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Spouse-devouring Black Widows and Their Neutered Mates: Postwar Suburbanization—A Battle over Domestic Space

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If the day is clear and if you climb high enough, you can look over tree tops and see the city...Its presence within view of this pretty green town seems incongruous and illogical...The residents of this town like to think of it as a peaceful country community. Even to the casual observer, however, it is different. Many of the town's people have a pins-and-needles quality...some are worse off. One of the young husbands who went to work this morning is feeling ill. His stomach hurts. He doesn't feel like eating lunch. Early in the afternoon he suddenly starts to vomit blood. He is rushed to the hospital with a hemorrhaging ulcer. In one of the split level houses, a young mother is crying. She is crouching in a dark closet. Voices in the walls are telling her she is worthless...In the darkness between two houses, a young man creeps up to a window and looks in. He is disappointed, for the housewife he sees is fully clothed. He disappears into the darkness to look for another window. Down at the police station it has been a fairly quiet evening....Suddenly the door of the station house bursts open and a wild eyed young mother comes in. She begs to be locked up. She talks incoherently of performing sexual perversions with her husband and stabbing her baby...What is happening to these people? What is missing, what is so terribly wrong, in this pretty green community?
-Richard E. Gordon, 1960[1]

ONTEMPORARY READERS may be inclined to smirk at the melodrama and naivete engendered in these vignettes of postwar suburbia. However, the authors who painted these portraits took their ideas quite seriously. These sketches are not the product of tabloid hyperbole. Rather this quotation comes from the prologue of Richard and Katharine Gordon's five year psychiatric study of the mental health of Bergen County,

New Jersey. Throughout the 1950s such illustrations had particular resonance. Supercharged sexuality, perversion, juvenile delinquency, mindless acts of conformity, and a creeping totalitarianism, typified recurrent images in both popular and academic literature aimed at revealing the pathology seemingly inherent in postwar, middle-class, suburban America. Posing a stark contrast to the more familiar mass culture suburban representations, the likes of "Leave it to Beaver" and "Father Knows Best," it is important to ask, where did these anti-suburban images come from and why did they have social meaning?

By examining selected anti-suburban texts of the postwar period it will become evident that this negative analysis of residential location emerged out of a pervasive uncertainty over the effects of postwar conditions. This uncertainty included concerns over the impact of abundance, the Cold War, and consumerism. Yet, more importantly, I will argue that anti-suburban literature symbolized the contested nature of gender relations in the 1950s. My main purpose is to explore this gendered subtext in the debate over the meaning of residential space.

By 1945 Americans had endured fifteen years of depression and war. Family formation had been dramatically disturbed and women had challenged entrenched prescriptions of femininity by proving themselves capable of performing tasks formerly reserved for men. Yet, rather than accepting women as equal partners in the labor force, postwar Americans chose to reconstruct traditional social and family order. It has been well documented that these attempts centered in the suburban locale. Here efforts were made to reprivatize women in what was essentially an all female space and the public sphere was preserved as the masculine breadwinner's domain. In this way the challenge of the working woman was temporarily diffused. Despite this attempt to recreate normalcy, however, anti-suburban literature reveals a continued discontent with the postwar vision of familial happiness.[2]

Critiques of suburbia date to the nineteenth century when some feminists, such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman, referred to them as "lace-curtain prisons."[3] However, the criticism of the early postwar period, was one that at its most basic level revealed not a feminist reproach of domesticity, but rather exposed a male uneasiness with female-centered power. This criticism marked its most profound debut with David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* in 1950 and was powerfully reinforced by William Whyte's *The Organization Man* in 1956. Alarmed that the celebrated rugged individualist of the nineteenth century had become the homogenized organization man of the twentieth century, Riesman and Whyte argued that work had lost its ability to function as a forum for masculine self-expression. Accordingly, the last refuge for male individuality was presumed to be within the home. Embedded in this analysis was a newfound anxiety over

the question of masculine identity. For in the process of reprivatizing women, the home had been reclaimed as feminine territory, thus leaving men with little space of their own. Furthermore, the qualities Riesman and Whyte identified as necessary to be a successful twentieth-century business man, such as group oriented and self-sacrificing, resembled the qualities traditionally associated with femininity.[4]

This article will place the literature of anti-suburbia into the context of a postwar gender crisis, arguing that contention over the meaning of suburbia ultimately represents disputes over socially constructed definitions of masculinity, femininity, and struggles over who would exert control over domestic space. I perceive gender here as a social construct of male and female identities which is defined by cultural values varying through time and space.[5] Although much of the anti-suburban criticism was expressed by men, perhaps the most fascinating fact is that not all of this literature can be seen in anti-feminist terms because it readily parallels the critiques of feminists like Friedan whose quintessential anti-suburban text *The Feminine Mystique* exhibits a shared sense of contempt for postwar gender relations embedded in the suburban ideal.[6] As men were searching for control and autonomy women were contracting a disease with no name. Further, both men and women employed a terminology of self-fulfillment and centered their critiques of social life on issues relating to suburbia.

To explain the gender politics of the Cold War period, this essay will briefly survey several representative texts of postwar anti-suburban literature, attempting to demonstrate that buried within this literature was a common language and a shared contempt for what Peter Filene calls the postwar "domestic mystique."[7] I will begin this task by examining the work of Riesman and Whyte, placing their ideas in the proper intellectual context. This is essential because the terminology they adopted to express the problems facing men at mid-century reflected the basic contours that anti-suburban criticism would take throughout the 1950s. This will also facilitate an understanding of John Keats' fiction which epitomizes the misogyny prevalent in popular literature. My analysis will then move from Keats to Richard and Katharine Gordon's attempt to legitimize anti-suburban rhetoric by placing it behind a veil of pseudo-science. Last, I will briefly look at *The Feminine Mystique*. As Riesman and Whyte ignored the implications of their work for women, Friedan equally disregarded how the suburban reprivatization of women contained repressive implications for men. Most importantly, her work provides insight into the strength of intellectual continuity, and the process by which similar language was used simultaneously against women as well as a means of feminist protest.

The Lonely Crowd

The emergence of the Cold War was a time for Americans to assess their values and analyze the core of American identity. In the postwar period of abundance, the main tenet of sociological inquiry centered on the middle class. Accepting that the basic American political and economic systems were sound, intellectuals turned their analysis inward toward the private sphere and individual psychology. The work of Riesman and Whyte emerged directly out of, and indeed helped to define, this intellectual tradition. Both authors drew heavily on Cold War themes to locate a threat to the integrity of American individuality underneath the veneer of contentment and prosperity. This threat was just as insidious as that levelled by European totalitarianism or oppression imposed on workers by the ruling class. Riesman and Whyte argued that Americans, seduced by the comforts of middle-class status, were losing their individualism and autonomy through a process of self-imposed totalitarianism. Riesman identified a new personality type—the other-directed individual—who was being manipulated by a desire to be well liked not unlike the German masses had been manipulated by Hitler. In his search for approval, Whyte added, the American male was being stripped of his individuality by corporate America. Willing to abandon their personal identity for the identity of the company where they were employed, organization men throughout the country were surrendering their autonomy for the promises held out by consumer society. As outlined by the likes of Riesman and Whyte, social criticism turned in the direction of an analysis of consumption, abundance, and specifically towards those they saw as most "victimized" by this abundance—the suburban middle class.

The Lonely Crowd resulted from an attempt to create an interdisciplinary college course on "Culture and Personality." It was a collaborative project, based on the work of a variety of scholars; yet, it was generally credited to Riesman. The principle concern of this study was to interpret how a society socially constructs a predominant personality type. Borrowing from Erich Fromm's concept of "social character" Riesman wanted to analyze the process by which individuals come to *want*, rather than are forced to do what is in accordance with social acceptance, or as Riesman stated, to discover how "outer force is replaced by inner compulsion."[8] He argued that there are three major personality types—traditional-directed, inner-directed, and other-directed—each correspondent to one of the three stages of the demographic transition.[9] The pivotal focus of Riesman's argument rested on the transition between the latter two personality types which he defined as emasculating.

Riesman identified inner-direction with a period of capitalist expansion, exploration, colonialism, and imperialism. This is a transitional time when tra-

ditional social patterns breakdown and survival is dependent upon individualized and innovative response. The rugged individualist and the nineteenth-century entrepreneurs are the most common examples of this personality type.[10]

In contrast, Riesman identified other-direction with a period of security and abundance, comparable to the turn of the twentieth century and the postwar era. It is a period of capitalism, industrialism, urbanism, and eventually, suburbanization. Where novel situations and fear of uncertainty would have required an inner-directed person to respond with resourceful ingenuity, Riesman argued, "the hard enduringness and enterprise of the inner-directed" person were no longer necessary qualities for the other-directed person.[11] At a time when production outstrips consumption, Riesman maintained, "other people are [now] the problem, not the material environment."[12] That is, as wide scale organizational changes occur, people's actions can no longer be seen as representing personal choices. For instance, what was once a solitary decision implemented by a foreman, now must be subject to the approval of "personnel men, safety directors, production engineers, [and] comptroller's representatives."[13] Under such circumstances, success is no longer determined by such things as self-discipline, autonomy or individuality, but rather by one's congeniality and sensitivity to other's feelings. "Today," Riesman argued, "it is the 'softness' of men rather than the 'hardness' of material that calls on talent and opens new channels of social mobility."[14]

Riesman was particularly fearful that as this transformation ensued—as the inner-directed entrepreneur of the nineteenth century was transformed into an other-directed corporate manager of the twentieth century—that something fundamental, in essence, autonomy and manhood, was being lost. The following excerpts illustrate these concerns.

Riesman argued that the crisis the white-collar American professional faced at mid-century was equivalent to the decline in autonomy that the nineteenth-century inner-directed craftsman had experienced as he went through the process of having his labor de-skilled.

> The professional of the more recent period is pushed upstairs into the managerial class while the artisan of the earlier period is transformed into the industrial proletariat...In both cases the industrial process advances by building into machines and not smooth flowing organizations the skills that were once built, by a long process of apprenticeship and character-formation, into men.[15]

Still more revealing, Riesman tells the story of an engineer who is offered a promotion to sales manager. The man loves his current work, but is persuaded

by both wife and sponsor who insist that he cannot turn this offer down. "Reluctantly" he accepts the new position: "That night [the engineer] has a dream. He has a slide rule in his hand, and suddenly realizes that he does not know how to use it. He wakes in a panic." Riesman concludes that the "dream symbolizes his feeling of impotence in a new job where he is alienated from his craft."[16] These two excepts disclose Riesman's association of the loss of autonomy with a loss of masculinity.

He located the beginnings of this shift near the turn of the century, when older patterns of industrial organization gave way to the rise of the modern corporation.[17] Not surprisingly, this is roughly the same period historians have identified as demarcating major shifts in liberalism. Evolution from inner-direction to outer-direction paralleled the transformation of laissez-faire liberalism to corporate liberalism. As the destructive nature of cutthroat competition was revealed, the ideals embodied in "rugged individualism" fell out of favor. In its place emerged the ideal of a social order where the concerns of more than just the most "fit" were recognized, a social order where, if not individuals, at least interest groups vied for the ability to share in society's benefits.[18]

Interestingly this is also the period in which historian Paula Baker has located the "domestication of politics" or, as others have called it, the "feminization of the state."[19] In either case, the basic principle remains. During the Progressive years, women around the country worked to build a national social reform movement centered on the needs of women and children.[20] In the process of advancing such things as workers' compensation, protective legislation, and pure milk and food laws, traditional "feminine" concerns were incorporated into national law and national consciousness. In this manner, the state was now regulating what had once been ghettoized as women's charitable causes.

In light of the convergence of these three trends, Riesman's use of imagery denoting impotence was perhaps not such an unreasonable response. For as inner-directed became outer-directed, and laissez-faire became corporate liberalism, masculine began to look feminine. Thus, it is understandable how Riesman could have linked a decline in autonomy with postwar abundance, and how postwar abundance could in turn pose threats to masculine identity. Indeed, the very qualities which defined the success of the other-directed male—emotional, sensitive to the feelings of others, desirous of placing the cares of the group ahead of the concerns of the individual—represented traditional feminine values. Furthermore, in her study of 1950s "male rebels" Barbara Ehrenreich has pointed out, "the traits that Riesman found in the other-directed personality—the perpetual alertness to signals from others, the concern with feelings and affect rather than objective tasks—were precisely those that the patriarch of

mid-century sociology, Talcott Parsons had just assigned to the female sex."
Thus, in a very real sense, the other-directed male was a "Parsonian woman."[21]

The Organization Man

Making specific what Riesman had left relatively general, Whyte transformed
Riesman's theories of global demographic change to a study specifically analyz-
ing the impact of mature industrialism on postwar, middle-class, suburban
America.[22] What began as a widely circulated series of articles written for *For-
tune* magazine culminated in the publication of *The Organization Man*, which
has often been cited as one of the most vitriolic attacks on postwar conformity.[23]
Studying both the quality of life at work and at home, Whyte concurred with
Riesman that the rise of corporate America was indeed posing a threat to indi-
viduality and, by extension, to masculinity. Instead of defining the problem
as one of inner-direction versus other-direction, however, Whyte restated the
issue. He argued that a decline in autonomy resulted from the transformation
of American society from a culture which embraced the values embedded in the
Protestant ethic to a culture which adhered to the social ethic. According to
Whyte the Protestant ethic "rests on the belief that success is due to one's own
efforts."[24] Like Riesman's inner-directed individualist, those subscribing to the
Protestant ethic used an internal gyroscope to govern their actions, and they
failed or triumphed as a result of their own talents. Conversely, Whyte stated,
the social ethic "is a new ideology that morally legitimates the subjugation of
the individual to the whole. [It] is a utopian faith which believes man is iso-
lated... [and] meaningless until he collaborates with others."[25] For Whyte, the
social ethic was other-directedness in collective form.

Not surprisingly, Whyte traced the emergence of the social ethic to the same
time period and similar impulses with which Riesman linked the emergence of
other-direction. Whyte believed that by the Progressive Era social conditions
had so significantly changed that privilege or circumstances beyond an
individual's control were now as responsible for personal success as the practice
of sobriety and hard work had been. Attempting to replace an outdated faith in
rugged individualism, Whyte maintained that intellectuals like Thorstein Veblen
and William James helped to construct a new ethic highlighting the social as-
pects responsible for human behavior. In doing so however, Whyte concluded
Americans had elevated the social at the expense of the individual, and further-
more, turned individuality and deviation from the majority into a social ill be-
cause it was readily recognized that the group was better than the individual.

For Whyte it was this faith in "false collectivism" that posed the real danger.
Individuals who no longer trusted their own judgments deified the wisdom of

the group at the expense of respecting individual initiative. Accordingly, Whyte insisted that middle-class professional men throughout the country were abandoning their autonomy for the beneficence of the organization. Believing in its inherent goodness, organization men *voluntarily* subjugated their autonomy for the good of the corporate whole.

The similarity with which Whyte and Riesman defined the problems of "modern man" are striking. When one substitutes "subjugation" of the individual and the need for "collaboration" to achieve social meaning with the softer tones of Riesman's "sensitivity to others" and "group orientation," the gender implications become clearer. Now that women's traditional duties of being self-sacrificing and nurturing were the roles men were to adopt at work, both authors were left to ponder— where could men still exert their autonomy?

To answer this question Riesman and Whyte turned their analysis toward understanding how other-directed values were actually learned, practiced, and reproduced. This task inevitably drew them to a study of white-collar workers' personal lives and thus to an analysis of the suburbs—the locale where most organization men resided. Riesman and Whyte firmly believed that the values the middle class internalized at work were reproduced in their suburban home lives. This meant that the expression of masculinity inside as well as outside of work were sure to be limited. However, despite acknowledged limitations, Riesman and Whyte did contend that men could express their autonomy.

In his section "Obstacles to Autonomy at Play," Riesman specifically stated that postwar men could exert control in their leisure time. He argued that in the other-directed stage of the demographic transition, Americans were no longer producers, rather they had become consumers. As consumption had increased so too had leisure. It was within this leisure time, that modern people could be autonomous. Problems of course arose since other-directed people tended to still be other-directed in their patterns of play, yet Riesman avoided this dilemma by defining the autonomous person not as a nonconformist, but rather as someone who was capable of deciding if he or she wanted to conform.

It is surprising that Riesman's discussion of autonomy and leisure contained the only subchapter in *The Lonely Crowd* (four pages in length) directly related to women. Although he was primarily concerned with men, he could not wholly ignore that women were the ones possessing the bulk of the highly coveted leisure time. Riesman's ultimate consideration was how women's leisure could be utilized to enhance masculine, not feminine, autonomy. Realizing that boring wives would obviously not encourage their husbands to engage in quality play, Riesman understood that women also needed outside stimulation. Nevertheless, he believed their primary role remained the traditional helpmate of men.

It is important to discern how Riesman and Whyte handled the issue of how leisure and autonomy could be rooted in the home; because in the process of dichotomizing autonomy into a debate about control over public versus private space, they laid the foundation for turning the suburban home into contested territory. As Riesman and Whyte came to accept that there was little men could do to maintain control at work, men, by implication, were left to vie for power in the space which had been defined as the domain and responsibility of their wives. Understanding this, the gendered dynamic embedded in later anti-suburban works becomes much more intelligible.

While Riesman argued from a theoretical base, Whyte became involved in one the first community studies of a postwar suburban development. His analysis of Park Forest, Illinois became a model for subsequent studies. After an extensive interviewing process Whyte concluded that the suburbs were communities "made in the organization man's image."[26] Imbued with similar values, these organization men created communities which seemingly reproduced their homogeneous support of the social ethic. For instance, organization suburbanites were so anxious to express their congeniality that Whyte claimed they were "imprison[ing] [each other] in brotherhood."[27] In a search for consensus, diversity was discouraged and group approval was the rule of the day. As in the organization, where beneficence was so deadly, the line between voluntary selflessness on behalf of the good of the whole, and surrender of the self were at times imperceptible in Park Forest neighborhoods.[28]

What struck Whyte, however, was the suburban self-consciousness regarding pressures to conform. Park Foresters actually used self-deprecating terms like "a Russia only with money" to describe their communitarian way of life.[29] It was this consciousness of a self-imposed totalitarianism which made Whyte hopeful. Like Riesman, Whyte concluded that the issue surrounding the suburbs was not really a question of conformity. Instead, it was a question of determining *when* one is conforming. Whyte concluded that, "the organization man is not in the grip of vast social forces about which it is impossible for him to do anything...he can turn away from the dehumanized collective that so haunts our thoughts."[30]

Whyte sought to transcend this problem by redefining the process of postwar suburbanization in terms which made it consistent with traditional American (read: male) individualism. Whyte suggested that suburbanites, migrating from all over the country, could be seen as pioneers coming together to form new democratic communities.[31] Rather than always promoting conformity, suburbs at times inspired social vigor. In fact, for Whyte, suburban male efforts constituted a noble attempt by mobile, rootless organization "transients" to con-

struct a stable world. With traditional kin networks severed, suburbanites turned to each other for mutual support and formed "foster families." Whyte even went as far as to describe the new postwar developments as representing the "second great melting pot."

Much like Riesman however, Whyte's comments directly relating to how organization men would in practice express their individuality in suburbia were unsatisfying. What is most telling about his analysis was his insistence that organization men controlled the character of suburban developments. Yet, he also admitted that the bulk of his interviews, (conducted during daytime) were with women. Thus, Whyte never actually studied suburban male culture; rather, he studied suburban female culture. Slightly conscious of this himself, he reserved a footnote to explain that men who happen to enter the suburbs during the day are viewed with suspicion. "Unless he is a delivery man or doctor or such, the man who enters suburbia during the day can make the female group feel that here comes Trouble, and their provocative instincts come to the fore—stroll by a bunch of wives kaffeeklatsching on a lawn and you will forcefully feel their inquiry."[32] Unwittingly, Whyte acknowledged the suburbs as female space. In doing so, he left the question of how men could exert their individuality at home open to speculation.

Riesman's and Whyte's work captured the spirit of liberal intellectuals during the Cold War. Basically supportive of American democracy and capitalism, especially in contrast to Soviet communism, they were nonetheless unconvinced that postwar abundance would lead to human happiness. More specifically, as they began to analyze the impact of abundance, some detected that prosperity came at a significant cost. That cost was symbolized by a loss of male control, by a fear of conformity, and by a decline in the ability to engage in individual choice at work and at play.

I have looked at Riesman's and Whyte's ideas in depth because their views on gender were significant indicators of what I am suggesting was a general middle-class male discomfort with the terms of the postwar reprivatization of women. On the one hand, they were mildly supportive of traditional gender roles, yet, these roles also proved to be restrictive for both men and women. For in defining women's place as the home, organization men limited their control of both home and leisure, and consequently reduced their opportunities for self-expression. In *The Hearts of Men* Barbara Ehrenreich has argued that conformity became the codeword for male discontent. She posits that this discontent was best symbolized by male rebels, such as the beats and playboys, who rejected the traditional breadwinner role. In contrast, I believe that it is more fruitful to look at the ideas of Riesman and Whyte than those of the blatant

rebels, since most men did accept their breadwinner "duties" just as most women embraced the homemaker ideal.[33] Elaine Tyler May's analysis of the Kelly Longitudinal Study reveals that men in the 1950s did not want to run from the home.[34] Rather, it is my contention that they were frustrated because they could not control it. I believe Riesman's and Whyte's discussion of suburbia confirms this supposition.

My discussion of other-direction, suburbia, and autonomy highlights Riesman's and Whyte's sense of ambiguity about gender roles in the postwar era. I am not suggesting that their ideas were misogynistic. In fact, most of their analysis was thoughtful and cautious. Furthermore, even though Whyte is generally considered to have produced a vitriolic attack against the conformity of the suburbs, I would contend his criticisms were quite generous compared to what would come later. Yet, to reiterate, Riesman's and Whyte's basic construction of locating autonomy in private as opposed to public space helped turn debates over suburban representations into debates over feminine and masculine control of the home. Their work laid the foundation for a groundswell of commentary much less tempered by reason than their own. In subsequent literature, hints of male discontent became full-blown attacks against women. Hundreds of articles emerged in a multitude of magazine genres such as *The Ladies Home Journal, The Atlantic, Saturday Evening Post, The New Yorker,* and *The Saturday Review,* all debating the true character of the suburbs. Articles with such varied titles as "Homogenized Children of New Suburbia," "Lament for the Male Sanctuary," and "What's Wrong With the Family?" convey the feelings of genuine crisis with which people described the postwar home. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that not all the responses Riesman and Whyte helped to generate were cast in anti-feminist tones. Their work evoked a myriad of reactions. This is what is truly fascinating about the anti-suburban literature because a rejection of reprivatization was not just liberating for women, but it was also seen by some as liberating for men. In either instance, debates over the basic contours of the American gender system were encased in attacks against suburban culture.

A Crack in the Picture Window

Riesman's and Whyte's concerns over emasculation and conformity can be interpreted as having been taken to their furthest extreme in novelist John Keats', *A Crack in the Picture Window,*[35] published in the same year as *The Organization Man.* Less concerned with the failings of the work place, Keats concentrated his efforts both more generally on postwar consumer culture, and more specifically on the failings of the suburban ideal. He railed against housing develop-

ers, the Veteran's Administration, suburban housewives, and their middle-class husbands, all for falsely believing that ownership of a suburban "dream home" should be the principle achievement of the American male. The following was his basic formulation: homogenized homes produced homogenized people. Since women were the primary inhabitants of the suburban home, they suffered the brunt of its failings. Perpetually bored by conformity, women used their consumer power to reduce the monotony in their lives. Already in heavy debt from purchasing a home they could ill afford, men were continuously forced to keep working longer hours to pay for their wives' consumer habits. Suburbs had turned men who were rarely in charge at home, into "dependent childish husbands" and suburban women had become "dull-witted slob[s]...and spouse-devouring black widows."[36] Using the suburbs as a symbol for the ills of postwar society, Keats thinly disguised his contempt for female-centered power.

Keats focussed his argument on a fictional account of a young couple's decision to purchase their first suburban home. Hoping to find respite from their current ugly, cramped, roach-invested, one-bedroom, urban apartment, Mary Drone pushes her husband, John, to buy a home in "Rolling Knolls Estates," a newly finished suburban development.[37] Initially excited about the change, Mary quickly discovers the limitations of suburban home ownership. Rather than finding a stimulating environment, Mary encounters monotonous rows of identical houses, inhabited by alarmingly similar people with like backgrounds, employment, interests, and incomes. Desirous of diversity, Mary remains unsatisfied.

Mary is frustrated by the drudgery of her daily life. She finds her days consumed by laundry, child care, and meal preparation. She spends her time with other dissatisfied women like herself. Having nowhere else to go, the women of Rolling Knolls are reduced to organizing "Morning Baby-Sitting Lawn Dates," where they ritualistically discuss children's progress in toilet training and the "the gross inadequacy of the human male." Languishing in their melancholy, and deeply despairing between the ideal image of marriage and the realities of their lives "they inveigh against their absent husbands by day and [are] indifferent to them at night." Frigid and discontent, these women continuously "confuse things for experiences" and rapidly become tyrannical nags begging their husbands for the latest consumer goods.[38]

Keats cites one particularly vexing day to summarize the stultifying trap of Mary Drone's suburban experience. While Mary struggles with her uncooperative washing machine, her daughter, little Kim, burns her arm on an exposed hot water pipe. Meanwhile the door burst open, an annoying neighbor accompanied by her "brood" invade Mary's home for the next three hours. Laundry

must be hung inside the home due to rainy weather, dinner must be made, the children must be woken from their naps. Frustrated, Mary begins to think that John should buy her a new clothes dryer. A little while later John comes home and Mary shrieks as he stumbles into the wet laundry. Keats concluded:

> The cumulative effect of Mary's rancid day led her to shriek, and although she never once allowed the thought conscious expression, somewhere deep inside her she knew perfectly well that the house she inhabited had helped spoil her day; that it was harming her marriage and corroding her life.

> The shape of Mary's dwelling was vile. Consider:...had there been a basement, Mary would not have hung the wash in the living room....Had there been a basement, Kim would not have burned her hand on an exposed pipe laid in the middle of the house...had there been ample play space in the bedroom,...Mary and Gladys might have been able to conduct a rational conversation in some form other than frenetic shouts over the children's noise. It is not fantastic to suggest that Gladys' and Mary's conversation would have been considerably shorter if it had been possible to conduct it in better circumstances; hence, Mary's housework might have had a better chance to get done before John came home.[39]

"Mary Drone's house," Keats surmised, "irritated her and it bored her and stifled her and led her to occasional shrieks at John who had no idea the house was turning his wife into a nag."

In one sense Keats' words are ironic. For in many ways they parallel the criticism that later feminists would employ against female reprivatization. For instance, it could be argued that Keats was applying the same type of sympathetic reasoning to suburban wives which Riesman and Whyte had applied to analyze the conditions suffered by these women's organization husbands. However, it was not just poor architectural design and housewife drudgery to which Keats objected. Rather, the real foundation of his complaint, was that *women* defined the character of the suburbs. Although overt references to female power are limited, Keats' contempt and fear of women's role in the home is much more blatantly articulated than Riesman's and Whyte's fear of emasculation.

Keats explained that the real nature of Mary's "trap" was not that she lived in a horrible house but that she "had fallen into a world of women without men." Keats declared, that in Rolling Knolls "there were no husbands," rather men were merely "overnight lodgers or casual weekend guests." Under such circumstances, suburbs had become "vast communistic, female barracks."[40]

Not only were women assuming more power in the home, but social order

had been radically overturned. Keats longed for the traditional "Elm Street" neighborhoods of America, where diversity and male domination were the rule of the day. Housewives in such neighborhoods did not necessarily know each other. People had different tastes, interests, and occupations. Most importantly, men controlled the social life of the community. Living in the same city in which they worked, couples could easily travel, and thus men introduced their wives to interesting acquaintances, ensuring that women would receive mental stimulation. Furthermore, male presence in the small traditional city, ensured that there were male role models for developing young men. In these neighborhoods Keats believed things were as they should be because traditional gender roles were enforced.

Conversely, in the suburbs, when men left the house in the morning, "ownership...passed by default" to what Keats maintained was "a matriarchy."[41] Too tired from his long commute when he did come home, the suburban man abdicated his responsibilities for providing his wife with an interesting social life and forced this responsibility on his wife. Yet, having limited social contacts besides themselves, suburban social life was restricted to people from the neighborhood block. Boredom and conformity resulted. Pushed into this position of leadership for which Keats considered them unprepared, women now in control of homes and culture had become "domineering," while men were "woman-bossed, inadequate, money terrified neuter[s]," and children, because they were forced to grow up with out the proper male influence, faced delinquency. Exaggerating Riesman's and Whyte's Cold War premonitions of conformity, Keats claimed that the overall result of female-dominated domestic space, was a communistic destruction of the individual spirit. Keats concluded:

> It is a hideous travesty to suggest the housewives of Rolling Knolls had "something in common," when the bitter truth is, they had only too much in common...[This caused] by the destruction of the individual. In this case, destruction began with obliteration of the individualistic house and self-sufficient neighborhood, and from there on, creation of mass-produced human beings followed as the night the day.[42]

For Keats, then, conformity, suburbia, and gender were intimately intertwined. Similar to Riesman and Whyte, Keats identified conformity as a major social ill in the postwar era. Yet, what they had considered a *potential* of a new form of social values, Keats saw as a *confirmed* reality resulting from an uprooting of traditional power relations. Whereas Whyte had argued that homogenized housing was merely a product of fulfilling the needs caused by a housing shortage, Keats, however, insisted that suburbia itself was a major contributor to this

homogeneity of the mind. Underlying this argument was the principle fact that women were the critical inhabitants of the suburbs. It was this female-centered power and female-defined space which Keats found most disturbing. Suburbia would remain pathological as long as women remained in control.

The Split-Level Trap

Drawing on themes similar to Keats,' the Gordons finished tabulating the results from their five year psychological study of Bergen County, New Jersey in 1960. Their purpose was to analyze the degree of mental illness in the suburbs and compare it to that in a traditional community. Responding to the criticism of suburbia like that levelled by Keats, the Gordons wanted to scientifically explore the validity of what by the end of the decade, had become a widely accepted image of suburban pathology. As the title of their book conveys, *The Split-Level Trap* confirmed what many already believed—that the suburbs harbored tremendous emotional stresses. The Gordons painted a picture of social decay—husbands with ulcers, wives crying in closets, people ingesting pills, gang sex, peeping Toms, and a pervasive neurosis. Indeed, they suggested suburbia should more appropriately be named "disturbia."

Despite a similar evocation of negative imagery however, their analysis was cast in a tone decidedly different from that of Keats and other critics. This was partially due to the fact that the Gordons assigned causation of suburban ills to a more complex set of interactions than the mere absence and emasculation of men. In fact, they inferred that one of their goals was to dispel the myth of the emasculated suburban male.[43] Yet, this goal was not fully realized since the Gordons' argument against suburbia came ultimately to rest on the issue of paternal neglect and maternal mismanagement of the domestic sphere. However, their initial approach to the issues was much more similar to that of Riesman and Whyte than it was to the more blatantly misogynistic Keats. Like the former, the Gordons defined the topic of suburban ills as emerging directly out of the deleterious effects of abundance. Similarly, although they did not actually employ the terminology other-directed and inner-directed, this model can easily be extrapolated as a guiding principle of their work. Yet, unlike Riesman and Whyte, they were not primarily focussed on a decline in male autonomy. Instead, they were fearful of something closer to the opposite—that inner-directed individualism was running amuck.

The Split-Level Trap consisted of eight dramatic case studies exposing the ills of suburban living. In this book, the Gordons made every attempt to engage in a serious dialogue about the failing of abundance.[44] Unfortunately, however, the Gordons made two critical mistakes; they echoed Keats' hyperbolic rhetoric

and they employed more gender stereotypes than they dispelled. In both instances, much of their psychoanalysis was reduced to the level of formula fiction.

All of the figures in the Gordon's case studies can be grouped in one of following basic character type categories: (1) the weak, unprepared mother who finds it difficult to adjust to the new demands of mobile society; (2) the status-seeking mobile woman who has an insatiable drive to compete for recognition from other suburban women, the only source for her to achieve status; (3) the overworked, exhausted, mobile husband who spends too many hours at the office and too few hours in the home; and (4) the "soft," "awkward" and "girlish" adolescent male who, as a result of over protective female nurturing, is incapable of proper social adjustment and is prone to delinquency and sexual maladjustment. To understand the full gender implications of the Gordon's critique it is useful to explore several of these case histories.

It is best to begin with Alice Hager, the case of the "sensitive" woman:

> In a corner of a dark bedroom closet, in a three-year-old split-level house, a young housewife crouched like a small, frightened animal. Her husband pleaded with her to tell him what was troubling her, but she would not speak. She stared out at him fearfully. Every time he reached down to touch her, she shrank away.

> She was terrified. People were staring at her, laughing at her, reading her mind. Voices from the walls were talking to her in angry tones. The authorities were looking for her. They were going to take her away somewhere and lock her up for her bad thoughts and for failing her husband and children.[45]

For the Gordons, Alice Hager exemplified what was happening to young women across the nation. Born in traditional, stable communities these women had been raised to depend on their husbands and their extended kin for strength and aid in forming their own families. This left them unprepared to deal with the mobile community. Commuter husbands were not there to help take care of the home. Family members were dispersed across the country. Further, in direct conflict with Keats' interpretation, the Gordons saw the suburbs as a collection of such diverse peoples that shy women like Alice found it difficult to form new bonds. Placed in the midst of social disintegration, these women simply could not cope. Frightened, Alice spent her days alone in her home. "Around the house the mobile society swirled, too busy, too full of its own problems, too alien to understand—or even if it did understand—to help."[46]

Alice's husband, Carl, was also too busy to help. Working to provide for the

family he was frustrated by Alice's failings and accused her of being "an inept mother and a worthless wife." Alice tried harder to avoid these accusations, but the Gordons point out she simply was not equipped to handle her new situation. Managing the home, and raising her children by herself, the Gordons insisted that Alice:

> like many other wives in disturbia…was being asked to fill the role of both woman and man in the family.…She was willing to try, but she was expecting too much from herself. She was a woman. She had been trained to be feminine, to shun aggressiveness, to leave firmness to men. She could not learn overnight to be a man. [47]

The result of these undue demands lead to personal illness and directly harmed suburban children's development. Without Carl's firm support, Alice's sons were becoming troublemakers at school. With her marriage disintegrating and her children becoming delinquent, Alice quickly turned into the crouching woman in the closet to whom we were first introduced.

The themes evident in the Gordon's tale of Alice were repeated with a myriad of variations. Where Alice could not form friendship due to her shyness, women like the social climbing wannabe, Eve Bright were rebuffed by neighbors because she had nothing "useful" to offer the community. Desperately seeking status the only way she knew how to achieve it, Eve had attached herself to Fred, a successful salesman. By negative example, the Gordons accused her of perpetuating this pattern by teaching her daughters to "cultivate a magnetic facade by means of which they, like their mother, could one day attach themselves, parasitic-like to climbing men."[48] Where Carl had remained physically unscathed, Fred, the victim of Eve's leeching, was pushed into a speculative way of life. Taking a high status job for which he was ill-prepared, he faked his expertise. The stress of this facade eventually drove him to internal hemorrhaging, the result of a bleeding peptic ulcer.

Perhaps the most frequently reiterated theme throughout, however, was the impact mobile society was having on adolescents. In a mobile society children believed that abundance was a well established fact. They frequently made material demands which the parents, suffering from the same illusion, did not resist. Thus, the younger generation expected success without having to work for it. They frequently misunderstood the real challenges they would encounter once they reached adulthood. The Gordons argued that for adolescent girls, this permissive environment was not all that harmful. Girls had female role models in which to learn the skills necessary for competing for a husband. Furthermore, if a girl was "moderately attractive and moderately lucky" life for her,

would be nicely mapped out.[49] Young boys, however, encountered a much different sets of circumstances. Boys had to learn how to be successful in the business world. They had to learn how to be effective negotiators, competitors and, more generally, they had to learn how to act like men.

The Gordons explained:

> Every child needs an adult of his own sex to guide him and serve as his model in growing up. A boy's job is to become a man, and he can't easily do it by himself. He needs men to teach him...many lessons: the importance of education, how to study, how to assert oneself without making enemies,...how to control and direct anger and fear in oneself and cope with these emotions in others. These and other things must be learned, and a boy learns them best from his father. His mother may be able to teach some of them, but not usually as well as a man can. She has difficulty in teaching masculine assertiveness, for example....Nor can she teach him how to throw a baseball or handle a saw. Nor does she usually fully understand the masculine attitude toward sex.[50]

The problem was that in the suburbs, there were no men to teach these essential skills. Boys only had women as their role models. The result was that boys were not learning to become real men. Although the Gordons never employed the term, suburban young men were obviously turning into victims of "momism"—over protected, effeminate, and impotent. This problem can clearly be exemplified with the story of Alice's children who had suffered from the lack of Carl's firm guidance, and with Eve and Fred's son who by age nine, the Gordons had already identified as a "sissy."

Even more alarming, was the case of Alec Green. Alec was the classic example of a suburban "gimmie kid" whose lack of correct parental guidance led him to be brought to juvenile court for gang raping a fifteen-year-old girl. Alec's principal problem presumably stemmed from the relationship he had with his mother. Married to a man who believed that child rearing was a domestic task entirely his wife's concern, Mrs. Green was left full responsibility of Alec's welfare. She was not a bad woman, but she suffered from the same failings as many other women—she simply protected Alec too much. In short, because of his mother, "Alec was soft."[51]

The Gordons believed that Alec's problem rested with the structure of the suburbs themselves for even if his father was absent, father-substitutes like male teachers and coaches could have helped Alec become a man. However, the Gordons bemoaned that in the suburban environment all of Alec's teachers were women. Even positions like swimming instructors and coaches were being abdicated by fathers who were too tired and too busy to help raise boys into

men. With no one to teach him masculine values, Alec ran the risk of being what the Gordons identified as a "chronic loser" —an unaggressive, second rate adult. Unable to compete with competent men, the chronic loser has no wife and no decent job and thus permanently remains in the female world of the suburbs.

Misguided, spoiled, and lacking male supervision, Alec began to get into trouble. He started to steal money from his mother's purse. One night he even carelessly set a house on fire. Believing he would not have to pay the consequences of his actions, Alec pushed the boundaries of propriety even further. One night he and his friends went to the home of a girl, to engage in what the Gordons referred to as Alec's first attempt at "complete sexual intercourse." Like other males in mobile society, Alec was all facade and no substance. Worried that he would do something wrong, afraid to ask advice, tense, and frightened, Alec, the Gordons regretfully recounted, "botched his *chance* ludicrously."[52] Worse yet, the Gordons explained that upon hearing her parents were home, "the more or less willing" girl "quickly devised a way to protect her reputation and escape blame. She screamed, 'Rape!'"[53] Reporters viewed Alec and his friends as hardened toughs when they were dragged before a juvenile court, but the Gordons showed them for what they believed they really were—"gimmie kids" who needed strong paternal discipline.

This story of Alec is symbolic of the shortcomings the Gordons identified with the suburban way of life. Couples possessed a good home, a family, and husbands worked at prestigious jobs; in essence the people of Bergen County were living out the postwar suburban ideal. Yet, rather than be content, they and suburbanites across the country were being diagnosed with mental and physical illness. Perhaps more important, the children of suburbia were becoming delinquent, like Alec, or parasitic, such as Eve Bright's girls. It is perhaps apropos to now attempt to answer Richard Gordon's original question: when everyone seemingly had all that they needed—what was missing, what was so terribly wrong, in this pretty green community?

Despite their attempts to engage in a sophisticated discussion of the complex interaction of abundance, consumer culture, mobility, and the growth of suburbia, the Gordons most definitive answer to this query mirrored the one-dimensional conclusion of Keats—the problem with suburbia was that it was female space. Rather, than creating emasculated husbands, as Keats had insisted, however, the Gordons were more fearful that suburbia was encouraging the internalization of feminine values by an entire generation of adolescent males—values, which when applied to boys, proved to be debilitating. Here, Alec's story is revealing. In the Gordon's retelling of Alec's troubles the prob-

lems of teen sexuality and even the issue of sexual assault against young women were deemed too insignificant to warrant discussion. Rather they felt it most important to stress how Alec's inabilities to partake in the "gang bang" left him "frustrated and miserable, full of new doubts about his sexual capacities."[54] The implications are clear—Mrs. Green's inappropriate guidance had completely undermined Alec's masculinity. For the Gordons the only way to prevent a nation wide "softening" of American culture was for men to reclaim their authority in the home. Not only for the purpose of relocating autonomy, but for the health of the nation and for the restoration of masculine identity.

It is worth noting that the Gordons' criticism did not go unchallenged. Some social scientists rebuked their findings that women suffered more mental illness than men. The rather apt point was made that since women were the primary inhabitants of the suburbs an analysis of suburban patients would obviously privilege the concerns of women over the concerns of their principally urban husbands. Yet, I did not encounter a reviewer who expressed concern that the Gordons' case studies read like morality tales directly out of the pages of women's magazines. It appeared that not only had the image of the emasculated male become entrenched by the 1950s, but the portrayal of women as mentally ill and responsible for devouring masculinity was not generally questioned.[55]

The Feminine Mystique

It is perhaps ironic that one of the major texts reinforcing this negative female imagery emerged in Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963. An instant best seller, this was the first thorough feminist criticism of suburbanization and the postwar domestic ideal. Drawing on similar case studies as the Gordons, Friedan concurred that women in the suburbs were emotionally disturbed.

As Friedan pointed out, by the early 1960s the "crisis" of the suburban housewife had reached the level of a "national parlor game." Negative images of women were not just to be found in the pages of *Crack in the Picture Window* or *The Split-Level Trap*. Whole issues of magazines, newspaper columns, books both popular and academic, educational panels, and television programs were all devoted to the issue of the unhappy and potentially ill American woman.[56] It was Friedan's thesis that the core of the problem, rested not with an absence of men or ill adjustment to mobility, but was embedded in the domestic and suburban ideals themselves. Friedan argued that by defining women's role as only that of wife and mother, women's psychological development had been stunted. Men were the pioneers of an exciting and stimulating new postwar culture. Yet, women were restricted to an isolated world of endless cooking, cleaning, and monotony. In sum, Friedan asserted that the domestic ideal undermined women's human

potential. Dependent, subservient, and self-sacrificing, women were kept in a permanent state of infantile development.

As a writer and a suburban resident herself, Friedan's inspiration for this project emerged out a questionnaire which she sent to her fellow Smith graduates. Friedan was anxious to disprove the popular belief that education had "ill fitted us for our role as women." Yet, the results of her questionnaire actually disproved her premise. That is, she found that many of her respondents were indeed not happy or well adjusted to their role as suburban housewives. As a consequence of these findings, Friedan began to question if perhaps it was the role of housewife and not education which was generating a nation full of discontented (middle-class, white) women.[57]

Armed with her newfound question, Friedan travelled from suburb to suburb in search of the "mystical" happy housewife of "Leave it to Beaver" and "Father Knows Best."[58] She interviewed psychologists, sociologists, marriage counsellors, suburban mental health workers, and scores of suburban housewives—all to no avail. As Keats, the Gordons, and all the Freudians and functionalists before her had claimed, Friedan concurred that women in the suburbs were indeed psychologically ill.[59]

Despite this agreement, however, Friedan reached conclusions which were in many ways antithetical to those of her predecessors. Where many would have suggested women were suffering because they were not properly adjusted to their womanly role, she argued that like men, women should be allowed to achieve their fullest potential; they should be autonomous and self-actualizing human beings. It was the very denial of women's "personhood" that had turned them into pathetic creatures. Yet, the similarity between the contemptuous language Friedan employed in her feminist critique and the language of those writing with anti-feminist undertones is truly striking. This similarity is worth a brief exploration.

Like the other authors I have addressed, Friedan fully acknowledged, in fact, shouted that *the* problem with the suburbs was indeed that they were female-defined space. With nowhere else to go and with no other means of achieving an identity, women adopted the role of homemaker with a vengeance. Friedan exclaimed, "with a snap course in house economics or marriage and family under her belt...with all [her] time, energy and intelligence, directed on husband, children and house the young American wife —easily, inevitably, disastrously— began to dominate the family."[60] The result of this female domination was just as catastrophic as Keats and the Gordons had claimed. Not only were Friedan's suburban women parasitic status seekers, and emasculators but, worse yet, they were like Whyte's Park Foresters who embraced the very ideals which impris-

oned them. Friedan blamed advertisers, educators, and a whole slew of others for promoting an ideal which was dangerous to women's health. Yet, she reserved her most vitriolic attacks for the very women who bought into the homemaker image. After conferring with the Gordons over their results in Bergen County, Friedan angrily concluded that during the 1950s "able, ambitious men kept on growing in the cities," while their pitiful wives deliberately, "evaded growth in vicarious living or non-commitment, fulfilling their feminine role at home."[61]

Friedan even went so far as to applaud the chorus of men who, like Keats, raged against women. She stated "this male outrage is the result, surely of an implacable hatred for...parasitic women."[62] This was a hatred Friedan shared. She went so far as to sympathize with young suburban husbands who felt trapped and lost power in their homes.[63]

Ultimately, Friedan believed that the feminine mystique had turned a generation of well-educated, intelligent women into anomic, and alienated drudges with an obliterated sense of self. Significantly, in this case, the solution was not to put male power back in the home, but to let women out of the home. Referring to the social theories of among others, Fromm and Riesman, Friedan wanted women to be "autonomous" and "to have the courage to be individuals;" to partake of the same creative forces which men were engaged in. To do otherwise, would promote a sickness and weakening of American culture. Thus, while Riesman and Whyte had feared a loss of male power, Keats a loss of male identity, the Gordons a loss of moral fiber, Friedan feared a loss of the female self. Echoing the apocalyptic concerns of the others, Friedan concluded that the loss of female identity engendered in the suburban image was the equivalent of those in Nazi death camps who "had surrendered their human identity and gone almost indifferently to their deaths."[64]

Signifying a bold disjuncture with the more familiarized representations of suburban home life, it is once again important to ask why these authors employed such negative imagery, and further, why these images resonated with the public? In a decade normally associated with an idealized family life, why were themes of psychotic housewives, "spouse devouring black widows," and "money terrified neuters" so warmly received?

In comparison with the Depression and World War II, the 1950s presented Americans with an opportunity for relative calm. This "return to normalized" conditions ushered in a period stereotypically perceived as a time of contentment, wealth, and consensus. Indeed, at the height of the Cold War, few radical challenges were presented to the structure of the American social system. The civil rights movement and fringe groups like the beat poets were, of course,

among the notable exceptions. Nonetheless, the literature I have reviewed reveals a genuine white middle-class discontent with postwar conditions. Desirous of stabilizing their home lives and frightened by the very real threats of the Cold War, these Americans turned to their homes as a source of security. Acting as though nearly 30 years of social change had never happened, postwar Americans tried to recreate an idealized family life located in the suburbs and based on a male/breadwinner and female/homemaker model. Yet, it was noted that men trying to fulfill this ideal had to spend more and more hours engaged in a form of labor which had become dissatisfying. Intellectuals like Riesman and Whyte proposed that men, stripped of the ability to assert their selfhood at work, searched for autonomy within their private lives. However, in the process of reprivatizing women, the home had become feminine space and therefore, the main source of control in one's private life had become the purview of women. Following this line of reasoning the Gordons and Keats proposed men should reclaim the power they had abdicated to their wives.

It is no small irony that just as these authors asserted the home as a source of autonomy and power, educated middle-class women like Friedan conceived suburban life to be as stultifying and self-denying as the others had defined twentieth-century labor. Still, instead of targeting the inadequacies of work, these postwar Americans targeted the inadequacies of each other. At its core, this literature reveals that years before an organized movement attempted to change gender roles, a pervasive discomfort with traditional family life was already being exhibited. This discomfort was neither solely male nor uniquely female, rather it was a shared contempt for the limitations of the gender roles embedded in suburban living. Unfortunately, those who suffered the bulk of the criticism whether levelled by anti-feminists or feminists were the women attempting to provide a good home life for their families.

NOTES

1.   Richard E. Gordon, M.D., Katharine K. Gordon and Max Gunther, *The Split-Level Trap* (New York: Random House, 1960).

2.   Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988). Readers should be aware that historians disagree about the freedom women had to participate in the public sphere and the degree of their happiness in the home. For alternative views see Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1979); Cynthia Harrison, *On Account of Sex: The Politics of Women's Issues, 1945-1968* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Susan Lynn, *Progressive Women in Conservative Times: Racial Justice, Peace, and Feminism, 1945 to the 1960s* (New York: Rutgers University Press, 1992); Joanne Meyerowitz, "Beyond the Feminine Mystique: A Reassessment of Postwar Mass Culture, 1946-1958" *Journal of Ameri-*

can History 79 March 1993, 1455-1482; Verta Rupp and Leila Taylor, *Survival in the Doldrums: The American Women's Rights Movement, 1945 to the 1960s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

3. Dolores Hayden, *Redesigning the American Dream* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1984) 7-9, 193-195.

4. See Barbara Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment* (New York: Anchor Press, 1983).

5. For one of the most helpful and concise descriptions of gender see Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," in *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

6. Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* 4th ed. (New York: Dell, 1962).

7. Peter G. Filene, *Him\Her\Self: Sex Roles in Modern America* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975).

8. David Riesman with Nathan Glazer and Reuel Denney, *The Lonely Crowd* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), 5.

9. The demographic transition is a basic construct used in the social sciences to explain historical changes in global population. It is most frequently referred to as the "S" shaped population curve. Part one of the curve is marked by high death and high birth rates (traditional-directed stage), part two is marked by low death and high birth rates(inner-directed stage) and part three of the curve is marked by low death and low birth rates (other-directed stage).

10. For a concise description of the rugged individualist as representative of the inner-directed personality type see Riesman, *Lonely Crowd*, 15.

11. Riesman, *Lonely Crowd*, 19.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid., 127.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid., 131.

16. Ibid., 130.

17. Ibid., 135.

18. James Weinstein, *The Corporate Ideal in the Liberal State 1900-1918* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968).

19. Paula Baker, "The Domestication of Politics" in *Women, the State, and Welfare*, ed. Linda Gordon (University of Wisconsin Press: Madison, 1990).

20. Rosalind Rosenberg, *Divided Lives: American Women in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992), 36.

21. Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men*, 24.

22. In many instances Riesman implies that he is aiming his research at middle-class, suburban America. Yet, his fluid discussions of time make it difficult to discern when he is referring to the Progressive Era versus when he is referring to the postwar period. This is particularly so because he tends to label the transition he has identified as a product of the Modern Epoch— roughly meaning the twentieth century. Riesman also states that no society is purely inner-directed or outer-directed. Employing the concept of cultural lag, Riesman conflates the I-D\O-D transition. At times he argues that this transition had already occurred yet at others times he argues that it is an ongoing process.

23. See for example, Richard Pells, *Liberal Mind in a Conservative Age* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985).

24. William H. Whyte, Jr. *The Organization Man* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1956), 26.

25. Whyte, *Organization Man*, 7.

26. Ibid., 263-7.

27. Ibid., 365.

28. Ibid., 357.

29.   Ibid., 25-35.

30.   Ibid., 404.

31.   Whyte's connection between the pioneer spirit and suburbanization is not unique. In *Suburban Lives* (Rutgers University Press: New York, 1990), Margaret Marsh explains that the ideology of domesticity and proponents of suburbanization evolved out of two separate ideological traditions. In the nineteenth century the ideology of domesticity was espoused by urban women who saw the home as a source of female power. Yet, suburbanization was supported by men who linked it with maintaining the Jeffersonian vision of an independent citizenry. The latter tradition obviously falls in line with the desire to restore the autonomy of men in the suburbs.

32.   *The Organization Man*, 356.

33.   See for example, Filene, *Him/Her/Self*. Filene goes so far to argue that critics like Riesman and Whyte were indeed inaccurate when they said that postwar men were alienated from their work or from their homes. Although I strongly disagree, it is apparent that the majority of men, whether discontent or not, certainly did not abandon their families or their breadwinner duties.

34.   The KLS consists of several surveys of 600 hundred white middle-class men and women. The participants answered a series of questionnaires regarding their feelings about married life. The KLS is a great resource for determining how white, middle-class couples understood their relations during the 1950s. See May, *Homeward Bound* for a full analysis of these surveys.

35.   John Keats, *A Crack in the Picture Window* (n.p.: Riverside Press, 1956).

36.   Ibid., 170, 181.

37.   Ibid., 5.

38.   Ibid., 64.

39.   Ibid., 45.

40.   Ibid., 60.

41.   Ibid., 61.

42.   Ibid., 60.

43.   For a concise depiction of this stereotype one can easily recall Jim Backus' character in *Rebel Without A Cause*. He is portrayed as the perpetually henpecked husband of a domineering wife. Playing Backus' son, James Dean is mortally humiliated when he sees his father dressed in an apron, picking up a spilled dinner tray on his hands and knees. For a good description of images of the 1950s on film see Peter Biskind, *Seeing is Believing: How Hollywood Taught Us To Stop Worrying and Love the Fifties* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983).

44.   Their argument fit perfectly within the tradition of major scholars such as C. Wright Mills and John Kenneth Galbraith, who were also struggling with concerns over the impact of abundance. See C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956) and John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1958).

45.   Ibid., 39-40.

46.   Ibid., 43.

47.   Ibid.

48.   Ibid., 104.

49.   Ibid., 164.

50.   Ibid., 136-7.

51.   Ibid., 154.

52.   Emphasis mine. Ibid., 160.

53.   Ibid.

54.   Ibid., 160.

55.   The same was true for reviews of John Keats. He was criticized by suburbanites for attacking their poor choice of investment as well as reducing people to caricatures. But the gender issues were ignored.

56. Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, 25.
57. Friedan's analysis was obviously limited to women in the middle class. College access for white middle-class women had become relatively common. However, the numbers of women in school and graduating were actually at lower levels than they had been in the 1920s. The race elements of this critique are important as well. Through the process of redlining and blatant discriminatory practices people of color had been prevented from living in the suburbs. Indeed there is an intimate connection between African-American access to the urban landscape and white flight to the suburbs.
58. Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, 233.
59. In one particular housing development Friedan interviewed twenty-eight women. Of these twenty-eight, sixteen were in psychoanalytic therapy, eighteen were taking tranquilizers, several had attempted suicide, and twelve were engaged in extramarital affairs "in fact or in fantasy." Ibid., 235.
60. Ibid., 257.
61. Ibid., 301.
62. ˙ Ibid., 274.
63. Ibid., 272.
64. Ibid., 202.

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