ROUTLEDGE ADVANCES IN FEMINIST STUDIES AND INTERSECTIONALITY

Masculinities and Literary Studies

Intersections and New Directions

Edited by
Josep M. Armengol,
Marta Bosch-Vilarrubias,
Àngels Carabí and
Teresa Requena-Pelegrí

ROUTLEDGE

Masculinities and Literary Studies

This volume explores the conjunction between masculinities and literary studies, revising some of the latest developments and new directions resulting from their intersection. If much of the existing masculinity scholarship has traditionally been grounded in a specific discipline, this study also provides an innovative methodological approach to the subject of literary masculinities by proving the applicability of the latest interdisciplinary masculinity scholarship—namely, sociology, social work, psychology, economics, political science, ecology, etc.—to the literary analysis, thus crossing the traditional boundary between the Social Sciences and the Humanities in new and profound ways. Presenting the latest advances in masculinity scholarship, this interdisciplinary book will appeal to gender and masculinity scholars from a wide variety of fields, including sociology and social work, psychology, philosophy, political science, and cultural and literary studies.

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Introduction

Traditionally, gender studies have generally focused on women. Politically, this is logical enough. It is women who have undergone the worst effects of gender discrimination, and so it is women who had to make gender visible as a political category for the first time. Nevertheless, gender studies have since the late 1980s started to pay increasing attention to men's lives as well, recognizing that the lives of women are inextricably linked to men's, and that men can, indeed should, actively participate in the struggle for gender equality if we are all to live better, happier lives (Kimmel and Messner 1–10). Over the last twenty years, then, gender studies have increasingly expanded to incorporate both women's studies and critical studies on men and masculinities. This has contributed to promoting a thriving interdisciplinary research on men and masculinities, which has given way to a fast-growing number of publications in the Social Sciences and the Humanities, including sociological, psychological, historical, anthropological, and cultural studies of masculinity, among others.

While the first studies of masculinities in the late 1980s stemmed from sociology and psychology, the field, as Michael Kimmel has argued, has since the late 1990s moved very influentially into the Humanities (16, 18), resulting in the recent publication of a growing number of studies on cultural representations of masculinity in literature, cinema, art, music, the media, and so forth. As part of this growing interest in cultural representations, a whole field has emerged that deals specifically with literary representations of masculinities. If, as Teresa de Lauretis has argued, "the representation of gender *is* (its) construction" (2), then there is no doubt that cultural representations play a key role in the social construction—and deconstruction—of masculinities. While the early feminist literary scholarship from the 1970s and 1980s focused on fictional representations of women and femininity, feminist criticism has since the 1990s expanded to include literary representations of masculinities as well, exploring depictions of male sexualities, the male body, fatherhood, friendship, and gender violence, among others.[1]

As more and more work is being done in the name of this ever-growing field of research, it seems necessary, therefore, to not only review its development and main contributions to the larger field of masculinity studies, but also to look at its latest advances and new directions. These are precisely the two main aims of the present volume, which, on the one hand, focuses on the intersections between

masculinity and literary studies while, on the other, explores some of the latest developments and new directions resulting from such intersections. Admittedly, there exist many books on masculinity studies theory. For example, Judith Gardiner's *Masculinity Studies and Feminist Theory: New Directions* (2002) focuses on the intersections between masculinity and feminist studies, as well as the new directions resulting thereof; Stephen Whitehead's *Men and Masculinities: Key Themes and New Directions* (2002) explores some of the latest sociological developments within the field; just as Todd W. Reeser's *Masculinities in Theory* (2010) offers a theoretical introduction to masculinity studies from the Humanities. Similarly, there is a wide variety of books on literary masculinities of different types and periods, including Berthold Schoene's *Writing Men: Literary Masculinities from Frankenstein to the New Man* (2000) (on British literature); Brian Baker's *Masculinity in Fiction and Film; Representing Men in Popular Genres, 1945–2000* (2006) (on popular fictions of masculinity, particularly pop novels and films); James Penner's *Pinks, Pansies, and Punks* (2010) (on masculinities in 1930s US American literature); Brenda M. Boyle's *Masculinity in Vietnam War Narratives* (2011); Stefan Horlacher's historical overview of *Constructions of Masculinity in British Literature from the Middle Ages to the Present* (2011); and Daniel Worden's *Masculine Style: The American West and Literary Modernism* (2013) (on masculinities in the genre of the US American West and its relationship to modernism), to name but a few. There is no work to date, however, that combines different disciplinary approaches to the topic of (fictional) masculinity in one single volume or, more specifically, that applies the existing interdisciplinary corpus of masculinity studies to literary analysis. If much of the existing masculinity scholarship has traditionally been grounded in a specific discipline, this project thus provides an innovative methodological approach to the subject of literary masculinities by proving the applicability of interdisciplinary masculinity perspectives—namely, sociology, social work, psychology, economics, political science, ecology, and so forth, to the literary analysis, bridging the traditional gap between the Social Sciences and the Humanities in radically new and profound ways. As a matter of fact, interconnecting both disciplines has been, for several years, a sustained academic goal of our research group "Constructing New Masculinities"—see *Debating Masculinity* (2009) and *Alternative Masculinities for a Changing World* (2014). Those intersections, which have emerged from the enriching debates with the renowned social scientists invited to the University of Barcelona (lectures available at http://www.ub.edu/masculinities), have given birth to his book. Inviting scholars from the Social Sciences to give seminars on topics that we considered "new directions" has extremely enriched and enlightened the analysis of literary masculinities. Thus, the six main sections of the book, each of which deals with what we see as some of the latest advances in masculinity scholarship, combine theoretical and literary discussions on the relationship between masculinities and the topics of ethnicity, transnationalism, age, affect, ecology, and capitalism, respectively. These sections are also followed by an epilogue, including the conversations and debates with masculinity scholars invited to the University of Barcelona. Throughout, the book shows not only the

usefulness of the interdisciplinary corpus of masculinity studies to the literary analysis, but also the relevance of literary texts to the social and political analysis of men and masculinities. The theoretical and literary discussions thus feed on each other. Not only is "the theory" of masculinity studies helpful—indeed, central—to the "practice" of literary criticism; literary texts themselves are shown to shed new light on some of the most pressing questions within current masculinity scholarship, revealing the deeper connections between social and literary models of men and masculinities.

The six parts cover six topics, and each part is in turn divided into two main sections. The introductory section offers an interdisciplinary perspective on the topic in question, including contributions by renowned masculinity scholars from the fields of English (Robert Reid-Pharr), social theory (Jeff Hearn), psychology (Lynne Segal), cultural and literary studies (Todd W. Reeser), ecology (Stefan Brandt), and political science (Penny Griffin). These introductory sections are each followed by literary chapters on the same topics, focusing on representations of masculinities in US literature. These chapters cover a wide variety of authors and texts, ranging from Herman Melville to Ralph Waldo Emerson to Martin Amis to Toni Morrison to contemporary Arab American women authors, among others. While being aware of the differences between "reality" and "fiction," we focus on (US) literary representations of masculinity not only because of our academic background but also, and above all, because we do firmly believe that, though far from being a "case study" or a "recipe," literature, as Nobel Prize–winning writer Toni Morrison suggested, usually has "something in it that enlightens, something in it that opens the door and points the way" (qtd. in Evans 341), the wide variety and psychological complexity of literary characters proving particularly useful to rethink men and masculinities in new and profound ways.

Thus, Part I, "Rethinking Ethnic Masculinities," opens with Robert Reid-Pharr's examination of the role of the Spanish-American War (1898) in the construction of the "New Negro," whose African American masculine identity was built upon the rhetoric of patriotism, masculinism, and militarism. Through a socio-historical analysis, Reid-Pharr argues that despite the war being another colonial effort to dominate "colored" peoples, it also provided black men with a chance to fight as citizens of the United States, thus paving the way for the articulation of what he labels "modern blackness." In the next chapter, Josep M. Armengol examines the intersections between masculinity and whiteness in Herman Melville's "Benito Cereno" (1855). He shows how the application of whiteness studies to this classic novella can shed new light on its representations of masculinity. The next chapter, by Barbara Ozieblo, problematizes the relationship of gender and ethnicity in the US American theatre and shows how some dramatists, especially women dramatists, free themselves from the rigid barriers of gender and/or ethnicity. As a consequence, Ozieblo argues that the gendered or ethnic classification of playwrights—male, female, white, colored, and so forth, has lost its usefulness in contemporary theatre.

Part II, "Transnational Masculinities," opens with the sociologist Jeff Hearn interrogating the role of the national in the creation and perpetuation of specific

models of masculinity, the concept of glocalization, and the notion of transnationalization. Hearn discusses how a close examination and problematization of these aspects can de-construct hegemonic masculinity and create new models of manhood that can eventually lead to more gender-egalitarian societies. As for the literary analysis, Aishih Wehbe-Herrera explores the models of masculinities in the works of the Dominican-Republican author Junot Diaz. Wehbe-Herrera contends that Diaz's reputed novel, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007), problematizes the inflexibility of hegemonic masculinity and shows how patriarchal models have become obsolete in times of transnationalism. The following article, by Marta Bosch-Vilarrubias, explores the new directions in the representations of post-9/11 Arab masculinities written by women. She argues that after 9/11, Arab American female writers are trying to both counteract the image of Arab men as terrorists and also present more gender-egalitarian models of masculinity.

In Part III, "The Ages of Men," Lynne Segal discusses how frightened we are of becoming old and how, for men, the fear of growing old is usually encoded as feminine. Men feel they become fragile, more like women, in their older age because of the loss of physical strength and deterioration of their health, especially if it supposes an erectile dysfunction. Segal centers her analysis on the writer Martin Amis and his London trilogy to explore the obsessive images of manly decline, bodily decay and mortality, and to show how his anguish over his own aging drives him to see the decay in everything around him. Amis's writing, Segal argues, captures some aspects of men's fears around aging. Shifting the focus to a much earlier life period, Mar Gallego argues that the expanding social studies of childhood and boyhood have not yet engaged deeply with gender studies, and that there is a need to foster a dialogue between life course studies and the studies of masculinities. To analyze the ways masculinities are defined and negotiated in their way to full manhood, Gallego explores male childhood in Richard Linklater's celebrated film *Boyhood* (2014), black boyhood in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970) and *Home* (2008). For her part, Sara Martín analyzes, from the point of view of class and masculinity, the imaginary friendship between an aged gay man and his much younger US American gardener in Christopher Bram's novel, *Father of Frankenstein* (1995). In doing so, Martín offers an exploration into aging gay masculinities in fiction, a trend of study that has been, as she argues, underanalyzed.

Part IV, "Masculinities and Affect," initiates the discussion of affective masculinities with Todd W. Reeser theorizing how affect, by being pre-linguistic, can deconstruct normative masculinity. Following the work of Deleuze, Guattari, and Massumi, he examines examples of popular culture such as the US American TV series *Louie* (2010–), the Australian novel *The Slap* (2008), and the viral video "First Kiss" (2014), and explores how affect can create and assert non-hegemonic models of masculinity. In the next chapter, Katarzyna Paszkiewicz interrogates the relationship between affect theory and embodied spectatorship in the book *Dispatches* (1977) by Michael Herr, and two films, *The Thin Red Line* (1998) by Terrence Malick and *The Hurt Locker* (2008) by Kathryn Bigelow. Paszkiewicz contends that these works provide a somatic experience

of combat in ways that undermine the more traditional representation of Western heroic masculinity.

Part V, "Eco-masculinities," includes Stefan Brandt exploring the aesthetic interaction of masculinity and environment. Following Donna Haraway's conceptualization of feminist theory as a "reinvented coyote discourse" (1988), and Hubert Zapf's observations regarding the sensory function of literary texts as "cultural ecology" (2002), Brandt discusses the effects of nature in masculinity in various nineteenth-century novels. Following this line, Teresa Requena-Pelegrí intertwines the fields of environmental humanities with the analysis of masculinities. In doing so, she explores the role of the affective state of caring in the construction of masculinities theorized by Puig, and analyzes its role in the literary works of Wells Tower and Scott Russell Sanders.

In Part VI, "Masculinities and/in Capitalism," Penny Griffin argues that ideas about men and masculinities have long shaped perceptions (and embodiments) of economic life, but the ways in which masculinities and economic practices interact across areas and experiences often remain unclear, if not purposefully obscured. Her chapter outlines the masculinized shape of key configurations of contemporary capitalism, focusing on three areas in particular: the global financial architecture, the financial discourse, and the global financial services industry. The article seeks to understand how the expansion of Western-style financial capitalism has depended on, but also camouflaged, the masculinized and ethnocentric model of human activity on which it has been built. In the following chapter, David Leverenz argues that the rise of US and world capitalism required the expansion of slavery, as new histories by Edward Baptist, Walter Johnson, Michael O'Malley, and Sven Beckert establish. While suggesting new directions on the analysis of masculinities related to capitalism, Leverenz draws on Karl Marx, Thomas Piketty, and Ryant Avent to explore how, long after slavery disappeared, capitalism continues to create worldwide inequalities, how it is affecting middle class stability, and how it undermines a primary manly prop: the labor theory of value. Finally, Mercè Cuenca interrogates the particulars of the development of masculinity within a capitalist scenario and explores, in the Pulitzer Prize–winning novel *The Goldfinch* (2013), by Donna Tartt, the ways Theodore Decker's conception of the value of money and material goods shifts over time, leading him to conclude that the commodification that characterizes life in the United States is irrelevant.

The six main sections are followed by an epilogue, which includes a number of conversations on "the new directions in masculinity studies" between renowned masculinity scholars, such as Robert Reid-Pharr, Jeff Hearn, Lynne Segal, Todd W. Reeser, Stefan Brandt, Michael Kimmel and the University of Barcelona-based research group CNM ("Constructing New Masculinities," http://www.ub.edu/masculinities). The epilogue functions as a conclusion to the book. The video *Masculinity Studies: New Directions. Selected Fragments* (http://www.ub.edu/ubtv/es/video/masculinity-studies-new-directions-selected-fragments), serves as a complement to the volume and includes selected fragments from the interview/lectures to and by the Social Sciences scholars mentioned earlier.

Note

1. The ever-growing bibliography on literary representations of masculinity is impressive and far too lengthy to quote here. For an updated list, see Michael Flood's section on "Cultural Representations" in his men's studies bibliography at http://mensbiblio.xyonline.net.

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Part I

Rethinking Ethnic Masculinities

1 The Negro Goes to War

Robert Reid-Pharr

I will begin with an altogether modest claim. The New Negro, the post-Reconstruction African American subject freed from the Gothic pastoralism of slavery and eager to demonstrate *his* independence, modernity, and cosmopolitanism, is a figure formed by dynamic structural forces that work together to produce an always contradictory, continually "in process," black subjectivity built upon rhetorics of patriotism, masculinism, and militarism that supported the idea of a noble, if highly restricted, black identity while continuing the very racialist and androcentric conceits that so marred—and mar—US culture. Or to state the matter a bit more simply, the New Negro was a product of war. African American participation in the US Civil War and the First World War was self-consciously understood as a spectacular demonstration of black patriotism and the fitness of blacks, particularly black men, for citizenship. Thus the New Negro was a figure produced not only in the salons, speakeasies, and recital halls of 1920s Harlem, but also in the United States' many theaters of martial conflict. This is hopefully an easy enough matter to accept and understand.

What is perhaps less obvious is the centrality of the Spanish-American War in this process. African American men knowingly used participation in the 1898 confrontation with Spain to construct and project an enduring image of a disciplined and indeed *militarized* black masculinity. In the process they at once resisted—and reiterated—the most noxious and intractable stereotypes of black cultural and biological inferiority. The prosecution of what was dubbed the "Splendid Little War," referring to the United States' relatively easy victory over the Spaniards, accomplished between the months of April and August with engagements in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and a remarkable naval victory in Manila, was self-consciously understood by President McKinley and other members of the American political elite as a necessary continuation of the United States' role as a specifically white Anglo-American country whose destiny was to dominate presumably backwards "colored" peoples in both the Atlantic and the Pacific.[1]

It takes no great stretch of intellect or imagination to understand that with the acquisition of Alaska with its largely aboriginal population in 1867; the consolidation of the United States' influence in Latin America, home to huge communities of blacks, Indians, mulattoes, and *mestizos*; the annexation of Hawai'i in 1894; the near total domination of the Cuban economy and its foreign policy after the

enactment of the Platt Amendment; and the occupation of the Philippines until the country's independence in 1946, American "republicans" had little trouble understanding and announcing themselves as the prophets of white supremacy and colonization.[2]

What gives pause, however—what stuns the less than romantic student of African American history and culture, is the fact that 1898 was also a key moment in the articulation of what one might think of as "modern blackness," a post-slavery, "New Negro" aesthetic, in which black individuals utilized the mechanics of war to proclaim an African American avant-garde. Taking place only two years after the Supreme Court's infamous *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, which initiated more than five decades of state-sponsored, federally supported racial segregation, the Spanish-American War provided a number of key opportunities for African American soldiers and the communities they represented. As Willard B. Gatewood rightly notes, the war gave many black men their first opportunity to fight for the United States as citizens of the republic. The larger-than-life image of the black in uniform, eager to risk his all in the service of country, would presumably blunt the viciousness of increasingly hostile whites against their black compatriots. Barring that, the "colored" nations of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines could provide key outlets for ambitious young blacks eager to advance in business and the professions (Gatewood). "I may visit the United States now and then," wrote African American physician and soldier, W. C. Warmsley, to the Washington, DC, *Bee*, "gaze once more upon the monument . . . visit the Capitol Building and White House, converse with my many friends and acquaintances and again enjoy their proverbial hospitality, but to make the States my home, never!" (qtd. in Gatewood 231).

For black soldiers, participation in the war involved a set of complex negotiations among competing ideologies of gender, race, and nation. As Warmsley noted, enlisting in the Ninth Infantry and practicing his trade in the relative comfort of eastern Cuba provided a means of at least partial escape from the racial terror of the United States. What I would add to this commentary, however, is the fact that this form of martial escape was absolutely necessary to the production of the idea of the New Negro. Indeed as I have argued already, the post-slavery, African American individual confident in *his* citizenship was a notion self-consciously fashioned in the crucible of war. It was an identity built upon a negotiation with (if not exactly a refusal of) the systematic violence practiced at all levels of American society against black people.

As many African American intellectuals recognized—including many of W. C. Warmsley's fellow soldiers—the United States' incursions into both Cuba and especially the Philippines were largely motivated by the very rabid white supremacy that stood at the heart of the *Plessy* decision.[3] The route that took the physician from Washington, DC, to Santiago was one that meandered through some of the stranger peculiarities of American style racialism. Dr. Warmsley was a member of one of the four all-black "immune units" (the seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth volunteer infantries), a subset of ten regiments composed of individuals thought to be immune to yellow fever because of previous exposure (the whites) or innate

racial "qualities" (the blacks). It was only in these units, built upon the presumed physical peculiarity of the colored animal, that black officers were commissioned. The gate through which the African American soldier had to pass in order to gain his ostensible liberation was one consecrated to the unremitting belief in his biological inferiority (Gatewood 10–11).

At the same time I want to remain focused on the fact that this process involved the self-conscious manipulation of both ideologies of race *and* gender. If you accept my assertion that the soldiers of the Spanish-American War helped to establish the original template for the so-called New Negro, then it is also important to remember that this newly established self-confident black identity was produced in relation to forms of sociality dependent upon ostentatious retreats from the domestic and the female. The New Negro gained his Manhood "out there," gun in hand, the clumsiness of American-style race and gender norms thrown by the wayside in favor of the modern modes of subjectivity for which the black subject presumably yearned.

In making this point, I would warn against assuming that what was on display in the black immune units was simply the continuation of ancient forms of racial antipathy that originated in slavery. On the contrary, both Dr. Warmsley and his white interlocutors were specifically modern. The segregation that he suffered was much more a product of the twentieth century than the nineteenth. The *Plessy* decision represented the Court's attempt to rationalize the hodgepodge of law and custom surrounding race in the United States by settling the matter of where a black began and a white ended through rigorous application of the so-called One-Drop Rule. Part of what segregation produced for blacks was an ability to disestablish the idea that somehow African Americans were nothing more than bastards of an (interracial) American family. Extremely light-skinned Homer Plessy had the vexing question of his genealogy settled by the Supreme Court. He was no longer a creole existing on a continuum between black and white, but instead a (new) Negro, an individual with the potential to establish alternative accounts of his proper relation to the national. In one fell swoop the Court helped to establish the white supremacist protocols that still dominate American society while releasing Negro citizens from having to confront complicated questions of primogeniture and paternity. Black men's military service represented a settling of accounts. The disequilibrium of the phrase "mama's baby, papa's maybe" was jettisoned in favor of the bold articulation of a newly established (and indeed war-hardened) black patriarchy, a subjectivity cleansed of the taint of boundarylessness, the shame of the masters' largesse.

Though many of the African American men who participated in the Spanish-American War were volunteers, a significant portion were black regulars drawn from the four regiments established immediately after the Civil War: the 24th and 25th Infantries and the 9th and 10th Cavalries. These men had previously been stationed in the western territories and were utilized heavily in the wars of Indian removal, as prior to 1898 military policy did not permit African American soldiers to carry weapons east of the Mississippi River. Commanded entirely by white officers, these soldiers, especially the cavalrymen collectively known as the

Buffalo Soldiers, developed reputations as fiercely effective fighters. What I want to warn against, however, is moving too quickly away from the difficulties inherent when one attempts to hold both the enviable reputation of the soldiers and the assumption that they were ill-prepared to act as officers in the same sentences. Instead I would suggest that the one follows logically from the other. It is the black soldier's modernity, not his primitivism, that establishes him as at once a talented fighter and a disabled intellect. Severed from the pastoralism that defined enslavement, he became something altogether new, a figure not yet become a subject, a living being permanently cut off from its roots and thus unencumbered by profundities of will or complexities of intellect. The usefulness of the freedman, at least once he was dressed in khaki and blue, operated in direct relation to the fact that he had been left over, refused if you will, thus made that much more available to the expansionist projects of the post-Civil War US government. As a consequence, his ferocity as a soldier stemmed in part from his ability literally to lose himself in the work he was called upon to do. He was dangerous not because he was an angry individual with a gun, but instead because there was no clear distinction between man and weapon. Smoking metal and human flesh were fused into one entity, producing the very half man / half machine cyborg that continues to so confuse and fascinate (Haraway). Ask an American general, why send the blacks to confront the natives and one imagines his quick, undigested response as, "When confronted by a savage, send a monster."

Again, I will have been read incorrectly if my readers assume that what I am describing are forms of racialism that have long since gone out of favor. Instead linking the specific hostility to black soldiers with anxieties confronted by Americans as they witnessed their country undergo quick modernization, I am trying to establish the primary aesthetic/ideological modes that structure the basic gender and race protocols of American culture and indeed the whole of Western Humanism. The black stands at exactly the location at which the conceptual and ethical difficulties involved in maintaining the distinction between human and Man become most palpable. He is a subject whose lack of connection to his "native" land produces him as a potentially perfect modern, an individual freed from the enervating procedures and rhythms of traditional life. Even his much-maligned skin, the marker of not only his animality and barbarism, but also his lack of deep connection to the United States, operates both as the most disabling of encumbrances and a profoundly fruitful site of possibility. As the dark individual, even the dark individual with a rifle slung across his shoulders, can never represent America per se, he has the ability, the "freedom," to transplant himself, to establish connections where presumably none previously existed:

> We are up here in the mountains, where you can hear or see nothing but wild Caribous, deer and ponies. We eat both the deer and Caribous, but not the ponies; we haven't come to eating horseflesh yet. This is a fine little place. The people up here are different from the other Natives. They are called Negritos. They don't wear any clothes but a gee-string and are strung from head to foot with brass band. They don't understand anything. They carry a

> knife called a bolo, and are a very mean people. They live on rice and dried fish. They are ruled by a president. They never stay in their huts at night, but go into the mountains, returning about 4 o'clock in the morning. They make fine cigars. You can get about fifty for four clackers, which equals one cent in our money. The government has about 400 working the road between here and San Jose and pay them $1 a week and their chow-chow; and they eat every hour. The soldiers are all doing well. They would have better health if they would let that beno alone. It is a drink that the Filipinos make. Poco Tempo [sic]. Tell my friends that I am just the same as a Filipino.
>
> (qtd. in Gatewood 276–7)

This outstanding note, written from the Philippines by Edward Brown to the *Recorder* of Indianapolis, suggests a level of ontic flexibility and playfulness that is most often associated with experiments by self-consciously post-modern intellectuals. That Brown encounters his own half-naked, knife-carrying, hardworking, cigar-smoking, and mean-spirited doppelgangers, the Negritos, forces the soldier to reconsider where he stands within the particular chain of being that he describes. The people whom Brown met, properly referred to in the Philippines as Agta, are small, dark-skinned persons who can still be found in isolated communities throughout Southeast Asia. Given the name Negritos (little blacks) by early Spanish explorers, it is not entirely clear whether they are direct descendants of the earliest humans or the remnants of nomadic African communities. In any case, the discursive structures that Brown utilizes to describe the community that he encounters were wholly overdetermined by the history of slavery and colonization of which his expedition to the Philippines was a part. That Spanish explorers and colonists assumed that the Agta were recently arrived Africans spoke to the stunning breadth and complexity of the colonialist project. The presence of the Negritos reinforced aesthetic practices developed in the crucibles of Spanish—and American—colonization and slavery. A Spanish explorer encountering Negritos in the Philippines was confirmed in the assumptions of human fungibility that lie at the center of colonialism. The little blacks of the Philippines, the little blacks of Africa, and the little blacks of the Americas are all one and the same.

This begs the question of the African American solider, ostensible agent of American modernity, as he is invited to regard with amusement and disdain people who are snarlingly referred to as "little blacks." I would remind you of the brief military history that I sketched earlier. Brown was a member of the regular army, the 24th Infantry, a regiment that, stationed in the American West, regularly engaged native peoples in combat before they were deployed to fight in Cuba in 1898. The following year they were called upon to fight against insurrectionists in the Philippines. Tellingly, the Agta were not widely represented as fighters in the Filipino struggle for national independence. For American soldiers the presence of these people represented a strange and comical exception to the complexities of geopolitics and statecraft of which they were a part. "The people up here are different from the other Natives," Brown writes. Their food, their dress, their conceptions of time all mark the Agta as aloof individuals living a presumably archaic

existence not unlike the aboriginal people of the western plains. As such they became (much like the African American community) a sort of perfect resource, providing nearly free supplies of cigars and labor remunerated only by $1 a week and regular "chow-chow." When Brown announces that he is "just the same as a Filipino," one must ask, "Which Filipino?" Is he a "Negrito," a primitive subject only vaguely aware of the complex negotiations of power taking place all around him, or is he just as sophisticated as the insurgents who have developed gorgeously effective methods by which to rob him of his life? In a sense Brown's shock and amusement upon encountering the Agta was based in the fact that, though defeated, these people could not be said to be "compromised." Their reactions to Spanish and American colonialism did not involve taking up "the master's tools," those guns attached to mahogany-colored, khaki-covered shoulders. Unlike their Negro American counterparts they could hardly be understood to be modern or new. Brown names no clearly discernible individual among the Agta. Instead the Negritos remain as one indistinguishable mass. They are (human) beings not yet become Men. Ostentatious in their nakedness, they lack not only class, race, and gender, but also the protocols of violence that underwrite the structures of so-called Western modernity.

The reactions of black soldiers to their experiences in the Spanish-American War are clear examples of the "camp thinking" about which Paul Gilroy warns us in his 2002 work, *Against Race*.[4] Of the many significant claims made by Gilroy, one of the most important is the idea that the public sphere is deeply marred by our overreliance on martial models of sociality in which various "racial" communities, "camps," are inevitably figured as ancient and bitter rivals. While I find this idea wholly convincing, I would push against Gilroy's tendency in *Against Race* to overvalue narratives of fascism and what he names "raciology" that take the Second World War and its aftermath as not simply key, but in a sense, elemental. Camp thinking has an extremely complex history in the United States, Spain, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines that predates the struggle against the Axis powers. Thus I resist deployment of the term "fascism," to the extent that it presupposes a distinction, clear or otherwise, between slavery, colonization, forced migration, and the atrocities committed by Germany, Italy, Japan, and their allies. There is no way to dismantle racial peculiarity that does not involve careful attention to the specificities of the manner in which racialism and nationalist militancy have become intertwined in our most precious notions of national culture. Hastily produced propaganda notwithstanding, the African American soldiers fighting in the theaters of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines could not be said to be generic "Americans." No such creature exists. Instead their very presence forced a remodulation of what we might think of as hegemonic camp mentality. Our critique must involve then not only a return to—and expansion of—local archives, but also a recommitment to nuanced analyses that eschew overreliance on rhetorics of sophistication and cosmopolitanism that all too often remain unself-consciously enmeshed in Anglo-American parochialism.

What the African American soldiers, both regulars and volunteers, most readily confronted as they set sail for Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines was the

starkness of the ontological choices they were offered. One must leave America as either Negro or Negrito, establish oneself as a Man, a New Negro willing to carry a gun and use it or an unwitting target viewed through a rifle's scope. We begin to see the contours of a fascination on the part of many African American intellectuals with the ways that Spanish aesthetic practices resonate so profoundly with just this dilemma, with these intensely difficult questions concerning the nature of human subjectivity. In our nobility, vulnerable as the caribou, we were half-naked and ignorant, eating rice, dried fish, and the occasional deer. We wanted nothing more than our knives and cigars. The sour-visaged angels of history had not yet turned their faces in our direction. In our maturity we are dressed in the raiment of militants, the guns in our hands intricately notched, detailing the unrelieved spilling of ancestral blood. The Spaniards remind us of us. The staccato rhythms of their singing, the uneven proportions of their art, bespeak a people used to speaking multiple languages at once. It was inevitable that some of us would eventually find our way to the peninsula itself. Whether our hands were empty or loaded with deadly metal, we had scores to settle.

Notes

1. For a very useful treatment of the racialist and white supremacist impulses compelling the Spanish-American War, see Nell Irvin Painter, "The White Man's Burden."
2. Between 1898 and 1919 the US military invaded not only Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines, but also Mexico, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua.
3. The *Plessy* decision was part of a group of racialist decisions by the Court designed to ratify the country's developing status as an imperial power while guarding against the threat of racial mixture. I specifically have in mind the series of Supreme Court decisions regarding the political status of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines as "foreign in a domestic sense." There are a fair number of works that treat this matter in depth. Among the best are Christina Duffy Burnett and Burke Marshall. See also Amy Kaplan.
4. Tellingly, the work was published in the United Kingdom in 2000 as *Between Camps*.

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2 Revisiting Masculinities from Whiteness Studies

Herman Melville's "Benito Cereno"

Josep M. Armengol

While scholarship is beginning to acknowledge the relevance of race to Melville's oeuvre, most of the existing studies on Melville's racial views have traditionally focused on his characters of color.[1] Furthermore, whiteness studies have tended to concentrate on his best-known novel, *Moby-Dick*,[2] thus neglecting the relevance of the subject to other texts. In this sense, then, the present chapter, on Melville's radical revision of the assumption of white supremacy in "Benito Cereno" (1855), will contribute to expanding the innovative takes on Melville and race, proving how Captain Delano's assumption of white superiority ultimately rests upon the antebellum definition of American manhood as free and nonenslaved. Following the dominant ideology of his times, Delano does indeed seem to keep in place the distinction between, on the one hand, independent entities—particularly white men—and, on the other, dependent entities—including children, servants, women, and slaves. Drawing on previous work on the correlation between whiteness and manhood in the nineteenth century (Sale; Dyer; Roediger; Frankenberg; McIntosh; Van Tassel), this chapter will thus focus on illustrating Captain Delano's feminization of blacks throughout the story, who, like women, are objectified as dependent, infantile, docile, simplistic, emotional, and sensuous. Despite their seeming dependency and feminization, however, the black slaves in "Benito Cereno," commanded by Babo, are in fact determined to reclaim their freedom (i.e., their manhood), which Delano must finally recognize, even if only as a threat. My argument rests on the assumption, therefore, that Melville's critique of white racism is part and parcel of his critique of traditional masculinity. After all, his portrayal of Babo as a particularly intelligent and brave slave inevitably calls into question the white male fantasy about black men as inferior and feminized, thus revealing, as we shall see, its internal ambivalence. Ultimately, I argue that Melville's story skillfully anatomizes, and critiques, both the white supremacist and patriarchal discourses of his time, highlighting their interdependence and, above all, their inevitable fissures and contradictions.

As is known, much of Herman Melville's "Benito Cereno" deals with Captain Amasa Delano's inability to see the slave rebellion aboard the *San Dominick*, as his "singularly undistrustful good nature" ("Benito" 131–5) keeps preventing him from even imagining the mutiny that has taken place on the Spanish vessel. Nor can he possibly conceive that Don Benito, the Spanish captain, is no longer

in charge of the *San Dominick* and has been imprisoned by Babo, his (apparent) servant, and the other black slaves, who now command the ship. For much of the book Delano thus remains oblivious to Babo's plot, even though the text spills with suggestions of rebellion, ranging from Cereno's saturnine mood to the strange behavior of Babo and the other slaves. The question, then, becomes why he fails to interpret the obvious signals given out by both Cereno and the slaves. Or, to put it differently, why does he read these signals in the *wrong* way? The answer to these questions, I believe, is inextricably linked to two different albeit interrelated factors—namely, Captain Delano's assumption of white supremacy (with his parallel view of blacks as inferior and, therefore, submissive) and the African slaves' "acting" based on the use of this very assumption to gain their own ends. These two strategies deployed by master and slaves, respectively, go hand in hand and feed on each other.

Captain Delano's racial views, then, rest on the "commonsense" assumption of white supremacy—and black inferiority—and, therefore, on the impossibility of organized black action, let alone insurrection. Delano's "republican" manhood, as Dana N. Nelson has called it, relies on an imagined "fraternity" or affiliation with other men such as Don Benito, "white" and propertied, who are assumed to hold power over groups of people, "the power to objectify, to identify, to manage" (Nelson 3).[3] In "Benito Cereno," Delano's view of white supremacy (and hence black inferiority) as "natural" becomes manifest from the start. Thus, as soon as the American captain boards the *San Dominick*, he criticizes the Africans' physical appearance, particularly their "unsophisticated" aspect and "small stature," before going on to celebrate their qualities as docile and servile creatures. In particular, Babo's subservience is explicitly connected by Delano to the slave's allegedly inferior intellectual capacity and skills, his "docility arising from the uninspiring contentment of a limited mind" ("Benito" 136, 137, 171). While briefly suspecting Don Benito of complicity with the blacks, Delano will soon be reassured of the unfeasibility of such a notion, since the blacks were "too stupid" whereas the whites were, "by nature, the shrewder race" ("Benito" 162–3).

In "Representing Whiteness in the Black Imagination," an insightful study on the perception of whites by blacks, bell hooks provocatively argued that while whiteness has often existed without knowledge of blackness (even as it collectively asserts control over black people), blacks have always observed whites and have been curious about them. Indeed, the (white) assumption that black people lack a critical "ethnographic" gaze is itself, according to hooks, an expression of racism. In her words, "racist thinking perpetuates the fantasy that the Other who is subjugated, who is subhuman, lacks the ability to comprehend, to understand, to see the working of the powerful" (168). In white supremacist society, white people can rest assured that they are "invisible" to black people since whites have been accorded the power to control the black gaze. As a result of slavery and racial apartheid, blacks were thus been compelled to assume "the mantle of invisibility" so that they could be "less threatening" servants. Indeed, black slaves could be brutally punished for appearing to observe the whites they were serving, since to look directly was an assertion of subjectivity and equality. "Reduced to the

machinery of bodily physical labor," hooks elaborates, "black people learned to appear before whites as though they were zombies, cultivating the habit of casting the gaze downward so as not to appear uppity" (168).

No wonder, then, that Delano can only look at Babo, Don Benito's (apparent) "servant," as an example of (black) docility and servility. Repeatedly judging by appearances, he is reassured of Don Benito's "control" over his servant by the difference in dress, "denoting their relative positions." Rather than Don Benito's slave, he is defined by Delano as the Spaniard's most "devoted companion" ("Benito" 143, 140, 137). Similarly, upon seeing several (white) sailors being "assisted" by black slaves seemingly performing "inferior" ("Benito" 159) functions, Delano fails to realize that the blacks are in reality guarding the whites. Moreover, the fight between a black slave and his white companion, which results in the former injuring the latter with a knife, Delano puts down to the Spanish captain's eroded authority as a result of his evident physical and mental deterioration, which seems to have transformed him into "a pale invalid." Clearly, then, Delano keeps misreading what he himself defines as "significant symbols" of the role reversal that is taking place between master and slaves ("Benito" 149).[4]

If Melville thus shows the effects of racism on the racists themselves, who are blinded from reality by their own white fantasies of "the Other," I believe the story also illustrates the inseparability of gender and race, showing how Captain Delano's assumption of white supremacy is part and parcel of his assumption of (white) masculine hegemony. It must not be forgotten, in this respect, that throughout much of the nineteenth century American society classified both (white) women and (black) slaves as "dependent" beings, a "moral economy of dependency" between "master" and "servant" determining both the institution of slavery and the patriarchal family. The Southern version of domesticity, as Van Tassel insists, helped Southern slaveholders articulate a patriarchal vision of slavery based on the "support for labor" ideology, which was nothing but a reflection of the usual domestic relations between husband and wife in the nineteenth century (152–3). It is no wonder, then, that most of the arguments for the abolition of slavery connected racism and patriarchal oppression, with numerous collaborations between abolitionism and feminism in the mid-nineteenth century.[5] Indeed, the oppression of black men, as Richard Dyer has argued, constantly put them into "feminine" positions, placing them "structurally" in the same positions as women (112).

Such ideas are important, I believe, because Captain Delano's belief in white supremacy is, in reality, synonymous with his assumption of hegemony as a white *male*, which leads him to stereotype black slaves as inferior but also, as we shall see, as dependent, submissive and, therefore, as inevitably "feminized." Drawing on the (racialized) gender prejudices of the time, Delano does actually appear to feminize Babo from the start, his description of the African slave resembling in every aspect that of the ideally submissive and docile nineteenth-century wife. Just as women in nineteenth-century America had been traditionally defined as intellectually inferior and morally subservient beings whose primary (indeed only) function was to act as men's foundation and support, so is Babo recurrently feminized, too. Therefore rather than Don Benito's slave, Delano sees Babo as

the Spaniard's "devoted *companion*," a faithful and obedient confidant who, like a traditional wife, is equally eager to please and to serve. As a result, Delano can only accept Don Benito's "*weakness* for Negroes," particularly Babo, who, he insists, may be treated "with *familiar* trust" ("Benito" 172, 137; emphasis added). According to Delano, it is black man, rather than woman, who is famous for making "the most pleasing *body* servant in the world," which seems to be confirmed by Babo combing his master's hair "as a *nurse* does a child's," with Don Benito relying throughout upon his servant's "*tasteful* hands" ("Benito" 137, 176; emphasis added). Indeed, Delano becomes so envious of the "beauty of that relationship" between Don Benito and his confidant that he tries to buy Babo from Cereno for fifty doubloons, even though the slave boasts that his master would not part with him "for a thousand doubloons" ("Benito" 143, 157). It seems clear, then, that Babo is recurrently feminized by Delano, both literally and symbolically, throughout the novel. Delano not only applauds but also seems to feel a homoerotic affection for Babo, seeking to acquire him for his own "as a man might a wife" (Sale 158).

Paradoxically Babo uses the feminization of blacks as inferior and dependent beings to his advantage, playing the role of the emasculated black slave to gain his own ends. Of all the Africans, it is Babo who remains, arguably, the best actor when it comes to putting on a mask of "female" submissiveness to fool the whites. Like a "Nubian sculptor" ("Benito" 175), Babo, leader and creator of the plot, challenges—indeed, manipulates—white supremacist assumptions of the blacks' submissive and "feminine" nature for his own profit. This becomes nowhere clearer, perhaps, than during the shaving scene, wherein the Negro terrifies Don Benito in a reversal of power relations that goes totally unnoticed by Delano. While supposedly "shaving" (i.e., *serving*) Don Benito, Babo is actually *controlling* his master, threatening to cut his throat with the razor should he decide to give Delano any clues regarding the rebellion on board the *San Dominick*. Even as Delano thinks Babo is only a slave playing his "natural" role as a docile and submissive (i.e., *feminine*) body servant, Babo thus uses the traditional stereotype of the emasculated black slave to his own advantage, revealing black/female submissiveness itself as a charade. If what bell hooks has defined as "the mask of whiteness," the pretence, represents it as always "benign" and "benevolent" (176), rather than dangerous or threatening, Babo will himself put on what I will call "the mask of blackness" to appear as always happily submissive and subservient to whites. Only at the very end, "with mask torn away," will Delano come to realize that the "spectacle of fidelity" ("Benito" 143) between Babo and his master was indeed a spectacle, the slave/wife taking revenge on the master/husband, paradoxically enough, in the very act of obeying him. Undermining the supposedly natural relations of master and slave, Babo's "exaggerated fidelity" (Rogin 215) serves to mock the paternalism of not only master and slave but also of husband and wife, while Don Benito, who has lost the authority that his dress claims, is forced to play the part of master/husband while he is being manipulated by his slave/wife. By feigning docility and obedience, Babo not only reveals the relation of dependency between master and slave, as well as husband and wife, but also

subverts the performance of subordination usually enacted by both women and slaves in the nineteenth century. Cunningly, Babo plays at being innocent while all the while plotting how to overthrow the master. Just as the childlike mask protected the slave from the master, the enslaved rebel must put on "the mask" of black submissiveness, and hence *feminization*, since his deceptions are absolutely essential "to his survival and possible escape" (Jay 387).

It may be argued, then, that the slaves-turned-mutineers disguised as slaves aboard the *San Dominick* are in "virtual blackface" (Lott 234), as in a blackface minstrel show, performing for the white captain too blinkered to know better. So as to try to recover their freedom, the rebellious slaves feel obliged to put on "the mask of blackness," thus reassuring the blinded Delano of his own delusions. Indeed, the theatrical aspect of this may be more literal than has been usually recognized, for Babo seems to re-present the dominant role played by blacks in the popular theatre and literature of the late eighteenth century, that is, that of the docile and contented slave—childlike, illiterate, dependent and so, ultimately, *feminized*.[6] "Probably more whites—at least in the North—received their understanding of African-American culture from minstrel shows," as Delgado and Stefancic have argued, "than from first hand acquaintance with blacks" (171). Despite these potential threats, however, Delano never gives up relying on the assumption of white superiority and black submissiveness to reassure himself of his own safety, being "duped . . . more by his own perceptions than by the rebels' acting" (Sale 158).

From this it is no wonder that the Massachusetts Captain Amasa Delano, who, as in a minstrel show, had taken for granted the blacks' stupidity as well as their "natural" passivity and feminization, is absolutely amazed when, "now with scales dropped from his eyes," he sees what is actually going on, as it suddenly dawns on him that the African slaves, "with mask torn away," are not simply in misrule but rather "in ferocious piratical revolt" ("Benito" 188). Upon realizing this deception, however, Delano activates automatically his dualistic view of blacks, moving from the stereotype of black submissiveness and "femininity" to its opposite, that is, the image of blacks as savage, barbaric, and hypermasculine,[7] which George Fredrickson has rightly defined as the other side of the same coin. Indeed, while Southern whites wanted to believe that the slave was a Sambo or a "happy" child, they also feared that he might under some circumstances turn into a murderous savage. As an "unstable compound of opposites," some of the people who believed in black docility also insisted that loyalty and submissiveness were not inevitable African traits, but rather an "artificial creation of absolute white dominance and control" (Fredrickson 40). Ironically, if the image of the contented slave was used to justify slavery, the savage side of the stereotype was thus put to the same use, so as to prevent blacks from challenging white power.[8]

In this sense, it may be argued that Delano sees the insurrection as a disruption of the "natural" order, as murder of the Spaniards, and as usurpation of their legitimate authority and property, represented by the slaves' own bodies. So, the Africans' action, which Delano sees as calling for immediate suppression, appears to evince their intrinsic savagery, the rebellion of the heathen and uncivilized against

the government of a superior, civilized people. When the Africans' rebellion becomes obvious, Delano switches without apparent hesitation from assumptions of black submissiveness to black savagery. The key to understanding the white supremacist discourse in the United States, both during slavery and afterward, rests, as Fredrickson reminds us, on this "sharp and recurring contrast between the 'good Negro' *in his place* and the vicious black *out of it*" (44).

Despite Delano's binary view on blacks, however, which radically changes from images of benevolence to others of sheer brutality, it must not be forgotten that the *San Dominick* is a slave-trader, that the black people on board the ship have been enslaved by the Spaniards, and that the Africans' rebellion simply aims at sailing the ship back to their homeland so as to achieve their self-liberation. To put it differently, while Delano ends up concluding that the Africans are "evil" and wicked creatures, he fails to take into account that evil had originally been done to the enslaved rebels and that it is slave-trading, rather than slave mutiny, that is despicable, their deception constituting nothing but a strategy of self-defense. No wonder, then, that concurrent with Delano's discovery of the Africans' rebellion is the unwrapping of the figurehead of the ship, which shows the skeleton of Alexandro Aranda. While seemingly an example of Babo's brutality, the unwrapping of Aranda's skeleton may then be read as a "brilliant postcolonial metacommentary" (Wallace 62), since the ship's proper figurehead had been the image of Christopher Columbus, the discoverer of the New World.

While Delano appears to restore the "natural" order on the *San Dominick* by finally recapturing the ship, Don Benito remains far from "saved," for "the negro" seems to have "cast . . . a shadow" (208) over him. Even if Babo is executed, his head, fixed on a pole in the plaza, looks toward the church where Aranda's ("white") bones, once recovered, are interred and toward the monastery where Don Benito, bereft of his energy, dies soon afterward. Babo's "dark" shadow thus seems to continue to linger in the two (white) men. Indeed, Don Benito's end, in a monastery, seems to replicate the beginning of the story, wherein the *San Dominick* is described as a "white-washed monastery." Babo's decapitated head, with its shadow covering Don Benito's monastery, continues to haunt the Spanish sailor until the very end. In this sense, then, Babo appears to symbolize the death-blowing shadow of blacks on whites, embodying the fear that "they" may be as intelligent, rational, and *independent*—in other words, as *masculine*—as "we." The shadow may be taken, in other words, as a critique of the white supremacist assumption of black inferiority, dependency, submissiveness, and, in short, *emasculation*. While seemingly submissive and feminized, the black rebels commanded by Babo are, in fact, determined to reclaim their freedom (i.e., their manhood), which Delano must finally recognize, even if only as a threat. Ultimately Melville's deconstruction of the white view of blacks as inferior and submissive beings called into question not only the "fictitious" component of supposedly organic human relations, but may also be considered an implicit, if not explicit, critique of nineteenth-century patriarchal gender relations, which defined both women and slaves as dependent beings. In so doing, Melville seemed to be

aware of the connections between slavery and patriarchy and, more importantly, revealed the unnaturalness and absurdity of both institutions.[9]

Ultimately, then, Melville's story provides a complex articulation of the intricate relations between whites and blacks in American history. Challenging traditional assumptions of white supremacy, Melville not only questioned the "natural" subordination of blacks, represented by the institution of slavery; he also showed the (blinding) effect of white racism on whites themselves. In so doing, he seemed to understand as well the intersections between race and gender, particularly between patriarchy and slavery, which he undermines by clearly questioning the feminization of blacks by whites. While refusing to "pretend to speak for the black man" (Yellin 224), Melville seemed to feel obliged as a white writer not simply to question whiteness as an invisible and dominant social norm, but also to make white privilege visible to whites, warning against the dangers of keeping one race "invisible" to another. To use W.E.B. Du Bois's famous metaphor, Melville seemed to highlight the dangers of two people being separated by a "veil," which not only deprives black people of self-consciousness, as they must always look at themselves "through the eyes of others," but also prevents whites themselves from knowing the "Other-ed" race, since they remain "shut out" from the black world by "a vast veil" (6).[10] Foreshadowing the Civil War to come, he warned against the dangers of racial segregation, suggesting that a real understanding between the two races would only be possible if whites learned to see themselves from the perspective of blacks, if they learned, that is, to occupy the position of the Other. Unfortunately, it took almost one century for Melville's ideas about race to become completely "meaning-full," when, in the wake of the Civil Rights movements of the 1950s, poets such as Robert Lowell[11] began to really understand the importance of lifting the (black) "shadow" cast on Benito Cereno and that still hung over the nation at mid-century.

Notes

1. An earlier and longer version of this chapter was first published in Josep M. Armengol, *Masculinities in Black and White: Manliness and Whiteness in (African) American Literature*, 2014, Palgrave Macmillan. Reproduced with permission of Palgrave Macmillan.
2. On blackness in Melville's works, see, for instance, the classic studies by Yellin; Rampersad; and Karcher. On whiteness in *Moby-Dick*, see, for instance, Valerie Babb's chapter, titled "The Whiteness of the Whale."
3. Clearly, Melville's story, as Nelson herself insists, reveals the fragility of this "national" fraternity of white men, symptomatizing "the profound abbreviation of human identification that structures white brotherhood" (203). Indeed, Delano's (mis)identification of Don Benito as his equal entails an "imaginative and emotional short-circuiting" (Nelson 203) that prevents him from understanding the real situation on the *San Dominick*.
4. "Against the ideology that saw slavery as the most organic of social relations," as Rogin argues, "Melville conventionalized, as stage props, the symbols of authority which slaveowners insisted were theirs by nature" (216).
5. Harriet Beecher Stowe is the obvious example here, although there are other male abolitionists and pro-feminists of the period, too, like the famous abolitionist James Mott, husband to Lucretia Mott, both an abolitionist and women's rights activist.

6. If the first appearance of Sambo, a "comic Negro" stereotype, occurred in a play called *The Divorce* (1781), blackface minstrelsy gained popularity in the 1830s and 1840s, thanks to the Jim Crow shows created by Thomas D. Rice, where whites in blackface created and spread stereotypes of African Americans as happily submissive child-like slaves (Delgado and Stefancic 171). See also Lott.
7. The stereotype of black manhood as hypermasculine will become especially apparent after the Civil War, when the image of the black male as a brutal rapist was used to justify the widespread lynchings by the Ku Klux Klan that took 2,500 lives between 1885 and 1900 alone.
8. Fredrickson notes, in this respect, that whenever the fear of emancipation increased, the savage side of the dual black image did usually reappear "with dramatic suddenness" (44).
9. Rampersad has provocatively compared the death-dealing shadow of blacks on whites to the effect of Du Bois's veil on blacks (168–169). However, while the veil has a negative effect on blacks, the shadow, according to this scholar, may have a more positive effect by representing victory over whites and destabilizing unitary consciousness as well as political and cultural power.
10. While Du Bois sees the veil as negative mostly for blacks, who are thus provided with the irreconcilable disjunction or "double-consciousness" (7) of being American and black, I would like to argue that this separation has a negative effect on whites themselves, too, particularly regarding their ignorance about blacks, as Melville's story illustrates.
11. See Sundquist for an excellent analysis of the influence of Melville on Robert Lowell's *Don Benito*, a play based on the novel of the same name.

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3 Staging Intersectionality

Beyond Gender and Race in the American Theater

Barbara Ozieblo

The concept of ethnic masculinities is surely just as slippery as all the categorizations that our society loves to indulge in, and the intersections of race, ethnicity, and gender have found a fertile playground in the American theater. It is a playground that the younger generation of playwrights is exploring and enjoying; they are no longer tied to autobiographical plots that highlight the difficulties of being a woman or an FOB (Fresh Off the Boat), and success on the mainstream theatrical playground, more difficult to achieve, is savored and valued highly—while yet recognized as fraught with ambivalence. Elaine Showalter, in *A Jury of Her Peers: American Women Writers*, dismissed her earlier classification of women's writing into feminine, feminist, and female as pertaining to a past age, so that, "By September 11, 2001, when the twentieth century ended for Americans, women's writing as a separate literary tradition . . . had reached the end of its usefulness. The woman writer, as an individual, could define and express herself" (511). In this chapter I offer an overview—admittedly from a slanted bird's-eye point of view—of the contemporary American theatrical scene and argue that not only has the classification of woman writer lost its usefulness, but that those other limiting categories of ethnic writer, male or female, have either lost their significance or earned new meanings.

As men and women have come out of their various closets, the traditional categories of gender have acquired their own specific problematics while the labels used for ethnic or racial minorities have also become more ambivalent: African American, Asian American, Latino/a or Hispanic American are umbrella terms that cover huge populations that do not necessarily have much in common.[1] Robert Reid-Pharr reminded us during the discussion following his seminar "New Approaches to Ethnic and Masculinity Studies" that such labels are constructed by a specific group for a reason; they are not God-given but respond, rather, to a historical contingency, or a need to create or fit in to, a recognized identity marker (my notes). The terms tend to mix concepts of race and ethnicity: "African American" frequently refers more to skin color than to social origin: not all African Americans are descendants of slaves and not all were born in Africa, and even if that were the case, Africa is a huge continent with a complex history and many cultures, customs, and languages. "Asian American," coined in the 1960s in rejection of the term "Oriental" (see Jung), is used of people who look more Asian than

European: according to the US Census, the term includes people living in America who were born, or who are descendants of people who were born, in the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent. Although this wide classification is frequently narrowed down to those whose origins are in the Far East, the geographical, social, and cultural breadth of such a label still takes one's breath away. Latino/a or Hispanic Americans also encompass a fascinating array of cultures and histories, races and ethnicities, but they do at least—on the whole—share a common language.[2]

In the American theater today, we can point out two trends in relation to racial or ethnic diversity: on the one hand, we have regional theaters that are working to involve the community, whatever its origins. This is done by organizing festivals, workshops, bringing together diverse groups of non-actors who discuss the problems of the community and, through guided improvisations, come up with a performance that may be strictly limited to one ethnicity or gender, or as varied and diverse as the population in the given community. In Orange County, California, the South Coast Repertory theater is a good example of such activity: Marc Masterson, its artistic director, believes that regional theaters should "serve the community and its varied demographics, not just the majority white audiences that traditionally come to the theatre" (Tran 45). As a result, the South Coast Rep created the program *Dialogue/Diálogos*, which allowed hundreds of residents to tell their stories and share their concerns (34 percent of the area's population is Latino/a or Hispanic) that were then workshopped and developed into *The Long Road Today / El Largo Camino de Hoy* performed in September 2014 by more than sixty locals. The experience demonstrated the "power of theatre"; the public spaces where the play was performed now belong to all—participants and audiences alike (May 54).

The South Coast Rep also organizes the Pacific Playwrights Festival, founded in 1998 to promote plays written in Southern California. One of the 2015 productions is Qui Nguyen's *Vietgone*; Orange County is home to the largest Vietnamese population outside of Vietnam, so it is not surprising that the initial readings have proved popular. Other initiatives include the Consortium of Asian American Theatres, which holds biennial conferences and festivals showcasing plays by Asian American playwrights. The Black Theatre Network, founded in 1986, is probably the oldest organization fighting for the rights of a specific group to be represented in the theater and for actors to be given more job opportunities, although the history of African American theater in the United States goes much further back.

The other trend that can be observed in the theater of the United States has been commented on by Esther Kim Lee who, writing on Asian American women dramatists, affirms that, "more recent works . . . defy conventional categorizations in terms of race and gender and have little to do with autobiographical identity or Asian American history" ("Asian American" 244). In her *A History of Asian American Theatre* (2011) Lee recognizes a third wave of dramatists: "It is not that the third wave Asian American playwrights rejected their racial and ethnic identities; rather, they revealed and expressed both the relevance and irrelevance of such labels in their lives" (203). The younger generations of playwrights,

regardless of gender or origin, no longer consider it necessary to vindicate their community or to replay their history—and when they do this, it is in oblique ways that are often ambiguous and that serve mainly to force the audience to reconsider their stance on a variety of issues. This can be applied to dramatists of other "minority" groups; the formally innovative and thematically original plays of post-black dramatist Suzan-Lori Parks, for example, are eons away from August Wilson's historical continuity and realism. Parks's surrealist *The America Play* (1994), boldly different in form and content, compels a re-examination of the figure of Lincoln as much as a questioning of what we hold culturally valuable.[3]

The younger women and ethnic or "minority" dramatists today no longer feel constrained to create women protagonists, or protagonists of a specific color or cultural background; they are able to focus on problems, dilemmas, or experiences of other groups, and are not limited to their home patch. Male writers, of course, have never considered themselves unable to portray women protagonists convincingly; but when women write a play with only male characters they face critics' disapproval, as did American playwright Naomi Wallace when her first play, *The War Boys*, premiered in 1993 in England at the Finborough theater. Alex Sierz, the British critic who coined the term "in-yer-face-theatre," considered Wallace's play to be "one of the best plays of the decade" and he reflects on the controversy the play caused "not because of its subject matter but because of its author's gender" (156). The subject matter, war, sex, identity, added to the innovative, surrealist form of the play should have been enough to raise and focus an explosion of controversy. Sierz quotes from a number of reviews: *Time Out* accused Wallace of storming "traditional male preserves" (156), while the *Times* drew attention to the extended belief that although men have always been held to write "about women tremendously well, women write best about their own sex" (157). He also quotes Wallace as saying that people were "surprised not just by the fact that a woman could stand on her legs, and write too, but by the complexity of the writing" (156). Wallace continues to write plays that challenge and nonplus audiences by their innovative theatrical devices—and to create characters that are not necessarily white or female: in *And I and Silence* (2011), her protagonists are two women, one white and the other black; in *The Hard Weather Boating Party* (2009), three men of different class and ethnicity plan to get their revenge on the owner of the factory that has been polluting the whole area, causing illness and death. Wallace's interest in working conditions is the theme of *Slaughter City* (1996), which also features a friendship between two women, white and black; while her most recent play, *A Liquid Plain* (2013), deals with slavery.

Today's generation of dramatists freely creates protagonists who are unlike them, and who have not lived similar dramas—as, for example, African American playwright Lynn Nottage's Pulitzer Prize–winning *Ruined* (2007), on rape in wartime Congo; or her most recent play, *Sweat*, which premiered at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in the summer of 2015. *Sweat* is set in Reading, Pennsylvania, where the factories have been shut down because manufacturing has been relocated to Mexico or elsewhere; as she did for *Ruined*, Nottage carried out extensive research and interviewed many people in the town. In *Ruined* Nottage

focused on the women, particularly Mama Nadi, Sophie, and Salima—although she also created a wholly engaging Christian—but in *Sweat* she focuses on both men and women, white and black, with equal intensity and shows that she can create convincing male characters that, as much as the women, reveal a "rich humanity" according to reviewer Charles Isherwood. Isherwood goes on to say that "From first moments to last, this compassionate but clear-eyed play throbs with heartfelt life, with characters as complicated as any you'll encounter at the theater today" (2015). Nottage evokes the tension she captures in her play:

> When you interview black and Latino folks, there is a narrative that has existed for the last fifty years of being sort of disaffected from the culture. But I sat in rooms with middle-aged white men and heard them speaking like young black men in America—they also feel disenfranchised, disaffected.
>
> (Weinert-Kendt 21)

We can compare these plays with those written by women in the 1970s and 1980s that dealt with issues that could be—by some—negatively catalogued as "trifles" or "women's issues," such as Marsha Norman's *Getting Out* (1977) or Pulitzer Prize–winning *'night, Mother* (1983), or with plays of that period by ethnic writers that dealt with "minority issues," as for example Wakako Yamauchi's *And the Soul Shall Dance* (1973), or *FOB* (1980) by David Henry Hwang. Hwang, best known for *M. Butterfly* (1988), in which he portrayed French diplomats in China, has also moved on to dispassionately examine white Americans and their relationships with Chinese Americans in *Yellow Fever* (2007), and with the Chinese in the highly amusing comedy *Chinglish* (2011), where internationalism rather than multiculturalism is the focus. However, his plays are still related to the question of racial identity. In an interview with Donna Hoke, he indicates: "When I started out, I was staking out territory, discussing the fluidity of identity, but what it means to be Asian-American is changing, and the aesthetic representation of that is changing as well." To which Hoke responds:

> But the next generation is . . . taking the conversation—and the representation—to the next level. Hwang knows this . . . from younger Asian-American playwrights who he feels are conscious of their identity and who may or may not write on subjects related to race and culture, but nonetheless cast diversely and represent themselves on stage.
>
> (Hoke)

Diverse casting, or an ethnic version of blind casting, is what Diana Son requires for *Stop Kiss* (1998): "The cast should reflect the ethnic diversity of New York City" (5); for *Satellites* (2006), she specifies that the characters should be played by Korean Americans, African Americans, Koreans, and white Americans, respectively (see Ozieblo).

The daring and challenging work of the dramatist Young Jean Lee, considered by the *New York Times* critic Charles Isherwood to be a "remarkably versatile

and inquisitive playwright" (2014), is an example of just how much has changed since Hwang started to write for the theater. Born in South Korea, but living in New York since she was two, Lee uses the theater to shock, to trap, or even to stun her audience. Her discussion of male expectations of manly behavior and relationships in *Straight White Men*—workshopped at Brown University in 2013 and performed at the Public Theatre of New York in November 2014—is a case in point. This piece departs from Lee's earlier plays; her admirers, used to theatrical innovation, mixtures of fantasy, choreography, ritual, and violence, as in *Songs of the Dragons Flying to Heaven* (2007), or simply the shock value of *Untitled Feminist Show* (2014), were in for a surprise. *Straight White Men* is a naturalistic/realistic family play, at times bringing to mind the plays of Sam Shepard or the father/son conflicts portrayed by Eugene O'Neill or Arthur Miller.

In the 1980s, realism met with much criticism as an inherently patriarchal form that serves only to reinforce and further empower the dominant, patriarchal order since it embeds the reader in its ideology (see Belsey and Forte). The anger against realism was such that Marsha Norman's *'night, Mother* was rejected by some as a play that did not meet the criteria of feminism because of its formal, realistic structure that adhered to the Aristotelian unities. Since Lee has always tried to astound her audiences by finding out-of-the-way means to subvert established forms, concepts, and stereotypes of gender, race, and ethnicity in her plays, the total respect for the three classical unities and adherence to the norms of the realistic play seem a strange choice. With *Straight White Men* she confounds her audience by confirming Arthur Miller's reflection that

> the force or pressure that makes for Realism, that even requires it, is the magnetic force of the family relationship within the play, and the pressure which evokes in a genuine, unforced way the un-realistic modes is the social relationship within the play.
>
> (71)

Straight White Men is a family play, an arena that places Lee squarely in the tradition of American theater that boasts so many plays that are "set in and around living rooms, the most common and persistent setting in contemporary American theatre" according to critic Isaac Butler (38). However, Lee's objectives do not appear to be quite the same as those of, say, white, male dramatist Tracy Letts in *August, Osage County* (2007), a Pulitzer-Prize winning realistic family play that damns all women. Asian American and female, Lee damns nobody. Instead, she aggressively forces us to consider, or reconsider, our opinions and our behavior. In a private interview with Kee-Yoon Nahm, she disclosed that "*Straight White Men* was an attempt to write an identity politics play, a straight white male identity politics play. And I wanted to use what I saw as the straight white man of theatrical genres, which is the straight play" (Nahm 6), which uses purely realistic devices.

Lee's plays have always been presented in alternative venues, but *Straight White Men* premiered at New York's more traditional Public Theater: members of the audience, new to Lee and not used to her tactics, complained at the loud hip

hop pre-show music and sometimes angrily demanded the volume be turned down (Larissa FastHorse 61). The music is a bold contrast to the "hyper-naturalistic" set, and to the characters who people it, and Lee's bold device to "create a sense that the show is under the control of people who are not straight white men" (*Straight* 62), a stage direction that immediately raises questions about power and control. Are straight white men in control of their lives? Are they privileged? Or do they obey unwritten norms that create stereotypes to which they have to submit? In an interview with Larissa FastHorse, Lee asks: "To what extent am I able to enjoy and exploit my privilege in a way that I can get away with because I am an Asian female?" (61). And she ends the interview with a characteristic comment: "I think the play ends up being a fundamentally unsatisfactory experience, which is great, since the last thing I wanted to do was make a show about these issues that left both the audience and me feeling satisfied" (61).

And indeed, the play leaves one unsatisfied, frustrated, and disturbed. It is Christmas, and Ed's three adult sons are spending the holiday with him. Matt, the eldest, who as a child had been the most promising, dropped out of graduate school and law school, now lives with his father, runs the house, and temps for a local charity. Jake, the middle brother, divorced, is a prosperous banker, and the youngest, Drew, is a university professor and novelist. Childhood memories and roughhouse displays of brotherly affection, comradeship, and jealousies occupy most of the play that is performed in a very realistic middle-class family room. This could well be a reality show. The father, Ed, is well-meaning but uncomprehending. During the Christmas festivities, seemingly for no reason, Matt begins to cry, putting paid to that old cliché about men not crying. Consternation follows; no one quite knows what to do or say as the lights dim and the act ends with a blackout. In Act 2 Jake, Drew, and Ed discuss Matt—his tears, his self-abasement, his inability to fit in to the slot that society has prepared for him; they all agree that he is gifted—but he is unmarried, he has no girlfriend, he is not gay, he does not want a full-time, well-paying job, he wants to help and be useful but limits this to fulfilling low administrative jobs "helping groups that support, like, oppressed people", he tries "not to take up space" and to be "invisible" (*Straight* 69, 70). His father believes he's depressed because he can't pay back his student loans and ends up giving him a check to cover the amount. Drew thinks his brother should see a therapist, and Jake believes he should learn how to sell himself since "today, it's all about who you are and how you're perceived, as opposed to what you can actually do" (*Straight* 73). They act out a job interview that Jake shines in, while Matt is unable to give a single convincing or even half-interesting answer as to why he wants a given job. And then Jake spells out the predicament of the straight white guy:

JAKE: There's nothing people like us can do in the world that isn't problematic or evil, so we have to make ourselves invisible!

ED: "People like us"? What's that supposed to mean?

JAKE: You know, privileged white dickheads. Women and minorities may get to pretend they're doing enough to make the world a better place just by

> getting ahead, but a white guy's pretty hard-pressed to explain why the world needs *him* to succeed. So Matt's trying to stay out of the way. (74)

The play ends with Matt rejecting his father's check and staring out into the audience not knowing what he should do with his life. Young Jean Lee is not criticizing the behavior of straight white men or showing them as victims, but rather reflecting that perhaps they have it more difficult than some of us might imagine. She does not create the model or type of a straight white man that we would all love to know: Ed, the father, is quite naturally set in his ways and unaware of politically correct opinions; Jake has made it to the top, but on the way he has lost wife, family, and belief in society and its values, while Drew, the successful novelist, appears to be superficial and supercilious. Matt does seem to be a good guy, but too meek and submissive to get anywhere in today's world. Lee's acerbic vision of society and life does not allow her to create positive all-round characters, men or women with whom we could comfortably share our lives. Her objective is Brechtian in that she wants audiences to reflect on what they see or hear on the stage and not passively accept yet another story of violence or injustice.

Lee makes her stance on playwriting and audiences quite clear in her interviews: her controversial objective in writing *Songs of the Dragons Flying to Heaven*—a play in which she abuses racist stereotypes as a way to demolish them—was to force herself to write the play she least wanted to write (see Jones 74). With *Straight White Men* she is exploring what she calls an existential crisis:

> If I woke up tomorrow and I was a straight white man, what would I do? . . . And that was the starting point. So it was less that I was trying to create sympathy for straight white male identity, than I was trying to inhabit that identity as a woman of color.
>
> (FastHorse 61)

Lee starts work on a play by casting it, and then getting the actors to talk and improvise in a workshop setting before she actually writes the script. In this case, she was talking with students at Brown, but found that straight white men had very little to say about their position in society: "they had spent much less time thinking about straight white male identity" (FastHorse 60) than do women or men of color. In a workshop with diverse students Lee found "people talking very harshly about straight white men," and so asked them to give her a list of how they would like straight white men to behave (Bent). She then "wrote that character" and found that they hated him:

> and they hated him because he was a loser. And that's what made me realize that, in spite of all these social-justice values, in our peer group, being a loser is worse than being an asshole. It kind of revealed our continuing investment in the patriarchy.
>
> (Bent)

She then affirms that her

> audience is supposed to get trapped in this kind of bind, this disjunction between the desire for social justice and the desire for things to stay the same, and for people not to be losers, and to be aligned with power.
>
> (Bent)

Lee's plays are, to a large extent, examinations of the power constructs of patriarchal society and how these constructs can be disabled or dismantled. In *The Shipment* (2010) she creates an all-black cast that deconstructs the minstrel show ethic in the first part and questions black identity in the second. The first part—the play is not formally divided into acts or scenes—reminds us of *Songs of the Dragons Flying to Heaven*; just as Korean Americans did in that play, the Stand-Up Comedian makes preposterous remarks about both whites and blacks, such as "I gotta talk about RACE because white people be some stupid-ass mothafuckas" (11). Or, "I even been accused a playin' a stereotype to cater to a white audience. Well, that's true, but mostly I talk this way because I'm fuckin' terrified a white people!" (14). There follow a number of short dialogues, which as Lee explains in the "Author's Note," she wrote

> to address the stereotypes my cast members felt they had to deal with as black performers. Our goal was to walk the line between stock forms of black entertainment and some unidentifiable weirdness to the point where the audience wasn't sure what they were watching or how they were supposed to respond.
>
> (*The Shipment* 5)

The realistic cocktail party that ends the play is just as disconcerting, reminiscent perhaps of Pinter's absurdist dialogues, especially when we learn that the black actors were actually playing white people.

Esther Kim Lee argues that dramatists such as Young Jean Lee, who create characters that belong to different races or ethnicities (and perhaps we could add genders), do so precisely because of the ambivalence that a hyphenated identity creates. As she says of the playwright, "The racial category 'Asian American' does not fit her comfortably . . . [and yet] the label follows her" (2013 244). In *The Shipment* the actors are in charge of what happens on the stage since they have chosen to create and ridicule the stereotypes they are playing and also because Lee wrote the play specifically for them; each actor is playing a part she or he has always wanted to play but has not been able to because of the scant opportunities available to colored actors. On the other hand, creating characters that depict the "Other"—who in *Straight White Men* wield power—a playwright can place herself in the position of that "Other" and so elude, deconstruct, and ridicule the customary stereotypes. In the same way, Naomi Wallace, in *The Hard Weather Boating Party* or *The War Boys*, in which all the characters are men, takes on their dilemmas and by doing so

gives a socially acceptable voice to her own preoccupations with exploitation and injustice.

Back in the 1970s, Japanese American playwright Philip Kan Gotanda considered the theater to be a valid platform from which Asian Americans could articulate protest and gain visibility (Shimakawa 67). At that time, it was important to establish the very existence of Asian Americans and other ethnic groups. For Gotanda—and others—writes Shimakawa, "theatre presented itself to Asian American social and political activists as an attractive medium for protest" (67). Ann-Marie Dunbar believes that Gotanda has gradually been moving from plays that placed emphasis on the Asian characteristics of the characters, as in *The Wash* (1985), to plays such as *Day Standing on Its Head* (1994), in which the universal takes over from the stereotypically Asian. The earlier plays used straightforward realism, while *Day Standing on Its Head* incorporates expressionism and surrealism into its structure—thereby, according to Dunbar, facilitating what she calls his movement "from the strictly ethnic to the mainstream arena without compromising or sacrificing [his] ideas and interests" (16). Gotanda's 2009 play, *#5 Angry Red Drum*, is an absurdist piece against war; when questioned whether he thought it was a part of Asian American theater, he responded that "as I move through the world, what stories and issues I engage with will vary" (Tang). In the same vein, Perry Yung, founding member of the multidisciplinary experimental SLANT Performance Group, can write: "If there is an authentic Asian American sensibility then I would say that it is close to that of an authentic American sensibility" (Yung). By freeing themselves of the limiting notion that only men can write about men, and only people of a specific ethnicity can write about that ethnicity, today's dramatists have opened up the possibilities of the stage, allowing empathy and embodiment a free rein.

Notes

1. The following information given by the Pew Research Center is illustrative of the problem: since 1960 people have been able to "choose their own race," while from 2000 on "Americans could be recorded in more than one race category on the census form." President Obama's decision to include himself only in the category of "Black" caused consternation among many. Also, "The U.S. Census Bureau does not consider Hispanic/Latino identity to be a race. Ethnicity is asked as a separate question." ("What Census Calls Us: A Historical Timeline" June 10, 2015, http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/interactives/multiracial-timeline/. See note 2.)
2. Brazilians, of course, present a problem here. See http://www.clickz.com/clickz/column/2193619/are-brazilians-latino-and-does-anybody-care for comments on what it means to be Latino/Hispanic American and whether Brazilians in the United States can be considered as belonging to this group.
3. Harry J. Elam and Douglas A. Jones define post-black as "an artistic and cultural moment and movement with its own historicity, a set of shared aesthetic and ideological sensibilities that, tautologically, come *after* a previous set" (xi, italics in original). It is not necessary to be African American to qualify as a post-black dramatist.

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Part II

Transnational Masculinities

4 Men Around the World

Global and Transnational Masculinities

Jeff Hearn

It is remarkable how social theory, including what has sometimes come to be narrowed and labelled as feminist theory, has in recent years become so influenced by scholars from outside the social sciences, often with a background in the humanities, especially philosophy, literary studies, and linguistics. It might be thought odd if the opposite occurred, and social scientists became the experts on the analysis of novels, visual artefacts, and the like, so that what was labelled literary theory or visual theory was defined within the frames of sociology or political science or economics. Anyway, in social theory language, narrative, discourse, and the like have been queen since the early 1980s. From this linguistic-discursive (and paradoxical) base, it has been noticed that there is something called "society."

I vividly recall sitting through a long seminar by a rather well-known philosopher, who then concluded with the insight that knowledge is socially constructed, and epistemology is a social and societal matter. I thought that was called the sociology of knowledge. All of this sometimes goes under the catch-all of "culture." The resort to culture has a lot to answer for, politically, even with the superb work of many cultural theorists and in cultural studies more generally. It is in this somewhat bizarre context that gender, gender relations, and gender power relations can easily become subsumed within culture and cultural formations, or even reduced to (cultural) gender identity (see Moi). Some of this debate represents an engagement between the long marches of modernism and postmodernism.

And now materiality has been (re)discovered—though I do not think that materiality really ever went away. But then some recent discussions of materiality are not about economy, labour, poverty and the unequal distribution of resources. In fact, the neglect of economy, global economy, is truly odd, at a time when global capitalism seems to be extending its power and influence into every corner and crevice.

The growing range of explicitly gendered studies and explorations of men and masculinities has tended to focus on certain relatively immediate aspects of social life (even if paradoxically bodies are often not foregrounded): family, health, interpersonal violence, friendship, sexualities, work—what might even be called *welfarist* approaches to men and masculinities. Important as they are, in this chapter I seek to move attention from those approaches, and instead turn to the international as a frame—but less as the simply comparative, or the supposedly

all-embracing global, but rather in terms of the contributions of the transnational and transnational studies.

Following a brief comment on critical studies on men and masculinities, I examine debates about four relevant aspects of studies of transnational men and masculinities: the national; the comparative; the global; and the transnational. As regards the first of these, I should emphasize that the nation and nationalism persist as important influences in the creation and perpetuation of specific modes and models of masculinity. Comparative research can be conducted in a way that reifies the nation, but it can also, by interrogating and problematizing the nation and the national as the often unspoken given context, assist the construction of new modes and models of being men that can, eventually in turn, contribute towards greater gender change. In discussing globalization, theories of the global and the local combine in analyzing how the macro-geographical and macro-historical trends of thought translate onto gender relations, men and masculinities. Finally, I explore the transnational and different aspects in the operation and deconstruction of transnational patriarchies, transnational men, and transnational masculinities.

Critical Studies on Men: Gendering Men, Masculinity, and Men's Practices

Men have studied men for centuries but often as an "absent presence" (Hearn "Theorizing"). "Men" as individuals, groups, or categories have *not* been problematized. Concerted attempts, primarily through feminist and profeminist scholarship, have been made to examine how men and masculinities are just as gendered as are women and femininities. Though for a long time, gender was largely seen as a matter of and for women; men were generally seen as ungendered, natural or naturalized. Critical studies on men and masculinities (CSMM) have highlighted how men have been and often continue to be seen ungendered or naturalized. CSMM have explicitly examined how men are gendered, presenting critical gendered accounts, descriptions, and explanations of men in their social contexts. CSMM comprise historical, cultural, relational, materialist, deconstructive, anti-essentialist studies. The idea that gender of men derives from a fixed inner trait or core is antagonistic to CSMM; men are not to be essentialized and reified. Within CSMM certain themes have been stressed, often local, personal, bodily, immediate, ethnographic, and in contradiction with dominant definitions and priorities of men. Questions of family, fatherhood, emotions, everyday life, and so on, have attracted more attention than the "big picture" (Connell "Big Picture"). There remains a strong tendency to see men and masculinities primarily in interpersonal rather than structural or societal, or even transsocietal, terms.

While not playing down differences between traditions in studying men, the broad critical approach to men and masculinities of recent years can be characterized by:

- An *explicit and specific focus* on men and masculinities;
- Taking account of *feminist, gay, and other critical gender scholarship*;

- Recognizing men and masculinities as *explicitly gendered*;
- Understanding men and masculinities as *socially constructed, produced, and reproduced*, rather than as somehow just "naturally" one way or another;
- Seeing men and masculinities as *variable and changing* across time (history) and space (culture), within societies, through life courses and biographies;
- Emphasizing men's relations, albeit differentially, to *gendered power*;
- The spanning of both the *material and the discursive*;
- Interrogating *intersections of gender with other social divisions* in constructions of men and masculinities (Connell, Hearn and Kimmel 3).

The National

While critical studies of men and masculinities are now relatively well established as a broad area of research and publication, men's relations to nation and state have not generally been so very prominent, at least not until rather recently. Despite the fact that these relations provide some of the most obvious sources of men's institutional and collective power, there has often been something of an avoidance of these issues even within the general critical field. Approaching and problematizing the nation and nationhood through the lens of critical analysis of men and masculinity suggests many possible avenues for theorizing, empirical study, and politics. The explicit gendering of and problematization of the nation assist the gendering and problematizing of men and masculinities, and vice versa.

In practice, the relation of men, masculinity, and nation has been constructed variously in history, social analysis, politics, and policy-making (Nagel). The nation has often been conceived as ungendered or non-gendered; or alternatively, it is represented as female, "a woman," the motherland to be protected, promoted, ruled by men; or, yet still, it may be constructed as male, as in the notion of fatherland. Additionally, there is a very large amount of academic work on men and masculinities that is nationalistic in its assumptions, especially in the United States, the UK and the Anglophone world, but also in many other parts of the world too. There remains a strong "methodological nationalism" (Beck; Beck and Sznaider; Chernilo) in contemporary studies and politics of men and masculinity—even with the increasing tendencies towards the comparative, the global, and the transnational.

One clear connection of men, masculinities and the nation is through citizenship, historically framed by the city-state, then the nation-state, and its supposedly gender-neutral, in practice often male, citizenry. This not only involves formal political representation but also social and cultural rights, and access to state machinery. The nation-state has also been characteristically gendered in the sense that its "making" has usually been a project publicly led by men, or at least initially certain classes of men. It is onto this political base that women's political participation has been grafted in many, though far from all, countries. More generally, some forms of (male) citizenship, based on notions of male citizen individualism, are in tension with forms of male-dominated nationalism based on notions

of the male collective, often homogenizing, lineage, culture, language, and exclusion of difference, including violent confrontations that occur in the name of such mythic entities as nation, people, religion, or blood. Having said this, there are many specific variations in how the gendering of citizenship operates at the level of the nation-state. For example, Finland was the first country, in 1906, to give full political rights to all adults, with citizenship for the mass of women and men being closely associated with the relatively recent nationalism for all citizens. This is not to say that such "nationalistic" citizenship is non-gendered—far from it. Supposedly non-gendered citizenship may remain patriarchal in form, not least through the continuation of pre-nationalistic discourses and practices, sometimes around particular notions of "equality," as in the Soviet regimes, or when "private," intimate partner violence is not brought into assessments of citizenship.

A further example on the connections between men, masculinities, and nation centres on war and militarism; indeed the indivisibility of men and nation is perhaps clearest in times of war. There is a whole raft of very obvious, obvious, and fairly obvious connections between men, masculinities, and the military (Hearn "Men Changing") that bear on nation and nationalism. These include who does the killing and how armies are gender-structured through to the questions of male military identity. These have been central aspects of the relation of men and nationalism, or Men/Nation. The military, warring and war-related times and places provide contexts for many other actually or potentially violent and violating gendered practices in and by corporations and privatized security forces, foreign policy and diplomacy, arms trading, extraordinary rendition and incarceration, atrocities in and after wars, the sex trade, corruption and financial exploitation, organized crime and kidnapping, rape and sexual assault, peacekeeping, and legal apparatuses, including prosecution of war crimes. These are all dominated by men, and with their own particular social structures and forms of organizing. These arenas operate primarily through men's collective and individual practices, whether hand-to-hand fighting, dropping bombs, pressing buttons, torture, "domestic" violence, sexual violence, along with intimidation, pressurizing, operating keyboards, trading, managing, working for a living, and so on. War, the military, and militarism, and their associated nations and states, can be seen as one part of a much wider web of activities of militarism-war-violence complex(es)—part of Men/Nation.

Even relatively critical studies of men and masculinity are often primarily contextualized implicitly or explicitly within the confines of the nation-state, a form of "methodological nationalism." This can be seen as an understated contextual aspect of the "ethnographic moment" (Connell *The Men*) that has characterized much of recent studies of men and masculinities. However, historical disruptions of nation-state and national and imperial power have sometimes been a spur to critical reflection on men and masculinity. Examples here include the loss of the frontier (Kimmel), fracturings of the dominant fiction (Silverman; Läubli and Sahli), loss of the British Empire (Tolson; Yekani), US defeat in the Vietnam War (Bliss), the turmoils of post-socialist era in Central and Eastern Europe (Novikova et al. 2003, 2005; Pajumets; Aavik), complex gender movements post-apartheid

(Shefer et al.), and various disruptions of some men's exclusion through national autocracies or sense of entitlement within the realms of globalization. These all create both uncertainties and new forms of gender domination. It is as if such disruptions, such losses of national confidence may be accompanied by reflection on the state of men. This can of course be conducted in the political realm from many positions and out of many motivations. These might include eugenic concerns, loss of manhood, the move to global finance capitalism, backlash against feminism, "break-up" of the nuclear family, as well as various more positive motivations of men who are uncertain and seek more equal relationships and positionings.

The Comparative

Despite such critical insights on Men/Nation, gendering men, nation and national citizenship often remains primarily within the context and confines of the nation-state. One way in which these possible conflations may be opened up is through studies within a cross-cultural, comparative, or even supranational frame, as with the European Union. This is keeping with very established traditions of comparative method in the social sciences, especially sociology.

In the European context much of this comparative research on men and masculinities has been policy-directed, led, and funded by the European Commission and its own agencies, such as the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), which in recent years has become an active player in the arena of men and gender equality. European Commission-funded research on men and boys has been carried out since the mid-1990s, beginning with the EU Arianne project with male pupils in 1995, and the EU Framework Programme 4 European Profeminist Men's Network in the late 1990s. However, comparative European research on men and masculinities took a major leap forward with the feminist and profeminist EU Framework 5 CROME (Critical Research on Men in Europe) Network.

The CROME Network was conceived in 1999 as undertaking comparative analysis of men and masculinities in a selection of European countries, at first ten in number, including Norway and the Russian Federation outside the EU (2000–2003), then expanded to fourteen within the CAHRV (Coordination Action on Human Rights Violation) (2004–2007). Members of the network continue to work together in a range of ways. A number of major insights followed this comparative research, for example, historicizing, relativizing, and contextualizing how men and masculinities appeared in specific places or nations. Moreover, some of this work was seeking to both take on board and critique the work of Esping-Andersen (1990) on comparative welfare frameworks, in terms of how men and masculinities are differentially positioned. Esping-Andersen's comparative framework of neoliberal, corporatist, Scandinavian, and Latin Rim welfare regimes (also see Duncan) was originally conceived on the basis of the decommodification of labour, and in that sense prioritized class relations. Subsequently, critiques of this "neutral," largely class-based approach were developed by a critical focus on gender (Lewis 1992, 1993; Sainsbury, 1994, 1996, 1999), and indeed ethnicity/race,

and thus in the CROME project we were trying to think through what this means by way of an explicit gendering of men and masculinities. Focusing on men and masculinities in relation to comparative welfare regimes suggested a slightly different pattern to Esping-Andersen's original commodification approach. Regarding gender policy development that has addressed men, a broad differentiation could now be made as follows:

- The Nordic nations (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden), which have had both gender equality apparatus, and some focused policy development on men, through national committees, since the 1980s, operating in the context of the membership and work of the Nordic Council of Ministers; this included the "Men and gender equality" programme (1995–2000). In the last few years both Finland (*Men's Issues* 2014) and Sweden (SOU) have conducted national inquiries on men, masculinities and gender equality.[1]
- The established EU-member nations (e.g., Ireland, Italy, Germany, the UK), which have developed their "equal opportunities" and "gender equality" policies in the context of the previous EU-15, and with some specific emphasis upon men.
- The former Soviet and former "Eastern Bloc" countries (e.g., Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Poland) in the EU-27, which in various ways have a recent political history of formal legal equality but without developed human rights, and have developed as part of the accession process their gender equality laws and policies post-transformation at the formal level, and with very limited specific emphasis upon men.
- The candidate countries to the EU (Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey), which are now in the process of developing their gender equality laws and policies post-transformation as part of EU accession process, with very limited specific emphasis upon men.
- The potential candidate countries to the EU (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo), where these post-socialist processes of change are generally at an earlier stage.
- Other European isolates (e.g., Belarus, Switzerland, Ukraine) (Hearn "Men Changing").

As the overall study proceeded in the early 2000s, the limitations of a nation-state "methodological nationalism" became apparent in comparative analysis, in part because of the non-comparability of such very different countries as, say, Estonia, Latvia, the Russian Federation, Germany, and the UK. This geopolitical critique focused, among other things, on not taking for granted the nation as the unit of analysis and instead deconstructing the ethnocentric understanding of the national. As this collective and collaborative work proceeded, there was also realization of the need to consider the relevance of the constructions of men and masculinities for the construction and indeed problematization of "Europe" itself (Novikova et al., 2003, 2005). At the same time the very concept of masculinity/ies was found to be less useful than expected, not least through the very

different traditions, locations, and substantive gender relations in different parts of Europe, and instead the concepts of men's individual and collective practices was employed (Hearn and Pringle). It is in this context that Keith Pringle, the overall coordinator of the CROME study, has written about turning Esping-Andersen on his head. He notes how the assumption that the Northern European countries are more progressive is not always the case. He particularly uses the example of violence, that sometimes certain kind of violence policies have been neglected, such as sexual abuse or sexual violence, whereas certain countries like Spain have developed progressive policies in recent times.

Accordingly, one cannot always assume a given clustering of countries. This issue of comparisons and the complexity clusterings was also addressed in the *Study on the Role of Men in Gender Equality* (Scambor et al.). This latter study ran for two years in 2011–2012, and included experts from all European countries, and indeed outside Europe too. This policy study drew heavily on Eurostat data, much of it individually based, but also a wealth of other sources and resources, statistical, qualitative, conceptual, and theoretical. It summarized major trends in men's situation in Europe, undertook intensive comparative study and developed supranational (EU) policy recommendations on men and masculinities in relation to policy areas, such as education, care, family, work, and violence. An important theme that the study emphasized was men's gradually changing relations to care and caring, though unevenly across Europe, with the urgent need to move to more caring masculinities. This kind of regional, indeed continental, supranational research contributes an important level of analysis, yet remains distinct from global perspectives on men and masculinities, which tend to operate out of different scientific and policy traditions, and it to these I now turn.

The Global

Globalization has become an extremely well-used—perhaps overused—concept in recent decades. The term is often employed as a gloss on what is happening in the world. It is also rather frequently used within a normative framing, either positively as the key to liberation, whether through political struggle or capitalist expansionism, or negatively as the source of current evils, as with some factions in anti-globalization movements. There is a wide range of influences that bear on these globalizing developments, including postcolonialism, neoliberalism, and the spread of information and communication technologies (ICTs).

Thus a third way is what may be called the global or indeed the glocal—the simultaneity and co-presence of universalizing and particularizing tendencies—that seeks to translate macro-geographical or macro-historical ways of thinking onto men, masculinities, and gender relations. Increasingly, analyses of men and masculinities are considered in the context of gendered, sexualized, violenced, embodied global and glocal processes. Globalization can mean many different things. A concise definition is that provided by the Australian sociologist, Malcolm Waters. He defines globalization as a "social process in which the constraints of *geography* on social and cultural arrangements recede and in which people

become increasingly *aware* that they are receding" (Waters 3, my emphases). In contrast to this emphasis on the relativity of place and consciousness thereof, many commentators have prioritized the development of transnational economic units. Waters notes that globalization affects movements of people, goods, services, and information through material, political, and symbolic exchanges. However, in each case there are contradictions with tendencies towards both local and non-local, both territorialized and non-territorialized social processes and entities. Indeed the massive literature on globalization has not produced a consensus on what it is; this considerable variation frequently involves contradictory accounts. For example,

> Roland Robertson asserted greater material interdependence and unity, but not greater integration, of the world; greater world consciousness; (while it is a single system) the promotion or "invention" of difference and variety in globalization; and indeed "clashes, conflicts, tensions and so on constitute a pivotal feature of globalization" (Robertson and Khondker 29). Antony Giddens highlighted the nation-state, modernity (capitalism, surveillance, military order, industrialism), time-space distanciation,[2] and reflexivity. Scott Lash and John Urry emphasized transcendence of the nation-state, and the increasing importance of signs, symbols, and transnational cultures. With anti-globalization, alternative economics and returns to the local have grown (Hearn *Men of the World* 63–4).

Most, especially mainstream, texts on globalization fail to discuss gender relations or do so in a cursory way. Yet, many of those that do attend to gender still translate gender as meaning women, with little if any explicit and developed analysis of men and global gender relations. Gendering globalization problematizes some of the more ambitious claims of globalization theses, and adds greater gendered complexity to debates on global convergence or divergence. So, how is globalization gendered? Joan Acker summarizes key processes as: "gender as embedded in globalizing capitalism"; "gendered construction of a division between capitalist production and human reproduction"; "masculinities in globalizing capital"; "gender as a resource for globalizing capital"; and "the gendered effects of globalization." Limiting analysis of men, masculinities, and patriarchy/patriarchies to a *particular* society, nation or "culture" is increasingly problematic, with both greater awareness of global linkages, and even the assertion of new forms of nationalism in glocal contexts.

The shift to global thinking has been seen in a variety of kinds of studies on men and masculinities, employing different traditions and methodologies. Raewyn Connell has been the key analyst of men and masculinities in relation to globalization. This has meant going back to earlier gendered histories of globalization. In 1993 Connell published an important article on the "big picture," setting out changes happening in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century empires (Spain, France, British, and others), such as changes in religion, the growth of cities, the growth of the state, and various associated men and masculinities within globalization processes (Connell "Big Picture"). This approach has opened up a whole range

of possibilities for exploration and contestation, including conceptualizations of "globalizing masculinities."

Among "globalizing masculinities," Connell has recognized *masculinities of conquest and settlement*, referring to those practices by men at the frontiers of incipient empires. These often combined "an unusual level of violence and egocentric individualism" (Connell "Masculinities" 12) with relative autonomy from state control, especially in early conquest and settlement. In some cases this led to local genocides; elsewhere, effects were more ideological or in local and community gender orders. *Masculinities of empire* refer to differential practices of men within established empires. These involved, and continue to involve, gender ranking of different men and masculinities—some more highly valued, more "masculine" (imperialists, colonizers, certain resistant colonized) (Fanon; West), some more "effeminized" (certain other, perhaps less resistant colonized) (Nandy; Sinha), or both (Hooper). Empires have also created opportunities for specific masculinities for administering imperial forms of individualism and collectivism, and new distinctions by expertise in the metropole. Processes of decolonization challenge former imperial gender orders and hierarchies, producing *masculinities of postcolonialism and neoliberalism*, often with associations of resistance, masculinity, and violence, and disruptive of community-based gender orders. With the breakdown of old empires, new postcolonialisms, and postcolonial "globalizing masculinities," have developed, through gendered global capitalism and neoliberalism (Connell "Masculinities"; Griffin 2005, 2009, 2013). Connell summarizes contemporary changes as follows:

> The neoliberal makeover of global capitalism and contemporary shifts in gender relations are linked *institutionally*. It is in the set of institutions that operate to some extent "offshore" that we find key dynamics. . . . Imperialism and postcolonial globalization have created an array of institutions that operate on a world scale. They all have internal gender regimes, and each gender regime has its gender dynamic—interests, gender politics, and processes of change.
> (Connell "Global" 9)

In the last few years Connell has been developing the global perspective via a "world-centred" view on masculinities (Connell "Margin"; Connell "Global"), building on earlier work on *Southern Theory* (2007) and the Global North's domination of knowledge construction. Such a "world-centred" view suggests many new lines of investigation, in terms of thinking broadly and globally about men and masculinities. One example would be the global environment; another is macro-geopolitics.

Meanwhile other scholars have adopted more conventional social science methods in approaching men and masculinities through a global lens. For example, the IMAGES (International Men and Gender Equality Survey) in low- and middle-income countries (Levtov et al.) has surveyed men's gender attitudes and gender practice, with a view to analyzing broad global trends and tendencies. This has pointed to how a significant proportion of men may report positive, if ambivalent, attitudes towards gender equality, and yet for most this is not translated into gender

equal outcomes; indeed many also see gender equality as already achieved or not as a "zero-sum game." The men who strongly support gender equality and the need for more progress but who believe it requires a loss for men constituted only a small proportion of men in the initial eight survey countries (Bosnia, Brazil, Chile, Croatia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mexico, India, Rwanda). Moreover, associations of anti-gender equality attitudes and racism/anti-immigration were found.[3]

A different methodology has been used by, for example, Øysten Gullvåg Holter (2014) to examine macro-level social relations, with nation-states and US states as the units of analysis. This suggests how greater gender equality may be in men's interests, through improved health and less violence, and, perhaps counter-intuitively, even more than women's, leading to further debate on the long-standing issue of men's interests (Pease).

The Transnational

In recent years there has been a surge of research studies, books, and other contributions, with an explicitly gendered focus on men that look across, beyond, and sometimes even through national borders, in regional, international, global, or postcolonial terms or contexts. Many of these researches are from the Global South (for example, Cornwall and Lindisfarne; Ouzgane and Coleman; Pease and Pringle; Jones; Esplen and Greig; Parpart and Zalewski; Donaldson et al.; Cornwall et al; Ruspini et al.; Hearn et al. 2013; Carabí and Armengol; van der Gaag; Edström et al.). Building on the global and glocal approaches outlined earlier, such translocal, transnational perspectives certainly do not mean a perspectiveless "god's-eye" view.

In making sense of this surge of studies, there are some difficulties with the concept of globalization; very few social phenomena are global, actually. To some extent, problems with the concept of globalization can be ameliorated in part by speaking instead of transnationalizations, operating within global contexts. There are several reasons why the transnational is important (Hearn "Neglected"). First, transnationality can be seen as a social division or intersection itself, just as real as age or class. Second, transnationality concerns relations between nationalities, and thus nations. Third, it highlights intersectionalities with and between nationality, language, culture, location, movement, mobility, but also across these boundaries, materially and virtually. Fourth, transnationality may involve the metamorphosing of boundaries, national and other (Hearn "Tracking"). Transnational categories and relations are becoming defined in more complex ways, with more blurrings in intersections with other social categories, intersectionalities, and the deconstruction, transnationalizations, and transformulation of those categories—hence transsectionalities, as with hybrid categories that are more than the sum of, say, gender/race/languages (also see Khagram and Levitt). In transnational processes the nation can be simultaneously affirmed and deconstructed, in several ways:

- *Moving across* or *between* two or more somethings: across national boundaries or between nations, as in migration or policy negotiations between sovereign states;

- *Metamorphosing*: problematizing, blurring, hydridizing, transgressing, breaking down, even dissolving something(s), nations or demise of the nation or national boundaries, as in blurrings of boundaries;
- *New configurations*, intensified, transnational, supranational or de-territorialized, de-materialized or virtual entities, the material/virtual sex trade.

The transnational occurs beyond, between, and within nations (Hearn et al. 2013); and is itself multi-form, as movement, transgression, and creating new configurations. Transnational processes of change involve flows of people, money, or information across borders, and the crossing and spanning of borders by social networks, organizations, and institutions. Multi-strandedness operates in economic, political, symbolic, and emotional realms. Transnationalism and transnationalizations emphasize multiple, often hybrid processes and institutions across geographical, cultural, and political borders. Such transnational moves have opened alternative and complex references and relations to nation-states. These can be seen as arenas of transnational patriarchies, or transpatriarchies for short. Transnationality and transnationalizations take many forms and have many implications for men, gender relations, nation, and nationalism (Zalewski and Parpart; Hearn and Pringle; Parpart and Zalewski). Key contemporary arenas of global and transnational gender relations are:

- Transnational business corporations and governmental organizations, with the almost total dominance of men at top levels of transnational corporate management, and their gender-segregated labour forces;
- International trade, global finance, and the masculinization of capital market trading and business media;
- Militarism and the arms trade;
- International sports industries and their gender segregation;
- Consumption and consumerism;
- Transnational work-family / household / life relations;
- Bio-, medical and reproductive movements, for example, sperm banks, cosmetic surgery, trading in body parts, surrogacy;
- Migrations, refugees, flows, movements, care chains, circuits;
- Information and communication technologies (ICT), virtualization, information flows, image transfer and circulation;
- The sex trade, and sexualization in the global mass media;
- Cultural, political, religious, aesthetic social movements;
- Transportation, water, environment, energy, climate;
- Knowledge production, theory and theorizing (Hearn *Men of the World* 20–1; see also Esplen and Greig).

In trying to make sense of all these kinds of transnational gender relations, in both extensive empirical studies and more theoretical analysis, I have found the long-established debate on patriarchy—now seen in transnational contexts—especially useful. As a way of doing these kinds of researches, and indeed activism and politics, the notion of transnational patriarchies is useful. So this approach is part

of a mindset that seeks to go beyond the problems of both comparative and over-globalizing viewpoints. Transnational patriarchies, or transpatriarchies for short, are overlapping kinds of "empires." Transpatriarchy(ies) might also be relevant for rethinking about the transformation of gender. The transnational frame presents great academic and political challenges and opportunities for deconstructing the dominant (Hearn "Deconstructing"; Hearn *Men of the World*). It can act as a broad heuristic or theoretical frame, as well as a conceptual apparatus for handling empirical data. This applies not only for macro-scale social phenomena such as large migrations or global, transnational business corporations or climate change, but also for interpreting changes in more immediate social institutions, processes and experiences, such as transnational aspects of fatherhood (Hearn "Men, Fatherhood") or aging (Hearn and Sandberg). Such issues have often been left to local welfarist analysis, as noted at the beginning of this chapter.

There are many ways in which transpatriarchal powers and processes develop and change, bringing extensions of power for some men, and loss of power and privilege for other men. *Extensions of transnational patriarchal power*, individual and collective, may follow new technologies or corporate concentrations. Such extensions can easily facilitate *processes of transnational individual and collective non-responsibility* of men, whereby social problems that have been created are held to be the business of others, be they women, other men, governments, or those elsewhere. These changes bring *processes of loss of expected security and privilege* for some men. This may take the form of non-responsibility, of surveillance and disruption, of loss of expected security/privilege—from individual men to state to transnational institutions. At the same time, losses, or perceived losses, of power among certain can interplay with *processes of recouping of patriarchal power*, within transnational movements and transnational social spaces. There are also growing *processes of surveillance*, along with reciprocal *processes of their disruption*, for example, through technological hacking or terrorism; *processes of transnational movements and formation of transnational social, political, cultural spaces*; and even *processes of transnational impacts of emotions* (Hearn "How About Transpatriarchies").

Concluding on Knowledges

Finally, some words are necessary on knowledge, knowledges, of different kinds—the very issue raised at the start of this chapter. All of the framings briefly outlined are about knowledge construction; different framings of "men around the world" and "global and transnational masculinities" have their modes of and implications for knowledge construction. Large-scale comparative, global, world-centered, and transnational thinking seems to take us a long way from the earlier "ethnographic moments" in critically studying men and masculinities. It also introduces some significant challenges, for example, how to distinguish such approaches from, for example, mainstream comparative studies or world systems theory. These issues resonate with postcolonial and decolonizing approaches to knowledge itself. The Beninese philosopher Paulin Hountondji has highlighted

the importance of global divisions of academic labour, with the global metropole holding most journals, most theory and methodology, most aggregated data in libraries, archives, data banks and research institutions, and most material resources in universities, research funding, conferences, and the like. Meanwhile, the global periphery supplies data, and sometimes subsequently applies, or even reapplies, metropolitan science in practice (see also Connell "Margin").

Comparative knowledge on men and masculinities is vital, but may have limitations, in assuming the comparability, empirically and epistemologically, of very different kinds of (usually national or state) units. In these units, men and masculinities are generally posited as nationally defined, as a mean average in some statistical way or sometimes differentially in relation to different locations within the (national) state or culture. This is necessary but not sufficient. Similarly, global, glocal, globalizing, and world-centred knowledges are also essential. They show the enormity of the issues in hand, and the need to attend to men and masculinities on a world scale. They may construct men and masculinities as the products of the disembodied, de-located, non-territorialized forces of globalization above and beyond the nation and region. They also, however, bring some risks in the sense of who can speak "for and behalf of the world," and as such, along with some other macro-orientated approaches, need to guard against the possible adoption of a "god's-eye" view.

Building on globally orientated knowledge, transnational knowledges do not resolve this last dilemma, but rather show the diversity of forms of social relations around men and masculinities: some locally and nationally founded and grounded; some concerning transgressions and deconstructions of nations and nationals boundaries; and some concerning new emerging social configurations, operating at different levels, scopes and scales. The multi-strandedness of transnational knowledges on men and masculinities operates economically, politically, symbolically, and emotionally, and emphasizes the multiple, hybrid, colonial, postcolonial, and decolonializing processes and institutions across borders—including what a man is and what masculinities are, are assumed to be, may become, and how they may be deconstructed. Such moves to think, analyze, act, more globally, more transnationally, are very part of the geopolitics of knowledge construction, with all that that entails in knowledge privileging, the establishment of knowledge intermediaries, and perpetuation of knowledge marginalizations and exclusions.

Notes

1. A comparative reading of these two reports of the investigations is especially interesting. The Finnish is the result of the deliberations of a committee of ministerial civil servants and non-governmental organization representatives, that heard inputs from some, but far from all relevant, experts and interested parties, and is 12 pages long; the Swedish stems from a coordinated investigation that commissioned expert chapters, and is 557 pages in the main report, and with 23 appendices, many of which are published additionally online.
2. That is, the compression of time and space across the globe—at least for some people and some aspects of life.

3. For more information, see http://www.icrw.org/publications/international-men-and-gender-equality-survey-images.

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5 Transnational Legacies and Masculinity Politics in *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*

Aishih Wehbe-Herrera

"OK, Wao. Ok. You win."

(325)

Junot Díaz is one of the most acclaimed Latino writers of the early twenty-first century. Already on the literary critics' radar since the publication of the short story collection *Drown* (1996), Díaz achieved wider recognition and acknowledgement with his first novel, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007), which won the 2008 Pulitzer Prize. The novel has been examined through multiple lenses such as its gender and masculinity politics, its historical, (post)/(de)colonial claims, its rich intertextuality, its engagement with science-fiction and comic literature, the tradition of magical realism, its relation to the Latin American literary canon,[1] its contention with multiculturalism,[2] and its historical account of the Dominican Republic before and after Rafael Leónidas Trujillo's dictatorship.[3] In my view, such rich and diverse scholarship reflects the post-structural and decolonial character of the text, which is powerfully contained in Díaz's self-confessed fascination for "how one thing can be absolutely yes and no at the same time . . . whatever happens in this conversation, the other thing exists equally" (Díaz "Revenge"). I argue that this "yes and no" rapport, this existential, discursive, and ontological "ubiquity" that captivates Díaz can be further articulated regarding the novel's gender politics, transnational claims, the colonial and dictatorial past of the Dominican Republic and its diaspora, and how these elements impact on people's individual and collective psyches. In this light, my contribution will examine the interdependence and relationality of these factors, tackling how they reinforce transnational patriarchies[4] and gender inequality while simultaneously disarticulating (trans)national heterosexist hegemonies, masculinity practices and national (de)limitations.

In addition, I argue that the novel reflects the transnational character of the relationship between the Dominican Republic (DR) and its American diaspora, presenting the three generations of de León y Cabral family as transnational subjects. In this respect, Oscar's family history epitomizes the forging of the Dominican transmigrant (trans)nation. Díaz takes the most fundamental (micro)social structure, the family, and through its story illuminates the realities of the Dominican

community (including its diaspora) through the simultaneous interpellation of the individual, particularly the diaspora-born Oscar and Lola. These central characters, along with Yunior, Oscar's roommate/friend, onetime unfaithful boyfriend of Lola, and the narrator of the novel, strive to shake off the burden (and responsibility) of intricate and convoluted (trans)national histories shaped by specific gender and racial identifications. Oscar and Lola's stories, the demise of the Cabral family, Beli's lifelong hardships as a Dominican dark-skinned (migrant) woman, and the perpetuation of gender inequalities through the transnational endorsement of *machismo* are keys to the novel.[5] Accordingly, relationships between the DR and Dominican communities worldwide, particularly in the United States, are defined by its transnational and transmigrant specificity.[6] The high flux of economic, cultural, values, and affective remittances determine the DR's socio-economic and political present through a relationship of co-dependence, rendering it virtually impossible to delineate the borders of *Dominicanness*, geographically and conceptually (Merman-Jozwiak 387). This fact interestingly challenges the feasibility of the modern nation-state, its geopolitical borders, and the configurations of collective "selves" and individual subjects. If one wonders, "[w]hat are the boundaries of Latin America if, for instance, we consider New York the largest Puerto Rican metropolis and Los Angeles the second largest Mexican metropolis?" (The Latin American Subaltern Studies Group qtd. in Merman-Jozwiak 17), then the understanding of cultural and national identities needs to be relocated and rethought in transnational terms, which acknowledge the presence of "nations" (although not limited to them) as agents of change, and as changing entities themselves. As Jeff Hearn and Marina Blagojević observed, this transnational thinking better accounts for the constant flow/movement of peoples, the socio-cultural, affective, and economic remittances of transnational communities, and the interdependence "between, within, and beyond" nations, diasporas, and transitional spaces.[7]

In the case of Oscar Wao, this transnational dimension serves as the backbone to the novel from its opening pages, which recalls the story of the *fukú*, "the Curse and the Doom of the New World . . . a demon drawn into Creation through the nightmare door that was cracked open in the Antilles" (1).[8] The *fukú* came from Africa "in the screams of the enslaved" (1) and reached the island's shores as a result of the Spanish Conquest of Hispaniola. The *fukú* is such an intimate part of Dominican cultural identity that everyone has a *fukú* story "knocking around in their family" (5). Undoubtedly, the *fukú* works as a powerful and versatile symbolic trope. First, as the narrator's cue to tell Oscar's family history and by extension, the story of the Dominicans as a nation. In addition, the *fukú*'s supernatural dimension nurtures the novel's intertextuality, particularly Díaz's use of comic and fantasy literature as (un)conscious decoders, that is, as mechanisms to approach and utter the grotesque, horrific, and otherworldly reality of human rights violations perpetuated under Trujillo and his post-mortem legacy, faithful to a tradition of colonial, postcolonial, and neocolonial violence. Significantly, the *fukú* helps to situate the story in transnational grounds, considering its Afro-Spanish colonial roots, its power during Trujillo's dictatorship, and its influence over the Dominican American diaspora and its hardships. According to Yunior's grandfather, it

was "Trujillo's payback to the pueblo that betrayed him. Fukú" (Díaz *Wao* 5). Therefore, *Oscar Wao* uncovers the transnational historiography of socio-political and economic violence rooted in the process of nation-building, shaped by the DR's colonial "past in present," US interventionism, particularly from the nineteenth century onwards, Trujillo's dictatorship (1930–1961), and neoliberal politics of "West/rest" and "North/South." Accordingly, Maja Horn (2014, 2015) examines the correlation between hegemony, gender, and nation-building, scrutinizing how US interventionism "shaped Dominican national sentiments and gender formations in ways that facilitated not only Trujillo's rise to power but also Dominicans' embrace of his national-popular political rhetoric, including its hyperbolic language of masculinity" (23–4). In effect, Díaz's novel disentangles and exposes "the centrality of gender notions in structuring Dominican political, public, and private imaginaries" (Horn 2014), and in weaving (US) imperialist, colonial and nationalist histories. The correlation between nation-building processes and heterosexist masculinity politics[9] is at the heart of US expansionism to the West, the racist premises of Manifest Destiny, the almost total annihilation of Native Americans, the rise of Theodore Roosevelt to the presidential office (Kimmel 2005), and I would add, US interventionist foreign policy in the Caribbean.[10] As Joane Nagel has pointed out:

> Given the close association between nineteenth and twentieth-century ideologies of masculinity, colonialism, imperialism, militarism and nationalism, given the fact that it was mainly men who adhered to and enacted them, and given the power of those movements and institutions in the making of the modern world, it is not surprising that masculinity and nationalism seem stamped from the same mould—a mould which has shaped important aspects of the structure and culture of the nations and states in the modern state system.
>
> (251)

Oscar Wao dissects this masculinity/nation/power/violence nexus, epitomized by Trujillo's dictatorship, its gross human rights violations, and the hypermasculinity, cruelty, and insatiability of its *caudillo*. In so doing, the novel spells out "the larger social and political implications and the lasting effects of [Trujillo's] dictatorial discourse on Dominican gender formations" (Horn 17), which still have a powerful bearing on the overall configuration of the Dominican (trans)nation. For example, heterosexist dynamics are not necessarily transformed by women's access to economic independence, as it happens with Beli, Oscar's mother, who migrates to the United States and keeps enforcing heterosexist values on her American-born children. Nor is it necessarily challenged by younger generations, as Yunior shows through his performance of highly sexualized, unfaithful, emotionally lacking, and *spornosexual*[11] standards of Dominican American masculinities. Both, Beli and Yunior try to instill "old good ideals" of Dominican manhood on Oscar, who originally seemed a "normal" Dominican boy, "one of those preschool loverboys who was always trying to kiss the girls, always coming

up behind them during a merengue and giving them the pelvic pump" (Díaz *Wao* 11). However, once Oscar is ditched by one of his first girlfriends and publicly cries about it, his fate changes from promising *tíguere*[12] to fanboy-nerdy loser.[13] Disapproving of Oscar's non-hegemonic geeky preferences, Beli forces him to

> Go outside and play! . . . Pórtate como un muchacho normal . . . Pa'fuera! his mother roared . . . please, I want to stay, he would beg his mother, but she shoved him out—You ain't a woman to be staying in the house.
>
> (Díaz *Wao* 22)

The lack of identification and performance of hegemonic masculinity is immediately related to the undervalued world the feminine and the queer,[14] which is the *raison d'être* of Oscar's nickname.[15]

Irritated by Oscar's manly failures, Yunior takes on the task of manning up Oscar through "Project Oscar" (Díaz *Wao* 176), which in military fashion aims to discipline Oscar's body and masculine performance and so metaphorically, "purge the Otherness out of himself" (Machado-Sáez 546). In so doing, he compels Oscar to lose weight, exercise heavily on a daily basis, and shake his nerdiness off him in order to reap the fruits of "real" masculinity: sexual intercourse. In the novel, being sexually active is sine qua non to hegemonic masculinity to the point of verging on men's animalization through their hypersexualization. Although this point was early made in the critical studies of men and masculinities (Kimmel and Kaufman, Kaufman, 1999, 2003, 2007; Pease 2000, 2014), the novel transnationally connects the fear of not having enough "toto" or "bootie" or sex, as the novel puts it, to Trujillo's hypersexualized masculinity and *culocracy* (Díaz *Wao* 217). Trujillo's need for constant sexual intercourse socially legitimized rape culture and gender-based violence against women and girls (GBVAWG), as illustrated by Beli's story with el Gangster and Abelard's death for protecting his daughters from Trujillo's rape. Even tío Rudolfo, Oscar's uncle, encourages Oscar to "grab a muchacha and méteselo. That will take care of everything. Start with a fea. Coje that fea y méteselo" (Díaz *Wao* 24). The link between masculinity, GBVAWG, political domination and *transpatriarchies* is evident, bringing to light how these transnational socio-political systems are upheld and developed not only at the expense of, and through women's bodies and rights, but also through the annihilation of men's emotional realms and humanity in such a process.

Yunior's inability to build significant emotionally nurturing and caring relationships with women and men hinders his inner growth and evolution as a character. As he acknowledges, "a heart like mine, which never got any kind of affection growing up, is terrible above all things" (Díaz *Wao* 185).[16] Yunior pays a high price for his "compulsive" unfaithfulness, which are his chronic loneliness and his inability to commit to others and above all, to himself. His relationship with Lola, whom he really loved, finishes after he cheats on her. In conversation with Oscar, Yunior affirms that he does not know why he was unfaithful to Lola, "If I knew that, it wouldn't be a problem" (Díaz *Wao* 313). Díaz, therefore, emphasizes the need for decolonizing intimacy, love, nurturance, emotion, sexuality, and

gender.[17] It is precisely on this point that Yunior and Oscar's symbiotic relationship is exposed, acting as a mirror for each other, representing their major differences but more strikingly, their similarities. On the one hand, Yunior, the perfect Dominican *tíguere*, who "ha[s] Atomic Level G . . . [and] pull[s] the bitches with both hands" (24), contrasts with Oscar, who "had none of the Higher Power of your typical Dominican male, couldn't have pulled a girl if his life depended on it . . . [and was full] of anti-pussy devices" (Díaz *Wao* 20). On the other, both are survivors of multiple traumatic experiences (i.e. Trujillo's dictatorship) and seek redemption through writing, a *zafa* that would hopefully enable self-understanding and healing (Fraser LeGris 7). Both like the genres, although Yunior learned to hide his *otakuness* (Díaz *Wao* 21). Both have Afro hair (Yunior had it shaved off by his dad),[18] and both felt vulnerable and cried in their childhood.[19] It is important to recuperate these dialogues between Díaz's works to illuminate important parallelisms between Yunior and Oscar, which help explain the former's anxieties towards the latter and his constant attempts to purge his Otherness. As Hannah Fraser LeGris explains, "when Yunior cries as a child, exhibits any sort of identification with either non-normative males or females, or spurns aggressive sexual conquests, he automatically becomes a queer suspect" (13). In this respect, an important difference between them is that Yunior, having a harsher patriarchal schooling through a repressive father-figure and elder brother, learned how to conceal the *queerness* that Oscar embodies (i.e. his non-gender compliance). In addition, Yunior also lacks Oscar's genuineness and transparency to be who he actually is, in all his imperfections and "unpretension."

Oscar's conscious *disidentification* with hegemonic masculinity is violently censored in a world in which gender, racial, sexual, and ethnic differences are systematically condemned, paying with his life for it. Although I agree with Horn (130) and Machado-Sáez (540) that the novel finally redeems Oscar's masculinity through traditional romantic love conventions and the "romance of sex" (Machado-Sáez 540) (i.e. he risks and loses his life for the love of a woman), I am more interested in Oscar's transgression of normative masculinity with/through its very tools. His heroism stems from the fact that, despite living a life full of humiliations, violence, and discrimination; despite his nerdiness, fatness, and non-desireable otherness; he experiences the intimacy found in love. I agree that this argument partly rests on the precepts of romantic love, indeed. However, I contend that Oscar's capacity to love and be loved is not experienced by any other male character in the novel, which represents a major handicap for Yunior himself. This emotional lack bespeaks of Yunior's incapacity to articulate feeling beyond anger, rage, anxiety and fear, and to make sense of love. In a soliloquy dedicated to Lola, Yunior admits that

> before all hope died I used to have this stupid dream that shit could be saved, that we would be in bed together like the old times, with the fan on, the smoke from our weed drifting above us, and I'd finally try to say words that could have saved us.
>
> (Díaz *Wao* 327)

As a result, I advocate for a more positive reading of Oscar's ending in line with masculinity studies that theorize the need to reconnect men with their emotions in order to transform heterosexist masculinity patterns into more egalitarian and non-violent ones (see Kaufman 1999, 2003, 2007 and Pease 2000, 2014). Even Yunior, after trying to avoid the act of "bearing witness" to himself, finally makes inventory, embarks in a process of self-accountability and finally settles down, and writes "from can't see in the morning to can't see at night. Learned that from Oscar. I'm a new man, you see, a new man, a new man" (Díaz *Wao* 326). This almost compulsive affirmation of a new manhood also relates back to Oscar, who in effect represented the only available non-hegemonic masculinity model for Yunior. Therefore, it is important to save love as a powerful tool and an effective channel to connect men with their emotional realm, severed as a result of transcolonial histories and the trauma of violence, power, and abuse—and enact social change.

The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao is an act of exorcism, or as Yunior puts it, "a zafa of sorts" (Díaz *Wao* 7). Every speech act, every act of memory, every telling and knowing and memory of violence is a counterspell. In this respect, the novel becomes a cartography, a tentative mapping to deal with "the good, the bad, and the ugly," and confront those transnational legacies that still permeate the collective unconscious and surface in the most unexpected, up-close and personal realms. The novel also captures the characters' attempts to "bear witness to themselves," which involves filling the *pátinas en blanco* and fighting *disremembrance*. Since "the only way out is in" (Díaz *Wao* 209), *The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* unearths the transnational histories, which rest on heterosexism, colonial and imperial discourses on race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and religion, as well as the realities of poverty, migration and violence, and that still hunt, hurt, influence and crosscut the Dominican transnation, their men and women. Finally, the novel problematizes masculinity as a site of transnational trauma, and advocates for accepting and exploring the human need to connect with others, to love and be loved, embracing vulnerability as a fundamental part of the self.

Notes

1. The works of Alejo Carpentier, Gabriel García Márquez, and Mario Vargas Llosa have served as a reference for several studies of the novel. See Cortés (2015) and Figueroa (2013).
2. For an excellent and thorough analysis of this question see Merman-Jozwiak (2013).
3. See Hanna, Harford-Vargas, and Saldívar (2016) for the first monograph and most recent publication on Junot Díaz's work from a decolonial perspective. See also Garland-Mahler, Hanna, Horn, Jay, Merman-Jozwiak, Ramírez, and Weese for outstanding interdisciplinary analyses of the novel.
4. For a definition of "transpatriarchies" see Hearn 2015: 81, and Hearn's article in this volume.
5. The (un)weaving of these stories clearly situates gender and masculinity practices in a transnational, transatlantic, transcontinental time/space frame; dating back to the *fukú* (an ancient transnational curse) of the admiral (aka Christopher Columbus; Díaz *Wao* 1),

and being brutally related to both the US military occupation of the DR (1916–1924) and "the language of racialized imperial masculinity that was used to justify it" (Dominguez Andersen and Went 2015:13).

6. As Sherri Grasmuck and Patricia Pessar claim, diasporic subjects keep strong ties with the DR, and move in and out both countries, for work and leisure, at times being "settled down" in both. (17).
7. Back in the 1980s, Chicana feminist, especially by Gloria Anzaldúa, already engaged in a discussion of the "transnational." Anzaldúa's conceptualisation and New Mestiza's *testimonio* of *transfronteriza* identity politics encompasses these "between, within and beyond" dynamics of identity formation and cultural straddling. This decolonization process implies both: intersectionally and relationally rethinking citizenship, belonging, rights, shared heritages, symbolic collective imaginaries, and sociopolitical economies, and "putting history through a sieve" (Anzaldúa 82) to disentangle white supremacist transnational legacies. It also involves "bearing witness to oneself" (Moya 215), becoming aware and therefore accountable to one's inscription and existence as subjects embedded in, resulting from, and functioning in multiple relations and structures of situated power(s). In *Oscar Wao*, the responsibility of bearing witness to/for oneself falls on the narrator, (Yunior) the readers, and the diasporic generation of Oscar and Lola: It is through the (re)telling of those stories, and the narration of the Cabral family's demise that the act of "bearing witness" is performed.
8. For a detailed analysis of the *fukú* see Garland Mahler 2010, Horn 2014, Merman-Jozwiak 2013, Patteson 2012, Ramírez 2013.
9. Jeff Hearn (2015) explores the close relation and often indivisibility of the nexus of men, nation, and state, which is socially and politically normalized and therefore unquestioned. Hearn rightly argues that

   > approaching the nation and nationhood through the lens of explicit critical analysis of men and masculinity suggests many possible avenues for theorizing empirical study and politics . . . Critically considering the place of nation and state in relation to critical studies of men and masculinities assists both their gendering and problematization" (82).

   This point has been also taken by international relations feminist scholarship (see Steans 2006). Joane Nagel's contribution eighteen years ago (1998) also needs to be carefully considered.
10. Joane Nagel explores the imperialist masculinist imagery that surrounded the US participation in the Spanish-American War, as well as Roosevelt's framing of this war in racialized gendered terms, depending on a "chauvinistic, militaristic masculinity" (1998: 251).
11. See Mark Simpson's theorisation of *spornosexuality* for further details.
12. The masculine ideal of the *tíguere*, which holds similarities with el *macho mexicano*, is a constant in the novel. As Christian Krohn-Hansen argues,

    > he is a type who acts according to the situation, is cunning, and has a gift for improvisation . . . the image of the *tíguere* represents both an everyday hero and a sort of trickster . . . and most men referred to by this label . . . embody a moral and political power which is ambiguous (109).

    Although the *tíguere* shows positive traits (i.e. strength, courage, intelligence), it also displays a hypersexualised hypermasculinity, and crosses ethical limits. This masculinity ideal powerfully flourished during Trujillo's time, being connected with sociopolitical power abuse, and subsequent control over women, racialised "others" and non-hegemonic subjects.

13.

> Oscar went home morose . . . What's wrong with you? his mother asked . . . When Oscar whimpered, Girls, Moms de León nearly exploded. Tú ta llorando por una muchacha? She hauled Oscar to his feet by his ear . . . She threw him to the floor. Dale un galletazo, she panted, then see if the little puta respects you (*Wao* 14).

Violence in all its forms is a common resource to implement gender compliance. In this respect, Judith Butler argues that

> gender as a norm is exercised coercively . . . [which speaks of an] extremely deep panic, or fear, an anxiety that pretends to gender norm. If someone says you must comply to the norm of masculinity otherwise you would die or I kill you now because you do not comply, then we have to start to question what the relation is between complying with gender and coercion (*A Short Speech on Gender*).

Susan Bordo (1999) and Raewyn Connell (1995) also delve into the brutal heterosexist policing of gender compliance, with special control and disciplining over masculinities, especially of those that (might) stray from hegemonic normativity.

14. In line with Judith Butler, I read the highly disputed concept of "queer" as "a site of collective contestation, the point of departure for a set of historical reflections and futural imaginings" (19). This interpretation means "no ownership" of this term, and its constant redeployment, twisting and "queering" from prior usages for the purpose of not losing its political and subversive potential (Butler "*Critical*" 19).
15. "Oscar Wao" alludes to the gay Irish poet Oscar Wilde.
16. For more insight into Yunior's growing up see *Drown* (1996).
17. This is also true of women in the novel.
18. See "Invierno," included in *This Is How You Lose Her* (2012).
19. See "Ysrael" in *Drown* (1996).

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6 New Arab Masculinities

A Feminist Approach to Arab American Men in Post-9/11 Literature Written by Women

Marta Bosch-Vilarrubias

Arab American writers, according to Khaled Mattawa and Munir Akash, have the power to subvert the commonly vilified image of Arabs in the United States. Mattawa and Akash state:

> If the image of [Arabs] is truly being created by the American imagination, the time has come to invalidate that image and render it unrecognizable . . . However slow and painful the recovery, Arab-American destiny will continue to come under Arab-American control so long as the image of the Arab-American comes increasingly under the control of Arab-American writers. (xi)

The negative view of Arabs and Muslims in North America stems from a long history of stereotyping. In the nineteenth-century United States, with the Barbary Wars, the first vilifying images started to appear, as the United States were fighting Muslim Pirates in the Atlantic.[1] Throughout the nineteenth century, Orientalist images were also inherited from Europe, and spread in the United States based on the "Social Darwinistic belief in the racial inferiority of Arabs, Kurds, and Turks and sustained by an abiding faith in the superiority of the United States" (Little 17). According to Douglas Little, it was in the 1920s that, with all those images in mind, "B movies, best-selling books, and mass circulation magazines" reinforced Orientalist stereotypes (17). In the second half of the twentieth century, the Arab-Israeli war of 1967, which took place as a consequence of the escalation of the 1956 Suez crisis, helped reinstate the negative views as Arabs were defeated by Israel.

This historical defamation of Arabs in the United States has historically gone hand in hand with the vilifying representation of Arabs and Muslims, especially men, in the media, notably in feature films and television, while women have been often portrayed as victims of men's patriarchy. Jack Shaheen has documented the historical media representation of Arabs in his volumes *The TV Arab* (1984), *Arab and Muslim Stereotyping in American Popular Culture* (1997), *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People* (2003), and *Guilty: Hollywood's Verdict on Arabs after 9/11* (2008). In his last book, Shaheen contends that after 9/11

Hollywood is continuing to vilify Arabs and Muslims, although, according to him, there is room for hope. As Shaheen expresses it:

> When I began researching this book I sensed that post-9/11 images of Arabs would be the same as pre-9/11 ones. They're not. Even though the majority of post-9/11 films do, in fact, vilify a people, I am somewhat encouraged to report that since 9/11, silver screens have displayed, at times, more complex, evenhanded Arab portraits than I have seen in the past.
>
> (*Guilty* 35)

To my mind, this slight change in the representation of Arabs responds to the earnest intention to positivize the image of Arabs after the terrorist attacks. In other words, despite the pervasive image of Arab/Muslim men as terrorists, there was an effort conducted after September 11 to counter that vilifying depiction that the media were reproducing. For example, President George W. Bush, in a speech in Congress on September 20, 2001, stated the importance of not falling into stereotyping:

> I also want to speak tonight directly to Muslims throughout the world. We respect your faith. It's practiced freely by many millions of Americans, and by millions more in countries that America counts as friends. Its teachings are good and peaceful, and those who commit evil in the name of Allah blaspheme the name of Allah. The terrorists are traitors to their own faith, trying, in effect, to hijack Islam itself. The enemy of America is not our many Muslim friends; it is not our many Arab friends. Our enemy is a radical network of terrorists, and every government that supports them.
>
> (in Blackley and Nahm)

My contention is that following the attacks, there were actually two trends, one which continued with the vilification of Arab masculinities, and another that, as posited by Jack Shaheen, represents "worthy Arabs and decent Arab Americans" (*Guilty* xv), and that according to him constitutes one-third of post-9/11 depictions. Television series, for example, tended after 9/11 to de-vilify Arab men by using Arab characters in an unexpected manner, and subverting the audience's expectations by providing a positive view of Arab or Muslim characters (Alsultany). Johanna Blackley and Shenna Nahim explain in their report on television series entitled "The Primetime War on Drugs and Terror" that 14 percent of terror suspects depicted after 9/11 are Arab or Muslim, while 62 percent are white Americans. They use *Homeland* as an example, and they point to an attempt to innovate and provide unexpected plots as a possible reason for this change (Bosch-Vilarrubias).[2] However, I believe that nowadays these expectations are beginning to be subverted again, the consequence of which is a return to the vilification of Arab men. In the new 2016 revival season of *The X Files*, there is a return to the 1990s concept, albeit in a post-9/11 manner. In episode 5 of season

10, called "Babylon," two young men appear to be planning a terrorist plot, but the scene seems to imply that they are in fact doing something else that is harmless. However, just as you expect to find out that they were innocent, a bomb explodes, evincing the fact that those men were terrorists. The rest of the episode revolves around trying to find a way to get into the mind of the only surviving terrorist who is in a coma. They eventually find a way, and the FBI is able to stop the terrorist plot and arrest the rest of the terrorists. I believe that the fact that this episode, aired on February 15, 2016, is subverting the common post-9/11 anti-stereotyping (or even unconventional) plot of the Arab terrorist speaks to the view of Muslim terrorism fifteen years after 9/11. Once, the response to the attacks was one the one hand vilification but on the other a strong attempt against stereotyping; but nowadays, and especially after further attacks (not on American soil), such as the one in Paris in November 2015, Brussels in March 2016, or the ISIS attacks in Syria, stereotyping is living a moment of resurgence, and this is having consequences in the representation of Arabs and Muslims in the media. Another example is season 5 of *Homeland*, which revolves around the attempt to avert Muslim fundamentalist terrorist attacks on European soil (in this case, Berlin). Therefore, it is becoming even more necessary for Arab Americans to provide images to counter those perpetuated by terrorism.

As mentioned earlier, it is mainly men who are relegated to the image of the terrorist. Conversely, it is mainly women who are providing representations of men in literature, since there is an overbearing presence of contemporary women writers within the Arab American literary circles. Nada Elia argues that the existence of more women writers than men responds to the fact that men are seen as a threat, while women are considered victims who deserve a voice (153). This is further complicated by the fact that women writers are informed by Arab American feminism, thus conducting an anti-sexist effort, while at the same time questioning the pervasive vilification of Arabs and Muslims in the United States. Therefore, the ones providing portrayals of new Arab American masculinities are Arab American women, and because they are schooled in gender issues, they conduct in their feminist writings a joint effort against sexism and against racism, offering depictions of men often informed by feminism. Arab American feminism has been working against both sexism and racism since its beginning in 1983, when the Feminist Arab-American Network (FAN) was created with the aim of establishing transnational links between Arab women in the United States and in the Arab world, and at the same time addressing the specific stereotyping of Arabs in America. FAN appeared as a consequence of the negative response received by Arab American women when they asked the National Women's Studies Association to condemn the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, to which the United States had given support. This fact made Arab American women realize that they were being dismissed by the feminist establishment, thus becoming aware of the racism pervasive in mainstream feminism. Therefore, they saw the need to establish a separate feminism that would tackle both ethnic and women's issues. In the 1990s, in the aftermath of the Persian Gulf War, Arab American feminism developed and gained force, as the war highlighted the ambivalence towards the Arab

American community in the United States.[3] A relevant 1990s publication resulting from this development was the anthology *Food for Our Grandmothers: Writings by Arab-American and Arab-Canadian Feminists* (1994), edited by Joanna Kadi (now known as Joe Kadi), which combined essays with fiction and poetry, and helped establish Arab American feminism and Arab American women writers within ethnic-American studies. After September 11, 2001, Arab American feminism continues advancing with organizations such as AMWAJ (Arab Movement of Women Arising for Justice), AROC (Arab Resource and Organizing Center), and SJP (Students for Justice in Palestine), which are promoting social justice in the United States while centering on Arab American women.

Hand in hand with the advancement of Arab American feminism, there was the growth of Arab American literature, which began to be considered a specific ethnic-American literature also in the 1990s. Arab American women writers have been the engine moving Arab American literature forward. In their texts, they reflect on gender issues, transpatriarchies, and masculinities, while also celebrating the importance of literature. As their prose focuses on gender issues, and given the post-9/11 context that emphasized Arab male vilification, Arab American women writers are providing new and mostly unstereotypical representations of Arab men. Jeff Hearn examines in his article in the present volume the concept of transnational patriarchies (or "transpatriarchies"), and their potential for deconstruction of dominant masculinities, patriarchies and, I would add, stereotypes. Arab American women writers reflect on transpatriarchies in their depictions of Arab men, they attempt to dismantle stereotypes, and aid thus in the deconstruction of gender hierarchies. In fact, Arab American women are reinscribing representations of men in American culture. While writing novels that feature prominent representations of fatherhoods that counteract stereotypes, women writers are also forwarding the importance of writing in their very own stories, and thus expressing the need for Arab American literature to provide new positive representations of Arab American manhoods. Susan Muaddi Darraj, in *The Inheritance of Exile: Stories of South Philly* (2007), and Randa Jarrar, in *A Map of Home* (2008), are two authors whose stories exemplify both the importance of women writing and of new nurturing conceptions of Arab manhood.

The Inheritance of Exile: Stories of South Philly, written by Susan Muaddi Darraj and published in 2007, tells the stories of four women of Palestinian origin in Philadelphia: Nadia, Aliyah, Hanan, and Reema. Their lives are more or less tangentially related to writing, and are intertwined with those of men around them, especially their fathers, but also their boyfriends, whose views of fatherhood are also highlighted in the novel.

Aliyah is the youngest writer in the story. As a child, at the age of ten, her father allowed her to have a room of her own where she could unleash her imagination on the page, leaving her brothers sharing one room (49). While mirroring Virginia Woolf's space of feminism, Aliyah's father was highlighting the pre-eminence of Arab women writers in the diaspora. However, Aliyah grew up, and her stories changed with her. When the honor of their family was attacked by a shameful (but true) story that Aliyah wrote, her father responded negatively to his honor being

attacked, and detached himself completely from his daughter. When cutting off his relationship with his daughter, he questioned her writing abilities and, overall, her imagination as an author:

> You are supposed to be a writer, no? And a writer uses her imagination to *create* characters and . . . situations.
>
> . . .
>
> So where is your imagination in this story? You create nothing. You only take an embarrassing family story and tell it to the world, like those Home Funniest Videos.
>
> (53, original emphasis)

Aliyah's father had started as a "new father" who forwarded feminism (Inhorn); however, this was so as long as that did not come into conflict with notions of honor and shame (central aspects to traditional conceptions of Arab masculinity). While he favored women education and literature, his concern with reputation and the Arab community still anchor him in traditional understandings of Arab masculinity, thus leaving him in an Arab American space between modernity and traditionalism in his understanding of manhood and feminism.

The other writer in *The Inheritance of Exile* is Reema. She is writing a PhD dissertation in sociology focused on immigrant women and thus interviews her mother, a Palestinian refugee. At the end of the novel, her mother acknowledges the importance of writing as a means to enact change, as she states "*Just shape the words I said the way you want—fix them and make them sound good. You are the writer*, habibti*, not me*" (196, original emphasis). Yousef Awad understands Reema's work as a form of postmemory. As he puts it, "Reema's project of keeping alive her mother's memories is not entirely different from Darraj's project because it entails re-living the traumatic experiences of war, immigration and displacement lived by Reema's mother and her generation" (6). Reema is conducting an effort in reinscribing her mother's trauma as a war refugee and, in doing so, is advancing the power of literature in healing trauma and deconstructing stereotypes.

Muaddi Darraj also continues forwarding the power of her own writing in her portrayal of Arab men in *The Inheritance of Exile*. She offers manhoods that counter stereotyped representations of Arab men, aiding thus in the Arab American feminist endeavor. Hanan's father is depicted as a second-generation Arab American man who understands his Arab American daughter better than her Palestinian refugee mother does. As is put in the novel, "Her father was an American, born to Arab parents" (81), while "her mother hadn't been born here—she'd grown up in the hilly town of Ramallah, had fled a series of wars, had left behind camps strewn with shrapnel, legless corpses, wailing women, and eyes too weary to weep" (81). Hanan's mother's status as a refugee distances her from her daughter who does not engage in the clinging to postmemory that her mother tries to instill on her. More than that, her mother's nostalgia for a homeland she cannot return to makes her stick to tradition, while Hanan tries to escape that by opposing her mother's

traditions. In a way, Hanan's reaction to her mother's refugee status is a rejection of the culture that is grounding her in nostalgia, a rejection of postmemory. This actually strengthens her relationship with her modern Arab American father, as he is by her side when she becomes a single mother. Her father cares for her, asking about her well-being, supporting her all along (95, 115–9, 133–5), and being "always kind and eager to please [her]" (101). She admires him so much that she gives her son her father's name. By doing so, she is in fact reinscribing the power of language in rewriting Arab (American) masculinities.

Finally, there is Nadia, whose father died when she was a young girl, so her memories of him are tinged with the nostalgia resultant from the loss of a parent. However, she remembers him as a nurturing father who would always play with her (38). Her father dies in an accident, and later on Nadia's own life mirrors that of her father, as she is involved in a car crash that leaves her with a long recovery ahead, and barren. She hides this information from her boyfriend, an Arab American man called George Haddad, from whom she distances herself after her mother tells her that "[George's family] are an Arab family, with only one son, who have put all their savings to send him to medical school in America. Do you think they will accept for him to marry and not have children?" (44). Fatherhood is related to patriarchy in the traditional Arab mind of Nadia's mother, who projects her own beliefs onto George and his family. However, George, as an Arab American, does not care about Nadia's infertility. At the end of the story, Nadia's friend Reema talks to George and explains the reason behind his and Nadia's estrangement, to which George replies "there is more than one way to become a father" (188). While he still underlines the importance that fatherhood has for him (a fact that may be pointing to the relevance of patriarchy for him), he also points to alternative modes of fatherhood within his view of transpatriarchies. Marcia C. Inhorn writes about "new Arab men" (302) and emergent masculinities in her book *The New Arab Man. Emergent Masculinities, Technologies, and Islam in the Middle East* (2012), where she examines the modern reproductive technologies used in the Middle East and the new understandings of masculinities resulting from them. Following his beliefs, George has become one of these "new Arab men." In his advancement of romantic love over fatherhood, George states, "I'm not a shallow man. If I have Nadia, that is everything. I want you to make her understand that. We'll figure out the rest later" (188).

The Inheritance of Exile examines the relevance of writing for Arab Americans while proposing representations of new masculinities. In doing so, Muaddi Darraj is advancing Arab American feminism by reflecting on the importance of women writers, while at the same time contributing images of Arab and Arab American men that deviate from stereotypical and vilified representations. In fact, Muaddi Darraj expressed in an interview her good relationship with her father, who always encouraged her to write (Horner).

In contrast, there is the case of Arab American writer Randa Jarrar, author of *A Map of Home*, who after publishing this novel saw her father distancing from her. In her unpublished essay "Bibliocast,"[4] Jarrar explains that after she published the novel, her father found it heretic and dishonorable towards her family, and told

her that he would not speak to her again unless she burned all the copies of the book. In a metaphorical stance on the power of literature, Jarrar ends the story in her essay with her throwing the last existing copy of the novel to her father, after which he dissolves into air. Jarrar is thus purposefully implying that literature is a powerful tool in favor of freedom of expression and against machismo.

The novel that Jarrar's father was so angry about, *A Map of Home*, is the story of a family in the diaspora. The main character is the adolescent Nidali, whose name means "my struggle" in Arabic, something that is representative of the relationship she will have with her father. He, a man of Palestinian origin called Waheed, tries to enact a masculinity that moves between tradition and modernity, which values female education at the same time as chastity, and thus denies female freedom. His masculinity is actually characteristic of diasporic Arab (and specifically Palestinian) manhoods, as Daniel Monterescu explains in his article "Stranger Masculinities: Gender and Politics in a Palestinian-Israeli 'Third Space.'" The third space that his masculinity occupies makes him want his daughter to pursue the PhD that he couldn't do, but at the same time, he does not want her to think about boys until she has finished her doctorate (24), and has outbursts of violence when he does not get his way. After moving from Boston, through different Arab countries, the family ends up in Texas, and there they undergo a change that directs them towards a more gender equal understanding of family. Once settled in the United States, mother and daughter confront Waheed in various occasions, and Nidali ends up leaving home and sending a dramatic letter to her father where she equates her lack of freedom with death (240). In fact, Nidali is starting to use writing as a tool to attempt a change in Arab (American) masculinities. The last confrontation between father and daughter takes place when she wants to leave home to go to university. Waheed refuses, but Nidali goes anyway, after which he understands that he has no power over his daughter's choices, as she has the freedom to leave. The novel concludes with Waheed hugging his daughter and acknowledging the need of nurturing in his relationship with her, thus pointing to a progress in his understanding of transpatriarchy:

> I reached out to hug him; I rested my face in the cloth of his suit; I breathed in the fabric and heard my father's heart, and Baba said, "I remember the way you used to breathe against my neck when you were a baby. I'd rock you to sleep and you would breathe . . . two tiny columns of breath against me, here," he gestured with his hand. "I can still feel it."
>
> (288)

In fact, what the novel is doing is projecting a hopeful ending for the relationship between Randa Jarrar and her father. Writing, both for Nidali and Jarrar, is a way to challenge and change (traditional) masculinities and to point to more nurturing transpatriarchies. Muaddi Darraj also reflects on the importance of women writers, while proposing positive models of Arab American enactments of manhood. These post-9/11 novels are acknowledging the importance of writing for the Arab American feminist struggle, and providing representations against the pervasive

Arab American mainstream view of Arabs and Muslims as terrorists. In doing so, they are advancing the Arab American feminist stance against both racism and sexism.

However, both in literature and in popular cultural artifacts, there has been in the 2010s a change of path from the one previously exemplified in Muaddi Darraj's and Jarrar's novels from 2007 and 2008. These last years (2010–2016), with the rise of ISIS and its attacks (in Syria, Paris, and Brussels), there seems to be a return to the image of Arabs/Muslims as terrorists—and we can see this in fiction on television (for example, on the aforementioned last season of *Homeland* or last episode of the *X Files* revival). It would seem convenient, thus, to purposefully forward an Arab American feminist view of Arab American masculinities through all means possible. One way to do so is through literature. Paradoxically, though, in Arab American literature (written by women) there's a new trend that underlines the obliteration of ethnicity. Renowned author Diana Abu-Jaber, well known for *Arabian Jazz* (1993) and *Crescent* (2003)—both novels centered on the issue of Arab American identity—has lately been publishing novels where no ethnic markers are to be found. This is the case of *Origin* (2007) and *Birds of Paradise* (2011). In relation to the former, Steven Salaita comments:

> By not identifying any of her characters as Arab, Abu-Jaber is making a specific political point in addition to an artistic choice. It is possible that she simply wanted to move away from being typecast as an ethnic author, but her choice not to name Arabs ultimately reinforces the importance of culture and identity in literature. Think of it as an inclusion by omission.
>
> (107)

This is actually a trend also followed by Mona Simpson—with a vast body of work devoid of ethnic references, such as *Anywhere But Here* (1987), *The Lost Father* (1991), or *A Regular Guy* (1996); and Naomi Shihab Nye, a prominent writer versed on Arab American themes, who in her novel *Going Going* (2005) the only ethnic reference is that of an admired grandfather who is mentioned in passing. This obliteration, this "inclusion by omission" (as Salaita put it), may have been responding to a feeling of de-vilification prompted by the aftermath of September 11 that, paradoxically, both disparaged Arabs and, as a way to counter their defamation, positivized the figure of Arab Americans. However, while writers seem to be forgetting about the need to take the image of Arabs under their control, I believe that it is still a preeminent endeavor.

Notes

1. The first Barbary War took place between 1801 and 1805 and confronted the United States and the Ottoman provinces of Algiers, Tripoli, Tunis, and the Sultanate of Morocco; the second one took place in 1815 against Algeria. These wars intended to stop Muslim pirates in the Atlantic, and resulted in the increase of Orientalist views of Muslims (Little 12).
2. To read more about *Homeland*'s use of stereotypes, see Bosch-Vilarrubias.

3. The Persian Gulf War took place from August 2, 1990, to March 1, 1991, and consisted of an armed conflict between Iraq and a coalition of countries from the United Nations, led by the United States, who tried to liberate Kuwait from the Iraqi invasion.
4. A reading of this essay by the author can be found in YouTube: "Randa Jarrar." Liberal Arts IUPUI. December 1, 2014. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFh1rWKFFvU.

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Part III

The Ages of Men

7 "Men Who Cry in Their Sleep"

Aging Male Hysteria in Martin Amis's London Stories

Lynne Segal

Cultures of aging, it should be obvious, are always gendered, whatever their time or place. As a feminist you might expect me to say this, of course, but then I am hardly the first to do so. From New York, over forty years ago, the American writer and cultural critic Susan Sontag was pointing out the double standard of aging, indicating that women are aged by culture far faster than men. They are also discarded sooner, both in the public world, and increasingly, in the private world as well (Sontag 27). It is "femininity" and "womanliness," in particular, which have always been so firmly grounded in the body, the youthful, and most certainly, the fertile body. This means that in culture generally women are silently stamped as undesirable, frightening, or pitiful, decades earlier than men. Surveying decades of mainstream film in the United States, for instance, Elizabeth Markson and Carol Taylor analyzed a sample of over 3,000 motion pictures made in the 1930s and the close of the twentieth century, finding little change in the way in which leading older actors were portrayed throughout those years. On screen any signs of physical aging tended to be played down, with elderly male actors overwhelmingly portrayed as vigorous and actively engaged with the world (whether as heroes or villains), while the opposite situation was in the roles provided for older female actresses, if and when they did appear (Markson and Taylor, Grogan). Indeed, as we'll see, so gendered is the stigma associated with old age that it creates distinct problems for men, making them feel feminized, simply because they are old. Thus, for instance, the Michigan law professor Bill Miller in his recent book, *Losing It*, laments that aging turns men into women, or at the very least "neuters them . . . which is what old, even middle, age effectively does to males anyway" (Miller 3).

Age Prejudice

What may seem surprising about the present moment is that age prejudice has actually been increasing rather than decreasing in recent years, both despite and because of the growing numbers of old people overall. Indeed, if we look at the UK, my own point of reference for this chapter, ageism has been socially orchestrated in recent times with my own generation of aging "baby-boomers" (as we are often called), those born at the close or soon after World War II, tendentiously

targeted as the selfish and greedy generation, even bizarrely seen as responsible for the economic downturn, as we enter old age. In the UK we have witnessed one of our ruling cabinet ministers in government, David Willetts, publishing a book called: *The Pinch: How the Baby-Boomers Took Their Children's Future—and Why They Should Give It Back* (2010). Such vilification neatly combines two favourite conservative mantras: trashing the radical legacy of the 1960s generation, while simultaneously disparaging those seen as becoming potentially unproductive, outside the waged labour market, or in need. In reality, as the British economist Phil Mullan argues, the vilification of this age cohort has little to do with economics or demographic shifts, but is deployed at government levels to justify austerity measures and further curbs in welfare spending.

However, these ongoing ideological assaults on the elderly merely add to the tacit perniciousness of the cultural representations of old age generally, rendering it all but synonymous with ugliness, frailty, incapacity, and death. Moreover, just as Sontag suggested, historically fears of aging have first and foremost targeted the aging woman. With old women in particular more likely to end up alone, unprotected, and penniless, the most terrifying images of old age have always had a female face: the witch, old hag, medusa, harridan—whether in myth, folk tale, or contemporary horror movies. Think of the famous Dutch painting, *The Ugly Duchess*, also known as *A Grotesque Old Woman*, a classic satirical portrait painted by the Flemish artist Quentin Massys. No equivalent symbolic resonance trails through time and place attached to male figures. This has always had and continues to have some stark material consequence for older women. The fact that women are aged by culture faster than men, as well as confined to fewer areas of the labour market, often taking time out from work, or working part-time when having children or to encompass other aspects of care work, has lasting implications for their rights and well-being as they age. Women overall have a much smaller pension pot, and they are for many reasons far more likely to end up living alone, with no companion to care for them. A recent report from Britain on the situation of older women, for instance, provided exhaustive evidence of the continuing invisibility of older women in public life, whether in the media, or in jobs generally, where older women have been losing jobs at a quite astounding rate compared with job losses overall (Labour Party).

Gender Contrasts

Despite this, when we look at the narratives in recent memoir or fictions around aging, the striking gender contrast is that older women's accounts tend to be more cheerful and optimistic than those of older men. Leading cultural figures in the UK media and publishing world, including Germaine Greer, Irma Kurtz, Diana Athill, Jane Miller, and Penelope Lively, for instance, have all written books on their own old age, describing the pleasures and contentment they find in late life, notwithstanding the losses and debilities that inevitably shadow it (Greer; Kurtz; Athill; Miller; Lively). Similar thoughts have been penned by women in old age in North America, especially by well-known feminist writers such as the

late Betty Friedan and the still active and feisty Gloria Steinem. Indeed, many of these women writers suggest they have found more joy in old age than they experienced in their young lives, voiced most forcefully by Virginia Ironside, now in her seventies, who affirms that the years after turning sixty have "no question, been the happiest years of my life" (Ironside 74–5). That is why she published and is still performing *The Virginia Monologues: 20 Reasons Why Growing Old Is Great*.

What is so startling about this cheeriness coming from older women, at least those who manage to remain in the public eye, is how different it is from those male writers penning their own memoirs, or fictionalizing old age. This is because they have mostly dwelt upon its deplorable vicissitudes. As I explore in my own book on aging, *Out of Time: The Pleasures and Perils of Ageing*, the best known American chroniclers of old age are headed up by Philip Roth, whose narratives of aging male distress and decrepitude are both forceful and bleak. Sales around the globe remain buoyant for *Everyman*, Roth's most explicit attempt to tell the story of the aging psyche of universal man. His message is familiar and simple: in men the impulsive erotic desires of youth last the whole life through, but tragically become increasingly unrealizable. Another of Roth's books echoes the title of Nobel Prize winner and favourite poet of Ireland, W. B. Yeats, who mourned at sixty-one that he lived with the soul of a man "sick with desire / And fastened to a dying animal" (Yeats 781). However, from my home town, in London, we have our very own chronicler of men's aging, Martin Amis, who sees himself and has also been seen as an authority on masculinity, as well as on London life. In all his writing we find him addressing both what aging does to men, as well as what he sees as, as if seamlessly interlinked, the decline of the city of London.

When he turned sixty in 2009, Amis was described by Andrew Anthony in one of our leading newspapers, the *Observer*, as "his generation's most astute documentarist of aging and a symbol of the accelerating passage of time" (Anthony). It is perhaps to be expected that a writer such as Amis, who once delighted in his public depiction as the enfant terrible of British fiction, and his image as iconic cigarette-smoking, insolent, scowling youth, would have more than the usual trouble with the passage of time. And this he projects onto London itself. Certainly, few people have expressed deeper, more visceral and consistent horror of aging than Martin Amis, or offended more people in the process. He started very early, in his provocative, satirical first novel, *The Rachel Papers* (1973), in which women over twenty were described as "scaly witches," with "breasts so flaccid you could tie them in a knot" (16–17). He honed his own distinctive style of streetwise black humour in popular novels, often referred to as his London novels, the following decade—most notoriously *Money: A Suicide Note* (1984) and *London Fields* (1989). Set in London, both books were apparently written to satirize the seedy, self-seeking, money-grubbing, fiercely competitive values associated with the triumph of Margaret Thatcher and her worship of profit, monetarism, and the market, alongside her contempt for welfare, dependence, and the caring state. The convoluted plot of *London Fields*, narrated by a failed, unreliable and ailing writer, for instance, depicts a thirty-four-year-old female anti-hero, Nicola Six, in

a way I can imagine no female writer portraying her, as a woman already bored with life and so fearful of the loss of power and the physical indignities accompany aging that she has arranged for her own murder on her thirty-fifth birthday.

Overall, women are more likely than men to suffer from significantly higher levels of stress and depression than are men, and yet as studies in official statistics in both the UK and United States confirm, men's suicide rates are on average three times higher than those of women, with older men in particular significantly more likely to choose to end their lives. In line with this gender imbalance, suicide is one of Amis's regular themes, along with sex, death, and lurid details of bodily decay. It is the topic, again, of his short novella, *Night Train* (1997), where unusually for Amis, the text has a female narrator, a forty-four-year-old ex-alcoholic detective, Mike Hoolihan. However, this bruised and battered American cop, with her telltale male name, talks like the male policeman who mentored her. She is investigating the incomprehensible suicide of an utterly contrasting woman, the elegant, refined Jennifer Rockwell, a much loved, beautiful, and successful intellectual woman, apparently free from any physical or emotional problems, but who nevertheless ends her life for no obvious reason, seemingly simply overcome by grief at the brevity and meaninglessness of life at the end of the twentieth century. As in *London Fields*, Amis toys with the idea that suicide may be the wisest choice for a woman confronting her future as an aging woman.

However, it is not older women who are generally, or genuinely, the focus of Amis's aging anxieties, although sometimes they are the objects of his moral panic. He has much to say about women, but for the most part Amis thinks that women are capable of dealing with life and its vicissitudes better than men. At least, as a man who is a firm believer in blueprints for sexual difference, he believes women are more skilled at coping with life, and comforting themselves and others, but only if they stay true to their womanly ways, and do not act like "cocks," trying to mimic the values and behaviour of men. As we'll see, Amis laments that many women *did*, foolishly for them, if more pleasurably for men, do just that back in the 1960s—sometimes ending up regretfully childless and alone.

Aging Men's Tears

However, it is the predicament of men, not that of women, which became the abiding theme of Amis's increasingly tormented scrutiny approaching middle age: whether he is observing himself and the state of the world, or depicting his differing fictional characters. In his view, there is simply something about masculinity itself, with its genetic competitive assertiveness that, when combined with the shifting economic and geopolitical contexts that emerged from the close of the 1970s, has made men dangerous, both to themselves and to others. Amis has consequently been mapping various routes to global destruction for decades. Solipsistically, Amis's anguish over his own aging and mortality is so extreme that it all too easily morphs into anxiety about the decay of everything around him and even the end of the world itself. In the 1980s, it was nuclear weapons, and the stance men adopted towards them, that threatened Armageddon. Introducing

his collection of short stories, *Einstein's Monsters*, for instance, he explains that "Einstein's monsters" refer both to nuclear weapons and also to ourselves. We are Einstein's monsters, not fully human, not for now" (Amis *Einstein's* 13). Today, however, he sees annihilation coming from "the medieval agonism of Islam" (Amis *Second* 19). Moreover, whether it is nuclear catastrophe or the obliteration of Western civilization via the global triumph of Islamic fundamentalism, in Amis's cosmology there is something personal, sexual, and perverse about it, connected to masculinities led astray, masculinities out of place.

Thus masculinity, as Amis often tells us, is his special theme. The opening sixty pages—covering three decades of his non-fiction prose—chosen for his personal anthology, *The War Against Cliché* (1991), are grouped under the title "Masculinity and Other Essays." It kicks off with mild mockery of the flurry of popular books on masculinity suddenly appearing in the early 1990s, including the huge success of Robert Bly's *Iron John* in the United States, with its talk of "Male wounds. Male rights. Male grandeur. Male whimpers of neglect" (Amis *War* 3). This is ironic, when it is precisely male grandiosity and whimpers of neglect that underlie so much of Amis's own literary productions, making him his own best critic. He suggests, for instance, that in Britain "maleness itself has become an embarrassment" (Amis *War* 5). Yet, as with that of most stern moralists, his own writing wallows in everything it purports to deplore, especially the money, greed, loose sex, pornography, and violence that characterize his accounts of London life. He seems entranced by the very transgressions he claims to deplore: the unembarrassed pursuit of wealth encouraged by Thatcher and the increasingly "free" market from the 1980s. In England, Amis suggested in an essay he wrote in 1991, we don't want to hear about it, about masculinity, which was just when he was plotting his next novel, *The Information* (1995). Indeed, in the five hundred pages of that novel its readers will contemplate little else between its covers. Moreover, Amis must have believed people *did* really want to hear about men's wails of woe, having just negotiated a spectacular half-million advance for a plotline distilling one man's failed and whimpering masculinity competitively yearning for the recognition he sees bestowed upon another man, in his view a less worthy writer, but one oozing glamour and success (Amis *Information*).

The Information has been seen by many as the conclusion to the London trilogy that opened with *Money* and *London Fields*. What Amis wants to share with readers is the miseries of contemporary urban masculinity. Not so unlike the American poet and men's therapist, Robert Bly, he portrays men who feel imperiled in what he sees as post-feminist times, believing that the authentic essence of masculinity is no longer either recognized or respected. This is the information "which comes in the night," which accounts for all those men "who cry in their sleep." The book opens memorably: "CITIES AT NIGHT, I feel, contain men who cry in their sleep and then say Nothing. It is nothing. Just sad dreams. Or something like that . . ." (Amis *Information* 9). It closes with the thought: "Your watch knows exactly what time is doing to you: *tsk*, *tsk*, it says, every second of every day. Every morning we leave more in the bed, more of ourselves, as our bodies make their own

preparations for reunion with the cosmos" (Amis *Information* 594). Like Roth, Amis aims to encompass the universal male predicament, from first breath to last groan:

> Why do men cry? Because of fights and fears and marathon preferment, because they want their mothers, because they are blind in time, because of all the hard-ons they have to whistle up out of the thin blue yonder, because of all that men have done. Because they can't be happy or sad any more—only smashed and nuts. And because they don't know how to do it when they're awake.
>
> (Amis *Information* 38–9)

As his fellow novelist Patrick McGrath comments, Amis's prose is always busily charting the swampy bottom lands of the contemporary British male psyche (McGrath). In these marshlands, another astute observer of contemporary fiction, Joseph Brooker, adds "the swaggering lad and the crumpled bloke are both frequently sighted . . . and they are often the same character" (Brooker 5). Amis's problems with aging had already begun in his thirties. Certainly the notorious narrator of *Money*, John Self, presented as equally loathsome and supposedly likeable (though I know few women who liked him) is already feeling his mortality at thirty-five, with rotting teeth, tinnitus, and incipient heart problems, feeling like he's just started out, and yet life is about to end: "I am a cripple in my detail . . . I know nothing. I am weak, wanton, baffled, faint . . . I'm tired of being a one-liner," and so he rants and moans on ("Martin Amis's Quotes"). Amis often depicts this sense I've elsewhere called "temporal vertigo"—feeling both old and young at the same time. But for him it attaches to a sense of panic not found in those women writers I mentioned in *Out of Time*, such as Virginia Woolf, Doris Lessing, and Penelope Lively, who also described feeling old and young at the very same time. For them, especially Lively, it was more a question of being able to roam, in more pleasurable reflection, back in the byways of one's past, as narrated so well in her prize-winning book, *Moon Tiger*, as here when she writes:

> There is no chronology inside my head. I am composed of a myriad Claudias [the name of her very old narrator] who spin and mix and part like sparks of sunlight on water. The pack of cards I carry around is forever shuffled and re-shuffled; there is no sequence, everything happens at once.
>
> (2)

The contrasts with Amis's obsessive images of manly decline, bodily decay, and mortality could hardly be starker, especially as they were already saturating his prose by his thirties, and approaching hysteria as he headed towards his forties, his age when *London Fields* was published in 1989: "And meanwhile time goes about its immemorial work of making everyone look and feel like shit" ("Martin Amis's Quotes").

Moreover, for Amis, men's crisis in their middle years is never really left behind, though it may become marginally less acute. In the opening pages of his

twelfth novel, *The Pregnant Widow* (2010), published as he turns sixty, old age is likened to "starring in a horror film," with the worst saved for last (Amis *Pregnant* 3). He returns to the metaphor in its closing pages, as the now fifty-six-year-old narrator Keith Nearing suggests "the horror film was set to become a snuff movie, but long before that he would be its trailer. He would be an ad for death" (462). In this novel, which at one point Amis described as "blindingly autobiographical" (462), the protagonist shares Amis's height, birth date, literary interests and much else, having fathered two sons in his first marriage and then two daughters in an ongoing happy marriage to a South American woman, a person who continued "to be insanely cheerful" (462). Keith's second wife mirrors Amis's account of his current wife, Isabel Fonseca (Leve). These "good" wives know how to care for their aging husbands. They are poles apart from the vapid women we are introduced to in the hundreds of pages of tendentious narrative constituting the semi-pornographic, dragging centre of *The Pregnant Widow*, evoking the sexual escapades of a group of young men and women holidaying in a beautiful Italian castle in the hot summer of 1970, in which Keith and his mates endlessly survey and compare the breasts and bottoms of assorted young women, imagining sex with them.

Amis is always at his worst writing about women, divided them into two sorts: those who are kinder, nicer, and incomprehensively different from men; and those unsuccessfully trying to compete with men, thereby damaging themselves and perhaps the planet itself in the process. The idea that women who adopt the power and privileges of men are obnoxious has appeared before in Amis's writing, as in his depiction of the rule of the repulsively assertive "monstrous matriarchs" and effeminate men in "The Little Puppy That Could" from *Einstein's Monsters*, mentioned earlier: a gender dystopia following the explosion of another atomic bomb.[1] In *The Pregnant Widow*, it is precisely the women who embrace new sexual and other freedoms who end up miserable or die young—like Amis's own sister, Sally Amis, seemingly evoked here as Keith's sister, Violet. In actuality, as all feminist memorabilia attests, early women's liberationists were neither simply mimicking nor rejecting men. Rather "we" were instead longing for a new type of liberation, both sexual and social, where freedoms for men would not be gained at women's expense, while also rejecting men's insidious demeaning of women (as in the *Pregnant Widow*) as little more than titillating bodies—"cocks" or "dogs." This is why there is neither trace nor whisper of feminist dreams in any of Amis's writing to date.[2]

However, it was not Amis's views on feminism, or women, but rather his perennial trouble with old age that incited alarm when Amis was promoting *The Pregnant Widow*. Indeed, he seemed to be almost satirizing himself in his account of the cultural and economic crisis caused by the ever-rising "silver tsunami" of old people:

> There'll be a population of demented very old people, like an invasion of terrible immigrants, stinking out the restaurants and cafes and shops. I can imagine a sort of civil war between the old and the young in 10 or 15 years' time.
> (qtd. in Davies)

His solution, obviously courting much of the publicity it garnered, was to suggest: "There should be a booth on every corner where you could get a martini and a medal" (qtd. in Davies). Some writers, we know, are determined to maintain their ability to shock, whatever their age, but the banality of his proposal, familiar from science fiction, renders his provocation more tiresome than shocking.

There is nothing new to say about Amis's next novel, *Lionel Asbo*, which returns to Amis' obsessions with the violence, greed, stupidity, and benefit scrounging he likes to attribute to the so-called underclass, when he can neither escape nor surmount all the horrors he projects onto different forms of masculinity. However, it does seem to me that for all of Amis's provocations, in his horror of aging and chagrin about mortality, his writing does capture some aspects of many men's fears around aging. In *Experience* (2001), the memoir in which he takes us back once more to his own crisis on reaching forty, he says this: "Youth has finally evaporated, and with it all sense of your own impregnability" (64). Of course men, like women, have never possessed any authentic inviolability, but in their youth it is perhaps easier for some to imagine themselves invulnerable, or at the very least, it is easier for them to perform in the world as though this is the case. The problem with this strategy, however, is that sooner rather than later, the realities of men's obvious vulnerability become undeniable. This is why so many of our images of masculinity make aging a perilous experience for those men still clinging to its traditional precepts. Forcing them to deny their own dependence and vulnerability is an increasingly futile task as they age.

Notes

1. For many further examples of Amis's passionate attachment to patriarchal thinking on sexual difference see Martin Amis, "The Little Puppy that Could" and Adam Mars-Jones, *Venus Envy: On the Womb and the Bomb*.
2. Writing in the Left newspaper, *Black Dwarf* in 1969, Sheila Rowbotham mocked its rhetorical Marxist tropes, assuring men that feminism could help liberate them too from "their chains":

   > You will no longer have anyone to creep away from and peek at with their knickers down, no-one to flaunt as the emblem of your virility, status, self-importance, no-one who will trap you, overwhelm you, no etherealized cloudy being floating unattainably in a plastic blue sky . . . There will only be thousands and millions of women people to discover, touch and become one with, who will understand you when you say we must make a new world in which we do not meet each other as exploiters and used objects. (qtd. in Ali 312)

   "Martin," Sheila might have said, had she visited him in his castle, "we do not need your black humour, we do not need your pity, or even your fears for us." We do, however, want to talk to you, she and others might have added, about how to refashion the world, as well as about love, sexuality, desire. Some of us, even then, whether or not we had read our Freud, or listened to Juliet Mitchell, had already suspected just how hard these conversations might prove, anticipating at least some of the challenges that were likely to capsize our dreams of creating both a new form of sexual politics and the social resources to help foster mutual care, affection, and respect between women, men, and children. Today, we aging feminists would probably add.

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8 Negotiating Childhood and Boyhood Boundaries

Richard Linklater's *Boyhood* and Toni Morrison's Black Boys

Mar Gallego[1]

Even though the studies of masculinities have been expanding their attention to numerous and varied fields of study, little attention has been given to the study of the life periods before manhood—that is, childhood, boyhood, and young adulthood—from the point of view of the analysis of masculinities. In addition to this, the well-established and expanding social studies of childhood and boyhood have not yet engaged deeply with gender studies.[2] So, there is a need to foster a dialogue between life course studies and the studies of masculinities in order to explore how the codes of masculinity are at work and fashion in different ways the early stages of manhood. Michael Kimmel stated years ago that masculinity varies over the life course of men and that what it means to be a man in his childhood years differs from what it will mean during his boyhood and adulthood (in Armengol and Carabí 18). The chapter, then, attempts to explore these life periods outlining the theoretical framework that informs the analysis of children, boys, and young adults, and it interrogates the ways masculinities are defined and negotiated on their way to full manhood. Paying attention to the multiple hierarchical systems of identification such as race, class, sexuality, and so forth, that also inflect these early periods of life, I intend to investigate childhood and boyhood through the character of Mason in Richard Linklater's celebrated film *Boyhood* (2014), and black childhood and boyhood in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and *Home*, through the characters of Cholly Breedlove and Frank Money respectively.

Negotiating identity and experience as a child, boy, or a young adult is a very complex and challenging task. The way in which individuals and societies define masculinity varies according to the dominant codes sanctioned at a certain time and place: "At any given time, one form of masculinity rather than others is culturally exalted" (Connell 77). The excerpt shows that masculinity is both a changing social and cultural construction. What is acceptable or even desirable at a particular historical period and in a given country may differ greatly from other possible alternative models of masculinity. Therefore, the emphasis should be placed on the contingent nature of masculinity ideals.

This contingency is further amplified if the age factor is incorporated to the analysis, as it is not the same to be a small baby or a boy in his teens, a young adult, or a mature man (Segal in this volume).[3] As a result, social expectations and responsibilities are crucial when studying the development of a boy throughout

the early stages of his life. And together with age, this conceptualization needs to address all the interrelated identity categories, and the "competent and convincing performances" of the masculine roles in each phase of the maturation process (Paechter 23). By articulating what Mayall calls "childhood geographies," especially linked to the notion of father figures and the ideologies of home, this chapter will attempt to throw light on the diverse strategies employed by white and black children to shape their adolescence and early adulthood.

Moments of a Life: Growing Up in Richard Linklater's *Boyhood*

The much-acclaimed movie *Boyhood* chronicles the protagonist's process of maturation from six to eighteen, detailing his passage from first grade to college. The film is unique in a number of ways, especially because it manages to capture a slice of life as it were, following the life of a boy, Mason (Ellar Coltrane), and his family for a dozen years, from 2002 to 2013. It is undoubtedly an "unprecedented cinematic gesture" (Klinger),[4] portraying a lower-middle-class family living in the Southern United States in the first years of the twenty-first century against the backdrop of cultural shifts, political changes, religious differences, and so forth.

In this coming-of-age movie what is really outstanding is precisely how it documents the passing of time, that is, as Linklater states in an interview, "how we process the world and time" (Tobias). Bearing witness to the passing of time, it allows spectators to watch the actors mature and age. Torregrosa also praises it as an "ode to the passing of time," almost recalling the classical carpe diem motif. What the director effectively accomplished was to focus not on momentous events, but significantly enough on the texture of that passing time: "I couldn't find that one moment in the process that would have summed it up—so I thought, what if we did it all?" (Gritten). So the process of maturation is foregrounded and illuminated by the director's philosophical view that "life's substance is found in the in-between moments" (Klinger), revealing what Klinger calls "the poetry of the ordinary."

What I actually find more compelling about the movie is that Mason's meditations upon his own process of maturity are being registered step by step. And this makes viewers identify with him more closely. In the very first scene of the movie we watch a blonde boy daydreaming, and the last scene zooms in on a close-up where Mason and a friend philosophize about the passing time. Thus, the film is defined as a Bildungsroman but also a Künstlerroman. Over time Mason develops an artistic angle especially related to his keen interest in photography and visual arts. His meditative gaze seems to contemplate life from a different perspective from other boys and teenagers he encounters, especially symbolized by his long hairstyle.[5]

This makes him an easy target for abusive teenagers in middle school, where he is frequently harassed,[6] but also makes him a favorite with his female classmates and older women (even some of his mother's students). One of his teachers literally highlights his "natural talent": "you are looking at things in a unique way."

But he also warns him that talent alone does not lead anywhere; "discipline, commitment and work" are needed in a very competitive world. At fifteen Mason is a definitively noncompetitive, aloof, and solitary adolescent, but he also makes the effort to relate to his father or other boys. The scene in which he goes camping with friends is also quite telling, since most of the boys mess around, drink, or pose as "cool" kids. Mason does not behave like the rest of them, but is able to integrate. Later we will see him smoking and drinking but almost as a side effect of joining another group of friends.

Another aspect worth commenting on has to do with Mason and the father figures he has to deal with over the course of time and space as a result of his mother's successive relationships and their frequent moving. His own father is depicted at the beginning as immature and irresponsible, an aspiring musician. Mason feels estranged from him, but over time they manage to forge a more natural and satisfactory relationship, where they can talk about girlfriends and other things that make Mason appreciate him. His mother's abusive third partner doesn't build any working relationship with him, and Mason rejects his conventional views about manhood. In middle school there is also a scene in which his father is talking to one of his stepfathers, an Iraq veteran, and their care for Mason is visibly dramatized. Then while in high school the correction officer is also supportive and, although Mason resents him, he also understands his concern for the family. So the movie displays an encompassing picture of the difficulties of male parenting and the different ideologies of home invoked by each of the father figures.

Finally, I would like to briefly meditate on the racial dynamics involved in the movie. *Boyhood* has been repeatedly praised for bringing childhood and adolescent memories to viewers, so they could relive and revisit their past. Nevertheless, the universal appeal of the film needs to be criticized and challenged, since the transition from boyhood to young adulthood, which is narrated, is clearly marked racially and geographically: Mason is a white lower-middle-class child and teenager raised in Texas, whose experiences may recall some commonalities but are deeply affected by race, gender, and class politics in the contemporary United States. There are some hints to some of the intricacies of those politics throughout the movie, as for example with the Obama presidential campaign in 2008 or American intervention in Iraq post-9/11, but on the whole an in-depth discussion is glaringly absent, especially as it conditions Mason's coming of age at the end of the movie.

Troublesome Babies, Abused Children, Ruined Men in *The Bluest Eye*

As part of the constructed nature of masculinity ideology, race also "draws boundaries between the acceptable and the unacceptable" (Kassem et al. 35). In Morrison's captivating first novel, images of forlorn black babies, abandoned children and desperate young men abound. Especially revealing for the purposes of this chapter is the character of Cholly Breedlove, probably one of the most

dysfunctional characters in Toni Morrison's oeuvre, whose behavior is worth analyzing in the context of the exploration of the interaction between masculinity and age undertaken in these pages.

There is one quote that aptly encapsulates the hideous man Cholly becomes in the novel: "Abandoned in a junk heap by his mother, rejected for a crap game by his father, there was nothing else to lose. He was alone with his perceptions and appetites" (126). Indeed, Cholly is a profoundly traumatized person, abandoned when he was only four days old. Fortunately he was raised by his Aunt Willie, an old and affectionate lady, who died too soon (when he was just fourteen). As a teenager, his search for stability prompts him to look for his father, who mistreats him on the only occasion they meet and immediately disavows him as his son. By the time he meets his future wife Pauline in his early twenties, Cholly is already a steady drunkard, tormented and paralyzed by his traumatic early experiences and "dangerously free" (125). Basically, free to do whatever he pleases without taking into account the consequences of his actions—a freedom that will ultimately lead him to disintegration and a premature death.

The only positive reference in his childhood geography is Blue, clearly a reliable father figure and role model, whom he encounters in his first job. Blue can also be perceived as a kind ancestor who tries to guide Cholly in the labyrinthine passage from boyhood to manhood.[7] Blue is the one who tries to connect Cholly to the history of African American people, instructing him about the facts of life—tantamount among them are white people and women. More importantly, Cholly openly expresses his feelings for him: "Cholly loved Blue. Long after he was a man, he remembered the good times they had had" (106). Undoubtedly Blue is the only person who touches his heart, especially evident in the watermelon episode when they share a moment of ultimate bliss: "Together the old man and the boy sat on the grass and shared the heart of the watermelon. The nasty-sweet guts of the earth" (107). The combination of nasty-sweet resonates with the story, especially in the relationship between Cholly and the women in his life.

In his sexual encounters with women it is where we can see how deeply disturbed Cholly actually is. Especially in that primal scene that will mark his behavior towards women for the rest of his life, the first time he makes love to a very young Darlene on the event of his aunt's funeral. Surprised by two white men who forced them to continue their act, he prefers to project the blame and hatred onto the poor country girl, instead of the perpetrators of the despicable action. Moreover, he also reduces her to the status of a child through a reference to her hands like "baby claws" (117), vaguely anticipating what will happen later with his own daughter. His resulting self-loathing and helplessness will be enormously damaging to his growth as a man. Besides, his first reaction will condition the subsequent way of facing blatant discrimination: transferring the blame from the oppressor to the victim, that is, shifting from a racist to a sexist attitude, in order to compensate for his emasculated self.[8] Thus, rather than directing the rage toward overt racism, he would intensify his capacity for self-destruction and "depravity" (37). His frustrations and failures will drive him to alcohol, gender violence, and madness.

Like father, like son. He decides to run away from the girl and look for his absent father. The meeting will be extremely problematic for him, as the father refuses to admit his paternity by a rebuke that constitutes a sexist slur against his absent mother. What is more telling is Cholly's alarming physical reaction, whereby he "soiled himself like a baby" (124). His intense pain makes him return to his early infancy, since he is unable to cope with the pain and frustration that ensue from this very traumatic episode. Interestingly enough, he will need the help of three women who will act as protectors and mentors for the young boy, helping the reassembling of his body and, by extension, of his manhood: "They give him back his manhood, which he takes aimlessly" (125). This is precisely one of the sources of great contradiction in the text. Whereas Cholly as a young boy is constantly mothered by kind and nourishing women, first his aunt and then these three compassionate women, he actually takes after his father, denying any involvement in the consequences of his own actions.

Moreover, his lack of aim will dictate his movements even when he eventually gets married and has children, never really settling down in any home. Over time, too, he becomes even more openly sexist, also following in his father's footsteps. Marriage will irrevocably drive him to despair and paralysis, unable to comprehend monogamy or what he terms "the arrogance of the female" (126). So his maturation process is forever delayed and hindered by a set of very contradictory feelings toward women that he is not willing to unravel. Ultimately, children will utterly be his undoing, as he cannot grasp what paternity may entail and fails to establish any healthy relationship or connection to them. More madness, rage, and ignominy follow when he resorts to fighting with his wife, tries to burn the house down, or rapes his own daughter. As a result of a completely failed transition from boyhood to adulthood, this character "in motion" (Doughty 38)[9] does not feel responsible for any of this either. He ends up denigrated, "beyond the reaches of human consideration" (18), effectively turning him into an animal.

In the end, the novel attests to the manifold difficulties Cholly has to face in order to effect a satisfying growth process, because his self-image tends to imitate claustrophobic conventional patterns of boyhood and young manhood based on racist and sexist assumptions. His failure to uphold to those conventions debilitates him and makes him adopt aggressive and self-destructive behavior. His helplessness and resentment sentences him to fragmentation and disintegration. Without a suitable guidance and counsel by a father figure, there is no satisfactory sense of identity or homecoming.

A Real Buddy but a Haunted Young Man in *Home*

In a way, this novel can be conceived as a much-needed corrective to the failed evolution of Cholly in the previous one. Dedicated to her deceased son Slade, Morrison undertakes an in-depth study of the transformation that should enact a satisfactory passage from childhood to maturity for black boys, and thus guarantee a different "variation in masculinity" as Susan Neal Mayberry contends (6).[10] In this case, the male protagonist Frank Money personifies that possibility of

change and maturation despite a strenuous boyhood and entrance into adulthood. By the time he is a young adult, Frank is an extremely traumatized war veteran who does not find his place in the world anymore. However, Morrison chooses to focus on the assets Frank has in comparison to Cholly that will eventually facilitate his successful adaptation to manhood: his strong ties with his sister and other black boys. This emotional attachment to others will definitively save Frank from the pit of despair and depression into which Cholly irremediably falls.

Throughout his boyhood he is described as embodying an alternative masculinity code that involves care for others. This is especially evident in the way he takes care of his sister Cee, literally mo/fathering her. According to his grandmother, "the four-year-old brother was clearly the real mother to the infant" (88). All his life revolves around his sister: "she was a shadow for most of my life, a presence marking its own absence . . . Who am I without her" (103). Indeed, as I have stated elsewhere,[11] her salvation becomes the only purpose in Frank's life. Upon receiving a letter warning him about his sister's possible death, Frank reacts and comes to the rescue. His protective attitude toward his sister makes him overcome obvious symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, travelling across the country to find her. His trip becomes an obvious trope for a healing process that restores both of them back to health and integrity.

From the very onset, Frank is intent on guarding and shielding her from all dangers and terrible experiences. In the first scene Frank recalls a childhood memory that is going to haunt him for most of his life. Cee and Frank witness the furtive burial of a black man by racist white men and Frank remembers a "black foot" (4) that sticks out. That pivotal scene will preside over most of his actions from then onwards, when he returns from the war and can only think about "horses, a man's foot, and Ycidra trembling under my arm" (69). In fact, Morrison uses this dreadful experience to denounce racism as a constant trait in Frank's life.

Growing up as a black boy in the thirties, Frank is constantly reminded of it. Frank's family was evicted from their house in Texas by racist bigots: "Residents of fifteen houses had been ordered to leave their little neighborhood on the edge of town. Twenty-four hours, they were told, or else. 'Else' meaning 'die'" (9–10). Their plight was unbelievable as they had to leave all their possessions behind, and walk from Texas to Georgia during the summer. Frank's mother was pregnant and Frank himself was only four then.

The other horrific moment that will also leave an indelible imprint on Frank's conscience is the death of his two homeboys, his closest friends, who were also family to him. The description of their childhood and teenagers years is really touching:

> As children they had chased after straying cows, made themselves a ball-park in the woods, shared Lucky Strikes, fumbled and giggled their way into sex. As teens they made use of Mrs. K, the hairdresser, who, depending on her wood, helped them hone their sexual skills. They argued, fought, laughed, mocked, and loved one another without ever having to say so.
>
> (98)

The unconditional love they felt for each other gave them some kind of purpose in life. As the quote proves, they were united against the rest of the world, especially against adults' lack of expectations and miserable existence. Thus, they depended on each other, as Frank also points out: "if not for my two friends I would have suffocated by the time I was twelve" (3). With indifferent and overworked parents, a silent grandfather and a hateful grandmother who actually beat him and Cee, he completely relied on his two friends and his little sister for sheer survival.

They finally decided to enlist in order to escape the stultifying atmosphere of Lotus. So they joined the army to save themselves, but in fact they damned themselves to horrible deaths and separation. Frank will obsessively revisit his friends' deaths, blaming himself for not being able to protect them. For months all he can think of is: "But I know them. I know them and they know me" (99). He is unable to understand the overwhelming loss he feels and when he is discharged, he cannot make his way home. In fact, he cannot locate home anymore without his buddies. Hence grieving over his friends also provides a sense of purpose to his otherwise aimless life.

But the past needs to be fully confronted and responsibility for one's actions taken in order to regain serenity and peace of mind once more. He will need to actively engage in uncovering what actually blocked him, how he has covered his "shame" (133) at some unspeakable truth that he has to come to terms with. What is really troubling him is his horrifying action of killing a little Korean girl. The whole episode is revealing, since the first time he narrates it, he tries to evade responsibility, but eventually declares: "I shot the Korean girl in her face" (133). The fact that he not only killed her, but also engaged in illicit sex with her takes him down to "a place I didn't know was in me" (134). His deep-seated guilt and shame poison his existence till he ultimately faces the consequences of his actions.

In the meantime, Frank wanders from place to place feeling rootless, dispossessed and lonely for more than a year, clearly reminiscent of the wandering and restless Cholly. He cannot cope with his feelings of fury and self-hatred, as every memory is associated to either pain or loss. But gradually he regains control of himself and he successfully rescues his sister and brings her back to their childhood geography, Lotus, where she can be cured by the community of women. Both of them will certainly need to undergo a lengthy and challenging healing process to recover their bodies and souls, and go back home.

In the end, he will correct a wrongdoing and properly bury the black man that was cruelly abused by white racist men. In this very last scene the novel revisits the primeval moment of the beginning, Frank and Cee go back to the place that has been surreptitiously haunting Frank's memories and unearth the remains of the "gentleman" (143), giving him a proper burial with a telling marker: "Here Stands A Man" (145). Claiming the gentleman's manhood, Frank can finally restore dignity to the true story of a father who died instead of his son when they were forced to fight for white men's entertainment. So the dead man becomes a symbol of self-ownership in the face of devastation. His dignified response—"Obey me, son, this one last time" (139)—negates the objectification and animalization to which they were subjected, and rearticulates a nurturing relationship between father and son.

The nameless gentleman thus becomes the positive fatherly figure in the novel or ancestor, easily identified with Blue in the other novel.

For Kim, "through this ritual of burial, Frank and Cee commemorate the tragic moment of the African American community as a whole and as individuals, and experience a new birth for the future" (263). Revealing the gentleman's true story and giving him a proper burial makes Frank regain confidence in himself. Through Frank, Morrison seems to hint at a new concept of manhood and identity that can sustain the character, but also the black community, one of the central concerns in Morrison's fiction. Despite the feelings of anger and alienation black men experience in this racist country, Morrison seems to be saying that it is always possible to counteract the devastating effects of discrimination and victimization, and envisage alternative ways to inhabit black manhood and find home. So they can finally go home: "Come on, brother. Let's go home" (146). The geography of childhood is transformed in a welcoming haven for the young adult Frank as the long homeward journey is finally over.

Notes

1. The author wishes to acknowledge the funding provided by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness (Research Project "Bodies in Transit," Ref. FFI2013–47789-C2–1-P) and the European Regional Development Fund for the writing of this essay.
2. Berry Mayall refers to the difficult relationship between feminism and childhood (15).
3. As Connell and Messerschmidt point out in their 2005 article, the concept of hegemonic masculinity formulated two decades ago also offered some hints about popular anxieties about men and children (830).
4. Even using the same cast: Mason's sister Samantha (Lorelei Linklater, Linklater's daughter), his mother (Patricia Arquette), and his father (Ethan Hawke).
5. His mother's second live-in partner cuts it off, exclaiming "you look like a man, not a girl," showing conflictive codes of masculinity at work.
6. Or that is what spectators assume as we only see a couple of scenes of this kind in the movie.
7. In Morrison's classic essay "Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation," the author explains the great importance of ancestor figures in African American culture in order to ensure the well-being of the black community.
8. In that sense, I agree with Katherine Payant when she argues that "this episode suggests that much abuse of black women by black men could be deflected hatred of whites" (2010). Mary Patricia Carden adds that "Morrison's novels measure the destruction wrought by white patriarchal hegemony" (71). However, my emphasis is placed on Cholly's story of child abandonment and rejection that conditions his actions as an adult.
9. According to this critic, Cholly is the first instance of a character in motion, who "having been in a sense formed by their history, nevertheless choose their track through the world" (38). Doughty acknowledges the weight of past history in Cholly's personality, but also the fact that he is able to choose and therefore, is accountable for his actions.
10. Current research repeatedly confirms "the inadequacy of using traditional models to study black men" (6).
11. In "Progressive Masculinities: Envisioning Alternative Models for Black Manhood in Toni Morrison's Novels" (2014).

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9 Fighting the Monsters Inside

Masculinity, Agency, and the Aging Gay Man in Christopher Bram's *Father of Frankenstein*

Sara Martín

Christopher Bram's elegant novel *Father of Frankenstein* (1995) is less well known, as it often happens, than its film adaptation *Gods and Monsters* (1998). Written and directed by Richard Condon, the film received an Oscar for Best Adapted Screenplay, and nominations for actors Ian McKellen, in the leading role, and Lynn Redgrave, in a supporting role. Bram, a gay American writer, has published so far nine novels and also a well-received non-fiction volume, *Eminent Outlaws: The Gay Writers Who Changed America* (2012). Perhaps because he deals mainly with gay themes, Bram has not really broken into the mainstream although he is a respected figure in LGBT circles. Asked whether his future works might be "cross-over" novels also appealing for straight readers, Bram answered that this audience "is eventually going to come to us. When we deliberately go to them we lose our strengths, our material becomes diluted" (qtd. in Gambone 100). The reading I offer here emerges from my own "going towards" Bram's gay fiction (thanks to Condon's film) and my conviction that *Father of Frankenstein* offers much to all kinds of readers, beyond the gay minority.

Bram narrates how real-life British film director James Whale—famous for *Frankenstein* (1931) and *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935)—reacts to a series of minor strokes announcing his impending physical and psychological decay, aged only 67. Under "the pressure of a death sentence," as Ian McKellen describes his predicament (qtd. in Porton 15), the retired director decides to kill himself. Departing from real-life events, Bram fancies that, lacking the courage to commit suicide, Whale determines to push someone else to murder him. Wrongly assuming that Clayton Boone, his young American gardener, has the potential to engage in the lethal violence he craves for, Whale embarks on what Vincenzo Maggitti rightly calls an "insano progetto ecfractisco" (124), forcing Boone to become his own Frankenstein's monster. Only when Clayton, who actually abhors violence, rejects this role, does Whale find the courage to drown himself in the swimming pool of his comfortable Los Angeles home.

Bram's novel is, thus, constituted by two main layers. Following Whale's biography, this is the story of an aging person who decides to regain control over his life by, paradoxically, committing suicide. On the other hand, Bram's fantasy about the misguided strategy chosen by Whale to have Clayton murder him emphasizes the homosexual identity of this ill, old man, who expects the younger

man's homophobia to result in the violence he needs. Both layers are connected through Bram's breaking down of heterosexist stereotypes regarding the alleged effeminacy of aging gay men, something accomplished by emphasizing Whale's manliness. Considering his age and his terminal illness, Whale's suicide is of a quite common type among men, as I will later explain; it is, however, quite atypical in relation to most gay suicides, as it is not caused by homophobia. Concerning his relationship with Boone, the irony is that Whale fails to grasp how the process of bonding with the younger man elicits his compassionate sympathy rather than his murderous homophobia. This sympathy is based, precisely, on Boone's progressive realization that the "old faggot" (16) embodies his own ideal of the manly self-made man. The self-confident masculinity that has allowed Whale to enjoy a happy life as a gay man and that determines his decision to maintain his agency even regarding his death, is also the feature that makes Boone's initial homophobia recede, allowing him to feel in the end respect and even affection for the father of Frankenstein.

Fear of Dependence: Rational Suicide as a (Male) Act of Empowerment

Most specialists agree that although men and women attempt to kill themselves in similar numbers, suicide is "largely a male phenomenon" with "a distinct profile: male decedents are less likely to be depressed or have received mental health services, less likely to have made previous attempts, and more likely to use highly lethal means" (Coleman, Kaplan, and Casey 247). Men are far more effective than women in killing themselves practically all over the world, to the extent that the word "epidemic" is often used in relation to this issue (Bilsker and White). Nevertheless, the links between the demands that the social construction of masculinity imposes on men and male suicide are not sufficiently understood. As Rosado et al. conclude, most studies simply describe the complex situation but fail to identify the deepest underlying causes; besides, the dominant medical-psychological perspective on the study of male suicide as a mental health issue tends to overlook social concerns (477). The suggestion that it might be necessary to change "the meaning and experience of being a man from the current norm" (Coleman, Kaplan, and Casey 248) in order to implement effective prevention policies has been already advanced, so far with limited impact.

The higher efficiency that men show in killing themselves seemingly connects with the masculine discourse on courage and bravery, an essential aspect of the discourse on patriarchal manliness (Mansfield). Men learn as teenagers to regard failed suicide attempts as feminine, since many more teen girls than boys injure themselves but fail to die (Canetto). The decision to end one's life also connects in the traditional masculine perspective with the male prerogative to keep control over one's own life (regardless of whether women also feel the same urge).

Elderly men are most likely to fall prey to circumstances out of their control and thus, unsurprisingly, most suicides fall within this demographic category. Figures for the United States published by the American Association of Suicidology indicate

that white men over eighty-five are "at the greatest risk of all age-gender-race groups." Their suicide rate in 2012 multiplied "almost 2.5 times the current rate for men of all ages (20.57 per 100,000)." We may surmise that the closer a man is to hegemonic masculinity, the higher his fear is of being disempowered by unmanning, infantilizing dependence; hence the higher suicide rates for white men. As Whale muses in Bram's novel, "He hates how illness has reduced him to a problem whispered about by others, a difficult child, an embarrassment" (4).

Despite these worrying figures, ageism is one of the main reasons why elderly men's suicide is still so poorly researched and understood. The term "ageism" was first coined in 1969 by psychiatrist Robert Neil Butler (1927–2010) in reference to the "personal revulsion and distaste" that young and middle-aged individuals feel "for growing old, disease, disability; and fear of powerlessness, 'uselessness,' and death" (Butler 243). The title of Butler's book *Why Survive?: Being Old in America*, a Pulitzer Prize winner, chimes well with the predicament of James Whale in Bram's novel. Butler launched not only a still ongoing protest against ageism but also a whole new field of applied research in gerontology, which has also opened up new ways of considering the textual representation of aging and elderly individuals. The title of Lynne Segal's recent *Out of Time: The Pleasures and Perils of Ageing* (2013) sums up neatly the two trends in the current view of elderly people: celebration and wariness.

Segal's volume deals marginally with men and not at all with gay men. Age Studies and Life-Course Studies have generally paid more attention to women whereas, clearly, Masculinity Studies lags far behind Women's Studies regarding research on aging. As concerns specifically gay men, the pioneering research of psychologist Raymond M. Berger, resulting in the publication of *Gay and Gray: The Older Homosexual Man* (1982, reissued 1995) revealed that, unlike what it was usually believed, plenty of American gay men felt satisfied with both their homosexuality and their personal aging process. This agrees very well with Bram's portrait of the essentially well-balanced, satisfied Whale. Since then, the extant bibliography on the aging of LGBT persons and of gay men in particular has multiplied (Sears; Bergling). The problem is that this proliferation corresponds mainly to the fields of medicine, psychology, psychiatry, sociology, social work and also self-help, whereas the scholarship on the representation of gay men is still scarce within the field of the Humanities, including Literary and Cultural Studies. This reveals a certain marginalization of gay issues in the otherwise burgeoning field of research challenging ageism. Tellingly, the entry for "Literature and Aging" by Wyatt-Brown within the *Encyclopedia of Aging* (2002) only mentions "George, the gay hero of Christopher Isherwood's *A Single Man* (1964)," among plenty of heterosexual examples. The article totally excludes aging lesbians.

This overlooking of LGBT aging in fiction is a main reason why *Father of Frankenstein* deserves far more attention, particularly as Bram's choice of subject matter also contributes to the ongoing public debate on our personal rights when facing death. Positions vary from the open defense of so-called "rational suicide" (Mayo), maintained for instance by British SOARS (the Society for Old

Age Rational Suicide), and the vehement denial that any decision about suicide can be made rationally. Most medical experts in the field link suicide with depression, "a psychological malady that is often described as anger turned inward back on one's self" (Kimmel 220), particularly in the case of men. Carmen Tejedor, a psychiatrist who recently implemented a successful prevention program in Barcelona, believes that suicide is never a free act; even the tiny 5 percent of individuals who commit so-called balance suicide, usually after being diagnosed with a terminal illness as happens to Whale, do so because they suffer of a "more or less covert depression" (qtd. in Amiguet 80, my translation). Yet, evidence suggests that, particularly among elderly men, suicide is not linked to depression, nor to any previous mental health problems. Strong taboos, however, still prevent many terminally ill persons to opt for assisted suicide within the law. A sense of shame surrounds the cases of those who, like Whale, choose to commit suicide to the point that in his case his long-time live-in partner David Lewis concealed for decades his good-bye note, raising in this way scandalous, unnecessary rumors.

The statistics and studies refer generally to the category "men," which is why it is not possible to discern from the available figures what percentage of the elderly suicides are homosexual men. These figures do indicate, nonetheless, that suicide is far more common among young gay men than among older gay men, as the younger suicides are often victims of homophobia who fail to cope with the pressure of coming out in unsympathetic environments; indeed, 70 percent of first attempts occur before age twenty-five (Paul et al.). Other studies claim that generally LGBT individuals tend to commit suicide more often than heterosexual individuals, and that in particular men in these minorities are a higher risk group as "the distance between hegemonic masculinity and gay or bisexual masculinities is greater and may constitute more of a threat to mental health" (Payne et al. 30). Whale's life experience does not fit this pattern, however. Bram presents him essentially as a self-possessed man whose personal flexibility allowed him to navigate key turning points with no major psychological harm: his escape from his Northern English working-class background through art, his experience as a World War I combatant and prisoner, his theatrical career in London, his new life in Hollywood from 1929 onwards. Whale's reinvention of himself once in the United States, as an upper-middle-class English gentleman, his positioning on a snug fringe of Hollywood's hegemonic masculinity, and the gusto with which he performs this role are evidence of his adaptability. His suicide, therefore, should not be connected at all with a need to escape himself (Baumeister), and much less with his identity as a gay man.

For Bram's Whale, "Death is the only alternative he can imagine to . . . pain and helplessness" (50); above all, he desperately wants to escape dependence. As a specifically gay man living in 1950s America in a personal situation of (chosen) singlehood—feeling "too old for love, too comfortable with his solitude" (14)—and with no family, Whale cannot rely on help from kin, friends, or lovers. Nor would he want it. Some years before the onset of his disease, Whale ends his relationship with Luc, a young Belgian mechanic he had picked up while travelling in Europe, and who finally could not cope with his homesickness. When his

ex-partner David comments that it would have been good for Luc to be around and help the ill Whale, he answers back, "I would've hated to see the boy play nursemaid" (7). With no chance of help, either, from LGBT-oriented social services, nursing homes, or health professionals, Whale faces a complicated prospect: his comfortable financial situation allows him, at least, to rely on paid help. His Mexican maid María is willing enough to take care of Mr. Jimmy, as she calls him, to the end because, as she tells Boone, "It is my job. . . . I did it when he was happy and it was easy. It is only fair I do it now when he is ill" (265). Yet, Whale already resents his dependence on her. To Boone he describes María, his housekeeper for fifteen years, as "very possessive. When they stay in your employ for that long, servants begin to think they're married to you" (71). María's Catholic homophobia possibly also counts in Whale's final decision not to depend on anyone. Loyal but critical, she tells Clay that her employer will go to hell for his sins, "Which is why I want to make Mr. Jimmy's last days as happy as possible" (167).

The image of the drowned Whale, nattily dressed in the director's habitual style, is both moving and pathetic. The scene has a certain grotesque touch, too, added by María's request that Boone puts back the body in the water for fear he will be blamed for a crime he cannot have committed. It is also a somehow disturbing scene in terms of class background, for it makes readers wonder about the privilege of having a swimming pool to drown in. A poor, old, terminally ill person of any description would face quite a different fate. Nonetheless, Whale's elegant outfit suggests that, in the face of the assault that illness and death launch on his aging body, he chooses to maintain the dignity that he has attached to his performance as an English gentleman in America. His suicide, I grant, may not be easy to sympathize with. Yet, as presented by Bram, this is the story of an individual who refuses to become a victim either in life or in death, an example of individual agency, serene masculinity, and satisfied homosexuality.

Contrasting Masculinities: The Limits of Male Bonding

The bond between Whale and Boone should not be read in terms of the fiction and film tradition derived from Thomas Mann's novella *Death in Venice*, beautifully adapted for the screen by Luchino Visconti. Despite the manifest absence of romance, one of the very few academic articles on Bram's novel—"The Englishman in America: Masculinity in *Love and Death on Long Island* and *Father of Frankenstein*" by Páraic Finnerty—insists on this reading, drawing an extensive comparison with Gilbert Adair's 1990 novel and its 1997 film adaptation by Richard Kwietniowski. Finnerty, although well aware that Whale is using the stereotype of the "English queer in America" to his own social advantage, and that his performance of the role is "exaggerated, opportunistic, advantageous, and provisional" (2010), forces Bram's novel into the mould of the unrequited love of an old man for a younger man impervious to seduction. In Ian McKellen's words, although both Bram's and Adair's novels are stories about "gay sexual desire—and about time, too. . . . I wouldn't stress a further connection between them" (qtd. in Porton 15).

Regrettably, the reception of *Father of Frankenstein* may have been affected by the negative, stereotyped perception of the main character as an "old queer," perhaps even an "old queen" or, worse, a "dirty old man." This reductive interpretation actually overlooks Whale's own dismissal of desire. Instead of feeling a "flicker of lust" when contemplating the fine-looking, shirtless Boone, "[t]he half-dressed body only makes him feel old, detached, and oddly sexless" (8). In Bram's novel, there is no carnal desire from the old man for the younger man but, rather, a desire that Boone culminates the elderly man's death wish. As Bronski observes, "[t]he most basic reversal" that Bram introduces in the *Death in Venice* imitative plot, is that Whale feels more interest in "Thanatos than Eros" (Bronski 13). Bram's wording could not be clearer: Whale "longs for someone large and strong to do the job quickly, someone who can cradle him in his arms and take him home, . . . as easily as his monster" (50). Whale knows that the idea is "insane," yet all he craves is a "masculine American killer" (158), hoping Boone fits the bill.

However, Clay's malleable face does bring forth an unexpected kind of desire, "the desire to tell stories" (139), which complicates their relationship. Whale starts relishing how their talks animate Boone, "as if that meaty statue might be amused or teased or confused into life with the right, peculiar anecdote from the past" (139). Their relationship, however, is quite one-sided and so, whereas selfish Whale never bothers to learn who the young man truly is, Boone makes an effort to correct his first impressions of the old man. Clay, a homophobe who has never actually met a gay man, is slowly won over by his realization that it is not easy to reject as a "fruit" the man who treats him "like I'm somebody worth talking to" (120). Still, whereas Clay has never felt "so close to another life" (248), Whale denies to María that Boone is, as she calls him, "an interesting friend" (192); for him, the conversations with Boone are just exercise to maintain his waning mental clarity—also attempts to scandalize and anger Clay progressively, steps in his bizarre suicidal plan. Instead, however, the memories that Whale finds himself describing only result in a self-presentation that emphasizes his manliness. This is what a puzzled Clay understands as, shedding his own prejudices, he realizes that the "elderly gent . . . could not look more confident and masculine" (175) when he smokes cigars but also, to Boone's surprise, when he boasts about his happy life as a self-exiled British gay man in America.

Whale, blinded by his death wish, only sees in Boone the potential violence of the stereotypical American low-class loser, a violence he unwisely decides to unleash by taunting the young man with the threat of unwelcome homosexual contact. Believing that Boone has experienced hand-to-hand combat in the Korean battlefields, which he has not, Whale misreads him, provoking the young man in the wrong way: "I gather that killing is an American rite of passage. One's not a real man until one's killed another man" (173). Whale, failing to really reciprocate Boone's increasingly warm feelings of friendship, seriously insults his admirer in the sad, pathetic sexual assault during which he fails to arouse Clay's supposed homophobic fury to a murderous point. After an ugly tussle that forces Boone to use some violence in self-defense, Whale finally declares to the young man that his is "no life for a man. It's an infant's life. A dog's life. I need you to

kill me" (248). Appalled, Boone tells him to kill himself, but Whale explains in despair that "I don't want to die alone!"; being killed by Clay "would make death bearable. Even beautiful" (248). Left by Boone's rejection with no choice, Whale writes a farewell note—"The future is just old age and pain. Good-bye all and thank you for all your love. I must have peace and this is the only way" (259), the real note the director wrote—and proceeds to die, as he fears, alone. The sad irony, of course, is that Whale completely misses that "Clay is overcome by feelings of pity, curiosity, and protectiveness" (223), the potential foundation for a far less lonely death.

The key factor contributing to Boone's admiration for Whale is the old gay man's status as a war veteran. Whale is plagued by constant olfactory hallucinations that bring back not only his undisclosed working-class past but, crucially, his experience in World War I. His time as an officer, a "temporary gentleman" as officers of his social background were called, teaches Clay (who missed fighting in Korea due to a burst appendix) that being gay is no obstacle to being a soldier, even an effective one. Ex-marine Boone is simply "too stunned to think a fruit has done things Clay feels he should have done" (181). Bram's choice of World War I as the main focus of Whale's nostalgia still denies, however, the homosexual relations that must have been common in the front lines. Whale jokes that the dreadful trenches were not the best possible environment to enjoy "love" (182): there was "no carnal knowledge. Only charnel knowledge" (183) and love was "chaste and sentimental" (183).

Certainly, the Great War's legacy is still perplexing, as we do not understand well whether this was a time when homoeroticism was "as it were, licensed" (Fussell 282), or when "the cataclysm of war produced gigantic tears in the fabric of friendship" (Cole 6). Cole explains that male friendship was foregrounded in the late Victorian period to celebrate the prevalence of male intimacy over male-female bonds at a time when the New Woman was beginning to question marriage. This new emphasis on male bonding, supported by the public school, the scouting camp, and even muscular Christianity, did not, however, survive well the strain of World War I. At first, "nostalgically" or "indulging for the first time" it drew men together (Bourke 135). Yet, ultimately, the "military rhetoric of mateship" perished, leading to "the repudiation of wartime comradeship and a reiteration of male-female relationships" (Bourke 155) through marriage.

Whale and Boone, then, find themselves trying to establish some kind of satisfactory male bonding at a time, the post–World War II 1950s, when this was already deeply policed by widespread homophobia, also fed in its turn by the progressive public consolidation of the label "homosexual," strictly limited at the time of World War I to medical and legal texts. Both men face, besides, the extremely difficult task of having to bridge national peculiarities, diverse class backgrounds, and generational differences. If they manage to communicate at all it is, precisely, because Whale's homoerotic memories of World War I open up a common space for them across the immense gulf dividing them. Whale is, nonetheless, unable to truly bond with the admiring Boone at a time when all his personal energy is focused on the problem of how to die. Reversely, Boone does

not see beyond his newly discovered image of Whale as a war veteran, failing to notice the old man's terminal distress.

Conclusions: Vindicating Cross-Over Readings

Christopher Bram's *Father of Frankenstein* should be read as a "cross-over" novel of general interest regarding not only the specific problem of how we react in old age to dependence and impending death but also in relation to the lessons Clay learns about homosexuality and masculinity. Bram's fictional account of James Whale's last two weeks elicits compassion for a man desperately trying to overcome his fear of decline and loneliness, and offers a far more dignified representation of the aging homosexual man than the romantic stories descended from Mann's *Death in Venice*. Irrational as Whale's fantasy of equating Clayton Boone with his Frankenstein's monster may be, the retired director—famous for monster films he does not particularly enjoy—keeps his rationality intact enough to realize that the only monsters are inside oneself. Tragic as his death is, we need to read it as a brave gesture, stressing, as I have argued, the aging man's agency to the very end of what he considered to have been a happy life.

In conclusion, Bram's choice of subject, with its double focus on aging and death, on the one hand, and, on the other, on the limits of male bonding across sexual identity, class, generation, and nation opens up new possibilities for the exploration of gay fiction from a cross-over perspective, offering thus new directions both for Masculinities Studies and for Queer Studies.

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Part IV

Masculinities and Affect

10 Theorizing the Masculinity of Affect

Todd W. Reeser

The fathers of affect theory, French theorists Deleuze and Guattari famously describe affects in French as "*asubjectifs*" (*Plateaus* 183), as beyond subjectivity. They are interested in relations that "compose an individual, decompose him . . . intensities that affect him" (314). Rei Terada writes that Deleuze "redefines affect as a structure that holds up without subjective aid" (113). In the affective turn, affect is widely taken as free from language and discourse and—according to Brian Massumi—is "not semantically or semiotically ordered" (*Parables* 24), and as a result, in the words of Simon O'Sullivan, "you cannot read affects, you can only experience them" (126).

One potential issue with the reception of non-discursive and asubjective affects—as a number of scholars have pointed out—is the risk that affect lacks any political valence, and that an asubjective, apolitical ontology replaces political understandings of discourse in critical and cultural theory. Considerations of culturally constructed and discursively based "emotion" may take into account power and subjectivity, but what of ineffable affective moments? And what of the idea of affect as autonomous and liberating? As Massumi writes in a well-known phrasing, "actually existing, structured things live in and through that which escapes them. Their autonomy is the autonomy of affect" (*Parables* 35). Michael Hardt argues that "the production of affects, subjectivities, and forms of life present an enormous potential for autonomous circuits of valorization, and perhaps for liberation" (100). This potential liberation would be, in his words, from "capitalist accumulation and patriarchal order" (100). If affect is indeed free and autonomous as well as outside discourse and subjectivity, then does the assumption or the perception of autonomy not risk effacing forms of difference, including gender difference and its attendant hierarchies? As Divya Tolia-Kelly comments on the relation between affect and hierarchy:

> Various bodies through their racialized, gendered and sexualized markedness, magnetize various capacities for being affected; a slave and holocaust victim do not necessarily experience pain, suffering, anomie, in the same way due to their social positioning and "enforced" capacities of (im)mobility, experience and affecting the social space around them.
>
> (215)

Clare Hemmings argues that "affective rewriting . . . ignor[es] the counter-hegemonic contributions of postcolonial and feminist theorists, only thereby positioning affect as 'the answer' to contemporary problems of cultural theory" (548). Deborah Thien critiques affect theory as reproducing the gendered division reason/emotion via the new binary opposition affect/emotion:

> The jettisoning of the term "emotion" in favour of the term "affect" seems compelled by an underlying revisiting . . . of the binary trope of emotion as negatively positioned in opposition to reason, as objectionably soft and implicitly feminized. In this conceptual positioning, these transhuman geographies re-draw yet again not only the demarcation between masculinist reason and feminized emotion, but also the false distinction between "personal" and "political" which feminist scholars have extensively critiqued.
>
> (452)[1]

Affect, Thien suggests, is assumed to be outside the political because it is taken as intensively personal, though it should not be separated from the political nor coded as unmarked or masculine. What if the autonomy or freedom characterizing affect is itself a reinscription of the supposed freedom of the normative male subject from political constraint and subjectivity? Unmarking affect may have the result of rendering it implicitly masculine, a return to the unmarked category as universal but in actuality centered on the normative.

While I fully agree with these critiques, my focus on this topic moves in a related but slightly different direction. The very focus on affect as liberatory implies a gender coding to affect since unmarking itself is a form of gendered construction (Reeser 8–9), one to which bodies linked to normative or hegemonic masculinity may have access while other bodies do not. The gendering of affect as masculine—whether implicit or explicit—may be problematic, but it can also offer a way to think about, to study, or to reimagine masculinities. It is no accident that Deleuze and Guattari describe affect—what they call "the active discharge of emotion" in *A Thousand Plateaus*—in military terms as the "counterattack" since "affects are projectiles just like weapons" (400). There is a violence to affective discharges because this element of their war machine renders the body undergoing them a kind of battlefield, participating in what the thinkers describe as "[l]earning to undo things, and to undo oneself" (400). As the potential for being affected, affect allows for the potential brokenness of bounded or solidified forms of masculinity in ways that cannot be predicted in advance or be controlled or managed. When Deleuze defines affect as the "passages, becomings, rises and falls, continuous variations of power [*puissance*] that pass from one state to another" ("Spinoza" 139), he suggests a potential oscillating mechanism for what is likely the most recurring characteristic of masculinity—its link to power. The male body, empowered by masculinity, may be attacked by affect and disempowered with respect to gender. It may pass or fall from a state of gendered power to another state where power ceases or is diminished. Affect opens up potentiality for bodies whose capacities, since at

least Spinoza, we do not know. Consequently, affect does not have to be imagined as a static masculine or masculinist state, but as one point on a movement-based chain with a before and an after, or as what Terada calls "a transitive link between states of affairs" (114). When Deleuze and Guattari write that "pure affects imply an enterprise of desubjectification" (*Plateaus* 270), they articulate a process of becoming that becomes out of, in the model that interests me, some form of masculinity. I align my object of inquiry with Margaret Wetherell's "affective practice" (23) and Hemming's "affective cycles," which "form *patterns* that are subject to reflective or political, rather than momentary or arbitrary judgement" and that we should imagine as "an ongoing, incrementally altering chain" (564, original emphasis) containing elements related to the body, affect, and emotion that in turn have effects on bodies. What I am calling the masculinity of affect, then, might have an effect on a pre-existing construct of masculinity, or it may put into motion gender becomings that did not exist before the active discharge of emotion. What interests me above all is how the perceived masculinity of affect transforms component parts of gender chains that will come or have come in another guise. In this model, the point is not really that affect is asubjective, but that it is one element of a process that temporarily composes or decomposes masculinity. Autonomous affect may break the hold of masculinity on a discretely defined male body, or it may disintegrate a body, rendering it vulnerable or connected to other bodies. Affect may be such an intensity or such an attack on normative masculinity that it wins the battle by overpowering it. In short, the masculinity of affect may produce new gender configurations as part of the unending chain of gendered becomings. If affect is defined as "a body's *capacity* to affect and to be affected" (Gregg and Seigworth 2, original emphasis), a male body may be affected by the masculinity of affect and its gender affected and reconfigured.

More specifically, my interest is the ways in which texts narrate or invent relations between affects and masculinities, not the ways in which humans actually experience the gender of affect or the relation between language and affect in scientific terms. In "Percept, Affect, and Concept," Deleuze and Guattari discuss the invention of affects as a job of the artist who "invents unknown or unrecognized affects and brings them to light as the becoming of his characters" (1994 174). Viewer—or reader-response aside—the analysis of affect is a priori an impossible task, since affect is, as Massumi puts it, "a temporal sink, a hole in time, as we conceive of it and narrativize it" (*Parables* 26). As a discourse-based phenomenon, emotion may be "a narrative element that moves the action ahead" and "take[s affect's] place," but once affect enters literature or film, it ceases to be affect itself as these texts can only depict intensity, often through absence of language (26). What texts *can* do is to narrate the results of affect, which is "analyzable in effect, as effect" (260, n3). Like conscious humans, Deleuze writes, texts "never apprehend anything but the *effects*" of affect (*Spinoza* 19, original emphasis). A text's affect may be, as Deleuze and Guattari write, related to artistic style that raise "lived affections to the affect" (*What Is* 170). For me, it is not so much the artistic renditions of static affect per se that matter, but the representation of

movements from and to affect—Hemming's "affective cycles," or what I might call cultural recurrences of the affective becomings of masculinity away from power or gender normativity. Of special interest in the rest of this chapter is the representation "sadness," which for Deleuze's Spinoza embodies the "diminution of the power of acting" and reveals that "a body or an idea threaten our own coherence" (*Spinoza* 50; 19), and which I take as one portion of gendered affective chains or cycles. Raymond Williams's "structures of feeling" help me to consider the cultural positioning of affect. Not quite ready to become part of the fabric of cultural context but "social experiences in solution" (133), a structure of feeling is an almost-becoming "at the very edge of semantic availability" (134). Williams takes literature as the locus where the structures are housed, and I would extend his structures to movement-based fictional representation to consider how they express the not yet fully articulable that is "recognizable at a later stage" (132). The affective chain described here may be articulated, but not as a routine social experience or category of identity easily legible or as normative masculinity in its socio-historical moment.[2]

In the rest of this chapter, I would like to consider how affective cycles might operate, both in theory and in practice through sample texts in which they are embedded. My goal is not to conduct readings of these texts per se, but to employ them to illustrate and interrogate the model articulated here and to offer sample ways of considering texts that can be employed elsewhere. In a scene simultaneously serious and comic in Östlund's Swedish film *Force Majeure*, the main character Tomas experiences an affective intensity so strong that it could be characterized as a gender breakdown. He reaches a point where he can no longer perform the heroic or traditional masculinity that he is expected to perform for a capitalist system and for his wife and kids. This intense segment in the film, however, does not critique masculinity in words or discourse, but through the representation of affect. Tomas cannot speak, but sobs repeatedly and loses the power to act. During the scene, he also takes off his shirt (with his wife's help) for no apparent reason except to highlight a variation in power, a potential vulnerability represented via his flesh, a willingness to not know what a male body can do. This affective breaking down helps Tomas undo the necessity to incarnate this definition of masculinity and to open up the potentiality for a new gender inscription onto his body.

This scene reenacts the story-defining scene early on in the film: while sitting on the deck of the ski lodge eating lunch with his family in the French Alps, a seemingly harmless and far-away avalanche comes closer and closer, and as it approaches Tomas runs off, leaving his wife and children. This image of a natural phenomenon that he believes is harmless, controlled, and not violent, changes and returns in the form of the affect that he cannot control either. In the same way that the avalanche sets the story of Tomas's failure as a man into motion, the affective avalanche—or his fall into sadness—recasts his masculinity for the rest of the narrative.

In a striking scene in Christos Tsiolkas's novel about a Greek immigrant family in suburban Australia, *The Slap*, the main character Hector also has a kind of

gender breakdown in a restaurant while on vacation with his wife Aisha, an affective intensity outside language:

> His body shuddered, rocked, and heavy tears streamed down his face and onto his shirt. Aisha was shocked, could not speak . . . The waitress had been on her way over to them, but she stopped, confused, scared, looking at Hector in open-mouthed wonder. The French couples had fallen silent . . . He could not speak. His sobs had become louder, deep, rocking cries.
>
> (388)

Embodying successful and desirable masculinity from the opening scene of the novel, Hector is assailed here like his Trojan namesake in Homer who is assailed by Achilles and by Fate. The opening paragraph of the novel presented him as a man who "had learned to rein his body in, to allow himself to only let go in solitude" (1), while this scene decomposes his managed, public body that pleases women.

Affect may be represented as extra-linguistic, but it nonetheless remains housed in linguistic chains. Discursive norms of masculinity operate on and through the male body, but in so doing they create the conditions for a response not necessarily discursive in nature. A male subject's very subjection to discourse may be precisely the impetus that thrusts him away from discourse into the world of affect. As Judith Butler points out in *Senses of the Subject*, "norms impress themselves upon us, and that impression opens up an affective register" (5). Instead of models in which a male subject either is written through by discourses of masculinity or resists them, or one in which he oscillates between resistance and inscription (Reeser 29–35), affect offers an avenue for a response to discourse that temporarily opts out of a power/knowledge model. An affective register is opened as language and discourse fail in the scene I described in *The Slap*. In *Force Majeure*, Tomas first performs a breakdown in language, not challenging masculinity, by seeming to feel sorry for not upholding gender norms. His wife Ebba comments that he is "just pretending," and it is then that affective intensity sets in. The attempt to participate in a discursive norm—to disingenuously perform an apology for not meeting masculine norms—is precisely what leads him outside discourse into the affective register.

Of course, the converse to this model can occur: affective intensity may propel a male subject into the realm of normative discourse. To turn Butler's statement around, I might say that affect can open up a discursive register of norms that is more forceful than it might be without affect. A man may be affected, but then attempt to assign the affect meaning via highly predictable or normative discourse. He may narrate that affect retroactively or as alinguistic or as something else than his being affected. In such a case, discursive normativity may squash potentiality so that he may not feel, appear, or be articulated as affective through forces beyond his control. In other words, the discursive recuperation of affect may serve to assert or reassert hegemonic or normative masculinity.

The Transmission of Affective Masculinity

Affect may be the "passage from one state to another," but affects do not disappear as new states come into being. The force or the energy of an affect remains, at least in part, in later moments, and the change in what a body can do does not depart but recurs in new, mutated forms. Affective traces or vestiges of intensity may mean that male bodies return to affective moments, reliving them in new guises or situations. To narrate affect, then, is to return to the effect of affect in another textual moment, and that return to the scene of potentiality suggests the power of the original affective intensity.

Tomas in a sense relives his being affected over and over as he reconfigures gender in the wake of the scene of affect. In a striking scene meant to reconstruct heroic masculinity for his two kids, Ebba disappears in the snow and Tomas goes to save her, returning with her in his arms. The theatrical performance might reestablish lost masculinity and reposition the patriarchal nuclear family as stable for the good of the children, but it also creates a new relation to acting and to being acted upon in the narrative chain. Tomas carries with him the "acted upon" of the previous affective intensity, but now displays a subjectivity that might be expressed in Butlerian terms as "I am never simply formed, nor am I ever fully self-forming" (6). The affective decomposition is implicit in the act, and the acting carries the "being acted upon" and the "being decomposed" with it. Masculinity can operate through a planned performance because it has previously been assailed affectively. The becoming of affect may very well then be the becoming of a consciousness or visibility of performance, not of new ways of being per se. Revealing heroic masculinity as a stunt is itself a post facto offshoot of affect whose force opens up a conscious performative register.

Affect may be transmitted forward in time and have an effect on gender in a future time frame as potentiality is realized in unpredictable ways. But that effect may be related to another male body or to other bodies to whom it passes the affective intensity. Affects do not simply have effects on single bodies and then disappear. As Massumi writes, affecting others may also be a way "of acting upon the level of belonging itself, on the moving together and coming together of bodies per se" (*Politics* 8). This kind of focus on the "relation of things as such" or on the transmission of affect may be what Massumi calls "a pragmatic politics of the in-between," part of a "politics of belonging instead of a politics of identity" (18). There may be a "correlated emergence instead of separate domains of interest attracting each other as colliding in predictable ways" (18). Instead of male subjects coming together as individuals to transform gender as discrete bodies "in predictable ways," this would be an "abductive politics that has to operate on the level of affect" (18). The violence of affect, then, may transform not the individual as much as relationality itself, not through tears or emotions or through sensitivity on its own. The textual representation of affect may have a political valence, then, not simply because it decomposes masculinity but because it decomposes corporeal relations.

Hector's affective intensity in *The Slap* revisits the titular slap of the novel: the full narrative revolves around the repercussions of his cousin Harry's slapping the son of two guests at Hector's birthday barbecue. If the unexpected slap has consequences and in a sense produces the narrative and a new series of relations among the characters, Hector's affective slap reconfigures gender relations, especially with regard to his wife. The affective breakdown concludes with Aisha's comment: "after this moment, everything would be changed. After this, things could never be the same" (389). But this affective intensity is not effeminizing or de-masculinizing: "there was nothing weak or submissive about her husband's crying" (388). In this case, Hector does not become a woman through affect, but the force of affect keeps the perception of his gender intact.[3] The point is not so much that he is or is not a man, but rather that a new form of relationality is produced, a new form of inbetween-ness that is transmitted away from him to her as their relationship is mutated. The emphasis is placed on how the force of affect conveyed through the male body does something to a non-male (and non-white) body. The becoming of masculinity is now an interpersonal becoming as she thinks back on her husband's breakdown: "She knew since Asia that to be with him was to move forward into an uncertain future" (424), and her narrative becomes one of futurity put into motion by the continuing slap of gender that has an effect on her relation with her husband.

The effects of the masculinity of affect may create a gendered becoming later in another seemingly unrelated scene with a seemingly unrelated character who does not embody normative masculinity or even masculinity at all. Indeed, part of the force of affect is its potential to reconfigure other subjectivities later on. In the Australian TV version of *The Slap*, Hector's affective response is channeled into the character of his wife Aisha. Having refused to see Harry, her husband's cousin who did the original slap, she reluctantly agrees to attend a barbecue at his house, but then confronts and chastises him harshly for having beat his wife in the past. Hector's affective slap recurs in reverse as Aisha slaps Harry's masculinity. The potential related to masculinity is no longer Hector's, but is channeled into her. The whole scene of his affective intensity in fact takes place fully within the chapter of the novel about her (titled "Aisha"). The reconfiguration of his gender creates new gender in-betweens related to her as she finds new ways to relate to Harry and his domestic violence.

One more specific way in which the invention of in-betweenness can be represented is as a queering of relations between bodies. Jasbir Puar asks an important question about affect: "is it the case that there is something queer about affect, that affect is queer unto itself, always already a defiance of identity registers, amenable to queer critique?" (207). Taking the question as rhetorical, I understand subjectivity-breaking affect as queering normative masculinity by destroying discrete and rigid boundaries of male corporality and opening up the potentiality of male bodies from rigid definitions that do not exist in affective intensities. Queer expressions related to affect may signify non-normative or partially transformed masculinity more than they depict same-sex sexuality per se, functioning as a kind of trope for masculinity's becoming.

As an example of queer affect from this perspective, I take a scene late in Christophe Honoré's film *Inside Paris* (*Dans Paris*). The two main characters, brothers Jonathan and Paul, connect physically and emotionally in the bathtub in the middle of the night as Paul experiences an affective intensity and is unable to speak. Because much of the film is about the two men's and their family's inability to connect, this scene turns the narrative in a new direction. The affective moment in the bathtub intensifies what a male body can do with another male body, but in a way that transforms not so much individual masculinity (as in the *Force Majeure* example), as much as the possibility for one male body's intimacy with another. Jonathan's character had followed the French New Wave cinematic model in which a character wants to be everywhere except in view of the camera (Fox 208). This scene suggests he no longer wants to be everywhere else than where he is, which is out being sexual with various female partners, as he and his brother spend the final scene of the film lying in bed together. In both the bathtub scene and this final scene, one of the male characters is shirtless and one not—Paul in the bathtub and Jonathan in bed–focusing attention on the male body as a signifier of potentiality. I take the skin of the male flesh as what Deleuze and Guattari call a "thermometer of a becoming" (*What Is* 179) or what Spinoza calls a "soft" part of the body on which are left "certain traces of the external body acting upon it" (76). By contrast, the scenes of Jonathan with women take place in public, with their bodies fully clothed in winter dress, and no traces of the woman's body are revealed. As the act of revealing flesh passes from Paul to Jonathan, the locus of potentiality shifts as well. The point of the final scene is that Jonathan is no longer womanizing, but human connection is instead bound up with his brother on the bed. The familial male love may not itself be homoerotic, but I take it as representationally queer, an affirmative response to Puar's rhetorical question. The affective intensity in the bathtub in a sense makes possible the narration of the bedroom scene, decomposing the energetic heterosexuality and anti-intimacy of the two male bodies. The queer potentiality of male bodies means that Alice, one of Jonathan's loves who has come to the apartment to wait for him to return home, literally has to wait in the hallway while the two men lie on the bed. Excessive male heterosexuality is in suspense temporarily as a male-male encounter lives out its potentiality. The representation of affective intensity in this sense permits a non-normative bond that, as the very final scene, gestures toward a new gendered relational future in a larger sense and toward Massumi's "politics of belonging" in a new, unpredictable way.

That transmission of intensity from body to body may mean that stable identities are recomposed as affect is passed along and another body's capacity increases. Teresa Brennan calls this process "the transmission of affect," by which she means "that the emotions or affects of one person, and the enhancing or depressing energies these affects entail, can enter into another" (3). Because we humans are "not self-contained in terms of our energies" (6), the energy of gendered affective intensities may be channeled elsewhere and reconfigure stable categories in the process. The transmission of affect may be a counterattack on masculinity when a male subject is taken as discrete and bordered or as non-dialogic (see

Reeser chap. 4). If managing the body is a masculine gerundive action, then the transmission of affect may unmanage the body, or put it under the direction of another manager that cannot be controlled in a chain of movement. In *Dans Paris*, affect is transferred from the shirtless Paul in the bathtub to the shirtless Jonathan in the bedroom. Brennan is interested in affective transmission that reveals the lack of "secure distinction between the individual and the environment" (6). In this case, affect is transmitted from male body to male body to environment, or to the enclosed Parisian bedroom that comes to hold that affect within. The "*Dans*" ("Inside") of the title is in a sense the "*dans*" of this final space, a kind of affective environment that replaces the affective locus of Paris as a space of potentiality, but that very spatial replacement suggests an unending chain inside of which male bodies are just one element.

In the novel *The Slap*, Hector's breakdown channels to his wife and opens an uncertain future, but it is also channeled into the following, final narrative of the novel about the coming-out process of the adolescent character Richie. Hector's breakdown becomes the breakdown of the closet and its suicidal shame for the gay character. It is a textual energy brought forward as the affective slap is transmitted to another body via the slap of masculinity on a normative male body. If the novel's original slap has innumerable narrative repercussions, if the narrative is propelled forward by that slap, here the narrative is propelled forward by Hector's affective slap whose effects move beyond the single heteronormative man in question. The issue with the original slap at the barbeque was that it was done by someone not supposed to slap—someone not the parent—but in this case, the textual slap moves from a character not supposed to transmit to the gay adolescent. Richie's erotic attraction to the indifferent Hector means that the narrative should not connect the characters, but, in fact, does. Or I might say that there is something queer about Hector's breakdown because it makes Richie's coming out possible. It is a kind of textual slap, and it is a queerness that slaps Richie out of the closet into the realm of the potentiality of love. Like Jonathan and Paul, who can love after the affective slap in the bathtub, Richie can love after Hector's affective slap opens up a space of gendered potentiality. That final novelistic potentiality contains potential or hope that has been helped along, in part, by the masculinity of affect and the affective war machine that fought and transmitted potentiality along with it. What this example as well as the model that I have presented suggest is that the masculinity of affect—as a "structure of feeling"—has the potential to slap normative masculinity into new configurations that imply a fall or an avalanche that decomposes and recomposes gender or gender relations in new, productive ways that cannot be predicted in advance and whose future may be represented in ways that harken back to the scene of affect.

Notes

1. For more on feminist critiques of affect, see, for instance, Wetherell 60–1; Pedwell and Whitehead.
2. I thus heed Brent Malin's call for affect theory to be "relentlessly historical" (14).

3. On the question of the Deleuzian notion of "becoming woman," as using woman as a tool to transform the man, see Howie.

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11 Men of War

Affect, Embodiment, and Western Heroic Masculinity in *Dispatches* and *The Hurt Locker*

Katarzyna Paszkiewicz

Every reference to the war genre and heroic masculinity carries the weight of several decades of literary, gender, and film studies criticism. Most scholars that have addressed war masculinities so far tended to adopt a representational model—focusing on the depiction of soldiers across a wide range of texts—which yielded many fruitful investigations into the power relations concerning binaries of race, gender, and sexuality, among others. In this chapter I attempt to sketch the outlines of a different approach to the war genre and to the Western heroic masculinity, one that is based on the concept of affect, foregrounding questions of embodied perception and sensorial engagement in two war narratives: the book *Dispatches* (1977) by Michael Herr and the film *The Hurt Locker* (2008) by Kathryn Bigelow. This approach, I argue, provides new ways of framing the heroic masculinity, both in literature and in film, while allowing us to open up a space for reflection on orchestration of affect in the war genre as possibly political.

The notion of affect—which can often encompass a variety of concepts such as passions, moods, sensations, feelings, and emotions—has been a recurrent theme throughout the history of philosophy. Recently, however, we have witnessed an increased proliferation of academic publications focused on the role of affect in cultural theory, which indicates what Patricia Clough dubs an "affective turn" in the humanities and social sciences. There are many angles onto affect's theorization, but perhaps the most widespread is Deleuze's Spinozian route, which understands affect as a corporal intensity, an increase or decrease in the capacities to act, to transform and to relate to others. The affective is that which occurs to the body, to the extent that bodies are defined by their potential for both affecting and being affected and thus for intense modification, as well as that which always arises between bodies (and objects): a dynamism that animates social forces and intersubjective relations, acting as a mobile threshold between different affective states while bringing together, aligning, or dispersing bodies.

While the role of affect has yet to be sufficiently explored in literary studies, the discipline of cinema studies has already benefited from this new interest in the non-representational. In film theory the concept of affect is sometimes interlaced with the phenomenological notion of embodiment and that of "the haptic," Deleuze's term for the tactility of vision. In the mid-1990s, and crucially inspired by Vivian Sobchack's *The Address of the Eye: A Phenomenology of Film*

Experience (1992), scholars started to focus on the material and sensual aspects of viewing, "thinking about film through such notions as the lived-body (applied to both film and spectator), the embodied and synesthetic nature of perception, the reversibility of perception and expression, and the material and sensuous operations of the technological film apparatus" (Del Rio 2). As evident in a number of books by Giuliana Bruno, Patricia Pisters, Anna Powell, Steven Shaviro, Laura Marks, and Jennifer Barker, which attempt to reconsider the film image from a non-representational angle, this new path in film theory opens up interesting possibilities for theorizing gender. In seeking to overcome the paradigm of representation, most of these scholars question some of the major assumptions of psychoanalytic film theory, in particular, its theoretical reduction of the viewing experience to gaze, frequently associated in feminist film theories with the controlling, patriarchal looking. The representational model of the voyeuristic eye implies a distance between the film and the viewers, who maintain a transcendent position towards what is being seen:

> The lens of the camera, and therefore the eye of spectator, remains at an imaginary viewing point, forever outside of the scene being viewed. The position of the spectator is a transcendent one; for this position is not part of the visual field, and therefore the spectator cannot him/herself be seen.
>
> (Shaviro "Straight from the Cerebral Cortex" 163)

Contrary to this earlier critical paradigm of eye/gaze theory, which associated the cinematic vision with the notions of control, deception, and objectification, the paradigm of embodied perception includes positions that conceptualize film as a specific kind of contact: on the one hand, as an encounter with the racially or culturally coded Other—see for example Hamid Naficy's notion of accented cinema—and, on the other hand, as a haptic experience that helps to question certain parameters of control and caption (Marks; Barker).

Building on Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, Sobchack states that "we do not experience any movie only through our eyes. We see and comprehend and feel films with our entire bodily being, informed by the full history and carnal knowledge of our acculturated sensorium" (*Carnal Thoughts* 63). Following Sobchack's influential work on affective dimension of film viewing scholars like Barker and Marks have questioned the representational paradigm in favor of a somatic, embodied, or tactile reception. These conceptualizations of the haptic suppose that viewers might abandon themselves corporeally to the flow of images on screen. For Marks, haptic images, which appeal to a complex multi-sensory perception—in contrast to optical images that are based on a clear separation and control—collapse the distance between the viewer and the image, creating a form of mutual contact: "The viewer relinquishes her own sense of separateness from the image" (124); the film, therefore, "transfers the presence of that object to viewers" (xvii). In her thought-provoking account of the film experience as a tactile interaction between film and viewer, Barker extends the notion of haptic visuality and considers it at three overlapping levels: the skin, the musculature,

and the viscera. Both Marks and Baker are interested in the embodied materiality of film experience as a key component in cinematic affect.[1]

How can this line of thought in film theory add to our analysis of literary texts in terms of affect and embodied knowledge? What would it mean to look at war narratives not through the lens of representation, but as examples of expressive culture, and in what ways this approach might contribute to our understanding of Western heroic masculinity? Drawing on the Deleuzian conceptualization of affect and phenomenological notion of embodiment, the aim of this chapter is to show how the aesthetics of the visceral employed in Herr's and Bigelow's respective works enables the sort of sensorial immersion of the readers/spectators, creating an explosive tension between the abstract, mythical masculinity and the singular, material bodies at risk. This approach to Western heroic masculinity is, of course, not without problems. One potential issue with the Deleuzian notion of affect as non-discursive and as subjective is, as Todd W. Reeser observes in his article included in this volume, "the risk that affect lacks any political valence, and that an asubjective, apolitical ontology replaces political understandings of discourse in critical and cultural theory." Reeser asks an important question: "Considerations of culturally constructed and discursively based 'emotion' may take into account power and subjectivity, but what of ineffable affective moments?" His contribution shows how affect, understood as an intensity, may "break the hold of masculinity on a discretely-defined male body, or it may disintegrate a body, rendering it vulnerable or connected to other bodies." Building on this idea, in this chapter I would like to consider how the textual and visual representations of subjectivity-breaking affect in *Dispatches* and *The Hurt Locker* may indeed have political valence, inasmuch as they decompose normative masculinity by destroying discrete and rigid boundaries of male corporality, at the same time as they decompose the transcendent position of the reader/spectator, rendering him/her vulnerable or connected to the "body" of the text.

Before discussing these two narratives, however, it is necessary to set this study in a broader historical and cultural context. Herr's *Dispatches* constitutes the collection of Vietnam War memoirs, published as a single work in 1977, which depicts his experience as a war correspondent with *Esquire* magazine from late 1967 into 1968. Together with the works of Truman Capote, Tom Wolfe, and Norman Mailer, among others, *Dispatches* was considered by the critics as an example of New Journalism, a term coined to designate an intensive reportage in which authors immersed themselves in the stories as they wrote them. Bigelow's *The Hurt Locker*, in turn, is an Iraq War movie written by Mark Boal, a freelance journalist embedded in 2004 with a US Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team in Bagdad. The film, which won six Academy Awards in 2010, including Best Picture and Best Director, was frequently praised for its realistic aesthetics; some critics foregrounded, for instance, how the documentary-like style heightened the sensorial immersion of the audience, conveying the shattered nature of the individual experiences of soldiers, and how the film itself succeeded in capturing the "real" war (Schwarzbaum).

Although Herr's book differs vastly from Bigelow's film in terms of historical moment and, especially, the type of conflict that is being depicted, it does follow a similar narrative strategy. Herr perceives the war in Vietnam as an assemblage of vignettes, or a myriad of stories, which at first sight seem like random and disjointed parts. In the same manner, the structure and the style of *The Hurt Locker* also evoke a collection of "serialized war correspondent dispatches," as Douglas A. Cunningham rightly notices in his article on Bigelow's movie. The film narrative consists of seven episodes accompanied by superimposed titles that announce the days remaining in Iraq. Interestingly, this countdown structure, which evokes the ticking of a bomb, does not offer a narrative causality; Bigelow is not interested in writing a faithful chronicle of events, but rather she focuses on singular episodes, apparently disconnected from one another.

Both narratives seem to dramatize a strong attraction to violence, or even to glamorize war, a fact that troubled a number of critics who reviewed these works. Maria S. Bonn, for instance, criticized Herr for succumbing to "the hypermasculinity and sexually charged violence of war" (38). Jim Neilson, in turn, read *Dispatches* as a self-reflexive work that constructed "the war (as Hollywood would profitably exploit) as a quintessentially American rock-and-roll adventure" (142). In her frequently quoted Salon.com review of *The Hurt Locker*, entitled provocatively "Kathryn Bigelow: Feminist Pioneer or Tough Guy in Drag?" Martha Nochimson dubbed the director "Hollywood transvestite" and accused her for masquerading as a "as a hyper-macho bad boy," while calling *The Hurt Locker* "a valentine to an emotionally challenged war addict."

These constant references to hypermasculinity and Hollywood films in the critical reception of both texts are not insignificant. While Bigelow draws heavily on the tradition of Western and action movies, "with celebrated cowboys dressed as admired soldiers, the Middle East cities used as Old West towns" (Villalba), Herr also relies on the Hollywood imaginary in his account of the Vietnam War. Undoubtedly, *Dispatches* is profoundly cinematic, not only because of its awareness of the Hollywood tropes, which affect the behavior of soldiers enlisted in Vietnam and at the same time influence their portrayal in Herr's work, but also because of the cinematic aesthetics that characterize the book. According to Maggie Gordon, "structure, style and technique make [Herr's work] seem almost a thinly veiled screenplay" (16). Ultimately, both works draw self-consciously on the cinematic myth of heroic masculinity, viewed from the nostalgic lens of an American ideal of the soldier archetype (the John Wayne masculinity, in particular), while offering aesthetics of sensory overload, emotional immediacy, and somatic empathy that, I suggest, disrupt such nostalgic readings.

The disruption of the myth is perhaps more evident in Herr's book. The soldiers portrayed in *Dispatches* imitate the heroes represented in the popular media of the time,[2] which evoke the well-known Western mythologies: "Everyone else . . . had that wild haunted going-West look that said it was perfectly correct to be here where the fighting would be the worst" (Herr 74). In order to conform to the hegemonic masculine ideals of the soldier, the troops are heading straight toward the "West," where the battle is, which clearly evokes the new frontier

myth, employed—as may scholars have demonstrated (Slotkin)—to justify and legitimize the Vietnam War in the eyes of Americans. The soldiers frame their experience of war by embodying archetypical images from the American culture: "somewhere all the mythic tracks intersected from the lowest John Wayne wet-dream to the most aggravated soldier-poet fantasy" (Herr 20).[3] In a much-cited fragment of *Dispatches*, Herr questions the media portrayal of the hero, at some point equating the troops' violent behavior with the overt rehearsing of Hollywood's World War II film clichés:

> You don't know what a media freak is until you've seen the way a few of those grunts would run around during a fight when they knew that there was a television crew nearby; they were actually making war movies in their heads, doing little guts-and-glory Leatherneck tap dances under fire, getting their pimples shot off for the networks. They were insane, but the war hadn't done that to them . . . We'd all seen too many movies, stayed too long in Television City, years of media glut had made certain connections difficult.
>
> (209)

In the same manner, *The Hurt Locker* also draws on the masculine Wild West soldier bravado à la John Wayne. The adrenaline-addicted sergeant Will James (Jeremy Renner) is dangerously reckless, constantly putting at risk his life and those of the members of his team. The allusions to Western in *The Hurt Locker* are plentiful and easy to find: the music that evokes Ennio Morricone's soundtrack in spaghetti westerns; a narrative conflict developed around some central iconographic elements that symbolize the civilized (soldiers) and non-civilized (Iraqi insurgents); Baghdad represented as a chaotic no-man's-land waiting to be "ordered" by the hero; dialogues that constantly reference Westerns, for instance when Sanborn wishes Thompson "happy trails," or when James boldly exclaims: "I'll tell you when I'm standing over [the bomb], cowboy." There is arguably a sense of nostalgia permeating the film, in which the protagonist, striving to be a cowboy, wanders the streets in a dead-end small town and protects the community. Nevertheless, these Wild West mythologies are destabilized in various ways. The narrative of an individualized heroism is undercut by the constant meta-cinematic exposure, which elicits both the almost erotic fascination with the figure of the hero and at the same time the awareness of its filmic fabrication. The archetypal masculine hero is constantly being scrutinized under the inquisitive gaze of the camera. By means of close-up shots and a combination of medium and wide shots from various angles, James's body is dissected with a surgeon-like precision.

It is not a coincidence that so many scenes in *The Hurt Locker* evoke filmmaking itself. The presence of multiple cameras and multiple screens, a recurrent feature in contemporary war film according to Patricia Pisters (232–52), calls our attention to the mediated nature of these images, putting into question their transparency and subjecting them to a self-examining consideration. In one of the scenes we can see Iraqi citizens filming James, who is carefully positioned at the center of the drama, during the defusing of the car bomb. "We got a lot of

eyes on us," says Sanborn at one point, and this may refer not only to the number of onlookers observing the spectacle, but also to the sort of delirious vision this scene, and the film in general, orchestrates. An aesthetic strategy based on the jittery movement of the camera, fast editing, lenses that constantly focus and refocus, framing James from new angles, denies us spatial orientation, while at the same time, it conveys the sensation of visual vigilance, which no longer belongs to the hero. Neither James nor the spectators, can visually take control of a space through the act of looking.

Robert Burgoyne offers an interesting reading of the first scene, which "in contrast to the traditional war film, where the cartography of the battlefield is defined from the outset with panoramic long shots and aerial overviews—a mapping operation that can be read as the cinematic analogue to the act of taking control of a geographic space"—opens suddenly in medias res:

> The streets have been turned into minefields and the markets into snipers' nests, visualizing through a fast, fragmented montage an experience of war no longer defined by fronts or sectors, a war in which improvised bombs and irregular combatants are concealed in the folds and textures of urban life.
>
> (13)

The aesthetics of kinesthetic agitation, along with the sounds of deep breaths, heartbeats, and the shouts of the soldiers that dominate the soundtrack, express a claustrophobic atmosphere of anxiety, and contrast with the cold and rational efficiency with which the protagonists are trying to dismantle the bomb. The camera mounted on a remote-controlled robot they use acts here as an inquisitive eye, a prolongation of the masculine, patriarchal gaze, whose phallic nature is made evident in the dialogue between Thompson and Sanborn:[4]

> SANBORN [when the robot reaches the bomb]: "Hello mama!"
>
> . . .
>
> SANBORN: I can't get in.
>
> THOMPSON: What do you mean you can't get in? Pretend it's your dick, man.

Nevertheless, instead of producing an illusion of control and omnipotence, the images that compose this initial sequence transmit a hypertrophy of the visual, borrowing the suggestive term from Steven Shaviro, who adopted it to analyze *Blue Steel*, another film by Bigelow:

> Something has happened to the act of looking . . . Vision in *Blue Steel* is excruciatingly, preternaturally vivid; reality is heightened into feverish hallucination. Such a hypertrophy of the visual is Bigelow's way of undoing the security and possessiveness that have conventionally been associated with the "male gaze." Bigelow pushes fetishism and voyeuristic fascination to the point where they explode.
>
> (*The Cinematic Body* 8)

The hypertrophy of the visual serves here to destabilize the mastery of the hero's imperialist looking based on control and caption. Bigelow multiplies vision, but at the same time refuses the visual plentitude of what is seen.

The excess of sensorial stimuli might be considered a way to frustrate the archetypical display of Hard Body, characteristic of the action-adventure films of the 1980s—the figure to which James clearly alludes—and which, as Susan Jeffords argued, promoted a concept of the nation as gendered, as strong, tough, and assertive. The repeated shots of the local community as they observe the American soldiers taking charge of their country, as well as shattered and agitated looking back, but not really discerning, upset the corporeal steadiness of the Western hero and at the same time call into question the US mission in Iraq. This sensation of uncertainty and even failure of the American project is transmitted visually in the powerful scene in which James, after successfully disarming a bomb, notices another wire and after pulling on it, he discovers more bombs hidden around him. In this, and many other scenes, James is viewed from high-angle, long-lens shots through windows and balconies, which render him the distant, vulnerable, and exposed object of the gaze.

The aesthetics of sensorial overload enables and at the same time frustrates this cinematic exposure of the Western hero, contributes to our sensorial immersion in the story. Jennifer Barker argues in *The Tactile Eye* that the film viewer can imitate and empathize not only with characters, but also the film itself: "Our bodies orient and dispose themselves toward the body of the film itself, because we and the film make sense of space by moving through it muscularly in similar ways and with similar attitudes" (75). The look that Bigelow orchestrates is connected to other senses, facilitating the physical and intensive implication of the spectator, even beyond identification with the characters. Although focused on the act of looking, *The Hurt Locker* does not offer a safe distance between perceiver and perceived. We find ourselves drawn into a frenetic world of images and sounds, where the boundary between self and other is difficult to discern.

The overload of sensory detail also characterizes Herr's experience of Vietnam. This is already reflected in the title of the chapter "Breathing In," in which Herr describes that his past experiences and expectations concerning Vietnam did not prepare him for the gravity of the war. While undoubtedly the title makes reference to this preparatory action (and, in the case of the soldiers, this "breathing in" probably also refers to all the misconceptions about being a man at war they drew from Hollywood glorified images of warfare), it also evokes "taking in" all that is around him. Herr's vivid, intense prose in *Dispatches* creates sensorial immersion, providing us with many images and sounds with all the sensory detail: "Everything I see is blown through with smoke, everything is on fire everywhere. It doesn't matter that memory distorts; every image, every sound comes back out of smoke and the smell of things burning" (108). Milton J. Bates addresses this urgency in Herr's writing:

> These are the words of a narrator who is too breathless, too high on the adrenaline rush of war, to organize his thoughts into grammatically correct and

> precisely subordinated sentences. In combat things happen all at once, to the correspondent as well as the soldier, and he captures that simultaneity with an artful use of the comma splice.
>
> (242)

In his kinetically agitated description of combat Herr questions the stability of the controlling looking, collapsing the distinction between the subject and the object of the gaze: "Under Fire would take you out of your head and your body too, the space you'd seen a second ago between subject and object wasn't there anymore, it banged shut in a fast wash of adrenaline" (63). Herr's vision is not based on a distanced eye mastering all it surveys, but instead is highly heterogeneous, multiple and physically implicated in what it perceives. Moreover, *Dispatches*, similarly to *The Hurt Locker*, also facilitates muscular empathy in Barker's terms. By foregrounding an overwhelming kaleidoscopic data stream, Herr embeds us in sensory proximity to the events themselves. His highly adrenal style generates a deep experience of somatic empathy with the text, that allows the reader access to the inside of the battle, but it also conveys a political charge. Just like in *The Hurt Locker*, *Dispatches* offers a powerful critique of the mythic and technological mediation that separates us from violent death.[5] In his insightful analysis of *Dispatches*, Ty Hawkins observes how gradually Herr chooses a total immersion, collapsing "the distance between himself and death, thereby shedding his belief that, 'I was there to watch'" (Hawkins 136). As Herr writes himself, "It took me a month to lose that feeling of being a spectator to something that was part game, part show" (168).

While Herr realizes that Vietnam is "not a movie, no jive cartoon either" (46), recognizing the detrimental effects this myth has, *The Hurt Locker* exposes the narrative of a clean and surgical war, which might be controllable by means of technological progress. James refuses to use a bomb suit or headphones that communicate him with his team, exposing himself to the immediacy of risk, which might be seen as an act of rebellion against the alienating technology. His relation to war is much more direct, physical, and material than that of any other character in the film. Nowhere in *The Hurt Locker* is it more clear than in the viscerally intense sequence involving a "body bomb," in which James tries to dismantle the device inside the teenage Iraqi boy's body, manipulating with his fingers between wires, organs, vessels and flesh.

At the same time as they furnish a self-reflexive commentary on the mythic or technological mediation of war, Herr and Bigelow do not offer a safe distance or the pleasures of alienated spectatorship. By highlighting the material, flesh-and-blood bodies at risk, defined by their potential for both affecting and being affected, they question the imaginary of the Hard Body of the heroic soldier, the display of whose masculinity is a major convention in US war cinema. If we follow Massumi's distinction between affect and emotion, the intensity of affect in both texts is something different from well-defined emotion tied to nation, to blood, or to nationalism. These war narratives convey an enhanced somatic experience of combat in ways that undermine the more traditional representation of

Western heroic masculinity. Herr dramatizes a clear disjoint between the archetypical active military body found in Hollywood films and the vulnerable, fragile, and often impotent bodies of the soldiers. Bigelow offers a reflection on the fabrication of the filmic hero, creating fissures in the dominant rhetoric based on the narrative of Western heroic masculinity. Far from attempting to celebrate its mythical qualities or presenting nostalgic tableaux of the past, she dramatizes the failure of the American presence in Iraq. Regardless of whether they take a critical or a more confirming stance towards war and nation, Herr's and Bigelow's respective works manage to disrupt the timeless motifs of heroism, producing particular aesthetic and affective versions of masculinities offered by the war genre.

Notes

1. It is worth mentioning that while Sobchack's and Barker's projects draw mainly upon Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology in their exploration of the corporeal dimensions of cinema, Marks's focus is on both phenomenological and Deleuzian theories.
2. For an analysis of the soldiers' gender-loaded, performative action from the angle of Judith Butler's conceptualization of imitation and gender, see Diezyn.
3. As the novel unravels, Herr mentions two of Wayne's films, *Fort Apache* (1948) and *The Green Berets* (1968), evoking two models of masculinity: the model of John Wayne as frontiersman and John Wayne as a soldier. In her examination of the nostalgic pressure of Hollywood masculine heroics that characters in *Dispatches* exhibit, Caroline Diezyn provides a detailed account of the "John Wayne masculinity" at work in Herr's book.
4. The idea of the penetration of land, marked as feminine, is very common in the war genre. For an analysis of the gendering of the land in Herr's book, see Diezyn.
5. Technological and mythic mediations abound in both texts. Just like *Dispatches* is organized around "the movie-fed war fantasies" (Herr 194), in *The Hurt Locker* there are several references to videogames (for example, the first scene in which soldiers use a robot to defuse a bomb or the scene of the shooting in the desert).

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Part V

Eco-masculinities

12 The "Wild, Wild World"

Masculinity and the Environment in the American Literary Imagination

Stefan Brandt

Introduction: Big Stick in the Wilderness

When former US President Teddy Roosevelt took his son Kermit on a hunting trip to Africa in November 1909, he was determined to make him a man. Given that the 20-year-old Kermit was rather keen on "effeminate" pleasures (namely, the reading and writing of literature), this did not seem an easy task. In a letter to his daughter Ethel from November 13, a worried Roosevelt articulated his skepticism as follows: "It is rare for a boy with his refined tastes and his genuine appreciation of literature . . . to be also an exceptionally bold and hardy sportsman" (*Letters*). The prospect that his oldest son could turn out to be a weakling must have been unbearable for the self-acclaimed "Rough Rider" and creator of "big-stick diplomacy" in US politics. When young Kermit finally earned his trophy near the 'Nzor River, his father was relieved: "Kermit killed a leopard yesterday. He has really done so very well!" (*Letters*). Interpreting his son's hunting success as a sign of newly won masculinity, Roosevelt is full of praise: "[H]is keenness, cool nerve, horsemanship, hardihood, endurance, and good eyesight make him a really good wilderness hunter" (*Letters*).[1]

The Roosevelt anecdote illustrates how intimately interwoven the discourses of manliness and the environment are in the American cultural imagination. It also documents an often utilized strategy in Western literary practice, namely that of inscribing codes of masculinity into the seemingly innocent "text" of nature. In this rhetoric, masculine identity seems closely linked to a conquest of nature, portrayed as a relentless yet strangely "reasonable" subjugation of everything wild and untamed.

My chapter aims to show that US American literature has been instrumental in creating this symbolic connection between manliness and nature. As Mark Allister has trenchantly put it in his introduction to the anthology *Eco-Man* (2004), masculinity in the US cultural imaginary is often envisioned as "a hypermanhood in the wilderness" (6), with cowboys, trailblazers, and pioneers functioning as pre-eminent national heroes. There is a long tradition in US American culture, going back to the nation's beginnings, to associate wild nature with a "virgin land" that has to be explored and conquered by the male settler (Smith).[2] In the realm of literary imagination, such acts of appropriation can be inscribed into

the "lay of the land," to take up Annette Kolodny's memorable phrase from the title of her 1975 book. Texts such as Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales* seem to reflect what Kolodny calls "an experience of the land as essentially feminine" (4). The history of the American westward movement has been largely written through metaphors of penetration and exploration. In colonial writing, this kind of "regeneration through violence," to quote the title of Richard Slotkin's study, was celebrated in endless accounts of symbolic defloration, an infamous example being Captain John Smith's report on the settlement of Virginia. In the following, I will demonstrate that the image of "hypermanhood in the wilderness" was carefully developed and reshaped throughout the centuries. Probably more than other literatures, American literary practice has generated strategies to incorporate codes of masculinity into the realm of nature (and vice versa).

I will start with some brief remarks on how approaches from ecocritical thought can be used to shed light on the literary nexus between manliness and the environment. In a second step, I will examine James Fenimore Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales* and Harold Bell Wright's westerns as examples of this classical phase of masculinist appropriation of nature. In a final section, which is also my excuse for a conclusion, I want to illuminate how postmodernist literature has challenged and often deconstructed this traditional perspective, creating what I term "eco-masculinity," namely an increased sense of awareness of the problematic dimensions of manliness. T.C. Boyle, Gretel Ehrlich, and Annie Proulx will serve as examples illustrating this transformation in the literary representation of masculinity and nature.

Ecocriticism and Masculinity

Ecocriticism, I will contend, can help us understand the mechanisms that operate underneath American texts ranging from Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales* to the fairly recent works mentioned in the introduction. Having emerged as a reaction to the global environmental crisis of the 1970s,[3] ecocritical theory has established itself as an important subdiscipline in literary and cultural theory. Cheryll Glotfelty describes "ecocriticism" as "the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment [taking] an earth-centered approach to literary studies" (xviii). Ecocritics have thus foregrounded the role of nature as a literary playground in which parameters of social practice can be expressed and discussed. In this vein, the discipline has pursued two different goals: first, to examine the emerging canon of blatantly ecological texts that have been produced in the wake of the global environmental crisis (Scheese); second, to encourage a rereading of the existing literary canon in terms of its negotiation of the link between mankind and nature (Buell; Slovic; Zapf). Scott Slovic has gone as far as to proclaim that "there is not a single literary work anywhere that utterly defies ecocritical interpretation" ("Ecocriticism" 160).

A chief concern of ecocritical writings is the ideological framework through which the environment is depicted in literary and cultural texts. The subdiscipline of "ecofeminism," in particular, has identified "the *andro*centric dualism man/

woman" as a key paradigm of Western thinking (Garrard 26).[4] "Ecofeminism's basic premise," cultural theorist Greta Gaard explains, "is that the ideology which authorizes oppressions such as those based on race, class, gender, sexuality, physical abilities, and species is the same ideology which sanctions the oppression of nature" (1).

The main reason for the predominance of patriarchal structures is seen in the pervasiveness of binaries in Western cultural thinking: male/female, culture/nature, wild/civilized, and so forth. Ecofeminists assert that "[t]he whole set-up or opposition and its complex implication in a related set of hierarchies needs to be rethought *in its totality*" (Clark 112, emphasis in original). Donna Haraway, for example, has suggested that literary theory should employ structural elements from the fields of nature to reformulate its theses: "I like to see feminist theory as a reinvented coyote discourse obligated to its sources in many heterogeneous accounts of the world" (594). Haraway's approach gives credit to the sensory reception of literature, which inevitably involves "[t]he *body*, the object of biological discourse" as "a most engaging being" (594). To read and understand literature, we have to become involved in the visceral world of the text as sentient agents.

In his influential study *Literatur als kulturelle Ökologie* [*Literature as Cultural Ecology*] (2002), Hubert Zapf elaborates on the unique "ecological" function of literary texts. Literature, according to Zapf, positions itself in analogy to an "ecological principle" and thus becomes a part of a "larger system" within hegemonic culture (3, my translation). Thus conceived, literary texts assume a specific role in cultural practice, articulating "unrealistic sensory desires" (63, my translation) and transforming them into feasible events in the realm of imagination. By means of its creative potential, literature is capable of informing our knowledge of identity on a deeply physical level. The distinction between male and female is often prestructured in literary texts as a basic natural marker, encouraging specific forms of gender-related identification and often inviting us directly to "read . . . like a man," as Robert Scholes has provocatively phrased it (218). American literature, in particular, has been interpreted by feminist critics as an archetypal arena for the expression and celebration of masculinity, thus figuratively becoming a "masculine wilderness," to use Judith Fetterley's memorable phrase (viii).

Into the Wild—The American Frontier as a Masculine Experience

Charles Brockden Brown's *Edgar Huntly* (1799), one of the first novels written by an American, presents us a white settler who stumbles through the forests of Pennsylvania while killing Indians and mysteriously becoming a savage himself. More than twenty years later, James Fenimore Cooper published the first of his famous "Leatherstocking novels," *The Pioneers* (1823), focusing on a fearless white trapper and pathfinder named Natty Bumppo who is adopted by Native Americans and functions as the epitome of the westward movement. The heroes in these two books could hardly be more different: While Brown's Edgar Huntly is a sexually

ambiguous figure whose persona partly merges with that of the Indian squaw sachem Queen Mab (181–200), Cooper's Natty Bumppo aka Leatherstocking is a masculine role model who inspires the other characters with his sense of vigor and hardihood. It is the frontier hero in the mold of Cooper's works who was to become, as one critic has phrased it, "the prototype of all pioneers, trappers, cowboys, and other innocently destructive children of nature" (Fiedler 194).

When Natty first appears in the opening chapter of Cooper's *The Pioneers*, the reader's attention is immediately directed to his unusual strength ("robust and enduring health") as well as to his manly appearance and dress ("tarnished buckskin breeches," "belt of deer-skin") (*Pio* 23).[5] This characterization is continued in *The Prairie* (1927), where we encounter an 87-year-old Natty Bumppo who has been shaped by the challenges of the American frontier.[6] Although an old man with "gray hairs" (*Prai* 114), the "trapper" (as Natty is now called) still functions as a male role model. Being endowed with a natural instinct, "the choicest and perhaps rarest gift of nature, that of distinguishing good from evil" (*Prai* 114), he is able to survive in the wilderness. He cherishes "the honesty of the woods" and is proud of having "escape[d] the wasteful temper of [his] people" (*Prai* 213). The main function that Natty assumes within the aesthetic frame of the novel is that of a "Heroic Artisan in the wilderness" (Kimmel 50), a masculine craftsman who also knows how to survive in the woods. When asking himself "to choose my time and place again," Cooper's hero does not hesitate a second: "twenty and the wilderness" (*Prai* 32). As if to reaffirm his hero's claim, Cooper rejuvenates Natty in his next Leatherstocking novel, *The Deerslayer* (1841), which was published fourteen years after *The Prairie*. Here, a young Natty Bumppo in his twenties adventurously explores the American wilderness, once again demonstrating his "manly nature and simple truth" (*DS* 267), his "true wilderness heart" (*DS* 93). "The Deerslayer model of manhood," John Tallmadge asserts in his thought-provoking essay, "construes nature as a scene for heroic action. Whether the goal is meat or discovery, victory or insight, nature is set over against a protagonist who is only passing through" (25). Natty's allies in the wilderness are equally endowed with masculine traits that reflect back on the realm of nature. In the first Leatherstocking novel, Natty's companion, the juvenile hunter Oliver Edwards, is marked as an exceptionally vigorous character whose virile presence is already foreshadowed by his voice ("the manly sounds of a male voice"; *Pio* 126). An impeccable creature of the wilderness, Natty is surrounded by several other masculine figures that appear throughout the books. The rugged bee-hunter Paul Hover in *The Prairie*, for example, impresses everyone with his "firm, deep, manly voice" (*Prai* 30) and "his frank, fearless, and manly character" (*Prai* 255). In a similar vein, the courageous trailblazer and founder of the frontier town Templeton, Judge Marmaduke (a character modeled after Cooper's own father), is described as having a "fine, manly face" (*Pio* 18) and even a "manly brow" (*Pio* 283).

Cooper leaves no doubt in his reader's mind that it is "this land of America" (*Prai* 344) which shapes such masculine characters. Compared to the inhabitants of "other countries," the American pioneers seem "more manly, and more honest, too" (*Prai* 345).[7] It is no surprise that Cooper makes a similar observation with

respect to the "noble savages" of the American wilderness. Thus, Natty's faithful friend Chingachgook, the eponymous "last of the Mohicans," is portrayed as a muscular, energetic character, endowed with an "unusual fire" in his eyes (*Pio* 139). Hard-Heart, the indomitable Pawnee warrior from *The Prairie*, seems equally manly in his appearance and behavior (*Prai* 321).[8] How much Cooper's vision of a "masculine wilderness" has evolved from Brown's portrayal just a quarter of a century earlier becomes clear on the linguistic level as well: Whereas the words "masculine" and "manly" are not used at all in Brown's *Edgar Huntly*, they appear almost ten times in various versions of Cooper's *The Pioneers*.[9] In their emphasis on "male virtues," Cooper's tales undoubtedly endorse the ideology of "tough-guy" masculinity that experienced its first heyday during the 1820s.[10]

Rocky Aesthetics—Masculinity in Post-Frontier Writing

After the official "closing of the frontier" declared by the US Census in 1890 (Turner), many writers were desperate to maintain a sense of imaginative wilderness, in the form of nostalgic westerns. When the frontier was "gone at last," to use the famous phrase by naturalist Frank Norris (69), the result was a wave of immensely successful cowboy narratives that celebrated the audacious westerner as an American hero, including Owen Wister's prototypical western novel *The Virginian* (1902) and Harold Bell Wright's *When a Man's a Man* (1916).

The latter novel, a bestseller at its time, serves as a good example for the validation of masculinity as a feature of the wilderness. Set in the frontier state of Arizona, *When a Man's a Man* relates the story of a mysterious stranger called Honorable Patches who enters a small settlement to work on the Cross-Triangle Ranch. Having been "bred and schooled in a world so far from this world of primitive things" (145), Patches soon helps establish a sense of order in an otherwise chaotic space. As in Cooper's *The Prairie*, the landscape in *When a Man's a Man* forms a dynamic presence that perfectly dovetails with the characters' actions. Wright's book matches the first criterion formulated by Lawrence Buell for an "environmentally oriented work." In such a text, Buell writes, "[t]he nonhuman environment is present not merely as a framing device but as a presence that begins to suggest that human history is implicated in natural history" (7). The "land of granite and marble and porphyry and gold" (Wright 9) described in *When a Man's a Man* plays a constitutive role in the formation of the settlers' identities. The novel suggests that the daring pioneer has to develop qualities similar to that of the environment: "[A] man's mental grace must be as the grace of the untamed trees," and "a man's soul must be as the unstained skies" (Wright 9.). Following the example of his earlier western *The Shepherd of the Hills* from 1907 (set in the Ozark Mountains and Northern Arkansas), Wright, in *When a Man's a Man*, reinvents Cooper's rhetoric of nature being a symbolic counterpart to hypercivilization. The concept now becomes infused with the unambiguous aura of rugged masculinity. While Cooper's vision of the American wilderness—at least partly—allowed shades of ambiguity and betweenness, Wright's fictional universe hardly

knows such nuances: "[I]n this land where a man, to live, must be a man, a woman, if she be not woman, must surely perish" (Wright 9). The unmistakably binary perspective of Wright's works seems rooted in the late Victorian cult of manliness that had taken a grip on turn-of-the-century America, evoking an analogy to the contemporary discourse of US imperialist politics. As Wright's omnipresent narrator clarifies, the hero's masculinity is not one of "tinseled bravery" and "confetti spirit" (12), but grounded in the harsh reality of American frontier life.[11]

Towards the end of the novel, Wright's hero symbolically merges with his natural environment, becoming part of the mountains that surround him: "At last, for a moment, he stood out boldly against the wide-arched sky—and then he had passed from sight—over the sky line, as he had said" (334). In its appropriation of the natural landscape, Wright's novel exemplifies an aesthetic strategy that Robert Tally has described as "literary cartography" (44). Conceived in this manner, both author and reader become involved in a process of "mapmaking" (Tally 26). Wright's elaborate use of "cartographic practices" (Tally 44) links his works to those of his naturalist predecessors, especially Jack London and Frank Norris, who have created a symbolic nexus between the wilderness of specific regions (Alaska, the Arctic, etc.) and tough-guy masculinity.

Conclusion—'Eco-Masculinity' and Postmodernist Literature

I have argued so far that the paradigms of masculinity and wilderness are intimately conjoined in classical American literature. In these texts, a sense of nature awareness is set off against what is called hypercivilization. To become real men, the heroes have to prove themselves in the wilderness. This traditional dichotomous model remains active well into the 1940s and '50s, with hard-boiled authors such as Ernest Hemingway.

With the "postmodernist turn" of the 1980s, writers began to look behind this discourse, more and more questioning its ideological assumptions. This is illustrated by the vast series of literary revisions of *the* Western myth in the works of T.C. Boyle, Annie Proulx, and Gretel Ehrlich. In Boyle's *The Tortilla Curtain* (1995), the cultural ideal of a "nature, pure and unalloyed" (113) is debunked as a grim farce. While the male protagonists' sense of masculinity is fundamentally shattered, images of an unruly and unreliable nature, epitomized by the "*wild world* [*of the coyote*]" (214, emphasis by Boyle), move to the foreground. In their critical reassessment of the cultural function of manliness, Boyle's writings advocate what I have called "eco-masculinity"—a reinstallment of nature as a balancing force.

Feminist writer Gretel Ehrlich, who, like Annie Proulx, writes about male protagonists in the former frontier state of Wyoming, exemplifies this "deconstructionist" stance on the "masculinity/wilderness" complex so typical of postmodernity. In her collection of essays, *The Solace of Open Spaces* (1985), she describes how depictions of the "strong and silent" (49) cowboy in urban settings clearly misrepresent reality: Marlboro ads on the New York subway showing the

rancher as a "rugged individualist" (49), she asserts, could not be further from the truth of actual life in Wyoming. Rather than being a "man's man" (51), the typical cowboy, according to Ehrlich, is rather caught in a "balancing act" (51) between the realms of masculinity and femininity. If he's gruff, handsome, and physically fit on the outside, he's androgynous at the core. Ranchers are midwives, hunters, and nurturers, providers, and conservationists all at once (51).

Ehrlich's statement points to an important approach in postmodern thinking linked to the criticism of metanarratives. In this approach, the feminist desire to challenge established assumptions about masculinity and femininity is connected to basic concerns regarding the environment. It is no coincidence that Proulx's short story "Brokeback Mountain" oscillates between metaphors of nature and gender, ending on the notion of "some open space" (318) within which the closeted hero tries to position himself. Figures like Jack Twist and Ennis Del Mar from Proulx's narrative illustrate the evolution from a formerly dichotomous view on American masculinity to alternative and challenging representations, in which a seemingly natural environment is revealed in its deeper ideological dimensions.[12]

To conclude, literary postmodernism, in all its diverse shades, seems to operate as a counter-discourse to the long-cultivated rhetoric of masculine self-affirmation and rejuvenation through acts of appropriation of the natural environment. The typical male character in postmodernist texts is more self-conscious than self-confident. Being aware of the complexities and paradoxes of identity structures in the postmodern era, he positions himself not as a conqueror of the wilderness, but as its equally complex and unpredictable counterpart in the world of social interaction. If nature seems more diverse and unruly to us today than one hundred years ago, masculinity as well has fundamentally transformed from a stereotype to a heterogeneous complexity, now lending itself to alternative and often paradoxical interpretations.

Notes

1. Roosevelt was not only a prominent defender of the turn-of-the-century cult of manliness, but also an influential advocate of the environmentalist movement. According to his own testimony, Roosevelt transformed from a frail child into a tough man, specifically through his determination to shape his body and pursue "the strenuous life" (*Autobiography* 56). The development of a strong physique seems connected in Roosevelt's rhetoric to the building of a strong national self (*Autobiography* 425–53). Interestingly enough, Roosevelt's presidency was marked by the establishment of the US Forest Service and the foundation of five national parks and 150 national forests (Brinkley).
2. Some ecofeminists maintain that metaphors of nature are so pervasive in Western thinking due to exploitative practices concerning both women and the environment. Patriarchal dominion over women, Carolyn Merchant and Val Plumwood contend in their respective books, is often negotiated and justified through images of conquered nature.
3. William Rueckert's "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism" (1978) is usually mentioned as a founding text of ecocriticism. Others point to even earlier publications such as Leo Marx's book-length study *The Machine in the Garden* (1964)

and Raymond Williams's *The Country and the City* (1973) as foundational texts in the field.

4. Ecofeminism's focus on the significance of gender dichotomies is matched in writings of the "Deep Ecology" movement by an emphasis on "the anthropocentric dualism of humanity/nature" in the cultural imaginary of the Western world (Garrard 26). Contributors to the influential collection of essays, *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century* (Sessions 1995), invite readers to recognize the inherent value of nature which should be regarded as separate from the aspect of usefulness. However, Greg Garrard has pointed out that the *Deep Ecology* reader mainly contains "essays on 'dead white males' such as D.H. Lawrence, John Muir and Henry David Thoreau" (29), while ecofeminist anthologies such as Greta Gaard's *Ecofeminism* (1993) offer a variety of approaches linking gender identity to issues of class, race, sexual orientation, and species.
5. For the sake of convenience, *The Pioneers* will be abbreviated as *Pio*; *The Prairie* will be cited as *Prai*, and *The Deerslayer* as *DS*.
6. For a detailed elaboration on the concept of the "American frontier," see Frederick Jackson Turner's groundbreaking essay from 1893. "The frontier is the line of most rapid and effective Americanization," Turner argues in this piece (415). "The wilderness masters the colonist" who is then transformed into an American (415).
7. When creating the figure of Natty Bumppo, Cooper must have thought of Daniel Boone, the iconic explorer and woodsman of the nation's founding years, who, as many critics believe, functioned as the historical archetype for the Leatherstocking figure (Smith 60).
8. The rough environment of the American prairie seems to have an invigorating influence even on the female characters. In *The Pioneers*, Elizabeth Temple, Marmaduke's daughter, wears a large coat that "was evidently intended for a masculine wearer" (*Pio*, 18). In the same novel, Mrs. Hollister, the owner of the village bar, is described as walking "with masculine strides" (*Pio*, 115), her face appearing "not unlike a sun rising in the west" (*Pio*, 114). In *The Prairie*, Esther Bush, a tireless settler and mother of fourteen children, is portrayed using similar words: "[A]ttired in a dress half-masculine, and bearing a weapon like the rest, [she] seem'd no unfit leader for the group of wildly-clad frontier-men, that followed in her rear" (*Prai*, 131).
9. The word "manly" appears six times throughout *The Pioneers*; the attribute "masculine" is used three times. These numbers even rise in the sequel *The Prairie*, released four years later, where "manly" and "masculine" are used twelve times, the antonym "unmanly" appearing twice.
10. The genre of sentimental fiction, closely identified with women writers such as Harriet Beecher Stowe, Maria Susanna Cummins, and Susan Warner, must be seen as a counter-movement to the rugged frontier tales written by Cooper. Warner's 1850 novel *The Wide, Wide World*, about the Christian initiation of a 13-year-old New York girl in Scotland shaped the formula of the female Bildungsroman in the nineteenth century (see Tompkins 125).
11. This rhetoric must have reminded readers of the fact that their president, Teddy Roosevelt, had given up his sheltered life to fight at one frontier (Cuba) and later expanded the US power sphere to take the nation to yet another frontier (the Philippines).
12. In his poems and essays, beat writer Gary Snyder has accomplished a similar goal, boldly decontextualizing tropes of the American wilderness and warning against their ideological uses within hegemonic culture (see, for example, *Turtle Island* from 1969 and *The Practice of the Wild* from 1990). Snyder's anarchistic eco-visions find a counterpart in the Promise Keepers movement of the American 1980s and '90s, in which men were invited to discover their "deeper masculinity" by means of a close contact with the wilderness (see Bly).

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13 Green Intersections

Caring Masculinities and the Environmental Crisis

Teresa Requena-Pelegrí

We live in a world of intersections in which the fluid webs of relatedness are multiple. Critical studies on men and masculinities are constantly exploring new paths of analysis and engaging in dialogue with other disciplines. At the same time, the greater use of comparative perspectives has brought together previously separated concerns, fields, and approaches that have in turn identified intersectionalities in theory, analysis, and practices (Ruspini et al. 2). In this context, care has featured prominently in the studies on men and masculinities of the preceding decades. Traditionally coded as feminine and thus relegated to the undervalued realm of emotions, care has historically been antagonized from normative definitions of masculinity. As Niall Hanlon argues, "despite feminist advances, the moral and structural imperatives on women to care along with women's subordination in the public sphere remain foremost obstacles to gender equality in economic, cultural, and political life" (2). Such a dualistic initial assumption on the gendered nature of care persists and is reinforced by the core assumption of many social sciences that have marginalized the analysis of care on the basis "that the prototypical human being is a self-sufficient rational . . . man" thus neglecting to give serious attention to "the reality of dependency and vulnerability for all human beings" (Hanlon 3).

Care, however, has recently taken center stage in articulating egalitarian gender arrangements and in constructing gender beyond the oppositional paradigm. Despite the fact that the discourses of masculinity and the environment are still rarely viewed together (Allister; Brandt in this volume; Pulé; Twine), I wish to look at care—in different connected guises: about others, about the environment—as being inextricably related to, on the one hand, the articulation of different forms of masculinities and, on the other, to environmental concerns. To that effect, I suggest analyzing two texts. The first one, Wells Tower's "Raw Water" (2009), a short story that tackles the perils of forsaking care for the environment and for others as an essentially destructive stance. In the story, environmental destruction is paired with the development of a hypermasculinity that is equally built on control and destruction in opposition to care. In the second case, I analyze Scott Russell Sander's nonfiction text *Hunting for Hope* (2000), which constitutes a manifesto for engagement and responsibility for the world we live

in, a meditation on the ways to build a masculine identity upon the foundations of care and restoration.

As Stefan Brandt's previous chapter demonstrates, nature in the US literary imagination has been a pervasive textual construction. The male experience of nature has taken different forms. In *Love and Death in the American Novel* (1960), for instance, Leslie Fiedler notoriously identified the ways in which the pastoral trope fostered by the Romantics underpins the archetypical nineteenth-century white male literary pattern, that of "the man on the run," away from civilization and sexual encounter in texts such as Washington Irving's "Rip Van Winkle" (1819) or Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884). Despite its recurrent presence, the archetypal flight from the pressures of domestic/adult life into a pastoral Eden devoid of responsibilities has long been proven to be a failure. In *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), for instance, Holden Caulfield finally rejects his dream of escape in favor of a responsibility he has consistently rejected as a malaise of the adult "phony" world that surrounds him. Thus, in his nonchalant way, Holden accepts his love for his sister Phoebe to prevail over his dreams of escaping westwards.

The advent of ecocriticism in the late 1960s and 1970s fostered an earth-centered approach to the analysis of literary texts, a study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment while focusing on the fundamental premise that human cultures are connected to the physical world, both *affecting* it and affected *by* it (Brandt in this volume; Glotfelty xviii–xix; Garrard 3). These have in turn intersected with larger environmental concerns and today, the relevance of the humanities to environmental issues is unquestionable as the creation of the professional Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) in the 1990s testifies. In turn, attention to environmental studies has entailed a self-reflexive rethinking of the field of literary studies and has brought an interdisciplinary approach to the field. As Ursula K. Heise argues:

> The environmental humanities are currently emerging from the convergence of research areas that have followed distinct disciplinary trajectories to date . . . The challenge for the environmental humanities lies in staking out common conceptual and methodological ground between these areas, as well as in how environmental perspectives are articulated differently within the framework of particular disciplines.

The particular intersection between two different areas, gender and ecocriticism, has been accomplished by the field of ecofeminism, thus revealing the ways in which patriarchal attitudes have historically exploited both women and nature (Allister 7). Texts such as Ynestra King's "Healing the Wounds: Feminism, Ecology, and the Nature/Culture Dualism" (1990) and Greta Gaard and Lori Gruen's "Ecofeminism: Toward Global Justice and Planetary Health" (1993) established the key parameters of the field. In the context of US literature, Annette Kolodny's seminal *The Land Before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers, 1630–1860* (1984), exposed the misogyny behind the male configurations

of landscape that have prevailed ever since the arrival of the first European colonizers. Revealing the ways in which the construction of the New World was given over to the fantasies of men (Kolodny 3), such studies have contributed to analyzing the literary representations of the colonial conquest from a gendered perspective.

The weight of the destructive responsibility men have historically had in their relationship with nature remains paramount in the shape of the impending economic, social, and environmental issues. For critic Scott Slovic ecofeminism has focused on denouncing a normative masculinity that has prevented alternative models from surfacing: "It appears to be taboo to use the phrase 'men and nature' in anything other than a derogatory way" since the "hypercritical attitude toward men in gender-conscious literary scholarship" has been the prevailing approach in discussions of nature and gender, at least since the mid-1970s (71–2). Male intervention in nature continues to be, however, particularly evident in hegemonic, domineering, and hierarchicalized societies that "typically marginalize non-traditional men, women, and nature as 'otherized' Others" (Pulé 2). As Pulé argues, these societies have again to acknowledge the inextricable relation between "modern Western masculine identities and nature" (2). As Connell's original theorization of hegemonic masculinity entails, all men position themselves in relation to it and benefit from the patriarchal dividend. Thus, although men might not fully realize the hegemonic model, they still passively maintain it and therefore sustain the patriarchal social structure by performing a complicit masculinity from which they can reap a structural privilege (Connell 1986; Demetriou). In particular, if the demands of normative masculinity have required men to stand up to the requirements of a performance of gender based on, among other aspects, domination, violence, aggression, emotional restraint, or competitiveness, these aspects have also been transferred to actual environmental interventions as well as literary constructions of the natural world.

As part of an ongoing revision of normative definitions of masculinities, critical studies on men and masculinities have been strongly encouraged to make care a visible category for men and thus discard a sustained principle that has discriminated against emotions in favor of rationality and self-sufficiency. As Seidler contends, such rationale is derived from the advent of modernity and its equation of science, rationality, and superiority (16). Such a standpoint, moreover, was fundamentally set in masculine terms since the identification of masculinity with reason placed men in the position of protectors of and gatekeepers for this dominant vision of modernity (Seidler 16, 19). This formulation led to the association of emotions and care as both an affective state and as practices belonging in the feminine sphere. In turn, emotions became a hidden aspect in normative configurations of masculinity. As Niall Hanlon notes, "We cannot appreciate masculinities without understanding relations of power and dominance, but we cannot understand power and dominance without also appreciating men's emotional lives. Moreover, we cannot deconstruct male power without reconstructing the emotional lives of men" (66).

In what follows, I propose analyzing two texts in order to address the issues raised by the interrelation between the studies on men and masculinities with environmental concerns and care. In the first one, "Raw Water" (2009) by Wells Tower, the aggressive domination of nature is coupled with the development of a hypermasculinity that proves to be ultimately destructive to both others and the environment. First published in *McSweeney's*, which featured stories "on an investigation of the world to come," it has been reprinted in several collections. The story features the Booths—Rodney and Cora—who rent a home in the desert, in Arizona, in a new community designed around an artificial inland lake created with excess ocean water. After the four days of driving from Boston to Arizona, the story succinctly identifies the ingredients that make Rodney feel vitally and sexually exhausted while his wife, who "had lately emerged from menopause with large itches in her . . . was hassling him for a session more days than not" (481). The initial rendering of Rodney's unenthusiastic physical response—"After so many tranquil, sexless years, Rodney felt there was something unseemly, a mild whang of incest, in mounting his best friend" (481)—constructs his body as a passionless stagnant entity devoid of energy. Having therefore sketched the sexual and bodily performances of both characters, the couple arrives at the world's newest inland ocean, the Anasazi Sea, which forms a rectangle of striking red water. The construction of the inland ocean is the first instance of the capitalist ethos intervening on the environment, it is part of a "new global fashion for do-it-yourself oceans" in which seawater is piped or channeled into desert depressions (482), a global phenomenon that manipulates nature in order to stop sea-level rise and thus increase economic benefits. In the story, US investors are inspired by the Libyan's example in their systematic flood of the Qattara Depression in the Cairo desert (482). The cost of such a protean project is, however, exposed: it fostered the prosperity of humans at the cost of the extinction of animals. Nevertheless, six million gallons of seawater flowed through the pipe that ran from the Gulf of Mexico to the Anasazi Sea after being boiled and filtered at the "grandest desalination facility in the western hemisphere" (482). Such a grandiose plan, however, goes awry because the evaporation clouds that were supposed to bring fresh rain caught instead "a thermal south, dumping their bounty on the far side of the Mexican border, nourishing a corn and strawberry bonanza in the dry land outside Juárez" (482). Nature's unexpected turn under its resistance at human control has devastating effects on the ocean: the absence of rain plus the demand for desalinated water of toilets, lawns, and putting greens of the homogeneous community of luxury houses built nearby makes the pumping back of excess salt water a much too expensive action and, hence, an expendable cost. The result is an ocean fifteen times as saline as the Pacific packed with red, one-celled creatures that thrive in high salt and a land boom that falls apart because water becomes an expensive whim. Abandoned houses constitute the desolate canvas that, in a Frankensteinian fashion, crystallize the failure of technology to bring about progress. The human impact in altering the sea salt levels, the landscape, the fauna, and the flora becomes intertwined with the lives of the two protagonists. Cora is an artist whose interest in the photographs and pictures she creates aims at

portraying science's unintended consequences; hence her interest in visiting "a place forsaken by God and movie stars" (484) in which science has gone astray and its effects are manifest. Their move to Triton Estates—with mythological echoes to Triton, the messenger of the sea—thus reverses the move of thousands of rich owners who have abandoned their luxury possessions no longer thrilled by the promises of exclusivity that the creation of the Anasazi Sea had brought about.

The Booths' new neighborhood is a ghost assemblage of abandoned homes that once "spelled class" (484). In Tower's skillful description of the details that conform to the area, we can picture the houses that were built in the promising prospective of the land fever that once took hold. Surprisingly, in the midst of the desolate postapocalyptic-like space, one of the four families that stayed in the neighborhood, the Nevises, invite them over dinner. They are, however, a weird family of sorts whose weird behavior—the story suggests—is the direct result of their lake water intake: the father and rental agent, Arn, keeps drinking alcohol as a way to soften the regular migraines that interfere with his speech; he openly expresses the sexual attraction he feels for Cora; his wife Phillys, a sixty-year-old woman, holds an infant who is breastfeeding and tries to talk Arn out of his sexual advances to Cora in a "gentle voice" (489). The soirée ends with a climax when Arn Nevis is drowning in their water inlet from the lake and Rodney jumps in to rescue him.

Significantly, after the evening at the Nevises, and after some days of food lake ingestion, Rodney begins to feel the transformation that operates in him in the form of a recovered sexual desire:

> Despite the evening's calamities, his heart was warm and filled with an electric vigor of life. The electricity stayed with him all the way back . . . in the echoing kitchen, Rodney made zestful love to his wife for the first time in seven weeks.
>
> (492)

The recovery of aggressive sexuality is just the first instance of the altered environment operating upon him. From then on, Rodney's body and life undergo a transformation in which his actions foster a fresh energy that overtakes him. In particular, it is the red lake oysters with luxurious meat that he eats up while on the beach that award him with unknown vigor. Drastically, his newly encountered lust for sex exerts a profound transformation in his gendered identity. The Rodney presented to us at the beginning of the story as being exhausted and put off by his wife's sexual drives now feels that his body energy translates into the hypermasculine dream of conquest that couples the domination over land with the domination over women:

> He had never been an ambitious person, but lately he had begun to feel that he was capable of resounding deeds. He had dreams in which he conquered famous wildernesses . . . For the first time in his life, he resented Cora, begrudged the years he'd spent at her heel, and how he'd raised no fuss when

> she'd changed her mind after five years of marriage and said she didn't want children after all. His mind roved to other women, to the Nevis girl, a young thing with a working womb, someone who'd shut up when he talked.
>
> (503)

Mosher and Sirkin define hypermasculinity as centrally consisting of three variables, namely the sexual callous attitudes towards women, the belief that violence is manly, and the experience of danger as exciting. As a form of exaggerated physicality, Rodney's hyperbolic body energy boost is thematized through two bodily processes: the insomnia he suffers and his compulsive eating. Believing that it is impossible to find sufficient foods that can satisfy his hunger (508), at night, he goes out wandering around for hours. Engaged in such activity, his hypermasculine dream of domination through possession merges with violent images in which he rapes Katherine, the adolescent Nevis daughter. Driven by sexual images of Katherine he conjures up, Rodney ends up transposing his fantasy of raping the girl on to the land: "he unbuckled his pants and fell to zealously raping the dirt. The sensation was not pleasurable, and the fierceness of the act did not sit with Rodney's notion of himself, but in the end he felt satisfied that he had completed a job of grim though necessary work" (509). The ultimate glorification of Rodney's sexual violence joins environmental destruction with the requirements of a hypermasculinity that keeps care at bay while fostering burgeoning violence, aggression, and domination.

While "Raw Water" exposes the recurrent absence of care in the capitalist exploitation of the land and presents its accompanying demand that men stand up to it by exhibiting a domineering and violent manhood, essayist and writer Scott Russell Sanders features responsibility, dependency, vulnerability, and care as central elements in configuring individual lives. As one of the voices in what Van Dooren has termed "engaged environmental humanities" that has repeatedly explored the responsibility of human beings toward the planet, Sanders has also issued a call for distinct changes in individual and collective actions and for embracing care as an ethical principle. In his *A Conservationist Manifesto* (2003), he addresses the centrality of emotions in the work of conservation, of which "love for wild and settled places" constitutes the leading impulse in order to carry out that work. In the text, Sanders identifies the sense of loss, the evidence of the scale of devastation caused by human activity, the cost of restoration and the ways in which the earth has been destroyed by the pursuit of private interests as key in urging us to take action against current environmental devastation. At the heart of his argument and as a way of reversing the devastation of the planet, Sanders suggests care. To him, the greatest challenge facing our society is "to shift from a culture based on consumption to a culture based on caretaking."

Such focus on caretaking constitutes a central interest in María Puig De la Bellacasa's work, which has theoretically revolved around the ethical articulation of care. In "'Nothing Comes Without its World': Thinking With Care," she unfolds her discussion as a rereading of Donna Haraway's work, whose concept of "situated

knowledge," that is, the belief that knowing and thinking are inconceivable without a multitude of relations, is reformulated to include care as a requirement in those very same relations. Thus, Puig argues that "thinking care is inseparably a vital affective state, an ethical obligation and a practical labor," three fundamental principles that constitute "transformative feminist politics and alternative forms of organizing" (197). As Van Dooren argues, care in Puig's work constitutes the junction of an affective state, an embodied phenomenon that is the product of intellectual and emotional competences; an ethical obligation, to become subject to another; and a practical labor, the requirement that we get involved in some concrete way, constitutes a form of embodied and practical ethics (292).

Sanders' writings constitute apt responses to Puig and Van Dooren's formulations. In order to reconfigure a different view of human beings' relationship to the planet, Sanders makes care and the acceptance of emotions such as anger or love necessary aspects in the practice of transformative politics. In *Hunting for Hope: a Father's Journeys* (1998), Sanders brings together a series of personal reflections in order to outline his reasons for facing the future with confidence. Thus, as the title suggests, hope runs through the essays as a strategic condition in order to affect change in our lives and the planet while staking a claim for the centrality of emotions in everyday life. Urging his readers to recognize the sense of loss when he describes the lives we have come to live in complete dissociation from the natural world, Sanders establishes the emotional paradigm that runs central in his writings: "much of the world we have made starves our senses" (53). Taking on the survival of our planet amid a greed-driven commercial culture that urges us to nonstop consumption, Sanders poses conservation, simplicity, and regard for the common good as viable alternatives to stop environmental degradation. Sanders' urge for a caring practice is not just a challenge to environmental destruction. It also constitutes a fundamental premise in order to unveil the essential capitalist premise of aggressive competitiveness (Leverenz in this volume; Cuenca in this volume) as well as a challenge to traditional gender configurations.

Sander's exploration of his ecological concerns is articulated through his role as a caring father, which also ties in with Puig's formulation—an affective state, an ethical obligation, and a practical matter. Thus defining care for the environment as intertwined with the construction of an identity as a father and as a man, caregiving becomes an essential category in formulating non-dominant definitions of masculinity. As Pease argues:

> Because men are discouraged from expressing emotions, they are seen to be unable to provide the emotional labor required in relationships and are largely absent from the care of children. Men can expect to have their emotional needs met by women. Because caregiving is associated with women, it is regarded by many men as "feminine" and to be avoided. This is largely because dominant definitions of masculinity do not include caregiving as a component of men's lives.
>
> (30)

Sanders' text centers upon emotional labor as well as on the assumption that care is constitutive of a masculine identity. In the first episode, "Where the Search Begins," Sanders and his son Jesse go on a backpacking trip in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado. After a fierce argument, Jesse reveals that what he perceives as his father's total lack of hope in the future has been the main cause for their distance. In acknowledging his son's vital demand for hope in the future, "What's the good of grieving if you can't change anything?" (9), Jesse claims, Sanders tracks the process of his realization. Thus, Sanders articulates care, emotions, and hope as central strategies for bringing about change.

Central in Sander's account is his listening to his son's arguments, about which he says they "sounded unfair to me, a caricature of my views . . . yet there was too much truth and too much hurt in what he said for me to fire back an answer" (9). It is his love for his son and his willingness to respond to Jesse's complaints that lead him to change his attitude: "I would have to learn to see differently. Since I could not forget the wounds to people and planet . . . I would have to look harder for antidotes, for medicines, for sources of hope" (15). Regarding hope as a responsibility towards his son in his role of father, Sanders crafts fathering practices as nurturing conditions, hence extending beyond the cultural imperatives of traditional fatherhood. As Murphy explains, the requirement that men create things and babies in opposition to the nurturance mothers are called upon to perform has been the prevailing assumption about normative masculinity (150). Sanders's position as a caring father binds a reconfiguration of relationships to people as well as what Murphy labels as an ecological sense of world interconnectedness (150).

The acceptance of such interrelation is fundamental for our purposes. As Puig argues, her conception of care is grounded on a relational requirement (199). Care is a

> non normative obligation . . . it is concomitant to life—not something forced upon living beings by a moral order; yet it *obliges* in that for life to be liveable it needs being fostered. This means that care is somehow unavoidable: although not all relations can be defined as caring, none could subsist without care.
>
> (198, emphasis in original)

As both "Raw Water" and Sanders's texts testify, the complexities of thinking with care cannot be ignored. If, as Puig's articulation implies, we should be weary of idealized visions of care, since caring or being cared for may not be necessarily rewarding or comforting (198–7), the texts I have considered expose the complexities and possibilities of weaving care into the studies of men and masculinities.

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Part VI

Masculinities and/in Capitalism

14 Masculinities and Financial Capitalism

Penny Griffin

Introduction

In 2009, the Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva stated that the global financial crisis had been "caused and encouraged by the irrational behavior of white *people* with blue eyes." Interestingly, he was often misquoted in various media outlets as having declared that the crisis was caused by the behaviour of "white *men* with blue eyes." The assumption that the 'people' in question might readily be considered 'men' arguably reflects the expected dominance of white men among the senior ranks of global finance. Ideas about men and masculinities have long shaped perceptions (and embodiments) of economic life, but the ways in which masculinities and economic practices interact across areas and experiences often remain unclear, if not purposefully obscured. To this end, this chapter outlines the masculinised shape of contemporary capitalism, focusing specifically on what might be termed global financial capitalism. This entails consideration of the gendered shape of the global financial architecture, neoliberal financial discourse, and the global financial services industry. This chapter explores how the expansion of Western-style financial capitalism has depended on, but also camouflaged, the masculinised and ethnocentric model of human activity on which it has been built. It interrogates how and to what effects capitalist practices, embodied in global finance, have reproduced particular configurations of power, privilege, and economic knowledge in the global political economy. It argues that gendered knowledge in and of the global political economy is crucial in accounting for the relations of power that drive capitalist systems, while the absence of gendered analysis only further sediments the patterns of privilege and exclusion from which economic disenfranchisement, exclusion, and crisis ensue.

What Is Financial Capitalism and Why Does Gender Matter?

Capitalism is often described as a 'purely' economic system, based on the centrality of private mechanisms of capital exchange and profit-making, the centrality of the market, and the necessity of exchange. Financial capitalism can be understood in similarly abstract, and 'value neutral' terms, as the centralisation of money,

and profits derived from trading in money. Yet it is difficult accurately to picture contemporary financial capitalism today without understanding how it has developed historically, and how this history is gendered. Complex forms of political, institutional, and social change have reconstituted across time and space the variety of ways in which economic activity has been made possible. Global finance has, for example, been enabled by the growth of financialisation, which has, in turn, been made possible by particular changes in economic dynamics, including their governance and regulation, but also the development and impact of particular assumptions about what people, the purveyors of finance, can and should do. Importantly, as this chapter will show, the financialisation of the world economy has not shifted capitalism's reliance on the central figure of the White, elite man.

For Marx and Marxists, capitalism is defined by its mode of production: this is the specific organisation of economic production in a given society and, in capitalist societies, is defined by the private ownership of the *means of production*. Such means include factories, machines, resources, and materials but also human labour. The relationship between those who own these means and those who do not defines the *relations of production*. Marx, like the bourgeois capitalists of his day, understands the market as independent; a mechanism of exchange for which commodities are produced by workers' labour and capitalists' investment. To extract the maximum profits, capitalists have a vested interest in paying their workers the lowest possible wage for their labour (which becomes the workers' labour value).

Financial capitalism, however, changes the nature of the relationship between production and money. Financial capitalism emerged most forcibly in the twentieth century due to the deregulation of national currencies, following the United States' decision to end the Bretton Woods Accord and float the US dollar. For Marxists, notably those cataloguing the industrial period, the relationship between labour and production is of central concern, particularly as workers themselves become estranged from the objects of their production, which are produced by capitalists controlling the circulation of money. In post-Fordist capitalist societies, however, production is superseded by the accumulation of (not always tangible) money profits, requiring different forms of participation and intelligence from human subjects. While for Marx, the capitalists purchased commodified labour power from workers' bodies, in post-Fordist societies, the worker is almost entirely tangential to the actual processes of financial production through which the financial system, and its actors, accumulate profit.

Unlike the models of capitalism that precede it, the era of financial capitalism that the end of Bretton Woods heralded, and the financialisation of the world economy that it inaugurated, has superseded traditional means of production with the exchange and accumulation of financial profits, but has not entirely bypassed them. Workers' bodies, and their capacity to labour, produce, and exchange, remain an indispensable component of the world economy. It would be a mistake to abstract human beings from the financial system they have made and continue to interact in. Traditional modes of production have, indeed, been supplanted by the rapid financialisation of the world economy, and financial instruments operate,

in some respects, apart from the human bodies that press buy and sell. Yet, global finance does not exist without human bodies. Assumptions about profitable, rational, and viable financial behaviour do not come from nowhere, nor do mathematical models have the agency to apply these assumptions of their own volition; they are made and reproduced by human actors, and the organisations they create. As Marieke de Goede has argued, to understand the world of global finance, we need to negotiate the "gendered cultural practices" in which "seemingly disinterested financial language is firmly rooted" ("Repoliticizing" 42). Financial capitalism is perhaps better understood as a social and discursive system, that is, a system by which social relations are ordered and make sense according to certain assumptions, values, and hierarchies of meaning, all of which are gendered. With this is in mind, this chapter traces a picture of contemporary financial capitalism situated in terms of its human constitution, and particularly the gendered cultural practices that make it possible.

Financial Activity and Gendered Calculations

The question of how we begin to expose financial capitalism to scrutiny, and where we start to understand the important gendered content of financial capitalism, is best answered, this chapter suggests, by unpeeling some of the 'mystic' assumptions, and their gendered content, that keep finance the preserve of certain (masculinised) bodies. The "significance of socio-institutional, governmental, and industry-led efforts to 'mystify' finance in the twentieth century" should not be underestimated (Griffin "Gendering" 13). The 'mythic technical character' of global finance that has, since the breakdown of the Bretton Woods Accord, effectively removed the inner workings of financial transactions and industry professionals from public scrutiny, operated to no small effect. It has become a reality of global politics, as Sinclair notes, "that although they affect the lives of billions, financial matters are often relegated to the business pages" (450). In tandem with administrative endeavors to incorporate working class and "everyday" populations in spaces of "popular finance," "capital" has itself been represented, popularly and academically, as "an implacable kind of force," and the financial world as "an unknowable and, importantly, undoable center of power and domination" (Aitken 78–80). As the global financial crisis perhaps showed in starkest relief, the hazy 'science' of global financial transactions has for a considerable time been removed from public scrutiny, spoken through a language too abstract for the average layperson to understand, and heavily guarded by state-led interventions to preserve capital 'mobility' (Griffin "Gendering" 13).

While the world of economic thought is of course not homogenous or closed, within the study of finance, as Samman notes, heterodox traditions of Marxian economics and Keynesianism have been eclipsed by an uptake of the equilibrium framework, "which treats finance as little more than a market for loanable funds" (316). This framework, enabled by the rise of formalism in modern economics, has become "the basis for a neoclassical turn in economic theory" (315). At the same time, financial "risk management" has been cast increasingly as "a domain

of technical expertise" dependent on these highly theoretical and abstract forms of modern finance theory, forms that are also heavily funded by academic but also financial institutions and reliant extensively on "mathematical and/or statistical analysis and focused on asset valuation models and models of institutional behavior and markets" (Whitley 1986, qtd. in De Goede "Repoliticizing" 207). A key effect of the development of an abstract and hypertheoretical language of economic efficiency and risk classification has been, as Baker (570) and De Goede articulate ("Repoliticizing" 205), both the depoliticisation of financial discourse and "the highly profitable commercialisation of risks in finance" (De Goede "Repoliticizing" 200). Herein, markets are invariably understood as ahistorical, asocial, and disembodied, such that "all markets are born equal, and equilibrium is an immanent tendency set in motion by external change" (Samman 315). Formalism admits no room to consider historical change, or even "the historical genesis of the market system itself" (Samman 316). The development of finance has firmly removed history from the rise of modern financial derivatives, in the form of creating a vision of the world with "fungible prices for all times, places and things" (Samman, qting. Wigan 161). Ironically, this "near-total annihilation of history" within financial economics has coincided "with the emergence of an industry that trades almost exclusively on claims on the future," the consequence of which is that "conventional financial economics has been unable to comprehend the historical dynamics of capitalist development and crisis" (Samman 161).

Financial activity is itself considered calculable, as is risk (here even uncertainty becomes an object of calculation, see Wigan, also De Goede "Repoliticizing" and *Virtue*). Importantly, however, as a desirable attribute of financial actors, the ability to act decisively, and strongly, in the face of uncertainty is less a 'truth' of the physics of financial calculation, than a historically dependent, and culturally highly masculinised, set of assumptions about what human attributes should be encouraged in financial capitalism, and incentivised across its practices. The financialisation of the world economy, the explosion of credit instruments made possible by the 'new economy' and the unprecedented growth of managerialism speak to the centrality of 'risk' in financial discourse (see Griffin "Gendering" 26–7). Risk is both "a quality and an effect of uncertainty that expresses itself only in its potential for either positive or negative (financial) returns" (Griffin "Gendering" 26). The significance, however, of rendering an intrinsically uncertain product of financial activity calculable resides not in the applicability of mathematical models of assessment to an essentially indefinable element of social life, but in the ways in which *people* have attached meaning to certain cultural, historical and gendered assumptions. Calculating an uncertain future is "the rationale for financial trading and has historically provided its political legitimacy" (De Goede "Repoliticizing" 200). In particular, modern financial risk management has required "particular cultural and conceptual transformations to render it both legitimate and profitable" (De Goede "Repoliticizing" 200). As De Goede notes, by the mid-nineteenth century in the Northern Hemisphere the lack of distinction between speculation and gambling had increasingly become "an obstacle to the legitimacy of financial practices"

(De Goede "Repoliticizing" 201). The necessity of rendering speculation a legitimate financial practice, removed from the disparaged realm of gambling, manifested in the articulation of risk as 'a calculable entity'; this, in turn, allowed much-maligned financial exchanges in the late nineteenth century to defend their exchange trading (Griffin "Gendering" 26). Thus, speculators were "cast as bearers of natural business risk," against "gamblers" as "enjoying the perverted and unnatural creation of chance events" (De Goede "Repoliticizing" 202) and risk began its journey as a 'natural' part of business transactions. 'Risk management' would provide the financial speculator with professional legitimacy and speculators would become a professional risk-bearing class and "a distinct body of men prepared to relieve [the trader] of the speculative element of his business" (Emery, qtd. in De Goede "Repoliticizing" 203).

Rather than blindly accepting the abstracted language of formalised and mathematical risk modeling, however, analysis is needed that pays greater attention to the problematic nature of increasing mathematical abstraction, particularly the ways in which this has allowed finance to calculate and classify risk "beyond public comprehension and debate" (De Goede "Repoliticizing" 199–200). Critical analysis instead highlights the ongoing depoliticising effects of the formalist turn in modern finance theory and its reliance on mathematical modeling, while revealing the ways in which finance has developed historically through the rewarding a distinct body of white, elite, professional men. By inquiring into the politics of banks' internal risk assessment models, attention is drawn to the heavy investment spent on rendering these models beyond politics, discussion, and therefore criticism. Importantly, by repoliticising the operations of mathematical, abstract financial calculations, the work that masculinities do in making sensible the world of global finance becomes much more apparent.

Financial Capitalism and Masculinities

Studies into the masculine credentials of global finance have a long and distinguished history. Philip Augar's famous 2000 analysis of the decline of London's merchant banks, for example, charts a course through the environment of London banking and its 'twilight' as a realm of 'gentlemanly capitalism.' Such capitalism, he argues, was usurped through the rise of foreign ownership, particularly foreign ownership beginning in the late 1970s and the increasing financialisation of the world economy. Augar describes a world that was small and highly dependent on close personal relationships, "where everyone knew and met each other" (19). Himself a London stockbroker from the late 1970s through the 1990s, Augar's analysis of London investment banking and the changes that have made global finance a world dominated by US and European corporate interests, although not a gender analysis, is eye-opening. He describes an industry dependent on a class of (largely male) bankers who had emerged from privileged backgrounds and elite educational establishments "with a respect for hierarchy, conservatism and with bags of self-confidence" (Augar xiii). Merchant banking in the 1980s and '90s is, in Augar's analysis, a tightly knit boys' club, a place where standards of behaviour

and moral purpose align closely with the expectations placed upon elite boys previously shepherded through the private schooling system.

Melissa Fisher's excellent ethnographic study, *Wall Street Women* (2012), follows the first generation of women to establish themselves as professionals on Wall Street. Often the only female professionals in male-dominated corporate structures, these women developed close personal and professional links to each other through the formal and informal associations that they together created (Fisher 3). Sometimes these women were not, in their early years, overt champions of the women's movement, yet they succeeded in incorporating tenets of feminism into their networks, shifting the relationship between feminism and financial markets quietly, but profoundly. The successes of this growing market feminism are perhaps most clearly embodied in the rise of 'governance feminism': this is problematic for many feminists, who see gender being made available for governance purposes in ways that may, or may not, be in keeping with feminist goals and that may not advance feminist ends (see, inter alia, Halley, and Fraser), but governance feminism has, nonetheless, "achieved great and widespread success in national governments, international governance and through inter- and non-governmental organisations" (Griffin "Crisis" 63). Importantly, governance feminism has often asked men to be 'champions of change,' promoting the role of influential male CEOs and chairpersons in advocating the advancement of women in leadership, in similar ways to the perhaps less overt efforts of early female professionals on Wall Street, who sought to implant the 'right' (non-threatening, male-friendly) liberal ideas in corporate structures (see Fisher 46).

Raewyn Connell's various engagements with hierarchies of global masculinity have also been particularly well known and widely used. Connell became perhaps best known for her well-regarded and widely cited outline of hegemonic masculinity (Connell et al., 1982). Connell's early work has since been criticised for reifying 'ideal types' and a certain form of essentialist rigidity, evident, as Elias and Beasley suggest, in an articulation of the global gender order as "necessarily and monolithically legitimated by elite transnational businessmen" (Elias and Beasley 289). Connell, however, defended the concept, in a 2005 article with James Messerschmidt, while admitting that criticisms of "trait models of gender" and "rigid typologies" had some validity (Connell and Messerschmidt 829). Connell's work remains insightful, however, for her refusal to separate spheres of activity, and her ongoing engagement with various sites of the reproduction of gender identities. Her work has, in particular, contributed to understanding the role of so-called "transnational business masculinity" and the "increasingly unregulated power of transnational corporations" that has placed "strategic power in the hands of particular groups of men" (Connell "Masculinities and Globalization" 15).

As Connell notes, masculinities "are not equivalent to men" but concern "the *position* of men in a gender order" and as such "can be defined as the patterns of practice by which people (both men and women, though predominantly men) engage that position" (Connell n.d.). Although the mechanisms and corporations of global finance are statistically populated more frequently by men, they need not be: masculinity is a symbolic incarnation of power in the global political economy

(GPE), intimately connected to our ideas about economic success (see Griffin "Gendering"). Women may now have entered the workforce en masse, but the fact of their presence does not necessarily challenge the endearing masculinity of a working environment or industry. Labour may have been increasingly feminised in the contemporary global political economy (see Wichterich, Ferber and Nelson, and Peterson 2005, 2007), but business remains arguably 'masculine' in character.

That which most clearly marks masculinity from femininity today, and which reinforces the masculinism of neoliberal financial discourse in particular, is that it may aspire to hegemony, as the dominant pattern of gender identity, where femininity cannot. Historic relations of economic and political domination have tended to embed a particular vision of manliness in contemporary economic interactions, through the dominance, in large part, of particular institutions. These institutions include organisations of governance and financial activity, such as commercial, manufacturing, production, wholesaling, retail and buying organisations, and financial institutions, including banks and credit unions, insurance and investment agencies, and mutual funds. But these institutions are also social institutions and modes of social organisation that include individual communities, governments, municipalities, educational establishments, health care organisations, cultural groups, justice systems and legal groupings, families, markets, the media, and so on. As Connell notes, the patterns of masculinity embedded in particular institutions have become, to a large extent, global standards (Connell "Masculinities and Globalization"). Naturalised and dehistoricised associations between men's bodies and their capacity to produce, provide for, and perpetuate modern economic society are embedded across structures of economic, social and political power, generating capital, profit, and expansion according to gendered assumptions about what bodies do, how they labour, and how they are able to assume certain kinds of rationality. Understanding the position, and role, of masculinities within financial capitalism is not about counting up the number of male bodies in the industry (although the number of male bodies in the industry perhaps tells us something about who is taught to believe they 'belong' in this industry). To examine how and where privilege is located in global financial capitalism, we need to ask not only what bodies are situated where, but how those bodies are situated, what they are expected to achieve, and what incentives they are offered to behave in certain ways.

As Assassi notes, financial markets are inhabited by "inherently gendered structures" (vi). Financial markets, and the actors and organisations that engage in financial activity, embody specific notions of economic success and financial viability that have become thoroughly embedded in the gender identity of modern (dominant) masculinity. This has been a historical development, a result of the repetition and naturalisation of a historically highly masculinised, Anglo-American and white vision of the appropriate mechanisms of socioeconomic exchange, distribution, and financial behavior. Women's involvement in the financial sectors in past centuries has frequently been rendered invisible "through assumptions and constructions of the 'nature' of women and men and their supposed proper place in the socioeconomic and political order" (Assassi 4). Such assumptions have

naturalised and solidified a model of human economic activity derived from the privileging and experiences of middle class, white, and Western men, perpetuating a vision of the appropriate mechanisms of socioeconomic exchange and distribution based on the exclusion of women and their work (see Peterson 2005, 2007; Hoskyns and Rai; and Assassi). Financial capitalism, this chapter argues, (re)produces social relations predicated according to certain gender norms, which are ideals historically formed, persistent through time and, in and of themselves, the sites of complex convergences of social meanings (see also Butler). The centering of certain articulations of gender (particularly, dominant forms of masculine identity) is a crucial component in ensuring hegemony over and stability to the social relations predicated by financial discourse.

Conceptualising masculinity, and thus the masculinism of financial capitalism, requires enquiry "into the complex sets of political, institutional and social changes that have reconstituted across time and space the variety of ways there are to 'be' a man or a woman" (Griffin "Gendering" 14). As Cleaver argues, cultural situation may bear heavily on what manhood (and womanhood) means in different contexts, as will class, race, and age, however, so too will processes of economic restructuring. Abstract assumptions about rational economic man rarely do these contexts justice, and varying contexts will all impact greatly on the ways in which financial capitalism is absorbed and enacted in different parts of the world. That there are, however, vastly different notions of manliness in varying contexts is not to say that financial capitalism is not dependent on, and does not reproduce, particular stereotypes of manliness, especially dominant manliness embodied in the figure of the financial actor. Whereas masculinity is almost always thought to proceed in some ways from men's bodies, as Brod writes, as inherent in a male body or expressing something about a male body, understanding these beliefs as a strategic part of a modern, economically circumscribed gender ideology requires investing analytical energy into the naturalised and dehistoricised associations made between men's bodies and their capacity to produce, provide for, and perpetuate modern economic society. These are, in essence, the mechanisms by which the structures of economic and financial power generate capital, profit, and expansion. There is nothing coincidental in the link between men's own virility and superior economic performance and the machinations of the global, 'free' market (Griffin "Gendering" 14). The success of financial capitalism depends, in every sense, on a willing army of men able to perform 'like men' (that is, like the stories that have been told about men).

The Rise of 'Transnational Business Masculinity'

Early twentieth century conceptions of economic activity emphasised a language of biological science as determinant of gender difference, produced through the body as a 'natural machine.' Thus the Smithsonian 'nature' of economic man was, while being intrinsically competitive and territorial, also essentially cooperative, with bonding instincts where like minds were found. Adam Smith's early description of human nature encompassed a vision of the white, middle-class male as

essentially wise, self-restraining, and able to restore peace and order (see Smith). Smith chose to distinguish the liberal character through descriptions of a noble and civilised form of masculinity, embodied in the democratic credentials of the Western, 'liberal' world. A more ruthless conception of the human male as naturally territorial and aggressive became increasingly dominant, however, during the large-scale periods of economic restructuring that have gripped the latter half of the twentieth century, with this version of dominant masculinity more recently reappearing during the resurgence of the new right and free market fundamentalisms (and, importantly, the 'roll back' neoliberalism of structural adjustment from the late 1970s). Once again the male body became the bearer of a natural masculinity produced by the evolutionary pressures that have borne down on the human stock. The 'masculine' genes inherited by the body show natural tendencies to aggression, heterosexuality, competitiveness, political power, hierarchy, territoriality and promiscuity and forming men's clubs (see Connell *Masculinities*). A key difference in 1980s libertarian free marketism was that women now presented an increasing percentage of the business classes. Yet culturally, this did not temper a climate of aggressive corporate masculinism sustaining financial capitalism. Rather, women found themselves subsumed in a macho, hyper-aggressive money culture that remained premised upon the 'hormonal' competitive advantage that men held over women. Their only possible hope of advancement would be to play 'like men' in the corporate powerhouses of the business world (see also Fisher). Thus in the 1980s and into the 1990s we see emerge a popular media of the corporate 'super-bitch': tough, resilient, and aggressive, and—crucially—popularly despised.

More recently, the nature of 'transnational business masculinity' has become increasingly significant to understanding the construction and function of masculinities in the global economy (Connell 'Masculinities and Globalization' 16). This is a model of masculinity most associated with those who control the dominant institutions of the global economy, particularly "the business executives who operate in global markets" and "the political executives who interact (and in many contexts, merge) with them" (Connell "Masculinities and Globalization" 16). Different to traditional bourgeois masculinity, marked by an "increasingly libertarian sexuality" and with a growing tendency "to commodify relations with women," transnational business masculinity is also conspicuous through "increasing egocentrism, very conditional loyalties (even to the corporation), and a declining sense of responsibility for others (except for purposes of image making)" (Connell "Masculinities and Globalization" 16).

Masculinities are negotiated, and gendered meanings, ideals, and patterns gain dominance in the global political economy in shifting and different ways. As Beasley notes, ongoing engagement with "privileged legitimating conceptions of manhood, and of relations between different masculinities, in the global/national nexus" is much needed (86). Rather than positing a specific 'type' of identity, true across time and space, the reproduction of 'transnational business masculinity' might be better understood as a contingent and negotiated association between masculinity and institutionalised power, embodying "a neoliberal

version of an emphasized traditional masculinity" (92), and deriving from the growth of industrial capitalism, imperialism, the rise of the transnational corporation, the growth of 'managerialism,' and the importance of managers as a social group (Connell and Wood 348). As Connell and Wood write, the embodiment of managerial masculinity is important, although it has been little studied. The "experience of pressure, long hours, and tension is part of what being a manager is" and the contemporary manager "has to manage the body as part of constructing a career." Such "body-reflexive practice" is, however, "not primarily a matter of self-reflexivity." Rather, it is

> a collective practice, the creation of a common way of life, the insertion of bodies into institutional and cultural matrices, and the living pursuit of what managers value most, profit. The fierce mutual scrutiny of managers, who, in a strong sense, embody the market, is both a gender-making process and a strategy of profit making. In the flow of managerial life, gender is not added on to capitalist rationality.
>
> (Connell and Wood 361)

In relation to this 'gender-making process' of profit-making, wherein gender is not actually included in capitalist rationality, Knyght et al. present an interesting analysis of interviews with various CEOs, managers, and chairmen in which finance industry professionals' perceptions of their industry are very much as spaces of 'survival of the fittest,' Darwinian natural selection, privilege, and elitism. Within these revealing interviews, "periodic financial crises and disaster" are often considered "a necessary evil of capitalism" and only "the strong adapt and thrive" (Knyght et al., qtd. in Griffin "Gendering" 15). The authors are not concerned with offering a gendered analysis, but the existence of gendered hierarchies in the finance industry is evident from their interviews, many of which reproduce (through the continual iteration of the male pronoun) the assumption that men 'naturally' populate this working environment (this is also supported statistically; see Thrift; Young and Schuberth). The linking of masculinities with global competitiveness is, of course, not new, nor are propositions of the "inherent masculinity of the financial services industry" (Salverda) unusual (see, for example, Connell 1998; Thrift 2001; Hooper 2001; De Goede "Repoliticizing" and *Virtue*; Fisher; Griffin "Gendering"). The financial services industry has long been characterised by narratives of "responsible men," displaying both "self discipline and masculine predatory strength" (De Goede "Repoliticizing," cited in Griffin "Gendering" 13). Hooper's critique of the British financial 'newspaper' the *Economist* notes the sexualisation of contemporary financial discourse, observing how risk-taking in particular is portrayed as "a heroically and glamorously masculine enterprise" (qtd. in Griffin "Gendering" 13).

Of course, it is not only women's presence (or lack of) in financial markets themselves (personally and professionally) that is something to worry about, but also the ways in which the *regulation* of these very markets, in the form of the governance of global finance, has effectively become "financial governance

without women" (Schuberth and Young 133). As Schuberth and Young note, the ridiculously low representation of women in the regulation of financial markets is a dimension of financial capitalism that has not yet received sufficient attention (133). Any assumption that financial markets are neutral purveyors of information and resources needs to face, as the authors suggest, the reality that the financial sector remains enduringly political: a creature of nation-state influence, uncoordinated supervision and uneven regulation, facilitated by select groupings of knowledge-based experts or decision-making bodies. The result has been "a power vacuum in which the private regulatory institutions and networks, along with their self-defined sets of rules and forms of self- and co-regulation, have become dominant" (Schuberth and Young 143). Nowhere here are women well represented, a state of affairs that is "a constant across time and space" (Schuberth and Young 143). This, ultimately, may lead the keen observer to wonder why, if markets are such 'neutral' creatures of (collective) rationality, only certain types of bodies are visible (operating, governing, and regulating financial practices). Or why, even, those most affected by regulatory failures have no seat, so to speak, at the table.

Conclusion

Financial capitalism relies on human bodies, but discriminates between the types of bodies it thinks most appropriate to preside over its practices. The privileging of scientific, formalistic knowledge, the mystification of global finance, the reproduction of masculinised managerialism and the increasingly significant distance between those who decide and who are decided upon—each of these constitutes the relations of power that drive financial capitalism, and each can be shown to be gendered. Financial capitalism has developed historically, and hierarchically, by privileging the experiences of white, Anglo-Saxon males. It is not an abstract system governed by efficient markets, but a human creation that needs to be understood as a social system, that is, a system by which social relations are ordered and make sense according to certain assumptions, values, and hierarchies of meaning. All of these are gendered. To argue that masculinity has an intimate relationship with rationality, proficiency, risk-taking, and perspicacity in financial capitalism is not to suggest that all men benefit from the operations and assumptions of financial capitalism (since clearly they do not), but to ask that we pay closer attention to the gendered shape of contemporary economic systems, practices and their potential, actual, and imaginable effects.

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15 Capitalism, Slavery, and Mask-ulinities

New Directions

David Leverenz

The rise of capitalism required the expansion of slavery. From the 1840s and 1850s until quite recently, many historians presented US slavery as a pre-capitalist institution whose feudal aspects made it more inefficient than wage labor. Some claimed that the Civil War wasn't necessary because slavery would have vanished for economic reasons. Recent books by Edward Baptist, Walter Johnson, and Sven Beckert decisively refute those arguments. Indirectly, the new histories also show how capitalist transformations of work and value exposed the masks in traditional codes of masculinity. Drawing on these and other histories, including Michael O'Malley's *Face Value* and Thomas Piketty's *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, my chapter suggests six new directions for masculinity studies.

1. Capitalism is here to stay, despite those on the left who keep hoping it will yield to a kinder, gentler mix of socialist cooperation and safety nets. Too often critics reduce capitalism's energy, competitiveness, and risky transformations to greed and abusiveness, or to "neo-liberal" blinders. As Beckert writes in *Empire of Cotton*, "Capitalists were the age's true revolutionaries" (309). What Joseph Schumpeter called capitalism's "creative destruction" includes self-reinventions, as many American writers explore and exploit.
2. On the managerial side, from slaveowners to CEOs, men's masks hide a turmoil of hybridities. Classic American literature features male characters who amalgamate opposites in a frenzied flux of self-divisions: savage and civilized, Indian and European, white and black, beast and aristocrat, calm philosopher and enraged killer. Capitalism energizes men through self-vexations as well as self-fictionalizations.
3. On the worker side, from antebellum slaves to today's unemployable college graduates, capitalism undermines the labor theory of value. Nostalgia for a code of masculinity based on artisan or farmer production has spurred Adam Smith, Karl Marx, and many more recent critics to celebrate the value of labor. But the idealized manliness of small-scale individual producers has been replaced by the interchangeabilities of corporate production and more gender-neutral consumer values.
4. Capitalism makes all values momentary, contingent on exchanges. The loss of fixed values brings fear as well as freedom. In the United States, O'Malley

argues, many Americans have tried to rescue value's imagined permanence through the gold standard and white supremacy. I suggest that traditional masculine codes offer white working-class men a third illusory way of stabilizing value.

5. African American men have developed different masks in response to the systematic stripping of their manhood. From Jim Crow through what Michelle Alexander has called "the New Jim Crow," darker-skinned men who resisted were often imprisoned or killed. As Baptist notes, many African American students today feel ashamed that their ancestors didn't measure up to European American codes of heroic masculinity (xviii, xx). To hide their hurt and anger, some African American men developed an ethic of caring and dignity, with pride in their inventive improvisings (143) or in their survival through "ordinary virtues" of kindness rather than vengeance (280–2).
6. Any masculine code steels men to protect their threatened group. In the United States, white supremacy has defined and defended the imagined homogeneity of a dominant group that grudgingly accepted European immigrants while rejecting equality with African Americans.[1] White men's fetishizing of freedom has always implied a half-stated binary: I'm not a slave. Now the United States is witnessing the breakup of homogeneous groups and racial hierarchies. As more and more people declare their mixed multiplicities, gender codes reflecting the identity politics of one group, whether a team, a gang, a company, an ethnicity, or a race, are starting to look constricting. That evolution destabilizes the free-slave binary that continues to spark so much anti-government protest, especially against a president perceived as a black boss. In the far future, masculine codes will become more provisional and momentary—like capitalist values.

The first part of this essay sketches how slavery seemed to stabilize but actually intensified capitalism's volatilities, which exposed masculine masks. The second part considers how Ralph Waldo Emerson's "Self-Reliance," Toni Morrison's *Sula*, and other American texts represent capitalism's self-reinventions and hybridities. The third part focuses on how capitalism undermines the labor theory of value. After discussing two movies appearing in the wake of the 2008 financial crash, *Margin Call* and *The Company Men*, I turn to Thomas Piketty's book and a 2014 *Economist* report (Avent) on how the digital revolution undermines work itself for the global middle class.

Slavery and Capitalist Volatility

Edward Baptist's compelling if sometimes overwritten history shows that white owners and overseers increased slavery's efficiency by using torture and violence to enforce daily quotas for the slaves' cotton picking. On thousands of what Baptist calls "slave labor camps," factory-like productivity rose almost 400 percent from 1800 to 1860 without any technological innovations (128). Cotton became the United States' most crucial export, with extensive funding from New York and

London banks. In the 1850s alone, as owners relentlessly increased daily quotas, cotton production doubled (350). During the Civil War and afterwards, production became less efficient (xvi–xvii, 399).

Slavery also expanded into the Mississippi Valley, from Thomas Jefferson's Louisiana Purchase in 1803 and Andrew Jackson's annexations of Indian territories to the Mexican War of 1844–1846, which appropriated half of Mexico for further expansions of slavery. By the 1850s the wider South supplied "about four-fifths of the world's cotton" (Johnson 408), and slaveowners pushed to extend slavery into Cuba, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Honduras. By 1860,

> there were more millionaires per capita in the Mississippi Valley than anywhere else in the United States. White privilege on an unprecedented scale was wrung from the lands of the Choctaw, the Creek, and the Chickasaw and from the bodies of the enslaved people brought in to replace them.
>
> (Johnson 5)

In *Inhuman Bondage*, David Brion Davis notes that though slavery's "façade of patriarchal paternalism" helped reconcile precapitalist traditions with brutality, slavery's efficiencies "anticipated . . . the assembly lines and agribusinesses of the future" (6, also 77). He even speculates that white supremacy blocked capitalist pressures to bring back white slavery (77–9, also 28, 31).

Sven Beckert puts the symbiosis of slavery and "war capitalism" in a global perspective. By "war capitalism," Beckert means not national wars but private capitalists' uses of violence to expropriate land and labor (xvi, 38). "The state of war between private parties" proved dysfunctional in capitalism's second stage (171), as state-sponsored industrial capitalism financed and integrated economies on a larger scale. In contrast to Brazil, Beckert suggests, "the absence of competing elites in the slaveholding states" gave unusually strong power to American planters in national and state governments (111). The Civil War came because the United States was "the only country in the world divided between war and industrial capitalism" (171), two modes in "coexistence" elsewhere (173).[2]

Johnson and Baptist diverge on antebellum masculinity codes.[3] Johnson features the rapacious wills animating the masters' paternalistic self-presentations, whereas Baptist emphasizes the man-making, man-breaking flux of boom and bust volatilities. Slaveowners needed slaves not just to do their physical work, but also to confirm their provincial status as pseudo-aristocrats. They measured their worth not only by the money they made, but also by the number of people dependent on their benevolent control. Both historians show the inward turmoil under the masters' poses of leisure and gentlemanly honor.

Johnson points to the fundamental shift: "value migrated from the real physical things . . . into the pure ether of unencumbered dollar values" whose momentary price "always had to be paid in a physical—movable, fakeable, and boostable—form" (67). The value of crops, for instance, "could shift in a matter of hours" (266). That instability led to a new world of "tricksters—the con men, gamblers, and escaping slaves" who "embodied the fears of a world in which identity had

been unmoored from geography, . . . in which anyone could be vouched for and no one could be trusted" (150).[4] Faced with a flux of selves as well as products, slaveowners clung to their superior status as "patriarchal, noncommercial, self-sufficient white men" (24, also 406–17). Yet their thoroughly commercial lives depended on credit given or withheld by distant banks in New York or London, especially after local banks lost legitimacy in the Panic of 1837. White supremacy secured their manhood as well as their status by making the marketplace and slave abuse parallel arenas for proving their "activist, dominative, violent sort of will—a field of force" (202, also 176–208). The owners' benevolent claims were hypocritical or self-deluding (192–8). They revelled in "the direct experience of mastery" (199), including their violent sexual exercise of "phallic power" (195) to breed more dark laborers as their property.

Baptist highlights the mix of greed and stress in Southern slaveowners' daily dealings. They were bent on "high-capital speculation in land and human bodies" (16). More gamblers than rational capitalists, they aimed for "massive profits" through what Joseph Schumpeter would later call creative destruction, "the core engine of capitalism's growth" (86). They loved "the sense of power they got from . . . cutting out rivals, knowing that people far away were bending to their wills" (86–7). With no possibility of controlling even one percent of total cotton production, thousands of plantation owners plunged into the "fever" of "perfect competition" for success in a world market (117). Driven by entrepreneurial desires, white men "tried to impose their codes [of masculinity] on everything around them" (217), fucking darker women and fighting with their peers "to prove that they were not slaves" (219).

These contradictions in antebellum masks of manhood reflect a more basic threat: the new volatility in value itself. Michael O'Malley's *Face Value* highlights the mix of fear and excitement in capitalist dynamics. Within and beyond its cruelties and exploitations, capitalism invites a freedom of self-making. But its ferment of exchanges brings primal anxieties about risk and failure. O'Malley emphasizes the "incompatible approaches to individualism" created by capitalism's "staggering transformative energies." Americans who believed in fixed moral "character" also believed they could refashion themselves. That "tense duality" of firm self-control and creative self-destruction sparks capitalist enterprise. The market "undermines essentialism and produces it" (6).

To evade the new volatility of values, O'Malley contends, Americans clutched at two fantasies of unchangeable worth: the gold standard and white supremacy. The institution of slavery gave most white Southerners a sense of permanent hierarchy. Slaves, not gold, were the basis of Southern credit (72). The ownership of dark bodies secured a light-skinned man's status. Yet such status was no more stable than slave prices, which constantly fluctuated, partly because money's value was so undependable. Thousands of banks made paper money with little or no backing. When credit disappeared, self-making could become self-breaking.

If the gold standard and white supremacy didn't quite secure value, codes of masculinity offered a third illusion of stability. But capitalism subverted the masculine codes its rhetoric preached: self-reliance, patriarchal honor, and moral

character. In the North, a passion for entrepreneurial self-reliance contradicted emerging workplace hierarchies of collaboration and subordination. In the South, slavery contradicted white men's honor by brutalizing masters, who humiliated black men every day. Until the 1850s most Northerners who claimed to be moral refused to confront slavery's horrors. Southern complacencies and Northern complicities affirmed white manhood and white supremacy, but only by making racism the basis for personal integrity.

Slaveowners plunged headlong into these contradictions, by-products of the capitalist volatilities they sought to control. With "careful calculation and passionate craving," they built their momentary empires out of paper money credit and human property. Then many of them watched helplessly as their empires crashed (Baptist 233–4). Absolute power and absolute panic: a recipe for hybridity.

Male Self-Reinventions and Hybridities in American Literature

Capitalism's assault on stable social traditions and hierarchies brought a new word, individualism, which Alexis de Tocqueville inadvertently popularized by critiquing it in the second volume of *Democracy in America* (1840). A year later Ralph Waldo Emerson's "Self-Reliance" (1841) argues that power exists only in the moment. Inward self-reinvention requires breaking free from your social self, which enslaves you to conformity and consistency. Using exhortations, accusations, and startling swerves, Emerson's essay tries to jolt "timid and apologetic" men into standing "upright" (1135). "Power . . . resides in the moment of transition from a past to a new state; in the shooting of the gulf; in the darting to an aim" (1136). Self-reliance is actually receptivity to "Spontaneity or Instinct" or "Intuition" (1134) or "aboriginal Self" (1133)—Emerson can't settle on a word for it, but he knows it's godlike.

It's sexy too. "We lie in the lap of immense intelligence, which makes us organs of its activity and receivers of its truth" (1134). Either we're God's "organs" or we can nurse at them. When he proclaims that "Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members" (1128), his pun on "members" invites men to elevate their penises with their aspirations. Emerson's sizzle of contradictory assertions dramatizes the force inherent in the self's momentariness. Even his sentences seem to shout, then vanish.

Emerson's essay embraces capitalist volatilities. Most readers simplified the message: to be a successful competitor, believe in yourself and the world will come around. His aphorisms animated men on the make, improvising, floundering, sometimes ruthless. Challenging calls for abolition or philanthropy, Emerson asks tartly, "Are they *my* poor?" (1129). That attitude suited what Sven Beckert calls "war capitalism," for men who sought an edge.

Toni Morrison's *Sula* (1973) puts an Emersonian spirit in a black woman's body. But the novel's post-slavery frame twists Sula's self-reliance toward social sorrowing. As a child Sula rejects pleasing others, being responsible, and playing acceptable roles. "I want to make myself," she says (92). After she overhears her

mother say "I love Sula. I just don't like her" (57), she lets Chicken Little slip from her hands to drown. Those two experiences teach her that she can't count on anyone, even herself (118–19). Like Emerson, she abandons conformity and consistency for "her own mood and whim" (121). Soon she watches her mother burn because she's "thrilled" to see Hannah "dancing" in the fire (147). Almost like a slaveowner, she watches these two black people die, one at her hands. But she doesn't want power, status, or control; she seeks the self's momentariness. Later she makes love with the husband of her best friend, Nel, ending their friendship. To the black people who live in the Bottom, on the unwanted top of an Ohio hill, Sula becomes a "pariah" (122). She doesn't care, because she wants to live "an experimental life" (118) in "free fall" (120). The novel's epigraph, from *The Rose Tattoo*, celebrates Sula's brief life: "I had too much glory. They don't want glory like *that* in nobody's heart."

Several un-Emersonian ironies frame Sula's glory. Because she is a poor black woman in the 1930s, her imagination dooms as well as liberates her: "like any artist with no art form, she became dangerous" (121). Sula also realizes that what she wants from lovemaking isn't freedom or power or mind-play; it's "misery and the ability to feel deep sorrow" (122). To her surprise, she yearns for Ajax and Nel. After her clinging makes Ajax leave, Nel stays bottled up in angry hurt, so Sula lets herself die of terminal self-reliance. Years later Nel sees that she misses her friend, not her husband. Then the spirits of Nel and Sula reconverge. In the novel's last lines, as Nel's "gray ball" (109–10) of suppressed rage and mourning bursts, she lets loose a long cry, with "no bottom and . . . no top, just circles and circles of sorrow" (174).

A more broadly ironic frame shows the encroachment of corporate capitalism. At the start, white people are turning the hilltop Bottom into "suburbs" (3), with TV towers and big houses and golf courses in the offing. There's no more black "neighborhood" (4), where people were "mightily preoccupied with . . . each other" (5). "Maybe it hadn't been a community," Nel muses at the end, "but it had been a place. Now there weren't any places left, just separate houses with separate televisions and separate telephones and less and less dropping by" (166). Suburban individualism separates white people into homogeneous enclaves of reclusiveness, whereas Sula's self-reliance brought diverse African Americans together, to love her or to hate her guts. That's all gone. For Morrison, capitalism creates another circle of sorrow.

Emerson and Morrison are among the rare American writers—Herman Melville is another—who cherish the mayfly momentariness of internal self-reinventions. Many more American writers dramatize self-reinventions as external masks. Their characters present strategic personas used for gain, status, or survival. Strategic personas work because their value has been reduced to just another short-term profit. As Ian Holm's character says in the 1996 movie, *The Big Night*: "I am a businessman. I am anything I need to be at any time."

Five American stories of external self-reinvention can stand for an infinite variety. Robert Montgomery Bird's *Sheppard Lee: Written by Himself* (1836) recounts a Philadelphia man's successive transformations into six dead men

whose bodies he reanimates, including a disturbingly contented slave. Luckily for him, the last body is his own corpse. At the advent of the corporate era, Horatio Alger's *Ragged Dick* (1868) features a brash orphan bootblack who keeps lying about his upscale connections. Instead of punishing his bad moral character, businessmen call his tall tales "droll" and reward his moxie. In F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925), poor midwestern Jay Gatz puts on the mask of a rich mysterious underworld cosmopolitan New Yorker, and becomes that mask. In Patricia Highsmith's *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1955), Tom Ripley fakes being Dickie, a wealthy acquaintance, to live an opulent lifestyle in Europe, and murders several people—including Dickie—to preserve the ruse. Finally, from a much less talented writer, Eben Alexander's *Proof of Heaven* (2012) celebrates his near-death experience of God, whose unconditional love not only rescues him from being an abandoned adoptee and partially acknowledged failure, but also introduces him to a dead sister he never knew about. Luke Dittrich, who exposed Alexander's malpractice suits and loss of surgical privileges, concludes that the writer "looks less like a messenger from heaven and more like a true son of America, a country where men have always found ways to escape the rubble of their old lives through audacious acts of reinvention."[5]

With internal or external self-reinventions, past selves don't matter. But past selves don't always stay buried. That return of the repressed brings hybridities, or internal civil war—another aspect of capitalism's creative destruction. Joyce Appleby's *The Relentless Revolution* (2010) defines early capitalism as a "Janus-like" culture of innovation, ingenuity, and brutality (419), with slave plantations and "mechanical wizardry" emerging as "twin responses to the capitalist genie" (122). Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (1994) established hybridity as "a subversive strategy of subaltern agency" in colonial conditions (185). In the post-colonial United States, already fizzing with capitalist energies, hybridities became a resource, not just a resistance.

From James Fenimore Cooper to Frederick Jackson Turner, writers imagined the American frontier as a borderland where civilized European American men discovered their inner savage. The four best-known antebellum novels feature male hybrids. In Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), Natty Bumppo mixes European and Indian values. In Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (1851), Roger Chillingworth and Arthur Dimmesdale experience clashes of inward opposites. In Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* (1851), Ahab's ivory leg, his crazed rage, the "crucifixion in his face" (137), and metaphors comparing him to animals or a black man or a locomotive all augment his power. And in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), George Harris blends his white father's entrepreneurial assertiveness with his mother's mulatto taint, while Uncle Tom mixes an "Uncle Tom" deference to his masters with managerial skills and resistance that get him killed. In *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym, of Nantucket* (1838), Edgar Allan Poe presents Dirk Peters as a deformed amalgam of animal, Negro, and demon, son of a fur-trader and an Indian squaw. Yet after Pym and Peters survive a black revolt in Antarctica, the hybrid assimilates: "We were the only

living white men upon the island" (400). Many other American stories, essays, and novels show similar tensions between hybridities, unintegrated self-divisions, and white belonging.[6]

A later American hybrid appeared during the corporate era: the beast-aristocrat. This mythic fantasy appealed to American men for whom corporate work provided stability but not self-reliance. Many men felt lost in the middle, as unheroic and replaceable middle managers. Such readers relished stories of males who mix heroic extremes. Edgar Rice Burroughs fictionalized the beast-aristocrat as Tarzan, then Bob Kane drew him as Batman. Jack London presented him as a regal dog in *The Call of the Wild* (1903), and Teddy Roosevelt lived the myth by calling himself a "Bull Moose" in his last run for president.[7] With hybridities and self-reinventions, capitalism goaded men to rise beyond the ordinary self they felt stuck with.

Capitalism's Assault on the Labor Theory of Value

Slave labor confirms a central argument in Karl Marx's *Capital*, that unregulated capitalism exploits workers to maximize profits. But angry nostalgia for a vanishing masculine code drives Marx's untenable claim that labor is the only source of real or natural value. "Capital is dead labour, that vampire-like, only lives by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks" (257, also 282). For Marx, work's natural home is on the land, whereas "the expropriation of the mass of people from the soil forms the basis of the capitalist mode of production" (841). Marx's allegiance to an artisan or farmer code of productivity blocked him from seeing how the volatility in capitalism's exchanges undermined the value of labor.[8]

Almost a century earlier, Adam Smith began *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* with a similar idealization: "Labour . . . is the real measure of the exchangeable value of all commodities. The real price of every thing . . . is the toil and trouble of acquiring it" (30, also 33). Almost no consumer today would agree that the value or price of a product derives from how it's made or how much work it takes to buy it rather than from what uses the buyer imagines for it. Consumers do value good service at the moment they purchase products, but such service is a human aspect of packaging, not production. Capital passionately indicts capitalism's degradation of human labor into use value, exchange value, commodity value, and especially surplus value, produced by the capitalist "who extracts unpaid labour directly from the labourers, and fixes it in commodities" (618). In one astonishing passage, Marx declares that worthless commodities are like Jews:

> The capitalist knows that all commodities, however scurvy they may look, or however badly they may smell, are in faith and in truth money, inwardly circumcised Jews, and what is more, a wonderful means whereby out of money to make more money.
>
> (172)

Two movies made after the 2008 financial crisis illustrate why Michael O'Malley is right about the volatility of all capitalist values, including labor. *Margin Call* grippingly dramatizes nearly two days of shock and free fall in a New York company whose leveraged mortgages have turned worthless. Worse, the company's negative assets are now greater than its market capitalization. In a few hours framed by massive firings, the CEO (Jeremy Irons) persuades his top manager Sam Rogers (Kevin Spacey) to tell the salespeople, sell all the bundled mortgages even though "you're selling something that you know has no value." They do it, they're fired, they get million-dollar severance packages, the company survives, and the CEO calmly muses that this sort of volatility happens every week.

The Company Men tries to resuscitate the value of labor by contrasting physical work with dysfunctional corporate masculinities. This movie too begins with massive firings. The company's shipbuilding industry is dying, and the CEO (Craig T. Nelson) hopes to fend off a merger by inching up stock prices for shareholders. Caring only about money, the CEO fires sales manager Bobby Walker (Ben Affleck) without a qualm. Trapped in his professional self-image, Walker won't tell anybody, while his wife (Rosemary DeWitt) urges him to adapt and cut back. Eventually he admits to her, "I'm a thirty-seven-year-old unemployed loser," and starts working for his wife's brother, Jack Dolan (Kevin Costner), a carpenter contractor. Though Walker is "a shitty carpenter," as Dolan tells him at the end, he likes the job's lack of anxiety. While Walker returns to self-respect, the next round of firings plunges his colleague Phil Woodward (Chris Cooper) into rage and suicide.

The CEO also fires his best friend, Gene McClary (Tommy Lee Jones), though McClary built the business with him. In a pointedly allegorical pairing, former executive McClary complements working-class Jack Dolan in aiming for a healthier masculine code that values ethics and building real things. To keep his workers employed, Dolan quietly underbids for jobs and works on Sundays for no pay. McClary's self-sacrificing is more ambitious. After the company does merge, McClary uses his stock options to buy the abandoned shipbuilding structure, rehiring Bobby Walker for $80,000 a year rather than his previous salary of $120,000. Walker tells Jack Dolan that's "half" of what he used to make. In public he's still posing, but at home he has become a man. His wife tells him, "You were never here before. And now you are." Josep M. Armengol has argued that Walker's and McClary's transformations show how men can reinvent themselves to escape "enslaving" corporate work.[9]

I'm not persuaded, because the content of their new characters seems awash with nostalgic fantasy. In a long speech to Walker as they walk through the shipyard building, McClary talks about a time when men earned "an honest wage, building something they could see. Not just figures on a balance sheet, but a ship they could see, smell, touch. These men knew their worth, knew who they were." Now everything is "gone," he concludes—before he raises the business from the dead. McClary's climactic sermon ringingly affirms the value of manly labor. Yet it's an empty alternative. For one thing, his venture may not succeed. As

Walker blithely says, they could all be fired again. More tellingly, the director (John Wells) and several of the actors admit in interviews that the world of shipbuilding and making durable things has indeed "gone," replaced by consumer goods and services.[10]

In both films, the CEOs are like antebellum slaveowners, ruthlessly maximizing profits. As the new histories abundantly show, slavery was unregulated capitalism in its most brutalizing form. Today most national economies have more humane checks and balances, from governmental regulations to worker benefits, worker rights, and safety nets. Yet the value of labor continues to decline as the inequality between top management and labor keeps widening. Using massive computerized data, Thomas Piketty's *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* shows how capital's ascendance over labor keeps increasing globally.

Only in the two World Wars and the Depression, when European and US governments made drastic redistributions, did the inequality gap lessen (Piketty 12–13, 572). Since the 1970s US inequality has returned to where it was in 1910–1920 (15, 23), in part because top managers can set their own pay (24, also 330–3). "The explosion of wage inequalities and the rise of the supermanager in the United States after 1980" (304) have made US inequality considerably greater than at the start of the nineteenth century (350). Worldwide inequalities reveal the same widening gap, because the steady return on capital at 3 percent to 6 percent almost always outstrips economic growth (206). "The problem is enormous, and there is no simple solution" (572), though a global tax on the very rich would be a start (515–34, 572). Those who hope that productivity growth and "the diffusion of knowledge" (234) will give labor better skills and wages show a "mindless optimism" (223–4) that Piketty's data can't support.

An October 2014 *Economist* booklet by Ryan Avent, "The Third Great Wave," argues that the digital revolution's new inequalities will make the middle class obsolete at work. In the last decade low-skilled service jobs have increased along with demand for high-skilled jobs (8), whereas the "hollowed out" middle (12) keeps expanding worldwide because machines can now replace people. Two Oxford economists conclude that "47% of employment in America is at high risk of being automated away over the next decade or two" (2). The digital economy holds wages flat for most workers "while extravagantly rewarding the most talented ones" (3). Over the last thirty years, "the share of income going to labour has fallen steadily the world over" (5).

Avent seconds Piketty's concern that the middle class's "stabilising force" may "disappear" (7). One economist says that "85–90% of the population may find little to do in the new economy" (12). A "growing underclass" will angrily demand "a cushion" such as guaranteed incomes or wage subsidies (14, 13). Though he hopes that humans differ from machines in our greater "flexibility" (12), that assertion looks like whistling in the dark. The "global eclipse of labour" will bring riches for the elite, but everyone else will be "underemployed" at best (2) as they rage against immigrants and look for better safety nets (10).

For the first time in history, middle-class people may confront the prospect that work doesn't define their social worth. I predict a surge of interest in Thoreau-like

narratives of men who value themselves beyond what they "do." Celebrations of mindful idleness will give new life to Whitman's poems and Emerson's essays. But being present in the moment brings a fearful lack of permanent value, especially for people who feel displaced or inadequate. Racism and xenophobia will keep surging too.

A minor plus side beckons: the digital revolution's new forms of creative destruction open intellectual opportunities that masculinity studies can capitalize on. Here's one possible topic. Slavery's humiliation of laborers lingers in the devaluation of black manhood still enforced and internalized in the United States. Now many other American men are experiencing the devaluation of their labor. Since Barack Obama was elected president in 2008, many American white men have recoiled into an angry racism. As Michael Kimmel argues in *Angry White Men* (2013), globalization has brought them downward mobility and the failure of their fathers, who lost stores or farms (22–3, 245). Racist anger helps them replace shame with pride (179). Idealizing their successful grandfathers, whose manhood embodies everything they want to recapture, they voice "aggrieved entitlement" (xiv) at a world stripping them of self-respect. In 2016 Donald Trump as the Republican presidential nominee has galvanized that political base. Not only does he resurrect the glory days of American whiteness by promising to bar Mexicans and Muslims, but he also performs a daily drama of jaunty, contentious masculinity. It takes a billionaire to delight people at the lower end of inequality by annoying almost every elite somebody who might be a worker's boss.

The anger of downwardly mobile white men complements the avoidance of public anger by upwardly mobile black male professionals. According to Jonathan Capehart, an African American editorial writer who has won the Pulitzer Prize, for a black male professional to voice rage is as dangerous as for a woman professional to cry in public ("Rage").[11] President Obama's measured calm is the safe persona to put on. One might contrast that "cool" style with the "hothead" style available to tea party advocates or African American radicals, or conservative Latino politicians like Ted Cruz.

That's just one comparative topic. The complexity of capitalist dynamics over the last three or four centuries invites thousands more.

Notes

1. In *Honor Bound* (2012) I argue that European Americans called themselves "white" to honor themselves while shaming darker-skinned peoples as "black," even though everyone's skin color is variously tinted brown. Jacqueline Jones's *A Dreadful Deceit* (2013) argues that from the start race has been a "myth" used by white elites to gain control, power, and cheap labor
2. On slavery as "war capitalism," see Beckert, xv–xvi, 38, 76–80, 84–5. Among many global ironies, "African rulers and merchants almost always demanded cotton cloth in exchange for slaves" (36).
3. Beckert slights gender issues except to note that rural women picked most of the cotton in the United States, Europe, and Japan (190–1, 407).
4. Stephen Mihm's *A Nation of Counterfeiters* (2007) links con men and counterfeiting to the rise of capitalism, when "making money" could mean contradictory behaviors

(368). Jonathan Levy's *Freaks of Fortune* (2012) defines capitalism as "an economic system that thrives off radical uncertainty," and argues that corporations evolved to manage risk (4–5).

5. Robert Gottlieb's "To Heaven and Back!" quotes Dittrich's August 2013 *Esquire* article on Alexander, "The Prophet" (77).
6. For more discussion of racialized capitalism and hybridities in classic American literature, see my essay on "Male Hybrids."
7. For more on this myth, see my "Last Real Man in America."
8. In *Origins of the Federal Reserve System* (1986), James Livingston suggests that producerist nostalgia—ultimately patriarchal as well as precapitalist—blinds critics to capitalism's creation of open-ended subjectivities beyond class and group categories.
9. Josep M. Armengol, e-mail (2 November 2014).
10. The interviews are on the Netflix disk for *The Company Men*.
11. See my *Honor Bound* on Capehart's balance of assertion and accommodation on the 19 February 2009 episode of MSNBC's *Hardball* (12, 15–16).

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16 "To Love What Death Doesn't Touch"

Questioning Capitalist Masculinity in Donna Tartt's *The Goldfinch*

Mercè Cuenca

In his article "Having your Beefcake and Eating It Too: Capitalism and Masculinity," Jonathan Kemp explains that capitalism and social exclusion are united by an indissoluble bond that has a traditional conception of masculinity at its root:

> It is clear that capitalism requires masculine aggression in order to survive, creating a planet of perpetual war, environmental destruction, and economies of exclusion in which only those at the very top, the superrich, stand a chance of surviving. The demonization of the poor, the needy, the sick together with the violent suppression of difference, of any alternative, are not just unfortunate by-products of capitalism, they are its structural requirements.
>
> (63)

Indeed, the logic behind this description of capitalism begs no explanation. As Western citizens living in capitalist societies, we are socialized into gendered, sexual, and racial binaries. Despite the laudable efforts of generations of feminist, LGBT, queer, and masculinity studies scholars and activists, the market opening for books like the one you hold in your hands proves that the lives of men and women are still compartmentalized by definite, if somewhat modified and more lenient, gendered roles. Seeking new directions in masculinity is a laudable enterprise; if nothing else, it signifies an attempt at softening the boundary that defines the lives of men and women. It shall be my purpose in this chapter to show how reconsidering capitalist economies of gender is of primary importance to move further in that direction. For this purpose, I have chosen to focus on Donna Tartt's *The Goldfinch* (2013). In my opinion, the novel exemplifies how the gendered limitations imposed by capitalism affect mainstream men while, at the same time, it proposes alternatives, indicating paths towards a less reified and more flexible model of masculinity.

The Goldfinch is a sprawling text, rich in detailed characterization and minute descriptions of everyday life and social customs: so much so that it sometimes reads like a twenty-first century novel written to emulate the classic British novels of the nineteenth century. Dickens' influence can easily be traced both in the novel's ambitious scope and length, and in its main thematic focus: the coming-of-age of a young orphan. It was precisely because of this choice of subject matter that some

reviewers found the novel disappointing, even going so far as to call it "children's literature" (qtd. in Peretz). However, it is my contention that just like Dickens's immensely popular masterpieces exposed the flaws of nineteenth-century industrial England, Tartt's best-selling work can be considered a poignant representation of the inequalities of twenty-first century capitalist America. Her dissection of the fundamental social inequalities and personal anxieties that her main character, Theo Decker, is exposed to due to the mechanics of consumer culture is relentless. As readers, we witness Theo's coming-of-age; this makes Tartt's critique even more poignant, as she puts an accent on how education, including, of course, the acquisition of gendered notions of lifestyle, is shaped by materialistic concerns. It is thus my contention that the author seeks to show how, in capitalist societies, the craving for capital accumulation can be incorporated into the core of (male) identity at a very young age, limiting freedom of thought in truly horrid ways.

Notwithstanding, the interest of *The Goldfinch* does not lie only in its diagnosis of a clearly ill society whose virus, material greed, is instilled in the young citizens of the future. The text interpellates readers to move beyond analysis and to reexamine their very own practices of ideological reproduction and consumption. That is why, from my point of view, Tartt's novel is of more interest than many reviewers gave it credit for when it was first published; it proposes questions that are key to present-day American (dare I say Western?) life: namely, how can we inhabit the materialism of capitalist systems and forge an independent identity at one and the same time? Why do we allow money, which like all valuables flows in and out of our lives, to become the core of human existence? More to the point, where do we turn to when it fails us, as it has so many citizens in the wake of the economic crisis? Are there any values that can elevate us over crass materialism, which can make our "tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury" (Shakespeare 132) signify something? Finally, and more importantly for the purpose of this article, how does the answer, as it is represented in the novel through the development of Theo's masculinity, illuminate new directions in the construction of contemporary manhood?

As has been pointed out, *The Goldfinch* traces the development of young Theo from childhood to adulthood. Specifically, it covers Theo's biographical experience from the ages of thirteen to twenty-seven. Though there are no temporal markers in the text, the characters' use of gadgets, such as cell phones and iPods, situates the action in the present. Thus, the novel is, in essence, an exploration of the process of becoming a man in the early twenty-first century. As befits the times, this development is neatly intertwined with a precocious worry over money and a thorough examination of its grip on contemporary experience, highlighting the pervasive and all-encompassing importance of currency in every minute detail of both children's and adults' everyday lives. The novel begins when Theo loses his mother tragically during a terrorist bombing on the Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art, New York, at age thirteen. From then on, he feels trapped, much like Carel Fabritius's goldfinch in the homonymous 1654 painting that gives the novel its title, by the chains of his material and affective dependence on the adults who subsequently agree to raise him. Tartt has Theo steal the painting in the chaos that

ensues after the attack (41), an act that proves to be providential in the context of the story. While the work of art becomes a material memento of his mother, a hidden secret that foreshadows the character's equation of affection with possession, eventually it also provides him with an avenue of escape from the hollowness of materialism.

Once Theo becomes a motherless orphan, his relation to consumer culture changes significantly. No longer blinded by the presence of a familial provider, the boy can now observe clearly that everyday life has a materialistic basis. He learns only too soon that the availability and expenditure of currency are a key concern in American life. For instance, when Theo reminisces on the period when he is first taken in by the Barbours, the rich parents of his schoolmate Andy, he remembers:

> With the Barbours, my lack of pocket money had been a continual worry; having always to hit Mrs. Barbour up for lunch money, lab fees at school, and other small expenses had occasioned dread and anxiety quite out of proportion to the sums she carelessly disbursed.
>
> (Tartt 442)

Hence, he comes to experience his relation to capitalist consumerism as problematic at an age when, had his mother's life followed its natural course, he would not have envisaged money, or the lack of it, as an issue in his life. As things stand, it becomes the key issue that shapes his development. By age twenty-seven, when the book closes, Theo has experienced a wide range of economic circumstances, from comparative wealth to enforced poverty, from having to steal to ensure the fulfillment of basic necessities to the autonomy of having independent means. Therefore, his construction of masculinity is deeply affected by his fluctuating relation to money and commodities. Interestingly, throughout this process, his life is shaped by two father figures, two significant male role models whose radically diverse relation to money also seems to shape their capacity, or lack thereof, for affection and nurturance. On the one hand, there is his father, Larry Decker, a former actor turned compulsive gambler who, after years of absence from Theo's life takes custody of the child, uprooting him from his hometown, New York, and taking him to Las Vegas. On the other hand, there is James "Hobie" Hobart, who becomes Theo's temporary guardian after his father's death, welcoming him into his Greenwich home and eventually entrusting him with his antiques restoration business.

Theo spends the better part of his adolescence with his father in Las Vegas. The choice of this city is no coincidence, as it mirrors the hollowness of the kid's emotional life during a period of his life when he is neglected and abused by an irresponsible and egotistical parent. Tartt describes the emptiness of the city behind the glitter and dazzle of the casino lights, highlighting the dismal living conditions behind the capitalist paradise of expenditure:

> The school bus didn't actually go all the way out to the edge of Canyon Shadows where Boris [Theo's closest friend at school] lived. It was a twenty

> minute walk to his house from the last stop, in blazing heat, through streets awash with sand . . . Most of the houses looked as if they had never been lived in. Others—unfinished—had raw-edged windows without glass in them; they were covered with scaffolding and grayed with blown sand, with piles of concrete and yellowing construction material out front. The boarded-up windows gave them a blind, battered, uneven look, as of faces beaten and bandaged. As we walked, the air of abandonment grew more and more disturbing, as if we were roaming some planet depopulated by radiation or disease.
>
> (268)

In much the same way, the sense of emotional and physical abandonment and solitude that the boy feels at his home is rampant. The sterility of a home life that is completely devoid of love is mirrored by the empty fridge that presides over the kitchen. No one is ever there to welcome Theo after school or to cook him a decent meal, let alone to offer him a scrap of affection. The boy literally finds himself depending for care and sustenance on his friend Boris, a similarly neglected teenager, who teaches him how to steal the food they need to survive (Tartt 276–7). Undernourished and emotionally deprived, Theo clings to the idea that his father might love him only to eventually find out that he has only sought to be his primary caretaker because of his greed for money. Unaware of the fact that his mother has left him a handsome sum in a trust to be used for his education, Theo finds himself harassed and beaten into deceiving his mother's lawyer so that he will release the large amount his father needs to pay his gambling debts. Tartt writes:

> Without warning, my dad snapped out and whacked me across the face, so hard and fast that for a second I didn't know what had happened. Then almost before I could blink he hit me again with his fist, cartoon *wham*, bright crack like a camera flash. As I wobbled—my knees had gone loose, everything white—he caught me by the throat with a sharp upward thrust and forced me up on tiptoe so I was gasping for breath. "Look here." He was shouting in my face—his nose two inches from mine—. . . . "You're going to call this guy" rattling the paper in my face—"and say what I fucking tell you. Don't make this any harder than it has to be because I will *make* you do this, Theo, no lie, I will break your arm, I will beat the everloving *shit* out of you if you don't get on the phone right now. Okay? Okay?"
>
> (365–6)

Clearly, like the city he inhabits, this onetime actor's performed affection hides the void of the addict player's need for cash, the desert hollowness of a man who is incapable of nurturing his son, who only thirsts after his money and will use any means necessary to get it.

Sadly, then, Theo learns very early on that a possible by-product of capitalist economies of affection is the commodification of emotion, and that it may reduce the most intimate of family bonds to utilitarianism. Deprived of any emotional

recognition both as a son and as a budding man, Theo develops a thwarted sense of self-worth and of masculinity. As he grows up, he comes to conflate the accumulation of money with his value as a man, an idea he internalizes during this troubled period in Las Vegas. Interestingly, in his book *The Moral Significance of Class*, Andrew Sayer argues that "[h]uman beings have a psychological need for recognition, and its denial, especially in childhood, can produce long-lasting damage" (57). Defining that recognition as "freely given acts and freely given words" (56), Sayer develops on the fundamental need for human beings to be acknowledged as worthy in their own right both at a personal and social level. Only thus will they develop a strong sense of self-worth, which will remain impervious to the social and economic categories that would seek to define them. Needless to say, this whole logic is eminently at odds with the hierarchical structure of capitalist societies, which thrive on inequality and exclusion. By replicating this structure in the private sphere of the family, and making Theo understand that he can only expect recognition in return for money, Tartt evinces the pervasive nature of capitalism, which makes its way into the innermost reaches of human lives. This extreme dehumanization echoes Marxist theory in that it shows how "[i]n a capitalist society, capital itself becomes the Subject. Human beings are its pawns, reduced to figuring out how they can get what they need in the interstices, by feeding the beast" (Fraser 50).

Owing to the engendered division of labor that still largely equates reproduction and care with the female, production and profit with the male (Fraser 65), the construction of masculinity is particularly vulnerable to the tyranny of capital. Theo internalizes the perverse discourse that places social status at the core of male mainstream identity, and this is precisely the central confusion that he must overcome in order to construct a meaningful sense of masculinity. Along the way, Theo is aided by the example of Hobie, who, after Larry Decker's sudden death in a car accident, becomes the boy's temporary guardian until he comes of age. Hobie clearly exemplifies an alternative model of masculinity in that he embodies a non-materialistic, nurturing, and caring model of manhood. Co-owner of the antiques shop Hobart and Blackwell, Hobie sticks to his passion for restoring and mending antique furniture once his business partner dies, disregarding the commercial aspect of his profession. It is, of course, no accident that Hobie's life is devoted to cherishing and mending the objects that others have disregarded and sold. A repairer by nature, Hobie seeks to assuage the harm that has been done to objects with the same affection with which he seeks to heal Theo's wrecked sense of self. Tartt subtly describes how lovingly he takes care of the old furniture that reaches his workshop, how affectionately he shares the secrets of his craft with the boy:

> "What ages wood? Anything you like. Heat and cold, fireplace soot, too many cats—or that," he said, stepping back as I ran my finger along the rough, muddied top of a mahogany chest. "What do you suppose wrecked that surface?"
>
> "Gosh—." I squatted on my heels to where the finish—black and sticky, like the burnt-on crust of some Easy-Bake Oven item you didn't want to eat—feathered out to a clear, rich shine.

> Hobie laughed. "Hair spray. Decades of. Can you believe it?" he said, scratching at an edge with his thumbnail so that a curl of black peeled away. . . . "It'd be a really interesting piece if she hadn't wrecked the finish. All we can do is clean it up, on top, so you can see the wood again, maybe give it a light wax. It's a beautiful old thing, though, isn't it?," he said, with warmth, trailing a finger down the side.
>
> (467–8)

Interestingly, Hobie's nurturing personality also shines through in his preoccupation with feeding Theo. A consummate cook, he pampers the boy with delicious meals, making of dinner a quotidian feast of tasting and sharing:

> Dinner time was the time of day I looked forward to most. In Vegas . . . I'd never gotten used to the sadness of having to scrabble around to feed myself at night, sitting on the side of my bed with a bag of potato chips or maybe a dried-up container of rice left over from my dad's carry out. By happy contrast, Hobie's whole day revolved around dinner. Where shall we eat? Who's coming over? What shall I cook? Do you like pot-au-feu? No? Never had it? Lemon rice or saffron? Fig preserves or apricot? Do you want to walk over to Jefferson Market with me?
>
> (444–5)

Thus, Hobie feeds Theo's body and spirit, taking care of the boy's every need, and showing him that adult masculinity can be focused on emotional plenitude instead of on material success.

Apparently, however, no amount of exposure to an alternative model of masculinity can completely undo the harm wreaked on Theo by a mercilessly materialistic father and a culture that celebrates men's accumulation of capital. When Theo reaches adulthood he oscillates between an extremely materialistic concept of masculinity, on the one hand, and a much more humane and selfless notion of manhood, on the other. In this way, he both replicates mainstream notions of capitalist masculinity and challenges them. Joan Acker contends in her article "Is Capitalism Gendered and Racialized?" that "[i]deologies of white masculinity and related forms of consciousness help to justify capitalist practices" (125). Undoubtedly, the construction of a hegemonic model of masculinity in Western, capitalist societies is eminently related to ensuring the continuity of the centrality of capital. By the same token, as Griffin argues, neoliberal financial discourses actually enable masculinity to occupy that very hegemonic position (Griffin in this volume). Thus, the gendered agenda is, firstly, to instill in white men the wish to accumulate capital, and, secondly, to create a system that consolidates and perpetuates the notion that white men are its rightful owners.

Tartt has Theo internalize this predominantly materialistic view of masculinity. He can thus be considered to embody a standard, capitalist model of adult manhood when he begins to show a disproportionate preoccupation with the acquisition of money in early adulthood. However, Tartt's narrative twist, which

has Theo conclude that using any means necessary to achieve material success is valid, questions the desirability of this model and foregrounds the dangers that individuals face in a society that gives moral value to wealth. Avowedly, the questioning of the mainstream construction of (capitalist) masculinity is not a new theme in American literature. Patricia Highsmith's 1955 novel *The Talented Mr. Ripley* quickly comes to mind as a referent in this connection. Tom Ripley's crusade in pursuit of wealth and social status leads him to weave an intricate web of lies with a notorious denouement: namely, the murder of Dickie Greenleaf and the final usurpation of his "money and freedom" (Highsmith 249). While Tartt does not have Theo reach quite such an extraordinary level of moral shadiness, she does have him apply capitalist rationales to business in ways that compromise the ethical solidity of the law of supply and demand, and which question capitalist culture's equation of social status with respectability.

As has been noted, Theo is no stranger to acquiring possessions illegally. After all, he steals Fabritius's *The Goldfinch* at a very early age, and hides it since, and he also finds himself having to steal food to eat during his adolescence. In this way, he experiences a blurring of the limits between rightful and inappropriate acquisition of goods in his mind. Ironically, his encounter with a caring and non-materialistic male caretaker does not preclude Theo's indulging in further unlawful dealings. On the contrary, it is precisely because Theo wants to please Hobie, to prove to his surrogate father that he can lead the elder man's antiques business to financial success, that he ends up committing fraud. Indeed, Theo takes over the abandoned commercial branch of his guardian's business and implements lucrative methods that are, at best, questionable, and, at worse, downright condemnable. Tartt explains:

> Objective value—list value—was meaningless. If a customer came in clueless with money in hand (as most of them did) it didn't matter what the books said, what the experts said, what similar items at Christie's had recently gone for. An object—*any* object—was worth whatever you could get someone to pay for it.
>
> . . . The trick, as I discovered through trial and error, was to keep at least a quarter of the prices low and jack up the rest, sometimes by as much as four and five hundred percent. . . . [F]or whatever reason, some people were more apt to put out fifteen hundred bucks for a Meissen teapot if it was placed next to a plainer but comparable piece selling (correctly, but cheaply) for a few hundred. (512)

Theo plainly thrives on his customers' lack of knowledge that is usually complemented by their desire to expose a surplus of wealth. As he himself explains, buying is intricately related for many customers with the need to project an identity, a rationale that only functions in capitalist settings:

> When selling a piece, talking it up . . . it was a game to size up a customer and figure out the image they wanted to project—not so much the people they

> were . . . as the people they wanted to be. Even on the highest levels, it was smoke and mirrors; everyone was furnishing a stage set.
>
> (513)

Clearly, having been exposed at a tender age to the social conflation of wealth and identity, of social status and moral value, Theo can manipulate others' dreams of upward mobility to his own advantage. Nonetheless, Tartt does not abandon her character to a progressive moral deterioration mediated by materialistic greed. Rather, in a beautiful turn of events, she has him redeemed thanks to the very first object that he stole: Fabritius's *The Goldfinch*. Theo grows up cherishing this one property over everything else in his life since it is the one memento he can keep from his mother. Like Hobie, the boy's mother teaches him to appreciate beauty, to see in it a value that elevates human beings over crass materialism. An art historian herself, just before dying, she tells Theo how the painting taught her the true worth of art: "You'll never believe it, but it was in a book I used to take out of the library as a kid. I used to sit on the floor by my bed and stare at it for hours, completely fascinated—that little guy! . . . I started off loving the bird, the way you'd love a pet or something, and ended up loving the way it was painted" (Tartt 29).

Thus, Theo's mother instills the love of art in him at a very early age, so much so that, as he grows up, the boy comes to associate the painting with tenderness. As he expresses it, "its glow enveloped me, something almost musical, an internal sweetness that was inexplicable beyond a deep, blood-rocking harmony of rightness, the way your heart beat slow and sure when you were with a person you felt safe with and loved" (355). Given his emotionally deprived adolescence, it is no wonder that Theo wishes to keep Fabritius's masterpiece to himself. However, this situation changes when Theo learns that the painting has been stolen and may disappear forever at the hands of illegal public collectors (632). Realizing that his own selfishness may now lead to a great artistic loss for humanity triggers a process of transformation in Theo. It leads him to retrieve the painting personally and to seek to make amends with Hobie by reimbursing all those customers he has overcharged. Interestingly, the young man is inspired by his guardian's words to take on this new path: "Caring too much for objects can destroy you. Only—if you care for a thing enough, it takes on a life of its own, doesn't it? And isn't the whole point of things—beautiful things—that they connect you to some larger beauty?" (849). Tartt's novel closes with Theo embarking on a personal journey to reconstruct his sense of identity, fostering from now on a masculinity that, mediated by the appreciation of art, focuses on sharing, not possessing. In this way, *The Goldfinch* is an example of the type of narrative that Leverenz envisions will become increasingly important in contemporary American literature; the novel proposes a male character whose sense of self-worth does not stem from his profession, or from any other type of lucrative practice (Leverenz in this volume). On the contrary, by shedding individualism, Theo understands that individuality only

makes sense as a contribution to a collective, and that this sense of belonging can only come about through love. Echoing Whitman, he concludes:

> [I]n the midst of our dying, as we rise from the organic and sink back ignominiously into the organic, it is a glory and a privilege to love what Death doesn't touch. For if disaster and oblivion have followed this painting [*The Goldfinch*] down through time—so too has love. Insofar as it is immortal (and it is) I have a small, bright, immutable part in that immortality. It exists; and it keeps on existing. And I add my own love to the history of people who have loved beautiful things, and pulled them from the fire, and sought them when they were lost, and tried to preserve them and save them while passing them along literally from hand to hand, singing out brilliantly from the wreck of time to the next generation of lovers, and the next.
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> (864)

Recognizing and embracing one's mortality, feeling the privilege of belonging to the human race rather than to a gender, and setting one's mind to the admiring of perennial values that soar over capitalist, everyday life. These are the standards that Tartt seems to propose can indicate the way towards a new direction in the construction of manhood. Utopian, but inspiring.

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Part VII

Epilogue

Masculinity Studies: New Directions

The epilogue, which functions as a thematic conclusion to the book, includes fragments from the Q&A sessions of the Seminars given at the University of Barcelona by Robert Reid-Pharr, Jeff Hearn, Lynne Segal, Todd W. Reeser, and Stefan Brandt, as well as an interview with Michael Kimmel, all in conversation with the members of the research group "Constructing New Masculinities" (CNM).

Robert Reid-Pharr

Expanding on Part I*, "Rethinking Ethnic Masculinities," Robert Reid-Pharr examines the position of African American men after Barack Obama's election and investigates the shifts that have affected the Black male community and the United States since then. This includes the return of Black Americans to a safer South; the flow of immigration from Eastern Europe to urban centers; and the protagonism of the Middle East in the current history of the Unites States.*

BARBARA OZIEBLO: *A lot has happened since you wrote and published Black Gay Men (2001), and reading the essays I couldn't help wondering whether, if you were writing it today, you would use the same language and the same ideas. Did the election of Barack Obama, and now his loss of popularity, change your interpretation of the position of the black man, of the African American man in the United States?*

ROBERT REID-PHARR: I think that one of the things that have happened since I published *Black Gay Men* is that the ground has shifted rather drastically in the United States in two big ways regarding the black population. One is related to the Nation of Islam, which was significant probably in the early '90s when I was studying, or was a young professor, but now it has rather changed and has sort of dropped off the map. There is also the question of who lives next to whom, and that has changed drastically too, particularly in a place like New York, where a lot of that stuff is centered. There has been a very serious reduction of black people born in the United States and living in New York. The average black person actually living in the city is

now born in the Caribbean or the African continent. As a matter of fact, African American people are leaving New York in groups and returning to the South, primarily North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Virginia for better lives. This is because the reason they left their places is done with. You are not in imminent danger anymore in the South and you can find a job or have a profession, etc., in a way you won't be able to do in a city like New York. However, immigrants are coming to the city because, obviously, it is a place where new immigrants are more accepted and put into the system, although that is changing in the United States as well. There is a huge mass of immigrants coming from Mexico who go directly to other places in the country because what they want is a house and a car. So, in New York, the tension in particular is, for instance in the field of education, on who gets to have a teaching slot, who gets to be the principal. The Jewish population now is not nearly as dominant in that sector as it was even twenty years ago; people have moved up and down the ladder. A considerable amount of foreign people in the United States have moved up into other realms of the economy, and we have to add that there is a continued immigration of people from Eastern Europe working as shoemakers, in the groceries, etc. The positions that have been vacated, particularly high school principals and people in the governmental transportation authority, are occupied very often by black people. Much of that stuff has changed and other types of tension have developed. No one is really thinking about the Nation of Islam because the idea of "oh my gosh that Jewish guy is charging me too much" has turned into "oh my gosh, that black man is charging me too much." So that's part of what is happening. The question of anti-Semitism in the United States now is not, as it used to be, a question that was largely about "this person, who is the shop owner, is a Jew" or, "this person who owns my apartment is a Jew." The question now is about Israel and Palestine. It has to do with: "What is happening in Israel? What is happening in Palestine?" And also remember, the United States in the past two years has started to become aware that there is a Middle East. In 1990, there would never have been a conversation about Syria or Jordan, maybe there would have been a little bit of conversation about Israel, but there would definitely have not been a question about Iraq or Afghanistan. Now, all the conversations about politics in the United States begin with that region of the world and people are very focused on Israel in relation to that. There's a real divide about whether or not the country should be the best friend of Israel or whether or not we should actually make sure certain people know we are not Middle Eastern people. It's just a different moment historically. 1990 seems to be a million years ago; the changes have been stunning since 2001, since 9/11. The thing that happened in the United States is that suddenly we became people who existed inside history. Now history is somehow happening to us.

Jeff Hearn

Jeff Hearn problematizes and revisits Connell's concept of "hegemonic masculinity," and points to the usefulness of the term "men's practices," a concept that appears as a unifying thread throughout this volume. In line with his chapter on men around the world, he also discusses the relevance of engaging with caring masculinities at both national and transnational levels.

SARA MARTÍN: The research literature around "hegemonic masculinity" seems to be increasing all the time without leading to more consensus. I have the feeling we are wasting precious academic energy on a concept that is perhaps no longer that useful, as other matters remain neglected. Would you agree?

JEFF HEARN: Your question links to discussion on the concept of masculinity itself, and the history, ambiguities, and limitations of the concept. To some extent, similar critiques can be raised about how the term hegemonic masculinity has been used in diluted and diverse ways, for example, sometimes just to mean dominant masculinity, sometimes to refer to superheroes in films. I think it's good to consider how this term has been used and why it has become so popular. It's been used in all sorts of different ways, sometimes even in retrogressive ways; for instance, we explored this issue in a project a few years ago on South African and Swedish work on masculinities (Hearn & Morrell, 2012; Hearn et al., 2012; Morrell et al., 2012). One of the reasons why I think the term has become so important is that within the earlier formulations in the late '70s, there were lots of different influences going on in the formulation of the concept: patriarchy theory, gay politics, Gramscian Marxism, practice theory, psychoanalysis, etc. They ranged across the whole of the social sciences, including pluralism or plurality or intersectionality, so different people took up different aspects and interpretations, and sometimes in quite opposing ways. It has taken lots of energy and there are lots of critiques. So in part I would agree; at the same time, it has been very productive, but probably not always in the way Raewyn Connell envisaged originally. Nowadays, the critiques keep coming, although some people seem to ignore them. Personally, I'll be a little critical now of the article she wrote with Messerschmidt (2005), as that didn't really address postcolonialism, as taken up elsewhere, or indeed queer theory, which is a shame. I think postcolonialism is a very important and powerful perspective, as indeed are some versions of queer theory. If you are interested in hegemony, you must question what are the issues that hegemony is about, in terms of gender and around gender; this, of course, includes hegemony of and around men and the category of men, and that involves asking why is that so taken-for-granted and how is that category is formed.

In the European CROME network (Hearn and Pringle 2006; Pringle et al.), we didn't find the concept of hegemonic masculinity useful; we actually

talked about men's practices; this is not to say that only men do masculinity; women can also do masculinity. In the contexts we were focusing on, we looked at men's practices of different kinds, in home and work, health, social exclusion, and violence. Trying to talk between the UK, Estonia, Russia, Finland, and many other countries was very difficult; to assume there was a similar concept of masculinity or hegemonic masculinity didn't really make sense; so we didn't really use the term hegemonic masculinity much. Also doing empirical work on men's violence against women, I didn't find the hegemomic masculinity framework very useful (Hearn 1998). I'm interested in how hegemonic masculinity relates to the issue of men's violence to women, because it's actually a bit of a problem: how to explain hegemony in relation to domestic violence, how is it part of hegemony or not? (Hearn 2012). The main feminist researchers on violence again women in Europe don't use that kind of framework.

TERESA REQUENA-PELEGRÍ: In the introduction to *Men and Masculinities around the World* (2011), you mention the transformation in theories and practices of parenting as one of the developments that are taking place within globalizing processes. In specific reference to fathering, how have everyday practices been changed by new conceptions of masculinities? What are the challenges for conceptualizing fatherhood within a globalized context?

JEFF HEARN: First, I should say that that book was very much a collective effort, co-edited with Elisabetta Ruspini, Bob Pease, and Keith Pringle, and my own contribution wasn't particularly focused on parenting or fathering. This question of parenting and caring more generally was, however, a central issue that was debated in the EU project, "The Role of Men in Gender Equality" (Scambor et al.), that I was part of in 2011 and 2012. We tried to think, what is the one message we can get over? We used the term "caring masculinities" as bit of a slogan; I don't think it is wise to base a program of gender change on fatherhood as necessarily a good thing; fatherhood can also be horrible, violent, and so on. We tried to bring caring masculinities into relationship to the father debate, we tried to make a point about that relationship, with children or anybody, in relation to caring. Then there's the issue of how would you take a discussion on caring masculinities into workplace discussions? The politics of fatherhood have been dominated by pro-fatherhood ideology, and this is also true in Nordic countries. If you look at the figures, you have huge variations in actual involvement in different parts of Europe. Debates in the Nordic countries have tended to be rather more focused on time-use studies. Time studies are really relevant, and perhaps a bit more reliable than activity studies.

There is in the report, "The Role of Men in Gender Equality," information that shows that, as a very broad generalization, men's share of care and housework varies positively with education but negatively with income. Put very simply, on average, men with more education tend to do more caring

work. But on average as men get more income, they tend to do less and that work and care may be outsourced; it might be having the laundry done, eating in a restaurant, etc. That's one way to think about those contradictions. Some commentators argue that this change in domestic involvement, this domestic and housework and caring aspect, is actually a bigger gender revolution than anything else, more than change in patterns of employment. These are in addition important transnational as well as national or single societal issues in relation to fatherhood and parenting. For example, in the book *Making Men into Fathers: Men, Masculinities and the Social Politics of Fatherhood*, edited by Barbara Hobson, I wrote a chapter on both national and transnational fatherhood. It's also interesting that the whole book talks about fathering and fathering practices as a processes rather than the institution of fatherhood or indeed parenthood.

Lynne Segal

In this conversation, Lynne Segal expands on a new direction in recent aging studies: aging masculinities. She discusses men's fears of getting old and asserts the need for a literature that reflects men's affirmation of old age. This becomes possible, she suggests, if men's lives are seen less in terms of individual self-projects and more in relation to connections to other people.

SARA MARTÍN: Vic Blake, a reader writing about your book in Amazon UK, complains that "in her discussion of male authors (Roth, Amis, Updike, in particular), Lynne Segal concentrates rather uncritically on their phallic preoccupations in such a way that aging for men comes to represent an inevitable and frightening all-encompassing impotence. What is needed instead is what she has attempted to provide for women—a view of aging for men in which it is possible to think in terms of enrichment, release, fruition and increased sensitivity." What would your answer be to this criticism?

LYNNE SEGAL: I was invited to speak in a men's group in Nottingham, where I was asked this same question. I answered saying: "What books should I look at?" "What have men written about this?" So that's the issue: "Where's this literature, that can provide us with something different?" What is more, people tend to say, if asked about their feelings as old people: "I DON'T feel old" when interviewed. Or they talk about how terrible aging is. But there are no books which say "I love being old." Julian Barnes, for instance, doesn't express the same fear and horror about old age, although he has usually written about older women. His preoccupation is with death. He's utterly afraid of dying. Men are either afraid of getting old and being dependent, or afraid of death. Barnes still hasn't written about what is to be an old man. Maybe it is easier in the movies. But I think it needs a movement behind it for men to affirm old age, the possible pleasures as well as the inevitable pains of a long life.

MERCÈ CUENCA: In your book *Out of Time* (2013), you point out that recognizing the inevitability of aging might help us to empathize with and take responsibility for the aged. Paradoxically, Western society has developed a whole set of market products, i.e., beauty products, cosmetic surgery, etc., designed to give the message that not only is aging avoidable, but that it should be. To what extent do you think the constant bombardment of such messages via the web and the mass media, for instance, shapes social perception of old age and especially of men?

LYNNE SEGAL: In the final chapter of *Out of Time* I do talk about a number of men, including Stuart Hall, who emphasize that life isn't best seen as a self-project. Life is about our connection to other people. Men need to express this more in writing about their personal lives; something we have seen more often when gay men have written about their personal lives, and caring for each other, especially in the worst years of the spread of HIV/AIDS. It is true that we are encouraged to "age well." But in general this means having to worry about not showing your age, or about how long cosmetic surgery is going to last. The need to look forever young is a dire problem that impacts first on women, who may want to change their bodies via the very latest cosmetic technologies. And this increases class divisions, since it has to do with who can afford the latest treatments and who can't. I read scholars who argue that how we age will be absolutely affected by class and status, that is, the ways of improving our looks to look younger, what surgery we can afford, etc. You cannot age agelessly. Some women's writing show a certain disavowal about the losses and injuries that age often causes; sometimes this disavowal can seem necessary as ways of handling them. But the old wisdom suggesting that aging well means that you grow wiser as you age, that you don't get so angry or cross, or that you have greater acceptance for the world as it is, etc., I'm not sure that it's either true, or necessary.

MARTA BOSCH-VILARRUBIAS: Following this line of thought, in your book you point out the social and economic marginalization of the elderly. What strategies do you envision as a way to solve this? As life expectancy increases, aging becomes an economic problem, given the expenses related to the care towards the elderly and their distancing from the workforce. What do you think about the relationship between aging and economy? How is this specifically experienced by aging men?

LYNNE SEGAL: In this period of market-led, neoliberal politics, we have seen a rolling back of the welfare state, while trying to make everyone feel responsible for themselves. But this does not fit well with having an aging population. People talk about how there's going to be many people in need of care, etc. So it is more complicated than it might seem. However, one reason we are living longer is because we are on the whole healthier, despite being older. Some people have pointed out that old people are more often not in the paid workforce or contributing to profit-making, which in these times is the only thing seen as counting as useful work. Yet, there are many people in

the voluntary sector, which is a large part of the caring system or charity work. They are doing care work. And if it wasn't for these volunteers, the caring system would collapse. So actually old people are very often giving back quite as much as they "take" from society. There is also this notion that being dependent, or in need care is a failing, when in fact those who in need care are actually providing jobs. Countries are now trying to make profits out of the social care system. In Britain they are trying to privatize or "outsource" the care system. It reminds me that contemporary feminists came in almost fifty years ago, asking this question: "How do we care for our children?" But we should have asked: "How do we care for each other?" Society needs to be constructed around how we care for each other, not on how we make profits. Today there is the idea that everybody should care for themselves, so caring is being politicized.

Todd W. Reeser

In this section, Todd W. Reeser expands the theoretical framework of Part IV *by further exploring the relationship between affect, emotions, and the body. He also discusses the difficulties in finding a definition for affect, arguing that any attempt to do so transforms affect into emotion.*

JOSEP MARIA ARMENGOL: Could you please explain the difference between affect and emotion and, therefore, between affect studies and previous studies on emotions?

TODD W. REESER: First of all, I think using Latin is useful in order to start talking about affect, and the word *affectus*. In *Setting Plato Straight* (2016), I deal a lot with erotics; the reception of erotics in the Renaissance, and it's frequently described as affectus. For example, Socrates is described as affectus by young boys, but that becomes a problem. In that sense, it is not a feeling, it is more "what happens to the body." There's no definition of affect, as I like to say to my students. I teach this in a graduate course called "Masculinity in Theory and Practice," where we deal with affect and masculinity and I also teach Queer Theory and we explore the relationship between queerness and affect. So I teach affect in different areas, and what I tell my students is that if I could get up here and explain what affect is to you, it wouldn't be affect. It would be the thing that it does not want to be—emotion or feeling. So let me say a couple of things. In an article titled "The Turn to Affect: A Critique," Ruth Leys states that "affects [are] capable of discharging themselves in a self-rewarding or self-punishing manner without regard to objects that elicit them," so whatever happens to my body and the body that I have (it doesn't matter that you are a woman or you are from Barcelona or wherever you are from), things that happen to me, the way in which my body is "affectus" is affected, is moved. Whatever that intensity is which is within me is independent from your race, gender, class, etc. That's one way to think about it. Deleuze and Guattari famously described affect as

"the active discharge of emotion" in a *Thousand Plateaus*; it's active, it's a discharge. Deleuze and Guattari use military language, and I'm very interested in that, the language, because it fits in the way I'm thinking about these tags and about masculinity and affect in general. If there's something that's been linked to masculinity throughout the centuries it is, of course, the military. So then if affect is a kind of militarized intensity or, as Deleuze and Guattari called it, "a counterattack," then there's something that's doing something to the male body that is allowing for that male body to lose its control, its subjectivity, to get out of itself even if only for a moment.

Affect is often thought in juxtaposition with emotion. This is the way I think about it. One of the issues I've always had with masculinity, and which Masculinity Studies has had with masculinity, it's its relation to emotion. It is not that masculinity is never emotional. Masculinity reveals emotions all the time. The problem is how you know it's not a kind of performance that asserts or reasserts hegemonic masculinity. What happens to the wounded soldier or vet that expresses emotion? Is he demasculinizing himself or is it a kind of remasculinization through the medium of emotion? Can you get something like the performance of a certain kind of wounded masculinity? Is the counterattack in this case against hegemonic masculinity or is it against the appearance of hegemonic masculinity?

There's a lot going on right now in American culture with white, hegemonic, normative masculinity pretending like it is a victim. The way I explain this to my students is through the idea of "the wolf in sheep's clothing." In my book I have a chapter called "Masculinity in Disguise" (2010) where I deal with this topic, how hegemonic masculinity takes on the characteristic of something very different from what it seems to be. I'm interested in normative men who become women, for instance. One of the points of affect is to show that there are moments that are a liberation, not a liberation from an oppression per se, but a liberation from strains of discourse around emotion. I ask students in representations of emotional or affective intensity whether masculinity is moving outside itself, or whether it is reinscribing itself as normative or as hegemonic in some way. Or both? Is affect in fact the sheep that hides the wolf?

TERESA REQUENA-PELEGRÍ: One of the things that strike me in reading about affect is the seeming essentialist assumption that theorizes affect as a process that predates or occurs independently of intention and meaning. For instance, Ruth Leys in her article "The Turn to Affect: A Critique" argues that the theory underlying the Basic Emotions paradigm, the idea that there exists six or seven discrete emotions "located subcortically in the brain and characterized by distinct, universal facial expressions is seriously flawed and . . . the theory underlying the paradigm is incoherent" (439). In bringing biology back into the argument, aren't we accepting a return to universal assumptions that the academic community has been wary of for a long time?

TODD W. REESER: I agree, if you read Deleuze, you feel we are back to biology, that affect comes within the body and that is chemical. There's also work on neuroscience, etc. That's not my interest or approach. I can't comment on any of that directly. What I'm interested in is not so much affect and emotion or affect and feeling and emotion. I'm interested in how these two aspects relate to each other in the realm of representation. For me, masculinity is always in movement. Movement does not take away masculinity, movement is the very thing masculinity was in the first place. You just have to look at it closely enough to know. This is my critique of Connell's "hegemonic masculinity," or of the way the concept is often received. Hegemonic masculinity is always in movement. Always. It's never a stable thing. You've just got to look at it closely enough. So, for me, from the perspective of affect, what interests me is the movement in a text, for instance, between what seems to be a representation of affect and what is then a representation of emotion. Because the thing about affect is that it can't stay affect forever, it's impossible, you can't have a whole day where you go around having intense feelings that break your subjectivity and where you are constantly "affected." They are little moments, they are points in your day. They may recur over the course of time, but they are not continuous. There's something going on that I can't describe, that's an affect. What you do when you try to describe it, however, is make the affect an emotion. That move to put that affective moment into language that can then be studied is what interests me; from those affect moments to emotional moments. How do texts, individuals, or cultures represent the movement from those affective moments to emotions? And what do those movements say about masculinity or about representation in a larger sense? How are they cultural coded?

Stefan Brandt

In this dialogue, Stefan Brandt further expands on his chapter in this volume and comments on how the works of Native American artists—William Apess and Kent Monkman—reverse traditional relations of power between Native Americans while at the same time exploring their relationship with nature and the construction of masculinities.

RUBÉN CENAMOR: In narratives where there is a close connection between the natural world and male characters, nature usually reinvigorates manliness, and favors traditional models of masculinity—or even hypermasculinity. This seems to be the case of the western genre such as it is seen in TV shows such as *Walker, Texas Ranger* and music videos by Finnish bands such as *Korpiklaani*. I am wondering if there are narratives where the natural world/ecology encourages alternative, more gender egalitarian masculinities? If so, how can they be created and become attractive to the readers/spectators taking into account the aforementioned conservative tradition?

STEFAN BRANDT: First of all, thank you very much for this thought-provoking question. I would argue that it very much depends on the historical context I mention in my chapter. The dynamics of the nineteenth century are not necessarily today's because we now have an entirely different framework. Looking at texts by Annie Proulx or T. C. Boyle, they show a much more intricate image; even the same words don't mean the same written in postmodernist days as written in the 1820s or in the 1830s. Western society didn't have that complex and sometimes contradictory awareness that we have today. So when we read these texts now, affect becomes important; the reception of their aesthetics becomes something that matters. Therefore, the same text is not the same text. You have the "noble savage" in Cooper, you have a kind of noble Native American in modern texts, but it's not the same thing because it was written from a different conceptual and historical angle, maybe even from a different perspective depending on the identity of the author. I'm thinking, for example, of films like *Dances with Wolves* (1990). Kevin Costner, who directed and starred in the movie, has very often emphasized his own identity as a Native American. He's one-eighth Native American, and he has made very clear that he is a different actor due to the fact that he has Native American roots. At first you might say "well, it's the same thing, you have the same 'noble savage' as in Cooper," but no. This is a movie from 1990, and I guess you can make similar statements about other postmodernist texts and authors who do indeed, as you point out here, challenge something, who look at the connection between masculinity and nature from a different angle and who do different things to the concept than Cooper did. One would also have to mention queer masculinity, of course; some argue that Proulx has created queer texts. But in the nineteenth century, it was very much the white man's vision and we hardly ever had texts by Native Americans. We had Samson Occom, who was very conservative, more like a Puritan; he wrote sermons and was highly conformist and religious. And then we had William Apess, who changed his name from William Apes to William Apess because he was tired of being called "Apes" and wanted to avoid that racist stereotype. William Apess's famous pamphlet "The Experiences of Five Christian Indians of the Pequot Tribe" from the 1830s, in which he tried to create a recipe for white men—white women possibly—to "walk in the Indian's shoes," was the first time the dominant white gaze was rejected by a major indigenous author. A more contemporary example is the painting by Kent Monkman, "Artist and Model" (2003), which I think creates an alternative and more gender-egalitarian vision by challenging the hegemonial gaze. In the painting, it is the Native American who looks at the white man. This is similar to what Apess had done 200 years earlier, to look at the white man, so I think there is a connection between them. William Apess tried to tell us—tried to tell white people—basically what happens when Natives are the ones who watch, when they appropriate the gaze. These fictional Indians (and *fictional* they are still) are more complex figures, they have minds of their own and are not just stereotypes as in Cooper's texts. In

Monkman's painting, what we get is a Native American portrayal of a white person, and he puts the Native American in high heels, thus even adding a queer dimension. As I mention in my chapter, the fictionalized American Indian is often both masculine and feminine at the same time, encapsulating a gender-egalitarian dimension; and, of course, we have the image of the feather, which looks like a wig. It is clear that the focus is on the Native American and that he is the bearer of the gaze. The white man is marked as very white, indeed; he's tied to a tree, he cannot move and that makes him passive. Kent Monkman is politically committed to the cause, he's one of the most influential painters in the United States, and his images are very popular. You have to keep in mind that he doesn't put the Native American on a pedestal. In other paintings, he even shows them torturing and slaughtering white men and animals, thus conjuring up the well-known imagery of the slaughtering of Native Americans. His work is a powerful example of a contemporary reversal of traditional perspectives. It offers an alternative take on masculinities in that it uproots conventional gender roles as well as the stereotype of the Native American being more nature-affiliated.

Michael Kimmel

In this interview, Michael Kimmel further expands on the relationship between masculinity and ethnicity discussed by other contributors in Part I*, section "Rethinking Ethnic Masculinities." He specifically focuses on how masculinities are inflected by race and the dynamics of power between hegemonic white masculinity and ethnic masculinities. He enriches the volume with his thought-provoking insights on globalization and masculinities, on the relevance of engaging men into feminist practices and on how the studies of masculinities are progressing. He finishes by pointing to what he sees as the "new directions" in masculinity studies, which may be seen as a conclusion to the volume as a whole.*

ÀNGELS CARABÍ: Michael, the first masculinities studies, which were published in the 1970s, used to focus on white masculinity as the normative model of masculinity. When and how do racialized masculinities begin to be studied?

MICHAEL KIMMEL: Well, that's a great first question. Let me give you a little bit of context. The earliest works on women in the late 1960s, early 1970s, and the earliest works on men in the mid-seventies basically had the same kind of format. For instance, *Men and Masculinity* (Pleck and Sawyer 1974), *The Forty-Nine Percent Majority* (Brannon and David 1976) or some of the earlier anthologies on women's lives. Take, for instance, *Men and Masculinity*; it follows men through the life course and at the end there's a section of black men and gay men, as if black men and gay men don't have jobs, families, sexualities, adolescence. As if they were almost a problem. By the late 1970s and early 1980s one can actually date, within feminism, to the

publication of *This Bridge Called My Back* (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981), the beginning of multicultural feminism. *Ain't I a Woman?* (hooks) is also an early important text. So what happens is that we understand that what we've been talking all along has been white, straight, and middle class. We haven't even seen anything else. The new groups of works in Masculinities Studies by the mid-1980s were beginning to take some account of the changes that multicultural feminism had brought to women's studies. Here men's studies divide; masculinities studies become very involved in multicultural and critical race theory, feminist theory, and queer theory. Men's studies remain largely the study of middle-class, straight white men. And so those two fields almost diverge a little bit by the late 1980s early 1990s. In my own field, we were very influenced by multicultural feminism. We realized that when we thought of men we thought of middle-class, white, and straight, and that was entirely wrong. Now of course, by the time I started the journal *Men and Masculinities* we used the plural and we began to realize that there were many different masculinities and ways to be a man: by ethnicity, by class, by sexuality, by age, by embodiment, etc. All of these different ways. We wanted to talk about the different masculinities and we were then elongating horizontally. The other thing, of course, that critical race theory or feminist theory say is "don't ignore power"; just because you focus on difference it doesn't mean you don't also focus on power relations. So we also had to talk about dynamics of the relations between white men and black men, between gay and heterosexual men, between older men and younger men, etc.

A.C.: How is masculinity inflected by race?

M.K.: I would say that the question about how masculinity is inflected by race is also to talk about how race is inflected by masculinity. The two are interrelated. Let me say a couple of things about that. First, men of color develop their own ideas and ideals of masculinity. So masculinities are inflected by race in the sense that race is one of the organizing principals of the development of gender ideology or the development of masculinity. You are not just a man, but a black man, or a Latino man or an Asian man. So those are different types of masculinity. That's one way. But the second way, and this is the important part, I believe, is that that's not done in a vacuum, that's not done by every group in their own little group saying "Okay, Asian men, let's develop Asian masculinity" or "Okay, black men, let's develop black masculinity," but they are done in relationship to each other and they are done in a relationship that is about power.

JOSEP M. ARMENGOL: What about recent whiteness studies which have begun to analyze white masculinity as specific ethnic and gendered concept? What's your opinion about them?

M.K.: Historically, white masculinity was invisible. It was *masculinity*, it wasn't a specific type, it was *the* type. And so, there's been two ways in which whiteness or race has become visible to white people: one way is the reaction; which is to say white people are discriminated against, therefore we need to protect white masculinity, an argument you hear from the extreme right. And

the other side is to interrogate whiteness, the way we learn to interrogate masculinity. And it's difficult to see because we are aware of how those dynamics work at the margins but we are rarely aware of how they work in the center. We know for example how to talk about race when we talk about people of color, we know how to talk about sexuality when we talk about gay people, we know how to talk about gender when we talk about women, but to talk about straight white men is very difficult. Now, the politics of whiteness studies, masculinity studies, or heterosexuality studies, the politics of studying the superordinate is exactly, politically, to make that visible, to move it out of the center, to move it from being the invisible center to another position.

A.C.: How about ethnic men who have contradicted positions in the sense that they are members of a privileged gender group, because they are men, but they belong to subordinate racial groups. Can you comment on how they deal with this?

M.K.: I would have two answers. The first answer is no one person completely embodies and encapsulates all of the different positions of power. Erving Goffman, my favorite sociologist, once said that there's only one perfect man in America: he's white, heterosexual, northern, of good complexion, weight and height, Christian, decent record at sports, etc. No one embodies all of those at the same time. Everybody has some level of marginalization. That's the first way I would describe this. That said, it is very difficult to get ethnic men and men of color to recognize the privilege they experience as men when what they are most aware is of the marginalization they experience as men of color. There's a very famous work in multicultural studies called *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack* (1988) by Peggy McIntosh, where she tries to explain to people what it means to be white, by thinking of all the things that you carry around with you that you are not even aware of that give you privilege for being white. That has been adapted for men so that men have an invisible knapsack, a kind of collection of privileges men have just for being men. And we use that historically with young men to talk about what it means to be a man. There's a new document called "The Black Male Privilege Checklist" (2008), by Jewel Woods, from the University of Michigan, and he has a black male privilege checklist in which he says "black men, do you realize all the privileges you get by being a man?" Even if your identity is marginalized by racism, you get enormous privileges by being a man. I would urge you to take a look at that.

J.M.A.: In an article on masculinities and globalization published in 1998, Connell insists that the newly globalized world is based on a globalized gender order. Could you talk about the new features of this new global order?

M.K.: What Connell was pointing to at that time, what I think we've seen since then, is a certain iteration. First that there was emerging a kind of global hegemonic masculinity, a certain kind of business masculinity that was emerging in globalized economy and that image is very familiar. You see him in a business class lounge in the airport: he's white, dressed in European designer clothes, he has the possibility to plug in any outlet anywhere in the world,

he speaks in English, he knows everything about continental cuisine, he has good taste in wine, he has very liberal taste in sex but conservative taste in politics. This is a model of masculinity that was emerging on the global stage. So you could take a German man, and an American man, and a Spanish man, and a Russian man, and a Nigerian man, and put them in the same place and they'd have plenty to talk about and they'll be talking in English. That's one part of what Connell was talking about. She was also pointing to something else, that the very institutions of globalization are gendered. The idea of free market is a gendered concept, not the connectedness of traditional market places. The marketplace, the state, the global institutions, even the EU, these are gendered institutions and the gender of these institutions is masculine.

J.M.A.: Do you think that now in the current global economic crisis this model is changing or has changed or will change?

M.K.: I think it's too early to tell whether it has changed. You are right to say it's in play. Which is to say, we don't know yet. There's a lot of feminist activity in the European Union, the European Commission, and the Council of Europe. For example, look at the global gender processes of globalization, like sex trafficking and the movements of labor for sex, sex tourism, as gender processes that the EU must address. So there's an effort to change this and then of course there's going to be an effort to remasculinize it, if it's breaking down some are going to try to rebuild it and some are going to say "no, let's push it forward to the cliff."

J.M.A.: In *The Other Half of Gender: Men's Issues in Development* (2006), Ian Bannon and Maria Correia indicate that integrating men's issues into gender problems is crucial to fully understand and change the current gender order in developing countries. What do you think of this idea?

M.K.: I think that's true in developing and no less true in developed countries. Integrating men and gender into the policy initiatives will in fact enable the kind of advances women have been advocating for a long time. As long as the policies are seen for women and women only they bump up against a certain wall. Let me give you an example of the developed world. Currently and in the US, there's an effort to make the workplaces more family-friendly—on-site childcare, flexible time, parental leave, etc. When we think of these issues we think of them as women's issues but they are not women's issues, they are parents' issues. They are issues that all parents should want. By bringing men into the discussion and say "we as fathers want this, and this and this," then and only then we will actually start to get them. That is, men's participation is essential for women to get the reforms they need. Of course, along the way, politically, I contend men would enjoy them. To get more gender equal policies men must be engaged. In many, many countries one of the things that keep women back is the idea of women's subordination to men. In some countries, for example, when a woman needs to go to hospital she needs her husband or father's permission to even go. In some places, in the developed world or developing world, violence against women holds women back from entering the public sphere, from walking down the street,

from going to school, from entering the profession. Unless men get involved in those issues, women would continually hit a barrier. So of course I think that's true.

J.M.A.: In several African countries, including Uganda and Malawi, homosexuality continues to be seen as a moral offense and a crime punishable by several years of prison. Moreover, homophobia in these counties has recently increased due to anti-imperialistic feelings which use homophobia as a weapon against Western assimilation. How can the struggle for sexual and gender equality be disassociated from questions of Western imperialism?

M.K.: In general, I would say that the trajectory is towards greater equality for gays and lesbians and for women; globally, I believe that's true. I think that each country and society enters that global trajectory at a different place. Many countries are fearful of homosexuality and gender quality. The first way to problematize it and try to resist it is to say "it's not from us, it's from outside, it's being imposed on us, and it's a Western idea." They say the same about gender equality: "gender equality is a Western idea, our women are happy as they are." Those ideas break down in the face of empirical evidence. They break down even in places such as Iran, where after the disputed and obviously fraudulent elections of 2008, there were enormous riots and demonstrations by Iranians and there were Iranian women showing they were not happy with the situation. It was not about Westernization. It is equally true that the global progression of lesbian and gay rights has progressed enormously both in the developed world and in the developing world. In the US, we will be joining much of Europe, as by the end of this decade there will be marriage between gay people. European countries are further along in gay and lesbian rights than in the US. In Europe, it is illegal to discriminate against gay and lesbians, but not in the US. Other countries are not as far along. Some countries annihilate it as an import.

A.C.: In multicultural societies, ethnic masculinities intersect and interrelate. Now the question is, what happens when a black man sees an Asian man, or an Asian man sees a Hispanic man, how does power operate among themselves?

M.K.: And not just when different ethnic groups meet, also when white men from different regions or religions meet. There's so many different ways. In many societies that have been historically homogenous in which one race or one ethnicity has dominated for a very long time, those societies are also becoming open now to remarkably rapid immigration. Think for instance of Sweden or Norway, which were very homogenous for a very long time; suddenly there are these waves of immigration. What happens is that there's a clash of the different regions (Norwegian men and Pakistani men, Norwegian men and Turkish men, etc.), but they are meeting, marrying, and having children, etc. Now we are not talking about Pakistani men and Norwegian men, we are now talking about children whose parents are Pakistani and Norwegian. And I think in general the brave encounters of some of these polar stereotypes is in the fact that we are finding each other as friends, colleagues, and romantic partners. In the year 2015, half of all college students in California will be of

mixed race origin. So we are not talking about multiculturalism about us and them; we are talking about multiculturalism about us.

J.M.A.: I think it was Angela Merkel, the German chancellor, talking about multiculturalism, who declared the death or the failure of multiculturalism, saying that multiculturalism was a failed project. What do you think of this idea?

M.K.: I think we have had two models which have failed. The first one was assimilationist. You come to our country, you have to be like us. You had to abandon your traditions and you had to compete for who could become more like us. That's the oldest assimilation model. The multicultural model swung entirely to the other side: you come to our country but you can stay like you are, you don't have to conform, you can keep your religion and don't have to do anything like us. Merkel describes the failure of these two and a possibility for a third model in which we also need to acknowledge that we can be changed by you. That's the missing piece. It's not simply that you come here and become like us, and it is not simply that you come and stay the same. But rather, that there's a mutually influencing process. What I'm advocating is a model of multiculturalism of mutual influence that has never been tried or has not been tried successfully.

A.C.: Has the fact that a black man was elected as president of the US had any influence in changing notions of ethnicity and masculinity in the US?

M.K.: Yes, I think that there are a couple of answers to this question. I don't believe in this sort of either is all good or is all bad, I'm always sort of a ends person. If you had asked on November 9th, 2008, we were having the biggest party in our history about the end of racism. It was over. We are no longer a racist country because we have a black man as president. "I'm not racist. You can't accuse me of racism, I voted for a black president!" Since Obama's election there has been such a resurgence of racism in America. It is as if to say that because we have voted for a black man now I give myself permission to say all kind of things. Obama represents a very new type of president as well; he and his wife are clearly in equal partnership and they constantly exemplify this. This isn't Laura Bush who was always shorter than President Bush and was looking admiringly at her husband. Michelle and Barack Obama are equal height, they are very egalitarian and he's a very involved father. This is relatively new; the Clintons were the first duo career couple, but the Obamas are the first equal couple in the White House. So in a way they exemplify something new and different.

A.C.: Where are the studies of masculinity going?

M.K.: There's two ways I think it's moving currently: if you take the idea that masculinities are horizontal—there are many masculinities, then the relationships among and between those groups of men is always an interesting conversation. What are the actual characteristics and how are they socially constructed within each ethnic group, within each racial group? That's one thing. That's the social science version. But I think, also, that in the humanities there's a lot of exciting work. People are returning to canonical texts and are re-engendering them and beginning to tease out the ideas of gender, the

ideas of masculinity and femininity that we missed the first time. If there was a work about women or if it was a work by a woman we see gender but if it is a work about men and by men we rarely interrogate gender. I think you, the CNM, have been at the forefront within the representations in film and literature and I think that's been so exciting, because when you are the dominant version you think that your idea of masculinity bubbles up from your body, bubbles up from your genes, there's no images, there's no stereotypes, no ideology involved, this is just my testosterone speaking. This is my brain chemistry speaking. And to see that my ideology, my idea of masculinity was constructed though the consumption of images, and of texts and the ways in which these texts work I think is an important part of decentering hegemonic masculinity. This is what I've seen in the journal, I've seen both of these happening, I've seen a tremendous amount of interest in localizing different versions of masculinity through ethnographies through close readings of texts. In the humanities this close readings have shown that what we consider normal are in fact ideological productions.

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