



"Enemigos de la virilidad": Sex, masturbation, and celibacy in nineteenth-century Spain [

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text (article)

Analítica

The discourse on sexuality in nineteenth-century Spain presents a fundamental difference between the masculine ideal of that period and our current definition of masculinity. According to today's popular stereotype, the typical man seeks out sexual contact and takes any opportunities that arise. By contrast, within the hygiene texts of the nineteenth century one detects a sense of unease associated with sexual activity and its corresponding role in the construction of hegemonic masculinity. In particular, sexual excess, masturbation, and celibacy were viewed as antagonistic to middleclass masculinity, which was instead associated with venereal moderation, marriage, and fatherhood. Men who transgressed this model risked their health as well as their masculinity. This formula reveals an element of fragility with regard to notions of manhood, in contrast to the traditional image of Spanish masculinity that originated during the Reconquest and is based on bellicose heroism, bravado, and sexual prowess

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