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#### RELATED ENTRIES

Artisan; Body; Bureaucratization; Capitalism; Class; Consumerism; Cowboys; Crisis of Masculinity; Darwinism; Fraternal Organizations; Heterosexuality; Homosexuality; Imperialism; Individualism; Jesus, Images of; Labor Movement and Unions; Middle-Class Manhood; Muscular Christianity; Passionate Manhood; Professionalism; Progressive Era; Race; Self-Made Man; Social Gospel; Strenuous Life; Urbanization; Victorian Era; Western Frontier; Whiteness; White Supremacism; Work; Working-Class Manhood

—Thomas Winter

## GRAHAM, SYLVESTER

1794–1851

Health Reformer and Minister

Sylvester Graham, a Presbyterian minister and antebellum health reformer, addressed medical, dietary, and sexual aspects

of manhood. Graham's emphasis on restraint in these areas meshed well with Victorian concerns about physical purity and bodily discipline in all aspects of life. While Victorian Americans valued self-control and bodily discipline in general, they were particularly inclined to identify these with ideal manhood.

Ordained in 1830, Graham began lecturing that same year for a temperance organization, the Pennsylvania Society for Discouraging the Use of Ardent Spirits. Graham was suddenly propelled into a position of cultural influence in 1832, when, amid fears of a cholera outbreak, he advised Americans of the preventive value of proper eating habits and food preparation. The physical self-restraint that Graham preached represented for him the essential quality of middle-class Victorian manhood. Graham began to consider the subject of sexuality in his 1834 *A Lecture to Young Men*. Graham advised his audiences, consisting largely of Northeastern white middle-class men, against any form of sexual indulgence, especially masturbation.

Graham feared that a loss of male self-control threatened Victorian society, and he therefore urged men to avoid any form of excitement. To cleanse the body and prevent debilitating overstimulation of the nervous system, he encouraged physical exercise, sleeping on a hard bed, avoidance of meat and spicy foods, and consumption of water and a coarse bread made of unsifted flour. (His original bread recipe eventually found a more appealing successor in the Graham Cracker.) Most importantly, Graham urged the utmost sexual restraint, even in marriage.

Influenced by the perfectionist impulse of the Second Great Awakening, which emphasized the possibility and duty of achieving total freedom from sin, Graham cast sin in a physical framework by defining it in terms of bodily appetite and desire. He urged men to embrace an antierotic, antilibidinal definition of manhood, identifying bodily self-restraint as the way to salvation. Graham's male ethos reflects the contradictions of an age that witnessed the first wave of industrialization and the emergence of a national market economy. On the one hand, his resistance to sensual indulgence can be interpreted as a critique of the materialism he feared would result from the nascent industrialization and market capitalism of the 1830s. On the other hand, his condemnation of self-indulgent behavior reflected a quintessentially capitalist ethos of delayed gratification.

A highly sought-after speaker in the Northeast, Graham was very influential. In 1837, his followers formed the American Physiological Society, with William Alcott, the author of *The Young Man's Guide* (1846), as its first president. The society published the *Graham Journal of Health and Longevity*, which ceased publication in 1839. While the society used his name and ideas, which became widely shared among contemporary reformers, Graham himself played no leading role in it.

Although Graham's best known legacy might be the Graham Cracker, his ideas also anticipated and shaped later shifts in cultural constructions of masculinity in the United States. His emphasis on bodily self-restraint and suppression of libidinal impulses helped to lay the foundation for the body-centered understanding of manhood that emerged later in the nineteenth century.

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#### RELATED ENTRIES

Body; Capitalism; Health; Heterosexuality; Industrialization; Market Revolution; Marriage; Masturbation; Middle-Class Manhood;

Reform Movements; Religion and Spirituality; Self-Control; Temperance; Victorian Era

—Thomas Winter

## GRANT, CARY

1904–1986

Actor

During the 1940s and 1950s, Cary Grant became the model of urbane, heterosexual masculinity for a generation of American filmgoers. Standing over six feet tall, Grant was strikingly handsome, and he was often cast as an upper-class character—such as C. K. Dexter Haven in *The Philadelphia Story* (1940)—whose charms made him irresistible to women. A popular romantic leading man from the 1930s through the 1960s, Grant's image of on-screen manhood evolved from that of a screwball comedian, featuring physical gags and self-deprecating wit, to that of a tanned, suave, self-contained hero.

Born in Bristol, England, as Archibald Alexander Leach, Grant grew up in modest circumstances. Coming to the United States in 1920, he found work on Broadway in New York City. By the 1930s he had moved to California and begun to appear in films—and changed his name at his studio's request.

Grant appeared in more than eighty films from 1932 to 1966. His early roles tended toward light comedy. The actress Mae West famously invited Grant to “come up and see me” in *She Done Him Wrong* (1933). The early Grant's screen image differed significantly from his later roles. In *Sylvia Scarlett* (1935), for instance, Grant plays a Cockney con man: sympathetic, funny, but hardly elegant. By the 1940s, however, Grant appeared as the romantic lead opposite his generation's best actresses. His characters from this period conveyed the idealized masculine type for which Grant is best remembered: handsome, graceful, elegant, stylish, and witty.

Grant's personal life was more complicated than his savoir-faire screen image would suggest, and he found it difficult to attain the ease and assurance that his film roles and publicity conveyed. “Everybody wants to be Cary Grant,” the actor once said, “even I want to be Cary Grant” (McCann, xi). For years he was reticent in speaking about private matters. Yet even as he became an icon of American manhood, his sexuality became the object of fascination and speculation. He shared a house for a time with the actor Randolph Scott, and gossip linked the two romantically. Grant's career was dependent on the overt heterosexuality of his characters, however, and he refused to address such rumors. In his early roles, Grant did play his masculinity broadly and with humor, particularly in