44 or Eisenhower jacket became standard issue. The jacket included a bloused back with action pleats, oversized sleeves, olive drab eighteen-ounce wool serge, notch lapels, staggered cuff buttons, and flaps to conceal buttons. Epaulets featured rank and helped steady shoulder-held equipment. Adjustable buckles on the sides helped cinch the coat at the

---

<sup>267</sup> Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 60. It was not uncommon for Eisenhower to be called the “chairman of the board” during the war, reinforcing the image of the army as a large corporation with him at the helm.

<sup>268</sup> Eisenhower to George C. Marshall, May 5, 1943, *Papers*, 2:1115.

<sup>269</sup> McKeogh, *Sgt. Mickey and General Ike*, 126.

waist to project a slim and trim look which did not hinder movement. The Eisenhower jacket was assigned double duty as the Army's field jacket and parade uniform. The dual function of the jacket reflected the wartime blur between a soldier's and citizen's duty. Lord and Taylor advertised a modified Eisenhower jacket for the "home front hero" which promised, "Even if he's a 4-F, he can feel like a hero."<sup>270</sup>

The Eisenhower jacket as well as wartime men's suits embodied discipline, containment, and mature responsibility. Gray flannel suits had become popular for business wear during the Depression, as the color and style reflected the sobriety of the economic downturn and a rejection of the light-hearted gaiety of the twenties. Victory Suits of World War II were designed to show patriotism and manufactured in compliance with the strict requirements of the War Production Board. *Esquire* magazine called the sanctioned garments "streamlined suits by Uncle Sam."<sup>271</sup> The suits retained many of the features of the athletic cut. Lapels were narrowed, jacket hemlines were slightly raised, and patch pockets, back belts, tucks, pleats, and vents were discarded. Pleats, cuffs, and tucks were eliminated from trousers and leg widths narrowed. Some tailors proposed Economy Suits that would have completely eliminated collars and lapels.<sup>272</sup>

Moral interpretations of the war alongside the feelings of organizational anonymity that the military generated coincided with the principled manhood of Eisenhower's command style. Despite the masculine rhetoric that launched the war in

---

<sup>270</sup> Lord and Taylor advertisement cited in Richard R. Lingeman, *Don't You Know There's A War On? The American Home Front, 1941-1945* (New York: Perigee, 1970), 126.

<sup>271</sup> O.E. Schoeffler and William Gale, *Esquire's Encyclopedia of 20th Century Men's Fashions* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973), 24.

<sup>272</sup> Daniel Delis Hill, *American Menswear: From the Civil War to the Twenty-First Century* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2011), 178-179. In contrast to these economy suits were the "zoot suits" worn by young Hispanic males in Los Angeles during the war. The starkly colored and long-draped jackets with heavily padded shoulders matched with baggy trousers were condemned by the WPB in 1942 as excessive and wasteful. During the war violent encounters with servicemen wearing standardized uniforms led to a series of zoot suit riots in Los Angeles and other major cities.

Europe, Eisenhower continued to view the theater as a righteous crusade which could only be won if soldiers and citizens alike performed their duty, worked and dressed in disciplined fashion, sacrificed personality for compliance, and obeyed their superiors. Eisenhower anticipated the same obeisance he rendered to Gen. George Marshall and the Combined Chiefs of Staff from his subordinates. The conflicts and rivalries among the Allied commanders in Europe during World War II have been extensively analyzed, but the role that competing interpretations of male identity played has been largely absent from the story. Considering Eisenhower's relationship with George Patton, Omar Bradley, and Bernard Montgomery during the war as a conflict between manhood and masculinity broadens the interpretation of the Allied commanders that sees their disagreements as stemming only from differences in tactics and strategies. The disputes among the generals were not simply over pins on a map, but also reflected fundamental differences as to how they saw themselves as men.<sup>273</sup>

It was Eisenhower himself who requested that General George S. Patton be a part of the Allied invasion of North Africa designated Operation TORCH. Eisenhower had known Patton since his Camp Meade days and they maintained a friendship during the interwar years, theorizing about an expanded role for the tank in the next war. In early 1941, Eisenhower had assented to Patton's preemptive request to be his chief of staff in the event that the flamboyant general was given command of an armored division. Yet, Marshall and the War Department snatched Eisenhower up into their own plans,

---

<sup>273</sup> For examinations of the relationships between the generals in the European theater, see Jonathan W. Jordan, *Brothers, Rivals, Victors: Eisenhower, Patton, Bradley, and the Partnership that drove the Allied Conquest in Europe* (New York: Caliber, 2011) and G.E. Patrick Murray, *Eisenhower versus Montgomery: The Continuing Debate* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996).

including the top command in Europe, placing Patton under Eisenhower's command rather than the reverse. Eisenhower valued his friend's determination, grit, and fighting resolve that was absent of excuses, but grew weary of Patton's bluster, blunders, and ostentation.

The American defeat at Kasserine Pass in February 1943 was the first major engagement between American troops and the seasoned German Wehrmacht and proved the necessity of determined, disciplined commanders leading green American soldiers. The American II Corps commanded by General Lloyd Fredendall suffered over 6,000 casualties at the hands of Erwin Rommel's Afrika Korps due to poor unit cohesion, inadequate training, and inexperience. GIs who cut corners by digging slit trenches instead of foxholes were crushed to death beneath Rommel's tanks. Fredendall exacerbated the problem of poor communication with his divisional commanders by establishing his headquarters seventy miles from the front. Eisenhower expressed support for Fredendall after the battle, but privately held doubts regarding his leadership abilities and attention to discipline. Eisenhower wrote Marshall that Fredendall was "tops" according to every yardstick for measuring a general except that "he has difficulty in picking good men and, even worse, in getting the best out of subordinates. . . . I must either find a good substitute for Fredendall or must place in his command a number of assistants who are so stable and sound that they will not be disturbed by his idiosyncrasies."<sup>274</sup> Ironically, Eisenhower appointed the most idiosyncratic of all American generals to replace Fredendall.

Eisenhower placed Patton in command of II Corps on March 6, 1943. After relieving Fredendall, Patton exulted in his diary: "God favors the brave. Victory is to the

---

<sup>274</sup> Eisenhower to George C. Marshall, March 3, 1943, *Papers*, 2:1006.



audacious!”<sup>275</sup> Audacious was exactly how II Corps’ subordinates found their new commander’s orders. Patton was shocked at the men’s lackadaisical demeanor and slovenly dress. He immediately imposed new restrictions on officers, new requirements for the men, and personally collected fines from the culpable. Intending to send a message to other officers and their men about their slit trenches, Patton asked the general of the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry division which trench was his, walked over to it, unbuttoned his fly, and proceeded to urinate into it. “Now try to use it,” Patton remarked with a smirk as he zipped up. Bradley believed Patton’s discipline was “excessively harsh; but intentionally or unintentionally, excess was Patton’s style. A firm but more mature and considerate discipline would no doubt have achieved the same results.”<sup>276</sup> Mature or not, Eisenhower had found a general who instilled enough discipline in his men to drive the Germans out of North Africa.

Eisenhower was sufficiently pleased to allow Patton a major role in the Allied invasion of Sicily in the summer of 1943 codenamed Operation HUSKY. Assigned command of the U.S. Seventh Army, Patton’s forces were to support Bernard Montgomery’s British Eighth Army’s march towards Messina. Patton was incensed with Eisenhower for how HUSKY gave preferences to Montgomery’s army. “We have a pro-British straw man at the top,” he complained to his diary.<sup>277</sup> Yet, when Montgomery became bogged down, Patton received permission to make a dashing western run to liberate Palermo. Sensing an opportunity to outdo Montgomery, Patton moved towards the British general’s objective of Messina by telling his chief of staff to claim a halt order

---

<sup>275</sup> George S. Patton, diary, March 4, 1943, in *The Patton Papers*, ed. Martin Blumenson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957), 2:178.

<sup>276</sup> Bradley quoted in Jordan, *Brothers, Rivals, and Victors*, 140.

<sup>277</sup> Patton, diary, May 22, 1943, *Patton Papers*, 2:254.

was “lost in transmission.” Bradley later recalled that “[George] wanted me to get to Messina as quickly as possible, [said] that he was determined to get there ahead of the British. He told me that if I could get there one day earlier by losing additional men, I was to lose them. He said he had a bet with ‘Monty’ and wanted to win it.”<sup>278</sup> Patton beat Montgomery to Messina after a series of amphibious landings in which American troops suffered heavy casualties.

While fighting continued on the island, Patton visited several hospitals where wounded American GIs were being treated or evacuated. On two different occasions Patton came across a soldier who was suffering from “battle fatigue” and verbally berated the men. Cursing their cowardice, he slapped them with his gloves and drove them out of the hospital tent. Hearing of the incident, Eisenhower chided Patton for his masculine excess and viewed the episode as a failure of manly self-control.

I am well aware of the necessity for hardness and toughness on the battlefield. I clearly understand that firm and drastic measures were at times necessary in order to secure the desired objectives. But this does not excuse brutality, abuse of the sick, nor exhibition of uncontrollable temper in front of subordinates. . . . I must so seriously question your good judgment and your self-discipline, as to raise serious doubt in my mind as to your future usefulness.<sup>279</sup>

Attempting to explain the incident to his commander, Patton wrote Eisenhower, “I assure you that I had no intention of being either harsh or cruel in my treatment of the two soldiers in question. My sole purpose was to try and restore in them a just appreciation of their obligation as men and soldiers.”<sup>280</sup> Eisenhower ordered Patton to apologize to the two abused soldiers, all the doctors and nurses who were present on the occasion, as well

---

<sup>278</sup> Bradley quoted in Stanley P. Hirshon, *General Patton: A Soldier's Life* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2002), 392.

<sup>279</sup> Eisenhower to Patton, August 17, 1943, *Papers*, 2:1340.

<sup>280</sup> Patton to Eisenhower, *Patton Papers*, 2:340-341.

as to each individual unit under his command. Patton explained to his diary that he had met with a slapped soldier and proffered him the emasculating explanation that he had “cussed him out in hope of restoring his manhood, that I was sorry, and that if he cared, I would like to shake hands with him. We shook.”<sup>281</sup> Recalling the event in his memoirs, Eisenhower continued to interpret the event as a failure of emotional self-control, explaining Patton was in a “highly emotional state,” noting his “emotional tenseness” and “impulsiveness.”<sup>282</sup>

Patton’s masculine impulsiveness and bravado continued to unnerve Eisenhower throughout the war. Speaking to a small crowd in Knutsford, England, during the lead up to the invasion of France in April 1944, Patton offhandedly remarked, “Since it is the evident destiny of the British and Americans, and, of course, the Russians, to rule the world, the better we know each other, the better job we will do.”<sup>283</sup> One reporter neglected to include “and, of course, the Russians” and Marshall and Eisenhower were shocked to see Patton’s words in the newspapers. In response to the speech, Eisenhower wrote to Marshall, “Frankly I am exceedingly weary of his habit of getting everybody in hot water through the immature character of his public actions and statements. . . . he simply does not keep his mouth shut.”<sup>284</sup> Patton was more terse in his diary after the incident blew up: “damn all reporters and gutless men.”<sup>285</sup> Yet, Eisenhower could not find it within himself to sack his old friend and send him home because, despite all the masculine posturing, the Supreme Commander knew he had a general who led with determination, perseverance, and got results. Eisenhower’s orders were to enter the

---

<sup>281</sup> Patton, diary, August 21, 1943, *Patton Papers*, 2:334.

<sup>282</sup> Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 179-181.

<sup>283</sup> Patton, *Patton Papers*, 2:441.

<sup>284</sup> Eisenhower to George C. Marshall, April 29, 1944, *Papers*, 3:1838.

<sup>285</sup> Patton, diary, April 27, 1944, *Patton Papers*, 2:444.

continent and destroy the German war machine. If Patton's generalship would help the Supreme Commander discharge his duty, then the Supreme Commander would put up with his general who even tried to impress the British king during a dinner in October 1944. When the king asked Patton if he had ever shot anyone with his famous pistols, Patton replied, "Oh yes. Really, not these pistols. These are the ones I carry socially. I carry my fighting pistols when I'm out on campaign."

"How many men have you killed in war?" asked the King.

"Seven, Sir."

Eisenhower interjected, "How many did you say?"

"Three, Sir."<sup>286</sup>

Eisenhower found a stark contrast to Patton's bravado in Omar Bradley. Eisenhower called the Missourian "about the best rounded, well balanced senior officer that we have in the service" and saw in him "a character that might well stand beside Lee's."<sup>287</sup> After the slapping incident in Sicily as well as Bradley's able command of II Corps in North Africa, Eisenhower sidelined Patton and selected Bradley to command the American ground troops for Operation OVERLORD – the invasion of Normandy. Patton grumbled to his diary that Bradley was "a man of great mediocrity"<sup>288</sup> and attributed his success to "his lack of back bone and servile deference to those above him."<sup>289</sup> Yet, the absence of dramatics and unruliness that Patton condemned in Bradley was exactly what Eisenhower knew the American ground commander would need to serve under British general Bernard Montgomery who was overall Allied ground commander for the

---

<sup>286</sup> Eisenhower, *At Ease*, 279.

<sup>287</sup> Eisenhower quoted in Jordan, *Brothers, Rivals, Victors*, 188.

<sup>288</sup> Patton, diary, January 18, 1944, *Patton Papers*, 2:398.

<sup>289</sup> Patton to Beatrice B. Patton, February 6, 1944 [*sic* 1945], *Patton Papers*, 2:637.

operation. Bradley's corporate persona ("plain as an old shoe," his aides described him) suited the conformist ethos of SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force) and earned him the nickname "the GI General."

The scene at SHAEF on the eve of the invasion resembled a high-level corporate meeting with the trustees looking to the chairman of the board to direct the responsibilities of the organization's men. "As the big day [D-Day] approaches," Eisenhower's naval aide wrote in his SHAEF diary, "Ike is bearing his responsibility with remarkable ease. Actually he is fatalistic about it – someone has to make the decision when the time comes and he simply happens to be the one who bears the responsibility and he will not hesitate to take it."<sup>290</sup> As the rain and wind rattled the windows of Southwick House in Hampshire, England, SHAEF's forward command post for the invasion, Eisenhower met with his air, naval, and ground chiefs in the large mess hall. A large table in front of the operation's wall map occupied one side of the hall and easy chairs the other side. A fast moving low front forced a cancellation on June 5<sup>th</sup> and now with thousands of troops bobbing in their transports, naval gunships circling as they waited for the command, and paratroopers rechecking their gear as they waited to board their gliders, the Supreme Commander had to choose between a twenty-four hour delay or wait an additional fortnight for a chance at better weather. At 9:30 PM on June 4<sup>th</sup> his meteorologist predicted a thirty-six hour break in the weather with cessation of rain, moderate winds, and slight cloud cover. Eisenhower paced in front of the table, stopping only to jut his chin out at one of his chiefs for their opinion. His air marshals thought it was too risky and proposed a delay. Montgomery wanted to go. Eisenhower's chief of staff, Walter Bedell Smith, was struck by the "loneliness and isolation of a commander at

---

<sup>290</sup> Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower*, 558.

a time when such a momentous decision was to be taken by him, with full knowledge that failure or success rests on his individual decision.” After a long pause Eisenhower addressed his chiefs and said, “I am quite positive that the order must be given.” The scene was repeated once more six hours later and after receiving another encouraging weather report, and polling his committee one more time, at 4:15 AM on June 5<sup>th</sup>, the chairman of the board said, “OK, let’s go.”<sup>291</sup>

The Supreme Commander’s modest and unostentatious order launched 150,000 troops, 11,000 aircraft, and 6,000 sea vessels across the English Channel. The German defenders of the French coast were taken by surprise and after a bitter day of struggle, particularly on the American beaches, a thin beachhead was in Allied hands by the end of the day on June 6<sup>th</sup>. Casualties were remarkably lower than projected. D-Day cost 10,250 Allied casualties, including 4,413 deaths. Only 127 aircraft were lost. Airborne casualties projected to be close to seventy percent were only a third that many. The Combined Chiefs amended Eisenhower’s original OVERLORD communiqué of “Allied naval forces supported by strong air forces began landing Allied armies this morning on the northern coast of France” to include the words “under the command of General Eisenhower.”<sup>292</sup> In case he needed it, on the day before the invasion Eisenhower wrote on a small piece of paper the consummate statement reflecting manly personal responsibility.

Our landings in the Cherbourg-Havre area have failed to gain a satisfactory foothold and I have withdrawn the troops. My decision to attack at this time and place was based upon the best information available. The troops, the air, and the Navy did all that bravery and

---

<sup>291</sup> Smith and Eisenhower quoted in Stephen E. Ambrose, *D-Day, June 6, 1944: The Climactic Battle of World War II* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), 187-189.

<sup>292</sup> Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower*, 541.

devotion to duty could do. If any blame or fault attaches to the attempt it is mine alone.<sup>293</sup>

The Allied breakout from Normandy and campaign across northern Europe often pitted Eisenhower against his British subordinate and masculine contrast Bernard Montgomery. Much as it was enamored with Patton's bravado, the American press also celebrated what it designated "the Monty Legend." *Life* applauded the general's self-assurance, boldness, and history of ordering retreat plans to be ripped up. Montgomery's refusal to move a high-level meeting beyond the range of German bombers also awed the magazine. When warned that the Germans could bomb his headquarters, Montgomery replied, "Fine. Let them know what manner of men we are." *Life* attributed the Monty legend to his dissimilarity from the conception of a modern general as the head of a great corporation sitting at the top of a great administrative structure. "Monty's conception of his job is more like that of a football coach and even more like that of the great captains in history – Alexander or Hannibal or Caesar." Often before Montgomery spoke to an audience, he would begin with, "I will give you two minutes to cough, sneeze and blow your noses. After that there will be no interruption." He would close with, "I have made myself perfectly clear. No questions are needed." *Life* also reported that physical fitness was a passion for Montgomery. "When he thinks his officers are getting soft, he may order them out for a five-mile run before breakfast. He despises fat men. His tour of divisional headquarters in the British isles was the occasion for a great deal of dieting, exercising and sucking in of stomachs on the part of over-plump officers."<sup>294</sup> Some Americans around SHAEF referred to Montgomery as "Chief Big Wind." Eisenhower

---

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*, 610.

<sup>294</sup> Joseph J. Thorndike, Jr., "The 'Monty' Legend," *Life*, May 15, 1944, 53-56.

himself once quipped, “Monty is a good man to serve under; a difficult man to serve with; and an impossible man to serve over.”<sup>295</sup>

The crux of the disagreement between Eisenhower and Montgomery centered on the strategy for Allied advance across northern Europe. SHAEF’s Planning Staff had outlined a plan for military operations in the West after Normandy that kept open opportunities for maneuver and avoided a direct collision with German forces. The plan that Eisenhower signed off on endeavored to keep the Germans guessing as to the location of the Allied main thrust to cause them to disperse their resources and forces across a broad front. Montgomery’s 21<sup>st</sup> Army Group would advance along a northern route and secure the critical port at Antwerp while Bradley’s 12<sup>th</sup> Army Group, which included Patton’s 3<sup>rd</sup> Army, would proceed towards the upper Rhine.<sup>296</sup>

Montgomery scoffed at the Supreme Commander’s cautious plan. The British field marshal considered Eisenhower “probably quite good on the political side” but “he knows nothing whatever about how to make war or fight battles; he should be kept away from all that business if we want to win this war.”<sup>297</sup> Montgomery demanded that he be appointed Allied ground commander, thus, taking the strategy decisions out of Eisenhower’s hands. Montgomery also called for forty divisions to be put under his command so he could launch a bold single thrust in the north that would stampede the reeling Wehrmacht, march all the way to Berlin, and bring a speedy end to the war. Eisenhower did not have forty divisions to give Montgomery and, even if he had, popular and political opinion in the United States would never have allowed it. If the Allies had

---

<sup>295</sup> Eisenhower quoted in Norman Gelb, *Ike and Monty: Generals at War* (New York: W. Morrow, 1994), 329.

<sup>296</sup> Murray, *Eisenhower versus Montgomery*, 33.

<sup>297</sup> Montgomery quoted in Carlo D’Este, *Eisenhower: A Soldier’s Life* (New York: Henry Holt, 2002), 410.



launched a single thrust across the Rhine, the Germans would have moved divisions from the east to block the end-run towards their capital, and Montgomery's army would not have been adequately supplied without an open port at Antwerp. Operation MARKET-GARDEN, which came closest to Eisenhower endorsing a single-thrust by Montgomery, failed because the British general's flank was left exposed, causing the British paratroopers to be slaughtered at Arnhem.<sup>298</sup> The restrained-broad-front versus dashing-single-thrust dispute between Eisenhower and Montgomery reflected their contrasting notions of maleness as well as differences in strategy.

Even without a single thrust, the Allied armies proved exposed enough to counter-attack when the Germans launched an offensive into the Ardennes in December 1944. Over 200,000 Nazi soldiers and more than 500 tanks and vehicles poured through the weak center of the Allied lines forming a large Axis bulge in what was previously Allied territory. Pandemonium ensued among retreating troops and a general feeling of consternation set in at SHAEF. Meeting with his generals on the third day of the attack, Eisenhower opened the meeting with the command, "The present situation is to be regarded as one of opportunity for us and not of disaster. There will be only cheerful faces at this conference table." Patton introduced some levity into the meeting interjecting, "Hell, let's have the guts to let the \_\_\_ go all the way to Paris. Then we'll really cut 'em off and chew 'em up."<sup>299</sup> The Supreme Commander's insistence upon emotional restraint and avoiding panic pervaded Allied command. Eisenhower demanded that the Ardennes offensive be considered an opportunity to destroy the exposed enemy and linked the Allied response to the broader moral crusade

---

<sup>298</sup> Murray, *Eisenhower versus Montgomery*, 161-177.

<sup>299</sup> Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 350. It is consistent with Eisenhower's manly reserve to edit Patton's quote into blanks rather than to print the words "sons of bitches."

of the war in a general directive to the troops. The Germans were described as “fighting savagely” and using “every treacherous trick to deceive and kill you.” Eisenhower labeled his troops as full of “unparalleled gallantry,” “proven bravery” and “fortitude.” The Supreme Commander called on all Allied troops “to rise now to new heights of courage, of resolution, and of effort. Let everyone hold before him a single thought – destroy him! United in this determination and with unshakeable faith in the cause for which we fight, we will, with God’s help, go forward to our greatest victory.”<sup>300</sup> The defeat of the German forces in the Battle of the Bulge marked the end of Nazi Germany’s ability to launch a major counteroffensive against Allied forces in the west.

On March 7<sup>th</sup> Bradley phoned Eisenhower that his men had discovered an intact bridge across the Rhine at Remagen. Eisenhower ordered Bradley to immediately send several divisions across the bridge to gain a foothold on the eastern bank of the Rhine. Six army divisions including 25,000 troops and hundreds of vehicles were able to cross at Remagen before the bridge collapsed ten days later. Eisenhower interpreted the capture of the Remagen bridgehead and the formation of other Rhine crossings as vindication of his broad-front strategy. Writing to Marshall in March, 1945, he beamed, “I hope this does not sound boastful, but I must admit to a great satisfaction that the things that Bradley and I have believed in from the beginning and have been carried out in the face of some opposition within and without, have matured so splendidly.”<sup>301</sup> For his part, Patton celebrated his crossing of the Rhine by ordering his driver to stop half way across

---

<sup>300</sup> Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower*, 734.

<sup>301</sup> Eisenhower to George C. Marshall, March 26, 1945, *Papers*, 4:2544.

a pontoon bridge and, after jumping out of the jeep and unzipping his fly, the general proceeded to urinate into the river.<sup>302</sup>

Eisenhower refused to share a meal or meet directly with German commanders before they assented to the Allied demand for unconditional surrender. The war was a moral crusade for him and not one for generals to commiserate over or celebrate. At Reims on May 7, 1945, after signing the instrument of surrender, German general Alfred Jodl received a stern warning about his responsibility for enforcing the requirements set out in the document from the Supreme Allied Commander. “You will, officially and personally, be held responsible if the terms of this surrender are violated, including its provisions for German commanders to appear in Berlin at the moment set by the Russian high command to accomplish formal surrender to that government.” Eisenhower dismissed him with a “That is all.”<sup>303</sup> Aides encouraged Eisenhower to write a triumphant and flamboyant message home after the Reims surrender in the tradition of “We have met the enemy and they are ours” or “Don’t give up the ship, we’ve just begun to fight.” But the victorious commander explained such flamboyance would sound foolish to the folks of Kansas and middle America. His dispatch was a single sentence: “THE MISSION OF THIS ALLIED FORCE WAS FULFILLED AT 0241, LOCAL TIME, MAY 7<sup>TH</sup>, 1945. EISENHOWER.”<sup>304</sup>

American masculinity suffered two debilitating blows during the first half of the twentieth century, an economic depression that crippled a male’s sense of accomplishment and two world wars that showed what one man could do to another man.

---

<sup>302</sup> Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower*, 762.

<sup>303</sup> Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 426.

<sup>304</sup> Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower*, 834.

In the aggregate, these two crises caused American males to begin a slow retreat from the masculine consensus that had prevailed in the twenties. The conception of maleness that reentered the American consciousness during and after the war bore a strong resemblance to the moral manhood of the previous century. The male virtues of responsibility, self-control, and maturity that were mocked before Pearl Harbor did not seem so expendable now with fifty million souls lost to aggression, toughness, and madness. A new kind of male was needed, not like the Nazi who imposed himself on the world through power and toughness, but a new man who would behave better. Anything less and the world might not long endure into the atomic age. A bevy of commentators were eager to preach a new manhood to returning veterans and the victorious Supreme Commander seemed to be the perfect prophet.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DUTIFUL MEN

In a March 1948 issue of *Life* magazine, an ebullient Eisenhower was photographed in his Virginia home above a caption that read: “Mister Dwight Eisenhower Models his First Suit of Civilian Clothes.” The magazine declared that, since the general’s retirement announcement the previous June, the country had been trying to “visualize a civilian Eisenhower.” The photograph gave the nation its chance to see the former Supreme Commander in his own house, arched back in laughter, one hand in a pocket and a cigarette in the other. Relaxed. Comfortable. Home. Dressed in what the magazine claimed was “the first civilian suit he has had in six years,” the double-breasted gray worsted suit was personally crafted for him by a tailor from New York, the same tailor who had made his first Eisenhower jacket. The suit cost \$90. *Life* went on to inform its readers that the general’s “meager civilian wardrobe” included only two suits, a tweed topcoat, and a gray Homburg hat. A former aide was quoted saying, “Ike isn’t fussy about clothes – as long as they fit.”<sup>305</sup>

Eisenhower’s gray suit marked his retirement from the military and his reentry into life as a civilian – a suit and a status similarly donned by millions of World War II veterans. Whereas GI fatigues uniformed a soldier during the war, a men’s suit uniformed a male citizen in the postwar peace. The formality yet functionality of the suit was a fitting uniform for postwar males who were eager to demonstrate their readjustment to

---

<sup>305</sup> *Life*, March 8, 1948, 32-33.

civilian life evidenced by their responsibility on the job, propriety in the home, and maturity in family life. The number of similarly dressed males reflected the homogeneity of American manhood in the forties and fifties. A shared national experience of depression and war fashioned a standardized American manhood in the postwar era charged with conforming to the duties of manhood. These duties would be extensively discussed and, at times, deplored well into the fifties, yet their imperatives would establish such a hegemony over American male identity that its foremost prophet would be charged with the duties of the presidency in 1952.

### **Manhood Revived**

Sixteen million Americans served in the armed forces during World War II. Millions more had their lives impacted by war work, rationing, bond drives, missing a loved one, caring for a disabled soldier, or mourning the loss of one. Few aspects of national life remained untouched by the war even though it was fought on foreign shores. The size and role of the federal government ballooned during the war. War contracts provided vast funds for large corporations to expand and small companies to climb out of the deep hole of the Depression. Many families relocated across the country to take advantage of wartime employment or live near a military base where a husband or father was stationed. The mustering-out of one hundred thousand GIs per month who had witnessed the horrors and experienced the masculine pleasures of soldiering overseas created a significantly altered social milieu than what existed in the United States five and certainly ten years before. The rapid rise in women working, children enrolled in

daycare centers, and delinquency rates effected social changes unknown to previous generations.<sup>306</sup>

The rush to return to a traditional gender order and establish social and sexual stability was critical for returning GIs, working women, and even neglected children. Fulfilling the duties of work, home, and family were prominent and recurring themes in the abundant literature published after the war to promote veteran readjustment. Even before the war was over, the War Department started publishing guidebooks for returning veterans that would help them to find work, understand the GI Bill, purchase a home, and function effectively as a husband and father. A small army of psychologists, sociologists, magazine editors, marriage counselors, family advocates, filmmakers as well as World War I veterans supplemented the War Department's works with additional manuals, articles, and guidebooks. Veterans were coached how to dress for a job interview, secure a house loan, receive their twenty dollars per week unemployment benefit, decide on a stable girl to marry, or relate to a child they had never met. Adjustment literature instructed postwar American males in dutiful manhood by delineating the duties with which the gray-flannelled male of the fifties would later be most associated: work, home, and family. Adjustment texts discouraged masculine adventurism and facilitated the postwar transition towards dutiful manhood. The introduction of one of the War Department's pamphlets, *Going Back to Civilian Life*, included a letter written by the U.S. Army's Chief of Staff in 1946, Dwight D. Eisenhower. The new Army Chief associated pride in one's military service with the obligations of being a civilian writing, "When you return to the duties and responsibilities of civilian life, you take with you the

---

<sup>306</sup> Michael J. Bennett, *When Dreams Came True: The GI Bill and the Making of Modern America* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 1995), 5.

good wishes of those who were in the service with you. You can always be proud that you were once a member of America's armed forces."<sup>307</sup>

Adjustment texts challenged veteran readers to apply the discipline they imbibed in the service to their civilian responsibilities. Many commentators believed the values incurred in the service could smooth a soldier's transition to domestic life. One pamphlet encouraging veterans to prevent a postwar crime wave reminded readers, "Army life has benefited many men. It has taught discipline to some; strengthened the self-confidence of others; trained still others in vocational skills that will help them in the battle of life."<sup>308</sup> Another author prompted veterans to remember "the individual masters personnel principles that will stand him in good stead as long as he lives. He learns, if he is a good military man, how to work with others, how to give orders without arousing antagonism, how to accept them without resentment."<sup>309</sup> The virtues a former soldier could utilize after his discharge included teamwork, the value of time, accuracy, telling the truth, appreciating the American way of life, and sensing the presence of God. As disabled veterans had performed their duty with pride overseas, they should consider their rehabilitation another job to perform for their country.<sup>310</sup> Above all, adjustment texts charged veterans with the task of constructing a more moral and peaceful world by leading the way towards responsibility and discipline. If veterans failed to take up this challenge, "weaker men" - those lacking in training and discipline - would create a world of additional suffering. One manual quoted a minister who declared, "The world is going

---

<sup>307</sup> *Going Back to Civilian Life* (Washington, D.C.: War and Navy Departments, 1946), v.

<sup>308</sup> *Is A Crime Wave Coming?* (Washington, D.C.: War Department, 1946), 19.

<sup>309</sup> Maxwell Droke, *Good-by to G.I.: How to be a successful civilian* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1945), 23-25, 27.

<sup>310</sup> *What's The Score in a Case Like Mine?* (Washington, D.C.: War Department, 1945).



to need a lot of men with high ideals and decency and morals after this war is over. Pray God that you may be one of those to build up what war and crime have torn down.”<sup>311</sup>

Adjustment manuals frequently signified the successful reintegration of a veteran to civilian life through the replacement of an army uniform with a men’s suit. One text warned veterans against believing reintegration to be “simply a matter of laying aside your uniform.” It would “require more than a sack suit to assure you an effective place in the civilian world.” He encouraged veterans to “change your *thinking* as well as your appearance.”<sup>312</sup> The manual *How to Be a Civilian* (1946) declared, “the human race has two outfits: a civilian suit and a uniform; two sets of morals and customs: civilian and military; two occupations: civilian and military” and cautioned “it is just as hard to adjust a human to military life as it is to adjust him to civilian life.”<sup>313</sup> Sociologist Willard Waller forewarned that civilian life may look easy to the soldier, but the transition was actually very difficult. Veterans had to learn to give up “glorious ambitions” and to bring “one’s self to accept a little dull job and to marry a woman who is just a good ordinary woman and to buy a suit of clothes with two pairs of pants.”<sup>314</sup> Thus, the image of suited males struggling in their conversion from masculine soldiers to dutiful citizens, that is men in gray flannel suits, finds its origin in postwar adjustment literature well before the publication of the novel that insured the image’s enduring symbolism.<sup>315</sup>

---

<sup>311</sup> Morton Thompson, *How to Be a Civilian* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1946), 132-133. For the optimistic and often trivializing treatment disabled veterans received after World War II, see John M. Kinder, *Paying with Their Bodies: American War and the Problem of the Disabled Veteran* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

<sup>312</sup> Droke, *Goodbye to GI*, 17-18.

<sup>313</sup> Thompson, *How to Be a Civilian*, x.

<sup>314</sup> Willard Waller, *The Veteran Comes Back* (New York: Dryden, 1944), 129.

<sup>315</sup> Robert Saxe writes in his history of veteran readjustment: “Veterans were encouraged to shed the antisocial traits essential to their success as masculine protectors in war and instead focus their energy on their new roles as the leaders in their homes and communities. It was this emphasis on stability and communal responsibility that would be an important factor in the development of a cold war consensus

For a generation of postwar males eager to settle into employment, marriage, parenting, and home ownership, veteran literature served as a handbook for dutiful manhood. Acclimating soldiers to civilian responsibilities was indiscriminately called “reconversion,” “reintegration,” and “readjustment,” but the term *adjustment* took on a broader meaning that extended beyond veteran literature. It referred to an individual’s ability to live functionally and non-compartmentalized, adeptly managing all responsibilities. Thus, veteran literature was only the first of several cultural sources promoting, supporting, and enforcing dutiful manhood.

The Servicemen’s Readjustment Act, better known as the G.I. Bill, subsidized dutiful manhood by financing veterans eager to fulfill their postwar aspirations of work and domesticity. Veterans who had been on active duty for at least ninety days and had been honorably discharged, in other words, those innocent of particularly sex crimes or perversion, were eligible to receive a low interest, zero down payment loan to purchase a home, farm, or business. Consequently, over four million veterans were able to purchase a home along with 200,000 farms and businesses. The bill’s “52-20” clause stipulated a full year’s worth of unemployment payments of twenty dollars per week, but remarkably only fourteen percent fully exhausted this benefit. The most memorable part of the bill was the educational provision that offered cash stipends for tuition and living expenses to those seeking to advance their education. Almost eight million veterans took advantage of the educational benefits many of whom returned to high school, enrolled in a vocational school, or attended college.<sup>316</sup> Historian Michael Bennett has called the law “a

---

culture as America moved into the 1950s.” Robert Francis Saxe, *Settling Down: World War II Veteran’s Challenge to the Postwar Consensus* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 21.

<sup>316</sup> Suzanne Mettler, *Soldiers to Citizens: The G.I. Bill and the Making of the Greatest Generation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 6-7.

Marshall Plan for America,”<sup>317</sup> which had the effect of rebuilding a broken and disordered manhood as if it was a war-ravaged continent. The law, which benefited mostly American males, effectively domesticated the masculine soldier and provided him with the resources to become a dutiful citizen with vocational and domestic responsibilities.<sup>318</sup>

The revival of religion in the fifties buttressed dutiful manhood with a spiritual authority that had been absent for several decades. Veterans were encouraged to return to church to find those with similar experiences who could help them overcome adjustment problems. Church membership increased significantly during the postwar period from 49% in 1940 to 69% in 1960. The fifties featured the highest rate of formal church affiliation in the twentieth century with mainline Protestantism holding sway at nearly 66%, Roman Catholics representing 25%, and Jews 3% of those claiming religious affiliation. Less than 3% of American adults claimed no religious affiliation.<sup>319</sup> In his study of American religion in 1950, Robert Ellwood describes postwar religion as largely “a religion of nostalgia” and “personal, seeking to appropriate the power and faith of the past in a way accessible today for oneself, one’s family, one’s career, one’s world.”<sup>320</sup> Accordingly, Reverend Norman Vincent Peale’s *The Power of Positive Thinking* (1952), the most popular non-fiction book published in the decade, asserted self-help solutions and optimistic thinking as moral virtues. Evangelical revivalist Billy Graham particularly targeted males for conversion by avoiding excessive emotionalism and offering an

---

<sup>317</sup> Bennett, *When Dreams Came True*, 8.

<sup>318</sup> For the exclusion of homosexuals from the GI Bill, see Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 137-173.

<sup>319</sup> Droke, *Goodbye to GI*, 70-71; Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 83; Andrew J. Dunar, *America in the Fifties* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2006), 181.

<sup>320</sup> Robert S. Ellwood, *1950: Crossroads of American Religious Life* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 6-7.

updated form of old-time religion that blurred distinctions between Christianity, Americanism, and anticommunism. “All the virtues of manhood are raised to the highest in the life of one who is surrendered to Christ,” Graham informed his listeners.<sup>321</sup>

The anxiety engendered by the cold war beckoned dutiful manhood’s caution and restraint lest the world be destroyed by nuclear weapons. If the last war did not sicken Americans enough with combat, the introduction of the atom bomb meant far greater destruction if war returned. Observers fingered masculine bravado in fascist efforts to create racially and physically superior men as dangerous precursors to World War II. Postwar peace required responsible males who felt a duty to preserve humanity and could demonstrate self-control with atomic weapons. In a 1945 editorial shortly after atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, *Life* recognized very quickly the need for moral individuals to be in control of the power of the atom. “Power in society has never been controlled by anything but morality,” the editorial preached. “Our sole safeguard against the very real danger of a reversion to barbarism is the kind of morality which compels the individual conscience, be the group right or wrong. The individual conscience against the atomic bomb? Yes, there is no other way.”<sup>322</sup>

Midcentury fear of communism enforced the normativity of dutiful manhood by identifying the disloyal, unpatriotic, non-domesticated, sexual deviant as the “other” which threatened the moral fiber of the nation. “McCarthyism,” William F. Buckley, the founder of *National Review* wrote in 1954, “is a movement around which men of good

---

<sup>321</sup> Graham quoted in James Gilbert, *Men in the Middle: Searching for Masculinity in the 1950s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 130.

<sup>322</sup> “The Atomic Age,” *Life*, August 20, 1945, 32. For popular fears connected to the atomic bomb, see Paul Boyer, *By The Bomb’s Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985).

will and stern morality can close ranks.”<sup>323</sup> Senator Joseph McCarthy (R-WI) and members of the HUAC committee employed a brash masculinity in its investigation of domestic communism, but the values and norms the committee venerated were those of traditional gender roles. Immoral males would be flushed out. McCarthy equated communists and homosexuals as examples of gender failure and sought out “pinks, punks, and perverts.” Senator Kenneth Wherry (R-NE) declared, “A man of low morality is a menace in the government, whatever he is, and they are all tied together.”<sup>324</sup>

The product of these postwar cultural conditions was a remarkably homogenous dutiful American manhood characterized by an affinity for traditional gender roles.<sup>325</sup>

Two years after the end of the war, *Colliers* published an article concluding the vast

---

<sup>323</sup> William F. Buckley and L. Brent Bozell, *McCarthy and his Enemies: The Record and its Meaning* (Chicago: H. Regnery Co., 1954), 335.

<sup>324</sup> McCarthy and Wherry quoted in Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Free Press, 1996), 236-237. For congressional investigations of gays and lesbians in government, see David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004). K.A. Cuordileone’s examination of cold war political culture credits McCarthyism with the subsequent cult of toughness that influenced the election of 1960 and the subsequent presidencies of Kennedy and Johnson. See K.A. Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

<sup>325</sup> The fifties gender order is usually attributed to the American middle class. For example, Elaine Tyler May writes, “Although all groups contributed to the baby boom, it was the values of the white middle-class that shaped the dominant political and economic institutions that affected all Americans. Those who did not conform to them were likely to be marginalized, stigmatized, and disadvantaged as a result.” See Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), 15. I am more inclined to agree with Jackson Lears who, borrowing from Antonio Gramsci, identifies not a dominant class in the fifties, but a dominant “historical bloc” – a group with shared interests who impose a cultural hegemony on a pluralistic society. “The ‘new class’ may not have constituted a class in any coherent or unified sense. But it did constitute a historical bloc – a coalition of groups which differed in many ways but which were bound together (up to a point) by common interests, common experiences, and a common worldview. The members of those groups tended to be rootless urbanites or suburbanites; they worked for big organizations that prized instrumentalist values; they sent their children to progressive schools and worried about sexual satisfaction in marriage; they were affluent enough to be at the cutting edge of mass consumption. They believed there was such a thing as an American Way of Life – fundamentally benign though sometimes suffocatingly vulgar; they believed their own interests and those of the nation were best served by pragmatic interest-group politics and an expanded ‘mixed economy’ undergirded by business-government cooperation. They feared ‘extremist’ crusades at home and an implacable Soviet threat abroad. On the basis of these experiences and values, the profession/managerial groups were able to form cross-class alliances and constitute – for a time – a hegemonic historical bloc.” Jackson Lears, “A Matter of Taste: Corporate Cultural Hegemony in a Mass-Consumption Society,” in *Recasting America: Culture and Politics in the Age of Cold War*, ed. Lary May (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 51.

majority of veterans had achieved a successful reintegration into civilian life and taken up their responsibilities on the job and at home. Although acknowledging the now adjusted veteran had lost his innocence overseas, “he didn’t come home a killer, sure; he is not a chronic neurotic, sure; he works, yes; gets married, yes; plays with the kids, yes; is a useful citizen, yes. Yes.”<sup>326</sup> In the late forties and fifties, marriage counselors encouraged women to return to their duties as wives and homemakers and allow their veteran husband to take charge in the home.<sup>327</sup> By leaving wartime gender and sexual upheaval behind and establishing a stable domestic order, they insisted a more reassuring postwar world was possible. “Social stability had replaced military victory as the national goal,” Susan Hartmann observes of this period.<sup>328</sup> The *National Education Association Journal* captured the summons to responsibility for both genders on a page readers were encouraged to post on their bulletin boards.

### The Law of Duty

#### The Good American Does His Duty

The Shirker and the willing idler live upon others, and burden fellow-citizens with work unfairly.

They do not do their share, for their country’s good.

I will try to find out what my duty is as a good American, and my duty I will do, whether it is easy or hard.

What it is my duty to do I can do.<sup>329</sup>

---

<sup>326</sup> Robert C. Ruark, “The Veteran Says: ‘Aw Nuts!’” *Colliers*, May 10, 1947, 69.

<sup>327</sup> For the responsibility of wives to assume a traditional gender role in facilitating readjustment, see Susan M. Hartmann, “Prescriptions for Penelope: Literature on Women’s Obligations to Returning World War II Veterans,” *Women’s Studies* 5, no. 3 (January 1978): 223-239. For the role women played in addressing moral issues in the fifties, see Eugenia Kaledin, *Mothers and More: American Women in the 1950s* (Boston: Twayne, 1984).

<sup>328</sup> Susan M. Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond: American Women in the 1940s* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982), 25.

<sup>329</sup> “Law of Duty: Code of the Good American,” *National Education Association Journal* 35 (October 1946): 428. For the postwar obsession of establishing and defining normality, see Anna G. Creadick, *Perfectly Average: The Pursuit of Normality in Postwar America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010).

## Masculinity Lamented

There may have been consensus, but not always comfort with the revival of dutiful manhood at midcentury. The remarkable similarity among postwar white middle-class males was, at times, unsettling to practitioners and observers alike. A number of commentators questioned whether America's remarkable postwar prosperity was not a Faustian bargain promising ease and affluence in exchange for freedom and individuality. Were not the men uniformed in gray flannel who kissed their wives goodbye and patted their children's heads as they stepped out of their suburban ranches to trudge off to faceless managerial jobs sacrificing their masculine souls for bland sameness? Was rugged individualism being neglected to earn the approval of the neighbors? Was the virile fighter and lover of the war too scared to stand up to the boss or wife?<sup>330</sup>

These were some of the concerns raised by public intellectuals such as C. Wright Mills, William Whyte, Erich Fromm, and David Riesman. Critics of the manhood consensus were particularly evident in academic and literary circles. Scholars discussed a perceived crisis in American manhood wherein men fresh from the battlefields of Europe and the Pacific and flushed with the invigoration of soldiering struggled to acclimate themselves to domesticity and corporatism. They suggested the peace and prosperity of the fifties deprived men of an arena to demonstrate rugged masculinity and, consequently, American males struggled to construct a sense of identity distinguished from the feminine. In "The Crisis of American Masculinity," Harvard historian Arthur

---

<sup>330</sup> For a concise discussion of the fifties debate regarding conformity, see David Halberstam, *The Fifties* (New York: Random House, 1993), 527. For sources decrying postwar conformity, see Robert Lindner, *Must You Conform?* (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1956); Alan Valentine, *The Age of Conformity* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1954); William Attwood et al., *The Decline of the American Male* (New York: Random House, 1958), which was a series of articles *Look* magazine published separately in its issues and then, later in the same year, in book form.

Schlesinger Jr. anxiously wrote, “the ways by which American men affirm their masculinity are uncertain and obscure. There are multiplying signs, indeed, that something has gone badly wrong with the American male’s conception of himself.”<sup>331</sup>

Some psychologists suggested contemporary males exhibited an absence of self-knowledge. In *Escape from Freedom* (1941), German-born psychologist Erich Fromm postulated two forms of freedom. The first, “freedom from,” was an absence of external restraint or controls and the second, “freedom to,” was the bold step individuals took to form their own identity and lives when controls were removed. Men may achieve freedom from exterior strictures that cause repression, he argued, but not all achieve the “freedom to” activate their creative self within the larger world. Men who throw off one form of authoritarianism often surrender to another in the form of expectations, rituals, and trends. Fromm exposed conformity as simply another coping technique many adopted to ameliorate ethical authoritarianism as they simultaneously shied away from individual freedom.<sup>332</sup>

Similarly, Gestalt therapists railed against the oppressive imposition of mature behaviors that disregarded anything less as infantile. They claimed adults striving for maturity burdened themselves with uninteresting responsibilities and would do well to learn from childlike earnestness and risk.

In our times it is not the case that the average man is irresponsible, does not hold himself together; rather he is too responsible, keeps meeting the time-clock, will not give in to sickness or fatigue, pays his bills before he is sure he has food, too narrowly minds his own business, does not take a

---

<sup>331</sup> Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., “The Crisis of American Masculinity” in *The Politics of Hope* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1963), 237. Anticipating John F. Kennedy, Schlesinger wrote in *The Vital Center* that World War II veterans who entered politics brought “a new virility into public life” that was in marked contrast to the “political sterility” of leftists and the emasculated ruling class before the war. See Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Vital Center: The Politics of Freedom* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1949).

<sup>332</sup> Erich H. Fromm, *Escape from Freedom* (1941; repr., New York: Henry Holt, 1969), 30-31, chapters four and five.



risk. Would it not be wiser, then, to bring to the fore, instead of responsibility and its mere negation, the childhood opposition of earnest and caprice, both positively valuable?<sup>333</sup>

The male obsessed with responsibility and maturity was not only a fake. He was a coward.

The modern workplace was often blamed for American male anonymity. Columbia sociologist C. Wright Mills highlighted the social alienation corporate workers experienced in *White Collar: The American Middle Classes* (1951). Mills argued that through an absence of heroic individualism the middle classes were defining the age with blandness, compliance, and subservience. Nineteenth-century farmers had been “stalwart individuals,” their own men “who could quickly grow to be almost as big as anyone else.” But the twentieth-century white-collar man was never as independent as the farmer and was “always somebody’s man, the corporation’s, the government’s, the army’s; and he is seen as the man who does not rise.”<sup>334</sup> Journalist William Whyte coined one of the most damning labels for corporate employees in the decade with his best-selling *The Organization Man* (1956). Whyte argued that organization men distrusted individualism and located the source of all creativity in the group. Whether the group was the company sales team, the government research lab, or the local church congregation, men had taken shelter behind a “Social Ethic” which, in contrast to the Protestant work ethic, lacked a rugged, striving productivity. The Social Ethic esteemed the collective as the source of creativity and the avenue towards “togetherness” and “belongingness.” Whyte lashed organizational men for their insularity, mourning that “man’s obligation is in the here and

---

<sup>333</sup> Frederick Perls et al., *Gestalt Therapy: Excitement and Growth in the Human Personality* (New York: Dell, 1951), 298-304.

<sup>334</sup> C. Wright Mills, *White Collar: The American Middle Classes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951), xii.

now; his duty is not so much to the community in a broad sense but to the actual, physical one about him” and he remains callously indifferent to larger social causes fearing the reactions of others.<sup>335</sup> “In group doctrine,” Whyte grieved, “the strong personality is viewed with overwhelming suspicion.”<sup>336</sup>

Inspired by Fromm, Harvard sociologist David Riesman wrote the decade’s best-selling critique of modern conformity and abnegation of the self. In *The Lonely Crowd* (1950), Riesman delineated three historical categories of identity that he asserted characterized contemporary men and women. “Tradition-directed” individuals, common in the Middle Ages, lived according to parameters set by previous generations. “Inner-directed” individuals with a strong sense of movement, values, and confidence characterized nineteenth-century entrepreneurs, inventors, and pioneers. Consumerism and corporatism, however, had birthed a new cultural type in the twentieth century which he designated “other-directed.” Other-directed types were the products of affluence, ease, and stability. They were conformists who fearfully imitated their neighbors and sought their approval. They found sanctuary in community. The group provided the predictability that risk threatened. Conformity offered security even as it ignored self-awareness. Riesman made “other-directed” a conversation topic for cocktail parties. His readers worried the suited males crowding elevators and purchasing ranch houses filled with mass produced, mass marketed, and mass purchased appliances were evidence that American males had lost their “psychic gyroscope.” Contemporary males were devoid of spontaneity, creativity, and individuation.<sup>337</sup>

---

<sup>335</sup> William H. Whyte Jr., *The Organization Man* (Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1956), 8.

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>337</sup> David Riesman et al., *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1953), 41.

*The Lonely Crowd* and the debate it engendered stimulated several popular expositions of male conformity. In 1958, *Look* magazine printed a series of articles titled *The Decline of the American Male* in which the authors bemoaned the decline of rugged masculinity, extrapolated the dangers of momism, and warned of the growing threat posed by American male weakness. The three part series featured articles entitled “Why Do Women Dominate Him?,” “Why Is He Afraid To Be Different?,” and “Why Does He Work So Hard?” The authors fingered the duties of manhood as the culprit of American emasculation. One author lamented that “in too many homes” the American father “has been pushed out of any significant role in rearing his son. He either deserts his boy, because he is too busy making a living, or confuses him, because he does the same household chores as the boy’s mother. A boy growing up today has little chance to observe his father in strictly masculine pursuits.”<sup>338</sup> Articles featuring the same theme appeared in *Reader’s Digest*, *Fortune*, and *Playboy*. In *The Hidden Persuaders* (1957), Vance Packard wondered aloud to what degree modern individuals were simply products of the manipulated expectations and induced desires of the advertising industry.<sup>339</sup> Additional works directly exploring conformity also appeared such as Robert Lindner’s *Must You Conform?* (1956) in which he asked, “Must we conform? Must we fit ourselves into the pattern that molds mass man? Must we bend, submit, adjust, give in? Must we, finally, cease to be men?”<sup>340</sup>

---

<sup>338</sup> Robert Moskin, “Why Do Women Dominate Him?” in *The Decline of the American Male* (New York: Random House, 1958), 14.

<sup>339</sup> Vance Packard, *The Hidden Persuaders* (New York: David McKay Co., 1957).

<sup>340</sup> Robert Lindner, *Must You Conform?* (New York: Rinehart and Co., 1956), 166. For additional sources on conformity, see Ardis Whitman, “The Danger of Being Too Well-Adjusted,” *Reader’s Digest*, December 1958, 43-45; Phillip Wylie, “The Abdicating Male . . . and How the Gray Flannel Mind Exploits Him Through His Women,” *Playboy*, November 1956, 29; Alan Valentine, *The Age of Conformity* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1954).

Midcentury conformity diatribes frequently bemoaned the absence of identity in the modern American male, but buried in these treatises was also a lament over the decline of a distinctly masculine identity. Critics of midcentury identity frequently offset rugged individualist caricatures of the nineteenth-century frontier up against twentieth-century corporate workers. The fabricated juxtaposition was bound to leave the postwar male in a sea of sameness. Even though Riesman and others claimed to be describing contemporary men *and* women, their descriptions of “other-directed” conformists contained the historically coded feminine terms of “soft” and “limp.” Conformists were also depicted as attuned to others’ signals, concerned with feelings, given to affective rather than objective tasks, and mired in consumer culture – all feminine signifiers. Thus, postwar conformity polemics are best read as works lamenting masculine declension as well as group uniformity.<sup>341</sup>

Conformity, repeatedly debated in the fifties, has become the predominant label among historians to describe the decade’s culture and particularly its males.<sup>342</sup> Those endorsing the conformity narrative usually point to a list of usual suspects for culpability that includes mass advertising, organizations, corporations, suburbia, churches, pop

---

<sup>341</sup> For the inherently gendered argument in *The Lonely Crowd*, see Barbara Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment* (New York: Anchor, 1983), 34 and James Gilbert, *Men in the Middle: Searching for Masculinity in the 1950s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 54.

<sup>342</sup> Historian Randall Bennett Woods writes that “suburbia both symbolized and reinforced one of the dominant characteristics of postwar American society – the demand for conformity. . . . To move from group to group in an increasingly differentiated bureaucracy, the organization man suppressed his individuality, spurned conflict, and sought guidance and approval from the environment around him.” See Randall Bennett Woods, *Quest for Identity: America Since 1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 126, 134-135. Similarly, William Manchester wrote of the decade’s university students, “in the conflict between independence and the system, they came down hard on the side of the system. They sought not fame, but the approval of others. Eager to collaborate in group actions, they deliberately suppressed traits which might set them apart.” See William Manchester, *The Glory and the Dream: A Narrative History of America, 1932-1972*. (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1974), 578. An additional source asserting a broad conformity narrative for the decade is Paul A. Carter, *Another Part of the Fifties* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

psychology, a burgeoning national security state, and the fascination with group dynamics in the decade. However, blanketing the fifties with a common ethic of conformity spurred by a generalized anxiety is problematical.<sup>343</sup>

There are several shortfalls in this fatigued interpretation, particularly in regards to midcentury male identity. The male conformist narrative creates an abrupt disjuncture with the virile male identity evident during the war. It fails to explain any transition from the war's masculine fighter to peacetime's organization man.<sup>344</sup> The narrative divests fifties males, not to mention females, of much of their personal agency, choice, desires, and affectations. The argument is contingent on a climate of mass anxiety and paranoia that is difficult to see characterizing the entirety of men's lives. The conformity narrative fails to account for the variety of experiences of all American males in the fifties as wealthy and urban males did not live under the compulsions of the suburbs, corporate culture meant little to blue collar males, and much of the decade's affluence remained out of the hands of poor rural whites and urban blacks. Finally, the conformity narrative fashions a triumphalism for the sixties and seventies viewing these decades as exclusively the provenance of cultural and gender change.<sup>345</sup>

---

<sup>343</sup> Theologian Paul Tillich and poet W.H. Auden were among those who argued the postwar years were characterized by anxiety. Generalizing the fifties as an age of collective anxiety was the propensity of academics and elite intellectuals more than the general population. Harvard sociologist Samuel A. Stouffer, who conducted a study of public opinion in 1954 on the question of national anxiety, concluded no such condition existed. See Samuel A. Stouffer, "Is there a National Anxiety Neurosis?" in *Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties: A Cross-Section of the Nation Speaks its Mind* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1963).

<sup>344</sup> In his study of masculinity and World War II copper miners, Matt Basso points out that historians' conception of manliness from the 1930s to the 1950s is "characterized by disjuncture. Working-class masculinity dominated the 1930s. Military masculinity dominated World War II. And white-collar corporate masculinity quickly came to dominate the latter 1940s and 1950s." See Matt Basso, *Meet Joe Copper: Masculinity and Race on Montana's World War II Home Front* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 267.

<sup>345</sup> Two authors who challenge the traditional homogenous-conformity-narrative of the fifties are Joel Foreman, ed., *The Other Fifties: Interrogating Midcentury American Icons* (Urbana: University of Illinois

Conformity of course was not absent from the fifties. Every cultural timeframe is freighted with social pressures towards specific norms. Postwar males felt a strong measure of social pressure to work consistently, get married, father children, and provide housing for their families. These are values almost universally expected of males. Particularly remarkable was the high percentage of American males focused on these duties that created a stunningly homogenous American male at midcentury. The missing element in most depictions regarding male conformity is an accurate explanation of the sources as well as the process of postwar male conformity.

The standard attribution of conformity to postwar males is confined to an unnecessarily narrow definition of conformity that does not account for the multiple variables inherent to social influence. In 1958 Harvard social-psychologist Herbert Kelman delineated three processes by which individuals adhere to social influence that are useful for understanding the decade's males. Kelman asserted some individuals conform to a norm in *compliance*, that is, they submit publicly to proscribed behavior even though privately they disagree. They comply so that others favorably view them. Kelman suggested others conform through *identification* by which they conform to another person such as a celebrity or prominent figure. Most conformity narratives of the fifties have explained the decade's uniformity through one of these two approaches with Riesman, Whyte, and Fromm reflecting the compliance model and Mills and Packard the identification model.<sup>346</sup>

---

Press, 1997), 2-4 and William L. O'Neill, *American High: The Years of Confidence, 1945-1960* (New York: Free Press, 1986), 36-38.

<sup>346</sup> Herbert C. Kelman, "Compliance, Identification, and Internalization: Three Processes of Attitude Change," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 2, no. 1 (March 1958): 53.

More helpful for understanding postwar males is Kelman's third model of conformity. Individuals can also conform through *internalization*, which is a process by which members accept induced ideas or behaviors because the subject finds them "intrinsically rewarding." The individual "adopts the induced behavior because it is congruent with his value system." Prescribed conduct is adopted because it is consistent with the individual's established values. "The satisfaction derived from internalization is due to the content of the new behavior," according to Kelman. There is no disjuncture between private and public behavior as subjects do not just publicly endorse norms, but also privately espouse them.<sup>347</sup>

Postwar males internalized the social expectations prescribed for employees, husbands, and fathers because these duties coincided with aspirations they were denied fulfilling during the Depression and war. Fifties males genuinely valued work, home, and family because these were significantly disrupted during the twin crises of their lifetimes. Accepting common influences on males to perform in these roles did not seem like mindless mimicry, but rather the fulfillment of longed-for desires. Thus, homogenous postwar male identity did not function in isolation from the two crises that preceded its emergence. All male experiences were not uniform during the crises, but few were left untouched by the economic and social dislocations the thirties and early forties generated. What some considered an abnegation of the self and a passionless conformity to the corporate and domestic expectations of others was actually congruent behavior stemming from the common experience of depression and war. Eisenhower may have alluded to the

---

<sup>347</sup> Kelman, "Compliance, Identification, and Internalization," 53.

congruent national experience that generated similar behavior in his second inaugural address when he urged, “May we know unity – without conformity.”<sup>348</sup>

The shocking gender and sexual upheavals of the Depression and war sapped American masculinity of much of its tough, macho, sexual appeal and prompted American males and their advice-givers to consider anew a better behaved manhood.<sup>349</sup> Dutiful manhood with its imperatives of responsibility, self-control, and maturity offered a shelter or, more timely, a bunker for American males from the masculine excesses of the previous fifty years and the alarming dangers of the early cold war. To reestablish normalcy after decades of crisis and male excess, men would be dutiful as workers and citizens, contain their impulses in the home, and demonstrate maturity in marriage and fatherhood. The extent to which fifties males despaired of their shortcomings in their duties to a boss, wife, or child revealed what clinical psychologist Carl Rogers called “incongruence” – the gap between the real self’s performance and the ideal self’s standards. Critics would often point out the growing incongruence gap between the congruent ideal of manhood and the reality of male behavior in the fifties, but

---

<sup>348</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Second Inaugural Address," January 21, 1957. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=10856> (accessed July 18, 2015). Norman Podhoretz makes a similar observation, declaring that American males “discovered that ‘conformity’ did not necessarily mean dullness and unthinking conventionality, that, indeed, there was great beauty, profound significance, in a man’s struggle to achieve freedom *through* submission to conditions . . . A great many of them married early; most of them made firm and decisive commitments to careers of a fairly modest sort, such as teaching; they cultivated an interest in food, clothes, furniture, manners – these being elements of the ‘richness’ of life that the generation of the 30’s had deprived itself of.” Norman Podhoretz, *Doings and Undoings: The Fifties and After in American Writing* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Co., Inc., 1964), 109.

<sup>349</sup> Susan Faludi makes a similar argument regarding postwar manhood. “Within the context of the cold war, the postwar man, too, seemed to share with his cohorts a common mission of prevailing in a struggle against Communism on the battlements of Europe, throughout Asia, at home, and even on the frontiers of outer space. Like GI Joe, he would be judged not on his personal dominance but on his sense of duty, his voluntary service to an organization made up of equally anonymous men. The dog soldier would continue to have his day.” Faludi observes that this “model of manhood would not hold past the Eisenhower presidency.” Susan Faludi, *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man* (New York: Perennial, 1999), 19, 39.



nevertheless dutiful manhood supplanted virile masculinity by the early fifties and would not yield its command over American male identity until the early sixties.<sup>350</sup>

Congruent male experience through depression and war may also help to explain the popularity of the fifties' most iconic novel. *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (1955) is frequently interpreted as a revealing exposé of male conformity in the 1950s detailing its demands, conflicts, and disappointments in engaging prose.<sup>351</sup> This singular reading of the novel, however, results from a superficial assumption based on the novel's title.<sup>352</sup> The author Sloan Wilson found amusement in this popular interpretation of his work remarking, "To my surprise, my novel, which I had regarded as largely autobiographical, was taken by some serious thinkers as a protest against conformity and the rigors of suburban life." Wilson was pleased that other reviewers including *The New York Times* identified the novel as a story about the problems of adjustment men in the service faced upon returning home.<sup>353</sup>

---

<sup>350</sup> Carl Rogers, *The Carl Rogers Reader*, ed. Howard Kirschenbaum and Valerie Land Henderson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1989), 246-247. Sociologist Helen M. Hacker discussed a similar incongruity gap in her study of male social roles. See Helen M. Hacker, "The New Burdens of Masculinity," *Marriage and Family Living* 19, no. 3 (August 1957): 227.

<sup>351</sup> Evan Brier challenges the traditional interpretation of Wilson's novel remarking, "contrary to the jacket copy and much of the critical reception, this is not a novel about corporate life." See Evan Brier, *A Novel Marketplace: Mass Culture, the Book Trade, and Postwar American Fiction* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 92.

<sup>352</sup> Wilson's title choice for the novel was originally *A Candle at Midnight*, but Wilson claims in the original jacket text that his wife encouraged him to change the title to *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*. Brier argues Dick Simon of Simon and Schuster saw great value in capitalizing on contemporary conformist discourse and also sought to publish a novel which would complement William Whyte's *The Organization Man* which Simon and Schuster also published one year after Wilson's novel. Similar to Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd*, Wilson's novel has suffered from a popular interpretation simply based on its title. See Brier, *A Novel Marketplace*, 83-85.

<sup>353</sup> Sloan Wilson, *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (1955; repr., New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1983), afterword; John McNulty, "Tom Rath, Commuter: *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*," *New York Times*, July 17, 1955. Serving as a contributing writer for the White House Conference on Education, Wilson met Eisenhower in 1956. Although the novelist did not vote for the president or admire his policies, Wilson later wrote that Eisenhower "was the most attractive human being I had ever seen. He was much taller than I had expected, and though he was old enough to be my father, he still had the body of a young athlete, broad-shouldered and narrow-hipped. The banker's suit he wore was unable to disguise his military bearing. Somehow he looked both at ease and at attention at the same time. . . . The smile was even more

The lead character in *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* struggles to conform not to others, but to the duties of his gender. The novel is best understood as the struggle postwar men faced in taking responsibility for their life.<sup>354</sup> Tom Rath, a Harvard educated, former paratrooper who served in both theaters of World War II, is the novel's lead male who struggles to find happiness amid the expectations at work and home. Tom explains he is "not the type to have a nervous breakdown. I can't afford it. I have too many responsibilities."<sup>355</sup> It was Tom's experience in the war that drained his passion for his duties and not the duties themselves. While he remains a responsible husband, father, and employee, he is utterly without enthusiasm. His wife Betsy laments, "it's as though Tom and I had been married twice, once before the war and once afterward, and what I want is my first marriage back."<sup>356</sup> The impact of the war scares her because "it means you're going to be unenthusiastic about everything for the rest of your life."<sup>357</sup> Tom does his best to put the memories of war behind him and get on with his obligations. "Now is the time to raise legitimate children, and make money, and dress properly, and be kind to one's wife, and admire one's boss, and learn not to worry," Tom dryly lists his duties. It

---

vivid in person than it was in all those millions of photographs." Sloan Wilson, *What Shall We Wear to This Party? The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit Twenty Years Before and After* (New York: Arbor House, 1976), 235.

<sup>354</sup> The dust jacket of the first edition of *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* announced the theme of the novel, "these men are all over America wearing gray flannel. A few short years back, they were wearing uniforms of olive drab. The central theme of this novel is the struggle of a man to adapt himself from the relative security of O.D. [olive drab] to the insecurity of gray flannel." A few months after the publication of his novel, Wilson speaking about heroism remarked, "the war was full of it, but so is business life; it is full of people doing painful jobs with little hope of reward, and only the drab prospect of balancing the budget – people who none the less create happiness for others and make a go of life. That's heroism, and I don't think it's sentimental to say it is." Nona Balakian, "Talk with Mr. Wilson," *New York Times*, August 7, 1955.

<sup>355</sup> Wilson, *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, 97.

<sup>356</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>357</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

does not matter, though, because he is “just a man in a gray flannel suit. I must keep my suit neatly pressed like anyone else, for I am a very respectable young man.”<sup>358</sup>

The turning point for Tom’s insipidity, as well as the other characters in the novel, is when Tom becomes willing to address his irresponsibility. A former fellow soldier encourages him to acknowledge his wartime infidelity with an Italian girl named Maria and the obligation Tom has to provide support. His dereliction of marital duty has produced a hungry child, inspires distracting daydreams on the job, and shrouds Tom’s time of deployment in secrecy from Betsy. The Rath’s marriage is not able to improve until Tom is willing to open up about the war and Betsy empathizes with the trauma it induced. Tom’s job contentment does not improve until he speaks honestly and frankly with Ralph Hopkins (the president of the company), refuses to be a disingenuous yes-man, and takes a lesser position in the company so that he can be at home more often.

It is significant that so little is different at the end of the novel compared to the beginning. Tom and Betsy are still married. The Raths are still parents to three children. They still live in the suburbs. Tom still works in the city. Even after his awakening, Tom still works for the same company. He still wears a gray flannel suit. If readers look to Wilson’s novel for a critique of 1950s blandness, then they will find little character or plot development. The novel does, however, convey the value of confronting a failure of duty in order to inspire the execution of other responsibilities.<sup>359</sup>

---

<sup>358</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>359</sup> *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* also negotiates the consequences of dutiful manhood discharged or neglected in the lives of its other characters. Betsy, Maria, and Maria’s child are all victims of Tom’s wartime infidelity. Ralph Hopkins’s daughter runs off to marry an objectionable man because her father has let his job consume him for many years. Hopkins’s wife lives a lonely, boring existence in the suburbs because her husband lives in the city in order to be close to his office. Judge Bernstein fulfills his duty to hand down justice and rule against the plotting caretaker who threatens to swindle Tom out of his inheritance. Tom’s angst at work is aggravated by Bill Ogden’s deference to Hopkins and his attempt to

As the uniform of peacetime duty, the gray flannel suit was not a straitjacket for mindless conformity. The ensemble represented a male's arrival to a position of responsibility secured by self-control and maturity. As a new suit represented for Alger's heroes a reversal of fortune, the suit for postwar males represented an end to Depression-era joblessness, postwar stability, a return to traditional domestic roles, and an adherence to male obligations. The powerful, broad-shouldered athletic suits of the Depression and war gave way to the more conservative Ivy League look featuring timid straight-hanging lines and diminutive details such as thin lapels and natural shoulders. *Esquire* observed, "Grey has a knack of giving you assurance, a manner that can best be described as satisfying – and if you are pleased with yourself, the rest comes naturally."<sup>360</sup> Fifties males dressed in conservative gray suits not because they feared individualism and self-expression, but rather out of the satisfaction that the prosperity and uniformity of their similar experiences had engendered.<sup>361</sup>

### **Manhood Elected**

Dwight Eisenhower was the exemplar of the dutiful manhood that achieved cultural hegemony at midcentury. The nineteenth-century conception of maleness that dominated his childhood and informed his development in the Army gained a new relevance at midcentury. The adulation Eisenhower received as a war hero and national figure signaled that his model of manhood had supplanted competing wartime

---

claim credit for a speech written by Tom. The novel's exploration of dutiful manhood inserts responsible and negligent males into the anonymous gray suit depicted on the cover.

<sup>360</sup> David Smart, "Grey to a T," *Esquire*, March 1951, 65.

<sup>361</sup> Daniel Delis Hill, *American Menswear: From the Civil War to the Twenty-First Century* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2011), 215-217. The Continental look near the end of the fifties returned a more silhouetted shape with trim jackets featuring shorter lengths, cutaway fronts, peaked lapels, angled pockets, and cuffed sleeves along with cuffed trousers.

constructions of masculinity exhibited by Patton and MacArthur.<sup>362</sup> Postwar prescriptions for males were in such coordination with Eisenhower's conception that the oft-repeated themes in his speeches raised him to an even greater popularity than what he enjoyed during the war. Recurring themes that he was "just a Kansas farmer boy who did his duty,"<sup>363</sup> that the war was a "holy war"<sup>364</sup> with the forces of evil arrayed against the forces of righteousness, and that "humility must always be the portion of any man who receives acclaim earned in blood of his followers and sacrifices of his friends"<sup>365</sup> further endeared him to a public exhausted by the masculine excesses that had destabilized American manhood. Joseph Stalin recognized these differences in Eisenhower during his visit to Moscow in August 1945. "General Eisenhower is a very great man," the Bolshevik whose name meant "Man of Steel" observed, "not only because of his military accomplishments, but because of his human, friendly, kind and frank nature. He is *not* a 'grubi' [coarse, brusque] man like most military."<sup>366</sup>

Eisenhower's postwar assignments continued to demonstrate a consistent submission to his strong sense of duty. He agreed to oversee the initial Allied occupation of Germany even though he found the work less rewarding and more divisive than being Supreme Commander of a large-scale military campaign. He reluctantly submitted to

---

<sup>362</sup> Eisenhower's longstanding friendship with Patton came to an end during the occupation of Germany over a dispute regarding non-fraternization and de-Nazification of the country. Eisenhower relieved Patton of his military governorship as well as command of Third Army. For his part, MacArthur had little respect for Eisenhower as a military commander, privately remarking, "He let his generals in the field fight the war for him. They were good and covered up for him. He drank tea with kings and queens. Just up Eisenhower's alley." Quoted in Kerry Irish, "Dwight Eisenhower and Douglas MacArthur in the Philippines: There Must Be a Day of Reckoning," *The Journal of Military History* 74, no. 2, (April 2010): 472.

<sup>363</sup> *New York Times*, June 20, 1945.

<sup>364</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, "The Guildhall Address," London, June 12, 1945 in *At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends* (Fort Washington, Penn.: Eastern National, 1967), 388.

<sup>365</sup> Eisenhower toast to Marshal Zhukov, June 10, 1945, in Harry C. Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946), 862.

<sup>366</sup> Stalin quoted in Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, 1890-1952* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1983), 430.

President Truman's request that he become Army Chief of Staff to oversee demobilization in November 1945. "The job I am taking now represents nothing but straight duty," he confided to a friend.<sup>367</sup> Although he longed for semi-retirement as president of a smaller college and had reservations about living in New York City, he accepted the presidency of Columbia University in 1948 explaining to another college president, "I . . . look upon the position not merely as an opportunity for service but almost as a duty."<sup>368</sup> Eisenhower responded once again to the president's wishes in December 1950, when he took an extended leave of absence from Columbia and was appointed Supreme Commander of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and given operational command of its forces. He responded to Truman's appeal that he take up the position by insisting the president order him to the post rather than simply make a request. "I am a soldier and am ready to respond to whatever orders my superiors . . . may care to issue to me," he wrote in his diary.<sup>369</sup>

Believing the finger of duty pointed towards the presidency of Columbia University, Eisenhower intended to use the position to promote his vision of a virtuous manhood in the very seedbed of scholars lamenting the decline of traditional masculinity. The misgivings Eisenhower had about living in the nation's largest city were confirmed once he settled into his new position. "I am a country boy born and bred, and cities never fail to irritate me. I like the green grass better than paved streets and the sight of a well-

---

<sup>367</sup> Eisenhower to Edward E. Hazlett, Jr., November 27, 1945, in *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: Occupation, 1945, VI*, ed. Alfred D. Chandler, Jr. et al. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 555.

<sup>368</sup> Eisenhower to Ralph Cooper Hutchison, June 25, 1947, in *Papers, The Chief of Staff*, 8:1781.

<sup>369</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, October 28, 1950, *The Eisenhower Diaries*, ed. Robert H. Ferrell (New York: W.W. Norton, 1981), 179. Eisenhower also turned down opportunities to be executive director of the Boy Scouts and commissioner of Major League Baseball.

fed cow more than that of a street car,” he told a friend.<sup>370</sup> The same urbanity that Eisenhower had little use for, however, was revered among the university’s researchers and faculty. Columbia was at the forefront of elevating sociology as a primary academic field after World War II. The department’s notable students and scholars, including C. Wright Mills, Robert S. Lynd, and Mirra Komarovsky, pioneered the sociological study of gender roles by examining the dutiful men emerging out of rural communities to take-up white-collar employment in the city. However, Eisenhower saw little value in research that did not reaffirm American traditionalism and promote character at Columbia and, in turn, the nation. Perhaps sensing that the university’s president did not fully appreciate the credentials of his faculty, one scholar lectured Eisenhower that “we have some of America’s most exceptional physicists, mathematicians, chemists, and engineers.” Brushing the self-adulation aside, Eisenhower asked if they were also “exceptional Americans.” The scholar replied that Eisenhower did not understand that they were *research* scholars. “Dammit,” the president raged, “what good are exceptional physicists . . . exceptional anything, unless they are exceptional Americans?”<sup>371</sup> It was his firm belief that every student needed to leave Columbia first and foremost a better citizen and secondarily a better scholar. To that end, Eisenhower created the American Assembly, a public policy forum at Columbia that brought together leaders in academia, business, and government to provide practical solutions for difficult problems. The American Assembly was fundamental to Eisenhower’s vision of making Columbia an institution that emphasized more practical scholarship.

---

<sup>370</sup> Eisenhower to Drew Middleton, June 21, 1948, in *Papers, Columbia University*, 10:121.

<sup>371</sup> Eisenhower’s exchange with scholar quoted in Steve Neal, *The Eisenhowers: Reluctant Dynasty* (New York: Doubleday, 1978), 249-250.

Eisenhower's reputation as a political outsider unsullied by Washington's corruption as well as his resume as a righteous crusader, carried broad appeal in a postwar culture focused on duty. In an editorial titled "Man for Leadership," *Colliers* endorsed Eisenhower for the presidency, declaring "he retains a simple and genuine devotion to the fundamental virtues of American character and American life which existed before this era of world leadership began. They still exist today, in spite of efforts to discredit and erase them. We are sure that he will seek to preserve them."<sup>372</sup> Tom Campbell, an ex-GI who served in North Africa, wrote Milton Eisenhower, "every day we see the hazard of appointees for political reasons." But Milton's brother was different. His "popularity, character, and integrity are sweeping the country like a prairie fire" and "he is the one man on whom the people of this country would unite."<sup>373</sup> *Life* magazine discussed Eisenhower's "indelible Americanism" which expressed not only "competence, charm, and resolution but a set of confidently held American beliefs." *Life* also acknowledged that perhaps Americans were attracted to the symbolism Eisenhower represented as much as the man himself and identified what Eisenhower represented as integrity, stature, and optimism. "He is a general, a Big Man, a leader born and proved."<sup>374</sup>

In 1948 Eisenhower received over 20,000 pieces of mail from a public urging him to run for president. A team led by Columbia University sociologist Robert K. Merton studied the mailings to discover common elements.<sup>375</sup> Eighty-nine percent of the writers

---

<sup>372</sup> "Man for Leadership," *Colliers*, August 9, 1952, 74.

<sup>373</sup> Thomas D. Campbell to Milton S. Eisenhower, January 24, 1948, Box 174, Principal File, Pre-Presidential papers, Eisenhower Library, Abilene Kansas (hereafter cited as EL).

<sup>374</sup> "The Ike Boom," *Life*, March 31, 1952, 26.

<sup>375</sup> While serving as president of Columbia, Eisenhower turned over the correspondence to Robert Merton and the Bureau of Applied Social Research ostensibly for academic research. Eisenhower prohibited the public release of the study when it was completed in the fall of 1949, probably because publication of the



urged General Eisenhower to run for the presidency in 1948. The relatively few letters that discouraged him from entering the race were not opposed to his candidacy necessarily, but feared that “contact with politics and politicians would mar his otherwise unimpeachable position in the eyes of the American public.” Most citizens who wrote the general appealed to his sense of duty as a “calling” from his fellow Americans. “We’re not asking you to do us a favor. We are issuing you a ‘call’ to your country’s need,” explained one. “God’s reward for a task well done is often a new and difficult task,” explained another. “Will you at this time prayerfully ask yourself, ‘Is God calling me to a new and more difficult task?’ In this crisis which faces our nation . . . can you not hear God’s voice, saying, ‘You art the man, General Eisenhower’?” In postwar America, Eisenhower’s dutiful manhood was in demand.<sup>376</sup>

The overwhelming focus of the correspondence was on the character of Eisenhower rather than his achievements. Eighty-five percent of the writers mentioned his “personality and traits of character.” Merton concluded it was “the kind of human being they felt him to be that was more often their expressed interest rather than what he had accomplished.” Even when writers mentioned Eisenhower’s accomplishments, it was done to call attention to him as a man. Eisenhower’s petitioners hailed him as a man self-controlled and not given to the vainglory of other military men or the aggressive blundering of a war hawk. “The General had never shown himself to be self-seeking” and “what he did was done out of conviction, and not for ‘effect.’” The mailings also

---

study would make it appear he was using the university’s faculty and resources to build support for a presidential run. The materials of the study, including Merton’s analysis of the correspondence, however, are among the Robert K. Merton papers contained in Columbia’s manuscript collections.

<sup>376</sup> Robert K. Merton, *An Inventory of Communications Addressed to General Eisenhower in the Spring of 1948: A Summary and Digest* (New York: Columbia University Bureau of Applied Social Research, September 1949), 6.

presented Eisenhower as a man who had matured beyond conniving politicians and whose qualities designated him a “born leader.” The writers frequently contrasted Eisenhower with the “scheming, self-interested insincerity” of most politicians. One-third of the participants labeled President Harry Truman sincere, but two-thirds also labeled him incompetent. Two-thirds claimed New York Governor Thomas Dewey lacked sincerity and many also believed him to be incompetent. “In the eyes of these writers,” Merton observed, Eisenhower “possessed the virtues of each, and the inadequacies of neither.” Eisenhower demonstrated the mature qualities that were required in the presidency, which one correspondent labeled as a “man-killing job.”<sup>377</sup>

The near universal opinion of the twenty thousand messages delivered to Eisenhower in 1948 was that he demonstrated responsibility, self-control, and maturity unlike anyone else and that he was the only man who could fill the office of the presidency. “You are the one man in this country in whom we can really place our trust,” declared one letter. Eisenhower was the only man who could secure domestic stability. “You, Sir, are Our Man and the Only Man who we feel can straighten out this mess,” wrote one concerned citizen. “You are the only man . . . who can lead the people of this country out of chaos,” pleaded another. Eisenhower was the only man who could rescue the international situation as well. “You, Sir, are the only human in the world who has the power to save America and humanity,” another direly announced.<sup>378</sup>

---

<sup>377</sup> Merton, *An Inventory of Communications*, 12-17, 19, 26.

<sup>378</sup> Robert K. Merton, *An Inventory of Communications Addressed to General Eisenhower in the Spring of 1948: A Summary and Digest* (Draft) Box 200, Folder 1, Series VI (New York: Columbia University Bureau of Applied Social Research, September 1949). Correspondents reassured the general that they had done their duty in promoting him for the presidency. “I put your name on my Democratic ballot in California Primaries, although it was against the law to insert another candidate,” confessed one dutiful citizen. “I did my duty in asserting my rights by putting in the name of a candidate of my own choice – and the choice of the Public of this Nation.”

Eisenhower repeatedly demonstrated an aversion to a political career during the war that carried over into the immediate postwar years. He considered politics a profession less noble than a military career. “I hope always to do my duty to my country,” he wrote in his diary at the beginning of 1951, “but I cannot even conceive of circumstances as of this moment that could convince me I had a duty to enter politics.”<sup>379</sup> His reservations stemmed from an antipathy towards the character of politicians and the entire political sphere. “Politics . . . excites all that is selfish and ambitious in man,” he told one businessman.<sup>380</sup> Eisenhower retained a popular nineteenth-century suspicion of politics as a sordid and dishonest profession that had the potential to soil the character of virtuous men. He was more comfortable within the Army’s traditional culture of discipline and duty which even discouraged its officers from voting in order that they would remain the ready servants of whichever commander-in-chief the people elected. The welfare legacy of the New Deal also disinclined him from associating with the Democratic party, which as a movement, he said, he “could never imagine feeling any compelling duty in connection with.”<sup>381</sup>

Ultimately, Eisenhower did not feel compelled to run for the presidency until his supporters cast his candidacy as an additional duty he had to the nation. Historian Douglas Southall Freeman encouraged the general to enter politics with just such an inducement. Eisenhower recalled that Freeman “urged that I change my wholly negative attitude toward entering politics. He saw it as my simple duty to the nation.”<sup>382</sup> Despite repeated protestations that he was not interested, Eisenhower supporters entered his name

---

<sup>379</sup> Eisenhower, January 1, 1951, *The Eisenhower Diaries*, 186.

<sup>380</sup> Eisenhower to Sid Williams Richardson, June 20, 1951, in *Papers, NATO and the Campaign of 1952*, 12:367.

<sup>381</sup> Eisenhower, September 25, 1951, *The Eisenhower Diaries*, 199.

<sup>382</sup> Eisenhower, *At Ease*, 334.

in the New Hampshire and Minnesota primaries in 1952. His victory in New Hampshire and his strong showing in Minnesota even without a declared candidacy spurred him closer to a run. A large Draft Eisenhower rally at Madison Square Garden with over ten thousand supporters cheering for his candidacy broke down his remaining reservations. *Newsweek* observed Eisenhower's decision to become a candidate represented "something close to a revolution in the general's feelings." Although, like many professional soldiers, Eisenhower had always regarded politics as "a not-quite-respectable profession," the magazine informed its readers, "higher duty is something he can't, as a conscientious American, avoid if the American people want him to perform it."<sup>383</sup>

If Eisenhower was concerned a presidential campaign would thrust him into the shady arena of aggressive politicking and had the potential to tarnish his character, his fears were not completely unfounded. While emphasizing his credential as the common man from Kansas in contrast to the urbane and intellectual candidacy of Adlai Stevenson, Eisenhower also portrayed himself as the virtuous candidate unsullied by Washington's scandals and culture of dishonesty. "I know something of the solemn responsibility of leading a crusade," the Republican nominee declared in his convention acceptance speech. "I accept your summons. I will lead this crusade."<sup>384</sup>

The righteousness of the crusade was imperiled when the *New York Post* reported in September 1952 that Eisenhower's running mate, Richard Nixon, had a secret slush fund that allowed him to live beyond his means as a senator. Numerous campaign staffers

---

<sup>383</sup> "Call to Higher Duty," *Newsweek*, March 31, 1952, 24.

<sup>384</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Address Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Republican National Convention in Chicago," July 11, 1952. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=75626> (accessed June 30, 2015).

urged Eisenhower to drop Nixon from the ticket and find a replacement, but the general remained composed and commanded Nixon to go on TV and defend his personal finances. After Nixon delivered his famous “Checkers speech” in which he meticulously detailed the uprightness of his finances, Eisenhower spoke to an audience in Cleveland and used a masculine metaphor to vouch for the manhood of his running mate. “I like courage. Tonight I saw an example of courage. . . . When I get in a fight, I would rather have a courageous and honest man by my side than a whole boxcar full of pussyfooters.”<sup>385</sup> Eisenhower would always remain suspicious of Nixon’s character. Yet, when the candidate met up with his vice-presidential nominee in West Virginia after Nixon’s humiliating speech, Eisenhower managed to highlight Nixon’s immaturity even as he assured him of his place on the ticket with a single sentence. “You’re my boy!”<sup>386</sup>

Besides a secret slush fund, the campaign also failed to dodge the coarse politics upon which fellow Republican Joseph McCarthy had made a name for himself in the United States Senate. Eisenhower privately loathed McCarthy and labeled him a “disciple of hate”<sup>387</sup> in his diary for his habit of badgering and intimidating witnesses who appeared before the Senate committee charged with investigating communists in the State Department on which he served. McCarthy also used his committee platform to publicly accuse General George Marshall of incompetence and disloyalty in failing to prevent a communist takeover in China. Eisenhower was outraged by the attack on his revered superior. In one of the greatest displays of his volcanic temper, Eisenhower met privately with McCarthy in Peoria, Illinois, before the campaign continued into McCarthy’s home state of Wisconsin. The meeting lasted a half hour during which, according to campaign

---

<sup>385</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change, 1953-1956* (New York: Signet, 1963), 103.

<sup>386</sup> Richard Nixon, *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1978), 106.

<sup>387</sup> Eisenhower, June 14, 1951, *The Eisenhower Diaries*, 195.

speechwriter Kevin McCann, “[Eisenhower] just took McCarthy apart. I never heard the General so cold-bloodedly skin a man. The air turned blue – so blue in fact that I couldn’t sit there listening. McCarthy said damned little. He just grunted and groaned . . . He was no heavyweight anyway. And under the attack he just went into shock.”<sup>388</sup>

Despite this private confrontation with McCarthy for his recklessness and unsubstantiated attacks, Eisenhower refused to condemn McCarthy publicly. When Eisenhower’s train rolled into Milwaukee for a campaign stop, Eisenhower assented to demands that a paragraph defending Marshall be excised from his speech thus sparing McCarthy the embarrassment of the party’s leader rebuking him before a home audience. A draft of the speech that included the paragraph defending Marshall, however, had already been released to the papers. The candidate’s acquiescence to the Wisconsin senator was exposed. Eisenhower’s failure to stand up to McCarthy made charges that the general would be simply a figure-head for darker political forces seem plausible. A Herbert Block cartoon circulated nationally depicted a weak and intimidated Eisenhower drawing a feather out of his scabbard to face an imposing and fearless McCarthy clutching a meat cleaver with the words, “Have a Care Sir.”<sup>389</sup>

Eisenhower failed to project the unsullied virtuous manhood that he desired during the campaign, making his efforts to distance himself from the Truman administration more difficult. It is surprising that Eisenhower and Truman did not enjoy a warmer relationship. They grew up within one hundred and fifty miles of each other as products of similar rural Midwest communities. In many ways, Truman inculcated the

---

<sup>388</sup> McCann quoted in William Bragg Ewald Jr., *Eisenhower the President* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1981), 60.

<sup>389</sup> Marquis Childs, *Eisenhower: Captive Hero: A Critical Study of the General and the President* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1958), 182.

same dutiful manhood in his upbringing as did Eisenhower. Journalist Richard Rovere pointed out they were both products of middle-class families who lived close to the edge of poverty. “Both are men of simple integrity and personal honor. Both have a kind of standard American personality,” Rovere observed.<sup>390</sup> Truman held such respect for Eisenhower after the war that he even promised to help him towards the presidency. In a private meeting during the Potsdam Conference in 1945, Truman assured Eisenhower, “General, there is nothing that you may want that I won’t try to help you get. That definitely and specifically includes the presidency in 1948.”<sup>391</sup>

Truman could never completely shed the image of himself as a product of a Kansas City political machine. A series of scandals plagued his second term that tarnished the image he preferred of himself as a rural commoner who had ascended all the way to the presidency. Revelations of gifts of deep freezers and fur coats to members of the administration, problems with the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, and corruption in the anti-trust activities of the Justice Department opened the administration to charges of influence-peddling and incompetence. Charges of tax favoritism, bribery, and theft of federal dollars by employees of the Bureau of Internal Revenue resulted in 166 employees resigning or being fired, many of them facing indictment. Long-time Truman friend and Democratic National Committee chair, William Boyle, resigned after being charged with financial corruption in 1951. Although Eisenhower had built his postwar career on supporting Truman’s internationalism, he believed the war in Korea

---

<sup>390</sup> Richard H. Rovere, *The Eisenhower Years: Affairs of State* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1956), 346-7.

<sup>391</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe* (New York: Doubleday, 1948), 444. For more on the Eisenhower-Truman relationship, see Irwin F. Gellman, *The President and the Apprentice: Eisenhower and Nixon, 1952-1961* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015); William Lee Miller, *Two Americans: Truman, Eisenhower, and a Dangerous World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012); Steve Neal, *Harry and Ike: The Partnership that Remade the Postwar World* (New York: Scribner, 2001).

was badly mismanaged, alarming budget deficits were spiraling out of control, and the administration was chock-full of disreputable characters. “Unworthy men . . . guide our destinies,” he wrote in his diary.<sup>392</sup>

On election day, Eisenhower won in a landslide. He received 55 percent of the popular vote and 442 electoral votes against Stevenson’s 44 percent and 89 electoral votes. On inauguration day, Eisenhower became the only president to lead the nation in prayer as part of his address. “Give us, we pray, the power to discern clearly right from wrong, and allow all our words and actions to be governed thereby,” he implored, before delivering an address that was replete with moral dichotomies and precepts. “The world and we have passed the midway point of a century of continuing challenge. We sense with all our faculties that forces of good and evil are massed and armed and opposed as rarely before in history.” The United States too had endured a time of recurring trial, passing through depression and war to a place of power and responsibility. And now mankind was confronted with the question if the light of peace was imminent or a new age of darkness. At such a point in history the nation needed to proclaim again its faith in eternal moral and natural laws. “We know that the virtues most cherished by free people - love of truth, pride of work, devotion to country - all are treasures equally precious in the lives of the most humble and of the most exalted.” Unity could only be achieved by discharging the duty that providence had placed upon the nation: “the responsibility of the free world’s leadership.” As free men, Americans carried a moral strength and would be guided by certain fixed principles including abhorring war, rejecting imperialism, and

---

<sup>392</sup> Eisenhower, April 27, 1951, in *The Eisenhower Diaries*, 193. For more on the scandals that beset the Truman administration, see Bert Cochran, *Harry Truman and the Crisis Presidency* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1973) and Andrew J. Dunar, *The Truman Scandals and the Politics of Morality* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1984).



promoting trade and security with all nations. Sacrifice would be necessary, for “it is the firm duty of each of our free citizens and of every free citizen everywhere to place the cause of his country before the comfort, the convenience of himself.” Furthermore, “a people that values its privileges above its principles soon loses both.”<sup>393</sup>

The cascade of moral platitudes extolling virtue, responsibility, restraint, sacrifice, and duty was not simply standard inaugural language for Eisenhower. Rather, the summons to moral stamina bespoke the creed of manhood Eisenhower inculcated from birth and believed to be the natural and only genuine order for every citizen. Fearing his address would be overlooked as mere banalities rather than as a genuine summons to dutiful citizens, Eisenhower explained near the end of his address, “these basic precepts are not lofty abstractions, far removed from matters of daily living. They are laws of spiritual strength that generate and define our material strength.”<sup>394</sup>

The virtue the new president called the nation’s citizenry toward was also the measuring stick he employed in selecting members for his Cabinet. “We can afford to have only those people in high political offices who cannot afford to take them,” he wrote in his diary and instructed those assisting him with appointments that no one seeking political office should be considered.<sup>395</sup> For some, such criteria would generate a cabinet composed of individuals of moderate means rather than those with large savings accounts that could be drawn upon during a period of government service. But for Eisenhower, executives of large corporations and businessmen who had amassed significant fortunes corroborated his nineteenth-century perspective that diligent labor would be rewarded

---

<sup>393</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Inaugural Address," January 20, 1953. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=9600> (accessed January 23, 2015).

<sup>394</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>395</sup> Eisenhower, January 5, 1953, *The Eisenhower Diaries*, 218.

with great success. He considered them to be self-made men who had proven their character by working hard and demonstrating perseverance, diligence, leadership, self-composure, and maturity. Accordingly, his cabinet was composed of, as *New Republic* quipped, “eight millionaires and one plumber.”<sup>396</sup> The president opened each of their meetings with prayer. Eisenhower particularly leaned on Secretary of State John Foster Dulles during international crises and Attorney General Herbert Brownell during domestic crises that the president viewed as moral dilemmas. However, others, including Winston Churchill, considered Dulles pompous, self-righteous, and painfully dull, while Brownell drew the ire of Southern segregationists for the moral imperative he saw in desegregation. No matter for Eisenhower, though, as his Cabinet met his only barometer of worthiness. “I like to be with them; I like to converse with them; I like their attitude toward their duty and toward governmental service.”<sup>397</sup>

The ascension of men to high office who prided themselves on fulfilling their duties in private and public life signaled the triumph of postwar dutiful manhood.<sup>398</sup> The longing for stability and traditional gender roles was particularly acute after the social disruptions of depression and war. Men who would forsake the masculine indulgences of the immediate past and take up the tasks of manhood proffered a path towards traditionalism and assurance that appealed to many in the early years of the cold war. Those disconsolate about the shedding of masculinity as the standard attire in which American men clothed themselves, found it futile to check the popular rush to install manhood’s premier prophet in the White House. For the man sent to the White House in 1952, the presidency represented another summons to duty and validated his character in

---

<sup>396</sup> “Washington Wire,” *New Republic*, December 15, 1952, 3.

<sup>397</sup> Eisenhower, January 18, 1954, *The Eisenhower Diaries*, 268.

the opinion of the nation. Similar to a Horatio Alger hero, who wore a new suit upon achieving success, the new president wore numerous suits, rarely the same one twice, perhaps indicating the pinnacle of achievement in American manhood.

CHAPTER FIVE  
CONTAINED MEN

A few months after his first inauguration, Eisenhower traveled to Oyster Bay, New York, to participate in the dedication ceremony of Sagamore Hill, the home of Theodore Roosevelt. Congress had passed a joint resolution designating the third week of June 1953, as “Theodore Roosevelt week” to honor the Rough Rider as “a spirited soldier, a farsighted statesman, an intrepid explorer, and a forceful writer.” Congress requested that the president call upon all Americans to pay tribute to the achievements and memory of TR during the week. Eisenhower signed the resolution at the Sagamore Hill dedication and then delivered a short speech about his presidential predecessor.

Eisenhower acknowledged the esteem with which his generation held Roosevelt, but then quickly warned his listeners of the tendency to “overdramatize” the “dramatic figures of the past.” The president speculated that Americans only think of Roosevelt as a Rough Rider; that as president he cowed Congress into submission by galloping on a charger with a drawn sabre down Pennsylvania Avenue, up Capitol Hill, and into the House and Senate chambers making demands. But Eisenhower was eager to correct any such notion of Roosevelt in his listener’s minds. “He was not a swashbuckler and he was not a bull in a china shop,” the president informed the crowd at Sagamore Hill. “He was a wise leader.”

Now that the audience was disabused of remembering their twenty-sixth president for his roughshod masculinity, the thirty-fourth president recast the war hero as a patient, consensus-building man who won over his political opponents not by violence or cursing, but rather “cajolery, “polite advance,” and “many breakfasts.” Eisenhower’s TR was “well-rounded,” a “great moral leader,” “possessed of great moral courage,” a principled man who understood his fellow human beings and their yearnings. His legacy was accomplished through “patient work” for “nothing was too mean for him to do” and “he had the stamina, the courage, the persistence to carry through.” The president concluded by calling on all Americans to dedicate themselves, like Roosevelt, to considering the common man, emulating his devotion to his fellow citizens, and adhering to the right. By doing so, all citizens would create “a little monument to America” as Roosevelt’s home now served to do.<sup>399</sup>

Fans of the masculine Rough Rider may have failed to recognize their hero upon the completion of Eisenhower’s speech. The very robustness and eccentric bravado that they esteemed in TR were the traits that Eisenhower indirectly denounced. By intentionally exaggerating and then dismissing a masculine caricature of Roosevelt, Eisenhower was able to dodge what could have been a humiliating contrast between himself and his predecessor: Roosevelt, the youngest president to date who personally had led troops in combat, versus Eisenhower, the oldest president to date whose military career was distinguished by administration rather than combat. Recasting the Rough Rider into a mature leader who exercised restraint, probity, and consensus effectively

---

<sup>399</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Remarks at the Dedication of the Theodore Roosevelt Home at Sagamore Hill, Oyster Bay, New York, as a National Shrine," June 14, 1953. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=9607> (accessed December 5, 2015)

privileged manhood at the expense of masculinity, dismounted Roosevelt from his charger, and placed him in a civilian suit much like the president who came to dedicate his home.

Eisenhower's taming of Roosevelt's reputation reflected postwar American eagerness to tame its wartime masculinity and dress it in a modest, responsible suit. The advent of the cold war along with the existential dangers of nuclear conflagration conditioned a desire for "domestic containment" at midcentury. Like the recently discovered powers of the atom, the hazards of masculinity (particularly sexual bravado) needed to be guarded, contained, and supervised. The gender and sexual upheavals of the war goaded postwar Americans to search for a venue to domesticate masculine sexuality and restore stability to marriages, family structures, gender roles, and heterosexual sex. It was to the suburban home that many World War II veterans and their families turned in the early years after the war for such stability. The ideal of a suburban ranch promised the long-denied pleasures of marriage, satisfying sex, family life, and convenience, even as it doubled as a bunker to shelter and contain restless males, and the dutiful men who resided there found a model of restraint and containment as well in the president they elected to lead them in an increasingly dangerous world.<sup>400</sup>

### **Masculinity Contained**

The Second World War, as well as the Korean stalemate that followed, changed many of the masculine men who were thrust into their theaters of combat. The soldiers

---

<sup>400</sup> My concept of contained manhood stems from Elaine Tyler May's examination of "domestic containment" discussed in her book, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 2008). Other works that examine the application of containment to the home front include Alan Nadel, *Containment Culture: American Narratives, Postmodernism, and the Atomic Age* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995) and Arnold Hirsch, "Containment on the Home Front: Race and Federal Housing Policy from the New Deal to the Cold War," *Journal of Urban History* (January 2000): 158-189.

who returned from both wars held few patriotic illusions regarding combat's purpose or their behavior in it. Speaking of World War II veterans, poet Karl Shapiro wrote, "we all came out of the same army and joined the same generation of silence."<sup>401</sup> Too horrified to speak of what they witnessed, GIs also worried they would be misunderstood by those who remained on the home front. Historian John Dippel identifies the war stories veterans were reluctant to share to include "failures of leaders to act wisely and in the best interests of their men, failures of soldiers to withstand harrowing combat conditions, failures of men to behave like decent human beings amid barbarous butchery, failures of husbands and fiancés to honor their pledges of faithfulness." All of it gave returning veterans "no great cause for pride or satisfaction." This generation of men "saw themselves as ordinary, imperfect men, eager to resume ordinary lives that had been interrupted by a trying but necessary interlude overseas. They wanted to look forward, not backward. And this was the country's mood, too."<sup>402</sup>

The unsettling gender and sexual maelstrom of World War II generated a significant amount of anxiety among civilians regarding returning veterans. What would the men be like when they returned? Would they organize and launch a revolution? Would they be psychotic killers unable to divest themselves of their combat training? Would they bring the murder, rape, and pillage of the battlefield back to the home front? "All wars are followed by periods of chaos and disillusionment," *The Ladies' Home Journal* warned in 1945. "This war, being the largest and worst in human history, leaves an inheritance of chaos at least as great as that following the fall of Rome, which plunged

---

<sup>401</sup> Karl Shapiro, *The Bourgeois Poet* (New York: Random House, 1964), 112.

<sup>402</sup> John V.H. Dippel, *War and Sex: A Brief History of Men's Urge for Battle* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 2010), 234-235.

civilization into the Dark Ages for five hundred years.”<sup>403</sup> Sociologist Robert Nisbet fretted that the release of males held within the disciplining confines of the army would create an effect that “may not inaptly be likened to an invasion by a race of overgrown children.”<sup>404</sup> Many observers looked back to the First World War and the Roaring Twenties that followed as evidence of soldiers unable to responsibly reintegrate into civilian life. The flagrant sexuality, female liberalization, and decadence of the decade were attributed to the war and the influence of returning veterans. “Sexual promiscuity, alcoholic excesses, perversions, and a general moral collapse are the almost inevitable concomitant of any ‘postwar period’,” two Marine psychiatrists fretted.<sup>405</sup>

A set of unique circumstances, however, precluded the fifties from replicating the twenties’ resurgence of masculine hegemony. The most significant difference was that the United States had just consecutively endured the two greatest crises of the century: the Great Depression and the Second World War. Both emergencies were long-lived. The nation remained mired in the Depression for nearly a decade and whereas United States’ involvement in World War I lasted for only a year and a half, World War II continued for almost four years. Four million American men served in the armed forces during the First World War, sixteen million in the Second. The extended period of deprivation, rationing, dislocation, and instability made the traditional male duties of breadwinning and domesticity much more attractive than before the twin crises. Veterans mustered-out in 1945 were not left to reassert a traditional masculine individualism on the postwar period

---

<sup>403</sup> Dorothy Thompson, “A Call to American Women,” *The Ladies Home Journal*, August 1945, 7.

<sup>404</sup> Robert A. Nisbet, “The Coming Problem of Assimilation,” *American Journal of Sociology* 50 no. 4 (January 1945): 266.

<sup>405</sup> Herbert I. Kupper and Robert H. Felix, *Back to Life: The Emotional Adjustment of our Veterans* (New York: Stratford Press, 1945), 161. For an additional source worrying about normalized males, see “Is Your Man Normal?” *Ladies’ Home Journal*, April 1946.



because War Department pamphlets and programs facilitated veteran readjustment toward the duties of work, marriage, and fatherhood. The GI Bill, as well as state veteran bonuses, coupled with a prosperous postwar economy, facilitated a smooth transition back to civilian life. Fears of atomic attack shaped a social order marked by probity, restraint, and responsibility. One author reassured returning vets that, despite forecasts that they would return from the war cursed with the “primitive traits of the jungle beasts,” a discharged soldier was “just a man home from the wars – mighty glad to be back and to settle down to domesticity for the rest of your days!”<sup>406</sup>

Discharged veterans were concerned more with restoring domestic stability than asserting a brash masculinity. Stable work, the nuclear family, and home ownership were the staples of mature and adjusted manhood at midcentury. Some would later find the duties attached to domestic normalcy suffocating, but for a generation of males who had been denied stability in these areas for years, the duties of manhood were more enticing than entangling. “My only desire is to be able to go home as soon as possible after the war ends,” one serviceman confessed. “In our duty to our country we haven’t failed her – but after it is all ended, our duty to our wives and children must be our first thought. My one plan is to pick up where I left off and establish a home for my family.”<sup>407</sup> A guidebook for the returning veteran observed, “while in the service, the thing which the average man desired most of all was to get the war over as quickly as possible and get home. His home was what he was fighting for in simplest terms, and that was where he wanted to return.” Once the fanfare of his homecoming had passed and a sense of routine

---

<sup>406</sup> Maxwell Droke, *Good-by to G.I.: How to be a successful civilian* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1945), 44, 51. For the common yearning for security among former GIs, see Oscar Handlin, “In a Time of Distrust: Yearning for Security,” *Atlantic Monthly*, January 1951, 25-27.

<sup>407</sup> Serviceman quoted in Robert Francis Saxe, *Settling Down: World War II Veterans’ Challenge to the Postwar Consensus* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 23.

had returned, the veteran's thoughts centered on "locating a good steady job" and "marrying that girl he had been writing to for so long and setting up a home of his own."<sup>408</sup>

A strong regard for self-control and restraint accompanied the aversion to masculine individualism and personal indulgence in adjustment literature. Subsuming a veteran's virility to the group, whether it be the office, home, neighborhood, or club, would facilitate successful readjustment and apply the discipline of selflessness a soldier learned in the army to civilian life. "It must always be remembered that a man's masculinity, individualism, adequacy, sexuality, even aggressiveness, which are necessary in making personal adaptation to our society, have all been altered by war," informed one manual. "His service life has taught him that for the common good he must forfeit his conscious individualism, his sense of self, and that his reward will be in becoming one of an 'outfit'."<sup>409</sup> "Groupism," "associationism," "togetherness," and "belongingness" all served as code words for recreating the fellowship of the army unit in civilian life. The tensions and risks of the cold war were so acute that group performance of duty negated rogue self-assertion. Journalist William Whyte later described the "organization man" as the male who sacrificed his individualism for "belongingness" and "togetherness," but commentators focused on readjusting veterans viewed these dynamics as applying military organization to civilian responsibilities.<sup>410</sup> Thus, *Soldier to Civilian* informed veterans that losing their individualism was part of their military service and

---

<sup>408</sup> James H. Bedford, *The Veteran and His Future Job* (Los Angeles: Society for Occupational Research, 1946), 5. Betty Friedan observed the same feelings among her contemporaries after the war. "We were all vulnerable, homesick, lonely, frightened. A pent-up hunger for marriage, home, and children was felt simultaneously by several different generations; a hunger which, in the prosperity of postwar America, everyone could suddenly satisfy." Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1963), 182-183.

<sup>409</sup> Kupper and Felix, *Back to Life*, 95.

<sup>410</sup> William H. Whyte Jr., *The Organization Man* (1956; repr., Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1957), 8, 60.

that, in order to attain “true emotional maturity,” they needed to realize they likewise belonged “to our family group, our school group, and our shop or office or work group” and also “to the rest of mankind.”<sup>411</sup> Military sociologist Willard Waller informed his readers, “though it may seem strange that a man should still be in need of learning discipline after a period of military service, it is nevertheless true. The discipline of military life, unfortunately but necessarily, is largely external, in contrast to the self-direction and self-control which civilian life demands.”<sup>412</sup>

The suburban home particularly served as a venue to contain masculine pursuits. A widespread housing shortage as well as low-interest GI Bill financing fueled the postwar flight to suburbia. An expanding highway system enabled white males to earn higher wages in the cities as well as escape urban vices by returning each night to a single-family dwelling. The suburban home was the consummate symbol of what Elaine Tyler May has called “domestic containment,” wherein postwar Americans found security and stability from the dangers of the atomic age in the home. “Within its walls, potentially dangerous social forces of the new age might be tamed, so they could contribute to the secure and fulfilling life to which postwar women and men aspired,” May writes in *Homeward Bound*. “More than merely a metaphor for the cold war on the home front, containment aptly describes the way in which public policy, personal behavior, and even political values were focused on the home.”<sup>413</sup> Many postwar

---

<sup>411</sup> George K. Pratt, *Soldier to Civilian: Problems of Readjustment* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1944), 37-38.

<sup>412</sup> Willard Waller, *The Veteran Comes Back* (New York: Dryden, 1944), 296. Clark Davis argues corporatization of America in the postwar period also sapped men of their entrepreneurial self-made independence and that they associated themselves more with the corporate group. Clark Davis, “The Corporate Reconstruction of Middle-Class Manhood,” in *The Middling Sorts: Explorations in the History of the American Middle Class*, ed. Burton J. Bledstein and Robert D. Johnston (New York: Routledge, 2001).

<sup>413</sup> May, *Homeward Bound*, 16.

commentators suggested the Soviet Union would attempt to destabilize the United States through fifth-column movements on the home front by undermining marriage, parenting, gender, sexual, and class traditions. Therefore, strengthening the home front by restraining masculine indulgence came to be seen as domestic as well as national security.<sup>414</sup>

Yet, postwar suburbia could not completely force a man to deny his masculine inclinations. *Woman's Home Companion* reminded wives, "a man in a gray-flannel suit is also a man."

For two or three years he lived as undomesticated men do live: without the bills and taxes perhaps, living among other men and not inhibiting man's natural impulse to obscene language and obscene storytelling, seeing men die and perhaps expecting to die himself, free in the sense that he often had no idea what the next day would bring. And free, if he wished, to lie on his bunk evenings, to think and dream.

There are certain deep and perfectly normal masculine drives that were 'permitted' during a war as they are not permitted in a suburban back yard. They are an inborn attraction to violence and obscenity and polygamy, an inborn love of change, an inborn need to be different from the others and rebel against them, a strong need for the occasional company of men only and an occasional need for solitude and privacy.

Certainly all men do not feel these drives to the same degree. And certainly these drives shouldn't all be permitted in that clean, green, happy back yard. But if they are always and completely inhibited – the man in the gray flannel suit will stop being a man.<sup>415</sup>

It was therefore necessary for the suburban home to provide contained masculine pleasures for restless dutiful males to satisfy in measure their heroic inclinations. Gray-flannelled males could long for the exotic adventures experienced by masculine heroes on TV, in the movies, or on the ball field, but their duties as husbands, fathers, and

---

<sup>414</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>415</sup> Louis Lyndon, "Uncertain Hero: The Paradox of the American Male," *Woman's Home Companion*, November 1956, 107.

employees quickly demanded their attention.<sup>416</sup> Historian James Gilbert has labeled this participation in heroic masculinity from a distance as “spectator masculinity.”<sup>417</sup> The decade’s mass purchase of billiard tables, home bars, sports equipment, record players, and televisions effectively relocated the billiard hall, barroom, ballpark, dancehall, and movie theater to the home shorn of seedy characters and temptations. Home improvement, family vacations, playing with the children, and manning a backyard barbecue provided suburban males with an abundance of activity and distraction. “When a barbecue goes into operation, it automatically becomes a masculine project,” noted *Esquire* magazine’s *Handbook for Hosts*. “After all, outdoor cooking is a man’s job.”<sup>418</sup>

Sexuality, more than any other demonstration of masculine virility, was to be exclusively contained in the home. Most readers were shocked by the conclusions Alfred Kinsey published in his two studies of American sexuality, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (1953). Kinsey made staggering claims about the extent of premarital, extramarital, and homosexual sex Americans were practicing and he seemed to have the bar graphs and tables to prove it.

---

<sup>416</sup> Michael Kimmel writes, “In the 1950s, as for over a century, it was to fantasy that middle-class men turned. So long as they remained reliable breadwinners and devoted dads, they could become wild and adventurous consumers, savoring real men’s ‘true’ adventures or grabbing fantasy thrills with traditional heroes like cowboys or with those delinquents with hearts of gold that Hollywood was fond of creating. It appeared that the more boring and dull the routine of men’s work became, the more exciting and glamorous were their fantasies of escape.” Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Free Press, 2011), 252.

<sup>417</sup> James Gilbert, *Men in the Middle: Searching for Masculinity in the 1950s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 31.

<sup>418</sup> “When a barbecue” quoted in Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 246. Others, however, believed the suburbs provided few true masculine enjoyments and ultimately divested a masculine male of his individualism. Urban booster Lewis Mumford described suburbia as “a multitude of uniform, unidentifiable houses, lined up inflexibly, at uniform distances, on uniform roads, in a treeless communal waste, inhabited by people of the same class, the same income, the same age group, witnessing the same television performances, eating the same tasteless pre-fabricated foods, from the same freezers, conforming in every outward and inward respect to a common mold, manufactured in the central metropolis.” See Lewis Mumford, *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1961), 486.

The sexual destabilization of the Depression and war brought a renewed reverence for traditional sex attitudes and marginalized the Roaring Twenties philanderer, the Depression's absentee father, and the discharged wartime homosexual. "The containment of sexuality permeated the full spectrum of American culture in the decade following the war," writes literary scholar Alan Nadel.<sup>419</sup> Nineteenth-century manhood viewed nocturnal emissions with suspicion and castigated young males who slipped into masturbation. Manhood's mid-twentieth century equivalent tolerated such personal behaviors, reserving greater condemnation for more socially-destabilizing sex practices such as premarital sex, bastardy, adultery, prostitution, and homosexuality. Such promiscuous behaviors, along with the venereal diseases males could contract, were evidence of sexual immaturity, an absence of self-control, and symptoms of "the tensions and hidden frustrations from which the swaggering Don Juan is suffering."<sup>420</sup> Commentators encouraged an exhausted masculine sexuality to take a reprieve as they simultaneously affirmed, celebrated, and demanded manly sexuality at midcentury.<sup>421</sup>

---

<sup>419</sup> Alan Nadel, *Containment Culture: American Narratives, Postmodernism, and the Atomic Age* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 117.

<sup>420</sup> "Promiscuity and VD," *The Ladies Home Journal*, August 1945, 6.

<sup>421</sup> Social worker Maurice Karpf wrote that "the man who frequents houses of prostitution rarely if ever develops the idea of self-control with respect to his sexual appetite or need. There is scarcely a human need or craving which is not controlled at one time or another and which, if not controlled, does not lead to excess with destructive consequences. This is true of food, drink, smoking, working, sleeping, exercise, etc." In reference to prostitution, Karpf wrote, "It is something of a reflection on the sex appeal and Don Juan abilities and proclivities of young men to have to resort to prostitutes." See Maurice J. Karpf, "The Effects of Prostitution on Marital Sex Adjustment," *Marriage and Family Living* 15, no. 1 (February 1953): 65, 69. Adjustment author John Mariano observed that sexual anxiety due to separation was managed through nocturnal emission, masturbation, and infidelity. He called nocturnal emissions "natural and harmless," masturbation "incomplete and immature," and infidelity "the biggest of all the sexual problems of separation" and "almost impossible to avoid emotional and moral judgment about it." See John H. Mariano, *The Veteran and His Marriage* (New York: Council on Marriage Relations, 1945), 48, 49, 53. Likewise, E. Howard Kitching wrote, "adultery is still rightly censured by society as a whole, because its condonation threatens the whole civilized structure." See E. Howard Kitching, *Sex Problems of the Returned Veteran* (New York: Emerson, 1946), 54.

Restraining masculine impulses through domestication was also a recurring theme in midcentury films. Alan Nadel has demonstrated how several fifties films placed the onus on females to domesticate males by redirecting their masculine energies towards preserving domestic harmony. Thus, Lady, in Disney's animated *Lady and the Tramp* (1955), inspires the street mutt, Tramp, to protect her owner's newborn by killing a rat which secures for the stray male a proper license and home. In *The Ten Commandments* (1956), the Egyptian prince Moses forsakes the display of his muscular chest and Nefretiri's cleavage for a Hebrew robe and beard alongside his modest, but enticing wife Sephora to become God's lawgiver for his fellow Hebrews.<sup>422</sup>

*North by Northwest* (1959) likewise dismisses the appeal of bachelor sexual freedom by hyper-sexualizing domesticity and married sex.<sup>423</sup> Confusion in gender roles prevails at the beginning of the film as Roger Thornhill (Cary Grant) is an emasculated, self-consumed, domestic failure whose self-protection inhibits any sense of larger duty than to himself. When first confronted with the opportunity to aid his country by taking on the role of a secret agent, Thornhill absconds saying, "I'm an advertising man, not a red herring. I've got a job, a secretary, a mother, two ex-wives and several bartenders that depend upon me, and I don't intend to disappoint them all by getting myself 'slightly' killed." Eve Kendall's (Eva Marie Saint) sex appeal, however, forces Thornhill to acknowledge his disingenuousness because she is "that type" – the type that is honest and exposes his dishonesty. Thornhill reveals that his dishonesty is most acute when he meets an attractive woman and has to pretend he has no desire to make love to her. "What

---

<sup>422</sup> Nadel, *Containment Culture*, 104-106, 117-154.

<sup>423</sup> My reflections on *North by Northwest* and its implications for dutiful manhood are inspired and influenced by Steven Cohan's reflections on the film in *Masked Men: Masculinity and the Movies in the Fifties* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 1-33.

makes you think you have to conceal it?” Kendall asks. When Thornhill responds the woman may find it objectionable, Kendall responds “then again, she might not.” Thus, it is Kendall’s sexual allure or hyper-femininity that exposes Thornhill’s absence of true manhood. She awakens in him what his over-bearing mother cannot. When the enticing dinner conversation evolves into flirtatious foreplay in Kendall’s sleeping car, Thornhill confesses, “When I was a little boy, I wouldn’t even let my mother undress me.” “Well, you’re a big boy now,” is Kendall’s alluring reply.

Yet, it becomes evident that Kendall will not be another sexual fling for Thornhill. She is looking for more than a fleeting encounter to satisfy a male’s sexual ego. She calls forth Thornhill’s manhood because she also is a victim of gender role dislocation. She has become a saucy secret agent because men like him have not fulfilled their duties. When Thornhill asks what is wrong with men like him, Kendall points out, “they don’t believe in marriage.” Begging to differ, Thornhill abjures he has been married twice. “See what I mean?” Kendall responds. Men like him who have failed to meet their responsibilities in the home and fulfill their duty to defend the country have compelled fertile females to play the man’s role.

Kendall’s arousing body fits the matrix of the female body that reinforced the “fertility fever” of the 1950s. Gabriele Dietze points out that the regions of the female body most associated with fertility, hips and breasts, were accentuated in the decade to reinforce contemporary expectations and duties assigned to the female body.<sup>424</sup> Curvy hips and large breasts eroticized the female body’s role in reproduction. Kendall’s physical maturity draws Thornhill away from his previous “dull” marriages and the

---

<sup>424</sup> Gabriele Dietze, “Gender Topography of the Fifties: Mickey Spillane and the Post-World War II Masculinity Crises,” *American Studies* 43, no. 4 (1998): 653.



enmeshed relationship he conducts with his mother towards a new sexually-charged domesticity. In their prelude to lovemaking, which Kendall teases but does not yield, she remarks, “I’m a big girl.” “Yeah,” Thornhill responds, “and in all the right places, too.”

Kendall sufficiently arouses Thornhill’s manhood so that as the film draws to a close, he takes on the heroic agent role (crafting escapes, fighting adeptly) and Kendall assumes the vulnerable position Thornhill exhibited at the beginning of the movie. As the hero and heroine scurry across Mount Rushmore seeking escape, heroic because they are restored to their proper gender identities, Thornhill remarks, “if we ever get out of this alive, let’s go back to New York on the train together, alright?” “Is that a proposition?” Kendall asks. “It’s a proposal, sweetie!” is the reply. The symbolism is clear. The nation’s security is at risk. All will not be secure until men fulfill their duties, reestablish gender stability, and rescue the nation and women who hang perilously off the edge. The dutiful hero draws Kendall up from the ledge of the monument and into the safety of their marriage bed on the train with the bidding, “Come along Mrs. Thornhill.” A man has responded to the call of duty in no small part because of the promise of a sexually-fulfilling marriage.

### **Manhood Sheltered**

No other venue was more important in postwar America for containing masculinity and nurturing manhood than the suburban home. Suburban boosters and developers began trumpeting the virtues and value of a family dwelling even before the end of the war. An advertisement for *Better Homes and Gardens* promised returning soldiers a better life through housing. “All the fighting power of their nation is directed towards securing, for them and their children, the one thing in life they value most: a

happy and livable home. . . . The home is the sound and constructive force, the builder of national character.” The same advertisement enumerated the key parts of a modern home. “A new and better room for Junior, a den for dad. New furniture for the living room. A glassed in porch. . . . A housewife’s faith that gay flowers can continue to bloom, year after year, in a little garden forever safe from the violation of a conqueror’s boots.”<sup>425</sup> Thus, a carefully planned layout was crucial in reinforcing each member’s age and gender role and securing the promise of a refuge from the threats of the outside world including infidelity, homosexuality, and delinquency. “In its idealized form,” Elaine Tyler May writes, “the home would contain sexual enjoyment, material comfort, well-adjusted children, and evidence of personal success for husbands and wives who performed well their clearly defined roles.”<sup>426</sup>

The demand for housing, particularly single-family homes in suburbia, was unprecedented after World War II. An incredible ninety-eight percent of American cities reported housing shortages in 1945. Ninety percent reported a shortage of apartments. Two years after the end of the war, six million families were still “doubling up” with relatives or friends. Depression-era cutbacks in housing materials and construction were felt acutely in the forties made worse by wartime rationing and the focus on munitions production.<sup>427</sup>

The end of the war and the consequent flood of returning veterans seeking to marry and start a family apart from extended family networks, however, jumpstarted the stagnant market and initiated a massive building campaign. Housing starts jumped from

---

<sup>425</sup> Advertisement cited in Rosalyn Baxandall and Elizabeth Ewen, *Picture Windows: How the Suburbs Happened* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 83.

<sup>426</sup> May, *Homeward Bound*, 175.

<sup>427</sup> *Ibid.*, 160-161.

114,000 in 1944 to a remarkable 1,692,000 in 1950. The suburban population, which experienced eighty-three percent of the nation's growth, doubled from 36 million in 1950 to 74 million 1970. A record 1.65 million housing starts occurred in 1955 and remained at a million and a half for the rest of the decade. Two-thirds of the homes constructed during this period were private, single-family dwellings that increased from 800 to 1,240 square feet and sold for an average price of \$14,585. According to the Housing and Home Finance Agency in 1950, almost fifty percent of the homebuyers were World War II veterans who had young children and had run out of space in their apartments and sought the independence and privacy of the suburbs. The other large group of buyers was slightly older and moved to a new home because of a job change, more space, a higher income, or a desire to escape the cities.<sup>428</sup>

Mid-century manhood promoters did not exhibit the same disdain for the city as their nineteenth-century counterparts, yet traditional suspicions regarding corrupting urban influences on young men were not entirely absent. The burgeoning suburbs enabled residents to laud small-town life and to connect their neighborhoods with more rural spaces of the past. "The central city is passing the crest of its importance in society . . . the retreat from the city is under way," rural booster H. Clay Tate declared with exuberance. Nine out of the nation's ten largest cities lost population between 1950 and 1960. Although the flight from the city to the country or outlying areas was not as dynamic as its opposite was a half-century earlier, the impetus was "due to the desire of people to escape from the dirt, smoke, crime, and high taxes of cities." Tate believed the

---

<sup>428</sup> *Ibid.*, 161-162, 185; Clifford E. Clark, Jr., "Ranch-House Suburbia: Ideals and Realities," in *Recasting America: Culture and Politics in the Age of Cold War*, ed. Lary May (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 183. See also Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), chapters 11 and 13.

non-metropolitan center was the “community of the future” and preached its virtues in a chapter titled “Small Town to the Rescue.” In small cities and towns the “good life” could be found and “here and here alone can the values upon which the nation was founded and nurtured be revived and perpetuated.”<sup>429</sup> In a similar vein, *The Nation* reported in 1956 that suburban residents were attending church in large numbers practicing a diluted and platitudinous religion that was distinctly suburban in its values.<sup>430</sup>

The good life, defined as home ownership in the suburbs, was exactly what William J. Levitt promised to World War II veterans looking to settle down in work, marriage, and family life. Levitt, and the company his father started, built three large suburban developments in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, all originally named Levittown. Levitt applied the efficiency of the assembly line to construction by hiring subcontractors to perform single repetitive tasks on each home, preparing as many parts as possible away from the lots, and standardizing floor plans, doors, windows, kitchen appliances, bathroom plumbing, roofing materials, and landscaping accoutrements. Levitt claimed that during peak production his company was producing a new house every twenty-four minutes. Levitt-style subdivisions accounted for seventy-five percent of all housing starts by 1955. By avoiding union labor and relying on government-financed mortgages, Levitt made home ownership accessible to middle and working-class families with homes at the previously unthinkable price of \$10,000. Many

---

<sup>429</sup> H. Clay Tate, *Building a Better Home Town: A Program of Community Self-analysis and Self-help* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954), 3-4, 12. Tate doubted the suburbs would provide the values or renewal that the nation needed because of the frenzied commutes, mass consumption, and hectic schedules that consumed its residents. Tate believed the future belonged to more isolated cities and towns such as Bloomington, Indiana.

<sup>430</sup> Stanley Rowland, Jr., “Suburbia Buys Religion,” *The Nation*, July 28, 1956, 78-80. *The Atlantic Monthly* described the new piety as “a gospel of smooth adjustment,” characterized by patriotism and peace of mind as well as anti-intellectualism and moral complacency. See Harry C. Meserve, “The New Piety,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, June 1955, 34-37.

mortgages in a Levittown averaged only sixty-five dollars per month. As architecture critic Paul Goldberger has noted, “Levittown houses were social creations more than architectural ones – they turned the detached, single-family house from a distant dream to a real possibility for thousands of middle-class American families.”<sup>431</sup> Levitt believed there was a moral imperative to promoting home ownership, remarking, “No man who owns his own house and lot can be a Communist. He has too much to do.”<sup>432</sup> Thus, a family that would live in one of his developments would follow his imperatives, which included a prohibition against fences, drying clothes outdoors on clotheslines, and failure to mow the lawn. Levitt’s company would cut the grass of slacking husbands and then send them the bill.<sup>433</sup>

Residents in a Levittown seem to have taken their developer’s expectations to heart and sought to create a community of dutiful, patriotic residents eager to take advantage of the opportunity home ownership provided to prove their responsibility. Many Levittown males were veterans who now worked as managers, professionals, salesmen, skilled workers, and small businessmen, and the culture of obligation that suffused their workplaces was also endemic in a Levittown. In August 1954, *The Saturday Evening Post* reported that most Levittowners were young, able, and responsible. Males heading up a young family were under thirty, with children under five, earned less than \$4,000 a year, and held a good credit rating. “They are not, of course, by any means all perfect,” the *Post* reminded its readers. “But by every comparative standard, the crime rate is very low, and it fairly can be said that no city ever had better

---

<sup>431</sup> Goldberger quoted in Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 236.

<sup>432</sup> Levitt quoted in Eric Larrabee, “The Six Thousand Houses that Levitt Built,” *Harpers*, September 1948, 84.

<sup>433</sup> Baxandall and Ewen, *Picture Windows*, 124-125, 137; Michael J. Bennett, *When Dreams Came True: The GI Bill and the Making of Modern America* (Dulles, Virginia: Brassey’s, 1996), 295-296.

human material.” The popular magazine warned Levittown would only be a beautiful city if “its people, individually and collectively, carry out the responsibilities of good citizenship. The alternative, which can be brought about by individual laziness and collective indifference, could be one of the biggest, most depressing slums in history.”<sup>434</sup> One resident, Beth Dalton of Levittown, New York, identified the values of her development to be the same as those of returned veterans. She explained, “You know, Leavitt built the houses. It’s the vets that moved in that created Levittown. He just built houses. They’re the ones, it’s their values and energy that created this community.”<sup>435</sup>

The very design of Cape Cods and ranches in a Levittown and other suburbs reinforced role expectations for the family unit and its constituent members. “The ideal home,” the *New York Times* declared in 1948, “is planned for the family as a whole, for its social hours together, and the privacy of each person as well.”<sup>436</sup> Traditional gender roles, the supervision of children, and the attention to family privacy were all reinforced by the consumerism, comfort, and convenience the dwellings conveyed. Levitt constructed four and one-half room Cape Cods in the New York Levittown in 1947 and 1948 that featured a kitchen and living room in the front and two bedrooms with a bath in the rear. The unfinished attic was expandable as was the entire house for an additional bedroom, den, porch, or garage. Shrubs, fruit, and shade trees landscaped the lot. The more popular ranch Levitt introduced in 1949 closely resembled its predecessor except it was fifty square feet larger and, while keeping the kitchen in the front, rotated the living room to the back placing the two bedrooms to one side. Both models gave priority to the

---

<sup>434</sup> Craig Thompson, “Growing Pains of a Brand-New City,” *The Saturday Evening Post*, August 7, 1954, 27.

<sup>435</sup> Dalton quoted in Baxandall and Ewen, *Picture Windows*, 157.

<sup>436</sup> Mary Roche, “Planned for the Whole Family,” *New York Times*, February 22, 1948.

housewife as the administrator of domestic life enabling her to simultaneously cook in the kitchen, supervise children in the living room or front yard, utilize modern kitchen appliances, operate the included Bendix washing machine, and oversee programming on the also included Admiral television set. The living room served as a common area to entertain visitors and for children to play, listen to the radio, and do homework. The living room also promoted family togetherness as a place to work, talk, relax, or watch television. The private area, which included two bedrooms and a bathroom, was a space males could retreat to complete unfinished work from the job, find some quiet from the children in the front of the house, or seek privacy for sexual intimacy. Historian Clifford Clark has pointed out that the suburban ranch contributed to the erosion of the nineteenth-century emphasis on distinct masculine and feminine spaces in the home and replaced it with an ideal of family togetherness and harmony. Spaces that had the potential of becoming strictly masculine spaces such as garages, attics, basements, or porches were often shared with female duties such as washing, drying, ironing, sewing, and storage of children's toys.<sup>437</sup>

If the ranch did not offer suburban males an exclusively masculine space, the simplicity, functionality, and informality of the entire dwelling invoked the American West as a frontier retreat from the stresses of work and the temptations of the city.<sup>438</sup> "The prairies around New York are cluttering up," the editor of *Harper's* proclaimed in

---

<sup>437</sup> Clark Jr., "Ranch-House Suburbia" in May, 171-191. See also John Mack Faragher, "Bungalow and Ranch House: The Architectural Backwash of California," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (Summer 2001): 149-173.

<sup>438</sup> "The ranch house, in its newly cloaked version of wood frame and board and batten siding, evoked in Americans the image of something unique to this country. It was the American western frontier symbolized in a clean-cut modern package. Folklore indicated the rancher was a product of ranches in the American West, and nobody saw a need to argue otherwise." Roger A. Clouser, "The Ranch House in America" (PhD diss., University of Kansas, 1984), 128.

1952.<sup>439</sup> The rustic illusions of the ranch, which could include large picture windows, decorative fences, patios located away from the street, small orchards of dwarf avocado, lemon, orange, and lime trees, private leisure areas such as backyards and swimming pools, a workshop attached to the garage, and a barbecue on the lanai, gave males a sense of being closer to nature and a part of a rural landscape. In contrast to 1920s bungalows, which featured welcoming porches that reached out towards the street, the fifties ranch hung back from the street and the hedges, walls, and low-hanging roofs gave the house, as Elaine Tyler May points out, “a sheltered, self-contained look.”<sup>440</sup>

Males may have struggled to carve out their own gendered space in a suburban ranch, but they were not forgotten when it came to its maintenance. Home improvement, billed as do-it-yourself projects, provided suburban males another duty to perform that would strengthen the structure of the home as well as the family unit itself. In an article titled, “America Rediscovered its Hands,” *The American Magazine* reported in 1953, “men and women everywhere who never drove a nail or hanged a faucet washer are now undertaking every conceivable type of manual task.” Some of the projects were small, some overly ambitious, and others riddled with mistakes, yet “most of today’s amateur craftsmen accomplish at least something worth while, and not a few of them complete really magnificent undertakings.” In 1952, home craftsmen spent a record sum of \$3.5 million for lumber, plywood, tools, paints, and other building materials. Homeowners purchased eighty percent of all hand tools, eighty percent of paint, and seventy percent of wallpaper. The article also observed women taking up home-decorating and wealthier

---

<sup>439</sup> Frederick Lewis Allen, “After Hours,” *Harper’s*, October 1952, 98.

<sup>440</sup> Irene Moore, “A Proper Dream House for any Veteran,” *House Beautiful*, January 1945, 34; Elaine Tyler May, “Shelter Me: The Suburban Dream in Cold War America,” in *Maynard L. Parker: Modern Photography and the American Dream*, ed. Jennifer Watts (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 140.



women doing their own housework as well as their own permanents instead of going to the beauty shop. Even better, family members were not working independently on their projects. “In thousands of homes, parents and children are working together at creative tasks, and thus tightening the ties which hold their families together.” The article went on to beam, “nobody knows how many cases of juvenile delinquency have been nipped in the bud by the reappearance of home workshops, or how many divorces have been prevented because husband and wife got together to do some interesting work project.” Such family projects proffered the hope of Americans becoming “a happier, healthier, more stable people.”<sup>441</sup> *Popular Mechanics* commenced a series of articles in May 1951 on building your own ranch. The magazine’s cover featured a husband and wife working side by side on the construction of their future home.<sup>442</sup>

The ideal of togetherness that the ranch as a western retreat encouraged, the suburban living room jumpstarted, and the duty of home improvement necessitated was expected to continue in the home’s more private area of the bedroom.<sup>443</sup> “Separation gravely threatens the ‘us’ which is the creation of marriage and which is vital to it and to both partners,” wrote the author of *Sex Problems of the Returned Veteran*. “It threatens both the feeling of emotional security and companionship, and the physical and emotional satisfaction of the sexual appetite, which are inseparably bound up with the ‘us’.”<sup>444</sup> Mid-twentieth century American attitudes towards sex had moved a significant distance from the suspicions that lingered in the nineteenth-century regarding the

---

<sup>441</sup> Phil Creden, “America Rediscovered its Hands,” *The American Magazine*, December 1953, 21, 111, 115.

<sup>442</sup> Tom Riley, “How I Built the Popular Mechanics Ranch House,” *Popular Mechanics*, May 1951, 154-165.

<sup>443</sup> For an examination of the medical profession’s role in defining normal heterosexuality, see Carolyn H. Lewis, *Prescription for Heterosexuality: Sexual Citizenship in the Cold War Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

<sup>444</sup> Kitching, *Sex Problems of the Returned Veteran*, 35.

pleasures of sex and its purpose apart from conception. Surveys at midcentury revealed that middle-class couples placed a heightened emphasis on a fulfilling sex life in marriage.<sup>445</sup> Marriage counselors and psychologists preached the importance of regular, satisfying, marital sex for the containment of male impulses, the strength of the marriage, and the stability of the domestic order. A sexually satisfied male in the home would result in additional moral benefits such as fewer sex crimes, a reduced divorce rate, reduced medical expenses, fewer abortions, less venereal disease, a decrease in homosexuality, and a reduction in teenage pregnancies. Perhaps most importantly, males who regularly enjoyed fulfilling marital sex would be less inclined to cavort with seductive women working for the communists.<sup>446</sup>

Male sexual enjoyment, however, also carried with it responsibilities. The marital duty included a very specific duty. To promote consensual sexual satisfaction, a husband held the obligation to bring his wife to orgasm not for the purpose of masculine braggadocio, but rather as a demonstration of manly self-control and maturity. Noting this distinction regarding the husband's role in the wife's orgasm, *Marriage and Family Living* observed, "virility used to be conceived as a unilateral expression of male sexuality, but is regarded today in terms of the ability to evoke a full sexual response on the part of the female. Men as the dominant group feel the strains of accommodating to the changing status of the minority group, and meeting the challenge presented by the

---

<sup>445</sup> John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 268.

<sup>446</sup> Frank S. Caprio, *The Adequate Male* (New York: Medical Research Press, 1952), 28. Elaine Tyler May explains, "The logic went as follows: National strength depended upon the ability of strong, manly men to stand up against communist threats. It was not simply a matter of general weakness leading to a soft foreign policy; rather sexual excesses or degeneracy would make individuals easy prey for communist tactics. According to the common wisdom of the time, 'normal' heterosexual behavior culminating in marriage represented 'maturity' and 'responsibility'; therefore, those who were 'deviant' were, by definition, irresponsible, immature, and weak. It followed that men who were slaves to their passions could easily be duped by seductive women who worked for the communists." May, *Homeward Bound*, 91.

sexual emancipation of women.”<sup>447</sup> Unlike masculine sexual prowess, that was predicated on aggression and power, containing baser impulses and demonstrating mature reserve characterized manly sexual skill. “The thoughtful and considerate husband will study his wife’s sensitivities and responses and will do those things and exercise the type of self-control which will give his wife the greatest degree of pleasure. This is usually the only way and a definite prerequisite to a good sexual adjustment,” the journal declared in another article.<sup>448</sup> Husbands who attempted to duck their responsibility to satisfy their wives behind charges of frigidity were not allowed to escape. “There are few truly frigid women,” sex therapist Frank Caprio wrote in *The Adequate Male*. “Many wives who are accused of being frigid have never been aroused sufficiently by their husbands. The sexual blunders which these ‘clumsy lovers’ commit tax the imagination.” Caprio explained that in a normal marriage no wife wanted to dominate her husband. Rather, she seeks a husband “who is mature, who assumes the necessary responsibilities of family life, and is considerate of her opinions in arriving at important decisions.” If husbands understood that for a woman to respond sexually “she cannot be subjected to abuse and mistreatment” then “the incidence of frigidity among wives would be decreased considerably.” Caprio made it clear whose duty it was to bring a wife sexual satisfaction. “The sexual awakening of the wife is his responsibility.”<sup>449</sup>

---

<sup>447</sup> Helen M. Hacker, “The New Burdens of Masculinity,” *Marriage and Family Living* 19, no. 3 (August 1957): 231.

<sup>448</sup> Maurice J. Karpf, “The Effects of Prostitution on Martial Sex Adjustment,” *Marriage and Family Living* 15, no. 1 (February 1953): 67.

<sup>449</sup> Caprio, *The Adequate Male*, 15, 65, 86. Jessamyn Neuhaus has identified a shift in post-World War II sex manuals that reassigned the responsibility for the wife’s orgasm from the husband to the wife herself. Neuhaus argues that, in a reversal from pre-World War II manuals in which a wife’s inability to experience orgasm was blamed on a husband’s poor technique, fifties manuals placed the blame on the frigidity of the wife. My sources seem to indicate the opposite. Conflicting advice would seem to indicate a continuation of placing the female’s orgasm as the duty of the male. See Jessamyn Neuhaus, “The Importance of Being

Ideally, a wife sexually fulfilled in the home would be disinclined to search for pleasure elsewhere and would be settled in the home where she could fulfill her duty to support her husband. The experience of suburban women in the fifties was varied and more fluid than a simple generalization of the traditional housewife, but a general imperative for women to stay at home and support their dutiful husbands is discernible in the decade.<sup>450</sup> Prompted by adjustment literature to ease and facilitate their husband's return from the war, women were further encouraged to support their husband's discharge of duties while raising responsible and self-controlled sons. In an address to advertising executives titled "The Wife of the Man in the Gray Flannel Suit," Madeleine Heiskell, the wife of *Life* magazine's publisher, reminded wives of the benefits they enjoyed. "Let's think of the *advantages* we have. We have husbands! Ever stop to think what it would be like to be single again? (Horrors!) To wake up in the middle of the night – as I used to when I was a career girl – and have those nightmarish fears of growing older, alone and unloved." Furthermore, the wives of organization men could rejoice that they had children, financial security, and labor-saving appliances and conveniences to lighten the burden of housework. Because "all human happiness and contentment lies in the love of man and woman" and "all family happiness stem from that relationship," Heiskell labeled the struggle of business executives to find quality times with their wives

---

Orgasmic: Sexuality, Gender, and Marital Sex Manuals in the United States, 1920-1963," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 9, no. 4 (October 2000): 447-473.

<sup>450</sup> Joanne Meyerowitz writes in the introduction to her series of essays on postwar women, "While no serious historian can deny the conservatism of the postwar era or the myriad constraints that women encountered, an unrelenting focus on women's subordination erases much of the history of the postwar years." Joanne Meyerowitz, ed., *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 4. Additional sources that challenge the homogenous housewife narrative of the fifties include Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (New York: Basic Books, 1992); Benita Eisler, *Private Lives: Men and Women of the Fifties* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1986); Joel Foreman, ed., *The Other Fifties: Interrogating Midcentury American Icons* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997).

as “the American Tragedy.” The solution Heiskell recommended was for wives to forsake any type of career that further detracts her time and attention away from supporting her husband. “Wives should ideally try and limit their activities to that time of day when their husbands, too, are occupied.” Heiskell also urged husbands to evaluate if all their business appointments were necessary to deprive them of time with their wives, nevertheless Heiskell clearly placed the onus on wives to promote greater marital togetherness. “It won’t hurt us so much if we are *aware* of the danger, and take our own very feminine steps to minimize it, and if we remember always that marriage is being *with each other*, Gray Flannel Suit, or no.”<sup>451</sup>

Gray flannel was not strictly for dutiful males at midcentury. Gray flannel suits were also marketed to women, providing a sartorial medium to convey seriousness, maturity, and importance. *Ladies’ Home Journal* included a fashion feature in the April 1957 issue titled “A Suit of Importance.” The piece described a woman’s gray flannel suit as the “basis of a spring wardrobe” and advised women to “wear clear yellows with gray flannel” with “cork beige for casual accents.” The feature explained how a gray flannel suit was “a suit of many changes” and how women could modify and adapt their suit to accommodate different parts of the day as well as a multitude of settings.<sup>452</sup> The suit thus served for men and women as the uniform of probity and restraint at midcentury as well as the uniform to execute the duties of each respective gender. This is not to say, however, that despite the suit’s sobriety, it did not also project a sexual potency for male as well as female wearers. Indeed, the female suit beckoned the same disrobing as the traditional housedress. The rigidity and reticence of the suit, along with the rest of the

---

<sup>451</sup> Mrs. Andrew Heiskell (née Madeleine Carroll), “The Wife of the Man in the Gray Flannel Suit,” *Tide*, May 23, 1958, 38-39.

<sup>452</sup> Ruth Mary Packard, “A Suit of Importance” (fashion feature), *Ladies’ Home Journal*, April 1957, 82.

postwar female fashion industry, propelled, according to historian Anne Hollander, “female sexual fantasy back into the vast world of erotic submission and narcissism disguised as modesty, the world of long hair bound up only to be unbound, of tightly girdled waists waiting for male deliverance, of myriad skirts hiding the prizes.”<sup>453</sup> A suit worn by a male or female in the suburbs did not prevent sexual gratification. It was a symbol of its containment.

### **Manhood Enforced**

Eisenhower and the vision he cast for his administration celebrated and articulated support for the contained citizen. He believed the virtues of restraint and selflessness that were critical during the war carried over into the challenges of the postwar peace. The cold war would be another crusade requiring additional self-control.<sup>454</sup> As historian Mary Stuckey explains, “Eisenhower argued for clear limitations on the sphere of both governmental and individual action. Indeed, he saw limits as important both as ends and as means. As ends, limits had intrinsic importance; a lack of boundaries was itself threatening and dangerous. Limits implied self-restraint and voluntary self-control; their absence implied the destructive power of selfishness run amok.” Stuckey identifies four means by which Eisenhower promoted domestic containment: (1) viewing all events at home and abroad through the context of the cold war (2) promoting limited government (3) cordoning private political issues away from the public fray (4) emphasizing the similarities between all Americans even as various groups differentiated themselves by

---

<sup>453</sup> Anne Hollander, *Sex and Suits: The Evolution of Modern Dress* (New York: Kodansha, 1994), 167.

<sup>454</sup> Ira Chernus, “Eisenhower’s Ideology in World War II,” *Armed Forces and Society* 23, no. 4 (Summer 1997): 608-609.

gender, race, class, and sexuality.<sup>455</sup> Although each of these were important, Eisenhower especially applied a cold war matrix to domestic issues that endeavored to justify a restraint and cultural containment that otherwise would seem unnecessary.

Eisenhower demonstrated his strategy to promote contained citizens in his 1957 State of the Union address regarding the issue of wage and price controls. “Freedom has been defined as the opportunity for self-discipline,” the president declared without identifying the author of such a definition. He explained freedom so defined had a particular application regarding monetary policy. “Should we persistently fail to discipline ourselves, eventually there will be increasing pressure on government to redress the failure. By that process freedom will step by step disappear.” Eisenhower warned, “no subject on the domestic scene should more attract the concern of the friends of American working men and women and of free business enterprise than the forces that threaten a steady depreciation of the value of our money.”<sup>456</sup> Thus, restraint was the bulwark of American freedom and only selfless citizens who disciplined themselves apart from the government and their own interest group could insure freedom’s survival against totalitarian threats.

The Eisenhower administration’s support for the family home coincided with the postwar belief that domestic life needed to contain sexual license and enforce the duties of each gender. National Home Weeks were an example of the administration’s belief in such domestic containment. In conjunction with the Department of Agriculture, land-grant colleges, and county governments, the Truman administration had launched

---

<sup>455</sup> Mary E. Stuckey, *Defining Americans: The Presidency and National Identity* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 245, 251.

<sup>456</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union," January 10, 1957. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=11029> (accessed February 10, 2015).

National Home Demonstration Weeks to pass on the latest techniques in home economics to housewives endeavoring to promote healthy and stable nuclear families. The Eisenhower administration continued and expanded the National Home Demonstration initiative. A promotional flyer from 1957 promised, “Today’s Home Builds Tomorrow’s World.” The aim for participants was “to strengthen home and family life by helping women become more efficient homemakers and more effective citizens in their communities, States, and Nation.” The flyer acknowledged women “exert a major influence on the character and personality of family members” and, therefore, they would receive up-to-date and reliable information on “nutrition, clothing, housing, home furnishings, household equipment, home management, . . . health and safety, child care and development, family relationships, family economics, good business practices, marketing and consumer buying, and public affairs.”<sup>457</sup> In a letter to the women participating in National Home Demonstration Weeks, the president wrote, “as you learn new homemaking practices, and share your skills with your neighbors, you help build better homes and communities across the land.” Eisenhower drew a direct correlation between housewives performing their duties and American victory in the cold war by declaring housewives who demonstrated modern home management would “show the homemakers of other countries the standard of generous living made possible through a democratic way of life.”<sup>458</sup> The National Home Demonstration Weeks were consistent with Eisenhower’s nineteenth-century view of women that celebrated females’ innate virtues and their ability as wives and mothers to pass on those virtues in the home.

---

<sup>457</sup> “National Home Demonstration Week: Today’s Home Builds Tomorrow’s World,” flyer, Presidential Personal Files, Eisenhower Library.

<sup>458</sup> Eisenhower to Ezra Taft Benson, March 30, 1957, Box 930, Presidential Personal Files, Central Files, EL.



Perhaps as a consequence of growing up exclusively with brothers along with an extended military career, Eisenhower preferred the company of men to that of women. He often expressed timidity at speaking to large groups of females.<sup>459</sup> He refused to even read pulp westerns that included female characters and any hint of sentimentality.<sup>460</sup> He had no close female friends.

His belief in a traditional homemaker role for women and their duty to promote character in the members of the home persisted during his presidency. At a Republican Women's National Conference in 1955, the president remarked that women are "better apostles" than men at remembering mankind is "a spiritual, and intellectual, and a physical being." Men are "engrossed in many kinds of activities," particularly earning a living, and tend to forget the larger spiritual goals of prosperity at home and peace abroad. As homemakers, women keep these ideals in mind for their husbands and families and, thus, the president argued, "their influence in spreading the basic doctrines of this kind is more profound than that of men."<sup>461</sup> Additionally, before the National Council of Catholic Women in 1954, the president identified the family as the locus for national character formation. Eisenhower pointed to women as the insurer of the home's sanctity and once again tied cold war victory to their duty as the dispensers of character and virtue. "Unless peace is taught in the home by the mother, during that age where

---

<sup>459</sup> For an example, see Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Remarks in Detroit to a Group of Business and Professional Women," October 17, 1960. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=11981> (accessed January 30, 2014).

<sup>460</sup> David Eisenhower with Julie Nixon Eisenhower, *Going Home to Glory: A Memoir of Life with Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1961-1969* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010), 27.

<sup>461</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Remarks at the Republican Women's National Conference," May 10, 1955. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=10476> (accessed January 7, 2015).

everything that is learned and absorbed stays with us so strongly, unless we do this, my friends, there is going to be no peace.”<sup>462</sup>

The cold war imperative of housewives to anchor the home through virtue would be imperiled if women abandoned their duty to their families through unrestrained sexuality, the pursuit of careers, or treasonous activities that could undermine the nation. Eisenhower told a group of business and professional women in Detroit in October 1960 that he could not “imagine a greater responsibility, a greater opportunity than falls to the lot of the woman who is the central figure in the home. They, far more than the men, remind us of the values of decency, of fair play, of tightness, of our own self-respect - and respecting ourselves always ready to respect others.”<sup>463</sup> Eisenhower’s belief in a woman’s virtuous duties contained in the home played at least some part in his refusal to commute the sentences of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, who had been convicted of passing atomic secrets to the Soviet Union. Eisenhower confessed privately to his son that it went “against the grain to avoid interfering in the case where a woman is to receive capital punishment.” Yet, two facts regarding women compelled him to refuse a commutation. First, “in this instance it is the woman who is [the] strong and recalcitrant character, the man is the weak one. She has obviously been the leader in everything they did in the spy ring.” Second, if he only commuted Ethel’s sentence, “then from here on the Soviets would simply recruit their spies from among women.”<sup>464</sup> The president’s

---

<sup>462</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Address to the National Council of Catholic Women, Boston, Massachusetts," November 8, 1954. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=10125> (accessed January 17, 2015).

<sup>463</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Remarks in Detroit to a Group of Business and Professional Women," October 17, 1960. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=11981> (accessed March 16, 2015).

<sup>464</sup> Eisenhower to John Sheldon Doud Eisenhower, June 16, 1953, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The Presidency: The Middle Way*, ed. Louis Galambos et al. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 14:299.

perspective was congruent with the popular postwar belief that in order to contain uninhibited masculinity and promote dutiful manhood, women too would need to be contained by keeping to their homemaking duties.

The administration's concern with shielding traditional gender roles from dangerous sexual practices also led to the purge of homosexuals from government. Historians have labeled the expulsion of hundreds of homosexuals from government service during the early fifties as the Lavender Scare partially in an effort to link it with the larger Red Scare provoked by McCarthy's investigations.<sup>465</sup> The Lavender Scare was spurred in large part by the belief that gay men could not exercise self-control over their sexual desires and, therefore, were not trustworthy with national security secrets.<sup>466</sup> The threat of being exposed as homosexual would provide Soviet agents with material to blackmail gays, thus, provoking them to give up classified secrets. Whereas the Truman administration had disbarred homosexuals from government service on the basis of disloyalty, the Eisenhower administration rooted out gays and lesbians upon the supposition that their homosexuality represented a threat to national security. Executive Order #10450 declared "the interests of national security" required persons "of good conduct and character" and employees who practiced "sexual perversion" would be investigated in "the interests of the national security."<sup>467</sup> By abandoning the broader and more nebulous test of disloyalty for purging homosexuals from government and tying sexual morality to national security, the administration crafted a more exclusionary

---

<sup>465</sup> See David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004) and David Cauter, *The Great Fear: The Anti-Communist Purge under Truman and Eisenhower* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978).

<sup>466</sup> Senate Committee on Expenditures in Executive Departments, *Employment of Homosexuals and Other Sex Perverts in Government*, 81<sup>st</sup> Cong., 2d sess., 1950.

<sup>467</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Executive Order 10450 - Security Requirements for Government Employment," April 27, 1953. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=59216> (accessed January 23, 1980).

standard for those who did not meet postwar definitions of sexual containment. The Eisenhower administration terminated an average of forty homosexuals per month from federal employment in the first sixteen months after the issuance of Executive Order #10450.<sup>468</sup>

Containing impulses and demonstrating self-restraint particularly characterized Eisenhower's presidential disposition. Eisenhower abhorred masculine showmanship and repeatedly demonstrated a preference for measured, restrained decision-making. Whereas some like Senator Joseph McCarthy (R-WI) relied on masculine displays of toughness and intimidation to garner attention, Eisenhower preferred a more controlled and conciliatory style in governance. "I am not one of the desk pounding type that likes to stick out his jaw and look like he is bossing the show," Eisenhower remarked in a press conference in 1956. "I would far rather get behind and, recognizing the frailties and the requirements of human nature, I would rather try to persuade a man to go along - because once I have persuaded him he will stick. If I scare him, he will stay just as long as he is scared, and then he is gone."<sup>469</sup> Even within the administration, some aides, like Emmet Hughes, wanted Eisenhower to demonstrate more strength and decisiveness and despaired of Eisenhower's refusal to make a decision until all sides were heard. Yet, Eisenhower believed the president needed to demonstrate a detachment from the momentary and popular excitements of the nation whether the issue be Chinese shelling of off-shore islands, Russian encroachments against Berlin, civil rights demonstrations in the South, or Soviet satellites launched into orbit. On the president's desk sat an ornament

---

<sup>468</sup> John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 44.

<sup>469</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, "The President's News Conference," November 14, 1956. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=10702> (accessed December 5, 2015).

inscribed with the words, “*Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re*” (Gently in manner, strong in deed).<sup>470</sup>

Eisenhower cast his presidency in probity and restraint because the style accommodated popular anxieties regarding nuclear weaponry, reinforced cold war containment culture, coincided with the postwar retreat towards traditionalism, and reflected Eisenhower’s conception of manhood. Eisenhower’s presidential predecessor had significantly mischaracterized his successor, believing Eisenhower would endeavor to govern as a brash, masculine military officer. Truman sneered in 1952, “He’ll sit here, and he’ll say, ‘Do this! Do that!’ *And nothing will happen* [Truman’s italics]. Poor Ike – it won’t be a bit like the Army. He’ll find it very frustrating.”<sup>471</sup> Instead, Eisenhower inaugurated an approach to presidential leadership that emphasized precision, moderation, and organization. Three examples of his leadership style include his “hidden hand” approach, the pursuit of a “middle way,” and his attention to organization.

Political scientist Fred Greenstein overturned two decades of Eisenhower scholarship in 1982 with the publication of his study of Eisenhower’s presidential leadership, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*. Greenstein set out to confirm the consensus opinion in the sixties and seventies that Eisenhower’s presidency was characterized by detachment, disinterest, and confusion. Yet, his examination of recently declassified White House correspondence and Eisenhower’s notes during phone calls, meetings, and policy decisions led Greenstein to conclude that Eisenhower exercised a “hidden-hand” as president, covertly directing, influencing, and manipulating the workings of the

---

<sup>470</sup> Fred I. Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency: Eisenhower as Leader* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 57.

<sup>471</sup> Richard E. Neustadt, *Presidential Power: The Politics of Leadership* (John Wiley and Sons: New York, 1960), 9.

executive branch to advance a distinct vision. Eisenhower moved away from Theodore Roosevelt's classic depiction of the presidency as a "bully pulpit," a powerful venue to boldly push forward an agenda, and re-conceptualized the office as a post from which to work behind the scenes, achieving goals through subtle, but principled action. "His organizational style seemed from public evidence to be highly formalistic," Greenstein wrote, "but its unpublicized face was directed to the informal subtleties of administrative politics." Eisenhower projected an image of detachment from political jockeying and bargaining, but in reality, "he revealed himself as a self-conscious practitioner of a leadership style that enabled him to maintain the popular support needed by a successful head of state without foregoing direct participation in the controversial politics of leadership."<sup>472</sup> Eisenhower's meticulous attention to the work of his administration, even as he projected a public image of dispassion and moderation, reflected the broader containment culture of the fifties and simultaneously the manly self-control of its president.<sup>473</sup>

Eisenhower labeled the path he endeavored to find with a hidden-hand as "the middle way." Identifying what he believed to be the extreme sides of any issue, Eisenhower endeavored to fashion a compromise between the two and dodge the heated passions of each. "Excluding the field of moral values," Eisenhower declared, "anything

---

<sup>472</sup> Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, 151. Greenstein also highlighted the previously underappreciated role of Milton Eisenhower in his brother's administration. "Milton Eisenhower was at least as important to his brother as Robert Kennedy was to John F. Kennedy. The contrast between the tactful, low visibility modus operandi of the Eisenhower brothers and the controversial public approach and teamwork of the Kennedys epitomizes the differences between the Eisenhower mode of seeking results without apparent controversy and the Kennedy emphasis on establishing the president and his team as visibly tough, 'hard ball' political operators." See Greenstein, *Hidden-Hand*, 149.

<sup>473</sup> In a similar vein, Stephen Ambrose writes, "Eisenhower, not Charlie Wilson, made defense policy; Eisenhower, not Foster Dulles, made foreign policy; Eisenhower, not Ezra Benson, made farm policy. Whether the policies were right or wrong, whether they reflected ambivalence and hesitation, or revealed the way in which Eisenhower was a prisoner of the technologists and scientists, or displayed bold and aggressive action, they were Eisenhower's policies. He ran the show." See Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: The President* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 10.

that affects or is proposed for masses of humans is wrong if the position it seeks is at either end of possible argument.”<sup>474</sup> Eisenhower particularly believed that middle ground could be found between individualism and federal intervention. “There is, in our affairs at home, a middle way between untrammelled freedom of the individual and the demands for the welfare of the whole Nation. This way must avoid government by bureaucracy as carefully as it avoids neglect of the helpless.”<sup>475</sup> Such a position of restraint and moderation often seemed sensible to the public, but the administration often drew the ire of disaffected groups when civil rights activists and violent segregationists, pacifists and defense contractors, welfare activists and budget hawks, and isolationists and interventionists were equally designated by the administration as extremists. Pursuing the middle way left Eisenhower as the moral arbiter for what qualified as the compromised, moderate middle.

The means by which Eisenhower exhibited a hidden-hand, endeavoring to find a middle way in policy decisions, was through a well-organized, hierarchical administrative structure that valued self-discipline and duty. *Newsweek* was quick to recognize the organizational culture Eisenhower would bring to the executive branch, declaring in July 1952 that, “by training and belief he is an organization man.”<sup>476</sup> Eisenhower recoiled at the lack of organization in the Roosevelt and Truman administrations and was determined to build an administrative structure that insured accountability, communication, and verification.<sup>477</sup> He organized his principal staff upon the model of the British War

---

<sup>474</sup> Eisenhower to Bradford G. Chynoweth, July 13, 1954, Box 7, DDE Diary Series, Ann Whitman File, EL.

<sup>475</sup> Minnich notes, Cabinet meeting, January 30, 1953, CMS, Eisenhower Library.

<sup>476</sup> *Newsweek*, June 16, 1952, 26.

<sup>477</sup> Robert Griffith writes, “Eisenhower was a product of the organizational revolution that had transformed American life in the twentieth century, a member of the new managerial class that led the nation’s great

Cabinet and SHAEF. He strengthened the National Security Council created under the National Defense Act (1947) by organizing the leaders of defense, state, treasury, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and the joint chiefs into a significant committee to coordinate cold war policy. He also elevated the positions of national security advisor, chief of staff, and congressional liaison to greater importance than they had in previous administrations.<sup>478</sup> The combined effect of Eisenhower's hidden-hand approach, middle way preferences, and organizational style was an administration that privileged restraint and moderation rather than placing policy formation and decision-making in the heroic hands of a single chief executive.<sup>479</sup>

Eisenhower's handling of Joseph McCarthy demonstrated the importance the president placed on backdoor channels, moderation, and dispassionate influence. As the brash Senator continued to intimidate and harangue witnesses brought before the senate subcommittee charged with rooting out communist subversives in the government, the calls for the president to directly take on McCarthy steadily increased. Yet, Eisenhower conjectured that a match of political wills between the Senator and the President performed before the public eye would only benefit McCarthy by granting him the attention and fight he sought. In private, Eisenhower would remark that he would not "get into a pissing contest with that skunk" or "get in the gutter with that guy."<sup>480</sup> In public, the President remained dispassionately detached from the senate hearings and indifferently reminded his listeners of his refusal to "engage in personalities." Adlai

---

public and private bureaucracies." See Robert Griffith, "Dwight D. Eisenhower and the Corporate Commonwealth," *The American Historical Review* 87, no. 1 (February 1982): 88.

<sup>478</sup> Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, xii, 103-107.

<sup>479</sup> For an example of how Eisenhower's and Kennedy's respective conceptions of manliness informed presidential decision-making, see discussion of the Bay of Pigs incident in chapter seven.

<sup>480</sup> Milton S. Eisenhower, *The President is Calling* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974), 318; Ambrose, *Eisenhower: The President*, 57, 141.



Stevenson, Eisenhower's Democratic opponent in 1952 and 1956, accused him of weakness in his failure to directly condemn McCarthy. Eisenhower defended his strength in his approach to McCarthy, though, writing that one of his life-long principles was, "to avoid public mention of any name *unless it can be done with favorable intent and connotation* [Eisenhower's italics]; reserve all criticism for the private conference; speak only good in public." Eisenhower insisted such an approach "is not namby-pamby. It certainly is not Pollyanna-ish. It is just sheer common sense. A leader's job is to get others to go along with him in the promotion of something. To do this he needs their good will."<sup>481</sup>

When McCarthy endeavored to subpoena members and documents of the administration to investigate the U.S. Army, Eisenhower blocked him. The president claimed executive privilege and refused to provide McCarthy with the witnesses or materials he needed to continue his investigations. McCarthy's reckless and baseless accusations ultimately went too far for the public and his fellow senators censured him after an Army attorney questioned the senator's decency on national television. For McCarthy's part, he accused Eisenhower of "weakness and supineness" and apologized to the American people for supporting him in 1952.<sup>482</sup> Others too would condemn Eisenhower for not more publicly and boldly condemning McCarthy, but the president's behind-the-scenes maneuvering to foster McCarthy's downfall reflected the organizational and contained intentions of a manly rather than a masculine presidency.<sup>483</sup>

---

<sup>481</sup> Eisenhower to Paul Hoy Helms, March 9, 1954, Box 18, Name Series, Ann Whitman File, EL.

<sup>482</sup> James C. Hagerty, *The Diary of James C. Hagerty: Eisenhower in mid-course, 1954-1955*, ed. Robert Ferrell (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 127-128.

<sup>483</sup> Milton Eisenhower, the president's brother, was among those who urged the president to publicly condemn McCarthy.

Eisenhower's foreign policy was also marked by restraint, self-control, and a determination to minimize crises. Eisenhower resisted pressures to escalate conflicts, inject troops into foreign wars, or expand U.S. involvement in foreign uprisings. He rejected Douglas MacArthur's advice to use atomic bombs in Korea, declared the war unwinnable, and negotiated an armistice. MacArthur privately scoffed that Eisenhower "doesn't have the guts to make a policy decision. He never did have the guts and he never will."<sup>484</sup> However, the President was more concerned with caution than guts as when he refused to intervene militarily when the French fortress of Dien Bien Phu was surrounded by the Vietminh in Indochina in 1954. Despite calls for the US to drop atomic weapons to break the siege against the French, Eisenhower refused to relieve Dien Bien Phu and agreed to a cease-fire, a partitioning of Indochina into North and South Vietnam, and national elections two years later. Eisenhower feared greater military involvement would divide the American public and warned, "This war in Indochina would absorb our troops by divisions!"<sup>485</sup> He also refused to accelerate the arms race out of fear that it would create ballooning budget deficits. He refused to support the British and French during the Suez Crisis, believing that weak nations had to be protected from the encroachments of the strong. He also declined to come to the aid of the rebels in Hungary when they rose up against their communist rulers in 1956. Eisenhower projected calm when the Soviets threatened Berlin, expressed exasperation over the panic surrounding *Sputnik*, and refused to cater to Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev's histrionics when the American spy plane, the U-2, was shot down over the U.S.S.R.

---

<sup>484</sup> MacArthur quoted in Peter Lyon, *Eisenhower: Portrait of the Hero* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1974), 472.

<sup>485</sup> National Security Council minutes, January 8, 1954, Box 5, National Security Council series, Ann Whitman File, Eisenhower Library.

Eisenhower preferred more restrained and shrewd foreign interventions. Thus, the Central Intelligence Agency's activities, particularly its foreign covert actions, increased significantly during the Eisenhower years. Agency operations to topple the Iranian government in 1953 and the Guatemalan government in 1954 were just the type of cheap, effective, subtle, and contained operations Eisenhower preferred. Exercising a hidden-hand in foreign policy may have fostered bitter resentments overseas in the long-term, but, in the short-term, the president achieved desired results through an approach that matched his own proclivities for restraint, containment, and subtlety.

Perhaps Eisenhower's most recurring battle during his presidency was his call for self-control and restraint in arms manufactures. Even during World War II the Supreme Commander had grown concerned over the close and mushrooming relationship between military industrialists and the War Department. That concern deepened after the war as the Truman administration repeatedly expanded the Defense Department's budget. As president, Eisenhower felt compelled to continually beat back accusations from journalists, business leaders, civic groups, Democrats, and Republicans that the nation's armaments were inadequate. What concerned Eisenhower more was the threat of extravagant military spending absent of any controls that ultimately compromised American values. In his April 1953 "Chance for Peace" address, Eisenhower explained,

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone.

It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children.

The cost of one modern heavy bomber is this: a modern brick school in more than 30 cities.

It is two electric power plants, each serving a town of 60,000 population.

It is two fine, fully equipped hospitals. It is some 50 miles of concrete highway.

We pay for a single fighter plane with a half million bushels of wheat.

We pay for a single destroyer with new homes that could have housed more than 8,000 people.

This, I repeat, is the best way of life to be found on the road the world has been taking.

This is not a way of life at all, in any true sense. Under the cloud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron.<sup>486</sup>

In his farewell address, the president warned against the “unwarranted influence” of “the military-industrial complex.”<sup>487</sup> For Eisenhower, extravagant expenditures on arms not only lurched the nation towards debt, war, and reduced domestic spending, but also represented a failure of the nation’s leaders to practice the requisite self-control budgeting required. Failure to deny the military and its contractors was a failure of self-denial; a lapse in dutiful manhood.

\* \* \* \* \*

Containment was the policy term used during the early years of the cold war to describe United States’ foreign policy towards the potential expansion of international communism. Nuclear weapons had raised the stakes for international conflict and direct

---

<sup>486</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Address 'The Chance for Peace' Delivered Before the American Society of Newspaper Editors," April 16, 1953. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=9819> (accessed July 18, 2015).

<sup>487</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Farewell Radio and Television Address to the American People," January 17, 1961. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=12086> (accessed March 16, 2015). For more on Eisenhower’s farewell address see James Ledbetter, *Unwarranted Influence: Dwight D. Eisenhower and the Military-Industrial Complex* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011); Martin Medhurst, ed. *Eisenhower’s War of Words: Rhetoric and Leadership* (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1994); Herbert I. Schiller and Joseph D. Phillips, eds. *Super-State: Readings in the Military-Industrial Complex* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970).

military conflict with the Soviet Union became unrealistic and almost unthinkable. By containing communism in the states and regions in which it already existed, perhaps the dangers inherent to the atomic age could be reduced, mitigated, even avoided. Yet, containment does not just describe American foreign policy in the formative years of the atomic age. Americans also adopted a “domestic containment” that sought to reduce the explosive dangers of the gender and sexual changes the Depression and World War II provoked by confining sexuality to the home. Americans hoped the energy of masculine adventurism and sexuality could be contained in the suburban home inhabited by a traditional nuclear family, each member performing their respective duties. Simultaneously, as families sat together in their living rooms watching their televisions, their elected leader extolled the duty of all Americans to practice self-control in order to secure the nation’s prosperity and peace.

## CHAPTER SIX

### MATURE MEN

The president worried about his vice-president's maturity.<sup>488</sup> While contemplating if Richard Nixon should be retained on the Republican ticket before the 1956 campaign, Eisenhower expressed unease that the nation still thought Nixon to be "a bit immature." Eisenhower confided to his speechwriter in early 1956 that, "I've watched Dick a long time, and he just hasn't grown. So I just haven't honestly been able to believe that he *is* presidential timber."<sup>489</sup> Nevertheless, after Eisenhower decided to retain Nixon on the ticket, at the launch of the 1956 campaign the president told reporters, "There is no man in the history of America who has had such a careful preparation as had Vice President Nixon for carrying out the duties of the Presidency if that duty should ever fall upon him."<sup>490</sup>

Even after Eisenhower left the White House, his evaluations of Nixon's maturity continued. In 1958 Eisenhower had told an administration official, "You know, Dick has matured." In 1964 the former president repeated himself saying, "You know, Dick has matured." Three years later Eisenhower mentioned again, "You know, Dick has really

---

<sup>488</sup> Scholars disagree over the nature of Eisenhower's relationship with Nixon while he served as the former's vice-president. Stephen Ambrose and Jeffrey Frank believe Eisenhower watched Nixon with suspicion and discomfort. Irwin Gellman argues the relationship was friendly and Eisenhower tutored Nixon in preparation for the presidency. See Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: The President* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983); Jeffrey Frank, *Ike and Dick: Portrait of a Strange Political Marriage* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2013); Irwin F. Gellman, *The President and the Apprentice: Eisenhower and Nixon, 1952-1961* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015).

<sup>489</sup> Eisenhower quoted in Emmet John Hughes, *The Ordeal of Power: A Political Memoir of the Eisenhower Years* (New York: Atheneum, 1963), 173.

<sup>490</sup> *New York Times*, September 13, 1956, 22.

matured.”<sup>491</sup> Also in 1967 when Nixon was gearing up for another run at the White House, Eisenhower told his former treasury secretary, “As you know I’ve always liked and respected him; he is now even more mature and well-informed than when he was Vice-President.”<sup>492</sup>

Eisenhower was not alone in the interest he paid to male maturity in the 1950s. War bond drives and advertisers had mythologized American GIs or “the boys” during World War II for their aw-shucks attitude and innocent obsession with girls, baseball, and the American flag. When the same boys returned home they were expected to shed their youth along with its indiscretions and grow up quickly by finding a job, getting married, bearing children, and purchasing a home. Commentators and advice manuals encouraged veterans returning from the war to be “adjusted” to peacetime conditions. Similar opinion brokers instructed the same men to be “mature” in the fifties. Midcentury maturity manuals capitalized on wartime longings for work, home, and family and coopted the language of adjustment literature to formulate, along with duty and self-control, the third element of midcentury manhood. Maturity for fifties males meant work, marriage, and fatherhood – demonstrable proofs that a male could distinguish himself from a child. Capitalizing on the demand for maturity opened the door for black Americans as well to secure greater economic and civic participation. Those designated mature at midcentury found support in a presidential administration determined to support mature manhood at the expense of childish masculinity.

---

<sup>491</sup> Eisenhower quoted in Arthur Larson, *Eisenhower: The President Nobody Knew* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1968), 10.

<sup>492</sup> Eisenhower to George M. Humphrey, July 21, 1967, Box 2, Augusta-Walter Reed Series, Post-Presidential Papers, EL.

## **Masculinity Patronized**

During World War II, *Life* magazine often featured advertisements that celebrated the youth and naiveté of American young men overseas. Baby-faced GIs were depicted in advertisements for everything from Dixie cups and ice cream to Pullman cars and Life Savers. Numerous products were covertly advertised next to pleas for the public to purchase more war bonds. Advertisers crafted the slogan, “Bring the Boys Back Sooner – Buy War Bonds” to generate greater support for the remaining campaigns. Likewise, on the home front war, supporters urged their fellow citizens to sacrifice more conveniences, give up more luxuries, and donate more for the war effort to bring the boys home.<sup>493</sup>

One year after the war had ended, however, the magazine took a decidedly different tone toward American soldiers now returning from abroad. An editorial in August 1946, provided hand-wringing numbers on what veteran pensions had cost the nation in the past. The same author now fretted about how the unprecedented number of soldiers who served in World War II would swell the federal budget in additional outlays. “Today we face an entirely new situation. Veterans should no longer be an avaricious minority in the body politic. There are too many of them.” With nearly 43% of the adult males of the country veterans, the time for a shift in responsibility from the government to the veterans themselves was in order. Veterans did not need “grab bags of poorly thought-out gratuities.” They needed “genuine rehabilitation, to be trained and helped into good jobs and into stations in society where they do not need pensions.” Pensions were only for the extremely disabled. For every other veteran, “pensions are really

---

<sup>493</sup> Examples of such advertisements appeared in the following issues of *Life*: May 29, 1944, June 19, 1944, February 14, 1944, February 21, 1944, and February 28, 1944.



confessions of failure.” It was clear that now that the “boys” had come home, it was time for them to grow up.<sup>494</sup>

Veteran adjustment literature echoed *Life*'s concern about the maturity of returning soldiers. An adjustment pamphlet titled *He's Back* (1945) acknowledged the adult responsibilities young men took on by going off to war, observing “the 18 year old who has been away from home a couple of years and wears the Purple Heart is no longer a carefree boy. He's a man now. Exposure to danger and the assumption of a soldier's daily responsibilities have made him older than his years. He probably knows more about the sordid realities of life than many of the older folks back home.” Yet, military sociologist Willard Waller drew his readers' attention to the immaturity of the same troops now home from the battlefield. Waller wrote that a veteran may resent the attribution of immaturity, but “it would be an error to suppose that he is actually mature.” The war developed parts of his personality and retarded growth in other areas. “The veteran is not immature in the same way in which the ordinary college boy is immature. He knows more about sex, perhaps less about love. He knows how to fight, but is less likely than the college boy to have had a satisfactory work experience.” Waller recognized a veteran's “organizing ability” and that “he knows how to run things,” but his time in the service has left him largely disconnected from civilian society.<sup>495</sup>

The most immediate task for veterans, and the one that could begin building maturity, was finding a job. The Depression's legacy of male joblessness was still fresh in the national psyche and the prospect of millions of males made callous by war

---

<sup>494</sup> “The Veterans,” *Life*, August 5, 1946, 36.

<sup>495</sup> *He's Back* (Washington, D.C.: War Department, 1945), 10; Willard Waller, *The Veteran Comes Back* (New York: Dryden, 1944), 152.

returning to idleness at home would inhibit a return to moral and social stability. Employment would set the returning veteran on a course of mature adjustment and begin to tame the coarser habits he adopted while overseas. George K. Pratt, author of *Soldier to Civilian* (1944), identified “the goal of rehabilitation” as “to bring a man to a point of maximal usefulness to himself and to society, to enable him to sustain himself and to enjoy the fruit of his production. The criteria of success for a veteran would be his ability to obtain and hold a job – ‘not any job, but a good job’.”<sup>496</sup> In *The Veteran and His Future Job* (1946), James Bedford wrote that employment is what the average veteran worries about. “He realizes that he cannot get married, he cannot establish a home, and he cannot be self-supporting, or even self-respecting, without a steady job.” Bedford offered a list of qualities that a veteran could consider to determine if he was a good employee. The list reads like a creed for what William Whyte would later label “the organizational man.”

#### ARE YOU A GOOD EMPLOYEE?

A good employee is first of all loyal, believes in the concern he is working for, its business policy and products;

a man who recognizes the fact that he must earn more than he is paid in order that the house can make a profit on his services;

a man who can be trusted in all matters and who never betrays a trust;

a man who can offer constructive criticism for the benefit of the business without criticising [*sic*] the boss;

a man who is not only courteous to customers but also to his fellow workers;

a man who keeps in step, meaning in full accord and sympathy with the organization;

a man who is efficient in all work entrusted to him, and is constantly striving to better his own condition by giving the company the best that is in him;

a man who will play his part in any organization with scrupulous exactness, realizing that special and unusual results are secured only through high individual performance;

---

<sup>496</sup> George K. Pratt, *Soldier to Civilian: Problems of Readjustment* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1944), 151.

a man who, when he makes a mistake, does not cover it up but reports the matter to a department head;

a man who is orderly in his habits and punctual in his engagements;

a man who thinks before he acts, one who wants to know that he may act intelligently and not blindly.<sup>497</sup>

Adjustment writers also counseled marriage as a maturing influence on a young man who may have been unattached during the war. A pamphlet published by the war department titled *Can War Marriages Be Made to Work?* (1944) declared, “mature people are more likely than others to make a go of marriage.” Lest readers think the mature were simply older individuals, the pamphlet explained many older folks were actually “grown-up babies walking around disguised as adults by graying hair and wrinkling skin.” Many of them were still attached to their mothers’ apron strings and were really adolescents at heart “seeking thrills, craving admiration, and pursuing the will-o’-the-wisp of unchanging romantic love.” Such masculine thrill seeking would do little to insure a successful marriage, however. “Throughout the centuries the human race has commonly regarded marriage as a symbol of maturity. When the symbol corresponds to reality, the chances of making a success of marriage are best.” The same War Department pamphlet included the government-issued dating advice of not marrying the first woman that caught a soldier’s eye, knowing the girl and knowing oneself, discussing what both expect out of marriage, comparing family backgrounds, and getting acquainted with one’s potential in-laws. The government also counseled the veteran that “most

---

<sup>497</sup> James H. Bedford, *The Veteran and His Future Job* (Los Angeles: Society for Occupational Research, 1946), 5, 257.

studies seem to indicate that sexual intercourse before marriage is unfavorable to marriage success.”<sup>498</sup>

The challenge for many returning veterans was that their wartime marriage was conceived not only in immaturity, but also in haste – knowing little about their spouse and even less about marriage. Adjustment writers encouraged veterans to stall the rising divorce rate and rescue their faltering marriages. *The Veteran and His Marriage* (1945) instructed its readers, “a returned veteran has to get his thought patterns on his home, and to some it is a new experience. Here then are new and untried duties. Yet, he should not falter. The task is even a pleasant one.”<sup>499</sup> Maxwell Droke, in *Good-by to G.I.* (1945), provided a list of suggestions and duties returning veterans could use to win over a long-separated wife. “Tell her that you love her. Tell her again. And again . . . demonstrating your affections will work for you in two ways: it will tend to release her own kindred emotions, and at the same time it will ease her apprehensions that you have become hardened and brutalized by the processes of war.” Droke informed his readers that women feared what effect the war would have on their men more than they realized. It

---

<sup>498</sup> *Can War Marriages Be Made To Work?* (Washington, D.C.: War Department, 1944), 15-22, 26-28. The same pamphlet seems to have placed much of the determination for a successful marriage on selecting the right girl. The pamphlet encouraged veterans to look for a girl:

1. Whose parents were happily married
2. Who was happy in childhood
3. Who got on with her mother
4. Who experienced home discipline that was firm but not harsh
5. Who was strongly attached to her mother
6. Who was strongly attached to her father
7. Who got on with her father
8. Who had parents who were frank about sex
9. Who was not punished often or severely in childhood
10. Whose attitude toward sex is free from disgust or aversion

With all this in mind, take another look at your possible parents-in-law, for their happiness, and adjustment may be important to you. That is the verdict of most studies of marriage.” *Can War Marriages Be Made To Work?* 22.

<sup>499</sup> John H. Mariano, *The Veteran and His Marriage* (New York: Council on Marriage Relations, 1945), 245.

was necessary, therefore, for a former soldier to reassure his woman that he was “a normal, tender, endearing wooer.” To that end, a veteran was counseled to discuss reasonably the women he had known during his months of absence. When a wife asked, the issue should not be dodged. “Don’t, of course, go out of your way to paint glamour pictures. But if you make too much of an effort to appear casually indifferent to the charms of the French maiden or the South Sea siren, she is sure to suspect a great deal more than the simple truth.” Details of harrowing war stories should also be avoided. “It will do her no good to know. It may do you much harm to tell. She can never understand. The telling would only serve to cut another chasm between the two of you.” Masculine adventurism would do nothing to rescue a wartime marriage. “The show is over. Ring down the curtain. It is better so.” Finally, veterans were urged to exchange their duties on the front for those in the home. “Don’t be afraid to trot out your domestic virtues and show appreciation of hers. Let her know you still have a hankering for home. She may persist in viewing you as the roving warrior, the romantic soldier of fortune, ever eager for the fray. That impression bodes you no good. Take time out right now to correct it, not only with words but by deeds.”<sup>500</sup>

Once a steady job had been secured and he committed himself to the maturing experience of marriage, a veteran could take on the additional maturing duty of fatherhood. Parenting would provide a former soldier with the opportunity to demonstrate, as well as impart, maturity. “It is not unreasonable to believe that children help to make marriage a success. . . . no one can deny that children help to educate parents into maturity, provide a common interest, and strengthen the incentive to work

---

<sup>500</sup> Maxwell Droke, *Good-by to G.I.: How to be a successful civilian* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1945), 65-66.

for a good marital adjustment.”<sup>501</sup> Mature parenting would not only mold the man, but in turn the mature male could influence young men and help reduce the spiraling delinquency rate. Another War Department pamphlet, titled *Is a Crime Wave Coming?* (1946), declared “the most important influence in shaping moral standards is the family. Parents must accept the responsibility for developing the characters of their children.” Readers were asked, “*Can you suggest ways of making parents more conscious of their duty?*” [italics in original]<sup>502</sup>

The disparagement of wartime masculinity and the urgent need for mature males to perform their domestic and patriotic duties were visually communicated in the film *The African Queen* (1951). The film serves as a male redemption tale with a female transforming a self-absorbed immature drunk into a self-controlled domestic who fulfills his patriotic duty. Charlie Allnut (Humphrey Bogart), a cigar-chomping, gin-drinking loafer, resides in the exclusively masculine space of his boat with a large supply of booze, cigarettes, contraband, and African natives. Rosie (Katherine Hepburn), an unmarried missionary, invades his space of undisciplined manhood and challenges his immoderation on the river. Fundamental to Charlie’s transformation is a gradual abandonment of masculine habits and a growing adoption of mature responsibilities. Charlie’s makeover is so complete near the end of the film that he assents to Rosie’s request to “make the *Queen* as clean as we can – scrub her decks and polish her brass” as Charlie acknowledges, “she ought to look her best, representing as she does, the Royal Navy.” Thus, cleaning their domestic space is equated with patriotic duty. Rosie launches Charlie on a course of mature manhood by purifying their “home” of his corrupting

---

<sup>501</sup> *Can War Marriages be made to Work?* 24-25.

<sup>502</sup> *Is A Crime Wave Coming?* (Washington, D.C.: War Department, 1946), 22-23.

indulgences. As Charlie sleeps off another hangover, Rose pours all his gin into the river. When he attempts to explain that it is in a man's nature to "take a drop too much," she preaches self-denial. "Nature, Mr. Allnut, is what we are put in this world to rise above." She insists he be a man of self-control and put away "nasty drunkardness."

Charlie matures into a responsible male protecting Rosie from gnats, braving leeches, fixing the boiler, building the torpedoes, repairing the boat, and gathering firewood. Rosie, the homemaker, departs from the boat less than Charlie, encourages its cleaning, nails up a flag, and prepares breakfast for Charlie as he sleeps. "Well, this is more like it – breakfast in bed," the domesticated Charlie acknowledges. The gender dislocation that prevailed at the beginning of the film has now been resolved. When their plan to torpedo the German boat *Louisa* fails and they are about to be hung for spying, Charlie implores the German captain to marry him and Rosie. After vows are quickly exchanged, the couple's other request that they would be hanged together is also granted. Before their nooses are tightened, however, the capsized *African Queen* providentially discharges its torpedoes into the side of the *Louisa*, allowing the newlyweds to escape. Charlie's earlier performance of his duty insures the continuation of their lives and the return of peace to the river. Their dream of telling these stories to their grandchildren will be realized. Masculine passions have been contained and manly duties discharged in a patriotic demonstration of domesticity and maturity.

### **Manhood Matured**

Midcentury philosophers, psychologists, and counselors adopted with few changes the derision towards immature masculinity and the preference for manly maturity exhibited in postwar adjustment literature. Maturity writers produced numerous

works that identified habits and practices appropriate only for children and steered adults towards more age-appropriate attitudes and behaviors.<sup>503</sup> H.A. Overstreet, a popular author for his works in psychology and sociology, published the most enduring work on maturity in 1949, *The Mature Mind*, which sold more than 50,000 copies by 1952. Building on Freud's concept of "arrested development," Overstreet defined maturity in contradistinction to the very traits that traditional masculinity valued including egotism, bravado, toughness, exceptionalism, and individualism. "Men are less able than they once were to satisfy their need for significance through childish forms of domination," Overstreet wrote. The "proper psychological undertaking of man," according to Overstreet, was to move from such immature traits towards maturity. "When we see grownups missing out on the rich experience of maturity – or see them creating fear and misery for others – we can no longer be satisfied to say, 'Oh, he's only a grown-up boy'." The world had become too dangerous to allow immature boys who have adult bodies to practice mischief. Overstreet encouraged his readers to ponder how to convince these "little ones" to act their age.<sup>504</sup>

Overstreet suggested the same solution for immature males as adjustment literature: the duties of manhood. "Mature responsibility involves both a willing participation in the chores of life and a creative participating in the bettering of life." If a man was willing to act responsibly, sink his ego, and try to understand himself and others then he would enjoy maturity. "Once the idea becomes central in our culture that a man is

---

<sup>503</sup> See also Leon J. Saul, *Emotional Maturity: The Development and Dynamics of Personality* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1947); Jane Warters, *Achieving Maturity* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1949); Elizabeth B. Hurlock, *Developmental Psychology* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959). For women and maturity, see Anna K. Daniels, *The Mature Woman: Her Richest Years* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1953). For religion and maturity, see Erwin R. Goodenough, *Toward a Mature Faith* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1955); R. Lofton Hudson, *The Religion of a Mature Person* (Nashville: Broadman, 1952); Helen B. Emmons, *The Mature Heart* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1953).

<sup>504</sup> H.A. Overstreet, *The Mature Mind* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1949), 16-17, 27, 172.



at his best when he is doing his best at what he can do best, many of the present hindrances to a sound maturing will be removed.” Otherwise, a man’s development would be inhibited. A man could only be accounted mature if he accepted his duties, discharged them well, and drew a sense of significance from performing them. Overstreet explained, “a man is immature if he regards the support of a family as a kind of trap in which he, an unsuspecting male, has somehow been caught. Again, the person who cannot settle down – who remains a vocational drifter; or the person who wants the prestige of a certain type of work but resents the routines that go with it, are immature in their sense of function.”<sup>505</sup>

The duties of the mature man were the same as the well-adjusted veteran: togetherness, work, marriage, fatherhood, domesticity. “One of the most important phases of maturing is that of growth from self-centering to an understanding relationship to others; from egocentricity to sociocentricity.” Only a mature male would give up his self-centered individualism and “see himself as one among others.” Overstreet declared such men to be rare as would those who rejected an immature definition of success. A man was usually judged a vocational success if he could earn a living and climb the corporate ladder even though his “success” might mean doing “profound hurt to other people: by selling shoddy goods; publishing a newspaper that stirs up racial hatreds; giving such concentrated attention to money-making that his personal relationships are neglected and distorted.” The most frequently neglected relationships by immature males

---

<sup>505</sup> Overstreet, *The Mature Mind*, 34, 51-52, 291. Overstreet labeled a woman immature “if she wants all the advantages of marriage but resents the work she has to do to keep a home in running order and to bring up a family.” Women were “more able to develop their full individual powers, so that they are less driven to try to win security and significance through childish forms of submission. All this promises the gradual development of a type of enriched companionship between men and women in which the maturity of each will be encouraged.” Overstreet, *The Mature Mind*, 52, 172.

were those in the home. Thus, Overstreet identified a stable home as the most fateful institution for developing maturity in husbands and wives and incubating maturity in children. As the venue for “the primary shaping of character,” the home was dependent on the father to instill maturity in the children necessitating his continual presence and engagement. Adolescent sex problems could only be resolved in maturity with a father’s guidance. Only a father’s efforts could prevent children from becoming “fixated in a permanent homosexuality.” The primary fact about maturity, according to Overstreet, was that maturity was not reached by an “isolated trait in a person,” but rather “a total character structure.”<sup>506</sup>

Midcentury focus on male duty and maturity did not exclusively concern white audiences. Black civil rights leaders also employed its principles seeking to improve the socio-economic condition of black males and their families. Nineteenth-century stereotypes of black males as lazy, irresponsible, promiscuous, and immature continued into the twentieth century, frustrating black males’ attempts to secure stable employment and serve in combat units during the war. The masculine hegemony of the first half of the twentieth century left little room for African-Americans who were considered weak, cowering, docile, and possibly effeminate. Nineteenth-century bigots asserted blacks had no manhood, twentieth-century that they had no masculinity.<sup>507</sup>

---

<sup>506</sup> *Ibid.*, 61, 63, 72-73, 84, 230, 235. Overstreet also applied his ideas regarding maturity to leadership in the United States. “In many respects, we are a far more mature people than we were even a generation ago. War and depression have humbled us into a kind of maturity. . . . Yet the old immaturities linger on. So many of them linger on, in fact, that we stand in grave danger of having even our new humility go to waste: in rescuing us from cocky childishness, it may land us merely in a submissive childishness; it may merely send us looking for some new authoritative ‘parent’ on whom we can rely.” Overstreet, *The Mature Mind*, 165. Overstreet probably feared a charismatic dictatorial “parent.” Eisenhower’s grandfatherly paternalism was more in line with Overstreet’s preference for national maturity.

<sup>507</sup> See Marlon B. Ross, *Manning the Race: Reforming Black Men in the Jim Crow Era* (New York: New York University Press, 2004); Steve Estes, *I AM A MAN!: Race, Manhood, and the Civil Rights Movement*

The large-scale participation of African-Americans during World War II, however, began to erode popular stereotypes. Blacks served nobly during the war as truck drivers, cooks, launderers, gravediggers, and soldiers. The war had highlighted the hypocrisy of Americans fighting overseas for the freedom of captive peoples even while a large black minority on the home front was left captive to a system of political and economic deprivation. The gendered discussions regarding equality in the postwar period became more pronounced than earlier black liberation movements. Black manhood became a central topic in these discussions. Black veterans had witnessed societies abroad absent of segregation, making the discrimination they faced upon their return home feel even more galling. “I spent four years in the army to free a bunch of Frenchmen and Dutchmen, and I’m hanged if I’m going to let the Alabama version of the Germans kick me around when I get back home. No sirreee-bob! I went into the army a nigger; I’m comin’ out a *man*,” declared one black corporal. Civil rights workers who volunteered in the early years of the movement traveled across the South and observed first-hand the shattered state of black manhood. Workers wrote letters to their homes in the North about “the absolute castration of the Negro male” and the emasculating effects of segregation which “makes boys . . . out of men.” The participation of blacks in the liberation of Europe prompted renewed calls for the liberation of blacks at home.<sup>508</sup>

Midcentury civil rights leaders employed the virtues of manhood to articulate a notion of black maleness that could only be attained by securing the benefits of full citizenship. A movement based on black delinquency, black effeminacy, or particularly

---

(Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Riché Richardson, *Black Masculinity and the U.S. South: From Uncle Tom to Gangsta* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2007).

<sup>508</sup> Quotes in Estes, *I Am A Man!*, 11, 80. For more on the African-American experience during World War II, see Neil A. Wynn, *The Afro-American and the Second World War* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1975).

black masculinity would never have had the hope of winning over white support. Capitalizing on white notions of the docile Negro while simultaneously employing the language of dutiful manhood, civil rights leaders shrewdly crafted a movement for black enfranchisement that appeared less threatening to white power and garnered sympathy for a domestic minority suffering from gender disorder. The civil rights movement was sold, in part, to white audiences as a matter of duty to promote responsibility, self-control, and maturity among black men. Martin Luther King Jr. acknowledged the debilitating effect of the breakdown of black manhood in a speech at the University of Chicago explaining,

When you deprive a man of a job, you deprive him of his manhood, deprive him of the authority of fatherhood, place him in a situation which controls his political life and denies his children adequate education and health services, forcing his wife to live on welfare in a dilapidated dwelling, you have a systematic pattern of humiliation which is as immoral as slavery and a lot more crippling than southern segregation.<sup>509</sup>

King's nonviolent movement left many whites without an answer when they were questioned why blacks should be denied the opportunity of fulfilling their domestic and civil responsibilities. The nation could not realistically promote responsibility among young males if it planned on leaving a large minority within its midst in a state where those responsibilities could not be met. Although non-violent or passive protest opened blacks up to charges of weakness in some quarters, the movement also proved to others the courage and self-control blacks embodied in the face of police dogs and fire hoses. The Montgomery bus boycott, the determination of black fathers to send their daughters to integrated schools, and the self-control the first black homeowners demonstrated in Levittown all proved that black males could demonstrate a manhood of character just as

---

<sup>509</sup> King quoted in Estes, *I Am A Man!*, 107.

much as whites. A movement for dutiful manhood was advanced through dutiful manhood.<sup>510</sup>

Civil rights leaders refused to lose sight of the seriousness of their cause as evidenced by the almost ubiquitous dress of their male participants in dark suits, white shirts, and black ties. Draping themselves in the uniform of dutiful manhood communicated the importance of black civil rights even as it simultaneously bore witness to the maturity and self-control of the wearer.<sup>511</sup> Video footage on the evening news of suited black males being kicked, punched, spat upon, and cursed by Southern males in white tee-shirts communicated a powerful contrast between Southern unrestrained bigoted masculinity and mature, contained black manhood.

Black consumers also aspired to the status and dignity that the midcentury suit expressed. *Ebony* regularly featured advertisements of black males in suits as successful musicians, athletes, executives, and celebrities. In a 1957 fashion feature, the magazine included a picture of a suited black businessman boarding a plane with his wife and being attended to by a white airline employee. The caption below the picture read, “Busy executives will wear gray flannel this fall.” In the same feature, another photograph of an enterprising black male included text that declared, “For that young executive look, popular three-button suit with flap pockets and center vent is just the thing.” Additional photos of black males in suits leaning against cars, on the move in the city, or leisurely

---

<sup>510</sup> A first-hand account of the desegregation of Levittown can be found in Daisy D. Myers, *Sticks and Stones: The Myers Family in Levittown* (York, PA: York County Heritage Trust, 2005).

<sup>511</sup> “Black political leadership reveals the tame and genteel face of the back middle class. The black dress suits with white shirts worn by Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr., signified the seriousness of their deep commitment to black freedom, whereas today the expensive tailored suits of black politicians symbolize their personal success and individual achievement. Malcolm and Martin called for the realization that black people are somebodies with which America has to reckon, whereas black politicians tend to turn our attention to *their* somebodiness owing to *their* ‘making it’ in America.” Cornel West, *Race Matters* (New York: Vintage, 1993), 38.

enjoying the company of other black males conveyed status, upward mobility, power, and wealth. *Ebony* seemed to acknowledge, however, that wealth and status were elusive for most black males. The magazine regularly featured advertisements for aspiring black males to sell made-to-order suits with the promise of receiving a free suit themselves. Readers were encouraged to mail in the included coupon and receive the free suit as soon as they began securing sales from others. “Our plan makes it easy for you to get your own personal suits, topcoats, and overcoats without paying 1¢ – in addition to your big cash earnings. Think of it! Not only do we start you on the road to making big money, but we also make it easy for you to get your own clothes without paying one penny.” The advertisement indicated that “thousands of men” had written enthusiastic letters to thank them for the opportunity. The success and mature manhood, as well as a suit that represented the achievement of these goals, was obviously still proving elusive for many black males.<sup>512</sup>

### **Manhood Administered**

The revival of manhood at midcentury along with its requisite maturities, coincided with the election of a president who saw no gap between the imperatives of work, marriage, fatherhood and his own sense of male duty. By 1952, after thirty-six years of marriage, Dwight and Mamie had fashioned a union based on a nineteenth-century model of separate gender roles, the provision and leadership of the husband, the homemaking of the wife, and the obedience of the children. Male maturity modeled by a

---

<sup>512</sup> “Men’s Fall Fashions: Well-dressed Males Take Color Cue from Nature,” *Ebony*, October 1957, 105-7; Stone-Field Corporation advertisement, *Ebony*, October 1958, 119. I am indebted to Anna G. Creadick, *Perfectly Average: The Pursuit of Normality in Postwar America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010), 84-86 for my sources in this paragraph.

president, who was also a former army man, served as a powerful and imitable example of successful postwar adjustment for midcentury males.

Stemming from his rural, religious, and modest upbringing, throughout his life Eisenhower continued to place a high emphasis on hard work as a mark of responsible manhood. “I knew almost from the day I married Ike that he would be a great soldier,” Mamie observed late in life. “He was always dedicated, serious and purposeful about his job. Nothing came before his duty. I was forced to match his spirit of personal sacrifice as best I could.”<sup>513</sup> Mamie learned her husband’s “spirit of personal sacrifice” would have to also become hers as well. After a month of marriage when Dwight had to leave his bride for a new post, she cried and complained he was leaving her. He put his arm around her and said firmly, “My duty will always come first.”<sup>514</sup> In his last years, Dwight would lament in his memoirs that one of the greatest distinctions between the youth he saw at the end of his life compared to those of his childhood was the diminished value placed upon hard work.<sup>515</sup>

Besides his work ethic, Eisenhower modeled manly maturity to the nation through his marriage. Dwight and Mamie’s marriage suffered tremendous challenges including the death of their firstborn, extended assignments, and rumors in the gossip press that Dwight was carrying on an affair during the war. These adversities, however, made the much older Eisenhowers appear to have more in common with younger married couples reuniting after the war and struggling with the same difficulties of loss, absence, and infidelity. The marriage model the Eisenhowers proffered young couples was distinctly

---

<sup>513</sup> Mamie quoted in Susan Eisenhower, *Mrs. Ike: Memories and Reflections on the Life of Mamie Eisenhower* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996), 85.

<sup>514</sup> Dwight quoted in *ibid.*, 47.

<sup>515</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, *At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1967), 79-80.

traditional with a firm division in gender roles. “Ike runs the [war, country], and I turn the lamb chops,” Mamie frequently quipped.<sup>516</sup> She also explained that she never felt compelled to give her husband any advice regarding his career as it was his business and her role was solely to make “as nice a family life as possible.” For the first lady, the problem with most modern marriages was the reluctance of both partners to work on the marriage and young women who “want to prove something, but all they have to prove is that they can be a good wife, housekeeper, and mother. There should be only one head of the family – the man.” Mamie’s granddaughter would later observe, “though she had presided over the 1950s and lived through the tumultuous 1970s . . . Mamie was, in fact, a Victorian, if often a headstrong one.”<sup>517</sup>

The Eisenhowers’ son, John, and even more significantly their grandchildren provided additional credentials to certify the president’s maturity in family life. A few years after his father’s death, John Eisenhower wrote, “I am certain that I was born standing at attention.” He described his parents as good, “although very strict” and believed his Spartan upbringing, West Point training, as well as his father’s notoriety stilled his own ability to carve out an identity. Regarding his relationship with his father, John reflected, “We had a deep mutual affection but there existed a certain military wall between us. I was not only his son; I was a young lieutenant who needed on occasion to be straightened out.”<sup>518</sup> The president proved more doting and amiable towards his son’s children as the press took note of the Eisenhower grandchildren’s frequent trips to the White House, Camp David, and Augusta National Golf Club. Even though the president

---

<sup>516</sup> Mamie quoted in Lester David and Irene David, *Ike and Mamie: The Story of the General and His Lady* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1981), 17.

<sup>517</sup> Eisenhower, *Mrs. Ike*, 5.

<sup>518</sup> John S. D. Eisenhower, *Strictly Personal* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1974), 63.



and first lady were not young, first-time parents, the abundance of photos taken with their grandchildren provided a link between the first family and the numerous young families flooding the suburbs. The press frequently associated the president and first lady with their grandchildren more than their actual parents. The age difference between the nation's young families and the much older couple in the White House did not seem as great and the president's maturity as a devoted grandfather seemed attractive and reproducible.

Eisenhower's proclivity and interest in traditional domestic activities also validated the trend towards male maturity in the postwar years. The absence of sisters in Eisenhower's childhood home required him and his brothers to perform customary female tasks such as laundry, cleaning, and cooking. Eisenhower demonstrated a lifelong interest in cooking by frequently composing a meal for staff members, cooking a dish for aides, or preparing breakfast for a pool of reporters. His interest in collecting and trying various recipes garnered national attention during campaigns and his presidency. Eisenhower's vegetable soup as well as his beef stew particularly attracted a large following. The president standing over a charcoal grill tending to several large steaks was a frequently photographed image during his administration. Besides the thrill he confessed to in shopping, Eisenhower also relished more home-bound activities such as painting, bridge, reading, and watching television.<sup>519</sup>

Eisenhower's ease around his wife, grandchildren, and domestic activities proved to be a valuable asset during the 1956 presidential campaign against Adlai Stevenson. Familiarity with domestic life was an important image for both candidates to capture

---

<sup>519</sup> Eisenhower, *At Ease*, 68-69. For more on Eisenhower's enjoyment of cooking, see Edward and Candace Russoli, *Ike the Cook: Dwight D. Eisenhower: General, President, and Cook* (Allentown, PA: Benedettini Books, 1990).

during the campaign. Critical was the female vote that had gone convincingly for Eisenhower four years earlier. Thus, the Eisenhower campaign featured several women, including young, old, white, black, housewives, and workers, who explained why they would vote to reelect the president. The Republican campaign celebrated the administration's role in promoting a prosperous American domestic life. One commercial included a middle-aged female explaining,

So much of our future rests with the women of our country. They're the homemakers. The whole family unit revolves around them. Everything that affects the family's welfare affects them first, and everything in the family's life benefits from their influence. They do the family buying, they see that everybody in the family circle is well clothed and well fed, but beyond this, they are the custodian of its values and aspirations for the future. In their hands lies the training of our young people, to whom they pass on the rich heritage of our nation, its love of peace and justice, and its passion for freedom. The women of our country swept Dwight D. Eisenhower into office four years ago. They will probably decide the election this time, and they like Ike.

And here's somebody else they like, too — Ike's beloved Mamie, whose smile and modesty and easy, natural charm make her the ideal First Lady. Let's keep our First Lady in the White House for four more years. November 6th vote for Dwight D. Eisenhower.<sup>520</sup>

The First Lady completed the image of domestic harmony that was critical in 1956. One campaign button summarized Mamie's popularity with the slogan, "I Like Ike, But I Love Mamie!" She managed to establish a unique style that distinguished her from the detachment or activism of previous first ladies. Her famous bangs, charm bracelets, flowing dresses, stylish hats, and minks established the "Mamie Look" - a look that defied the appearance of an older grandmother and evoked youthfulness, girlishness, perkiness, and endless shopping. Mollie Parnis, the First Lady's designer, explained about her famous client, "She's so normal! . . . She's proving that a grandmother needn't be an old lady. She's making maturity glamorous." Even the fact that most Americans

---

<sup>520</sup> <http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1956> (accessed December 5, 2015).

referred to the president's wife by her first name revealed an unprecedented familiarity with the presidential family. Ike and Mamie seemed like a friendly young couple who just moved into a nearby suburb and who dealt with many of the same issues as other young families.<sup>521</sup>

Adlai Stevenson's Democratic campaign also endeavored to capture the female vote with a campaign commercial that showed the candidate helping his daughter-in-law bring groceries into his house. His son and daughter-in-law were staying with him, the candidate explains in the ad, while his son is enrolled in an unnamed law school. In the commercial, Stevenson stops in front of his enclosed porch, groceries in hand, to discuss the election and its issues. Yet, the attempt at domestic ease fails. The candidate appears brainy, awkward, patronizing, and his halting, wordy monologue comes off as dry sermonizing. The glaring absence for the candidate is a wife and small children. Stevenson divorced seven years earlier and his children were all grown to adulthood. The attempt at domestic familiarity fails as does the candidate's responsibility to bring in the groceries. His daughter-in-law descends from the porch and sarcastically remarks, "You're a big help!" The candidate weakly apologizes, "Oh, I forgot to deliver the groceries and made a speech instead!" The Eisenhower campaign had little difficulty showcasing Stevenson's domestic failings and immaturity. The *New York Daily News* nicknamed the Democrat "Adelaide," questioning the candidate's sexuality.<sup>522</sup>

---

<sup>521</sup> Parnis quoted in Karal Ann Marling, *As Seen on TV: The Visual Culture of Everyday Life in the 1950s* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 26. For two biographies on Mamie Eisenhower written during the White House years, see Alden Hatch, *Red Carpet for Mamie* (New York: Henry Holt, 1954) and Dorothy Brandon, *Mamie Doud Eisenhower: A Portrait of a First Lady* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954).

<sup>522</sup> <http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1956> (accessed February 10, 2015). For more about issues of gender and the 1956 campaign, see K.A. Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 88-96.

Eisenhower soundly defeated Stevenson in 1956 by an even greater margin than he had in 1952.

Both campaigns paid little attention to the simmering issue of civil rights in 1956. The Stevenson campaign ran one ad that spoke vaguely about equal opportunities regardless of gender and race. The Eisenhower campaign ran an ad that featured a black woman who identified herself as a mother and declared her intention to reelect the president because he had kept the nation out of war and established peace. Another Republican campaign commercial included a black priest who explained he liked the president because of his “personal integrity.” He believed Eisenhower to be “the nearest thing to a statesman we’ve had in the White House for many years” and because of his integrity he had brought confidence back to the nation.<sup>523</sup>

Eisenhower preferred to use lofty and morally platitudinous terms when he referred to black civil rights. Employing nonthreatening and ambiguous language such as “opportunity,” “equality,” “decency,” and “progress” when addressing discrimination and violence against blacks put Southern segregationists at ease and black civil rights leaders in limbo. This is not to say that the president was completely calloused to the plight of black Americans. Eisenhower genuinely believed improving the lot of all citizens was a moral imperative for elected officials and providing opportunities for blacks to mature as full citizens was the right thing to do. In October 1956 the president remarked, “We have been pursuing this quietly, not tub-thumping, and we have not tried to claim political credit. This is a matter of justice, not of anything else.”<sup>524</sup> Reflecting back on his

---

<sup>523</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>524</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Television Broadcast: 'The People Ask the President'," October 12, 1956. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=10640> (accessed December 7, 2015).

administration's efforts for blacks, Eisenhower bemoaned, "It's a funny thing. There is no evidence that we have raised any votes with all we've done for the Negroes." After House Minority Leader Charlie Halleck offered his opinion that he did not think there was any political value in civil rights, Eisenhower clarified that he was not looking for votes anyway and affirmed that civil rights were a matter of decency.<sup>525</sup> Amidst the mob violence, lynchings, and cross burnings in the South, though, many blacks considered the issue of their rights and safety to be more than simply about decency.

The frustrations black leaders had with the president stemmed from the restraint and self-control he demonstrated on civil rights. Eisenhower considered his patience and caution a badge of mature manhood that he too expected blacks to demonstrate in advancing their cause. During the Montgomery Bus Boycott, that began with Rosa Parks's refusal to sit in the rear of a Montgomery city bus in December 1955, Eisenhower remarked he was "much impressed with the moderation of the Negroes in Alabama."<sup>526</sup> In a March 1956 press conference, Eisenhower pleaded for mature restraint from those on both sides of the issue. "If ever there was a time when we must be patient without being complacent, when we must be understanding of other people's deep emotions as well as our own, this is it. Extremists on neither side are going to help this situation, and we can only believe that the good sense, the common sense, of Americans will bring this thing along." Civil rights leaders resented being lumped in with Southern racists as

---

<sup>525</sup> L. Arthur Minnich, Legislative Leaders Meeting notes, February 17, 1959, Box 3, Legislative Meetings Series, Ann Whitman File, EL.

<sup>526</sup> L. Arthur Minnich, (hand-written notes), March 23, 1956, Box 4, Cabinet meeting notes, Cabinet Series, EL.

“extremists,” but Eisenhower was intent on not inflaming passions by dramatically castigating one side or the other.<sup>527</sup>

Eisenhower earned his indifferent reputation on civil rights due to his dispassionate and legalistic response to the Supreme Court’s decision in *Brown vs. Board of Education* (1954). When the Court ruled that “separate but equal” schools for blacks were “inherently unequal,” the decision galvanized public opinion on both sides of the case. The president, however, remained muted. “The Supreme Court has spoken and I am sworn to uphold the constitutional processes in this country; and I will obey,” Eisenhower declared tersely in a May 1954 press conference.<sup>528</sup> When asked directly in September 1956 if he endorsed or merely accepted the *Brown* decision, Eisenhower replied, “I think it makes no difference whether or not I endorse it. The Constitution is as the Supreme Court interprets it; and I must conform to that and do my very best to see that it is carried out in this country.”<sup>529</sup> Although exasperating to *Brown*’s beneficiaries, Eisenhower’s guarded, contained response was consistent with the mature reserve he brought to the presidency, his habit of identifying two extremes so that he could chart a course through the middle, and the covert nature of a hidden-hand style that deplored the presidency as a bully pulpit.<sup>530</sup>

---

<sup>527</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, “The President’s News Conference,” March 14, 1956. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=10752> (accessed June 6, 2015).

<sup>528</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, “The President’s News Conference,” May 19, 1954. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=9892> (accessed May 6, 2015).

<sup>529</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, “The President’s News Conference,” September 5, 1956. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=10591> (accessed February 21, 2015).

<sup>530</sup> In reference to the president’s muted response to *Brown*, Earl Warren believed in exaggerated optimism that if Eisenhower had clearly stated, “that it should be the duty of every good citizen to help rectify more than eighty years of wrongdoing by honoring that decision – if he had said something to this effect, we would have been relieved, in my opinion, of many of the racial problems which have continued to plague

Eisenhower did not provide the inspiring words civil rights leaders longed for to validate their movement, but his actions as chief executive did lend support to the nascent movement. The Eisenhower administration enforced President Truman's executive order to desegregate the armed forces that had gone largely unimplemented. Eisenhower further ordered that segregation be banned from the District of Columbia including its schools. Eisenhower appointed the first African-American, E. Frederic Morrow, to an executive position in White House history.<sup>531</sup> He also backed two Civil Rights bills, one in 1957 and one in 1960, that increased the powers of the Justice Department to prosecute civil rights abuses and enabled the federal government to more closely monitor voting by minorities in areas where there was a history of discrimination. The two bills, representing the first civil rights legislation in over eighty years, paved the way for the Civil Rights Act (1964) and Voting Rights Act (1965) and would have been stronger if Senate Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson and other Southern Democrats had not watered them down. Eisenhower also made five appointments to the Supreme Court, none of whom were Southern or segregationists. He filled the lower federal courts with similar appointees. His boldest action on behalf of civil rights was dispatching the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division to Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, to insure the safe admittance of nine adolescents to school. Eisenhower's concern with civil rights was sufficient to win

---

us. But he never even stated that he thought the decision was right until he had left the White House." Earl Warren, *The Memoirs of Earl Warren* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1977), 291.

<sup>531</sup> Morrow's path breaking yet disillusioning experience can be found in E. Frederic Morrow, *Black Man in the White House: A Diary of the Eisenhower Years by the Administrative Officer for Special Projects, The White House, 1955-1961* (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1963).

the votes of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's leaders, Martin Luther King Jr. and Ralph Abernathy, in 1956.<sup>532</sup>

\*\*\*\*\*

Maturity, along with responsibility and self-control, was an important facet of the dutiful manhood that characterized American males at mid-century. It is not surprising that the generation that came of age during the Depression and war was particularly enamored with the call to maturity. The twin crises in the first half of the century required that children take on adult responsibilities often before they were ready. A record number of early and expedited marriages produced a record number of births at midcentury and a subsequent eagerness to know how to raise them to become mature adults. While white veterans demonstrated their adjustment to full maturity becoming organizational men, husbands, fathers, and homeowners, black veterans were eager to gain access to the same privileges, even as they fought against traditional stereotypes regarding their own immaturity. Regardless of race, significant numbers of American males disparaged childish masculinity and endeavored to prove their manhood through work, marriage, and fatherhood. In 1956, they reelected by a large margin the candidate who most convincingly modeled the maturity they revered.

---

<sup>532</sup> For the best examination of Eisenhower's record on civil rights, see David A. Nichols, *A Matter of Justice: Eisenhower and the beginning of the Civil Rights revolution* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2007).



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### OLD MEN

On September 24, 1955, the Eisenhowers were vacationing in Denver. After taking care of some early morning business, the president set out to play a few rounds of golf. Phone calls from John Foster Dulles interrupted his game several times. Upon being notified of the calls, Eisenhower made his way to the clubhouse. He grew angry and frustrated when he discovered that Dulles tired of waiting for the president to reach the phone and had hung up both times. Eisenhower ate a hamburger topped with Bermuda onions for lunch after which he experienced an irritated stomach. After a third phone call, requiring another walk back to the clubhouse, he gave up and returned to his mother-in-law's house in frustration. Eisenhower played billiards with a friend, ate dinner, and then retired to bed.

Around 1:00 A.M the president awoke with severe chest pains. Summoning Mamie, he asked for some milk of magnesia, believing the pain to be a continuation of the previous day's unsettled stomach. Mamie grew concerned and called for Dr. Howard Snyder, the president's longtime personal physician. Apparently Snyder initially agreed with the president's suggestion that he was suffering an aggravated stomach because he administered papaverine, a gastrointestinal antispasmodic, and morphine as a painkiller for the chest pains. Eisenhower fell back to sleep and did not awake until noon. When he

did awake, Snyder administered an electrocardiogram. The test revealed the president had endured a coronary thrombosis.<sup>533</sup>

A heart attack forced Eisenhower to reconsider his vitality and fitness. He had survived the attack and he credited it to his being a “competitor” and “fighter.” Yet, whisperings regarding Eisenhower’s health and strength grew louder and stronger in the final years of his administration. While a majority of American males privileged responsibility, self-control, and maturity in the immediate postwar years, a bevy of voices espousing new male identities simultaneously wondered aloud if dutiful manhood was not only too restricting, but also antiquated and perilous to one’s health. Manhood’s dissenters labeled its dutifulness, self-control, and maturity, like its aged president, archaic and out of touch. Critics of manhood were varied and peripheral in the fifties, but a multitude of male identities, alongside a reinvigorated masculinity, overthrew the hegemony manhood enjoyed in the fifties amidst the upheaval of the sixties and seventies.

### **Manhood Besieged**

In August, 1959, *Playboy* magazine bluntly asked its readers, “why does the United States, a country that traditionally prizes youth, idealizes it, insists on it in top jobs, now find itself with superannuated leadership in the most critical area of national life?” The article pointed out that the average ages in the Senate, House, and committee chairmanships were higher than the national average and these governing bodies were often impervious to the entrance of younger men into their circles. Although other

---

<sup>533</sup> For the details surrounding Eisenhower’s heart attack, see Stephen Ambrose, *Eisenhower: The President* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), 270-286; Geoffrey Perret, *Eisenhower* (Holbrook, MA: Adams Media, 1999), 530-532; Jean Edward Smith, *Eisenhower: In War and Peace* (New York: Random House, 2013), 674-685.

government workers were subject to mandatory age retirements, the nation's highest elected officials were immune. *Playboy* contrasted younger men with the "oldsters" and enumerated deficiencies in memory, flexibility, and learning among those in their sixties and seventies. "All men of 70 are not inferior to all men of 40," the article asserted, "but *most* men of 70 are not as capable of leadership as *most* men of 40."<sup>534</sup> Eisenhower received *Playboy*'s particular scorn as a leader who was well beyond his prime. Whereas "our six greatest Presidents – Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, Teddy Roosevelt, Wilson and FDR – were all relatively young men," the number of days Eisenhower spent behind his White House desk "cannot be said to be setting a record for Presidential toil." The article explained that Eisenhower's aged passivity did not inhibit the aspirations of younger men, but neither did it challenge their complacency. "We have assumed . . . a reverence for old age . . . which approaches a cult of the aged leader," the author lamented.<sup>535</sup>

*Playboy*'s disillusionment with Eisenhower's age and the perceived inertia of his administration were not unique. Remarks about national complacency increased in fervor as the decade drew to a close with the president often serving as the symbol of a nation stuck in the past and perilously at risk of falling behind its enemies. "The prosperity of the Eisenhower Age is a deceptive sign of vigor and health," conservative pundit Norman Podhoretz wrote in *Commentary* as Eisenhower's term was concluding. Podhoretz pointed to "the boredom one senses on all sides, the torpor, the anxiety, the listlessness." Literary critic Dwight Macdonald went further. "We are an unhappy people," he declared, "a people without style, without a sense of what is humanly satisfying. There is

---

<sup>534</sup> Ralph Ginzburg, "Cult of the Aged Leader," *Playboy*, August 1, 1959, 59, 98.

<sup>535</sup> *Ibid.*, 60, 96, 98.

a terrible shapelessness about American life.” Historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. called the decade “a listless interlude” and the Eisenhower era a period of “passivity and acquiescence in our national life.” Journalist Marquis Childs believed Eisenhower shouldered much of the blame for the decade’s lethargy. The powers of the presidency had declined precipitously during his tenure and “the office has resembled much more nearly what it was in the late nineteenth century.” Childs acknowledged strong, vigorous, and healthy men may not always occupy the White House, but the rigors of the job required such men. “For his failure to use the powers of the office,” Childs concluded, “Eisenhower, in the interpretation of the weak and strong, must be put down as a weak president.”<sup>536</sup>

Popular disenchantment did not strictly focus on the president himself. Disappointment also became a particularly gendered conversation as numerous authors and commentators spoke of a “crisis of masculinity” in the postwar period.<sup>537</sup> Dutiful manhood, which proved appealing to so many immediately after World War II with its promise of order and stability, gradually seemed to many as tired and tiring as its well-worn admonitions.

Abraham Maslow argued the contemporary emphasis on maturity was misplaced and that self-control needed to be replaced with “actualization.” Maturity should be dumped in favor of “growth.” The exchange would prove healthier and far more fulfilling. Maslow influenced the development of the Human Potential Movement of the

---

<sup>536</sup> Alan Ehrenhart, “Are We as Happy as We Think?” *New York Times*, May 7, 2000; Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *Politics of Hope* (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1963), 81, 93; Marquis Childs, *Eisenhower: Captive Hero: A Critical Study of the General and the President* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1958), 290-297.

<sup>537</sup> Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., “The Crisis of American Masculinity” in *The Politics of Hope* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1963).

sixties with his revolutionary approach to psychology, asserting that humans who secured their basic needs would be able to move on towards betterment and achieve self-actualization. Exterior expectations and rules could inhibit personal growth and the doctrine of original sin, which Eisenhower and most religious Americans grew up under, was an obstruction to personal attainment. The inner nature was good and not evil and any fretting about self-control would inhibit its full expression. “It is best to bring it out and to encourage it rather than to suppress it,” Maslow declared. “If it is permitted to guide our life, we grow healthy, fruitful, and happy.” Humanistic psychology labeled sin not just as an outmoded word. It was a dangerous concept that could inhibit growth. Thus, an extramarital affair, a divorce, or an arrest could be seen as a “stage of growth” or a “passage” in life.<sup>538</sup>

Novelists and playwrights also explored themes regarding a postwar male’s agony beneath the burden of dutiful manhood. Male characters, chaffing under their occupational and domestic duties, often attempted a breakout through infidelity, violence, or suicide only to find themselves more deeply ensnared in domestic and corporate blandness. Harry “Rabbit” Angstrom, after running here and there for excitement, sex, and escape, lives in bitterness and resentment with his wife Janice at the conclusion of *Rabbit, Run* (1960). At the end of *Revolutionary Road* (1961), Frank Wheeler is left as an empty gray suit after April aborts her pregnancy and her own life attempting to advance her husband’s dream of moving to Paris. Arthur Miller detailed the dead end that conformist males faced in his Pulitzer Prize winning play, *Death of a Salesman* (1949).

J.D. Sallinger’s *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) provided a revealing description of teenage angst and became the bible for alienated youth, Holden Caulfield the Moses

---

<sup>538</sup> Abraham Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being* (Princeton, NJ: D.Van Nostrand, 1962), 3.

for captive teens. The novel played upon a decade long concern with juvenile delinquency and redefined maturity apart from noble behavior. Sallinger made responsible adults seem not so responsible if they were disconnected from their own children. Manhood had always distinguished itself in opposition to childhood. Holden Caulfield elevated youth and immaturity as repositories of wisdom and dignity of which adults were ignorant.

An increasing number of midcentury youth cast off the gendered strictures of their parents in a manner previous generations had not for many reasons. Record rates of high school enrollment created a common forum for adolescents to socialize and collaborate. The popularity of television insured even strangers would have their favorite shows to discuss. The proliferation of complete feature films about youth and marketed to youth nourished the collective identity of “teenager.” Films such as *Blackboard Jungle* (1955), *The Wild One* (1953), and *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955) gave mainstream teens a medium to cheer for rebellion, even if they were not participants. Perhaps most significantly, midcentury teens were the beneficiaries of a new genre of music that was performed by their peers and reinforced distinctions between themselves and their parents. Early rock ‘n’ roll provided a soundtrack for the young male’s revolt from duty. Its early artists, including Bill Haley, Little Richard, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Chuck Berry, blurred the traditional lines between age and youth, white and black, maturity and childishness, responsibility and fun. Elvis Presley’s body served as a tableau for several of the conflicts fifties youths felt: deportment and rebellion, self-control and sex, maturity and youth. The growing trend of white artists adopting black sounds, styles, and moves in early rock ‘n’ roll justified to some widespread concerns about the genre’s associations

with rebellion. Parents, pastors, and principals expressed concern, not only with the overt sexuality and allusions to rebellion in the music, but also regarding its close affinity with the language, dress, and styles of blacks. Norman Mailer confirmed the worst fears of some when he examined the “hipsters” or white youth who adopted black culture, language, and mores in his essay, “The White Negro” (1957).<sup>539</sup> Many white fathers could only see an unmistakable association of blackness with rebellion.

The image of the rebellious Negro was important for other males, however, in the fifties and sixties. A new generation of black activists no longer repulsed the image, despite the consternation it could cause within their own families and communities. The nascent civil rights movement suffered from a similar generation gap that was starting to rend apart all Americans in the fifties and sixties. Black parents, who had been teased with earlier promises of civic equality and had acclimated themselves towards disenfranchisement, worried, scoffed, or even discouraged their sons from attempting to take on a segregated society. Young black activists queried what was the value of freedom apart from its reality and failed to see how they could perform their duties as husbands and fathers without their full rights as citizens.<sup>540</sup>

The result was that black male identity fragmented and gave rise to a new following for black strength, toughness, power – black masculinity. Malcolm X was one of the first promoters of black masculinity at mid-century and a critic of Martin Luther King’s nonviolent approach. Some of the movement’s later activists believed that King’s movement had not gone far enough and would never be able to restore black manhood. Several Nation of Islam leaders emphasized a “masculinist liberation theology” and

---

<sup>539</sup> Norman Mailer, *Advertisements for Myself* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1959).

<sup>540</sup> See Steve Estes, *I Am A Man!: Race, Manhood, and the Civil Rights Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

portrayed non-violent leaders as weak, cowardly, unmanly. Advocating a more “militant manhood,” Malcolm X declared blacks needed to throw off the weakness imposed by white men and suggested non-violence was too “feminine.” Malcolm suggested the entrance of more former Muslims like himself into established civil rights organizations would make “Uncle Tom Negro leaders stand up and fight like men instead of running around here nonviolently acting like women.”<sup>541</sup> Near the end of his life, the Muslim activist seems to have drawn back from his earlier militancy, but where he hesitated, the Black Panthers were willing to go further. Founded in 1966 in Oakland, California, by Bobby Seale and Huey Newton, the Panthers encouraged black violence to fight against police brutality in black neighborhoods as a demonstration of masculine strength and toughness. Violence against “the man,” that is policemen who undergirded the white establishment, was a means to prove one’s masculinity. “We shall have our manhood,” Eldridge Cleaver, another early Panther leader, wrote in *Soul on Ice* (1968). “We shall have it or the earth will be leveled by our attempt to gain it.”<sup>542</sup>

A rigid gender binary informed Black Panther ideology that starkly distinguished masculinity from femininity and equated homosexuality with those who lacked black power. Amiri Baraka, a Black Power ideologue, declared straight black men were the only true men because “most white men are trained to be fags. For this reason it is no wonder their faces are weak and blank . . . [with] those silky blue faggot eyes.” Panther leaders often exchanged women as sex partners as a means to prove their station and power within the party’s leadership. Tracye Matthews remarks that female sexuality was viewed as a commodity within the party “to be exchanged in service of the revolution.” A

---

<sup>541</sup> Malcolm X quoted in Steve Estes, *I Am A Man!*, 88, 91, 97, 103, 105.

<sup>542</sup> Eldridge Cleaver, *Soul on Ice* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), xiii.



strict gender hierarchy along with a promotion of a “separate spheres” doctrine reinforced masculine power in the party. Black women were often expected to give birth to a new generation of revolutionaries, whereas the revolution itself would be left to the men.<sup>543</sup>

*Playboy* magazine served as the guide for men, black and white, eager to enjoy the perks of an assertive female sexuality and asserted there was a means to be male apart from the suburban home and corporate office. Appearing on newsstands for the first time in November 1953, *Playboy* labored to remove the stigma against extramarital sex and presented women and sex as consumable products that a hedonistic male could enjoy at leisure. In fact, leisure was the ethic that the magazine promoted even more than sex. The playboy lifestyle served up an alternative to the young man apart from the wife-whipped-work-obsessed-coronary-threatening lifestyle of the organizational men. In the magazine’s first issue, founder and editor Hugh Hefner proclaimed, “we want to make clear from the very start, we aren’t a ‘family magazine.’ If you’re somebody’s sister, wife, or mother-in-law and picked us up by mistake, please pass us along to the man in your life and get back to your *Ladies Home Companion*.” The playboy, Hefner explained, spends the majority of his time inside his trendy urban apartment “mixing up cocktails and an *hors d’oeuvre* or two, putting a little mood music on the phonograph, and inviting in a female acquaintance for a quiet discussion on Picasso, Nietzsche, jazz, sex.”<sup>544</sup> The first issue featured a nude Marilyn Monroe sprawled on a velvet sheet alongside text that informed readers she was “as famous as Dwight Eisenhower.”<sup>545</sup> *Playboy* offered a male ethic completely at variance with the decade’s dutiful men: bachelorhood over marriage,

---

<sup>543</sup> Quotes in Estes, *I AM A MAN!*, 162-166.

<sup>544</sup> *Playboy*, undated first issue, 3.

<sup>545</sup> *Ibid.*, centerfold.

leisure over responsibility, hedonism over self-control, youth over maturity, apartments over suburban ranches, casual sex over monogamy.<sup>546</sup>

The rejection of dutiful manhood came not only from quarters advancing competing definitions of maleness, but also from the nascent feminist movement articulating a new role for women in their relationships with men. *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), by Betty Friedan, made it clear that a new generation of feminists would not tolerate gender formulations, particularly those that reinforced a traditional patriarchy in the home, office, or politics. Postwar commentators had encouraged American women to practice a version of nineteenth-century republican womanhood where as wives they would gird up their men to perform their duties and as mothers reinforce a moral manhood in their sons.<sup>547</sup> However, Friedan believed widespread disenchantment with the assignment could no longer be overlooked. “We can no longer ignore that voice within women that says: ‘I want something more than my husband and my children and my home’.” The duty of bolstering responsibility in her husband and sons was supposed to be a wife’s unique gift and purpose – her “mystique.” But Friedan labeled the role a “problem that has no name” which prohibited women from growing to their “full human capacities.”<sup>548</sup> The entrance of women into the workplace in unprecedented numbers, coupled with the feminist assertion that husbands need not be the sole breadwinner, alongside a spiking divorce rate, compromised manhood’s dictum that it was a

---

<sup>546</sup> For more on the cultural significance of *Playboy*, see Elizabeth Fraterrigo, *Playboy and the Making of the Good Life in Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009) and Steven Watts, *Mr. Playboy: Hugh Hefner and the American Dream* (Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2008).

<sup>547</sup> Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980); Jan Lewis, “The Republican Wife: Virtue and Seduction in the Early Republic,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (October 1987): 689-721.

<sup>548</sup> Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1963), 32, 364. See also Daniel Horowitz, *Betty Friedan and the Making of The Feminine Mystique: The American Left, The Cold War, and Modern Feminism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998).

responsible husband's job to provide for his wife and family. Record numbers of women enrolling in college, alongside a loosening of attitudes towards sexual distinctiveness, as well as an embrace of sexual looseness, meant the death of nineteenth-century ideas prompting wives to be curators of dutiful men. Males who sought to hang onto the postwar gender order were beginning to find fewer women who agreed with them. Many young women, responding to Friedan's trumpet blast, were eager to forsake their mothers' aprons for gray flannel suits. Gloria Steinem urged husbands to seek their wives' emancipation by encouraging them to pursue careers. For, as the sole breadwinners, they "have nothing to lose but their coronaries."<sup>549</sup>

If feminists challenged the distinctions between traditional male and female roles, the emerging counter-culture blurred the distinctions between masculinity and femininity. The reshuffled gender order was particularly evident in the Beat movement. *Life* magazine featured the movement in 1959 with an article entitled, "Squaresville, U.S.A. vs. Beatsville." Contrasting the traditionalism of Hutchinson, Kansas with the Bohemianism of Venice, California, the article displayed for *Life's* broad readership alternative concepts of maleness. Beat males cared less about a suburban home, a corporate job, and modern conveniences. Opportunities for self-expression through music, poetry, theater, and art in a trendy urban apartment were the ideal quests for the alternative male.<sup>550</sup> Jack Kerouac explored the independence of Beat male identity in his largely autobiographical sketch, *On the Road* (1957). Although some read the novel as an account of irresponsible males seeking the next thrill on a series of road trips across the country, Kerouac attempted to invest the novel with a spiritual meaning, claiming it was

---

<sup>549</sup> Steinem quoted in Ehrenreich, *Hearts of Men*, 100.

<sup>550</sup> "Squaresville U.S.A. vs. Beatsville," *Life*, September 21, 1959.

the story of two men's search for God. Indifferent to the pleas of girlfriends and pregnant wives, the two friends gorge themselves on poetry, jazz, and sex. *On the Road* provided another contrast to dutiful manhood that seemed to highlight its limitations and blandness.<sup>551</sup>

Similar to Kerouac's novel, Allen Ginsburg's poem "Howl" (1956) offered, in part, a Beat tribute to male irresponsibility, self-indulgence, and immaturity. "Howl" provides a lament for the ones Ginsburg calls the "best minds" of his generation who were "destroyed by madness." Ginsburg's subjects are poets, radicals, addicts, dissenters, vagrants, and homosexuals who have been cast out by a society that celebrated its congruence and consumerism. But they are also the dutiful men who have lost their humanity and identity adhering to the imperatives of their gender. They included the ones,

who were burned alive in their innocent flannel suits on Madison Avenue amid blasts of leaden verse & the tanked-up clatter of the iron regiments of fashion & the nitroglycerine shrieks of the fairies of advertising & the mustard gas of sinister intelligent editors, or were run down by the drunken taxicabs of Absolute Reality.

The perpetrator of all the violence against Ginsburg's "best minds" is Moloch. The Biblical reference is to a Canaanite deity who was worshipped through the sacrifice of children. Moloch in Ginsburg's poem stands for industrialized civilization with all its controls, conformity, and concerns. It is the established order, including the duties of manhood, that leaves its victims with bashed-opened skulls, eaten brains and imagination, and "manless in Moloch." Besides the poem's overt celebration of madness, drugs,

---

<sup>551</sup> Mary Carden explains that the lead characters "attempt to replace the model of manhood dominant in capitalist America with a model rooted in foundational American ideals of conquest and self-discovery." See Mary Pannicia Carden, "Adventures in Auto-Eroticism': Economies of Traveling Masculinity in *On the Road* and *The First Third*," in *What's Your Road, Man?* ed. Hilary Holladay and Robert Holton (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2009), 77.

rebellion, masturbation, promiscuity, and homosexuality, “Howl” envisioned a new concept of manliness where males seek freedom from Moloch, embrace their madness, and receive feminine consolation from another male.<sup>552</sup>

The softer male, who abjured the corporate rat race and the heterosexual monogamy of marriage, unabashedly modeled by Ginsburg, foreshadowed the effeminacy of the male hippie. A large number of counterculture males sought enlightenment over income, eroticism over monogamy, and peace over prosperity. Counterculture youth were often anathemas to their fathers who had endured the Depression and war to provide for their sons what they did not want. The hippie also refused to embrace a masculinity of power and toughness. John Lennon encouraged a softer maleness and rejection of a “macho ethic” by asking, “where has it gotten us all these thousands of years? Are we still going to have to be clubbing each other to death? Do I have to arm wrestle you to have relationship with you as another male? Do I have to seduce her – just because she’s a female? Can we not have a relationship on some other level?” Lennon admitted he did not “want to go through life pretending to be James Dean or Marlon Brando.” The counterculture fashioned an alternative to maleness characterized by neither duty nor toughness.<sup>553</sup>

No other event precipitated the collapse of dutiful manhood and ripped apart two generations of American males more than the war in Vietnam. Many suburban homes thundered with arguments between fathers and sons replete with a lexicon of duty and manliness. Fathers affirmed that they had served in their war, done their duty, been responsible, loyal and patriotic. Now it was their sons’ turn. Sons railed against the war

---

<sup>552</sup> Allen Ginsburg, “Howl,” <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/179381> (accessed April 9, 2014).

<sup>553</sup> Lennon quoted in Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Free Press, 1996), 293.

as national murder of the innocents of Vietnam. Fathers, who accused their hippie sons of irresponsibility and effeminacy, failed to see that beneath the long unwashed hair, beads, and tie-dye seethed anger against a war justified in the language of duty. Amidst a draft to serve in an unjust war, not a few protestors questioned who was more dutiful: males who participated in the killing or those who refused and burnt their notices? Their sons discarded as tokens of shame the medals the preceding generation had received in World War II and, in the process, directly challenged who gets to define a man's duty in each generation.

To many dutiful men, the male hippie bore strong resemblance to the effeminate homosexual that heterosexual men feared was rapidly increasing in numbers in the fifties and sixties. Sex researcher Alfred Kinsey's *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (1948) did not show a rise, but a significant prevalence of homosexuality among American males. Kinsey reported thirty-seven percent of post-adolescent men had at least one homosexual experience that led to orgasm. Fifty percent of men who remained single until thirty-five had some type of overt homosexual experience that led to orgasm. A shocking fifty percent of men surveyed admitted to some sexual attraction to other men. Kinsey's percentages were quickly called into question and heavily scrutinized, but for many postwar heterosexual men the percentages and bar graphs were alarming.<sup>554</sup>

Concern over the surprising numbers of homosexuals sparked numerous efforts to explain its causes. Betty Friedan speculated that increased overt expressions of

---

<sup>554</sup> Alfred C. Kinsey et al., *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders Co., 1948), 650-651. For midcentury evaluations of the Kinsey studies, see Abraham Stone's review of *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* in *Marriage and Family Living* 10, no. 4 (November 1948): 96-97 and Ray E. Baber's review of a symposium on the Kinsey reports in *Marriage and Family Living* 18, no. 3 (August 1956): 281-282. More recently, James Jones, in his biography of Kinsey, claims the sex surveys overrepresented prisoners and prostitutes, over-sampled homosexuals, and labeled some single subjects as "married." See James H. Jones, *Alfred C. Kinsey: A Public/Private Life* (New York: Norton, 1997).

homosexuality were due in part to the feminine mystique that “glorified and perpetuated in the name of femininity a passive, childlike immaturity which is passed on from mothers to sons.” This transfer creates “Peter Pans, forever childlike, afraid of age, grasping at youth in their continual search for reassurance in some sexual magic.”<sup>555</sup> In *Sex in Our Changing World* (1947), John McPartland estimated the numbers of potential homosexuals to be around “8,000,000 or higher” and increasing at a faster rate than the population. Its increase was best understood to be due to the cultivation of “infantilism” in boys, the growth of urban culture which “tends towards homosexuality,” and the complexity of modern economic life that produces “reversions to homosexuality as a protest.”<sup>556</sup> Robert Lindner devoted an entire chapter to homosexuality in *Must You Conform?* (1956) and asserted that such males were sexually inverted, rebelling against a repressive sexual conformity. Thus, for some, the burdensome imperatives of manhood were responsible for the multiplication of homosexuals.<sup>557</sup>

### **Masculinity Revived**

Postwar white heterosexual males who had adopted the previous century’s virtuous manhood after the war to establish gender order and stability felt besieged by the proliferation of new male identities. The primary question about men that troubled contemporaries was the inability to define maleness when the question urgently required an answer. The demobilization of service men, the settlement of the suburbs, the record number of marriages followed by the record number of births, the growing impatience of blacks, and the apocalyptic threat of the atomic bomb necessitated a resolution of the

---

<sup>555</sup> Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1963), 275.

<sup>556</sup> John McPartland, *Sex in Our Changing World* (New York: Rinehart and Company, 1947), 150.

<sup>557</sup> Robert Lindner, *Must You Conform?* (New York: Rinehart, 1956), 31-44, 58.

question: what does it mean to be a man? Dutiful manhood made a startlingly successful bid to achieve hegemony on the issue, but ultimately as a gender construct, it remained an ideal, an ideal that was attractive after the indulgence of the twenties, the deprivations of the thirties, and the upheaval of the forties, but nevertheless an ideal. The manhood ideal of the fifties perished in competition with a multitude of alternative ideals. Ideals that were not like mass-produced suits where one size fits all, but rather like multi-pieced ensembles that shoppers could mix and match, blend and blur, borrow and return in the era's gender bazaar. The questions regarding male identity remained unresolved even as American males put forth an assortment of new identities.

Dutiful males who failed to discover a concept of maleness that suited them among the multitude of identities that proliferated in the fifties and sixties, returned in large numbers to the masculinity that had predominated for the fifty years before the war. Many males sought a tougher and more aggressive identity to prevent the complete abolition of maleness by feminists, blacks, hippies, and homosexuals. The hard body of virile masculinity that the depression and war had vitiated revived with a steroid injection of toughness, bitterness, and rage. Robust masculinity would reject momism, discipline delinquents, muscle-out feminists, toughen-up sissies, and win the cold war. The strong-bodied male who backed up his talk with physical and sexual prowess became the gold standard by which American males compared themselves. The hegemony virile masculinity established was so complete that in popular parlance it was more often than not the only construction to express maleness.

American males enjoyed a multitude of mediums to demonstrate their masculinity at mid-century. Jack LaLanne's fitness promotions taught males that dietary health and a



toned physique were necessary for good health. Joe Weider's publications such as *Muscle Builder* (1953) instructed males on how to build their own frame and Weider exhibited his own body as an example for which to strive. The popularity of Mr. Universe competitions as well as the famed muscle beach in Santa Monica provided males a forum in which they could compare their bodies against those of other men. The spectacle of baseball, football, and boxing exhibited masculine bodies in motion. The attraction of western films and novels, as well as rodeos, was partly due to how they provided masculinity with an air of nostalgia reinforcing the perception that "real men" had founded the nation, fought its wars, and settled the frontier. Hollywood seamlessly wove manhood and masculinity together in the Biblical epics of the period. "Sword and sandal" films such as *The Robe* (1953), *The Ten Commandments* (1956), and *Ben-Hur* (1959) got away with showing an abundance of skin and violence because they were set within the context of biblical morality. The films showed that men could be moral as well as robust fighters and lovers.

Mickey Spillane's novels provided a formula for the new masculinity that was not hard to miss. Spillane's novels featured tales of tough guy detective Mike Hammer who was uninhibited by domestic duties and had the mental, physical, and sexual fortitude to beat up bad guys, bed alluring vixens, and consign friend or foe to their death if they crossed him. Elements of Spillane's novels reflected the lives of blue-collar males who were familiar with criminals, corrupt cops, nightclub singers, and the harshness of urban streets. Spillane's accent on hardness (hard nosed cops, hardened crooks, hard bodies) and disdain for softness (soft-spined traitors, lawyers soft on crime) may be his most significant contribution to masculinity. Hammer's hardness was often accompanied by a

fervent anticommunism. After killing several communists in *One Lonely Night* (1951), Hammer reflects, “I killed more people tonight than I have fingers on my hands. I shot them in cold blood and enjoyed every minute of it . . . They were Communists . . . They were red sons-of-bitches who should have died long ago . . . They never thought there were people like me in this country. They figured us all to be soft as horse manure and just as stupid.”<sup>558</sup>

Men’s adventure magazines also showcased a revived masculinity at mid-century. More like a comic book than *Field and Stream* and less provocative than *Playboy*, adventure magazines offered men tales of adventure, battle, and sex as well as an escape from responsibility. Over one hundred different men’s magazines were published at the end of the fifties at the height of their popularity and they remained sought after well into the seventies. As one anthologist of pulp magazines writes, the magazines were selling “a concept of manhood – the John Wayne myth translated to the reality of blue-collar America, in tales of tough men able to withstand any pain dished out by man, beast, or nature.”<sup>559</sup>

Men’s magazines featured bodies (muscular bodies, sweaty bodies, tortured bodies, captured bodies, fighting bodies, aroused bodies) as the models of masculinity. The replacement of photographs with illustrated covers enabled publishers to present bodies with exaggerated components, featuring the necessary anatomical part for the adventure at hand. The advertisements inside the magazines for fitness and muscle building seemed to offer a means to achieve the body that was presented on the cover. Such magazines were often known as the “sweats” for the glistening bodies engaged in

---

<sup>558</sup> Mickey Spillane, *One Lonely Night* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1951), 171.

<sup>559</sup> Max Allan Collins and George Hagenauer, *Men’s Adventure Magazines in Postwar America* (Los Angeles: Taschen, 2008), 14.

combat, adventure, or sex.<sup>560</sup> Male bodies depicted as bleeding, fighting, or lovemaking offered dutiful men an avenue for vicarious experiences of masculinity far removed from their daily routines. War stories were particularly enticing for men who had not experienced combat in the war. The torn blouses and bursting breasts of the sweats communicated the ultimate masculine fantasy - female sexuality beyond the control of a woman's body and in need of a virile man to master its overwhelming power. Thus, readers replaced the postwar determination to restrict male sexuality with an urgency to keep women bedded lest their sexuality be given over to the enemy and compromise national security.

As it had in the previous century, masculinity took hold initially among working-class males. Free from the strictures of corporate propriety and university pretentiousness, blue-collar males, who relied on the performance of their bodies to earn a living, saw in the new masculine ethos a delineator of manliness that would distinguish them from white-collar workers. Corporate professionals did not work with their hands, expose themselves to dirt, sweat, or blood, or know the dangers of a construction site or loading dock. Blue-collar workers needed hard hats to guard their hard bodies with which they worked hard jobs with hard materials. Anthropologist Walter Miller argued the new masculine impulse stemmed from lower-class reaction to fears of feminization and,

related to the fact that a significant proportion of lower class males are reared in a predominantly female household and lack a consistently present male figure with whom to identify and from whom to learn essential components of a 'male' role. Since women serve as a primary object of identification during pre-adolescent years, the almost obsessive lower class concern with 'masculinity' probably resembles a type of compulsive reaction-formation.<sup>561</sup>

---

<sup>560</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>561</sup> Walter Miller, "Lower-Class Culture As a Generating Milieu of Gang Delinquency," *Journal of Social Issues* 14, no. 3 (1958): 9.

Miller was attempting to identify the roots of adolescent gang behavior, but his insight revealed a broader move towards a male identity based on toughness among blue-collar families. *Fortune* magazine discovered the same masculine edge in a report on auto assembly workers in July 1970. Immune from the threats of discipline and termination, young autoworkers were “well aware that bishops, soldiers, diplomats, even Cabinet officers, question orders these days and dispute commands.” They were also aware “that demonstrations and dissent have usually been rewarded. They do not look afraid, and they don’t look as though they would take much guff. They are creatures of their times.” White-collar workers were quick to adopt the masculine lexicon of the working class and proved that Brooks Brothers suits could also dress professional-class toughness, as the most successful on Wall Street demonstrated in the 1980s.<sup>562</sup>

Masculinity was the largest shard remaining after American male identity fragmented along the fault lines of class, race, gender, and sexuality at mid-century. The privilege, color, feminism, and homosexuality in the new concepts of maleness served as markers against which blue-collar, white, heterosexual males could offset themselves in forming a masculine ethos. *Time* magazine heralded these “middle Americans” as their Man of the Year in 1969 and reported on their nostalgia for lost values. They “still want to believe in America and the American dream,” *Time* reflected, but “it has dimmed for too many, sometimes because of their failed expectations, sometimes because of the assaults on their complacency.”<sup>563</sup> Pete Hamill warned of “The Revolt of the Lower White Middle Class” in a 1969 piece in *New York Magazine*. The American white working man demanded respect above all else and knew that intellectuals did not

---

<sup>562</sup> Judson Gooding, “Blue Collar Blues,” *Fortune*, July 1970, 112-113.

<sup>563</sup> “Man and Woman of the Year: The Middle Americans,” *Time*, January 5, 1970, 17.

“understand his virtues (loyalty, endurance, courage, among others) and see him only through his faults (narrowness, bigotry, the worship of machismo, among others). The result is the stereotype.” Hamill warned that New York politicians needed “to deal with the growing alienation and paranoia of the working-class white man” because there was growing talk of revolt and that revolt “involves the use of guns.”<sup>564</sup>

Hardhats instead of guns were the weapons of revolt. No other event signified the emergence of a new masculinity and its juxtaposition against other male identities than the New York hardhat riots of May, 1970.<sup>565</sup> Embittered by war protestors supporting Mayor John Lindsay’s day of mourning for the students shot by National Guardsmen at Kent State University five days earlier, city construction workers attacked the protesting students with clubs, crowbars, and their own hardhats. The workers stormed City Hall and raised the building’s American flag from half-staff to full-staff in defiance of the mayor’s order to memorialize the slain students. Seventy people were injured in the melee as city police tried in vain to keep the two sides apart or cowed to the workers’ demands. The hardhats’ refusal to sympathize with the Kent State students was consistent with national opinions regarding the shootings. Gallup revealed only eleven percent of those polled blamed the guardsmen at Kent State.<sup>566</sup>

The *New York Times* did not overlook the gray-flannelled males who also participated in the riots. The newspaper speculated on their level of involvement. In its initial report on the riot, a subheading in the article queried, “A Staged Assault?” and was

---

<sup>564</sup> Pete Hamill, “The Revolt of the Lower White Middle Class,” *New York Magazine*, April 14, 1969, <http://nymag.com/news/features/46801/> (accessed April 9, 2014).

<sup>565</sup> See Joshua B. Freeman, “Hardhats: Construction Workers, Manliness, and the 1970 Pro-War Demonstrations,” *Journal of Social History* 26, no. 4 (Summer 1993): 725-744.

<sup>566</sup> David Lawrence, “Campus Unrest Linked to Drugs,” *Palm Beach Post*, May 28, 1970, <http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=kn0yAAAAIIBAJ&sjid=-bUFAAAAIIBAJ&pg=862,4936664&dq=kent-state&hl=en> (accessed April 9, 2014).

followed by the *Times* wondering if the hardhats had been mobilized by white-collar workers. “From his 32d-floor office at 63 Wall Street, Edward Shufro of the brokerage firm of Shufro, Rose and Ehrman watched through binoculars two men in gray suits and gray hats who, he said, seemed to be directing the workers. ‘These guys were directing the construction workers with hand motions,’ Mr. Shufro said.”<sup>567</sup> The *Times* reported on another large march by workers on May 15 and featured a photograph of hardhat workers, longshoremen, other blue collar workers, as well as numerous white-collar suited males all marching together waving American flags and carrying anti-Lindsay signs. Among the signs, reported the article, were slogans calling the mayor “a rat, a Commy rat, a faggot, a leftist, an idiot, a neurotic, an anarchist and a traitor.” The workers also lauded Nixon’s war strategy and one large banner declared, “We love Nixon, Agnew, Mitchell, His Wife, and Reagan.” The workers continued to storm buildings and raise American flags on the old Tweed Court House, behind City Hall, and on the Wall Street Journal Building. The march of a combined group of professional and working class males against the alternative male identities of the student protestors vividly displayed the gender conflict American males had experienced since the late fifties. The surge of masculinity was unmistakable.<sup>568</sup>

The obvious fashion consequence of the end of manhood hegemony was the termination of the suit as the assumed uniform of mature manhood. An explosion of styles, colors, and accessories dismantled gendered concepts of clothing and expressed the multitude of male identities that proliferated in the sixties and seventies. The Peacock Revolution imported from Britain with its mod fashions introduced unprecedented

---

<sup>567</sup> Homer Bigart, “War Foes Here Attacked By Construction Workers: City Hall Is Stormed,” *New York Times*, May 9, 1970.

<sup>568</sup> “Thousands In City March To Assail Lindsay On War,” *New York Times*, May 16, 1970.

flamboyance, color, and effeminacy to men's dress. Male dress paid increased attention to male sexuality, highlighting chest hair by unbuttoning a shirt's top buttons, wearing Jockey bikini style underwear, and body-fitted tight jeans that accentuated the crotch and buttocks. Fashion historian Daniel Delis Hill observes that, "the peace-and-love young men of the late 1960s rejected the soulless gray flannel suits of their fathers' generation." Instead, sixties youth combined varieties of tunics, leather vests, carpet coats, tie-dyed T-shirts, and army surplus garments with beads, fringe, feathers, and long hair. Thus, black men, effeminate men, feminist men, gay men, and promiscuous men could all find a style that reflected their concept of maleness. Working-class males increasingly wore denim overalls and work jeans on and off the job site, providing them with garb to express their masculinity throughout the day and obscuring times of the day when toughness was necessary.<sup>569</sup>

The male suit endured, but with a new variety of lapel shapes, sizes, colors, and cuts. Space jackets, Nehru jackets, tiger suits, knicker suits, vest suits, sculpted suits, and leisure suits marked a firm break with the standard gray flannel of the previous decade. The suits of the late seventies still managed to convey a bold masculinity in the corporate setting with deeper V-shaped jackets that accentuated the expanse of the chest, broad lapels, and "rigid, shaped armor fashioned of indestructible double knit polyesters." Fashion historian Daniel Hill observes, "it was a stiff, assertive big look."<sup>570</sup>

---

<sup>569</sup> Daniel Delis Hill, *American Menswear: From the Civil War to the Twenty-First Century* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2011), 247, 260.

<sup>570</sup> *Ibid.*, 255.

## Manhood Aged

The formation of new male identities along with the youth revolt against manhood near the end of Eisenhower's presidency coincided with an increasing concern regarding the president's age and health. Eisenhower was keenly aware of his advanced years. At sixty-two, he was the oldest president to be elected since James Buchanan. In 1960 he became the oldest sitting president. In October of the same year he turned seventy years old. Eisenhower was shocked during a 1954 visit to the White House by the aged Winston Churchill. The distinguished prime minister had lost much of his legendary acuity and was severely hard of hearing. He repeated himself with the same comments and questions and struggled against nodding off in the afternoons. Eisenhower privately called Churchill a "little Peter Pan" who refused to acknowledge his age and was holding onto his office too long.<sup>571</sup> Eisenhower admitted the physical and mental pounding of the presidency could tax even the energies of a young man. He had witnessed some men "hang on too long" because they believed that they "had a great duty to perform and that no one else could adequately fill his particular position." Eisenhower confessed he might be prone to the same mistake because "the more important and demanding the position, the greater the danger in this regard." Above all he was certain that no man should be in his office more than seventy years old. Eisenhower would reach such a mark the month before the 1960 election.<sup>572</sup>

Eisenhower's age was a frequent topic in the press, among his opponents, and even among his allies. Columnist Stewart Alsop wrote in the middle of Eisenhower's

---

<sup>571</sup> L. Arthur Minnich, (hand-written notes), October 23, 1953, Box 1, Cabinet meeting notes, Cabinet Series, EL.

<sup>572</sup> Eisenhower to Edward E. Hazlett, Jr., August 15, 1955, in *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The Presidency: The Middle Way*, ed. by Louis Galambos et al. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 16:1820.



1956 reelection campaign that the president was no more than “an amiable but aging and ailing man, trapped into running against his will by ruthless politicians and big businessmen, determined to use him for their own purposes.”<sup>573</sup> *New York Times* editorialist James Reston wrote in late 1957, “We are in a race with the pace of history. We are in a time when brain power is more important than fire power, but in the last five years the President has gradually drifted apart from the intellectual opinion of the country, filled up his social hours with bantering locker-room cronies, and denied himself the mental stimulus that is always available to any President.”<sup>574</sup> During the 1956 campaign, Democrats printed a bumper sticker that read, “A Vote for Eisenhower is a Vote for Nixon.” For his part, Nixon, on at least one occasion, called Eisenhower behind his back a “goddamned old fool” and “a senile old bastard.”<sup>575</sup>

In his last years in the White House, Eisenhower observed what he perceived to be a drift away from his administration’s and traditional GOP principles. He speculated that a new generation in the party believed customary concerns with restraining spending and balanced budgets were as aged as the president himself. “With the world trend toward socialism, maybe we can’t get out of it,” Eisenhower lamented in early 1959. “Maybe we are just like the old guard at the bridge with rusty armor and a broken sword.”<sup>576</sup> He reacted with even more horror at the tough rhetoric in the 1960 campaign about inadequate defense expenditures, missile gaps, and claims that his administration had allowed the nation to become second-rate in defense and military preparedness.

---

<sup>573</sup> *Washington Post and Times Herald*, July 15, 1956.

<sup>574</sup> *New York Times*, December 8, 1957.

<sup>575</sup> Nixon quoted in Jeffrey Frank, *Ike and Dick: Portrait of a Strange Political Marriage* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2013), 15.

<sup>576</sup> L. Arthur Minnich, (hand-written notes), January 16, 1959, Box 5, Cabinet meeting notes, Cabinet Series, EL.

Particularly unsettling was the habit of Republican candidates adopting such talk and pushing for, to what seemed to Eisenhower, wildly inflated defense budgets. After vetoing a federal pay hike that many congressional Republicans supported, an aide wrote, “The President is at a loss . . . as to what Republicans really stand for. Fiscal integrity is the keystone to which all Republicans have adhered, [Ike] said, and he could hardly see how he could contend vigorously . . . that the Republican Party is the party of responsibility when the majority of the Republicans vote exactly the opposite.” To Eisenhower’s consternation, his responsible and principled men like Secretary of State Dulles, Chief of Staff Sherman Adams, and Attorney General Herbert Brownell had all died, been driven out, or retired from his administration. Despite his enduring popularity, the president mourned that he too felt like he was being “read out of the party.” More and more he looked forward to being a free man when he left the presidency.<sup>577</sup>

Eisenhower’s recurring health crises further undermined his image as a man healthy and strong enough to fulfill the requirements of his office. A heart attack in 1955, a bout of ileitis in 1956, and a stroke in 1957 challenged the administration’s efforts to present the president as healthy and strong enough to meet the demands of his office. The specter of a president possibly dying at any moment challenged the administration’s efforts to present Eisenhower as viable enough to meet the demands of his office.

In January 1960 *Time* magazine named Eisenhower its Man of the Year for the previous year. It was the second time he had won the honor. When Eisenhower received the title in 1944, *Time* cast the Supreme Commander as likeable, but tough on his enemies and taking far more from Hitler than the dictator wished to give. Now at the beginning of 1960 the magazine celebrated the values revered by postwar men and their

---

<sup>577</sup> Memo for Record, July 1, 1960, Box 51, DDE Diary Series, Ann Whitman File, EL.

most famous member. Eisenhower was “the man who had become the nation’s image” and was shaped by the principles of “liberty under law” and “self-restraint.” Returning from a trip to Europe, Asia, and Africa, where everywhere he was greeted with adoring crowds, “Eisenhower towered as the world’s best known, best-liked citizen.” *Time* celebrated the American president’s international popularity and explained that anyone seeking explanations for it would find it “no more complicated than ‘he’s a good (or decent, or honest) man,’ or ‘we can trust him,’ or ‘he does his best.’” The magazine went on to contrast Eisenhower’s calmness with Khrushchev’s bluster and traced a consistent attention to principle in each period of the icon’s life.

Ike’s faults are those that his countrymen can share and understand, and in his virtues he is more than anything else a repository of traditional U.S. values derived from his boyhood in Abilene, Kans., instilled in him by his fundamentalist parents, drilled into him at West Point, tempered by wartime command, applied to the awesome job of the presidency and expanded to meet the challenges of the cold war.

The article included a timeline with an up and down arrow showing fluctuations in Eisenhower’s popularity rating. The arrow bounced up and down mostly within the sixty and seventy percentiles throughout Eisenhower’s presidency. It peaked at the end of 1959 with what Gallup calculated to be a seventy-six percent approval rating.<sup>578</sup>

The next and final year of Eisenhower’s presidency proved to be his worst. Crises at home and abroad sullied his record and dragged down his legendary popularity rating for only the second time below fifty percent. The embarrassment of the U-2 incident along with the failed Paris summit, the withdrawal of Khrushchev’s invitation to visit the Soviet Union, the “loss of Cuba” to an increasingly anti-American and pro-Soviet Fidel Castro, and tensions in the Congo compromised Eisenhower’s image as a strong and

---

<sup>578</sup> “Man of the Year,” *Time*, January 4, 1960, 11.

capable leader in foreign affairs. Coupled with domestic accusations of letting U.S. military preparedness fall behind and opening up a “missile gap,” fighting against congressional members who wanted to prove they were “tough” on defense by expanding the military’s budget, and a biting recession that began in April and lasted for ten months, Eisenhower increasingly longed for retirement. At one point he told Anne Whitman he would like to resign. Even though the man remained popular, the manly virtues of caution and self-restraint that *Time* had applauded him for a year earlier now seemed more appropriate for an ageing grandfather than the leader of the free world.<sup>579</sup>

The approach of the 1960 presidential election prompted Eisenhower to reflect on a successor and the moral qualities that the office required. The president stated in a January press conference that he believed there were a number of Republicans, “eminent men, big men, that could fulfill the requirements of the position.” Eisenhower publicly expressed his “admiration” and “respect” for Nixon, but refused to endorse his vice-president until the party convention put forth its candidate.<sup>580</sup> Eisenhower’s hesitant support for Nixon’s candidacy revealed lingering doubts in Eisenhower’s mind about Nixon’s readiness for the job. In June, Eisenhower privately remarked to former cabinet member, Oveta Culp Hobby, that Nixon was “growing in stature daily.”<sup>581</sup> But a growing sense in Eisenhower’s mind that Nixon was maturing did not stave off a disastrous press conference in August. When reporters repeatedly asked Eisenhower for a single idea or decision Nixon contributed as vice-president to the administration, Eisenhower snapped

---

<sup>579</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Waging Peace, 1956-1961* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965), 552.

<sup>580</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, "The President's News Conference," January 13, 1960. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=12131> (accessed January 7, 2014).

<sup>581</sup> Eisenhower to Oveta Culp Hobby, Telephone calls, June 11, 1960, Box 50, DDE Diary Series, Ann Whitman File, EL.

back, “If you give me a week, I might think of one. I don’t remember.”<sup>582</sup> The rash answer proved devastating to Nixon’s campaign.

Eisenhower had no doubts about the responsibility of the Democrats or the maturity of their candidates. John Kennedy had “no real stature.” Eisenhower told a close friend that he feared if the Kennedys got in, “we will never get them out – that there will be a machine bigger than Tammany Hall ever was . . .”<sup>583</sup> As far as the Democratic candidate himself, Eisenhower declared privately, “I will do almost anything to avoid turning my chair and the country over to Kennedy.”<sup>584</sup> Eisenhower dismissed the Democrat as “Little Boy Blue” and bemoaned the personality cult that surrounded Kennedy. Regarding Kennedy’s running mate, Eisenhower observed the same lack of character. Lyndon Johnson was “not a big man.” He was “a small man” who “hasn’t got the depth of mind nor the breadth of vision to carry great responsibility.”<sup>585</sup>

Kennedy shrewdly avoided attacking Eisenhower personally and instead attacked the perceived complacency and listlessness of the previous eight years. Kennedy made the election a referendum on the new masculinity he embodied. In announcing his candidacy in January, Kennedy connected the power of the presidency with creating “a more vital life for our people.”<sup>586</sup> In July, in response to Truman’s criticism that he was too inexperienced for the presidency, Kennedy declared the office required “the strength

---

<sup>582</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, “The President’s News Conference,” August 24, 1960. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=11915> (accessed January 7, 2014).

<sup>583</sup> Eisenhower quoted in Ellis D. Slater, *The Ike I Knew* (Privately printed, 1980), 229.

<sup>584</sup> Eisenhower to Ben Fairless, Telephone calls, August 19, 1960, Box 52, DDE Diary Series, Ann Whitman File, EL.

<sup>585</sup> William E. Robinson, Diary, July 18-25, 1960, Box 4, William E. Robinson Papers, EL.

<sup>586</sup> John F. Kennedy, “Remarks of Senator John F. Kennedy Announcing His Candidacy for the Presidency of the United States - Senate Caucus Room, Washington, DC,” January 2, 1960. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=25909> (accessed January 7, 2014).

and health and vigor of young men.”<sup>587</sup> In his speech accepting his party’s nomination, Kennedy employed the imagery of rugged, untamed wilderness in proclaiming his New Frontier. The tamed men of recent years would not be able to forge the wilderness, however. “After eight years of drugged and fitful sleep, this nation needs strong, creative Democratic leadership in the White House.” The New Frontier demanded the vigor of young men not burdened by such moralisms as self-control and maturity, but rather boldness and courage. “All over the world, particularly in the newer nations, young men are coming to power – men who are not bound by the traditions of the past – men who are not blinded by the old fears and hates and rivalries – young men who can cast off the old slogans and delusions and suspicions.”<sup>588</sup> Kennedy assured voters he was ready to cast off the strictures that held old men back. The young pioneer would lead the nation into the future.

Kennedy’s campaign effectively fought off the old guard’s attempt to dismiss him as too young and inexperienced for the highest office in the land. New Dealers still looked to the twice-nominated and twice-defeated Adlai Stevenson as the standard-bearer of responsible manhood and liberalism. Eleanor Roosevelt, as the matriarch of the New Deal, spoke for traditional liberals who were not immediately won over by Kennedy’s youthful cut. “[T]he world now requires maturity, it requires experience,” Roosevelt wrote in her newspaper column, “and . . . the only man meeting these requirements . . . is Adlai E. Stevenson.”<sup>589</sup> Kennedy’s camp, however, attributed weakness rather than maturity to Stevenson. Kennedy’s speechwriter, Ted Sorensen, explained that the

---

<sup>587</sup> Clayton Knowles, “Kennedy’s Reply to Truman,” *New York Times*, July 5, 1960.

<sup>588</sup> John F. Kennedy, “Address of Senator John F. Kennedy Accepting the Democratic Party Nomination for the Presidency of the United States - Memorial Coliseum, Los Angeles,” July 15, 1960. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=25966> (accessed January 7, 2014).

<sup>589</sup> *New York Times*, June 10, 1960, 14.

Kennedy-Stevenson relationship had deteriorated “partly because they were political rivals and partly because JFK regarded Stevenson as weak and indecisive in the convention and pre-convention maneuvering. Ironically, had Stevenson been tougher and more determined in battling it out with him for the nomination, JFK would have respected him more.”<sup>590</sup> Stevenson experienced firsthand Kennedy’s penchant for toughness as the party convention approached and rumors swirled that Stevenson would try to capitalize on a divided convention and secure the nomination for a third straight time. “I have the votes for the nomination and if you don’t give me your support,” Kennedy threatened, “I’ll have to shit all over you. I don’t want to do that but I can, and I will if I have to.” Overwhelmed, Stevenson explained to his then speechwriter George Ball, “I should have told the son of a bitch off, but frankly, I was shocked and confused by that Irish gutter talk.”<sup>591</sup> Robert Kennedy expressed his family’s opinion of Stevenson with labels of “untough,” a “whiner,” and a “pain in the ass.”<sup>592</sup>

While Kennedy enjoyed enormous capital trumpeting his youth, vision, and vigor, Nixon was plagued with questions regarding his character and the quality of his manhood. Joe Alsop wrote of “haunting doubts about Nixon’s character and capabilities.”<sup>593</sup> C.D. Jackson from *Time* exposed Nixon’s contrived manhood by explaining his image “arises not out of his alleged vices, but out of his evident virtues. He is too perfect; he never makes a misstep; the image is of an antiseptic man, not a warm man – like the perfect hospital nurse, beautifully starched, doing everything exactly right, but not a woman . . . There is an aura of contrivance about even the best things he has

---

<sup>590</sup> Theodore C. Sorensen, *The Kennedy Legacy* (New York: Macmillan, 1969), 85.

<sup>591</sup> Michael O’Brien, *John F. Kennedy: A Biography* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2005), 460.

<sup>592</sup> Kennedy quoted in Evan Thomas, *Robert Kennedy: His Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000), 220.

<sup>593</sup> *Washington Post and Times Herald*, A15.

done.”<sup>594</sup> Eisenhower’s secretary formed the same conclusion. She wrote that, “the President is a man of integrity and sincere in his every action . . . But the Vice President sometimes seems like a man who is acting like a nice man rather than being one.”<sup>595</sup> Stevenson considered it “unthinkable that a man with his background of slander, abuse, innuendo, expediency and resort to all the most devious political devices should ever occupy an office which we have tried for generations to exalt in the esteem of young people and the world.”<sup>596</sup>

Conflicting opinions about Nixon as a man thus accentuated his problems in 1960. As vice-president, Nixon was already tied to the Eisenhower administration’s image as a time of inertia presided over by aged and ailing men. Nixon never successfully capitalized on the peace and prosperity of the Eisenhower years to buttress his campaign. Kennedy effectively harped on the passivity, resignation, and comfort of the decade, effectively tying the youthful Nixon with the ageing Eisenhower. Even though Nixon was only four years older than Kennedy, his opponent made the margin seem much greater. At the same time, the vice-president’s reputation as a fierce anti-communism fighter and an aggressive campaigner raised questions about the quality of his manly character that were never effectively answered. Thus, Nixon was caught in 1960 between two ends of a vise that were coming together to squeeze himself and American males: old and ageing dutiful manhood and a new virile masculinity. Much of the public realized what Nixon’s close observers recognized. Nixon parroted Eisenhower’s dutiful manhood to remain in the good graces of the administration while he struggled often unsuccessfully to conceal a

---

<sup>594</sup> C.D. Jackson, Log, January 11, 1960, Box 69, C.D. Jackson Papers, EL.

<sup>595</sup> Ann C. Whitman Diary, August 30, 1960, Box 11, Ann Whitman Diary Series, Ann Whitman file, EL.

<sup>596</sup> Stevenson quoted in Porter McKeever, *Adlai Stevenson: His Life and Legacy* (New York: William Morrow, 1989), 419.



masculinity that thrived on toughness and power conflicts. His inability to rest comfortably in either one went a long way in highlighting Kennedy's resolute virility and the need for strong, vigorous men in the White House. Kennedy won the contest between the two cold warriors, but only by .17% of the vote.

### **Masculinity Elected**

The inauguration of John Kennedy in January, 1961 marked not only the beginning of a new administration, but also the beginnings of the modern masculine presidency. Historian Robert Dean has effectively described the "patrician masculinity" that characterized Kennedy's administration and how the president's efforts to prove his vigor influenced his staff's composition and significant policy decisions. Whereas Eisenhower's dutiful manhood was a construction of early to mid-nineteenth century rural communities, Kennedy's stemmed from early twentieth-century elite boarding schools and Ivy League universities where the upper-class pretensions of *noblesse oblige* demanded courage, sacrifice, and toughness from its males. Kennedy's masculinity also included imperialistic implications that sought the expansion of American power and influence through heroic individualism. Kennedy's heroics during the sinking of *PT-109*, his contempt for Eisenhower's organizational approach to national security, and his disgust for what he perceived as a pallid State Department reinforced his belief in himself as the heroic individual who could dispense with the lethargy of old men and unilaterally conduct a more courageous foreign policy.<sup>597</sup>

Kennedy's patrician masculinity shunned caution and restraint. Rather, boldness and courage defined manliness for his class. The feminized domesticated male was an

---

<sup>597</sup> Robert D. Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood: Gender and the Making of Cold War Foreign Policy* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), 1-7.

anathema to masculine elitists, for family served more as an ornament than a mission. Kennedy's supporters frequently presented their hero as a loving husband and devoted father filled with the vigor of youth and health. The reality belied the packaged image of numerous photographs, opinion pieces, and television specials. Kennedy spent much of his presidency in pain from deteriorating vertebrae and in dependency on cortisone and amphetamine injections to manage his Addison's disease. Kennedy's womanizing, only the subject of squelched rumors during his Senate years, continued unabated in the White House. Kennedy enjoyed the amours of numerous secretaries, female staffers, stewardesses, call girls, prostitutes, and Hollywood starlets during his presidency. While these liaisons were consistent with Kennedy's personal and family history, they also served to distract him even momentarily from his constant physical pain, satisfied his amphetamine-elevated libido, and allayed his nagging sense of impending death. They also revealed Kennedy's rejection of any type of manliness that preached self-control and responsibility. Camelot proved the presidency did not preclude a playboy if efforts were made to keep it under wraps.<sup>598</sup>

Eisenhower despaired of what he considered Kennedy's recklessness and irresponsibility. The new president eschewed his predecessor's regular schedule of Cabinet and National Security Council meetings and appointed a reticent head to the State Department in Dean Rusk because the president himself anticipated performing as his own Secretary of State. Kennedy's preference for young and bold men came to bear in the 1961 Bay of Pigs fiasco. The president withdrew promised U.S. air support for an

---

<sup>598</sup> See Mimi Alford, *Once Upon a Secret: My Affair with President John F. Kennedy and its Aftermath* (New York: Random House, 2012); Robert Dallek, *An Unfinished Life: John F. Kennedy, 1917-1963* (Boston: Back Bay Books, 2003); Michael O'Brien, *Rethinking Kennedy: An Interpretive Biography* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2010); Geoffrey Perret, *Jack: A Life Like No Other* (New York: Random House, 2002).

anti-Castro invasion force of Cuban exiles which was subsequently overwhelmed on the beach and resulted in hundreds of casualties. Kennedy felt humiliated and embarrassed in his first major foreign policy venture and summoned Eisenhower for an April meeting at Camp David. Eisenhower asked Kennedy if he had assembled his national security team together to evaluate the mission or if he had met individually with his aides. Kennedy's admission that he conducted only one-on-one meetings revealed to Eisenhower that his successor had dismantled the national security apparatus he had created to insure crosschecking and accountability.<sup>599</sup> Eisenhower's manhood required group accountability. Kennedy's masculinity revered heroic individualism.

Eisenhower continued to take issue with what he perceived as the Kennedy administration's recklessness and bravado. The former president did not disguise his contempt for Kennedy's enlarged defense spending and neglect of balanced budgets. Eisenhower begrudged Kennedy's boast of going to the moon and instead called for "an orderly, scientific" approach "rather than engaging in a mad effort to win a stunt race."<sup>600</sup> The former president was also shocked to hear rumors of possible CIA involvement in the assassination of President Ngo Dinh Diem of South Vietnam in 1963. Eisenhower's reflections on Diem's murder in a letter to Nixon revealed the former president's ignorance of Kennedy's obsession with covert ops and the heroic special agent. "No matter how much the Administration may have differed with him, I cannot believe any American would have approved the cold-blooded killing of a man who had, after all, shown great courage when he undertook the task some years ago of defeating

---

<sup>599</sup> Malcolm C. Moos interview with Dwight D. Eisenhower, November 8, 1966, Gettysburg, PA, Box 2, Augusta-Walter Reed Series, Post-Presidential Papers, EL.

<sup>600</sup> "Eisenhower Terms Space Effort 'Mad'," *New York Times*, August 7, 1962.

Communist's attempts to take over his country."<sup>601</sup> For Kennedy, boldness supplanted obligation.

The ascension of Lyndon Johnson to the presidency after Kennedy's assassination marked a further masculinization of the presidency. Like Eisenhower, Johnson had been born in Texas, grown up in a small rural town, and experienced firsthand rigorous manual labor. Johnson, however, had been born almost twenty years after Eisenhower, came of age in the twenties when urban masculinity was supplanting dutiful manhood, and was not raised in the devout Protestantism that Eisenhower and his brothers received in their home. Moreover, Texas never abandoned the frontier masculinity that residents of Abilene bid farewell to in the 1870s. Johnson was a proud Texan. He saw no strength in a president endeavoring to be dutiful and mature. "It's not the job of a politician to go around saying principled things," he sneered. For Johnson, Eisenhower was too tame; a hero who could rest on his war credentials even as an old man. Kennedy was a youth in a man's game; propped up by his father's money, nicely groomed by his consultants, and a mirage of true power. Jack Kennedy was "weak and pallid – a scrawny man with a bad back, a weak and indecisive politician, a nice man, a gentle man, but not a man's man," was the way Johnson described his slain predecessor. In the macho pursuit of sexual conquest, LBJ wanted others to know that the Kennedy playboy could not surpass him in numbers. "I had more women by accident than he ever had by design," Johnson assured Kennedy admirers. Johnson's corporeal bravado was frequently put on display against those he sought to intimidate, coerce, or overrule. Urinating and defecating in front of others, groping his scrotum in front of female reporters, and exposing his erect penis to

---

<sup>601</sup> Eisenhower to Richard M. Nixon, November 11, 1963, Box 14, Special Names Series, Post-Presidential Papers, EL.

journalists felt like a blindside punch to witnesses in a bout of masculine exhibitionism.<sup>602</sup>

Eisenhower advised Johnson more frequently than Kennedy, but remained suspicious of the president's agenda and flattery. Eisenhower was aghast at the size of the Great Society programs and the funding they required. He also demurred at Johnson's obsequious notes, phone calls, and gifts and begged aides to stand between himself and the president so that Johnson would not touch him. At times feeling used, Eisenhower remarked, "Johnson is unreliable and has no moral courage whatsoever."<sup>603</sup>

Johnson's masculine code was instrumental in his crafting of U.S. policy in Vietnam as a test of his personal, as well as the nation's, backbone. Urged on by advisors who were too cowed by his presence to offer counsel at variance with what he wanted to hear, Johnson affirmed officials who spoke assuredly of victory and stiffened the spines of others with tough talk and promises of masculine feats. Vietnam was a "bitch" who kept him from the woman he loved – the Great Society. He was determined not to be "the first American President to lose a war." After the Christmas bombings of North Vietnam in 1966, Johnson boasted, "I didn't just screw Ho Chi Minh. I cut his pecker off."<sup>604</sup> Johnson's fragile ego and incessant determination to see every conflict as a Texas standoff impelled him to squander opportunities for withdrawal. Johnson's refusal to be seen as soft in front of Kennedy's "Harvards," the patrician imperialists his predecessor installed as the foreign policy establishment, positioned presidential ego as a key factor in

---

<sup>602</sup> Robert A. Caro, *The Years of Lyndon Johnson: Master of the Senate* (New York: Vintage, 2002), xv, 121; Robert A. Caro, *The Years of Lyndon Johnson: The Passage of Power* (New York: Vintage, 2012), 33; Robert Dallek, *Flawed Giant: Lyndon Johnson and his Times, 1961-1973* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 124, 186, 408.

<sup>603</sup> Eisenhower to Raymond J. Saulnier, September 10, 1964, Box 2, Appointment Series, Post-Presidential Papers, EL.

<sup>604</sup> Johnson quoted in Dallek, *Flawed Giant*, 246, 277, 500.

the formation of military strategy. David Halberstam, who won a Pulitzer prize for his coverage of the war, wrote that Johnson had “always been haunted by the idea that he would be judged as being insufficiently manly for the job, that he would lack courage at a crucial moment. More than a little insecure himself, he wanted very much to be seen as a man; it was a conscious thing . . . [H]e wanted the respect of men who were tough, real men, and they would turn out to be hawks.”<sup>605</sup>

Among Johnson’s hawkish advisers on Vietnam, but for different reasons than his foreign policy aides, was Eisenhower. The retired general urged Johnson to prosecute the war aggressively and unstintingly as a responsibility the United States had to South Vietnam, to America’s reputation abroad, and to the servicemen who had already died in the war. After being briefed on the war’s progress, in a February 1965 meeting in the Cabinet Room, Eisenhower urged consistency on the American part and not a series of starts and stops. The enemy’s morale needed to be crushed. American morale needed to improve. Eisenhower also told Johnson the South’s government needed to be stabilized. The assassination of Diem two years earlier was a pity, because the South Vietnamese leader had been “a capable man” and his removal “resulted in a great setback for our cause.” Eisenhower warned Johnson against communicating to the Chinese that the U.S. was conducting a limited war in Vietnam for “that would be the beginning of the end” as “they would know all they had to do was go further than we do.”<sup>606</sup> In March of the same year, Eisenhower voiced his support for Operation Rolling Thunder, the bombing of North Vietnam, and affirmed Johnson’s deployment of American troops to the South. “When you once appeal to force in an international situation involving military help for a

---

<sup>605</sup> David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1992), 414, 531.

<sup>606</sup> Memo of meeting with the President, February 17, 1965, Box 9, Post-Presidential Papers, Augusta-Walter Reed Series, EL.

nation you have to go all out,” Eisenhower counseled Johnson in July. “This is war, and as long as the enemy are putting men down there, my advice is do what you have to do!” When Johnson asked Eisenhower if he really believed the U.S. could defeat the Vietcong, the general responded, “We are not going to be run out of a free country that we helped to establish.” When Johnson warned further escalation could alienate the British and Canadians and the U.S. would be left alone, Eisenhower retorted, “We would still have the Australians and the Koreans – and our own convictions.”<sup>607</sup>

For Eisenhower, demonstrating conviction in Vietnam meant the United States would fulfill its treaty agreements, fight aggressively after a congressional declaration of war, and unshackle the military from Washington’s control. He grew disaffected with Johnson’s handling of the war and, in September, 1966, Eisenhower warned the president’s halting approach to the bombings and the tendency to centralize command decisions in Washington was pursuing a “war of gradualism” and was “bound to be ineffective.”<sup>608</sup> Eisenhower’s demands for further escalation were not accompanied with advice as to what to do if the Chinese or Soviet Union also entered North Vietnam. He labeled Johnson’s retreat from his campaign in 1968 as “an effort to surrender to another the Presidential responsibilities in this conflict” and a desire “to be excused from the burden of the office to which he was elected.”<sup>609</sup> Eisenhower believed Johnson was retreating from responsibility. Johnson worried he was retreating from a fight. Soon the United States would be retreating from a war that had more to do with socio-cultural factors in Vietnam than constructions of male identity in the United States.

---

<sup>607</sup> Eisenhower and Lyndon Johnson, Telephone calls, July 2, 1965, Box 10, Augusta-Walter Reed Series, Post-Presidential Papers. EL.

<sup>608</sup> David R. Jones, “Eisenhower Scores ‘War of Gradualism’,” *New York Times*, July 22, 1967.

<sup>609</sup> Quoted in David Eisenhower with Julie Nixon Eisenhower, *Going Home to Glory: A Memoir of Life with Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1961-1969* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010), 247.

The election of 1968 brought the nation's multitude of masculinities into a headlong crash and, for the next two decades, secured the hegemony of hyper-masculinity in the nation's discourse on maleness and in the presidency. Hippies, playboys, homosexuals, male feminists, and rioting blacks all sought to occupy the contested spaces made available by the fragmentation of manhood. These groups garnered unprecedented and largely negative media attention at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. Hyper-masculine males won enough converts to distance voters from their competitors and oriented the candidates to their message of law and order. Robert Kennedy, whom one British journalist once described as "like a Sioux brave about to take a scalp," launched a campaign ostensibly about poverty and minorities, but also to prove his mettle against the formidable Johnson – the incumbent of his own party.<sup>610</sup> Kennedy's assassination in June cleared the way for Johnson's vice-president, Hubert Humphrey, to secure the nomination. Johnson's tepid support for his former running mate along with his private doubts about Humphrey's toughness did not help a Democratic party that appeared as conflicted and cacophonous as the new masculinities that shouted for the nation's attention. Alternatively, George Wallace's campaign promised a candidate who "has the courage to stand up for America."<sup>611</sup> Yet, the alumni of dutiful manhood who articulated a masculine response to each of the social fissures multiplying in the sixties found in Richard Nixon a figurehead who was a throwback to the dutiful Eisenhower years, but who also promised an invigorated toughness against the deleterious concepts of maleness that threatened the nation and its men. A particularly

---

<sup>610</sup> Journalist quoted in David Pietrusza, *1960: LBJ vs. JFK vs. Nixon: The Epic Campaign That Forged Three Presidencies* (New York: Union Square, 2008), 63.

<sup>611</sup> Museum of the Moving Image, *The Living Room Candidate – Transcript*, "Vietnam," Wallace, 1968, <http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1968> (accessed April 10, 2014).



poignant campaign commercial entitled “The First Civil Right” featured examples of the new masculinities (hippies, blacks, students) in scenes of violence, protest, and conflict with police. Nixon’s voice-over declared, “Let us recognize that the first civil right of every American is to be free from domestic violence. So I pledge to you, we shall have order in the United States.” A closing caption read, “This Time Vote Like Your Whole World Depended On It . . . Nixon.” Eisenhower’s dutiful men, who now had become Nixon’s masculine “silent majority,” believed a new generation of males had violated their civil rights and voted enthusiastically for Nixon’s promise of law and order. The final vote, however, revealed how closely contested the male identity of the presidency had become. Nixon won by a single percentage point.<sup>612</sup>

### **Manhood Taps**

Eisenhower spoke for many men of the Silent Majority when he endorsed Nixon’s candidacy in 1968. Eisenhower’s opinion of Nixon’s maturity had improved throughout the sixties, particularly as the former president contrasted his vice-president with Kennedy and Johnson. In 1962, Eisenhower declared he could “personally vouch” for Nixon’s “ability, his sense of duty, his sharpness of mind, and his wealth in wisdom.”<sup>613</sup> In 1964, Eisenhower stated in a press conference that Nixon was “atmosphered in the duties and the tribulations and the trials and the tests that come to the top man.”<sup>614</sup> In a 1968 letter to his former Treasury Secretary George Humphrey, Eisenhower wrote, “As you know I’ve always like and respected him; he is even more mature and well-informed

---

<sup>612</sup> *ibid.*, “The First Civil Right,” Nixon, 1968, <http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1968> (accessed April 10, 2014).

<sup>613</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, October 9, 1962, 1+.

<sup>614</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, October 9, 1963, 1+.

than when he was Vice-President.”<sup>615</sup> To Nixon himself, Eisenhower delivered what he had denied his running mate for years before – an unqualified endorsement. “You have stood steady and talked straight, despite what must have been heavy pressures and temptations to reach for popular support through irresponsibility. I commend you especially for this; it befits you and befits our country.”<sup>616</sup>

The former vice-president, second-in-command during the heyday of dutiful manhood, seemed to be the most sensible choice to return the nation to the nostalgic stability of the fifties. Nixon made the two promises middle-American men yearned for the most in 1968 - a return to law and order and an honorable end to the war in Vietnam. Urban rioting by blacks, protests by dissolute students, and the deaths of American servicemen in a war with no end in sight were the most tangible and galling signs to the dutiful generation that the nation was off-course. Nixon’s strong moral pronouncements and promises echoed Eisenhower’s campaign in 1952 that also promised to “clean up the mess in Washington” and end an unpopular and stalemated war overseas. The irony of the Nixon administration promising a presidency of honor and respectability, but in the end contributing probably more than any other president to the office’s decline in veneration was a paradox Eisenhower would not live to witness. Later reflecting on Nixon’s fall, Eisenhower’s youngest brother Milton remarked, “I’m glad the President did not live to see the things that man did.”<sup>617</sup>

Eisenhower did live to see the disintegration of dutiful manhood. Like many in the Depression-World War II generation, the retired general and president reacted with

---

<sup>615</sup> Eisenhower to George Humphrey, July 21, 1967, Box 2, Augusta-Walter Reed Series, Post-Presidential Papers, EL.

<sup>616</sup> Eisenhower to Nixon, October 24, 1968, Principal File, Post-Presidential Papers, EL.

<sup>617</sup> Milton Eisenhower quoted in Frank, *Ike and Dick*, 343.

alarm to the changes in gender identity and behavior in the sixties. The descriptions Eisenhower employed to decry the changes were congruent with the behavior determinants of nineteenth-century manhood. Charges of irresponsibility, abnegation of duty, permissiveness, and immaturity frequently appeared in his speeches and correspondence. Many of the decade's youth sought to unmask and undo the world his generation had created. Whereas Eisenhower's generation looked back and saw progress and stability, the next generation looked forward and called for racial, gender, and sexual emancipation. Such emancipation was an anathema to Eisenhower. The emancipation he and his generation celebrated was the end of the Depression and freedom from Nazi tyranny.

The ailing general tried to be optimistic about the next generation. He acknowledged parents regularly subjected their children to stories about the Depression and war. He despaired that the nation's youth were subject to federal programs that promised security and the prospect of a respectable life. Technological advances, the sexual naiveté of parents, and the regression in education and morals seemed to conspire against the character of the next generation. He admitted that older adults probably worried too much about youth as well.<sup>618</sup>

Yet, Eisenhower spent the majority of his retirement despairing of the behavior of youth rather than extolling it. Like many men of the Depression-World War II generation who extolled their duty amidst adversity in contrast with the dissipation of contemporary youth, Eisenhower was disturbed by the student protests consuming the nation's campuses during the sixties. He criticized their irresponsibility and ignorance that

---

<sup>618</sup> Eisenhower, speech draft, September 27, 1967, Box 5, Augusta-Walter Reed Series, Post-Presidential Papers, EL.

jeopardized American unity and the military's efforts in Vietnam. He railed to one correspondent about "the selfish and cowardly whimperings of some of those 'students' who – uninformed and brash though they are – arrogate to themselves the right to criticize, irresponsibly, our highest officials, and to condemn America's deepest commitments to her international friends."<sup>619</sup> Eisenhower failed to see any civic duty in the protestors' demands for credibility in government or morality towards the Vietnamese. Rather, the students' "lack of respect for law, laxness in dress, appearance, and thinking, in conduct and in manner" all sprang from "a lack of concern for the ancient virtues of decency, respect for law and elders, and old-fashioned patriotism."<sup>620</sup> Old-fashioned virtues for Eisenhower were those of his childhood. Those duties for men were preserved for him and eventually reintegrated into postwar American life through mass mobilization of the nation's males in the military during World War II. Not surprisingly, Eisenhower speculated ungrateful youth needed the same tutor. "Maybe the hippie generation would benefit from a stint in the Army," Eisenhower told Nixon with a smile.<sup>621</sup>

Black urban violence and rioting equally received Eisenhower's opprobrium. In a 1967 piece he composed for *Reader's Digest* entitled, "We Should Be Ashamed," Eisenhower railed against the alarming growth in violent crime and urban rioting. Eisenhower detailed the frustrations of police in trying to apprehend criminals and the fears they held of being falsely accused of police brutality. "There is something seriously wrong with our public and private attitudes towards law and order," Eisenhower

---

<sup>619</sup> Eisenhower to A.R. Anderson, October 23, 1965, Box 1, Convenience File, Post-Presidential Papers, EL.

<sup>620</sup> Eisenhower quoted in James Patterson, *The Eve of Destruction: How 1965 Transformed America* (New York: Basic Books, 2012), xiv.

<sup>621</sup> Eisenhower quoted in Eisenhower and Nixon, *Going Home to Glory*, 223.

explained. Perhaps apathy was a part of the problem, but so was a “neglect of certain fundamental moral principles.” In a veiled reference to disaffected blacks rioting in Midwest and eastern cities, Eisenhower wrote that he had “the utmost sympathy for any person who has never had a decent chance in life,” but historic bad treatment from a society did not excuse looting and attacks on police. The culprits needed to be punished without temporizing, “regardless of their race or their grievances against society.” Excusing such behavior “sets back the cause of the underprivileged” for many years.<sup>622</sup> In a letter to William Nichols of *This Week* magazine, Eisenhower suggested a desire to be different as well as to get noticed guided the activities of Black Muslims. Thus, Eisenhower’s opinions on black advancement remained unchanged since his presidency. Blacks should have access to every opportunity to demonstrate responsibility, but he would give no quarter to those operating outside the law.<sup>623</sup>

The new generation’s rejection of traditional sexual mores was one of the most glaring departures from Eisenhower’s conservatism. The proliferation of pornography, casual sex, divorce, homosexuality, and out-of-wedlock children – the hallmarks of the sexual revolution – signaled a rejection of the restrained manhood Eisenhower espoused. He lamented what he perceived as a decline in “our concept of beauty and decency and morality” and criticized film, book, and magazine producers for their “vulgarity, sensuality, indeed downright filth, to sell their wares.” Modern art, with its unrestrained and uninhibited forms, likewise seemed to lack any traditional beauty or decency. Such

---

<sup>622</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, “We Should Be Ashamed,” *Reader’s Digest*, August 1967, 67-71.

<sup>623</sup> Eisenhower to William L. Nichols, August 21, 1967, Box 21, Secretary’s Series, Post-Presidential Papers, EL.

paintings looked “like a broken-down tin lizzie loaded with paint has been driven over it.”<sup>624</sup>

Eisenhower connected the flowering of the sexual revolution with the breakdown of the fifties nuclear family and the departure of women from the home as homemakers and caretakers. Eisenhower frowned at a mother abandoning her responsibilities to her child simply because she desired a career. He counseled that such a woman should reconsider the consequences of her actions upon the child.<sup>625</sup> To a greater extreme, Eisenhower became increasingly concerned with a perceived worldwide population explosion in the last decade of his life and supported measures that would curtail the inclinations of irresponsible females who repeatedly gave birth to illegitimate children. In a letter to Senator Ernest Gruening (D-AK), chair of a senate subcommittee on foreign aid expenditures, Eisenhower expressed disappointment with subsidized mothers who relied on relief checks drawn from public funds to provide for their multiple out-of-wedlock children. “I think no one of us would want to condemn out of hand any woman who might have, because of any emotional reason, given birth to a child out of wedlock or deny to her needed support for its raising,” Eisenhower wrote Gruening, but if the mother continued to make the same mistake “the public should be guaranteed against the need of supporting more than two illegitimate children. I see no way this can be done except through compulsory sterilization.”<sup>626</sup> Eisenhower’s views about women, wives, and mothers remained consistent with his nineteenth century values and the mentality of

---

<sup>624</sup> Eisenhower quoted in Peter Lyon, *Eisenhower: Portrait of the Hero* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1974), 836.

<sup>625</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Remarks to the National Committee for the 1960 White House Conference on Children and Youth," December 16, 1958, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=11297> (accessed January 7, 2014).

<sup>626</sup> Eisenhower to Ernest Gruening, June 18, 1965, Box 1, Convenience File, Post-Presidential Papers, EL.

the fifties. He struggled to see how a woman's emancipation from a husband, a home, or a child could be called liberation.

Eisenhower maintained his optimism about the nation's youth by remaining on the lookout for young men who came from proud parents, devoted their lives to service (particularly in the military), and clung to a manly ethic of duty. He was searching for a younger version of himself. He found such a youth in September 1967 when he wrote a condolence letter to a set of parents who had lost their son in Vietnam. The letter revealed the strong knot Eisenhower tied together with the strands of war, duty, and manhood. He expressed his deep sympathy to the parents in the loss of their son and connected his death to the preservation of the United States – a self-governing nation that “valued individual liberty and human dignity above all else.” Dictatorial, particularly communist governments, sought the destruction of such free governments in order to secure their power over ignorant populations. The United States was founded to defend freedom and if the U.S. abandoned one weak nation after another to communism, then we would find ourselves in a “sea of despotism” which would result in our own destruction. To defy enslavement of others is to save ourselves. Their son was part of the price paid to maintain a free existence. “It is a great pity that men of such splendid promise have to be a part of the sacrifice, but duty to country is still one of the noblest concepts that must inspire us all if we are to be good citizens.” The people elect their presidents. The duty of guiding and leading us becomes theirs by our own action. And then the highest commendation Eisenhower could grant to another male he bestowed upon the parents’

son. “May the knowledge that he was performing his duty in the finest tradition to Americanism give some solace to you all.”<sup>627</sup>

In the late sixties, Eisenhower declined in vitality and relevance as much as the dutiful manhood he championed. A series of additional heart attacks and operations necessitated numerous trips to Walter Reed Medical Center until an admission in May, 1968 confined him permanently to the hospital. The old general continued to receive visits from presidents, friends, and well-wishers from his hospital bed as well as maintaining a vigorous correspondence. His lucid mind was not without a forum for him to express displeasure with presidents and practitioners of the new masculinity. He met with Billy Graham, prayed for the forgiveness of his sins, and inquired about heaven.<sup>628</sup> To onlookers it seemed that his thoughts and words turned back towards his youth – faith, family, friends – bypassing his years as president and Supreme Commander. Dutiful manhood’s most famous proponent passed away at 12:35 P.M. on March 28, 1969.

---

<sup>627</sup> Eisenhower to Howard A. Kellermann, Sept. 25, 1967, Box 1, Convenience File, Post-Presidential Papers, EL.

<sup>628</sup> Billy Graham, *Just As I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997), 205-206.



## EPILOGUE

Near the end of his second year in office, Dwight D. Eisenhower endeavored to define the qualities that made a great man. In a letter to a childhood friend, the president wrote that a man could only be considered great if he fit into one of two categories. A man was great if he made a significant accomplishment in an important field of knowledge or a man in a responsible position discharged his duties so effectively that he left a favorable imprint on society. The qualities of a great man included vision, integrity, courage, understanding, written or spoken articulation, and profundity of character. Eisenhower estimated that, in his lifetime, Winston Churchill most approximated this definition of greatness. The president had known greater characters and wiser philosophers in his lifetime, but few achieved prominence “through carrying on duties of responsibility” or granting the world new achievements. General George Marshall, Eisenhower wrote, possessed more qualities of greatness than any other man he had known. Although a few other contemporaries approached his standard of greatness, Eisenhower lamented that there were so few such men. It struck him as disappointing that two centuries of American history had succeeded in producing only a handful of great men.<sup>629</sup>

Eisenhower’s favorable assessment of Churchill and Marshall is not surprising. They were the heroes of the war, the leaders of nations and armies, and prime examples

---

<sup>629</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Ike’s Letters to a Friend, 1941-1958*, ed. Robert Griffith (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1984), 139-140.

of Eisenhower's preference for virtuous and dutiful men. They represented the model of manhood that reemerged during the war and characterized many postwar American males. No wonder Eisenhower and the generation of men who served under him during the war and then voted for him in the fifties were alarmed and disoriented by the multitude of male identities that proliferated in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s. The varied constructions of maleness exhibited by playboys, feminists, blacks, gays, and hippies were significant departures from the dutiful men who, in Eisenhower's estimation, had won the war and then secured the postwar peace.

Yet, the reverence for dutiful men had passed by the time of Eisenhower's death, derided and discarded by their own sons during the Age of Aquarius. The responsible, self-controlled, and mature men who donned suits in the postwar years failed to retain hegemony over American male identity after the fifties. Instead, the children of Eisenhower's dutiful men provided a variety of answers to the question regarding what it means to be a man. In 1967, *Look* magazine delighted in this profusion of new identities, gleefully observing that, "Our faceless homogenized society with its organization men, its phony Puritans, its hordes of misanthropic bureaucrats, its publish-or-perish professors is beginning to separate like cream from milk. We have the social dropout, the he-man dandy, the nonpermissive father, the dedicated soldier, the optimistic Negro, the new frontiersmen in business. There are not enough of them yet, but they share one trait. They are uncommon men."<sup>630</sup>

For each of the new male identities that *Look* celebrated, the suit would be employed as a sartorial medium to convey arrival, legitimacy, and respectability. The suit has become as much of a contested article as the male personas it attires. For the playboy,

---

<sup>630</sup> Patricia Coffin, "A Message to the American Man," *Look*, January 10, 1967, 16.

the suit communicated a purposefulness that was intended to lift him above the college-aged cad. For the African-American male, the suit conveyed seriousness, power, and equality. “Power dressing” working women summoned the powers of the suit in the eighties to convey a “big look” and to “dress to kill.” Homosexual men, endeavoring to secure public acceptance, employed the suit to convey responsible self-control. Hippies, feminists, transvestites, and transgenders would all find ways to use the suit in their wardrobe to challenge established opinions regarding who was its rightful wearer, who was the responsible professional, and who was the “normal” male.

Although *Look* applauded the decline of the fifties organizational men and the explosion of “uncommon men,” the same article also expressed a preference for the masculinity that emerged during the era of Vietnam and Civil Rights. Speaking to American men in general, the magazine scolded, “You are too nice. You have been too nice for too long. Some of you are decent-nice. Some of you are nasty-nice. Others among you are mealy-mouth-nice, conformist-lazy and some, heroically-nice. But niceness does not become you.” The diversity in American men was pleasant, but the author expressed a preference for masculinity. “As providers, you American men are unique. As doers, no one can beat you. As lovers, you are gauche but great. Yet you take the cake when it comes to being pushed around by your women. Do you want a world of she-men and he-women?”<sup>631</sup> It was not only *Look* that preferred a tough masculinity. A majority of American males turned back to a masculine ethic during the turbulent sixties and seventies. The near hegemony it established over males during these decades was so significant that it became the dominant mode for male distinctiveness.

---

<sup>631</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

Consequently, at the end of the twentieth century and quite commonly still today, a hard-bodied toughness is the principal understanding of how to be male in the United States. In popular discourse, the masculine designation has shoved aside competing definitions and identities. Other groups have tried and largely failed to break the exclusive provenance the word “masculinity” holds over American male identity. The unfortunate consequence for many males is the apparent prohibition of even conceiving of maleness apart from power, toughness, and sexual virility. Apart from academic and activist circles, the new “masculinities” struggle to even claim the title.

The adoption of the suit by men seeking to project power and virility has reinforced the masculine hegemony. The gray flannel suits of the fifties represented a corporate culture that valued dutifulness, obedience, containment, and congruence. Corporatism, since the Hard Hat riots and particularly since the “Greedy Eighties,” is characterized by a much more masculine environment. Male managers display a “corporate masculinity” through their attitudes toward women, but even more so by the values a corporation esteems including “independence, autonomy, hierarchical relations, competition, status, and authority.”<sup>632</sup> Not surprisingly, despite its adoption by competing male identities, the suit remains the primary signifier of corporate masculinity. The association of the suit with power and toughness was particularly augmented during the 1980s. *Gentlemen’s Quarterly* claimed in 1982 that, “When duty calls, captains of industry slip into the universally recognized emblem of authority: the business suit. The nucleus of corporate style, a finely fashioned, suitably fitted suit projects the confidence

---

<sup>632</sup> Agneta H. Fischer and Annelies E. M. van Vianen, “Corporate Masculinity,” in *A Companion to Gender Studies*, ed. Philomena Essed et al. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 345-350.

and cool that's essential in the heat of boardroom battle."<sup>633</sup> *GQ* imagined the shoulder-padded power suit of the eighties as saying, " 'Look at me.' I've expensively riveted myself together for today's business battles. . . . The bigger the suit, the bigger the man."<sup>634</sup>

The suit's masculine connotations have so thoroughly supplanted its earlier associations with responsibility and maturity, that the garment itself is now employed to project masculinity back onto postwar males. Thus, in the sequel to his famous novel, Sloan Wilson has Tom Rath observe,

When I changed my army uniform for a gray flannel suit, I learned that anger has to be carefully camouflaged in civilian life. Men in gray flannel suits are supposed to speak softly and carry a big pencil, but I still wryly thought of myself as the last angry public relations man. There was still, of course, plenty to be infuriated at in the world, but young executives were supposed to keep smiling. Sometimes I thought I should change my name to Tom Bland.<sup>635</sup>

In *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit II* (1984), Tom finds relief from blandness in the arms of his mistress in a sexually-charged affair. Tom Rath may have been the original gray-flannelled, dutiful male in the first novel, but in the sequel he is a suited, masculine playboy concerned more with his mistress than his duties as a husband, father, and employee. Similarly, television series such as *Suits* and *Mad Men* depict the corporate masculinity of law firms and advertising agencies through a heavy dose of suited, masculine males: powerful, shrewd, conniving, lustful, and competitive. At the end of the nineteenth century, the suit was a sign that a young man was capable of hard work, self-control and ready for mature responsibility. By the end of the twentieth century, the suit was firmly solidified in popular culture as the garment of wealth, power, intimidation,

---

<sup>633</sup> Jack Haber, ed. "Corporate Style," *Gentlemen's Quarterly*, August 1982, 106.

<sup>634</sup> Scott Omelianuk, "Fall Preview 1993," *Gentlemen's Quarterly*, July 1993, 66.

<sup>635</sup> Sloan Wilson, *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit II* (New York: Arbor House, 1984), 9.

and sexual virility. In the second season of *Mad Men*, the masculine take-over of the suit's former associations with responsibility is complete. The husband of one of his many mistresses finally confronts the gray-flannelled and intensely masculine Don Draper. In the moment before Draper punches him and knocks him down, the betrayed husband snarkily remarks, "Well, if it isn't the man in the gray flannel suit!"<sup>636</sup>

At the same time that the suit has become the recognized uniform of corporate masculinity, the presidency has become an office frequently dominated by masculine figures. Richard Nixon completed the masculinization of the presidency that was commenced by Kennedy and continued under Johnson. In the fourteen years between 1961 and 1974, the office increasingly reflected the masculine priorities revered by its occupants and many of the nation's males. Distancing themselves from the controlled and virtuous manhood of the fifties, Eisenhower's successors recast the presidency as a project to advertise America's power and toughness all the while deploring weakness and vacillation. As the nation's dutiful men cloaked themselves in a virile masculinity to counter other definitions of maleness, their elected sovereigns likewise advertised their manly stripes and offset themselves from male identities they considered effete, feminized, colored, or gay. Nixon, among the modern presidents, most pointedly differentiated the masculinized presidency from other gender options. Similarly, Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush projected an image of a chief executive who was tough enough to back down enemies, foreign and domestic, while pursuing leisure activities,

---

<sup>636</sup> *Mad Men*, "Six Month Leave," episode 22, December 14, 2014 (originally aired September 28, 2008).

such as ranching, hunting, and mountain biking, that left no doubt in the public's mind regarding their leader's masculine credentials.<sup>637</sup>

Why have masculine figures frequently occupied the White House since the Eisenhower years? After Eisenhower no presidents were born in the nineteenth century or so closely represented the gender values of that century. The libertinism of the sixties made counsel about duty and responsibility seem prudish and self-righteous. Pleas for self-control seemed at odds in a culture of abundance, consumption, and potential. Television audiences demanded display, performance, action, and drama. Amidst the enduring dangers of the cold war, the social upheavals of the sixties and seventies, and the shock of the September 11, 2001 attacks, strength and toughness seemed like safe and attractive options. If the nation's enemies were going to talk tough and take bold risks then America's leaders needed to be tough as well. Stiff resolve would protect the nation's future far better than responsible management.<sup>638</sup>

This is not to say that American men and women are always comfortable with the masculine hegemony. Male and female critics of masculinity produced an array of arguments against the health and legitimacy of masculinity in the 1970s.<sup>639</sup> Feminists pointed out the deleterious effects on wives and children of an unfettered masculinity that

---

<sup>637</sup> See Susan Jeffords, *Hard Bodies: Hollywood Masculinity in the Reagan Era* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994); Stephen J. Ducat, *The Wimp Factor: Gender Gaps, Holy Wars, and the Politics of Anxious Masculinity* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004); Jackson Katz, *Leading Men: Presidential Campaigns and the Politics of Manhood* (Northampton, MA: Interlink, 2013).

<sup>638</sup> For the appeal of masculinity during the Cold War, see Robert L. Griswold, "The 'Flabby American,' the Body, and the Cold War," in *A Shared Experience: Men, Women, and the History of Gender*, ed. Laura McCall and Donald Yacovone (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 323-348. For trends towards masculinity after the Vietnam War, see Susan Jeffords, *The Remasculinization of America: Gender and the Vietnam War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989). For more on post-9/11 masculinity, see Susan Faludi, *The Terror Dream: Myth and Misogyny in an Insecure America* (New York: Picador, 2008).

<sup>639</sup> See the chapter entitled "Some Lethal Aspects of the Male Role" in Sidney M. Jourard, *The Transparent Self* (New York: Van Nostrand, 1971), 34-41; Jack O. Balswick and Charles W. Peek, "The Inexpressive Male: A Tragedy of American Society," *The Family Coordinator* 20, no. 4 (October 1971): 363-368; Alan Booth, "Sex and Social Participation," *American Sociological Review* 37, no. 2 (April 1972): 183-193.

expressed itself through domestic violence, alcoholism, infidelity, and child abuse. Other critics highlighted the inability of many males to feel empathy, express intimacy, or gain touch with a personal emotional life. Books such as *The Transparent Self* (1971), *The Hazards of Being Male* (1976), and *Understanding the Male Temperament* (1977) underscored the pressures on men to demonstrate masculinity and called for a new model of manliness.<sup>640</sup> In the mid-1970s psychologist Herb Goldberg wrote,

The liberated male, in touch with his psychological and physiological self, will simply not want to disguise and numb the pressures of a painful harness. He will reject onerous life situations and ungratifying relationships and environments that sanctify his role while they deny expression to his being and to his feelings. He will reject externally imposed, predefined 'masculine' roles, not for ideological reasons, but simply because they are painful and self-destructive.<sup>641</sup>

Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter allowed the decade's suspicions of masculinity to inform their presidencies by abandoning Nixon's talk of enemies, honing reputations as common men, and supporting the Equal Rights Amendment to the constitution.

Eisenhower's dutiful manhood made a brief reappearance to the presidency during the administration of George H.W. Bush. The forty-first president was the final member of the World War II generation to occupy the White House and Bush demonstrated a reverence for duty and an aversion to masculine bluster that echoed Eisenhower's preferences. Despite winning one of the nastiest presidential campaigns in modern memory, Bush loathed being negative about his opponents and balked even more at the prospect of boasting about himself. Bush feigned a masculine posture in his 1988 nomination acceptance speech when he vowed, "Read my Lips! No new taxes!" but his

---

<sup>640</sup> Sidney M. Jourard, *The Transparent Self*; Herb Goldberg, *The Hazards of Being Male: Surviving the Myth of Masculine Privilege* (New York: Signet, 1976); Tim LaHaye, *Understanding the Male Temperament: What Every Man Would Like to Tell His Wife About Himself . . . But Won't* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1977).

<sup>641</sup> Goldberg, *The Hazards of Being Male*, 183.



true sense of duty was evident by his later willingness to sign on to tax increases and to take the politically unpopular step of using federal funds to bail out the failed savings and loan industry. Bush also refused to boast as the century's most dangerous rivalry, the Cold War, came to an end during his term. He confided to his diary that he felt little sense of elation as the country applauded the American military's destruction of Saddam Hussein's forces in the Persian Gulf War.<sup>642</sup> *Newsweek* called attention to the president's "sense of moral certainty"<sup>643</sup> that was peculiar to his generation in 1991, but Bush failed to shed the more damning label *Newsweek* had bestowed upon him four years earlier by highlighting his "wimp factor." "Unless he learns to project his inner strength," the magazine had written then, "voters may overlook his fairness and sense of duty - and see instead a lesser man."<sup>644</sup>

Adherents of a more affective manliness made their mark on the nation and the presidency in the 1990s amidst another transition in male identity. The mytho-poetic movement endeavored to help men discover the "male feeling" in their souls through classical stories, ballad poetry, ancient myths, Grimm fairy tales, and Jungian psychology. Inspired by best sellers, such as *Iron John* (1990) and *King, Warrior, Magician, Lover* (1990), groups of men feeling emasculated by corporatism and feminism retreated to the woods to recite poetry, beat drums, and chant warrior hymns in an effort to recover the "deep masculine" in their souls.<sup>645</sup> The movement's concern with emotion, spirituality, power, and community was a marked contrast to the brash traits

---

<sup>642</sup> Jon Meacham, *Destiny and Power: The American Odyssey of George Herbert Walker Bush* (New York: Random House, 2015), 467.

<sup>643</sup> Evan Thomas and Ann McDaniel, "Where Was George This Time?" *Newsweek*, April 15, 1991, 31.

<sup>644</sup> Margaret G. Warner, "Bush Battles The 'Wimp Factor'," *Newsweek*, October 19, 1987, 28.

<sup>645</sup> Robert Bly, *Iron John* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1990); Robert Moore and Douglas Gillette, *King, Warrior, Magician, Lover: Rediscovering the Archetypes of the Mature Masculine* (New York: HarperCollins, 1990). See also Michael J. Meade, *Men and the Water of Life: Initiation and the Tempering of Men* (San Francisco: Harper, 1993).

valued by proponents of historical masculinity. Concern with male emotion and reassurances from a presidential candidate that he could “feel your pain,” were powerful enough to land Bill Clinton in the White House for the bulk of the decade.<sup>646</sup>

The sight of shirtless grown men wearing bandanas, dancing, and bellowing in the woods to many other observers, however, seemed to raise another question about American males in the 1990s: when are they going to grow up?<sup>647</sup> Not since a generation of war-besmirched young males returned from World War II was there so much discussion regarding male immaturity as the 1990s. Concerned commentators lamented a perceived overabundance of “adulescent” males – young men who seemed stuck in their teens well into their twenties and thirties. The evidence seemed overwhelming. Nineties males refused to get married well into their thirties or even forties. They balked at taking up the responsibilities of fatherhood. A job was simply a means to fund their infatuation with sports, video games, skateboarding, comic books, and first dates. They pursued sex without commitment. Their role models were Homer Simpson, Al Bundy, and Beavis and Butthead. Commentators fingered feminism, pop culture, absentee fathers, the end of universal military service, and daycare centers as all possible causes for male immaturity. Even the president capitalized on the infatuation with youth at the expense of his wife. “I was born at sixteen and I’ll always feel I’m sixteen,” Bill Clinton confessed. “And Hillary was born at age forty.”<sup>648</sup>

---

<sup>646</sup> See Brenton J. Malin, *American Masculinity Under Clinton: Popular Media and the Nineties “Crisis of Masculinity”* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2005).

<sup>647</sup> Dan Kiley, *The Peter Pan Syndrome: Men Who Have Never Grown Up* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1983); Kay S. Hymowitz, *Manning Up: How the Rise of Women has turned Men into Boys* (New York: Basic, 2011). Gary Cross writes, “The so-called Greatest Generation is tacitly the model of manhood that boomer men clearly cannot live up to and their sons scarcely know. And that sense of ‘inadequacy’ is surely part of the problem of the boy-man today.” Gary Cross, *Men to Boys: The Making of Modern Immaturity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 13.

<sup>648</sup> Rich Lowry, “Understanding Bill,” *National Review*, June 23, 2004, 12.

Similar to the postwar period when the nation's gender observers fretted over male immaturity, some called for a return to a more moral manhood. Dutiful manhood always drew its strength from a strong Christian moralism and evangelicals turned to the same source in an effort to resolve the immaturity crisis at the end of the twentieth century. Titles such as *The Book of Virtues* (1993), *The New Dare to Discipline* (1996), and *Every Young Man's Battle* (2002) fed an evangelical readership hungry for spiritual and moral solutions for young males caught in immaturity, sexual sin, and the pop culture malaise.<sup>649</sup> These efforts gained their broadest appeal in the massive Promise Keepers gatherings that filled large football stadiums with repentant men seeking forgiveness, community, and resolution to take back their duties as husbands, fathers, and employees.<sup>650</sup> The movement enjoyed early success in curtailing immoderate male behavior, but after the large stadium gatherings were curtailed by a series of financial setbacks, it was clear the promise to revive a more dutiful manhood remained unfulfilled.

Black masculinity likewise was the target of religious moralists at the end of the millennium. A series of black pop icons, including Shaft, Eddie Murphy, Mr. T, and Denzel Washington, legitimized black masculinity and acculturated white audiences to images of black males displaying toughness, power, and sexual virility. Yet, black hip hop's blatant celebration of gangs, guns, drugs, and sexual violence registered due south on the moral compass of many in and outside of urban black communities. Rap music's exposure of the poverty, violence, addiction, and fatherlessness experienced by young

---

<sup>649</sup> William J. Bennett, *The Book of Virtues: A Treasury of Great Moral Stories* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993); James C. Dobson, *The New Dare to Discipline* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1992); Stephen Arterburn et al., *Every Young Man's Battle: Strategies for Victory in the Real World of Sexual Temptation* (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press, 2002).

<sup>650</sup> Jeff Wagenheim, "Among the Promise Keepers," *New Age Journal*, March-April 1995, 78-81, 126-130.

black males also sparked calls among religious leaders of color for a more dutiful black manhood.<sup>651</sup> Efforts to mobilize and reform black manhood culminated with the Million Man March, which took place in Washington D.C. on October 16, 1995, organized by the Nation of Islam and its controversial leader, Louis Farrakhan. Pitched as a “day of atonement, reconciliation, and responsibility,” the march drew on a long history of efforts within the African-American community to promote a more moral manhood.<sup>652</sup> Senator and eventual vice-president Joe Biden seemed to be alluding to this strain of black manhood when he clumsily described Barack Obama as “the first mainstream African-American who is articulate and bright and clean and a nice-looking guy.”<sup>653</sup> Interpretations of Obama’s manhood range between praise for restraint and reproach for weakness.<sup>654</sup>

It remains unclear what the implications are for female presidential candidates seeking to ascend to an office that has thus far been exclusively male and, since Eisenhower retired, a predominately masculine position. Eisenhower once told an inquirer that he believed a woman would one day be nominated for the presidency and encouraged his former Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, Oveta Culp Hobby,

---

<sup>651</sup> Daniel Doherty, “Bill Cosby: We Need More Black Men Willing to Be Fathers,” *Townhall.com*, September 16, 2013, <http://townhall.com/tipsheet/danieldoherty/2013/09/16/cosby-we-need-more-men-wanting-to-be-fathers-n1701520> (accessed March 5, 2016); “Why So Many Black Fatherless Babies? Jesse Jackson: Government is Responsible – vs. – Barack Obama: Fathers Need to be Responsible,” *Barbados Free Press*, July 11, 2008, <https://barbadosfreepress.wordpress.com/2008/07/11/why-so-many-black-fatherless-babies-jesse-jackson-government-is-responsible-vs-barack-obama-fathers-need-to-be-responsible/> (accessed March 5, 2016).

<sup>652</sup> Michel Marriott, “Black Women Are Split Over All-Male March on Washington,” *New York Times*, October 14, 1995, 1, 8.

<sup>653</sup> Xuan Thai and Ted Barrett, “Biden’s description of Obama draws scrutiny,” *cnn.com*, February 9, 2007, <http://www.cnn.com/2007/POLITICS/01/31/biden.obama/> (accessed March 16, 2015).

<sup>654</sup> Columnist David Brooks has discussed both perspectives. See David Brooks, “Thinking About Obama,” *New York Times*, October 16, 2008 and Katherine Fung, “David Brooks Actually Talked About Obama’s ‘Manhood Problem in the Middle East,’” *Huffington Post*, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/04/20/david-brooks-obama-manhood-problem\\_n\\_5182525.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/04/20/david-brooks-obama-manhood-problem_n_5182525.html) (accessed February 26, 2016).

to pursue the Republican nod in 1960.<sup>655</sup> Recent discussion regarding a female president has revolved primarily around Hillary Clinton, who nearly received the Democratic nomination in 2008 and is poised to do so in 2016. Although a majority of those polled believe Clinton exhibits the “toughness” that the presidency is presumed to require, others wonder whether the chief benefit a female brings to the presidency should be simply an imitation of male masculinity rather than a unique feminine contribution.<sup>656</sup> Gloria Steinem told *Time* in 1970 that, “with women as half the country’s elected representatives, and a woman President once in a while, the country’s machismo would be greatly reduced.”<sup>657</sup> After Clinton’s failed 2008 run at the White House, Italian designer Donatella Versace garnered international attention for condemning Clinton’s preference for gender-neutral pantsuits. “I can understand [trousers] are comfortable, but she’s a woman and she is allowed to show that,” Versace remarked in the German weekly *Die Zeit*. “She should treat femininity as an opportunity and not try to emulate masculinity in politics.”<sup>658</sup> Republican female candidates have offered a slightly different model for a female presidency that celebrates a powerful matriarch balancing the exigencies of power politics alongside a maternal commitment to husbands, children, and home.

The gendered expectations Americans place on their presidents remain as tenuous as those they place on its males in the early decades of the twenty-first century. It is not surprising that throughout United States history the president as the nation’s most

---

<sup>655</sup> Robert E. Merriam to Carmen Tentinger, May 12, 1960, Box 930, President’s Personal File, Central Files, EL.

<sup>656</sup> Thomas B. Edsall, “Hillary Clinton’s Toughness,” *New York Times*, December 9, 2015, [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/09/opinion/campaign-stops/hillary-clintons-toughness.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/09/opinion/campaign-stops/hillary-clintons-toughness.html?_r=0) (accessed February 27, 2016).

<sup>657</sup> Gloria Steinem, “What It Would Be Like If Women Win,” *Time*, August 31, 1970, 22, 24.

<sup>658</sup> Versace quoted in Guy Garcia, *The Decline of Men: How the American Male is Tuning Out, Giving Up, and Flipping Off His Future* (New York: Harper Collins, 2008), 58.

prominent male has often reflected prevailing notions of manliness at the time of his administration. Washington, Lincoln, and McKinley modeled the manly virtue that was prized for the majority of the nineteenth century. Theodore Roosevelt excited the nation's masculine impulses with his strenuous lifestyle and imperial ambitions at the beginning of the twentieth century. Eisenhower's sense of dutiful manhood was appealing to a postwar generation exhausted and ashamed by war and eager to demonstrate a mature domesticity. Kennedy's virile image and new frontierism launched the modern presidency's masculine persona. Contemplating the relationship between shifting definitions of maleness and the presidency is critical for understanding the office, the nature of executive action, and the opportunities and limitations placed upon each chief executive. In other words, the American electorate should look closely at the gendered expectations it demands and assigns to candidates for the presidency and ask itself if those parameters are what is best for the challenges of our time. In a democratic republic, the men (and someday women) we elect to the presidency are a close projection of our own notion of gender freighted with our particular aspirations, fears, prejudices, fantasies, loves, and hatreds. The relationship is reciprocal. Our presidents reveal just as much about ourselves as we reveal about them.

This returns us to the question that I posed in the introduction: *What does it mean to be a man?* Does it require a virtuous and dutiful character as the nineteenth century demanded? Does it require a virility and toughness that condemns weakness as it did for much of the twentieth century? Does it require an emotional neediness and vulnerability that the 1990s celebrated? Can the multitude of new masculinities help us answer this question?

I trust that I am a better historian than a psychologist, so I will not attempt to provide a conclusive answer that I assert to be adequate for all men in all seasons. I suspect the sheer number of responses that males have offered in the past is each telling us something about the answer. Men have demonstrated remarkable variety in arranging the fig leaves to cover their naked souls in the past and I anticipate they will continue to do so. Contemporary suit styles selectively borrow from the past to mix and match a new design. Fashioning male identity works in a similar vein.

I disagree that the absence of a perfect answer necessitates we stop asking the question. I am not calling for an end to gender as some do. Being male is a personal and complex product of biology, culture, nurture, experience, modeling, and principle. We will surely end up shortchanging ourselves if we insist gender can be reduced to a set of bare essentials or that it is entirely subjective and solely the product of social construction. Describing what it means to be a man does matter and we should continue to seek a clear answer.

Because this is a dissertation about the dutiful manhood that animated Eisenhower and the men who revered him, let me offer a final thought on their answer to the question and its implications for males today. In his enormously popular *The Greatest Generation* (1998), Tom Brokaw writes,

These men and women came of age in the Great Depression, when economic despair hovered over the land like a plague. They had watched their parents lose their businesses, the farms, their jobs, their hopes. They had learned to accept a future that played out one day at a time. . . . They answered the call to help save the world from the two most powerful and ruthless military machines ever assembled, instruments of conquest in the hands of fascist maniacs. . . . When the war was over, the men and women who had been involved, in uniform and in civilian capacities, joined in joyous and short-lived celebrations, then immediately began the task of rebuilding their lives and the world they wanted. They were mature

beyond their years, tempered by what they had been through, disciplined by their military training and sacrifices. They married in record numbers and gave birth to another distinctive generation, the Baby Boomers. They stayed true to their values of personal responsibility, duty, honor, and faith.<sup>659</sup>

Several historians have taken issue with Brokaw's book and his designation of the Depression-World War II generation as being the "greatest."<sup>660</sup> Indeed, the generation's shortcomings should not be glossed over, but Brokaw did not label them "the perfect generation." Rather, he called attention to the sense of duty that animated them to overcome the two greatest crises of the twentieth century and motivated them to build a new world in its place. Considering the enormity of the challenges they faced, it is difficult to see why they should not be appropriately commended.

If a concept of maleness predicated on duty can empower a generation of men to overcome global depression, defeat the world's worst evils, and construct a new world in the aftermath, then dutiful manhood has much to convey to any generation of men. American males and their presidents are shipwrecked on the rocks of disaster when advocates of male responsibility, character, and integrity are held in contempt. To be sure, we must avoid the pitfall of previous generations that allowed the propagandizing of male virtue to lapse into self-righteousness and hypocrisy. But if as a culture we cannot agree that being a man requires something of you (something connected to character, integrity, and duty), we will continue to lament the consequences of male violence, selfishness, brutishness, and absence. Perhaps we can combine some of the answers men have provided in the past and call men today to a new strength. A strength drawn from a

---

<sup>659</sup> Tom Brokaw, *The Greatest Generation* (New York: Random House, 1998), xxviii.

<sup>660</sup> Two examples are Michael C.C. Adams, *The Best War Ever: America and World War II* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994) and Kenneth D. Rose, *Myth and the Greatest Generation: A Social History of Americans in World War II* (New York: Routledge, 2012).



depth of character familiar with the rewards of fulfilled duty. A strength that demonstrates a masculine endurance apart from the callousness that is intrinsic to toughness. A strength that is confident amidst vulnerability and emotion without giving into personal abdication. If I can father my sons so that they discover strength without power, endurance without toughness, and emotion without abnegation then they will discover an answer to being a man that is a rare find. If Americans choose presidents that are stirred primarily by a sense of duty to their oath and the people that elected them, then the office will retrieve some of the respect it has lost in recent decades. If we instill in men esteem for strength born of personal duty, then another generation may earn the title of great as well. That would be a generation appreciated by all Americans and one Ike would have liked too.

## References

### Manuscripts

Dwight D. Eisenhower Papers. Dwight D. Eisenhower Library. Abilene, Kansas.

Robert K. Merton, *An Inventory of Communications Addressed to General Eisenhower in the Spring of 1948: A Summary and Digest*. Bureau of Applied Social Research, September 1949. Columbia University. New York, New York.

### Government Documents

*Can War Marriages Be Made To Work?* Washington D.C.: War Department, 1944.

*Going Back to Civilian Life*. Washington D.C.: War and Navy Departments, 1946.

*He's Back*. Washington D.C.: War Department, 1945.

*Instructions for American Servicemen in Britain, 1942*. 1942. Reprint, Oxford: Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, 2012.

*Is A Crime Wave Coming?* Washington D.C.: War Department, 1946.

“National Home Demonstration Week: Today’s Home Builds Tomorrow’s World,”  
Presidential Personal Files, Eisenhower Library.

U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on Expenditures in Executive Departments.  
*Employment of Homosexuals and Other Sex Perverts in Government*. 81<sup>st</sup> Cong.,  
2d sess., 1950.

*What's The Score in a Case Like Mine?* Washington D.C.: War Department, 1945.

### Newspapers

*Abilene Daily Reflector*

*Chicago Tribune*

*Los Angeles Times*

*New York Times*

*Palm Beach Post*

*Stars and Stripes*

*Washington Post and Times Herald*

Magazines

*Atlantic Monthly*

*Colliers*

*Cosmopolitan*

*Ebony*

*Esquire*

*Fortune*

*Gentlemen's Quarterly*

*Harper's*

*House Beautiful*

*Liberty*

*Life*

*Look*

*National Review*

*New Age Journal*

*New Republic*

*Newsweek*

*New York Magazine*

*Playboy*

*Popular Mechanics*

*Readers' Digest*

*The Ladies' Home Journal*

*The American Magazine*

*The American Mercury*

*The Nation*

*The Saturday Evening Post*

*Tide*

*Time*

*Vanity Fair*

*Woman's Home Companion*

*Yank*

Books

Adams, Michael C.C. *The Best War Ever: America and World War II*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994.

Alford, Mimi. *Once Upon a Secret: My Affair with President John F. Kennedy and its Aftermath*. New York: Random House, 2012.

Allen, Frederick Lewis. *Only Yesterday: An Informal History of the Nineteen-Twenties*. New York: Blue Ribbon Books, 1931.

Ambrose, Stephen E. *D-Day, June 6, 1944: The Climactic Battle of World War II*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Duty, Honor, Country: A History of West Point*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, 1890–1952*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Eisenhower: The President*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1984.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Victors: Eisenhower and His Boys, The Men of World War II*. New York:

- Touchstone, 1998.
- Arterburn, Stephen, et al., *Every Young Man's Battle: Strategies for Victory in the Real World of Sexual Temptation*. Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press, 2002.
- Arthur, T.S. *Advice to Young Men on Their Duties and Conduct in Life*. Boston: Barton, 1848.
- Attwood, William et al. *The Decline of the American Male*. New York: Random House, 1958.
- Barton, Bruce. *The Man Nobody Knows: A Discovery of the Real Jesus*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company Publishers, 1925.
- Basso, Matthew L. *Meet Joe Copper: Masculinity and Race on Montana's World War II Home Front*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.
- Baxandall, Rosalyn and Elizabeth Ewen. *Picture Windows: How the Suburbs Happened*. New York: Basic Books, 2000.
- Bederman, Gail. *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.
- Bedford, James H. *The Veteran and His Future Job*. Los Angeles: Society for Occupational Research, 1946.
- Benemann, William. *Male-Male Intimacy in Early America: Beyond Romantic Friendships*. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Bennett, Michael J. *When Dreams Came True: The GI Bill and the Making of Modern America*. Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 1995.
- Bennett, William J. *The Book of Virtues: A Treasury of Great Moral Stories*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993.
- Bérubé, Allan. *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War Two*. New York: Plume, 1990.
- Bird, William L. *Design for Victory: World War II posters on the American home front*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998.
- Bly, Robert. *Iron John*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1990.
- Boyer, Paul. *By The Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985.

- Bradley, Omar N. and Clay Blair. *A General's Life: An Autobiography by General of the Army Omar N. Bradley*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983.
- Brandon, Dorothy. *Mamie Doud Eisenhower: A Portrait of a First Lady*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954.
- Brier, Evan. *A Novel Marketplace: Mass Culture, the Book Trade, and Postwar American Fiction*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011.
- Brokaw, Tom. *The Greatest Generation*. New York: Random House, 1998.
- Buckley, William F. and L. Brent Bozell. *McCarthy and his Enemies: The Record and its Meaning*. Chicago: H. Regnery Co., 1954.
- Butcher, Harry C. *My Three Years with Eisenhower*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946.
- Calhoun, Arthur C. *A Social History of the American Family*. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1960.
- Canaday, Margot. *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009.
- Caprio, Frank S. *The Adequate Male*. New York: Medical Research Press, 1952.
- Caro, Robert A. *The Years of Lyndon Johnson: Master of the Senate*. New York: Vintage, 2002.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Years of Lyndon Johnson: The Passage of Power*. New York: Vintage, 2012.
- Carter, Paul A. *Another Part of the Fifties*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.
- Caute, David. *The Great Fear: The Anti-Communist Purge under Truman and Eisenhower*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978.
- Cavan, Ruth S. and Katherine H. Ranck. *The Family and the Depression: A Study of One Hundred Chicago Families*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938.
- Cawelti, John G. *Apostles of the Self-Made Man*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965.
- Childs, Marquis. *Eisenhower: Captive Hero: A Critical Study of the General and the President*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1958.
- Chudacoff, Howard. *The Age of the Bachelor: Creating an American Subculture*.

- Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999.
- Cleaver, Eldridge. *Soul on Ice*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967.
- Cochran, Bert. *Harry Truman and the Crisis Presidency*. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1973.
- Cohan, Steven. *Masked Men: Masculinity and the Movies in the Fifties*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997.
- Collins, Max Allan and George Hagenauer. *Men's Adventure Magazines in Postwar America*. Los Angeles: Taschen, 2008.
- Connell, R.W. *Masculinities*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.
- Coontz, Stephanie. *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap*. New York: Basic Books, 1992.
- Costello, John. *Virtue Under Fire: How World War II Changed Our Social and Sexual Attitudes*. New York: Fromm, 1987.
- Creadick, Anna G. *Perfectly Average: The Pursuit of Normality in Postwar America*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010.
- Cross, Gary. *Men to Boys: The Making of Modern Immaturity*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.
- Cuordileone, K.A. *Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War*. New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Dallek, Robert. *An Unfinished Life: John F. Kennedy, 1917-1963*. Boston: Back Bay Books, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Flawed Giant: Lyndon Johnson and his Times, 1961-1973*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Daniels, Anna K. *The Mature Woman: Her Richest Years*. New York: Prentice-Hall, 1953.
- David, Lester and Irene David. *Ike and Mamie: The Story of the General and His Lady*. New York: G.R. Putnam's Sons, 1981.
- Davis, Kenneth S. *Dwight D. Eisenhower: Soldier of Democracy*. Old Saybrook, CT: Konecky and Konecky, 1945.
- Dean, Robert D. *Imperial Brotherhood: Gender and the Making of Cold War Foreign*

- Policy*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 2001.
- Dean, Virgil W., ed. *John Brown to Bob Dole: Movers and Shakers in Kansas History*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006.
- D'Emilio, John. *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.
- D'Emilio, John and Estelle B. Freedman. *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997.
- D'Este, Carlo. *Eisenhower: A Soldier's Life*. New York: Henry Holt, 2002.
- Dick, Bernard F. *The Star-Spangled Screen: The American World War II Film*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1985.
- Dippel, John V. H. *War and Sex: A Brief History of Men's Urge for Battle*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 2010.
- Divine, Robert A. *Eisenhower and the Cold War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981.
- Dobson, James C. *The New Dare to Discipline*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1992.
- Dorsey, Bruce. *Reforming Men and Women: Gender in the Antebellum City*. Ithaca: Cornell University, 2002.
- Droke, Maxwell. *Good-by to G.I.: How to be a Successful Civilian*. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1945.
- Dubbert, Joe L. *A Man's Place: Masculinity in Transition*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1979.
- Ducat, Stephen J. *The Wimp Factor: Gender Gaps, Holy Wars, and the Politics of Anxious Masculinity*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2004.
- Dunar, Andrew J. *America in the Fifties*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2006.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Truman Scandals and the Politics of Morality*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1984.
- Durham, Martin. *Women and Fascism*. New York: Routledge, 1998.
- Dykstra, Robert R. *The Cattle Towns*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968.



- Ehrenreich, Barbara. *The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment*. New York: Anchor, 1983.
- Eisenhower, David with Julie Nixon Eisenhower. *Going Home to Glory: A Memoir of Life with Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1961-1969*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010.
- Eisenhower, Dwight D. *At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1967.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Crusade in Europe*. New York: Doubleday, 1948.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Eisenhower: The Prewar Diaries and Selected Papers, 1905-1941*. Edited by Daniel D. Holt and James W. Leyerzapf. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Ike's Letters to a Friend, 1941-1958*, ed. Robert Griffith. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1984.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Mandate for Change, 1953-1956*. New York: Signet, 1963.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Eisenhower Diaries*, edited by Robert H. Ferrell. New York: Norton, 1981.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*. Edited by Alfred D. Chandler Jr., Louis Galambos, Daun Van Ee. Jr. 21 vols. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970-1996.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Waging Peace, 1956-1961*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965.
- Eisenhower, John S.D. *Strictly Personal*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1974.
- Eisenhower, Milton S. *The President is Calling*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974.
- Eisenhower, Susan. *Mrs. Ike: Memories and Reflections on the Life of Mamie Eisenhower*. Charleston, SC: Ferrous, 2011.
- Eisler, Benita. *Private Lives: Men and Women of the Fifties*. New York: Franklin Watts, 1986.
- Ellis, Havelock. *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*. 2 vols. New York: Random House, 1936.
- Ellis, John. *The Sharp End: The Fighting Man in World War II*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1980.

- Ellwood, Robert S. *1950: Crossroads of American Religious Life*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000.
- Emmet, John Hughes. *The Ordeal of Power: A Political Memoir of the Eisenhower Years*. New York: Atheneum, 1963.
- Emmons, Helen B. *The Mature Heart*. New York: Abingdon Press, 1953.
- Estes, Steve. *I Am A Man!: Race, Manhood, and the Civil Rights Movement*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005.
- Everts, William W. *Manhood: Its Duties and Responsibilities*. Louisville: Hull and Brother, 1854.
- Ewald Jr., William Bragg. *Eisenhower the President: Crucial Days, 1951-1960*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1981.
- Faludi, Susan. *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man*. New York: Perennial, 1999.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Terror Dream: Myth and Misogyny in an Insecure America*. New York: Picador, 2008.
- Fishbein, Morris. *A History of the American Medical Association*. Philadelphia: Saunders, 1947.
- Foreman, Joel, ed. *The Other Fifties: Interrogating Midcentury American Icons*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997.
- Frank, Jeffrey. *Ike and Dick: Portrait of a Strange Political Marriage*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2013.
- Franklin, Benjamin. *The Art of Virtue*. New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2012.
- Fraterrigo, Elizabeth. *Playboy and the Making of the Good Life in Modern America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Friedan, Betty. *The Feminine Mystique*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1963.
- Fromm, Erich. *Escape from Freedom*. 1941. Reprint, New York: Henry Holt, 1994.
- Fussell, Paul. *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.
- Garcia, Guy. *The Decline of Men: How the American Male is Tuning Out, Giving Up, and Flipping Off His Future*. New York: Harper Collins, 2008.

- Gardiner, Juliet. *Overpaid, Oversexed, and Over Here: The American GI in World War II Britain*. New York: Canopy Books, 1992.
- Gelb, Norman. *Ike and Monty: Generals at War*. New York: W. Morrow, 1994.
- Gellman, Irwin F. *The President and the Apprentice: Eisenhower and Nixon, 1952-1961*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015.
- Gilbert, James. *Men in the Middle: Searching for Masculinity in the 1950s*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.
- Goldberg, Herb. *The Hazards of Being Male: Surviving the Myth of Masculine Privilege*. New York: Signet, 1976.
- Goldstein, Joshua S. *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Goodenough, Erwin R. *Toward a Mature Faith*. New York: Prentice-Hall, 1955.
- Graham, Billy. *Just As I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham*. New York: HarperCollins, 1997.
- Greenstein, Fred I. *The Hidden-Hand Presidency: Eisenhower as Leader*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994.
- Grosz, Elizabeth. *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.
- Gunther, John. *Eisenhower: The Man and the Symbol*. New York: Harper and Row, 1952.
- Hagerty, James C. *The Diary of James C. Hagerty: Eisenhower in mid-course, 1954-1955*, ed. Robert Ferrell. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983.
- Halberstam, David. *The Fifties*. New York: Random House, 1993.
- Hartmann, Susan M. *The Home Front and Beyond: American Women in the 1940s*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982.
- Haskew, Michael E. *West Point 1915: Eisenhower, Bradley, and the Class the Stars Fell On*. Minneapolis MN: Zenith, 2014.
- Hatch, Alden. *General Ike: A Biography of Dwight D. Eisenhower*. Chicago: Consolidated Book Publishers, 1944.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *Red Carpet for Mamie*. New York: Henry Holt, 1954.
- Hicken, Victor. *The American Fighting Man*. New York: Macmillan, 1969.
- Hill, Daniel Delis. *American Menswear: From the Civil War to the Twenty-First Century*. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2011.
- Hirshon, Stanley P. *General Patton: A Soldier's Life*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2002.
- Hoganson, Kristin L. *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.
- Hollander, Anne. *Sex and Suits: The Evolution of Modern Dress*. New York: Kodansha, 1994.
- Holzer, Harold. *Lincoln at Cooper Union: The Speech that made Abraham Lincoln President*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004.
- Horowitz, Daniel. *Betty Friedan and the Making of The Feminine Mystique: The American Left, The Cold War, and Modern Feminism*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998.
- Horrocks, Roger. *Masculinity in Crisis: Myths, Fantasies, and Realities*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994.
- Houck, Davis W. and Amos Kiewe. *FDR's Body Politics: The Rhetoric of Disability*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2003.
- Hudson, R. Lofton. *The Religion of a Mature Person*. Nashville: Broadman, 1952.
- Huntington, Samuel P. *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*. Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1957.
- Hurlock, Elizabeth B. *Developmental Psychology*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959.
- Hymowitz, Kay S. *Manning Up: How the Rise of Women has turned Men into Boys*. New York: Basic, 2011.
- Jackson, Kenneth T. *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Jacobus, Mary et al. *Body/Politics: Women and the Discourses of Science*. New York: Routledge, 1990.
- James, Henry. *The Bostonians*. New York: Modern Library, 1956.

- James, Pearl, ed. *Picture This: World War I Posters and Visual Culture*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009.
- Janowitz, Morris. *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait*. New York: Free Press, 1971.
- Jarvis, Christina S. *The Male Body at War: American Masculinity during World War II*. Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010.
- Jeffords, Susan. *Hard Bodies: Hollywood Masculinity in the Reagan Era*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Remasculinization of America: Gender and the Vietnam War*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989.
- Johnson, David K. *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.
- Jones, James H. *Alfred C. Kinsey: A Public/Private Life*. New York: Norton, 1997.
- Jordan, Jonathan W. *Brothers, Rivals, Victors: Eisenhower, Patton, Bradley, and the Partnership that Drove the Allied Conquest in Europe*. New York: New American Library, 2011.
- Jourard, Sidney M. *The Transparent Self*. New York: Van Nostrand, 1971.
- Kaledin, Eugenia. *Mothers and More: American Women in the 1950s*. Boston: Twayne, 1984.
- Kann, Mark E. *A Republic of Men: The American Founders, Gendered Language, and Patriarchal Politics*. New York: New York University Press, 1998.
- Kasson, John F. *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man: The White Male Body and the Challenge of Modernity in America*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2001.
- Katz, Jackson. *Leading Men: Presidential Campaigns and the Politics of Manhood*. Northampton, MA: Interlink, 2013.
- Keegan, John. *The Mask of Command*. New York: Penguin, 1987.
- Kennedy, David M. *Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Kennet, Lee. *G.I.: The American Soldier in World War II*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997.

- Kerber, Linda K. *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980.
- Kiley, Dan. *The Peter Pan Syndrome: Men Who Have Never Grown Up*. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1983.
- Kimmel, Michael. *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*. New York: Free Press, 2011.
- Kinder, John M. *Paying with Their Bodies: American War and the Problem of the Disabled Veteran*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015.
- Kinsey, Alfred C. et al. *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*. Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders Co., 1948.
- Kitching, E. Howard. *Sex Problems of the Returned Veteran*. New York: Emerson, 1946.
- Komarovsky, Mirra. *The Unemployed Man and His Family: The Effect of Unemployment Upon the Status of the Man in Fifty-nine Families*. New York: Dryden, 1940.
- Krieg, Joann P. *Dwight D. Eisenhower: Soldier, President, and Statesman*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1987.
- Kuchta, David. *The Three-Piece Suit and Modern Masculinity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.
- Kupper, Herbert I. and Robert H. Felix. *Back to Life: The Emotional Adjustment of our Veterans*. New York: Stratford Press, 1945.
- Kwolek-Folland, Angel. *Engendering Business: Men and Women in the Corporate Office, 1870-1930*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994.
- LaHaye, Tim. *Understanding the Male Temperament: What Every Man Would Like to Tell His Wife About Himself . . . But Won't*. Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1977.
- Larson, Arthur. *Eisenhower: The President Nobody Knew*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968.
- Ledbetter, James. *Unwarranted Influence: Dwight D. Eisenhower and the Military-Industrial Complex*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011.
- Lewis, Adrian R. *Omaha Beach: A Flawed Victory*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001.

- Lewis, Carolyn H. *Prescription for Hetersosexuality: Sexual Citizenship in the Cold War Era*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010.
- Lewis, Sinclair. *Babbitt*. Mineola, NY: Dover, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Main Street*. New York: Barnes and Noble, 2003.
- Lindner, Robert. *Must You Conform?* New York: Rinehart & Co., 1956.
- Lingeman, Richard R. *Don't You Know There's A War On? The American Home Front, 1941-1945*. New York: Perigee, 1970.
- Lumpkin, Katharine D. *The Family: A Study of Member Roles*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1933.
- Lyon, Peter. *Eisenhower: Portrait of the Hero*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1974.
- MacDonald, Charles B. *Company Commander*. New York: History Book Club, 1947.
- Maddock, Shane J. *Nuclear Apartheid: The Quest for American Atomic Supremacy from World War II to the Present*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010.
- Mailer, Norman. *Advertisements for Myself*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1959.
- Malin, Brenton J. *American Masculinity Under Clinton: Popular Media and the Nineties "Crisis of Masculinity."* New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2005.
- Manchester, William. *The Glory and the Dream: A Narrative History of America, 1932-1972*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1974.
- Mangan, J.A. and James Walvin, eds. *Manliness and Morality: Middle-class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987.
- Mariano, John H. *The Veteran and His Marriage*. New York: Council on Marriage Relations, 1945.
- Marling, Karal Ann. *As Seen on TV: The Visual Culture of Everyday Life in the 1950s*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994.
- Maslow, Abraham. *Toward a Psychology of Being*. Princeton, NJ: D. Van Nostrand, 1962.
- Mauldin, Bill. *Up Front*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2000.
- May, Elaine Tyler. *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*. New

- York: Basic Books, 1988.
- May, Lary, ed. *Recasting America: Culture and Politics in the Age of Cold War*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.
- McCallum, John. *Six Roads from Abilene: Some Personal Recollections of Edgar Eisenhower*. Seattle: Wood and Reber, 1960.
- McCullough, David G. *Truman*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992.
- McEntee, James J. *Now They Are Men: The Story of the CCC*. Washington D.C.: National Home Library Foundation, 1940.
- McKeever, Porter. *Adlai Stevenson: His Life and Legacy*. New York: William Morrow, 1989.
- McKeogh, Michael J. and Richard Lockridge. *Sgt. Mickey and General Ike*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1946.
- McLeod, David I. *Building Character in the American Boy: The Boy Scouts, YMCA, and Their Forerunners, 1870-1920*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983.
- McPartland, John. *Sex in Our Changing World*. New York: Rinehart and Company, 1947.
- Meacham, Jon. *Destiny and Power: The American Odyssey of George Herbert Walker Bush*. New York: Random House, 2015.
- Meade, Michael J. *Men and the Water of Life: Initiation and the Tempering of Men*. San Francisco: Harper, 1993.
- Medhurst, Martin, ed. *Eisenhower's War of Words: Rhetoric and Leadership*. East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1994.
- Melosh, Barbara. *Engendering Culture: Manhood and Womanhood in New Deal Public Art and Theater*. Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institute Press, 1991.
- Mencken, H.L. *The Vintage Mencken*. Alistair Cooke, ed. New York: Vintage, 1955.
- Meredith, Burgess. *So Far, So Good: A Memoir*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1994.
- Mettler, Suzanne. *Soldiers to Citizens: The G.I. Bill and the Making of the Greatest Generation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Meyerowitz, Joanne, ed. *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994.



- Michel, Sonya and Robyn Muncy, eds. *Engendering America: A Documentary History, 1865 to the Present*. Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1999.
- Miller, Francis T. *Eisenhower: Man and Soldier*. Philadelphia: John C. Winston, 1944.
- Miller, Nyle H. and Joseph W. Snell. *Great Gunfighters of the Kansas Cowtowns, 1867–1886*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1963.
- Miller, William Lee. *Two Americans: Truman, Eisenhower, and a Dangerous World*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012.
- Mills, C. Wright. *White Collar: The American Middle Classes*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1951.
- Moore, Robert and Douglas Gillette. *King, Warrior, Magician, Lover: Rediscovering the Archetypes of the Mature Masculine*. New York: HarperCollins, 1990.
- Morgan, Kaye Eisenhower. *The Eisenhower Legacy: A Tribute to Ida Stover Eisenhower and David Jacob Eisenhower*. Mesa, Ariz.: Roesler Enterprises Publishing, 2005.
- Morrow, E. Frederic. *Black Man in the White House: A Diary of the Eisenhower Years by the Administrative Officer for Special Projects, The White House, 1955-1961*. New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1963.
- Mrozek, Donald J. *Sport and American Mentality, 1880-1910*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1983.
- Mumford, Lewis. *Technics and Civilization*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1934.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1961.
- Murphy, Kevin P. *Political Manhood: Red Bloods, Mollycoddles, and the Politics of Progressive Era Reform*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.
- Murray, G.E. Patrick. *Eisenhower versus Montgomery: The Continuing Debate*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996.
- Myers, Daisy D. *Sticks and Stones: The Myers Family in Levittown*. York, PA: York County Heritage Trust, 2005.
- Nadel, Alan. *Containment Culture: American Narratives, Postmodernism, and the Atomic Age*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1995.

- Neal, Steve. *Harry and Ike: The Partnership that Remade the Postwar World*. New York: Scribner, 2001.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Eisenhowers: Reluctant Dynasty*. New York: Doubleday, 1978.
- Neustadt, Richard E. *Presidential Power: The Politics of Leadership*. John Wiley and Sons: New York, 1960.
- Nichols, David A. *A Matter of Justice: Eisenhower and the beginning of the Civil Rights revolution*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2007.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Eisenhower 1956: The President's Year of Crisis: Suez and the Brink of War*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011.
- Nixon, Richard M. *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon*. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1978.
- O'Brien, Michael. *John F. Kennedy: A Biography*. New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2005.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Rethinking Kennedy: An Interpretive Biography*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2010.
- Old Sarge. *How to Get Along in the Army*. New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1942.
- O'Neill, William L. *American High: The Years of Confidence, 1945-1960*. New York: Free Press, 1986.
- Overstreet, H.A. *The Mature Mind*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1949.
- Packard, Vance. *The Hidden Persuaders*. New York: David McKay Co., 1957.
- Patterson, James. *The Eve of Destruction: How 1965 Transformed America*. New York: Basic Books, 2012.
- Patton, George S. *The Patton Papers*, edited by Martin Blumenson. 2 vols. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957.
- Perls, Frederick et al. *Gestalt Therapy: Excitement and Growth in the Human Personality*. New York: Dell, 1951.
- Perret, Geoffrey. *Eisenhower*. Holbrook, MA: Adams Media Co., 1999.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Jack: A Life Like No Other*. New York: Random House, 2002.
- Perry, Mark. *Partners in Command: George Marshall and Dwight Eisenhower in War and Peace*. New York: Penguin, 2007.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Most Dangerous Man in America: The Making of Douglas MacArthur*. New York: Basic Books, 2014.
- Pietrusza, David. *1960: LBJ vs. JFK vs. Nixon: The Epic Campaign That Forged Three Presidencies*. New York: Union Square, 2008.
- Podhoretz, Norman. *Doings and Undoings: The Fifties and After in American Writing*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Co., Inc., 1964.
- Pratt, George K. *Soldier to Civilian: Problems of Readjustment*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1944.
- Reel, Guy. *The National Police Gazette and the Making of the Modern American Man, 1879-1906*. New York: Palgrave, 2006.
- Richardson, Riché. *Black Masculinity and the U.S. South: From Uncle Tom to Gangsta*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2007.
- Riesman, David et al. *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1953.
- Robb, Graham. *Strangers: Homosexual Love in the Nineteenth Century*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2003.
- Rogers, Carl. *The Carl Rogers Reader*. Edited by Howard Kirschenbaum and Valerie Land Henderson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1989.
- Roosevelt, Theodore. *The Strenuous Life: Essays and Addresses*. New York: Century Co., 1905.
- Rose, Kenneth D. *Myth and the Greatest Generation: A Social History of Americans in World War II*. New York: Routledge, 2008.
- Ross, Marlon B. *Manning the Race: Reforming Black Men in the Jim Crow Era*. New York: New York University Press, 2004.
- Rovere, Richard H. *The Eisenhower Years: Affairs of State*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1956.
- Russoli, Edward and Candace. *Ike the Cook: Dwight D. Eisenhower: General, President, and Cook*. Allentown, PA: Benedettini Books, 1990.
- Saul, Leon J. *Emotional Maturity: The Development and Dynamics of Personality*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1947.
- Savran, David. *Taking it Like a Man: White Masculinity, Masochism, and Contemporary*

- American Culture*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998.
- Saxe, Robert Francis. *Settling Down: World War II Veteran's Challenge to the Postwar Consensus*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
- Schiller, Herbert I. and Joseph D. Phillips, eds. *Super-State: Readings in the Military-Industrial Complex*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970.
- Schlesinger Jr., Arthur M. *The Politics of Hope*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1963.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Vital Center: The Politics of Freedom*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1949.
- Schoeffler, O.E. and William Gale. *Esquire's Encyclopedia of 20th Century Men's Fashions*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973.
- Shapiro, Karl. *The Bourgeois Poet*. New York: Random House, 1964.
- Slater, Ellis D. *The Ike I Knew*. Privately printed, 1980.
- Smith, Jean Edward. *Eisenhower: In War and Peace*. New York: Random House, 2013.
- Sorensen, Theodore C. *The Kennedy Legacy*. New York: Macmillan, 1969.
- Spillane, Mickey. *One Lonely Night*. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1951.
- Stott, Richard B. *Workers in the Metropolis: Class, Ethnicity, and Youth in Antebellum New York City*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990.
- Stuckey, Mary E. *Defining Americans: The Presidency and National Identity*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004.
- Susman, Warren. *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Pantheon, 1973.
- Tate, H. Clay. *Building a Better Home Town: A Program of Community Self-analysis and Self-help*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954.
- Thomas, Evan. *Robert Kennedy: His Life*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000.
- Thompson, Morton. *How to Be a Civilian*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1946.
- Tobin, James. *The Man He Became: How FDR Defied Polio to Win the Presidency*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2013.
- Tuchman, Barbara. *Stillwell and the American Experience in China, 1911-45*. New York:

- Macmillan, 1970.
- Turner, Frederick Jackson. *The Frontier in American History*. New York: Holt, 1921.
- Valentine, Alan. *The Age of Conformity*. Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1954.
- Verckler, Stewart P. *Cowtown-Abilene: The Story of Abilene, Kansas, 1867–1875*. New York: Carlton Press, 1961.
- Waller, Willard. *The Veteran Comes Back*. New York: Dryden Press, 1944.
- Warren, Earl. *The Memoirs of Earl Warren*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1977.
- Warters, Jane. *Achieving Maturity*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1949.
- Washington, George. *Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior In Company and Conversation*. Bedford, MA: Applewood Books, 1988.
- Watts, Steven. *Mr. Playboy: Hugh Hefner and the American Dream*. Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2008.
- Wayne, Pilar and Alex Thorleifson. *John Wayne: My Life with the Duke*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1987.
- West, Cornel. *Race Matters*. New York: Vintage, 1993.
- Whitfield, Stephen J. *The Culture of the Cold War*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.
- Whyte Jr., William H. *The Organization Man*. Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1956.
- Wilson, Sloan. *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (1955; repr., New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1983.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit II*. New York: Arbor House, 1984.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *What Shall We Wear to This Party? The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit Twenty Years Before and After*. New York: Arbor House, 1976.
- Woods, Randall Bennett. *Quest for Identity: America Since 1945*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Wylie, Phillip. *Generation of Vipers*. New York: Rinehart & Co., 1942.
- Wyllie, Irvin G. *The Self-Made Man in America: The Myth of Rags to Riches*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1954.

Wynn, Neil A. *The Afro-American and the Second World War*. New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1975.

### Articles

Balswick, Jack O. and Charles W. Peek, "The Inexpressive Male: A Tragedy of American Society" *The Family Coordinator*, 20, no. 4 (October 1971): 363-368.

Belmonte, Laura A. "No Substitute for Virility: Douglas MacArthur, Gender, and the Culture of Militarism." In *MacArthur and the American Century*, edited by William M. Leary, 436-465. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001.

Booth, Alan. "Sex and Social Participation," *American Sociological Review*, 37, no. 2 (April 1972): 183-193.

Burns, J.H. "The American Professional Soldier," *Infantry Journal* 47 (September-October 1940): 419-423.

Carden, Mary Pannicia. "'Adventures in Auto-Eroticism': Economies of Traveling Masculinity in *On the Road* and *The First Third*." In *What's Your Road, Man?* edited by Hilary Holladay and Robert Holton, 169-185. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2009.

Chernus, Ira. "Eisenhower's Ideology in World War II," *Armed Forces and Society*, (Summer 1997): 595-613.

Davis, Clark. "The Corporate Reconstruction of Middle-Class Manhood." In *The Middling Sorts: Explorations in the History of the American Middle Class*, edited by Burton J. Bledstein and Robert D. Johnston. New York: Routledge, 2001.

Dietze, Gabriele. "Gender Topography of the Fifties: Mickey Spillane and the Post-World War II Masculinity Crises," *American Studies* 43, no. 4 (1998): 645-656.

Elkin, Henry. "Aggressive and Erotic Tendencies," *American Journal of Sociology*, 51 (March 1946): 408-413.

Faragher, John Mack. "Bungalow and Ranch House: The Architectural Backwash of California," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (Summer 2001): 149-173.

Fischer, Agneta H. and Annelies E. M. van Vianen, "Corporate Masculinity," In *A Companion to Gender Studies*, edited by Philomena Essed et al., 342-354. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005.

Freeman, Joshua B. "Hardhats: Construction Workers, Manliness, and the 1970 Pro-War Demonstrations." *Journal of Social History* 26, no. 4 (Summer 1993): 725-744.

- Garceau, Dee. "Nomads, Bunkies, Cross-Dressers, and Family Men: Cowboy Identity and the Gendering of Ranch Work." In *Across the Great Divide: Cultures of Manhood in the American West*, edited by Matthew Basso, Laura McCall, and Dee Garceau, 149-154. New York: Routledge, 2001.
- Griffin, Charles J.G. "New Light on Eisenhower's Farewell Address." In *Eisenhower's War of Words: Rhetoric and Leadership*, edited by Martin J. Medhurst. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1994.
- Griffith, Robert. "Dwight D. Eisenhower and the Corporate Commonwealth." *The American Historical Review* 87, no. 1 (February 1982): 87-122.
- Griswold, Robert L. "The 'Flabby American,' the Body, and the Cold War," in *A Shared Experience: Men, Women, and the History of Gender*, eds. Laura McCall and Donald Yacovone (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 323-348.
- Griswold, W. "The Fabrication of Meaning: Literary Interpretation in the United States, Great Britain, and the West Indies." *American Journal of Sociology* 92 (1987): 1077-1117.
- Hacker, Helen M. "The New Burdens of Masculinity," *Marriage and Family Living*. 19:3 (August 1957): 227-233.
- Hartmann, Susan M. "Prescriptions for Penelope: Literature on Women's Obligations to Returning World War II Veterans," *Women's Studies* 5, no. 3 (January 1978): 223-239.
- Henry, George W. "Psychogenic Factors in Overt Homosexuality," *American Journal of Psychology*, 93 (1937): 889-908.
- Hirsch, Arnold. "Containment on the Home Front: Race and Federal Housing Policy from the New Deal to the Cold War." *Journal of Urban History* (January 2000): 158-189.
- Hollingshead, August B. "Adjustment to Military Life," *American Journal of Sociology*, 51:5 (March 1946): 439-447.
- Irish, Kerry E. "Dwight Eisenhower and Douglas MacArthur in the Philippines: There Must Be a Day of Reckoning," *Journal of Military History* 74, no. 2 (2010): 439-473.
- Karpf, Maurice. "The Effects of Prostitution on Marital Sex Adjustment." *Marriage and Family Living* 15, no. 1 (February 1953): 65-71.
- Kelman, Herbert C. "Compliance, Identification, and Internalization: Three Processes of

- Attitude Change, *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*. 2:1 (March 1958): 51-60.
- “Law of Duty: Code of the Good American,” *National Education Association Journal* 35 (October 1946): 428.
- Lewis, Jan. “The Republican Wife: Virtue and Seduction in the Early Republic.” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (October 1987): 689-721.
- May, Elaine Tyler. “Shelter Me: The Suburban Dream in Cold War America.” In *Maynard L. Parker: Modern Photography and the American Dream*, edited by Jennifer Watts, 131-160. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012.
- Miller, Walter B. “Lower-Class Culture As a Generating Milieu of Gang Delinquency.” *Journal of Social Issues* 14, no. 3 (1958): 5-19.
- Morris, Kenneth E. and Barry Schwartz. “Why They liked Ike: Tradition, Crisis, and Heroic Leadership.” *The Sociological Quarterly* 34: no. 1 (Spring 1993): 133-151.
- Neuhaus, Jessamyn. “The Importance of Being Orgasmic: Sexuality, Gender, and Marital Sex Manuals in the United States, 1920-1963.” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 9, no. 4 (October 2000): 447-473.
- Neumeyer, Martin H. “Delinquency Trends in Wartime,” *Sociology and Social Research*, 29 (March-April 1945): 262-275.
- Nisbet, Robert A. “The Coming Problem of Assimilation.” *American Journal of Sociology* 50, no. 4 (January 1945): 261-270.
- Parker IV, Jerome H. “Fox Conner and Dwight Eisenhower: Mentoring and Application.” *Military Review* 85, no. 4 (July 2005): 92-95.
- Rotundo, E. Anthony, “Body and Soul: Changing Ideals of American Middle-Class Manhood, 1770-1920,” *Journal of Social History* 16 no. 4 (Summer 1983): 23-38.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Learning about Manhood: Gender Ideals and the Middle-Class Family in Nineteenth-Century America.” In *Manliness and Morality*, edited by J.A. Mangan and James Walvin, 35-51. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1987.
- Stouffer, Samuel A. “Is there a National Anxiety Neurosis?” in *Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties: A Cross-Section of the Nation Speaks its Mind*. Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1963.



### Dissertations

Clouser, Roger A. "The Ranch House in America." PhD diss., University of Kansas, 1984.

### Websites

[www.armchairgeneral.com](http://www.armchairgeneral.com)

[www.barbadosfreepress.com](http://www.barbadosfreepress.com)

[www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com)

[www.huffingtonpost.com](http://www.huffingtonpost.com)

[www.livingroomcandidate.org](http://www.livingroomcandidate.org)

[www.poetryfoundation.org](http://www.poetryfoundation.org)

[www.presidency.ucsb.edu](http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu)

[www.townhall.com](http://www.townhall.com)

VITA

Peter M. Nadeau

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Dissertation: THE PRESIDENT IN THE GRAY FLANNEL SUIT: DWIGHT D.  
EISENHOWER AND POSTWAR AMERICAN MANHOOD

Major Field: History

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in history at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May, 2016

Completed the requirements for the Master of Arts in Theological Studies at Reformed Theological Seminary, Oviedo, Florida in May, 2005.

Completed the requirements for the Master of Arts in history at Tufts University, Medford, Massachusetts in May, 1997.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in history at Salem State University, Salem, Massachusetts in May, 1996.

Experience:

Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma (2016-Present)  
Lecturer

Orangewood High School, Maitland, Florida (1998-2003; 2006-2012)  
History Instructor and Department Chair

Ligonier Ministries, Lake Mary, Florida (2003-2004)  
Freelance Writer