

Affair

An affair, in current parlance, is a romantic engagement between two individuals—of either gender nowadays—whom the normal practices of their society frown on. It may be that one or both of the individuals is married, in which case they will, in theory anyway, have promised one another 'fidelity under god.' (The fine points of such commitments are no longer invariable, so that these grounds for frowning on our unfortunate couple—that they have broken their vows-- may well be shaky. It may of course also be a case of adolescent imprudence that has brought the young couple together. Such ultra common imprudence can have social consequences, and lead to every kind of social disapprobation. But usually, these days, the consequences are mild or less. The States and Western Europe no longer tolerate hyper sensitivity to these issues). That, though, does not complete the survey, of the kinds of opprobrium the affair may arouse. If one or both members of the 'unfortunate couple' is gay, there will be additional possibilities of critique or mutual defense added to the analysis of the relationship. We can find ourselves talking gender issues rather than romantic issues.

Keen sensitivity to the inviolability of marriage has had its day, but nevertheless it is still an issue today. From the barroom brawl to the parking lot shootout to virtually fatal teenager despair, a bad affair still draws plenty of blood. For vast numbers of the erotic, a stolen kiss, a secret night in a motel, a half misunderstood note or text message, any of these can set the mind to tingling and the body to twisting during the night. The stakes continue to be high in this erotic zone.

The olden days of chastity belts, bloody sheets at the window, and knights who would fight to the death to preserve a daughter's honor, those days are antiquated, but the issues generating them are not.