

# **MAN OR CAVEMAN?**

**BAD NEWS FOR THE WOMEN  
OF THE CARING, SHARING NINETIES.  
THE OTHER HALF OF SOCIETY  
ISN'T PLAYING.**

**BURKITT  
WEINREICH  
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of the caring, sharing nineties.  
The other half of society isn't playing.*

**By Simon Silvester**

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1992

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# Burkitt Weinreich Who?

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This report has been prepared by Burkitt Weinreich Bryant, an advertising agency which believes in a ruthless interrogation of the *basic rules* of the marketplace before creating advertising for its clients.

Such questioning - of the product, of its competition and most importantly of its *consumer* - leads to strategies, and thence advertising designed to *get a reaction* rather than just to entertain.

Using intuitive research techniques to work out the flaws in the logic which underpin the unthinking habits of the customer, we aim to find the chinks in the competition's armour.

The resulting advertising can go beyond selling - it may even redefine what the market in question is all about.

Strategies based on a slavish devotion to conventional research however, can only lead to one outcome: a campaign that passes like a ship in the night.

This report is based on the findings of one of our recent projects.

We hope it may provoke you.

## Management Summary

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- 1 On the surface, British man has changed beyond belief. Only 16% now think that a woman's place is in the home.
- 2 But look beneath the surface, and how much has man *really* changed? 66% agree that "men still judge women mainly on looks", and 54% feel that "it is natural for men to want to have sex with more than one woman." *Things have changed little since Neanderthal times.*
- 3 These attitudes aren't limited to the building site either. Professional AB men are *more*, rather than less likely to espouse them.
- 4 Over the past thirty years, we have seen the rise of emancipated, working women. As a result, few men now consider that their wife's place is in the home. Instead, he expects her to be out there contributing to the mortgage *as well as* doing all the cooking and cleaning when she gets home. In only 4% of UK households in the nineties does the man take the main responsibility for household cleaning; and he takes charge of ironing in *only 2%*.
- 5 Even better if they cohabit rather than marry. When a man and a woman move in together, he gets as much sex as he wants and a cleaner house. As he views it as an open ended relationship, she gets no guarantee that he will still be around in a year or so.
- 6 And open ended it is. As the caring, sharing men of the nineties reach their thirties, they are likely to dump their cohabitee and start a bimbo hunt. OPCS statistics show that men in their

early thirties are as likely to marry someone *ten years their junior* as marry someone of their own generation.

- 7 Thus in the nineties, most women still *do* need marriage, as a firm sign of commitment from their man before they get pregnant. But with cohabitation the norm, there is no reason for him to propose. Thus the average age for marriage thus continues to rise, up 1.5 years in the past 10 years.
- 8 And when it *does* come to marriage, thirty years of a liberal society have changed little. The New Men of the nineties are *less likely than any men in Europe* to approve of marriage with someone of a different class, educational background, or with different cultural beliefs. And any woman older than them had better forget it too.
- 9 The caring, sharing father is words and no action too. Whilst 60% feel that looking after kids is no more a female role than a man's, *only 2%* actually look after their kids when they are sick.
- 10 He won't be left holding the baby on divorce either: over 90% of families headed by lone parents are headed by *women*.
- 11 All of which is bad news for the hundreds of advertisers who have been spending millions of pounds targeting 'New Men' in recent years. He's fine if you're offering women a fantasy nineties Prince Charming (but how long before they stop believing you), but if you're talking to men, the stereotype just doesn't gel with the way they really think about the world.
- 12 Instead, manufacturers of products from cars to razors should be rethinking their creative strategies. Forget the thin veneer of caring, sharing values. Talk to the caveman within.

# Judge men by their actions, not their words

For their recent joint supplement, The Guardian and Elle commissioned a study into men's attitudes towards women and women's rights.

They asked men for their feelings about feminism. 56% of men thought feminism was 'good'; a mere 15% thought it was bad.

Clearly, from these statistics, the majority of nineties men have very positive attitudes towards women's rights.

### So are men all becoming right on?

We think not. We believe that men are happy to espouse very positive attitudes towards women *in general* and their rights *in general*, as long as agreeing with those attitudes does not force them to change their everyday habits.

But when it comes to the day to day lives of men, and their treatment of the women they live with, their behaviour is often *totally at odds with their attitudes*.

Consider the following statistics:

## "Looking after the kids is more a woman's job than a man's."

% of men saying

Yes	37
<b>No</b>	<b>60</b>
Don't know	4

Base: 497 UK Men  
Source: Audience Selection /BWBC  
3rd - 5th January 1992

## But who *actually* looks after the kids when they are sick?

% of households

<b>Mainly man</b>	<b>2</b>
Mainly woman	67
Shared equally	30

Source: British Social Attitudes Survey 1987  
Social and Community Planning Research

*How caring and sharing are men really in a society where most mothers work, yet where in only 2% of households do fathers take the majority of the responsibility for sick kids?*

On the left, we have the classic 'new man' attitudes, with a majority of British men feeling that men in general should take an equal responsibility for the

kids.

On the right, we have the actual behaviour - as researched in a government commissioned survey.

### Why the discrepancy?

What we have found in our research discussions is that men in Britain increasingly know the set of attitudes they are *supposed* to hold in relation to women.

When they are presented with an attitude they are supposed to agree with, they agree. But when research asks them about their *actual* personal behaviour, the truth behind the façade is revealed.

## "Men still judge women mainly on looks"

% Agreeing  
All men **66%**

Professional Men  
AB **73%**

Base: 497 GB Men  
Source: A BWBC survey amongst 1034 adults  
through Audience Selection  
3rd - 5th January 1992

## "It is natural for men to want to have sex with more than one woman"

% Agreeing  
All men **54%**

Professional Men  
AB **64%**

Base: 497 GB Men  
Source: A BWBC survey amongst 1034 adults  
through Audience Selection  
3rd - 5th January 1992

*2000 years of civilization later, the basic instinct of many men is still to judge by physical appearance, and to seek multiple sexual partners. And it isn't just those at the bottom of society. The instincts are more prevalent amongst liberal professional men.*

### So are men chauvinists?

The term is an easy label for a person with non feminist attitudes, but in the end it does not prove particularly useful as a term to anyone marketing products or services to men. A less prejudicial view is needed.

In this document, we will look at male behaviour in the nineties from a more open perspective. We will not judge, merely observe and draw conclusions.

We will conclude that much of male behaviour conflicts with what many people would like to believe, and that the *underlying* attitudes betray instincts that seem to have changed little from Neanderthal times.

Then we will show that if an advertiser wishes to communicate with a man, he must ignore the thin veneer of adopted feminist values on his surface, and talk to the man, *or rather the caveman* within.

## Requiem on the New Man

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For the past decade, the advertising and media industries have been obsessed with the concept of the caring, sharing non sexist male. Examine any evening's commercials, or programme espousing contemporary views, and you will see images of him.

The non sexist male cleans and irons, looks after kids, and forms stable, equal relationships with high powered career women. He is the antithesis of the traditional attitudes of past generations. The traditional notion that 'a woman's place is in the home' is anathema to him.

Ten years of exposure to the 'New Man' stereotype means that he is nowadays readily understood by the consumer. In our research groups, we hear both men and women talking about him.

### **Prince Charming now borrows coffee**

When men talk about him, they do so whilst espousing very positive non sexist attitudes. For women, he has often replaced the traditional 'knight on a white charger' ideal man.

The concept has particular appeal to career women in their late twenties, who are now actively seeking the support of an equal partner in their more pressured, work oriented lives.

### **A bigger stereotype than Mrs Washing Powder?**

In the seventies, advertising, particularly in the household product category was widely criticised by women as presenting a two dimensional female stereotype.

Formula advertising, known as 2CK (Two characters in a kitchen) presented her as a cleanliness obsessed automaton with limited interest outside the family. Such was the volume of this type of advertising that the Mrs Clean stereotype became ingrained in many women's minds.

In the eighties, with the decreasing importance of household product advertising, and the increasing reluctance of women to accept the stereotype, Mrs Clean has bitten the dust.

The top slot has now gone to the New Man, who has been used to sell every product category under the

## Typical New Man Advertising Strategies

### Food

Show a man - preferably a *single parent* cooking it.

### Cars

Put a baby on his back seat - or tell him the car is *recyclable*.

### Beer

Show him saving a village from being turned into an oil refinery.

sun. He has formed the basis of scores of 'lifestyle' commercials, selling everything from soup to washing machines to young couples.

Literally *hundreds of millions of pounds* have been spent on advertising promoting the stereotype.

### Who exactly is this man?

His characteristics, as gleaned from the small screen, include:

- 1 An equal relationship with his partner. They make joint decisions.
- 2 *Caring sex*. Instead of rolling over and going to sleep, he shares a pot of ice cream afterwards.
- 3 He takes responsibility for household chores. He cooks. They both do the washing up.
- 4 He likes and wants to have babies. He wants to be at the birth.
- 5 Once it's born, he changes half the nappies.
- 6 And he turns into a caring father. If the kids are sick, no problem. He takes time off work.
- 7 He is into environmental issues.
- 8 He has a sharing attitude towards money. No longer does he fob her off with the housekeeping. They share financial control.
- 9 He supports her in her career. Even if she does earn more money than him.
- 10 And, above all, the idea of having a bit on the side *doesn't even cross his mind*.

### Who he isn't

- 1 He doesn't view his wife as an attachment to his home, his property to do with as he pleases.
- 2 He does not exert power over her, economic or otherwise.
- 3 In no way does he treat her as a *sex object*.

### What's the point of a stereotype?

When you have a mere thirty seconds to build up a sales message, the in - depth characterisation seen in films and books cannot take place. Instead, copywriters use shorthand. For instance, flowers can represent love, spectacles can represent intellect.

The New Man is a stereotype used to represent the values listed above.

### **But does it flog cars?**

A stereotype works if the consumer identifies with it; if it matches his or her aspirations, desires and needs.

But if the stereotype depicted in the advertising is some adman's fantasy, and has little relation to the consumer reality out on the streets of Britain, then the advertising will *not communicate*. It is merely one ad man talking to another.

The end result is millions of pounds worth of advertising investment down the pan.

### **So does the New Man really exist?**

We thought we had better check this out in depth. Surely, if the New Man is a real sociological phenomenon, there must be at least *some* evidence of him now visible - surely younger men, who have reached adulthood in the last 10 years must betray *some* of his characteristics?

Hence this research project. We went out to find the *real* attitudes and behaviour patterns of the men of the early nineties.

### **Research conducted**

Firstly, we analysed statistics from the General Household Survey, British Social Attitudes Survey, OPCS statistics, including their recently published study into Marriage and Divorce, Readers Digest Eurodata, Lord Chancellor's Department, DES, Charity Household Survey, Family Policy Bulletin and BMRB's Target Group Index.

We looked at statistics in different ways, comparing the attitudes of men with those of women, and against the attitudes *expected* of men in the caring sharing nineties.

### **Original Research**

Then we commissioned our own survey through Audience Selection, to clarify the issues raised. 1047 men and women were asked questions to help explain their attitudes towards each other.

Then, to understand some of the reasons behind the behaviours detected, we conducted *qualitative* research. We went out and interviewed groups of the men and women of the nineties.

Then we analysed our findings.

### **Our Conclusions**

As we will go on to show, we found that the New Man was a figment of a fevered imagination. The caring, sharing man is a female aspiration, not a reality.

Instead, our research has uncovered evidence that young men nowadays are using the tools of female emancipation for their own ends.

Britain is *not* moving toward a new more equal society. All that is happening is that the goalposts are changing. A new era of sexism has dawned.

A 'New Man' exists as part of this. *But he has more in common with cavemen than with emancipated women.*

## What *has* changed over the past 20 years

### "Women should have more freedom to do what they want"

*% of men agreeing strongly*

France	52
Germany	65
Italy	43
Spain	53
Holland	62
<b>UK</b>	<b>81</b>

*Source: Readers' Digest Eurodata/  
Gallup 1990*

### "A woman's place is in the home"

*% of men agreeing strongly*

France	24
Germany	25
Italy	35
Spain	27
Holland	18
<b>UK</b>	<b>16</b>

*Source: Readers' Digest Eurodata/  
Gallup 1990*

As a first part of our investigation, we looked at the traditional sexist attitudes, the apparent decline of which is used by many as an indication of the presence of a new, more caring man in society.

We looked at the attitudes statistically, and from qualitative research groups. It is clear from a variety of sources, that overt identification with these sexist attitudes *is* very much on the wane.

The man to man pub banter of the sixties and seventies is no longer acceptable in the nineties.

In fact, many of the attitudes can effectively be regarded as extinct amongst the younger sector of the population.

#### **The 'MCP' of the seventies is dead**

Typical of the seventies was the male chauvinist pig'. He saw himself as controlling the women in his life, and *he* decided what they should do and think.

In short, he believed in restricting women's freedom.

That attitude appears to have all but disappeared in Britain, with 81% of men agreeing that women 'should have more freedom to do what they want'.

Interestingly, this finding makes British men amongst the least sexist in Europe - in Italy, for instance, the belief amongst men in increasing women's freedom remains a minority attitude with just 43% agreement. Even in liberal Holland, the agreement is only 62%

#### **Less me Tarzan, you stay at home**

"A woman's place is in the home" is a phrase recognised by most older British men as a philosophy which guided them in their decision making 30 years ago when getting married, and when having children.

The tradition in the fifties and before was that British women gave up work on marriage to 'run the home' and to look after the kids. To many men of this era, the idea of having a working wife was unacceptable. As one man put it, '*It showed that you couldn't afford to support her, or that you had no real control over her - you were a bit of a nancy.*'

## 'Blonde women are more attractive than brunettes'

% of men agreeing	
All	18%
AB	<b>17%</b>
C1	11%
C2	19%
DE	23%

Base: 497 GB men  
Source: Audience Selection/BWBC  
3rd - 5th January 1992

*In the nineties, the appeal of blonde hair is skewed towards DE men rather than the AB 'Gentlemen'.*

Today, attitudes have changed dramatically, with only 16% of British men agreeing with the statement.

Again, this gives them the most liberal attitudes in Europe, with higher proportions of German, French, Italian, Spanish and Dutchmen agreeing with the statement.

### Less traditionalism in terms of what attracts

Thirty years ago the 'blonde bombshells' of Diana Dors and Jayne Mansfield dominated male fantasies. Blonde haired women were deemed to be *defacto* more attractive, irrespective of personality.

The epithet that 'Gentlemen Prefer Blondes' reflected the attitudes of a male society obsessed by physical appearance.

In the nineties, British men appear no longer to judge a woman's appeal primarily by the colour of her hair. According to our survey through Audience Selection, only 18% of the men of 1992 agreed that 'blonde women are more attractive than brunettes.'

Agreement with the statement is lower amongst the ABC1s (The middle classes - traditionally the 'gentlemen' of society) than amongst working class C2DE men.

In the nineties, blonde women have, if anything, a *downmarket* appeal.

### Less sex stereotyping in the media

As consciousness levels have risen, some young British men have also come to recognise the patronising sexual stereotypes present in much of the media, particularly advertising.

In group discussions, we have often found them to recognise and find distasteful any imagery which presents women as objects of desire.

## "A lot of advertising patronises women"

% Definitely/tend to agree	Young men	Young Women
	39.5%	45.1%

Base: BC1C2 Adults aged 18 to 30  
Source: TGI 1991

The level of recognition amongst the young British men of the nineties is not, however, as much as that of women.

## Baby you can drive my bus

Percentage of men thinking the job is suitable for men only

car mechanic	73
bus driver	42
police officer	41
bank manager	31
secretary	1
nurse	-
<b>MP</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>local councillor</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>computer programmer</b>	<b>5</b>
social worker	1

source: British Social Attitudes Survey  
Social and Community Planning Research

### Less sexism in academic standards

If school qualifications were anything to go by, the problem of sexism in British society would be reversed. Girls leave school better qualified and better adapted to life.

In the late eighties, 59% of girls left school with at least one O level or CSE grade C or above.

For boys the figure was only 53%.

It is clear that the education system is no longer the breeding ground it was for discrimination in society.

### Less sexism in jobs

On the subject of suitability of women for particular occupations, male sexist attitudes have also diminished in recent years.

Thirty years ago, men considered most jobs to be for men only, with a few areas, mainly in the 'caring' and clerical areas suitable for women.

That situation has now changed to a great extent, with most men, particularly younger ones, believing that most white collar jobs are equally suitable for women. Most men for instance would nowadays consider that running a branch of a bank would be suitable for a woman; thirty years ago, few would have felt the same way.

It is only the greasy, dirty jobs that men consider women to be unsuitable for nowadays.

### Less sexism in the pub

A lot of the old male attitudes about drinking have now changed. Thirty years ago the ability to stand up after a night of heavy drinking was a sign of manhood in most social classes.

Amongst the young men of the nineties in particular, this attitude has faded. Only 8.3% of men now agree strongly with the statement that a real man can down several pints of beer at one sitting.

## "A real man can down several pints of beer at one sitting"

% Definitely/tend to agree

Young men

8.3%

Young Women

2.7%

Base: BC1C2 Adults aged 18 to 30  
Source: TGI 1991

### So goodbye traditional sexism

It is clear from all of this that the old sexist atti-

tudes, as they were once recognised in Britain, are on the wane amongst the male population as a whole, and have now all but disappeared amongst the younger generation that are now settling down into long term relationships with women.

**But all is not well**

In their place have come new, more pernicious attitudes and behaviour patterns.

Surprisingly, these new behaviour patterns are more prevalent amongst 'liberal' young and upmarket men than amongst their more downmarket contemporaries.

This document will therefore tend to focus on young, upmarket men, their attitudes and their lifestyles.

# So are the men of the nineties caring and sharing?

We think not, for two reasons.

## 1 As we said before, judge them by their **actions, not their words**

In research groups where women are present, they usually espouse highly 'correct' views.

In surveys too, they usually agree entirely with the views that they are *expected* by society to hold.

Most interesting however, is how men *actually behave* to the women in their lives, what they say when women aren't there, in short what they *really think and do*.

## 2 Time has moved on

As society has changed, male chauvinism has adapted.

The 'a woman's place is in the home' credo has gone, but not because men in the nineties are fundamentally different creatures, but because a woman at home nowadays means *less income* for him.

In the nineties, he can now expect a woman to feed him and wash for him *and* increase household income by a substantial margin.

In a society where house prices are a function of mortgages funded by dual incomes, he expects his woman to slave over a hot word processor as well as a stove.

The ballpark has changed, and men have adjusted to it in terms of both their behaviour and their attitudes. As we will go on to show, the man of the nineties uses the free relationships cohabitation and the Pill afford him to get his own way, and not hers.

A caring New Man has not arrived.

All that has happened is that *the caveman has adapted*.

### How men lie in research

*How many lovers have you had in your life?*

Maximum claim in survey:

	Women	Men
16 - 24	11	100
25 - 34	20	300
35 - 44	26	<b>400</b>
45 - 54	5	20

Base: UK adults

Source: Marie Claire, August 1991

*In surveys some men claim to have had 400 women in 40 years - the equivalent of a new partner every three weeks from the age of 16. Surely some mistake?*

# Shacking up with a Caveman

Thirty years ago, men and women got married before they lived together. The woman had a defined set of rights under marriage, both legal and moral, and had power as a result of them.

Then came cohabitation, a much less formal type of relationship. Initially, this was accepted as a good idea by women, as it allowed a freer, less stifling relationship, with limited parental interference.

As time has gone on, cohabitation has become the standard relationship for young couples in many

## Living in sin is in

*% of women cohabiting*

	<b>1979</b>	<b>1981</b>	<b>1986</b>	<b>1988</b>
18 to 24	4.5	5.6	9.0	12.4
25 - 49	2.2	2.6	4.6	6.3

*Source: General Household Survey*

parts of society. (The upmarket and downmarket cohabit. In social classes C1 and C2, young people don't do it as much.)

However, as we will go on to show, under the cohabitation arrangements of the caring, sharing nineties, the woman's rights have *gone out of the window*.

### **How cohabitation has grown**

Over the past ten years the proportion of women in their twenties who are cohabiting (and presumably men as well) has tripled. In most cases it is now a standard precursor to marriage.

GHS statistics indicate that the average cohabiting couple spend 28 months cohabiting together, before they either split up or marry, so it is a significant part of many people's lives in the nineties.

### **Sexual politics**

It is clear that this process has now changed the

sexual politics of marriage. This situation thirty years ago was typified by a woman we interviewed.

*“In my day, nice girls didn’t sleep with a man until they were married. It gave him a real incentive. If he wanted you, he had to marry you.”*

Woman, 50.

It is clear that older women do not entirely envy the situation their daughters are placed in:

*“If you sleep with a man, you give him everything he wants. He’s got it. He doesn’t want the relationship to move on. Why should he? He’s getting his sex.”*

Woman, late thirties

## Is marrying the same as living together?

*How likely are you to spend the rest of your life with your partner?*

	Cohabiting	Married
Very likely	52	87
Quite likely	32	10
Not very/not at all likely	6	2
Don’t know	10	2

Base: Cohabiting/Married Couples  
Source: Gallup/DT June 1990

Some may argue that all that has happened is that cohabitation has replaced marriage as a less formal institution, to reflect our less formal times.

Certainly this is the situation in Scandinavia, where many couples live together unmarried for their entire lives.

But it is clear from recent Gallup research that in Britain at least, cohabitation is a *completely different institution to marriage*.

Clearly from the table above, marriage is regarded as permanent by the vast majority of those who are married.

However, as only *half* of those who are cohabiting say that they are ‘very likely’ to spend the rest of their life with their partner, cohabitation is not.

We’re also willing to bet that the 52% of cohabitees who claim to be very likely to spend the rest of their lives with their partners are mainly *female*, and those who said they weren’t very likely, or were not at all likely, or just didn’t know, were mainly their *male partners*.

As one woman put it:

*“You don’t move in with a man unless you really want him. As far as I am concerned, I have already committed myself to Philip.”*

Woman, 25

*“Most of my friends have girls living with them. It’s normal. But when they start to get on your nerves, you dump them.”*

Man, Dagenham

*“Living with someone, you’ve always got a way out. You’re just not as committed.”*

Man, 25, Earl’s Court

*“If you really want them for ever and ever, you marry them, cos that’s what they want. But if you just want sex on tap, you let them move in.”*

Man, Birmingham

Thus to women, the level of commitment required for cohabitation is the same as marriage. It is the male point of view that differs.

When cohabiting men are interviewed in groups by male researchers, their attitudes towards the durability of their relationship are lackadaisical.

Many profess to be living with their partner only 'until something better comes along'.

### **Mucking out the cave**

It is also clear that men have other motives in mind when they allow a woman to move in. For many men who set up home on their own, housekeeping is a problem area.

Whilst British mothers continue to educate their daughters on homemaking, most leave their sons painfully ill equipped to deal with running their personal lives.

Therefore, the temptation to capitalise on the tidy and homemaking tendencies of a girlfriend are all too tempting to many men.

## **I like to be organised and follow routine.**

*%Definitely/tend to agree*

Young men	Young Women
46.7%	<b>57.8%</b>

*Base: BC1C2 Adults aged 18 to 30*

*Source: TGI 1991*

*“I’m naturally a bit of a pig, most men are. But when she moved in suddenly the house got a lot tidier.”*

Man, Edinburgh

*“I came home one day and all my clothes had been sent to the dry cleaners.”*

Man, 38, Fulham

### **The cohabitation ladder**

It is clear from our investigations that whereas marriage is a one step formal contract, cohabitation is a many stepped transaction. Each step has its own politics.

#### **Getting the keys**

At the beginning of the union, it is the getting of the keys.

For many men, this is quite a fundamental stage.

*“When you’re living apart, and she hasn’t got keys to your flat, you still feel that if you got chatting to some bird in a pub, you could still ask her back for the night. Once she’s got your keys, you don’t dare, in case she catches you on the job.”*

Man, Crystal Palace

For women, the exchanging of keys is also a fairly fundamental stage. For many we interviewed, it meant a very positive step within the relationship - a sense of permanence. For others, who were living at home with their parents, it meant a sense of power - at last they could choose whether they went home that night or not.

#### **She moves in**

The next stage is the full move in.

*“I came home one day and there was this suitcase in the hall. She said she’d had a row with her flatmate and had to move out. Could she stay here for a few days? I knew I’d never get her out again.”*

Man, Birmingham

#### **Fighting for territory**

Even when a woman has been living in his flat or house for months, a man may still attempt to restrict her freedom within it. Often, use of the hifi will be barred to her, wardrobes may remain 'his', the introduction of vases, flowers and cushions opposed.

The message is clear: this is his cave, she is just an accessory within it.

#### **The Long term**

Even after several years, there remain significant differences between cohabitation and marriage:

*“I’ve got this friend who has lived with his girl-  
friend for seven years, and only last week  
did he let her put her name on the answerphone.”*

Man, London

Under the rules of cohabitation (virtually universally established by *him*) she has no real rights of equality, and no real guarantee of a permanent relationship.

Clearly, the trend towards cohabitation has shifted the balance of power in relationships towards the young man of the nineties, and away from his woman.

The caring, sharing new age nineties man?

What a joke.

## A Woman's Place

Twenty five years ago, women often gave up work when they married, in order to manage the household.

In the nineties, few women desire to do this.

Nor, in the nineties is it economically *possible* for women to do this. In a world where a depressed housing market reflects dual income funded mortgages, few couples can afford for one to be economically inactive for sustained periods.

According to Department of Employment statistics, only 42.4% of women aged 25 - 44 were economically active in 1971.

In 1991 the Department projected the proportion to be around 68.4% Amongst young women in the pre family stage, work is almost universal.

Young women thus work the same hours as their

### Women have less time than men when working full time

	Men	Women
Free time per weekday	4.7	3.2
Free time per weekend day	10.4	8.5

Source: Henley Centre for Forecasting  
Social Trends 21

men, and should thus have similar amounts of leisure time as them, once they have shared the household chores out.

#### The slob man and her

In reality, they have significantly less time to themselves than their male counterparts - over an hour less per weekday, and four hours less per weekend.

The reason? Despite the equal amounts of work being done outside the house, the caring, sharing man of the nineties doesn't lift a finger inside it.

### Intentions vs Fact

The familiar 'acceptable attitudes' come into play here. Ask young unmarried men how they will divide the housework once they get married, and they give you a pious 50/50 split as their intention.

But ask their partners six months later what the actual situation is and the result is completely at odds. Time after time we have spoken to young women who have seen the share of chores handled by their 'new age' husband decline dramatically over the first few months of marriage.

The British Social Attitudes Survey paints a statis-

## Every Englishman's castle needs a serf

	Mainly man	Mainly woman	Shared equally
Household shopping	7	<b>50</b>	43
Makes evening meal	6	<b>77</b>	17
Does evening dishes	22	<b>39</b>	36
Does household cleaning	4	<b>72</b>	23
Does washing and ironing	2	<b>88</b>	9
Repairs household equipment	<b>82</b>	6	8
Organises household money/ bills	32	38	30

*Source: British Social Attitudes Survey 1987  
Social and Community Planning Research*

tical picture of the who's cleaning battle across Britain: The woman mainly does the household cleaning in 72% of British households, and makes the evening meal in 77%. The woman mainly does the washing and ironing in 88% of British households.

And even though the woman does the evening meal, the washing up afterwards is mainly done by the man in just 17% of households.

### Men mend the telly

The only area where men claim to take a serious role is in repairing household equipment (Men do it most often in 82% of households). But as technology becomes more reliable, the mending job becomes less important.

*When was the last time your TV broke down?*

### The new age male would be happy in a sty

Why do young men do less housework than their

wives and girlfriends?

TGI statistics indicate that the new young men of the nineties *hate* all forms of housework, and are quite prepared to live in a dirty untidy home as a result.

*Of course, they don't actually have to, because she clears it up.*

### "I loathe doing any form of housework"

%	<i>Definitely/tend to agree</i>	
	<b>Young men</b>	<b>Young Women</b>
	<b>35.7%</b>	<b>26.8%</b>

### "I can't bear untidiness in the home"

%	<i>Definitely/tend to agree</i>	
	<b>Young men</b>	<b>Young Women</b>
	<b>51.4%</b>	<b>61.3%</b>

*Base: BC1C2 Adults aged 18 to 30  
Source: TGI 1991*

### Women Cook Food, Men Eat It

Another part of the New Man theory depicted in commercials is the young man cooking. Not just defrosting things, but actually making *real meals*.

Sadly, this also appears to be a figment of an overactive copywriter's imagination.

It is clear that the young men of today still delegate all the work of cooking to their female partners. From TGI, it seems clear that the kitchen holds little fascination for him:

### "I normally read the recipes in magazines"

%	<i>Definitely/tend to agree</i>	
	<b>Young men</b>	<b>Young Women</b>
	<b>12.0%</b>	<b>43.7%</b>

*Base: BC1C2 Adults aged 18 to 30  
Source: TGI 1991*

## "I consult recipes a lot for cooking"

*%Definitely/tend to agree*

Young men	Young Women
19.6%	35.3%

*Base: BC1C2 Adults aged 18 to 30  
Source: TGI 1991*

Overall, it is clear that young men have little time for food, apart from when they are eating it.

## "I don't have time to prepare and cook food"

*%Definitely/tend to agree*

Young men	Young Women
31.0%	27.5%

*Base: BC1C2 Adults aged 18 to 30  
Source: TGI 1991*

## "I really enjoy my food"

*%Definitely agree*

Young men	Young Women
39.8%	33.4%

*Base: BC1C2 Adults aged 18 to 30  
Source: TGI 1991*

### **Real men don't rattle tins**

When it comes to voluntary activities the sex differences come out even more.

Men are *half* as likely to get involved in voluntary activities as women. Fewer organise fund raising events, fewer sell raffle tickets. Only when it comes to blood donors are men equally represented.

*It is clear that the New Age caring, sharing post eighties community is populated mainly by women.*

# Men and Marriage

*"Whilst you're just living together, her parents are just pushing you to get engaged. But as soon as you get married, she has her mother leaning on her to produce children."*

Man, 30

*"I went to the doctor to have a cyst removed and he asked me when I was going to have babies. I said I was too busy with my job and was thinking thirty seven thirty eight. He said I was stupid. You only have a chance of conceiving at that age."*

Woman, 27

Cohabitation and freer sexual attitudes have meant one thing to men: they no longer need to get married in their early twenties in order to obtain a sleeping partner.

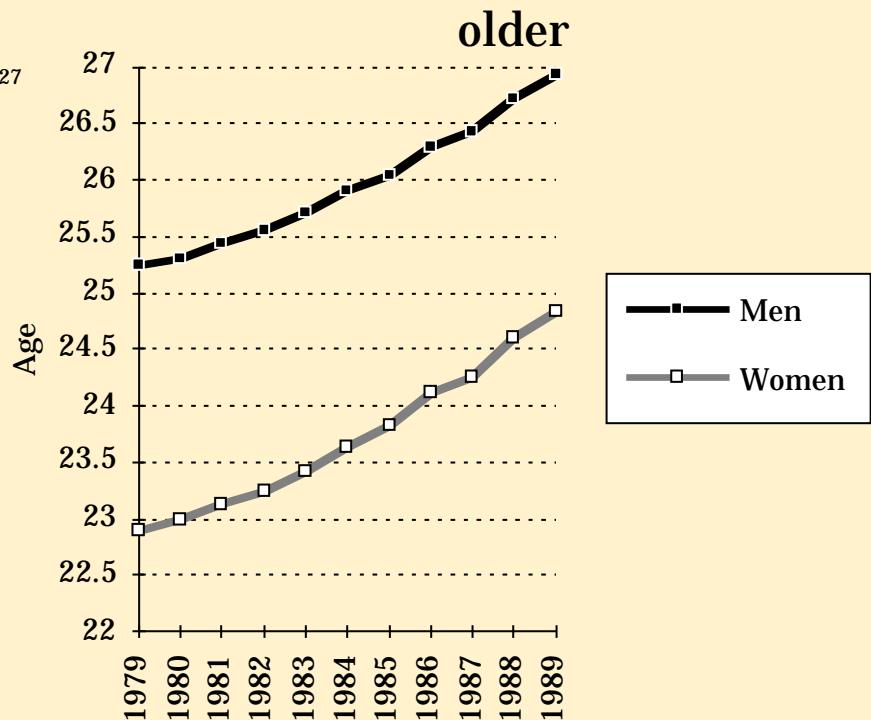
Increasingly, this has meant men wanting to leave marriage until they feel they have their career sorted, and feel ready to settle down.

Marriage also means pressure to have kids; and as nineties man dislikes serious commitment, the last thing he wants are kids.

As a result of this concern, nineties man is delaying marriage as long as possible. Mean ages of marriage for both men and women are thus rising rapidly.

The average age at marriage for men is now 27, and 25 for women. (Interestingly, the age difference, of around two years has remained the same. In the caring, sharing New Age, men still want younger brides.)

## Men and women are marrying



Source: OPCS

Later marriage has profound consequences for the male female power balance. Whilst men are aware that they can biologically have children right up to their seventies, women in their late twenties come under an increasing barrage of pressure from health professionals and female relatives to reproduce now rather than later.

For women in their late twenties, marriage is bound up with this need to have babies sooner rather than later. Few women in their late twenties choose to have babies without getting married first.

Thus whilst he is happy for their open ended cohabitation agreement to continue indefinitely, she biologically *needs* to get married.

She thus needs the caring, sharing New Age man to champion her needs.

### **So who *does* he marry?**

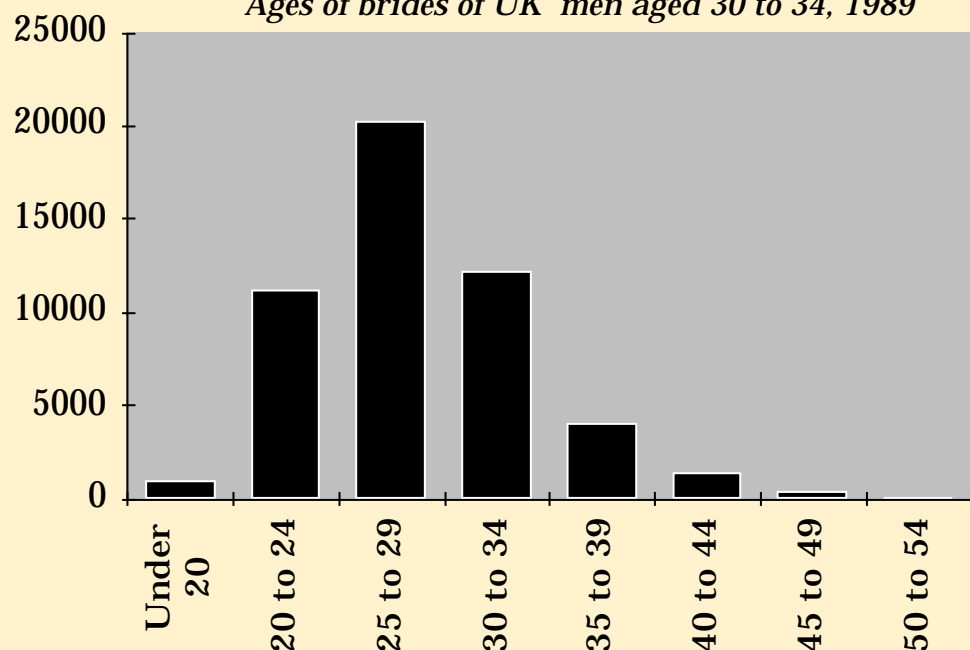
If cohabitation really was a straight precursor to marriage, there would be no problem. But as we established earlier, men see cohabitation as a much more open ended relationship than their partners.

If men *did* see cohabitation as serious commitment, they would all marry the woman they had been living with when they jointly reached their late twenties and early thirties.

But as can be seen from government statistics, men in their early thirties are *as likely to marry a woman ten years their junior* as a woman of their age group.

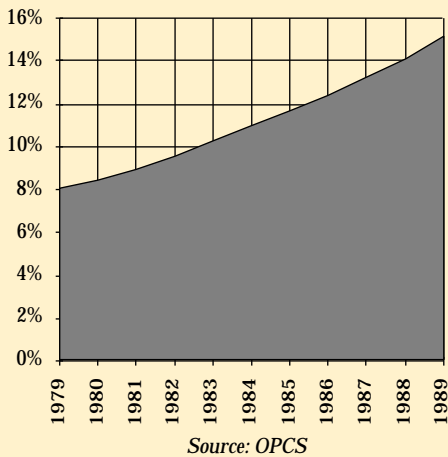
## The Bimbo Factor

*Ages of brides of UK men aged 30 to 34, 1989*



Source: OPCS

## Proportion of women age 30 to 34 who are unmarried.



### AB men are the worst

ABs (professional/middle class) men tend to marry much later than the rest of the population. Thus it is these so-called more liberated men who are indulging in the bimbo tendency.

As a result of this set of marriage patterns, the proportion of women who remain unmarried in their early thirties is growing rapidly.

Women in this age group now face a set of serious problems:

*"The problem with being in your thirties and single is that all the attractive men have gone. They're all either personality-free or peculiar or gay."*

Woman, Putney

*"Never go out with a younger man. It works for a while, and then they treat you like shit."*

Banker, 38

*"You've got to catch men the second time round."*

Banker, 29

Government statistics show that women in this age group are as likely to marry men in their mid forties as men of their age group.

## What the 'New Age Man' wants in a wife

When it comes to marriage, a large amount of conservatism is revealed in the British male. When it comes to the choice of a wife, years of liberal media influences have little effect.

British men are the most conservative in Europe when it comes to choosing a bride in terms of class, education, culture or religion.

### People who marry someone of a different class or educational background

*% of men strongly/somewhat approving*

France	50
Germany	52
Italy	60
Spain	64
Holland	72
<b>UK</b>	<b>42</b>

### People who marry someone of a different cultural or religious background

*% of men strongly/somewhat approving*

France	44
Germany	39
Italy	53
Spain	64
Holland	65
<b>UK</b>	<b>35</b>

*Source: Reader's Digest Eurodata, 1991*

The most interesting comparisons here come with Holland, at the opposite end of the tolerance scale, where Alto (BWBC's European network) have recently conducted social research exercises.

In Holland, the attitudes towards marriage differ greatly:

*“Here there is a tradition of tolerance, of Catholics marrying Protestants. Also we try to have no class. A woman and a man marry if they love each other. They do not have to be of a certain background.”*

Man, Amstelveen

The pattern in Britain can hardly be further from this.

### **The power of mum**

In Britain, 30 years of a more free and equal society have not fully impinged on marital attitudes. In this area, it is clear that men are still very much controlled by the attitudes of their parents.

*“I’d like to think that I could marry anyone, but if I brought home someone with a regional accent, I just know my parents would take against her. It wouldn’t go down well at coffee mornings in Guildford.”*

Man, Surrey

It is interesting to contrast the differences in attitude towards the cohabitee and the wife. From the female perspective:

*“I lived with Roger for three years. I never met his mum. Then we split up, and he introduced this other woman to his mum and got engaged within weeks. I should have known. All the way along, I was classed in his head as non permanent.”*

Other traditional attitudes continue to hold sway in within the minds of a fair proportion of 90s men:

## **"Marriages between younger men and older women tend not to work out"**

<i>% of men</i>	
Agree	31%
Disagree	44%
Don't know	24%

Base: 497 UK men

Source: Audience Selection/BWBC 3rd - 5th January 1992

*“Getting rid of a jointly mortgaged piece of property is a lot messier than sorting out a divorce, particularly in today’s property slump.”*

Solicitor

*“It made sense to buy something in 1988, because all the prices were going up, and I thought I could make some money. So Jane and I bought a house. What a mistake.”*

Solicitor, 27

*“Getting divorced was easy. Getting rid of the house wasn’t. We both lost £50K.”*

Accountant 28

### **Has the joint mortgage replaced marriage?**

From a legal point of view, buying a house together as a couple is a greater commitment than getting married.

In the eighties, this was often not recognised, as couples with limited commitment to each other eagerly bought property together in order to enjoy dual MIRAS relief on their property. With the property market booming, their investment could be disposed of in a matter of weeks, limiting the commitment.

On the other hand, some women recognised the joint property as a way of 'tying down' their man:

*“You can’t ask a man to marry you, it just isn’t done. But you can ask a man to buy a house with you. It’s practical, down to earth. He can cope with it, and there are advantages for him - he might not be able to afford one otherwise.”*

### **Cohabitation in a cold climate**

In the nineties, with the changes in the property market, extreme pressures have been put on the loosely committed cohabiting couple. As many know to their cost:

- Many couples were encouraged by parents to buy properties together before the joint ending of tax relief on mortgages on 1st August 1988.
- Many took out 95% or 100% mortgages, having no savings.
- To afford a flat of a decent size, many of these transactions happened at three to four times joint earning levels.
- House prices in many areas of the country rose by up to 20% during the first 7 months of 1988 in anticipation of this.
- Then house prices began to fall
- Then interest rates rose
- Then the market dried up.

What was the resulting effect on the relationship?

We have encountered several variations:

- 1 It has had the effect of a *traditional marriage* on some couples. They are committed to each other because they have to be. 'Till death us do part' has been replaced by 'Till an improving economy us do part'.
- 2 It has created an *impossible situation*, particularly for the woman. As was said earlier,

women rarely cohabit without serious commitment, and therefore rarely enter into a joint property transaction without a similar level of commitment.

Not so for men. We have encountered situations where the man, unable to leave the house he has bought with his girlfriend for financial reasons *has moved his new woman in*.

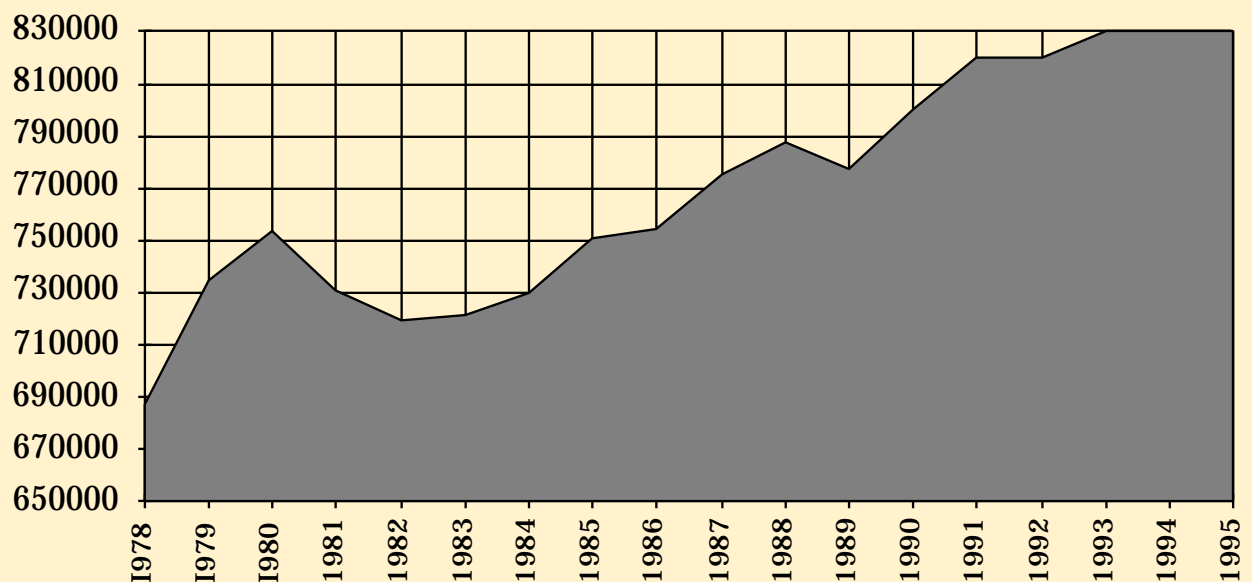
Yet again, the caveman is revealed.

## You're What???

Current changes in the demographic structure of the UK population mean that Britain is currently undergoing a minor baby boom. The reason for this is that women born in the last baby boom which peaked at 1,000,000 babies born in 1964 are now reaching the key fertility age of 27.

This baby boom, however, conceals a large number

### UK Birth Rate



Source: OPCS 1989/90

of other changes which are happening in society

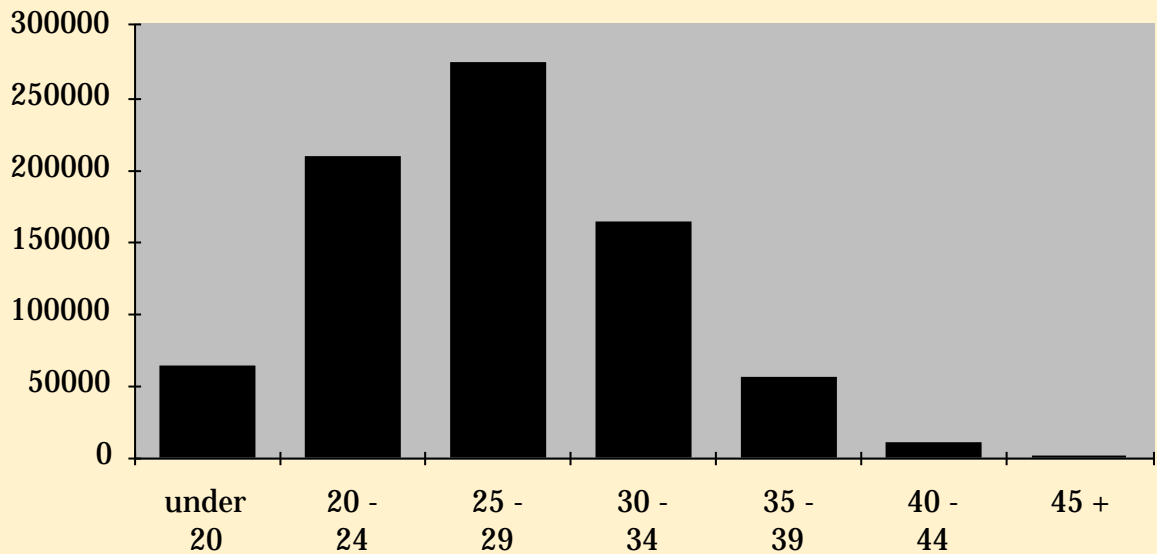
#### **Mothers are getting older**

As time has moved on, more and more women are leaving babies until later in life. One factor is the desire amongst middle class women to have more of a career before having the baby.

But a greater factor is, as stated before, an unwillingness amongst men to commit themselves to those women whilst they are in their early twenties.

Clearly, many women nowadays have babies without getting married, but most women still remain unwilling to get pregnant before the guarantee of a firm relationship afforded by marriage.

## Births by Age of Mother



Base: UK births 1989 Source: OPCS

Thus, as the number of years a woman has between finding a committed man and the biological cut off point for safe pregnancy decreases, the distinction between their girlfriend's need for marriage and her need for a baby has blurred.

Many men in their late twenties and early thirties remain confused about their partner's real desires.

This has put many of them off marriage.

*"I'm never quite sure with some women whether they want me, or whether they want a man, any nice man, so that they can have a baby."*

Man, 28

### Why don't men want babies?

6 nappies per day for 365 days, at 20p per nappy	=	£400
Baby clothes age 0 -1	=	£300
Baby food (3 jars a day for 6 months)	=	£300
Formula milk	=	£400
Pram, pushchair, cot	=	£1,200
Wife's loss of earnings, one year, or cost of nanny	=	£8,000 net
<b>Total</b>	=	<b>£11,000</b>

*For the price of a baby, a man could afford a video camera, three expensive holidays a year, **and** the lease costs of a BMW.*

## Victorian Dad

The new man gets worse when the kids reach school age. By this time, his wife has usually gone back to work, be it only on a part time basis.

With the kids, he is happy to take an equal share of tasks that involve little work, for example shouting at them:

### Who teaches the children discipline?

*% of households*

**Mainly man**

**Mainly woman**

**Shared equally**

13

19

67

*Source: British Social Attitudes Survey 1987  
Social and Community Planning Research*

When it comes to doing other tasks that involve serious commitment, the picture changes. Suddenly the kids become *her* problem.

For instance, when one of the kids suddenly becomes sick, guess who looks after them:

### Who looks after sick children?

*% of households*

**Mainly man**

**Mainly woman**

**Shared equally**

2

67

30

*Source: British Social Attitudes Survey 1987  
Social and Community Planning Research*

*In only 2% of British households is it the father who takes the main responsibility for looking after sick children - despite the fact that in the majority of households with children, the mother also works.*

As a result, even amongst younger couples, it is the mother who spends more time at home:

## I spend most of my time at home with my family

*%Definitely/tending to agree*

Young men	Young Women
43.6%	57.2%

*Base: BC1G2 Adults aged 18 to 30  
Source: TGI 1991*

Of course, if you ask a new man what are his *attitudes* towards looking after kids, the majority will spout the politically correct attitude. According to our survey through Audience Selection, 60% of men claim that looking after the kids is no more a woman's job than a man's.

### **Victorian attitudes to childcare**

As they are not that involved in children's mealtimes (as they rarely cook or wash up), most men are unaware of current trends in child education.

Thus they are likely to spout whatever attitudes their parents had about feeding, when asked for their opinions:

*"With equity derivative markets the way they are, I don't have more than a few hours a week for the kid... ...They should eat what they are given. That's the bottom line."*

Man, 32

All in all, little has *really* changed in men's role as fathers over the past thirty years.

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# Sleeping with a Caveman

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In the sixties, British sexual attitudes underwent a sea change. The 'good girl bad girl' attitudes of the fifties were replaced by the love ins and 'unrestricted morality' of the sixties.

At the time, women welcomed the change as a real difference from the restrictive attitudes of the fifties. Contraceptive pills allowed them the freedom to control their own bodies and to have a more liberated time.

So do the young women of the nineties have a better deal in bed with their New Men?

## **Nookie negotiations**

Thirty years ago, men regarded it as their right to have sex with their wives as and when they wanted it.

In our research groups we have found that that attitude has changed. Men no longer expect their women to "lie back and think of England" as one woman put it. The situation has got more complex.

In the nineties, the relationship consists of three parts. In the beginning, the man is very interested in the woman, primarily to get her into bed.

Conversations we have conducted with women indicate that this period lasts from a week to two months. Most women still feel that it is wrong to sleep with a man on the first date; but as the relationship progresses they feel under increasing pressure from the man to 'perform'.

As one woman put it to us,

*"You sense from him that he wants you and that he isn't going to be satisfied with a peck on the cheek. With one man I went out with, I could almost see him adding up the cost of the meals on a calculator in his head. And society affords you no defence. If you won't sleep with him, everyone thinks you're frigid".*

There is also a real fear amongst a lot of women that they will be "dumped" if they don't do anything after a month or so.

From the male side, attitudes are similar. There still appears to be a lot of pub culture sitting in the male mind on the subject of relationships. In most

*"Most women seem to have a three week rule. As long as you keep on pushing, you score in the end."*

Man, 34

cases, the woman concerned is known to the circle of male friends of the man. All are goading him into “scoring”.

If he does not succeed within a month or so, he appears to be regarded as a wimp.

**Stage two**

The second stage of the relationship is where “she moves in” either as cohabitation, or upon engagement or marriage. This stage is regarded with dread by many men, as it signals the end of sex as a key bargaining tool in his armoury.

When she didn’t live in, she would have offered sex to get close to him, to get into his flat or house. Once she has moved in, she has the right to be there, sex or no.

As one man put it to our researchers:

*“I’ve lived with three women and each time one moved in, the sex dried up. They started having headaches, and “the wrong time of the month” lasted a fortnight. This time round, I’m telling her I need my own space, and I’m keeping her down to one toothbrush in my flat. She doesn’t like it, but it keeps me happy.”*

However, all is not in the control of the woman who has moved in. Most feel that their “other halves” to use the current euphemism will not pressurise them interminably into sex, but in stark contrast to the situation thirty years ago, most also are made to feel aware by the man that he has other alternatives, and that when he claims he has been working hard at the office, he only half means it.

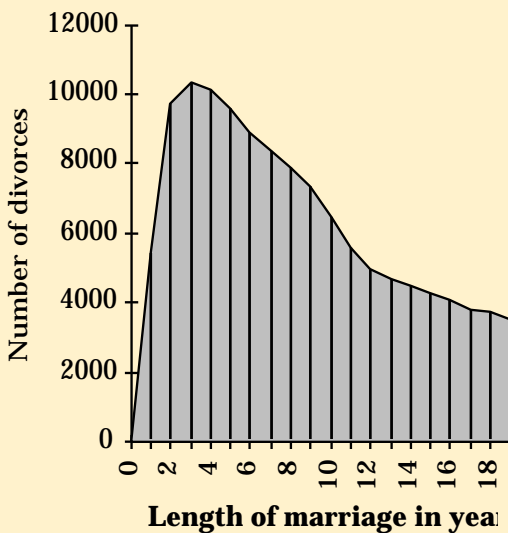
As one 25 year old woman accountant put it to us:

*“David would never force me to have sex with him, but when I had exams and wanted just to work all the time, I would get this constant monologue about his needs and how he would have to do something. Then he let it slip that his ex girlfriend had rung up. The threat was there, and I didn’t want to lose him. So I gave in.”*

**Stage three**

With increasing numbers of nineties men happy to ‘mess around’ with other women, and increasing numbers of predatory women around waiting to pick off a wavering husband, stage three involves him on the prowl again.

**The Three Year Itch**



## Do women prefer bastards anyway?

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In the work environment, career women demand and expect nonsexist, equal attitudes and behaviour from their male colleagues.

But the indications are that nineties women increasingly reject such behaviour from their *partners*.

As the ideologically correct son of a feminist mother recently put it to the Guardian:

*"A man likes to chase but not to catch. A woman likes to be caught. They're basically incompatible."*

Woman, 25, Torquay

*"I lived with my last girlfriend for three years. She used to tell me that I was the most caring, most loving man she had ever met. She turned round at the end and told me I was too nice. It may have been an excuse, but I was distraught."*

Man, 22, quoted in the Guardian  
January 9th, 1992

The desire for a partner who exudes traditional male values extends right up to the top of the career ladder:

*"At the moment, we've just started going out, and I feel in control. But later on, I'll get really bad, ringing him up all the time saying I want to see you. I get really pathetic."*

Woman, 25, Clapham

*"I make decisions all day. When a man takes me out, I don't want to make decisions. I want him to be in control, to tell me what is going to happen."*

Senior Strategy Consultant

Clearly, much of what the women of the nineties have been brought up over the past twenty years to believe conflicts with their basic human nature.

Our research for this report has focused on men, not women, and therefore we can come to no firm conclusions in this area.

But surely, in a society where women are rejecting the idea of sharing a lentil bake with a New Man in favour of being tied to the bedposts by Alan Rickman, advertisers need to reconsider female aspirations, and the imagery they use to portray them.

## What it means for advertisers

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First of all it means that in presenting the trendy caring men of the late 80s advertisers and their agencies have been guilty of playing a lie back to their public.

Those idealised couples in the coffee ads, and their counterparts in food commercials who have appeared on our screens over the past ten years are simply not real. Life just isn't like that.

When interviewed by a middle aged lady with a clipboard, men may *claim* to seek caring, altruistic lifestyles, but all they are doing is playing back the set of acceptable attitudes society has imposed on them over the past few decades.

Beneath that New Man veneer is another man, with basic needs and basic motivations.

Advertisers who recognise this, and who appeal to him over the next few years may reap disproportionate rewards.

*"Has anyone seen the New Man? I'd really like one."*

Brand Manager, Harlow

### **Specific markets**

It is impossible in a general report of this nature to go into the ramifications for advertisers in specific markets.

In markets where the prime purchaser/brand specifier is *female*, the New Man may remain a useful sales tool for a few years to come.

Where the prime purchaser/specifier is male, the caveman line of thinking has to be handled carefully; make it too overt and the communication will be rejected; choose the wrong cultural and attitudinal references, and today's man may perceive the advertising as aimed at his father.

On the subject of *existing* male targeted commercials, suffice it to say that though men may say they enjoy and respond to them, deep down, they leave them cold.

Men may say they get a warm feeling inside when a car manufacturer shows them a baby or cuddly bunny on the back seat of their new model; we'd just suspect that many men, deep down, would prefer to find Michelle Pfeiffer there instead.