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# Virginity: Not All Rose Petals and Candles

An overview of the development of the virginity construct and the  
impact on modern perspectives

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Sexuality in general has historically been a taboo topic in Western Culture from ancient Greece to old time England to the present in the United States, however common themes through time have been the suppression of female sexuality, the value placed on women's virginity, and virginity being a patriarchal structure (Orenstein 2, 79). Many other cultures have different opinions or practices when it comes to virginity but due to space, this essay only focuses on European descent and the issues that occurred for white women which is by no means the normal standards but illustrates the history of the current problem of virginity in the United States. Women's usefulness to society has often been reduced to being the best option for marriage and thus building connections between families and having children while taking care of the domestic chores. In order to be highly valued, women had to be virginal, chaste, pure, innocent, etc. The word "virgin" is derived from the Greek and Latin word "virgo" which means "maiden" or "an unmarried girl or woman". One definition of virginity from the Oxford-English Dictionary is "the condition of being or remaining in a state of chastity or abstinence from or avoidance of all sexual relations". Virginity is something to lose or something that is taken by another which was established in the late 14th century. There have been many terms for a virgin over the years, one of the more recent ones in the United States being "v-card".

This essay explores how the views in white western culture regarding virginity have changed over time from the Greek ancient civilization, the middle ages with a focus on the medieval times, the early modern era focusing on the Tudor time and impact, and the modern era with an emphasis on the Victorian times. Each time period's language around virginity will also be examined to understand how opinions shifted. The practices in place and language used through time is similar to what occurs in modern days, for example the judgment from others regarding one's virginity status remains constant, especially for women. If a woman has sex before marriage she is negatively labeled by her peers. This results in a peer-pressure driven society where being a virgin until marriage and then only having sex with the intention of reproduction is seen as this angelic ideal and any who stray from this standard is seen as sinful

(Valenti 13). This essay is organized by time period and major patterns are identified from the research literature, illustrating how prevalent control over female sexuality has always been, how this has impacted the livelihood of White Western women, and why male control over female virginity has been so desired and a continuous theme throughout history.

### **A woman's value is tied to her virginity**

Modern Western culture draws heavily on the practices of the ancient Greeks and Romans in most areas of life which existed from the 500 BCE to 400 CE. For instance, the voting system or democracy used by the United States is similar to what the Greeks used. One area in which modern times are more restrictive and less inclusive than ancient times is sexuality and the discussion of sex. It wasn't uncommon for warriors to find comfort in each other and it was even a part of Greek culture that the men would be experienced in most ways of life, including sexually, before marriage to an inexperienced girl.

Greek society held high, nearly impossible, standards to meet for women. The ideal woman was beautiful, had a beautiful voice, was sexy, intelligent, tall, industrious, well-born, fertile, virtuous, modest, passive, submissive, silent, and invisible. Women were nurtured into becoming these perfect versions by serving Artemis (the Goddess of chastity, the hunt, and the moon (Morford 210)) between the ages of 5 and puberty where they would act out the role of untamed animals that would be domesticated and socialized through marriage (Morford 180). A girl would be married at 14 or 15 to a 30-year-old man who would have many more years of experience in every aspect of the world. At the wedding, she would be passed from the protection of her father to her new husband. The essence of Athenian law ensured that at no point in her life does a woman have any authority over her own being. Part of this is due to the fact that women were considered to be incapable of restraining their insatiable sexual appetites and sensuality which were believed to subvert men, her family, and society. A woman was believed to be unable to control herself or resist influences like emotions which were believed to be an external force. There was a tradition of women not being allowed to make eye contact

with men other than her groom on her wedding day because she would entice them (Morford 180).

A father would live with constant anxiety about his unmarried daughter giving in to her true nature and indulging her sexual curiosity. Girls who had been sullied through promiscuous behavior could be sold into slavery by her father. In terms of rape, an unmarried woman could claim substantial damages that could sustain her as an unworthy prospect of marriage or could enhance the dowry to entice suitors despite the events. An unmarried woman without her virginity was considered to be damaged goods and her worth was severely diminished. A dowry is a way to show the woman's family investment in the marriage and prevent mistreatment of the woman. The wife's role mainly centered around managing the household and producing children (Reeder 20-25).

From the Online Etymology Dictionary, *parthenikos* was the word the Greeks used to describe a virgin either as a being, a characteristic, or as something being unviolated or pure. The root of this word was related to the Athens Parthenon which was a temple dedicated to Athena Parthenos (which means Athena the Virgin) and is a staple of Western civilization. Athena was one of the three Virgin Goddesses in Greek mythology and was the goddess of wisdom and war. The Greeks held female virginity in the highest regard and women who had sex before marriage or went unmarried were seen as having low value to society (Morford 19).

### **Virgins are magical and represent their family's honor**

Thoughts around what a virgin was didn't change that much from the Greek and Roman times to the medieval age. Both the ancients and people from the Middle Ages believed that virginity was a physical state of being. One change in thought is that women were not warriors (Reeder 20). In the Greek times, women were also thought of as weaker than men, but they could still be warriors or strong (Morford 223). In the Middle Ages, women were not only thought of as weaker, but as damsels (ladies) in distress. Being a girl who constantly needs saving, unable to provide for themselves, and altogether needing the protection of a man.

During the Middle Ages, specifically the medieval times, the idea that virgins are magical in some way and that being a virgin was a physical attribute led to some interesting and invasive practices. Virgins often had to undergo tests either by midwives checking the intactness of the hymen or the suitor's family following instructions from medieval medical books to prove their purity and were thought to have special powers. Certain magical objects were used to test one's virginal state like a chair, harp, pin, and an extensive list of others. The chair couldn't be sat on by an unchaste woman. The harp will play out of tune if a non-virginal woman approaches it. If a pin sinks in water, the woman is unchaste (Kelly 66). Another test for virginity was the sparkling urine test. Virgins were thought to have urine that is clear and lucid, sometimes white, sometimes sparkling (McGrath 20). There were also ordeals that some women were put through to test whether they were virgins such as: catching a salmon with one's bare hands; holding the greased and shaven tail of a bull; holding a poisonous snake; passing through fire; or passing under a magic rod (Kelly 66). The premise of these ordeals was that if a woman couldn't perform them, they were impure.

Virginity could represent many things during this time. The honor of the family, status of the household, or assurance of bloodline continuation. Virginity also represents the character of a saint, the body and spirit of the Church, or the integrity of the text in the sense of someone embodying a pure lifestyle (Kelly 67). This was of course only for the females; male chastity isn't a common topic nor is it as important to society's success. This was partially due to the belief that men have to be seduced because women had imperfect bodies and want union with the perfect male body (Kelly 98). Because female virginity was so highly valued in society, methods were developed in order to fake it and maintain the family's reputation. The Trotula was a compendium created in ancient Italy with writing credits given to a woman named Trota who taught at a medical school and was developed giving advice to girls to make their vagina appear unpenetrated. Part of the reason being able to fake one's virginity was important was because

due to Canon Law, a woman's virginity could be examined by women of good repute (McGrath 20).

The language during this era expanded immensely to include many words that apply to female virginity. Most of the words used were descriptive for women being dainty, precious, or something to protect (Kelly 33). The Online Etymology Dictionary provides the origin history of the terms described here. *Purity, chastity, chaste, maiden, flower,* and *virgin* were all terms that originated in the 1200s that meant a woman who has not been touched sexually. *Chaste* was specifically meant for unlawful sexual intercourse until the 15th century where it came to mean completely sexually pure. All but the word *maiden* were derived from Old French, while *maiden* was modified from Old Germanic language. Other terms for the sexually inexperienced women from the 14th century that were derived from Old French were *integrity, innocence, abstinence, continence, deflower,* and *virginity*. *Abstinence* is the only term more broadly used when not doing any acts, but sex was the most common act to abstain from. *Deflower* is also the only word that describes the loss of a woman's purity or virginity.

Other terms were found in the Oxford English Dictionary to have originated during the Middle Ages. One such term used for a woman's virginity was *gem*. As in *gem of chastity* or *gem of virtue* which rose in popularity in the late 13th century and was commonly used for about 400 years. Flowers were also commonly associated with women during the Middle Ages. To *attain the flower* means that a woman was at the height of their peak level of beauty. It's also an obsolete term for virginity in the 14th century. In the late 14th century, the *rose* became a common term for a woman of great beauty and the usage of the word with this definition only stopped being popular in the early 2000s. This language highlights the common theme of women needing to be cared for and men being the ones to protect them (Kelly 7).

### **Female virginity is important for securing the bloodline**

One of the most influential periods during the Early Modern Era in terms of sexuality expression of women is the Tudor period. The Tudor period lasted from 1485-1603 in England

and was the bridge between medieval times and the renaissance which impacted all Western society. The Roman Catholic Church kept strict rules around sex and sexuality from the medieval period through the Early Modern Period. According to the Church, marriage was the only way to control womanly sexual desires because women were seen to be the inferior version of men who were susceptible to sin (McGrath xi). The legal age for marriage was 12 for a girl and 14 for a boy. Although intercourse was considered to have to wait until the girl was 14 at least because of the dangers that are involved when being pregnant so young.

Another idea the Church had that shows how different the expression of sexuality was between men and women was that sex was acceptable for men to the point that abstinence was considered bad for them and they were encouraged to take mistresses. Sex was incredibly controlled in that it was decreed by the Roman Catholic Church for sex not to happen during certain times of year, during menstruation, during pregnancy, or while the woman was breastfeeding. This was enforced by the guilt people would feel for disobeying the Church and therefore also God, however many people disregarded the rules anyway at least behind closed doors. The effects on men being unable to have sex in their marriage were that he would be driven to commit heinous acts like rape. Men were encouraged to take mistresses in order to expel their seed which would corrupt them if left to sit for too long. Christianity in general was averse to sex as pleasure and play. The Roman Catholic Church believed that sex should only be for reproductive purposes. There was emphasis on women to be a helpmate to her husband after the Reformation operating as mother and domestic goddess. Protestantism was a branch of Christianity that broke away from the Roman Catholic Church when the disagreement over how to reach salvation emerged. Protestants rejected virginity as an ideal, but there was much criticism for women who were unfaithful or if a woman entered sexual relations before marriage - they gave into temptation and committed sinful acts (McGrath 6-7).

Female virginity was prized by both the woman's and suitor's families in Tudor society until marriage was imminent because the code of honor valued chastity and reputation



(McGrath 16). A man was expected to have gained sexual experience before marriage. A man's reputation relied on his experience while a woman's reputation relied on her inexperience. Marriage between families was only legitimate when consummated through sex (McGrath 14). The strictest standards of sexual behavior were imposed on women and enforced by all the legal, moral, and religious pressures society could impose. Women were seen as sexual property of men and they were worth more if they were chaste. One main reason why a woman's virginity was so important during this time period is the legitimacy of the couple's offspring. Men wanted to be sure that their wives were only pregnant with their legitimate heirs. The only way to ensure this at the time is if the woman is untouched prior to marriage. The ability for the property and assets owned by the family to pass from father to son was highly sought after (McGrath 39). There was great importance attached to the bride's virginal status though the marriage may have been consummated during the betrothal stage.

After the marriage night, to ensure the bride was a virgin, the sheets would be examined for blood. The sheet would then be displayed in some noble households as proof of virginity. This was known as the bloodied sheet test. In 1498, an Italian physician Michael Savonavola used the term hymen as a description of why the sheets should be bloodied after a woman's first time. The hymen was a membrane broken at the time of deflowering so blood flows, thus the myth of the hymen in regard to virginity was born (McGrath 19). The presence and type of blood flow was common to determine chastity in a woman. Humoral theory states that menstrual blood could be used to identify characteristics in women. A woman with heavy reddish menses would be most likely to be prudent and chaste while heavy flow of blue blood indicates inconsistency. Other types of blood flow may indicate a woman's good memory or inactive mind (McGrath 25). There were many physical characteristics of a woman that could determine specific attributes regarding their virginity. In determining the virginity status of women, there was a wide range of descriptive terms used.

Language around virginity didn't shift too much from the Middle Ages. There was a similar theme of female virginity being precious and something to protect while men were the protectors (McGrath 2). *Rose* and *gem* were two common descriptions that described a woman's virtue or beauty that came from being chaste (Oxford English Dictionary). From the Online Etymology Dictionary, *integrity* changed to mean more about something having a wholeness or being of a high moral character instead of being sexually pure in the 1540s. A new term that originated in the 1590s was *virtue* which meant chastity or sexual purity especially in women. Though there were few other terms that referred to virginity. To *assail* or *assault* someone meant laying siege to a body's chastity. *Whore* came from Old Norse which meant adulteress and is a term of abuse, stigmatizing female sexuality to provoke shame. In the 1200s, this was a way to reassert male sexual control and dominance over women because the label threatened a woman's value on the marriage market. *Maidenhead* was used to describe female virginity. *Treasure* was a term used to describe a woman's sexual zone, especially a virgin's sexual zone. Another phrase used was *virgin knot* which meant hymen (McGrath 136-139).

### **Sexuality acceptance warring with Purity Revolutions**

The modern era is the time period that started in 1750 and into present time. During this time period, ideas around sexuality in the Victorian era were still heavily influenced by the qualities of chivalry and purity from the medieval and Tudor eras. Public opinions have only shifted dramatically in the United States since the 1960s during the first sexual revolution. To combat this more open talk about sexuality, there were other movements that focused primarily on purity and the idea that saving oneself until marriage is the only correct way to have sex. The views specifically around female virginity haven't changed as much as might be expected even with the more open communication about sex. The reasons behind there being little change in the expression of female sexuality during the modern era aren't as unexpected. Male control

and dominance over female sexuality expression has been a recurring theme and seen as normal (Fenn 19).

The appearance of virginity and innocence were important values in the 19th century. Women and girls were property of their fathers then their husbands. Middle- and upper-class women were chaperoned so they wouldn't bring shame on their families by having sex before marriage. Girls had to save themselves for marriage. Being betrothed loosened the rules a bit in terms of intimacy since a betrothal is stating one's intentions to wed. However, that doesn't mean that they could have sex. If they did, and were either caught or became pregnant, then the woman's reputation would be in tatters (Fenn 19-20). Young ladies of the aristocratic classes would come out as debutantes around the age of 16 and spend the season parading and dancing while keeping an eye out for potential suitors who were most favorable if they had money or property. Girls were expected to find a husband within 3 of these seasons. If this didn't happen then they would bring shame to their families and become spinsters (Fenn 6-7). Until the Married Women's Property Act 1882, a new wife and her worldly goods became the property of her husband. Sex was seen as natural to being human but only privately was there a healthy and open-minded attitude towards it (Fenn 30-31).

Women were also expected to dress the role of innocent and pure in wearing multilayered gowns that covered every inch of their skin. An accidental sighting of bare skin was considered scandalous and could ruin the reputation of a woman and her family (Fenn 11). In terms of wedding attire, the white wedding dress became popular after Queen Victoria wore one for her wedding. The dress was originally more of a sign of wealth than purity because making white fabric to use was extremely expensive. The idea of white meaning purify didn't manifest until the mid-twentieth century in Europe and North America (Fenn 3).

Society in Western Europe and the United States became more obsessed with purity during the Victorian times and there were many movements that occurred promoting the idea of purity. In North America, Congress received a bill to create a national board of health in 1878

which scared purity reformers (Pivar 96). In 1885, the purity movement started out as a protest against prostitution and organizers would try to rehabilitate the prostitute into general life. The movement then changed in 1895 to desire more of a purification of society (Pivar 131). Starting in the 1900s, purity reformers changed North American attitudes towards sex by introducing the topic and attempting to educate while pushing for love over lust in relationships. From this shift in attitudes towards sex, other groups emerged that pushed for purity in the sense of abstaining from sex until marriage (Pivar 255).

The most recent Purity Revolution started in 1993 in the United States with the True Love Waits pledge which is a pledge that is a publicly spoken commitment for sexual abstinence until marriage. True Love Waits was supposed to address the negative emotional and moral consequences of premarital sex. Another pledge that originated in 1993 is the Silver Ring Thing where one wore a silver ring as a sign of commitment of virginity until marriage. In the 2000s, the political climate shifted in favor of faith groups looking to acquire funding whereas before funds were only offered if the faith was downplayed. Silver Ring Thing was awarded a total of \$1.4 million for 3 years. Both the True Love Waits and Silver Ring Thing pledges were frontrunners of the purity movement. They were able to influence so many people because in 1981, President Reagan signed into law the Adolescent Family Life Act which was a way to move federal funding away from comprehensive sex education because conservatives believed it was the cause of the high rates of teen pregnancy. The bill was actually passed as a political deal where liberals agreed to support it in exchange for conservative support for family-planning clinics. In 1996, a new draft of the bill was created which limited funding to abstinence-only education.

During the Bush administration, funding for abstinence-only education reached its peak where 33 groups received \$20 million in federal grant money. People are so invested in this idea of purity and virginity that they were willing to allot millions of dollars into promoting these ideals. Instead of only suppressing female sexuality, male sexuality is also suppressed with only

being taught to be abstinent instead of safe ways to have sex. Even so, within abstinence-only education male anatomy is covered in detail while female anatomy is barely touched on. There's a continued belief of female anatomy and sexuality being shameful or wrong (Orenstein 2, 76)). In 2008, the Obama administration restored funding for, while shifting political favor away from, supporting abstinence-only education (Moslener 109-119). Simultaneously, National Abstinence Education Association launched a \$1 million campaign called Parents for Truth to enlist 1 million parents to support abstinence-only education and Congress was debating whether to authorize \$190 million in federal abstinence funds. In 2009, almost half of the states refused federal funding for abstinence-only programs which limit the ability to talk about contraception (Valenti 118). Currently, abstinence-only education gets around \$100 million annually in federal funding (Valenti 32). By age 45, 99% of Americans will have had sex and 95% will have sex before marriage. However, teens are having sex a lot more responsibly than before and pregnancy rates have been dropping since the 1990s prior to funding for abstinence-only programs (Valenti 59).

*Celibacy* was a term from the 1660s that meant the state of being unmarried and willingly abstaining from marriage derived from Latin. Then, in the 19th century *celibacy* meant opposing marriage until the 1950s where it became used to express the voluntary absence from sexuality without referring to marriage (Online Etymology Dictionary). As the descriptive gem went out of slang for the value of a woman's virginity, *cherry* became popular. *Cherry* was originally used in the early 1890s as a gender-neutral term for virgin (Oxford English Dictionary). Again, the *cherry* was something to lose or be taken. Also *taking a cherry* transitioned to a more female term in 1928 by using the cherry to represent a woman's hymen and to say that one's cherry was popped (Online Etymology Dictionary). Another term that originated in the '80s is *v-card*. Which is a gender-neutral term for losing one's virginity. *V-card* is one of the slang terms for virginity still used today.

## Current Issues

Narratives of losing one's virginity are typically comprised of four elements. First, describing one's partner and analyzing their feelings towards them. Second, describing the place and the time the intercourse took place. Third, a description of the act itself. Finally, a discussion of what was learned from this experience. (Kelly 125). Surprisingly, despite how taboo the talk of sex is in society, people want to talk about it and talk about it often. When Orenstein conducted interviews with both girls and boys, they both equally wanted to share their stories. The diversity in which people were interviewed by Orenstein was vast. For the girls, they were from all over, from different religious and political backgrounds; the majority were white but there were also many other races; some were in the LGBTQIA+ community; most were from upper-middle class families though some were from other economic backgrounds; all of them were either in college or college bound (Orenstein 2, 4). The boys had a similar range of diversity as the girls who were interviewed. Some were under the LGBTQIA+ umbrella; had a range of race, religious backgrounds, and economic backgrounds (Orenstein 1, 4). All who were interviewed volunteered to tell their stories. The difference was that the girls didn't need a lot of directed questions and just wanted to talk about their experiences with someone who would listen (Orenstein 2, 4). With boys on the other hand, while they also wanted to talk about their stories, it was clear that they had less of a support system to do so. The women in the boys' lives were the most commonly named confidants which reinforces this idea that women are responsible for all emotional labor (Orenstein 1, 17). Another interesting difference in the stories of these two sexes is that most girls wish that they had waited instead of having sex so early and were sexually active in the sense of having oral sex or anything other than full intercourse while considering themselves virgins and having full intercourse was still a huge milestone. Some of the guys did express regret for having sex when they did, but most of the time losing their virginity was just a way to be more popular in their friend groups. It was seen as a good thing to lose it as soon as possible (Orenstein 2, 77).

Nearly two-thirds of teenagers have sexual intercourse at least once before college and the average age for virginity loss in America is 17 (Orenstein 2, 77). The problem is that people panic about losing their virginity before college and have bad experiences because they fear the potential to be seen as inexperienced or too ugly to find a partner. Also due to the stigma around the topic of sex, it's not talked about nearly enough and that leads to an overestimation of how much peers have sex. There's also four main ways that people relate to virginity. One way is that virginity is a gift and their first time is overly romanticized. Another way is that it's a stigma, something to be more embarrassed about the closer high school graduation approaches. A third way that virginity is seen as is a process. The natural next step to growing up and existing as a rite of passage to adulthood. The last way that people relate to virginity is not only that it's a gift, but one specifically for God which is a reason to be abstinent until marriage. What all these views have in common when thinking about virginity is that having sex for the first time would be a life-changing experience. The veil will be lifted, and eyes opened to a new realm of possibilities. Which isn't true. Having sex for the first time is one of the least sexual and smooth processes done. It could be bonding and be a way to be intimate with someone, but it's also awkward and not like the movies. (Orenstein 2, 78-83).

Lies about virginity or virginity loss exist as a way to exert control over a particular group of people. Mainly young women are affected in that their perception of themselves becomes inextricable from their bodies and being a moral agent is dependent on their sexuality (Valenti 9). No one, not even the medical books at Harvard know what a virgin is (Valenti 11). People are even able to reinstate their virginity status if they decide to choose abstinence until marriage even if they've had sex previously which shows how arbitrary the definition of virgin is (Orenstein 2, 78). The virginity movement included many actions where a woman's worth was directly tied to her sexuality (Valenti 176). A woman's identity is so tied to whether they've had sex, that it's hard to be a woman outside of this context (Valenti 79). The "perfect virgin" is a woman who abstains from sex (Valenti 66).

Purity balls are organized by Christian churches mainly in the South and Midwest. Most who attend these events and sign pledges are girls who were raised in a Christian household, homeschooled, and sheltered from popular culture. There were boys who signed pledges too, about 10% of teen boys and 16% of girls in the United States have signed virginity pledges (Baumgardner 94). The main agenda of purity balls starting in 1998, was for fathers to vow to protect their daughters' chastity until marriage and for the daughters to promise to remain pure. They were also a way to set a standard of dignity and honor for how girls should be treated by the men in their lives. These balls are a part of the evangelical Christian movement and embody the key doctrine of abstinence until marriage. Protecting their purity has become a national concern, not just a familial one (Orenstein 2, 84).

Currently, South Dakota's Abstinence Clearinghouse sends out hundreds of purity ball planner booklets a year which include tips about printing vows on nice paper and serving wedding cake. The ball is seen as a date with Dad and establishes that he is the only man allowed in her life until she is courted for marriage. When it's time to take the pledge, the men stand over their daughters and recite a vow (sometimes exchanging rings) and then sign with their daughters as witnesses. When girls sign their virginity to their fathers, their sexuality is taken away until another contract overrides it, the marriage one. The whole concept is based on not letting girls grow up. They aren't allowed to explore or do anything in life that may cause them to be less pure (Baumgardner 93-99). Boys go to similar events with their mothers called integrity balls, but instead of pledging to be pure, they vow not to sully someone's daughter or future wife. Still showing that women's purity maintenance is up to men (Valenti 67). There is a lot of evidence that more than half the teens who take virginity pledges have sex within three years and 88% have sex before marriage (Baumgardner 100). Over 80% of purity ball pledgers by their twenties either deny or forgot that they pledged (Orenstein 2, 89).



## Conclusion

Throughout all periods of time in the West, there is a common theme of ownership and suppression of sexuality. Girls belong to their fathers and then their husbands. The act of transferring the property was a way to keep women from giving into temptation and their baser instincts of uncontrollable lust. That's another theme through time in Western culture. Women are slaves to their emotions and their sexual desire. The only way for women to have a valuable place in society was through marriage. During wedding ceremonies, the tradition is for fathers to walk their daughters down the aisle to pass them to their soon-to-be-husbands while they wear white to symbolize their pure status. In current times, this act is now seen as support from the fathers for the marriage and the white dress color is just tradition. However, there is the underlying action of passing from father to groom like property and the men in women's lives seem to control their sexuality still. Purity balls are a good example in which the men promise to protect their daughter's chastity and control female expression of sexuality. No matter how open conversations about experiences with sex have gotten in the last sixty years, there is still the idea that women need to be controlled sexually. Women who have sex outside of marriage are shamed by a vast number of people (mainly men) and women who refuse to have sex are called prudes by both men and women. The lines drawn for female sexuality are so blurred in terms of what is acceptable by society, that no matter what, women are shamed for having sex, being sexual, or not doing either.

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