

Modernity's Masculine Matrix:
Homosocial Organization in Pre-Stonewall America

Major Research Paper

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Abstract

Southern California became a space of masculine experimentation at a time when few men dared to move beyond domestic ideological barriers that protected them from the harsh realities of a somewhat ambiguous, contradictory world. Obligatory heteronormativity dominated American society during the 1950s, as Americans succumbed to the institutionalization of Lavender Scare state policies and McCarthy-era sponsored domestic and familial containment strategies. The professionalization and proliferation of scientific specialists, who became interested in provocative subjects such as human sexuality, like zoology professor Dr. Alfred C. Kinsey, opened up a new realm of scholarly ambition, and ignited a fervor in American society that allowed for discussions pertaining to taboo topics such as sexuality to flourish – homosexual or otherwise. This resulted in the 1950s being known as the apogee of straight masculine assertiveness, but less known for its regulative forces of masculinity on new *homophile* homosocial organization. The reification of homosexuality during the 1950s in the city of Los Angeles was partly a construction of freedom and a counter to the compulsory heterosexuality of American society. While elitist, supposedly straight, men's organizations sought to perpetuate heteronormativity during the 1950s, newly formed gay organizations, such as the Mattachine Society, openly negotiated masculinity through dialogue, community involvement and structured hierarchies.

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Introduction

The Masculine Ideal and Identity in Pre-Stonewall America

Contemporary American society remains fascinated – in one way or another – with homosexuality. Currently, thirteen states and the District of Columbia allow for same-sex marriage.¹ Those Americans ardently opposed to same-sex marriage are backed by anti-gay state constitutions throughout the country, while passionate pro-gay Americans continue to lobby for a more fair and equitable America. The history of gay rights in the United States is extensive. The history of how America came to understand gay rights, however, is far less understood. The post-World War II period of American history is important for the contemporary definition of who homosexuals are in America, while the 1950s continue to be known as an unambiguous apogee of American masculinity.

The watershed moment for the United States regarding the place of homosexuals within society was what occurred at 53 Christopher Street, the Stonewall Inn, in June 1969. The establishment was definitely not an upscale enterprise: it didn't have running water behind the bar, patrons were required to sign in – Judy Garlands and Elizabeth Taylors filled the “bottle club” often – and the local precinct was paid off a total of \$2,000 a week. Operating a gay establishment was illegal, as was the sale of liquor, and the weekly payment to the New York police ensured the bar's owners that they would be tipped off by the police before a raid. Typically, raids occurred at least once a month and raids consisted of little more than police striding through the club and then leaving. In the case of the Stonewall Inn, the police had considerable stake – they were making \$2,000 a week – and the Inn's owners knew that regular,

¹ Massachusetts, Connecticut, Iowa, Vermont, New Hampshire, New York, Washington, Maine, Maryland, Rhode Island, Delaware, and Minnesota, and California.

staged raids would abate future police confrontations.² An unexpected police raid of the Stonewall Inn occurred on June 28, when eight detectives from a different precinct showed up to the Inn's front door in the early hours of the morning. During this startling raid New York erupted into "instant pandemonium" when, for the first time in history, "the cops got what they gave," and a patron hit a police officer in the face.³ Reports in the *New York Times* are telling of how quickly the Stonewall Riots grew, but did little to foreshadow the impact the riots would have on American society. After the first riot took place, the paper barely made room for the news, explaining simply that four policemen were hurt, after about 200 young men were evicted from the Stonewall Inn.⁴ A line on June 30, 1969 read, "The police were denounced by last night's crowd for allegedly harassing homosexuals. Graffiti on the boarded-up windows of the inn included: 'Support Gay Power' and 'Legalize gay bars.'"⁵ On July 3, the *New York Times* reported that at least 500 people had congregated in Greenwich Village to protest the Stonewall Inn's raid, and at least four were arrested.⁶ Exactly one year later, one of the headlines of the *New York Times* stated: "Thousands of Homosexuals Hold a Protest Rally in Central Park." The Stonewall Inn raid on June 28, 1969 allowed gay people to discover their potential strength and to gain a new pride.⁷ Stonewall is part of the quintessential vocabulary used to describe gay rights in American history, but one must look earlier than the formulating years of the Gay

² Martin Duberman, *Stonewall* (New York: Dutton, 1993), 193.

³ Charles Kaiser, *The Gay Metropolis: 1940-1996* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997), 198-199.

⁴ "4 Policemen Hurt in 'Village' Raid," *New York Times*, June 29, 1969.

⁵ "Police Again Rout 'Village Youths,'" *New York Times*, June 30, 1969.

⁶ "Hostile Crowd Dispersed Near Sheridan Square," *New York Times*, July 3, 1969.

⁷ Fosburgh, Lacey. "Thousands of Homosexuals Hold a Protest Rally in Central Park," *New York Times*, June 29, 1970.

Liberation movement if he or she is to explore the history masculinity and homosexuality in America's period of modernity in the post World War II years.⁸

Americans marched triumphantly away from the battlefields in Europe and from the war in the Pacific, into the prosperity of a post-World War II world. The period of modernity that followed WWII became an arena for the regulatory practices of sexual identity to be carried out. The regulation of sexuality in America during this period was due in part to state regulatory processes, as outlined by historian Margot Canaday. Federal welfare agencies, the military, and the Bureau of Immigration each facilitated the process of engendering regulating social institutions in the United States. Canaday contends that the American state led to the formation of the homosexual identity in modern America, partly by restricting the gay community from state services.⁹ The atmosphere of the 1950s resulted also in a masculinization of modernity and the creation of a society based on heteronormative principles.

America's current homosexual fascination demands a solid understanding of what gender and masculinity meant for America, especially during the post-WWII years. Historian of United States imperialism, Kristin Hoganson, articulates what many contemporary historians thought

⁸ In his 2013 Inaugural Address, President Barack Obama explained that equality in the nation is the result of historic civil rights moments. The Stonewall Inn Raid (and the ensuing riots in New York) were just as significant as other events in the history of American civil rights, as implied by the President: "We, the people, declare today that the most evident of truths – that all of us are created equal – is the star that guides us still; just as it guided our forbearers through Seneca Falls, and Selma, and Stonewall; just as it guided all those men and women, sung and unsung, who left footprints along this great Mall, to hear a preacher say that we cannot walk alone; to hear a King proclaim that our individual freedom is inextricably bound to the freedom of every soul on Earth." President Obama, "Inaugural Address," January 21, 2013.

⁹ Margot Canaday uses three developing bureaucracies of the modern American state: the Bureau of Immigration, the military and federal welfare agencies, to explain how homosexuality became institutionally regulated. The state regulated and helped to identify sexual behaviors, and gender traits, and used their regulations as grounds for social exclusion. Canaday argues that the American state led to the formation of the homosexual (and as a result, heterosexual) identity in the modern era. Because homosexuals were not allowed to take advantage of the services that the state provided, Canaday argues that this essentially took away basic citizenry rights. Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

during the late twentieth century when she asked: What does gender have to do with it?¹⁰

Hoganson confronts this issue within the field of international history, and perhaps the same question should be asked of American Studies. What *does* gender have to do with it? Certainly, one of the reasons for gender's prominence in the field of American Studies – and history as well – is due to researchers' willingness to maneuver in and out of the borders of a particular field, which results in tremendous interdisciplinary work being done. Gender has allowed us to tear down the simple binaries of men versus women, masculine versus feminine, gay versus straight, and has allowed American Studies to become an ideological matrix.

Gender is constructed in culturally and historically specific contexts and masculinity is especially contingent on the way that power is balanced and manifested in society. Whether or not the men and women of the 1950s conformed to the homogenization process of heteronormativity, they were still impacted by it. Some people were able to manipulate the heteronormative lifestyle that afforded people such acceptance by using escapist strategies. Others, especially single people, were socially stigmatized, as they did not have a domestic life from which to escape. Gender has a lot to do with how we think about American Studies, especially American cultural studies, and as we continue to consider gender a construction based on social interaction, rather than something fixed in advance of social interaction, we are able to move beyond the roles assigned to the different sexes. This allows researchers to understand masculinity, specifically, as something that is being made and remade with changing social conventions and practices.

The question still remains, however. How do we study gender in American Studies?

Theoretical historian Joan W. Scott contends that researchers need to “examine the ways in

¹⁰ Kristin Hoganson, “What’s Gender Got to Do with it? Gender History as Foreign Relation History.” In Michael Hogan, Thomas G. Paterson (eds.), *Explaining the History of America Foreign Relations, 2nd Edition*, 304-322, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

which gendered identities are substantively constructed and relate their findings to a range of activities, social organizations, and historically specific cultural representations.”¹¹ Scott also questions how social institutions – such as the military, or the welfare system – incorporated gender into their assumptions and organization. Questions such as these have been partly explained, for example, by Margot Canaday, who has explained state organization and the institutionalization of gender in American society.

Again though, we turn to Scott’s theoretical essay that outlines the usability of gender in the field of history. At the time of her writing in 1986, Scott posited that to study gender, what was essentially the study of women at the time, was to also study ‘the other’ as well. Of course, Scott implied that studying gender meant to put men under the microscope. Scott’s argument contends that in order to understand how gender works, historians need to be able to articulate the nature of the relationship between the individual subject and the social organization within which it is contained and of which it is a part.¹² Human agency, as described by Scott, “is the attempt to construct an identity, a life, a set of relationships, a society with certain limits and with language – conceptual language that at once sets boundaries and contains the possibility for negation, resistance, reinterpretation, the play of metaphoric invention and imagination.”¹³ The concept of human agency is hugely important to the researcher’s understanding of how concrete social interactions are meaningful.

As sex and sexuality studies began to flourish during the twentieth century, Scott argued that gender was to become an important paradigm through which to study the difference between

¹¹ Joan W. Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” *American Historical Review* 91 (December 1986), 1068.

¹² Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” 1067.

¹³ Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” 1067.

sexual practice and sex roles in society.¹⁴ The relationships between the sexes – and between differing masculinities, and femininities – resulted in a sensible consideration of gender as a means to view these phenomena. Historian John D’Emilio similarly argues that since 1960 historians have moved toward a much more complex history of society. The practice of gender history as it related to men was helped by new social histories – commonly known as “history from the bottom up” – and feminism.¹⁵ Just as Scott had posited six years prior, D’Emilio explained that the study of women using a feminist paradigm opened up the domain of sexuality to historical scrutiny. Feminist scholars during the 1960s allowed for the reconfiguration of homosexuality, and the identification of gender and sexuality as social constructs, rather than biological facts. By 1992 D’Emilio had suggested that to study gay history, scholars might need to adjust the lens of criticism and observation. In fact, D’Emilio interestingly reiterates Kristin Hoganson’s question by asking why gay history cannot be studied using the vantage of gender – or masculinity.¹⁶

Masculinity, however, remains subtly provocative and, in some ways, the mystique of gender studies. Bryce Traister explains that masculinity is resistant to analysis – or at least, has been – because, “masculinity has for so long stood as the transcendental anchor and guarantor of cultural authority and ‘truth,’ demonstrating its materiality, its ‘constructiveness,’ requires an especially energetic rhetorical and critical insistence.”¹⁷ In his historiographical analysis of the study of men, Traister outlines the difference between earlier notions of masculinity studies as

¹⁴ Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” 1056.

¹⁵ John D’Emilio, *Making Trouble: Essays on Gay History, Politics, and the University* (Routledge: New York, 1992), 97.

¹⁶ D’Emilio, *Making Trouble: Essays on Gay History, Politics, and the University*, 109.

¹⁷ Bryce Traister, “Academic Viagra: The Rise of American Masculinity Studies,” *American Quarterly* 52:2 (June 2000), 281.

heterosexually orientated, and more current masculinity studies, which bring heteromasculine and gay studies together. The effect of heteromasculine studies, specifically, has been a restoration of the representations of men, which are produced and analyzed by men. In particular, Traister points to the so-called crisis theory of American masculinity, which replaces the transcendental male with the constructed or performative male, as a means to deconstruct not only masculinity, but also its cultural practices.¹⁸ Heteromascularity studies, simply put, is the history of men without masculinity.¹⁹ Contemporary masculinity studies allow the researcher to move deeper into the study of men as the product and representation of other men. Queer theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's studies have been instrumental in using this method, particularly in her assertion that homosocial relations result in obligatory heteronormative – often phallogocentric – sociability amongst men. This is due in part to the phobic prohibition against eroticism evident in homosocial organization.²⁰

It is also possible that heterosexual men's organizations during the post-WWII years were ambivalent to their somewhat latent homosexual tendencies in homosocial gathering places. Much of this is difficult to ascertain. Much of the history that this paper analyzes has been complicated by time and personality. In determining what masculinity meant during the 1950s, and what the main influences on masculinity were, we need to properly engage with a plethora of sources. Early studies, which considered personal interviews with leading members of

¹⁸ Historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr., who wrote "The Crisis of American Masculinity" for *Esquire* in 1958, first brought up the crisis of masculinity. Schlesinger posited: "What has happened to the American male? For a long time he seemed utterly confident in his manhood, sure of his masculine role in society, easy and definite in his sense of sexual identity. Today men are more and more conscious of maleness not as a fact but as a problem. The ways by which American men affirm their masculinity are uncertain and obscure. There are multiplying signs, indeed, that something has gone badly wrong with the American male's conception of himself." Schlesinger's article highlighted the gendered anxiety of the post-war period; Traister, "Academic Viagra: The Rise of American Masculinity Studies," 284.

¹⁹ Traister, "Academic Viagra: The Rise of American Masculinity Studies," 284.

²⁰ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, (New York: Columbia University Press), 1985.

homosocial organizations, discouraged the impact these organizations had on American society. Many chose to instead focus on individual identity and rarely have researchers employed the masculine studies approach outlined by Traister, whereby gay studies and heteromascuine studies are brought together. Of course, using a similar methodological question put forth by Scott, and then reiterated by D'Emilio, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick posits that if overt homophobes, who were supposedly insecure about their masculinity, helped to create a secure version of masculinity by maintaining gender subordination (using acts of homophobic enforcement), what does this say about the masculinity of gay men?

This paper will begin with a critical examination of what it meant to be a heterosexual man in the post-WWII period. The first chapter, *The Manliness of Modernity*, will examine quintessential historians of the modern era, such as Elaine Tyler May, and evaluate the impact of Joseph McCarthy, McCarthyism, and the Red Scare, on the development of America's straight men. Important characters such as Hugh Hefner will be discussed and used to define the ambiguity of obligatory heteronormativity during the 1950s. Chapter two, *The Gay Man in Pre-Stonewall America* will explain the history of Los Angeles' gay scene during the 1950s. Specifically, the chapter will analyze how the public perception of homosexuality became manipulated by state-sponsored policies, such as the Lavender Scare. The last chapter, *Harry Hay's Gay L.A. and the Remaking of the Masculine Matrix*, will analyze the efforts of early homosocial organizers and their attempt to define homosexuals as a repressed minority in Cold War America. The Mattachine Society will be of particular importance, as this homosocial organization worked considerably hard to foster open dialogue and community engagement in their early endeavors. The conclusion, *The Exclusivity of the Eternal Brotherhood*, will situate

gay history, and specifically homosocial organization, as a significant component of society's negotiation of masculinity.

Obligatory heteronormativity dominated American society during the 1950s, as Americans succumbed to the institutionalization of Lavender Scare state policies and McCarthy-era sponsored domestic and familial containment strategies. The professionalization and proliferation of scientific specialists, who became interested in provocative subjects such as human sexuality like zoology professor Dr. Alfred C. Kinsey, opened up a new realm of scholarly ambition, and ignited a fervor in American society that allowed for discussions pertaining to taboo topics such as sexuality – homosexual or otherwise to proliferate. This resulted in a decade well known as the apogee of straight masculine assertiveness, but less known for its regulative forces of masculinity on new *homophile* homosocial organization. The reification of homosexuality during the 1950s in the city of Los Angeles was partly a construction of freedom and a counter to compulsory heterosexuality of American society. While elitist, supposedly straight, men's organizations sought to perpetuate heteronormativity during the 1950s, newly formed gay organizations, such as the Mattachine Society, openly negotiated masculinity through dialogue, community involvement and structured hierarchies.

Chapter I

The Manliness of Modernity

Sloan Wilson's quintessential 1950s novel *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* provides contemporary readers with an expression of the struggle young, middle class Americans faced in the conforming space of the suburb. The young American couple in the novel, Tom and Betsy Rath, were members of a white middle class who settled comfortably into the age of affluence, sheltered from domestic regulatory policies and international affairs. Their ambivalence regarding the Red Scare and Lavender Scare, and focus on economic prosperity, ultimately highlights the pinnacle of the homogenization process of 1950s American society. Tom and Betsy's role in the heteronormative project of the 1950s American suburb articulates the intricacies involved with fragile marital relationships.

Elaine Tyler May's monumental work, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*, contends that Americans during the post-World War II period worked together to homogenize society by finding lifestyles that were suitable to the acceptability of mainstream culture, for "it was not just nuclear energy that had to be contained, but the social and sexual fallout of the nuclear age itself."²¹ The family became the ideal social containment strategy, and both men and women were, "[un]willing to give up the rewards of conforming for the risks of resisting the domestic path."²² During a period of assumed insecurity, "bombshell" beauties and subversive individuals needed to be contained and their influence prevented from affecting all of American society.

²¹ Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War*, (New York: Basic Books, 2008), 91.

²² May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War*, 17.

One key area of containment in the domestic Cold War, which significantly impacted the masculinity of America's heterosexual men, was marital sex. Historian Carolyn Herbst Lewis argues that America's Cold War general practitioners were instrumental in providing medical advice to America's newly married couples. "Family medicine" during this period involved matters such as sexual dysfunction, venereal disease, and sterility. Lewis explains that general practitioners during the Cold War accepted reports that premarital relations were rising in the United States, yet the specialists continued to practice with the assumption that couples entered into the marriage as virgins.²³ Reproductive specialists, as suggested by Lewis, explained that in the case of male infertility, these men lacked the "naturalness" of heterosexuality and would probably not be able to endure the shame of their inadequacy.²⁴ Clearly there was a perceived "naturalness" to America's heterosexual man that in the 1950s most doctors – or at least, fertility specialists – could purportedly discern.

In Southern California, which is the focus of this study, there appeared to be a psychologically driven desire for young families to move into single family dwellings during the post-war period. This part of the country was populated by millions of Americans who had been mobilized for the war and had lived in intensified defensive spaces, which deepened the desire for the mythic private home.²⁵ According to the historian Kevin Starr, families were forming at a rate of 1.4 million new families per year following the war, and by 1957 the average household

²³ Premarital sex in America had been well studied by Dr. Kinsey, and his influential study would have been read by most of America's doctors. See, Alfred C. Kinsey, Wardell B. Pomeroy, and Clyde E. Martin. *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (1948 repr, Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders Company, 1949), 547-63.

²⁴ Carolyn Herbst Lewis, *Prescription for Heterosexuality: Sexual Citizenship in the Cold War Era*, (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina press, 2010).

²⁵ Kevin Starr, *Golden Dreams: California in an Age of Abundance, 1950-1963*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 8.

had 3.7 children.²⁶ The post-WWII baby boom resulted in increased familial spending on consumer goods such as home furnishings. New schools and new suburban neighborhoods typified the average 1950s community. The physical space of the suburb, however, also helped to build and foster Cold War ideologies.

The Cold War resulted in fears of Communist subversion on American soil, and as a result, in 1945, the Special Committee on Un-American Activities was formally established as the House Un-American Activities Committee. The quintessential figure of the 1950s Red Scare was Senator Joseph McCarthy from Wisconsin. In February 1950, the Republican Senator stated to a conservative American women's group that the State Department harbored 205 "card-carrying Communists." McCarthy's campaign against subversive activity in the State Department and his bully-like tactics resulted in a Cold War domestic Red Scare, which targeted Americans working in numerous government agencies, from the Government Printing Office to the Army Signal Corps.²⁷ Fear of Communist subversion reached deep into American society and Americans began to understand sexual perversion as important characteristics of McCarthy-era ideologies, which targeted subversive individuals.

The pervasive atmosphere of anticommunism in Cold War American society resulted in individuals who were willing to compromise, accommodate and lower expectations of fulfillment in order to cling to the ideal of domestic containment; personal experimentation, as well as political resistance, were seen as risky endeavors with dim prospects for significant positive results.²⁸ The characters portrayed by Wilson in the fictional – albeit, supposedly autobiographical – account of Tom and Betsy Rath highlight the lackluster sexual relations and

²⁶ Starr, *Golden Dreams: California in an Age of Abundance, 1950-1963*, 8.

²⁷ David Goldfield et al, *The American Journey*, vol 2 (New Jersey: Upper Saddle River, 2008), 780-781.

²⁸ May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War*, 197.

personal dissatisfaction of post-war marriage and containment. Upon learning about Tom's estranged premarital relationship with a woman in Italy, Betsy explains how her marriage to Tom was unfulfilling to say the least:

Let's be honest about it. We haven't had much of a life together. You and I seem to have learned a lot of things since the war – a lot of things I don't want to know. We've learned to drag along from day to day without any real emotion except worry. We've learned to make love without passion. We've even learned to stop fighting together, haven't we? We haven't had a real good fight since you threw that vase against the wall a year ago. ... All I know how to do nowadays is be responsible and dutiful and deliberately cheerful for the sake of the children. ... It's a great life, isn't it?²⁹

Betsy Rath demonstrates the marital tension that occurred during episodes of familial containment during this period. Historian Elizabeth Fraterrigo astutely comments on the outright contradiction of the supposed masculinity that was part and parcel of modernity in the early post war period. Fraterrigo argues that the urban lifestyle that was immersed in popular culture and fed, quite literally, through consumption, resulted in a masculinity that was definitively middle-class. The manly modern's constant consumption and highly regulated corporate life had the potential to emasculate the white collar worker, and his incentive to consume and to modify his appearance caused social unease within the new 1950s man.³⁰ These tensions were certainly felt in numerous families, other than the Raths.

As was previously alluded to, some men partook in escapist strategies. By doing so, they were able to participate in a socially regulated strategy, which positioned them within the confines of society's obligatory heteronormativity. Perhaps the most well known of these men was Hugh Hefner. Hefner's *Playboy* served as an escapist strategy for men who were less than

²⁹ Sloan Wilson, *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (1955; repr., Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2002), 267.

³⁰ Elizabeth Fraterrigo, *Playboy and the Making of the Good Life in Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 8.

happily married. For, to “read *Playboy* was to join an imaginary smart set of guys who lived in penthouses, drove sports cars and were worldly-wise about wine and women.”³¹ Men who read *Playboy* were able to imagine themselves as part of an idealized life of sycophant conformity where, like Hefner, they could indulge in the extravagancies of a life distant from their wives. The masculine identity that these men believed they could exude was based on tasteful consumption and sexual pleasure. The playboy of the 1950s – single or not – immersed himself in the consumption of commodities, and Hefner coached these men and welcomed them to the sphere of domestic consumption.³² In a subscription pitch written for the April 1956 issue of *Playboy*, Hefner defined America’s modern playboy:

[A playboy] can be a sharp-minded young business executive, a worker in the arts, a university professor, an architect or an engineer. He can be many things, provided he possess a certain point of view. He must see life not as a vale of tears, but as a happy time, he must take joy in his work, without regarding it as the end of all living. He must be an alert man, an aware man, a man of taste, a man sensitive to pleasure, a man who – without acquiring the stigma of voluptuary or dilettante – can live life to the hilt. This is the sort of man we mean when we use the word playboy.³³

The certain type of man who read *Playboy* did not necessarily have to be unhappy with his marriage. He could have been very happy with his marriage. There was a very good chance, however, that America’s 1950s playboy was single.

In 1953 *Playboy* began as a project of the true man-about-town: the gentleman bachelor. Manly confidence could be found on each page of Hefner’s *Playboy*, and historian Carrie Pitzulo contends that the mid-century’s consuming male – the playboy – was either a product of the over consuming affluent male, or the result of the 1950s’ so-called crisis of masculinity as outlined by

³¹ Russell Miller, *Bunny: The Real Story of Playboy* (London: Michael Joseph, 1984), 51.

³² Fraterrigo, *Playboy and the Making of the Good Life in Modern America*, 9.

³³ Miller, *Bunny: The Real Story of Playboy*, 65.

Arthur Schlesinger Jr. in 1958.³⁴ For, as Hugh Hefner explained, *Playboy* contained “articles, fiction, picture stories, cartoons, humor and special features culled from many sources, past and present, to form a pleasure-primer styled to the masculine taste. Most of today’s ‘magazines for men’ spend all their time out-of-doors – thrashing through thorny thickets or splashing about in fast flowing streams. We’ll be out there too ... but ... we plan on spending most of our time inside.”³⁵ Hefner’s sexual liberation and young consumption based lifestyle appears to have stepped outside the realm of domestic containment policies as outlined by Elaine Tyler May.

The seemingly carefree life of the consuming bachelor appears to not only break the domestic containment strategy’s mold, but also ostensibly redefines heteromale identity, as well. Bill Osgerby argues that Hefner’s *Playboy*, and the bachelor life it espoused, undoubtedly challenged the breadwinner archetype of the 1950’s man, and to an extent, the ideology of Cold War domestic containment. However, this process merely pushed the boundaries of acceptable heterosexual behavior, as opposed to rewriting the boundaries completely.³⁶ Both Osgerby and Carrie Pitzulo argue that consumption became a defining characteristic of the heterosexual man during the 1950s, and this is partly due to the rise in the affluence and individuality of America’s young playboy. During the 1950s, however, one defining characteristic of post-war military family life was aid issued through the GI Bill.³⁷ This allowed millions of young families to rise

³⁴ Carrie Pitzulo, *Bachelors and Bunnies: The Sexual Politics of Playboy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 73.

³⁵ Miller, *Bunny: The Real Story of Playboy*, 44. Taken from part of an editorial, written by Hugh Hefner, for *Playboy*’s first issue. The editorial was written to introduce readers to the magazine and to explain the magazine’s philosophy. In his introduction, Hefner explained that *Playboy* was not a family magazine: “If you’re somebody’s sister, wife or mother-in-law and picked us up by mistake, please pass us along to the man in your life and get back to the *Ladies Home Companion*.” The magazine was designed for men “between 18 and 80,” who liked “entertainment served up with humor, sophistication and spice.”

³⁶ Bill Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise: Masculinity, Youth and Leisure-Style in Modern America* (2001; repr., New York: Berg, 2006), 145.

³⁷ Pitzulo, *Bachelors and Bunnies: The Sexual Politics of Playboy* 75.

into the middle class. These young families were afforded the financial ability to purchase a new house, and fathers who fought in the war were entitled to an education, which had numerous benefits in a workplace now dominated by managerial positions and upward mobility. The GI Bill not only helped to fuel post war prosperity in America, but it allowed Americans – including fathers and single men – to fulfill the expanding definition of a postwar masculinity, a manly masculine who was affluent and participated in a consumer culture.

The Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944 “provided continued medical care, counseling, VA loans, insurance, educational opportunities, and other benefits to ensure successful physical and mental readjustments.”³⁸ Historian Margot Canaday claims that legislators aimed to domesticate men who had been honorably discharged from service after the war finished. Memories of the unemployed bonus-deprived veterans who marched on Washington during the post-WWI years lingered in the minds of politicians, many of whom wanted to include domestication as a cornerstone of the post-WWII welfare system.³⁹ The GI Bill domesticated veterans by guaranteeing loans of up to \$2000 for buying a house, a farm, or starting a business.⁴⁰

The impacts of the GI Bill were felt throughout American society during the early 1950s. As historian Christina S. Jarvis explains, “for a nation looking to the future and prosperity, the best ways of remembering the war and its people’s sacrifices [was] the GI Bill of Rights and local, community-based living memorials that served all its citizens.”⁴¹ The impact of the GI Bill on the future of affluence and prosperity in American society was especially important. Clearly,

³⁸ Christina S. Jarvis, *The Male Body at War: American Masculinity during World War II* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2004), 187.

³⁹ Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America*, 142.

⁴⁰ Goldfield et al, *The American Journey*, 761.

⁴¹ Jarvis, *The Male Body at War: American Masculinity during World War II*, 178.

by domesticating its veterans, society as a whole would benefit greatly. Besides domesticating the masculine in America, the GI Bill also affected gender in America by subverting the gender of homosexual veterans and women.

Margot Canaday argues that the GI Bill institutionalized heterosexuality, “by channeling resources to men so that – at a moment when women had made significant gains in the workplace – the economic incentives for women to marry remained firmly in place.”⁴² The GI Bill regulated the economics of household earnings, and subverted women in the process. World War II had a strong role in leveling the sexes – if only for a short time – in America, explained James Douglas Margin, a journalist who wrote for *ONE: The Homosexual Magazine* in 1955. The emergency put women in uniform, created a labor force of them and upon completion of the war, many returned to their homes with newly learned masculine skills. The GI Bill sought to correct these irregularities, which Margin explained, “took place in abnormal times.”⁴³ The WWII period certainly changed the economics of the American home by affecting the roles of women in society.

The increased funding for servicemen to attain a post-secondary school education afforded by the GI Bill resulted in significantly more servicemen attending college. In 1947, for example, veterans made up half of all college graduates. One impact was felt in the number of women who were literally pushed out of the colleges’ hallways to make room for the men returning home. The process of engendering universities and colleges masculine had massive impacts on the numbers of women who attended post-secondary education. In 1940 women accepted 40 percent of the Bachelor’s Degrees awarded, but by 1950 that figure had dropped to

⁴² Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America*, 171.

⁴³ James Douglas Margin, “The Margin of Masculinity,” *ONE*, May 1955.

25 percent.⁴⁴ The state regulation of society afforded by the GI Bill resulted in the manipulation of the gender roles that had already been subverted by WWII. The war pushed women into the workplace and men into all male environments, and the GI Bill sought to correct these two anomalies by influencing masculinity and heteronormativity.

The temporal space in the history and study of masculinity is important, especially during the early Cold War years. World War II affected most Americans, subverted traditional gender prescriptions, and affected males' relationships with one another. *LIFE* magazine perpetuated the dichotomizing of erotic expression into heterosexual and homosexual realms after the war. The images that the popular magazine published before and after the war differed from *LIFE* photography during the war. During WWII *LIFE* showcased men who were involved together in heterosexual, homosocial environments – such as at work, or on the playing field.⁴⁵ Appendix A demonstrates examples of wartime advertisements and photographs of men in uniform (however, they were usually partly disrobed of their uniforms) that showcase a certain level of homoeroticism and highlighted the camaraderie felt amongst the soldiers. Post-war photography in *LIFE* featured considerably less homosociability – apparently the magazine with its finger on the pulse of the nation had conformed to the heteronormative containment strategy of the 1950s. Men found in the pages and advertisements of *LIFE* during this period were often alone, shaving with other men (with shirts on), were pictured as grooms before a wedding, or were casually drinking with a friend: Appendix B shows examples of these types of visuals.⁴⁶ The eroticism that was shown in *LIFE* magazine during the war was within a masculine gendered social

⁴⁴ Goldfield et al, *The American Journey*, 761.

⁴⁵ John Ibson, “Masculinity Under Fire: Life’s Presentation of Camaraderie and Homoeroticism before, during, and after the Second World War,” in *Looking at LIFE Magazine*, ed. Erika Doss (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 181.

⁴⁶ Ibson, “Masculinity Under Fire: Life’s Presentation of Camaraderie and Homoeroticism before, during, and after the Second World War,” 187.

presence. Images that focused on homosocial relationships, that did involve women, meant that there was less challenge to the prescribed gender order of the period.⁴⁷ That these images did not challenge the natural engendering of the military as a masculine realm speaks volumes to the fact that in the post-war period the same magazine chose to document and compare men such starkly. The gender identity of the heterosexual man experienced a shift in the postwar period to a masculinity characterized more by individuality, and by domestic containment ideologies.

As is expected from the hegemony of the dominant social pattern, all members of society were impacted by the obligatory heteronormativity of 1950s culture and within each group of people there was some form of engagement with society's hegemonic masculinity.⁴⁸ Compulsory heterosexuality, for example, in public discourse was taken for granted in the post-WWII period. In reality, compulsory heterosexuality was not necessarily realized in private. Dr. Kinsey's report outlined the fact that 1 in 10 American men were homosexuals and up to 37 percent of men had experienced some sort of homosexual act. Kinsey's findings also pointed to the reality that the public perception of pre-marital and extra-marital sex was not congruent with the fact that Americans *were* participating in these acts. While heteronormativity – and heterosexuality – appeared to be reaching its apogee, we are now able to assert that the public's willingness to engage with obligatory heteronormativity was actually quite ambiguous. It remains difficult to ascertain who was participating in extra-marital and pre-marital relationships and which people were publically straight, but in fact were privately gay.

The patriarchal nature of America's heteronormative culture resulted in a sexually contained culture of the 1950s. Sociologist R.W. Connell explains that this sexual containment affected women's sexuality by subverting it to the power of manly-masculinity in household

⁴⁷ R.W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 161.

⁴⁸ Connell, *Masculinities*, 146.

spaces.⁴⁹ This somewhat oblique binary within the home resulted in a direct notion of sexual roles and the engendering processes that resulted in those roles. This culture of heteronormativity within the home resulted in the designation that gay men apparently lacked the masculinity that their married counterparts were able to exude.

⁴⁹ Connell, *Masculinities*, 143.

Chapter II

The Gay Man in Pre Stonewall America

In his descriptive essay of the images presented in *LIFE* magazine during and after the war, John Ibson postulates that scenes of male sociability pictured in *LIFE* represented “unions that may have been erotic more often than realized though less often than feared.”⁵⁰ Sexually active homosexual men existed in American society – before – during and after WWII. *LIFE* shifted from wartime acceptability of homosocial behavior – a behavior that was assumed to be heterosexual – to a period where any homosocial behavior was feared to be homosexual. This social construct was fostered by heteronormative practices, which were adopted after the war and into the 1950s. This period may have been known as the apogee of heteronormative practice, but these years cultivated gay homosocial organization as well. This was partly done through state intervention in the social process of obligatory heteronormativity, but also through the expression of group identity. The 1950s, however, were not good years to be a homosexual in America.

Donald Webster Cory is the author of the monumental book *The Homosexual in America*, which is an autobiographical sketch of the life of a homosexual man during the early post-WWII period. Donald Webster Cory was actually the pen name of sociology professor Edward Sagarin. The book openly pioneered the concept that homosexuals deserved sympathy because of their repressed position in society. To many homosexuals during the 1950s, *The Homosexual in America* represented a radical step towards a better understanding of the homosexual man as a distinct minority. *The Homosexual in America* influenced many people, and because it predated the Stonewall Riots, those who read it were empathetic to Cory’s assertion that the ability of

⁵⁰ Ibson, “Masculinity Under Fire: Life’s Presentation of Camaraderie and Homoeroticism before, during, and after the Second World War,” 189.

homosexual men to remain concealed behind a mask of heterosexuality trapped gay men into a vicious cycle. Cory explained the difficulty of being gay in an extremely antihomosexual world:

As a minority, we homosexuals are ... caught in a particularly vicious circle. ... the shame of belonging and the social punishment of acknowledgement are so great that pretense is almost universal; ... only a leadership that would acknowledge [it] would be able to break down the barriers of shame and resultant discrimination. Until the world is able to accept us on an equal basis as human beings entitled to the full rights of life, we are unlikely to have any great numbers willing to become martyrs...But until we are willing to speak out openly and frankly in defense of our activities, ...we are unlikely to find the attitudes of the world undergoing any significant change.⁵¹

Cory's book outlined the clearly antihomosexual nature of America's early post WWII society, but also questioned the legitimacy of gay men being the agents for change in the redefinition of acceptability – and masculinity as well. Still, his message and call for martyrs for the gay struggle highlighted a positive change in the creation of a homosexual minority.

Of course, not all members of American society were as willing to let Cory's message of optimism and expression of homosexual sympathy stand out. Dr. Hervey Cleckley reviewed *The Homosexual in America* and in a rather patronizing manner, discredited Cory's argument that homosexuals could be happy. The doctor cited lack of statistical evidence for homosexual happiness, based on his understanding that homosexual *mating* could be productive.⁵² What is particularly compelling regarding Cory is the way in which American society perceived his book: homosexuals found refuge in between the covers of his book, while scientific specialists – except perhaps Alfred Kinsey – remained skeptical. Cory's text was a testament to the recognition of a homosexual community during the post-WWII years.

⁵¹ Donald Webster Cory, *The Homosexual in America: A Subjective Approach* (1951; repr., New York: Castle Books, 1960), 14.

⁵² Harvey Cleckley, "Book Reviews: *The Homosexual in America*," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 109 (1952), 477.

As homosexuals began to understand themselves as a significant portion of society, the societal crackdown on homosexuality – then known as sexual perversion – became much more malicious, dangerous, and less discreet. The criminality of homosexuality, and the religious consensus that such behavior was immoral dictated the views of many Congressmen and Senators during the post-war period. Such ‘immoral’ persons who committed illegal acts clearly had no place in government. To that end, on December 15 1950, the Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments submitted a report that justified the exclusion of homosexuals from all government offices. The first reason to do so concerned the “unsuitability of sex perverts.” The report explained that those who engaged in overt acts of perversion lacked the emotional stability of normal persons. Committing acts of sexual perversion also “[weakened] the moral fiber of an individual to a degree that he is not suitable for a position of responsibility.”⁵³ The report also insinuated that, “the presence of a sex pervert in a Government agency [tended] to have a corrosive influence upon his fellow employees. These perverts [would] ... attempt to entice normal individuals to engage in perverted practices. ... One homosexual [could] pollute a Government office.”⁵⁴ Besides lacking the moral and emotional stability of a *normal* heterosexual person, homosexuals, according to the Committee’s report, were security risks. The report warned that espionage agents could easily blackmail homosexual government employees, which would lead to the spread of state secrets.⁵⁵ The post-war period signaled the beginnings of a mass culling of homosexuals from government, and America soon adopted the anti-

⁵³ *Employment of Homosexuals and Other Sex Perverts in Government*, 81st Cong., 2d sess., 1950, Document No. 241: 4.

⁵⁴ *Employment of Homosexuals and Other Sex Perverts in Government*, 81st Cong., 2d sess., 1950, Document No. 241: 4.

⁵⁵ *Employment of Homosexuals and Other Sex Perverts in Government*, 81st Cong., 2d sess., 1950, Document No. 241: 4-6.

homosexual attitude that the government espoused. The post-war period recreated the masculinity of American's men – both homosexual and heterosexual.

America's gay men were impacted greatly from the war, just like their straight counterparts. Unlike America's heterosexual men, however, gay men experienced a homosociability that would be robbed from them as the war came to a close. In his study of gay men and women during the war, Allan Berube explains that during the Revolutionary War, the act of sodomy – which during that period included oral and anal sex between men – could result in a prison sentence. During WWII, however, psychiatry specialists encouraged extensive screening for numerous maladies – including sexual perversion – that led to the exclusion of homosexuals from enlisting.⁵⁶ Christina S. Jarvis contends that evidence of sexual experiences and homosexuality was believed to be discernable simply from the bodies of men who were in fact homosexual.⁵⁷ For example, a set of diagnostic criteria was provided for psychiatrists responsible for the screening of homosexuals in the military. The recruits were required to strip off their clothing and answer questions such as, “do you like girls.” Homosexuality, the psychiatrists believed, would be detected by the physicality of the man's body. Sexual perversion – homosexuality – could then be detected by noticing a man's “effeminate gestures,” or his “feminine” distribution of pubic hair.⁵⁸ What is important to note is the military's insistence that the homosexual in America could be biologically evident when compared to his heterosexual

⁵⁶ Allan Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War Two* (New York: The Free Press, 1990), 2.

⁵⁷ Jarvis, *The Male Body at War: American Masculinity during World War II*, 73.

⁵⁸ Jarvis, *The Male Body at War: American Masculinity during World War II*, 75.

counterparts. Allan Berube explains that despite the military's concern with homosexuals fighting in the war, at least 650 000 and as many as 1.6 million soldiers were gay.⁵⁹

Besides the designation as a sexual pervert, the homosexual during the war could potentially be discharged from the military. According to a January 3, 1944 statement by the War Department, a “true or confirmed homosexual deemed not reclaimable was to be given a blue discharge (without honor), while the reclaimable offender was to be treated and returned to duty under a different command.”⁶⁰ Historian Margot Canaday explains that this was particularly problematic for soldiers who, upon returning to the United States, were denied access to funds guaranteed in the GI Bill. In 1945, the Veterans Administration issued a policy that barred GI Bill benefits to any soldier who had been administratively discharged as undesirable because of homosexual acts or tendencies.⁶¹ Of course, not all men who partook in homosexual acts were discharged, and Canaday argues that in a subtle act of irony, the state institutionalized a closet for homosexual men to use (as they were able to openly take advantage of the benefits afforded by the GI Bill).⁶² By denying those who were discharged the benefits of the GI Bill, soldiers were left with few funds to support a lifestyle that was afforded straight men. Heterosexual men could partake in the playboy lifestyle – if they could afford it. By denying discharged homosexual men their postwar benefits, the military systematically cut away the ability of gay men to take part in the cosmopolitan consumption that their straight counterparts enjoyed (and that masculinity afforded).

⁵⁹ Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War Two*, 3.

⁶⁰ Jarvis, *The Male Body at War: American Masculinity during World War II*, 77.

⁶¹ Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America*, 138.

⁶² Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America*, 170.

The attitudes towards homosexuals in the military represented a general perception towards homosexuality that was manipulated by state policies. Historian David K. Johnson has written a well-known account of the post WWII state-sponsored drive to rid the State Department of homosexuals, which has been called the Lavender Scare. Homosexual men, or men of “unconventional morality” were targeted because they were perceived as security threats.⁶³ It was believed that the men would be easily swayed by blackmail and targeted by Soviet spies. Johnson contends that the Lavender Scare permeated much of 1950s political culture and calls to cull homosexuals from the civil service originally begun as a partisan political weapon morphed into the mainstream of American culture as a moral panic.⁶⁴ The Lavender Scare sent a strike of fear into the lives of men who regularly participated in homosocial activities, for these came under constant suspicion.

Robert J. Corber explains how the heterosexual’s crisis of masculinity during the 1950s helped the homosexual during this period to exert his influence in society. Corber’s argument that homosexual men played a direct role in crafting a distinct, masculine, homosexual identity in society, which resulted in the sexual binary of homosexual versus heterosexual, but borrowed similar characteristics of masculinity, differs from earlier groups of gay men who lived as members of a myriad matrix of maleness.⁶⁵ In particular, this shift in identity is most different from America’s early twentieth century homosocial organizations. Historian George Chauncey explains that during the first half of the twentieth century men were not categorized as easily into the sexual binary of homo versus heterosexual. As WWII progressed and men came home to

⁶³ David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 6.

⁶⁴ Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government*, 9.

⁶⁵ Robert J. Corber, *Homosexuality in Cold War America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).

domestic containment policies and strategies, this rather complex binary of heterosexual versus homosexual began to be expressed in sociology and Corber identifies this social construction as the product of gay male agency within the heteronormativity of 1950s America.

Corber's argument gives much more credit to America's post war gay community in defining society's definition of who was a homosexual and who was a heterosexual. The gay men that Corber studies defined their own definition of acceptable masculinity, but not all men were as eager to redefine masculinity. Instead, they chose to employ a similar strategy to Hugh Hefner in that they rearticulated the heteronormative definition of masculine sexuality. How were these men able to counter what sociologist Peter Hennen describes as a constraint of sexual identity based on society's masculine norms? America's 'faeries,' 'bears' and 'leathermen' each crafted a collective response to the engendering of homosexuality as effeminate.⁶⁶ These three subcategories of gay homosocial organization embraced the feminization of their culture, their political lives and their sexual lives. Leathermen espoused ironic, hypermasculine lifestyles, while bears embraced their supposed femininity, yet did so using a normalizing strategy. Faeries clinched their effeminate sexuality close and celebrated in a fashion closely resembling camp.

Anti-homosexual state policies infiltrated as far as international affairs during this period. On March 31, 1950, as the U.S. House of Representatives debated whether or not technical assistance should be given to poorer nations in Africa, Democrat James P. Sutton – who opposed increasing Marshall Plan ideological spending in Africa – announced that countries that spent beyond the reach of their people were most definitely socialist. Sutton then declared, "I hate

⁶⁶ Peter Hennen, *Faeries, Bears, and Leathermen: Men in Community Queering the Masculine* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 8.

communism, I detest socialism, and I love Americanism.”⁶⁷ This all appears to be common House of Representatives rhetoric. What is particularly interesting was the choice words of made by Republican Representative Arthur L. Miller, who springboarded from Sutton’s highly patriotic exceptionalist language into rampant, anti-gay rhetoric. Miller exclaimed that, “‘the fetid stinking flesh ... on this skeleton of homosexuality’ posed a serious threat to the nation’s well-being.”⁶⁸ This choice phrasing juxtaposed the positive influence of Americans in the world with the degraded sex pervert, and this highlights what the diplomatic historian Robert D. Dean has recently explained as a defining struggle within the Lavender Scare over who would control America’s mid-century empire.⁶⁹

David K. Johnson explains that many leaders of the Republican party knew that Senator McCarthy’s attempts to clean up the State Department using anti-Communist rhetoric was outdated and futile. In fact, after McCarthy had accused the State Department of harboring Communists in 1950, John Peurifoy, the head of the department’s security program, issued a press release denying that the State Department had anything to do with harboring Communists.⁷⁰ However, a week after McCarthy’s infamous speech, Secretary of State Dean Acheson made a public appearance to discuss the next fiscal year in Washington. Due to McCarthy’s boisterous attitude towards security threats and his outrageous allegations, the media were at hand ready to hear what else the Secretary had to say about the matter. The influential Republican Senator from New Hampshire, Styles Bridges, managed to get the Secretary Acheson

⁶⁷ Naoko Shibusawa, “The Lavender Scare and Empire: Rethinking Cold War Antigay Politics,” *Diplomatic History* 36:4 (September 2012), 723.

⁶⁸ Shibusawa, “The Lavender Scare and Empire: Rethinking Cold War Antigay Politics,” 724.

⁶⁹ Shibusawa, “The Lavender Scare and Empire: Rethinking Cold War Antigay Politics,” 726.

⁷⁰ Johnson, *The Lavender Scare*, 16.

to admit that homosexuals in the State Department were in fact, security risks.⁷¹ When Bridges asked Acheson how many employees in the State Department had resigned because they were under investigation by the department for being a homosexual, it was admitted that of the ninety-one men to have left the State Department because they were under investigation, most were homosexuals.⁷² The State Department and its “cookie pushers in striped pants” became the laughingstock of the nation. Thus, men in the State Department, and those who tried to look for jobs in the Department, became subjugated to intense screening practices.

That homosexuals during the 1950s could have a hand in diminishing the American empire abroad appears absurd, and the accusation that gay men could have such a vilified position in America was a rather extreme tactic at an attempt to engender the State Department heteromasculine. In an Internal State Department Memo sent to Undersecretary Webb on June 23, 1950 titled, “Problem of Homosexuals and Sex Perverts in the Department of State,” Assistant Secretary of State Humelsine explained that, “where the mores of a people have condoned homosexuality through apathy, the vigor of that people have been emasculated.”⁷³ The risk of allowing homosexuals to perpetuate in American society would lead to the total breakdown of heteronormativity in society. The memo also espoused that numerous ancient civilizations, including the Greek, Roman and Egyptian empires, that accepted homosexuality experienced decline as they did so. The Red Scare, therefore, was very much intertwined with fears expressed by the Lavender Scare. Understandably, the homosexual community expressed disgust at the insinuation that their sexuality predisposed them to be communists. One of these

⁷¹ Johnson, *The Lavender Scare*, 17.

⁷² Johnson, Johnson, *The Lavender Scare*, 17.

⁷³ Quoted in Shibusawa, “The Lavender Scare and Empire: Rethinking Cold War Antigay Politics,” 742.

men, Harry Johnson, wrote in September 1953, “[proponents of homosexuals being communists] can promote the fashionable anti-red hysteria by claiming left political activity to be a sign of sexual perversion and neurosis. They can present their rotten propaganda with which the public has grown bored in sugar-coated doses by the trick of combing it with the most ‘wicked’ and simultaneously the most titillating of all sexual deviations.”⁷⁴ To Mr. Johnson, he shared the same distrust of communists in American society, and could not understand why homosexuals, who were already vilified, needed to be belittled farther.

The vilification of homosexuality was not only influenced by state policies barring gays from serving in the State Department, or from receiving GI Bill benefits. Often, middle-class groups targeted homosexuals as well. Los Angeles’ homosexual black community experienced hostility from middle-class black Americans who espoused beliefs about morality, and criminality that homosexual black people did not share. Los Angeles’ black community experienced growth after the war: in 1940 75 000 black Americans lived in Los Angeles County, by 1950 the population was 218 000, and by 1960 nearly 465 000 black Americans lived in the Los Angeles-Long Beach metropolitan area.⁷⁵ The rapid growth of the black population likely resulted in more people who were willing to participate in and frequent homosexual spaces, posits historian of sexuality Kevin Allen Leonard. Black American newspapers in Los Angeles, however, often depicted stories of homosexual perversion, and Leonard argues that black people in LA did not tolerate sexual perversion in the black community, nor did black newspapers allow for the acceptability of homophile organization into the 1950s.

⁷⁴ Harry Johnson, “And a Red too....” *ONE*, September 1953.

⁷⁵ Kevin Allen Leonard, “Containing ‘Perversion:’ African Americans and Same-Sex Desire in Cold War Los Angeles,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 20:3 (September 2011), 550.

While the scope of this paper is limited to the 1950s, it would be unjust not to mention the beginnings of America's first gay college student groups. Queer historian Brett Beemyn explains that America's first Student Homophile League was formed at Columbia in 1966 yet operated underground until 1968 when it received university recognition. University administrators feared that the student club's social functions would violate New York State's sodomy laws, and as such they were banned from organizing any social functions for its members.⁷⁶ Beemyn asserts that the Student Homophile League was aligned somewhat with homophile organizations which began in the 1950s – such as Mattachine – but took a much more militant approach to gay liberation at a time before the defining moment of the Stonewall Inn riots. The Student Homophile League at Columbia, and later, Cornell's Gay Liberation Front, were important features of America's post-WWII gay history, yet were also imperative for the success of the later, post-Stonewall movements which openly fought for gay rights and acceptability using militant techniques.

Obligatory heteronormativity of the 1950s was very fragile. State policies bolstered the discrimination felt by homosexuals during the 1950s, and homosexuals endangered not only the fate of American empire but also heteronormative acceptability in society. Connell explains that no model for homosexual identity formation exists. However, he also acknowledges a general trend amongst gay social organizations. Many gay homosocial organizations began with a certain level of engagement with hegemonic masculinity exuded by society. They defined the group's sexuality around relationships with men, and they participated in the collective practices of a gay community.⁷⁷ These steps do not suggest a general model of homosexual identity formation, for

⁷⁶ Brett Beemyn, "The Silence is Broken: A History of the First Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual College Student Groups," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 12:2 (April 2003): 207-08.

⁷⁷ Connell, *Masculinities*, 160.

no such model exists – the same is said for heterosexual identity formation. These moments do, however, define a project that can be documented in the making of a homosexual masculinity as a historically realized configuration of practice. They are comparable with similar moments in the reconstruction of the masculinity exuded by obligatory heteronormativity.

Chapter III

Harry Hay's Gay L.A. and the Remaking of the Masculine Matrix

“Straight Guy: Is it Victorian to wish for a complete life? ... the majority of us still have the possibility of getting normal satisfactions out of living.

Homosexual: No one is preventing you. I personally think you're deluding yourself in pretending a normality which no longer exists. ... I merely want my own freedom to behave as I choose and must.”

Mattachine Review, May, 1959.

Homosexual people during the 1950s, especially men, took part in a growing trend of organization. During the early twentieth century, we know that there were significant groups of homosexual men who organized in urban areas. In 1925 Henry Gerber – a German immigrant – helped to create the Society for Human Rights, America's first gay rights organization, in Chicago. It was not until the 1950s – as Cold War ideologies, which fostered heteronormative sentiments, were heating up – that the United States experienced a significant number of homosexual men who organized into fraternal brotherhoods. These homosocial organizations provided homosexual men with an outlet to counter the compulsory heteronormativity of American society, and to openly negotiate masculinity through dialogue, community involvement and structured hierarchies.

Los Angeles became the ideal town for the beginning of America's first longstanding gay homosocial organization. Historian Daniel Hurewitz explains that the antihomosexual policies of 1950s Los Angeles and its widespread gay movement were due to the political culture of the late 1930s. The 1938 mayoral recall, which unseated Los Angeles' Mayor Frank Shaw, wove a cultural fabric combining fears of morality, communism, homosexuality and gender. The political culture that Hurewitz describes made it difficult for society to discern between people who were long-haired radicals – communists – or long-haired fairies – homosexuals. This political culture amalgamated the two and the fear that was generated permeated into post-war

Red and Lavender Scare policies.⁷⁸ However, by engaging with the possibility that homosexuals and communists could potentially gain political clout, the political culture of 1930s Los Angeles actually garnered these populations considerable political agency; enough so that by the early 1950s they became much more politically engaged and organized.

Alfred C. Kinsey's *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* broke the ground of sexuality studies after being published on January 5, 1948. The study contributed to affecting the way many individuals in American society thought about sex. Hugh Hefner, then the managing editor of the University of Illinois's student periodical, *Shaft*, wrote a damning article that confronted society's hypocrisy regarding sexual relations. Hefner wrote in February 1948 that "Kinsey's book disturbs me. Not because I consider the American people overly immoral, but this study makes obvious the lack of understanding and realistic thinking that have gone into the formation of our sex standards and laws. Our moral pretenses, our hypocrisy on matters of sex has led to incalculable frustration, delinquency and unhappiness."⁷⁹ The lack of congruency between public perception and private fact bothered Hefner. He believed that Americans were sexually hypocritical. According to Dr. Kinsey, up to 46 percent of married males had experienced some form of extra-marital sex, and between 56 to 98 percent of men (depending on socioeconomic level) had experienced premarital coitus.⁸⁰ Kinsey's report helped to break the ground for newer, provocative heterosexual publications such as *Playboy*. The report helped Hefner to realize that others in American society viewed sex in the same light as he did. Others in society also took

⁷⁸ David Hurewitz, "Goody-Goodies, Sissies, and Long-Hairs: The Dangerous Figures in 1930s Los Angeles Political Culture," *Journal of Urban History* 33:1 (November 2006), 45.

⁷⁹ Hugh Hefer, "Ces Martyrs: Les fous d'Amérique." *Shaft*, February 1948.

⁸⁰ Kinsey, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, 585 (extramarital relations), and Table 136 (premarital relations).

what they could from Kinsey's report. Their interpretation of Kinsey's data has had as much of an impact on American culture as the behemoth *Playboy*.

The Mattachine Society⁸¹ signaled the beginning of a new form of organized dissent, which profoundly transformed American society.⁸² Its radical beginnings in Southern California began with a man named Harry Hay. A member of the Communist Party, Harry Hay maintained a lifestyle of activism as he pursued a Hollywood career. Harry participated in the Milk Strike demonstrations of 1934 in Los Angeles, and in the same year participated in the General Strike in San Francisco. The activist-actor also took part in Upton Sinclair's 1936 End Poverty in California campaign for governor, the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League, and other causes as well. Hay's musical talent afforded him the opportunity to collaborate on the Oscar winning short film *Heavenly Music* in 1943.⁸³ Harry married his wife, Anita Platky, in September of 1938.

The 1940s were instrumental years in Harry Hay's development as an organizing leader. He taught Marxist theory at the Southern California Labor School, became increasingly involved with Communist Party activities and pursued anthropology studies.⁸⁴ For a brief time, however, Harry and his wife Anita lived in New York. Harry assumed the job of a scriptwriter from 1939 until December 1941, right after the attack on Pearl Harbor.⁸⁵ It was in New York that Hay met John Erwin, a medical student at Bellevue Hospital. The two men discussed homosexuality

⁸¹ Mattachine was known as a Foundation in its early years until 1954, when a change in leadership occurred. For the purposes of this paper, Mattachine, Mattachine Foundation and Mattachine Society will be used interchangeably, due to the fact that people referred to the organization using different names.

⁸² Kevin Starr, *Golden Dreams: California in an Age of Abundance, 1950-1963* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 469.

⁸³ Starr, *Golden Dreams: California in an Age of Abundance, 1950-1963*, 469.

⁸⁴ Starr, *Golden Dreams: California in an Age of Abundance, 1950-1963*, 470.

⁸⁵ Stuart Timmons, *The Trouble with Harry Hay: Founder of the Modern Gay Movement* (Boston: Alyson Publications, 1990), 114.

often, and Erwin invited Hay to meet a researcher at the hospital, Dr. Alfred Kinsey.⁸⁶ Hay met the zoologist and agreed to be interviewed by him. Soon after, Harry Hay's comments and answers were added to the statistics that would lead to a shocking revelation in the activist's life. When Dr. Kinsey's *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* was released, Hay himself was dumbfounded to find that up to 10 percent of all American men were homosexual, and that up to 37 percent of men had had homosexual experiences. Kinsey's report was just as instrumental in confirming Hugh Hefner's attitudes towards sex as it did to ignite a dedication to homosexual organization and planning in Harry Hay. In fact, Hay has been quoted as saying that he carried Kinsey's report around with him everywhere and treated it, "as though it were a bible."⁸⁷

As far as Harry Hay was concerned, homosexuals in America belonged to a single minority. Donald Webster Cory's *The Homosexual in America* defined the homosexual minority in 1951. Cory argued that a minority group must have a lower or unequal status in society.⁸⁸ Cory contended that the minority status of homosexuals was similar "to that of national, religious, and other ethnic groups: in the denial of civil liberties, extra-legal, and quasi-legal discrimination; in the exclusion from the mainstreams of life and culture; in the development of the protection and security of intra-group association; in the development of a special language and literature and a set of moral tenets within our group."⁸⁹ Hay's definition came three years prior, in 1948, when he was still an active member of the Communist Party. Hay used Stalinist criteria to define a specific cultural minority, which could be amendable to political organization. Homosexual Americans, according to Hay, had a shared language and psychological make-up

⁸⁶ Timmons, *The Trouble with Harry Hay: Founder of the Modern Gay Movement*, 111.

⁸⁷ Johnson, *The Lavender Scare*, 54.

⁸⁸ Cory, *The Homosexual in America: A Subjective Approach*, 5.

⁸⁹ Cory, *The Homosexual in America: A Subjective Approach*, 14.

and culture.⁹⁰ In 1948, for a brief time – less than a year and likely no more than a few months – Hay formed a group that he titled The Bachelors of Wallace.⁹¹ At this point, Hay’s divorce from his ex-wife had been finalized. Besides the staggering statistics in Kinsey’s report, the other main reason why Harry chose to start this Bachelors’ homosocial club was due to the frequent scenes of homosexual discrimination – the result of the Lavender Scare – on television. Johnson argues that Americans on the west coast were affected by the Lavender Scare because of the large military presence in that part of the country – there were also many men in Southern California who worked for the State Department. Kinsey’s report, along with the general homophobic climate of the early 1950s, resulted in Hay’s proposal that the homosexual community in America was a repressed minority and needed to be organized.

The name of Harry Hay’s organization changed frequently before Hay and other founders declared Mattachine the name for their organization. There is debate amongst scholars where the name Mattachine originates. Kevin Starr, in his discussion of post-war southern Californian history, explains that the choice paid homage to the Mattachines of the French Renaissance. This was an organization of young unmarried men, many of whom were clerics, who satirized the machinations of everyday life such as the church and other components of society.⁹² The French clerics and other single men during the French Renaissance gave Harry Hay an inspiration that his homosocial organization of men – most of whom would be homosexual – could have as much of a societal regulating force as the French satirists. Johnson claims that the organization

⁹⁰ Hay, Harry (ed. Will Roscoe). *Radically Gay: Gay Liberation in the Words of Its Founder* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), 43.

⁹¹ Starr, *Golden Dreams: California in an Age of Abundance, 1950-1963*, 470.

⁹² Starr, *Golden Dreams: California in an Age of Abundance, 1950-1963*, 470.

was named for Matachinos, the masked court jesters of the Italian Renaissance who – hidden behind masks – were able to speak the truth.⁹³

In his edited biography, Hay explained that the traditions of different medieval fool guilds, such as the French clerics and the Matachinos were actually remnants of tribal initiation rites, whereby young people were assigned “fool errands,” and, depending on the extent of completion, would be celebrated by the people in the community.⁹⁴ Hay also argued, rather provocatively, that, “the figure of the Fool was the tribal religious functionary who presided over these rites, in a role similar to that of the Native American Two-Spirit.”⁹⁵ According to Hay’s biography, European folk traditions and rituals made use of the Fool dressed as a woman, or dressed in both male and female clothing. The overtly queer elements of the Fool led Hay to propose the name “Society of Fools,” but Mattachine was chosen from a suggestion made by Hay’s friend Bob Hull.⁹⁶ The Fool became more than just a namesake for the early homophile organization, and was also used as a graphic for its formal publications (see Appendix C). Hay contends in his biography that as a Marxist, his focus was on the social institutions of the heterosexual minority, as opposed to the sexuality of the individual. The guise of the jester from the medieval court became the perfect symbol for Hay’s objectives.

⁹³ Johnson, *The Lavender Scare*, 169.

⁹⁴ Hay, *Radically Gay: Gay Liberation in the Words of Its Founder*, 49.

⁹⁵ Hay, *Radically Gay: Gay Liberation in the Words of Its Founder*, 49. Two-spirited person is a sexual orientation/ gender identity associated with Native Americans, or First Nations people in Canada. It is denoted by the “2” within the LGBTTIQQ2A sexual orientation umbrella. Harry Hay became very focused on two-spirited rights later in his activist career. Anthropologically speaking, these people are referred to as the berdache. A berdache is usually defined as a male who does not fill a society’s standard man’s role, or who has a nonmasculine character. Cross dressing and assuming traditional women’s roles are common amongst berdache people. Generally (and historically), most Native American groups were more accepting of the “ambiguities of life.” Acceptance of gender variation in the berdache tradition is typical of many Native American cultures’ approach to life in general. For more information, see Walter L. Williams, *The Spirit an the Flesh: Sexual Diversity in American Indian Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986).

⁹⁶ Hay, *Radically Gay: Gay Liberation in the Words of Its Founder*, 50.

The organization of Hay's brotherhood went through numerous transformations. During the post-WWII period, secret fraternal organizations had enjoyed a surge in popularity.⁹⁷ Harry Hay organized his fraternal society in a manner similar to other secret brotherhoods. As early as 1948, when Harry wrote down the preliminary concepts for the "Bachelor's Anonymous ... or The International Bachelor's Fraternal Orders for Peace and Social Dignity," Harry knew that he wanted to organize in a fashion similar to other successful brotherhoods: "We declare our aims to present the concept of our Fraternal Orders, fully subscribed to by our membership, as being similar in both membership service and community service and social objectives as the well-known and respected 'Alcoholics Anonymous.'"⁹⁸ Hay knew that the membership of his fraternal order should be non-discriminatory, "Masonic in character" and the membership should "be understood to be sworn to protective secrecy."⁹⁹ Hay valued the benefits of secrecy, and based his fraternal organization on other successful homosocial organizations such as the Masonic Lodge. These supposedly heterosexual men were able to use the guise of homosocial organization to maintain principles and anonymity, and Harry Hay felt as if his organization could do the same.

In the early years of Mattachine, Dorr Legg – who became very involved in the 1950s homophile movement – attended a discussion group meeting organized by Mattachine. His involvement in the discussion resulted in a formal invitation to become a member of the First Order of the secret guild. Unbeknownst to the men (and women) who attended the discussion groups, the actual members of the fraternal organization met regularly in secret to plan for future

⁹⁷ Lillian Faderman, and Stuart Timmons, *GAY LA: A History of Sexual Outlaws, Power Politic, and Lipstick Lesbians* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 111.

⁹⁸ Eann MacDonald (pseud. Harry Hay), "Preliminary Concepts ... Bachelor's Anonymous ... or The International Bachelor's Fraternal Orders for Peace and Social Dignity." August 1948. Coll2011-033, Box 1:3.

⁹⁹ Eann MacDonald (pseud. Harry Hay), "Preliminary Concepts ... Bachelor's Anonymous ... or The International Bachelor's Fraternal Orders for Peace and Social Dignity." August 1948. Coll2011-033, Box 1:3.

discussion groups and debated about who might be considered for invitation to the society. Harry's intricate fraternal guild divided the Mattachine membership into different Orders. Each Order had different responsibilities. Specifically, members of Order I were required to host discussion group meetings. Appendix D shows Harry Hay's five Orders, and the membership of each Order in the organization's early years – Dorr's name is clearly visible in the First Order of the structured hierarchy. The pyramid cell structure was designed to expand horizontally, and each Order was responsible for subdividing into separate cells. This resulted in a great deal of anonymity amongst the membership.¹⁰⁰

Historian John D'Emilio explains that pre-Stonewall activists – like Harry Hay and the other early organizers of the Mattachine Society – employed ordinary means to attack an extraordinary situation.¹⁰¹ To be invited to become a member of Mattachine allowed men in Los Angeles the opportunity to confront the issues homosexuals faced in society, and let them to legitimately feel as if their actions could have a positive impact on all Americans. Gerard Brissette, for example, upon being invited to join the Mattachine in 1953 wrote that:

I dream of freedom in a land of repression, guilt, and blue-nosed Puritanism, fully realizing how impossible my dreams are when so few share them with me ... So from my failure to fulfill my dream, I gain my inspiration to change my environment. If I rebel against this ungodly pattern of “tricking” where men are not human but machines, and “camping” where life is not a joke, a game, a pit of despair, then it is my responsibility to work for the kind of world I believe in, to help create in the hearts of people like me a belief in themselves, a dignity, and a capacity for loving as free men love... If Mattachine means this, then I am with you all the way.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ For more detailed explanation of the early organization of Mattachine, see Chapter Four, Section II of John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.)

¹⁰¹ D'Emilio, *Making Trouble: Essays on Gay History, Politics, and the University*, 239.

¹⁰² Correspondence 1952-53, Brissette, Gerard 1953, Coll2008-016, Box 1:9.

To repressed men, Mattachine stood as a call to arms for the betterment of all men in society. To have been formally invited into the fraternal brotherhood, like Dorr Legg and Gerard Brissette, meant that they had been given the opportunity to improve their lives, but also the lives of many other men in America.

The Civil Rights movement impacted the post-war period by making America society more equitable, and historian Kevin Starr explains that out of this movement emerged a style of civil rights specific to California. This movement was characterized by civil rights groups such as the Beats of San Francisco, the Mattachine, Mexican Americans and Filipino American migrant workers.¹⁰³ Californian Civil Rights groups had the ability to cause serious repercussions for people who were not minorities in the state. Traister explains that the civil rights movement contributed to the crisis facing American men during the post-WWII period.¹⁰⁴ Historian of masculinity Michael Kimmel clarifies that during the 1960s feminism, black liberation, and gay liberation constituted a “frontal assault” on the traditional ways in which men defined their manhood.¹⁰⁵ However, as early as the mid 1950s, Mattachine had subscribed to the American Civil Liberties Union after a redefinition of the club’s goals to promote equality of rights for all Americans. The Mattachine Society embraced these other liberation groups, and as the so-called crisis of masculinity waned on the American man, Mattachine members defined their masculinity by early assertions that their homosocial organization could take shape within the grander civil rights movement.

¹⁰³ Starr, *Golden Dreams: California in an Age of Abundance, 1950-1963*, 479

¹⁰⁴ Traister, “Academic Viagra: The Rise of American Masculinity Studies,” 288.

¹⁰⁵ Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in American: A Cultural History* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 280. For a general discussion about these three civil rights movements see Kimmel’s “The Masculine Mystique,” pp 261-90.

In his remarks made to the first discussion group of the Mattachine in November 1950 (at the time the organization was called Les Mattichines, or “The Society of Fools”), Harry Hay explained that while community discussion groups had grown in America in the post WWII period, he said that, “the undertaking [that commenced] here tonight may be one of historic importance and magnitude.”¹⁰⁶ Hay’s comments explained that the discussions hosted by Mattachine were open to a multitude of specialists, and open to all members of society. The goal of the discussion groups, according to Harry Hay, was to “agree to disagree, object, criticize, analyze, summarize, specify, test, weigh, simplify, and finally to prove our conclusions by self-applications, thus bringing to the community generally the greatest body of socially-derived, socially-coordinated, socially-oriented, and socially proven theory as we can possibly fashion.”¹⁰⁷ Clearly Harry Hay had high hopes that America’s first homophile organization might be able to not only critically analyze society, but perhaps affect change in society as well.

By 1954 Mattachine had progressed considerably in its efforts to bring awareness of the homosexual minority to American society. In January 1955 it began publishing its own magazine, the *Mattachine Review* – the San Francisco chapter assumed the primary responsibility for publishing it. Historian John D’Emilio explains that the gay press of the 1950s invented a new form of public discourse.¹⁰⁸ *Mattachine Review* helped to create a common vocabulary that helped gay men (and women) to articulate their experiences, and to share that vocabulary with other people.¹⁰⁹ In May 1959, *Mattachine Review* published an interview

¹⁰⁶ Hay, “Remarks to _____ Discussion Group – Nov 1950.” Coll2008-016, Box 1:21

¹⁰⁷ Hay, “Remarks to _____ Discussion Group – Nov 1950.” Coll2008-016, Box 1:21

¹⁰⁸ D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, 114.

¹⁰⁹ The Daughters of Bilitis was formed in 1955 by eight women – all lesbians – and the organization published *The Ladder*, a lesbian magazine. For more information, see D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, pp 102-07.

between a “Straight Guy” and a “Homosexual.” The back and forth conversation was a reprint from a weekly newspaper out of Greenwich Village, and frankly outlined common themes and issues brought up in regular gay-straight debates. For example:

Straight Guy: ...I’ll always see homosexuality as anti-masculine, perverse, a short-circuit of nature’s obvious logic in creating two sexes. ...

Homosexual: ...only insensitive people or poseurs pretend to a cartoon image of masculinity vs. femininity. ... Social change itself has softened the dividing line. ... I’m not being a woman. I’m being human – something you might be ashamed of, with your straightjacket notion of masculinity.

...

Straight Guy: You make it sound like a holy crusade, when you really feel inside ... that you’re miserable and almost unworthy to live.

Homosexual: But that’s the point! We’ve finally rebelled against feeling this way because our human nature can no longer stand it. Look out for people whom you have driven to such an extreme! ... Life is too fast and mad today for us to accept old-fashioned socially-induced suffering. ... we will force our way into open society and you will have to acknowledge us.¹¹⁰

The *Mattachine Review* became an important outlet for the public discussion of homosexuality at a time when the very topic of homosexuality was illegal. The frank discussion between the “Straight Guy” and the “Homosexual” brought a sense of normalcy to the issues that faced American men – gay and straight. The particular emphasis on masculinity shed light on the changing attitudes towards its definition and place as a marker of supposed manly stability.

At a Los Angeles (Southern) Area Council discussion group in January during the mid-1950s, a group of homosexual women and a group of homosexual men discussed the differences and similarities between the former and the latter. The masculinity of the male participants had been brought up twice during the discussion. The first observation made by a woman at the discussion explained that a male homosexual “[had] a much easier time. He is looked upon as the

¹¹⁰ Seymour Krim, and David McReynolds, “Revolt of the Homosexual,” *Mattachine Review*, May 1959.

carefree bachelor, the casual ‘man about town’ who is always handy when the party runs short of men, or if he chooses he can be considered the happy, foot-loose vagabond who is slightly frowned upon and secretly envied by the ambitious hard working element.”¹¹¹ Yet, interestingly, during the same discussion group, a homosexual woman explained that since the female homosexual consistently strives to emulate the male, she looks with disdain upon her male counterpart in whom she does not see full masculinity. The gender being discussed and sought after during this meeting exuded dominance, and homosexual women during this period saw in America’s homosexual men figures of unfulfilled modern masculinity. The men, however, defiantly argued that they preferred not to be defined by the roles they played in *typical* homosexual relationships. The men were unwilling to let the women at the meeting decide that half of all homosexual men in relationships were “passive,” while all heterosexual men in relationships were “active.”¹¹² Rather, the men progressively argued that many homosexuals preferred the variety of roles that were afforded in homosexual relationships. These discussion meetings helped to make people aware of the gender binaries that existed in modern sexual relations. They afforded people the opportunity to delve into the possibility that gender in the post-war period could be understood as a complex matrix, rather than a simple binary.

¹¹¹ Bob Bishop, “January Discussion Group, L.A. (Southern Area Council Activity/ Event.” Coll2008-016, Box 3:62.

¹¹² Bob Bishop, “January Discussion Group, L.A. (Southern Area Council Activity/ Event.” Coll2008-016, Box 3:62. See also, Coll2008-016, Box 1:7: In this document Harry Hay’s unmistakable handwriting appears in the top right hand corner. Unfortunately only “use for Spring 1952” remains, as a misfile occurred and this document appears to be one page out of a series. The document appears to be a questionnaire prepared by a non-homosexual and I assume the answers belong to Harry Hay. One question reads: “Is it a general characteristic of homosexuals, as they mature, to develop the feminine attributes of their physical and psychological makeups?” Hay’s answer reads: “This is a common judgment passed by society ... upon thoroughly distorted materials. It is a common fallacy, in our free-enterprise morality, to confuse masculinity and femininity with dominant recessive and with accomplishment and frustration. A possibility to be explored is whether the personal concept of personal security in the form of an ideal lover, offering protective or possessive domination, becomes the homosexual’s only manifestible substitute for his lack of Civil Security. ...” There was an obvious binary that had been created in 1950s society which placed men and women into distinct categories. Harry Hay and other homosexuals clearly maintained that such categories were bogus, and that it was possible to manifest oneself into any role that could make one feel – like a “normal” heterosexual – safe and secure in a relationship.

The task of discerning whether or not the Mattachine Society had an explicit impact on masculinity during the pre-Stonewall period is difficult. The organization certainly fostered open dialogue between homosexual people and highly regarded people in society, such as psychological experts. The opportunity for such a dialogue presented itself when, in May 1953, A.R. Mangus, PhD, the director of Sexual Deviation Research at The Langley Porter Clinic, contacted the Mattachine Society and explained that one of the purposes of his organization was to conduct research into problems of sexual deviation and to sponsor public educational programs to promote better understanding of the problems of sexual deviates. Dr. Mangus also wrote that his organization at the Langley Porter Clinic would benefit greatly from receiving any literature that the Mattachine wished to share.¹¹³ Within a week, David L. Freeman, the Corresponding Secretary of the Mattachine, responded and explained that, “We are, of course, familiar with the fine work of the Langley Porter Clinic. While we are now sponsoring a number of projects we look forward to offering facilities for research (psychological, endocrinological, etc.) into the ‘normal’ homosexual” – a category which, Freeman explained, most homosexuals fell into.¹¹⁴ By 1955, the homosexual magazine *ONE* – which will be explained in fuller detail below – included a paper that had been presented at a 1953 session for The International Congress for Sexual Equality, which had been held in Amsterdam. The author, Professor G. Th. Kempe, explained that modern psychotherapy had begun to discard diagnoses of “sexual deviations,” and that the profession had started to veer away from objectifying the homophile, and had started to meet him in studies based on “real communication.”¹¹⁵ Again, it is difficult to properly discern to what extent gay-homosocial organizations were able to better define

¹¹³ Letter to the Mattachine, from A.R. Mangus, May 4, 1953. Coll2008-016, Box 1:8.

¹¹⁴ Letter to Dr. Mangus, from David L. Freeman, May 14, 1953. Coll2008-016, Box 1:8.

¹¹⁵ G. Th. Kempe, “The Homophile in Society,” *ONE*, March 1955.

homosexuality and masculinity in society, but their techniques were certainly innovative, and opened dialogue between groups in society where such openness did not previously exist.

Mattachine clearly played a role in redefining what constituted *normal* in American society.

The result of the early organizers' work to ignite a dedication to homophile awareness and understanding was the creation of ONE, Incorporated. The West Hollywood Mattachine group produced and organized ONE, Incorporated and historian of southern Californian gay and lesbian history Lillian Faderman explains that the members referred to themselves as a corporation – a capitalist mask – during the Red Scare.¹¹⁶ ONE, Incorporated (hereafter, ONE) was founded on October 15, 1952 and its primary purpose was to “publish and disseminate a magazine dealing primarily with homosexuality from the scientific, historical and critical point of view, and to aid in the social integration and rehabilitation of the sexual variant.”¹¹⁷ Generally, the corporation intended to sponsor, supervise and conduct educational programs that would promote amongst the general public an interest, knowledge and understanding of the problems of social variants, and to promote the integration of people whose behavior varied from the current moral and social standards of the time.¹¹⁸ The name “ONE” originated from a line written by Thomas Carlyle: “A mystic bond of brotherhood makes all men one.”

ONE published *ONE: The Homosexual Magazine* as the main outlet for broadening the readership of its educational material. Faderman explains that the Comstock Act of 1873 forbade the mailing of materials that were “obscene, lewd, lascivious or filthy.” During the 1950s homosexuality was not only illegal, but its mere mention could be considered obscene, lewd,

¹¹⁶ Faderman, and Timmons, *GAY L.A.: A History of Sexual Outlaws, Power Politic, and Lipstick Lesbians*, 116.

¹¹⁷ Articles of Incorporation, ONE, Incorporated, Coll2011.001, Box 8:3.

¹¹⁸ Articles of Incorporation, ONE, Incorporated, Coll2011.001, Box 8:3.

lascivious and filthy.¹¹⁹ In order to avoid attention, *ONE* was mailed to most of its subscribers in a sealed envelope without a return address. However, in October 1954 the magazine was seized by the post office, and *ONE*'s attorney appeared before Federal District Judge Thurmond Clarke who declared in 1956 that the October 1954 edition of *ONE* contained obscene and filthy content and was, therefore, illegal to mail.¹²⁰ After an unsuccessful bid to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, the corporation and its lone lawyer took the case to the Supreme Court. Not only did the Supreme Court hear the case, but it agreed that the post office unfairly discriminated against the magazine and its staff because of its association with homosexuality. On January 13, 1958 the Supreme Court reversed the lower court's decision; homosexual content in magazines was no longer deemed obscene and a homosexual magazine could legally be sent through United States mail.¹²¹ The perseverance of *ONE* resulted in success for homosexuals in America, not only because they were legally able to send *ONE* in the mail, but because they had managed to influence change in America's highest courts and had affected laws that would impact American society for years to come.

ONE used its public platform to influence how society regarded homosexuals. For example, in the May 1957 edition, *ONE*'s publishers reprinted an article from the Swiss magazine *Der Kreis*, titled "Something About Sailors," which explained that no real evidence existed that supported the idea that homosexuals led free and uninhibited lives at sea. The article clarified that while close friendships developed at sea, they did not always have a sexual basis. The author attested to the greater acceptability of homosexuality on ships, explaining that the

¹¹⁹ Faderman, and Timmons, *GAY L.A.: A History of Sexual Outlaws, Power Politic, and Lipstick Lesbians*, 117.

¹²⁰ Ironically, the October 1954 edition of *ONE* that was considered obscene contained an article written by *ONE*'s attorney, which identified and explained the laws regarding mailing obscene materials in the U.S. Postal Service to its subscribers. See "The Law of Mailable Material," *ONE*, October 1954.

¹²¹ Faderman, and Timmons, *GAY L.A.: A History of Sexual Outlaws, Power Politic, and Lipstick Lesbians*, 119.

purely heterosexual sailor, knowing about the homosexuality of a fellow sailor, may “kid the other along a bit, but . . . never maliciously.”¹²² The author asserted that these heterosexual sailors were more tolerant of homosexuality, but their use of homophobic enforcement in the subordination of gender points to the ambiguous sense of hetero-masculinity on the ships. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s theories regarding homosocial desire indicate that the type of gender subordination that occurred within homosocial communities was based on structures of psychological homophobia. Moreover, readers of the article were left with the explanation that “Only a sailor [could] understand how the mind of a another sailor works.”¹²³ This article provided compelling evidence as to why the lives and sexualities of sailors were so difficult for society to understand during the post-WWII period.

The bulk of *ONE* readership was probably homosexual; after all, it was a homosexual magazine. An intriguing article, written by James Douglas Margin for the May 1955 issue and titled “The Margin of Masculinity,” would have been an eye-opening read for *ONE*’s subscribers. The somewhat misleading title of the article plays on the author’s name, yet also does justice to the ambiguities of masculinity, homosexuality and social construction. Margin begins his journalistic essay with an explanation of “Margin’s Theory of Masculine Deportment.” Margin had apparently mastered the art of masculine detection, and his article outlined the necessary steps a homosexual person might need to take in order to appear more masculine. In a manner that had been perfected by Hefner’s *Playboy* writers, Margin explained, with intricate detail, the necessary steps one would need to take in order to make striking a match, holding a cigarette, crossing one’s legs and shaking a person’s hand appear more masculine. The instructions were meticulously detailed, and Margin ironically explained that

¹²² Stornoway, “Something About Sailors,” *ONE*, May 1957.

¹²³ Stornoway, “Something About Sailors,” *ONE*, May 1957.

homosexuals needed to “choose between fastidiousness and [a] typical masculine disregard for it.”¹²⁴ Of course, Margin’s “Theory” led the reader to assume that by purporting a mask of masculinity, they would be regarded as a heterosexual and not subject to cruel ridicule in public places like bars.

Margin’s article highlights the apparent ambivalence and misunderstanding of masculinity amongst America’s gay men. Apparently America’s gay man needed just as much instruction as America’s would-be bachelor. Readers of *ONE* and *Playboy* were aiming towards self-preservation. The compelling instinct to transform one’s image defined both homosexual and heterosexual men during the tumultuous 1950s. The revelation, however, came at the end of the article when Margin wrote that he had once met a man in a bar, had talked with him and even shared a beer with him. Yet Margin, the self-proclaimed expert on masculine deportment, could not tell which way the man “tipped the scales.” The reader would have read numerous pages of that edition of *ONE* to find out that a man’s mannerisms could not indefinitely be used as a barometer for masculinity. This article cleverly let homosexuals identify masculinity as part of being a man, and not a tool to be used as a homosexual’s heteromascuine guise.

Harry Hay resigned in 1953 over fears that Mattachine was moving towards a future of homophile study, rather than activism.¹²⁵ Still, his homosocial organization created an air of acceptability for the discussion of homosexuality that led many Americans to come to grips with the fact that homosexuality, as a part of the human condition, was not something that was going to be easily changed. Harry Hay’s Mattachine Society and other gay homosocial organizations resulted in identity formation amongst gay men in America. George Chauncey’s seminal history, *Gay New York*, argues that a distinct homosexual community existed decades before the

¹²⁴ James Douglas Margin, “The Margin of Masculinity,” 12.

¹²⁵ Starr, *Golden Dreams*, 471.

Stonewall Riots, and that gay communities in New York negotiated a complex myriad of gay identities. Gay men such as Harry Hay were instrumental in helping to tear down the social-sexual binary of gay-straight in American society and instead used masculinity as a tool for negotiating the construction of America's post-war manly matrix.

Conclusion

The Exclusivity of the Eternal Brotherhood

Historian of male sexuality George Chauncey argues that understandings of homosexuality in the early twentieth century differed considerably from understandings of homosexuality at mid-century. The boundaries of male sociability and homosexuality were difficult to define in the early twentieth century because sexual boundaries were drawn using gender as the defining feature for each of the men participating in these relationships, and men who participated in same-sex acts after World War I were categorized as being straight or queer based not on the extent of their homosexual activity, but of the gender role that they assumed in the relationship.¹²⁶ The men who conformed to masculine gender norms, yet participated in homosexual activity, were placed in ambiguous categories that revolved around being “regular” or, at least “relatively marginal” members of the homosocial group.¹²⁷ By the 1950s, American society had become much less ambiguous in the way it categorized men: they were either gay or straight. However, within this apparently black and white decade, serious contradictions about gender were made.

In July 1953, the Los Angeles Area Council of the Mattachine Society sent out an invitation for an overnight visit to one of the mountain resorts near the city. The invitation explained that participation in the camping expedition was an “absolute necessity” and that “the sooner we get out sleeves rolled up and pitch in the sooner we will see positive results.”¹²⁸ The Mattachine coordinated many of these camping expeditions and helped to strengthen the bonds

¹²⁶ George Chauncey, “Christian Brotherhood or Sexual Perversion? Homosexual Identities and the Construction of Sexual Boundaries in the World War One Era,” *Journal of Social History* 19:2 (Winter, 1985), 190.

¹²⁷ Chauncey, “Christian Brotherhood or Sexual Perversion? Homosexual Identities and the Construction of Sexual Boundaries in the World War One Era,” 192.

¹²⁸ Letter from Milan Charles, to members of the Los Angeles Area Council of the Mattachine Society. Coll2008-016, Box 3:65.

felt between the men in the fraternal society. Their retreat interestingly mimicked the same yearly getaway planned by San Francisco's elite all-male Bohemian Club, and other homosocial organizations.

The Bohemian Club's secret getaway, the Bohemian Grove, nestled amongst California's redwoods, was a boys-only exclusive camp meant for private reception and frivolity during the summer months for members of the homosocial organization. The fraternal get-away exuded exclusionary prestige and allowed the Club and its membership to frame their political and elitist paradigms as inextricably different than those of the regular American. The club managed to weave their elitist notions of masculinity into society from behind the closed doors of their organization. The secret nature of the Bohemian Club, and the events that happened at the Grove's secluded camp-out, highlights the very contradiction evident in American society at mid-century. That these supposedly straight men had to go into hiding for a couple of weeks every summer to assert a masculinity that might have been different than the masculinity that they portrayed on a daily basis would have been very appealing to a segment of the population who, on a daily basis, questioned and wondered about their masculinity and the way it was perceived in society.¹²⁹

The 1950s is often thought of as the apogee of masculinity in American society, and for good reason. The encompassing nature of the decade's containment strategies and the aggressive assertiveness of the Red Scare allowed for the growth of American families safely tucked in to quiet suburbs. Obligatory heterosexuality dominated, and masculinity was defined by the extent

¹²⁹ For more information regarding the Bohemian Grove, see William G. Domhoff, *The Bohemian Grove and Other Retreats: A Study in Ruling-Class Cohesiveness* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), and John Van der Zee, *The Greatest Men's Party on Earth: Inside the Bohemian Grove* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc, 1974).

to which a man was able to provide for his family. The manliness of modernity, however, was highly structured using state agencies and resulted in rather contradictory expectations for its men. The Red Scare resulted in a generation of men who would rather lower their expectations of fulfillment in order to cling to the ideal of domestic containment. Some men during the 1950s employed escapist strategies in order to cope with the tensions and stress of conforming to the compulsory heteronormative lifestyle that afforded them with the idealized masculine image. In creating the masculine-heterosexual being typical of 1950s America, women and gay men were subjugated, and the post-WWII period thickened the web of oppression that gay men had to endure, and made even more ambiguous the notion of masculinity.

World War II resulted in mass military mobilization, which expanded an urban gay subculture in large military cities such as Los Angeles. The war may have created gay communities in many of America's cities, but the end of the war resulted in oppression towards homosexuals due to anti-gay state policies, which barred homosexuals from the government, police crackdowns on "lewd" behavior and the ability to use the homosexual as a scapegoat. Alfred Kinsey's *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* identified 1 out of 10 American men as homosexual and acknowledged the fact that up to 37 percent of all men in the United States had experienced some sort of homosexual episode in his life. The 1950s may have been known as the apogee of masculinity, but there existed in America the beginnings of a repressed gay identity. Besides Kinsey's monumental report on male sexuality, Donald Webster Cory's *The Homosexual in America* helped to craft a homosexual identity in the States by describing the minority status that homosexuals had in society. The impact of state-sponsored rhetoric and dogma was huge impact on America's gay population – and the masculinity of these men. The so-called Lavender Scare resulted in an increased vilification of homosexuality as men were

barred from state service, were excluded from military service and were denied veteran's benefits. Homosexuality in America was just as 'state-sponsored' as heterosexuality during the 1950s, and this contributed to a binary in society whereby one's sexuality was pigeonholed as either gay or straight. Unlike the early twentieth century, men could not use the myriad of masculinity to assert their identity, and as such, men – homosexual and heterosexual – scrambled to make society's definition of masculinity work for them.

America's gay homosocial organizations engaged with the hegemonic masculinity of the 1950s and the result was that masculinity became a negotiable force once again. Harry Hay's Mattachine Society is an example of one of the fraternal organizations that began after WWII that provided men with the opportunity to counter the compulsory heteronormative attitude that was evident in most facets of American life during this period. His homosocial organization propelled people into discussions regarding sexual binaries, and contested obligatory heteronormative assumptions. More importantly, Mattachine used masculinity as a means to better understand the place of homosexuals within the repressive 1950s matrix of men.

John D'Emilio has argued that the oppression against homosexuals in the 1950s resulted in the closeting of numerous could-be gay activists. The closets of the 1950s acted like a pressure cooker, and the Stonewall Riots resulted in an explosion of activist recruitment aimed at fighting for the rights of gay men and women in America. Homosocial groups such as Mattachine were instrumental in the surge of gay activism that occurred after the Stonewall Riots. D'Emilio's 1983 behemoth: *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, defined America's early homophile movement of the 1950s as the foundation for what would become a very strong and powerful gay liberation movement. D'Emilio explains that "however little the homophile movement seemed to have achieved in the way of specific goals, the pioneering activities of the 1950s and 1960s had

managed to disseminate throughout American culture information about homosexuality that reshaped the consciousness of gay men and women.”¹³⁰ Little *tangible* evidence exists that show what the Mattachine in the early 1950s had accomplished. When viewed through the unquantifiable paradigm of masculinity, however, Mattachine becomes much more than just a pre-liberation movement. It becomes a preserver of homosociability and a means by which men were able to be men, unfettered from the binding forces of the state-sponsored exodus of homosexuality and gay homosocial organization.

The homosocial organizations and fraternal associations of the 1950s allowed for an organized dissent against the homogenization processes of obligatory heteronormativity during the 1950s. In particular, the Mattachine Society began as a manifestation of male agency during a period of heightened oppression and helped to contend with 1950s heteronormative dogma, from which even straight men ran. Contemporary masculinity studies have been able to reign in the provocative nature of the history of masculinity by combining the forces of gender studies, gay, and heteromasculine history. In doing so, the field of American Studies has become just one of the many places of discourse for the redefinition of manliness as part of a masculine matrix.

¹³⁰ D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970*, 249.

Appendices

Appendix A: Wartime Homoeroticism and Male Sociability in LIFE Magazine



TRUE TOWEL TALK, No. 4... AS TOLD US BY A SOLDIER

BUNA BATHING

Millions of Cannon Towels are now going to the Armed Forces. You may find a smaller selection in the stores—green, white, and a limited variety of colors. But the durable Cannon Towels, the best quality that will see you through, makes the most of the money you spend. Cannon will make anything you need for your outfit. "Here in Make Your Owns, Look Longer," says Cannon Towels, Inc., 25 West Street, New York 14, N. Y. See Victory—Buy U. S. War Goods!

"We came across this Buna village," says a private in the army, "and down on the beach was a canoe that the natives had no use for. It was full of sun-water and we were dirty. The natives thought we were wacky — but what's bath, brother, what's bath?" A freshwater bath is a welcome novelty sometimes in our area who are bath-hat and soap-dirty. But they do have towels — and they're grateful for em!

Good towels, you. Many are Cannon — light, efficient, hard-working — the kind you've pruned to own or stashed for emergency. We all need towels — but they need them more. That's why there aren't as many here at home. The best reason in the world for us to take special care of those we have!

Cannon Towels
CANNON ANKETS CANNON HOSIERY

HOW TO MAKE YOUR TOWELS LAST LONGER AND STAY DOUBLY FOR THE DEREKAT!
Wander before they become too faded. Wash by hand — never iron. If you are ironed — and all other good things — wash and after (before) immediately. Dry good quality touch — always the best economy.

Advertisement for Canon Towels, *LIFE*, June 26, 1944.

"Life Goes to an Aircraft Carrier Party," *LIFE*, July 3, 1944, p. 83.

Appendix B: Post-War Images of American Masculinity and Homosocial Environments

Which Hot Toddy has the **Calvert**?




Don't say an opinion is what we all you that there only is a difference. Although these hot toddies look alike and are equally good with cream and cinnamon, your taste could tell which one has the smoother, mellower Calvert Whiskey.

No drink can taste better than the whiskey you put into it. That's why we suggest you compare the flavor and smoothness of Calvert with your present drink. You know, the one you're in the picture, and then pick the whiskey you really like best.

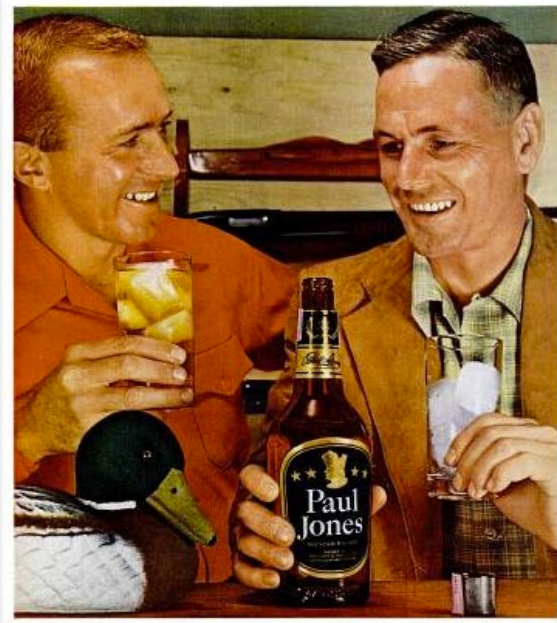
Once you do, we're sure that your next whiskey drink will be made with smoother, better tasting Calvert!

TRY CALVERT - AND MEET THE HOT TODDY! The Hot Toddy King of the Cocktail does exactly 2 cups of water with splash of hot brandy. Add lemon, olive, orange, cinnamon stick and 1/2 oz. of smooth Calvert. Fill with boiling water, sprinkle with sugar, stir well and enjoy!

COMPARE WHISKEY THE RIGHT WAY. Single- barrel mashes of Calvert and our other whiskeys for identical results. Taste them side-by-side for three and five days. Choose the one that suits you best.

Compare... and you'll switch to Calvert

CALVERT RESERVE BLENDED WHISKEY—44 & 50 PROOF—65% GRAIN NEUTRAL SPIRITS—CALVERT DISTILLERS CORPORATION, NEW YORK CITY



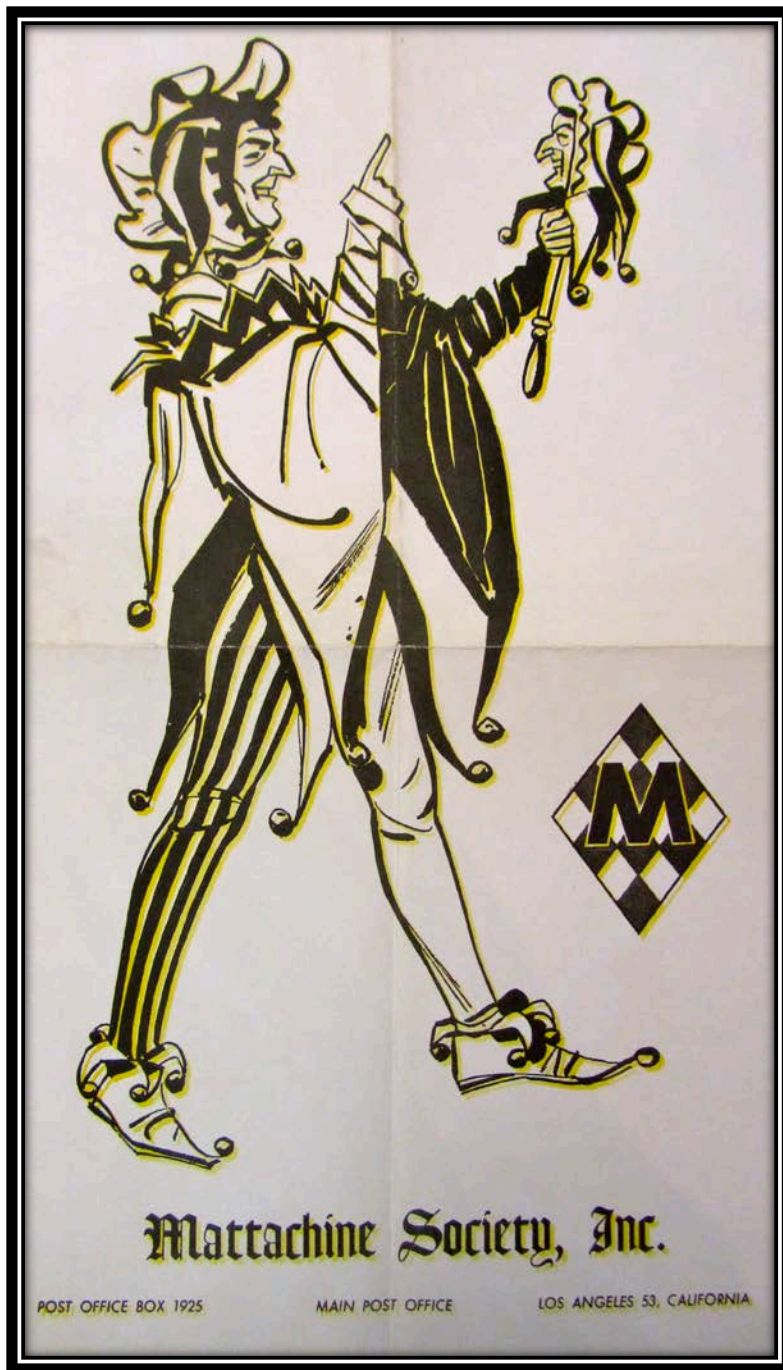
Make a change for the better! **Paul Jones**

Better flavor • Better quality • Better for your budget TRAVELER BOTTLES CO., N. Y. C. BLENDED WHISKEY 40 PROOF 40% GRAIN NEUTRAL SPIRITS

Advertisement for Calvert, *LIFE*, February 22, 1954, 109.

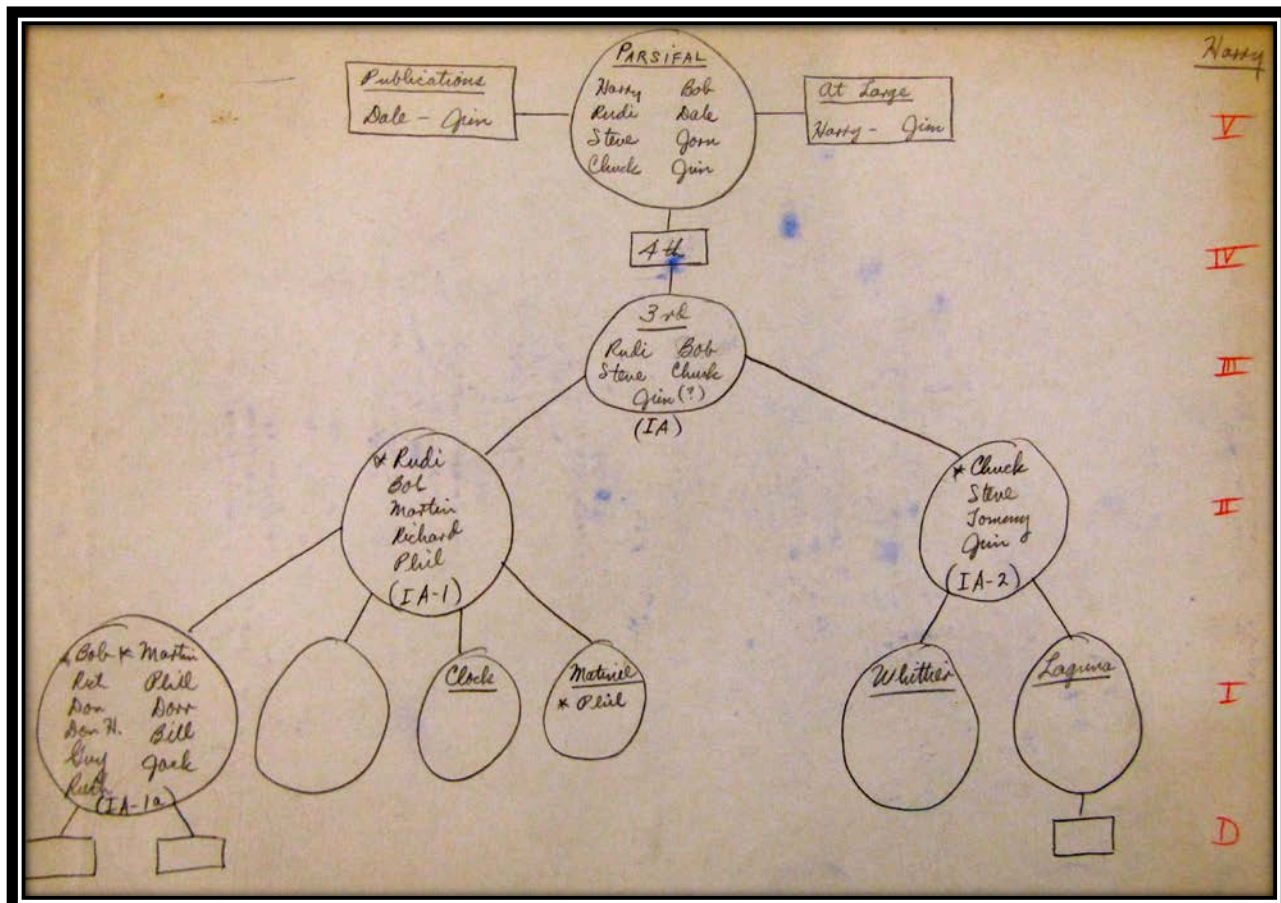
Advertisement for Paul Jones, *LIFE*, October 4, 1954, 46.

Appendix C: Mattachine Society Poster c. 1960



“Poster Undated,” Mattachine Society Project Collection, Coll2008-016, Box 1:58.

Appendix D: Organizational Chart of the Early Mattachine c. 1950-52



“Organizational Chart of the Guild Fellowship Organism of Any Order circa 1950-52.”
 Mattachine Society Project Collection, Coll2008-016, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

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