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Lori Rotskoff, *Love on the Rocks: Men, Women and Alcohol in Post-World War II America*. Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2002.

There are many intriguing historical issues raised in the versatile *Love on the Rocks*. This richly researched and well-crafted book is social history at its best as it organizes a history of gender and family roles around the topic of drinking in American society. The shifts from a view of drinking as morally repugnant, downright sinful, and male gendered in the 1880s, to a view of drinking as a disease by the 1930s, and as a family mental health problem by the 1950s, involved changing definitions of gender and gender ideals. This intriguing story is neatly played out in five chapters. While each

chapter focuses on a provocative issue/question and is foundational to the next, each stands as a functional essay on its own.

Chapter One, *Culture of Drink in Prohibition and Post Repeal America*, explores the culture of drink and manhood from the turn of the twentieth century through the end of Prohibition. Saloon culture met the social, political, and recreational needs of working class men, many of whom were single and/or recent immigrants to urban settings. Male gender identity was socialized through the homosocial haven of saloon culture. Upper class men also drank in gender exclusive groups, but they did so in the more private environments of hotels and clubs.

By contrast, middle class men forsook homosocial-drinking environments and opted for fatherhood, the family hearth, and the cult of domesticity. Such “admirable” middle class Victorian men were the gender ideal for white, middle class, Protestant women, many of whom were members of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union. These self-assigned keepers of the family successfully convinced Americans that alcohol was a threat to family life in America. Such Victorian activists believed they were protecting themselves, their children, and the country from the debilitating effects of a heavy drinking, antisocial male that they defined as “sinful and deviant”.

Though Prohibition prevailed and foisted a Victorian morality on America, by the 1920s, America was going “modern.” A suburbanizing and commercialized nation commodified leisure. Public amusement spaces such as cabarets, dance halls, hotels, restaurants, and movie theatres served alcohol to mixed company. Liquor lost its power to symbolize female vulnerability and male “sin,” and the frisson between Victorian versus modern tilted toward the modern. Harsh historical realities also ushered the end of Prohibition. The Depression put Prohibition on the back burner, and businessmen argued that repealing Prohibition could develop tax revenues and create jobs. Others argued that depressed people were entitled to have a little fun. Rotskoff ties these economic realities back to gender by suggesting that unemployed and economically

disenfranchised men needed to feel “manly” again. Prohibition was repealed.

The emergent influence of popular culture reinforced the rise of the modern and moderate cocktail drinker. In “The Thin Man” (1934), Nick and Nora showed that working, drinking, and having fun were all possible. Chapter Two, *Engendering the Alcoholic*, explores the years 1930 through the post-war era, a time when Americans reshaped ideologies of manhood to distinguish between normal and problem drinkers. They also recast ideas about healthy and pathological gender norms. Heavy drinking was no longer associated with masculine virility and sexual prowess. Now recast as sexual pathology, the alcoholic man was viewed as less manly, meaning he could not meet his gendered role expectation as economic provider and marital companion. Deviant drinking in the middle class was the result of masculine neurosis or middle class anxiety, a mental health issue. Mental health professionals - physicians, social workers, therapists - replaced the social reformers as the people who would both define and treat the problem of excessive drinking. The first therapeutic books came out in the 1930s and 1940s as the disease model of excessive drinking emerged. Alongside the mental health community, Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) was born.

Chapter Three, *Alcoholics Anonymous and the Culture of Sobriety*, presents a gendered look at the founding of AA by Bill and Dr. Bob in 1935. This mutual self-help group, which in 1938 codified its philosophies in the now famous *Blue Book*, was responding to a lack of treatment alternatives. The culture of AA recreated the manly camaraderie of the saloon, where narratives of drinking - war stories - reforged the brotherhood. The milieu of AA was white middle class suburban communities; meetings took place in local churches and community buildings. The goal of AA was social rehabilitation; through mutually supported sobriety, men could restore themselves to domestic masculinity and reestablish their roles as breadwinners and partners.

Placing men squarely in charge of their families fit nicely with the emerging post-war ethic of the American dream: "A house, a car, and a family of my own." Bolstered by the G.I. Bill, suburban communities grew and the white-collar professions of management and sales created "the corporate man." Popular culture was not afraid to explore excessive drinking. Films like *The Lost Weekend* (1945), an insider's view of alcoholism, presented the dilemmas of the new American male, a white collar guy facing pressures of society, while *The Best Years of our Lives* (1946) exposed adjustment problems of returning WWII vets; both films presented familiar and sympathetic male characters who needed help.

The post-war American dream included women, the subject of Chapter Four, *The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage*. A woman's role in the 1950s was largely circumscribed by her relationship to men. The post-war family was one of "domestic containment," so all solutions were orchestrated within the family structure. If alcoholic men were willing to take charge of their own behavior through recovery, the role of their wives was clear: to support them. While in the temperance era women were the objects of pity, by the 50s women were activists for marriage. Founded in 1951 by Lois Wilson, Al Anon was created to provide support and strategies for women to cope with their familial dilemmas. If men had to exercise physical sobriety, women had to exercise emotional sobriety. Getting angry, getting full time work, taking over the family responsibility--these were defined as pathological gender responses in the 1950s.

Chapter Five, *Drink and Domesticity in Postwar America*, examines suburbia and the culture of the cocktail. Leisure activities were organized around alcohol consumption--the barbecue, the cocktail party, theme parties, dinner parties--the manifestations of a good life. Advertisers promoted this culture by showing an elegant and happy lifestyle, punctuated by liquor. Critics of suburbia, however, offered excessive drinking as a response to the boredom, conformity, and anxiety of keeping up with the Joneses. Postwar pop culture recognized drinking as a problem. Films like *Come*

*Back, Little Sheba* (1952) examined the alcoholic marriage within the context of a desolate and disappointing suburban existence.

By the 1960s, civil rights, feminism, and the counter culture challenged conventions of race, class, and gender and are worthy topics for a second book from this author. As part of the Gender and American Culture Series published by University of North Carolina, *Love on The Rocks* fills a much-needed gap in alcohol studies within the context of broader twentieth century issues. The idea that gender formation is an historic process by which the two genders are formed and reformed is one of the most compelling points of the book; the intimate link between gender formation and the history of drinking is its most provocative insight.

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Dempsey, Hugh A., *Firewater: The Impact of the Whisky Trade on the Blackfoot Nation*. Calgary: Fifth House, 2000.

Hugh A. Dempsey's *Firewater: The Impact of the Whisky Trade on the Blackfoot Nation* is a history of the most intensive and unfortunate Blackfoot encounter with "white man's water," with a narrative structure that rides through like a classic western. It begins with the departure of the old "sheriff" - the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) - and the transfer of territorial control to the fledgling Dominion of Canada in 1869. The HBC had been largely responsible for maintaining a semblance of control over whisky in the Great Plains north of the forty-ninth parallel. However, before a new "sheriff" could be appointed, in rode a gang of black hats under the long-arm control of Thomas C. Powers and company.

The outlaws whom Powers supplies with whisky ride into the power vacuum created by the HBC's departure, setting up forts and trade posts throughout the Whoop Up country in what was formerly British territory. As they do so, they outwit and