"Impersonal, but Friendly":
Causes of the New Emotional Style

Victorian emotional culture was not replaced by accident. Beginning in the 1920s or a bit before, a variety of factors combined to undermine the nineteenth-century synthesis and build up a new aversion to emotional intensity. Simply put, the combination of economic and familial functionalism and the larger innovations that supported Victorian culture began to unravel. New economic forms redefined functional emotions. Cultural changes further pointed this redefinition in the direction of growing hostility to intense emotional experience. A new breed of experts translated these various factors into emotionology. Finally, alterations in family forms, and particularly parent-child relations, worked into the brew. In one sense, this mix of factors that caused the new emotionology was unsurprising. Emotional change reflected some of the developments associated with the maturation of American industrial society, which have been widely studied and which remain open to much discussion. Even here, however, the link with emotion helps identify the larger structural shifts in society, pinpointing their timing, and explaining their links with individual behavior. Furthermore, familiar themes like heightened consumerism or the reduced birthrate did not by themselves guide the shift in emotional standards. Their combination was vital, and they were supplemented by other changes in personal values, including new anxieties about health. New economic and familial structures required new emotional definitions, but the specific results were
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not inevitable, save as the cultural context shifted as well. The challenge is to fit the puzzle together with the mixture of novel and recognizable pieces. The result not only explains the changes already described, but explains why the second quarter of the century served as the real crucible of contemporary middle-class character in the United States.

Neither the disseminators nor the audience for the new emotional culture spelled out their overall motivations. As we have seen, some of the changes were almost unperceived, and no one explicitly captured the general movement against intensity. Many advice givers and advice receivers were almost surely unaware of exactly why they wanted to move away from the emotional culture of previous generations even when, as was the case by the 1940s, they did recognize that they wanted to behave differently and to socialize their children differently than in the past. This means that causation must be teased out from a variety of indications, with careful attention to the connections that can be demonstrated but no claim of rigorous proof.

Not surprisingly, shifts in emotionology responded to several basic changes in American society during the second quarter of the twentieth century. However, some major changes were not clearly involved. We will see, for example, that the state had no definable role in the new emotionology, except insofar as a growth of government functions gave some of the new breed of experts the backing of agencies such as the Children's Bureau. Leading events such as the world wars factor in, but only rather vaguely, while the experience of the 1930s depression seems oddly irrelevant to the ongoing reconsideration of emotional standards that began during prosperity and continued even amid economic dislocation.

As in the nineteenth century, specific factors combined with more general changes to promote redefinitions in emotionology, particularly where discrete emotions were concerned. A new stance toward grief, as we have seen, owed much to the radical decline in the infant mortality rate that occurred between 1880 and 1920 and that began to be perceived by the 1890s.¹ With less need to anticipate grief on the death of a child, with growing emphasis on successful measures to reduce many causes of death, and with valorization of medical personnel as heroic death fighters, grief almost inevitably declined in stature. New attention to problems of jealousy followed in part from changes in patterns of social interaction. During the Victorian era men and women spent much
time in separate social spheres; young men roomed with their colleagues, participated in male lodges, and only in their later twenties began a process of active courtship. By 1920 young men and women spent more and more time in each other's company as coeducation gained ground and novel practices such as dating reconfigured the social activities of high school and college-age youth. New prescriptions against jealousy were a necessary result of this increased heterosexual mingling. New levels of concern about anger and aggression followed in part from perceptions of heightened crime, including juvenile delinquency, and the results of untrammeled aggression in Nazism and then renewed world war. It was difficult, in this context, to view channeled anger as a safe or even useful emotional motivation. As parental control over adolescents became increasingly limited, attention to emotional guidance for younger children was heightened, and an effort was made to develop emotional enforcers that were less dependent on lifelong guilt, more attuned to the emerging peer culture.

Efforts to increase adult supervision of children and youth, widely noted as dividing the nineteenth-century experience of childhood (particularly for boys) from the new, more regulated environment of the early twentieth century, fed the revision of fear standards, for adults could justify their new claims of authority as coaches or scoutmasters in part from their need to attack Victorian "boy culture" and its use of dares and bravado. The simple fact of greater urbanization also affected fear, removing children from daily interaction with animals and thus making them more likely to be frightened by a neighbor's pet. Fear of animals quite probably increased (in contrast to the dominant nineteenth-century concern, which was cruelty to animals). Certainly such fear became more noticeable, and this in turn helped spur the larger reevaluation of fear in boyhood. Changes concerning love, finally, owed a great deal to the growing acceptance of birth control devices in the middle class. Premarital sex was not immediately revolutionized as a result, but the idea of love rising above sex made far less functional sense by the 1920s, and as a result some of the more general ethereality vanished.

This review of specifics could easily be extended, and existing studies of changes in individual emotions have already prepared a great deal of useful explanation. Some of the causes for these specific changes relate to the larger framework that must be developed to account for the more general attack on emotional intensity. It remains important to attend to
shifts that bore particularly on a single emotion. Among other things, specific contexts help explain some of the differences in timing already noted. By studying such contexts we learn, for example, that attention to grief preceded the more general reconsideration of Victorianism because of declining death rates—though in the long run the results merged with the larger twentieth-century emotional configuration. The general factors and especially the main lines of cultural and functional change transcended a mere accumulation of particulars. This is why, as was true in explaining Victorian emotionology, a larger analysis remains essential.

At the same time, it is vital to insist on the magnitude of the changes that were occurring, for while important continuities persisted from the previous culture—including the aversion to anger in families or the distinction between jealousy and love—it is still the case that the Victorian amalgam was jettisoned. Such a sharp change in standards sets a demanding analytical agenda, making it necessary to identify the causes that prompted such a substantial reworking of widely accepted norms. By the same token, the causation package that can be identified helps explain why so many Victorian staples—from emotional distinctions between the genders to the unprecedented attack on intensity—were replaced.

Yet, beguilingly, there is a line of argument, offered particularly by European scholars, that takes a different tack, and this must be assessed before the more elaborate alternative is presented. Several perceptive Dutch and German sociologists have stressed the emergence of a new emotional style in the twentieth century. Much of their evidence is European, but their generalizations often range across the Atlantic. In some ways, in their fascination with growing informality and individualized adjustments in emotional presentation, they claim greater movement away from Victorian standards than may actually apply. As noted in the previous chapter, it is important at least in the American case to emphasize the real tension between individualism and regulation and not to assume that the former triumphed over the latter. I will return to the issue of European-American comparison in a concluding chapter, but at this point it is necessary directly to address the European theories of causation.

The most impressive work to date on emotional style has simultaneously portrayed a major twentieth-century shift and claimed substantial
continuity in causation. Abram de Swaan, in describing the contrast between nineteenth- and twentieth-century approaches to emotional standards, notes a major shift from “management by command” to “management by negotiation.” He insists that both phases constitute stages in a common civilizing process that began with the growing strength of national states as early as the seventeenth century. To reconcile his dual claims, de Swaan begins by stressing, correctly, that the “widely held assumption” that emotional restrictions were lessening “does not hold.” His vision of management by negotiation assumes a great deal of self-control, which is why the appearance of freedom in the new emotional style “is so rarely experienced as liberating.” This leads de Swaan and other analysts like Cas Wouters, who go somewhat farther in exploring innovation and informality, to the second reconciling claim: that precisely the success of Victorian impulse control—the nineteenth-century version of Norbert Elias’s civilizing offensive—has allowed a relaxation of the most formal emotional rules in the twentieth century. Precisely because most people have internalized appropriate controls of violence, sexuality, and emotional outburst, twentieth-century society can afford a much looser emotional regime, at least on the surface.

In these analyses, causation is not really an issue. De Swaan mentions changes in management hierarchies and Jürgen Gerhards addresses the impact of a consumer society, but according to these analysts, these contemporary efflorescences are ultimately generated by the inexorable civilizing process—the force, connected with state discipline and upper-class control of the lower orders, that launched greater impulse control even before the Victorian era itself. They admit that the civilizing process has become more complex in the twentieth century, as Elias himself noted in a final phrase and as his disciples discuss more elaborately; relaxation of sexuality and of earlier standards of bodily control, as in posture or dress, make this obvious. But the process itself remains ineluctable, almost beyond explanation.

A claim that grants major change but makes no concerted effort to explain it provides an elusive target for alternative analysis. Obviously, emotional control continued in the twentieth century; in some ways, it increased. To this extent, it is accurate to draw a very general link between the present and past periods in which emotional regulation had also occurred. A few of the more simplified claims of direct continuity
between Victorian and twentieth-century control approaches can be easily dismissed, but the overall change-within-common-process approach is harder to tackle. Those who believe in an ineffable civilizing offensive, tied however diffusely to a tangible entity such as the nation state, may well be unpersuadable. But this same ineffability must raise questions: Has a common underlying force guided emotional culture for the past four centuries? Is the twentieth century, with its undeniable shifts in focus, still part of the same fundamental period in emotional culture as the eighteenth century or the Victorian era?

I have argued that the change that began to take shape in the 1920s in the United States was profound, comprising a major part of a more general shift in American personality standards that has been noted by various scholars, from David Riesman onward.\textsuperscript{10} Change is never complete. The new twentieth-century emotional style built on some of the standards that Victorians had also emphasized, and of course the larger similarity—that both cultures set forth emotional standards at all—must be granted as well. But the context for emotional culture was changing substantially, which means that new causation can and should be sought. It is not necessary to rely on an overarching civilizing process in order to unearth a new explanatory combination that, in addition, includes some factors mentioned only in passing in the European assessments. Nor is such reliance desirable, for it distracts from a full understanding of the new emotional signals themselves. Granting, then, that some momentum from past emotional management continued and that twentieth-century American society, like all modern societies, most definitely did seek to regulate impulse, it is essential to undertake a fresh look at causation.

In this effort, emphasis on innovation gains pride of place, for what took shape by the 1920s was a major reevaluation of intensities in personal expression. The Victorian relationship between sexuality and emotion, for example, was virtually reversed. During the nineteenth century sexual intensity was regarded with uniform hostility in middle-class culture, which prescribed that sexual pleasure be sought cautiously and in moderation. Emotions, in contrast, could be vigorously indulged in appropriate contexts. By the 1920s the reversal was underway; despite hesitations, sexual intensity won new approval. The principal new sexual constraint involved explicit identification of homosexuality as a warning that intensity must be directed appropriately, in the proper
context. Emotional intensity, in contrast, now encountered some of the same blanket aversion that had described sexual intensity in the previous era. Emotion, not sex, became the field in which great management subtlety was required. Other constraints were reevaluated at the same time. Rigid costumes and corresponding injunctions about posture gave ground fairly steadily, though bodily discipline was still enforced by anxieties about weight and exercise. Still, on balance, greater physical freedom coincided with the new, if subtle, restraints on emotional expression. Fear of excess showed not only in the emotional sphere but also in the new definition of alcoholism as something more than a problem of moral discipline; here was another area in which some individuals, at least, needed to be warned that self-control must be bolstered.11

Beyond the major shifts in the rules governing specific emotions—the decline of channeled anger, attacks on excessive motherlove, the painful reevaluation of grief—the basic tone of twentieth-century emotions advice was transformed. As the growing reliance on embarrassment suggests, even the functions of emotions in maintaining human relationships were recast, with intensity now seen as a barrier rather than a bond.12 The extent of the transformation calls for an explicit causal inquiry, whatever one’s ultimate views about some underlying civilizing process might be. General factors must be identified that explain the overall directions of change and its concentration in the three to four decades after 1920. Such an exploration will not only account for the change but also deepen our understanding of its nature.

Sources of Standards: A Changing Intellectual Base

During the Victorian period the primary source of emotional advice to the middle class came from people whose authority rested on a combination of morality and common sense. Morality was in some instances bolstered by Protestant religious training, though this was not always the case and most advice after 1830 strove to avoid a sectarian tone. Thus Jacob Abbott, author of several family manuals and twenty-three books in the *Rollo* series, built not only on his training as a Protestant minister but also on his dissatisfaction with conventional theology in his effort to update and broaden a largely moral version of his religion—and to reach a varied middle-class audience outside any institutional
setting. Such confidence in moral vision also predominated among many of the authors for popular periodicals like the *Ladies Home Journal*, as well as among other prolific advice writers like T. S. Arthur, who also mixed vaguely religious injunctions with specific emotional advice. As we have seen, scientific claims began to intrude on the moral ground of advice by the end of the century, but they initially supplemented moralism in the area of emotional standards. Authorities like G. Stanley Hall largely echoed the claims made by the moralists when writing about such topics as the motivational importance of anger or the gender basis for natural emotions such as fear or jealousy.

Two kinds of challengers arose to contend with the Victorian moral authority, both of which blossomed fully in the 1920s. The first were the self-conscious moderns, who still argued morality but based their claims less on common sense and more on up-to-dateness. We have seen the impact of modernist thinking in the areas of grief, love, and jealousy particularly. More important still was the new appeal to science and related research studies as the basis for popularized emotional advice and as the most far-reaching alternative to moralism. A characteristic exemplar of the new-style advice writer was D. H. Thom, who trained as a physician and then moved into psychiatry and guidance work while also serving as a major author for the Children’s Bureau in the Department of Labor. Social workers, doctors, psychologists—these were the people who were now entitled to define standards or whose theories other popularizers referred to in justifying their own approaches. As we have seen, new journals such as *Parents’ Magazine* and *Esquire* eagerly turned to these new authorities in articles dealing with children’s fears or the new standards of love. New subdisciplines got into the act, most notably with the rise of industrial psychology and the resulting zeal of personnel experts to prescribe appropriate emotional qualities at work.

The new breed of popularizing experts both encouraged and reflected changes in dominant emotional standards. Their basic arguments shifted from training for moral standards toward encouragement of personal adjustment, simply as a function of the change in the disciplinary background of the advice setters whose authority and knowledge they drew upon. This change clearly provides part of the explanation for new concerns about emotional intensity, a quality that was far more appropriate when a person’s main task was to live up to demanding standards
than when that task was redefined in terms of demonstrating self-control and the ability to work and play well with others. The shift showed clearly, for example, in the recasting of fear from an occasion for moral challenge to a potential source of damaging trauma. In essence, the new breed of experts was explicitly interested in challenging the wisdom of their elders—a feature particularly prominent among the modernist writers—and in the process they generated a definite direction for change that profoundly altered the goals of personality development.

The new bases of relevant expertise also brought other new factors into play. One of these involved, quite simply, data. Scientific experiments began to provide unexpected information, particularly about children, as early as the 1890s, when G. Stanley Hall and others sponsored studies of childhood emotions. While his own views on emotions reflected a firm Victorianism, the facts he uncovered shook Victorian foundations. Hall's findings on the frequency of night terrors among infants raised questions about the Victorian stiff-upper-lip approach to male courage, for as Hall himself noted, children's fears were both unpredictable and irrational. Soon after 1900 advice manuals sponsored by the Child Study Association, including Alice Birney's, began to introduce new cautions concerning fear even as Victorian standards were maintained in other respects. Birney stressed the emotional fragility of young children and the need for protective strategies, clearly forecasting the more general reassessments of the 1920s. She also ignored the Victorian tradition that distinguished boys from girls where fear was involved; scientific observation showed that children's problems with fear knew no gender. Other linkages between experiment and advice occurred in the area of children's jealousy, though here it seems likely that standards began to change even before scientists started measuring jealousy among young children. Nevertheless, the series of 1920s psychological studies seemed to confirm the prevalence of bitter rivalries among siblings—particularly, but not exclusively, girls—and this further fueled the effort to focus new socialization attention on this emotional problem. New data also entered into the current of advice about anger at work as Elton Mayo and others uncovered surprising levels of rage on the shop floor that, in their judgment, profoundly interfered with efficiency. Here again, objective science did not reign supreme, given that Mayo and his colleagues interpreted worker anger in light of middle-class domestic standards; but new facts about emotional expres-
sion became available in the process and added to the sense that past emotional norms must be reassessed.

New expertise implicitly affected gender contours. Advice writers in both the Victorian era and the early twentieth century divided fairly evenly between males and females. But the women who penned popularizations or magazine articles after 1900 were increasingly professionals, caught up in the movement to justify their work not on grounds of special female emotional qualities but through objective science. Few of the new women writers professed active feminism. Nevertheless, although they wrote mainly during decades in which feminism moved into a less strident phase, many of the childrearing experts of the 1920s and 1930s illustrated the extent to which professionally trained women implicitly revised key elements of the Victorian system, including its gender divisions. Their new credentials were typically impressive. Dorothy Canfield Fisher, one of the early revisionists, held a doctorate (though in French literature); Alice Birney had attended Mount Holyoke and later became a professional child welfare worker. These two women were of course transitional, and both at least initially reflected some of Victorianism’s continued hold. Slightly later women popularizers, born after 1890, had more explicit professional backgrounds. Caroline Zachary earned a doctorate in educational psychology, Dorothy Baruch a doctorate in psychology. Sidonie Gruenberg had advanced education, while Marian Faegre was an academic. None of these women was actively partisan, but their standards almost inevitably challenged Victorian assumptions about female emotionality and the differences between men and women. And while many other popularizers were men, some of these, like D. H. Thom, worked closely with the women experts of the Children’s Bureau in what was increasingly a coeducational field.

The new experts were also frequently aware of their role in helping to set common standards for a nation that had seemed, around 1900, dangerously fragmented by labor strife and diverse waves of immigration. The 1920s launched the period of new attention to Americanization, and many of the new popularizers played a role in educational and media efforts to move toward a common culture. This mood did not require that Victorian standards be altered, but it did help generate a sense that older values might be reevaluated and that some innovation might forward the process of reducing divisions in American values.

Finally, the new experts were conduits through which the impact of
certain striking events could affect advice about emotional standards. Advice in the 1920s and 1930s was colored by American reactions to the perceived irrationality and childishness of European warmongers, stirred initially by the fears roused during World War I and its aftermath. We have seen that some popularizations, particularly those dealing with grief, delighted in contrasting American rationality with European ungoverned impulse. Connections grew more explicit with the advent of Nazism and World War II, particularly with regard to growing concern about anger—or, more properly, about what was now termed "aggression"—in light of such sweeping evidence of what untrammeled rage could do to a civilized society.\(^{19}\) It is hard to determine how much the atmosphere of the world war years colored basic changes in emotional standards, but there is no question that individual experts and whole schools of thought, such as behaviorism, were affected by a desire to define standards of socialization that would keep Americans free from the madness they thought they saw in other parts of the world.

Experts and popularizers alone do not an emotional culture make. There is a tendency among some historically minded students of changes in emotional culture to ignore issues of authorship, treating their sources as automatic reflections of larger and more interesting changes in the society around them. Indeed, the new breed of popularizers who were cutting their teeth in the 1920s largely mirrored developments in the economy and in wider culture that in turn serve as the principal explanations of why emotional standards shifted away from Victorianism. In addition, only these larger factors account for the growing audience for the experts—the people who thronged to the lectures of the marriage counselors, for example, or who gobbled up the stories in *Esquire* or the advice columns in *Parents' Magazine*. Furthermore, specific intellectual schools among the experts largely pale beside the broader changes that their theories mirrored. Behaviorism, as we have seen, played a role in some of the new emotional standards, though Watson's theories were not uniformly adopted and particularly affected revisions in the areas of fear and motherlove. By the 1940s the somewhat greater Freudian influence ushered in certain changes in popularized advice, while the growth of a more permissive attitude symbolized by the early Dr. Spock, which was deliberately directed against behaviorism, modified emotional norms in a few cases. In general, however, the new emotionological trends overrode the seemingly vital fluctuations in dominant psychologi-
cal schools.\textsuperscript{20} The attack on anger, the concern about sibling jealousy, even the substantial downgrading of motherlove, which had gained impetus from behaviorism, largely continued in the years of Spockian permissiveness. Again, we must not let attention to authorship of advice unduly simplify our understanding of causation or lead us into every fad and byway of expert enthusiasm. The fundamental trends ran deeper.

Still, shifts in expertise both reflect and help account for a number of features of the new approach to emotional standards. Secularization increased, with divine support and heavenly reward increasingly withdrawing from emotions of all sorts. New data helped generate the growing focus on emotional guidance for very young children. Concern about healthy personalities and smooth interpersonal relationships, the dominant themes in advice psychology, began to outstrip explicitly moral goals. This in turn played a role not only with regard to overall emotional intensity but also in the new aversion to guilt and the effort to use embarrassment to signal maladjustment in emotional expression. New kinds of training produced different views of the gender implications of emotional standards.\textsuperscript{21} Thus, analyzing the new breed of experts helps explain the timing of the redefinition of basic emotional culture, and also some of the directions this new definition took.

\textit{Family}

Two strands of change within the middle-class family fed into the growing preoccupation with intensity, and they most definitely help explain the almost desperate search for innovative guidance from the experts. The more familiar of these involved gender, but the more significant centered on parent-child relations.

By the 1920s social interactions between men and women were changing rapidly, both before family formation and during marriage. The Victorian life course had entailed a considerable period of separation between women and young men, who they moved away from their parents and into the company of other men while they decided on careers and launched their first efforts. This was the time when men formed intense emotional bonds with each other, sometimes as roommates, and when they joined the fraternal lodges that burgeoned during the nineteenth century. With marriage, typically around the age of thirty, more involvement with women occurred, but lodge activity might persist
and contact was further limited by the sheer length of the working day, which was sometimes supplemented by periods of isolation in the male sanctuary upon return to the home. Even vacations frequently separated men from their families.22

Family time for men may have begun to increase as early as the 1880s. Certainly by the 1920s evidence of heightened paternal involvement with families began to proliferate. Meanwhile, dating activities brought men into social contact with women earlier, during high school or college. For the middle class, dating was a social and sexual activity removed from active thoughts of marriage, at least until the college years, but it represented a huge departure from the male-oriented socializing of the nineteenth century. Not surprisingly, lodge membership began to plummet during the 1920s.23 Within marriage, there was an increase in social activities that joined husband and wife, as studies like that of Middletown suggested. Card playing and other home-based entertainments brought the sexes into contact with each other, reducing gender distinctions in social patterns. Parties that sometimes involved carefully, if subtly, regulated sexual games among husbands and wives from different families began to appear in the middle-class social scene from the 1920s onward.24

In a variety of respects, then, from the teen years onward, social contact between men and women increased rather strikingly over the levels of the Victorian era. The term "companionate marriage" has been coined to describe precisely these social patterns, which were also recommended by the new breed of marriage counselors.25 This was no breakthrough toward gender equality, but it was nevertheless a substantial shift in the interactions between men and women. Even as the change confirmed women's domestic role by emphasizing family companionship, it also signaled the need to adjust some of the emotional disparities that had been fundamental to Victorian culture.

Obviously, new contacts increased the pressures against specific emotions like jealousy. Particularly before the rise of "steady" dating late in the 1930s, dating deliberately involved contacts with various individuals from the opposite sex, which burdened a jealous temperament almost unbearably. Increased socializing might also, as Esquire noted, have prompted some rethinking of love, on grounds that transcendent closeness amid daily socializing was too much of a good thing.26

The larger implications of these new social patterns affected overall
judgments of intensity. Now that men and women socialized with each other on a more routine basis, efforts to define the genders in terms of radically different emotional styles almost inevitably came under question. This in turn altered the framework in which emotions such as fear or anger were evaluated, adding to research findings that also blurred distinctions between boys and girls. Insistence on special emotional courage for males made less sense when smooth relations between men and women headed the agenda. Motherlove, of course, fell victim to the same homogenizing impulse, as did channeled anger for men. Because many emotional intensities preached in Victorian culture had also served to define gender identity, the reduction of gender as a category in social relations inevitably reshaped consideration of passion as well. Love was no longer the intense emotion that enabled men and women to transcend their differences. Gender distinctions remained, and the attack on romantic love in one facet of male culture can even be seen as an innovative reaction against the dissolving of prior emotional divisions. But the Victorian staples no longer served, and with this there was a decline in openness to the kinds of intensities that would help men establish their particular qualities, would help women establish theirs, and would help both overcome their differences in love.27

Relations between parents and children changed at least as much as did social interactions between men and women. However, these changes are harder to trace if only because rhetoric could so obscure reality. Well into the twentieth century, middle-class readers liked to hear about how important children were and how well they were being treated in this enlightened age. The proclamation of the new era as the “century of the child” picked up on this whiggish theme of progress.28 At this level Victorian fascination with children seemed to be gaining ground as more families realized the centrality of parent-child relations while casting aside some of the more brutal or heedless treatments of the past. In some respects, of course, as in child health, the proclamations of progress were true; but in descriptions of emotional standards they could easily mislead.

Advice givers were clearly urging parents to regard children, including very young children, as far more problematic, vulnerable, and downright difficult than their Victorian counterparts. Nineteenth-century belief in an innocent blank slate was declining in favor of implicit belief in a host of ingrained fears and hostilities. Parents must not only avoid giving
bad examples; they must also actively organize emotional and material support systems to help children overcome innate jealousies or anxieties. Further, these same parents might not have quite the automatic fund of emotional virtues as had been available in the Victorian assumption of transcendent maternal love. In a variety of ways, then, parenting was becoming harder, at least according to the prescriptive literature. One explanation for this persistent complication of the parental task, this new view of children as problems, lay in the desire of the popularizers to get their rhetorical foot in the door, to persuade an audience that outside advice was essential. But real changes in parent-child contacts were in fact occurring. These changes, in turn, involved both shifts in adult caretaking and alterations in the emotional experiences of young children themselves.

Parents in the middle class had more direct contact with their young children by the 1920s than had been common previously. The use of live-in servants declined in the middle class from the 1890s onward. Day servants were now often drawn from groups seen as even more different from the middle class than nineteenth-century domestics had been, and quite apart from the sheer reduction in servant availability, they were less likely to be used for child care. Beginning in the 1920s proper, coresidence by older relatives, particularly grandparents or maiden aunts, also began to decline steadily, which further reduced the range of adults able to participate in daily child care. This weakening of the extended family in initial response to the growth of an urban, industrial society occurred after a century in which it had actually gained ground. The change was often compounded, at least on a day-to-day basis, by suburbanization, which absorbed more and more levels of the urban middle class from the 1880s onward. Changes of this sort inherently increased the intensity of parent-child contacts and potentially also the burdens on the parents involved.

Continued reduction of the birth rate, while limiting the pressure on parents on a numerical basis, also compounded the starkness of parent-child interactions. There were fewer older children to help with later child care and to serve as buffers between young children and their parents. A second child, as a result, was likely to direct a great deal more emotional attention to parents than was common in larger broods. Certain kinds of emotional intensities, including sibling jealousy, tend to increase in small families, where children do not see themselves as part
of a larger group with mutual responsibilities for their own maintenance, but rather focus directly on ties to parents. With two- and three-child families becoming the norm in the middle class by 1900, and with the birth rate declining further thereafter, parental awareness and experience of distressing emotional signals from children readily increased. Emotions were more focused, and there were fewer intermediaries.

Finally, children's experiences also changed. Starting in infancy, they became more likely to sleep alone. Middle-class Victorian families routinely had children sleep together, which set patterns of physical and emotional relationship that extended to later friendships. This practice was abandoned beginning around 1900 and was actively disapproved by many experts between 1920 and 1940. Individuation, separate space and separate toys, became the key to proper socialization and avoidance of emotional complications. At the same time, however, these new practices could increase the anxiety of very young children, now placed in a separate room at a very tender age. Growing reports of fears of the dark and of noise might well have sprung not only from new discoveries about childish irrationality but also from new stresses in the experience of childhood itself. The immaturity of children, their incapacity to behave "rationally," could gain new emphasis in this atmosphere, helping to make immaturity a badge of emotional incompetence when applied to adult behaviors as well.

The net effect of these changes clearly established some of the context for the growing perception of children as emotionally vulnerable, prone to un governable extremes unless carefully guided and manipulated. The resulting increase in pressure on adults may well have developed some new ambivalences about infants that, while normally repressed, may have added yet another ingredient to the desire to keep emotional levels down. The attack on intensity, in other words, reflected new tensions in the parent-child experience and some attempt on the part of parents to project their own tur moils onto their children, to cope with their own need to suppress by insisting that children learn early on to keep emotional burners on low. Parents afraid to acknowledge their own sexual jealousy, for example, could focus new attention on sibling squabbles. Parents tenser with children's emotions than they liked to admit could express some of their feelings by urging the kids to stop acting like babies and learn to keep cool.

Innovations in family life, particularly the rapid reduction of the birth
rate, also influenced intellectual judgments on the family, in Europe as well as the United States. Rudolph Binion has highlighted the new hostility to the family in literature from the 1880s onward as authors began to focus on deviant sexuality, oppression of children and women, and the stifling effects of family life on all its members. He attributes this literary revulsion to two main factors: the anxieties resulting from the newly nonprocreative nature of sexuality attendant on birth rate reduction; and the rising emotional intensity within families attempting to realize Victorian norms within a smaller, more intimate framework. Certainly the literary current helped set the stage for the defiant modernism that in turn attacked conventions of jealousy and familial grief by the 1920s. It may also have mirrored deeper tensions within the middle-class family itself that moved toward deintensification in reaction to the guilts and uncertainties generated by unprecedented levels of birth control, as parents worried about the ethics of contraception and the goals of family life with the experience of parenthood reduced.

Whatever the more pervasive psychological undercurrents for the literary attack on family might have been, there is no question that by the 1920s changes in parent-child contacts and in gender relations had departed from Victorian norms, often in directions participants did not fully or frankly grasp. These changes in turn helped spark reconsideration of specific emotional standards, making emotions such as jealousy and fear more problematic. More generally, they encouraged a redefinition of desirable emotional pitch. Shifts in family relations thus coincided, both in overall timing and in direction, with the factors that most clearly defined the new emotional culture. These factors emanated from economic structure and from new anxieties about the body.

The Consumer Society

More and more Americans were becoming entranced by the joys of consumerism in the decades around 1900—there is no historical mystery to uncover here. Advertisements became more elaborate, department store displays more extravagant, the sheer delight in buying new items more pronounced. What consumerism meant in real, middle-class life is not, however, fully clear as yet. The emotional implications of consumerism help clarify its meaning, while rising consumer commitment in turn explains many of the changes in emotional culture. Some
relationships between consumerism and emotion are fairly obvious, but the crucial link with intensity, less visible on the surface, proves particularly revealing.

Consumerism was not new at the turn of the century. Elements of a new passion for goods, with emotional implications such as impulsiveness and a new tendency to define personal identity through things, have been traced back to the eighteenth century. However, consumerism took on a dramatic new shape in the twentieth century, not only because of the greater abundance of goods but also because of a deeper impact on personal meanings. The incorporation of attachments to things into emotionology was a symptom of this intensification. Several distinct changes in tone emerged in the early twentieth century, providing the context for heightened links with emotion. Commercial notices, for example, shifted from dry, largely informational headings to more frankly emotional appeals, suggesting that buyers could achieve better ways of life by purchasing particular products. Thus as late as the 1890s, advertisements for silk goods came in the form of statements of price and utility in newspaper product lists, but thereafter they stressed a carefree mood and more than a bit of sexuality. Increasingly, illustrative materials accompanied slogans such as a department store’s lure, “To feel young and carefree, buy our silk.” Department stores were also remodeled in the early decades of the twentieth century to stress larger, more evocative store windows and displays. Charged adjectives like “alluring,” “bewitching,” “enticing”—or, for more domestic products, “healthy,” “sanitary,” “warm”—became staples in promotional campaigns. The range of goods themselves steadily expanded. The bicycle served as the first relatively expensive mass sales item widely purchased in the middle class that was not fairly directly related to needs (however elaborately defined) of food, clothing, or shelter. The 1880s craze emphasized the recreational and pleasurable functions of bicycles. Cosmetics, automobiles, and a wealth of other products added to the list during the first decades of the twentieth century, while even more ordinary goods, like soap, were pushed well beyond any definable necessity. The idea of a new stage of consumerism taking shape by the early 1900s seems well founded.

This heightened middle-class consumer interest, in turn, had several effects on emotional standards. First and most obviously, it encouraged the growing penchant to distinguish between pleasant and unpleasant
emotions. Consumers sought products that made them feel good and shunned those that did not; not surprisingly, emotional standards increasingly moved in the same direction. Thus emotions like grief, which clearly involved pain and in addition could promote relatively few goods outside the services of the undertaker, came in for reexamination, were held up to the new light of consumer pleasures and found wanting.

The decline of guilt was an obvious result of heightened consumerism. Advertisers explicitly contended with possible guilt at self-indulgence, urging buyers to take a kind of pleasure in acquisition that would be untainted by internal emotional warnings. In a consumerist context, guilt clearly joined the list of bad emotions.

Growing consumerism also encouraged a new informality, a sense of loosening standards. Advertisers depended on impulse. A highly regulated atmosphere, in which firm social hierarchy prevailed, was not conducive to sales or to the open enjoyment of things, and so, as many sociologists of emotion have noted, this atmosphere gradually changed. Here was a clear source of the new emotional standards, which carried fewer firm prohibitions and claimed more expressiveness and openness. Certainly, consumer culture in the United States highlighted a strong democratic ingredient, emphasizing the wide availability of goods rather than rigid status groups, and this in turn promoted reassessment of certain emotions, like anger, that could be associated with defense of hierarchy. Smooth relations—including of course customer relations—rather than divisions based on entitlements to emotions like anger gained new emphasis in harmony with consumer values.

Consumerism also promoted the use of goods to deflect emotional stress. Beginning in the 1920s emotional advice conveyed this compensatory strategy in a variety of different contexts. Jealous or potentially jealous children should be distracted by access to their own clothes, toys, and room. Grandparents were told to bring gifts for a jealous sibling when offering traditional presents to a new baby or a birthday child. Children's fears might be approached through the lure of things, as in the suggestion that candy be used to draw a reluctant child into a darkened room. Some anger advice suggested that directing rage at things (rather than people) was a possible outlet for emotions otherwise best kept under wraps. The evolution of Esquire magazine implied that things might even be used to replace excessive love, as the magazine
turned men's attention away from debates over romance toward a diet of travel, records, cars, and gadgets.  

Finally, the use of goods as distractions could easily be transformed into a use of goods as a focus for intense attachments that were now no longer available in relationships. A logic of consumerism, indeed, involved winning satisfactions through acquisition that previously might have been won through passions like love or even anger. This point is no mere theoretical construct. Extremes such as the new disease of kleptomania showed how the passion for things could consume consumers in an atmosphere in which displays of goods gained a new place in the daily routine.

Children, newly problematic in family and emotional life, were exposed to the new effort to equate emotions and things early on as part of the attempt to guide them away from emotional extremes. Toys were of course used as distractions in many distressing situations, and while the technique was surely not brand new, its frequency increased as the range and importance of manufactured toys steadily expanded. Most revealing in this connection was the advent of new kinds of dolls. Dolls, of course, were no innovation of the turn-of-the-century decades. During most of the nineteenth century, however, dolls had been rather expensive items and had been designed primarily for older children. Their functions, while not divorced from emotion, were defined primarily in terms of utility and aesthetics. Dolls were intended to teach various kinds of learning and developmental skills and (particularly after the Civil War) an appreciation for fashion—the latter especially for the younger girls. By the 1890s an emotional role for dolls began to be suggested; comments were made to the effect that dolls might serve as objects of attachment to replace fathers absent at work. By this point also, girls were urged to use dolls for training in grief; doll funerals and other rituals were encouraged, as were such objects as doll coffins. Still, however, most dolls remained stiff, fragile creatures destined more for admiration and role playing than for deep affection, and the fascinating effort at grief involvement was designed for middle childhood, not the impressionable early years.

This situation changed in part because of new technology that allowed American manufacturers to displace European importers and to provide a succession of soft, cuddly creatures, including the famous American teddy bear, that were directed at infants of both sexes. In
preventing German exports, World War I completed the process of converting doll production to domestic centers and to products designed for physical contact rather than fragile items designed for aesthetic admiration. Rag dolls of all sorts proliferated, and the conversion to dolls that looked like children (or young animals) rather than adults was completed.44

At the same time dolls for older children, increasingly varied and numerous, became enmeshed in a variety of fantasy productions. Children’s stories supplemented the use of dolls by providing settings in which dolls expressed and received a variety of emotions. Children were encouraged to display attachment to dolls, and on their own they might also turn dolls into objects of rage or jealousy. Above all, dolls were increasingly designed to act as children or siblings, with their child owners being encouraged to feel parental or sisterly emotion toward them. Not surprisingly, in this new climate dolls began for the first time to receive comment from childrearing authorities and popularizers. Some objected to the kinds of fantasies that dolls stimulated: “Why foster a craving for novelty and variety that life cannot satisfy?” A minister blasted teddy bears as substitute objects of affection that corrupted the maternal instinct. More observers, however, commented on the positive roles dolls could play in emotional life. Thus teddy bears “may have robbed childhood of one of its terrors”—the fear of animals.45 The importance of the new dolls’ cuddly qualities was emphasized, both because they facilitated girls’ acquisition of maternal instincts and, more generally, because they provided infants of both sexes with a concrete, reliable focus for attachments. A 1932 observer in *Hygeia* put the point directly, though stiffly: “With the realization of the psychologic importance of the child’s early years, there has arisen a new need, that of definite toys of peace and a technic of presenting play material that will furnish the right background and associations for feelings.”46 Or, in an article of 1914: “Children’s affections [have] come to center around the toys with which they have lived and played.” For infants, parents were advised to “choose a soft animal; the affections as yet are very physical, and this is known as the ‘cuddling’ age.”47 The link between dolls and other toys and children’s emotions, though not an invention of the twentieth century, was almost certainly expanding.

The early use of dolls and other toys as emotional focuses for young children, followed by the deliberate use of material objects to distract
from emotional excess, linked consumerism to the socialization process and the perceived problems of children’s lack of mature control. There was no plot here, no foul machinations by toymakers or other consumer gurus to ensnare minds and passions; rather, growing consumer interests, increasingly recognized by parents and childrearing authorities, were fit into the experience of growing up just as new questions about children’s emotions were being posed. By the 1920s many middle-class Americans were being taught that intense emotion might more safely be directed toward artifacts than toward people and that acquisition might compensate for the limits to emotional spontaneity in other facets of life. And they began learning these lessons in infancy with the endearing toys that now crowded their cribs. In this sense consumerism went beyond its more obvious function of downgrading unpleasant emotions to undercut emotional intensity in interpersonal relations more generally.

Bureaucracy and the Service Sector: A New Functionalism

Changes in middle-class family life and the increasing emphasis on consumerism in American society helped reshape emotional culture. These factors explain major developments like the good-bad dichotomy and the growing focus on early childhood, and they contributed to the aversion to intensity. Trends in both areas, however, accumulated over several decades; they do not fully account for the emergence of the new emotional culture from the 1920s onward. Furthermore, while they are relevant to issues of intensity, they do not fully describe the new interest in self-control. Shifts in family patterns, for example, explain new concerns about children but not the growing emphasis on rationality. To achieve greater chronological precision and to account for a larger number of the actual directions of twentieth-century emotionology, we must consider other changes in economic structure that had accumulated by the 1920s.

The growth of managerial bureaucracies, particularly in corporations but also in sectors such as school administrations and other public agencies, called for new qualities that were different from the real or imagined virtues of the Victorian entrepreneur. Sports goals were redefined, for example, with football gaining on baseball in part because it seemed to inculcate teamwork more fully. At the same time, the rise of the service sector, with a growing number of jobs in sales, clerical work,
and the like, called for what came to be called "people skills," which had received far less emphasis in the production-oriented nineteenth century. On the whole, these skills were also required in bureaucratic hierarchies, at least in the middle ranks. Finally, though on a more subsidiary level, these developments also brought growing numbers of middle-class women into the labor force, at least briefly before marriage, and this had its own influence on the emotional tenor of work. 49

These developments, maturing by the 1920s, undercut the previous functional basis for emotional norms. They called for new definitions, including new goals in the emotional socialization of children. They supported the kinds of experts who were beginning to voice defense of new standards. 50 Finally, the shifts in American economic structure generated an audience for the new goals: managerial and service-sector personnel would, at least by the 1930s and 1940s, take the lead in internalizing twentieth-century emotional strategies, including the implicit but pervasive interest in avoiding undue intensity.

Several of the landmark studies of emotion in the twentieth century have illustrated the link between changes in occupational structure and emotional standards. Arlie Hochschild's examination of employer manipulation of emotion focused on the service sector. She paid particular attention to female employees like flight attendants, who were enjoined to smile and avoid spontaneous emotional response regardless of provocation. She found that this injunction affected not only the employees' experiences of their jobs but also their emotional reactions in other relationships. The Dutch sociologists who have emphasized the new informality, in which emotions are presented carefully depending on context, have similarly highlighted the bureaucracies of the later twentieth century, where at least superficial democracy reduces detailed rules of emotional conduct but where the need to manifest appropriate responses and avoid embarrassment continues to define important constraints. 51

In the United States the impact of new work settings became manifest during the 1920s. It was at this point that department store personnel programs increased their efforts to make sales clerks conform to middle-class norms in dress and demeanor. It was at this point that advice books for would-be secretaries (male as well as female) began to emphasize the need for emotional control, shifting away from the stress on honesty and punctuality that had dominated behavioral sections of corresponding
Impersonal, but Friendly"

manuals in the 1880s. And it was at this point that Elton Mayo, manifesting the middle-class aversion to undue anger that in the nineteenth century had focused almost exclusively on the home, began to apply his standards to shop-floor tactics, sketching the ventilationist approach that would spread widely in children's socialization as well as in work settings in subsequent decades. During the 1920s (with a bit of preparation during World War I) Mayo and other industrial psychologists also contended that new kinds of emotional restraint were needed in job areas where female employees were beginning to play a role, however subordinate. Women, so the new common wisdom argued, could not take the emotional rough-and-tumble that Victorian work had entailed, breaking down in tears at signs of anger on the part of supervisors. Moreover, women brought new jealous backbiting to the job floor, which must be nipped in the bud by an insistence on rational control. It was at this point, finally, that Dale Carnegie and other business advice leaders began to stress the need for a combination of strict emotional control and an appearance of effusive bonhomie for salesmen or managers. Carnegie's approach in essence argued for manipulation of the salesman's emotional arsenal such that a less rational, more openly emotional customer would be completely disarmed, charmed, and ready to buy. The 1920s, in sum, saw the inauguration on a variety of fronts of new standards for managing emotional intensity and a new group of experts eager to implement those standards because of the nature of job requirements in a bureaucratic, service-oriented environment. Revealingly, while some of the standards were also suggested for factory labor, they were never pushed as hard in the blue-collar sector as they were for managers, clerks, and salespeople.

In this new campaign, particular emotions that might interfere with smooth bureaucratic or customer relations received the most elaborate comment. Managers and salesmen must keep a lid on their anger lest they provoke subordinates or antagonize buyers. Thus many of the retraining courses and much of the personnel advice directed to the new clerical and managerial middle class from the 1920s onward focused on anger, with a few remarks on jealousy added in. But there was a larger theme of rationality that could call any threat to careful emotional control into question. Mayo, for example, argued in 1933 that modern industrial life does "predispose workers to obsessive response"—to precisely the kind of emotion-driven irrationality that could so disrupt
smooth production and harmonious bureaucracies.\textsuperscript{54} Mayo's response, which was to employ company psychologists to counsel emotionally fervent personnel, implied that emotions interfered with economic objectives much more than problems between labor and capital did and, further, that emotional intensity could be "cured." Aversion to intensity, then, followed from the work goals attached to dominant American business organization and occupational structure by the second quarter of the twentieth century.

The contrast with Victorian functionalism was marked. Victorian emotional standards were designed to separate work from family, whereas experts à la Mayo were eager to harmonize work and family under more general strategies of intensity control. The frequent contention that work problems most commonly resulted from domestic turmoil or poor upbringing revealed the new holistic approach, which in turn argued against any emotional locus for intense expressions whatsoever. Whereas Victorian standards had helped separate the genders, the growing service economy called for standards that would subsume both men and women, at least to the point where they could work smoothly together in the same space. Whereas Victorian standards emphasized emotional respectability as part of a definition of social class, twentieth-century work, in the broader context of consumerism, downplayed formal hierarchy in favor of wider emotional rules that would reduce intensity for all parties.\textsuperscript{55} The only class factor still implicitly granted was the emphasis on training for the managerial middle class primarily. Finally, Victorian standards had highlighted emotions, particularly for men, that could serve as vibrant motivations, where fervor and controlled channeling could combine to prompt high achievement. The new economic setting, though never specifically belittling achievement goals, clearly placed smooth human relations at the forefront, again attacking emotional intensities that might make it harder for people to get along in the fast-growing offices and stores.

While work needs produced the functionalist pressure to redefine emotional goals, the resulting standards were felt in the home as well as on the job. Personnel counselors, trying to shift the blame for job tensions to the domestic front, implied the need to control intensity across the board. As Hochschild has shown, full-blown programs of workplace emotional management inevitably carried over into domestic life—though this extension was not necessarily present in the initial job cam-
campaigns of the 1920s and 1930s. Arguments for proper emotional socialization of children—prevention of harmful accumulations of ungoverned anger, fear, or jealousy—commonly mentioned the requirements of successful adjustment to work as one of the central adult realities that must be anticipated by careful parental strategies. This popularization, which began in the 1920s, stood in contrast to Victorian manuals that had connected socialization to work mainly through discussions of channeled anger or courage.

The childrearing advisers did not specifically articulate their awareness of a new economic structure, but their overall approach suggested a level of awareness that at times spilled over into actual vocabulary. In the first edition of his immensely popular baby book, Dr. Spock repeated essentially Victorian advice about anger, arguing that parents must help children learn that the emotion had no place in the home but also that, properly directed, it could be a useful spur. Spock noted that the competitive drive resulting from anger would be useful when children grew up to become hard-driving businessmen or farmers. A bit more than a decade later, and in all subsequent editions, Spock's advice changed, as did his career references. By the 1960s children's anger should be firmly controlled in all circumstances, for the emotion was both dangerous and valueless. Rather than teach children how to channel their aggressive energies toward useful goals, parents should help children minimize intensity by harmless verbalizing; anger itself should have no place in the development of their emotional makeup. revealingly, when Spock now referred to the work goals for which children were being prepared, his examples came from the areas of management and sales, where smooth personalities and emotional control held pride of place. Spock's conversion on this point, though helpfully explicit, was a bit late; others had realized earlier that the economic role models of the nineteenth century had faded from fashion, and with them the kinds of emotions in which children should be schooled. More generally, the growing emphasis on the need to overcome emotional immaturity resulted from the fact that children's innate emotional turmoil was recognized at the same time that modern work heightened the demand for systematic control of intensity. Small wonder that avoidance of intensity, not only in clearly disruptive categories like anger but also in more benign staples such as motherlove, became such a dominant theme.

Finally, evidence appearing by the late 1930s delineates the final
puzzle piece in this functionalist approach to cultural change: the families that most eagerly bought into the new advice literature on emotional control came from the sectors of the middle class most involved in the managerial and service occupations. Arthur Jersild’s polling data about levels of parental concern over children’s emotional problems, including sibling jealousy, show that suburban families easily exceeded all others. The urban upper class and working class both lagged, rating other, nonemotional issues with children considerably more important. Miller and Swanson’s 1950s survey of Detroit families similarly showed, with a more extensive database, that managerial families were most interested in the newer approaches to childrearing, paying particular attention to strict emotional control by parent and child alike. Older middle-class families and traditional blue-collar families were noticeably less interested. Parents from entrepreneurial families, for example, admitted that they were far more likely than their managerial counterparts to punish children when angry and were less concerned if their children were angry as a result of discipline. That this same division generated a growing audience for the new standards was suggested in a number of other studies, particularly focused on the suburbs, of parents who explicitly sought (or claimed to seek) to counter the emotional guidelines their own parents had emphasized. Again, persistent economic change forced the reconsideration of Victorian emotionology and the development of norms in which intensity played no legitimate role. The same change spread from the workplace to other sites, including the family and childrearing, and it also produced the sectors of the middle class (some newly risen from labor and immigrant ranks) most attuned to the advice that resulted. A new functionalism assured both a radical shift in standards and a basis for their dissemination.

The economic shifts persisted, gaining momentum over time and so increasing the pressure to redefine emotional norms and to accept the redefinitions first widely sketched in the 1920s. Managerial bureaucracies became ever larger and more visible in terms of defining probable adult economic roles. The service sector, with its ubiquitous people-pleasing requirements, grew still more rapidly, and by the 1950s television, staffed by service-sector workers par excellence, helped translate the ever-smiling models of service success into daily viewing. The fuller participation of women in the work force during the 1950s and 1960s extended this aspect of the service economy, adding female stereotypes
of niceness and docility to the existing standards of emotional control and putting new pressure on men to master impulses that might seem troubling in a dual-gendered job environment.

*Cultural Change: Anxieties over Health and Salvation*

A functionalist approach to twentieth-century emotionology centers on the new job structure of an advanced industrial society and is supplemented by attention to shifts in family patterns and rising consumerism. This approach accounts for a great deal of the growing aversion to intensity in middle-class emotional culture. It targeted anger; it fed hostility to jealousy and concerns about the distorting effects of too much motherlove; it even contributed to the shifts in grief standards as part of the campaign to smooth over any emotional expression that could disrupt interpersonal harmony and the even flow of the daily routine.

Yet functionalism, even combined with consideration of other structural changes such as twentieth-century demography, should not be pressed too far. There is no reason to assume that the twentieth century poses an exception to previous episodes of major emotionological redefinition, such as the seventeenth—eighteenth centuries and then the Victorian era, when cultural factors conjoined with functional factors to account for new directions. More concretely, some facets of the twentieth-century aversion to intensity do not spring clearly from a functionalist framework. Although there is no clear proof that campaigns against anger actually improved productivity, and although some cultural assumptions were already involved in the reactions of Mayo and his colleagues, the attempts to suppress anger do seem largely functionalist. But the same does not so readily apply to the redefinitions of courage and fear. The attack on Victorian interest in courage was fully as important a part of the overall move against emotional intensity as any other change in the 1920s, yet its link to economic structures is at best remote. With respect to fear of death specifically, given that society was rapidly accommodating to changes in the child mortality rate, functionalism of another sort might be adduced; and of course changes in the actual experience of children and their contacts with adults entered in, as we have seen. But for fear in general, and to an extent for grief and love, the concern about intensity, though not unrelated to
functionalism, is most readily explained by shifts in middle-class culture away from the distinctive religious and medical amalgams of Victorianism. This broader cultural change also underlay some of the most vivid imagery of the new emotionology, with its anxieties about emotions that could fester, accumulating much like poison in the body and requiring the regulatory equivalent of lancing a boil.

Relevant cultural change, in turn, included two ingredients. One was fairly obvious in the gyrations of self-styled modernists and sober advice givers alike, the other much less transparent but probably more widely shared and certainly influential.

Discussions of grief and fear during the 1920s made it clear that many popularizers found religious certainties considerably diminished in the American middle class. From this stemmed contentions that assurances of a heavenly reunion might not be credible to alert children, who would sense that their parents no longer adhered to the Victorian formulas. Prayer was no longer invoked in mainstream advice as a means of dealing with fear. The decline of motherlove might also reflect a shift in the salience of semireligious imagery. To the extent that confidence in a benevolent Victorian God declined, a need for greater caution in emotional intensity might well have followed: there was no divine hand to bring fervent expressions to a successful result, and individuals required greater circumspection in tailoring emotions to the reactions of others. Professed religious belief may have altered less fully than the science-based experts contended, however. The factor is relevant, but its weight remains difficult to assess.

There is no question, however, that emotions were assessed in increasingly secular terms, without the moralistic and spiritualized backdrop standard in Victorian emotional discourse. Thus Esquire, attacking nineteenth-century love ideals, blasted their excessive spirituality. Efforts to associate love with religious reward now seemed silly, unmodern, given the new focus on physical attraction and mutual accommodation. Even as the middle class continued to profess some religious commitments, the effective utility of religion in helping to guide emotion waned noticeably.

Growing concern about the inner workings of the body was even more widely applicable to the heightened aversion to emotional intensity. Just as medical routines began to change for the middle class, popularizations increasingly highlighted the role of emotions in unseating physical equilibrium and even good health.
Belief in the salience of emotions for health was no new discovery, of course. Traditional humeral medicine had tended to view bodily changes as causing emotion; physical imbalance could prompt outbursts or even outright insanity. From Galen onward, however, Western physicians and medical commentators referred to the effect of emotion on the body, recurrently mentioning the role of love, fear, or grief in causing pains in the heart. In seventeenth-century England, William Harvey discussed the effect of repressed anger in causing "distressing pain in the chest" on the part of one patient. Eighteenth-century investigators still more commonly stressed the role of specific emotional states, notably anger, in causing angina and other heart problems. Learned articles frequently cited the onset of temper as a cause of death.\(^6\)

While this line of argument continued into the nineteenth century, most Victorian physicians, at least until the 1870s, focused more on diagnosis than on explanation. Physical symptoms held center stage with the introduction of new instruments such as the stethoscope. In the popular imagination, judging by dominant emphases in the middle-class press, environmental dangers to health easily prevailed over emotional links. Until the germ theory was assimilated and serious contagious disease began to recede, attention to emotional factors, and particularly the idea that emotional intensity could cause bodily harm, remained at most a subordinate theme. Moralist fiction did sometimes punish emotional excess with death, though just as commonly a victim of emotional misbehavior died or fell ill, causing guilt and remorse on the part of the miscreant. The most obvious manipulation of health anxieties to regulate middle-class behavior focused not on emotion per se but on sex, with the widely disseminated belief that sexual excess or premature indulgence could result in ailments ranging from acne through sterility to lunacy.\(^6\)

This thinking began to change in the 1870s as earlier medical ideas about emotional causation began to blend with growing public concern about the pressures of modern life. Two articles appeared in the *Popular Science Monthly* in 1874–1875 on "Induced Disease from the Influence of the Passions." "The passions which act most severely on the physical life are anger, fear, hatred, and grief." Love, it was argued, sustained life until it deteriorated into grief or unless it stimulated unduly strenuous exertion. Rage disturbed both the "organic nervous chain" and the heart, causing major disturbance and in some instances death. The brain
could also be paralyzed from rage, leading to "a congestion of the vessels of that organ." Fear and grief could have similar effects, grief for example frequently producing irregularity in heartbeat and also stomach distress. Worst of all were the occasions in which "the passions, excited in turn, injure by the combined influence of their action." The health message was clear: "Whenever, from undue excitement of any kind, the passions are permitted to overrule the reason, the result is disease; the heart empties itself into the brain; the brain is stricken, the heart is prostrate, and both are lost.” Popularizers were also at pains to cite new instruments, like the cardiograph, that permitted unprecedented measurement of these sometimes unseen inner effects of emotion. At the same time, Darwinian work on the evolutionary functions of emotion, including preparation for flight or fight, encouraged the revival of interest in the impact of emotion on the body.  

Victorian emphasis on bodily restraint for the purpose of avoiding undue sexuality or contagion certainly did not disappear, but the new concern for emotional control in the interest of physical well-being began to gain ground. The body might still be seen as a machine, but now it was perceived as a machine that might break down, often insidiously, from within, with unchecked emotions being a major source of damage.

The widely popular commentary on nervous disorders, or neurasthenia, formed an initial result of this anxiety about the impact on physical health of intangible pressures—of what in the later twentieth century would be called stress. From the 1880s past 1900, middle-class Americans were regaled with accounts about the deleterious impact of fast-paced modern life on the heart, on the circulation, and on sanity. Diagnosis of neurasthenia for the middle class focused on tension or dissipation, whereas for lower-class women it was sheer overwork that could prompt nervous disorder. Nervous force was seen as human capital that must be economized, with caution required to avoid "depleting waste."

Thus generalized anxieties about trends in modern life helped account for the neurasthenia craze. Thereafter, between 1900 and 1930, the pace of popular accounts of the ominous link between emotions and health stepped up—literally quadrupling over levels in the 1890s. The rise of psychology both reflected and fueled the growing effort to see emotional control as central to physical well-being. But other, more prosaic factors
were also involved; more focused beliefs about the vulnerability of internal organs played a role as well. After 1900 the concept of blood pressure reached public awareness, with appropriate warnings soon attached. Relatedly, the sphygmomanometer was invented in 1896, and its increasing use in routine medical checkups brought home to middle-class Americans the important mystery of internal conditions within their bodies. Attention to inner, organic degeneration increased as well, as common contagious diseases came under greater control particularly after the influenza epidemic of 1919. While phobias about germs persisted, the growing significance of degenerative diseases won public notice. Not coincidentally, efforts to popularize fundraising for and awareness of cancer gained ground rapidly in the 1920s and 1930s, generating the first instance of a successful public campaign over a degenerative ailment. In sum, with the widespread awareness of the nervous pressures of modern society as a backdrop, practical changes in medical routines and disease patterns, supported by wide public discussions, set the stage for a much more specific use of health as a measurement of appropriate emotional standards.

As attention shifted from general nervousness to emotionality, initial popular commentary focused on the increasingly suspect emotions. An article in 1896 described the results of fear: “When under fear’s sway the heart beats quickly and violently, and palpitates or knocks against the ribs, thus the heart’s action becomes disturbed.” Anger received similar attention in 1900 in the *Scientific American*: “The heart bounds or beats rapidly and several cases of death due to cardiac lesion are ascribed to anger. Some people have peculiar feelings in the throat and mouth, others become dizzy or faint . . ., and in twenty cases attacks called bilious are ascribed to anger.” One book linked the emotions to the growing concern about infants, stating that “children often died of violent, mental excitement.” *Living Age* returned to fear in 1907: “We are now informed that the emotion of fear may produce paralysis, jaundice, sudden decay of the teeth, erysipelas, eczema and even death.” *Current Literature* discussed the poisons produced by excess passion, arguing that hate produces enough chemicals in the body “to cause the death of perhaps fourscore persons.” Another 1907 article summed up the increasing agreement: “Now it is the emotions that are the most obvious meeting ground of the flesh and the spirit.” Similarly, the *Saturday Evening Post* told its middle-class audience that “by the time
an emotion has fairly got us in its grip . . . the blood-supply of half the organs in our body has then powerfully altered, and often completely reversed.”

While blood and heart commanded the most attention, suggesting links between new theories about the impact of powerful emotions and growing concerns about cardiac awareness, popular articles by 1914 also noted links to gastric distress. For example, Harper's Magazine brought this new area to public attention: “Not only are the secretory activities of the stomach unfavorably affected during strong emotions; the movements of the stomach as well, and, indeed, the movements of almost the entire alimentary canal, are wholly stopped during excitement.” The range of damaging emotions expanded as well, an editorial in the Independent dryly noting, “We often hear of people dying of grief.” The article went on to comment that the literary device of perishing from heartbreak turned out to be quite accurate in many cases, particularly when strong emotion joined with outright physical decay. Grief could, in sum, “corrode” internal organs. Extending the same thought, “love-sickness” was noted as a real malady and no mere poet’s fancy; love could produce loss of appetite, dysfunction of the heart, and ailments of the lungs and liver. The public also was treated to increasingly specific comments on emotion’s chemical effects. Living Age discussed the production of adrenalin under the sway of emotion, which “raises the blood pressure, constricts the smaller blood-vessels . . . and increases the sugar-content of the blood.” And again, the general point continued to be hammered home, as in a 1913 essay in Harper's Bazaar:

It is now a fact recognized by scientific experts that many nervous disorders are the product of emotions which years before the onset of the illness had not been properly controlled, but only repressed or allowed to disguise themselves in other forms of self-gratification.

In the light of what has been said we can understand how to manipulate our thoughts and emotions so that we may live healthy and therefore useful lives.

By the 1920s, along with ongoing commentary on the deleterious impact of intense emotions on heart, blood, and stomach, popular magazines increasingly emphasized the lessons to be drawn from the new wisdom. “The general law is that all peaceful, tranquil, undisturbing types of thought tend to act beneficently and helpfully upon all bodily organs and functions . . . while all of the opposite nature have disturbing and destructive influences, and tend to produce bodily disor-
ders.” In commenting on the role of strong emotions in the poor health of war-devastated Europe, the Literary Digest described how people “overcome by their emotion, would ... perform all sorts of antics, the subjective mentality gaining the ascendancy over the higher centers of judgement.” A few comments made an exception for joy, arguing that it revived the organism, but otherwise strong passions seemed uniformly bad for the health. Thus a 1926 piece on blood pressure in the American Magazine argued that even love could damage the system, as opposed to a calmer, cheerful but more controlled approach to romance.71

Both religious and secular authorities found support for their claims in the growing belief in the need for emotional control. Serene faith might be a remedy, “allowing our bodies to recover from many ills.” John Watson argued in Harper’s that the same result would be achieved by a scientifically sound childrearing strategy that would prevent durable disruption of the nervous and digestive systems by teaching children how to avoid strong emotion, enabling them to “get a grip” on their own emotional behavior. In Harper’s in 1922, a Harvard medical school professor chimed in with a cautionary essay on “What Strong Emotions Do to Us.” After detailing all the standard circulatory, digestive, and cardiac issues, Dr. Cannon turned to the proper preventative: solid rational control. “The wise man” is he who accepts problems “philosophically, and so far as possible, turns his attention to other affairs. Thus the futile emotional disturbance may be aborted.” A proper mental attitude can allow “emotional factors” to be “diverted and minimized to insignificance.”72

The early decades of the twentieth century thus saw what one historian has termed the “somaticization” of psychological tensions. Another historian, more vaguely but quite accurately, speaks of a transition from fears of forces in the outer world, which were dominant in Western culture through the eighteenth century, to fears of inner forces, which gained ground during the twentieth century.73 The growing anxieties about emotion that developed during the initial phases of the shift away from Victorian emotionology expressed both the somaticization process and the heightened concern about unseen but menacing currents in the body’s interior. A new nervousness about health, all the greater for uncertainties about the afterlife, helped regulate emotional norms as shifts in emotionology participated in other fundamental changes in middle-class beliefs. Awareness of the many facets of organic deteriora-
tion contributed strongly not only to the growing aversion to intense emotional experience but also to some of the specific imagery that viewed damaging emotion in terms of inward accumulation and virtual poison. This same approach explains why even emotions not particularly related to smooth management coordination came under the general attack on emotional intensity. Functionalism and a new health culture neatly meshed to urge that the passions be kept under strict control.

Conclusion

Most of the factors that prompted reconsideration of Victorian emotional formulas and the generation of a new emotionology predicated on more systematic avoidance of intensity gained momentum from about 1920 onward. Consumerism and the demands of a management-based service economy established an increasingly pervasive framework. Shifts in gender roles and concerns about children's behavior continued to affect emotional formulas, with post–World War II changes, including dramatic loosening of parental supervision over adolescents, adding important ingredients. The trajectory of cultural change was perhaps more complex. The interwar theme of religious uncertainty waned somewhat, and increased recognition of the strength of American religions promoted some revision of the expert proclamations of the 1920s and 1930s, particularly concerning such emotions as grief. At the same time, many secularizing trends continued, including heightened sexuality, making most Americans uncomfortable with religiouslike passions as opposed to calmer statements of belief. The fascination with health as a barometer of emotional control persisted strongly. Magazine articles on the subject declined in number as what had been a set of novel pronouncements between 1900 and 1930 became part of a common fund of wisdom about strategies to avoid high blood pressure or ulcers. These beliefs persisted and provided dramatic enforcement to warnings about emotional excess. Commentary on the deleterious effects of anger recurred, for example, in the 1980s fascination with "type A" personalities and their proneness to heart attacks. The American preoccupation with cardiovascular disorder gave rise to theoretical formulations about the relationship between a society's prohibitions and its preferred disease emphasis. By the 1970s and 1980s, indeed, health culture and corporate functionalism easily conjoined. Training sessions for flight attendants,
for example, argued not only that anger must be avoided in order to please customers; it must also be avoided in the interests of attendants' health, for not only lack of control of levels of anger but the mere fact of the emotion itself could damage the heart. "I'd like to talk to you about being angry. I'm not saying you should do it for the passengers. I'm saying do it for yourselves." 75

The combination of factors that emerged by the 1920s to produce a new emotional culture called on various kinds of change in American life. The combination was complex. It guided a new type of popularizing expert and motivated a growing audience to seek new directions in emotional advice. The combination developed early in the United States; a comparable mixture would affect Europe only in the 1960s, and even then would lack some specific ingredients such as the particular American fascination with heart disease. 76 The combination explains both the need to reformulate Victorian standards and the persistence of the new amalgam. It generated powerful changes in what Americans thought they should seek in emotional behavior and what anxieties they had when they considered deviations from the norm. The same combination of causes, finally, explains not only why many Americans were ready to listen to new advice but also why this advice was internalized in many ways and incorporated in many facets of American life. Because it responded to important trends, the new emotional culture had a wide array of impacts; it received from the wider society, but it also gave, in turn helping to reshape aspects of this society.