

THE CONTINENT MAN:  
THE IDEAL OF PURE MANHOOD IN THE *SELF* AND *SEX* SERIES, 1897-1915

by

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements .....	ii
Introduction: <b>The Continent Man</b> .....	1
Chapter I: <b>A Book In Hand</b> .....	18
Chapter II: <b>Christian Physiology</b> .....	53
Chapter III: <b>The Politicization of Pollution</b> .....	89
Conclusion: <b>The Old/New Ideal of Sexual Continence for Men</b> .....	130
Bibliography.....	140

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## INTRODUCTION

### The Continent Man

Beware of all excesses, of whatever nature, and guard your personal purity with sacred determination.<sup>1</sup>

The injunction, 'Keep thyself pure,' is worthy to be repeated to every generation of young men, since it was written to Timothy by the great Apostle more than eighteen hundred years ago. The young man who undertakes to keep himself pure will find his task is not to be accomplished without a struggle.<sup>2</sup>

Writing in 1897, the American Lutheran minister Rev. Sylvanus Stall, D.D. (1847-1915), admitted that, as a boy, later as a student in college, and still later as a pastor, he saw the need for "a clean, pure, but full-orbed and truthful book addressed to young men."<sup>3</sup> Stall attempted to fulfill this need by authoring, in that same year, not one, but two books entitled *What A Young Boy Ought To Know* and *What A Young Man Ought To Know*. In 1899 Stall completed *What A Young Husband Ought To Know*. He rounded off this list in 1901 with a fourth book called *What A Man of 45 Ought To Know*.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> B. G. Jefferis and J. L. Nichols, *Searchlights on Health* (Toronto: The J. L. Nichols Co. Ltd., 1911 first pub. 1894), p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Sylvanus Stall, *What A Young Man Ought To Know* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1904, first pub. 1897), p. 34.

<sup>3</sup> Sylvanus Stall, *What A Young Boy Ought To Know* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1909, first pub. 1897), p. 33.

<sup>4</sup> Sylvanus Stall, *What A Young Husband Ought To Know* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1907, first pub. 1899) and *What A Man Of 45 Ought To Know* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1901). Stall authored several additional books, such as: *Faces Toward the Light: A Book for the Devotional Home and for Sabbath Reading* (Philadelphia: Vir Publishing Company, 1903); *Parental Honesty* (Philadelphia: Vir Publishing Company, 1905), and *The Social Peril* (Philadelphia: Vir Publishing Company, 1905).

Stall was not only a Doctor of Divinity,<sup>5</sup> a pastor and an author, but the manager of the Philadelphia-based Vir Publishing Company<sup>6</sup> which had a branch office in London, England. Stall contracted the American Dr. Mary Wood-Allen (1841-1908) to author the first two companionate volumes to his four. Her *What A Young Girl Ought To Know* appeared in 1897 while *What A Young Woman Ought To Know* appeared in 1898.<sup>7</sup> Stall next offered a \$1000 prize to the author of an essay directed to young wives. He set up a committee composed of church-going wives and mothers who would judge the entries to the contest. Dr. Emma F. Angell Drake (1849-?), also an American, won the contest. Her *What A Young Wife Ought To Know* was published in 1901. Stall then contracted her to author *What A Woman of 45 Ought To Know*, which was published in 1902.<sup>8</sup> The eight books were advertised for sale as the *Self and Sex Series*. The Series proved to be immensely popular worldwide, selling over one million copies in English.<sup>9</sup> In Canada, the Series

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<sup>5</sup> In 1893, the degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon Stall by his Alma Mater, Pennsylvania College. For a biographical sketch of Stall, see L. M. Cross, "Sylvanus Stall, D.D.: A Man With A Message," in Sylvanus Stall, *The Successful Selling of the Self and Sex Series* (Philadelphia: Vir Publishing Company, 1907), pp. 323-329.

<sup>6</sup> Vir was responsible for the dissemination of many additional books and pamphlets for boys, men, girls and women. Some of these were: William Byron Forbrush, *The Boy Problem* (Albany, New York: Sabbath Literature Company, 1901); Samuel Smiles *Character* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1872); Pauline Page, *The Bloom of Girlhood* (Philadelphia: Vir Publishing Company, 1905), and Mary Lowe Dickinson, *From Girlhood to Motherhood* (New York: F. H. Revell Company, 1899). Vir's books carried lists and advertisements for the company's other publications. I have compiled this short list from a much longer one in Mrs. Emma F. Angell Drake, M.D., *What A Young Wife Ought To Know* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1902, first pub. 1901), pp. 288-291, and from advertisements in Stall, *Young Man*, back pages.

<sup>7</sup> Mrs. Mary Wood-Allen, M.D., *What A Young Girl Ought To Know* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1897) and *What A Young Woman Ought To Know* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1898). In the *National Union Catalogue: Pre-1959 Imprints*, vol. 9 (London: Mansell Information/Publishing Ltd., 1968), p. 410, *What A Young Girl Ought To Know* is listed as co-authored by Stall and Wood-Allen. My 1897 edition lists only Wood-Allen as the author. Wood-Allen had her own publishing company. She authored several other advice books for boys, girls, men and women. Some of these were, *Almost a Man* (Ann Arbor: The Wood-Allen Publishing Company, 1895); *Almost a Woman* (Ann Arbor: The Wood-Allen Publishing Company, 1903); *The Marvels of our Bodily Dwelling* (Ann Arbor: The Wood-Allen Publishing Company, 1895) and *A Noble Father* (Cooperstown, New York: Scott and Marshall, 1907). For a biographical sketch of Wood-Allen, see L. M. Cross, "Mrs. Mary Wood-Allen, M.D., and Her Message to Girls," in *Successful Selling*, pp. 330-332.

<sup>8</sup> Mrs. Emma F. Angell Drake, M.D., *What A Woman of 45 Ought To Know* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1902). Drake also authored *Maternity Without Suffering* (Philadelphia: Vir Publishing Company, 1902) and *The Daughter's Danger* (Philadelphia: Vir Publishing Company, 1905). For a biographical sketch of Drake, see L. M. Cross, "Mrs Emma F. A. Drake, M.D., and Her Message to Wives and Women of Middle Life," in *Successful Selling*, pp. 333-336.

<sup>9</sup> Michael Bliss, "'Pure Books on Impure Subjects': Pre-Freudian Sexual Ideas in Canada," in *Studies in Canadian Social History*, ed. Michael Horn and Ronald Sabourin (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), p. 326. Stall advertised that the Series was published in French, German, Dutch, Swedish, Spanish, Japanese, Bengali, Telegu and Urdu. See Drake, *Wife*, initial pages. I have discovered that some books in the Series were published in Italian, French and Greek during the 1940's. *National Union Catalogue*, vol. 564, pp. 98-100.

was a best seller between 1900-1915.<sup>10</sup> It was published by the Methodist Rev. William Briggs, D.D., Steward of the Toronto-based Methodist Book and Publishing House, the official publishing arm of the Methodist Church in Canada.

The Series falls into the category of what can broadly be termed prescriptive sexual literature. I have discovered approximately 100 such texts of Canadian, British and American origin which were available to the Canadian public between the 1840's and 1900.<sup>11</sup> The authors of prescriptive sexual literature were usually men and women clerics, doctors, homeopaths, phrenologists and hydropaths.<sup>12</sup> Most of the prescriptive sexual literature I found was authored by members of the medical or clerical professions. Given that these professions were far more open to men than they were to women in the nineteenth century, many more of these authors were men. As advice literature, prescriptive sexual literature prescribed, rather than described, ideal situations and solutions the authors believed contributed toward their readers' enlightenment on sexual matters. Prescriptive sexual literature provided readers with advice and information on child and adult sexuality, plant, animal, and human reproduction, child-bearing and child-rearing. Prescriptive sexual literature also encompassed advice and information on health, disease, dress, diet, exercise, toilette, and etiquette. And couched within the advice and information it dispensed, prescriptive sexual literature furnished readers with highly structured models of ideal Anglo-Saxon, upper and middle class Christian manhood and womanhood.

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<sup>10</sup> Bliss, "Pure Books," p. 326.

<sup>11</sup> Nineteenth-century prescriptive sexual literature which circulated in Canada has yet to be properly catalogued. Charles Rosenberg and Carroll Smith-Rosenberg are series editors of approximately 35 nineteenth-century American, French and British advice manuals reprinted by Arno Press in the United States. Most of my information was culled from the Canadian Historical Reproductions on Microfiche, but there were several texts I discovered by accident which were not listed on the fiche. I have arrived at the figure of 100 by calculating the number of texts on the fiche, those I happened upon, those I found referenced in other Canadian books but of which I could find no trace, plus those available in the medical sections of libraries. I believe that many more texts were available to the Canadian public. Bliss contends that in the fifty years before the First World War, sex manuals circulated in North America "in the hundreds of thousands." Michael Bliss, "How We Used to Learn About Sex," *Macleans*, March 1974, p. 38.

<sup>12</sup> Bliss, "Pure Books," p. 335, says that in the United States, most of the prescriptive sexual literature from the 1830's onward was written by "cultists." These men and women began to deal with sexual problems because members of the regular medical profession refused to deal with them. When regular doctors did deal with sexual problems in advice literature, they reinforced many of the cultists' ideas.

This thesis will concern itself with the *Self and Sex Series'* ideal of pure manhood, but as Stall was specifically addressing boys and men, I will focus my attention on his conceptualization of the pure man. I have used the word "pure" to connote three important facets of the Series' ideal. The word pure incorporates a sense of the undistilled, true essence of manhood, the Christian intimation of virginal sinlessness, and the late nineteenth-century social purity movement's influence on this conceptualization. These points will be elaborated upon throughout this thesis. For Stall, Wood-Allen and Drake, pure manhood, or the art or state of being a pure, true, real man was intimately connected to sexual continence for all boys and men. There were two kinds of sexual continence to which the Series as a whole referred. Strict sexual continence constituted,

the voluntary, entire abstinence from sexual indulgence in any form, except intercourse for the purpose of procreation; and the complete control over the passions by one who knows their power, and who, but for his pure life and steady will, not only could, but would indulge them.<sup>13</sup>

Moderate sexual continence constituted the expenditure of semen<sup>14</sup> in marital intercourse for propagative as well as for amative purposes depending on the willingness of husband and wife and on the moral, mental and physical good of both parties.

Stall believed that men could restrict themselves to expending their semen in reproductive sexual intercourse within marriage, but as men were thought to be more sexually aggressive than women, the restriction would be more difficult for men to bear. He proposed, however, that all boys and unmarried men ought to practise strict continence. Nocturnal emissions occurring no more than once every two or three weeks were to be the only legitimate outlet for the expenditure of semen. Stall was slightly more lenient with married men. He hesitatingly prescribed moderate continence for husbands if they did not wish to practise strict continence, for sexual congress between

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<sup>13</sup> The best definition for strict sexual continence I found appears in E. R. Shepherd, *True Manhood: A Manual for Young Men* (Chicago: A. B. Stockham and Co., 1889), p. 249.

<sup>14</sup> By the time Stall was writing, the distinction between semen, the fluid emanating from the male urethral opening in ejaculation, and sperm, the sex cells of the male contained in semen, had been made. But Stall refers most often to semen and sperm interchangeably as "seed" or "life fluid." I therefore use "semen" as the umbrella term to incorporate semen itself and sperm as well, except when otherwise specified.

husband and wife when restricted only to reproduction could result in "marital unhappiness."<sup>15</sup> He advocated that when attention was paid to the well-being of both husband and wife, sexual congress could be undertaken no more than once a week to express "mutual love, affection, comfort, consolation and support."<sup>16</sup> Wood-Allen and Drake, however, were not as lenient as Stall. Although they did not openly condemn moderate sexual continence for married men, it appears that both women, and Drake in particular, favoured strict sexual continence for all men regardless of their marital status.

I will use the term "continent man" to identify the boy or unmarried man who was strictly sexually continent and the married man who was strictly and/or moderately continent.<sup>17</sup> The continent man who carefully regulated the retention and expenditure of his semen before and during his marriage was considered by Stall to be the pure model of manhood. Stall considered such a man to be a true Christian and an informed, prudent, healthy, respectable and successful individual. The continent man stood in direct contrast to an impure model of manhood: the priapic man constantly desirous of ejaculation.<sup>18</sup> Stall believed that what I call the incontinent man was the antithesis, indeed, the feared nemesis of the continent man. Incontinence could be best defined as the ill-regulated and/or excessive expenditure of semen in any kind of sexual activity based on gross sensuality and licentiousness. Incontinence could be practised by boys, unmarried men and married men. The incontinent man was, according to Stall, un-Christian, ignorant, imprudent, unhealthy, disreputable and unsuccessful.<sup>19</sup> To Stall, the incontinent man's ill-regulated, excessive expenditure of semen

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<sup>15</sup> Stall, *Husband*, p. 85.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> The term "continent man" comes from Shepherd, p. 218. Shepherd used it to define the strictly continent man, but I have adapted the term to Stall's understanding of sexual continence for unmarried and married men.

<sup>18</sup> Carroll Smith-Rosenberg notes that there were two main competing ideologies of manhood represented by two mythic figures in the United States during the first half of the nineteenth century. The frail bourgeois adolescent male who had to restrict the expression of his sexuality to marriage and procreation was set against the autonomous frontiersman who rebelled against bourgeois institutions, fought, masturbated and fornicated. See Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "Davy Crockett as Trickster: Pornography, Liminality, and Symbolic Inversion in Victorian America," in Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), pp. 91-93.

<sup>19</sup> For a more detailed comparison between continence and incontinence, see Peter T. Cominos, "Late Victorian Sexual Respectability and the Social System," *International Review of Social History* 8 (1963): 18-48, 216-250.



disqualified him for entry into the ideal of Anglo-Saxon, upper and middle class Christian manhood.

Stall did acknowledge that both strict and moderate sexual continence for all men, particularly from puberty to middle age, would be a sore but worthy trial. He compared men's bodies to a cage which enclosed an angel, a devil and a beast. No man, believed Stall, "can afford to arouse the beast, and thus deliberately deliver himself into the hands of the devil."<sup>20</sup> The beast represented Stall's conceptualization of the *incontinent man* who, lurking close beneath the surface of all men, spewed semen like waste matter.<sup>21</sup> A man wishing to be continent had to struggle with the incontinent beast within. He had to battle, from boyhood until middle age, against sexual incontinence. Stall conceded that this battle was "fierce with many," manifested by the fact that "thousands are in the vilest servitude to lust."<sup>22</sup>

This thesis represents an exploration of the socio-historical construction of masculinity. The focus of this exploration is the development and propagation of the concept of a pure manhood won via the man's struggle for sexual continence and his battle against incontinence. I have selected the period 1897—the year in which *What A Young Boy Ought To Know* and *What A Young Man Ought To Know* were first published—to 1915—the last year during which the Series was a best seller in Canada—as this exploration's official chronological boundaries. The thesis is not, however, completely restricted to these boundaries. I will examine both primary and secondary sources relevant to this period which include information pre-dating the year 1897 and post-dating the year 1915. I have also tried, wherever possible, to situate the Series in the late nineteenth-and early twentieth-century Canadian context. In my exploration, this context is restricted, by and large, to that milieu inhabited by the Anglo-Saxon, English-speaking, Christian upper and middle classes for

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<sup>20</sup> Stall, *Young Man*, p. 233.

<sup>21</sup> Perhaps a connection can be made between the continent man, the incontinent man, and various nineteenth-century novels which dealt with double identities; the one pure and good and the other impure and evil. Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (London: Longmans, Green, 1886) is just one example of the literature from this era.

<sup>22</sup> Stall, *Young Man*, p. 36.

whom these books were primarily intended.<sup>23</sup> I regret that the scope of my analysis does not incorporate groups which existed outside this milieu of the Canadian establishment. I accept that the Series' conceptualization of pure manhood may have been unimportant for, or unacceptable to, those Canadian men and women not included in the Canadian establishment by virtue of their cultural background, language, religion, and/or class. Despite this, I would still maintain the importance of studying the belief systems of any country's establishment because its ideals are promoted as standard realities to all inhabitants. As Roland Barthes has noted, the power of the bourgeoisie lies in its ability to transform "the reality of the world into an image of the world, History into Nature. And this image has a remarkable feature: it is upside down. The status of the bourgeoisie is particular, historical: man as represented by it is universal, eternal."<sup>24</sup>

This exploration will focus on two lines of defense Stall recommended for boys and men going into battle against incontinence. Stall placed at their disposal two safeguards which were guaranteed to keep them continent: pure books, and pure women.<sup>25</sup> Pure books form the basis of the first chapter of this thesis. I will organize my discussion primarily around the four pure books Stall authored for boys and men. This chapter will outline the advice these pure books contained concerning manhood, sexual continence and incontinence. The chapter will also deal with the politics of reading and publishing such literature in Canada. My second chapter will deal with the Christian and physiological thought of the nineteenth century which buttressed Stall's advice. I will

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<sup>23</sup> I believe the Series was directed toward this milieu because it reflected, as well as confirmed, the importance of upper and middle class lifestyle, values and institutions. The Series emphasized the need for a comfortable domicile, wholesome food and education. It advised readers on Christian religious virtue, social and sexual respectability, the quest for success and eminence in men's professional lives, familial love and obedience to parents. It took for granted that all men and women were heterosexuals desirous of marriage, children and life within the patriarchal nuclear family structure. The Series also took for granted that all women were destined for motherhood and that wives would not need to work outside the home.

<sup>24</sup> Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (London: Paladin Grafton Books, 1986, first pub. 1973), p. 14.

<sup>25</sup> Although I am using the word "pure" in the senses I have previously outlined, I think it is interesting to note that the eight texts of the *Self* and *Sex* Series were advertised in Canada under the heading, "Pure Books on Avoided Subjects." Bliss, "Pure Books," p. 326. Stall himself uses the term "pure" on several occasions when he wished to identify women worthy of keeping a man continent. See, for example, Stall, *Young Man*, p. 45. In Chapter XVI of *Young Man*, entitled "Helps to be Used," both pure books and pure women figure prominently in the battle for continence.

illustrate the existence of the complementarity between Christianity and physiology by focusing on one of the gravest forms of incontinence against which Stall counseled: masturbation. I will show that the information Canadian educators dispensed concerning sexual incontinence and masturbation was similar to Stall's advice. Lastly, I will posit that the ideal of sexual continence for boys and men was geared toward the safeguarding of Anglo-Saxon, Christian upper and middle class societal status, the patriarchal nuclear family,<sup>26</sup> and the future of Anglo-Saxon, Christian upper and middle class sons. My third chapter will look at the contribution pure women were to make to the battle against men's sexual incontinence. I will analyze the advice Stall, Wood-Allen and Drake dispensed to pure women. I will propose that while Stall saw women's participation in the battle against men's sexual incontinence as restricted to women's sexual inertia and to the single standard of sexual purity, Wood-Allen and Drake saw motherhood as a source of power to better guard men and women against all forms of incontinence emanating from men.

I approach my exploration as a "textual discourse" on the nineteenth-century ideal of manhood in much the same way feminist historians have previously researched nineteenth-century ideals of womanhood.<sup>27</sup> According to Dorothy Smith, texts, or those "materially fixed forms of printed writing and images,"<sup>28</sup> have traditionally participated in an ordering of stereotypical femininity—in which women actively cooperate<sup>29</sup>—by means of a textual discourse. Smith defines textual discourse as a socializing agent, an "assemblage of 'statements' arising in an ongoing 'conversation', mediated by texts, among speakers and hearers separated from one another in time

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<sup>26</sup> From this point onward, I will use the word family to mean the patriarchal nuclear family. Any mention of the family in the *Self and Sex Series* meant, as Wood-Allen put it, "the father, mother and children" who God the Father placed together in a home. See Wood-Allen, *Young Girl*, pp. 99-100. There are many different kinds of "families" which did and do not involve a male head, a wife and children living together in one domicile. See Margrit Eichler, *Families in Canada Today* (Toronto: Gage Publishing, 1983).

<sup>27</sup> See, for example, Barbara Ehrenreich and Deidre English, *For Her Own Good: 150 Years of the Experts' Advice to Women* (New York: Doubleday, 1979).

<sup>28</sup> Dorothy Smith, "Femininity as Discourse," in *Becoming Feminine: The Politics of Popular Culture*, ed. Leslie Gail Roman and Linda K. Christian-Smith (Lewes, Sussex: The Falmer Press, 1988), p. 39.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* Smith's primary contention is that the subjects of discourse are actively involved in its relations whether they cooperate in, or resist, the ordering of a stereotypical femininity. I believe that resistance to this ordering has occurred historically and continues to occur. Adrienne Rich, Andrea Dworkin and Dale Spender are three of many feminist authors who have recorded the historical and current rejection of this process, and the penalties women pay when so doing.

and space." Although organized in relation to the text, this discourse is not limited to the text, for the texts themselves "enter into and order courses of action and relations among individuals."<sup>30</sup>

I find this approach useful because, in working with the nineteenth century, I have access to texts, not individuals. I can only estimate what effect the ideal of pure manhood had on a certain number of men and women. It is certainly possible that the discourse on pure manhood was not limited to the text but put into practice. On the one hand, there is evidence that pure manhood and sexual continence for boys and men were certainly linked in organizations such as the Young Men's Christian Association<sup>31</sup> and were actively promoted by such social purity organizations as the White Cross. The White Cross even required men to sign a pledge of sexual purity.<sup>32</sup> I will provide information in the remainder of this thesis to show that the discourse on pure manhood did move beyond the covers of texts. One example of the way in which the ideal of pure manhood may have manifested itself lies in birth statistics at the turn of the century. Among the Anglo-Saxon, English-speaking, Christian middle class in Canada, there was a noticeable drop in fertility during this period. Some historians speculate that continence must have been used as an important form of birth control as little accurate information about women's reproductive cycle was yet available, and as artificial contraception was illegal, often unreliable and distasteful to many Canadians<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, the use of abortion as a form of fertility control,<sup>34</sup> the evidence of widespread prostitution,<sup>35</sup> venereal disease,<sup>36</sup> and pornography<sup>37</sup> may have illustrated either of two things. One, that

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 40. Smith, defines the concept of textual discourse in the way it is used by Michel Foucault.

<sup>31</sup> David MacLeod, "A Live Vaccine: The YMCA and Male Adolescence in the United States and Canada," *Social History/Histoire sociale* 11 (May 1978): 2-25.

<sup>32</sup> Sheila Jeffreys, *The Spinster and Her Enemies: Feminism and Sexuality 1880-1930* (London: Pandora Press, 1985), p 13. Article 3 of the White Cross Pledge states, "To maintain the law of purity as equally binding on men and women." Shepherd includes this pledge on page 280. On page 281, Shepherd also includes the Silver Cross Pledge from the Knights of the Silver Cross, an organization for boys. Article 5 states, "To keep my body in temperance, soberness and chastity."

<sup>33</sup> Angus McLaren, "Birth Control and Abortion in Canada, 1870-1920," *Canadian Historical Review* 59, 3 (1978): 322.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., pp. 327-340.

<sup>35</sup> For a nineteenth-century look at prostitution in Toronto, see, C. S. Clark, *Of Toronto the Good* (Montréal: The Toronto Publishing Company, 1898), pp. 131-137. For a secondary source on prostitution in a Western Canadian city, see Judy Bedford, "Prostitution in Calgary, 1905-1914," *Alberta History* 29, 2 (1981): 1-11.

<sup>36</sup> Jay Cassel, *The Secret Plague: Venereal Disease in Canada 1838-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987).

pure manhood and continence made little impression on men, or two, that pure manhood and continence were accepted primarily as a surface, official, respectable discourse under which the greater reality of sexual incontinence prevailed. Thus, in promoting the ideal of pure manhood, Stall may well have been assailing the fact that sexual incontinence was practised by many men.

I have chosen to work with the Series to explore the link between manhood and sexual continence for five reasons. First, as the Series forms a part of approximately 100-odd British, American and Canadian prescriptive sexual texts which circulated in Canada during the nineteenth century, I have chosen the eight texts in the Series as a manageable amount to explore. Second, after investigating the contents of some of these 100-odd texts, I believe that the Series is a representative sample of the majority of these texts. This assertion is supported by those historians who have previously investigated the contents of the Series in addition to other nineteenth-century prescriptive sexual texts.<sup>38</sup> Third, the Series' best seller status between 1900 and 1915 proved that it was popular with Canadians. The fact that the Series' authors were American did not seem to diminish its relevance for Canadians. Fourth, its publication and distribution by the Toronto-based Methodist Book and Publishing House, the largest and most profitable publishing firm during this period,<sup>39</sup> meant that it would be widely available throughout Canada. Emanating from the official publishing arm of the Methodist Church in Canada, the Series would have appeared to have some kind of legitimacy in the eyes of many Christian Canadians.<sup>40</sup> Finally, I have chosen to work with

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<sup>37</sup> Steven Marcus, *The Other Victorians* (London: W. W. Norton and Co., 1985, first pub. 1964). Marcus concerns himself with pornographic literature in Victorian England. I have not come across documented evidence of the existence of the same kind of pornography in Canada during the nineteenth century. Given the existence of a seedy underground of boarders, prostitutes, pimps and "street boys" in some of Canada's larger cities (see Clark), I speculate, however, that pornography of this kind was also available in this country.

<sup>38</sup> John Haller and Robin Haller, "Behind the Fig Leaf," in *Assault on Victorianism: The Rise of Popular Culture in America 1890-1945*, ed. John N. Ingham (Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press, 1987), pp. 33-52.

<sup>39</sup> George L. Parker, *The Beginnings of the Book Trade in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), p. 93.

<sup>40</sup> Mary Anne MacFarlane, who is currently doing doctoral research on women's role in the United Church in Canada at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, suggests that these books may have been available as prizes and gifts to students for church work and social service. She has found that the Series joined the list of books recommended to Women's Reading Clubs by the respected Methodist publication, the *Christian Guardian*, September 25, 1901, p. 614.

the Series because its place in the sexual history of Canada has been previously established by Canadian historian Michael Bliss. Bliss has completed the most thorough investigation of the Series in one scholarly article entitled "'Pure Books on Avoided Subjects': Pre-Freudian Sexual Ideas in Canada," and one popular article entitled "How We Used to Learn About Sex."<sup>41</sup>

Both of Bliss' articles are restricted to the sexual advice the Series dispensed to boys, men, girls and women. He asserts that each of the eight texts' major theme was the difficulty "sexuality created for boys, girls, men, women, husbands, wives, and the elderly."<sup>42</sup> Bliss claims that the Series' authors accepted that sexuality was not intrinsically evil or harmful, but could become so when it was directed away from procreative sexual activity within marriage. Because semen and sexual energy were considered a vital life force, one's sexuality was far better repressed, or directed toward creative, intellectual and aesthetic purposes. Bliss believes that the Series' philosophy may, therefore, be termed "the doctrine of creative sexual repression."<sup>43</sup> According to Bliss, this doctrine was influenced by philosophic idealism, vitalist physiology, the movement for sexual reform, the social purity and the women's movements, secularized evangelism and perfectionism. The doctrine in turn influenced late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century Canadian popular and medical thought and was manifest in orthodox and enlightened sexual attitudes of English-speaking Canadians prior to the First World War.

Bliss packs an admirable amount of information into his analysis which is extremely useful to my thesis. Missing, however, is his discussion of the highly structured models of ideal Anglo-Saxon, upper and middle class Christian manhood and womanhood. Nor does Bliss specifically address matters of race, class and religion and gender. These issues have, since Bliss' analysis, become central to feminist historians' revisioning of traditional historical approaches. Neither is the subject of continence for men specifically addressed, despite the fact that Bliss depends heavily on

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<sup>41</sup> Bliss, "'Pure Books'," pp. 327-346, and Bliss, "How," pp. 38, 61-64, 66.

<sup>42</sup> Bliss, "'Pure Books'," p. 327.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 334.

Stall's advice to boys and men to confirm the existence of the doctrine of creative sexual repression. Although Bliss touches upon the nineteenth-century feminist rebellion against women's sexual exploitation,<sup>44</sup> no link is made between feminist-inspired ideals of manhood and sexual behaviour.

I also object to Bliss' use of the term "creative sexual repression." My reading of the Series finds that a boy or man struggling to control his sexual energy was advised that he would be best benefitted by channeling it toward work, "the bourgeois race for success in either business or professional circles,"<sup>45</sup> and not creative endeavour. Indeed, many historians of the nineteenth century admit that a "gospel of work"<sup>46</sup> fuelled the bourgeois belief that a man could rise up through the ranks of the Victorian/Edwardian system of sexual and social respectability.<sup>47</sup> Next, as Bliss himself admits, the Series is a part of pre-Freudian literature on sexuality; the concept of repression is a Freudian one which I do not believe can be anachronistically applied to the Series' thought. What Stall, as well as Wood-Allen and Drake, counseled their men and women readers on was not repression per se, but informed, wise and knowledgeable consent to sexual self-regulation, self-control and self-mastery.<sup>48</sup> The concept of repression also connotes a psychic dimension and an unhealthy condition. Yet, as it will become clear, Stall, Wood-Allen and Drake did not involve the psychic dimension in their understanding of sexual expression. Sexual expression was limited to the interaction between the individual's mental, physical and spiritual dimensions. Nor did the Series' authors consider strict and/or moderate continence for men unhealthy. If a man retained his

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<sup>44</sup> Bliss, "How," p. 65.

<sup>45</sup> Stall, *Young Man*, p. 28. Stall's emphasis on the vital importance of work appears as early as his advice to the young boy. God, according to Stall, supplied even Adam and Eve with "something to do" so they would not waste their time in idleness. Stall counseled that "we must all be taught to work, and should be put at it and kept at it, at such intervals as are best suited to teach us the art, and enable us to acquire the taste for work." Stall, *Young Boy*, p. 143.

<sup>46</sup> Deborah Gorham is one such historian. See Deborah Gorham, *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), p. 3.

<sup>47</sup> Hard work and sexual continence for men play a large role in the analysis of gentlemanly behaviour in Cominos.

<sup>48</sup> Anita Clair Fellman and Michael Fellman have called this sexual self-regulation "self-repressed expression." Although I still disagree with the use of the word "repression," their term is based on the balance between sexual self-control and sexual self-expression nineteenth-century authors favoured. See their *Making Sense of Self: Medical Advice Literature in Late Nineteenth-Century America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981), pp. 75-78.

semen, he was considered mentally, physically and spiritually healthier than a man who wasted his semen in essentially non-reproductive sexual activity.

I believe that the notion of balance, not creative sexual repression better serves my understanding of the conceptualization of pure manhood and the subject of continence and incontinence. During the nineteenth century, a healthy balance within the individual, between the sexes and among citizens of a nation was an admired bourgeois ideal.<sup>49</sup> This ideal of personal, gender and national balance centred on the human body, and particularly, the sexual organs of that body.<sup>50</sup> Many British, American and Canadian authors of prescriptive literature considered human sexuality to be neatly divided into male and female sexuality, with the former viewed as active and the latter as passive. While the female human body was thought to be vulnerable to moral, mental and physical imbalance because of the malfunction of its reproductive organs,<sup>51</sup> the male human body was thought to be vulnerable to the same because of its innate aggressive sexual drive.

Dr. Joseph Heller Hett preached the same message to a Canadian audience of young men. He advised the young unmarried man and the married man to balance reason and passion. He feared that men's aggressive sexual drive eventually led to serious mental, moral and physical imbalance when the passions ruled supreme. He warned that masturbation unhinged men's intelligence, fornication blighted their souls and sexually transmissible diseases ravaged their bodies. Even the unmarried youth who repented after his first experience of illicit heterosexual intercourse

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<sup>49</sup> Fellman and Fellman would agree. See Fellman and Fellman, pp. 3-12. Feminists were also particularly concerned with personal, gender and national balance. See William Leach, *True Love and Perfect Union* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), pp. 19-37. Charlotte Perkins Gilman was one feminist who attributed much of her society's ills to the imbalance caused by an over-emphasis on "masculine" rather than "feminine" values. See her *The Man-Made World or Our Androcentric Culture* (New York: Johnson Reprint Co., 1971, first pub. 1911). Thanks to Ruth Pierson for pointing this out. Many late nineteenth-century feminists concerned with imbalance found solace in theosophy. A set of spiritual and philosophical beliefs, theosophy preached that the feminine "principle" had to be re-united with the masculine "principle" to achieve universal harmony. See the work of theosophist and women's rights activist Matilda Joslyn Gage, *Woman, Church and State* (Watertown: Persephone Press, 1980, first pub. 1893).

<sup>50</sup> Fellman and Fellman, pp. 91- 112.

<sup>51</sup> See Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Hysterical Woman: Sex Roles and Role Conflict in Nineteenth-Century America," in Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), pp. 197-216.



was doomed, for when he again met the same girl or "a similar one," the "balance [between reason and passion] is quickly drawn down by the lascivious thoughts of the tempter."<sup>52</sup>

Like Stall, Hett believed that the relentless expenditure of semen not only morally, mentally and physically unbalanced the individual man, but unsteadied his relationship with women and destabilized his connection to the nation as well. The degradation of women in seduction, prostitution, unwanted maternity, social ostracization, artificial contraception and abortion was blamed, to a large extent, on men. Similarly, the consumption of tobacco and alcohol, the use of impure literature, the spread of sexually transmissible disease to innocent victims, the birth of unwanted, still-born, diseased and licentious children and were provided as evidence of the sexually aggressive man's dislocation from honourable citizenry. Thus, only the man who attained, and maintained, the perfect balance between the retention and expenditure of semen could be said to have achieved pure manhood.

There have been few scholarly studies on the nineteenth-century ideal of pure manhood, and the subject of continence and incontinence. Some historians have advanced that the vicissitudes of industrial capitalism led individuals to control and manipulate the "last intuitive resource...his or her own body, and especially its sexual impulses."<sup>53</sup> Yet others have popularly claimed that industrial capitalism's emphasis on the accumulation rather than the expenditure of financial resources forced nations, and men's bodies to retain, rather than expend financial/seminal capital.<sup>54</sup> Another maintains that continence for men ranked them as successful, ambitious, hard-working, upwardly mobile respectable gentlemen.<sup>55</sup> Yet another believes that the rise of individualism focused attention

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<sup>52</sup> Joseph Heller Hett, *The Sexual Organs: Their Use and Abuse* (Berlin [now Kitchener], Ontario: Ritinger and Motz, 1899), p. 59.

<sup>53</sup> Smith-Rosenberg, "Davy Crockett," p. 90.

<sup>54</sup> The analogy between economic and sexual conservatism is drawn by Cominos; Steven Marcus, *The Other Victorians* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1985, first pub. 1964), and G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Horrors of the Half-Known Life: Male Attitudes Toward Women and Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976).

<sup>55</sup> Cominos.

on the body as a vehicle to middle-class success.<sup>56</sup> All these explanations have some value, and I will draw upon them when necessary. I will draw upon, as well, studies in the history of sexuality, feminist analyses of the social purity movement, and primary and secondary sources which provide information on nineteenth-century social conditions in Canada.

I have chosen to work at exploring an ideal of manhood for two reasons. First, I believe that ideals of manhood, which are integral to the study of the socio-historical construction of masculinity, are underexplored. I believe, as well, that the study of the socio-historical construction of masculinity offers a richness to a scholar, like myself, who is interested in gender relations, and feminist, medical and sexual history. The exploration of the socio-historical construction of masculinity also provides a needed academic counterpart to the various feminist analyses of the socio-historical construction of femininity. Secondly, and more importantly, I believe that feminists must develop a feminist approach to the socio-historical construction of masculinity.<sup>57</sup> A number of scholarly and popular books and articles from the mid-seventies to the late eighties do engage in a pro-feminist deconstruction of masculinity.<sup>58</sup> With few exceptions,<sup>59</sup> such pro-feminist approaches to the study of masculinity are undertaken by men and for men. These works analyze the way in which "men [have] experienced history *as men*, as carriers of masculinity," and claim to be part of a "discipline" termed Men's Studies, or, the New Men's Studies.<sup>60</sup> Men are even encour-

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<sup>56</sup> E. Anthony Rotundo, "Body and Soul: Changing Ideals of American Middle-Class Manhood, 1770-1920," *Journal of Social History* 16, 3 (Spring 1983): 23-38.

<sup>57</sup> Lois Banner agrees. She says that the large amount of literature about men, and the authors' so-called specialization in "men's studies" pose a challenge to feminist scholars. See, Lois Banner, "Book Reviews," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 14, 3 (Spring 1989): 703-708.

<sup>58</sup> See, Andrew Tolson, *The Limits of Masculinity* (London: Tavistock Publications Ltd., 1977); Alice Jardine and Paul Smith, eds., *Men in Feminism* (New York: Methuen Inc., 1987); Michael Kaufman, ed., *Beyond Patriarchy* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1987); Rosalind Coward, "Men's Bodies," in Rosalind Coward, *Female Desire* (London: Paladin Books, 1986, first pub. 1985), pp. 225-231; Harry Brod, ed., *The Making of Masculinities* (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1987); Rowena Chapman and Jonathan Rutherford, eds., *Male Order: Unwrapping Masculinity* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1988). This list is far from complete, but it does represent a good sampling of the available literature on the historical construction of masculinity.

<sup>59</sup> I have already mentioned Rosalind Coward's work. There are, as well, a few articles within the edited texts I have cited in footnote 58 which are written by women. The majority of these articles are concerned with the problematic inclusion of men in feminism.

<sup>60</sup> Catherine R. Stimpson, "Foreword," in Brod, p. xii. Both Stimpson and Brod use the term "Men's Studies," or "New Men's Studies" to describe this discipline.

aged to go beyond the study of masculinity and study the existence of "masculinities" based on the interweavings of gender, race, class and sexual orientation.

Much about Men's Studies is commendable. Most of this literature accepts the traditional academic feminist distinction between the biological categories of male and female and the said genderized polarities of "masculine" and "feminine." The authors uphold the cultural relativism of what is considered masculine and feminine in much the same way feminists have. Thus, it is held that the living out of the male biological category occurs within a masculine framework which is socially and historically constructed. This literature also attests to the problems of definition. Generic "man" not only mistakenly incorporates women, but also eclipses hegemonic "man" and individual men. "Masculinity" conflates "masculine," "male," "manliness" and "manhood," and obfuscates the connection between patriarchy, power, hegemony and "masculinity."<sup>61</sup> And only some of the authors involved in Men's Studies acknowledge their indebtedness to feminist theory and practice.<sup>62</sup>

Yet, I find the Men's Studies' approach to the socio-historical construction of masculinity problematic. The terminology itself concerns me. Margrit Eichler notes that many women will not take "Women's Studies" courses if they are called "Feminist Studies." Feminist professors note that men students avoid "Women's Studies" or "Feminist Studies" courses because they believe that these cater exclusively to women.<sup>63</sup> I object to the naming of the various pro-feminist approaches to the study of the socio-historical construction of masculinity as "Men's Studies" or "New Men's Studies." There is the possibility of semantic confusion between "malestream" Men's Studies and

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<sup>61</sup> For a more detailed discussion of these points, see Peter Filene, "The Secrets of Men's History" in Brod, pp. 103-119.

<sup>62</sup> Acknowledging their indebtedness to feminist theory and practice seems to be something men in the academic community are more willing to do. I have noticed that men outside the academic community who engage in popular men's consciousness raising groups tend not to acknowledge any psychological and/or intellectual debt to the women's movement or academic feminism. One man explained to me that his men's group was doing its work on its own and claimed to have trouble with the word "debt." Women's labour, he said, had been appropriated by men for so long that to turn to feminist theory or methodology would constitute appropriation once again!

<sup>63</sup> Andrew Thornton, "A Study of Men in 'Women's Studies'," unpublished paper, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, December, 1987.

"genderstream" Men's Studies. In addition, although some male authors of this discipline explicitly acknowledge their intellectual, pedagogical and emotional debt to feminist theory and practice, the terminology does not acknowledge its pro-feminist approach. Next, the terminological exclusion of women may eventually work against their canonical inclusion. This terminological exclusion reinstates the said polarity between men and women. Finally, Men's Studies appears to cater exclusively to men. There is a danger that "Women's Studies" may cede much of its hard won academic territory, funding, popularity and power to men once again. Those involved in both Men's and Women's Studies could benefit by using "Feminist Studies" as an umbrella term which incorporates both approaches while remaining true to feminist scholars' contribution to both "disciplines."<sup>64</sup>

My concern with Men's Studies also extends to what Lois Banner recognizes as Men's Studies' overreliance on men's behaviour and experience. The Men's Studies approach focuses on our culture's masculine stereotypes and the personal pain they cause many men. While appropriate in many instances, this approach emphasizes types of masculinities such as "hypermasculinity" or "hegemonic masculinity" rather than patriarchy. Patriarchy, as defined in part by Adrienne Rich, is

the power of the fathers: a familial-social, ideological, political system in which men—by force, direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law, and language, customs, etiquette, education, and the division of labor, determine what part women shall or shall not play, and in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male.<sup>65</sup>

Men's Studies' emphasis on hypermasculinity and hegemonic masculinity must not be permitted to obscure what many feminists have recognized as necessary in theory and in practice: an overall analysis of men's power, privilege, and misogyny . As Banner says, masculinity "is not just an experience,...it is also an institution." And that institution is patriarchy.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Brod would like to agree, but suggests that Women's Studies and Men's Studies retain their separate terminologies so that the latter can be viewed as a complement to Women's Studies. He also suggests using "gender scholarship" as an umbrella term to incorporate both disciplines. See, Brod, "The Case for Men's Studies," in Brod, pp. 39-62. Banner also agrees that Feminist Studies is more appropriate term.

<sup>65</sup> Adrienne Rich, *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1976), p. 57.

<sup>66</sup> Banner, pp. 707-708.

# I

## A Book In Hand

His peroration, the top of the show, came when the doctor produced, after some rummaging, his own penis as an example of the adult member in its full splendour. He held it in his hand, as he thanked God for assisting him in bringing the great message of purity of life to the boys of Blairlogie.<sup>1</sup>

I bear willing testimony that I believe this book ought to be in the hands of every young man in this country.<sup>2</sup>

"The social body," according to Mary Douglas, "constrains the way the physical body is perceived. The physical experience of the body, always modified by the social categories through which it is known, sustains a particular view of society. There is a continual exchange of meanings between the two kinds of bodily experience so that each reinforces the categories of the other. As a result of this interaction the body itself is a highly restricted medium of expression."<sup>3</sup> Expanding upon her argument, Douglas advances the thesis that "bodily control is an expression of social control."<sup>4</sup>

One way in which the social body—and I will add here, the social body as represented by the bourgeoisie—attempted to exercise control over the physical body during the nineteenth century

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<sup>1</sup> Robertson Davies, *What's Bred in the Bone* (Markham, Ontario: Penguin Books, 1986), p. 117. Davies confirmed by letter that "Dr. Upper" did in fact lecture to Canadian school boys in this fashion, but did not wish to provide the doctor's real name. Letter from Robertson Davies to Christabelle Sethna, dated April 7, 1989.

<sup>2</sup> J. Wilbur Chapman, the "Eminent American Evangelist and Preacher," recommending one of Sylvanus Stall's four books in the *Self and Sex* Series. Sylvanus Stall, *What A Young Man Ought To Know* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1904, first pub. 1897), initial pages.

<sup>3</sup> Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1973, first pub. 1970), p. 93.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 98-99.

was through the most powerful medium then available: the book. A great many books circulating in the nineteenth century prescribed for the physical body that much sought-after and admired bourgeois ideal to which the social body subscribed: a healthy balance within the individual, between the sexes and among citizens of a nation. Because men were considered far more innately sexually aggressive than women, they were thought to be especially vulnerable to imbalance. A man's ill-regulated and/or excessive expenditure of semen in any kind of sexual activity based on gross sensuality and licentiousness was thought to upset the individual man morally, mentally and physically. His relentless pursuit of sensual and licentious satisfaction was also thought to unsteady his relationship with women and to destabilize his connection to the nation. Vulnerable to, and responsible for, personal, gender and national imbalance, a man's imbalance between the expenditure and retention of his semen made him less of a man. Thus, the man who correctly balanced the retention and expenditure of his semen was considered a continent man, and a continent man was a pure man. I propose that the link between pure manhood and sexual continence for men in the late nineteenth century straddled, in Canada, Great Britain and the United States, two connected conversations characteristic of that century's bourgeoisie. The first conversation is what Michel Foucault calls the nineteenth-century "regulated and polymorphous incitement to discourse" on child and adult sexuality.<sup>5</sup> The second, and more specific, conversation is the late nineteenth-century social purity discourse on the same.

First, as Michel Foucault notes, there existed during the Victorian/Edwardian era, not repression and censorship, but a "multiplicity of discourses" on child and adult sexuality.<sup>6</sup> Foucault's analysis links these discourses to state power. He believes these discourses were regulated and polymorphous. The discourses were regulated, because their statements were authorized, codified, and policed. They were polymorphous because the centres of state power from which they emanated operated in different institutions. Foucault notes that by the nineteenth century, the tradi-

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<sup>5</sup> See Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1: *An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), p. 34.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

tional, official Judeo-Christian discourse on sexuality no longer stood alone, for psychiatric, demographic, medical, ethical, political and pedagogical thought also contributed to the number of official discourses on sexuality. There were other illicit discourses, such as the pornographic, which simultaneously existed alongside the official discourses on sexuality. Although they were acknowledged, and, in fact, participated in by many members of the bourgeoisie, these illicit discourses were formally shunned by a middle class increasingly concerned with its respectability.<sup>7</sup>

In Canada, the majority of these regulated and polymorphous textual discourses were imported from Great Britain and the United States.<sup>8</sup> The prescriptive sexual literature in Canada reflected the influence of these two nations which reflected in turn at least three centuries of Western European thought. John and Robin Haller's study of the sexual advice manual in North American history traces the roots of prescriptive sexual literature in British North America to the seventeenth century beginning with the widely available and popular British "Aristotle" series.<sup>9</sup> Haller and Haller reveal that over the centuries the vast numbers of texts differed in their sexual perspective. Manuals produced in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries focused on sexual desire and pleasure as natural to both sexes, and emphasized the importance of sexual reciprocity between the sexes.

By the late 1840's, however, the texts began to mirror the prevailing medical and psychiatric teaching promoting lifelong sexual conservatism to be practised before and during marriage as necessary to the physical and mental health of both sexes. This sexual conservatism focused on the apparent lack of sexual feeling in women and the excess of sexual feeling in men. Sexual incontinence was considered dangerous to men because the expenditure of semen in mainly non-reproductive sexual activity was thought to seriously debilitate the male organism. Manhood, in all centres of power, thus came to be officially linked to sexual continence. Sex, in effect, "became middle class,

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<sup>7</sup> For an example of one wealthy man's covert participation in all sorts of illicit discourses, see the account provided by the anonymous author of *My Secret Life* in Steven Marcus, *The Other Victorians* (London: W. W. Norton and Co., 1985, first pub. 1964), pp. 77-196.

<sup>8</sup> The imported textual discourses do not have to be limited to prescriptive sexual literature. Discourses ran the gamut from law books, to medical manuals, to Irish textbooks used in Ontario schools.

<sup>9</sup> John S. Haller and Robin M. Haller, "Behind the Fig Leaf," in *Assault on Victorianism: The Rise of Popular Culture in America 1890-1945*, ed. John N. Ingham (Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press, 1987), pp. 33-52.

with all the marks of sobriety, propriety, modesty, and conformity," supplying, however, the same behavioural cues for all classes.<sup>10</sup>

Second, this respectable middle class discourse garnered tremendous support in the late nineteenth century. By the 1870's, the British, American and Canadian public was exposed to an even greater proliferation of manuals which were, Haller and Haller confirm, monopolized by clerical and medical social purity advocates.<sup>11</sup> The social purity movement was influenced by feminist ideas which decried the sexual exploitation of girls and women,<sup>12</sup> evangelical Christian religious revivalism, which promoted the perfectibility of humankind on earth, and by the campaign to repeal the Contagious Diseases Acts introduced to the English Parliament in 1864, 1866 and 1869.<sup>13</sup> The Acts intended to control the spread of venereal disease among enlisted men stationed in garrison towns and ports by permitting police to arrest any woman identified as a "common prostitute."<sup>14</sup> The woman was then forced to submit to a gynaecological examination for venereal diseases. If she tested positive, the woman was subjected to mandatory medical treatment at a lock hospital.

Public outrage over the exploitative nature of the Acts—which was galvanized, in part, by the Ladies National Association and its leader, Englishwoman Josephine Butler—eventually led to their repeal. Following the successful repeal campaign, incontinence in men continued to be seen by the largely upper and middle class Christian, Anglo-Saxon men and women social purity reformers in Britain, the United States and Canada, as a major problem. These men and women were intent on eliminating prostitution, but also tackled such issues as venereal disease, marital rape, alcohol and tobacco abuse, and impure literature. They believed that the double standard, which permitted men but not women to engage in indiscriminate forms of sexual and social behaviour without social

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>12</sup> Sheila Jeffreys, *The Spinster and Her Enemies: Feminism and Sexuality 1880-1930* (London: Pandora Press, 1985), p. 6.

<sup>13</sup> Olive Banks, *Faces of Feminism* (Oxford, Great Britain: Martin Robertson and Co. Ltd., 1981), pp. 13-27.

<sup>14</sup> Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Woman, Class and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p.1. For a look at venereal disease and prostitution in Canada, see Jay Cassel, *The Secret Plague: Venereal Disease in Canada 1838-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), pp. 71-100.



sanction, had to be eliminated. The majority of them were convinced that boys and men benefitted themselves, women, and the nation as a whole when they adhered to the single standard of sexual purity traditionally set for women.

The Reverend Sylvanus Stall, D.D., was a turn-of-the-century clerical social purity reformer who published a great deal of social purity literature including the journal the *Purity Advocate*.<sup>15</sup> He also advocated that the man's solution to maintaining personal, gender and national balance, and attaining pure manhood, was to willingly participate in a lifelong battle for sexual continence. Stall did not send the man who wanted to be a pure man into battle unprepared. He placed a pure book in his hand at each stage of his life. Stall envisioned that the boy's or man's hands could function as agents for the social body which desired to control the physical body's sexual organs. The boy and man could take in hand a pure book which directed them toward continence, or, could take in hand an impure book which led them to incontinence. Hands, in other words, were for holding pure books and not genitals. Hands, according to Stall, should be a "source of help and blessing, and not a means of defilement and injury and thus prove a curse."<sup>16</sup> For the boy already wrestling with his recalcitrant sexual organs, Stall authored the first of his pure books in the *Self and Sex Series*, *What A Young Boy Ought To Know*. For the young man wrestling with the same, Stall recommended *What A Young Man Ought To Know*; for the married man, *What A Young Husband Ought To Know*, and for the middle-aged man, *What A Man of 45 Ought To Know*.

Stall was not alone in seeing his pure books as valuable weapons which helped boys and men maintain their balance and win the battle for continence. Numerous men were also content to take his books in hand. Anthony Comstock, identified as "The Eminent American Christian Reformer," recommended *What A Young Boy Ought To Know* by saying, "Every parent who has a boy would be benefitted if he would carefully read this book and then communicate the facts to

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<sup>15</sup> The *Purity Advocate*, "devoted to the true cause of pure Manhood and Womanhood," was available in Canada and the United States for 10 cents a copy. Sylvanus Stall, *What A Young Boy Ought To Know* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1909, first pub. 1897), final pages.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94

his boy, by putting the book into the boy's hand."<sup>17</sup> One Rev. John Clifford, "The Eminent English Preacher and Author," himself responsible for *Dawn of Manhood*,<sup>18</sup> claimed that *What A Young Man Ought To Know* was "thoroughly manly" and "one of the best books that has fallen into my hands."<sup>19</sup> Dr. Eugene Porter, editor of the *North American Journal of Homeopathy*, believed that *What A Young Husband Ought To Know* "should be in the hands of every young man who contemplates marriage."<sup>20</sup> The *Milwaukee Journal* commended *What A Man of 45 Ought To Know*, insisting that the book should be placed in everyone's hands in order to have "a wide and careful reading."<sup>21</sup>

Each pure book Stall authored ostensibly provided the boy, the young man, the young husband and the middle-aged man with the complete knowledge of continence and incontinence in order to attain and maintain the former while rejecting the latter. The knowledge Stall dispensed purported to deal with human sexuality which was in turn divided between the two concepts that gave the Series its name: "self" and "sex." The self encompassed such classical forms as the individual, the soul, the mind, the will and the physical body. The self was said to possess three natures: the intellectual nature, the moral nature and animal nature. Sex was a curious combination and conflation of what we today would consider reproductive and non-reproductive sexual activity, sexual desire and sexual pleasure.

It is true that Stall was writing at a time when the widespread existence of non-reproductive sexual activity from infancy onward was being documented in the work of early sexologists such as Havelock Ellis and Magnus Hirschfield. No mention of their work, however, is ever made in the *Self* and *Sex* Series. Given the similarity in subject matter and timing, it is likely that Stall was

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<sup>17</sup> Anthony Comstock, quoted in *Ibid.*, initial pages.

<sup>18</sup> John Clifford, *Dawn of Manhood* (London: The Christian Commonwealth Publishing Company, 1891).

<sup>19</sup> Rev. John Clifford, cited in Stall, *Young Man*, initial pages.

<sup>20</sup> Dr. Eugene Porter, cited in Sylvanus Stall, *What A Young Husband Ought To Know* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1907, first pub. 1899), initial pages.

<sup>21</sup> The *Milwaukee Journal*, cited in Sylvanus Stall, *What A Man Of 45 Ought To Know* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1901), initial pages.

aware of their work but, for important reasons, chose to ignore it. First, some sexologists' confirmation of the widespread, hence seemingly "normal," practice of non-reproductive sexual activity in boys, girls, men and women would not have been welcomed by Stall, or for that matter, by many other men and women in the social purity movement.<sup>22</sup> Second, Stall's belief that sexual continence contributed to boys' and men's moral, mental and physical health contrasted with some sexologists' findings that sexual continence could contribute to moral, mental and physical ill-health in boys and men. Third, as we shall see in Chapter II, Stall's belief in sexual continence was solidly grounded in nineteenth-century thought. By contrast, the sexologists' teachings on sexual continence attempted to break new ground. Finally, it appears that Stall's beliefs were more palatable to the Anglo-Saxon, Christian, bourgeois establishment he was addressing. Few professional men and women in North America were prepared to accept the turn-of-the-century sexologists' teachings. In Canada, the *Self* and *Sex* Series continued to be published and sold well into the late 1930's while Freud's work remained unacceptable to the Canadian medical community until the early 1940's.<sup>23</sup>

With these points in mind, it is not surprising that Stall considered each of his books be so conclusively whole as to render any further reading on human sexuality at each stage of a man's life unnecessary. He asserted, for example, that the "information contained in [*What A Young Boy Ought To Know*] is all that any boy needs to know until he arrives at the age of seventeen or eighteen, when he should have a copy of the book next in this educational series upon this subject, namely, 'What A Young Man Ought To Know'." <sup>24</sup> Yet despite the fact that Stall lauded his books as complete educational packages which would dispel the ignorance surrounding self and sex, the knowledge Stall provided boys and men was anything but complete. The knowledge he provided did not go beyond the strictly regulated continence-is-good/incontinence-is-bad axis. Foucault's

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<sup>22</sup> See Linda Gordon, *Woman's Body, Woman's Right: A Social History of Birth Control in America* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1977, first pub. 1976), pp. 3-25.

<sup>23</sup> See Thomas E. Brown, "Dr. Ernest Jones, Psychoanalysis, and the Canadian Medical Profession, 1908-1913," in *Medicine in Canadian Society*, ed. S. E. D. Shortt (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1981), pp. 315-360.

<sup>24</sup> Stall, *Young Boy*, p. 30.

analysis of Western sexual thought affirms that despite the multiplication of discourses on sexuality since the seventeenth century, sex itself was screened and concealed.<sup>25</sup> Sex was no longer to be condemned, tolerated or judged, but managed and "administered."<sup>26</sup> In the late nineteenth century, Stall's need to administer human sexuality by strictly regulating the sexual knowledge he placed in boys' and men's hands arose out of the connection many social purity reformers made between men's sexual incontinence and social impurity.

Stall was following in the tradition of the turn-of-the-century social purity reformers, who believed that the knowledge of human sexuality held the key to personal, gender and national balance as well as pure manhood. Stall decried the vaunted Victorian virtue of innocence because it was tantamount to ignorance. "Ignorance is Vice," claimed Stall, borrowing the dictum from Socrates and placing it on the title page of *What A Young Boy Ought To Know*. Ignorance of self and sex, which beset a man at each stage of his life, was dangerous to the individual man, to women and to the nation. Ignorance lost the battle for sexual continence and triggered personal, gender and national imbalance. As we shall see, the boy and man's incontinence was thought to lead directly to various forms of social and sexual impurity. No man guilty of participating in, say, the abuse of alcohol or prostitution, could ever be a candidate for pure manhood. Social purity reformers like Stall hoped to turn boys and men away from incontinence by establishing an Anglo-Saxon, upper and middle class Christian ideal of pure manhood for all boys and men. In order to help boys and men achieve this ideal, Stall took it upon himself to provide them with the knowledge of human sexuality contained in his pure books. "The common refrain," wrote Stall, of boys and men eager to remain pure is:

Why did not some person warn me! No friend or teacher, neither in the day school or Sunday-School, not even our minister or doctor, ever said one word of warning to me upon this subject! Father and mother, who must have known all about this danger, never mentioned the subject to me. Instead of telling me the truth and warning me they tried to deceive me, and in ignorance left me to go wrong without warning.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Foucault, p. 53.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>27</sup> Stall, *Young Boy*, p. 16.

To Stall, the proper understanding of the self was crucial if the boy and man were to appreciate the the wonders of continence and the horrors of incontinence. Stall perceived the self as a Platonist complex of three hierarchically ordered components: the intellect, the will and the passions. He showed little recognition of any psychic dimension to the self, most likely because psychological theories, particularly those which dealt with human sexuality, were still in their infancy during the period in which Stall was writing. Applying a generic term to encompass men and women, Stall believed that in "man" the "highest culture is found in the symmetrical development of his [sic] threefold nature."<sup>28</sup> The head was the seat of the highest nature, the intellect, the soul the seat of the moral nature, the will, and the genitals the seat of the lowest nature, the passions. Given Western society's traditional valorization and dichotomization of reason as opposed to emotion, the social body's rendering of the "relation of head to feet, of brain and sexual organs, of mouth and anus" are commonly treated, according to Douglas, as the expression of the "relevant patterns of hierarchy."<sup>29</sup> A man who maintained this hierarchical ordering of the self was a balanced man, the balanced man was a continent man, and the continent man was a pure man. "It was never intended," wrote Stall, "that the lower should rule the higher. If there is, therefore, at any time insubordination in the lower nature, the appeal must be made to the higher, to that in us which is kingly and superior."<sup>30</sup>

To Stall, the pure man was everything the bourgeois man should be, ought to be, or could be taught to be: well-balanced, well-educated, self-controlled, self-made and well-off. To many of his contemporaries, the Reverend William Briggs, D.D., stood as a Canadian example of a pure man. Book Steward, from 1879-1918, of the Toronto-based Methodist Book and Publishing House, Briggs was responsible for the publication of the *Self* and *Sex* Series in Canada. He was admired for being "emphatically a *man*."<sup>31</sup> He was, according to the Reverend John Carroll, well-

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<sup>28</sup> Stall, *Young Man*, p. 29

<sup>29</sup> Douglas, p. 99.

<sup>30</sup> Stall, *Young Man*, p. 31.

<sup>31</sup> John Carroll, "The Reverend William Briggs," *The Canadian Methodist Magazine*, 12, 2 (August, 1880):

balanced: neither "large nor small, juvenile nor elderly; but an average man for height, breadth, and weight; straight, trim-built, full chested, oval yet full-faced, with a noticeably well-developed head, beyond the average size."<sup>32</sup> Briggs was well-educated. He had been privileged to have classical schooling, commercial training, religious education and the lifelong companionship of pure, good, English books, "(never having had any desire for the superficial and trashy), to which he gave his days and nights, 'marking, learning, and inwardly digesting' their contents."<sup>33</sup> Supremely self-controlled, his days and nights were given to little else but books. At eighty-one, he was still directing the business of the book trade: from nine "until twelve noon, when he goes home for lunch and forty winks. At three he is back again and at work until five-thirty. He seldom misses even so much as a day a month from the office."<sup>34</sup> His marriage, at age 32 to Rosalie Clark, lasted her lifetime. One son was produced. No stain of scandal ever touched Briggs. He remained a pillar of the community. A self-made man, he rose quickly in the ranks of the Methodist Church, having been recognized first for his preaching skills and later for his shrewd administrative and commercial talents. He amassed a small fortune. When he died in 1923, he left his son in excess of \$85,000.

The emphasis on the self reflected the nineteenth century's belief in self-cultivation, hard work, and bourgeois success.<sup>35</sup> Stall believed that the "Church and the State, indeed all the walks and departments of life, are as open as never before to young men of brain and brawn; but capacity and power are nevertheless made the indispensable requisites to eminence or even success."<sup>36</sup> An unbalanced man, rendered incapacitated and powerless by incontinence, would be barred from any kind of Briggsian eminence or success. An unbalanced man would have permitted his passions to reign supreme. The boy and man had to overcome their passions by struggling to achieve self-mas-

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 98.

<sup>34</sup> United Church Archives, "Dr. Briggs and His Books," *The Courier*, February 10, 1917.

<sup>35</sup> E. Anthony Rotundo, "Body and Soul: Changing Ideals of American Middle-Class Manhood, 1770-1920," *Journal of Social History* 16, 3 (Spring 1983): 23-38.

<sup>36</sup> Stall, *Young Man*, pp. 27-28.

tery, or complete self-control over their sexual organs. Victor Seidler has found that white, Western, Christian men have generally agreed that servitude to the passions was a sign not of human reason but of animal unreason.<sup>37</sup> Stall expressed the same sentiments when he claimed, "the man who gains the mastery grows more manly, more noble, while the man who is overcome becomes less manly, and if just be given the sway he becomes increasingly beastly."<sup>38</sup> Books such as those authored by Stall, which taught boys and men of the wonders of continence, appealed to the intellect rather than to the passions. In appealing to the intellect, Stall's supposedly enabled the self to exist as a properly balanced entity. As such, the individual man was guaranteed success in the bourgeois sense of the word.<sup>39</sup>

The tripartite balanced complex of the intellect, the will and the passions were, according to Stall, housed in the physical body. Borrowing from Paulist thought, Stall perceived the body as a Holy Temple. The self, and the body in which it was housed, belonged to God. God actually inhabited the body. Stall quoted from St. Paul: "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?"<sup>40</sup> and used the body/Temple analogy to assert that any act which defiled the body, defiled God as well. Despite the fact that Stall considered the genitals to be the seat of the lower nature, the passions, the genitals themselves were the "Holiest of Holies," the most sacred portion of the entire Temple. This apparent reversal of the hierarchization of the three parts of the self is resolved because Stall distinguished between the passions and the genitals. Although the genitals were considered the seat of the passions, which could unbalance the individual, his relation to women and his connection to the nation when they overtook the intellect, the genitals themselves were the most sacred organs of the body because they contained semen.

To Stall, semen was the most important product of the male human body. It was a precious

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<sup>37</sup> Victor J. Seidler, "Reason, Desire, and Male Sexuality," in *The Cultural Construction of Sexuality*, ed. Pat Caplan (London: Tavistock Publications, 1987), pp. 85-89.

<sup>38</sup> Stall, *Husband*, p. 97.

<sup>39</sup> For an expansion of the connection between the retention of semen and bourgeois success, see Peter T. Cominos, "Late Victorian Sexual Respectability and the Social System," *International Review of Social History* 8 (1963): 18-48, 216-250.

<sup>40</sup> Stall, *Young Boy*, p. 102.

fluid which was responsible for new life when expended in reproductive sexual intercourse and, when retained, was responsible for the moral, mental and physical health of the body. Like Stall, many authors of prescriptive sexual literature advocated that men should remain continent especially during their first 25 years. This period was thought to be crucial to the full moral, mental and physical development of the male human body. A Mrs. E. R. Shepherd, whose views on sexual continence for men closely resembled those held by Stall, linked the retention of semen to good health throughout life. A continent man grew to be, and remained, tall, erect, broad-chested, heavily bearded, deep-voiced, muscular and agile, "the embodiment of manly power and strength."<sup>41</sup> Stall proclaimed that the retention of semen raised the man to the pinnacle of both the Christian and the social Darwinist scale of being. "The noblest and grandest thing in the world," rhapsodized Stall,

is a young man in all the vigor and buoyancy of manhood, and with all the promise of long life and usefulness before him. The young man with broad shoulders and deep chest, with strong muscles and intellectual forehead—a veritable son of God—is the grandest object in the entire world. That which elevates man and places him next to his Creator in the scale of being is found in the fact that God created man in His own image.<sup>42</sup>

The body/Temple which Stall revered contained many orifices which were actually entrances to pathways directly linked to the testicles. The ear, for example, when polluted by "vile stories," was one of the "avenues by which the sacred temple of our bodies is entered by evil influences."<sup>43</sup> Because the testicles produced precious semen, Stall urged boys and men to guard the body's orifices with great care. Stall's concern with the physical body's orifices fits nicely with Douglas' finding that interest in the physical body's "apertures depends on the preoccupations with social exits and entrances, escape routes and invasions. If there is no concern to preserve social boundaries, I would not expect to find concern with bodily boundaries."<sup>44</sup> Stall warned that pollutants which penetrated the body/Temple via its orifices could affect the self's lowest nature to such a degree that the individual could begin, or continue to engage in, non-reproductive sexual activity,

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<sup>41</sup> E. R. Shepherd, *True Manhood: A Manual for Young Men* (Chicago: A. B. Stockham and Co., 1889), p. 69.

<sup>42</sup> Stall, *Young Man*, p. 29.

<sup>43</sup> Stall, *Young Boy*, pp. 103-104.

<sup>44</sup> Douglas, pp. 98-99.



and hence, lose the battle for continence.

What we would today term reproductive sexual activity and non-reproductive sexual activity reflected the continence-is-good/incontinence-is-bad axis in Stall's work. To Stall the term sex encompassed both reproductive and non-reproductive sexual activity. He believed, however, that sexual activity was most appropriate for men and women when it was connected to heterosexual sexual intercourse for reproduction within marriage. He acknowledged that although the theory that men required unlimited sexual gratification was a popular one, this theory was actually "contrary to the laws of nature, to the laws of God, and to the laws of all civilized nations."<sup>45</sup> Stall, in fact, saw sexual activity for men and women as so closely tied to marriage, offspring, the family, the home, and to Christian society that he often referred to sexual relations as "the marital relation." Reproductive sex within marriage offered the man wishing to attain and maintain continence the opportunity to retain and expend his semen in the best balanced fashion possible. This belief pervaded all four of Stall's works and is clearly evident from the first book on. The opening chapters of *What A Young Boy Ought To Know* treat the book's fictitious recipient of Stall's lectures on sex, little "Harry," to an exposition on "reproductive power." As defined by Stall, reproductive power was the God-given ability possessed by all living creatures "to beget and reproduce others like themselves."<sup>46</sup> To further his discussion of this power, Stall began with the account of creation in Genesis, progressed toward a lengthy discussion of the reproductive capabilities of various plant and animal species and finally concluded that Harry, a "reproduction" of Pappa and Mamma,<sup>47</sup> was once a tiny egg who lived in his mother's body.

While it is doubtful that little Harry received adequate instruction in the nature of human reproduction from various chapters on flora and fauna, these chapters, dismissed by Michael Bliss' analysis of the *Self* and *Sex Series* as "a few pages on plants and fishes,"<sup>48</sup> are, in fact, very im-

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<sup>45</sup> Stall, *Husband*, p. 84.

<sup>46</sup> Stall, *Young Boy*, p. 45.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.

<sup>48</sup> Michael Bliss, "'Pure Books on Impure Subjects': Pre-Freudian Sexual Ideas in Canada," in *Studies in*

portant to Stall's vision of pure manhood. They reappear in a condensed version in the advice given to the young man and husband. The chapters establish that as reproductive power is derived from God, it is sacred. The thought, treatment and study of this power by boys and men should be pure and reverent. Second, as reproductive power, and hence, reproduction, is the natural order of things in plant and animal species, so too is this natural order repeated in the relation between the sexes. Third, as the human being is a product of father and mother, both men and women contribute equally to the creation of new life and to its maintenance. For men as for women, this contribution could be best made in marriage.

Stall railed against four major forms of non-reproductive sexual activity which were simultaneously the four major ways in which men participated in sexually incontinent behaviour. These were: nocturnal emissions, masturbation, pre-marital and/or extra-marital sexual intercourse, and marital excess. Missing, in Stall's work, is any mention of what is today termed homosexuality. Hints of homosexual activity were subsumed under masturbation, which sometimes included mutual masturbation, or group masturbation among boys and men.

Stall considered himself relatively progressive on the subject of nocturnal emissions. Unlike some authors who condemned this loss of semen, Stall refuted the belief that a normal, healthy man could do without periodic nocturnal emissions. Stall scoffed at those "quacks" who claimed that successful, eminent and hard-working men such as Sir Issac Newton had never "lost a single drop of sexual fluid."<sup>49</sup> Stall conceded that, in theory, the man who lived in a state of mental and physical purity could render nocturnal emissions unnecessary. But Stall wrote that he had never been able to find such an individual. This admission presumably included Stall himself in the category of men who had experienced nocturnal emissions.

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*Canadian Social History*, ed. Michael Horn and Ronald Sabourin (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), p. 327.

<sup>49</sup> Stall, *Young Man*, p. 83.

Stall foresaw three problems in the loss of semen via nocturnal emissions: the frequency of emissions, the reason for any increase in their frequency, and the result of any such increase. According to his informed opinion, Stall allowed for emissions to occur in normal, healthy men approximately once every two or three weeks. This adequately balanced the man, for nocturnal emissions were a physiological outlet for the man who had no other form of sexual release. Stall warned, however, that when emissions exceeded this limit, they were usually dangerous. An increase in nocturnal emissions was said to have been caused by an overwrought sexual imagination which resulted in an increase in the amount of semen manufactured by the testicles.<sup>50</sup> The body responded to the imbalance in seminal fluid by repeatedly casting semen out of the body. The results were quite serious. The individual's moral nature would be corrupted. He would then no longer be able to enlist his will to struggle for mastery over the sexual organs. As Stall believed that injury to any one of the self's three natures impaired the proper functioning of the other two, the mental and physical debility of the organism was sure to follow.

Defined as "[t]o pollute by the hand,"<sup>51</sup> masturbation was condemned by Stall, and by the majority of authors of prescriptive sexual literature, as one of the most grievous, indeed sinful, forms of incontinence. Stall considered masturbation to represent the classic form of incontinence and deemed it almost as horrific as pre-marital sex. Bliss deems the Series' texts "little more than anti-masturbation tracts."<sup>52</sup> Masturbation, however, figured far more prominently in the advice the Series dispensed to men rather than to women. The subject of masturbation consumed an enormous number of pages in the books Stall directed to the boy and young man.<sup>53</sup> Like many other authors of prescriptive sexual literature, Stall was greatly concerned about masturbation.<sup>54</sup> These authors

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<sup>50</sup> Shepherd likened the increased production of semen caused by thoughts of sex to the excess production of saliva caused by thoughts of food. Shepherd, pp. 84-90. Stall agreed in *Young Man*, pp. 85-86.

<sup>51</sup> Stall, *Young Boy*, p. 108.

<sup>52</sup> Bliss, "'Pure Books'," p. 327.

<sup>53</sup> Chapters VIII-XIV, and XVIII-XXI in Stall, *Young Boy*, dealt wholly or partially with masturbation as did chapters II-IV and XVI in Stall, *Young Man*. The amount of space Stall devoted to masturbation grew progressively smaller in his next two books. Chapters XVII-XIX in Stall, *Husband* and chapter VIII in Stall, *45* warn against the practice.

<sup>54</sup> See, for example, the numerous references to masturbation in boys and men scattered throughout Shepherd,

were most probably concerned with masturbation for at least five reasons. They considered masturbation the most prevalent form of non-reproductive sexual activity in which boys and young men engaged. Second, masturbation was seen as the prelude to ever worsening incontinence. Third, masturbation was considered so addictive that the authors feared boys and men would never marry and engage in reproductive sex. Fourth, masturbation was an activity over which the social body would have little control, presumably because masturbation could be engaged in repeatedly and covertly. The problem of masturbation's secrecy is evident in its nineteenth-century euphemism, "solitary vice."

Finally, masturbation was considered, by clerical and medical authorities, to have irrevocable and horrific consequences for the individual which were far worse than those brought about by nocturnal emissions.<sup>55</sup> Masturbatory activity promised to lead to severe moral degeneration. This was speedily followed by the terrible mental and physical wasting of the organism much to the disgrace of the individual family. Perhaps in an effort to lock the horrors of masturbation into the minds of the age group believed most likely to engage in it, Stall outdid himself in his graphic descriptions of masturbation's consequences in the advice he dispensed to the young boy. Despite protestations of being unable to find words "scarcely capable of describing the dreadful consequences which are suffered by those who persist in this practice,"<sup>56</sup> Stall provided the boy with a good sized list. He assured the boy that masturbation led to moral changes in the individual's character which made him weak-willed, "fretful, irritable, stolid, and reticent...[unable to] look people

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S. Pancoast, *The Ladies New Medical Guide* (Paris, Ontario: J. S. Brown and Sons, 1892), B. G. Jefferis and J. L. Nichols, *Searchlights on Health* (Toronto: The J. L. Nichols Co. Ltd., 1911 first pub. 1894), George Douglas, *Thou Art the Man!* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1895) and Joseph Heller Hett, *The Sexual Organs: Their Use and Abuse* (Berlin [now Kitchener], Ontario: Rittinger and Motz, 1899). Many historians have accepted that authors of prescriptive sexual literature were greatly concerned with masturbation. See Arthur N. Gilbert, "Doctor, Patient, and Onanist Diseases in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of the History of Medicine* 30 (July 1975): 217-234.

<sup>55</sup> I have arrived at these five reasons after an analysis of Stall's Shepherd's, Pancoast's, Jeffries' and Nichols', Douglas' and Hett's concern with masturbation. I have also been influenced by historian G. J. Barker-Benfield's investigation of masturbation. See his *The Horrors of the Half-Known Life: Male Attitudes Toward Women and Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), pp. 165-174.

<sup>56</sup> Stall, *Young Boy*, p. 108.

squarely and frankly in the face."<sup>57</sup> Mental debility in the individual was manifested in his loss of memory, his inability to concentrate, his lack of self-reliance and finally, in his full-blown insanity. Physical debility in the individual was illustrated by his lack of interest in work, his inability to apply himself to work, his sallow skin, flabby muscles, languor, weariness, headache, heart palpitations, his susceptibility to disease and his eventual death. The fate of the masturbating boy or man, no longer a virile fellow but a decrepit creature, was held to be the insane asylum and/or the tomb.

To make matters worse, the masturbating boy or man eventually begat offspring who were in turn sexually incontinent as well as morally, mentally and physically diseased. The belief in the paternal passage of mental and physical disease and incontinence from one generation to the next was considered an important aspect of the "law of heredity."<sup>58</sup> A confused conflation of late nineteenth-century theories of genetic inheritance and environmental influence, this law figured prominently in the Series' authors' texts. The law of heredity will be more fully analyzed in the following chapters. For the moment, it is sufficient to know that Stall believed the law of heredity could serve as a warning to incontinent boys and men. Stall warned little Harry that "when you shall yourself become a father, your children will be sure to suffer the results of your negligence and imprudence."<sup>59</sup> If Harry were to engage in masturbation, he was sure to produce a diseased and incontinent child for "a licentious father is the legitimate predecessor of a vicious child."<sup>60</sup>

Masturbation was not the only way in which incontinence could seriously affect future generations. Pre-marital and extra-marital sex were roundly condemned by Stall. Stall urged the man to always keep the law of heredity in mind. "Is it comforting," asked Stall, "for a father to anticipate with certainty that all the vices which have corrupted his life, blighted his home and debased his moral nature are to be transmitted to his offspring?"<sup>61</sup> The answer, obviously, was no. Stall

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 112.

<sup>58</sup> In Stall, the law of heredity is first tackled in *Young Boy*, pp. 81-88, and continues to be a serious issue in the remainder of the books authored by Stall.

<sup>59</sup> Stall, *Young Boy*, pp. 83-84.

<sup>60</sup> Stall, *Husband*, p. 113.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

advised men to avoid pre-marital and extra-marital sex, because they resulted in venereal diseases which were as life-threatening as the consequences which followed masturbation. But while masturbation primarily affected the individual, and secondarily affected his family and his future offspring, venereal diseases were said to affect society as a whole. Stall cited several cases in which men suffering from syphilis, gonorrhoea, chancroid and/or cancer died miserable and insane, but not before they had unwittingly passed their diseases onto their innocent wives and children. These innocents in turn infected wet nurses and friends. Stall, like many other writers of this period who concerned themselves with sexually transmissible diseases, did not as yet fully understand just how these diseases were communicated between individuals. He claimed that venereal diseases were transmitted not only by sexual intercourse, but by kisses, water-closets, drinking glasses, flatware, combs, and linen.<sup>62</sup>

Marital excess proved to be the most complex of all forms of incontinence because it hinged upon Stall's hesitant acceptance of non-reproductive, or non-propagative sexual relations within marriage. Stall first distinguished between lust and love. Lust was a "monstrosity," completely physical in nature, and imparted "neither beauty nor life."<sup>63</sup> Love, which was both physical and spiritual in nature, ennobled the individual. Stall considered it the "foundation of marriage and of home."<sup>64</sup> As marriage ought to be based on love, and not lust, Stall hesitantly proposed that within marriage, sexual relations between husband and wife could take place not only to produce offspring, but to express those amative sentiments, such as "mutual affection," "personal endearments," and "affections and tender feelings which are calculated to render home the place of blessing and good which God intended."<sup>65</sup> Love, and not lust, in other words, was a permissible and admirable motive for engaging in non-reproductive sexual intercourse within marriage. Stall realized that engaging only in sexual intercourse for the purposes of reproduction would require "a de-

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<sup>62</sup> Stall, *Young Man*, p. 99.

<sup>63</sup> Stall, *Husband*, p. 83.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

gree of self-denial and self-control as is far beyond the possession of the great mass of humanity."<sup>66</sup> Yet even though this exception was occasionally necessary to the "balance of husband and wife,"<sup>67</sup> it was, nevertheless, fraught with the risk of imbalance.

Although Stall was himself "strongly inclined" to theoretically favour love as a motive for engaging in the marital relation, he admitted that this was a difficult position to maintain in reality. True to the sentiments of many social purity reformers, Stall conceded that the most pressing danger of this position was "too frequent conception."<sup>68</sup> He sympathized with the wife burdened with too many pregnancies, for they were sure to destroy her physical and mental health. Another complication he euphemistically cited was the way in which some people "regulate this matter."<sup>69</sup> He referred obliquely to abortion, calling it "nothing short of murder," and to artificial methods of birth control. He claimed that such methods were "expedients which are often unsatisfactory in their results and also ruinous to the health or well-being of either the husband or wife, or both."<sup>70</sup>

Stall proposed three solutions to the sex-for-love dilemma. As a concession to the problem of unwanted maternity, Stall asserted that no sexual contact between husband and wife should occur if the wife were unwilling. It was best if the wife, not the husband, set the rate of frequency for the marital relation. In this instance, the married man would remain continent according to Stall's first solution, if he engaged in the expenditure of his semen only at his wife's behest. Next, Stall coyly informed the husband of the Levitical rule which he believed correctly balanced self-denial and self-indulgence. Citing the information found in Leviticus, the third Book of the Old Testament, Stall prescribed that husbands who wished to limit the number of offspring should follow the sanction against sexual intercourse with their wives for up to seven days after menstruation. Bliss notes that, while this so-called "safe period" was common knowledge, it unfortunately coin-

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>67</sup> Stall, quoting Dr. H. F. Pomeroy, author of *Ethics of Marriage*, in *ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., pp. 86-87.

cides, in most women, with the most propitious fertile period in their menstrual cycle.<sup>71</sup> Herein, the married man would remain continent if he abstained from expending his semen during the unsafe period of his wife's menstrual cycle. Last, Stall counseled that the husband should engage in sexual intercourse with his wife no more than once a week. This solution seemed to be the main guideline whereby the married man could remain continent, for in excess of this amount the husband would supposedly experience many of the moral, mental and physical symptoms of classic incontinence: moral degradation, intellectual decline, weakness, giddiness, backache and paralysis. Upon experiencing these symptoms, a man was to understand he had surpassed the point of "marital moderation,"<sup>72</sup> and realize, he was, indeed, incontinent. In the final analysis, it was reproductive sex within marriage which benefitted the self the most. Intellectually desirable and spiritually elevating, it catered to a man's higher nature. The intelligent man, advised Stall, would not cater to his lower nature, but would "persistently...exercise the spirit of self-control and self-mastery"<sup>73</sup> even within marriage.

The information Stall provided the boy and man about sex also encompassed sexual desire and sexual pleasure. Stall understood that boys and men did experience what would today be called sexual desire. Stall, however, believed that sexual desire was the desire to beget offspring within marriage which drove men to want to expend their semen. Problems, of course, arose when this desire was misdirected in incontinence. Stall lauded reproductive desire as God-given. Without it, a man would be repellent to other men and women. He would never desire to take a wife and support a family.

Similarly, sexual pleasure was reproductive pleasure. Given his emphasis on reproductive

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<sup>71</sup> Bliss, "How We Used to Learn About Sex," *Macleans*, March 1974, p. 62. Research conducted on the menstrual cycle in the 1920's revealed that the most fertile period in the average woman's 28-day cycle occurred approximately mid-way through the cycle. In the early 1940's, Alfred Tyrer, the Canadian author of the popular *Sex, Marriage and Birth Control*, openly informed women that between 10 to 20 days from the first day of menstruation constituted the fertile period. See Alfred Tyrer, *Sex, Marriage and Birth Control* (Toronto: Marriage Welfare Bureau, 1936), pp. 23-24.

<sup>72</sup> Stall, *Husband*, p. 87.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.



rather than recreational sex,<sup>74</sup> Stall rarely distinguished between the testicles and the penis, and often referred to them collectively as the "sexual organs." When he did specifically refer to the penis, it was to confirm its place as only one portion of the reproductive system; a conduit which directed semen out of the body, or a channel to remove waste matter.<sup>75</sup> This is in total—and telling contrast—to the emphasis on the penis in nineteenth-century, and, I would add, current-day pornographic literature.<sup>76</sup> Stall also viewed sexual pleasure derived from reproductive sex as superior to that experienced in non-reproductive sex. While sexual pleasure in reproductive sex within marriage was the experience of the "greatest pleasure and satisfaction,"<sup>77</sup> the "sensation" a boy or man experienced in masturbation was only grudgingly admitted to be a "momentary" pleasure.<sup>78</sup> In fact, Stall's euphemisms for orgasm in non-reproductive sex—"spasm," "fit," "irritation" or "fixed habit"—conveyed that such activity was aberrational and hazardous. Perhaps in order to achieve pure manhood, Stall believed that the boy and man had to remain virtually ignorant of the magnitude of sexual desire and sexual pleasure beyond the continence/incontinence axis.

Having identified the four ways in which men could be incontinent, and the moral, mental and physical consequences of incontinence, Stall next went on to deal with how incontinence could be caused and cured. As Stall believed that incontinence was caused by pollutants which entered the body/Temple via its orifices, he proposed that the boy and man follow a strict regimen which supposedly guarded their bodies against the penetration of pollutants and fortified their bodies against such penetration.<sup>79</sup> Stall recognized that continence for men from boyhood to middle age would be

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<sup>74</sup> My thanks to Jane Abrey for this insight.

<sup>75</sup> The lack of attention paid to the penis is evident in another book published earlier than the first of Stall's works. Dr. Pancoast, author of *The Ladies New Medical Guide*, refers only to the testicles when he elaborates upon the "Male Organs of Generation." See S. Pancoast, *The Ladies New Medical Guide* (Paris, Ontario: J. S. Brown and Sons, 1892), pp. 123-125.

<sup>76</sup> See, for example, an excerpt from *The Romance of Lust*, a novel published during the 1870's cited in Marcus, pp. 276-277.

<sup>77</sup> Stall, *Husband*, p. 88.

<sup>78</sup> Stall, *Young Boy*, p. 95.

<sup>79</sup> Havelock Ellis referred to this kind of thinking when he claimed that the ideal of sexual continence was based on the precept that sexual activity "is a response to stimulation from without or from within [the individual], so that if there is no stimulation there will be no sexual manifestation." Those who supported the ideal of sexual continence "preach...a strenuous ideal; they would set up a wholesome dictate of hygiene." See his *On Life and Love: Essays of Love and Virtue*, Vols. 1 and 2 (New York: Garden City Publishing Company, Inc., 1937), p. 38.

especially difficult because this time period coincided with the peak of their reproductive power. After age forty-five, this power would wane as the body's manufacture of semen decreased. In order to maintain and attain continence during this trying period of reproductive potency, Stall prescribed that his regimen be followed for approximately fifty years.

The following information was set forth to a greater or lesser degree in every one of Stall's books. Vile stories, which we know penetrated the body/Temple via the ear, had to be avoided because they were thought to lead to incontinence. In keeping with the primacy of the self's highest nature, however, the most important orifices to the body/Temple were the eye and the mind. The body could be polluted by whatever the eye were to read or see and the mind were to store. Impure books destroyed the body/Temple, and weakened the organism against further assault. Next to his condemnation of masturbation, Stall reserved his most vituperative prose for impure books. Stall probably saw some similarity between masturbation and the reading of impure books. Reading, like masturbation, was an activity which could be engaged in repeatedly and covertly. Both reading and masturbation were activities over which the social body had little control.<sup>80</sup> Novels, entertaining literature, pornography and scandal sheets were considered to be pernicious, immoral, and to reek of moral rot. Those boys and men whose minds were brought into contact with such literature were "likely to be contaminated by the evils which are so pervasive and contagious in this atmosphere of death."<sup>81</sup> Impure pictures, whether on their own, or contained in impure books, did not escape Stall's wrath. "No man," thundered Stall, "can look upon obscene pictures without the danger of photographing upon his mind that which he might subsequently be willing to give thousands of dollars to obliterate."<sup>82</sup> Stall fully supported the censorship efforts of the Society for the Suppression of Vice in the United States, but decried the possibility that "a single picture which escapes [the Society's] search and destruction may defile the minds of a hundred young men who

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<sup>80</sup> Barker-Benfield, pp. 165-174, has outlined how masturbation and the reading of impure books were thought to be intimately connected.

<sup>81</sup> Stall, *Young Man*, p. 233.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 233-34.

behold it."<sup>83</sup>

The impure books Stall warned against presumably incited the reader to experience sexual desire and sexual pleasure beyond the continence/incontinence axis. This is probably why Stall urged the boy never to "handle, or listen to the reading of a book or paper which you might not ask your Mamma or Pappa to read aloud with you."<sup>84</sup> One of Stall's self-proclaimed proudest achievements was to gear the sexual knowledge he dispensed to boys and men to suit them as they progressed from boyhood to middle age. According to Stall, the danger of "placing in the hands of a child a book containing information which is designed only for grown persons" was too obvious to require discussion.<sup>85</sup> Implicit in this statement is the belief that sexual knowledge had to be parcelled out carefully to individuals depending on their age and their level of self-development. If this sexual knowledge were not carefully parcelled out, the same pure book which would presumably help keep an older, more self-developed man continent could become an impure book in the hands of a younger, less self-developed man. The pure book, in the hands of a younger, less self-developed man, posed a danger to the individual, his relationship to women and his connection to the nation for it could stimulate him to engage in sexual incontinence. As impure books were thought to pollute the individual, Stall advised both men and women never to read a novel before age 25, for there is "too much that is indispensable for intelligence,...for study, for business, health and morals, that need[s] to be read first."<sup>86</sup> The Reverend George Douglas, a Canadian critic of impure books and a public supporter of sexual continence for boys and men, expressed similar sentiments in much stronger language: "Impeach those booksellers and news-vendors at war with virtue—men who stand behind counters and deal out the black lettered literature which abounds in these times, down through the slimy streams of sensational tales to the depths of the French novel of Zola, George Sand and others."<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 234

<sup>84</sup> Stall, *Young Boy* p. 130.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>86</sup> Stall, *Young Man*, p. 258.

<sup>87</sup> Douglas, pp. 11-12.

The mouth, in Stall's conceptualization of the body/Temple, was subject to myriad assaults. Tobacco use was be shunned because it impaired the individual's intellect. This impaired intellect unbalanced the man and reduced his ability to struggle for control over his genitals. Alcohol use, on the one hand, acted like tobacco in reducing the man's ability to subdue his passions. On the other hand, alcohol was a stimulant like tea and coffee. Stimulants excited the passions and had, therefore, to be eschewed. Like many other social purity reformers, Stall lambasted alcohol because he firmly believed that in men, drink led to crime, violence and the frequenting of prostitutes.<sup>88</sup> The mouth could also be penetrated by foods like meats, sweets and spices which were thought to excite the passions. Even wholesome foods like grains had to be carefully monitored as to when and in what quantity they were eaten. Consuming too much of these foods, or consuming them too late at night, could also cause incontinence. The anus had to be guarded, not against penetration, but against the incorrect evacuation of waste matter. Constipation was thought to put undue pressure on the sexual organs which likewise led to incontinence. Accumulation of waste matter could also irritate the anal area and the attempt to relieve the irritation by scratching could result in incontinence. Stall advised regularity in evacuation and thorough cleanliness of the anal area. The anus could be penetrated by flushings of warm water to relieve one of constipation, thereby freeing the individual from sexual unrest.<sup>89</sup>

As there were endless threats to the self's moral, mental and physical integrity, Stall discussed additional precautions the boy or man could take against the penetration of pollution. Should the boy or man fail to properly guard his orifices, there were several ways in which he could fortify his body against penetration. Stall concerned himself with the healthy moral, mental and physical development of the boy and man. Visits to a gambling house, theatre or dance hall could forever morally impair the boy's and man's moral health. Boys and men were told that contact with bannis-

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<sup>88</sup> Stall, *Young Man*, pp. 245-246. Similar sentiments were expressed in Canada. See F. S. Spence, comp., *The Facts of the Case: A Summary of the Most Importance Evidence and Argument Presented in the Report of the Royal Commission on the Liquor Traffic* (Toronto: Newton and Treloar, 1896), pp. 267-270.

<sup>89</sup> Flushings were something Stall personally employed to rid himself of constipation and induce a feeling of sexual repose. Stall, 45, pp. 140-144.

ters, trees and saddles on bicycles and horses could contribute to immoral sensations. They also were advised to pray for guidance against incontinence. They were told to apply themselves to their schoolwork and business affairs to improve their mental faculties. Boys and men, however, had to have a good balance between mental and physical exertion. To strengthen the body, boys and men were to take cold baths, never spending an extended amount of time handling the sexual organs. The area under the foreskin had to be thoroughly cleaned to avoid a build-up of smegma which caused increased sensitivity to touch. In some cases, Stall recommended circumcision. Boys and men never were to use feather beds or covers because these generated too much heat in the sexual organs. Boys and men never were to lie on their backs because this position increased the possibility of nocturnal emissions. A towel, knotted around the spine to prevent lying on one's back, was said to be most efficacious.<sup>90</sup> Boys and men were to awaken early and exercise regularly. Exercise improved the health of the boy and man and directed his attention away from his sexual organs.

Next to avoiding the afore-mentioned pollutants and fortifying the body against them, the most important portion of Stall's regimen was the reading of pure books. Stall urged that while impure books could pollute the body/Temple, pure books could nourish it. "If it is important," wrote Stall, "that the body should be fed upon the most nourishing food, the same is also true of that upon which the mind is to be fed."<sup>91</sup> Stall affirmed that when he saw a Bible, a "few well-chosen books upon the shelf and a pair of dumb-bells" in a boy's room, the boy's future was "full of hope and promise."<sup>92</sup> Stall highly recommended the Bible to men desirous of knowledge rather than ignorance. Reading the Bible prepared men to fashion themselves after the "likeness of God."<sup>93</sup> Needless to say, the boy or man battling for continence could find a wonderful example of pure manhood in Christ, the ultimate continent man.

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<sup>90</sup> Stall, borrowing physician William Acton's advice in *Young Man*, p. 95. Stall also included a footnote to Acton's advice. He recommended that an "effective and satisfactory device, to prevent lying on the back and its attendant evils" could be bought from his Vir Publishing Company for 5 cents.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 258.

<sup>92</sup> Stall, *Young Boy*, p. 144.

<sup>93</sup> Stall, *Young Man*, p. 263.

It is clear that Stall offered the reader his pure books as a mine of "useful" knowledge.<sup>94</sup> This term was often used in the nineteenth century, and subsumed a common presumption held by middle and upper class elites: that books could be either pure and good, or impure and bad. The former category consisted of the classical works on history, philosophy, theology, economic and political theory and was considered useful to the general populace. The latter included works which alluded to radical working-class politics, an anti-Christian bias, the loosely defined "immorality" or "licentiousness," and imaginative fiction. Stall was not alone in condemning novels, for fiction was thought to "produce false impressions, to glorify crime and violence, and to stimulate the imagination unduly."<sup>95</sup> Bruce Curtis' research establishes the historical existence of a hegemonic English Canadian literary canon based on those British and American classics considered suitable for the reading populace according to bourgeois concepts of "taste and virtue."<sup>96</sup>

The Canadian Methodist Rev. Egerton Ryerson's forays into the world of books were conditioned by his belief in the importance of useful knowledge. In 1829 he founded the Methodist Book Room and Publishing House to publish the well-respected Methodist newspaper, the *Christian Guardian*. The Book Room was the same firm which would later publish the *Self and Sex* Series under Briggs' leadership, as well as a host of other texts which were considered to be full of useful knowledge. Ryerson next became the Superintendent of Education for Canada West (Ontario) from 1844-1876. Ryerson ordered several texts from the British Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge for Ontario's libraries, drawing on classics from Britain and the United States. These texts, in addition to the *Christian Guardian*, Sunday School literature, tracts, catechisms, hymn books, travel books, histories, biographies of missionaries and fiction "of a devout and didactic nature."<sup>97</sup> informed the standard Book Room list up until the late 1880's.

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<sup>94</sup> See Bruce Curtis' wonderful and informative article, "'Littery Merrit,' 'Useful Knowledge,' and the Organization of Township Libraries in Canada West, 1840-1860," *Ontario History* 68, 4 (December, 1986): 285-311.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 291.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 306.

<sup>97</sup> George L. Parker, *The Beginnings of the Book Trade in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), p. 209.

The reading of good books was seen as an improving activity for the individual and society. The act of reading a good book, it was believed, could develop or improve one's character and manners, take up leisure time with morally uplifting tales instead of drinking and gambling, inculcate bourgeois values into all classes, and create a "moral, peaceful, rational and loyal population."<sup>98</sup> Thus, a good book in hand was a "safe" book, directing the individual away from injurious living. A bad book was "unsafe" because it accomplished the opposite. Like many of his British contemporaries, Ryerson believed that the desire to read, and to know, could be excited, satisfied and regulated<sup>99</sup> within the covers of a select and suitable number of canonical texts. Regulated reading, according to Curtis, was considered "a potent force for the formation of individual character and manners. It was upon these things that social order would ultimately depend."<sup>100</sup>

Despite Ryerson's prodigious efforts, vast numbers of the Canadian reading public chose not to participate in the hegemonically ordered dissemination of useful knowledge. The popularity of "lighter" reading which entertained, distracted, or otherwise proved more pleasurable to the individual, confirmed that while "useful knowledge and moral tales were what people *should* want to read,"<sup>101</sup> they were not what people *would* always read. Curtis tells of an underground library, operated by two boys at the Port Hope Central School in 1861. For a penny a book, the young students lent their colleagues the well-worn and well-studied stories of highwaymen, love, murder, lives of opera girls and other "filthy and exciting publications" while Hume's and Gibbon's works remained in a "spotless state" in the school's library.<sup>102</sup>

So prevalent was the distinction between good and bad books, that nineteenth-century authors who dealt in any way with sexuality had to immediately explain why the sexual knowledge

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<sup>98</sup> Curtis, p. 285.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., pp. 299-307.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p. 285.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., p. 304.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 305.

they were dispensing was neither useless nor illicit, but useful and licit. Stall was quick to point out that his books were written out of love for men and God. He admitted that he was willing "to suffer the reproaches of those who are ever ready to lift their hands in horror when attention is called to the most sacred laws which God himself has written deep in our physical nature."<sup>103</sup> Stall perhaps feared that his pure books, similar to impure books, would be held responsible for contributing to those very forms of incontinence he so eagerly decried. It is certainly possible that some boys and men who read about those very activities they ought to shun may have become sexually excited or sexually curious enough to partake of them.<sup>104</sup> He, therefore, urged his readers to consider his books to be philanthropic works, unlike those which "secretly foster or unwittingly inflame the lusts which [their] author professes to denounce."<sup>105</sup> Dr. Joseph Heller Hett, a Canadian doctor who authored *The Sexual Organs: Their Use and Abuse* (1899), a book remarkably similar to Stall's *What A Young Man Ought To Know* and *What A Young Husband Ought To Know*, also felt the need to distinguish his book as pure, good and safe. Hett's book was meant "for the purposes of enlightenment, so that men will be able to understand the true teachings, so that they can fortify themselves against all forms of temptations."<sup>106</sup> His book was not "filthy, as many claim." Hett pointed out that his photograph in the book was proof of his "sincerity."<sup>107</sup> In 1911, Dr. B. G. Jefferis and J. L. Nichols, authors of *Searchlights on Health*, likewise claimed in their book's twenty-second edition that their work, though "to some extent daring...is chaste, practical and to the point, and will be a boon and a blessing to thousands who consult its pages."<sup>108</sup>

Stall believed that his books had been "inspired by the same purpose" which led the Reverend John Todd to author the *Student's Manual* in 1854.<sup>109</sup> Todd's *Manual* had extolled the

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<sup>103</sup> Stall, *Young Man*, p. 21.

<sup>104</sup> Interestingly enough, Bliss notes that some Canadian boys who were lectured against masturbation in Ontario schools during the 1930's actually began masturbating because their curiosity got the better of them. Bliss, "How," p. 66.

<sup>105</sup> Stall, *Young Man*, p. 21.

<sup>106</sup> Hett, p. 3.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>108</sup> B. G. Jefferis and J. L. Nichols, *Searchlights on Health* (Toronto: The J. L. Nichols Co. Ltd., 1911 first pub. 1894), p. 4.

<sup>109</sup> Stall, *Young Man*, p. 24.



virtues of continence for boys and men, linking the retention of semen with the discipline, energy, intelligence and work necessary to worldly success.<sup>110</sup> Todd firmly upheld the distinction between good and bad books. To Todd, reading good books was an extremely important activity to boys and men. Reading good books not only helped boys and men battle against incontinence, but helped them develop concentration, stimulate the powers of the mind and store up valuable material which could be put to use.<sup>111</sup> Stall similarly advised the young man striving for success and eminence in his profession to select "some good books judiciously, and then read them thoughtfully and studiously."<sup>112</sup> Books on eminent men, Stall thought, were extremely valuable reading because they discussed "the foundation for every manly character and successful career."<sup>113</sup> Briggs' admirers certainly would have agreed with these sentiments. It should be remembered that Briggs, from boyhood on, himself had marked, learned and inwardly digested the contents of the very best English books much to his own professional success. Reading pure or good books could, therefore, lead a boy or man to remain continent either by advising him of the benefits of continence and the horrors of incontinence or by preparing him for worldly success.

Given the apprehension with which even the authors acknowledged books on human sexuality would be greeted, Stall's books, and the remainder of the *Self* and *Sex* Series, may have seemed an odd choice for publication by the well-respected Methodist Book Room and Publishing House. That the official publishing arm of the Methodist Church could include books which called for a complete knowledge of human sexuality seems a contradiction in terms. Stall's books aspired, however, to those ends in which the firm's founder, Ryerson, had believed.<sup>114</sup> The books were presented to the reader as *useful* knowledge. They were good books to have in hand. The books could also have been said to *excite*, in the reader, the desire to read and to know about his sexuality

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<sup>110</sup> See Barker-Benfield, pp. 135-226. Barker-Benfield provides a wonderful analysis of Todd's textual advice to young men on the necessity of retaining semen.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., p. 167.

<sup>112</sup> Stall, *Young Man*, p. 257.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., p. 259.

<sup>114</sup> Bliss reports that the Series was even advertised in the *Christian Guardian* beginning in 1902. Bliss, "Pure Books," p. 340, note 1.

but only within carefully circumscribed boundaries. The books were no doubt perceived as being able to *satisfy* the desire to read and to know. The sexual knowledge they contained was considered satisfactory to boys and men at each stage of their lives despite the fact that this knowledge rested solely upon the continence/incontinence axis. Like the other books on the Book Room's traditional list, Stall's books may have also been regarded as able to satisfy the reader's need to be morally uplifted. Most importantly, Stall's books could *regulate* the desire to read and to know. Stall reaffirmed the distinction between good and bad books, thereby assuring the reader that his works belonged to the former category.

There was yet another reason why the Book Room may have chosen to publish the Series: financial profit. Stall himself included, in the four books he addressed to boys and men, several textual requests to the reader to buy or lend the books in the Series, or to order similar social purity works from Vir. In addition, Stall authored and published in 1907, a manual entitled *The Successful Selling of the Self and Sex Series*.<sup>115</sup> This manual was directed to men and women<sup>116</sup> employed by publishing firms who canvassed orders for the Series. Stall apparently spoke from his own experience, for he supported himself while in college by canvassing orders for books.<sup>117</sup> Stall urged the canvassers to work in harmony with the purpose for which the books in the Series were written: "to benefit and bless mankind [sic]."<sup>118</sup> It was clear, however, that these canvassers were to work in harmony with the purpose for which the books in the Series were sold: financial profit. Each family "of moderate means," calculated Stall, "means...the canvasser can or should sell the entire set [of eight books in the Series]. Where that cannot be done he[sic] can carefully and quickly size up the situation, drop from the set to such single books as are best suited to the persons constituting the home, or to the individual being canvassed."<sup>119</sup> Stall crammed the majority of the man-

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<sup>115</sup> Sylvanus Stall, *The Successful Selling of the Self and Sex Series* (Philadelphia: Vir Publishing Company, 1907).

<sup>116</sup> Stall recognized women canvassers' "excellent work" in selling the Series. He admitted that he would use "the masculine pronoun as inclusive of both genders" in his manual when referring to a canvasser. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>117</sup> L. M. Cross, "Sylvanus Stall, D.D.: A Man With A Message," in *ibid.*, p. 324.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

ual's 376 pages with detailed instructions on how to best sell the Series. These instructions focused on the canvasser's mental, moral and physical health, habits, personal appearance, speech, sales pitch, target individuals and groups,<sup>120</sup> delivery dates and interviews. So detailed were these instructions, that even the canvasser's specially designed display case for the books in the Series was attended to. The case was to prominently display all the books in the Series to better enable the customer "to understand the order of the [Series] and the canvasser to select any desired book without a moment's hesitation."<sup>121</sup>

Greater competition among publishing houses in North America may have motivated an American publisher like Stall to actively solicit orders for his firm's books. Indeed, by the late 1800's the publishing industry in Canada had become extremely competitive. In acknowledgement of this situation, Briggs, a "shrewd and far-sighted bookman,"<sup>122</sup> expanded the Methodist Book Room and Publishing House's standard list of publications. He undertook the large-scale publication of Canadian writers.<sup>123</sup> He encouraged the publication of popular fiction. He turned the Book Room into the Canadian agency of some English and American publishing houses. He also pursued contracts to be made with the Government of Ontario—for the publication of textbooks—and with individual authors and firms. One of these firms was the Vir Publishing Company headed by Stall.

Briggs' death, in 1922, prompted a spate of newspaper eulogies praising him for an exceptionally successful career. The *Globe* concurred in this assessment, saying:

His was the guiding hand which took control of a small denominational printing plant and created one of the largest publishing concerns in the Dominion. For 40 years he administered the Methodist Book and Publishing House. With the phenomenal growth of that institution the name of William Briggs became a household word wherever books were read in Canada.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Pastors, physicians and social purity organizations like the Young Men's Christian Association (Y.M.C.A.) were the recommended favourites. *Ibid.*, pp. 190-191.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69. Perhaps some men and women who wished to canvass orders for the *Self and Sex* Series did turn to this manual. The available loan slip shows that the manual was signed out of the University of California Library on December 5th, 1932, January 31, 1935.

<sup>122</sup> Parker, p. 209.

<sup>123</sup> Nellie McClung, Catherine Parr Trail and Susanna Moodie had their start with Briggs.

<sup>124</sup> United Church Archives, clipping from the *Globe*, Toronto, November 6, 1922.

One cautious assessment of Briggs' contribution to Canadian publishing nevertheless allows that this same guiding hand "transformed the Methodist House into the largest printing and publishing house in Canada." By the early 1890's annual sales averaged over \$400,000 and books bearing the imprint "William Briggs" reached every part of the Dominion.<sup>125</sup>

Alan Rusbridger, author of *A Concise History of the Sex Manual*, writes irreverently of authors' and publishers' need for sex advice manuals. "There are few subjects," claims Rusbridger, "that can match sex for sheer shelf-stamina, sales figures and profits."<sup>126</sup> An astute businessman, Briggs would certainly have been aware of the popularity of prescriptive sexual literature. The publication of the Series was, therefore, a viable business decision backed by the previous appearance and commercial success of similar books.<sup>127</sup> It should come as no surprise that the Book Room identified the Series' texts as the best-selling sex manuals in Canada between 1900 and 1915.<sup>128</sup> Prior to the appearance of the Series, Briggs had published, in 1894, W. J. Hunter's *Manhood Wrecked and Rescued*. In 1895, the Book Room issued George Douglas' *Thou Art the Man!* Under the terms of a 1906 contract with Stall, Briggs received all Canadian rights to continue to publish and distribute two more social purity books distributed by Vir. These were Joseph Alfred Conwell's *Manhood's Morning* and Charles Frederic Goss' *Husband, Wife and Home*.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Parker, pp. 236-38. Unfortunately, the lack of historical records render incomplete the full range of new titles which bore the "William Briggs" imprint. W. Stewart Wallace laments that many copies of pamphlets and books published by Briggs no longer exist. He admits that even his attempt to compile as complete a list of titles as possible could not include those of English and American origin due to the enormity of the task. See W. Stewart Wallace, *The Ryerson Imprint: A Checklist of the Books and Pamphlets published by the Ryerson Press since the Foundation of the House in 1829* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1954), pp. 1-2.

<sup>126</sup> Alan Rusbridger, *A Concise History of the Sex Manual* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1986), p. 25.

<sup>127</sup> I have already stated that the *Self* and *Sex* Series represented eight of the many other advice texts on child and adult sexuality circulating in Canada during the nineteenth century. The historical analyses of Briggs and the Book Room I have used do not deal with either prescriptive sexual literature or purity literature as a separate category. The absence of a distinct category does not signal the unimportance of this literature to Briggs' diversified list. The absence is due, rather, to the direction each analysis takes. Parker's historical investigation focuses on the development of copyright laws and the growth of the book trade. Wallace's compilation of titles published by Briggs, by his own admission, ignores those books from England and the United States distributed by Briggs. Lorne Pierce, *The House of Ryerson 1829-1954* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1954), focuses on Briggs' contribution to the publishing of classics of Canadian literature.

<sup>128</sup> Bliss, "Pure Books," pp. 327-46.

<sup>129</sup> Contract between Sylvanus Stall and William Briggs, January 24, 1906, Box 9, File 246, United Church Archives. See also Joseph Alfred Conwell, *Manhood's Morning* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1903) and Charles Frederic Goss, *Husband, Wife and Home* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1905).

Briggs' firm also profited from the terms set out by Stall. Vir's books were sold in Canada exclusively through the Book Room. Stall offered the books to Briggs at a discount of 55 percent. Stall even provided the Book Room with electrotypes bearing advertising for the books at no charge. The stipulation, in 1899, at least, was that one dollar per book had to be charged regardless of whether the books were sold to ministers and teachers.<sup>130</sup> This stipulation was quite important to both Stall's and Briggs' financial dealings because they targeted social purity organizations such as the Young Men's Christian Association (Y.M.C.A.) and Sunday Schools for the distribution and sale of their literature.<sup>131</sup> In time, the Series grew to be popular reading for some social purity organizations. Stall's *What A Young Boy Ought To Know* and Mary Wood-Allen's *What A Young Girl Ought To Know* were recommended by J. H. Gordon in his address to the British Columbia Branch of the International Sunday School Association's conference in 1904, entitled "The Sunday School and Purity Teaching."<sup>132</sup> Discounts to ministers and teachers active in such organizations, who would have ordered social purity works like the *Self* and *Sex* Series for their students and libraries, may have reduced the margin of profit both Stall and Briggs seemed to want to increase.

Criticism levied against the motives of Christian clergy entering the publishing world came from at least one quarter. C. S. Clark's acerbic exposé of the underside of late nineteenth-century Toronto life included a section on the hypocrisy of the Protestant churches in North America. Clergymen, according to Clark, depended on the Press. They were forever rushing into print. Asked Clark, "[I]f clergymen are actuated by motives Christlike, why was it necessary for the Rev. Dr. Carman of Belleville to rush into print when it so happened that he was not asked to say grace at a banquet given in Belleville in honor of Sir Mackenzie Bowell?"<sup>133</sup> Clark quoted the words of American Rev. Henry C. Myers who spoke out against the Methodist Church and its publication

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<sup>130</sup> Letter from William Briggs to Sylvanus Stall, April 17, 1899, Box 9, File 246, United Church Archives.

<sup>131</sup> Letter from Sylvanus Stall to William Briggs, April 12, 1899, Box 9, File 246, United Church Archives. This letter specified that the Y.M.C.A. "and other organizations" were to receive the advertising circulars made from the electrotypes Stall provided Briggs.

<sup>132</sup> Many thanks to Mary Anne MacFarlane for this reference.

<sup>133</sup> C. S. Clark, *Of Toronto the Good* (Montréal: The Toronto Publishing Company, 1898), p. 175.

ventures: "Methodism," wrote Myers, "is controlled by a set of ecclesiastical bosses...Book concerns are run by this gigantic institution, and all preachers are required to purchase their literature from them at enormous prices, so that [the bosses] can come and draw large salaries, ride in Pullman palace cars, stop at costly hotels, and build fine mansions."<sup>134</sup> Even Briggs' Book Room came under direct fire. Clark first accused the Methodist Church of financially profiting from the Book Room enterprise, then berated those ministers unable or unwilling to pay their debts to the Book Room. He finally reproached one Book Room representative for insinuating that all ministers who did not pay were "deadbeats."<sup>135</sup>

Briggs' literary and professional credentials combined with his financial skills may have helped to overcome any resistance to the diversification of the standard texts traditionally published by the Book Room. By 1912, however, the suspicion that the Book Room was circulating "objectional literature" surfaced. Lorne Pierce concedes that given the large number of British and American publishers the House represented, "[I]t is remarkable that this sort of complaint did not occur more frequently."<sup>136</sup> Yet even though he was publishing Robert Service's "ribald rhymes,"<sup>137</sup> Briggs purposefully portrayed his newly diversified selection of texts as good books in keeping with the hegemonically ordered dissemination of useful knowledge. This diversification was cleverly advertised as a moral textual bulwark erected in favour of a heterogeneous populace against the onslaught of useless knowledge. Just three years after Briggs' election as Book Steward, one of the Book Committee's reports stated tellingly in rhetoric Ryerson may well have used:

The growing influence of the press in educating the people, in all classes of subjects, the deplorable extent to which books and periodicals are the means of propagating misleading and false views of duty and belief, and the zeal with which all enterprises are seeking to use this potent agency, render it the imperative duty of the Church to enlist to the utmost the aid of a sound religious and moral literature in the great work of spreading the knowl-

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid., pp. 163-164.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., pp. 168-169.

<sup>136</sup> Pierce, p. 27.

<sup>137</sup> Wallace, p. 3 quips: "That William Briggs could have published the ribald rhymes of Robert W. Service [*Songs of a Sourdough*, 1907] shows how far the policy of the house had changed since he took it over."

edge of those divine truths that relate to life and salvation in the world.<sup>138</sup>

Identical discussions of the moral effects good and bad books could have on the populace also took place in the *Christian Guardian* from the 1880's to the 1890's as Christian upper and middle class fears of social impurity increased during the late nineteenth century.<sup>139</sup> Briggs, however, took pains to balance the lucrative results his policies produced against the moral results the Methodist Church believed good literature encouraged. "[M]aking money", claimed the same report, was not the only goal of the Book Room. The "grand moral results" emanating from the publication and circulation of "sound Christian literature" were gratification enough.<sup>140</sup> Despite these self-important protestations, Briggs' decision to publish works such as the *Self* and *Sex* Series fused commercial success to the excitation, satisfaction and regulation of the knowledge of human sexuality.

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<sup>138</sup> *Quadrennial Report of the Western Section of the Book Committee of the Methodist Church of Canada to the General Conference* (Toronto: Methodist Book and Publishing House, 1882), p. 3, United Church Archives.

<sup>139</sup> My thanks to Mary Anne MacFarlane for this information.

<sup>140</sup> *Quadrennial Report*, p. 3.

## II

### Christian Physiology

Now what every young man, and boy also, ought to know about himself is this. The two appendages of the body, of which we are too modest to speak, but which the Holy Scripture calls 'the stones', and medical men the 'testes' or 'testicles,' form the laboratory of the human body, whereby a process of which we are quite unconscious, the blessing given man at the Creation is being fulfilled, and out of the system a vital fluid, which is the very 'Essence of Life,' the source of Being (*a life and being*, remember, *derived from God*) is being constantly produced from the time of puberty, to be employed, when he reaches maturity, not in the gratification of the lusts of the flesh, but in the procreation of children.<sup>1</sup>

The extent to which the excessive loss of seminal fluid tends to weaken the system is clearly illustrated in the Old Testament in the instance of Samson and Delilah. While much is meant by the statement that Samson was 'shorn of his hair,'...it is universally agreed that Samson's enemies, with a full knowledge of the weakening effects of excessive and especially of illicit sexual indulgence, used Delilah, who was a harlot, to divest Samson of his strength so they might conquer the giant, whom they could not overcome by any other stratagem, or by the united strength of many.<sup>2</sup>

It would be relatively easy for the modern-day reader to dismiss as fantasy the advice the Reverend Sylvanus Stall, D.D., directed to boys and men on the wonders of sexual continence and the horrors of sexual incontinence. It must be remembered, however, that Stall received support from not only the public, but from social purity reformers of his ilk, and many medical men and women. Both reformers' and physicians' words and likenesses graced the initial pages of each work in the *Self* and *Sex* Series. Testimonials from individuals as diverse as the English social purity reformer William Stead and the American Dr. Howard Kelly, professor of Gynaecology at

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<sup>1</sup> William Acton, quoting a clergyman, in William Acton, *The Functions and Disorders of the Reproductive Organs, in Childhood, Youth, Adult Age, and Advanced Life, Considered in their Physiological, Social and Moral Relations* (Philadelphia: P. Blakiston and Son, 1894, first pub. 1857), p. 45. Despite the impression the title gives the reader, this book—with the exception of approximately five pages—deals exclusively with the human male reproductive organs.

<sup>2</sup> Sylvanus Stall, *What A Young Man Ought To Know* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1904, first pub. 1897), p. 84.



John Hopkins University,<sup>3</sup> were united in their support of Stall's advice. I believe the reason for the support given to Stall's texts lay in the traditional religious and medical understanding of the importance of semen to the body. The fact that both social purity reformers and medical men recommended Stall's work is the first of many clues.

Ordained a Lutheran pastor in 1874 after approximately eight years of religious study,<sup>4</sup> Stall would have been aware of the traditional Christian emphasis on continence and its sanction against seminal expenditure not connected with heterosexual, sexual intercourse within marriage for the purpose of procreation.<sup>5</sup> His concern with masturbation, nocturnal emissions, pre-marital and extra-marital sex, and marital excess betrays his Christian heritage. Yet Stall—and we cannot escape the irony that he was a Doctor of Divinity without a medical degree writing much like a medical doctor—not only referred to the religious immorality of incontinence but to its serious physiological consequences which he believed would unman the man and destroy the race. Stall, I believe, was one of many nineteenth-century social purity reformers and medical men and women who combined their Christian beliefs with their understanding of human physiology.

I have adopted the term Christian Physiology<sup>6</sup> to describe the close connection between the religious and medical thought which pervaded Stall's texts. To Stall, religion and science had been united in Jesus Christ, the "Great Physician" who sent his disciples out into the world to heal the

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<sup>3</sup> For Stead's testimonial, see *ibid.*, initial pages. See also *What A Man Of 45 Ought To Know* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1901), initial pages. For Kelly's testimonial, see Stall, *What A Young Husband Ought To Know* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1907, first pub. 1899), initial pages.

<sup>4</sup> Stall entered the Hartwick Seminary in Ostego county, New York, in 1866. In 1873 he began his studies at the Union Theological Seminary in New York City. L. M. Cross, "Sylvanus Stall, D.D.: A Man With A Message," in Sylvanus Stall, *The Successful Selling of the Self and Sex Series* (Vir Publishing Company, 1907), p. 324.

<sup>5</sup> John T. Noonan, Jr., *Contraception* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965). Noonan first looks at the Old Testament which helped define early Christian attitudes to sexual intercourse. He next concentrates on groups of individuals—the Evangelists, the Stoics and the writers of the Talmud—who did the same. Noonan also focuses attention on a few dominant individuals—St. Augustine, St. Thomas and St. Paul—who greatly influenced Christian thought on sexual intercourse, marriage and contraception. St. Paul, as we have seen in Chapter I, and will continue to see throughout this thesis, figured prominently in Stall's ideas on the self, sexuality and on the relationship between husbands and wives.

<sup>6</sup> I have borrowed this term from Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman doctor to practise medicine in the United States, who introduced her *Essays in Medical Sociology*, vol. 1, with the statement, "This work is written from the standpoint of the Christian physiologist." See Elizabeth Blackwell, *Essays in Medical Sociology*, vols. 1 and 2 (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1972, first pub. 1902), p. 1.

sick, cleanse the lepers and cast out devils.<sup>7</sup> As a Christian Physiologist, Stall behaved much like a disciple intent on healing the sexually sick, cleansing the moral lepers and casting out devils of social impurity by educating the boy and man to remain sexually continent. The crux of Christian Physiological beliefs united both theology and science in considering human sexual function to be subject to the same religious and physiological "laws" of continence and incontinence. Religious laws on the subject of continence, incontinence, reproductive sex and non-reproductive sex could be found in the Bible. Physiological laws on the same subject, which were gradually being "discovered" as science and medicine strove onward to greater achievement, were said to be in complete harmony with biblical teaching. It was believed that, if obeyed, these laws were conducive to moral virtue, physical and mental health, and social purity. The transgression of these laws inevitably resulted in moral vice, physical and mental disease, and social impurity. E. R. Shepherd, another Christian Physiologist writing a few years before Stall, said it best. She urged those who studied physiology to believe that the teachings of the Bible were true: "they agree with science; agree with reason; agree with facts. As physiologists, therefore, submit yourselves to God."<sup>8</sup>

Moral platitudes aside, Stall's modern-day readers must be made aware that it has generally been established that by the advent of the twentieth century, traditional Christianity's grip on the populace in Western countries, such as Britain, the United States and Canada, had been somewhat loosened. By the late nineteenth century, numerous medical discoveries, scientific theories and social movements were slowly turning the public's mind away from spiritual to temporal explanations for disease, human behaviour, and various other natural phenomena. But by the time Stall was publishing his books, neither traditional Christianity nor science was capable of asserting its primacy in society. Thus, social purity reformers, who looked primarily to religion, and medical men, who looked primarily to science, found in each other a powerful complement. Science served to prop up Christian teaching while religion served to strengthen science. In this way, there was little

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<sup>7</sup> Stall, *Young Man*, p. 152.

<sup>8</sup> E. R. Shepherd, *True Manhood: A Manual for Young Men* (Chicago: A. B. Stockham and Co., 1889), p. 109.

need to pit religion against science. Rev. E. H. Dewart, the editor of the *Christian Guardian* from 1869-1894, and a colleague of Rev. William Briggs at the Methodist Book and Publishing House for 15 years would have conceded the point. Dewart found little incompatibility between Darwin's evolutionary theory and Christianity, reporting that, "there is nothing inconsistent with Christianity in admitting natural development as one of God's methods of working out his plans."<sup>9</sup> Thus, waning Christianity and fledgling science married well. Further proof of this powerful complementarity came from Stall himself. He cited eight pages of physicians' names attesting to the religious and scientific good sense of sexual continence for men and women in the following:

In view of the widespread suffering, physical disease, deplorable hereditary results, and moral deterioration, inseparable from unchaste living, we the undersigned, members of the medical profession of New York and vicinity, unite in declaring it as our opinion that chastity,—a pure, continent life, for both sexes,—is consonant with the best conditions of physical, mental and moral health.<sup>10</sup>

Simultaneously, the traditional Christian emphasis on the individual's relationship to God was, in some circles, slowly being displaced by an emphasis on one individual's relationship to another.<sup>11</sup> Ramsay Cook holds that the wave of Protestant Christian-oriented reform which swept over Canada in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was fuelled by a belief in the spiritual regeneration of society. Cook shows that the rise of Darwinian science and the historical criticism of the Bible led many Canadians to salvage Christianity by "transforming it into an essentially social religion."<sup>12</sup> Herein lay the roots of a modernist theology which maintained that Christianity should adapt itself to, rather than remain separate from, society and thereby bring about the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. In this way, the traditional preoccupation with individual salvation gradually gave way to social salvation. Stall was concerned with both individual and social salva-

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<sup>9</sup> Dewart, quoted in Ramsay Cook, *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), p. 15.

<sup>10</sup> These eight pages are found in the original 1897 edition of Stall's *Young Man*, pp. 59-67. The physicians names do not appear in the 1904 edition I am using although the same quote does appear on page 66. In the 1904 edition, p. 63, Stall also uses a similar quote from a group of physicians in Norway. He then cites, pp. 63-66, the pro-continenence opinions of two famous nineteenth-century European authors of works on human sexuality, August Forel and Richard von Krafft-Ebing, and the similar opinions of various American physicians.

<sup>11</sup> Cook, pp. 4.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

tion. He closed *What A Young Man Ought To Know* with a story of two dead men, one a true Christian and the other a disbeliever. The first man's "glorious" soul was permitted entrance into heaven. The second man recognized all too late that his soul had become "hideous with sin" and, therefore, doomed to hell.<sup>13</sup> It was, however, social salvation, and ultimately, social salvation which would best benefit the upper and middle classes of Anglo-Saxon descent and Protestant Christian faith, which was more important to Stall's prescription of sexual continence for men. Stall believed that his prescription was in keeping with society's entrance into "different times"<sup>14</sup> during which personal and collective action in the name of the love of God and the love of humankind could exchange hellish social impurity for heavenly social purity on earth.

The relationship between Christian morality and nineteenth-century physiology has rarely been explored by historians analyzing nineteenth-century texts concerning the wonders of sexual continence and the horrors of sexual incontinence for men. H. Tristram Englehardt does appear to make an abstract connection between theology and science, for he advances that when "one examines the world with a tacit presupposition of a parallelism between what is good for one's soul and what is good for one's health, then one would expect to find disease correlates for immoral sexual behaviour."<sup>15</sup> A widely held historical explanation for the nineteenth-century concern over the retention and expenditure of semen does not, however, make a connection between Christianity and physiology. This historical explanation would have that support for Stall's account was engendered by the popular nineteenth-century understanding of the relationship between semen and currency.

A number of contemporary historians view the nineteenth-century need to balance the retention and expenditure of semen in regard to the male human body as paralleling the nineteenth-century need to balance the accumulation and outlay of currency in regard to the capitalist economy. It

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<sup>13</sup> Stall, *Young Man*, pp. 266-269. This story was reproduced by Stall from the Rev. Dr. John Todd's collection.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>15</sup> H. Tristram Englehardt, quoted in Arthur N. Gilbert, "Doctor, Patient, and Onanist Diseases in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of the History of Medicine* 30 (July 1975): 220.

has been pointedly observed, for example, that the nineteenth-century's vernacular for orgasm was "to spend." Historian Peter Cominos has brilliantly expounded upon the relationship between semen and currency he sees as prevalent in prescriptive sexual literature and medical texts of the late nineteenth century. He asserts, in part, that as classical political economic theory cited work and thrift as the two "causes" of wealth, and idleness and waste the two causes of poverty, the middle and upper class man equated work and thrift with continence, and idleness and waste with incontinence. The retention of semen, like the accumulation of money, assured this man his place as a *gentleman in respectable society*.<sup>16</sup> Steven Marcus mines the same vein in his investigation of Victorian England's underground pornographic literature. Marcus finds in pornographic literature the mirror-image of what appeared in the official, licit discourses on human sexuality such as those produced by Stall.<sup>17</sup> In the nineteenth-century pornographic literature Marcus analyzed, semen was expended profusely in all acts of non-reproductive sex. Marcus notes that both money and semen filled the vaginas of working class women, the main targets of sexual exploitation by middle and upper class men.<sup>18</sup> Both money and semen were said to nourish the bodies of men and women who participate in "spending' and swallowing each other's juices," a practice in keeping with the neat capitalist economic balance between intake and output of resources.<sup>19</sup>

The analogy between the retention and expenditure of semen and the capitalist economy certainly is persuasive. Even Stall sees semen as currency when he urges the young man to be forever *industrious and economical in all things* in order to lay "the foundation for a life of real usefulness."<sup>20</sup> More to the point is a writer's summary of the contents of a 1888 lecture to 800 men at the Toronto Young Men's Christian Association (Y.M.C.A.) by Dr. Daniel Clark, Superintendent at the Toronto Asylum for the Insane. Clark apparently claimed that the expenditure of semen would

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<sup>16</sup> Peter T. Cominos, "Late Victorian Sexual Respectability and the Social System," *International Review of Social History* 8 (1963): 222.

<sup>17</sup> Steven Marcus, *The Other Victorians* (London: W. W. Norton and Co., 1985, first pub. 1964), p. 243.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159. Marcus reports that the anonymous author of the multi-volume *My Secret Life*, who paid countless working class women for sex acts, twice experiments with a woman's vagina by filling it with shillings.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 243.

<sup>20</sup> Stall, *Young Man*, p. 254.

result in the "physical system" demanding, "at some future time, principal with compound interest, at the rate of twenty-five percent, or more, if the liquidation of the bills be delayed very long."<sup>21</sup> Michael Bliss argues, however, that the persuasiveness of the analogy between semen and currency does not mean that a causal relationship existed between the "economics of sexual scarcity" and the "economics of capital scarcity."<sup>22</sup> Bliss proposes that it was not capitalist economics which urged men to retain their semen, but vitalist concepts.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, G. J. Barker Benfield has found that although men believed the retention and expenditure of semen should be governed by economic principles, the "spermatic economy" was influenced by vitalism.<sup>24</sup>

There is little reason to doubt that social purity reformers and medical men were equally aware of this concept as it can be traced back to Aristotle.<sup>25</sup> Derived from the Latin "vita," or "life," the term vitalism encompasses "the view that life processes occur because of the presence of a 'life force' rather than by physicochemical processes alone."<sup>26</sup> Vitalism constituted a direct challenge to the mechanistic view of life which holds that "all phenomena, no matter how complex, are ultimately describable in terms of physical and chemical laws and that no 'vital force' distinct from matter and energy is required to explain life."<sup>27</sup> According to vitalist theories, the life force, operating in an organism, was akin to its electric, magnetic, galvanic nervous and/or sexual energy. According to Bliss, as sexual activity was directly connected with the transmission of life, writers in the nineteenth century who dealt with sexual problems identified life energy with sexual energy in either of two ways. One system identified semen as a potent form of vital energy condensed from

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<sup>21</sup> *The Monthly Review of the Toronto Young Men's Christian Association* 2, 3 (March 1888): 18. Clark's lecture was given on February 7, 1888, and was entitled "The Dangers of Early Manhood." It was reported to be "a great success" in the same issue.

<sup>22</sup> Michael Bliss, "'Pure Books on Impure Subjects': Pre-Freudian Sexual Ideas in Canada," in *Studies in Canadian Social History*, ed. Michael Horn and Ronald Sabourin (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), note 59, p. 346.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 334.

<sup>24</sup> G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Horrors of the Half-Known Life: Male Attitudes Toward Women and Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), p. 181.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 181.

<sup>26</sup> Arthur J. Vander, James H. Sherman and Dorothy S. Luciano, *Human Physiology*, 4th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1985), p. G-44.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

the blood for the creation of new life. Another system, popularized in North America in the 1830's by health reformer Sylvester Graham,<sup>28</sup> held all sexual activity responsible for the release of large amounts of vital energy. Bliss contends that while many authors like Stall confused both systems, it was generally agreed that the expenditure of semen drained the limited amount of vital energy in the human body.<sup>29</sup>

These two systems were given additional backing by another two theories. The Lamarckian theory, traceable to Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, held that men, via their sperm, and women, via their ova, could transmit mental and physical characteristics acquired during their lifetime to their offspring. By the nineteenth century it was generally believed that mental impressions, such as fear, anger and sexual desire could also be transmitted by the father and/or the mother to offspring at conception, or by the mother during gestation. The Lamarckian theory regarding the transmission of acquired characteristics gained much popularity; it even influenced Darwin, but fell into disrepute at the beginning of the twentieth century. The theory of the conservation of energy was first expounded by Helmholtz in 1847. Taken up by such famous nineteenth-century theorists as Herbert Spencer, the conservation theory held that energy used up by one organ "reduced by the same degree the amount of energy available to other organs of the body."<sup>30</sup> Thus, the expenditure of energy in one direction forced the body's other organs to economize the amount of energy they used in another. Many men opposing higher education for women used this theory to argue that study was inappropriate for women because the energy required by their brains would be directed away from their reproductive organs. Women thus became unwomanly.<sup>31</sup> In men, the reverse was often argued. Energy used up by their reproductive organs directed it away from their brain, making them

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<sup>28</sup> For information on Graham, see Steven Nissenbaum, *Sex, Diet and Debility in Jacksonian America* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1980).

<sup>29</sup> Bliss, "'Pure Books'," p. 334.

<sup>30</sup> Janet Sayers, *Biological Politics* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1982), p. 12.

<sup>31</sup> The argument against women's higher education was put forth in England by Henry Maudsley, and in the United States by Edward H. Clarke. These men believed that mental exertion in women from puberty onward would cause menstrual discomfort, nervousness, sterility, and an over-all masculinization of young women. See Joan N. Burstyn, *Victorian Education and the Ideal of Womanhood* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1984), pp. 84-98.

unmanly. It is indeed ironic that the same theory which was cited to prevent women from attaining education was used to restrain men from ejaculation.

Vitalist concepts proved to be a boon to Christian Physiologists, for they physiologically upheld what the Christian Church had long been teaching in regard to human sexuality. Traditional Christian doctrine held sperm to be sacred because it was intended for procreation. In concert with this belief, Stall also expounded that sperm was a precious fluid divinely destined for reproduction. Christian doctrine approved of heterosexual sexual intercourse only within marriage and usually only for reproductive purposes.<sup>32</sup> Although prepared to make some theoretical allowances for marital relations apart from reproductive purposes, Stall also believed that sexual activity was most appropriate for men and women when it was connected to heterosexual, sexual intercourse for reproduction within marriage. Christian doctrine even held that the punishment for the violation of divine laws would be terrible and inexorable, for the Bible itself promised that up to seven future generations would be punished for one individual's sin. Stall likewise held that the consequences of non-reproductive sex were a physiological manifestation of divine punishment. Venereal disease, for example, was considered by Stall to be common among those individuals "who defy the laws of God and man, and expose themselves to the immediate judgements which God visits upon those who transgress moral restraints, social rights, and physical laws."<sup>33</sup> Biblical promises of punishment meted out to the descendants of sinners fully supported Stall's belief in the law of heredity which purported to smite the descendants of a sexual transgressor with mental and physical disease and sexual incontinence. Here, then, in the harmony between Christian theological thought and scientific theory lay all the more reason to limit the expenditure of semen. Vitalist concepts were, therefore, seen as religiously and physiologically acting in concert with divine and natural laws.

A true Christian Physiologist who saw the necessity of making men and women aware of

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<sup>32</sup> The Protestant Churches very slowly moved toward an acceptance of sexual relations within marriage apart from reproduction from the Reformation onward. The Catholic Church, however, gave some degree of grudging permission to sexual relations within marriage apart from reproduction in the Second Vatican Council's encyclical *Gaudium et Spes*, issued in 1965.

<sup>33</sup> Stall, *Young Man*, p. 113.



the harmonious relationship between Christian theological thought and scientific theory, Stall was not content to turn to God alone. As proof of the correctness of his advice, he turned to Christian medical men who had likewise "discovered" the existence of this harmony and who had authored strikingly similar texts. Among many others, Stall cites the words of the well-known Drs. William Acton, author of *The Functions and Disorders of the Reproductive Organs, in Childhood, Youth, Adult Age, and Advanced Life, Considered in their Physiological, Social and Moral Relations* (1857), John Cowan, author of *The Science of A New Life* (1869), Augustus K. Gardner, author of *Conjugal Sins Against the Laws of Life and Health* (1870), Dio Lewis, author of *Chastity* (1874), and John Harvey Kellogg, author of *Plain Facts For Old and Young* (1877).<sup>34</sup> These physicians were also personally involved in social purity reform in various ways. Acton's investigation of English prostitutes contributed toward the climate of concern over the incidence of syphilis in the general population. His contribution led to the more stringent regulation of prostitution in the Contagious Diseases Act of 1866.<sup>35</sup> Like Stall, Acton opposed prostitution on religious grounds, but believed that the medical examination and regulation of prostitutes were ultimately preferable to widespread venereal disease. Cowan was an American post-Civil War reformer who condemned sexual license and recommended that woman's status, in accordance with Christianity, be elevated by opening all the professions to her. Gardner considered his efforts to condemn all forms of non-reproductive sex as a religious mission, dedicating *Conjugal Sins* to "The Reverend Clergy of the United States." Lewis and his wife were both influenced the Bostonian Moral Education Association, an organization which spoke out against the sexual exploitation of single and married women. Kellogg, who remained continent all his married life,<sup>36</sup> attacked a host of social evils, some of which included non-reproductive sex, polygamy, divorce and flirtation. Kellogg also treated men and women for sexual problems at his Battle Creek Sanitarium in Michigan.

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<sup>34</sup> John Cowan, *The Science of a New Life* (New York: J. S. Ogilvie Publishing Company, 1919, first pub. 1869); Augustus K. Gardner, *Conjugal Sins Against the Laws of Life and Health* (New York: Arno Press, 1974, first pub. 1870); Dio Lewis, *Chastity* (New York: Arno Press, 1974, first pub. 1874), and John Harvey Kellogg, *Plain Facts for Old and Young* (Buffalo: The Heritage Press, 1974, first pub. 1877).

<sup>35</sup> Marcus, p. 3. See also Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Woman, Class and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 41-47, 77-82.

<sup>36</sup> Bliss, "Pure Books," note 42, p. 344.

Stall was quite dependent on his sources for his arguments concerning sexual continence and incontinence in men. Often, passages in Stall's four books resemble a paraphrased and even plagiarized compendium of the afore-mentioned medical authorities' texts. At times Stall even quoted entire pages of text from some of these authors. In certain instances, Stall neither cited the original author nor indicated that the words he used may have belonged to someone else. Speaking of an overworked sexual imagination, Lewis states in *Chastity* :

How humiliating the thought that a single passion, the organ of which lies in the very bottom and back part of the brain, should absorb the whole man! The intellectual faculties, the moral and religious sentiments, become only attendants and slaves.<sup>37</sup>

Speaking of the aggressive sexual nature of certain men, Stall echoed Lewis in stating:

Why allow a single passion, the controlling organ of which lies at the very bottom and lowest part of the brain, to usurp and control the entire man, dominate over every other faculty, and render the physical, intellectual and moral faculties and religious sentiments only attendants and slaves!<sup>38</sup>

Although he was quite dependent upon the medical authorities to whom he referred, Stall was also fairly selective when choosing among their arguments regarding sexual continence and incontinence in men. As I have already pointed out, Stall viewed nocturnal emissions as necessary to healthy men as long as they did not occur more than once every two or three weeks. Stall based this view on Acton's authority alone. In contrast, most of the remaining four authors considered nocturnal emissions extremely unhealthy. In addition, Stall also took more liberty with the belief that the expenditure of semen in marital intercourse was intended solely for reproductive purposes. Although Stall feared the very real ensuing dangers of unwanted pregnancy, the decline of the wife's health, abortion and artificial contraception, he did allow for a theoretical distinction between the amative and the propagative elements of marital intercourse depending on the health, willingness and desire of husband *and* wife.

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<sup>37</sup> Lewis, p. 108.

<sup>38</sup> Stall, *Husband*, p. 93. Nineteenth-century authors commonly reproduced, in their own works, authorities' arguments and words without citation. Nellie McClung is an example of one thinker who used many of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's arguments without naming her as the source for these arguments. My thanks to Ruth Pierson for pointing this out to me.

This perspective reflected the "relatively moderate" expression of sexually and socially respectable marital behaviour among men of the upper and middle classes in the latter half of the nineteenth century.<sup>39</sup> Acton<sup>40</sup> was the only one of the five authorities with whom I deal who supported this perspective. Acton believed that it was imperative for single men to remain continent while married men could be more "moderate" in sexual relations with their wives.<sup>41</sup> Stall showed signs of likewise discriminating between unmarried and married men when he theoretically distinguished between the amative and the propagative elements of marital intercourse. But like Acton, he was unable to clearly define just how frequently the expenditure of semen could occur in marriage. Their inability to regulate the frequency of sexual intercourse for each married couple probably was the reason why both Stall and Acton accepted love, rather than lust, as the proper grounds for the marital relation when it was not directly connected with procreation. In recognition of the dangers associated with slipping into all too frequent expenditures of semen, both men turned to Jeremy Taylor, a seventeenth-century bishop and theologian recognized for significant advances in Christian sexual teaching, to show the importance of love. Taylor obviously influenced both these men, for Acton and Stall quoted the following passage from one of Taylor's treatises:

... there is an appetite to be satisfied, which cannot be done without pleasing that desire; yet, since that desire and satisfaction were intended by nature for other ends, they should never be separated from those ends, but always be joined with all or one of these ends: with the desire for children; to avoid fornication; or to lighten and ease the cares and sadness of household affairs; or to endear each other; but never with a purpose, either in act or desire, to separate the sensuality from the ends which hallow it.<sup>42</sup>

One is made aware by Taylor's definition of love that although a distinction between the amative and the propagative elements of marital intercourse was made, this distinction was not a separation between these two aims of marriage. Love between husband and wife, to Taylor, Acton and Stall, was still intimately connected to offspring, the retention of semen within marital boundaries, re-

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<sup>39</sup> Cominos, p. 21.

<sup>40</sup> Acton is identified by Cominos as a representative of the marital moderation perspective. Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Cominos, p. 24.

<sup>42</sup> In Acton, this passage appears on pages 186-187. In Stall, it appears in *Husband*, p. 90.

sponsibility for home and family, and tenderness between legally married men and women. Thus, the amative element in these men's thought was, in fact, subsumed under the propagative element of marital relations.

Nevertheless, the distinction between the propagative and the amative elements of marital relations is an important one. "Free lovers," like John Humphrey Noyes, who advocated a distinction between the amative and propagative elements of sexual intercourse in married and unmarried men and women, were roundly condemned by Lewis.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, Cowan, Gardner, Lewis, and Kellogg believed in what Cominos calls the "strictest" expression of sexually and socially respectable marital behaviour among men of the upper and middle classes in the latter half of the nineteenth century.<sup>44</sup> This perspective held that marital intercourse for non-reproductive purposes was not permissible even if this period extended to three years. Cowan strongly stated: "*This is the only true solution of God's divine law in the government of the reproductive element in mankind*, and no man, since the time of Adam, has in the remotest manner broken this law, but has in some measure suffered the just penalty attached to it."<sup>45</sup> Yet Stall's theoretical distinction between the propagative and the amative elements of marital intercourse was severely circumscribed. This is illustrated by his claim that "[s]trict continence is not injurious, either to the unmarried or to the married,"<sup>46</sup> and by his belief in the need for many married men to remain strictly continent. He linked strict continence in many men to better health, greater energy, exceptional careers and a longer life span. These were advantages enjoyed by the married continent man who did not lose his "vitalizing sperm" in non-reproductive sexual intercourse.<sup>47</sup> Every married man was advised to remain strictly continent for his own, his wife's and his children's benefit when drunk, when he or his wife were physically or mentally ill, when recovering from illness, when the wife was pregnant, and when

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<sup>43</sup> Lewis, pp. 98-109. Linda Gordon has found that even these "free lovers" rejected the promiscuous expression of love and artificial birth control. They believed in stable, happy relationships, sexual self-control and sexual abstinence. Linda Gordon, *Woman's Body, Woman's Right: A Social History of Birth Control in America* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1977, first pub. 1976), pp. 95-103.

<sup>44</sup> Cominos, p. 21.

<sup>45</sup> Cowan, p. 116.

<sup>46</sup> Stall, *Husband*, p. 79.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

she was convalescing after delivery. These restrictions, in one form or another, appear in all five authorities' texts. Once again, it should be apparent that the amative and the propagative elements of marital intercourse were intimately connected to, rather than separate from, each other.

Stall's theoretical distinction between the amative and the propagative was probably not only influenced by a theological authority such as Taylor and a medical authority such as Acton. Stall would have also been exposed to the late nineteenth century's changing views on marriage, marital relations and the status of wives. These more liberal views were supported, according to John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman, by some upper and middle class women social purity reformers and feminists who favoured passionately tender and refined unions between husbands and wives, greater respect for the wife's sexual rights to her own body and voluntary motherhood for married women. D'Emilio and Freedman see, as well, that such liberalized views would have received approval from those middle class men and women who proposed that some form of birth control should be used to control the frequency of childbearing in order to better the marital relation for the wife.<sup>48</sup> Although Stall did not countenance the use of artificial contraception, he did offer a supposedly safe period of days a month during which it was erroneously believed marital relations would not result in pregnancy. Ironically, the distinction between the amative and the propagative aspects of marital relations would later fuel part of the growing consensual opinion, supported by some Protestant Churches, that artificial contraception within marriage was permissible because fear of pregnancy destroyed the couple's ability to express their love for each other.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), pp. 173-178. D'Emilio and Freedman also note that by the turn of the century, sexual relations between the married men and women in middle class couples had moved beyond the traditional procreative framework. For statistical evidence of falling birth rates, birth control and sexual practices in the lives of American middle class married women, see Clelia Mosher's 1890-1920 study profiled in Carl Degler, "What Ought to Be and What Was: Women's Sexuality in the Nineteenth Century," *American Historical Review* 79 (December 1974): 1467-1490. See also Katherine Bement Davis' doctoral thesis, *Factors in the Sex Life of Twenty-Two Hundred Women* (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1972, first pub. 1929). For a Canadian analysis, see Angus McLaren, "Birth Control and Abortion in Canada, 1870-1920," *Canadian Historical Review* 59, 3 (1978): 319-340.

<sup>49</sup> See Alfred Tyrer, *Sex, Marriage and Birth Control* (Toronto: Marriage Welfare Bureau, 1936), p. 40. Tyrer noted: "Most of the important churches are now committed to the view that sexual intercourse between husbands and wives has a meaning and value of its own...entirely apart from the procreation of children, which can be guarded against when necessary by the intelligent use of harmless contraceptives."

Despite the differences in opinion which existed among and between Stall and his authorities, Stall united with Acton, Cowan, Gardner, Lewis, Kellogg and numerous others to illustrate the physiological importance of semen to the individual man. Having been in turn influenced by previous centuries' European, English and American medical authorities who had dispensed virtually identical information on the benefits of continence and the causes, consequences and treatment of incontinence, the men who influenced Stall's works unanimously concluded that semen constituted the most precious product of the male human body. Indeed, John and Robin Haller say that in the nineteenth century, the medical profession's concern with sexual disorders "evolved from the century's obsession with the sanctity of [human] male semen," an obsession which reached far back into the teachings of such medical ancients as Aristotle, Epicurus, Pythagoras and Hippocrates.<sup>50</sup> My investigation reveals that Stall's sources relied not only on the medical ancients, but on the traditional Christian viewpoint which ordained a man's "seed" to generation, and generation only within marital boundaries. I am aware that this viewpoint was neither originally nor exclusively Christian. Michel Foucault has stated that *The Pedagogue*, the "first great Christian text devoted to sexual practice in married life" which extolled the virtues of procreative monogamy, draws on both scripture and pagan philosophy.<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, it is important to realize that the doctors upon whom Stall relied were Christian men who believed that, as semen's primary purpose lay in the creation of new life within marital boundaries, any violation of this God-given law resulted in not only moral, but physiological consequences to the organism.

Acton quoted a clergyman's advice to strengthen his warning that semen, given its primary purpose, was so important a substance that it should be used sparingly and, then, only within marital boundaries. From boyhood onward, claimed the clergyman, the man should never "cause the fruit of his body to be expended...He should be taught that all such expenditure is a drain upon his

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<sup>50</sup> John S. Haller and Robin M. Haller, *The Physician and Sexuality in Victorian America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974), p. 195.

<sup>51</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 2: *The Use of Pleasure*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1986), p. 15.

whole system, and weakens the powers which God has given him to be employed *only* in the married state."<sup>52</sup> Gardner also looked to clergymen who provided his readers with an example of what could happen when men over-expended their semen within marriage. Were semen incorrectly used in what Stall repeatedly condemned as marital excess, physiological consequences would ensue. In married clergymen, "thoughtlessly anticipating a repayment for all past restraints, in unlimited physical gratification," wrote Gardner, "I have seen no more marked instances of physical and nervous debility and disorganization."<sup>53</sup> And Stall, like Acton, focused on the physical "cost" of the expenditure of semen itself. Acton attributed his married male patients' failing eyesight, back pain and nervousness to marital excess. Stall graphically illustrated the potential fate which awaited some husbands by enumerating examples of the deaths of insects and animals which speedily followed exhaustive mating periods.

Stall's authorities also sought to establish that when retained within the body, semen was an equally miraculous substance. Cosseted in the Holiest of Holies, its religious value was assured because it was not employed for non-reproductive purposes. Contained in the testicles, semen's physiological value was assured because it was thought to contribute greatly to the human male organism, particularly before the age of twenty-five. The lack of knowledge of the endocrine and biofeedback systems may in some way account for the medical authorities' emphasis on the said function of semen. It was believed that when retained, semen augmented the activity of the mind and the body by its supposed reabsorption into the blood. Acton, Cowan, Gardner, Lewis, Kellogg and Stall uniformly concurred with this theory because they had been subject to the views of men such as the "celebrated Swiss physician"<sup>54</sup> Simon Tissot. His famous *Treatise on the Diseases Produced by Onanism* (1758) claimed that there existed a human fluid more vital than blood:

...the seminal fluid, which has so much influence on the strength of the body and on the perfection of digestion which restores it, that the physicians of every age have unani-

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<sup>52</sup> Cited in Acton, p. 44.

<sup>53</sup> Gardner, p. 78.

<sup>54</sup> E. H. Hare, "Masturbatory Insanity: The History of an Idea," *The Journal of Mental Science* 108, 452 (1965): 2. See also Robert H. MacDonald, "The Frightful Consequences of Onanism: Notes on the History of A Delusion," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 28 (1967): 423-31.

mously admitted, that the loss of one ounce of it, enfeebles more than forty ounces of blood.<sup>55</sup>

Stall never refers to Tissot, but it is clear that the five authorities upon whom he relies are greatly affected, either directly or indirectly, by such thinking. Tissot's *Treatise* remained popular and was last printed in 1905.<sup>56</sup> Like Tissot, these five authorities, in addition to Stall, credited semen with the capacity to produce stereotypical physical manliness, i.e., to cause the voice to deepen, the beard to sprout, the muscles to enlarge.<sup>57</sup> This is how the androgynous boy became a man.

In *Functions and Disorders of the Reproductive Organs, in Childhood, Youth, Adult Age, and Advanced Life, Considered in their Physiological, Social and Moral Relations*,<sup>58</sup> Acton gave credence to Tissot. In this work, Acton observed that "semen, after it has been secreted by the testes, must be taken up again and carried into the general circulation, there to produce effects on the system that are only noticed in men and animals who enjoy virility." Furthermore, the "marked difference between castrated and non-castrated animals" proved that semen is a "powerful vital stimulant [which] animates, warms the whole economy, places it in a state of exaltation and orgasm; renders it in some sort more capable of thinking and acting with ascendancy—with a superiority, as we equally observe amongst animals in the rutting season."<sup>59</sup> Cowan concluded that se-

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<sup>55</sup> Simon André Tissot, *Treatise on the Diseases Produced by Onanism*, trans. from the French (New York: Collins and Hannay, 1832, first pub. 1758), p. V. Tissot's equation is a curious one. As far as I know, no reason has been given as to why semen was supposedly *forty* times the equivalent of blood. Interestingly enough, a very similar equation is also found in India. Pat Caplan quotes from a study of the high castes of a Rajasthani village: "Everyone knew that semen was not easily formed; it takes forty days, and *forty* drops of blood to make one drop of semen." [my emphasis] See, Pat Caplan, "Celibacy as Solution? Mahatma Gandhi and Brahmacharya", in *The Cultural Construction of Sexuality*, ed. Pat Caplan (London: Tavistock Publications, 1987), p. 275.

<sup>56</sup> MacDonald, p. 426.

<sup>57</sup> Tissot, p. V-VI.

<sup>58</sup> Acton is also remembered for *A Practical Treatise on Diseases of the Urinary and Generative Organs in Both Sexes*, published in 1841 and the revised and enlarged edition of *Prostitution, considered in its Moral, Social, and Sanitary Aspects, in London and other Large Cities and Garrison Towns, with Proposals for the Control and Prevention of its Attendant Evils*, published in 1870. See Marcus, pp. 1-33. F. Barry Smith, "Sexuality in Britain, 1800-1900: Some Suggested Revisions," in *A Widening Sphere*, ed. Martha Vicinus (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), pp. 182-198, has attempted to discredit Acton as a "reliable guide to sexual behaviour and a less representative example of medical opinion than [Steven] Marcus and others have taken him to be." (p. 185) The fact remains, however, that Acton's prominence in English medical circles, in addition to Stall's—and others'—extensive use of his work makes his advice to men an important part of my analysis. The popularity of Acton's advice to men outlived him. He died in 1875, but *Functions* continued to be published and met with continued success. I am using its eighth edition.

<sup>59</sup> Acton, *Functions*, p. 125.



men's reabsorption into the blood was responsible in the man for voice change, facial hair, physical growth, health, "clearness of brain, a strength of purpose and might of will that the poor miserable sensualist...knows not of."<sup>60</sup> Both Gardener and Lewis agreed, that "*Totus homo semen est.*"<sup>61</sup> Semen was held not only to "communicate life, but also to nourish the individual life."<sup>62</sup> Circulated throughout the body by the blood, semen brought "a new vigor to the vital functions" and lent itself to "the prolongation of existence."<sup>63</sup> Kellogg cited both Acton and Gardner, and quoted Gardner's phrase, "The sperm is the purest extract of the blood."<sup>64</sup> Tissot's equation even appeared on one Canadian social purity reformer's blackboard as late as 1933. Arthur Beall, hired by the Ontario Department of Education to lecture on eugenics and personal hygiene to adolescent boys, chalked in large letters,

The LIFE GLANDS secrete a fluid called the 'LIFE FLUID' a fluid forty times stronger than BLOOD FLUID.

After "many years of experience with the adolescent mind," Beall claimed, "it has been practically demonstrated that a mathematical equivalent makes the only appeal."<sup>65</sup>

The interaction between the belief in sexual continence for men, the importance of semen to men, vitalist concepts and Christian Physiology is best explained by an analysis of the most grievous form of incontinence: masturbation. Various explanations for nineteenth-century authors' emphasis on masturbation have been advanced. Thomas Szasz offers that by the nineteenth century, masturbation overtook witchcraft as a source of societal evil. Alex Comfort believes that medical men's quest for power led them to exercise control over their masturbating patients. Arthur Gilbert concludes that as medical authority outdistanced medical capability in the nineteenth century, mas-

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<sup>60</sup> Cowan, p. 91.

<sup>61</sup> This Latin phrase appears in Gardner, p. 163, and in Lewis, p. 246.

<sup>62</sup> Gardner, p. 163.

<sup>63</sup> Lewis, p. 246.

<sup>64</sup> Kellogg, p. 228.

<sup>65</sup> Arthur Beall, *The Living Temple* (Whitby, Ontario: The A. B. Penhale Publishing Company, 1933), p. 61. Many thanks to Michael Bliss for pointing out Beall's publication to me. For more information on Beall, see Bliss, "How We Used to Learn About Sex," *Macleans*, March 1974, p. 38. Bliss also points out Tissot's importance in Bliss, "Pure Books," p. 334.

turbation provided medical men with an explanation for serious diseases they would not otherwise have.<sup>66</sup> Ronald Walters proposes that the nineteenth-century societal changes, such as larger homes, smaller families and the growth of boarding schools, may have provided more opportunities for masturbation, or may have pushed some to worry that there were more opportunities for masturbation.<sup>67</sup>

While all of these explanations have some merit, not one of them helps to explain why masturbation played such a pivotal role in the advice Christian Physiologists like Stall and his medical sources dispensed to boys and men. I will try to show that as vitalist concepts married religion to physiology, they provided the Christian Physiologist with a great deal of moral and medical ammunition against sexual incontinence in men. The most fascinating evidence of the way in which vitalist concepts were seen as religiously and physiologically acting in concert with divine and natural laws appears in the background to Stall's attack on masturbation. Masturbation, according to Christian sources, was either a venal or mortal sin; Thomas Aquinas considered it worse than fornication. Like Acton, Cowan, Gardner, Lewis and Kellogg, Stall believed that masturbation was the most prevalent sexual sin, or crime, in society. Kellogg called it "the most dangerous of all sexual abuses, because [it was] the most extensively practised."<sup>68</sup> There appeared to be some confusion over whether masturbation was practised by girls and women as well, but the general consensus was that boys and men indulged in it more. All of these authors believed that masturbation was "caused" by ignorance of the evil effects of bad books, lascivious thoughts, "vicious" servants, bad company, excessive solitude, and ignorance of its consequences. Each of Stall's authorities agreed that the consequences of masturbation were physiologically truly horrifying. Making Stall's description of masturbation's consequences look paltry indeed, Kellogg produced the most comprehensive list of 39 general consequences of masturbation which also served to positively identify the

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<sup>66</sup> Thomas Szasz, *The Manufacture of Madness* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970) and Alex Comfort, *The Anxiety Makers* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1967), are summarized in Gilbert, pp. 218-219. Gilbert's article provides a nice summary of current literature dealing with masturbation.

<sup>67</sup> Ronald G. Walters, *Primers for Prudery* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974), p. 40.

<sup>68</sup> Kellogg, p. 315.

masturbator. Kellogg included, as well, a list of 11 consequences specific to boys and men. The general consequences ranged from overall debility to failure of mental capacity, to bashfulness, consumption, acne, paralysis and round shoulders. Among the 11 consequences specific to boys and men were irritation and stricture of the urethra, an enlarged prostate, priapism, impotence, piles, atrophy of the testicles and nocturnal emissions.<sup>69</sup> Perhaps the most frightening consequence of all was that a man who had masturbated, or lived licentiously at any time in his life could transmit to his child at conception, or during gestation in his wife's womb, his "perverted amative-ness."<sup>70</sup> All five agreed that masturbation, being a "habit," could be "cured" in various ways. Acton believed that religion played a large role in the repentance of the individual. Others believed that once instructed on masturbation's evil, the individual should immediately renounce this habit, and proceed with the same strict regimen Stall so carefully outlined in his texts.

Stall's authorities had a phalanx of previous centuries' medical authorities who confirmed that masturbation destroyed the individual's constitution. Lewis conclusively stated that he knew of no "distinguished author, from Hippocrates down," who did not condemn masturbation, and then produced "startling testimony...from eminent men scattered through twenty-three centuries."<sup>71</sup> Contemporary medical historians are convinced they have traced the nineteenth-century medical concern with the loss of semen via masturbation to a popular early eighteenth-century London publication on the religious and physiological consequences of masturbation called *Onania, or the Heinous Sin of Self-Pollution*.<sup>72</sup> Written by an anonymous, discredited clergyman who was not a medical doctor, this pamphlet made its way to North America where it was published in Boston in 1724. Medical historian Robert MacDonald asserts that, "much of the ammunition used by the Victorian writers on masturbation can be traced back to the pamphlet *Onania*."<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., pp. 331-354.

<sup>70</sup> Cowan, p. 357.

<sup>71</sup> Lewis, p. 160.

<sup>72</sup> Hare p. 2, MacDonald, pp. 423-431, Gilbert, pp. 219-220.

<sup>73</sup> MacDonald, p. 423.

Primarily a religious pamphlet, *Onania* emphasized more of the sinful nature of masturbation rather than its physical destructiveness. The anonymous author deemed masturbation pernicious because it violated moral laws and hindered marriage and procreation. One can see in *Onania* the inklings of Stall's and his five authorities' preoccupation with masturbation, its causes, its consequences and its cures.<sup>74</sup> The clergyman author was preoccupied with masturbation because he believed it to be prevalent in society "especially among the Male Youth of the Nation." He identified ignorance, secrecy and disbelief in punishment to be the causes of masturbation. Masturbation's consequences were considered by the clergyman to be horrifying, painful and inevitable. The cure he recommended was both spiritual and physical—repentance, renunciation, and the strict regimentation of the body.<sup>75</sup>

In spite of some attempts to challenge the pamphlet, *Onania* held the field on masturbation until the mid-eighteenth century when Tissot published his *Treatise*. Tissot accepted masturbation as the most physiologically harmful of all non-reproductive sexual activities because his views on the loss of semen had been influenced by *Onania*. Tissot dismissed the anonymous author for many theological and moral "frivolities,"<sup>76</sup> but adopted several of his ideas. Unlike *Onania*, Tissot's *Treatise* was primarily a medical work, but it was also written especially to condemn masturbation in men. After concluding that semen was forty times stronger than blood, he asked his readers: "Can we doubt...of its [semen's] action on the whole body, and not perceive the many bad consequences with which the emission of so precious a fluid must be attended?"<sup>77</sup> Tissot believed that all seminal emissions were, to a certain extent, attended with bad consequences, but hierarchized these consequences according to the ways in which semen could be lost. Semen discharged in the

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<sup>74</sup> I have outlined Stall's preoccupation with masturbation, and his account of its causes, consequences and cures in Chapter I. See also, Acton, Cowan, Gardner, Lewis, and Kellogg.

<sup>75</sup> MacDonald, p. 425. Acton believed that religion was an aid to continence, praising the Church of Rome for her teachings on the subject of sexual continence. Acton included 22 such teachings and claimed that if the phraseology were Protestantized, these teachings would be worthily adopted. Acton, pp. 22-25. Kellogg urged the reader to pray: "At the first suggestion of evil thought, send up a mental prayer to Him whose ear is always open." Kellogg, p. 214.

<sup>76</sup> Tissot, p. 17.

<sup>77</sup> Tissot, p. VI.

"natural way," meaning heterosexual sexual intercourse, produced "serious symptoms." Semen discharged by "unnatural means", meaning masturbation, nocturnal emissions, pre-marital and extra-marital sex ("fornication"), and conjugal excess produced "much more serious" symptoms. But masturbation, acknowledged Tissot, produced the worst "diseases."<sup>78</sup>

Tissot warned of six main consequences of masturbation outlined by the anonymous author of *Onania*, but claimed that they could also result from nocturnal emissions, fornication and marital excess. These six main consequences were said to be: i) the complete enfeeblement of the "intellectual faculties," ii) the entire failure of "the powers of the body," including epilepsy, iii) "the most acute pains" in all parts of the body, iv) pale and pimpled skin, v) genital dysfunction such as impotence, premature ejaculation, gonorrhoea,<sup>79</sup> vi) pain, swelling, sterility and intestinal derangement leading to constipation, hemorrhoids or diarrhea.<sup>80</sup> Tissot also provided the reader with the familiar strict regimen on how to maintain continence. The man must have plenty of fresh air, eat easily digestible food such as vegetables and fruit. Meat, wine and coffee should be avoided.<sup>81</sup> He should sleep well but never linger in bed, particularly a feather bed. The man should evacuate bodily wastes regularly, distract his mind from his passion by cultivating his intellect, avoid "licentious books," and take cold baths for relief from that passion.<sup>82</sup> Tissot likewise accepted some of the clergyman's methods of refraining from sexual excess; the author of *Onania* advised those who renounced their sin of masturbation to take cold baths and consume a milk diet.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. Tissot does mention that women also have "emissions," but he does not elaborate. The consequences of masturbation for women were similar to those of men, and included hysteria and a heavy vaginal discharge. His target audience, however, is men. Tissot spends only three pages on the consequences of masturbation in women. See, Tissot, pp. 28-31.

<sup>79</sup> MacDonald, p. 431, claims that the link between masturbation and gonorrhoea may have been a medical and etymological mistake. Gonorrhoea was thought to be a discharge of semen; this ambiguity led to confusion between gonorrhoea contracted by sexual intercourse and seminal emissions.

<sup>80</sup> Tissot, p. 17. Tissot is referring to *Onania*, which he believes is authored by Dr. Bekker of London. E. H. Hare maintains that *Onania's* author remained anonymous. See, Hare, p. 2.

<sup>81</sup> The idea that diet could help maintain sexual continence was actively taken up in the United States during the early nineteenth century by Sylvester Graham. Today, Graham crackers innocuously occupy our supermarket shelves without any hint of the role they played in North American sexual history. For more information on Graham, continence and diet, see, Nissenbaum. The same could be said for Kellogg, one of Stall's authorities who invented corn flakes. See, Kellogg.

<sup>82</sup> Tissot, pp. 60-87.

<sup>83</sup> MacDonald, p. 425.

Had Tissot not turned to *Onania*, this publication would have been forgotten.<sup>84</sup> E. H. Hare believes that Tissot's status as an "unimpeachable medical authority," who was also the Pope's advisor on epidemics, gave more credence to *Onania's* arguments against masturbation than the pamphlet deserved. The views on masturbation outlined in Tissot's *Treatise* had a profound influence on medical thought. In the wake of the appearance of the *Treatise*, the number of publications on masturbation burgeoned throughout Europe and the United States. Acton, for example, specifically referred to Tissot on several occasions to condemn masturbation, while the good doctors Cowan, Lewis, Gardner and Kellogg all showed their indebtedness to Tissot by reproducing virtually all of his physiological arguments against masturbation as their own. As Hare puts it, the Christian Church "had always taught the sinfulness of masturbation," and by the end of the eighteenth century, "its harmfulness was...asserted by a considerable, perhaps a major part of the medical profession."<sup>85</sup>

Even more interesting is that Tissot appeared to back the anonymous clergyman's opinion that the physiological consequences of masturbation occurred as a result of God's punishment. Following the clergyman's opinion, Tissot refers to the Old Testament story of Onan. The story which was the cause of so much consternation concerns itself with the reason for God's punishment of Onan, son of Judah. Judah's and Shua's eldest son, Er, displeases Yahweh for some unknown reason and is slain. Judah then orders his second son, Onan, to impregnate Er's widow, Tamar, so that a son may be produced for the dead brother. "'Take your brother's wife,'" commands Judah,

'and do your duty as her brother-in-law, to produce a child for your brother.' But Onan, knowing the child would be his, spilt his seed on the ground every time he slept with his brother's wife, to avoid providing a child for his brother. What he did was offensive to Yahweh, he brought about his death also.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Hare, p. 2.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>86</sup> Genesis 38: 8-11 in *The Jerusalem Bible*, ed. Alexander Jones (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1968), p. 44.

John Noonan notes that the original Hebrew omits the words "his seed," but that most English translations, under the influence of St. Jerome, include them.<sup>87</sup> Noonan suggests that Onan was punished by death because, in refusing to impregnate Tamar, he disobeyed his father and the levirate law. Onan evidently appears to be practising the contraceptive act of coitus interruptus, not masturbation. Noonan believes that given the lack of a specific Talmudic commandment against contraception, the contrast between Onan's conduct and other explicit Jewish marriage regulations, and the Old Testament's need to strictly circumscribe other forms of sexual misconduct, the practice of contraception is not the reason Onan is slain by Yahweh.<sup>88</sup> Hare is certain that the author of *Onania* incorrectly linked the story of Onan to masturbation rather than to coitus interruptus. Regardless, this was the first time "onanism," "masturbation" and "self-abuse" were used interchangeably.<sup>89</sup>

If we accept that Onan was engaging in coitus interruptus, not masturbation, and was slain for his disobedience toward his father and the law, it is not clear why the author of *Onania* believed that Onan's death occurred because God was displeased with his masturbation. The clergyman chose the term "onania" because he could not think "of any other word which would so well put the reader in mind both of the sin and its punishment at once, as this."<sup>90</sup> Tissot wholeheartedly accepts that onanism and masturbation are one and the same. Punishment by death was, indeed, a religious as well as a physiological consequence of masturbation. He concludes that the author of Genesis "has left us the history of the crime of Onan, doubtless to mention his punishment,"<sup>91</sup> and later confirms that,

[t]hose who believe in a special providence, account for it [punishment by death for masturbation] by a special ordinance of the Deity to punish this crime...Hippocrates who, in speaking of a disease regarded by the Scythians a special punishment from the Deity, makes this excellent remark, 'it is true this disease came from God, but it comes from

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<sup>87</sup> Noonan, p. 34.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 10, 35-36.

<sup>89</sup> Hare, p. 2.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., note 5, p. 20. Hare is quoting from *Onania*.

<sup>91</sup> Tissot, p. VI.

him only like all other diseases: they are a consequence of the law of nature which governs everything.<sup>92</sup>

Stall, like Lewis and Kellogg, also connected masturbation with onanism, naming the sin variously as "secret vice," "solitary vice," "self-pollution," "masturbation," and, of course, "Onanism." Stall noted that "for a similar offence, nearly four thousand years ago, God punished Onan with death (Genesis xxxviii, 3-10)."<sup>93</sup> By the nineteenth century, onanism was variously confused with homosexuality. This confusion may have been symptomatic of the nineteenth century's concern with all forms of non-reproductive sexual activity. Or, the mix-up may have reflected the still imprecise medical categorization of homosexuality.<sup>94</sup> The confusion with homosexuality is understandable because masturbation and mutual masturbation were often recorded as being practised among boys, and Stall, like his authorities before him, was concerned that a boy could be "taught" how to masturbate by another. Acton cited as proof a letter from an anonymous writer who complained:

I went to a large public school, and there, of course, became acquainted with the practice of masturbation, and almost equally as a matter of course, indulged in the habit, and without a thought of its baneful consequences, have practised it for years.<sup>95</sup>

Onanism was also confused with contraception in the practice of coitus interruptus. Noonan agrees, having found that this biblical story provides "a striking example by which later commentators, Jewish and Christian, could demonstrate the sinfulness of contraception."<sup>96</sup> Lewis quotes the story of Onan on the authority of another physician named Mayer, to tell his readers that withdrawal "before the emission occurs is injurious to both parties." Lewis, like Gardner and Kellogg, thus concludes that "conjugal onanism" is a most injurious vice.<sup>97</sup>

Stall, then, was certainly on the track well-worn by religious and medical men when he

<sup>92</sup> Tissot, pp. 45-46.

<sup>93</sup> Stall, *What A Young Boy Ought To Know* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1909, first pub. 1897), p. 108.

<sup>94</sup> Vein L. Bullough and Martha Voght, "Homosexuality and Its Confusion with the 'Secret Sin' in Pre-Freudian America," *Journal of the History of Medicine* 28 (1973): 145.

<sup>95</sup> Acton, p. 43.

<sup>96</sup> Noonan, p. 36.

<sup>97</sup> Lewis, p. 89. See also, Gardner, p. 88; Kellogg, p. 251.



warned that no boy or man "can toy with the exposed portions of his reproductive system without finally suffering very serious consequences."<sup>98</sup> During the century in which he authored his books, medical doctors confirmed the belief that masturbation was linked to bodily and mental disease. In fact, a particular kind of "masturbatory insanity" was said to affect victims of self-abuse. It has been suggested that as asylums became more common by the end of the eighteenth century, doctors would have been more likely to see patients masturbating, thereby concluding that masturbation did indeed cause insanity.<sup>99</sup> Dr. Benjamin Rush, an American Professor of Medicine and one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, reported in 1812 that four cases of madness he investigated between 1804 and 1807 could be attributed to masturbation.<sup>100</sup> Acton cites the report of a Dr. Ritchie, which made the same link between masturbation and insanity. Ritchie stated that those individuals in the asylum with a "pale complexion, emaciated form, the sloughing gait, the clammy palm, the glassy or leaden eye, and the averted gaze, indicate the lunatic victim to this vice."<sup>101</sup> Cowan cites the 1865 Annual Report of Dr. Joseph Workman, superintendent at the Toronto Asylum for the Insane, who likewise concluded that those individuals with a feeble pulse, clammy skin, pallid countenance and an unsteady gaze were masturbators. Workman stated,

I have recently made a careful scrutiny of the character of the cases of insane men on behalf of whom applications have been made, and from friends and physicians details, in our circular form, have been received. The result has been frightful. I hesitate to state the proportion in which—I feel fully assured or morally certain—secret vice is present.<sup>102</sup>

So prevalent were these symptoms thought to be that many, like Stall, believed that although they could be confused with other diseases, "a competent physician ought, at all times, to be able to judge accurately in any given case of the cause, or causes which have produced the results."<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Stall, *Young Boy*, p. 107.

<sup>99</sup> Hare, p. 12.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>101</sup> Ritchie, quoted in Acton, p. 63. I did not find any mention of Ritchie in Hare's article. Hare believes that these hallmarks of the said masturbator were actually signs of what was later diagnosed as adolescent schizophrenia. Hare, p. 8.

<sup>102</sup> Workman, quoted in Cowan, p. 355. Bliss notes that given nineteenth-century medical teaching, there was little Canadian doctors would find objectional in the *Self and Sex Series*. Bliss, "Pure Books," pp. 323-333.

<sup>103</sup> Stall, *Young Boy*, p. 115.

Stall likewise believed, on the authority of a Dr. Guernsey, that masturbators, along with those suffering from syphilis, filled asylums, prisons and hospitals.<sup>104</sup> Physicians' findings were similarly echoed by the Canadian social purity reformer Rev. George Douglas who assured his audience in 1895 that solitary vice launched "emasculated ruin into asylums of hopeless insanity, collapsing in premature death." To confirm this, Douglas stated,

On the authority of our leading experts and on the authority of one of Ontario's greatest physicians, I affirm that this unsheathed sword overhangs almost every family where young life abides on this American continent.<sup>105</sup>

In the 1930's Beall taught classrooms of boys that masturbation led to insanity and compared it to the bleeding away of the brain. According to Beall, there were several hospitals for the insane in Brockville, Kingston, Whitby, Toronto, Mimico, Hamilton and London filled with large numbers of masturbators. He told of unfortunate Henry from Perth County who refused to stop masturbating and "went out of his mind; and they took him to the Hospital for the Insane, and there he is still." Because Henry refused to stop masturbating, the doctors were reduced to castrating him to keep him alive.<sup>106</sup>

Beall may not have been exaggerating the drastic measures to which Henry's doctors turned. The medical profession in the nineteenth century generally supported the efficacy of the regimen recommended by the author of *Onania* and by Tissot to cure the individual man from en-

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<sup>104</sup> Stall, relying on a Dr. Guernsey in Stall, *Young Man*, p. 141.

<sup>105</sup> George Douglas, *Thou Art the Man!* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1895), pp. 34-35. The physician to whom Douglas alludes was probably Workman's successor, Daniel Clark, who also spoke out against masturbation. Clark urged "parents, preachers, philanthropists and physicians...to use every legitimate means at their disposal to crush out a national curse. This can only be done by educating the public mind to its [masturbation's] enormity and the direful results." Daniel Clark, comp., *Report of the Medical Superintendent of the Asylum for the Insane, Toronto for the Year Ending 30th September 1877* (Toronto: Hunter, Rose and Co., 1878). p. 21. There were a few medical men, like Stephen Lett, Clark's assistant, and later Medical Superintendent to the Homewood Retreat in Guelph, Ontario, who came to believe that masturbation was a symptom, and not a cause of insanity. See, Stephen Lett, M.D., "The Relationship of Insanity to Masturbation," *Canada Lancet* 19 (August 1887): 360-363.

<sup>106</sup> Beall, pp. 63-65. Bliss refers to the same story in "Pure Books'," mentioning that when Beall died in 1939, "the Globe and Mail hailed him as 'one of the best informed men on educational matters in Canada.'" Bliss, "Pure Books'," pp. 338-339. In 1932, a book which acknowledged its debt to the *Self and Sex* Series and was "Dedicated to all Children," counseled little ones to never roughly handle their private parts. "Every human being has to be careful about this as long as life lasts. The older you grow, the more careful you must be, for if these parts are roughly treated, or handled at all when not needful, you can lose your health and strength and even your mind." See, H. A. Guerber, *Yourself and Your House Wonderful* (Toronto: The John C. Winston Company, 1932), p. 285. Many thanks to Ruth Pierson for providing me with this book.

gaging in masturbation, but mechanical and surgical techniques were sometimes resorted to. Stall does speak of straight-jackets, fastening hands behind the back, tying hands to bedposts and walls by ropes, chains and rings as methods used to prevent masturbation. He does not elaborate on the "extreme measures" also used to "save the person from total mental and physical self-destruction,"<sup>107</sup> but they may well have included the following. Acton recommended cauterization of the urethra with silver nitrate for masturbation and nocturnal emissions.<sup>108</sup> Others recommended a plaster cast made to fit upon the human male genitals.<sup>109</sup> Yet others recommended faradization of the spine or blistering the prepuce.<sup>110</sup> Some, like the Canadian Dr. Maurice Bucke, considered circumcision.<sup>111</sup> A well known Canadian social reformer of the late nineteenth century, Bucke was the also the Superintendent for the London Asylum. Likewise accepting that masturbation caused insanity, he eventually tried to cure patients by capitalizing on a technique termed male infibulation.<sup>112</sup> Male infibulation involved piercing the prepuce with wire to prevent its retraction behind the glans penis. Bucke, following the example of the British Dr. Yellowlees, infibulated the prepuces of 15 men in 1877 with silver wire in the hope that erections would be "so painful that it

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<sup>107</sup> Stall, *Young Boy*, p. 117.

<sup>108</sup> Acton, p. 113. Acton also recommended this treatment for a "disease"—popularized by Claude Francois Lallemand in France—called spermatorrhoea, which Stall does not take up. See, Claude Francois Lallemand, *A Practical Treatise on the Causes, Symptoms, and Treatment of Spermatorrhoea*, trans. Henry John McDougal (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1848 first pub. 1836-1842). Spermatorrhoea was a vague catch-all phrase for an excessive discharge of semen caused by masturbation, nocturnal emissions and venereal excesses which was attended with neither excitement nor erection. The consequences were the same as those produced by masturbation. Charles Drysdale took up some of Lallemand's ideas in England, producing a work entitled *Elements of Social Science; or physical, sexual and natural religion. An exposition of the true cause and only cure of the three primary social evils: poverty, prostitution, and celibacy* in 1854. Drysdale thought sexual continence most unhealthy, and remained convinced that sexual intercourse cured spermatorrhoea. His book led the young Havelock Ellis to believe that he had contracted spermatorrhoea. At this point, Ellis concluded that the only two courses left open to him were the tomb or the seminary. For more information on Lallemand, Drysdale and Ellis, see Edward Brecher, *The Sex Researchers* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969), pp. 17-20. For additional treatments for spermatorrhoea, see Gail Pat Parsons, "Equal Treatment for All: American Medical Remedies for Male Sexual Problems: 1850-1900," *Journal of the History of Medicine* 32 (January 1977): 64-68.

<sup>109</sup> Parsons, p. 63.

<sup>110</sup> Hare, p. 10.

<sup>111</sup> Wendy Mitchinson, "R. M. Bucke, A Victorian Asylum Superintendent," *Ontario History* 68, 4 (December 1981): 247. Ramsay Cook believes that Bucke's wiring operations on men and his gynaecological operations on women to "cure" insanity constituted a departure from this doctor's "generally compassionate attitude to his patients." Ramsay Cook, *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985) p. 95.

<sup>112</sup> Hare, note 23, p. 10.

would be practically impossible and emission therefore extremely unlikely."<sup>113</sup> Bucke also placed leather mitts upon his patients hands to prevent them from removing the wire; when this proved futile in one patient, the mitts were tied over his head. Bucke's experiments were ultimately unsuccessful, for the patients continued to masturbate after they healed while others had to have the wires removed due to pain and swelling.<sup>114</sup> In some cases, castration was performed, but the practice was quickly discontinued.<sup>115</sup>

Hare has found that in the last 15 years of the nineteenth century, masturbation was linked more to neurasthenia—a broad, imprecise term to denote nervous debility caused by a drain in nerve force—than to insanity. Richard von Kraft-Ebbing, who authored the classic *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886), and who was cited as an advocate of continence by Stall, admitted that masturbation "injures" the mind.<sup>116</sup> Freud likewise emphasized the connection, as did one of his followers, Ernest Jones,<sup>117</sup> a pathologist at the Toronto Hospital for the Insane, the first director of its Psychiatric Out-Patient Clinic, and an associate professor of psychiatry at the University of Toronto between 1908 and 1913.<sup>118</sup> Even Canada's premier physician, William Osler, stated that "sexual excess, particularly masturbation," could cause hysteria and neurasthenia.<sup>119</sup> By the thirties, the "bold assertions" concerning masturbation were "emasculated and...coupled with the opinion that

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<sup>113</sup> Yellowlees, quoted in Mitchinson, p. 247.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Mitchinson says that "[i]n extreme cases physicians had been known to castrate their male patients." Ibid., p. 246. Another historian cites a specific instance of castration as a cure for masturbation. *The Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* reported the case of a twenty-three-year-old man castrated by a doctor who did not have the instruments necessary for the cauterization of the patient's urethra. See Parsons, p. 63.

<sup>116</sup> Vern L. Bullough and Bonnie Bullough, *Sin, Sickness and Sanity: A History of Sexual Attitudes* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1977), p. 63. *Psychopathia Sexualis* proved to be so popular that two new translations appeared in the United States in 1965.

<sup>117</sup> Hare, p. 9.

<sup>118</sup> Thomas E. Brown, "Dr. Ernest Jones, Psychoanalysis, and the Canadian Medical Profession, 1908-1913" in *Medicine in Canadian Society*, ed. S. E. D. Shortt (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1981), pp. 315-360. Brown portrays Jones as an eccentric, sexual rebel who tried to convince the dour Canadian medical establishment of the validity of Freud's ideas to little avail. Besides the weather, what irritated Jones about Toronto was its intellectual atmosphere. Jones wrote in 1908, "It was not merely that I found myself back in the Biblical and Victorian atmosphere of my boyhood—that would have been bad enough to someone bent on emancipation—but it was the dead uniformity that I found so tedious: one knew beforehand everyone's opinion on every subject, so there was a complete absence of mental stimulation or exchange of thought." (p. 322.)

<sup>119</sup> From the 1909 edition of Osler's *The Principles and Practices of Medicine*, quoted in Bliss, "Pure Books," p. 333.

the harmful effects of masturbation [were] not due to the act itself but to worry over 'exaggerated opinions' of its consequences."<sup>120</sup> Alfred Tyrer, a Canadian Anglican minister with forty-five years of experience in church work, who, like Stall, wrote much like a medical doctor, reflected this change in his popular *Sex, Marriage and Birth Control* (1936). Tyrer dedicated his book in part to "those Doctors who are too busy to attempt the reeducation of patients." Tyrer believed that masturbation was common in both sexes, but because their sex drive was stronger, more men than women practised it. Interestingly enough, Tyrer does not blame physicians for publicizing the link between masturbation and insanity, but points the finger at quacks, and those

[W]ell-meaning, but ignorant, evangelists of one kind or another, going up and down the land, [who] often dwelt on the matter in meetings advertised 'for men only'. They did infinitely more harm by the groundless fears they aroused than they did good.<sup>121</sup>

Teachings about the insane asylum and God's punishment were "a lot of silly nonsense." To Tyrer, the main danger lay in the effects such teachings had on the individual: guilt, self-reproach and feelings of inferiority. He counseled that masturbation was harmless when practised in moderation, approximately once or twice a week. He rang the familiar warning bell, however, in stating, "The one all important precept to observe is, DO NOT CARRY IT TO EXCESS: BE WISELY MODERATE." Excess could lead to "undesirable" physical and social conditions.<sup>122</sup>

Having tried to establish the way in which vitalist concepts were seen as religiously and physiologically acting in concert with divine and natural laws in the background to Stall's attack on masturbation, I will now offer three further hypotheses as to why masturbation continued to be important to Christian Physiologists. First, masturbation was the most reviled of all forms of non-reproductive sexual activity, and was considered the most damaging way in which a man could expend his semen because it was an act over which the social body had the least amount of control.

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<sup>120</sup> Hare, p. 9.

<sup>121</sup> Tyrer, p. 92. Perhaps Tyrer was thinking not only of Rev. George Douglas, but of Rev. W. J. Hunter as well. Hunter apparently lectured to 1500 men a night at the St. James Methodist Church in Montréal on masturbation, puberty and prostitution. See, Gary Kinsman, *The Regulation of Desire* (Montréal: Black Rose Books, 1987), p. 89. See also, W. J. Hunter, *Manhood Wrecked and Rescued* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1895).

<sup>122</sup> Tyrer, pp. 92-95.

As masturbation was thought to lead to even greater sexual incontinence, and hence, greater social impurity, masturbation proved to be extremely distressing to social purity reformers and medical men. But as white, Christian gentlemen from the upper and middle class sectors of Western society, reformers and physicians needed to encourage social purity not only because of their personal moral convictions, but also because social impurity challenged their bourgeois status in society.

Stall, and Acton, Cowan, Gardner, Lewis and Kellogg before him, were caught within certain social dislocations which were edging society toward a new order in which Anglo-Saxon Christian bourgeois hegemony could not be guaranteed. It is quite possible that Christian Physiologists feared these dislocations because they virtually assured that semen would be expended or was already being expended outside the context of the family, the very foundation of nineteenth-century patriarchal and bourgeois hegemony. Some of these social dislocations were: the movement to free women from the private sphere and its perceived corollary of family disruption; fluctuating economic conditions; the longer period of time during which young adults remained unmarried; the increasing number of single men and women living in cities; the greater numbers of single women entering the urban work force; the increase in unchaperoned contact between the sexes; the increase in "other" textual discourses, such as romance novels, plays, and scandal sheets; the heightened challenge to sexual continence from those thinkers who equated it with repression and imbalance; evidence of the increase in contraceptive use among upper and middle class married women, abortion, and a decline in the number of children being born to Anglo-Saxon families in Britain, the United States and Canada.<sup>123</sup>

It was, therefore, in Christian Physiologists' interest to condemn strongly the act of masturbation because it threatened to destroy the family and, by extension, patriarchal and bourgeois hegemony. Ideologically united in the battle for continence, Christian Physiologists' condemnation

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<sup>123</sup> Angus McLaren and Arlene Tigar McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State: The Changing Practices and Politics of Contraception and Abortion in Canada, 1880-1980* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1986), pp. 9-24. McLaren and McLaren agree that such dislocations were slowly taking place during the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth.

of masturbation was not only a moral and physiological necessity but a political one as well. Both reformers and medical men did their part by speaking out against masturbation in books or in physicians' offices with the vociferousness characteristic of those championing a major political cause. The physician's office, like the priest's confessional, became a "sacred setting"<sup>124</sup> where patients either "confessed" that their diseases were caused by masturbation, or were prodded into confessing the same.<sup>125</sup> As Foucault notes perceptively, in Western culture, information about human sexual behaviour has been produced not by pleasure, but by confession. Confession, according to Foucault, is a ritual of power which gradually moved from a confessional Christianity to a confessional science. Thus, confession on the part of a patient functioned within the norms of "scientific regularity."<sup>126</sup> I would add that this scientific regularity extended itself to the patriarchal and bourgeois political reality as well. In Stall, visiting a doctor could represent a political act to protect the family. Stall cautioned men suffering from masturbation to select a Christian doctor, "a man of experience and good judgement, a man of pure life and Christian character and of irreproachable standing in the community." Men had to avoid the doctor who would prescribe sexual intercourse with women outside the bonds of marriage as the remedy for masturbation. Such a doctor was party to an "infamous crime" who should be severely rebuked by the law and by his patient. Stall proposed that the patient should rebuke the doctor by asking to be introduced to his wife and daughters in order to carry out the prescription.<sup>127</sup>

Second, both social purity reformers and medical men were united not only in their belief in the marriage of Divine and natural laws, and in their desire to protect the family, but in their upper and middle class concept of manhood. As manhood was intimately related to the retention of semen, and as masturbation involved the potentially limitless expenditure of semen, it is quite pos-

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<sup>124</sup> Haller and Haller, p. x.

<sup>125</sup> The words "confess" and "confession" appear numerous times in Acton, Cowan, Gardner, Lewis and Kellogg.

<sup>126</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History Of Sexuality*, vol. 1: *An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1980, first pub. 1976), p. 65.

<sup>127</sup> Stall, *Young Man*, pp. 71-73.

sible that Christian Physiologists condemned masturbation because, like no other form of non-productive sexual activity, it unmanned men. If a "Christian [were] the highest type of manhood,"<sup>128</sup> then the unmanned man could never be a Christian gentleman. In draining away his life fluid he forfeited his connection to Jesus Christ, the ultimate continent man, and forfeited his position in the bourgeois system of sexual and economic respectability. The masturbating man would indeed become a part of that very "class" opposite to the one to which the Christian Gentleman belonged. He would join the class of the ungodly, the

profane, the vicious, the intemperate, the dishonest, the law-breakers, and the defiers of God and man. To this class belongs every man who staggers, reels and falls into the gutter, every tramp who walks the road, and nine-tenths of all the persons who fill our almshouses. It includes, with scarcely an exception, every man and woman who fill our prisons and reformatory institutions; those who crowd the great tenements and live in filth and squalor in the slums of our cities; those whose bodies reek with physical and moral rotteness.<sup>129</sup>

The Christian Gentleman, on the other hand, belonged to the godly class of what the Reverend William Briggs would have been a part of: the hard-working, the affluent, the respectable, the influential, the eminent and successful leaders of commerce, industry and the nation. "These are the people," claimed Stall,

who dwell in the best homes, who eat the best food, who have the largest amount of material comforts. They are the people who enjoy the best health, who have the brightest minds, who produce the best books, the most helpful literature. They have the brightest eyes and the strongest bodies, and when cholera and plague come and sweep away men and women by thousands, it scarcely ever crosses the line which separates these from the temperate and the vicious... [They have] the promise of the life that *now is*...and the promise of the life which is *to come*, a part in the first resurrection,...and eternal rest at God's right hand.<sup>130</sup>

Even worse, the unmanned man could never be a Christian gentleman because in draining away his life fluid he came to bear a striking resemblance to stereotypical nineteenth-century femininity. The classic masturbator suffered from just about everything considered the lot of a nineteenth-century woman: general ill health, physical weakness, paleness, fatigue, shyness, fretful-

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<sup>128</sup> Stall, *Husband*, p. 71.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 71-71. Bliss calls this passage an example of Stall's "remarkable sociology" which was reprinted in the 1933 version of this text. Bliss, "'Pure Books'," note 27, pp. 341-342.



ness, mental incompetence, insanity, neurasthenia, the lack of self-control, and the lack of self-reliance. There is little to differentiate the classic masturbator ruled by his testicles rather than by his brain from the classic hysterical woman ruled by her uterus in the place of her brain. In addition, the classic masturbator, according to Stall, eventually suffered from seminal weakness to such an extent that the flow of semen from his body became an involuntary rather than a voluntary flow in nocturnal emissions. Or, again according to Stall, the classic masturbator could become so caught up in his habit, that with a weakened will he would be unable to stop the flow of semen from his body, making it a *mechanical expenditure*. Either way, the flow of semen was not actively controlled by the man. It is difficult not to see the similarity between the involuntary, mechanical flow of semen which inevitably attended masturbation in men and the involuntary, mechanical flow of menstrual blood characteristic of the reproductive cycle in women. Even Stall explicitly connects nocturnal emissions with menstruation, saying that the "periodic loss of semen during sleep is as natural to the normal male in good health as menstruation is to the normal female who is in good health."<sup>131</sup> The continual flow of semen to a man not in good health—the classic masturbator—like the flow of menstrual blood in a woman not in good health—the hysteric—was detrimental.<sup>132</sup> Both semen and menstrual blood physically, morally, mentally and physically debilitated the man and woman. Both were signs of misdirected reproductive potency. The flow of semen out of a man's body was as incapable of begetting offspring as the flow of menstrual blood was incapable of nourishing them.

Truly unmanned by the involuntary or mechanical flow of semen out of his body, the masturbating man would be unable to meet the challenge social dislocations posed to his position in bourgeois society. He would be unable to withstand the assault on the family. Little would distin-

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<sup>131</sup> Stall, *Young Man*, p. 79.

<sup>132</sup> Carroll Smith-Rosenberg has found that in the United States, the woman hysteric's moral, mental and physical ill health was considered by many medical men to be closely tied to her reproductive organs and her menstrual cycle. The first question doctors reportedly asked the hysterical woman as a matter of routine was, "Are your courses regular?" Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Hysterical Woman: Sex Roles and Role Conflict in Nineteenth-Century America," in Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), p. 206. Canadian medical thought on hysteria and gynaecological disorders did not differ. See Alison Prentice et al., ed., *Canadian Women: A History* (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988), p. 146.

guish him from woman, and little would recommend him for his seat at the pinnacle of the Christian and social Darwinist scale of being upon which Stall placed the continent man. Like many women, he would be destined for unemployment rather than employment, failure rather than success, anonymity rather than eminence, powerlessness as opposed to power and poverty as opposed to wealth.

Finally, Christian Physiologists would have condemned masturbation because like other forms of non-reproductive sexual activity, it apparently destroyed the race. According to Stall and his medical authorities who cited the law of heredity, the masturbating man's flow of semen constituted a stream of destruction which extended both forward and backward. The masturbating man inevitably begat children as morally, physically and mentally unbalanced as he was. His children would in turn masturbate, producing a line of licentious, worthless idiots and imbeciles destined for the asylum, the hospital, the poorhouse and/or the prison. R. P. Neuman contends that historians of masturbation like Hare have overlooked the fact that the practice was considered a problem in conjunction with modern concepts of childhood. Masturbation in childhood was a serious problem because it not only invalidated the ideals of sexuality for procreation and sexuality for adults only, but because it supposedly destroyed the race.<sup>133</sup>

One must be careful, however, to analyze what many Christian Physiologists meant by the term "race." When Stall placed the continent man at the pinnacle of the Christian and social Darwinist scale of being, he was referring neither to a man nor to humankind but to the Christian Gentleman: an Anglo-Saxon, Protestant man of the upper and middle classes. What Stall meant by race was certainly not the human race, but the race which begat and conceived Christian Gentlemen. The social dislocations which so disturbed social purity reformers and medical men during the nineteenth century were exacerbated by the perceived decline in the health of the Anglo-Saxons, the declining Anglo-Saxon birth rate, and the increasing non-Anglo-Saxon birth rate particularly in the

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<sup>133</sup> R. P. Neuman, "Masturbation, Madness, and the Modern Concepts of Childhood and Adolescence," *Journal of Social History* 8 (Spring 1975): pp. 1-27.

United States and Canada.<sup>134</sup> By the twentieth century in Canada, for example, the average family in rural French Catholic Quebec and New Brunswick was twice the size of a family in urban, English Protestant Ontario and British Columbia.<sup>135</sup> Christian Physiologists were therefore intent on acting against those forces which threatened to further a decline in the number and health of the race which begat and conceived Christian Gentlemen. On the one hand, Christian Physiologists took action against upper and middle class women for cutting down their numbers of offspring. The cries of "race suicide" coming from both social purity reformers and medical men condemned women for selfishly resorting to artificial contraception and abortion.<sup>136</sup> On the other hand, Christian Physiologists condemned boys and men for masturbating, thereby endangering the health of a nation's most valuable property, its boys,<sup>137</sup> or future Christian Gentlemen. The seed of a Christian Gentleman had to transmit not only a sound moral, mental and physical inheritance to his sons, but had to ensure their future position at the pinnacle of the Christian and social Darwinist scale of being.

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<sup>134</sup> McLaren and McLaren, pp. 11, 16-18.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12-37.

<sup>137</sup> Kellogg, p. 421. Lord Baden-Powell, founder of the Boy Scout movement, sought to strengthen English boys via sexual continence. See Lord Robert Baden-Powell, *Rovering to Success* (London: Herbert Jenkins Ltd., 1922), pp. 111-112. See also Michael Rosenthal, *The Character Factory* (London: William Collins Sons and Co., 1986), pp. 186-190.

### III

#### The Politicization of Pollution

Let us have a chance at the taps!<sup>1</sup>

A partnership with God is motherhood;  
What strength, what purity, what self-control,  
What love, what wisdom should belong to her,  
Who helps God fashion an immortal soul.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to pure books, Stall proposed that a second safeguard, pure women, should be introduced to the continent man's arsenal. Pure women could participate in men's battle for sexual continence because they provided the men wishing to remain continent two kinds of protection against the ill-regulated and/or excessive expenditure of semen. First, the man wishing to remain continent could be greatly aided by pure women because Stall believed that they lacked sexual aggressiveness, that their sexual drive contributed little to their motivations and that lustful feelings and/or behaviour did not motivate their actions.<sup>3</sup> They were, in other words, sexually inert. Stall, therefore, advised that the man who wished to remain continent should seek the love of "a woman who is pure and noble."<sup>4</sup> Second, Stall believed that pure women could participate in men's battle

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<sup>1</sup> Nellie McClung, *In Times Like These* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972, first pub. 1915), p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> Poem quoted in Mrs. Emma F. Angell Drake, M.D., *What A Young Wife Ought To Know* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1902, first pub. 1901), p. 145, and in Jessie C. Smith's lecture on "Social Purity" to the W.C.T.U. in Nova Scotia, 1898, in *The Proper Sphere: Woman's Place in Canadian Society*, ed. Ramsay Cook and Wendy Mitchinson (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 227.

<sup>3</sup> I have used Nancy Cott's definition of women's sexual "passionlessness" to summarize Stall's sexual views on women. Cott speculates that the belief in women's sexual inertia was rooted in early nineteenth-century evangelical Christianity. Nancy F. Cott, "Passionlessness: An Interpretation of Victorian Sexual Ideology, 1790-1850," in *A Heritage of Her Own*, ed. Nancy F. Cott and Elizabeth H. Pleck (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), p. 163.

<sup>4</sup> Sylvanus Stall, *What A Young Man Ought To Know* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1904, first pub. 1897), pp. 45.

for sexual continence because they could hold men to the single standard of sexual purity. The single standard, as opposed to the double standard of sexual purity, required that men become subject to the same sexual and social behavioural codes and penalties to which all classes of women were traditionally subject. Stall, therefore, advised the man wishing to remain continent to live by the same standard of "moral and personal purity"<sup>5</sup> set by men for women.

Stall was doing little that was unusual by calling for pure women's participation in the continent man's battle for the retention of his semen. Anglo-Saxon upper and middle class Christian women social purity reformers and feminists, at times in conjunction with their lower class sisters in Britain and the United States, had, from the 1830's to the 1920's, marched at the helm of social purity movements. In Canada, women social purity reformers and feminists were much more active from the 1870's to the 1920's. These women directly linked men's incontinence to social impurity because they believed incontinent men were the source of the flow of moral pollution.<sup>6</sup> Semen expended in ill-regulated and/or excessive sexual activity, however, was not the only form of moral pollution these women attacked. They included impure literature, alcohol, tobacco, venereally diseased, unwanted and/or handicapped children as part and parcel of the flow of pollution they aimed to stem. The vast number of organizations,<sup>7</sup> made up of such women to combat moral pollution, may be seen as a way in which women strove to regulate the flow of moral pollution into and out of men's and women's orifices.

The joint participation of women social purity reformers and feminists in the late nine-

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Judith Walkowitz, Martha Vicinus and Carroll Smith-Rosenberg agree. Walkowitz claims that during the campaign in Britain of the Ladies National Association (L.N.A.) to repeal the Contagious Diseases Acts, led by Josephine Butler, prostitutes were depicted by women activists as "victims of male pollution, as women who had been invaded by men's bodies, men's laws, and by that 'steel penis,' the speculum." Judith Walkowitz, "Male Vice and Female Virtue," in *Powers of Desire*, ed. Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thompson (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983), p. 422.

<sup>7</sup> The number of organizations formed to combat moral pollution in the wake of Butler's L.N.A. would be too numerous to list. I name only a few. In Canada, there existed the W.C.T.U., the White Cross, the White Ribbon Movement, the Aberdeen Association, the National Home Reading Union, the Young Women's Christian Association, the Girls' Friendly Society of Canada and the largest women's umbrella organization of all, the National Council of Women of Canada.

teenth-century social purity movement may be explained by the following reasoning. From the 1830's to the 1920's such women were also at the forefront of evangelical Christian, pietist, perfectionist, millennialist, alternative medical, theosophical<sup>8</sup> and social gospel movements from which social purity drew its sustenance. Second, fear of and hostility to men's sexuality likewise united women social purity reformers and feminists. Both groups of women believed that men's aggressive sexual drive was harmful not only because it subjected women and children to sexual exploitation within and without marriage, but because it threatened to destroy civilization.<sup>9</sup> Both groups of women agreed that the single standard of sexual purity should be adhered to by men and women regardless of age or marital status.

Third, consistent with the mid to late nineteenth-century belief that the political emancipation of women was necessary to social reform, many of the women involved in the social purity movement simultaneously participated in the women's rights movement during this period. In fact, their consensus on social purity issues makes it difficult to distinguish between women social purity reformers and feminists.<sup>10</sup> This is perfectly illustrated by the fact that Dr. Mary Wood-Allen, author of the first two books in the *Self and Sex* Series for women—*What A Young Girl Ought To Know*, and *What A Young Woman Ought To Know*—was the Superintendent of the Purity Department of the World Women's Christian Temperance Union (W.C.T.U.), the famous social

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<sup>8</sup> Theosophy, for example, was founded by a woman, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, and her male disciple, Colonel Henry Steele Olcott, and was dominated by women. See Diana Burfield, "Theosophy and Feminism: Some Explorations in Nineteenth-Century Biography," in *Women's Religious Experience*, ed. Pat Holden (London: Croom Helm, 1983), pp. 27-56.

<sup>9</sup> Linda Gordon, *Woman's Body, Woman's Right: A Social History of Birth Control in America* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1977, first pub. 1976), p. 118.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 117-118. The following authors concur on the similarity between women social purity reformers and feminists: David J. Pivar, *Purity Crusade: Sexual Morality and Social Control, 1868-1900* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, Inc., 1973); T. R. Morrison, "'Their Proper Sphere': Feminism, The Family, and Child-Centered Social Reform in Ontario, 1875-1900. Part I," *Ontario History* 68, 1 (March 1976): 45-74; William Leach, *True Love and Perfect Union: The Feminist Reform of Sex and Society* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981 first pub. 1980); Walkowitz, "Male Vice," pp. 421-438; Sheila Jeffreys, *The Spinster and Her Enemies: Feminism and Sexuality 1880-1920* (London: Pandora Press, 1985). Examples of social purity reformers who were also feminists in Great Britain and the United States, respectively, are Josephine Butler and Matilda Joslyn Gage. In Canada, Emily Stowe, Augusta Stowe Gullen and Flora Macdonald Denison were theosophists, social reformers, and women's rights advocates. See Wayne Roberts, "Six New Women: A Guide to the Mental Map of Women Reformers in Toronto," *Atlantis* 31 (Fall 1977): 145-64. For another individual who combined social purity reform and women's rights in Canada, see McClung.

purity organization.<sup>11</sup> Dr. Emily Drake, author of the last two books in the *Self and Sex Series* for women—*What A Young Wife Ought To Know*, and *What A Woman of 45 Ought To Know*—was the corresponding secretary for the World's Purity Federation, a national lecturer for the W.C.T.U., and a prohibitionist who favoured women's suffrage. Not surprisingly, the *Self and Sex Series* received support from Frances Willard, the President of the American W.C.T.U.; the Vice-President of that same organization in Canada, Dr. Amelia Yeomans, and from the well-known American suffragist, Elizabeth Cady Stanton.<sup>12</sup>

And finally, by the time the Series was published, both women social purity reformers and feminists, albeit with some exceptions, accepted the common Anglo-Saxon, Christian, upper and middle class view that womanhood meant home, the family, and motherhood. As Drake put it, "Motherhood is not a remote contingency, but the common duty and the common glory of womanhood."<sup>13</sup> The majority of feminists after the 1850's augmented the earlier argument for women's enfranchisement based on equal rights, with the argument based on women's special mission of mothering not only her immediate family, but society in general. These so-called "social" or "maternal" feminists came to dominate both the social purity and the women's rights movements in the United States and Canada.<sup>14</sup> Wood-Allen and Drake certainly were maternal feminists. Both

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<sup>11</sup> For information on the W.C.T.U. in Canada, see Wendy Mitchinson, "The W.C.T.U.: 'For God, Home and Native Land': A Study in Nineteenth-Century Feminism," in *A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada, 1880's-1920's*, ed. Linda Kealey (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1979), pp. 152-167.

<sup>12</sup> Willard's photograph and verbal commendation head the list of "What Eminent People In America Say." Yeomans appears directly beside her in Mrs. Mary Wood-Allen, M.D., *What A Young Girl Ought To Know* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1897), initial pages. Cady Stanton appears twice, recommending Wood-Allen's *What A Young Woman Ought To Know* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1913, first pub. 1898), initial pages, and Drake's *Wife* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1902, first pub. 1901), initial pages. Michael Bliss cites the endorsement of the Series by "prominent feminists" Cady Stanton and Yeomans, noting that feminists supported sexual repression as a rebellion against "male sexual aggression—frequent, thoughtless and brutal intercourse that turned marriage into 'legalized prostitution' and condemned wives to the pain and hazard of endless child-bearing." Michael Bliss, "How We Used to Learn About Sex," *Macleans*, March 1974, p. 64.

<sup>13</sup> Drake, *Wife*, p. 98.

<sup>14</sup> For an excellent analysis of maternal feminism and social purity reform in Canada, see Morrison. For more information, see also Wayne Roberts, "'Rocking the Cradle for the World': The New Woman and Maternal Feminism, Toronto 1877-1914," in Kealey, pp. 15-45. Deborah Gorham maintains that while both equal rights and maternal feminism played a role in Canadian women's history, maternal feminism was better accepted as a tactical measure to win wider support for women's issues and the vote. Deborah Gorham, "The Canadian Suffragists," in *Women in the Canadian Mosaic*, ed. Gwen Matheson (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates Ltd., 1976), pp. 23-55.

women were wives and mothers. Their personal experience of motherhood was said to be central to their professional lives.<sup>15</sup> Wood-Allen was the founder, publisher and editor of a purity publication first entitled *The New Crusade*, which was renamed *The American Mother* in 1895. Drake was a High School teacher of girls and later became a Professor of Obstetrics at the Denver Homeopathic College and Hospital.

In believing that pure women could offer men wishing to be continent protection against incontinence, Stall subscribed to a Victorian patriarchal vision of women which has often been termed the angel in the house.<sup>16</sup> Pure women, he believed, whose lives were spent in noble servitude to husband, home and family, were to be men's sexual gatekeepers. As sexual gatekeepers, pure women, like pure books, were thought to help balance the man, his relationship to women and his connection to the nation. Stall was not alone in subscribing to this patriarchal vision. Many women social purity reformers and feminists concerned with the elimination of moral pollution also endorsed women's position as sexual gatekeeper. They had good reason to support sexual continence for men because they believed that men's balanced expenditure and retention of semen protected them personally against seduction, unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmissible diseases.

Wood-Allen and Drake likewise accepted that pure women could join in the battle against men's incontinence. They agreed that pure women were sexually inert. They also agreed that pure women could hold men to the single standard of sexual purity. They recognized, however, that both sexual inertia and the single standard offered women limited opportunities to adequately balance the retention and expenditure of men's semen. Unlike Stall, Wood-Allen and Drake focused

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<sup>15</sup> See, L. M. Cross, "Mrs. Mary Wood-Allen, M.D., and Her Message to Girls," in Sylvanus Stall, *The Successful Selling of the Self and Sex Series* (Philadelphia: Vir Publishing Company, 1907) pp. 330-332 and "Mrs Emma F. A. Drake, M.D., and Her Message to Wives and Women of Middle Life," in *ibid.*, pp. 333-336.

<sup>16</sup> Carol Christ has borrowed the term angel in the house from the title of Coventry Patmore's poem. Carol Christ, "Victorian Masculinity and the Angel in the House" in *A Widening Sphere*, ed. Martha Vicinus (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), p. 146. Peter Cominos calls the ideal woman in the late nineteenth century the sexless, ministering angel. Peter T. Cominos, "Innocent Femina Sensualis in Unconscious Conflict," in *Suffer and Be Still*, ed. Martha Vicinus (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1974), p. 167.



on another form of protection pure women could provide men to keep them continent. This protection was said to be women's common glory: motherhood. Under their pens, pure women, as potential or actual mothers to the family, the nation and the race, were supplied with a base for an attack on moral pollution. Wood-Allen and Drake turned the angel of the house into a fierce guardian angel who actively regulated the flow of moral pollution into and out of men's and women's bodily orifices.

According to Wood-Allen and Drake, the pure woman who was the potential or actual mother, had the right to regulate this flow because her body housed potentially healthy and socially pure future citizens. Ultimately, however, each of the three forms of protection against incontinence pure women were said to offer men in the *Self* and *Sex* Series, was a contradiction in terms. While many women, like Wood-Allen and Drake, saw sexual inertia, the single standard of sexual purity and motherhood as empowering to pure women, these forms remained an inherent part of patriarchal ideology which disempowered rather than empowered all women.

Deborah Gorham has postulated that the triumph of industrial capitalism led the middle class to seek refuge in the family from the rapid social and economic change of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>17</sup> The pre-eminence of the family in Victorian and Edwardian middle class ideology split patriarchal capitalist society into two separate but supposedly equal spheres: the public and the private. Nineteenth-century individuals of the middle class thereby hoped to achieve an "efficient moral balance."<sup>18</sup> The public sphere, associated with politics, industry and commerce came to be regarded as men's exclusive domain. The private sphere, associated with the home, the family and motherhood, came to be regarded as women's exclusive domain.<sup>19</sup> Despite her unten-

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<sup>17</sup> Deborah Gorham, *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), p. 4.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Published in Canada, Dr. Pancoast's *The Ladies New Medical Guide* intoned: "Woman's first and noblest place is the fulfilling of the duties of *Home!*...Women can only be properly esteemed at *Home!*...Truly women's sphere is *Home!*" Dr. S. Pancoast, *The Ladies New Medical Guide* (Paris, Ontario: J. S. Brown and Sons, 1892), pp. 348-349.

ability and unreality for many women, the ideal woman of the private sphere became the angel in the house whose role in life revolved solely around her home, her husband and their children. Conformity to this role placed women on a class-based, socially sanctioned Christian moral pedestal.<sup>20</sup>

Sexual inertia was part and parcel of this angelic ideal. In keeping with nineteenth-century patriarchal thought that rarely conceived of women's sexuality as independent from that of men's,<sup>21</sup> the angel in the house, according to Carol Christ, was considered the perfect mate for nineteenth-century men because she embodied many of the qualities men would have liked to possess. The greatest of these was her sexual inertia. Christ proposes that because men viewed their sexual aggressiveness as dangerous and distasteful, it was important to project onto women an ideal of sexual chastity. In so doing, men could simultaneously aspire to greater sexual control, respectfully distance themselves from sexual temptation, and participate in a more feminine ideal of desirable behaviour.<sup>22</sup>

Peter Cominos similarly argues that the sexual counterpart to what I call the continent man was the "angelic" woman. Cominos concurs with the historical interpretation of nineteenth-century sexual ideology as promoting the belief that women were born angels, and men, animals.<sup>23</sup> Cominos, however, claims that male hostility toward women's sexuality forced women to appear "desexualized" in order to help gentlemen cope with controlling their aggressive sexuality. When not in abeyance, women's sexuality was indifferent, and when not indifferent, deviant. Desexualized as such, a woman's sole outlet for sexual expression was in heterosexual marriage and motherhood. Desexualization made the woman respectable.

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<sup>20</sup> Martha Vicinus, "Introduction," in *Suffer*, ed. Vicinus, p. ix.

<sup>21</sup> Jeffrey Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality Since 1800* (New York: Longman Inc., 1981), p. 42.

<sup>22</sup> Christ, pp. 146-162.

<sup>23</sup> Cominos, p. 162.

G. J. Barker-Benfield also perceives the ideal woman as necessarily sexually undemanding. Given the nineteenth century's links between continence and bourgeois success and between incontinence and capitalist failure, the sexually inert woman could help her mate triumph over the vicissitudes of industrial capitalism by directing his energies toward work rather than sex.<sup>24</sup> In his look at nineteenth-century American attitudes toward women, Barker-Benfield proposes that men's vulnerability to the spilling of semen led them to invest moral superiority in women, to separate themselves from women by isolating them in houses, and to conduct, in the United States, gynaecological pogroms against women's reproductive and sexual organs. Sexual desire in women was considered so deviant as to invoke the surgical excision of clitorae, ovaries and uteri in the hope of restoring women to their much vaunted asexuality. In Canada, such operations seldom took place. When they did, they were ostensibly used to treat women for insanity.<sup>25</sup>

Stall's conceptualization of the pure woman's sexual inertia functioned, as does Christ's, Cominos', and Barker-Benfield's angel in the house, as protection against men's incontinence. Stall believed that women's sexual inertia, like men's sexual aggressiveness could be traced to the basic biological differences between men and women. Stall claimed that the ovum, in comparison to the "great activity and remarkable vitality" of the spermatozoon, was "passive."<sup>26</sup> Stall was, no doubt, directly or indirectly influenced by Patrick Geddes' and J. Arthur Thomson's popular *The Evolution of Sex*, published in 1889. Geddes and Thomson held that differences between men and women were the result of the differences in male and female sex cell metabolism. The spermatozoon dissipated energy and was "katabolic," or active. The ovum conserved energy and was "anabolic," or passive. Geddes and Thomson extrapolated from these differences to conclude that men were, therefore, "more active, energetic, eager, passionate, and variable," while women, on the other

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<sup>24</sup> G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Horrors of the Half-Known Life: Male Attitudes Toward Women and Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), pp. 45-57; 80-90.

<sup>25</sup> Wendy Mitchinson, "R. M. Bucke, A Victorian Asylum Superintendent," *Ontario History* 68, 4 (December 1981): 246-251.

<sup>26</sup> Sylvanus Stall, *What A Young Husband Ought To Know* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1907, first pub. 1899), p. 38.

hand, were "more passive, conservative, sluggish, and stable."<sup>27</sup>

The great majority of women, men were authoritatively informed by Stall, were "largely devoid of sexual pleasure."<sup>28</sup> Stall's authority, once again, was probably William Acton who claimed that "the majority of women (happily for society) are not very much troubled with sexual feeling of any kind. What men are habitually, women are only exceptionally."<sup>29</sup> Their passions, Acton believed, were not sexual, but domestic. Stall defined pure women as those who

are by nature chaste, pure-minded, and when their hearts are endued by divine grace and their lives are brought under the sway of refining and religious influences, if they are not rendered frivolous by society or empty-headed by novel reading, their companionship and acquaintance are more than likely to prove helpful and inspiring to a young man.<sup>30</sup>

Stall made it clear that loving and being loved by such a woman protected men from incontinence because she was sexually inert. She was desirable precisely because her lack of sexual desire helped young men retain their semen. By contrast, a minority of women were impure. They were, confirmed Stall, "amative by nature" and "voluptuous in form." They inspired impure thoughts in men and aroused "the most dormant sexual nature."<sup>31</sup> Impure women were denigrated by Stall because they represented the enemy which could call forth the incontinent beast within every man. The impure woman posed a threat to the continent man because she could induce him to expend his semen in ill-regulated and/or excessive sexual activity, thereby unbalancing him.

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<sup>27</sup> Geddes and Thomson, quoted in Janet Sayers, *Biological Politics* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1982), p. 40. Sayers argues that Geddes' and Thomson's views fuelled anti-feminist arguments all the way into the 1950's. Sayers notes that Simone de Beauvoir had to refute Geddes' and Thomson's work when she wrote *The Second Sex*. Sayers, p. 41. For more information on Geddes and Thomson, see Jill Conway, "Stereotypes of Femininity in a Theory of Sexual Evolution," in *Suffer and Be Still: Women in the Victorian Age*, ed. Martha Vicinus (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), pp. 140-154. Naomi Pfeffer, "The Hidden Pathology of the Male Reproductive System," in *The Sexual Politics of Reproduction*, ed. Hilary Homans (Brookfield, Vermont: Gower Publishing Co. Ltd., 1985), pp. 30-44, contends that the "active" spermatozoon and the "passive" ovum still make their appearance in today's medical textbooks contrary to evidence that the sperm are drawn into the the uterus by the peristaltic motion of the female reproductive tract.

<sup>28</sup> Stall, *Husband*, p. 118.

<sup>29</sup> William Acton, *The Functions and Disorders of the Reproductive Organs, in Childhood, Youth, Adult Age, and Advanced Life, Considered in their Physiological, Social and Moral Relations* (Philadelphia: P. Blakiston and Son, 1894, first pub. 1857), p. 209

<sup>30</sup> Stall, *Young Man*, p. 45.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

Stall prescribed that a man wishing to lead a sexually balanced life should choose a pure woman for a wife. Such a woman seldom sought her husband's closer embraces. Most wives, Stall claimed, were "generally indifferent; often absolutely averse" to marital relations.<sup>32</sup> Stall believed that were it not for their desire to become mothers, pure women would probably not engage in marital relations. He urged husbands to be thankful for their spouses' sexual inertia. Had God endowed men and women with the same sexual propensities, "the male nature would be called into such frequent and continuous exercise that the power of reproduction would be either totally destroyed or so impaired that the race would degenerate into moral, intellectual and physical pygmies."<sup>33</sup> The wife's sexual inertia, lauded Stall, was "the protection of her husband and a source of manifold blessing to their children."<sup>34</sup>

To a large extent, Stall's conceptualization of the pure woman was duplicated in the advice Wood-Allen and Drake dispensed to the girl, the young woman and the wife. Wood-Allen and Drake insisted that girls and women possess little sexual feeling. In comparison to the vast amount of pages Stall devoted to counselling boys and men against masturbation, Wood-Allen's mention of masturbation in girls and women is minimal. Interestingly enough, the girl was advised never to engage in solitary vice not because it used up her vital energy, but because she would become the opposite of what pure girls should be: peevish, irritable, morose, disobedient and bold.<sup>35</sup> Unlike the young man, the young woman did not have to be warned against pre-marital or extra-marital sex, but against flirting and holding hands with boys and men. In fact, Wood-Allen claimed that the demeanour of the pure girl and the pure woman made it impossible for any man to feel "an impure

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<sup>32</sup> Stall, *Husband*, p. 48.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Wood-Allen, *Girl*, p. 107. In other quarters, masturbation in girls was considered as, or more serious than, masturbation in boys. Mary Hartman has found evidence of four young English girls who were subjected to brutal abuse by their French governess for their masturbatory habits. The governess' treatment of the children, which included binding their hands and feet to the edge of their beds, was apparently agreed upon by the girls' father. When one of the girls died, the father was reluctant to press charges against the governess. He feared the trial would bring forth revelations of his daughters' masturbation, thereby casting dishonour upon the family. See Mary Hartman, *Victorian Murderesses* (New York: Schocken Books, 1977), pp. 85-129.

impulse"<sup>36</sup> in their presence. In one of the Series' rare allusions to homosexuality, the girl and young woman were cautioned against "perverse" friendships with female friends, for the "only natural method of arousing a recognition of sexual feeling is as God has appointed in holy marriage."<sup>37</sup>

Despite the Series' much vaunted emphasis on the dispensing of sexual information, girls and women were provided with the most rudimentary sexual information possible.<sup>38</sup> Both Wood-Allen and Drake could, therefore, perpetuate the myth of women's lack of sexual feeling, and maintain that whatever feeling there may be, should be exercised only in reproduction. The advent of a girl's first period led to a discussion of all women's desire to be wives and mothers. The onset of menstruation occasioned a description of the human female's sexual organs: the uterus and ovaries. No mention of the clitoris, vagina and vulva was made. Given the emphasis on the pure woman's limited sexual feeling to be exercised only in marriage, it is possible that Drake's advice to young wives may have provided more information about sexual activity between husband and wife, but it did not. Stall at least provided husbands with information about the similarity between the reproductive organs in both sexes, maintaining, in part, that "[W]ithout materially disturbing its position, diminish the sexual member of the male and you have the clitoria of the female."<sup>39</sup>

Despite the unfortunate fact that marital sexual relations were a mystery to many unmarried

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<sup>36</sup> Wood-Allen, *Woman*, p. 167.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154.

<sup>38</sup> There is the possibility that the Series may not have sold as well as it did, were it more explicit. The United States, where the books were originally published, laboured under the infamous Comstock Laws which severely restricted the distribution of printed sexual information. Anthony Comstock, called "The Eminent American Christian Reformer," lent his support and likeness to the Series by appearing in Stall, *What A Young Boy Ought To Know* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1909, first pub. 1897), initial pages. In addition, the reading public was still struggling with the question of what fell into the category of respectable, acceptable, sexual information. Nellie McClung recalls that in the late nineties, when Dr. Amelia Yeomans published a pamphlet called "Warning to Girls," a storm of abuse arose. McClung reports: "Ministers raged against it in the pulpit. I remember one brother who was very emphatic in his denunciations who afterwards was put out of the church for indecent conduct. Of course he wanted girls to remain innocent—it suited his purpose." McClung brings up an important point. Some men may have disapproved of giving girls and women sexual information because it would have hampered their sexual exploits. McClung, p. 84.

<sup>39</sup> Stall, *Husband*, p. 51.

women,<sup>40</sup> or may well have remained a source of anxiety to many married women,<sup>41</sup> Drake shed little light on the subject. She wrote only that marital relations called for the strictest self-control. The wife had to be careful not to invite her husband's unnecessary attentions; she should consider the marital relation sacred, and only for the purposes of reproduction. The wife had to, in effect, husband her husband's semen, for "a vast amount of vital force [is] used in the production and expenditure of the seminal fluid."<sup>42</sup> She was warned to never participate in lustful congress. She should never use artificial birth control, or turn to abortion, but consent willingly to maternity. Should she experience sexual passion during pregnancy, it was to be "considered a disease, and for it the physician should be consulted."<sup>43</sup> The wife was told of the "fearful results" of sexual excess in men and women at middle age: in the former, disordered memory, vision and hearing; in the latter, barrenness, prolapse or cancer of the uterus, and breast cancer. Far more information was provided on the subject of pregnancy and the development, birth, and care of children than is given on the subject of sexual relations between wife and husband.<sup>44</sup>

Personal testimonials from some late nineteenth-century wives show that many women enjoyed expressing their sexual desire apart from their desire to experience motherhood. The popularity of a book, *Karezza: Ethics of Marriage*, which informed husbands and wives that they could enjoy penetration without either experiencing a climax seems to prove this.<sup>45</sup> *Karezza* was enthusi-

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<sup>40</sup> Despite the high educational level attained by many of the women surveyed in one of the earliest recorded studies of women's sexual behaviour, the subjects admitted they had little knowledge about sexual relations between husband and wife. See Carl Degler's analysis of Dr. Celia Mosher's unpublished study, undertaken between the 1890's and the 1920's, on the sex lives of 45 married women in Carl Degler, "What Ought to Be and What Was: Women's Sexuality in the Nineteenth Century," *American Historical Review* 79 (December 1974):1467-1490.

<sup>41</sup> Wives' sexual maladjustment in Mosher's study often began with first intercourse. Wives showed concern over the disparity in sexual responses between wives and husbands, and some wives were anxious over their inability to achieve orgasm. See Degler, p. 1485.

<sup>42</sup> Drake, *Wife*, p. 88-89.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 93-94.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.* Chapter VII deals with sexual relations between husbands and wives. Chapters VIII, XII to XIV and XVI to XXII deal with pregnancy and children.

<sup>45</sup> See, for example, the letters from grateful women Alice Stockham reproduces at various points in her *Karezza: Ethics of Marriage* (New York: R. F. Fenno and Co., 1896). Stockham permitted penetration without ejaculation for non-reproductive purposes. Her belief that men could develop enough self-control not to ejaculate in intercourse seemed to require as much as, or more self-control than that required of the man who had to restrict himself to strict continence.

astically reviewed in 1896 by the Superintendent of the Purity Department of the Canadian W.C.T.U. She recommended the book to all men thinking of marriage.<sup>46</sup> Some married women surveyed by Dr. Clelia Mosher in the United States admitted that pleasure alone was a sufficient reason to engage in sexual intercourse, and conceded that sexual relations were necessary for a happy marriage. Still others changed their minds about the purpose of sexual relations within marriage. One woman, who married in 1896, felt that sexual relations ought to be confined to reproduction. By 1920, she believed that sexual relations could be undertaken for pleasure.<sup>47</sup>

Even though popular and scientific opinion was often confused about women's sexuality, there were many texts which acknowledged the existence of women's sexual desire. Some authors of prescriptive sexual literature writing shortly before the Series was published maintained that women experienced, and needed to experience sexual desire. They believed that it should be fulfilled and not denied.<sup>48</sup> One such author, who was published in Canada, told women that the clitoris is "usually about one inch in length, and formed similarly to the male penis...It becomes erect during coition, and is the principal seat of the thrill or voluptuous sensation in the female."<sup>49</sup> Similarly, nineteenth-century medical opinion acknowledged, to some degree, the existence of women's sexual desire. Wendy Mitchinson has found that although women's sexuality was never viewed as aggressive, most of the Canadian medical journals and textbooks used in Canadian medical colleges agreed upon the existence of women's sexual desire, and recognized the clitoris as responsible for orgasm in women.<sup>50</sup> One must remember, however, that even though some quarters accepted the existence of women's sexual desire, it was rarely considered independent of men's sexual desire. Women's sexual desire also had to be experienced and fulfilled within marriage.

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<sup>46</sup> Bliss, "Pure Books on Impure Subjects': Pre-Freudian Sexual Ideas in Canada," in *Studies in Canadian Social History*, ed. Michael Horn and Ronald Sabourin (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), p. 344, note 43.

<sup>47</sup> Degler, pp. 1488-1490.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1469-1477.

<sup>49</sup> Pancoast, pp. 54-55.

<sup>50</sup> Wendy Mitchinson, "Medical Perceptions of Female Sexuality: A Late Nineteenth-Century Case," *Scientia Canadensis* 9, 1 (June 1985): 67-81.



Portraying pure women as sexually inert, dispensing a small amount of sexual information to women, and conflating women's sexual desire with women's maternal desire—in contrast to the opinions held by some wives, some popular writers and some medical texts—may indeed have represented a way in which Stall, Wood-Allen and Drake invested power in pure women to keep men continent. If men were to remain either strictly or moderately continent, it was best that the knowledge of women's sexual desire was something both sexes ought *not* to have. Drake, for example, believed that women's sexual inertia could keep a man strictly continent, much to his own and his wife's benefit. She seized upon the belief in women's sexual inertia and tried to empower wives seeking protection from their husbands' incontinence. In so doing, she engaged in an important form of textual rebellion against some of the advice Stall dispensed to husbands.

Unlike Stall, Drake did not distinguish between love and lust. Nor did Drake distinguish between the propagative and the amative aspects of marital intercourse. Drake distinguished only between the self's higher and lower natures. To her, non-reproductive sexual activity between wife and husband pandered to the lower nature, and was classified as "sexual indulgence."<sup>51</sup> Drake insisted that under no circumstances should sexual activity take place unless *both* parties were willing to accept any ensuing pregnancy. This presumably empowered the pure women to keep her husband strictly continent, for she was to have the final say in regulating the expenditure of her husband's semen in marital intercourse. Stall had proposed three solutions to the regulation of the husband's seminal expenditure: the wife's prerogative, the Levitical law and the once-a-week rule. Drake, however, found the greatest support for the pure woman in the wife's prerogative. She insisted that marital relations should not be "liberty for one, and the grossest bondage for the other. Nowhere does the wife's opinion deserve greater respect and tolerance than here. Nowhere should her negative be so willingly accepted."<sup>52</sup> Neither did Drake even hint of the Levitical rule Stall sup-

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<sup>51</sup> Drake, *Wife*, p. 87.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.,

plied the husband in a coy, if misinformed attempt to better space the birth of children. Drake intoned, "the fact that conception may result at *any* time, proves that the conjugal relation was not instituted primarily for the gratification of the lower nature, but for procreation [my emphasis]."<sup>53</sup> Nor did she set down a specific frequency for marital intercourse. Her only stipulation was that "there shall be no pandering to sexual indulgence, while there is an unwillingness to bear as many children, as a proper manly and womanly Christian temperance in these things will allow."<sup>54</sup>

Her unwillingness to distinguish between the propagative and the amative elements of marital relations differed from those upper and middle class women social purity reformers and feminists—studied by John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman—who supported the distinction.<sup>55</sup> Yet Drake's attitude to marital intercourse differed from the attitude of these women in degree rather than in kind. Like these women, she favoured tender unions between husbands and wives, respect for the wife's sexual rights to her own body and voluntary motherhood for married women. But the more sexually conservative Drake believed these goals could be better reached by strict rather than moderate continence for married men. Drake, of course, was not alone in these sentiments. Her advice obviously received the approval of those wives and mothers on the committee set up to award the \$1000 prize offered by Stall to the author of the best advice to young wives. These women selected her manuscript over others as the most deserving.<sup>56</sup> It seems that whereas Stall was concerned about the balanced expenditure and retention of the husband's semen, Drake, and the wives and mothers on the committee, were far more concerned about the balance between the number of wanted and unwanted children born to the married couple. Drake, and the women who supported the distinction between the propagative and the amative, remained united in their efforts to participate in the battle for men's continence by becoming publicly and privately involved in

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>55</sup> See John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), pp. 173-178.

<sup>56</sup> L. M. Cross, "Mrs Emma F. A. Drake, M.D., and Her Message to Wives and Women of Middle Life," in *Successful Selling*, pp. 333-334.

shaping the ideal of the continent man. They were also united on the importance of mothers, motherhood and voluntary motherhood.<sup>57</sup> This point will be taken up later in this chapter.

Nancy Cott agrees that while sexual inertia was seen by some women as a defense against seduction, unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmissible diseases, sexual inertia contracted, rather than expanded women's sphere of influence over men. It also obfuscated the need for other sources of power for women.<sup>58</sup> And despite Stall's, Wood-Allen's, and Drake's fantastic claims of the power of pure women to keep men continent, it is entirely doubtful that sexual inertia actually kept men from sexual incontinence. After all, women social purity reformers' and feminists' common agenda included a condemnation of marital rape and prostitution. Many husbands may have found that the pure woman was a paltry safeguard when she could be taken by force. Many unmarried and married men may have also discovered that the pure woman offered them scant protection against the regulation of their seminal expenditure when impure women, such as prostitutes, were available. And needless to say, women's sexual inertia stultified the lives of many women who saw little alternative to the living out of this ideal in patriarchal society.<sup>59</sup>

One could also argue that women's sexual inertia did not help to keep men continent, for Stall, social purity reformers and feminists called to men to adhere to the single standard of sexual purity. They demanded that the sexual and social behavioural code to which women traditionally adhered should also apply to men. Stall considered the single standard to mean sexual and social purity for both sexes of all ages, and equal respect for the husband's and wife's person. That Stall believed in the pure woman's ability to hold men to the the single standard is a tribute to the effec-

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<sup>57</sup> Gordon, for example, sees how various feminists—the suffragists, the moral reformers and the free lovers—though politically dissimilar, all believed in the importance of voluntary motherhood. Gordon, pp. 95-115.

<sup>58</sup> Cott, pp. 172-175.

<sup>59</sup> Mosher blamed some prescriptive sexual literature for instilling in women the idea that their sexual response was immodest. See Degler, pp. 1488-1489. Katherine Bement Davis saw conflicting feelings of sexual desire, inadequate sexual instruction and unhappy first experience with intercourse as some of the reasons contributing to women's unhappiness in marriage. See Katherine Bement Davis, *Factors in the Sex Life of Twenty-Two Hundred Women* (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1972, first pub.1929), pp. 38-78.

tiveness of women's campaigns against the double standard of sexual purity. Indeed, many feminist historians propose that women's demand to eliminate the double standard was seen as a specific way in which women could set limits on men's sexual behaviour.<sup>60</sup> Stall believed pure women could better balance the expenditure and retention of semen in unmarried and married man because they could make men see the inherent moral logic of the single standard. He predicted that men would be moved by the force of the pure woman's example to practise strict and/or moderate continence.

The single standard of sexual purity was reinforced among women, according to Cominos, by four mechanisms of control: the sharp distinction between pure and impure women, the social ostracism to which impure women were subject, the application and efficacy of that sanction in regard to women, and the respectable bourgeois ideological tenet that the loss of chastity corrupted a woman forever.<sup>61</sup> I would add a fifth mechanism of control: another respectable, patriarchal, bourgeois ideological tenet that a woman's loss of chastity corrupted her family and society as well. Failure to comply with this standard of sexual purity signalled, to both women and men, a woman's "fall," connoting loss of physical virginity and loss of sexual chastity. On a real and symbolic level, the word represented the angel's fall from her high-ranking position in the upper and middle class system, from the socially sanctioned moral pedestal she occupied, and from the sexually anaesthetized heaven she was said to inhabit. Like Eve, whose sexual disobedience was popularly held to be responsible for humanity's fall from God's grace, the woman who fell was also responsible for her family's and society's fall from respectable, Christian, middle class morality. Her fall, then, deposited her among the sorority of the impure: common working class women, sexually promiscuous women, and prostitutes.

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<sup>60</sup> Jeffreys, *Spinster*. Jeffreys, "Free From All Uninvited Touch of Man': Women's Campaigns Around Sexuality, 1880-1914," *Women's Studies International Forum* 5, 6 (1982): 629-645. See also Ellen Carol DuBois and Linda Gordon, "Seeking Ecstasy on the Battlefield: Danger and Pleasure in Nineteenth-century Feminist Sexual Thought," in *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality*, ed. Carole S. Vance (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), pp. 31-49.

<sup>61</sup> Cominos, p. 166.

Like many women social purity reformers and feminists, Stall believed that the double standard had to be eliminated because of the harm it did men and women. Stall asked young men a remarkable set of questions which I reproduce in their entirety:

Why should there be two standards of morals, one for women and another for men? Why should it be thought right for a man to do what is universally acknowledged to be wrong for a woman to do? Has God made one standard for men and another for women? Does the moral character of the act depend on who does it? Is the question of right and wrong a mere question of gender? If God made His own immutable nature the basis of the moral law, then surely the moral law is unchangeable, is the same for male or female, for bond and free, for rich and poor, for black and white; without regard to race, class, color or condition. And the question remains, if God did not make the double standard of conduct and character, then where did it come from and who made it?<sup>62</sup>

Stall answered that the double standard was of human<sup>63</sup> rather than divine origin, a mark of uncivilized rather than civilized communities, and an indication of pagan rather than Christian countries. Women, he complained, were subjected to a code of behaviour which was essentially hypocritical. Stall maintained that if the young man expected "purity" from "the dear, sweet girl" someday to be his bride, she had "an equal right to expect and demand" the same of him.<sup>64</sup> Stall used the word "purity" not only to allude to the preservation of sexual virginity before marriage and to sexual fidelity within marriage, but to the rejection of alcohol, tobacco, impure literature, dance halls and the theatre.

Stall, women social purity reformers and feminists were well-intentioned when they attacked the double standard of sexual purity. Campaigns undertaken against the double standard received widespread attention in the public sphere. Such activism contributed to many changes in the British and American criminal codes designed to better protect girls and women from men's incontinence. Women's and men's agitation in Canada also led many legislators to speak out in favour of

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<sup>62</sup> Stall, *Young Man*, p. 46.

<sup>63</sup> It is indeed unusual that Stall considered the double standard to be of *human* origin when many nineteenth-century feminists held *men* responsible for it. But Stall believed that women, like men, were also responsible for the perpetuation of the double standard of sexual purity. Women, argued Stall, condoned in men "the sin which consigns one of their own sex to the eternal obloquy and endless ostracism which is heaped upon her when she goes wrong." *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

enacting similar laws. One member of the Canadian Senate complained that in all other "civilized countries, women and girls have a measure of protection thrown over them by the law of the land" while Canada had "no sufficient provision for their protection."<sup>65</sup> One member of Parliament assured his colleagues that any law enacted to protect women from sexual exploitation was in keeping with Canadian "Christian and moral sentiments." He presented Parliament with petitions from "thousands of ladies" who prayed for the speedy enactment of more protective laws.<sup>66</sup> When the Department of Justice in Ottawa solicited Canadians' opinions on the proposed Criminal Code of 1892, it was bombarded with letters from citizens concerned about sexual morals. Many letters were sent by D. A. Watt, a staunch Presbyterian man who was the "driving force" behind the Society for the Protection of Women and Young Girls. Watt was strongly influenced by the work of W. T. Stead, who was Josephine Butler's colleague in the fight to repeal the the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864, 1866 and 1869, and a supporter of Stall's advice to men.<sup>67</sup> Watt wanted to raise the legal age of consent for women to 22 years.

Given the fact that Canadian women were not yet enfranchised, it is remarkable that from 1885 to 1892, strict legislation was enacted to protect girls and women from men's sexual incontinence. Some of this stricter legislation accepted that girls and women were vulnerable to men's incontinence and had to be legally protected against it. The vast legislation included the following changes: the age of consent was raised to 14 years in 1886. Seduction was made an offence in that same year. Punishable by a jail term of two years, it was illegal to have sexual relations with a girl of previously chaste character between 12 and 15 years of age, or with a girl of previously chaste character under 18 under promise of marriage. In 1887, the under promise of marriage provision

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<sup>65</sup> Senator Alexander Vidal, quoted in Constance Backhouse, "Nineteenth-Century Canadian Rape Law 1800-92," in *Essays in the History of Canadian Law*, vol. 2, ed. David H. Flaherty (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), p. 229.

<sup>66</sup> M.P. John Charlton, quoted in *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> Graham Parker, "The Origins of the Canadian Criminal Code," in *Essays in the History of Canadian Law*, vol. 1, ed. David H. Flaherty (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), pp. 268-269. For Stead's support of Stall's books, see Sylvanus Stall, *What A Young Man Ought To Know* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1904, first pub. 1897), initial pages, and *What A Man Of 45 Ought To Know* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1901), initial pages.

was extended to cover women under 21 years as long as the seducer was over age 21. In 1890, it was illegal to seduce a ward or female employee. The Criminal Code of 1892 made the seduction of girls and women on ships subject to one year imprisonment and a fine. The Code defined rape in such a way as to broaden the range of sexually coercive behaviour. It did not, however, reject the spousal immunity clause against rape.<sup>68</sup>

Despite the existence of such legislation, which in some way tried to protect girls and women while it simultaneously tried to punish men in the public or private sphere who flouted the single standard of sexual purity, pure women were hard pressed to make men adhere to the single standard. For example, the stricter legislation was very narrowly interpreted by members of the more conservative judiciary. Although the paternalistic legislators accepted the ideal of women's sexual inertia and clearly portrayed men as the brutish offender, they also accepted that the loss of a girl's or woman's "honour" constituted a disastrous fall which affected her and not her seducer.<sup>69</sup> But in the aftermath of the Code's implementation, men's convictions for sexual crimes against girls and women often hinged solely on indubitable evidence of girls' and women's sexual purity, their physical resistance to the assault, and the defendant's knowledge of the plaintiff's age at the time of the crime.<sup>70</sup> Dr. Joseph Heller Hett told Canadians in 1899 that better laws were needed because a man could go to jail for stealing a chicken, but when he robbed a dozen girls of their virginity, he escaped "scott free."<sup>71</sup> Several years later, Nellie McClung bitterly complained that a man who kidnapped an 11-year old girl at a railway station and sexually abused her was less liable to imprisonment than if he had stolen some article belonging to the railway station.<sup>72</sup> A member of Parliament who had originally disagreed with the need for stricter sexual legislation best expressed

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<sup>68</sup> Backhouse, "Nineteenth-Century," pp. 228-235.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., pp. 230-235.

<sup>70</sup> For information on how the Code's changes did and did not help women in the Canadian West, See Terry L. Chapman, "Sex Crimes in the West, 1890-1920," *Alberta History* 35, 4 (Autumn 1987): 6-18.

<sup>71</sup> Dr. Joseph Heller Hett, *The Sexual Organs: Their Use and Abuse* (Berlin [now Kitchener], Ontario: Rittinger and Motz, 1899), p. 71.

<sup>72</sup> McClung, p. 77.

why pure women may have had so much difficulty in holding men to the single standard when he stated:

A pure woman knows she is the guardian of her honour and lives above suspicion. Pure, modest women need not the protection of law to guard their honour, and no man looking on one surrounded by purity can have evil thoughts.<sup>73</sup>

With these sentiments in mind, it is doubtful that pure women, let alone working class women, prostitutes, and unmarried women who lived with men,<sup>74</sup> would have had adequate legal means to hold men to the single standard. The fact that the men to whom pure women would have been closest—fathers, uncles, brothers-in-law, physicians and schoolteachers—were often women's main assailants made pure women's task all the more difficult.<sup>75</sup>

Classism and racism may have also prevented women from holding men to the single standard of sexual purity. C. S. Clark questioned whether or not Canadian women so concerned with morals would report the seduction of one of their domestic servants—many of whom were farm girls or overseas immigrants—when it involved their own sons.<sup>76</sup> And without a corresponding emphasis on a single standard of economic equality, the single standard of sexual purity was doomed to failure. Few men and women in Canada saw poverty, rather than the double standard, as the cause of prostitution. Rev. J. G. Shearer, Secretary for the Moral and Social Reform Council of Canada, argued that the priests, reporters, teachers parents and moral reformers should "persistently PROCLAIM THE SINGLE STANDARD of morals...For every fallen woman there is at least one 'fallen man.'<sup>77</sup> It was not until 1912 that Mrs. Flora Macdonald Denison, herself a working-class feminist, and Mrs. Sonia Leathes told the National Council of Women of Canada

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<sup>73</sup> Senator Henry Kaulback, quoted in Backhouse, "Nineteenth-Century," p. 231.

<sup>74</sup> Backhouse cites the case of one unmarried woman living with a man who was gang-raped and robbed by four men in Toronto. The men were acquitted of rape and robbery because her character was called into question. *Ibid.*, p. 221.

<sup>75</sup> Backhouse has found in her review of nineteenth-century sexual assault cases that the majority of offenders were men women knew best. *Ibid.*, p. 225.

<sup>76</sup> C. S. Clark, *Of Toronto the Good* (Montréal: The Toronto Publishing Company, 1898), p. 110.

<sup>77</sup> Rev. J. G. Shearer, "The Canadian Crusade," in *Fighting the Traffic in Young Girls*, ed. Ernest Bell (Incomplete publication data, 1911) p. 350.



that unskilled and underpaid women were most likely to turn to prostitution.<sup>78</sup> Some Toronto moral reformers tried to "rehabilitate" prostitutes by training them for domestic work. Yet the sexual harassment and the poor wages characteristic of domestic work were cited as two of the main reasons women turned to prostitution in the first place.<sup>79</sup>

Holding men to the single standard of sexual purity within the private sphere would have proved equally difficult for the pure woman. While the five or so mechanisms of control reinforced the single sexual standard among women, there were few comparable mechanisms which would have accomplished the same in men. The main mechanism of sexual control for men was self-control, a reality Stall acknowledged in his advice to boys and men. Stall realized that some men spent a great deal of time away from the home, in saloons, clubs and lodges where they were presumably free to engage in non-reproductive sexual activity, smoke, drink, and read impure literature. Busy wasting their money and semen in the public sphere, these men were out of the reach of pure women ensconced in the private sphere. Stall could only urge such men to renounce their "clubhouse" lifestyle for the good of their families, to become more solicitous of their wives, and to work around the home as much as possible, beautifying its lawns and shrubbery. The way to enforce the single standard of sexual purity thus seemed to lie not with the pure woman, but entirely with such men's autonomous movement toward greater self-control.

Even within her home, the pure woman would have found that there was virtually no way in which she could hold the man to a single standard of sexual purity. She would have been unable to prevent her husband from violating her person even though the single standard required that husbands and wives respect each other's sexual rights to their own bodies. Stall did chastize men who subjected their wives to unwanted sexual intercourse. He likened the unfortunate lot of these

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<sup>78</sup> Lori Rotenberg, "The Wayward Worker: Toronto's Prostitute at the Turn of the Century," in *Women at Work: Ontario, 1850-1930*, ed. Janice Acton, Penny Goldsmith and Bonnie Shepard (Toronto: Canadian Women's Educational Press, 1974), p. 46

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 33-69.

women to a "great army of slaves who suffer in silence the servitude from which they have no hope of deliverance except by death."<sup>80</sup> He even promoted the practice of sleeping in separate beds, or separate rooms, permitting the wife possession of the key to the communicating door. But while allowing that husbands should respect their wives' rights to their own persons, Stall advocated that husbands and wives should remain committed to nothing less than patriarchal marriage. He established that in civilized, Christian nations—those same nations which would presumably overthrow the double standard—wives must accept their husbands' leadership. Despite the rhetoric that the home was woman's domain, the woman had to accept St. Paul's teaching that the husband was "the head of the house."<sup>81</sup> Stall was not alone in this view. Patriarchal marriage was upheld in the Criminal Code of 1892 when it refused to consider marital rape an offense. It was also upheld by several nineteenth-century Canadian judicial rulings which favoured husbands' rights over wives' rights in decisions relating to money, property ownership and grounds for divorce.<sup>82</sup> Despite the existence of the deplorable sexual and legal conditions many women faced in patriarchal marriage, Stall, in fact, romanticized the wife's state. He maintained that the wife was honoured and privileged to remain in submission to her considerate and loving Christian husband. And even if this husband were not a considerate and loving Christian, the wife had, nevertheless, to "recognize and conform" to St. Paul's teaching, hoping to "win him to a life with Christ."<sup>83</sup> Once again, the pure woman had to wait for her husband's autonomous movement toward greater self-control to render her submission more comfortable.

Wood-Allen and Drake agreed whole-heartedly with the need to eliminate the double standard of sexual purity, because they believed that God created the sexes to be equal. Sexual equality to Wood-Allen and Drake meant the moral equality of men's and women's souls. If smoking were

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<sup>80</sup> Stall, *Husband*, p. 94.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>82</sup> Constance Backhouse, "Pure Patriarchy: Nineteenth-Century Canadian Marriage," *McGill Law Journal* 31(1986): 264-312

<sup>83</sup> Stall, *Husband*, p. 65.

a moral crime in women, so too was it in men because, what "one soul does is of just as much importance as what any other soul does."<sup>84</sup> The women authors alerted girls and women to the dangers of the double standard. Girls and women were warned that men who transgressed the double standard came from the upper middle and lower classes alike. The authors even went so far as to say that women who meet men who have transgressed the single standard should "shrink from personal contact with them as from a viper."<sup>85</sup> Yet it seems that Wood-Allen and Drake were aware that in reality, men's transgression of the double standard—as Clark put it—was of "no more consequence socially, than a change of diet would be."<sup>86</sup>

Instead of focusing, as Stall did, on pure women's sexual inertia and the double standard to help keep men continent, Wood-Allen and Drake depended far more upon the pure woman's said vocation of motherhood. Within the four books addressed to girls, women and wives, Wood-Allen and Drake attempted to regulate the flow of moral pollution into and out of men's and women's orifices in three ways. They established the importance of mothers and motherhood to the family, the race and the nation. They urged women to marry continent men. Finally, they counseled mothers to build close relationships with their daughters, and more importantly with their sons.

As Stall's four books consist of a panegyric to men's semen, Wood-Allen's and Drake's books amount to an ode to women's wombs. Wood-Allen's and Drake's readers were instructed that girls' and women's lives were inevitably directed toward motherhood, that mothers were extremely powerful individuals living great lives and that mothers served all humanity by bearing, raising and properly educating the end product of their wombs: their children. Even little girls were told that their entire upbringing had to be a preparation for the birth of their future daughters and sons. So strong is the emphasis these two women authors place on motherhood, that no woman was said to have the right to be a wife if she did not want to be a mother. Regardless of her empty

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<sup>84</sup> Wood-Allen, *Young Girl*, p. 175.

<sup>85</sup> Wood-Allen, *Young Woman*, pp. 237-238.

<sup>86</sup> Clark, pp. 66-67.

womb, even the never-married woman, and the menopausal woman could "mother" others by pursuing "the work of reform."<sup>87</sup>

Both Wood-Allen and Drake established the importance of motherhood and mothers by vesting enormous power in the person of the mother. The mother looking after her family was considered to be general, president, cabinet officer, diplomat, domestic scientist, day and night teacher, guide, counsellor, spiritual director, nurse, physician, lawmaker, judge, and arbitrator.<sup>88</sup> Mothers not only fed and clothed their children, but prepared them for true boyhood, manhood, girlhood and womanhood.<sup>89</sup> Drake wrote proudly that it was at the mother's knee that the great lessons of sexual purity are learned. "[H]appy the mother," proclaimed Drake, "who can take her children through all the higher grades, until their education in these things is completed."<sup>90</sup> Mothers' all-encompassing work was said to have an important influence not only on the family, but on the race and the nation. Mothers who were educated in preparing themselves for motherhood guaranteed that a "millennial day would dawn for the race."<sup>91</sup> What the nation needed were educated mothers who were willing to plan and research the care of the home and the mental, spiritual and physical training of healthy, wanted children. For Wood-Allen and Drake, it was a series of short steps from the home, to the community, and then to the heart of the nation.

It seems ironic that Wood-Allen and Drake turned to motherhood to keep men continent, for this common glory of womanhood as then instituted virtually ensured women's subordination to men.<sup>92</sup> The nineteenth-century ideology of motherhood was inherently a patriarchal construct, for it held all women to be instinctively maternal and desirous of maternity. It upheld the distinction

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<sup>87</sup> Mrs. Emma F. Angell Drake, M.D., *What A Woman Of 45 Ought To Know* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1902), p. 107.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>89</sup> Drake, *Wife*, p. 216-217.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 221. Drake ended *Wife* with a four-page list of books—published and distributed by Vir—which would help the young wife exercise the maternal office with greater ease and knowledge. See pp. 287-291.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 287.

<sup>92</sup> DuBois and Gordon, p. 35.

between pure and and impure women. It encouraged all women to enter into monogamous, heterosexual relationships. It magnified the biological differences between men and women, much to women's detriment. It isolated women within the family and within the home. This ideology severely restricted women's career choices, reinforced women's economic dependence on men, and validated the separation of the sexes into separate spheres. When women were permitted to leave the private sphere to enter the public sphere, it was to impart her maternal influence to the world of politics, industry and commerce. Yet Wood-Allen and Drake considered motherhood so important that they fiercely condemned contraception and abortion as heinous sins. It was not so much their religious beliefs which made them turn against contraception and abortion. Like many other women social purity reformers and feminists, Wood-Allen and Drake opposed contraception and abortion because they believed that the family's position in society would be undermined if contraception and abortion instead of strict sexual continence were used to control fertility. If the family's position in society were undermined, a great many women would be bereft of their most common livelihood: marriage and motherhood. This is possibly why Wood-Allen and Drake, while accepting that husbands' incontinence forced many wives to resort to contraception and abortion, counseled women to be brave and give birth to their unwanted children if they could not have avoided conceiving them. In addition, it was commonly believed that contraception and abortion were resorted to by prostitutes; for obvious tactical reasons, social purity reformers and feminists did not want to categorize themselves as impure women.<sup>93</sup>

Late nineteenth-century developments, however, made many women see motherhood as an empowering tool women could use to gain more leverage in patriarchal society. The reasons for this stemmed first and foremost from the "discovery of the child."<sup>94</sup> Jeffrey Weeks reports that from the eighteenth century onward, the bourgeois conceptualization of children held them to be pure,

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<sup>93</sup> Gordon, p. 110.

<sup>94</sup> Barbara Ehrenreich and Deidre English, *For Her Own Good: 150 Years of the Experts' Advice to Women* (Toronto: Doubleday, 1979), pp. 183-210.

innocent and lovable creatures who, above all, had to be protected. By the nineteenth century, childhood was considered a stage separate from the stage of adulthood.<sup>95</sup> Concern for children focused on their mortality, care, health, education, working conditions, sexuality, and future, for they were no longer considered heirs or miniature adults, but a kind of "evolutionary protoplasm"<sup>96</sup> who would determine the fate of the nation which brought them forth.

Directly linked to the growing importance of the child, the public health movement, which attracted many professional reform-minded women at the turn of the century, eventually turned to teachers—most of whom were also women<sup>97</sup>—to educate children on pollutants of all kinds. Teachers were themselves instructed in hygiene, contagious diseases, physiology, public health, and physical culture.<sup>98</sup> The analogy between the images and the lexicon used in textbooks turned out by the public health movement and the images and lexicon used in prescriptive sexual literature turned out by the social purity reform movement would make a very fruitful research topic on its own. Purity was equated with cleanliness. The fight against germs was perceived as a fierce battle which only the hygienically pure would win. Germs, like incontinence, were the enemy which had to be vanquished. The key was knowledge, not ignorance. Germs were pollutants which invaded the orifices of the body in similar fashion to impure literature, tobacco and alcohol. Germs were "filth," "dirt," "disease," and "darkness." "What most helps to keep people well?" asked one hygiene textbook used in Canadian public schools which was co-authored by the same J. H. Kellogg famous for his directives on social purity. The answer, "cleanliness."<sup>99</sup> It is no wonder that the public health movement found an ally in the housewives and mothers of the domestic science movement; now women could regulate the pollutants streaming into the orifices of their children's

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<sup>95</sup> Weeks, p. 48.

<sup>96</sup> Ehrenreich and English, p. 191.

<sup>97</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century, women dominated the teaching profession numerically. Alison Prentice et al., *Canadian Women: A History* (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988), p. 129.

<sup>98</sup> Neil Sutherland, "To Create a Strong and Healthy Race: School Children in the Public Health Movement, 1880-1914," in *Medicine in Canadian Society*, ed. S. E. D. Shortt (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1981), pp. 361-393.

<sup>99</sup> M. V. O'Shea and J. H. Kellogg, *Health and Cleanliness* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1919), p. 1.

bodies as well as into the doors and windows of their homes.<sup>100</sup>

The responsibility for the child and his or her upbringing devolved upon the mother, aided by a contingent of male child-care experts. Barbara Ehrenreich and Deidre English agree that the child provided an answer to the "Woman Question." Traditionally ensconced in the private sphere, society now accepted that women could increasingly become involved in the public sphere because their career as child educators demanded it. Motherhood thus became a scientific profession worthy of the consideration of the most intelligent men and women. Maternal feminists like Wood-Allen and Drake lauded the role mothers played in raising their children, for, like the famous maternalist Ellen Key,<sup>101</sup> they too believed that professional child-raising brought the individual woman to self-fulfillment. And as the pure woman attained fulfillment, her child was being trained to become the socially pure vanguard of the nation. Mrs. Parker, a Toronto women's rights activist, would have agreed. She proclaimed that the mother's raising of her "little band of embryo citizens" provided the foundation upon which "the greater super-structure is to be reared."<sup>102</sup>

The embryo-citizen's importance to the nation was coupled with concern for the Anglo-Saxon race. This concern centred on the fear of the falling Anglo-Saxon birth rate among the upper and middle class, the pollution of the race by diseases such as tuberculosis, alcoholism and syphilis, the degeneration of the race caused by unwanted maternity and the perceived decline in the health of Anglo-Saxon men and women.<sup>103</sup> Before I discuss each one of these fears, it is important to know that Wood-Allen and Drake were both eugenicists and environmentalists who believed that children were influenced by their parents' genes and by the environment which surrounded them: "What our children become depends upon two conditions; what they are at birth, and what the envi-

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<sup>100</sup> For an excellent analysis on women, germs, and the domestic science movement, see Ehrenreich and English, pp. 141-181.

<sup>101</sup> Ruth Roach Pierson, "Ellen Key: Maternalism and Pacifism," in *Delivering Motherhood: Maternal Ideologies and Practices in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Katherine Arnup, Andr e L vesque and Ruth Roach Pierson (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 270-283.

<sup>102</sup> Quoted in Morrison, p. 51.

<sup>103</sup> For the way in which Canada reacted to these fears, see Carol Lee Bacchi, *Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English-Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1819* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), pp. 104-116.

ronment makes them."<sup>104</sup> Eugenic thought, popularized by Francis Dalton, Charles Darwin's cousin, held that nature was more important than nurture. Eugenicists believed that the solution to improving the racial stock lay in preventing the unfit from breeding, while encouraging the fit to breed. Environmentalist thought held that nurture was more important than nature. Environmentalists paid homage to Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, who believed that changes in the environment led to physical and mental changes in the individual which were transmitted to following generations.<sup>105</sup> They concluded that improvements in the environment could better the racial stock.

The fear of the falling Anglo-Saxon birth-rate was said to threaten the future of the race. Although they used the word "race" liberally, Wood-Allen and Drake, like good Christian Physiologists, were concerned not with the human race, but with Christian, Anglo-Saxon men and women of the upper and middle classes. This group's declining birth-rate was remarked upon in Britain, the United States and Canada. While Canada's population grew from 4.3 million inhabitants in 1881 to 8.5 million in 1920, most of the increase was due to immigration. In 1871, 60 per cent of the Canadian population was of Anglo-Saxon origin. By 1921, this figure had declined to 40 percent.<sup>106</sup> Even Englishman James Marchant, Secretary to the National Birth-Rate Commission, responded with alarm to the news that Canada, and all England's white colonial nations' populations, were smaller than they needed to be. He ignored India's vast numbers because this country did not offer "opportunities of prosperity to the white populations."<sup>107</sup> Wood-Allen and Drake condemned the use of contraception and abortion once again because they believed it was being used primarily by the higher classes to limit offspring. Drake warned that few children were born "into our better homes, while in the byways, among the lower classes, the little ones swarm in

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<sup>104</sup> Drake, *Wife*, p. 138.

<sup>105</sup> Bacchi, pp. 105-106.

<sup>106</sup> Angus McLaren and Arlene Tigar McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State: The Changing Practices and Politics of Contraception and Abortion in Canada, 1880-1980* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1986), p. 16.

<sup>107</sup> James Marchant, *Birth-Rate and Empire* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1917), p. 2.



hotbeds of sin."<sup>108</sup> When compared with the the evidence of booming non-Anglo-Saxon, lower class immigrant populations in the United States and Canada, the Anglo-Saxon race seemed destined for numerical scarcity. Drake advised that at least four children had to be born into each American home. Because the average fell far below this mark, she warned that the "American race is fast dying out."<sup>109</sup> Similar sentiments were expressed by the prominent Canadian W. S. Wallace, who urged that the

native-born population, in the struggle to keep up appearances in the face of increasing competition, fails to propagate itself, commits race suicide...whereas the immigrant population, being inferior...propagates itself like a fish in the sea.<sup>110</sup>

The fear that the race was being polluted by disease also was expressed by Wood-Allen and Drake. Although Drake regarded the study of heredity to be "almost an exact science,"<sup>111</sup> she, like Wood-Allen and Stall, conflated the nature and nurture theories of hereditary inheritance into the law of heredity. The law of heredity gave pseudo-scientific respectability to Christian Physiologists' classism, racism and overt moralism. The Series' authors concluded, for example, that according to this law, the children of poor, jealous, tubercular, alcoholic, syphilitic, insane, tobacco-using and licentious parents produced "ugly misshapen children, mentally and morally."<sup>112</sup> In one of the Series' most impressive scare stories, Margaret, a young woman who lived an impure life and presumably acquired some venereal disease, was said to be responsible for twelve hundred mentally and morally impaired descendants in seventy-five years. Two hundred and eighty of these were "paupers," one hundred and forty were "habitual criminals." The remainder "cursed the country with vice, crime, pauperism, and insanity."<sup>113</sup> The pollution of the race by syphilis was an especial concern for women social purity reformers in Canada. In 1905, the transmission of the

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<sup>108</sup> Drake, *Wife*, p. 133.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134.

<sup>110</sup> Quoted in McLaren and McLaren, p. 17.

<sup>111</sup> Drake, *Wife*, p. 137. Drake cites both Francis Dalton and Charles Darwin to support her.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139-140. Similar sentiments were expressed by Wood-Allen, *Young Woman*, pp. 215-239 and Stall, *Young Man*, pp. 251-274.

<sup>113</sup> Drake, *Wife*, p. 141.

disease from infected mother to child was proved. With this information at hand, Lillian Beynon Thomas attributed 50 percent of mental deficiency to syphilis. Mary McCallum hoped to stop the spread of such pollution by keeping patients suffering from venereal disease in strict quarantine.<sup>114</sup>

Unwanted maternity was likewise considered a factor contributing to the degeneration of the Anglo-Saxon race. While acknowledging, like Stall, that the father bore responsibility for his contribution to the offspring's mental, moral and physical make-up, Wood-Allen and Drake emphasized the mother's greater influence on the inheritance their child received. The theory of maternal impressions, often attributed to Lamarck, held that feelings, thoughts, and sensations experienced by the mother positively or negatively affected the child at conception or during gestation. Wood-Allen and Drake drew upon this theory in viewing the mother's soul, mind and body as the moral, mental, and physical environment in which present or future offspring could either thrive or sicken and die. Women's immorality, as in the case of Margaret, did adversely affect her children. But Wood-Allen and Drake consistently used examples of married men's incontinence to illustrate the negative effects unwanted maternity could have on the child. Sexual intercourse imposed upon a mother unwilling to become pregnant would result in a child morally, mentally and physically damaged by its mother's distraught thoughts, feelings and sensations. Unwanted maternity was cited by Drake as one of the reasons why the world was filled with "dwarfed minds and bodies," and "paranoiacs, cranks, [and] feeble-minded, idiotic, epileptic, diseased children."<sup>115</sup>

The consequences of the law of heredity could be overcome, however, by the "gospel of heredity." Wood-Allen and Drake assured that this gospel, or teaching meant that "heredity is not fatality."<sup>116</sup> Similarly classist and racist in content, the gospel of heredity preached that pure women should understand and spread the hereditary Word that unwanted, unloved and diseased children who eventually filled orphanages, asylums and jails did not have to be born as such. Dr.

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<sup>114</sup> Bacci, pp. 111-112.

<sup>115</sup> Drake, *Wife*, p. 89-90.

<sup>116</sup> Wood-Allen, *Young Woman*, p. 243.

Peter Bryce, President of the Canadian Purity Education Association and Chief Medical Officer for the Department of Immigration, also believed in a combination of eugenic and environmentalist theory. Citing the complementarity of the law of heredity and the gospel of heredity, Bryce proposed in 1914 that the government strictly control marriage to weed out hereditary weaknesses. But he also supported better housing, less over-crowding, lower costs for food and land and a reduction in child labour to improve the health of the race.<sup>117</sup>

Like the Biblical Word, the gospel of heredity was a message of good tidings which further encouraged potential or actual mothers to take it to the public sphere. To ensure the best extra-uterine life for the child, the intra-uterine life of the embryo-citizen could be enriched by the mother. With hard work, she could actually ameliorate the effect her husband's impure seed could have on her embryo-citizen. Marvellous results could be attained if the woman had been preparing herself for motherhood. She was to eat good food, lightly exercise, and not restrict her womb with tight clothing. Hoping to improve the health of future mothers, many Canadian educators supported the building of recreational facilities for women and condemned the fashionable clothing which pinched women in at the waist.<sup>118</sup> Drake believed that, during pregnancy, equally marvellous results could be attained if the mother remained sexually inactive, read pure books, cultivated a love for art, science or music, thought positively, and weeded out the habits and tendencies she did not wish to transmit to her child. The child was sure to follow suit. Needless to say, such an ameliorative regime of leisure, culture and self-development was far more accessible to women of the upper and middle classes rather than to women of the lower classes. As proof of the positive side of maternal impressions, Drake offered several travellers' observations that children in Italy bore "a striking resemblance" to the child Jesus; the result of the emotional adoration Italian mothers gave the Madonna.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Bacchi, p. 108.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>119</sup> Drake, *Wife*, p. 104.

Finally, the physical and mental fitness of Anglo-Saxon men, women and children was called into question. Men's incontinence led to mental, spiritual and physical degeneracy. Women's unhealthy dress, diet, and lack of exercise led to the ruin of their health, painful menstruation and difficult delivery. Wood-Allen and Drake recommended that women overthrow the corset, amend their diet with grains and vigorously attack household tasks to keep themselves in top childbearing shape. The impure lifestyles of both sexes was said to contribute to their children's worsening inheritance. Matters seemed to be confirmed when in Britain, mecca for the Anglo-Saxon race, three out of every five volunteers were rejected as unfit to serve in the Boer War of 1899-1901. Little attention was paid to the fact that these volunteers were unemployed and presumably from the lower classes. Instead of linking the volunteers' small stature, flat feet, rotten teeth, bad hearts and weak lungs with poverty, a connection was made instead between the volunteers' unfitness and improper maternal care.<sup>120</sup> In Canada, Dr. Helen MacMurchy blended professional motherhood, social purity reform, concern with the child, and concern for the race in her career as a medical inspector of schools. Best described as a social patriot, she also dated social reformers' interest in socially applied medicine to the discovery of the puny volunteer specimens of Anglo-Saxon manhood during the Boer War.<sup>121</sup> By 1907, MacMurchy focused her efforts on the "feeble-minded." Sounding much like Wood-Allen and Drake, she complained that "imbecility and heredity are known causes of pauperism and crime."<sup>122</sup> Like Wood-Allen and Drake, MacMurchy also held that the feeble-minded bred faster than fit people because they were easily victimized, and because they did not have the self-control required to turn away from impurity. She suggested a mandatory thirty-year policy of institutionalization of the feeble-minded in order to dry up the flow of human polluters of the race.

With her womb at the centre of the family, the nation and the race, the pure woman was en-

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<sup>120</sup> Anna Davin, "Imperialism and Motherhood," *History Workshop* 5 (Spring 1978): 15-16.

<sup>121</sup> Roberts, "Six," p. 158.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159.

couraged to live with the knowledge of the inheritance she would pass on to her embryo-citizens. She could successfully accomplish this by keeping herself pure. But how could she ensure that the paternal contribution to her embryo-citizen's inheritance could likewise be as pure? Wood-Allen's and Drake's answer was that the pure woman should marry a man she would like to see reproduced in her children. This man was not so much the moderately, but the strictly continent man. He would presumably have an equal interest in producing socially pure sons and daughters to ensure the continuation of Christian, Anglo-Saxon, upper and middle class hegemony.

The advice Wood-Allen and Drake dispensed to women on the kind of man the pure woman should choose as her husband should not be underestimated. Marriage to the strictly continent man was thought to protect pure women from the flow of moral pollution emanating from incontinent men. Even more important, given the material reality of many women's lives, and by this I mean the limited economic, professional, personal, sexual, and legal opportunities facing nineteenth-century women in patriarchal society, marriage proved to be a necessity. With the judiciary firmly on the husband's side in patriarchal marriage, an unhappy marriage would have made life miserable for any wife. What Wood-Allen and Drake hoped to do for the pure woman was to destroy any appeal the incontinent man may have held, and to create an ideal of the strictly continent man as a romantic partner ultimately suitable for fatherhood.

Wood-Allen and Drake proposed that as a potential or actual mother, the pure woman had to determine what kind of inheritance the man she would marry would bequeath their children. If she could not determine this, it was better to remain single. The pure woman was urged to seek out a man who had been preparing himself for fatherhood in the same way she had been preparing herself for motherhood. This was the man who had avoided tobacco, alcohol, prostitutes and other impure practices which provided poor soil for his seed. Drake even offered the pure woman a set of questions designed to reveal exactly what the prospective husband truly was. These questions concerned themselves with his mental, moral and physical purity, his expectations of his bride's mental, moral and physical purity, his hidden habits, his companions, his preparation for fatherhood,

his virginity, and his estimation of fitness for marriage.<sup>123</sup> The pure man with nothing to hide would unblushingly answer such intimate questions. If he did not, parents did not have the right to permit their daughter to marry him.

Wood-Allen and Drake counseled that incontinent men who used pornography, smoked, drank and sowed their wild oats were, contrary to popular opinion, not "manly" but unmanly. These men were, in fact, slaves to all kinds of pollutants because of their lack of manly self-control. The pure woman was warned that incontinent men were "vile" characters who polluted themselves and women. They were "moral lepers" who bred contamination.<sup>124</sup> They were in no way suitable for marriage and fatherhood. Impure literature destroyed the man's potential for fatherhood because it destroyed the mind. Tobacco smoke ruined the health of the wife and damaged the developing child. Alcohol led a man to lose self-control. As a result, women were seduced and wives were subjected to sexual and physical violence. Babies begat by an alcoholic father were sickly and sure to become alcoholics themselves. Sexual licence led to syphilis which was transmitted by the infected husband to innocent wives and children.

After having determined what kind of inheritance the pure woman's future husband would bequeath their children, Wood-Allen and Drake proposed that as a potential or actual mother, the pure woman had also to ascertain whether or not the potential or actual father was, and would remain a strictly continent man. The pure woman had a right to expect, "nay more, to demand"<sup>125</sup> certain personal characteristics of the man she would marry. Like her, the strictly continent man had to possess purity, honour, truth, courage, daring, as well as proper restraint, strength, the ability to plan and achieve, authority based upon ability, and wise judgement.<sup>126</sup> This man had to respect

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<sup>123</sup> Drake, *Wife* p. 114-115. One survey of 40 American marriage manuals published between the years 1832-1892 shows that of the main criteria for a good husband, good health and temperate morality figured prominently. See Michael Gordon, "The Ideal Husband as Depicted in the Nineteenth-Century Marriage Manual," in *The American Man*, ed. Elizabeth H. Pleck and Joseph H. Pleck (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1980), pp. 145-157.

<sup>124</sup> Drake, *Wife*, p. 60.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.

woman as an equal, as "an individual with rights, with intellect and heart, with a judgement to be consulted, [and] opinions worthy of recognition," rather than a mere "appendage to man, created for his comfort and to be held in her 'sphere' by his will."<sup>127</sup>

This same equality had to extend into the marriage relation itself. In another instance of textual rebellion, neither Wood-Allen nor Drake repeated Stall's advice that the wife must recognize and conform to St. Paul's teaching concerning the subordination of the wife to the husband.<sup>128</sup> The women authors were insistent that the husband had to treat his wife as an equal, and a companion rather than as a child, a servant or a plaything. He had to value her work in the home, for after all, women did half the work of the world. He had to share information about his business dealings and finances with her. The husband had to understand that her reform work outside the home would "only freshen and brighten her for companionship, and give her glimpses, yes, extended views, of the world and its doings, that will serve to broaden her horizon, and bring her closer in touch with her husband in his wrestlings with the affairs of life."<sup>129</sup> Given Wood-Allen's and Drake's involvement in the W.C.T.U., it is not surprising that this condition would have been included.

In Wood-Allen and Drake's thought, marriage to a strictly continent man led to a companionate, rather than a patriarchal marriage. Companionate marriage was a conceptualization influenced by the Protestant view that marriage was an especial duty and grace which permitted the spiritual, mental and physical blending of the couple. One can see in this conceptualization a harbinger of what Marie Stopes would later rhapsodize as the "erogamic life."<sup>130</sup> Far more woman-centred

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<sup>127</sup> Wood-Allen, *Young Woman*, p. 248.

<sup>128</sup> This proves to be a most interesting omission. Drake, however, recommends that it should be binding "upon every young man before he stands at the marriage altar, to read carefully and painstakingly Dr. Stall's books for young men and husbands." Drake, *Wife*, pp. 54-55. As publisher, Stall may have persuaded Drake to incorporate this recommendation. On the other hand, Drake may have included this recommendation to curry favour with Stall in order to assure her work was published by the Vir Publishing Company. Lastly, Stall may have included this recommendation to encourage the greater readership and sale of the entire Series.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>130</sup> Stopes wrote: "The word [erogamic] is derived from the Greek: *eros*—love, and *gamos*—marriage or mating. I minted it with the intention that it shall designate the noble flower of the duality of human life, the mating and relation together of man and woman in all three planes—physical, mental and spiritual." Marie Carmichael Stopes, *Enduring Passion* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1934, first pub. 1928), p. 15.

than the patriarchal marriage Stall ultimately defended, the companionate marriage supposedly ensured that both husband and wife would willingly seek each other's opinions and wishes. Each would acknowledge the other's individuality and respect the differences which arose. Both husband and wife would continue to hold each other to the highest ideals of purity. Most importantly to Wood-Allen and Drake, in a companionate marriage, the potential or actual mother had the greatest amount of control over the potential or actual father's incontinence. They believed that the strictly continent man would be duly impressed with the difficulty and glory of motherhood. Thus, marriage would prove to be the only balanced moral and legal container into which the husband could dutifully and responsibly expend his semen.

For the good of his own offspring, the husband would restrict himself to sexual intercourse within marriage for procreation. He would eschew prostitutes, thus reducing the opportunity to contract and transmit venereal disease to his children. He would respect his wife's sexual rights. As unwanted maternity and maternal impressions seriously hindered the proper development of the child, it was counseled that the husband should never allow himself to engage in marital excess if he appreciated what this meant to his wife, his unborn children and to the future generation. Never would he force himself upon his wife during pregnancy. Like his wife, he would never resort to contraception and abortion for both were indications of gross licentiousness which would leave their mark on the child. The pure woman's rejection of artificial contraception and abortion made it all the more incumbent upon her husband to practise strict continence to limit family size.

The potential or actual mother who gave birth to daughters was encouraged to raise them not only to be pure, but to maintain close relationships with their mothers in order to prepare them for motherhood. In encouraging pure women to maintain close relationships with their daughters, Wood-Allen and Drake simultaneously advocated that women protect their daughters from men's incontinence, establish maternal rather than paternal access to their daughters, and instill a feeling of solidarity among women united in the work of reform. In preparing their daughters for motherhood, the two women authors passed on to their daughters the same safeguard they had seen fit to



combat moral pollution. Wood-Allen, for example, gave the young girl permission to tell boys and men who smoked that tobacco affected the heart and throat, but more importantly, caused children to die of infantile paralysis. This was clearly a "very serious matter in regard to the future of the children in the years to come."<sup>131</sup> Preparation for motherhood ostensibly led daughters to select a strictly continent man for a husband, thereby ensuring that her rights within a companionate marriage would be protected. Preparation for motherhood also ensured that the daughter would raise her children to respect the importance of motherhood and fatherhood.

Perhaps the most interesting portion of Wood-Allen's and Drake's advice to girls, women and wives on the subject of motherhood dealt with the way in which the pure woman should raise her sons. The potential or actual mother was encouraged, for the good of her son and his future wife and children, to maintain an extremely close relationship with him. The development of this relationship was to begin even before the son was conceived. Girls, unmarried women and wives alike were told that they must never tolerate conduct in a boy that they would not tolerate in a girl. The women authors' audience was also told that boys and girls, brothers and sisters, and men and women "ought to be grand, true friends, inciting each other to the noblest achievements."<sup>132</sup> Boys, in fact, needed women's protection because they were thought to have a more difficult time growing up than did girls.

After the birth of a son, the mother was to develop her close relationship with him by shaping him into the strictly continent man. She was urged to tell him the story of his own conception and birth. Drake advised the mother to tell her son that he once grew in her body. The mother was never to omit any reference to the pain she had suffered in labour. Upon hearing this story, one young son was apparently moved to tears. Throwing his arms around his mother's neck he cried, "Oh, how boys ought to love their mothers."<sup>133</sup> Arthur Beall, who was eventually hired to speak

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<sup>131</sup> Wood-Allen, *Young Girl*, p. 126.

<sup>132</sup> Wood-Allen, *Young Woman*, p. 174.

<sup>133</sup> Drake, *Wife*, p. 223.

on social purity issues by the Ontario W.C.T.U., used this same technique in his lecture to young boys. Hoping to encourage boys to revere motherhood rather than spread "dirty stories," Beall asked them to repeat after him, "On the day I was born my mother went down into the Valley of the Shadow of Death, so that I might live."<sup>134</sup> He closed this portion of his lesson by affirming "Now boys, I know you're going to love your mother ten thousand times better after today."<sup>135</sup> Such lectures had an honourable purpose. The lesson of motherly love and suffering fastened the boy to his mother, and a "mother-anchored" child was supposed never to stray too far. The lesson also fastened the boy to his future wife and children with a moral, or spiritual paternal umbilical cord. The mother had to establish the existence of this cord if she were to raise her son to be unlike the "untaught boys [who] grow to be men and trample upon every holy instinct of womanhood, and set at naught the sacredness of maternity."<sup>136</sup>

This close relationship between mother and son extended to the first dawns of his sexuality. Far more in control with her son than with men in general, the mother could guard her son's body from invasions of all kinds. She was to direct his mind away from bad thoughts, his eyes from impure books, his ears from vicious stories, his mouth from lewd speech and stimulating food, his urethral opening from the flow of semen. From the earliest days she had to keep his penis and rectum perfectly clean, properly tie his napkin, and carefully bathe him so as not to arouse any feeling of irritation which could lead to masturbation. Drake encouraged the mother to be "Argus-eyed"<sup>137</sup> in all the departments of life to ensure the health and social purity of her son. She would lovingly direct her son away from bad habits and bad companions. Fearing sons would learn how to masturbate from other children, Drake warned the mother never to let her son play with a child

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<sup>134</sup> Arthur Beall, *The Living Temple* (Whitby, Ontario: The A. B. Penhale Publishing Company, 1933), p. 53.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54. See also the information Robertson Davies' provides on a "Dr. Upper" who lectured to the young male protagonist's class on the importance of "Mommy" in *What's Bred in the Bone* (Markham, Ontario: Penguin Books, 1986), p. 115. A comparison between Davies' account of Dr. Upper's lectures in *Bone* and Beall's selection of lectures in *Temple* leads me to suspect that Arthur Beall and "Dr. Upper" were one and the same person.

<sup>136</sup> Drake, *Wife* p. 225.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 238.

she did not know, sleep over at another child's house, let children sleep together in the same bed nor to allow children to play in the streets after nightfall. During the late nineteenth century, many Canadian provincial W.C.T.U. organizations lobbied in favour of a nine o'clock curfew for children. This effort was later abandoned in favour of educating children to control their behaviour on their own.<sup>138</sup> The Argus-eyed mother figured prominently in Jessie Smith's speech on "Social Purity" to women of the W.C.T.U. in Nova Scotia in 1898. In her speech, mothers were depicted as sentinels who watched and guarded the little child "from every impurity of thought and of act." Mothers asked teachers to take their place at schools, looking out for foul language, filthy illustrations, and outhouse doors which closed improperly.<sup>139</sup>

Such an omnipotent mother was intended to guarantee that she, and not the father, would serve as the gender role model for her son. As such, he would supposedly grow up to be a more woman-centred rather than man-centred man. The impressionable young son, noted Smith, should not necessarily model himself after his father if that "admired 'big man'" were overtly man-centred. Smith feared that a son patterned after his father was vulnerable to

growing into habits of rudeness or of courtesy: imitating his [father's] speech, refined or vulgar, foul or clean; absorbing his ideas on every subject; knowing only the books that he reads,—and the Bible *may* be among them,—on every side of his nature, while mind and heart are as yet as 'wax to receive, and marble to retain,' receiving those impressions which will never pass away, because at this stage of life they form habit, and in weaker and slower minds, even character.<sup>140</sup>

The woman-centred man, as a more balanced, socially pure individual, was apparently a better candidate for pure manhood than the man-centred man.

Mothers were to fashion their sons into sons of God.<sup>141</sup> One could consider this task entirely consistent with the example of pure manhood Jesus Christ provided, with the Madonna's

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<sup>138</sup> Mitchinson, "The W.C.T.U.," p. 162.

<sup>139</sup> Smith, in *The Proper Sphere*, ed. Cook and Mitchinson, p. 230.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 231.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*

close relationship to her son, with the Virgin Mary's virginal sinlessness and with the pure woman's angelic status. Drake offered her readers one mother's example of success. A young boy of fifteen intending to visit a dubious amusement park with some male school companions, is dissuaded from doing so ever again when his mother, "dressed in her prettiest and most girlish dress,"<sup>142</sup> accompanies him there. As if looking at the park and its frequenters through his mother's eyes, the son soon registers his disgust. He sorrowfully tells his male friends the next day,

Well, I want to tell you right here, boys, you'll never catch me going anywhere again where I can't take my mother. Of course she knew what kind of place it was and wanted me to see that it was not for me if it were not for her, and I learned the lesson.<sup>143</sup>

Having helped regulate the flow of moral pollution into and out of her sons' orifices, the potential or actual mother could rightly claim that she who bore and reared "splendid sons from babyhood to manhood," could "shape communities."<sup>144</sup> Her great work of social purity reform which united all women together in motherhood, hoped to provide daughters with a pool of pure men from which they could choose strictly continent husbands. The women authors believed that the close relationship mothers had with their sons would help raise a generation of woman-centred, hence balanced, socially pure men. It is understandable that in a patriarchal society, Wood-Allen and Drake could have viewed mothers' close relationship with their sons as a revolutionary means whereby pure women could stop men from contributing their semen to the flow of moral pollution. But it is also difficult not to see that in true patriarchal fashion, mothers' close relationship with their sons resulted in privileging sons over daughters and men over women.

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<sup>142</sup> Drake, *Wife*, p. 260.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 261,

<sup>144</sup> Drake, *45*, p. 47.

## CONCLUSION

### **The Old/New Ideal of Sexual Continence For Men**

I feel it is appropriate to end this exploration of the socio-historical construction of masculinity, which has focused on the development and propagation of the concept of a pure manhood won via the man's struggle for sexual continence and his battle against incontinence, with some diary entries from Charles Walter Stetson (1858-1911). When an unmarried man, Stetson realized that his energy was "consumed in trying to subdue" his sexual desires which were "most innocent and sweet desires, in themselves, but most inconvenient and embarrassing when a mate is lacking."<sup>1</sup> When courting his fiancée, Stetson tried to restrict her reading on sexual matters to the "holiness" of sexual relations. He did not want his fiancée to read books on "the odor of [the sexual encounter's] perspiration, the action of its phallus, the hairiness of sweating breasts."<sup>2</sup> And when his marriage to this fiercely independent woman neared its demise, Stetson privately lamented in June of 1888 that in his loneliness, he again had to struggle with the possibility of incontinence. He complained,

I was never made to be a "continent" man...If I lived in the 14th or 15th century I should keep mistresses. As I live in this [the nineteenth century] and have inherited the moral nature, to some extent, of my Puritan forefathers combined with extreme nervous sensitiveness, and a quick sympathy with the female sex, I am in a state far from blessed. I confess—and I am so blind that I do not feel shame for it—that I think it would be quite right for me, with my temperament and the circumstances of my married life to keep a mistress. Yet I shrink from it because of the respect in which I hold Charlotte, my love of her. But it is certain that I need more of that sort of thing than there is any way of my getting. All I fear is that at some time all the hunger of this side of my nature may break out and that I shall revel in some demoralizing nauseous excess.<sup>3</sup>

Stetson was the first husband of the famous American woman rights activist Charlotte Perkins Gilman and a fairly well-known American painter. Although I have tried, wherever possi-

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<sup>1</sup> Mary Armfield Hill, quoting Stetson's diary entry of April, 1883, in Mary Armfield Hill, ed., *Endure: The Diaries of Charles Walter Stetson* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1985), p. xxx. Many thanks to David Sharp for pointing out Stetson's battle against sexual incontinence to me.

<sup>2</sup> Hill, quoting Stetson's diary entries of June 25 and July 14, 1883 in *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 365.

ble, to situate the American-authored *Self and Sex Series* in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Canadian context, I did not find a more appropriate personal account left by a late nineteenth-century Canadian man. I am sure that as the study of the socio-historical construction of masculinity develops in Canada, and as more exhaustive searches for nineteenth-century Canadian men's personal papers are conducted, historians will bring to light evidence of nineteenth-century Canadian men's experiences of ideals of manhood. Having just made this point, let me also say that some evidence of Canadian men's personal experiences of ideals of manhood has been unearthed. Although he is better known for twice leading the Métis rebellion against Prime Minister John A. Macdonald's vision of Canadian Confederation in the late 1800's, Louis Riel also recorded his struggle with his recalcitrant sexual organs. He blamed himself for various excesses, among them, debauchery and onanism. He sent up a prayer to the "Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ" to give him "the grace to be truly continent." He asked the "Sacred Heart of Mary" to make him "chaste."<sup>4</sup> Stetson, however, as opposed to Riel, is a more appropriate subject for the conclusion of my exploration of the ideal of pure manhood because he belonged to the establishment to which prescriptive sexual literature most often directed its advice. Stetson was an Anglo-Saxon, middle class son of a Baptist minister whose professional prominence and Puritan upbringing ranked him a Christian gentleman. Riel, by contrast, was a part Métis, lower-class [in Anglo-Saxon bourgeois terms] son of a Catholic Métis leader. Riel's battle against Macdonald's government led him to the gallows. Yet, although both Stetson and Riel were distinguished by their dissimilar backgrounds, their similar sexual struggles illustrate just how hegemonic a construct the nineteenth-century ideal of pure manhood was.<sup>5</sup>

I also chose Stetson's words because they represent a personalized reiteration of the various themes the Reverend Sylvanus Stall, D.D., addressed in his advice to boys and men. Like Stall,

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Flanagan, ed., *The Diaries of Louis Riel* (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1976), p. 41.

<sup>5</sup> So powerful was this ideal that Havelock Ellis addressed it in a chapter called "The Meaning of Purity" in his *On Life and Love: Essays of Love and Virtue*, vols. 1 and 2 (New York: Garden City Publishing Company, Inc., 1937), pp. 37-62.

Stetson was concerned with strict sexual continence for unmarried men. Stetson likewise harboured the fear that the incontinent man within every man lurked close to the surface. Like Stall, Stetson also believed in the importance of the moral, mental and physical self-control required to subdue sexual desires. Stetson drew moral, mental and physical distinctions between reproductive and non-reproductive sex and exalted the sacredness of marital relations as did Stall. Stetson also agreed with the imposition of restrictions on the reading of sexual matters. Like Stall, Stetson was cognizant of the difficulties strict and moderate sexual continence posed for unmarried and married men, respectively. Stetson recognized that whereas incontinence would have been socially acceptable in the distant past, it was unacceptable in the nineteenth century. And both Stall and Stetson confirmed that although it was a struggle, it was best for men to restrict the expenditure of their semen to marriage because men's respect for women and love for their wives demanded it.

From a Men's Studies' perspective, the nineteenth-century hegemonic ideal of pure manhood as promoted by Stall, and as poignantly lived by Stetson, could be envisioned as an alternative to mid to late twentieth-century hegemonic masculinity. In fact, strict and/or moderate sexual continence for men is today promoted by some male authors<sup>6</sup> who seem to recognize that masculinity is socially and historically constructed and who, therefore, desire alternatives to a stereotype of masculinity as aggressively sexual. Indeed, the late nineteenth-century 's ideal of pure manhood I have explored may appear to stand in contrast to, in four important ways, the mid to late twentieth-century hegemonic ideal of masculinity.<sup>7</sup>

First, Stall's ideal of pure manhood focused on the correct balance between the expenditure and retention of semen, whereas today's masculine ideal of human male sexuality focuses mainly

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<sup>6</sup> Richard Newman, "Fertility and Virility: A Meditation on Sperm," *Changing Men* 20 (Spring 1989): 2-3, and Tripurari Swami, "Sex Education: The Case for Continence," *Network of Light* 4, 2 (June/July 1989): 1, 3, 14.

<sup>7</sup> For a feminist analysis of what the hegemonic ideal of masculinity entails, see, for example, Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (New York: Doubleday, 1970), Andrea Dworkin, *Woman-Hating* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1974), Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1975). See also Emmanuel Reynaud's pro-feminist analysis, *Holy Virility: The Social Construction of Masculinity*, trans. Ros Schwartz (London: Pluto Press, 1983).

on the expenditure of semen. Second, Stall's ideal validated those men who shunned essentially non-reproductive sexual activity, while current hegemonic masculinity validates those men who expend their semen in essentially non-reproductive sexual activity. Some gay men lament that even though the hegemonic ideal is inherently a heterosexual one, homosexual sexual activity is also dominated by it.<sup>8</sup> Third, pure manhood allowed that a man who practiced sexual continence was more of a pure, true or real man. The contemporary hegemonic stereotype of masculinity renders the pure, true or real man as one who practices incontinence, particularly with multiple female partners. Lastly, pure manhood emphasized the connection between seminal expenditure and health, the single standard of sexual purity, and fatherhood. Very few such connections are made in today's ideal of masculinity. Now, seminal expenditure is most often connected with sexual desire, sexual pleasure and peer pressure. This contrast is neatly symbolized by Stall's fixation on the testicles and the fixation of today's hegemonic masculinity on the penis.

From a feminist perspective, however, the ideal of pure manhood as conceptualized by Stall does not appear to be a viable alternative to the hegemonic masculinity of the 1980's. In fact, strict or moderate sexual continence for men as advocated by Stall may be viewed as part and parcel of the patriarchal system which has contributed so much to the socio-historical construction of masculinity. The four ways in which the ideal of pure manhood appears to contrast with the mid to late twentieth-century hegemonic ideal of human male sexuality should not obscure the fact that sexual continence for men in Stall's thought upheld patriarchy, "the power of the fathers."<sup>9</sup> In a very real sense, Stall's model of pure manhood supported a version of patriarchy shot through with the politics of race and class.

It should be apparent that Stall's first line of defense, pure books, contained and/or omitted information which assured the man, and particularly, the Anglo-Saxon, Christian upper and middle

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<sup>8</sup> Seymour Kleinburg, "The New Masculinity of Gay Men, and Beyond," in *Beyond Patriarchy*, ed. Michael Kaufman (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 120-138.

<sup>9</sup> Adrienne Rich, *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1976), p. 57.



class man, of his power in society. In advising boys and men on manhood, sexual continence and incontinence, as I outlined in Chapter I, Stall provided his readers with measures by which men could attain and maintain this power. Stall's belief in men's inherent aggressive sexuality, his splitting of the self into three neat components—the intellect, the will, and the passions—his validation of the intellect over the passions, his desire to see implemented a strict regimentation of the human male body, his definitions of success and hard work and his emphasis on the importance of semen excluded women and institutionalized patriarchy. These measures are themselves recognizable as part of a "dominant male culture"<sup>10</sup> which values male aggression, compartmentalization, categorization, "objective" thinking, "rationality," supreme self-control, physical strength, titled eminence, economic wealth, virility, and semen.<sup>11</sup>

Christian Physiology, discussed in Chapter II, is the ideology which happily married traditional Christian theology and science. In the nineteenth century this ideology, which gave religious and scientific sanction to pure manhood, also excluded women and institutionalized patriarchy. One could well argue, as Matilda Joslyn Gage did in the nineteenth century, and as Mary Daly does in the twentieth,<sup>12</sup> that Christian doctrine, as conceptualized by the Church fathers, upholds the power of all men over all women. And physiology, it could also be argued, is a discipline—dominated throughout the centuries by men—which does the same. Christianity, physiology and nineteenth-century vitalist concepts acted in concert to privilege Christian gentlemen who properly balanced the retention and expenditure of their semen. Because their semen was considered religiously, physiologically *and* politically important, Christian gentlemen's condemnation of masturbation was crucial to their ideal of pure manhood. According to the religious and scientific "wisdom" of the fathers, the masturbating boy or man became a totally powerless individual. His moral, mental and physical degeneration disempowered the family, the very core of patriarchal and bourgeois hegemony. The

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>11</sup> Rich has touched upon some of these values in *ibid.*, pp. 62-73. See also, Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978).

<sup>12</sup> See Matilda Joslyn Gage, *Woman, Church and State* (Watertown, Massachusetts: Persephone Press, 1980, first pub. 1893) and Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father: Towards a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973).

masturbating boy or man destroyed his opportunities to distinguish himself from the powerless lower classes. He emasculated himself to such an extent that he came to bear a striking resemblance to the stereotypical, nineteenth-century powerless hysterical woman. Lastly, the masturbating boy or man was thought to endanger the moral, mental and physical health of the Anglo-Saxon, Protestant upper and middle class "race." By keeping a tight reign on boys' and men's testicles, Stall attempted to ensure that morally, mentally and physically healthy sons would be born to Christian gentlemen in order to inherit and maintain patriarchal and bourgeois power, institutions and privileges.

Stall's second line of defense against men's sexual incontinence, pure women,<sup>13</sup> is discussed in Chapter III. The ideal of the pure woman is the most blatant evidence of pure manhood's connection to turn-of-the-century patriarchy and its racism and classism. The upper and middle class Anglo-Saxon Christian woman was envisioned as a sexual gatekeeper who could keep men continent by remaining sexually inert and by holding men to the single standard of sexual purity. Yet despite the apparent power she was thought to have over the retention and expenditure of men's semen, the pure woman was almost completely subjected to patriarchal power. While men dominated the public sphere, the pure woman was relegated to the private sphere—to the home, family and motherhood. The pure woman was thought to have few sexual feelings or desires as a result of her biological inheritance. Any expression of sexual desire on the part of the pure woman was restricted to patriarchal marriage and motherhood. So entrenched was this ideal of womanhood, that it was ably supported by patriarchal institutions such as the judiciary, a fact which made pure women's task of holding men to the single standard all the more difficult.

Drs. Mary Wood-Allen and Emma Drake also espoused the ideal of pure manhood. But ev-

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<sup>13</sup> Stetson was greatly influenced by the stereotype of pure women and their role in keeping men continent. Hill suggests that Stetson idealized women as models of moral perfection without realizing that in objectifying women he was also denegrating them. See Hill, p. xxx. Ann Lane suggests that one of the reasons for the marital difficulties experienced by Stetson and Gilman may have been Gilman's passionate demonstrations of affection and Stetson's distaste for them. See Ann J. Lane, ed., *The Charlotte Perkins Gilman Reader* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), p. x. Many thanks to David Sharp for this reference.

idence of women's support for sexual continence, in the *Self and Sex Series* and in history, does not mean that such women stood outside the boundaries of patriarchal power. Adrienne Rich perceptively notes that women in patriarchal society "have access only to so much of privilege or influence as the patriarchy is willing to accede to [women], and only for so long as [women] will pay the price for male approval."<sup>14</sup> In supporting the ideal of pure manhood, Wood-Allen and Drake paid a heavy price. These women had to subscribe to Stall's Victorian, patriarchal ideal of pure womanhood. Thus, despite evidence to the contrary, they too upheld the belief in women's sexual inertia and in the women's ability to hold men to the single standard of sexual purity. And when they virtually deified the ideal of pure woman as mother in order to gain a greater measure of control over boy's and men's retention and expenditure of semen, they became further ensconced in patriarchy. Although Wood-Allen and Drake saw in motherhood a powerful tool they could use against men's aggressive sexuality, motherhood as instituted in the nineteenth century reinforced the patriarchal system. It supported Anglo-Saxon Christian upper and middle class ideals of pure manhood and womanhood and applied these ideals to all races and classes. It validated only those women who married, raised a family, restricted themselves to the private sphere and who privileged their sons over their daughters. Ultimately, motherhood burdened pure women with the responsibility for the moral, mental and physical health of men, women, children, the nation and the race.

I have tried to illustrate the difference between a Men Studies' approach and a feminist approach to pure manhood as promoted by Stall, to show how important it is for feminists to develop a theoretical approach to the study of the socio-historical construction of masculinity which focuses on the institution of patriarchy and its interweavings with institutions of race and class domination. If sexual continence for men, for example, is to become an old/new ideal of manhood, then I think feminists must question the ideal's ideological underpinnings. We must question, as well, the purpose this ideal served women and men of the past and could serve women and men of the present. Today, author Richard Newman, who takes the well-intentioned Men's Studies' approach to sexual

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

continence for men, suggests that sperm's reproductive capacity makes it a fluid both dangerous and precious to men and women. Although Newman does not specifically recommend that men limit themselves to strict continence, he does admit that artificial birth control methods are not the answer. Men must "responsibly exercise" control over their sperm. A man who has sexual intercourse with a woman should say: "This is my sperm. If I do not believe that you will do with it what I want to be done with it, I will not agree to put it in your body."<sup>15</sup>

Reading Newman makes me wonder whether the old/new ideal of sexual continence for men means that women will have to continue to tailor the expression of our sexuality to fit men's regardless of our sexual orientation. Will we have to help men remain continent by continuing to be their sexual gatekeepers? And if sexual continence for men is once again touted as an ideal of manhood, it is probable that sperm will continue to be prioritized over women. In the light of the recent spate of ex-partners legally preventing women from getting abortions in Canada, the connection between the privileging of the sperm over the ovum and the institutionalization of patriarchy should not be taken lightly. Moreover, the possibility that sexual continence may become an ideal for men leads me to fear there will be little progress made in the development of new methods of artificial contraception for men. If strict or moderate continence is valued as a method of birth control, then it is very possible that women will continue to take the major responsibility for using artificial contraception as we have for so long. If not, women will risk an unwanted pregnancy, for there is no guarantee that continence is an effective method of birth-control.

Another author eerily echoes Stall in maintaining that semen is a vital fluid, an "extremely vital substance."<sup>16</sup> Tripurari Swami rhapsodizes about sperm in much the same way Stall and his medical authorities did. Sperm is the "cream of the milk of blood," rich in lecithin—a component of brain and nervous tissue—calcium, phosphorus, vitamin E "and other vital substances."<sup>17</sup> Semen

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<sup>15</sup> Newman, p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> Swami, p. 1.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

is representative of sexual energy, which is considered the source of procreation, optimum health, heightened mental functioning, and spirituality. The author recommends a vegetarian diet, noting that in Plato, St. Francis, Newton, Tolstoy, and Gandhi, vegetarianism and continence went hand in hand. A reduced tobacco and alcohol intake is also recommended in curbing sexual energy. This author sees sexual continence as even more beneficial in the wake of the health threat posed by the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (A.I.D.S.). He supports the implementation of an education program which promotes the virtues of continence for men.

Calls for continence for men are all the more relevant today because of the A.I.D.S. crisis. It is understandable that in the absence of a cure, sexual abstinence and "safe sex" are two of the most highly recommended ways of reducing the risk of becoming infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (H.I.V.). But neither of these methods should be perceived as anything but stop-gap measures. The Canadian response to fighting A.I.D.S., in terms of finances, advertisements, information, and treatment, is generally acknowledged to be dismal. It is difficult for me not to see a similarity between the way in which the *Self* and *Sex* Series looked to sexual continence for men to solve the problem of venereal disease, and the way in which the Canadian government brightly emphasizes condoms and abstinence over research. I must also point out that recent medical studies show that the H.I.V. virus in women does not follow the same pattern of pathological development the disease exhibits in men because of the difference in women's hormonal cycles. The uncharted waters of the symptoms, diagnosis, treatment of and eventual cure for women with A.I.D.S. poses an even greater challenge to medicine. And as some women have already realized, strategies originally developed to curtail the spread of A.I.D.S. in male drug users and in homosexual men will not necessarily be effective in populations of heterosexual and homosexual women.<sup>18</sup> In the absence of more women-centred strategies, it is entirely possible that the old/new ideal of sexual continence for men may hold little positive value for women.

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<sup>18</sup> Although her book contains many generalizations, Helen Singer Kaplan does try to address the medical and sexual politics which affect the progress of A.I.D.S. in women. See her *The Real Truth About Women and AIDS: How to Eliminate the Risks Without Giving up Love and Sex* (New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1987).

There are many themes extant in nineteenth-century prescriptive sexual literature which could serve future researchers interested in exploring nineteenth-century ideals of manhood and womanhood. One particular topic which would make fascinating reading would be to compare pre-Freudian writers' and post-Freudian sexologists' ideals of manhood and womanhood. It would also be interesting to compare the ideals of manhood and womanhood that exist in prescriptive sexual literature to those promoted by right-wing organizations such as Realistic Equal Active for Life (R.E.A.L.) Women in Canada. I also recommend that men's involvement in the social purity movement in Canada should be researched. How did men reconcile their power in patriarchal society, if indeed they did, with their membership in organizations such as the White Cross which forbade their sexual exploitation of women? Another direction for future research could involve analyzing those novels of the period which caused Stall so much consternation. Sexually charged novels or pornography which were available in Canada would be a wonderful point of entry into alternative ideals of nineteenth-century manhood and womanhood. Yet another topic I could suggest is one I touched upon in Chapter III. A more extensive exploration of Canadian women, motherhood, domestic science and the public health movement would be a valuable addition to feminist studies in Canada. And finally, child-raising techniques advocated by Stall, Drake and Wood-Allen could serve as the basis for an investigation into the conceptualization of gender in childhood and adolescence in Canada.

I feel that feminists must take responsibility for actively naming and analyzing any old or new ideals of manhood and their implications for all women and men. Sexual continence for men is certainly one of these. I hope that my preliminary exploration of the ideal of pure manhood represents a step toward future scholarly work in the socio-historical construction of masculinity in Canada.

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