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AMERICAN MANPOWER:

WORK AND MASCULINITY IN THE 1970s

BY

VICTORIA W. LUDAS

A Master's thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, the City University of New York.

2011

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in satisfaction of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

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This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my father, Michael A. Ludas (1953-2008).

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It is one of America's tragedies that we have come to believe that a man is what he does for a living. Chiefly that. If women also do what he does for a living, is he less than he was? Less than a man ought to be? Are his victories made small because women also enjoy them? What is a man in our society who loses a job? A man who loses his job loses his identity.

Jean Way Schoonover, president, Dudley-Anderson-Yutzy Public Relations (1974)

[T]rying to seem manly is a kind of "work," and work imposes stress and consumes energy. Manliness, then, seems to carry with it a chronic burden of stress and energy-expenditure which could be a factor related to man's relatively shorter life-span.

Sidney M. Jourard, "Some Lethal Aspects of the Male Role" in *Men and Masculinity* (1974)

"Be a man!" What a strange order, yet it runs through so many human societies. We do not rush out to daughters and urge them to be women.

Peter Stearns, *Be a Man!* (1979)

Introduction

Over the course of the 1970s, due to a series of economic and social changes, the state of work in America was forever altered. White male employment became less and less the prosperous stronghold it had been during the postwar boom years of the 1950s and 1960s. The decade saw an overall rise in unemployment through the 1970s and into the 1980s; the recessions of 1973-1975 and 1979-1980; deindustrialization and the corresponding decline in manufacturing jobs; oil crises; and administrations that cared more about fighting inflation than unemployment. In addition, as a result of the political movements of the 1960s, more attention was being paid to the condition of workers who

were not white males, and a series of laws were passed to ensure that they were not discriminated against in the workplace. Moreover, there were simply more women in the workforce in general, due in part to the women's liberation movement, but also as part of a long, gradual trend that gained momentum after World War II.

Outside of employment, social changes were rushing along as well. As a result of the civil rights, women's liberation, and gay rights movements, white heterosexual men, some of whom had been in the vanguard of social movements earlier in the 1960s, were being called to account for their part in the oppression of white women, gay men, and nonwhite men and women. These social changes also appeared in the workplace, a center of male empowerment and protection, but an area that was beginning to crack under the weight of outside pressure. There began to appear female bartenders, bus drivers, and bill collectors, and more black men and white women were promoted to white-collar positions of power. They still remained largely an anomaly, but they existed, and could no longer be harassed out of the job. At a time of growing unemployment and change in established industries like automobile manufacturing and construction, white men also had to reconfigure their ideas of themselves. Who were they if they were unemployed? If they stayed home while their wife worked? If they were employed, but had to answer to a female boss? What was a white man in the 1970s, given the shifting circumstances of work and labor?

This paper is about three things, as examined over the course of the 1970s: the changes in the state and dependability of work, the pressures of masculinity as felt by heterosexual white men over the age of 20 in the working and middle classes, and what occurred because of the relationship between work and that masculinity. To understand

the third, it is necessary to understand the first two, and what happened in both cases during the decade. Even disregarding the male-female dynamic in the increase in women at work, the state of employment changed in massive and permanent ways. Discussing work in combination with masculinity and expected social roles makes it more interesting because of the association between men and breadwinning, which was a key aspect of the male sex role predominant at the time. The discussion of these sex role assumptions led to the establishment of the men's liberation movement, whose middle- and upper-middle-class members examined the pressures they felt to be the sole earner for their families while their wives began to push for change.

However, the changing economy most affected white men in the working class, who were less able to openly discuss the pressures they felt but were actively squeezed by the decline in traditional areas of employment and the increasing economic need for their wives to work. As low men – though not the lowest – on the economic totem pole, authority at home was supposed to make up for their lack of authority in work and society, but women leaving the home to work upended that, too. Combined with the social movements criticizing the white-male-dominated patriarchy, white working-class men felt threatened and attacked for circumstances over which they held no power, while their actual share of power was being eaten away. The men's liberation movement suggested new ideals of masculinity, in which men could be more open with other people, and more able to express emotions. But by the end of the decade, an increasing sense of being unfairly attacked just for being white men became common among men of both classes, and many in and out of the men's liberation movement began to reject the

idea that white masculinity and the structure of the patriarchy were in need of modification.

This defensiveness was manifested in a transition in men's liberation to a more anti-feminist men's rights attitude; others turned to political conservatism. Ronald Reagan and his rhetoric of restoring American might capitalized on a feeling of vulnerable masculinity. In doing so, he persuaded the majority of white-male voters, especially those in the working class who had been loyal Democrats in previous decades, to vote Republican for the rest of the twentieth century. Both shifts in approach were an attempt by white men to hold onto what felt like an increasingly endangered authority: at work, at home, and in the nation overall.

Nonwhite men will be discussed to some extent, but since much of the contemporaneous discussion about men's issues in the 1970s referred solely to white men, this paper is thus focused on them. However, there still remains much to be said about black masculinity in the same period. Daniel P. Moynihan's 1965 report, "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action," while bringing needed attention to an under examined populace, also essentially claimed that black families were often in poverty because black women were too strong-willed and black men were therefore emasculated. Black masculinity was being publicly questioned in a government report that continued to be cited as fact into the next decade. Not everyone agreed with Moynihan's conclusions, and *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman*, Michele Wallace's 1978 political broadside/personal memoir, as *Newsweek* described it (Clemons 78), instead described the problem as one of black men pitted against black women, who were hardly the "superwomen" black and white men both claimed them to be.

In addition, the issues of unemployment and providing for one's family were much more central in the lives of black men and women, whose opportunities were fewer than those of white men and women, and whose unemployment rates were, as a consequence, always much higher. Black unemployment was often reported upon in newsweeklies, and the effects were discussed in greater detail in black interest magazines like *Ebony* and *Essence*. In short, despite the lack of attention paid to the issue by men's issues writers in the 1970s, black masculinity of that period is as vital and fertile an issue of exploration as white masculinity, and I hope that study is not long in coming.

Work

"Work" and "masculinity" are both terms weighted with social and cultural assumptions, and it is useful, before proceeding, to explore further what is meant by them. "Work," as noted by the members of the Special Task Force to the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare in their 1972 study *Work in America*, is "an activity that produces something of value for other people" (O'Toole, Hansot and Herman 3). Their definition includes housewives, who may work for free but who definitely produce something of value, but by "work" I refer to labor done outside the home for the purpose of financially supporting oneself and/or one's family, as the focus of this paper is on the workers for whom home and work are discrete entities.

Work informs all aspects of life: time, money, family, community, and personal image. It is, as the female company president noted above, a key determinant of identity, and it was, until the last half and especially last quarter of the twentieth century, a world largely inhabited by men. What a man did decided his and his family's class standing, where and how he lived, where his children went to school, and with whom he and his

family associated. In short, a man's work determined the "life style and life chances of all the family members" (O'Toole, Hansot and Herman 4). It gave a person a sense of his (or her) value, both personally and in society: if, according to the logic of the wage-labor market, his skills are valuable, he has value; if not, he does not, or at least may see himself that way.

Work also leads to the creation of a distinct environment and culture of a workplace, in which disparate people brought together in a hierarchy to do a particular job establish their own vocabulary and rapport (or lack thereof). An individual's experiences at and feeling about work can carry over to his or her home life and vice versa, so that while the two worlds are generally kept separate, what happens in one will affect the other:

> The more a man is integrated into the economic opportunity structure (as measured objectively by his occupational status, education and income and subjectively by his alienation or lack of alienation) the greater the cohesiveness of the family and of satisfaction with the husband-wife relationship…. Lack of integration, however, may cause the displacement of economic discontents onto personal relations. (John Scanzoni, cited in Kanter 14)

The primacy of work as a determining factor of so many aspects of modern life would be interesting to study alongside the expectations and actions of men even without the added socially- and self-imposed pressure American men felt (and to a large degree still feel) to be "the breadwinner," the sole provider of their family's financial stability. For so long, men had been taught to expect to work to provide for themselves and their families, that it was something they were uniquely qualified for in a way women were not. The provider role came as part of an informal bargain, "a kind of cultural bribe"

(Tolson 46), struck between a husband and a wife: in exchange for working in an unsatisfying and potentially dehumanizing job, the worker gets to do what he will with his leisure time, and is respected as the head of his household by his wife and children. This bargain has to be upheld by both sides; should the man fail to find or keep a job, he is not guaranteed to be obeyed at home. The contract aspect of it is what critics of the women's movement pointed to as evidence that women were not oppressed by gender norms, but that failed to take into account the fact that often the contract only went one way, and that women were not always able to amend its stipulations (Sennett and Cobb 126-129; Rubin 95-97).

Where did this pressure come from? Prior to industrialization, when work was more craft-based and autonomous, artisans would sometimes utilize their wives and children in some of the easier tasks involved in production of goods like shoes or textiles, and homes were often where that work would occur. Physical strength was necessary for some of the work, especially in agriculture, which employed the bulk of American men earlier in the nineteenth century (Kimmel 60). But as factories came to replace individual craftsmanship and hire away many farmers, work and home became much more separate (Rotundo 23-24; Kimmel 39-40). This division of work and home was also true for middle-class workers, as many moved out to the newly-established suburbs once easy access to city centers became common. Work, and this was true of both white- and blue-collar occupations, turned into a male-only space that generally neither welcomed women nor considered them to have the skills necessary to work in the rough world of business or manual labor (Rotundo 174-176).

For laborers, the work itself became much less about personal skill and much more about simple repetition, especially with the development of the mass production line devised by Henry Ford to produce his Model T car as quickly and cheaply as possible in the early twentieth century. The work in some industries was basic enough that many employers took advantage of cheaper female labor, such as in the textile mills of Lawrence, Massachusetts. The female workers tended to be young and single, often leaving the workforce upon marriage, and were usually given the lowest-paying, lowest-skilled jobs, as the more skilled work was saved for men.

Joshua Freeman notes in “Hardhats: Construction Workers, Manliness, and the 1970 Pro-War Demonstrations” that by the late nineteenth century, “physical strength and specific craft skills became less important in working-class male identity, while the ability of a worker to provide for his family became more so” (Freeman 727). As work itself became less challenging, men were no longer able to pride themselves on their skills. Other losses in the nineteenth century included a reduction in independent farms and small businesses concurrent with the rise in conglomerated companies whose factories hired away the workers who would otherwise work in those businesses (Kimmel 61-62). No longer would most men be able to physically own and pass down to their son land, business, or skills. Instead, they turned their ability to feed their families into the challenge and goal of their working lives, which was later incorporated into union struggles for better wages and benefits. If the job was not going to improve, at least life outside the job would be better.

This goal was also defined by the fact that their wives were not to work, or if so, only as supplementary income. Indeed, the ability to support a family on one income, the

so-called “family wage,” was seen as a major determinant of higher status, especially for the working class. Discussing the reaction of nineteenth-century laborers to industrialization, Peter Stearns noted the “pervasive belief, lasting well into the [twentieth century], that the man had failed whose wife had to seek employment outside the house” (Stearns 45). By the 1970s, when many working-class wives had to go to work for economic reasons, the feeling of having failed if unable to earn enough on one’s own still affected many men in the working class:

> Despite the enormity of the burdens they carry, many men still feel they must do it alone if they are to fulfill their roles successfully. Often they cannot, as the soaring proportion of married women who work attests. For the working-class man, that often means yet another challenge to his already uncertain self-esteem – this time in the only place where he has been able to make his authority felt: the family. (Rubin 183-184)

Wives in the middle class, whose husbands earned more than their working-class counterparts, paid closer attention to how that income level could be expressed through fashion and consumer goods, a practice the working class would not widely pick up until the postwar boom of the 1950s and 1960s when the price of expensive consumer goods came down while the availability of consumer credit rose. But as prices rose while wages stagnated, even middle-class wives got a job. As the twentieth century marched inexorably toward the twenty-first, women kept on entering the world of work, beyond the low-skilled drudge jobs men did not want anyway. So if women could be executives or welders, and men no longer had to be the sole breadwinner, where else could a man look to define himself?

These questions were taken up during the 1970s by the growing field of men’s studies, initially expressed by men’s liberation writers, who began to examine the

evolution of Western attitudes about men and work. At the same time, the subject of work in and of itself was a popular topic among a variety of writers, including journalists, psychologists, sociologists, and government-appointed researchers, as much that had been taken for granted in the postwar boom years was proving to be unreliable, and the world of work was changing. Worker alienation in particular proved to be a fertile topic, and many writers and researchers concluded that it resulted from much blue-collar work having deteriorated into mindlessly repetitive, disconnected tasks that failed to engage the mind while also producing little of immediate value. As one steelworker put it, "[i]t's hard to take pride in a bridge you're never gonna (sic) cross, in a door you're never gonna open. You're mass-producing things and you never see the end result of it" (Mike Lefevre, quoted in Terkel xxxi).

One such study, *Worlds of Pain* (1976) by sociologist Lillian Rubin, acknowledged that though there were still elite blue-collar jobs, like skilled construction workers, truck drivers, and other work that required skills and provided some autonomy, there were fewer of those all the time:

> [M]ost blue-collar men work at jobs that require less skill, that have less room for independent judgment – indeed, often expect that it will be suspended – and that leave their occupants with little freedom or autonomy. Such jobs have few intrinsic rewards and little status – either in the blue-collar world or the one outside – and offer few possibilities for experiencing oneself as a "good man." (Rubin 158)

The Hidden Injuries of Class (1972), by Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb, made a similar observation of many white-collar workers, especially those who had been raised in blue-collar families. Ambivalence about changing status was increased by a feeling that "pushing papers" was not *real* work compared to making something, even if the

workers making that thing did not feel they were doing much, either (Sennett and Cobb 21). “Pushing papers” could be as repetitive and mindless as manual work, and getting paid more for it did not always satisfy the nagging feeling of not feeling connected to your work, not having something to point to that you created. Though research was done and recommendations made, little was done over the course of the 1970s to improve the problem of worker alienation.

Along with worker alienation came stagnation in productivity, the engine that had propelled the boom years of the 1950s and 1960s. As productivity fell, the costs of business rose, especially when compared to the bustling economies of West Germany and Japan which began to fill the productivity gap. As a result, American corporations increased the pace of automation in factory work and began closing factories in the Northeast and Midwest and opening them in cheaper areas in the South and West or outsourcing the work to supplier firms. Once cheaper labor markets emerged in other countries, multinational companies closed factories in the U.S. and sent the work to their international factories in what was known as “offshoring” (Lee and Mather 14-15). This process came to be known as “deindustrialization” in the popular lexicon from a 1982 study *The Deindustrialization of America: Plant Closings, Community Abandonment, and the Dismantling of Basic Industry* by Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison. They found that “[b]etween thirty-two and thirty-eight *million* jobs disappeared during the 1970s as the direct result of private disinvestment or relocation of U.S. businesses” (emphasis his, Bluestone in Cowie and Heathcott ix), a process that is still continuing. Between 1973 and 2007, the proportion of nonfarm workers in manufacturing in the U.S.

fell from 24% to 10%, while workers in the service sector increased from 70% to 83% over the same period (Lee and Mather 7).

Another change in work was the greater number of female employees. More women were in the workforce by the end of the 1970s than ever before in American history, and there were more couples with two earners than one, a phenomenon that first occurred only in 1978 (Westcott and Bednarzik 11). The expectation that women could and would work after marriage became normalized in this decade. However, despite the increase of women and non-white men in higher-skilled and higher-ranked work, the majority of those better-paying jobs were still filled by white men.

Masculinity

As the historian Gail Bederman puts it, “To study the history of manhood . . . is to study the historical ways different ideologies about manhood develop, change, are combined, amended, contested – and gain the status of truth” (quoted in Traister 274). Masculinity refers to the collection of social pressures that have come to equal “man” – to be thought of as a man in a particular setting, one must follow certain rules. But these rules and expectations change over time for a variety of reasons, and their fluidity exposes their subjectivity and arbitrariness. Studying masculinity means identifying the elements of maleness as they appear at a particular time, and then tracing the origins of those elements. Often, this exposes the fact that an ideology of masculinity is based on out-of-date social and economic circumstances, and the emergence of new and unprecedented conditions can throw traditional ideals into disarray. The internal clash within men at such times has proven to be fertile ground for scholars of men’s studies, who explore the trends in masculinities from several perspectives.

One of the more influential studies in the current field was Judith Butler's discussion of feminist and queer identity, *Gender Trouble* (1990). Her work had a galvanizing impact on men's studies by suggesting that masculinity, like femininity, was an external performance of qualities and behaviors required by social norms in order for a person to be perceived as fitting into whatever gender type he or she identified with. If one has to perform like a man to be seen as a man, what does it actually mean to *be* a man? Is manhood measured against other men by what one *is*, or is it measured against women, what one is *not*? Or is it both? If every quality and behavior occurs because of a conscious or unconscious decision to do so, is identity anything but performance? I am inclined to think that identity is a performance, but one in which most people do not realize they have agreed to participate.

The tenuousness of the performance is made most obvious when it is threatened. Much of the recent work on masculinity has focused on periods of "crisis," when established norms were in question and the resulting disruption often led to the adaptation and reaffirmation of male dominance, though the term "crisis" in relation to masculinity was used even in 1970, in Karl Bednarik's book *The Male in Crisis*. Often, the shifts in social norms have been attributed to major social and economic changes such as urbanization and industrialization, when the unspoken rules of class, race, and gender were upended and the old answers did not fit the new questions.

To look at the work done on masculinity in the last twenty years is to observe that American men have been in an apparently never-ending series of crises throughout the twentieth century. In a review essay of three monographs written in the late 1990s, Judith A. Allen notes that all three share a sense that "[i]nherently unstable, masculinity is

always in process, under negotiation, needing to be 'shored up,' reinforced, buttressed against its many enemies" (Allen 199).[1] Bryce Traister, in an analysis of the subfield of "heteromasculinity studies," in which this paper should be categorized, locates the "crisis theory" partly in Butler's influence and partly in the recent burst of works done in the field itself. The crisis theme is so popular that it can seem as though the "history of American men as men now not only proceeds as a historiography of masculine crisis but collectively writes itself as an actual history of American masculinity *as* crisis" (emphasis his, Traister 287). In other words, if masculinity is only made visible when it is in conflict, then the best way to truly examine the history of American men is through a series of those conflicts. Only by discovering where the vulnerabilities are most obvious can we see what led to those vulnerabilities and what emerged from them to be later challenged in another crisis.

As a reaction to the growth in women's studies in the late 1960s and early 1970s, writers in men's studies began to observe that men were as susceptible to social pressures as women. Though there were several books written about men in the 1970s, some of which will be discussed in greater detail below, much of the conversation on men's issues was done on a popular rather than academic level. Early academic men's studies programs appeared in MIT and Temple University, but the academic field of men's or "masculinity" studies gained more traction in the 1980s before emerging as a full-blown area of study in the 1990s with the publication of books such as Anthony Rotundo's

[1] *Fighting for Manhood American: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-America and Philippine-American Wars*, Kristin Hoganson (1998); *The Trials of Masculinity: Policing Sexual Boundaries, 1870-1930*, Angus McLaren (1997); and *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity*, George Mosse (1996).

American Manhood (1993), R.W. Connell's *Masculinities* (1995), Gail Bederman's *Manliness and Civilization* (1995), and Michael Kimmel's *Manhood in America* (1996), which declared itself to be "a history of men *as men*," rather than as the default (Kimmel 1). "Gender studies," a term originally used to mean women's or queer studies, officially began to include men in those studies in the mid-1990s.

Can women write about manhood? Though Kimmel, for one, says no – they only see men's history as "the drive for power, for domination, for control," when manhood is really "more about the fear of others dominating us, having power or control over us" (Kimmel 5)[2] – many female scholars have ignored this opinion. An informal survey of the works referenced in a 2005 review of the field of men's studies by Robert Nye shows that of the authors of works published between the years 2000 and 2003, forty are women and forty-four are men. The explosion of the field in the last twenty years has proved equally fertile for both men and women. Despite Kimmel's assertion that women cannot possibly understand "us," perhaps it is more useful to be outside the direct influence of social pressures when describing how those pressures affect men.

Of those writers who are male, however, Traister notes that many insert themselves into their work, adopting the feminist trope that "the personal is professional is political." In *American Manhood*, Anthony Rotundo says that "[a]s I have written this book, I have been more aware of my inner discord on issues of manhood than of my inner coherence" (quoted in Traister 279). David Leverenz, in *Manhood and the American Renaissance*, records his own reactions to the male-authored texts he discusses and in

[2] Although if this is true, how can any man permit himself to work, given that most will be professionally dominated by their boss?

doing so, as Traister puts it, "[t]he manhood of Leverenz's nineteenth-century American renaissance . . . looks a lot like his own confessed struggles with masculinity" (Traister 280). Writing about historical masculinity often seems to bring up questions for male writers about what it is now, true of writers in the 1970s as in the present era. In 1985, Tim Carrigan, Bob Connell, and John Lee, three Australian scholars reviewing the previous decade's discussion of masculinity, noticed a similar trend:

> The autobiographical sketches that peppered the 1970s books-about-men regularly remarked how the author had been taught the conventional male role, found it hard to inhabit, and eventually discovered the trouble was not in him but in the role. (Carrigan, Connell and Lee 565)

One such writer, Peter Stearns, wrote in 1979 that though he did not always feel particularly manly, *Be a Man! Males in Modern Society* was "not a shy boy's revenge against he-men, a kick of verbal sand at Charles Atlas," and that there was "no search here for villainesses," that is to say, feminists (Stearns 9). His self-conscious defense only points out further that in writing about the historical traditions that have led to the existing standards of male behavior, it is hard for male authors – who were themselves engaged in scholarly writing, something generally not considered especially manly – not to examine themselves.

Nye observes that one reason for the increased attention paid in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries to the malleability of sex and the self-identification of gender is due to the improvements over the last half-century in surgery and synthetic hormones:

> These developments have divided sex, gender, and sexuality into separate ontological and analytical categories and have produced the situation in which *gender*, as the more stable feature of personal and social identity, has begun to replace *sex* as the common descriptor in everyday discourse for women and men, male and female. (Nye 1938)

The biological and psychological science of sex has removed a lot of the mystery that doctors and social scientists previously ascribed to "masculinity" and "femininity," and as more work is done in the "putting on" of sex roles, the idea that anything can be assumed about a person (including what pronoun to use) just by what gender he or she appears to be is becoming increasingly invalidated. And in that new space historians, sociologists, anthropologists, and cultural scholars work to further explore what can be revealed through studying masculinity.

The study of masculinity in the 1970s is particularly interesting because not only was it a period of crisis, in which standards of manhood were put to the test, it marked the beginning of the conversation about those standards, and the realization that ideals of true masculinity were never as concrete as they may have seemed. The idea of gender standards as socially imposed rather than innately natural had come up before – Traister cites as a predecessor of the field Leslie A. Fiedler's *Love and Death in the American Novel* (1960), a groundbreaking study of the unexamined sexual and racial overtones in classic American novels such as *The Scarlet Letter* and *Huckleberry Finn*, and through the late 1950s and into the 1960s sociologists studied "masculinity" as it applied to groups like juvenile delinquents, especially focusing on the effects on a man of growing up without a father (Carrigan, Connell and Lee 560) – but discussion in the 1970s was important because it came at a time when these socially imposed standards of masculinity were again being threatened, especially in the workforce, for the first time since the end of WWII. The postwar boom introduced a society of affluence in which the economy was assumed to have become predictable and manageable so social issues could be dealt with more fully. Unions had won important gains in wage and benefit packages, based on the

assumption that the economy would continue to improve. Yet in reality, political management of the economy proved illusory, and social problems became exacerbated by a declining economy. The country changed in several key ways that affected how white men saw themselves, and it was not by accident that the movement that led to men's studies began in the 1970s.

Current Discussion

Over the last decade, the 1970s have become a popular subject of discussion. Many events of recent years – the 2008 financial crisis, the perilous position of public and private unions, various issues related to energy and oil consumption, growing economic inequality between the rich and everybody else – can be traced back to decisions made and not made in the 1970s. Writers have begun to examine the period from a variety of perspectives: economic (*Pivotal Decade*, by Judith Stein, 2010), intellectual (*Age of Fracture*, by Daniel T. Rodgers, 2011), political (*Suburban Warriors*, Lisa McGirr, 2001; *Rightward Bound*, by Bruce Schulman and Julian Zelizer (eds.), 2008; *Stayin' Alive*, by Jefferson Cowie, 2010; *Right Star Rising*, by Laura Kalman, 2010), and social (*How We Got Here*, by David Frum, 2000; *The Seventies*, by Bruce Schulman, 2002; *America in the Seventies*, by Beth Bailey and David Farber (eds.), 2004; *Something Happened*, by Edward Berkowitz, 2007; *No Direction Home*, by Natasha Zaretsky, 2007; *Decade of Nightmares*, by Philip Jenkins, 2008). Some books have focused on particular years or events: *Taken Hostage*, by David Farber, 2006; *1973 Nervous Breakdown*, by Andreas Killen, 2007; *What the Heck Are You Up To, Mr. President?*, by Kevin Mattson, 2009.

The rightward political shift in the U.S. is a popular topic in most narratives of the decade, as the economic policies of the Republican-controlled federal government in the 1980s are largely responsible for much of the economic situation today. McGirr traces the rise of the conservative and religious right in Orange County, CA, and notes that the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978, a state regulation imposing a cap on property taxes, was directly responsible for the county's bankruptcy in 1994 (McGirr 270). Stein and Harvey trace the economic changes caused by the New Right and their disastrous effects on the national economy, while Rodgers examines the shift in rhetoric between Carter and Reagan as well as the political and social reconceptualization and renegotiation of some of the many "ideas in motion" (Rodgers 13) in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

However, despite the victories won in the 1980s by the more conservative Republican party, Kalman's political history shows that in many ways, the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980 came more from strong anti-Carter and anti-liberal feeling than because of some larger rightward shift. Though the U.S. of the 1980s was undoubtedly more conservative than that of the 1970s, it was not a foregone conclusion in 1972 or 1976 that a conservative Republican would be elected in 1980, however otherwise the narrative was later recast by Republicans. One such reviser was former George W. Bush speechwriter David Frum, who claimed that the 1970s were a period of national doubt and insecurity – what *New West* magazine declared to be "a Pinto of a decade," referring to Ford Motor Company's subcompact car noted for its occasionally faulty engineering and unattractive appearance (quoted in Mattson 199), and, indeed, no author refers to the decade as an unqualified success – that could only have been restored by the triumphant

1980s. His is a rare note of victory; more in line with the overall tone of most writers, Mattson asks, replying in part to Frum's assertion, that if 1979 was indeed a turning point, did the country make the best turn?

Masculinity, a topic so broad as to include discussion of international and historic issues as well as film studies, anthropology, politics, music, theater, and parenting, continues as a popular subject of books. In 2011 alone, books have already been or will soon be published with titles such as *Contemporary Hollywood Masculinities*, by Suzanne Kord and Elisabeth Krimmer, a study of masculinity in American film during the Clinton and George W. Bush administrations; *'Manufactured' Masculinity*, by J.A. Mangan, about British imperial standards of masculinity; *Cow Boys and Cattle Men*, by Jacqueline Moore, about white men in Texas, 1865 to 1900; *From Jim Crow to Jay-Z*, by Miles White, about the performance of race and masculinity in rap music; *David Mamet and American Macho*, by Arthur Holmberg, about the playwright's male characters; and *Making It Like a Man*, by Christine Ramsay, a study of Canadian masculinity. Interestingly, an anthology examining the uses of men's studies itself will also be published in 2011, *Masculine Lessons: Rethinking Men's and Women's Studies*, by James Catano and Daniel Novak (eds.).

Another interesting release, though not one about masculinity, is a self-help book called *For Women Only in the Workplace: What You Need to Know About How Men Think At Work*, by Shaunti Feldhahn, that claims to help Christian businesswomen succeed at work by understanding the male rules. Feldhahn explains that she wrote this book to help her readers better understand the "male expectations and perceptions" that affect their workplace:

> [E]ven as smart, experienced women, we can find ourselves being tripped up by obstacles we don't know are there. Or perhaps we simply aren't as influential as we could be, or aren't experiencing the rewarding, positive relationships that all of us want in the workplace. Based on my nationwide surveys and interviews with thousands of men, I can tell you that those dynamics are far more common that most women realize. (Feldhahn 2)

What is fascinating about Feldhahn's book and other self-help titles purporting to teach women the ins and outs of business is that they show how unchanged the world of work really is, despite the consistent presence of women for the past thirty years.[3] Though there was some discussion in the 1970s about bringing more "feminine" characteristics, such as "sensitivity to people [and] compassion" (Professor Don Jewell, quoted in U.S. News and World Report 12/8/75 62), into the workplace, that simply failed to occur on a wide scale, and indeed, sometimes the people who most discourage the feminization of work are female executives themselves. In a recent *New Yorker* profile, Sheryl Sandberg, the Chief Operations Officer of Facebook, whose mentor at Harvard University and beyond was a man who worked for multiple presidential administrations as a high-ranking economist, spoke disparagingly about what she called "girl questions," such as how to find a mentor (Auletta 60). Asking "girl questions" distracted from the business of doing business; women, she felt, did not need special treatment, just to be assertive. As Urie Bronfenbrenner noted disapprovingly in 1976, "we have left the world of work defined in male terms" (Huber and Bronfenbrenner 48), and it is evidently no different now than it was then.

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[3] For example: *Play Like a Man, Win Like a Woman: What Men Know About Success That Women Need to Learn*, Gail Events (2001); *Seducing the Boys Club: Uncensored Tactics from a Woman at the Top*, Nina DiSesa (2008); *Nice Women Don't Get the Corner Office: 101 Unconscious Mistakes Women Make That Sabotage Their Careers*, Lois P. Frankel (2010).

Though many monographs discuss some aspect of work in their examinations of masculinity, more specific connections between masculinity and work can often be found in essays such as “The Influence of Parenthood on the Work Effort of Married Men and Women,” by Gayle Kaufman and Peter Uhlenberg, 2000; “Contracting Masculinity: Gender, Class and Race in a White-Collar Union, 1944-1994,” by Gillian Creese, 2000; “‘Why Marcia, You’ve Changed!’ Male Clerical Temporary Workers Doing Masculinity in a Feminized Occupation,” by Kevin Henson and Jackie Krasas Rogers, 2001; “By Necessity or By Right: The Language and Experience of Gender at Work,” by Nancy Christie, 2002; and “What Happens to Potential Discouraged? Masculine Norms and the Contrasting Institutional and Labor Market Experiences of Less Affluent Black and White Men,” by Deirdre Royster, 2007. The 2001 anthology *Boys and Their Toys? Masculinity, Technology, and Class in America* looks closely at many aspects of masculinity as it ties into the workplace. But so far little has been done recently specifically on men in the 1970s.

Economic and social shifts of the 1970s, especially deindustrialization, the increase of women in the workforce, and a stagnating economy, upended traditional ideas of white middle-class and working-class manhood and led many men to a more conservative outlook. In *The Neglected Voter*, a 2008 study of white male voters’ transition from a Democrat to Republican bloc in the second half of the twentieth century, David Paul Kuhn traces the “problem of the rejected man” in terms of white men’s social alienation from their traditional party (Kuhn 8). Though the political aspect of the shift in thinking among white men is important and will be discussed, I also

examine that alienation in more social terms, as among middle-class men who began to reject feminism without necessarily becoming Republicans. This conservative shift had and still has a significant political and social effect on the country, continuing to retard true equality between white men and everyone else. In the 1970s, a time when the negative effects of the patriarchal system were made so obvious – through the blatant disregard of businesses for their workers, the shunting of women employees into low-paying and low-status work, and the introduction of economic policies that would increase the financial success of the wealthy at the expense of the rest of the country – why did so many white men in both classes decide, consciously or not, to support that system by opposing greater equality? I contend that as the demographic group with the most economic, social, and political power, even if it felt otherwise at the time, they had no incentive to give it up, and indeed, a strong desire to maintain it.

The first chapter of this work looks at changes in work and society from 1970 to 1980. The Department of Labor's *Monthly Labor Review*, which reports and analyzes employment data for the country, was used as a source of contemporary employment information. In addition, I looked at some of the decade's many books about work, including the government study *Work in America*, *Worlds of Pain* by Lillian Rubin, and *The Hidden Injuries of Class* by Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb. Secondary sources include *Right Star Rising* by Laura Kalman, *Suburban Warriors* by Lisa McGirr, *Pivotal Decade* by Judith Stein, and several others.

The second chapter examines employment and the language of masculinity as used in the media, as well as journalism's discussions of masculinity itself. Primary sources are largely magazine articles of the period, representing a spectrum of viewpoints

and opinions, from the newsweeklies *U.S. News and World Report*, *Time*, and *Newsweek* to more specialized periodicals such as *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Esquire*, *Intellect*, *Commonweal*, and *Reader's Digest*, among many others.

The third chapter surveys the men's liberation movement and the field of masculinity studies as exemplified by a selection of the books written on "men's lib" over the course of the decade, such as *Men's Liberation* by John Nichols, *Men and Masculinity* by Joseph Pleck and Jack Sawyer (editors), *The Liberated Man* by Warren Farrell, and others. I conclude with a look at the similarities between that decade and this one, and how many of the same issues are still being discussed now.

Chapter 1: Changes in the World of the White American Man

Over the course of the 1970s, the cost of living increased while the availability of work for white men decreased. Though white men in general remained better off than any other group in terms of employment, the increased participation of women combined with a shift from a manufacturing-based to a services-based economy meant that overall, white men's share of the job market fell. Combined with a rate of inflation that made everything more expensive, men could no longer assume that their income would be enough to support a family, one of the foundations of traditional American manhood. This chapter shows the many economic and political changes that occurred during the decade, and the origin of the feeling of threatened manhood. By understanding the historical context of the period, we can better understand why white men felt the world was to some degree leaving them behind.

Employment by the Numbers

The Bureau of Labor Statistics' yearly reports show that over the course of the 1970s, blue-collar jobs shrunk in absolute terms. However, white men still remained better off in terms of work and unemployment than any other demographic group, even as their proportion of the workforce slowly declined. The unemployment rate of white men never went above 6.2%, even in 1975, when the 1970s economy was at its worst and the national average unemployment rate was 8.5% (and 11.7% for black men) (Green, Devens and Whitmore 16). But that was poor comfort to those who were unemployed or whose work environment was changing.

The 1970s began on the crest of the surge in employment of the 1960s. The prewar macroeconomic principles of British economist John Maynard Keynes, or

Keynesianism, promoted government intervention and stimulus of the economy. When combined with a strong postwar economy based on international trade and domestic consumption, the result was an economic boom that both steadily increased the standard of living while establishing the U.S. as the world's primary financial power. However, the boom was not felt uniformly across the country, and though wage increases became standard among unionized laborers, factories began closing in the older, established industrialized cities in the Northeast and Midwest, and reopening in the less-unionized and therefore less expensive cities in the South. The abandonment of older factories in favor of new ones elsewhere was also encouraged by federal tax laws that allowed for a tax deduction of losses incurred from doing so. Only strong labor resistance prevented this from happening as often as big corporations, like U.S. Steel, would have liked (Brill 138).

At the same time, fighting the U.S.S.R. in the Cold War seemed to necessitate a federal budget that spent a lot on defense, and the new industries of military technology were built largely through government funding. The "military-industrial complex" President Eisenhower warned about in his final speech as president in 1961 made Southern California into a booming, bustling area of development, the promised land of postwar America, while previously lively cities like Detroit slowly deteriorated (McGirr 45). The affluence of Southern California and the West in general was largely due to wars in Korea and Vietnam, and the ongoing arms race against the U.S.S.R.; as Eisenhower pointed out, if fighting wars becomes a business, then wars must regularly be fought in order for that business to continue. Businesses built on the horrors of war were neither morally nor financially sustainable, as would become obvious in the 1970s after

Vietnam. Moreover, not everyone was able to fully participate in that affluence without further prodding from the federal government. The postwar boom was, in other words, of dubious social merit.

The employment boom of the 1960s peaked in mid-1970 before beginning to recede. Unemployment leveled off in the third quarter of 1970 but the United Automobile Workers' strike against General Motors Corporation complicated the issue and unemployment rose again, mostly due to secondary effects of the strike in industries that built car parts. Anything that affected the automobile industry affected the economy at large, as workers in the automobile and related industries made up one out of every twelve manufacturing employees in the United States (Stein 252). Drops in employment in the first half of 1970 were seen in largely male-dominated fields, such as aerospace and defense, which were beginning to feel the effects of the slowdown in the Vietnam War; durable goods manufacturing, including industries affected by the decline in aerospace and defense; and construction. The Pentagon let go about 400,000 military and another 100,000 civilian employees, while another almost 400,000 were laid off in defense-related companies, a big shock for an industry that only two years earlier had been booming (*Businessweek* 9/5/70 66). This caused the first increase in unemployment for men since 1962, especially blue-collar men over 25, whose unemployment rate rose from 3.9% in 1969 to 6.2% just a year later (Flaim and Schwab 18). The overall unemployment rate of white men, however, was 3.2% (Green and Stinson 23).

There was some recovery in 1971, especially in the fields of trade, services, and government work, but unemployment remained at around 6% the entire year (Green and Stinson 20). Most job losses were felt by adult men in the goods-producing industries,

especially those involved in the defense and aerospace industries, which, unusually, affected the nonproduction, white-collar jobs as much as the blue-collar. Other nonproduction jobs were lost due to employers cutting costs by trimming nonessential workers. As a result of these and other trends, professional white-collar unemployment increased almost a full percentage point to 2.9%, the highest level ever recorded up to that time, and white-collar unemployment in general increased significantly from 2.8% in 1970 to 3.5% (Green and Stinson 25). What job increases existed did not extend to black workers, whose unemployment level increased slightly to 9.9%, the highest since 1963 (Green and Stinson 26).

Though the economy improved greatly over the course of 1972 and an average of about 2.3 million jobs were created, the introduction of about 2.1 million new workers into the workforce failed to lower the unemployment rate as much as it otherwise might have. In addition, the length of unemployment was steadily increasing, and much of the long-term unemployed (27 weeks or more) were adult males who had previously held manufacturing jobs (*Businessweek* 6/12/71 24). Continuing the tradition of recent years, the workforce expansion included women, teenagers, and returning veterans of the Vietnam War. All demographic groups did well in the recovery, especially white adult men (aged 20 and older), the group that saw “the largest year-to-year job pickup in twenty-five years” with about one million jobs, almost 50% of the year’s new positions, and this group’s unemployment rate decreased to 3.6% (Green and Stinson 24).

The expansion that had begun in 1971 culminated in 1973 with an increase in employment of 2.7 million workers, “the largest year-to-year increase since 1955” (Gilroy and Bradshaw 3). The labor force rose 2.1 million, due mostly to an increase in

the population of men and women ages 20-24, baby boomers reaching work age. Both white- and blue-collar industries gained jobs, though for the first time since the end of WWII wages ceased to follow the pattern of regular growth and began to stagnate even as inflation caused the cost of living to continue increasing (Stein xi). White-collar science and engineering occupations began to rebound from the cutbacks in defense and aerospace that began in 1969, though manufacturing jobs in companies that had produced goods for the defense and aerospace industries failed to return to the highs of the Vietnam War period, an example of the white-collarization of these particular industries. Blue-collar unemployment fell to 5.3%, the lowest since 1970. The unemployment rate of white men decreased significantly to 2.9%. General unemployment hit a low of 4.7%, but began to rise as the year ended, due to the stock market crash in late 1973, and the retaliatory oil embargo imposed by some of the members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) that began in October as a consequence of American aid to Israel in the Yom Kippur War against Syria and Egypt, both of which boded poorly for the years to come.

1974 saw the beginning of the real economic woes of the 1970s. High interest rates combined with a shortage of mortgage funds led to the worst housing crisis since World War II, which, combined with a downturn in nonresidential construction, prompted a dramatic rise in the unemployment rate of construction workers, from 8.8% in 1973 to 13.7% in 1974 (Flaim, Bradshaw and Gilroy 4). The energy crisis of 1973 continued to negatively affect automobile and related manufacturing industries. As a result of the downturns in construction and manufacturing, the jobless rate skyrocketed, from 4.1% in Fall 1973 to 7.1% in December 1974 (Flaim, Bradshaw and Gilroy 3), for a

total of 18.3 million people, an increase of four million over 1973 (Young 47). "One-third of all construction workers and one-fifth of workers in durable and nondurable manufacturing were unemployed at some time during the year, much larger proportions than in 1973" (Young 49). The continued rise in inflation led to a steady decline in real personal disposable income, which hurt the retail industry. The downturn, however, was much less severe in white-collar work.

The recession that had begun in 1973 led to "the worst economic contraction since the Great Depression" in 1975, and with it came a great increase in unemployment that was "particularly severe among adult men" (St. Marie and Bednarzik 11). Between mid-year 1974 and mid-year 1975, adult males lost 1.3 million jobs, especially blue-collar work. Unemployment for white adult males hit a decade high of 6.2% (Green, Devens and Whitmore 16). Unemployment in general peaked at 8.5% for the year, the highest level recorded anytime post-WWII, and unemployment benefits were claimed by about 75% of the unemployed (Bednarzik and St. Marie 10). There was slight recovery at the end of the year, but not enough to return to pre-recession levels. As in 1974, the worst job losses were in manufacturing and construction, with white-collar work much less affected.

In 1976, the economic recovery begun in 1975 continued, but overall unemployment still remained high, at one point hitting 8.0% (Bednarzik and St. Marie 3). What jobs were added benefited adult women over adult men, as white-collar work gained two million jobs whereas blue-collar gained only 850,000 (Bednarzik and St. Marie 3). Unemployment insurance remained a popular option for workers and was claimed by about 60% in 1976, down from 1975's high of 75% (Bednarzik and St. Marie

10). The workforce continued to grow, due especially to an influx of adult women, and the proportion of adult men continued its decline. The unemployment rate of white men fell to 5.4% (Green, Devens and Whitmore 16).

The post-recession expansion continued in 1977, with employment up in all groups and a decrease in the unemployment rate to an average of 7% (Green, Devens and Whitmore 12). Adult women, having become a third of the entire work force, accounted for about half of the 3.9 million jobs gained, and adult men, about 40%, while teenagers made up the rest (Green, Devens and Whitmore 12). However, adult men made up a larger proportion of the decline in joblessness, as the decline in unemployment for women was offset by an increase in working women. Any improvement in joblessness was limited to white workers, as black unemployment stagnated at around 13.1% (Green, Devens and Whitmore 16). Though black workers had better access to education and thus to better jobs, for the most part black workers were concentrated in unskilled laborer jobs, which were much more susceptible to cyclical joblessness. The country experienced greater post-recession recovery in 1976 and 1977 than in any other postwar recovery, which was largely due to the addition of around 1.4 million women a year. This also explained the high unemployment rate even in a recovery, as many of the jobless were first-time jobseekers "attracted to the labor force by increased employment opportunities" (Green, Devens and Whitmore 18).

The job growth in 1978 amounted to 3.3 million new jobs, 60% of which went to female workers (Rones and Leon 3). Blue-collar jobs expanded strongly for the third consecutive year, especially in goods and crafts. Women benefited from the increase in crafts jobs as well as the white-collar increase in sales and clerical work. Mining and

construction, two industries whose workforce was principally male, both saw gains in employment, and the unemployment rate for the country fell to a four-year low, to 5.8% (Rones and Leon 3). The unemployment rate of white men decreased to 3.5%, though the percentage of couples with both members working increased for the first time to exceed that of one-worker couples, a trend that was to remain constant through the rest of the decade and into the 1980s (Rones and Leon 11).

The great gains of 1976, 1977, and 1978 slowed down in 1979, as the labor force and employment rates both increased by two million, compared to three million or more in the previous years. The unemployment rate remained around 5.9% throughout the year (Leon and Rones 3). Growth was strongest in service-producing industries, largely concentrated in services, which accounted for about 75% of the new jobs, though the more blue-collar fields of construction and mining also posted strong employment gains; however, construction gains were limited to those working on long-term construction projects, as residential construction was deeply hurt by the economic slowdown, losing 560,000 jobs by September 1979 (*U.S. News and World Report* 9/17/79 27). There were another 1.4 million working women in the workforce, who took most of the new white-collar jobs (Rones and Leon 3). The unemployment rate of white men rose slightly to finish out the decade at 3.7% (Rones and Leon 8).

The 1980s began with a recession. By the end of 1980, 1.3 million jobs had been lost, mostly in the goods-producing sector, and the unemployment rate had risen to 7.5%, about 8 million people, up from 6.1 million in 1979 (Westcott and Bednarzik 4). Compared to the recession of 1974-1975, which had been the worst of the postwar recessions, the recession of 1980 began the mildest, as job loss in blue-collar, goods-

producing industries was made up for by job increases in the service-producing sector, particularly in professional and technical occupations. The worst of the recession was felt mainly in three specific industries: automobiles, construction, and steel, and related industries to a lesser extent, all of which were involved in the production of higher-end consumer products. Factory layoffs reached an all-time high of 35 layoffs per 1,000 employees in the second quarter of 1980 before recovering somewhat (Westcott and Bednarzik 6). Due to this and other sharp increases in layoffs, the overall unemployment rate jumped 1.1% between the first and second quarters of 1980 (Westcott and Bednarzik 8). By the end of the third quarter, male unemployment "actually exceeded that for adult women, a highly unusual labor market occurrence," 6.6% to 6.4%, though it fell in the fourth quarter to under that of women, 6.3% to 6.7% (Westcott and Bednarzik 8). Blue-collar unemployment peaked at 11.1% while the effects of the recession were felt much less in white-collar occupations, though unemployment rates for both were still below 1974-1975 levels (Westcott and Bednarzik 9).

Economic Trends

Though jobs are thought of in terms of personal and professional actions and relationships, employment is also political. The national state of employment is strongly affected by decisions made by the federal government, such as international trade agreements, efforts to stabilize the stock market, or programs designed to address various problems. One governmental influence on employment in the 1970s was the rate of so-called "full employment," a political term meant to indicate the acceptable level of unemployment that would prevent an "overfull" economy and subsequent increase in inflation. The rate of full employment had been inching up steadily since the 1950s, when a rate of 2-3% was deemed acceptable (Ulmer 14). Immediately following World War II,

full employment had been considered 1%; accordingly, the Employment Act of 1946 had originally been named the Full Employment Act, written with the Keynesian idea that employment was a right, and that the government should ensure that everyone who wanted a job should be able to find one (Ginsburg 114). But the business community strongly opposed what they felt were government regulations over business cycles that would address the issue anyway, and Congress, controlled by Republicans and Southern Democrats, pushed the bill into a compromise. Just as the word “full” was removed, so was the definition of “full employment” reconfigured to mean 2-3% unemployment rather than 1% or even 0% by giving different weight to different demographic groups of the unemployed to gain the desired result, a trick other politicians were later to use (Ulmer 14).

Though, as Helen Ginsburg in *The Nation* put it, “[i]n a workforce of 92 million people, each percentage-point rise in joblessness tosses another 920,000 onto the scrap heap” (Ginsburg 116), John F. Kennedy’s administration moved the definition of “full employment” up to 4%, which held fairly steady until, during another period of increasing unemployment, Richard Nixon declared it to be 5% in 1971. Nixon administration officials, including Treasury Secretary John Connally and Chief Domestic Advisor John Erlichman, claimed that since only the unemployment rate of male heads-of-household truly counted in terms of the negative effect of unemployment, the rate was itself somewhat inflated and should be reconsidered (Connally, quoted in Ginsburg 116; Erlichman, quoted in *Time* 10/9/72 76). This was a simplistic and insulting view of the issue as it related to millions of unemployed women, single men, and teenagers, and failed to take into account the “discouraged” or “hardcore” unemployed, those who had

given up looking for work and were not counted in the unemployment rate. Melvin Ulmer of *The New Republic* (1972) made a pointed observation on the politics of unemployment:

> [By 1976,] in time for the *next* presidential campaign, the true full employment rate of unemployment will be fixed at 15 per cent of the labor force. Had we only known this 40 years ago, we would have realized that 1932 was a year of unrecognized prosperity. (Ulmer 14)

An attempt to amend the 1946 act, the 1978 Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment Act, known officially as the Full Employment and Balanced Growth Act, was a Keynesian effort to reduce unemployment to 3% to 4% by 1983 and to authorize the government to help do so by providing a constant supply of public employment as needed. However, it was halfheartedly supported by President Carter and, as many of the more useful measures – consumer protection, welfare reform, hospital cost containment, and a simple national health insurance system – were cut from the bill by Senate conservatives, it failed to achieve its goal (Kalman 219-221).

Through the years of increased unemployment, the administrations of Presidents Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter made it clear that their priority was to combat inflation at the expense of the unemployment rate. Nixon's attempts to lower unemployment in the early 1970s only helped in the short-term, and his conversion to Keynesianism after many years of criticizing the government spending of previous administrations made him seem unprepared for the realization that inflation and unemployment could both rise as the same time. The most popular Keynesian tool for predicting what the economy would do was the Phillips curve, an economic device that claimed a negative association between

unemployment and inflation. Originally devised in Britain, it was applied to American data in 1958, and turned into a macroeconomic tool in 1961 (Rodgers 48-49). In the period leading up to 1970, the Phillips curve seemed to adequately explain why the economy reacted as it did to various pressures, and provided politicians and economists with a fairly reliable way to predict the outcome of various measures. Unfortunately, its forecasting power began to break down in the 1970s.

Inflation had begun its inexorable increase in the mid-1960s, as President Lyndon B. Johnson strained economic resources with the war in Vietnam and a series of expensive anti-poverty programs without also instituting a tax increase until the deficit necessitated one in 1968 (Stein 25). However, as the war in Vietnam and defense spending both began to wind down while the workforce grew in an unprecedented surge, inflation and unemployment started to rise at the same time. This resulted in the Nixon administration's "extraordinary flailing" to regain some kind of control, in the form of wage and price controls that did help the economy recover in 1971 and 1972, but the removal of which made the situation worse in 1973 (Rodgers 48). Reimposition of the controls could not stop the recession that followed.

By the mid-1970s, administration officials and leading economists, including Alan Greenspan, then Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors under President Ford, continued to insist that inflation was a threat larger than the growing proportion of unemployed men, women, and teenagers. Ford claimed inflation was "Public Enemy #1" (*Businessweek* 11/9/74 158), despite the public's growing dissatisfaction with the direction the country was headed. He refused to "prime" the economic "pump" with public-works projects that would provide new jobs because, as he put it, "our country is

not in an economic crisis" (quoted in Kalman 46). Alas, the "Ford recession," as it came to be called, worsened in 1975, and though the economy did improve in 1976, the unemployment rate did not, especially for blue-collar workers in what was becoming known as the "Rust Belt" of the Northeast and Midwest, where factories had shut down altogether. Not until 1980 did members of the Carter administration admit that the combination of unemployment and inflation was "unacceptable" (Byron 44), though by that point the country was in another recession.

As the business community began to coalesce into a major lobbying force, they used their influence with the Ford administration in particular to promote inflation as the key enemy of a successful economy, while unemployment was reduced to a tool to fight inflation and recession. Especially as the recession worsened in 1974, some business leaders argued, with questionable math, that an economic stimulus to counter the rise in joblessness "would mean helping six percent of the population at the expense of the other 94 percent." They instead urged the "bitter medicine" of a short recession rather than running the risk of increased inflation (*Businessweek* 11/9/74 154). The business lobby would prove even more influential following a 1976 Supreme Court decision that allowed corporations to make unlimited donations to political parties and political action committees. Though Democrats now found themselves in a tricky position, relying on corporate donations yet still needing to satisfy their electoral base, the Republicans were much more comfortable with the alliance, and many of President Reagan's "kitchen cabinet" members were high-ranked businessmen who wasted no time in achieving the repeal of almost forty percent of the 1970s laws that had benefited labor (Harvey 44-50).

A competing economic tool, the Laffer curve, arose to counter the failure of the Phillips curve and Keynesianism and claimed that a low tax rate, at exactly the right point, could provide the same level of government revenue as a higher rate, due to the increase in business capital such a low rate would supply. However, when it was put into practice in the Reagan administration, the Laffer curve proved unsound, and led to an increase in the deficit rather than the predicted surplus.

Though unemployment was somewhat less painful than it had been in the past owing to an increase in private and federally funded unemployment benefits, the government's failure to address the underlying issues in the rise of the unemployment rate – such as the disassembling of the country's manufacturing industries as a result of foreign competition, domestic outsourcing, and offshoring; the alarming growth in teenage unemployment partly due to a rise in the minimum wage; and the training gap between those looking for work and the skilled jobs going unfilled – largely left the unemployed to fend for themselves.

By the end of the 1970s, industries like automobile and steel manufacturing that had "once symbolized America's economic might [were] now suffering the worst unemployment," which was especially concentrated in areas dominated by a single industry (Byron 158). In Detroit, for example, almost 25% of the city's automobile workers were unemployed in 1980 (Byron 158). The downturn in both automobile manufacturing and construction were connected to the oil crisis of 1973-1974 that led not only to a decline in the sales of large American cars, their many parts, and steel, but also

to the increase in the cost of manufacturing in general from which they had just started to recover when the second oil crisis of the decade hit in 1979. With oil expenses acting as a large and generally inescapable tax on doing business, in terms of transportation if not also in production, corporations proved unwilling to invest in construction of new facilities and new machinery. This would later lead to the layoffs of thousands of workers whose cheaper cost, compared to new machinery, could not keep declining industries afloat. The cheaper price of labor abroad also helped to doom labor-heavy industries like garment production; in 1982, for the first time in history, more workers in New York City were employed in nonmanufacturing jobs than manufacturing, spurred on by the growth of the financial industries as much as by the decline in manufacturing (Karmin and Sheler 54).

In her economic history of the period, *Pivotal Decade: How the U.S. Traded Factories for Finance in the 1970s*, Judith Stein notes that another contributing factor to the economic slowdown in the 1970s was international trade. An important tool in aiding countries after World War II as well as preventing many from becoming Communist, postwar American trade policy was based on the assumption that the American economy was strong enough to take the short end of the stick in negotiations. This worked well during the 1950s and 1960s, but by the end of the 1960s, some international economies, particularly West Germany and Japan, had stronger economic growth than the U.S., due in no small part to the favorable trade agreements they shared with the U.S. As a result, domestic production in the U.S. began to suffer from international competition. While Japan's domestic steel companies were protected from international competitors, for example, American steel companies had only weak antidumping laws that the Treasury

Department did little to enforce (Stein 156). In addition, the rising cost of manufacturing in the U.S. combined with the booming economies of other countries led many producers to move their factories abroad, which created a serious flow of dollars to other countries, especially Mexico, Japan, Taiwan, and Belgium. The Trade Act of 1974 was an attempt to help afflicted industries in the U.S. with programs like Trade Adjustment Assistance, in which factory workers who were laid off because of international competition were given special unemployment assistance by the government (Stein 49; *Businessweek* 11/14/77 144). While helpful to the unemployed workers, the feeling that "protectionism" was a bad word prevented the government from being more helpful by keeping the jobs in the country (*U.S. News and World Report* 5/12/80 78).

It is also worth noting that American involvement in the world market meant that it was susceptible to world food shortages such as those of 1973. The resulting inflation in food prices was not helped by the Nixon food and wage controls. In 1973, as the price of food increased while wages were held down, workers struck in higher numbers than any year since 1959 (Stein 75). Though food prices fell and stayed fairly constant from 1975 on, they proved again that the American economy could easily be negatively affected by the events of foreign countries.

This was especially true when it came to oil. Between 1946 and 1972, international production in non-Communist nations grew from 8.7 million barrels a day to 42 million. American domestic production could not keep up with domestic consumption, which had tripled in volume since the 1940s for a number of reasons: greater car ownership, an expansion of modern heating and cooling systems, and the invention of new home appliances and other products. An unexpected result of the

environmental movement's push against coal was an increase in demand for oil as a replacement. Concurrent with the increase in worldwide demand was a shift in the power balance, from American, British, and Dutch supremacy to a Middle Eastern advantage. OPEC was created in 1960 by Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, Kuwait, Iraq, and Iran, and later additions included Libya, Algeria, and Qatar. By 1980, most of these countries had nationalized their oil production, meaning that with the boom in worldwide demand, these countries became very rich, and were able to use their oil advantage to become players in the international political sphere. This led to the "OPEC effect," the realization that the third world mattered just as much as the first in world diplomacy, an unpleasant shock to those in the first world who would never regain their status as the world's premier oil producers (Stein 75-91).

Changes in the Work Force

The increase in costs of food and gas contributed to an increase in the American cost of living. Combined with an increasing difficulty in finding or holding on to work, white men found that solo breadwinning became a greater challenge, leading many married women to go to work. As a result, over the course of the decade, the work force changed dramatically and permanently.

Partly due to a series of legal measures taken to prevent discrimination in hiring by sex, partly a slow but long-term trend that had begun centuries earlier, and in large part due to economic necessity, more women than ever before joined the labor force. The growth was noticeable among older women and young workers, mothers of the postwar "baby boom" as well as the babies themselves, who had now reached working age. Young female workers, aged 20 to 24, also came of working age at a time of declining

marriage and birth rates (Waldman 10). As divorce rates and marriage age went up while marriage rates went down, more single and divorced women joined the workforce as well.

The most remarkable increase, however, was that of mothers with small children, most of whom had historically remained at home, although working-class mothers had always worked in greater proportion than their middle- and upper-class counterparts. Overall, the number of working wives increased 320% from 1940 to 1970 to the point where two out of every five workers was female (Waldman 11). By 1980, more than half of all adult women, 51.4%, were working or seeking work, up from 43.4% in 1971, an increase that was greatest among married women (41.3% in 1971 compared to 51.4% in 1980) (Westcott and Bednarzik 13). The participation of adult men, on the other hand, decreased slowly but regularly over the course of the 1970s, from 82.1% in 1971 to 79.4% in 1980 (Westcott and Bednarzik 13).[4]

The continuing addition of women as well as teenagers into the workforce led to a decrease in the proportion of unemployed men, but only because the proportion of working men in general became smaller. In 1972, there were ten million more female workers than there had been in 1962. Speaking in terms of the work force, the share of women of all ages increased from 31.6% in 1955 to 40.3% in 1976, while that of men decreased from 55.9% to 44.5% in the same period; "[t]he backbone of the workforce – men 25 to 64 – makes up a smaller and smaller share [of it]" (*U.S. News and World Report* 11/1/76 84).

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[4] By 2007, men's participation fell to 73%, while that of women increased to almost 60%. Also that year, women made up 46% of the workforce (Lee and Mather 4).

A majority of the 18.5 million nonagricultural jobs created between 1968 and 1978 went to women, as most were in the service sector where female workers were concentrated. The increase in women workers, and the industries that grew correspondingly, were indicative of the country's shift from a goods-producing economy pre-WWII to a predominantly service-producing economy in the 1950s and 1960s. Indeed, the downturn in male-dominated industries like manufacturing and construction led to an increase in male unemployment while female-dominated industries like retail sales gained jobs (Flaim, Bradshaw and Gilroy 3).

In addition, the work status of black workers was steadily improving, although still a measure behind that of white workers. "For every successive peak-to-trough period, black workers . . . shared less of the increase of unemployment" (Gilroy 42), so that where the ratio of black to white unemployed workers had been about twenty to ten in the 1957-1958 downturn, it had improved to fourteen to ten in the 1969-1970 recession. Black workers were also taking a greater share of the increase in jobs: in the 1954 to 1957 recovery, thirteen black workers found jobs for every ten newly employed white workers; in the 1961 to 1969 prosperity, it increased to twenty-two to ten (Gilroy 43). The quality of jobs was improving as well, especially in clerical, professional, and technical work, though the proportion of black workers still generally trailed behind their proportion of the workforce, about 10.5%, unlike in less-skilled work, where black workers were overrepresented (Garfinkle 25-27). As the 1970s continued, the small percentage of black men in upper-level professional and administrative positions increased from 2 to 4% (Garfinkle 29). Though black women were a much smaller percentage of workers in management positions (about three percent of all female

managers, who were themselves about 18.5%), they benefited from the increase in white-collar clerical and sales work as much as white women and more than black men (Garfinkle 32). The proportion of black women in white-collar work increased from 7% to 10% between 1962 and 1974 (Garfinkle 33). Overall, the percentage of black workers in lower-paid and lower-skilled work declined, to be replaced in part by rising numbers of Hispanic immigrants, though their rates of unemployment were still several percentage points above that of white workers, and disproportional to their share of the workforce in general (Garfinkle 33).

Along with the eradication of traditional areas of work, white men found that the newer jobs available were often not available to them. Partly from a resistance to doing "woman's work," partly from a lack of training that women were more likely to have received, laid-off white men, especially those in the working class, were more likely to keep looking for work in the field in which they were familiar than to attempt to work in the growing fields of office and sales that employed a growing stream of women. So as the workforce changed, white working-class men became a smaller share of it and were less able to change with it (Westcott and Bednarzik 13).

Political and Social Developments

One of the bigger changes of the 1970s that was to greatly affect the next decade was the emergence of the New Right, made up of libertarians and religious conservatives who were much more politically conservative than what became known as the Old Right. Though the two subgroups eventually acted together in the body of the Republican Party, they did not agree on every particular and were not always united in their objective. But

their common enemies and goals were enough to help them defeat the more moderate Republicans within the party and eventually help elect Reagan in 1980.

Though the campaign to elect Barry Goldwater to the presidency in 1964 was unsuccessful, it revealed the efficacy of grassroots activism, as Goldwater's nomination to the Republican ticket would not have occurred without the efforts of the middle-class men and women in places like Southern California, to whom Goldwater's exhortations against the ongoing threat of Communism rang true. The specter of Communism also helped to inspire the Christian fundamentalist movement. Fundamentalist churches, unlike those of the older Christian denominations, were "newer, theologically simpler, and more emotionally and relationally intense churches" (Rodgers 168). They fit well in the individualist Sunbelt environment in which beneficiaries of the booming economy wanted to enjoy their hard-earned rewards without being told to contribute to a New Deal-like welfare system that helped those not strong or smart enough to achieve as much as they had themselves. Fundamentalist churches also portrayed Communism as a Satanic threat to the Christian nation of America, and claimed liberals were only aiding Satan in his dark quest through welfare, the United Nations, and the teaching of sex education in public schools (McGirr 71). To those in areas dominated by the federally-funded defense industry, anti-Communist fervor also helped to fuel the feeling that they were working on God's behalf.

The John Birch Society, another organization devoted to spreading the word of the oncoming Communist/Satanic revolution, also found a receptive audience in Southern California and other booming Sunbelt areas. The Birchers, as they were known, were generally seen as part of the reason Goldwater failed to win in 1964, as they were among

the more extremist of the conservative groups and scared off many moderate Republicans, who at that point still made up the majority of the national party. Ronald Reagan, running for governor of California in 1966, was able to utilize Bircher sentiment without incorporating the more radical aspects of the group, a skill that would come in handy in his later presidential runs.

The attempt in the late 1960s and early 1970s to expand the reach of the Democratic Party into demographics like the young, women, minorities, and the middle-class left out traditional blocs like labor. Eugene McGovern's lack of interest in appealing to the established Democratic ally in his presidential campaign in 1972 while encouraging the countercultural youth who alienated labor leaders and workers left the "Silent Majority," as Nixon came to call them, free to be scooped up by Nixon's moderate conservatism (Stein 70). Nixon was also aided by social divisions emerging between the elite and younger members of the Democrats and the middle- and lower-class white voters who opposed busing as a means of school integration they labeled as racists, despite evidence that busing was broadly unpopular (Kuhn 67).

Nixon's reelection was less a sign of a growing shift to the right – indeed, it was the opposite, according to a poll that observed a noticeable shift to the left on the issues among most Americans between 1968 and 1972 (Stein 72) – than it was a sign that McGovern had estranged many voters. White male working-class voters in particular lost no love for Nixon but could not tolerate McGovern's radicalism and apparent disregard for labor, no mean feat for Nixon given that McGovern had had a remarkably pro-labor record in the Senate (Kuhn 63; Cowie 87). As Nixon pointed out at the time, "[t]he real issues of the election are the ones like patriotism, morality, religion – not the material

issues. … If the issues were prices and taxes, they'd vote for McGovern. We've done things labor doesn't like. … But they'll support us for these other reasons" (quoted in Cowie 124). Nixon's valuable insight, which McGovern failed to utilize, was "making workers' economic interests secondary to an appeal to their moral backbone, patriotic rectitude, whiteness, and machismo in the face of the inter-related threats of social decay, racial unrest, and faltering national purpose" (Cowie 127). Though the Republicans profited from that Democratic misstep and Nixon's clever use of rhetoric, the white male shift to the Republican Party was not yet guaranteed, nor was the Republican Party of Nixon's liberally moderate conservatism in 1972 similar to the more hard-line conservative party of Reagan in 1980. However, as Cowie pointed out, it is here that we can begin to see the reaction of some working-class men to the perceived threats to manhood posed by McGovern and the new model of the Democratic Party, an uneasiness Reagan would later utilize.

The Watergate scandal and Ford's pardon of Nixon gave the Democrats an easy win in the midterm elections of 1974, and they gained the majority in both houses. Followed by Ford's less than impressive term in office and loss to Carter in 1976 – who won even more of the white male vote than the white female, 47% to 46% (Kuhn 68) – it seemed like traditional conservatives were on the brink of dying out altogether. But Carter's failure to combat many of the problems Americans wanted him to – the energy crisis (even before the 1979-80 oil shortage), unemployment, presenting a tough face to the U.S.S.R. in treaty talks and the world in general – left a political vacuum that the Republicans rushed to fill in the midterm elections in 1978. They proved successful at recasting the political narrative:

> [Republicans were not] a party of big business and the wealthy, but . . . a party of the little guy, the regular American Joe and his wife, while the Democratic party belonged to elitists who imposed schemes of social engineering, social privilege, and special interests on the little guy. (Marjorie Spruill, quoted in Kalman 263)

The narrative was also amended to show that Carter's election had been an aberration in an otherwise obvious Republican revolution that began with Goldwater in 1964, though Reagan was aided in his win by Carter's many problems.

Carter's inability to effectively lead the country through difficult social and economic situations meant that the "national experiment with quiet, secure, non-macho leadership" would prove unsuccessful:

> "As it was, when someone 'stands up and raises his voice and says, goddamit (sic), we're going to do something about this problem,' Americans cheered. 'They don't even listen to what he's saying. Nor do they listen to what you say; they only know you say it slower and softer.'" (Carter advisor Gerald Rafshoon, quoted in Kalman 317)

Had Carter made different decisions, or acted differently, or been an entirely different person, there is no guarantee that Reagan would have actually won in 1980. The rightward shift of the late 1970s was to a great degree in reaction to Carter's failures, not an inevitable conclusion, but some of those failures included actions that added to a feeling among white men of losing overall authority, personally, nationally, and in terms of world standing. Reagan was able to capitalize on Carter's apparent lack of masculinity in his less forceful, more fallible mode of leading. Carter's "crisis of confidence" speech in June 1979 included his observation that the country had become consumption-obsessed and self-absorbed, but such reprimands did not find hospitable ground among all of his listeners, and instead provided Reagan with a more positive, self-congratulatory response: "How can we not believe in the greatness of America? . . . We're Americans,"

and “I find no national malaise. I find nothing wrong with the American people” (quoted in Rodgers 25 and Mattson 185). Empty claims of confidence seemed manlier and were easier to support than thoughtful discussions of shortcomings. Carter lost the Democrats the white-male vote for the rest of the twentieth century (Kalman 265).[5]

Similarly, the rise in religious conservatism was largely due to the perceived threats to masculinity and traditional sex roles instigated by the many social movements of the era:

> A sense of faltering manhood helped to fuel concern that Americans had grown disastrously weak; that homosexuality would run rampant among men if tolerated and made public; that men were ceding their responsibilities to discipline children to others; that feminist ideas, insinuating their way into the culture of ordinary housewives, blurring gender lines and reversing gender roles, were already sapping the power of husbands. (Rodgers 170)

For many, fighting what they felt was untoward liberal influence in public education was their first experience with political action, and would often lead to later involvement in grassroots political activism. Despite his own strong association with Christianity, Carter became a hated target of the fundamentalists for, among other things, establishing the Department of Education, which was viewed as another advance in the secularization of education (Kuhn 82).

Fundamentalist spokespeople like Phyllis Schlafly and Anita Bryant labeled feminists enemies of “the family,” trying to “replace the image of woman as virtue and mother with the image of prostitute, swinger, and lesbian” (Schlafly, quoted in Kalman 72). The defense of “traditional” values appealed to many who felt confused by the shifts in ideals about how men and women were supposed to act. But even fundamentalist

[5] Carter’s weak majority was 47%, which fell to 32% in 1980 (Kuhn 5); the next Democratic presidential candidate to get over 40% of the white-male vote would be Barack Obama in 2008 (Noah).

homes often had dual earners as time went on, and the justifications for letting women work were incorporated into otherwise “traditional” ideology: men were to be “loving” and “humble” but not dominating, while women were to give “intelligent willing and joyful submission” without being servile (the Danvers Statement, quoted in Rodgers 173). Women could work, but not in jobs that might undermine male coworkers’ manhood.

As seen through employment, the economy, and politics, the events of the 1970s created an environment in which white male authority was thrown into question. Though they were and remained the greatest share of the workforce, their share was reduced, and their ability to find work made less certain. Industries that had employed fathers and sons for decades were shutting down factories and leaving nothing behind. The government seemed not to care or even notice. These vicissitudes were discussed in the media, the growing instability both in employment and ideas of what it meant to be a man. What emerges from that discussion is a sense that when the ability to work was at risk, men feared seeming less masculine, even if the reasons they were unemployed were out of their control, such as the shutdown of a factory. This fear was sometimes encouraged by the media itself, whose subtle (and sometimes not-so-subtle) biases contributed to the pressure men felt to work and succeed.

Chapter 2: Popular Discourses of Employment and Masculinity

This chapter shows the national discourse on the topics of work and masculinity: how the unemployed saw themselves, and how society viewed the unemployed, as well as how the discussion of men themselves was changing. The link between men and work was taken for granted, an assumption that provides a glimpse into why men put such pressure on themselves to work, and took it so personally when work failed them. Through this discussion, we can better understand how the worries about threatened manhood at a time of economic instability were diffused through the media and the public, contributing to the sense that the country's power, and white men's share of it, were on the decline.

Men and Employment

To express the toll it took on the American working man, media discussion of unemployment often took place in the language of masculinity, though certainly unconsciously. This was particularly evident in interviews with unemployed men, but journalists could also be perceived to editorialize in their choice of words, describing the effects of unemployment on "him" rather than "her" or "them" when discussing unemployment in general, even though there were always, throughout the 1970s, more unemployed women than men. Unless expressly described otherwise, the men of these pieces were also white, thus locating the discourse even more firmly in the language of white masculinity.

In a society where "most men [were] brought up to think their jobs [were] so important that it became part of their internal identity," where the type of work one performed was "a key element in defining one's social role, status, and personal identity"

and something that could “give meaning to life,” unemployment meant the loss of more than “just a job” (psychologist Basil Najjar, quoted in *U.S. News and World Report* 1/27/75 54; Hesson 390; Byron 45). Work provided a sense of purpose as well as a community of like-minded men. “Whenever a man is without work, he is without much more than buying power. His whole life is changed” (*U.S. News and World Report* 5/21/79 95). Unemployment meant “the disintegration of your confidence as a man and your ability to protect your family from economic disaster,” which was manifested in stress, anxiety, ulcers (Hesson 390).

Who was to blame for being unemployed? In some cases, it was externalized, aimed at the companies for shutting down or the government for not addressing the issue. One unemployed auto worker used his time to keep his skills sharp: “A man’s got to keep his hands in tune, his mind alert. You can’t let them slowly kill you and let your family go naked. Not this man” (quoted in Byron 46). The “them” in this instance could refer to the company that laid him off, the government that refused to help, or simply the amorphous worry that threatened a working-class father who could not support his family. And even knowing the external factors, being unemployed could also feel like a personal failing. As psychiatrist Dr. Alvin Poussaint noted, “[u]nemployment and low wages affect [men’s] lives with their loved ones and family and even though unemployment is society’s fault, these men often blame themselves. This is of particular significance in the lives of black men who have suffered so much unemployment and have so much concern for their manhood” (quoted in *Ebony* 8/72 100).

The pain of losing one’s job affected all classes, though the language differed somewhat; the “plight” and “agony” of white-collar workers – the “psychological strain,”

claimed *Time*, "is hardest on middle-aged, upper-middle-income executives, who felt wedded to their companies and drew strong creative satisfactions from their jobs" (*Time* 3/17/75 22)[6] – was contrasted with the "lowdown blues" of blue-collar workers in the automobile and steel industries (*U.S. News and World Report* 1/27/75; *Time* 10/5/70; *Time* 11/9/70), whose identity was no less tied to their place of employment, which often included a family history of association with a particular company. While blue-collar work was in general much more volatile than white-collar, going through cyclical ups and downs throughout the year, white-collar work was experiencing its first great increase in instability since the postwar boom took off, and many workers were laid off for the first time:

> [T]he disappearance of engineering jobs in 1969-70 caused such severe emotional disorganization among the engineers laid off [because] they had never expected that professionals like themselves could ever be thrown into the industrial job market in that way – i.e., that their skills might ever be unneeded. (Sennett and Cobb 227n)

But white-collar workers had assets many blue-collar workers did not. In a 1972 piece in *Esquire*, Peter Swerdloff, who had recently been laid off from *Time* magazine, wrote that though many of his well-educated friends had been unexpectedly let go, "a certain gaiety prevail[ed] among the victims. Young people with a lifetime of busy success behind them have discovered that slothfulness can be fun" (Swerdloff 66), which, while nice for them, could not be said of all those unemployed.

[6] Though race and gender are unspecified, I assume the author of the piece was referring to white men, as the percentage of "middle-aged, upper-middle-income executives" in 1975 who were not white men was extremely small. Indeed, that this was unmentioned helps to illuminate the unspoken assumptions present in news journalism.

Working Women

Beyond the economy, another large force worked to change the status quo. By the 1970s, the women's liberation movement, or "women's lib," had helped to push through several legal measures that worked to combat sex discrimination.[7] The entry of working wives into the work force led to a rethinking of established norms, especially among working-class and middle-class men and women, though the working class proved more fruitful as a subject of sociological study during the decade, as in *The Hidden Injuries of Class* (1972) by Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb, and *Worlds of Pain* (1976) by Lillian Rubin, both of which were preceded in their study of the working class at home by Mirra Komarovsky's *Blue-Collar Marriage* (1962). The 1970s studies each observed a strain in working-class families between husbands who had never wanted their wives to work and the wives who often tended to enjoy working outside of the home, but there also remained a strong sense for both men and women that men were supposed to work, and those who failed were failures as men, not living up to their part of the bargain.

In some cases, wives were able to make as much or more as their husbands, and the phenomenon of the "househusband" appeared in the mainstream. Though households that were principally or solely supported by a working woman were always a small minority of working couples – in 1968, only 2% of wives supplied 75% or more of their family's income, and that number never exceeded 5% in the 1970s (Waldman 16; Rones and Leon 11) – the idea of men staying home while their wives worked gained some traction. Articles discussing the matter appeared in *Time*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, and *Businessweek*, among others, in different tones but all sharing a certain puzzled

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[7] Specifically, the Equal Pay Act of 1963, Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Title IX of the 1972 Education Act, and Executive Orders 11246 and 11375, which established a policy of "affirmative action" in hiring for federally-funded contracts.

fascination by the idea. "The husband willing not to just help at home but instead to liberate his wife totally from the kitchen remains a rare species," noted *Time* (*Time* 2/18/74 76), while *Ladies' Home Journal*, not pulling its punches, commented that "[i]n our present society, such an arrangement is called 'role reversal' – except when it's called 'weird' or 'abnormal'" (Pogrebin 30). The authors of a piece in *Intellect* wondered whether the "liberated husband" was "father – or babysitter?" and the fathers interviewed did not seem sure, either (Hillman, Raskin and Orloff-Kaplan 462-465).

Men stayed home – or "copped out," as *Businessweek* put it (*Businessweek* 11/14/77) – for a number of reasons, though about half were receiving disability benefits and undoubtedly included a large percentage of Vietnam veterans who had been wounded, making *Businessweek*'s use of the term "cop out," as in to "shirk" or "evade," unnecessarily harsh. The sense that to not work was unmanly could be particularly unfair to those injured in Vietnam, who appeared to receive little respect for their sacrifice. Almost two-thirds of men aged 25 to 34 who stayed home had working wives, and some did so to take care of their children, but never very many. In 1979, in a survey of the unemployed, of those who "did not want a job now," less than 2% of men listed "keeping house" as their reason for not wanting to work, while 49% listed retirement, the largest proportion of men in this group. Of those who wanted a job but were not looking, 2.6% listed "home responsibilities" as their reason for not looking for work, while about 65% listed either "school attendance" or "illness/disability" (Leon and Rones 9), which again likely included veterans.

Younger men were more able to adapt to the shift in norms that would let men give up their provider role in order to take on the more "feminine" role of child-raising,

but they were still fairly anomalous. Articles that discussed this rare breed usually did so in terms of a group interview, one featuring newsman Ted Koppel, who stayed home with his children while his wife went to law school. The tone of these men was proud but somewhat defensive: “The fact is,” one said, “[my wife] makes more than I ever did when I worked full time – and I have a loving family. I don’t need to make money to feel like a man.” Another, a father of eleven whose wife was a highly ranked state government official, declared, “I keep this house together. If eleven children isn’t a career, what is?” (quoted in Pogrebin 34) These men were in the unfamiliar position of having to defend staying at home. One hoped this would prevent his young son from developing the “machismo hang-ups that afflict many men” (*Time* 2/18/74 76).

Though women generally moved into work in a few specific industries – domestic service, teaching, clerical work, nursing, and retail sales (Waldman 12) – they also spread into almost every other job listed in the Census. This was especially true over the course of the 1970s as the field of teaching became saturated. Teachers had been in high demand in the postwar baby boom, but as the birth rate declined, so did demand for people to teach them. This, along with increased demand for female workers in fields where women were poorly represented as a result of the presidential Executive Orders requiring that “affirmative action” be taken to hire more women and minorities, contributed to a diffusion of women into a broader variety of jobs, though while their proportional representation increased, the numbers of actual female employees in many non-traditional fields remained low.

In some cases, men moved into “women’s” work as women moved into “men’s,” as seen in a study discussed in “Pink-Collar Men and Blue-Collar Women” (*Psychology*

Today, 1979). The sample of fifty workers who worked at a company that "actively promote[d] 'sex atypical' job assignments for people who want[ed] them" (Asher 31) was happier in their current work – men doing clerical jobs, women in manual jobs – than in otherwise "traditional" fields, as their jobs better fit their interests and skills than sex-stereotyped work would have, and the decision to work in an atypical job added an extra pressure to perform well. The interesting difference came in how these workers wanted to be viewed by their coworkers; the blue-collar women wanted to be thought of "as good as" the men, while the "pink-collar" men wanted to be seen as "better than" the women with whom they worked. "Several [men] found it unthinkable that they might fail at a job that women could do" (Asher 32), while their female officemates "wondered why any man would choose such work," a sign of how poorly esteemed such "women's work" was judged by men as well as by the women who did it themselves. The more typically employed pink- or blue-collar workers were initially mistrustful of the new additions but came to find that having them around made for a more interesting work environment.

Some women moved up the job ladder into management, which created a new set of issues. In the October 1974 issue of the *Saturday Evening Post*, one female executive, a company president, made a series of observations in the provocatively titled article, "Why Men Fear Women in Business." Where the world of work had been a men-only dominion, "Uncle Sam[,] traitor to his sex, has ordered that the hunt be opened to women, that there be equal opportunity, that the Man's World hang out both 'his' and 'her' signs" (Schoonover 48). Women executives, she explained, somewhat tongue-in-cheek, were seen as too emotional, too susceptible to sexual tension, wanting to be men.

Men, for their part, were unused to seeing women in positions of power other than their mothers, and they feared what changes could mean to their position in society.

However, though female executives were still rare and had to continually reassert their roles to outsiders, the men who worked under them seemed to adjust fairly well. "Becoming noticeable in many firms is a reduction of the bitterness displayed by some male executives who had perceived women as 'outsiders' usurping their role in management" (*U.S. News and World Report* 12/8/75 55; also, Kirkendall 158). One career consultant even thought women had a better shot at getting ahead in business than men, especially as affirmative action laws took hold (*U.S. News and World Report* 12/8/75 59). But in general, women were advised that in order to move ahead in business, without the male "old-boy" networks of which to take advantage, they had to work harder than their male counterparts. Those that got to a position of power were few, but could prove to their subordinates that they had earned it.

A 1977 *Ladies' Home Journal* article asked, "What happens when the 'man at the top' is a woman?" Interviews with several women executives, including the highest ranked woman at the *New York Times*, a vice president for a department store chain, and a president of an electrical contracting firm, concluded that if a woman "carried real power, then both male and female subordinates respond[ed] with respect and productivity," in the words of sociologist Rosabeth Moss Kanter (quoted in Pogrebin 24). But women were still not always able to move up past the level they had worked to reach, and had to work around assumptions to appear independent, such as never asking an assistant to bring them coffee. Interestingly, the only woman interviewed who worked in a blue-collar industry, the electrical contracting firm, was also the only one to say she

sometimes had to “play to the male ego” to achieve results. “If I have a job to get done, I might have to turn on the charm and tell the guys how much I need them. When they feel like my protectors, they feel better about putting out” (Pogrebin 38). Work could go smoother if the president of the company pretended she was not in charge and appealed to her more traditionally-minded employees in a manner with which they were more comfortable.

These articles show that in the media, the subject of work was discussed from a variety of perspectives. Work was defined in terms of men, in many ways; men were expected to work, and thus any aberration was noteworthy and due for some judgment, even if the cause of not working was a war injury. Women at work, on the other hand, were still in many ways a new phenomenon, so they were discussed in more exploratory, if occasionally patronizing, tones.

Attitudes about class emerged as well through difference in tone, and there sometimes appeared a subtle suggestion that white-collar employment, as it was labeled more mentally strenuous than blue-collar, engendered a stronger personal connection to the work. However, Swerdloff’s essay about the young, well-educated unemployed seemed almost facile about the topic, while the words of blue-collar men without work showed a greater respect for the action of work and the need to do it. This distinction supports the separation that emerged between upper-middle-class and working-class white voters as seen in the last chapter. Unemployment, or “dropping out” while the wife worked, was for those who could afford it an opportunity to explore different jobs, or

take care of the children, or, in the case of men's liberation in the next chapter, discuss one's problems with being a man. But there were many who could not afford to support a family on unemployment benefits or one salary, and if they were ever home while their wives worked, it was because they had been laid off.

However, what both groups of men had in common, as the decade continued and as the next part will show, was a growing feeling of having to fend off some perceived threat to masculinity. The following section examines how the masculinity of these employed or unemployed men was disseminated in the media, a much more diffuse and complicated subject than the statistics of employment, but tracing a similar sense of unease.

A 'New' Masculinity?

The changes in established norms suggested by the women's movement and its men's liberation offshoot, discussed in the next chapter, proved unsettling and strange for most journalists. In a 1972 *Reader's Digest* interview with sociologist and early proponent of sex education Lester Kirkendall, James Lincoln Collier asked, "Are men really men anymore? … Is there a 'new masculinity,' a new way for men to act, feel and think about themselves?" (Kirkendall 158) Kirkendall thought yes, that new ideals would allow men to do all the things they felt would make them appear unmanly, such as expressing tenderness and affection, letting their wives make decisions without appearing hen-pecked, and allowing women more of the lead in bed. Though this article came out in favor, overall, of the new developments, the initial question is jarring – if men act differently than they are expected to, *are they still men*?

Collier also investigated the origin of the American masculine ideal. Kirkendall connected it to “a man’s idea of his authority” (Kirkendall 155), originally located among the early pioneers of the West, who were in an environment where men had to be hard and stoic to survive and protect their family. This interpretation overlooks the fact that, just as often, women had to survive and protect their family as well, and that it was only in popular representation – such as dime novels or, later, movies – that men were shown as the sole actors in the pioneer family, while the wives and children appeared more as reactors. The fictionalized frontier “seemed to write large the differences that seemed apparent even in more normal life between men and women” (Stearns 52), regardless of whether those differences were as actual as they were apparent.

A more common view, however, as mentioned earlier, placed modern masculinity as originating in the period of industrialization and separation between work and home. A 1978 article in *Newsweek*, “How Men Are Changing,” asserted that industrialization gave men a “lonely new authority as breadwinners in the harsh world of factories and foundries” (Gelman, Huck and Camp 53), in that the loss of authority at work was made up for with an increase in authority at home, guaranteed by the financial transaction of family support. Similarly, in “Women’s Fib,” Marvin Harris of *Natural History* suggested that in industrial societies, subordination of women was the benefit to men who were subordinate to other men in war and work (Harris 22). The authors of the *Newsweek* piece claimed that the 1960s marked the first occasion of challenge to male sovereignty, though men of previous generations who witnessed the suffrage movement might have disagreed with that statement.

One common theme was the possibility of androgyny as a solution to the sex roles problem, the popularity of which indicated that it apparently “met a widely-felt need for an image of change in sexual character” (Carrigan, Connell and Lee 567). Confusion over what was now right or wrong to do in relating to the opposite sex led to a welcoming of any alternative that seemed to offer a clear set of rules. Though proponents of the idea seemed mostly to suggest it as an unlikely but possibly effective solution, encouraged by the popularity of epicene glam rocker David Bowie, those opposed took it very seriously, as another sign that the liberation movement was proposing nothing less than the end of western civilization. Androgyny, in this case, did not mean indeterminate or mixed gender so much as “unisexualism,” as John Nichols put it, such as giving little boys dolls as well as trucks, or establishing public bathrooms that either gender could use. The thought behind it was that if roles are not innate but were in fact outwardly imposed, then changing the environment would change the way the role was learned (Nichols 58-59). Marc Feigen Fasteau in *Psychology Today* suggested that men and women were not as different as people seemed to think, and that perhaps androgyny would be an improvement, a thought similar to that expressed by Robert A. Fein in “Men and Young Children” (*Men and Masculinity*, 1974).

I have seen no evidence that the discussion of androgyny or unisexualism was ever seriously intended to accomplish more than, for instance, encourage boys to learn how to cook. But in opposing it, those who did so brought a measure of legitimacy to the issue, perhaps more than it might have had otherwise. In 1974, a fundamentalist Baptist minister in Connecticut vigorously opposed having boys in seventh grade take classes in home economics because he feared it would make them gay, or at the very least disrupt

the purity of traditional gender roles. Said the minister, “Our society has been built upon the sanctity of the home. If they destroy that they’ll destroy America” (Rice 65). George Gilder, another big adversary of the incipient androgyny revolution, also opposed it on the basis of tradition, fearing that the natural sex roles humans had lived with for so long would be utterly destroyed by coeducation or women and men earning the same amount for doing the same work, much less androgyny. Though some welcomed Gilder’s ideas, to some degree, as a counter to the “bombardment” of women’s lib and “the whole current *Playboy*-gay activist-*Joy of Sex* copulatory manual ethic of sexual hedonism,” his worries about androgyny did not seem warranted, and indeed, seemed to be contradicted by his own thesis: “If our lives are so completely biologically determined by sex differentiation, as Gilder makes out, then worries about a coming androgynous society are groundless; it simply won’t happen” (Fremont-Smith 79).

Not everyone took the issue of unsteady masculinity so seriously. John Mariani of *New York*, writing in the magazine’s tongue-in-cheek tone, suggested that the “new macho” should be called “Neo-macho, because such a term sounds slightly more effete” (Mariani 41). The article goes on to describe how a man in a bar who declaimed the “old macho” ways of just trying to get women to sleep with him was, by doing so, successful in getting his female listeners to want to sleep with him. “By repudiating the old macho, the first man had made himself the hero of all the women present. What could be more macho? . . . [M]acho has changed since the good old days, when it meant something like putting out a cigarette in your hand, to the new days, when it is more likely to mean emptying an ashtray;” that is, from uncomplaining toughness to unimposing politeness. The author compares the old macho to the new, with contrasts like Humphrey Bogart

(old) and Woody Allen (new); Bela Lugosi's Frankenstein's monster (old) and Peter Boyle's monster in the comedy "Young Frankenstein" (1974) (new). The article's humorous tone allowed the author to poke fun at the "new macho" while also subtly congratulating these "new men" on knowing how to play the situation to their advantage.

Some male journalists made their opinion clear, with titles such as "The Guilty Sex: How American Men Became Irrelevant," or "Women's Fib." "The Guilty Sex," a 1975 essay by Stephen Koch in *Esquire*, displays a sort of irritated resignation about women's lib. He asserts that men were beginning to change before women began accusing them of villainy, that they had already rejected the "jock" norms with which they were raised, the idea that being a father meant ignoring your children unless they needed disciplining. The attractive formula of "us versus them" had originally meant the "sons of the counterculture" versus "those jocks and sons of jocks whom every campus protest instinctively understood to be the Enemy" (Koch 53). The women's movement adopted and adapted that language, and made men into "Them," guilty just by being men; but what of the men who also felt "mutilated, baffled and enraged by plenty of the prevalent middle-class notions of manhood[?] It is indeed difficult to either surrender or fulfill the desire to be recognized, loved and admired as a man; difficult to surrender or fulfill the absurd sexualized fantasy of wisdom, self-confidence, attractiveness, focus of identity, fulsomeness of love, totality of competence, personal power and success one is supposed to want. … I have sometimes confused and betrayed myself trying to 'be a man,' and likewise trying not to be" (Koch 56).

The privileges of white maleness were seductive, yet confining, the demands sometimes impossible to achieve. Koch was writing during the spread of men's

liberation, and the questions he raised were similar to many of those discussed in consciousness-raising groups in some parts of the U.S., generally by well-educated, well-off white men. Being a man, was supposed to be the end result of embodying a set of requirements, and in exchange for doing so, one would be "recognized, loved, and admired as a man," as Koch put it. But what if one did not want to perform part or all of those requirements? What if one lost a job or was in a job that would not lead to "success"? Though the writings of men's liberation, examined in the next chapter, were limited in scope and intended audience, they did bring these questions into the mainstream discussion, as seen above. As an attempt to work on the problems of the patriarchy and become more comfortable with working women and their own emotions, men's liberation was in some ways laudable. But over time, Chapter Three will show that the movement began to evolve away from a more pro-feminist stance into one that had to fend off perceived threats to the masculinity men's libbers were supposedly trying to moderate themselves. As Koch asks, what *of* the men who also felt "mutilated, baffled and enraged by plenty of the prevalent middle-class notions of manhood"? Men's lib became not a movement to help men grow, but instead an advocate for *men's* rights, specifically white men. This paralleled the way working-class men were moving away from liberal politics, in an overarching trend of defending traditional white masculinity against economic, social, and political threat.

Chapter 3: Men's Liberation

Men's liberation was one attempt by white men to counter the questions to masculinity inherent in the social and economic changes of the decade. Though it was not particularly successful, its evolution from a liberal to more conservative and more diverse movement offers an interesting example of the shift in men's thinking over the 1970s. The benefits of the patriarchal system especially benefited these upper-middle and middle-class men, so there was little to gain from actively trying to change it, which the working-class men who became more politically conservative could not say. But both groups' shift to conservative thinking was to indicate that they were not responsible for every other social group's problems while overlooking their many real advantages, a neat trick of misdirection men's lib figured out early. In addition, the works of men's liberation also offer an interesting look at the beginnings of men's studies, the field that inspired this paper.

As one of the issues that affected most men was the need to support their family, a common theme among men's lib writers was work, both the compulsion to do so and the demands of the job itself. The discussion of work, at least among these usually upper-middle-class men, sheds a useful light on how these writers conceptualized the historical and current pressure on men to be breadwinners. However, one reason men's lib was not able to instigate national change the way the feminist movement did is that the writers were, without wanting to admit to it, or perhaps even able to realize it, well served by the system they were criticizing. Their ability to collect graduate degrees and spend time thinking and writing about the state of "men" kept them largely unconnected from the rest of the country, including white men in the working class. Unlike the larger and more

politically effective feminist and gay rights movements, men's lib and its works were never in a position to sincerely affect the mainstream state of affairs.[8] The failure of men's lib to understand or even consider the positions or needs of men out of its restricted purview – including lower-class white men, as well as gay men, minorities, or men of non-Western cultures – corresponds to some extent with the failure of the more sensitive masculine model, socially and politically.

However, as the predecessor of today's men's studies scholarship, the genre of men's lib is still critically important. Though their writing style could be overblown, the discussion of which they were a part were an influential aspect of 1970s culture, for those who found legitimation of their own issues as well as those who found the whole debate silly. This chapter will explore the history of the movement and the discussion within the genre on the subject of work.

The Movement

In reaction to the women's, gay rights, and civil rights social movements that criticized the white, heterosexual patriarchy, some, though by no means all or even most, straight white men realized that even though they were ostensibly benefited by the patriarchy, they were also susceptible to that social pressure, and established the men's liberation movement to work on that problem. So already the criticism by women and gay men about the domination and subordination inherent in male-female relationships could be subsumed into one where men were conflicted within themselves, a subtle distraction from the real problems of patriarchy. This could be cured by a change in

[8] Note Carrigan, Connell, and Lee, what men's lib *did* do, "very successfully, [was] produce publicists." (Carrigan, Connell and Lee 575).

thinking as opposed to changes in the power dynamic, noted Carrigan, Connell and Lee, thus eliminating the need to give up any male authority to women.

In the 1960s, the initial shots across the bow of sex role theory – the idea that men and women were biologically predisposed to fit within the family relationship in socially acceptable patterns, first discussed in the 1940s by social scientists (Carrigan, Connell and Lee 554-556) – were by the sons of middle-class businessmen who rejected the masculine values with which they had been raised: "either shouting, or that soul-crushing silence most deeply installed in the soul of any red-blooded American boy: Dad mute behind his newspaper" (Koch 54). The "weakly fathered and fatherless sons of the counterculture" (Koch 53) came out against the consumerist society in which they grew up, and to which they were expected to contribute, by abandoning their grey flannel suits in favor of jeans and crochet.

But over the course of the decade, these activists found themselves on the receiving end of the protest. In the late 1960s, the civil rights movement moved into a more nationalist, exclusionary phase; later, the feminist and gay rights movements appropriated the language and means of protest these white, middle-class men had been using. Their momentum was also halted by the winding down of the draft and the war in general in 1972 and 1973, removing one of the bigger targets of the countercultural dissent. "Having spent most, if not all, of their adult lives in social criticism and confrontation, young, white-male activists had believed they were the vanguard of a social justice movement that would transform society. Now suddenly they found themselves forced to the sidelines, with social ferment spinning off in new directions" (Gambill 1).

As white, middle-class young men had questioned the social norm that expected them to work the same impersonal, unsatisfying job their often-absent father had worked, so now did white, middle-class young women question their mandatory role in the home. Women's liberation condemned the social, family, and governmental patriarchy, a system in which men dominate and women are largely excluded or subordinate. The sexual revolution, aided by the spread of abortion and the creation of the birth control pill, made women as free to initiate sexual relationships as men and to demand they be brought to orgasm, creating anxiety for those men who had never had to worry about such a thing before. Another attack on established ideas of manhood came from gay rights activists, whose movement gained direction and momentum following the Stonewall Inn riots in 1969.

These critiques, especially from the feminists, sparked further discussion among some white men, partly as a way to deflect the barrage of criticism. Though the gay rights movement offered probably the most directed and immediate criticism of straight masculinity, most of the writing on straight men's issues ranged "between generally ignoring homosexuals and homosexuality, and totally ignoring them" (Carrigan, Connell and Lee 577). Men who were most open to exploring their own sex role preconceptions were initially only to be found in liberal, well-educated, economically comfortable enclaves like Berkeley and San Francisco, CA, and New York City, but as coverage of the issue spread, through mainstream news outlets and new publications devoted to the cause, "men's liberation," or men's lib, became labeled a movement of its own. Between 1971 and 1980, thirty-eight English-language non-fiction books about men, the male role,

and masculinity were published, and a genre was established (Carrigan, Connell and Lee 567).

Men's lib meant "freedom from destructive competition, from the fear of being called effeminate, from the terror of sexual failure, from the nervousness that inhibits male friendship – from all the cultural straitjackets and mental stereotypes that warp men's attitudes and behavior" (Nichols, back cover). Proponents also recommended a more active role in fatherhood. Men's lib was spread through consciousness-raising (CR) groups in which men got together in small groups to discuss the pressures they felt as men, with the hopes of encouraging them all to try to change the behaviors that made them unhappy. The CR groups became networked across the country, and more than two dozen "men's centers" were established, mostly in the Northeast, upper Midwest, and Pacific Coast (Gambill 5-7). Though its appeal was fairly limited to white, middle-class men, word of the movement and its activities spread through the media, in tones both approving and not.[9]

Though the movement originated out of the women's lib movement, not everyone who eventually prescribed to its beliefs believed in feminism. And at the same time, not every feminist supported their male counterparts. Some women felt the attempt to turn the conversation back to the problems men faced was just another way to "expand sexual conquests and reconstitute the patriarchy" (Gambill 12). Nor were all men's rights activists willing to admit – or even aware of – the possibility that gay men had an equal claim to manhood. The movement was, overall, rarely unified and often at war with itself.

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[9] Indeed, proportionally speaking, it was more covered in the media than the percentage of men involved might otherwise suggest, giving it the appearance of a "media fad" (Nichols 11).

Multiple issues were raised within the movement – would men's libbers also support nuclear disarmament? Oppose capitalism? Protest colonialism around the world? Not everyone felt the need to be so political or even to attempt to change much beyond themselves: in the words of one man, "I don't want to be radical. I don't want to stamp out sexism now. I just want to get my head on straight about men and women" (Gambill 14). The political radicals within the movement split off in criticism of the men's rights advocates' "complacency and egocentricity" (Carrigan, Connell and Lee 574). For the radicals, the focus was fighting sexism rather than addressing personal issues.

Two main schools of thought emerged in the movement: men who supported women's lib, and men who supported men's rights. Both used the language of sex roles to argue that men were forced into competition with each other and unable to express themselves, made to deny their "authentic selves" (Lynne Segal, quoted in New 737). "But where 'anti-sexist' men emphasized men's agency in the oppression of women, and attempted to expose and resist prescriptive sex roles in order to undermine sexism, 'men's rights' activists were largely concerned with undoing the damage sex roles did to men" (New 737).[10]

Men's rights, in this case, came in multiple varieties. Conservatives, as part of the larger conservative movement, rejected any attempt to modify gender roles, instead working to defend the "traditional" standards they felt were at risk. Liberal men's rights activists, who first appeared in 1975, supported feminism as well as reducing the burden

[10] New notes that this divergence has carried over into current discussion of "masculinities," Connell's plural, with some, like Connell, rejecting the hegemonic singular masculinity while men's rights proponents reject a "feminized" masculinity in favor of a moderated "natural" sex role. But she concludes that overall, perhaps "masculinity" is just not a concept strong enough to do all the work assigned to it, though she does not suggest an alternative (New 737).

of social pressures on men, though many who supported women's lib felt that women had more power and privilege than they claimed to. It was this feeling of indignation over what they viewed as women's excessive vitriol against men and demands for change that later led many of the liberal men's rights activists to abandon their pro-feminist stance in the 1980s. Men's rights also came to include a father's rights movement, promoted most prominently by the organization known as Free Men, Incorporated – later renamed the National Coalition of Free Men, now the National Coalition for Men – advocating for greater rights for divorced fathers later in the 1970s, and particularly in the 1980s, to counter a perceived bias toward women in family courts. These activists claimed that the strictures of the breadwinner role were responsible for men's less-active role in parenting, but that did not mean women should win custody by default.

The seeds of the more conservative men's rights were present in the formation of men's lib, as many of the leaders of the movement – such as Warren Farrell, discussed further below – were white, upper-middle-class men, who "quietly benefit[ed] from patriarchy without being militant in its defense" (Connell 210). It was not in their economic or social interest to achieve true change of a system that gave them real and concrete advantage over almost every other demographic group in the country, and indeed, the constant defense of women's complaints eventually turned into a sense that it was time for women (and gay men) to stop complaining and realize that the real victims here were white, straight, middle-class men. If sex roles were so oppressive, the reactionary thinking went, then men were just as oppressed as women.

The Genre

Though articles on the male sex role started to appear in the 1940s, books on the subject – what are referred to somewhat mockingly as "Books About Men" (Carrigan, Connell and Lee 565, 599; Connell 24) – were published in some abundance by the mid-1970s. Books discussed the issue of men from a variety of outlooks, some in favor of rethinking sex roles and some attempting to warn of the calamities that would befall the country should sex roles change in the slightest. Many writers were professors, often of sociology. Some were therapists or psychiatrists; at least one (Warren Farrell) was a lawyer. Though the authors' styles differed to some extent, their subjects all tended to be white, married, straight men, generally of the middle- or upper-middle-class. That fit, as most of the authors tended to be white, straight, middle-class men themselves (though marriage status was not always obvious). Like later authors of books about masculinity, they often inserted themselves into their narratives, occasionally writing specifically about themselves and their experiences as (white, straight, middle-class) men in the 1970s.

As a common thread in the life experience of almost all men, work was a common theme in these Books About Men. The following is a look at a sample of books published from during the period, to explore how these writers thought about work within the context of the male sex role.

One of the first books to be published was *The Male in Crisis* by Karl Bednarik, translated from the German by Helen Sebba and published in the U.S. in 1970. His thesis, that men had created the tools of their current technological imprisonment, noted that the crisis included the realm of "eros," relationships between men and women, because the

birth control pill had made women too aggressive, which went against the traditional male role he believed to be true.

Regarding work, he cited the development in human evolution of newer and better tools for every task, and bureaucratization as the inevitable result of an advanced technocratic society. "Since the manual and industrial trades have always been a masculine domain, the masculine way of life is obviously the first to be affected by these changes" (Bednarik 143), in that although the work is made easier through technological advance, the connection to work is made much more tenuous. He cites Stalin, who noted that the working man becomes "a little cog in the machine, insignificant, anonymous, a bit of human fuel for the supermachine of industrial culture, just as the soldier of today is merely cannon fodder for the machinery of war" (paraphrased in Bednarik 144). White-collar workers in particular, which he accurately described as "the only social group that is still growing" (Bednarik 146), were especially unconnected from work, as much cogs in the system as the lower-status laborer but with less agency to rebel against the bureaucracy because they were more fully subjugated to it. The "white-collar" class was indeed an "artificially produced false consciousness … to keep all lower-grade employees starting with the office boy solidly lined up with the top bureaucrats," despite their actual inability to break into that upper echelon of the bureaucracy (Bednarik 154).

Bednarik claims the most "crucial sphere of male existence, the sphere of authority," was the source of man's greatest problem in the technocratic society (Bednarik 173). His authority was undermined by, among other things, his inability to express aggression naturally (as proscribed by the bureaucratization of work and war). The expanding federally-provided safety net injured his ability to fully act as father to his

children, as he was "eclipsed as a father by the institutions of the 'father state,'" which provided what he was previously responsible for (Bednarik 182). Only by reclaiming his authority can man "best resist the feminizing and infantilizing tendencies of the time" (Bednarik 188), though he had no specific recommendations on that front. Bednarik's Eurocentric tract was an early entry in the field of books about men but offered limited advice, acting instead as a list of complaints about the many crises of contemporary men.

The best known author and leader of the American men's lib movement was Warren Farrell, whose book, *The Liberated Man* (1974) was about his work as a leader of consciousness-raising groups and his thoughts about men. Farrell, who served three terms on the board of directors of the National Organization for Women and the head of its short-lived men's group, was often cited in the media as a spokesman for the men's movement. *The Liberated Man*, which went through five printings in 1975 (Gambill 6), attempts to establish a new vocabulary: "attaché" was to replace "husband" or "wife" as a unisex term meaning "a person with whom one has a deep emotional attachment" (Farrell xxxi). Instead of he/his/him and she/her/her, he proposed to use instead "te/tes/tir" (Farrell xxxi). Though these terms did not catch on, his unabashed feminism is further obvious in his discussion of the restrictions placed on women at work, in childcare, and in sexual relations with men. His fondness for surprisingly graphic imagery is evident in his descriptions of cynicism as "a man's emotional diarrhea," as "[r]eal emotions are stuck in his system" like emotional "constipation" (Farrell 71). Success at work is parallel to sexual success: "A man's need for an upwardly mobile penis is only outpaced by the pressure to be upwardly mobile in his career" (Farrell 67).

Farrell suggests that women's lib, by encouraging women to work, can help men in a number of work-related ways. A couple that is less reliant on one salary gives the husband more freedom to choose a job he likes, and keeps the wife from pressuring her husband to increase his job status. Benefits of women working were to be seen in the increased demand for cars, vacations, women's business apparel, and similar industries. Women's lib also "frees a man from being the sole source of his attaché's happiness" as well as "allow[s] a man more autonomy in his personal life" (Farrell 187), win-win for all. Overcoming the pressure to compete at work is "not to return to mediocrity, it is to gain the freedom to escape mediocrity" (Farrell 63); men's lib meant giving men the freedom "to change places with women, or switch jobs or even just resist on their jobs without risking the entire family income" (Farrell 65). Farrell's memoir-like discussion of his own involvement and thoughts about feminism and men are easy enough to digest but offer little true thoughtfulness.

Also published in 1974 was *Men and Masculinity*, an anthology of writings about men edited by Joseph Pleck and Jack Sawyer. Pleck was notable for having built an academic career on the male sex role, though Carrigan, Connell and Lee observe that "the fundamental intellectual incoherence of [the genre's] general approach to masculinity is strikingly illustrated in his work" (Carrigan, Connell and Lee 572), in that his claims could vary depending on the audience and he did little sociological research to back up his work. The pieces featured in *Men and Masculinity* were drawn from several sources, including *Brother: A Forum for Men Against Sexism*, a magazine about men's issues published and originally circulated in the Bay Area (CA), but also the *Harvard Business Review*. As a result, the arguments about men at work varied in tone and approach, from

a medical explanation of the shorter male life-span due in part to the stress of working so hard for so long in "Some Lethal Aspects of the Male Role" by Sidney M. Jourard, to the pressures felt to succeed in "Measuring Masculinity by the Size of a Paycheck" by Robert E. Gould, M.D.

As the editors noted, "[w]hether for money, prestige, or power" – but not, apparently, for family, an interesting omission – "we men work as hard as we do because we have learned that is what we are supposed to do – and learned it so gradually, so subtly, and so long ago that we do not remember we once did not need to work just to feel worthwhile" (Pleck and Sawyer 95). Gould observed that when masculinity was measured "by the size of a paycheck," it was a precarious standard:

> The situation becomes even more complicated when "the head of the house" is competing against his wife's paycheck as well as his own expectations. Recently, economic realities have made the two-paycheck family respectable. This is tolerable to Jack as long as he can provide for his family and Jill earns only enough to make all the "little extras" possible. … [But] if she can make *real money*, she is co-opting the man's passport to masculinity (thus the stereotype of the successful woman being too masculine, too competitive, too unfeminine), and he is effectively castrated. (Emphasis his, Gould in Pleck and Sawyer 98)

Gould felt that perhaps masculinity should be reconfigured to mean the ability to give and receive love rather than make money, an attitude that would not be shared by the young executives and their wives interviewed by Fernando Bartolomé for the *Harvard Business Review*, all of whom were white Anglo-Saxon Protestants (except for a few couples of Irish descent). One executive noted that "[t]he ones who concentrate more on communicating with their wives and families are those who have realized that they aren't going to make it and therefore they have changed their focus of attention" (quoted in Pleck and Sawyer 103). Achieving was an easier measure of masculine success than

feelings or family relationships, which was a different kind of pressure than that to support a family but one that could be equally if not more demanding. This is also in a way an explanation and justification of bad parenting: to be a good father is to be a failure. The sociological approach of the essays in *Men and Masculinity* makes their conclusions somewhat more reliable than those of other authors.

Men's Liberation, by Jack Nichols (1975), on the other hand, was an idiosyncratic examination of the many ways men were "shackled" by personal, romantic, and social demands, with the aim of providing "visionary alternatives for future living patterns that each man can freely choose for himself" (Nichols 11-13). Assigning men the single role of provider, "a designation signifying they are beasts of burden," might, he thought, be related to men having a shorter life-span, much as Jourard discussed in *Men and Masculinity* (Pleck and Sawyer 121). Success was based on the number of possessions amassed, and thus by increasing the salary so that more possessions could be acquired, as Gould discussed in *Men and Masculinity*. "What this means for today's beleaguered male is that he may feel greater exhilarations if he does not become demented with the mania of owning things" (Nichols 131). Being a father has become reduced to "financial functionary" (Nichols 252). Similar to Farrell, Pleck, and other writers, but not to the above-mentioned young executives, Nichols felt that greater happiness and true equality would be achieved through closer relationships with one's children, not success at work.

Another anthology discussing the same topics (with some of the same essays) as *Men and Masculinity* was *The Forty-Nine Percent Majority*, edited by Deborah David and Robert Brannon (1976). *The Forty-Nine Percent Majority*, however, unlike *Men and Masculinity*, was broader in scope as well as chronological range, and included short

stories like James Thurber's "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" and poems like Rudyard Kipling's "If," as examples of masculinity in other genres. Discussion of work included a 1966 essay by Myron Benton, "The Breadwinner," in which he cited a contemporary study in which almost two-thirds of a sample of women stated their husbands' primary role was that of breadwinner, followed by father, and "husband, a poor third" (Brenton in David and Brannon 92). Brenton notes that modern men, likely employed by someone else, were alienated from the work itself and focused instead of the "fruits" of the work: pay, prestige, status, possessions, and support of their families (David and Brannon 94). With masculinity so closely tied to work, the job choice was of greater consequence and constriction, either by class status or perceived masculine qualities. Status within the job was also hazardous, susceptible to erosion by technological advance. "[B]y depending so heavily on his breadwinning role to validate his sense of himself as a man, instead of also letting his roles as husband, father, and citizen of the community count as validating sources, the American male treads on psychically dangerous ground. It's always dangerous to put all of one's psychic eggs into one basket" (Brenton in David and Brannon 93).

Also in that collection was Arthur B. Shostak's 1969 essay, "Blue-Collar Work." Blue-collar men, who "begin and end the workday with the knowledge that their employ could hardly have less status," are more tied to the work itself as confirmation of manliness in some ways than middle-class men, particularly in skilled craft work (Shostak in David and Brannon 98). This carries its own precariousness in less skilled work with the increased simplification of jobs and the subsequent entry of women and younger men into the workforce. As Sennett and Cobb would later find, Shostak noted

that many blue-collar fathers, though disparaging of white-collar "pencil pushers," would push their own sons to a more white-collar job than following the "'old man' into the plant. . . . One wonders at what price to family solidarity and father-son relations comes the presence of the father as a negative reference model, a man who insists his career is not to be emulated, but is to be avoided?" (David and Brannon 104)

In the opening essay of *The Forty-Nine Percent Majority*, Brannon gives a short history of the male sex role, the discovery of which he dates back only to the discovery of the female sex role first propounded upon by the women's movement starting in the mid-1960s, though in this he is mistaken.[11] As the "fish will be the last to discover the ocean," so it is hard for them to study it, even knowing it is there, as "[i]ts values and assumptions have so infiltrated our minds that we're almost blind to them; only gradually and imperfectly can we distangle them and give them names." Though white men have been the oppressors if not the oppressed, they too are "wounded" by the "cruel demands" of sex roles (David and Brannon 4-5).

R.W. Connell critiques these Books About Men as doing little new research, but instead just assembling "familiar items such as feminist criticisms of men, media images of masculinity, paper-and-pencil tests of attitudes, findings of sex differences and autobiographical anecdotes about sport" (Connell 24). Indeed, Bednarik bases his study of sex roles on observations like homosexuality being a result of "a false orientation at an

[11] Carrigan, Connell and Lee cite as particularly critical the work of sociologist Helen Hacker, who wrote in the late 1950s about the conflicts within men to live up to the expectations of masculinity. Though her conclusions did not all prove true, "most research on masculinity [since hers] has not improved on her analysis," yet she is mentioned by none of the men's issues authors (Carrigan, Connell and Lee 560-561).

early stage of sexual maturation" (Bednarik 81), due to absent fathers and overattentive mothers, an explanation found in other work by men's lib writers (Marc Feigen Fasteau, Farrell), but one that has by now been entirely discredited. But perhaps the true value of these books, as self-indulgent and short-sighted as they often are, is that they provide the basis for the studies that Connell and other masculine studies scholars would later do. Was men's studies an inevitable topic of scholarship? Would men's studies be where it is today if these men had not been the first to talk about external social pressures on men? Though analysis of sex roles had appeared before the 1970s, the personalization of the field was in some ways directly responsible for the personal feelings on the history of masculinity expressed by later scholars such as Kimmel and Rotundo, who were more able than their predecessors to view the field beyond a male/female "us versus them" mentality.

The men's liberation movement as it began in the 1970s did not end particularly well, dissolving into in-fighting and conflicting objectives. Carter, the most influential example of a more sensitive man of the 1970s, was an uninspiring president. By the early 1980s, some feminists started criticizing the "New Man" as one who was "feminized" but not "feminist" (Barbara Ehrenreich, quoted in Gambill 32). Many within the men's movement started turning against feminists, asserting men's own pressures and stresses were as heavy and oppressive as those of women. While men's studies were spreading throughout American campuses, also not without controversy, the original men's lib organizations slowly died out during the 1980s due to lack of direction. Warren Farrell, who had been a symbol of the pro-feminist men's lib movement, shifted entirely to an

anti-feminist position, insisting instead that men were equally as powerless as women and that more attention should be paid to their suffering. But “[a]s this might seem to contradict the facts he had noticed in the early 1970s, Farrell carefully redefined power by shifting from the public world to the inner world of emotion. Men did not feel emotionally in control of their lives, therefore they lacked power” (Connell 208). New quotes an illuminating passage in Susan Faludi’s work on men and feminism in the late 1980s and early 1990s, *Backlash* (1992):

> “Men are hurting more than women – that is, men are, in many ways, actually more powerless than women now.” Warren Farrell pauses to sip from the coffee mug that his female housekeeper has just handed him. In another room his female secretary is busy typing and tidying his files. “The women’s movement has turned out to be not a movement for equality but a movement for women’s maximization of opportunities,” he says. (New 737)

Men’s libbers fragmented, finally unwilling to fully face the privileges that they still maintained and would have to give up in order to fully achieve “liberation,” whatever that term actually meant. This conservative shift was an effort to repel criticism and counter real or perceived unfairness in how white men were treated. Advocacy of men’s rights survives in varying forms like the mythopoetic men’s movement of Robert Bly, locating the key to personal happiness in adhering to ancient gender roles and traditions, or organizations like the National Center for Men, incorporated in 1987, which claims to have “steadfastly put forth a fair and progressive masculist point of view even when that view was unpopular” (The National Center for Men: Our History), working in favor of such issues as men’s reproductive rights. This feeling of defending oneself even when it

is “unpopular” to do so is a continuing effect of the shift to a more conservative viewpoint.

Conclusion

It has been noted recently that there remains a strong sense in current discourse that men are still vulnerable (Malone 12; Peck). The fact that more women attend college than men remains a popular subject of discussion in the media and is analyzed from various angles, as is the ascendance of women to various positions of political, corporate, or social power. Such reiteration can lend itself to a feeling that women overall are gaining power as, more importantly, men are losing it. This, like the economic changes we see today, was a trend that began in the 1970s.

The country changed in the 1970s, never to return to the way things had been before, and in that, as one man said, "one hardly knows if there are more grounds for hope or for despair" (Koch 156). This feeling that white men are oppressed, despite continuing to be the demographic holding the greatest amount of influence socially, economically, and politically, is based on several elements, some of which could be seen in the men's lib movement as well as in working-class male voters' shift rightward. The idea of being called to account for the historical oppression of not just white women but men and women of other races felt unfair and overblown to men who were themselves not in any obvious position of power except at home. And there, too, their roles were threatened by the increase in wives who worked, and who expected greater help in housework from their spouses in exchange for their own financial contributions, not to mention more orgasms. Taking into account social pressure to act tough, not express emotion, impress women, and succeed at work, these men felt that not only were they not in *any* actual position of power, but that they were unable to really be themselves, and therefore, they were just as subject to the demands of others as women claimed to be.

This feeling of being bombarded on all sides occurred alongside a feeling of being let down by the government, and especially the Democratic Party, the traditional home of working-class white men. A thoroughly frustrating Carter administration, which supported labor halfheartedly and ignored the problems of deindustrialization and unemployment, only brought home for many men a feeling that their party had abandoned them in favor of women, minorities, and the young, the very people who claimed white men had too much power. The result of electing a "New Man" like Carter was that it seemed to show that attempting to change the male sex role, at least in terms of political leadership, was a mistake. Manly men were needed to restore America to world dominance and white men to personal dominance. Rather than Carter's talk of personal responsibility, Reagan proclaimed that "we are first; we are the best. … How can we not believe in the greatness of America?" (quoted in Rodgers 25)

When faced with the positive encouragement of Reagan's traditional, religiously-based masculinity, supporting "a systematic reassertion of old-fashioned models of masculinity" (Carrigan, Connell and Lee 599), it was not surprising that the white-male voting bloc became largely Republican for the rest of the century. "Manhood and moral values were both born of the same fundamental belief that Democrats no longer represented the character of the classic man. Only one party seemingly stood up for faith, family, and virtue, a belief system born of God and country, and for a world slowly being chopped away by modernity" (Kuhn 82). Though the 1980s began with what would become a harsh recession, further adding to the spread of deindustrialization and increasing the unemployment rate, there was hope that Reagan – who won in 1980 mostly by not being Carter, but who won an impressive reelection in 1984 on his own

ostensible merit – would be the masculine leader America needed. And he was, just not for the working- and middle-class men and women whose tax share went up as that of big business and the wealthy went down.

The neoliberalization of the American economy sent more jobs overseas and did further damage to union power as the finance industry expanded considerably. As part of a wave of deregulation that had actually begun during Carter's administration, Reagan deregulated the National Labor Relations Board so it was able to attack unions rather than support them, as it had been intended to do (Harvey 51). In crushing the strike of air traffic controllers in 1981 he helped to shift public opinion even further against organized labor. The central focus of the federal government had moved from the proverbial Main Street to the actual Wall Street, and would remain so for the following decades; "[i]n the event of a conflict between Main Street and Wall Street, the latter was to be favored. The real possibility then arises that while Wall Street does well the rest of the U.S. (as well as the rest of the world) does badly. And for several years, particularly during the 1990s, this is exactly what happened" (Harvey 33). Peck observes that this process has continued in the present:

> Over time, the United States has expected less and less of its elite, even as society has oriented itself in a way that is most likely to maximize their income. . . . As America's winners have been separated more starkly from its losers, the idea of compensating the latter out of the pockets of the former has met stiff resistance: that would run afoul of another economic theory, dulling the winners' incentives and squashing their entrepreneurial spirit; some, we are reminded, might even leave the country. And so, in a neat and perhaps unconscious two-step, many elites have pushed policies that benefit them, by touting theoretical gains to society—then ruled out measures that would distribute those gains widely. (Peck 78)

Though Reagan, like his cinematic warrior Rambo, the main character of a hugely

successful action series in the 1980s, was supposed to stand for the revival of the collective national spirit, Reagan's "hard-body" America turned out to be limited to only the hardest of bodies or the richest of bank accounts, white men built like tanks who were willing and able to pour gunpowder in their own arrow wound and light it on fire, or risk losing millions in daily trading on Wall Street. They were entitled to the benefits of American society that they had earned, and "whereas weak men may not be actual enemies, they are nonetheless not entitled to the profits due to those whose strength" – or financial acumen – "insures the survival of the nation as a whole" (Jeffords 52). The resurgent masculinity of the 1980s was, in the end, not meant to apply to all white men, much less all men in general.

Much like the 1970s, unemployment today is high, and many will spend a long time unemployed before finding a new job. The New Deal safety net continues to erode under political and social pressure, collective bargaining is frequently attacked by Republican politicians, and the differences between the very rich and everyone else continue to increase. Men now are no more secure in work and providing than they were almost forty years ago. Though Kimmel originally observed those similarities in the mid-1990s (Kimmel 241), they are still quite true in the twenty-first century.

We are still feeling the effects of the dismantling of the manufacturing sector of the economy that became the norm in the 1970s, both in terms of trade deficits with countries from whom the U.S. buys goods, and a workforce made up mostly of jobs in the services sector, 83% as of 2007 (Lee and Mather 7). During the recession that began

2007 and apparently ended in 2009, though recovery has not been particularly strong, "men lost 71 percent of the jobs that disappeared . . . even as the outlook was sunnier in pink-collar jobs like nursing and teaching, and women for the first time made up more than 50 percent of the workforce" (though she does not differentiate by race, just by gender; Malone 12). Since then, though women still have a lower unemployment rate than men, 8.5% to 9.5%, men have regained 768,000 jobs as women have lost 218,000, often in "pink-collar" fields. A Pew report "shows that retail, education, and health services all hired more men than women during the past few years" (Malone 12).

In a recent article in *The Atlantic*, however, Don Peck disagrees with Malone's belief that men are recovering well (though he does not differentiate by race, either):

> According to the Harvard economist Lawrence Katz, since the mid-1980s, the labor market has been placing a higher premium on creative, analytic, and interpersonal skills, and the wages of men without a college degree have been under particular pressure. . . . During the aughts, construction provided an outlet for the young men who would have gone into manufacturing a generation ago. Men without higher education 'didn't do as badly as you might have expected, on long-run trends, because of the housing bubble.' But it's hard to imagine another such construction boom coming to their rescue. (Peck 65)

Manufacturing has lost about four million jobs since 2001, but manufacturing, construction, transportation and utilities were "more heavily dominated by men in 2009 than they'd been nine years earlier" (Peck 65). Peck attributes this to the growing value placed on computer and interpersonal skills in business, and the divide between those with a college degree and those without; men tend to receive fewer degrees than women, and less training in the skills needed for white-collar work, which sends more of them to blue-collar jobs. But those jobs are disappearing, and men as a group do not seem open to a change in occupation. Peck suggests increasing the use of career-academy programs in

high schools, in part to open boys' minds to work in fields like health care in which they do not show enough interest, given the growth of such "pink-collar" work while blue-collar declines; "these programs might even help weaken the grip of the various stereotypes that seem to be keeping some boys locked into declining parts of the economy" (Peck 76). The constraints of masculinity are no weaker now than they were in the 1970s.

So what really changed? For most people, the changes of the 1970s appeared in smaller events, a series of more immediate questions – should men still hold the door for women? Should a woman still take her husband's name? Was a man still expected to be the sole provider? While the first two questions were a matter of personal opinion (and still are today), the last was where true change became apparent.

By the 1980s, in all families, even the conservative ones, working wives became conventional, due to economic need and increased job opportunity. Until the mid-1970s, mothers of young children were the least likely to work, but by 1987, the pattern of female participation rates by age looked much more like that of men, with a marked increase in work participation between the ages of 25 and 44 (Shank 4). In 1987, 55% of women with children under the age of three worked, while in 1967 that number was less than 25% (Shank 4). For the first time, the participation rates became much more similar for white and nonwhite women. The 1980s also marked the first time that more women became as career-oriented as men, working longer hours (though still fewer than men) and remaining committed to the job held before the children were born, often returning immediately after (Shank 5-6). Though the earnings gap remained as women tended to

work in lower-paying jobs, or were simply paid less for the same job (Mellor 18-19), by the late 1990s, almost 25% of wives in dual-earner marriages made more than their husbands (Winkler 42).

The personal consequences of a series of massive economic and social changes such as those seen during the decade of the 1970s are internalized differently by different people. The urge to recover a threatened sense of authority and power among white men was based on real social, economic, and political changes that worked to benefit others over them. For those who had lost jobs or could not afford to live well even with a wife's salary, being passed over as a group worthy of aid and awareness just for being white seemed thoroughly unfair, though the irony was perhaps unnoticed (and in the men's lib genre, completely overlooked). White men became conservative because it offered them some measure of defense, tools to retain or at least attempt to retain some power that being more liberal, politically or otherwise, did not give them when work was no longer the fortification it had been for so long.

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