American Cool
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Most of the disciplines that study emotion in social contexts note the relevance of norms to emotional reality. The evidence from the Victorian era yields the same conclusion: standards count, even though individuals vary around the norm and in general accept innovation gradually at best. People work to adjust their expressions of emotion, even their self-reports, according to cultural standards, though of course they continue to differ in temperament and may also find ways to manipulate the cultural system to their personal emotional advantage. Even young children pick up emotional cues offered by adult caregivers, which means that cultural standards are transmitted as part of a process that helps children select among the emotional options available to them.

If it is to have more than passing significance, any analysis of emotional standards must be able to demonstrate that cultural materials have real-life impact. It is tempting to assume as much, but to do so would be fraudulent; the assumption must be demonstrated for any cultural area or period. The first historians who dabbled explicitly in the study of emotion drew oversharpen contrasts between one period and the next because they did not examine the complexities of impact. Certainly it is difficult to determine "actual" emotions in the past, and thus to discern how much they shifted to accord with a new emotional culture. Evidence is often sketchy, particularly where inner feelings are con-
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cerned. Even where indications of attitudes exist, people frequently claim to adhere to one set of standards while behaving quite differently. This is a common problem, for example, in assessing the extent to which parents really change their childrearing styles as opposed to learning what to tell outside observers, sometimes with the utmost sincerity.³

But the new standards that developed during the second quarter of the twentieth century did have consequences. They changed, at least in some measure, the way many Americans thought about various kinds of emotional intensities—and/or they reflected these changes. They altered the ways in which many Americans responded to other people's emotions, creating such a significant bias against strong emotional expressions that it was often the emotional individual, not the object of his or her emotion, who was seen as requiring remediation. The new standards, finally, affected a number of social institutions and conventions, altering them to reflect a new desire to avoid what was increasingly pejoratively regarded as emotionalism. Indeed, the idea of emotionality carried a new taint, as the 1960s fascination with the word “cool” suggested; more than in the nineteenth century, when the focus had been more subtly directed toward inappropriate use or target, open emotion now could convey an embarrassing vulnerability.⁴

So the requirement for a study of emotional culture can be fulfilled in this case. It can be shown that the standards put forward to replace Victorianism had impact; the culture counted, and it helps explain a variety of changes in American life, from opinion to law. No single study can do justice to the range of possible results of a growing aversion to intensity, and many areas must be sketched tentatively at best. However, enough can be demonstrated to justify recognizing a new set of emotional signals as a powerful factor for change in middle-class life over the past seven decades.

Aside from the need to acknowledge insufficient evidence and individual variation around norms, three issues complicate this final part of the analysis of emotional transformation: continuities from the past must be acknowledged; problems of timing must be reviewed; and a special complexity concerning institutionalization of the new standards must be invoked, for certain public outlets deliberately defied the new norms in the very process of adjusting to their impact.

Victorianism did not die overnight. We have seen its persistence in periodic reassertions of older grief values, for example, or in the long
attachment to channeled anger in some of the most popular childrearing manuals. Victorian standards that were susceptible to deintensification proved particularly hardy. Thus there was no general movement against the idea of love; rather, love was subtly redefined toward reduced fervor. Beliefs about gender and emotion easily survived a host of changes, not only in culture but also in actual expression; into the 1990s Americans reported believing that women were naturally more loving than men, men naturally more often angry. Advertising continued to play up a special kind of motherlove, at least as it might be expressed in a desire to have clean kitchens or satisfied child eaters; this was not the powerful Victorian version, to be sure, but it maintained some of the trappings. Continuities from earlier periods had also bedeviled Victorianism—there was no sudden conversion to the idea of avoiding anger in punishing children, for example. But aspects of Victorianism had been prepared by previous shifts in emotional culture reaching back to the seventeenth or eighteenth century, which had begun to create firmer standards against domestic anger and to promote new ideas of love. In contrast, the twentieth-century attack on intensity was a more abrupt shift of gears away from earlier standards. It is hardly surprising, then, that a host of apparent anomalies persisted, even as the new standards were in many respects gradually assimilated.

A new emotional culture yields consequences only over time. While parents hastened to assimilate some of the new wisdom about children’s fears and jealousies by the later 1920s, a full set of results had to await at least a generation, at which point children raised under some attempt to incorporate new standards could demonstrate their impact in adulthood and in their own childrearing practices. Thus our focus shifts from the 1920s and 1930s to the 1940s and beyond, in some cases reaching into quite recent times. This extension of the time frame is untidy, but it is entirely logical given the slow process required to internalize highly personal new beliefs. My emphasis on the word “cool” is in this sense deliberate. “Cool” became a widespread term for an appropriate emotional style only in the 1960s, for the full measure of the culture occurred thirty to forty years after its effective inception. Indeed, the fact that the term has maintained standard popularity among youth into the 1990s may plausibly suggest not only the culture’s ongoing potency but also the continued elaboration of its results.

As argued earlier, it is necessary to demonstrate that an emotional
culture translated into major public institutions and practices in order to show that it was more than a meaningless fad. As we have seen, Victorian emotional culture meets this test fairly readily, whatever the variations in individual acceptance might have been. The same holds true for twentieth-century culture, but modern middle-class life introduced an interesting division. There is evidence that important facets of public life reflected the new standards, but it also appears that the very inculcation of a cool culture created a need for alternative outlets in which quite different emotional values, including Victorian symbols, could at least be vicariously experienced. Discussion of this complexity must await the following chapter, which will explore the divided world that made the new cautiousness endurable by creating an aura of greater freedom. The present chapter will set the stage by examining the most straightforward public translations of the new standards.

Beliefs

Between the late 1920s and the late 1940s, a growing audience developed for new-style advice about emotion. The establishment and popularity of magazines in which this advice featured prominently, like Parents' Magazine (1927) and Esquire (1933), provide strong evidence of this audience (though it is always possible that audience interest focused on other content and merely tolerated the novel emotionology). Explicit appeals for formal advice on marriage and spouse selection, as in the popularity of advice columns or the efforts to establish college courses in the subject from 1927 onward, suggest a similar uncertainty about older standards and a desire for clarification of new norms. The sheer volume of new childrearing manuals from the mid-1920s through Dr. Spock suggests the same, as do family studies and polling data from the 1930s through the 1950s. Relevant findings emphasized the extent to which emotional problems were seen as crucial by parents newly worried about excessive temper or sibling rivalry; by adults worried about their own jealousy (particularly after about 1950, when sexual jealousy replaced sibling tensions in acknowledged prominence); or by spouses rating each other (men worried about women's emotional nagging, women about men's emotional unresponsiveness). Polls indicated that the new, suburban, managerial-service middle class was particularly eager to jettison outdated emotional standards. By the 1940s a series of
studies more widely suggested particular interest in establishing a new pattern of childrearing, deliberately different from that of parents or grandparents in terms of disciplinary style and emotional goals. Use of therapy, finally, again reflected a growing audience for innovation or at least for guidance at a time when emotional standards were shifting and the importance of emotional conformity was in many ways increasing. By the 1930s child guidance clinics, initially established for troubled working-class families, found themselves increasingly preoccupied with middle-class clients who were, in turn, eager for help in controlling unacceptable childish anger or jealousy. By the 1940s a growing number of therapists for adults began to report issues relating to anger and other areas of emotional intensity—and these issues involved not only cases of unwanted excessive emotion but also inability to express emotion after a childhood of sedulous suppression.

The new emotional culture fed this growing audience interest and almost surely reflected it as well. Experts worked hard to sell their wares; they had a vested interest in innovation, particularly as the basis for expertise shifted toward scientific popularization. But from the 1920s onward experts also reported their own need to respond to the kinds of problems parents or others brought to them; for example, parental requests for advice on new sibling jealousies preceded the experiments that provided scientific basis for expert concern. The establishment of a new emotionology set the stage, then, for wider changes in actual emotional beliefs, but it also reflected some of these changes as well. The internalization of twentieth-century emotional culture was not a one-way street.

The process of innovation did not yield a blanket statement of concern about undue intensity. The experts were not explicit on this point; rather, the attack on intensity accumulated through specific comments on the dangers of romantic love as the basis for marriage or the hazards of anger in the workplace. Neither was the middle-class audience fully aware of the overall consistency of new emotional reactions. Yet the combined impact of specific shifts of belief concerning individual emotions and emotional relationships clearly suggests increasing agreement on the need to keep emotions under careful wraps.

Surveys indicate clearly, for example, a general middle-class consensus on the embarrassing childishness of jealousy by the 1960s. Whether or not this had in fact developed earlier cannot be fully determined, but
The new common wisdom clearly reflected the long process of socialization in this direction since the 1920s. Initially it emphasized standards for children (conceived with an eye toward adult emotional behavior and probably translating adult concerns), then adult jealousy per se. Some extreme manifestations, like the jealousy workshops of the 1970s, were atypical and followed from the particular tenor of the sexual revolution decades, but the larger agreement had wider and deeper roots. While some Americans fell back on a temperament argument, implying that they were jealous by nature, an increasing number either denied jealousy or admitted deep personal responsibility for the emotion, proving “more likely to try and change, or else get out of, relationships where they feel unhappy and insecure.” Comparative analysis from the same period, around 1970, indicated that Americans were far more likely to profess great discomfort with jealousy than were people from most other cultures (50 percent more likely than their closest competitors, West Indians). About a third of all middle-class Americans claimed freedom from jealousy, and others expressed uneasiness with this facet of their emotional makeup; both self-reports worked against intensity, requiring in its place nonchalance or concealment or both. And while jealous Americans tended to argue that their emotional style resulted from insecurity, the animus against the emotion had reached such proportions that some authorities argued that the reverse equation might in fact hold: that people with unduly intense emotions such as jealousy might become insecure because of their anxiety and embarrassment over their intense reactions.

The bias against manifesting jealousy fed new social patterns as well as difficult self-evaluations. As early as the 1920s parties held by middle-class couples began to emphasize some controlled spouse swapping as couples shifted partners for games or, in some cases, even in seemingly sedate small towns, for a bit of kissing and fondling. With increasingly overt sexual experimentation and some outright commitments to open marriages by the 1960s, tests of jealousy control expanded. Again, only a minority pushed to the extremes, but the pressure to avoid expressions of jealousy unquestionably mounted as spouses moved toward more diverse interactions and in some instances un conceded infidelity. Jealous reactions among swinging couples were disapproved: “I think it comes from possessiveness and I’m trying to grow away from that.” From the 1920s onward, growing pressure to control jealousy was a vital
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precondition for women's new public contacts and for more permissive sexual standards.\textsuperscript{11}

At the same time, the hostility to jealousy could produce new institutions designed to minimize it. Dating, for example, moved fairly quickly from its initial "polygamous" form, in which youth were expected to date multiple partners, to more controlled arrangements that would among other things offer a greater protection against jealousy. From the late 1930s onward teenagers frequently moved from playing the field to seeking a steady dating partner (or, in the middle class, a series of steady dating partners). The greater "security" cited in this growing movement meant many things, including the mere convenience of not having to worry about finding a partner, but it undoubtedly reflected a desire to avoid the jealous discomforts of uncontrolled dating. Then, as dating began to decline in the 1960s, it was replaced by larger peer groupings in which pairing was less emphasized and pressures against jealousy were routinely enforced by group conformity. A cool emotional style, including avoidance of jealousy, became a vital part of the new social code.\textsuperscript{12}

Middle-class Americans did not find a perfect solution to their own strict codes concerning manifestations of jealousy. Steady dating, for example, reduced jealous onslaughts for a time but opened the way for tension-filled breakups or subsequent jealousy about a partner's previous involvements. A majority combined profound disapproval of jealousy with some admitted pangs, an uncomfortable amalgam that provoked real embarrassment and a consistent effort to control both excessive internal passion and overt display. Private battles against jealousy as heterosexual social contacts widened provided an important ingredient for twentieth-century emotional life and a recurrent setting for the larger war against intensity.

A new current of psychological research on jealousy underscores the ongoing importance of jealousy in American life and its potentially constructive consequences. Researchers mention a pronounced effort to ignore jealous responses as one coping mechanism for individuals and, above all, a distinctive American impulse to check others' reactions when jealousy does emerge. In contrast to jealous Frenchmen, who tend to get mad, or Dutchmen who get sad, jealous Americans, when they cannot conceal, tend to canvass friends and acquaintances both for support and for assurance that the emotion has not emerged too
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strongly. Amid great individual variations in the personal capacity to minimize jealousy, then, the anti-intensity culture continues to have impact.13

New standards applied to fear had more ambiguous results, though the effort to avoid intense confrontation—or to stage-manage childhood toward this end—was widespread. The spate of parental letters to childrearing authorities from the late 1920s onward suggested widespread agreement on the newly problematic status of fear. Fears loomed large among the emotional issues parents cited as real worries by the late 1940s, particularly in the suburban middle class. Some inconsistency developed, with some older gender distinctions being maintained. Fathers worried about boys’ fears less than mothers did, and continued interest in competitive contact sports like football encouraged demonstration of courage even for many middle-class boys. On the other hand, some nineteenth-century fear rituals declined under growing adult supervision; amateur boxing for middle-class boys was a case in point. Overall, despite lags and disagreements, the goal of limiting deliberate contact with fear in childhood almost certainly gained ground.14

As for middle-class adults, there is no way to demonstrate that they grew more likely to try to avoid fear than had their counterparts in the nineteenth century. To be sure, military service became less popular in the middle class and less likely to produce personal accounts of courage in the fashion common during the Civil War. A variety of factors contributed to this shift, but the declining validity of fear encounters might have been one of them. Verbal admission of fear, ironically, became somewhat more acceptable by midcentury. Because it was thought that fear should not be experienced too intensely and because ventilation was a widely recommended means of reducing intensity, discussions of fear in battle or in anticipation of battle became more open and were even recommended as part of therapy. At the same time, however, lesser fears were commonly given other terms, like “nervousness” or “anxiety,” lest undue intensity be implied. To this extent, some authorities argued, fear became less “available” as an emotional experience by the later twentieth century.15 Finally, the vocabulary used to describe emotionally intense confrontations with fear clearly declined, as courage—despite John F. Kennedy’s adoption of the term—began to take on slightly anachronistic connotations.

Application of the anti-intensity theme to grief also produced ambigu-
ous results. Many people continued to grieve as they had in the nineteenth century, mourning the deaths of children or young adults with great sorrow. Here, the biggest change may have been not culture but demographic reality, as child death rates declined greatly and thus greatly reduced the occasions for grief manifestations. At the same time, awareness of new grief rules spread, making some people comfortable with relatively little show of outward sorrow and causing others who were genuinely grief-stricken to question or criticize their own reactions. Therapists reported problems with patients who adamantly insisted that there must be something wrong with them because their grief “cures” did not occur as rapidly as the general culture urged or simply because they occurred in less recognizable phases. “I feel like I am just at a standstill in my life, really, just kind of stopped there,” said one patient actively fighting her deep grief. The need for therapy itself, though not unprecedented, was a sign of growing discomfort with spontaneous emotional reactions to sorrow. Many marriages now split apart during grief over the death of a child, and this newly common family disruption reflected not only hostility to the grief of others but also confusion over one’s own reaction; shared grief, that staple of Victorian culture, became harder to achieve.16

Adult efforts to disclaim intense anger were more clear-cut than was the case with grief and, particularly, with fear. The new emotionology did not, after all, deny the possibility of intense fear if it was provoked by something from the outside world; it merely argued that the intensity was risky and undesirable. The new standards of restraint did not prohibit either adults or children from experiencing or to some extent expressing fear. As for grief, though it was regarded more ambivalently than fear, it could not entirely be denied. Anger, however, was another matter; like jealousy, this was an emotion to be controlled even in response to outside stimuli.

By the 1950s, surveys of middle managers noted a widespread interest in claiming temper control as a common characteristic. And while angry supervisors remained a problem for many workers, the extent of the problem almost certainly declined. By the 1970s, less than 10 percent of all workers listed emotional tensions with supervisors as a significant job issue. Correspondingly, strikes over issues of management style declined steadily from the 1940s through the 1970s; statistical categories are crude, but they suggest almost a 50 percent drop. And the fact that
strikes and strikers themselves declined in relation to the size of the labor force after a peak in the 1950s suggests, among other things, a growing worker embarrassment at organized displays of anger as part of job life. Trade unions began to join employers in urging emotional restraint. As a United Auto Workers booklet argued in the mid-1940s: "A lost temper usually means a lost argument." In the early 1970s workers of various sorts told Studs Terkel about their internalization of anger control. "You always have to be pleasant—no matter how bad you feel." "You can't say anything back. The customer is always right." Foremen, who dealt with underlings rather than customers, boasted of their ability to create an atmosphere of positive cheer, using their own acceptance of the new emotional rules to affect those around them. As with jealousy, then, increasing numbers of Americans on the job either argued that they had mastered an unpleasant emotional tension and could avoid intensity spontaneously or that they imposed control on their intense feelings, even at some internal cost. The new rules won widespread adherence, even if claims undoubtedly exceeded real achievement.

Parental standards for anger also changed. Parents increasingly vowed to gain control over anger in dealing with children, and even more revealingly, they expressed less pleasure in children's anger as a sign of spirit, though this decline occurred more slowly among fathers than among mothers or school authorities. Anger was increasingly a problem, pure and simple—one of the "adjustment problems" widely noted by school guidance counselors, replacing sexual transgressions as the leading category by the 1940s. An array of surveys from the 1940s onward revealed discomfort, and sometimes even deeper depression, when control slipped and anger was expressed in the family. This was not necessarily novel, as Victorian culture had preached against the angry quarrel, but it may have gained ground particularly among men, who, despite some conventional wisdom to the contrary, were now as likely to be upset with their own display of anger in a marital spat as were wives. By the 1970s marriage authorities, cleverly but not necessarily inaccurately, argued that reactions to one's own anger had surpassed anger itself as a cause of disputes and even breakups. "Their [the spouses'] problem isn't that they are angry with each other; it's that they think they shouldn't be angry with each other." By the early 1950s surveys reported that an overwhelming majority of couples felt bad if
they became emotional in quarreling with each other, and the bad temper of a spouse was rated as one of the leading problems in marriage.\textsuperscript{20} Victorian promptings to control anger in the family, now overlaid by the more general warnings against emotional intensity, worked to restrain the emotion or to create complex reactions when the restraint broke down, including, ironically, yet more anger that could not be directly expressed.

As with jealousy, finally, the desire to conceal anger, to claim that it did not exist, spread in American culture.\textsuperscript{21} Here was one of the important "secrets" of modern society, which comparative studies suggested was particularly prevalent in the United States. Despite the absence of similar analysis for the Victorian era, the strong likelihood, given the new emotional norms, is that this secretive reaction was a twentieth-century artifact, especially for men and especially in public encounters such as those of the workplace.

Quite apart from individual variations in temperament, other factors prevented uniform commitment to anger avoidance within the American middle class. Fundamentalist Christians from various social classes seemed to encourage the anger-avoidance code: "The Christian response is to put our anger at a distance" because anger indicates reluctance to trust in the guidance of the Lord. "Don't get mad. Hang on. Jesus is coming. Be patient." On the other hand, however, the fundamentalist method of anger control involved repressing anger in the family but actually encouraging its expression against outside targets. This differed from the blander but more systematic evisceration of anger intended by the ventilationist approach. Historian Philip Greven has argued that even in the later twentieth century, this approach to anger harked back to a pre-Victorian evangelical tradition that allowed for an underlying rage that could burst out against evildoers.\textsuperscript{22} By the 1970s some of this anger began to fuel new protest movements directed, for example, against legalized abortion.

Youth protesters in the 1960s demonstrated intense anger, as did many feminists in the ensuing decade. Yet here the general anger control formulas did have a bearing, if an incomplete one. Feminists carefully maintained the control theme in their own groups, though this did not prevent expressions of deep anger against male opponents. Youth in the 1960s, with their emphasis on love over war, liked to think of themselves as apostles of gentleness, which meant that their own anger often discon-
certed them (or led to denial); this discomfort with anger may even have inhibited a more durable or ideological commitment to protest. Anger control had its impact, in other words, even on certain middle-class groups that flirted with considerable intensity at least during a particularly vibrant protest period.

Even aside from important subcultural or chronological variations, anger by no means disappeared from middle-class life. Many people, as we will see, professed a tension between controlling their own anger and feeling compelled to absorb or mediate the anger of others. As the new anger standards took hold, some individuals continued to claim a positive use for anger in dealing with others. For example, a foreman in the 1930s acknowledged the new advice to use sensitivity in reacting to angry workers but reacted tersely: "Well, even if it is true, what of it? I've got to do something with such birds." Even in the 1970s service workers might claim that a healthy temper was a sign of "red-blooded" Americanness. These arguments on behalf of anger, however, did not set forth an alternate standard in which certain kinds of angry intensity might be justifiable or useful. Instead, as in the case of the foreman, they recognized the new norms even while professing impatience with them or, as with the service workers, they were accompanied by parallel claims of a capacity normally to keep cool. A pro-anger stance was progressively discredited. This is why the temptation to veil or prevaricate increased. This is why the emotional basis for certain institutional expressions of anger, like fire-breathing unions or strikes, steadily eroded. This is why older workers themselves measured change: "The younger workers don't even know how to take the crap we took." Of course the decline in strikes was by no means total, and of course emotional factors were only one element in the complex shift in the accessibility of protest. But it remains true that the new movement against intensity undermined the passions that could in turn undergird expressions of moral outrage, at least around the workplace. Conversations to the new standards thus linked personal expectations to wider social trends.

Unlike anger, love was not systematically denied. However, its locations were narrowed, its language was moderated, and in some instances its ambivalence increased—all under the spur of the new cautions about intensity.

Men and women still sought love, but their vocabulary moved away
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The soar, religiouslike fervor of the Victorian era. At the same time, the centrality of sex in describing and measuring love advanced. By the 1950s, many courting couples and marriage partners emphasized the same combination of personal and sexual compatibility in defining what they meant by love. They talked of identifying marital success by a capacity to “work and play together successfully” for years. They replaced boundlessness with a desire for good sense: “Our marriage should be rational and controllable.” Even when seeking permanence, they often prided themselves on their ability calmly to acknowledge the possibility of divorce.24

Men began to talk of love more casually. By the 1920s the institution of dating privileged sexual contacts over Victorian transcendence. A 1920s fraternity phrase captured the new mood: “If a girl doesn’t pet, a man can figure he didn’t rush her right.” The whole practice of dating introduced a recreational element into heterosexual contacts, at least from the male side, that squeezed out love. By the 1940s high school boys talked in terms of pushing petting as far as their dates would allow, describing the experience as “having fun” or “taking them for a ride.” Similar though less crudely put concepts suffused marriage, with increased interest in defining marriage in terms of sexual satisfaction (particularly on men’s part). Polls in the 1930s suggested considerable complaint by wives about husbands’ failure to express love verbally, while husbands responded with a critique of wives’ tendency to manifest hurt feelings.25 There was no direct dispute about love here but also no widespread ability to describe the emotion in terms of transcendence. Even wives who might comment on their husbands’ emotional reticence were no longer describing the kind of descent from spiritual love that had appeared in Victorian evaluations.

Women also experienced new conflicts in defining love. A recent analysis of the 1920s diary of a Western Pennsylvania woman, though reflecting some purely personal psychodynamics, illustrates some of these conflicts. Gladys Bell harbored late-nineteenth-century ideals of intense love, which she found reflected in the books she read and the movies she saw. She even shared the characteristic late-Victorian dilemma about the balance between religion and love. But unlike the late Victorians, she held back from admitting love, lest she be engulfed by it, adding notes like “I’m losing my grip on myself” when she could not control her emotions to her satisfaction. She saw new sexual interests
and even new career interests (she was a teacher) as reasons for her failure to find the love she professed to want. "Funniest thing of my life is that I never ‘fell in love.’" A brief engagement left her feeling that "love in some form or other has taken possession of me" while at the same time she lamented, "I seem to have lost a part of myself." Ultimately she married a man she hesitated to love, moved to do so because, among other reasons, she worried that his own love might "turn to something harmful." She never managed a Victorian-like faith in romantic passion. Her case demonstrates a clearly transitional situation, in which older definitions persisted but were reevaluated in terms of threat, above all because of the paralyzing effects of intensity on individual will.

The whole genre of love letters declined, partly because new means of communication developed but partly perhaps because of the more prosaic and/or more overtly sexual phrasing that many couples found appropriate to express their emotional ties. The same trend affected writings among friends. Discoveries of throwbacks to Victorian vocabulary in the letters of women friends—particularly in letters by people like Eleanor Roosevelt who were raised in the transition decades between Victorian and twentieth-century emotional culture—evoked startled incomprehension or accusations of lesbianism or both. Obviously a new language did not necessarily mean a different emotional experience where love or intense friendship was involved, and it is true that a history of the content of modern friendship has yet to emerge. But the altered vocabulary suggested a substantial change in the ability to express a nineteenth-century style love (and perhaps the very idea of love among friends), or at least in the sense of the appropriateness of such expression.

Greater caution toward love continued into the 1970s and beyond. A number of observers noted changes in middle-class dating patterns. Steady dating declined in favor of looser alliances among many peers; or if steadies developed, they were typically treated less intensely than their counterparts had been a generation before. Love-struck couples wandered around high school corridors less often than in the 1950s. Many observers found the same emotional loosening among adults. As Alan Bloom put it, even the replacement of the phrase "in love" with the word "relationship" suggested greater tentativeness. The exact tenor of heterosexual love remains to be fully captured by research, and as always there was variety, but agreement on change was widespread.26

Several factors prompted this further shift away from intensely ro-
mantic love. Economic pressures, beginning with the later stages of the baby boomers' maturation, prompted marriage at older ages. New sexual habits, particularly the normalcy of premarital sex, removed certain mysteries from love. For some teenagers who preferred to delay their sexual initiation, the new sexual habits also reinforced a certain reserve that could replace standardized rules like "good girls say no." These new factors added to the ongoing culture of emotional reticence, allowing this culture in essence to implement the limitations on mutual devotion that were generated by economic changes. Love, already in process of redefinition by the 1930s, came to take on different meanings for young people, becoming either more purely sexual or more cautious or both, as economic and sexual realities prompted fuller acceptance of post-Victorian standards in generating real emotional life.

Friendship as well as love reflected the effects of new adult constraints and of new vocabulary. Male friendship changed decisively. The loving attachments that young middle-class Victorian men had openly sought and described disappeared. Some may have survived through the collegiate years, yielding only in early adulthood to less intense male contacts, but even before full adulthood, growing fear of homosexuality significantly reduced men's willingness to talk or write about their emotions for each other or to combine emotion with open physical contact. As homosexuality gained new definition and more open disapproval, the male dilemma became in some senses a special case, but it also fit the larger pattern of downgrading intense emotional bonds. While male friendship was partially replaced by new social contacts with women, a certain guardedness often carried over into those contacts.27

Children still loved their mothers, but here too signs of altered emotional experience began to surface by the 1930s. A study of mother-daughter relationships notes a more relaxed, even flippant tone in daughters' letters after the 1920s.28 A young woman thus wrote from camp: "It was nice to hear from you, to put it mildly. I'd like to write often very much... but alas and alack, when I have two minutes to sit down and write, I must write reports." This letter actually resulted from the promptings of the young woman's father. Women, apparently less intensely or at least more ambivalently attached to their mothers, became not only more nonchalant about staying in contact but also more likely to express open annoyance at interference. A diabetic wrote her concerned mother, who had sent a maid to accompany her home from
boarding school: "I think its [sic] selfish when you let your responsibility for me run away to such an extent that it seriously hampers my life. . . . I had a few hopes that you would have out grown [sic] some of this since I have been away, but maybe that's hoping to [sic] much from you." Attention to peers and boys began to replace some of the intimacies previously focused on the mother-daughter tie. This could simply transfer intensity to another target, but it certainly suggested some experiential impact of the growing cautions against motherlove as the quintessential female emotional focus. Thus a girl might wonder about love in general, while simultaneously noting that "I very seldom think of Dad & Mom though I'm of course fond of them." Patterns varied, to be sure, and nineteenth-century-style fervor might still emerge. But the language and general tone changed, leading to the increasing frankness young women gained by the 1960s and 1970s in discussing their relationship with their mothers in terms of problems more than rewards.

To be sure, the problems were rooted in undeniable emotional links, but these links now had to be broken or reformed in the interests of personal independence and reduced intensity.

The general aversion to emotional intensity significantly changed the way middle-class Americans described their own emotional goals and even the way they defined desirable emotional experiences. Concerning many negative emotions, deception gained ground—self-deception in some cases, concealment from the outside world in others. It was no accident that, by the 1960s, sunglasses became a badge of American cool, for they hid emotions the eyes might disclose. While ventilationist strategies in principle promoted some willingness to put certain emotional tensions into words—"it made me so mad"—even this release was often constrained by embarrassment. Not surprisingly, advice about venting emotions often emphasized the need for complete privacy, like shouting in a closet. Far more frequently and systematically than in the nineteenth century, emotionality took on unfavorable connotations, suggesting an inability to maintain proper control. Middle-class Americans worked to restrain themselves.

The Emotions of Others

The new emotional culture significantly reduced tolerance for other people's intensity. To be sure, the culture harbored an important incon-
sistency in this respect. On the one hand, people were trained to identify their emotions and verbalize them lest they fester, and this ventilationist strategy implied some willingness on the part of others to listen to an emotional experience. Friendship might be defined, to use a 1980s phrasing, in terms of "being there" for someone else's emotional outpourings. On the other hand, intense emotion was also a sign of immaturity, and it could be shunned on that basis even when a given individual was too overwhelmed to be properly constrained by embarrassment. While parents were enjoined to listen to their children's venting as part of the effort to socialize them toward appropriate emotional control in adulthood, many parents unquestionably found even this exposure to others' emotion somewhat wearing. Children became more problematic because they needed an emotional audience that adults should not require, and parental pleasure in dealing with children declined measurably, at least between the 1950s and the 1970s, in part for this reason.31

Impatience with others' emotions applied clearly to jealousy and anger. Lewis Terman's 1930s marriage survey disclosed a definite resentment against spousal jealousy, primarily among husbands. According to most married men, jealousy had become an intolerable emotional intrusion. Sexual experimentation like open marriage, as it spread by the 1960s, was often initiated by one partner on the assumption that it was up to the other partner to handle any ensuing jealousy. In other words, jealousy became the problem of the person who felt it, not a cue to a partner to offer systematically reassuring behavior. Apology might be expected more from a jealous spouse than from the partner who had flirted or strayed even further into the growing opportunities for sexual promiscuity. Paul Popenoe cited an impulse on the part of targets of spousal jealousy to wish to retaliate—to give their partner "something to be jealous about." Even in the 1930s in conventional Middletown, the Lynds noted a widespread sense that concealment of affairs had become less essential than before—a theme that carried easily into the 1980s, when many couples found frankness, with its accompanying demand for control over jealousy, a legitimate test of a mate's emotional maturity.32

The anger of others became increasingly unattractive. In colleges the growing practice of soliciting student evaluations encouraged comments on grumpy professors, and open displays of faculty temper were readily
condemned. On the job, standards reflected a certain complexity for a few decades; middle managers were taught in the 1930s and 1940s that a certain amount of worker anger might have to be accepted, not because it was justified but because workers had so many domestic problems or simply lacked appropriate breeding. Middle management thus involved turning the other cheek, accepting (though immediately diluting) emotional outbursts that supervisors themselves must avoid. Over time, expectations of middle-class control mounted steadily. Workers became accustomed to foremen who kept their temper in check—one of the key reasons for a declining rate of personal tensions with supervisors—while blithely advising less controlled supervisors to catch up with the times: “He should use some psychology.” By the 1970s a few employees even argued that their supervisors had become so eager to avoid confrontation, so reluctant to criticize, that guidelines for improved performance had become impossibly fuzzy.

Revealingly, training for middle managers moved increasingly away from techniques for dealing with angry customers or subordinates to assumptions that such strategies would not be necessary. The sensitivity-training groups (T-groups) that gained wide popularity in the 1950s and 1960s differed from earlier management retraining efforts in shifting away from explicit lessons in temper control or in defusing the reactions of others. In keeping with the widespread (if somewhat cosmetic) promptings toward more open communication, T-groups also advocated such communication, in the process revealing their assumption that negative emotions would be held in check. “Effectiveness decreases and emotionality increases.” T-groups argued against strict hierarchy or firm repressiveness with the clear expectation that anger would no longer enter in; only positive feelings, desirable for management loyalty, would emerge when frank exchanges were encouraged. Thus when T-group advocates spoke of “more authentic” personal relationships on the job, they assumed that anger had no place in authenticity; only affection would emerge in an open environment. Movements of this sort, though eager to embrace a nonrepressive language, constituted a clear escalation of the anger-control goals, and particularly a growing intolerance for expressions of temper on the part of others, at least within management ranks. Just as there was no longer any clear reason to spend much time listening to another proclaim jealousy, so anger now discredited its
bearer; few if any occasions seemed to require listening to someone else talk about his or her rage.\textsuperscript{34}

The clearest victim of the growing intolerance for emotional intensity on the part of others was grief. We have seen that the etiquette manuals, picking up on the new aversion to intense grief, argued in terms of the emotion's unpleasantness for other people, "who might find it difficult to function well in the constant company of an outwardly mourning person." Stories also dealt with the problems of peer reactions—"her friends were again feeling a little critical of her, saying to one another that it would be a pity if poor Marian should allow grief to make her 'queer.' " From the 1920s onward formal mourning declined. Special clothes were abandoned except for funerals themselves, and increasingly even for funerals. Markings on homes progressively disappeared. Employers became increasingly reluctant to allow time off for mourning apart from a funeral day or half-day. And, always granting variety in personal reactions, many Americans became impatient with the need to listen to the grief of others, particularly after an initial this-should-do-it exchange. The removal of death to hospitals, where few people were allowed to participate in the receipt of the final news, was not directly caused by the new aversion to handling grief, but it certainly furthered the process. Avoidance of grief situations seemed to make the new emotionology work well.\textsuperscript{35}

But grief itself did not decline as rapidly as did public tolerance for it. Stories might note the decline of conventional mourning and of sacred symbols of the departed, but their recommendations for alternatives remained rather vague: "Slowly, slowly we come out of all this. Slowly we learn that the one way to keep our own forever with us, is to lift into the aura of his spiritual permanence." By the 1950s certain categories of grief-stricken Americans, such as people who lost a child or spouse at an untimely age, began to form voluntary groups of kindred souls, providing emotional support for each other on the basis of their shared experience and their common realization of the lack of extensive sympathy from the wider society. Support groups like Theos and the Compassionate Friends spread to most American cities.\textsuperscript{36} This new bond elevated strangers to a position of emotional importance simply on the basis of the unavailability of sympathetic others, including, often, friends. The bond might fill the void, but it also testified to the growing distaste for
other people's intensities even at times of crisis. The pressure to maintain control of oneself and the convenient belief in the immaturity of others' outbursts supported a major change in emotional interactions in many middle-class families and acquaintance groups. Here the "impersonal" portion of the "impersonal but friendly" tandem could shine through.

Impatience with others' emotion applied also to sadness. A major study in the 1980s showed a pronounced difference between assessment of one's own sadness and reactions to other people's. One's own sadness was perceived as a legitimate problem that called forth strategies for resolution. Sadness in others, however, was a form of whimpering incapacity that was at best an annoyance, at worst a cause for avoidance. The study was not, to be sure, historical, and there is no evidence to prove that past reactions to sadness in American culture had been more generous. Nevertheless, the correspondence between this study's results and reactions in other emotional instances is striking. Here, too, strong emotions might force efforts to find acquaintances based on shared emotional state, an odd alignment produced by the twentieth-century sense that emotions should not normally intrude. Or they might prompt a turn to therapy, the other contemporary remedy for emotions that had no audience.

The growing aversion to dealing with the emotions of others was in fact one of the most powerful effects of the new emotional culture. It sustained a growing sense of individualism as people became emotionally more separate, and it supported the enforcement of emotional control through embarrassment, for the belief that strong emotions might unfavorably affect peers' reactions was often quite accurate.

Like beliefs about one's own emotions, reactions to others' varied, of course, by individual temperament. We are talking about changing norms, not a set of uniform patterns. Further, an important gap also opened between men and women in their respective interpretations of the new emotional culture. Men most clearly moved toward a distaste for emotional exchange on the grounds that individuals should exert self-control, while many women preferred to seek and provide an audience for the verbal venting of intense sentiments. Here the quarrel was not about the need to control emotions but about the role of others in facilitating this process. The movement toward greater uniformity in emotional standards had itself carried some antifemale implications, particularly in the attacks (by many professional women as well as men)
on motherlove and excessive romantic love. A tone was set by the 1930s in which living up to the gender-neutral standards of emotional control seemed to require particular redress on women's side. Differences in expectations about support from others added to this new, subtle but potentially bitter gender gap. By the 1960s, women's claims of men's excessive coldness became commonplace, both within and without the growing feminist movement; and women were echoed by many in the small band of "men's liberationists." Men, so this argument went, were too rigidly closed to their own emotions and too intolerant of others' needs for emotional expression; women were no more emotional in fact, but they were more aware and certainly more mutually supportive. Aside from the liberationist wing, men largely seemed to ignore these jeremiads, and polls in the 1970s and 1980s revealed men's strong belief that women were too emotional and too dependent on an audience for their emotional experiences. This was in fact one of the chief grievances men manifested against women, so the difference was far from trivial.

The most pervasive emotional gender gap of the twentieth century thus differed considerably from the Victorian statement of differences in emotional traits, though it had some similar resonance. It could produce bitter disputes over response to emotional distress and particularly over conversation concerning emotional issues. This gap widened even as many aspects of men's and women's lives grew closer together—perhaps, indeed, precisely because they drew closer together, requiring or promoting some new differentiations in order to preserve identities on new bases.

Yet women's emotional expressiveness should not be exaggerated. Not only because of continued male influence but also because many women were eager to dissociate themselves from Victorian traditions of maternalism, the overall context for reacting to the emotions of others did narrow. Women might share more than men on average, but they too lost Victorian opportunities in experiences such as mourning. Though the theme of self-sacrifice persisted in women's definitions of love, the decline of motherlove and redefinitions of romance both worked against the kinds of selfless devotion popular in Victorian women's culture and enacted by some women. By the 1960s a new insistence in women's literature on greater assertiveness further assailed altruistic love even in this final bastion, at least in principle. Again, the new emotional culture's promotion of increased separateness among
individuals stands out, though men probably internalized this standard more commonly than women. Worry about emotional “contagion” limited tolerance for the angry, the grief-stricken, the depressed. This trend helped generate new needs (though again more widely among women than among men) for professionals whose job it was to listen to intense emotions that might find no other audience. The rise of therapy in the American middle class, though deriving from a number of factors, including the decline of fervent religion, owed much to the need to find listeners as the more traditional pool dried up.\(^{39}\)

Declining tolerance for emotional intensity in others had other effects that marked its fairly steady progress between the 1920s and the 1980s. Two developments in particular delineated the changes in the audience for emotion. The first marks a growing need to identify real emotional sharing as a special rather than a normal trait. The second suggests ways in which some individuals tried to develop alternatives to serious support from the outside world.

The word “empathy” was coined early in the twentieth century, in part to provide an English equivalent for the German word *Einfühlung*. The word initially gained currency only among experts in psychology and kindred fields and was not directed toward normal social interactions. By the 1920s it was particularly applied to the capacity for deep appreciation of works of art or music. The word gained public usage only in the 1950s and 1960s in the United States, where it described individuals able to share deeply in the feelings of others. By the 1980s it was dubbed a “vogue word,” open to some confusions but most commonly denoting a capacity for emotional sharing.\(^{40}\) The coining, progress, and changing emphases of the word suggest that an emotionally altruistic quality needed to be identified because it stood out from what were becoming the most common reactions to the feelings of others. Empathy involved more than a negotiated willingness to listen briefly to the emotions of others in the expectation that the same service would be provided in return—the most common ventilationist strategy. The quality was praised, but more significantly it was reified and granted terminology because of its scarcity value. Finding an empathic listener when in emotional need or even a truly empathic moment on the part of a reasonably sensitive other became an achievement clearly to be distinguished from normal experience. Finding an explicit term for such an unusual experience became equally necessary.
The Impact of the New Standards

It is not surprising that as the audience for emotion narrowed its range, some emotions were increasingly described in terms of isolation. In the twentieth-century debates on the function of sadness, American authorities have exhibited a pronounced tendency to label as useful the kind of sadness that allows an individual to withdraw in order to assess and retool before emotional reentry to a full range of activity. Sadness as a means of appealing to others for help has won less approval, and the kind of empathy with sadness developed in other cultures, and possibly in the Victorian past even within the United States, has become less common as well. Small wonder that the most common deviant emotional state in the twentieth century, depression, involves pronounced withdrawal from emotional interaction, in contrast to many qualities of the most widely noted deviance of the Victorian era, hysteria. Emotions work well, even to express dysfunction, when they call for little reaction or when they emphasize withdrawal from interaction.

As the context for emotional response shifted and individuals struggled to gain appropriate control, the role of totally private emotional expression changed. A need to find emotionally kindred spirits, as in the grief support groups, was not abandoned. But many people also needed to seek some release without expecting anyone else to respond or share. Shouting in the closet or in the privacy of a car may have served this purpose, as some authorities recommended. At least as interesting, and a bit more traceable, was a shift in the nature of adult diaries.

Diaries in the nineteenth century and earlier were often relevant to emotional expression. But their main function was to record emotional reactions in terms of the standards desired; the diary became a record of success or failure in living up to emotional goals, a moral account. Thus diarists documented their struggles with temper or the grief they shared with others. Rarely did a diary explicitly serve as a form of release in absence of social support. Twentieth-century diaries, in contrast, moved in precisely this direction. Moral self-evaluation continued, but the trend was toward use of the diary directly to state emotional experiences that could not otherwise be vented, to express emotions that were recognized as too intense for an audience but that required release from the personal interior. Maintaining multiple diaries served as one outlet that allowed emotional expression to be subdivided so that its intensity would not seem overwhelming, even to the lone author-reader. Thus a woman kept an "angry journal" that she felt must be separated from comments on
marriage or on spiritual yearnings because “it’s just too full of nasty ugly things.” A mild-mannered professional, proud of never displaying temper, deliberately maintained a journal filled with all his “negative emotions . . . feelings of remorse and loss . . . jealousy, anger and swearing come out in unabashed tones. . . . When I write, I can get much rawer . . . I don’t have to worry, Am I hurting somebody? Am I inflicting pain?” By the later twentieth century other individuals used diaries precisely because they found themselves too emotional and their emotions too overwhelming to, and unwelcomed by, significant others.43

New technologies might also have provided additional, if more muted, forms of release. For example, when computer mail was developed, individuals used it to express much more emotional reaction than they would venture either in speech or in normal writing. The novelty of the medium and the anonymity of the audience reduced the normal constraints imposed by the twentieth-century standards of self-control and the usual awareness of an unsympathetic audience.44

The decline of a sense of obligation to respond to others’ emotions, and the echoes of this decline in individual efforts to seek compensatory release, form one of the leading impacts of twentieth-century emotionology, clearly differentiating emotional relationships from Victorian patterns. This trend led not only to acceptance of reduced intensity in one’s own expressions but also to changes in the nature of friendship and to some new uncertainties surrounding expectations within the family. The new atmosphere could work well for individuals who normally had their emotions in appropriate check or for whom the impulse to conceal was not a strain. But the same atmosphere might also leave certain emotional needs unanswered in times of crisis, or it might limit the outlets available to individuals who, correctly or not, judged themselves more emotional than the times allowed. Again, shifts in responsiveness to others, based on the growing disapproval of intensity, heightened emotional individualism. But successful navigation of the new environment also required some combination of considerable individual self-control, private release, and concealment; individualism should not be confused with spontaneity, despite recurrent rhetoric directed against repression. The preoccupation with one’s own emotional control, in turn, contributed to the limited tolerance for the intrusions of others. Victorian selflessness, not to mention the emotional collaboration discovered in other cultures—like the shared sadness conveyed by the word fago in Ifaluk society45—
became increasingly rare, except as it was specially reinvented by groups of initial strangers united by some pressing need to manufacture emotional support.

**Institutional Reactions to the New Culture**

The emotional culture that began to form in the 1920s produced some rapid changes in public institutions. Shifts in corporate programs were part of the emerging culture itself, particularly in the campaign against intense anger. Corporations that set up retraining classes, tests to help weed out hotheads, and personnel counseling were responding to the new standards while also defining and disseminating them. Over time, additional corporate initiatives flowed from the larger implications of twentieth-century emotionology. By the 1950s job interviews were characteristically restructured to reduce emotional anxiety. The idea of using emotional cues to test character gave way to a desire to promote calm, since vigorous emotion would simply distract. The same style applied to the increasingly common exit interview, where departing employees were encouraged to discuss problems but also to gain a more balanced mood; insofar as possible, no one should go away mad.46

Work life might still stir deep emotion; we have seen that many workers responded to the new standards not by avoiding emotion but by restraining or concealing it. Public impact is not the same thing as institutional ability actually to control emotional experience. Corporate manipulation did confuse some workers about what their "real" emotions were, but it did not control emotional experience completely. This same uncertainty applies to the military efforts to curtail intense emotion by providing a more understanding approach to fear during World War II and then subsequently reducing hazing exercises in training, for their success can hardly be measured.47

On the other hand, attempts to regulate the activities of children and youth, particularly prominent during the early decades of the twentieth century, had more consistent implications for emotional socialization. Adult groups sought to limit boy culture, to reduce the fights and the risky dares that had translated ingredients of Victorian emotionology into daily life.48 Adult initiatives were not entirely successful, but many historians agree that the autonomy of boys was curtailed to some extent into early adolescence by activities such as scouting and by the extension
of after-school programs. Some of the resultant organizations, to be sure, maintained a Victorian tone—like the sports teams that worked on channeling anger. Others, however, sought more fully to regulate intense interactions; cub scout programs, for example, emphasized crafts that might substitute busy work with inanimate objects for some of the emotional liveliness of Victorian boyhood.

Schools participated actively in the attempt to develop new policies that would limit emotionality. Success may have been elusive because for each emotion-reducing policy, other developments, such as racial integration, may have provided new reasons for fear or anger in the school setting. But explicit school policies did shift under the new emotionological aegis, and these policies had significant consequences in their own right.

By the 1930s, school authorities began urging reduction of fear-inducing situations. One authority noted: "Many junior high schools, by eliminating home work and stressing day-by-day preparation at school, have done much to banish the fear of semester examinations." By the 1940s education officials increasingly emphasized positive reinforcements rather than fear-inducing punishments and comparisons, to the point that some educators came to believe that only kindness, not stressful criticism, was worth conveying as a response to classroom work. The flunking of students declined in favor of more lenient acknowledgments of minimum quality or improvement such that students could be spared the anxiety, and teachers the resultant student anger, of being held back. Schools worked also to limit hazing practices by student organizations. The decline of new introductions of honor codes was a response to concerns about the stress of intense guilt, and by the 1960s students themselves proved increasingly loath to report violations of codes lest they betray their peers and involve themselves in unwanted settings of intense emotion. Competitiveness was downplayed by new policies designed to keep grades private. By the 1980s identifiable posting of grades, by which students might learn their comparative ranking and risk the resultant envy and jealous resentment, had become not only uncommon but illegal (though in this case students often rejected the system by immediately discussing their grades anyway, in part to demonstrate their ability to rise above emotional tensions among friends). Schools also developed the use of guidance counselors in part to deal with children—particularly angry children—who did not live up to
appropriate emotional codes. And by the 1950s teachers themselves, like other middle-class workers, were being urged to adopt more "psychological" techniques in dealing with students—including careful control over their own tempers.51

Most indicative of the new desire to defuse the emotional atmosphere of the classroom was the progressive shift in grading policies. By the 1950s, school authorities—including teachers—began to participate in a massive escalation of average grades, which often yielded a majority of students earning honors marks in suburban high schools and prestigious colleges, despite evidence that objective student performance levels were deteriorating. Higher grades were thought to reduce student anxiety and anger and thus help teachers curtail emotional confrontations with students or their parents (this trend largely continues into the 1990s). For their part, many students seemed not illogically to assume that a friendly personality and controlled emotional behavior largely sufficed to merit good marks. American schools—and particularly those dominated by the middle class—showed the stamp of a new set of emotional goals as strong emotion came to be seen as a distraction from, even a deterrent to, educational performance rather than a spur to achievement.52

American colleges and universities participated enthusiastically in the new emotional climate, particularly from the 1950s onward. They attacked emotionally threatening (and sometimes physically dangerous) fraternity hazing practices in favor of milder initiations. They joined in the upward grading curve and provided a growing array of counseling services and friendly student affairs personnel to make students feel less emotionally threatened. Evaluations of faculty encouraged students to comment on the personality attributes of faculty, promoting a sense that traditional aloofness or invocations of fear should be replaced by a more relaxed, at least apparently affable manner. "Quality of life" became a campus watchword as a moderate and supportive emotional atmosphere replaced traditional points of stress. As campus supervision of sexual habits declined amid 1960s attacks on the doctrine of in loco parentis, efforts to monitor emotional styles in the direction of a pleasant mildness ironically increased.

The new emotionology increasingly informed the law and some uses of the law. The same held true for Victorian emotional culture, but the new directions were even more dramatically novel. As early as the
1890s, American states began to turn against the jealousy defense as an excuse for homicide, as they increasingly disallowed the invocation of the “unwritten law” as a form of insanity. Even with this shift, however, state legislatures and juries continued to reduce the charge of murder to that of manslaughter when the “heat of passion” could be invoked by a man. Southern states in particular maintained their regional tradition of supporting jealousy. By the 1970s, however, passion was finally struck down. Texas withdrew its statute in 1974 while Georgia rescinded its tolerance in 1977. “In this day of no-fault, on-demand divorce, when adultery is merely a misdemeanor . . . any idea that a spouse is ever justified in taking the life of another—adulterous spouse or illicit lover—to prevent adultery is uncivilized.”

Public or at least legal sanction for this intense emotional act had been revoked. Other states moved in the same direction, even limiting jury flexibility in delivering verdicts on manslaughter.

Jealousy and even intense love were also attacked by the abrupt termination of alienation-of-affection suits, which flourished in the United States from the late nineteenth century until the 1930s. Alienation-of-affection actions had been based on the idea that engagement gave each partner some ownership of the other—such that proprietary rights were violated if one partner was wooed away—and also on a recognition of the intense suffering that withdrawal of love might cause. Emotional distress must be soothed, usually by substantial monetary awards from a well-to-do fiancé. By the 1930s, however, the emotional basis for these “heart balm” suits, as they had been dubbed, had eroded. Jealousy was now tawdry and embarrassing, and people should either not love too intensely or lick their wounds in private. The rate of suits plummeted, and in the 1970s state governments (with rare exceptions) put an end to the category by formal legislation.

The most striking and general legal incorporation of the growing hostility to emotional intensity applied to the growing currency of no-fault actions. Just as the rise of mental cruelty provisions had symbolized the application of Victorian culture to marriage law, which was intended to sanctify intense family bonds and punish their violation, so no-fault actions translated the desire to avoid emotional entanglements into an even wider-ranging set of legal innovations. No-fault worked toward a simplification of divorce whereby neither party would have to proclaim particular emotional or other damage and whereby both parties could,
for the public record at least, proclaim their ability to agree without requiring legally sanctioned emotional (or material) hostage taking. As no-fault spread out from California by the late 1960s, the percentage of men filing for no-fault divorce increased gradually. This indicates the reduced stigma of being divorced, to be sure, but it was also a sign that the emotionally "cooler" gender now found a legal proceeding that matched its emotional self-image. No-fault also mirrored the decline in the need to proclaim guilt, not only in divorce but also in automobile accidents. The legal provision unquestionably concealed continued anger, grief, and guilt, but concealment was part of the new culture, certainly preferable to direct, intense confrontation with emotion.

The advent of no-fault legislation responded to many factors. Concerning car insurance, reduction of legal costs and delays served as primary motivation, but an emotional culture that discouraged adversarial attitudes was also relevant. The more prosaic changes in insurance law prepared the way for no-fault divorce reforms. They also reflected growing dissatisfaction with the lies and delays attendant on most fault-based divorce, which required couples who had agreed to a divorce to trump up charges of cruelty or adultery. Nevertheless, the new emotional culture was central to the no-fault divorce movement. It was no accident that discussions of divorce by consent dated back to the years around 1920, when the new emotionology was itself being installed. Proponents of no-fault in the 1960s and 1970s argued explicitly in terms of avoidance of emotional stress: divorcing couples had experienced enough "emotional trauma" without having to "endure a legal trauma as well." The whole adversarial nature of conventional divorce seemed anachronistic in an increasingly therapeutic atmosphere. Divorcing couples should be encouraged to consider counseling but should also be free, perhaps after additional counseling, to undertake a new relationship undamaged by a bruising emotional experience in the interim. The elite divorce lawyers who initially spearheaded the no-fault movement in California were explicitly bent on humanizing the divorce process by decreasing the conflict level—and emotional ingredients were central in these considerations. California testimony from 1964 onward placed the new emotional standards directly on the table (though the novelty was not acknowledged). Thus a psychiatrist argued that all divorce was the result of "gross emotional immaturity... Emotional immaturity is a state of decadence or regression... because somehow or another, in this
pattern of growth, he [the relevant spouse] was not able to develop better solutions, better emotionality, better emotional solutions to problems." Adding intense emotional conflict to this brew was, it seemed, nonsensical; it was better to let people cut their losses and start afresh. No-fault provisions also affected the costs of litigation and could have implications for property settlement, but the response to new emotional standards—and above all, the desire to facilitate escape from intensity without imposing additional emotional stress in the process—lay at the center of this broad legal current. A basic pillar of the legal system involving family law and conceptions of responsibility had been reconstructed to fit altered beliefs about emotional propriety.

During the 1970s one state after another raced to catch up with California. The speed with which no-fault legislation spread, and the relative lack of controversy, further suggest the wide agreement on the goals of avoiding unnecessary intensity. One scholar has emphasized lobbying and legislative process as the keys to this "silent revolution," but a larger public concern about conflict and the burdens of passion drove the process as well.

American law also served emotional goals in other, more indirect ways, though here patterns may have been less novel. Rates of litigation remained high in the later twentieth century, and many observers commented on the aggressive, angry style of many courtroom suits. Yet beneath the surface, a different emotional reality could be played out. Despite, or perhaps because of, the adversarial approach of courtroom attorneys, many Americans were drawn to minor lawsuits as a way of expressing their anger (or grief) over an accident or malfeasance through some sort of small claims action—along with some hope of monetary gain, though studies suggested that this was often a minor motivation. As one litigant who was suing a store noted: "I was really angry. I'd been gyppe d and there was nothing I could do . . . I think that suing him made me feel better. I guess I did it just to let off steam." But a large minority of individual litigants never actually appeared in court, sometimes because out-of-court settlements were made but also, in almost as many instances, because they felt that launching the suit was sufficient to serve the purpose of venting. There was no need to follow up and no interest in sustaining the emotional basis of the suit intensely enough to go to further trouble, particularly amid long trial delays. Claims suits thus allowed a modest ritual expression of emotion, but the
The impact of bringing suit often sufficed to defuse the intensity, and many litigants actually depended on the no-show system to excuse them from the need for outright confrontation. Thus an apparently direct outlet for aggression became increasingly modified as the emotional culture encouraged a gap between initial claims and willingness to persist or to express intense emotion in an open court. Furthermore, even among individuals who did pursue their claims, many were at pains to identify their goals as righting an injustice, not as indulging a “fit of anger.” Finally, by the later 1970s, even preliminary adversarial action was losing ground to arbitration procedures, which provided a counterpart to no-fault laws in the divorce arena. Again, not only the law itself but also some of its uses translated a widespread desire to restrain passion, even though the adversarial elements in the legal system reflected older standards.

Advice about emotion thus fed into efforts by employers, youth authorities, jurists, and legislators to reduce the settings in which strong emotion need be expressed or, in the case of legal claims action, to provide ritual outlets that might limit the expression. Vivid emotion was no longer a useful test of or motivation for people; rather, people deserved protection from its onslaught, whether in divorce action or military training or school examinations. Gradually and incompletely but unquestionably, American institutions moved toward translating a culture of mildness into a host of standard routines, with impacts ranging from grading policies to the unprecedented effort to dissociate the emotion-laden concept of fault from wide stretches of the law.

**Conclusion: The Broader Consequences**

The impact of a changing emotionology took shape from the 1930s onward. It appeared in the three areas that constitute the crucial tests of a link between culture and consequence: personal belief and self-judgments, reactions to others, and institutional context. However, it was not confined to these three areas, for these impacts, in turn, fed a variety of new behaviors, facilitating if not actually causing them. New sexual patterns, as we have seen, unquestionably depended on a decline in the legitimacy of felt jealousy. Not only growing promiscuity but also increasing opportunities for wide heterosexual social contacts and attendant flirting demanded a relaxation of Victorian beliefs not only about
women but also about jealousy and intense love. Obviously, some Americans remained uncomfortable with the new formulations precisely because their values or personalities did not adequately adjust. But overall, new beliefs about the need for mature control and new institutional practices, including declining legal sanction for jealousy, pushed the new values and thus opened the way to altered behaviors. The decline of open grief affected more than mourning rituals. Rapidly increasing separation and divorce also caused pain, and again some outright maladjustment, but they were carried out on the assumption that most Americans would know how either to control or to conceal their grief, with perhaps some sporadic and uncertain emotional support from friends so long as the intense reactions were neither too great nor too long. Decline of anger linked, as we have seen, to shifts in protest movements, reaching well beyond the emotional sphere per se into broader reaches of power and politics.

The impact of the new emotional culture spread to other areas as well, though I will leave a full assessment of these wider consequences for the conclusion. Political styles expressed the assimilation of the new standards despite a few nostalgic gestures to the livelier political culture of the past such as the manufactured exhilaration of presidential nominating conventions. The emotional edge of political debating declined in comparison with nineteenth-century levels or with ongoing patterns in parliamentary formats such as those of Great Britain or Canada. Nastiness may well have increased; several observers suggested that outright lying rose from the 1960s onward. But direct encounters among candidates, and particularly the so-called debates that became obligatory after the late 1950s, featured largely separate statements blandly devoid of any overt anger or passion. Self-presentation rules remained complex. Absence of affect was unacceptable; Michael Dukakis discovered this in 1988 in response to a question about how he would react to a rape of his wife, which launched him into a dry, rational discourse on his philosophy of punishment and convinced many observers that he was a political robot. But public displays of intense emotion, and particularly negative emotion, were now signs of vulnerability, not desirable fervor. Subcultural styles that retained a higher degree of emotionality, as in African American politics, remained interesting but also somewhat foreign, outside the middle-class mainstream. Not surprisingly, the self-control and plasticity widely noted as being required for television cover-
age blended readily with the emotional culture that had already been taking shape: public figures must be ready to display emotional control and a meaningless smile at the drop of a camera button.

On the more personal level, declining intensity affected issues of emotional commitment in friendship and family life. By the 1950s a sense of growing reservations about deep emotional involvement between parents and children, among friends, and in courtship became widespread and persisted into the 1990s. The theme was easily trivialized and exaggerated, but it had some measurable manifestations. The shift from reliance on dating to wider peer associations pointed in the direction of looser emotional (though not sexual) involvements among teenagers after 1960. The rise in the marriage age in the middle class from the early 1970s onward, along with increasing divorce, translated new tensions about commitment into the statistical realm. A looser style of address from children to parents was matched between the 1950s and the 1970s by the measurable decline in parental satisfaction with children. Fathers and mothers alike reported a decreasing sense of reward in dealing with their children. In 1976, for example, less than half as many American parents rated children as providing a major goal in life as had their counterparts twenty years before. Thus a decline in parents’ moral authority over children was matched by declining emotional rewards. According to the same polling data, the importance of the marital bond did rise, but this conclusion stands in some contradiction to actual rates of marriage and divorce, and it is notable that good marriages were defined more in terms of shared consumption goals and leisure patterns than in terms of emotional interactions where, as we have seen, men and women often evinced sharp disagreements. Overall, while the family institution remained varied and viable, attention to individual needs, including as we can now see the complex task of emotional self-control and self-presentation, increasingly overshadowed strong emotional bonds with others.

The impacts of twentieth-century emotional culture need further study. This is true even in areas where definite conclusions can already be drawn. In some respects twentieth-century impacts are less well explored than their Victorian counterparts, for greater familiarity with the Victorian culture and greater perspective on its interactions have facilitated recent findings concerning the intertwining of emotionology with courtship, workplace environment, and law. This chapter’s tenta-
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tive sketch of consequences had to await the analysis central to the earlier chapters, that is, the clear definition of the twentieth-century standards that replaced Victorianism and establishment of the major causes involved. The same definition also invites further work that will take this new culture seriously as a factor among a variety of other developments in American society. Some of the contours of emotional relationships within the twentieth-century family, for example, remain elusive. Certainly additional work on friendship and other centers of emotional response to others remains highly desirable, for generalizations and laments have outpaced data on change.

What, for example, was the impact of the new emotional culture on relationships among siblings after early childhood? Declining family size reduced early sibling ties and encouraged a focus on parents. The new emotional standards warned against too much intensity among siblings because it was likely to turn sour, perhaps even dangerous. Hence siblings were urged to separate, to emphasize individual rather than shared space, and to develop activities that would discourage intense rivalries. Probably, this pattern fostered looser sibling relationships in subsequent adulthood. Certainly twentieth-century imagery, in which adult brothers and sisters play only bit parts in most middle-class lives, contrasts markedly with Victorian ideals of lifelong bonds emanating from the emotionally vivid family of origin. Here might be one more area in which the effort to downplay intensity has undercut a potentially vigorous human relationship—always recognizing, of course, individual variations around the norm. But because the actual history of ties among brothers and sisters has yet to be sketched, any plausible conclusion about trends that would link this emotional relationship to somewhat clearer shifts in friendship and parenthood must remain hypothetical, awaiting further work that can utilize the framework provided by the historical findings on emotionological change.

The nature of variations around the new norms also deserves attention. Regional factors are less important than in the nineteenth century, which seems logical, but the South continues to stand out in certain areas of impact—even in rates of homicide provoked by jealousy. Religious and ethnic subcultures also demand attention where emotional standards are concerned. Gender variations emerge more clearly but amid great complexity in comparison with the clear-cut principles of the nineteenth century. Gender standards for emotional expression merged;
the leading trends from the 1920s onward, well in advance of a full revolution in ascribed roles. Both males and females were called upon to reduce their special areas of emotional intensity in favor of a common pattern of control. However, this same movement generated special attacks on emotional women and on women’s Victorian traditions, whereas men were called to change with far less editorializing. This differentiation, in turn, along with the striking distinctions in the prior tradition, generated some real dispute, not so much over the basic new standards but rather over the ways in which they were incorporated. Women’s links to a special paternalism attenuated but did not disappear. Women remained more likely to think of love than men—by the 1980s they were almost twice as likely to associate sex with love, for example—and they continued to associate love with self-sacrifice, in contrast to the most heralded male variants of the modern love theme. Even more generally, women responded to new emotional rules with frequent interest in discussion, whereas men disproportionately preferred to leave the subject off their conversational agendas (beginning even in boyhood, when excited talk of sports served as the main topical gambit). Thus conventional images of emotional differentiation persisted, often in contrast to a more common shared reality. The new culture, in sum, redefined gender distinctions, but despite some homogenizing impulses, it hardly eliminated them and may actually have exacerbated potential misunderstandings about how emotions were to be handled. Add to region, gender, class, and ethnicity the factor of personal variations, and the complexities of adjustments to the new emotional standards inevitably require further analysis.

Change occurred nevertheless, and it moved many segments of the American middle class in some common directions. Public tolerance of strong emotion declined. Embarrassment frequently checked emotional intensity and led to claims of a uniformly cool, controlled personality. Increasing numbers of people concealed their emotional reactions when dealing with objectionable acts, or loss, or rivalry, or even the tug of family ties, for they were rightly aware that they could not count on much active support from others or were even persuaded that their reactions were their fault in the first place. Intense emotions still occurred, if only because the environment delivered new challenges that could not be fit into a culture of control, but they fit the revised American context badly.