Atenea

Número especial
sobre **los hombres y las masculinidades**

Special Issue on
men and masculinities

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El diseño de la portada viene de un tetradracma de plata ateniense del siglo V a.C. Presenta a Atenea en el anverso y su atributo, la lechuza, en el reverso. Cortesía del Foro de Monedas Antiguas.

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The cover design is based on an Athenian silver tetradrachm from the 5th century B.C., depicting Athena on the obverse and her owl on the reverse. Courtesy of the Ancient Coin Forum.

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LA MIRADA DEL DANDI DESDE EL DISCURSO HEGEMÓNICO: REFLEXIONES SOBRE LA REPRESENTACIÓN DEL GÉNERO EN LA OBRA DE LUCIO VICTORIO MANSILLA

Javier Muñoz-Basols

> No sólo me presentó como un *poseur* presuntuoso que se daba aires de adulto, sino que, además, se explayaba sobre mis sentimientos para con él, elogiaba las altas calidades de mi mente y mi corazón (un solo defecto, que le gustaba la pose, pero esto se le pasará con la edad), y, como hablaba con no sé qué sentimentalismo y con la voz típicamente anacrónica de un maestro anticuado y pasado de moda, parecía, pues, que yo también estaba pasado de moda y no era nada moderno.
>
> Witold Gombrowicz, *Ferdydurke*, 138

La mirada proyecta un intercambio de información entre los sujetos que son partícipes del mismo campo de visión. Cuando la mirada se presenta a través de una obra literaria, como lectores o receptores del texto, se nos supedita a lo que el autor quiere ver a través de los personajes; participamos de esa mirada, somos parte del personaje que observa al tiempo que nos preguntamos por qué se nos dirige en torno a una dirección visual concreta.

La sociedad de fin de siglo se caracterizó por una nueva manera de mirar. Dejarse ver, ser visto e ir a ver, eran actividades que perseguían un mismo fin: ser objeto de otras miradas siempre siendo consciente de que se es el objeto contemplado. Lucio Victorio Mansilla es partícipe del conglomerado de producción estética del momento, entra en contacto con los decadentes, realiza una crítica clarividente desenmascarando el sistema de valores y ciertas formas de conducta de esa sociedad, y se deja llevar, asimismo, por la aureola de uno de los elementos socio-estéticos del momento que vive por y para ser observado: el dandi.[1]

[1] Miguel Ángel Cárcano se hace eco del componente estético de nuestro autor

En el presente estudio, rescato la faceta personal de Lucio Victorio Mansilla para ilustrarla no con relación a la formación de sujeto dentro de un entorno político-social emergente, como se ha venido realizando hasta la fecha, sino desde un punto de vista más intimista. A quién se mira, cómo es esa mirada, y en términos de género, cuál es el objeto de la mirada, son interrogantes que considero para trazar una nueva dirección de interpretación en sus escritos que hasta la fecha no ha sido tomada en consideración.[2] La crítica ha contemplado tanto su literatura como su trayectoria personal desde el sujeto que actuó como un dandi, más que indagar en una lectura interpretativa que identifique otros elementos inherentes a esta caracterización. Y si bien la crítica ha planteado este actuar,[3] o esta *performance*, no ha sabido responder al porqué de la necesidad de manifestarse bajo una estética dandista, que identifico tal y como: "Baudelaire offers us jumping-off points to a discussion of dandies: cosmopolitanism, presentation, spectacle, 'moral mechanism[s]'. His dandyism conjoins clothing—personally intimate and literally 'material'—the passionate pursuit of an original selfhood" (Fillin-Yeh 2).

Al traer a colación la figura del dandi en Mansilla y al hablar de su faceta autobiográfica hay que mencionar, dentro de la sociedad patriarcal en la que vivió, la influencia de su madre en la formación de su identidad:

> Mansilla buscó al igual que su madre, la sociabilidad del salón, con su conversación elegante y chismosa, a la cual añadiría él su experiencia de soldado, viajero y devoto de aventuras galantes, fiestas en las grandes capitales europeas y duelos [...] dos veces casado

---

al decir que Lucio V. Mansilla "pudo ser el Brummell porteño si hubiera sido menos extravagante. Importó en Buenos Aires los gustos y la manera de vivir de la sociedad francesa del segundo Imperio como lo hizo Miguel Cané en el estilo y composición literaria" (26).

[2] Debido al peso político-familiar del autor se ha llevado a cabo una lectura de su producción literaria mediatizada por las disputas y los apoyos políticos como rosista exacerbado, así como abanderado de las campañas militares del momento y contribuidor al nacimiento de la Argentina moderna, sin embargo como bien señala Jitrik: "Es claro que ni lo personal está ausente, en cuanto justificación especialmente política, ni la objetividad descrita deja de referirse a un compromiso político y social, como por ejemplo al sentido que tiene la sociedad 'reconciliada' de la época roquista, desde la que se puede hacer la evocación con toda parsimonia. Pero más interesantes que éstos son los recuerdos personales, porque sobre ellos se opera una cierta transmutación estética y, en consecuencia, se puede ver mejor la tensión con que son recuperados, hacia dónde se dirige" (79).

[3] "Le gens de lettres ont inventé le «dandysme». On use de ce terme pour qualifier quiconque s'adonne de tout son cœur à certain goût élevé ou noble, mais sans vouloir en avoir l'air : ceci, apparemment, parce que les premiers dandys s'efforçaient de paraître dégoûtés des leurs propres plaisirs" (Carassus 189).

> sin excesiva pasión, Mansilla quizá sólo se fascinó por una mujer, su madre. (Matamoros 26)

Mansilla era consciente de la interpretación que este tipo de apariencia dandista conllevaba para la sociedad porteña de fin de siglo, y dentro de este tipo de discurso hegemónico, en el que se intentaba no plantear ambigüedades genéricas, nos narra en "tono de *causerie* y de club, de una clase patricia que comprendía y compartía los mismo códigos semánticos" (Salessi 82):

> Sean cuales hayan sido mis desviaciones, que de mí no ha de poder escribir ninguna mujer lo que Emilia Pardo Bazán escribe—no hay como las mujeres que dicen querer a un hombre para estropearlo—de Barbey d'Aurevilly, que llevaba el bigote reteñido, el pelo ídem, y en troba como en los albores del romanticismo, el pantalón de jareta y franja como los lechuguinos del año 1830 [...] y que en costumbres y en carácter era tan raro y original como escribiendo. (*Entre-nos* 394)

No es una mera elección que Mansilla nos hable de Barbey d'Aurevilly, dandi por excelencia, a quien conoce en París y al que le une una amistad personal; que se dirija a sus lectores con el mismo tono con el que se lo habría contado a sus amigos del club social y que, asimismo, mencione a Emilia Pardo Bazán juzgando —sin reparos— el arte de escribir por una mujer. Gonzalo Sobejano subraya la desigualdad genérica intelectual y social existente en la época al afirmar que "Emilia Pardo Bazán, escribía buscando, y casi siempre alcanzando, mentalidad varonil" (145). Este hecho acusaba raíces históricas muy consolidadas por los atavismos, el desarrollo económico y la religión, tal y como recoge Mansilla: "yo no soy amigo, ni partidario, ni admirador, por regla general, de las mujeres escritores. En una palabra, no me gustan *les blas-bleus*, con polisón, porque suelen ser demasiado *polissonnes*" (*Entre-nos* 181); también cuando nos habla de la mujer ideal, "que estimo, sin duda porque no me adula o porque no es letrada" (354).

Su libro *Entre-nos* aparece en 1888, año en el que ya se empieza a notar el ascenso social de la mujer por su incorporación paulatina al mercado de trabajo, la participación en proyectos de educación, posteriormente de higiene, y la presencia de profesionales femeninos en dicho ámbito, por lo que la mujer se empieza a perfilar dentro de una nueva posición en una sociedad que se resistía a reconocer su estatus imprescindible:

> When the education of women became a national issue in the 1880s, most voices claimed 'higher' education to allow women to go into professional careers. Many educators, however, did not lose sight of the need to prepare women for less sophisticated objectives such as the efficient management of the home and the 'scientific' care of children. (Lavrin 102-103)

Una vez caracterizada a grandes rasgos la sociedad del momento cabe preguntarse: ¿cómo podemos responder al tratamiento del género en la obra literaria de un argentino de la generación de los ochenta como Lucio Victorio Mansilla? El primer problema que se nos plantea es el de vislumbrar en sus obras muestras textuales que lo identifiquen como individuo que posee un tipo de mirada dandista, y por consiguiente distinta, que se plasma en sus escritos fragmentarios, anecdóticos y autobiográficos. Por lo tanto, me interesa mostrar cómo se relaciona este aspecto con la manera de representar el género en sus escritos con el fin de ilustrar cuál es la relevancia de interpretación del hombre y de la mujer en la sociedad finisecular argentina. Para el análisis, me remito a una base de discusión textual que se apoya en su producción literaria con el propósito de puntualizar cómo se materializa parte del discurso narrativo bajo una patología de la observación que es compartida por muchos otros dandis. También deseo llamar la atención sobre cómo se proyecta la mirada en el discurso de Mansilla en consonancia con el fin de siglo: una "visibilidad acrecentada de maneras diversas" (Molloy 130). Esta visibilidad, o exceso de visibilidad, reivindica la figura de Lucio Victorio Mansilla como el dandi que no sólo participó de la manifestación estética del momento, la moda cultural que supuso el dandismo, sino que también integró dicho esteticismo en su literatura, así como en su componente biográfico para crear un tipo de lectura claramente elaborada e intencional:

> El dandi nace como una ficción literaria, un modelo de identidad social en que se encarnan propuestas artísticas que reivindican 'el arte por el arte'. Los dandis acentúan la superficie, el juego con los signos y las formas, cultivan la apariencia y una actitud de superioridad respecto al mundo. Para quienes se identifican con el credo del esteticismo, la vida es arte; o más precisamente, la vida es, sobre todo artificio, y el artificio se convierte en patrón con el que se juzga la existencia. (Mira 65-66)

La característica más sobresaliente de los escritos de Mansilla es, sin duda, su carácter autobiográfico. Esta manera de confesarse con el lector,[4] nos permite realizar un tipo de lectura que desvela y reconstruye cómo Mansilla mira a su coetáneo, y más importante aún, cómo el dandi Mansilla deposita su sensibilidad verbal y descriptiva; un tipo de mirada que ahonda en los personajes, pero que manifiesta una libertad de expresión ante el objeto por el que se rinde culto verbal. El dandi es el que dicta[5] y capta la realidad en cualquier punto de su

[4] La crisis finisecular genera un sentimiento de frustración colectiva y da pie a una reflexión crítica sobre la realidad nacional coetánea y pasada, reflexión que coincide con la renovación artística y literaria modernista.

[5] Mansilla, artífice del juego lingüístico, escribe una *causerie* que titula '¿Si dicto

manifestación dando prioridad al aspecto sensorial.[6] Si a Mansilla, como dandi, le gustaba que en la escena porteña se percataran de su presencia, de la misma manera sentía una fascinación por observar, contemplar, captar y capturar con la escritura; un '(ad)mirar' al objeto que visualizamos en sus escritos mediante el ejercicio de la descripción o de la caracterización. Es un 'mirar', aunque el simple hecho de contemplar se traduce en '(ad)mirar', es decir, recrear con la mirada el objeto contemplado; un acto de observar con sorpresa, placer o entusiasmo.

La producción literaria de nuestro autor se caracteriza por una constante divagación discursiva que se dirige a un lector que no aparece como su otro yo. Tal y como bien señala Blas Matamoros, se trata más de conversación que de literatura *per se*; es como si Mansilla hiciera partícipe al lector del "parlamento secreto del club privado. La escritura venía a fijar y a rescatar del olvido la vibración de las palabras que sólo se dicen una vez, en el diálogo, y que se disipan como el humo de los puros y el vapor del café" (30). En ciertos momentos de la narración una escena capta su atención, y con entusiasmo describe lo que ve, al tiempo que manifiesta, si es de su agrado, satisfacción o sorpresa ante lo vislumbrado. Siempre existe una mirada constante que incorpora como parte de su personalidad y que transporta al ámbito literario:

> Mansilla quiere ser original. La originalidad no se fabrica. Se es o no original. Todas las personas son distintas, muy pocos son originales. La verdadera originalidad es un impulso vital genuino que se exterioriza en las más diversas formas [...] La originalidad se revela en el carácter y en la forma de pensar y de vivir, en la palabra, en el gesto en la manera de conducirse, de querer, de odiar, de sentir, de halagar, de vestirse, de comer, de mirar. (Cárcano 26)

Al igual que el dandi se recrea en su persona con la elegancia, el gusto por el buen vestir y los buenos modales, también se recrea en el sujeto al que contempla con un tipo de mirada que ahonda tanto en la fisonomía como en la personalidad del individuo, en nuestro autor, como escritor que narra a partir de la experiencia: "Mansilla's personal narrator allocates to himself the right to engage in a wide-ranging analysis of facts and beliefs, interpreting them as he sees fit

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o escribo?': "Bueno, pues, ya sabes con lo dicho, ¿o no me he explicado bastante?, cuál es la contestación que debo dar a tu pregunta 'si dicto o escribo'. Esto es dictado" (*Entre-nos* 321).

[6] De aquí que a Mansilla le fascine tanto el olor, el cual describe como un 'fetichismo', y dedique páginas a escribir sobre quehaceres diarios prestando atención al aspecto sensorial y transformando esta serie de actividades rutinarias en un compendio de estética discursiva que caracteriza al autor.

and legitimizing his interpretations on the basis of his personal attributes as a witness and the depth of his acquired learning" (Foster 25). Por lo tanto, ¿cómo se debe entender el género desde un punto de vista o actitud dandista al aplicar este tipo de esteticismo a un autor reconocido como Lucio Victorio Mansilla? Lo genérico en relación con el dandismo aparece bajo una dicotomía que existe entre la relación del dandi y los elementos sociales preestablecidos. Éste surge, tal y como plantea Baudelaire,[7] como un nuevo género precisamente porque no entra dentro de una taxonomía que lo incluya en el papel socialmente preestablecido dentro del discurso hegemónico. Es un tipo de género que en primera instancia se opondría a lo femenino, aunque paradójicamente el desarrollo de su estética se encuentre estrechamente ligado a una manera de apropiarse de este tipo de cualidades:

> Dandyism exists in the field of force between two opposing, irreconcilable notions about gender. First, the (male) dandy defines himself by attacking women. Second, so crucial are female characteristics to the dandy's self-creation that he defines himself by embracing women, appropriating their characteristics. (Feldman 6)

De acuerdo con lo estipulado por Feldman, la mujer en los escritos de Mansilla responde a una caracterización de rechazo como elemento social de segundo plano; una tónica narrativa un tanto distinta de la que planteaban otros autores coetáneos argentinos, aunque igualmente relegando a la mujer a un plano secundario:

> Circulaba la imagen de la mujer que cuidaba el espacio doméstico al servicio de la nación. *Amalia* de José Mármol, las novelas de Juana Manso de Noroña, los cuentos de Juana Manuela Gorriti, insisten rotundamente en la imagen de la mujer como 'ángel del hogar', cuyo papel tradicional apoyaba los ideales de la patria y los valores nacionales. (Masiello 140)

La figura femenina que se postula para otros escritores como la salvaguarda del sistema de valores de la nación argentina, no se muestra bajo el mismo esquema en los textos de Mansilla, sino que por el contrario "se nota un desequilibrio entre los proyectos discursivos de los distintos sectores sociales, sobre todo con respecto a la representación de la mujer" (Masiello 140). Lo femenino queda sometido a una exclusión que se refleja en el discurso popular de la época, y que aparece por añadidura como elemento menor, tal y como escribe Mansilla: "¡Las mujeres! ¡Las mujeres, señor! que no sirven sino para perjuicio" (*Una excursión* 212). O en la misma línea

[7] "Dandi es el individuo que carece de género, el inclasificable" (Matamoros 37).

de significado: “Si hubiese sido mujer, habría lanzando un grito y me habría desmayado” (120); “¿Por qué ha hecho Dios cosas tan contradictorias, como una mujer adorable y mala?” (634), estereotipando lo femenino retóricamente de acuerdo con los parámetros discursivos habituales de la sociedad patriarcal. Mansilla retrata a la mujer como un sujeto sobre el que se ejerce control de manera consciente y que opera más como una necesidad instintiva que espiritual:

> A la luz moribunda del candil que había llevado Carmen hacía rato, me pareció ver una mujer. Estas mujeres se le aparecen a uno en todas partes. Nos aman con abnegación. ¡Y tan crueles que somos después con ellas! Nos dan la vida, el placer, la felicidad. ¿Y para qué? Para que tarde o temprano en un arranque de hastío exclamemos: ‘Siempre igual, necias mujeres’. (353)

Sin embargo, esta caracterización de lo femenino no le impide manifestar su afecto y admiración por el elemento genérico masculino: “Yo amo la luz y a los hombres, aunque he hecho mas locuras por las mujeres” (507). Este desequilibrio genérico-discursivo corrobora cómo se representa al sujeto no tanto por su caracterización como personaje en la trama, que también tiene su importancia, sino como objeto de la descripción: “Mansilla es un excelente pintor cuando habla y escribe; sensible al color, a la línea, a la luz. Pinta como Manet, con soltura y sin retoques, cuadros realistas, frescos, alegres, espontáneos. La técnica es simple, el parecido surge y la pluma se desliza sin esfuerzo, la mirada se ilumina y la sangre circula bajo la piel del sujeto” (Cárcano 21). El estudio de la apariencia y de la fisonomía es un rasgo que caracteriza una amplia parte de su producción literaria. De esta manera titula precisamente uno de sus episodios anecdóticos o *causeries* que recoge en *Entre-nos* y en la que nos dice a modo de epígrafe, “Hay sabios que no creen en la fisonomía y que desconfían de un hongo por su aspecto y de una planta por su color” (364). Dentro de esta misma *causerie*, nos muestra la importancia del aspecto exterior y de la capacidad de observación del individuo:

> Estaba pues, repito (yo) parado, como se dice acá, de pie, como se dice en España, hablando con Adolfo Ansina [...] cuando acertó a pasar por la acera de enfrente un caballero, al parecer, que caminaba de cierta manera, el cual cambió con Adolfo un saludo de los más cordiales. Yo al ver aquello, díjele a Adolfo, con cierto aire, no de horror, sino de estupor:
>
> —¿Tú tienes amistad con ese hombre?
>
> —Y ¿por qué no? —repuso él, con los detalles que alguna otra vez han leído ustedes. Y entre mi estupor y la incredulidad de Adolfo, pueden ustedes idear un mundo de contradicciones, sosteniendo yo que todo el hombre está en lo exterior y Adolfo que no. (*Entre-nos* 367)

Mansilla caracteriza lo masculino fijándose en la apariencia exterior: "¡Cuántas veces no lo juzgan a uno por aquel con quien lo ven conversando, siquiera sea de paso!" (*Entre-nos* 326). Presentimos que en sus palabras hay un querer ver, pero al mismo tiempo, se halla un saber observar, puesto que nos envía datos prosopográficos al caracterizar a los personajes que lo acompañan en sus anécdotas. Dicha descripción facilita la representación mental por parte del receptor del texto, además de mostrar una manera característica de contemplar el objeto-persona que extraemos de sus palabras.

Nuestro autor deja muestra de este tipo de retratos en uno de sus libros, *Una excursión a los indios ranqueles*, aparecido en *La Tribuna* en forma de cartas y recogido posteriormente en 1870 en un libro bajo el augurio de Héctor F. Varela. En algunos pasajes de esta obra posa su mirada sobre ciertos aspectos físicos de sus compañeros de campaña, una mirada de viaje, al aire libre, donde describe la expedición Tierra Adentro; "trozos de literatura descriptiva [...] seductor y poético por el lenguaje impregnado de luz en el que está escrito" (Nallim 39), y cuyo contexto contrasta con el otro libro de donde extraemos muestras textuales en el presente estudio, *Entre-nos*, donde el espacio del destinatario se reduce más al club, y por lo tanto la elaboración discursiva permite una mayor divagación filosófica aunque no menos anecdótica y autobiográfica. Sin embargo, ambos libros y lugares presentan un círculo varonil determinado, o siguiendo a Eve Kosofsky Segdwick, un ámbito homosocial que dirige el recuerdo de Mansilla y que nos remite a algunas escenas su vida que recogemos a continuación.

En la biografía sobre el autor, Enrique Popolizio se hace eco del espacio del viaje y menciona cómo dicho espacio propicia un acercamiento entre los individuos que lo comparten: "Los viajes —particularmente los marítimos— suelen aproximar a los pasajeros. Ya sea por su larga duración y lo limitado del ámbito, bien por una subconsciente impresión de peligro y desamparo, en ellos, más que en los terrestres, *los hombres se acercan y se buscan*" (75, énfasis añadido). Mansilla realiza diferentes viajes llamado por su espíritu viajero[8] y aventurero:[9] "El contacto de Mansilla con otras culturas,

[8] Entra en una de sus divagaciones sobre el porqué y el para qué del viaje: "Todos los que viajaban ponderan alguna maravilla, la que más ha llamado su atención, o tienen alguna anécdota favorita, algo que contar; en suma, aunque más no sea que han estado en París, barniz que no a todos se les conoce" (126).

[9] Nos desvela en el segundo capítulo de *Una excursión a los indios ranqueles* una alegoría al conjunto del libro, "Hacía ya mucho tiempo que yo rumiaba el pensamiento de ir a Tierra Adentro" (65).

durante su viaje juvenil por Europa, África del Norte y la India (1848) le muestra rápidamente otras perspectivas. Desde entonces cabe pensar en su afiliación a la actitud *dandy*" (Matamoros 37). De todos ellos, el viaje a la India marca su juventud al suponer un tumulto de experiencias que fomentarán, aún más, sus ansias por adentrarse en lo desconocido, pero también por su amistad[10] con James Foster Rodgers.[11] Sin duda la aventura más peculiar en compañía del americano fue la compra de una esclava, como el propio Mansilla nos cuenta, para posteriormente liberarla; hazaña que deja a la libre interpretación del lector:

> Pero ustedes, que me han oído hablar de que compré una mujer, han de tener curiosidad, estoy seguro de ello, de saber qué es un mercado de mujeres [...] mi compañero de viaje y yo, gastando ochenta libras esterlinas, pudimos decirle a un ser humano, cuya condición era peor que la de un perro sarnoso: '¡Eres libre!' haciendo ella después de su capa un sayo, determinación que dejo a la fantasía de cada cual apreciar, si fue prudente, o no... (*Entre-nos* 167-168)

Aunque sin duda, sus incursiones en París son las que dejan el rastro del contacto con el mundo de gestación dandista así como su círculo de amistades, lo cual se une a la fascinación por esta ciudad: "París, París de Francia, como suelen decir algunos para que no quepa duda, es para mí la ciudad ideal. Así es que cuando alguien me dice que no le gusta París, yo me digo interiormente: será porque no te alcanza tu renta para vivir allí" (*Entre-nos* 324). Es consciente de cómo dicha ciudad absorbe a un sinnúmero de intelectuales, a los que tendrá la oportunidad de conocer en persona; individuos de la escena parisina entre los que destacan Marcel Proust, Robert de Montesquieu, Barbey d'Aurevilly o Paul Verlaine: "París es, en efecto, la ciudad del mundo, donde entra y sale cotidianamente mayor número de gente extraña" (*Entre-nos* 494).

Como hemos visto a través de las muestras textuales seleccionadas, la posición de la mujer quedaba relegada a un segundo plano,

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[10] "En la India establece otra relación: un acaudalado comerciante norteamericano, hombre que lo doblaba en edad, de carácter seco y 'de prosa dura', pero con quien coincidió en su afán de aventuras y exploraciones de toda índole: viajeras, cinegéticas o galantes. Mansilla confesó después, con la despreocupación que le era habitual, al recordar los propósitos mercantiles del viaje a la India: [...] compré placeres" (Lanuza 24).

[11] "James Foster Rodgers era un yankee número uno, con el que nos conocimos en Calcuta. [...] Durante algún tiempo después de que nos separamos, estuvimos en correspondencia. Hace muchísimos años que no sé nada de él: supongo que habrá pasado a mejor o peor vida, porque en 1850, tenía ya veinte años más que yo, mala salud, el fetiquismo de los ojos negros y los pies chicos, y yo no soy un nene. Catorce meses vivimos como hermanos" (*Entre-nos* 165).

tanto por el contexto de gestación dandista como en la búsqueda de Tierra Adentro, al ser el hombre autosuficiente para tal empresa. Consecuentemente nuestro autor observa, contempla, y posteriormente retrata con la pluma a sus compañeros de campaña, estableciendo un tipo de hábitat hecho por y para hombres:[12]

> La colección *de retratos de los hombres* de Paraná reúne valores muy dispares. *Mansilla los conoció íntimamente*, en el momento más interesante de su actuación. En el sencillo ambiente provinciano de Santa Fe y Paraná, donde el contacto personal es permanente, difícil resulta ocultar los hábitos, el carácter; el pensamiento; *la curiosidad llega hasta la alcoba*. (Cárcano 22, énfasis añadido)

De este tipo de *milieu*[13] se desprende la capacidad de desarrollo de un tipo de mirada literaria que contribuye a resaltar los atributos de lo masculino, ya que la presencia del elemento varonil se perfila como una necesidad para el éxito de la campaña. En su estilo característico, Mansilla ahonda en el personaje y confecciona un tipo de descripción visual a la vez que pondera cómo retratar la fisonomía:

> Aproveché el tiempo para observar la fisonomía de aquel *picador de tabaco*, imperturbable, especie de patriarca. Manuel Baigorria, alias Baigorrita, tiene treinta y dos años. [...] Baigorrita tiene la talla mediana, predominando en su fisonomía el tipo español. Sus ojos son negros, grandes, redondos y brillantes; su nariz respingada y abierta; su boca regular; sus labios gruesos; su barba corta y ancha. Tiene una cabellera larga, negra y lacia, y una frente espaciosa que no carece de nobleza. Su mirada es dulce, bravía algunas veces. En este conjunto sobresalen los instintos carnales y cierta inclinación a las emociones fuertes, envuelto todo en la brumas de una melancolía genial. (*Una excursión* 465)

Una elaboración prosopográfica del personaje para que el lector pueda visualizarlo con mayor precisión sensorial mediante una caracterización poética y valorativa del objeto contemplado, lo cual reitera una vez más la presencia hegemónico-discursiva de lo masculino. En *Una excursión a los indios ranqueles* elabora otras caracterizaciones en las que se solapa la combinación de la faceta prosopográfica, o descripción del aspecto físico, con la etopéyica,

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[12] "Homosocial phenomena might well be mentioned here, including the inherent problematics associated with them (the case of the tango, for example), especially when they conceal a homoerotic dimension that, in a certain sense, could function as a semantic matrix capable of inspiring a series of readings whose strength would imply a new horizon of cultural considerations" (Geirola 317).

[13] Alberto Mira se hace eco del ambiente genérico que rodeó al dandismo, "Ni todos los dandis eran homosexuales ni la única expresión de la homosexualidad era el dandismo. Sin embargo, la asociación entre ambos conceptos es recurrente y se establece tanto por parte de los propios interesados como identificación deseada como desde perspectivas anti-homosexuales" (65).

o descripción del carácter y costumbres de una persona: "Miguelito había concebido por mí una de *esas pasiones eléctricas* que revelan la espontaneidad del alma; *que son un refugio de las grandes tribulaciones*, que consuelan y fortalecen; que no retroceden ante ningún sacrificio; que confunden el escéptico y al creyente lo llenan de inefable satisfacción" (287, énfasis añadido). Aquí Mansilla matiza el lazo de unión con Miguelito, pero es la fuerza descriptiva la que plasma una cercanía genérica intencional. El autor se exhibe como centro de admiración, actitud legítima de estética dandista, y reconoce la cercanía afectiva que reconstruimos a partir de sus palabras:

> Tendría Gómez así como unos treinta y cinco años; era alto, fornido, y columpiábase con cierta gracia al caminar; su tez era blanca y amarilla, tenía ese tinte peculiar a las razas tropicales; hablaba con la tonada guaranítica, mezclando, como es costumbre entre los correntinos y entre los paraguayos vulgares, la segunda y la tercera persona; en una palabra, era un tipo varonil simpático [...] por su talla esbelta fue a la compañía de granaderos [...] La varonil figura de Gómez y las recomendaciones de Garmendia predispusieron desde luego mi ánimo a favor del nuevo destinado. (91-92)

Bosqueja a su contiguo mediante una reconstrucción de imágenes superpuestas que se materializan en la representación global de su intencionalidad descriptiva, técnica narrativa que pone de manifiesto los aspectos que captan su atención y que ofrecen al lector paciente[14] un profundo conocimiento sobre su vida.

A partir de los ejemplos analizados, podemos afirmar que en la literatura de Mansilla se establece una claro desequilibrio en términos genéricos, reflejo de la sociedad de la época, y cuyo foco de atención descriptivo y narrativo se desvía principalmente hacia lo masculino en su creación literario-autobiográfica: "It has been clear that women had a kind of ultimate importance in the schema of men's gender constitution–representing an absolute of exchange value, of representation itself, and also being the ultimate victims of the painful contradictions in the gender system that regulates men" (Sedgwick 134). Existe una manifiesta intencionalidad en sus memorias[15] y

[14] Mansilla se dirige en más de una ocasión al lector realizando una apelación sobre el mismo: "¡Buenas noches!, por no decir buenos días, o salud, lector paciente" (*Una excursión* 124). Es consciente de la presencia de un receptor que subraya la búsqueda de un destinatario que recoja una lectura didáctico-moral de sus experiencias.

[15] Juan Carlos Ghiano en la introducción de *Entre-nos*, apunta que "podría reconocerse a las 'memorias' como género elevado, el más alto de la literatura autobiográfica, mientras los 'recuerdos' aparecen como género menor, cerca del diálogo en tertulias con oyentes comprensivos [...] Entre estos dos puntos extremos. Se sucede una variedad de matices que manifiesta con amplitud la literatura de Mansilla" (*Mis memorias* 8).

recuerdos[16] para que el lector le escuche atentamente.[17] La efigie de Mansilla funde al dandi, político, militar y viajero dotando a sus escritos de un alarde de experiencia como observador. Nos transporta visualmente, nos hace contemplar y (ad)mirar, dirigiendo nuestra mirada a través de su manera característica de observar y narrar por medio de la divagación discursiva, rescatando los momentos que selecciona y dispone en su fragmentado discurso. Este grado de acercamiento en su escritura desvela su manera de sentir; una amistad que nos brinda y adentra en su dimensión emotiva.

Con esta perspectiva analítica sobre el contexto personal y la técnica literaria de Lucio Victorio Mansilla, he querido destacar la importancia de su escritura como un tipo de literatura que nos revela una intencionalidad visual en clave finisecular. Uno de los cometidos de la crítica debe estar encaminado, por tanto, a explorar otros canales hermenéuticos en su obra, ya que hasta la fecha se ha vertido una interpretación unidireccional de sus escritos mediatizada por la vinculación histórico-política del autor, o como apunta Myron Lichtblau: "as an exclusively historical and social frame of reference" (93). "Sus libros contienen abundante material para que sea nuevamente clasificado, interpretado, comprendido y escrito" (Cárcano 21). Se debe, por consiguiente, indagar más este tipo de visibilidad literaria característica del fin de siglo, que aúna la faceta personal a la literaria, y que se articula "según dónde se produce y según quién la percibe" (Molloy 130).

Javier Muñoz-Basols
University of Oxford
Reino Unido

[16] De acuerdo con la visión retrospectiva, Mansilla distingue entre 'memorias' y 'recuerdos'. "Las primeras evocan la trayectoria ya concluida de un hombre importante, y son el punto de llegada de quien puede realizar un balance de su conducta, buena y mala, que sirva de lección a los lectores, con atesoramiento de experiencias. Los recuerdos sólo son hitos puestos en ese camino, estaciones momentáneas que manifiestan aspectos persistentes de lo vivido [...] Las primeras se destinarían al público; los segundos, a los amigos" (*Entre-nos* 8).

[17] Leemos como lectores ajenos a su vida, pero al mismo tiempo, leemos como Lucio Victorio Mansilla y contemplamos a través del recordar literario, pudiendo aplicar una valoración sobre su representación genérica que reconstruye a partir de aspectos que son objeto de una visión retrospectiva.

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SITUATING LATIN AMERICAN MASCULINITY: IMMIGRATION, EMPATHY AND EMASCULATION IN JUNOT DÍAZ'S *DROWN*

John Riofrio

A brief survey of recent immigration literature reveals what is essentially common sense: identity is sharply connected to the process of movement we know as immigration. At the very least it can be said that immigration produces categorical shifts in how we experience and also understand ourselves as people. This essay examines Junot Díaz's collection of short stories, *Drown*,[1] as a means to investigate the potential trauma which immigration has on the male, working class psyche and how that trauma, the oft-cited dislocation of immigration, ultimately reveals the underlying tensions between memory, nostalgia and identity, categories which are in the end essential to our understanding of diaspora, immigration and assimilation.

Masculinity as Identity

Recent work in the field of masculinity studies has posited the notion that masculinity, like other forms of identity—race, sexuality, disability and class—is a social construct intimately connected to its

[1] During the 2003 Future of Minority Studies Conference at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, there was a lively debate as to whether or not one could consider Díaz's text a novel. Of the book's ten stories, six are explicitly connected by the presence of Yunior, the central narrator. These six stories do not form a convenient book-end (they represent the 1st, 2nd, 4th, 8th, 9th and 10th stories respectively) nor do they present a straight-forward chronology. Once gathered, however, the details form a coherent story of poverty, immigration and assimilation. The other four stories, by contrast, remain intriguingly ambiguous in terms of narrator. None of the narrators in "Aurora," "Drown," "Boyfriend," or "Edison, New Jersey" is given a specific name, but Díaz offers many clues as to their identities. All but one of them, the narrator of "Boyfriend," *could* be Yunior even if one factors in the particular tone, lifestyle and chronology of each of the stories. My feeling, then, is that taken in conjunction these stories offer a thematic cohesion more similar to that of a novel than a group of short stories. It is for this reason that I will, throughout this essay, refer to *Drown* as a novel.

social and historical context. To paraphrase Professor Keith Nurse, masculinism[2] is an ideology which is produced by its social context while simultaneously affecting the stability of that social context in order to further reproduce the ideal conditions for its continuation. The consequence of this ideology is that, like gender or race—with its accompanying notions of "color" or whiteness—men are not simply born, they are made. Or as Peruvian sociologist Norma Fuller posits, "Ser hombre es algo que se debe lograr, conquistar y merecer" (24). Fuller's choice of words implies that you aren't born a man; it is a title earned through action, often violent action.

Literary critic Satya Mohanty has argued that identities, like cultures, are a way of organizing the world we live in, of making sense of our experiences and what those experiences tell us about our social reality. Masculinity, like race, disability or sexuality, is thus a component of identity which reveals profound insights about the world we live in as well as the ideologies which shape that world. Definitions of what it means to be a "real man," are imposed externally while functioning as social constructs masked as fundamental truths, the natural order of things. As anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu writes in his book, *Masculine Domination*, "what appears, in history, as being eternal is merely the product of a labour of externalization performed by interconnected institutions such as the family, the church, the state, the educational system, and also, in another order of things, sport and journalism"(viii). For Bourdieu, what makes masculinism so difficult to identify and overcome, both for men and women, is its link to the many differentiated layers of society. This linkage ultimately produces the effect of casting masculinity—its characteristics as well as its presumed place in the social hierarchy—as the natural and unavoidable state of things.

Masculinity in the Latin American Context

In Latin America, discussions of masculinity have long been dominated by the notion of *machismo*, a manliness that overpowers and in fact seems to spill over, an excess of masculinity. Machismo is present in representations of Latin Americans by Latin Americans such as the epic Argentine gaucho poem by Martin Fierro or the Mexican corridos which sing of "el caudillo," but is also present in the ways

[2] Nurse defines masculinism as "the dominant philosophical value system in the gender framework." Masculinity by contrast is a manifestation of that philosophy. Masculinism, therefore, can be seen as a system of thought, conscious and unconscious of which masculinity is its primary manifestation.

in which the U.S. has figured Latino males in films like *Zorro* where Zorro is the archetypal Latin male: tall, swarthy, virile and mysterious. Contemporary Latin American and Latin@ writers, like Peru's Alfredo Bryce Echenique, however, have begun to explore the construction of the Latin American male, working on definitions of masculinity which go beyond outward symbols of virility. In opposition to traditional figures like the gaucho or the caudillo, the "new" man is one who functions within cultured or privileged society, one who knows and "works" the system from within. Virility, still the central focus of the cultural expectations of masculinity, is now measured less in shows of courage or violence and more in tangible symbols of success, wealth, influence and social esteem. The break between the traditional Latin "macho" and the new man of society, is not, of course, absolute. There is overlap particularly when one considers the effect of social class: how men, for example, without access to privilege define themselves is often reminiscent of the more traditional masculine figures of the gaucho and the caudillo. Two constants, however, in the manifestation of masculinity in Latin America remain: the first is the persistent centrality of sexual conquest in notions of real masculinity; the second is the fact that as an identity, masculinity remains a label affixed to men by men, what Nurse describes as manhood "affirmed through homosocial enactment and male validation" (8).

Norma Fuller sees masculinity in terms of the dichotomy of "virilidad" and "hombria," where the former refers to the naturalized, "biologically oriented" behavior of the *macho* vs. the latter which embodies the domesticated but still patriarchal man of responsibility—"the breadwinner." For both Fuller and Nurse, masculinity is both variable and fluid but is not, however, free from restraint in that it is irrevocably tied to the concrete, if often subtle, expectations of male society. The paradox which Fuller's work illuminates is the troubling notion that one's biology does not simply make one a man. Dominican psychologist Antonio de Moya further explains that this process of self-affirmation, the need to prove one's masculinity beyond mere biology, is by no means a product of adulthood. Rather, the process of demonstrating one's merits for inclusion, which Fuller refers to as *ortopedia*, begins succinctly in childhood and adolescence where, though younger, the stakes are just as high. De Moya writes:

> From early childhood, males are led to become self-conscious about those verbal and non-verbal behaviours which could lead others to suspect that they are not "true" or "real" men. This self-consciousness, which may become quasi-paranoid by adolescence for non-conforming males, is the product of an ongoing process of stringent, totalitarian "gender work", orienting towards the construction of a hegemonic male. (98)

De Moya points out the subtlety of expression upon which masculinity ultimately rests, but also clarifies the concrete ways in which masculinity depends on a kind of self-policing among its members. Freedom of expression, whether through body language or verbal and emotional communication, is scrutinized to a degree which then transforms the adolescent male into a well-trained subject "unconsciously" aware of the "natural" rules of masculinity. De Moya's choice of the word 'totalitarian' is particularly well suited in that it implies, via the association of the political, the severity of the consequences engendered by non-conformity. To consider masculinity in these terms moves us beyond the simple binary of patriarchal privilege and dominance to a more nuanced understanding of masculinity as embodying both oppression and the oppressed.

Absent Masculinity and the Fatherless Generation

"Ysrael," the first story of Díaz's collection, sets the stage for the picture of masculinity which will reveal itself throughout all ten of the stories. In "Ysrael" we meet Yunior, the narrator of six of the stories, his older brother Rafa, as well as Ysrael the boy whose face was devoured by a pig when he was still an infant. Rafa and Yunior leave home one day to search for Ysrael with the hopes of seeing his disfigured face which he hides behind a surgical mask. They come across Ysrael in a field flying a beautiful kite which Yunior identifies as definitely not "a local handmade job (16) but rather one that "had been manufactured abroad" (16). Yunior, unaware of his brother's plans for Ysrael (a topic I address later), strikes up an innocent conversation with Ysrael. "Where did you get that? I asked. Nueva York, he said. From my father. No shit! Our father's there too! I shouted" (16). This simple exchange reveals an important detail about Dominican life: the poverty which plagues the island has created a situation in which survival depends upon fathers leaving the island to try and carve out a better life for themselves and their families. Yunior and Ysrael's conversation functions as the grainy snapshot of an entire generation of Dominican boys forced to grow up without fathers. The absence of the father figure and the perpetual reality of abandonment which accompanies this absence oblige the generation of fatherless boys to construct their own vision of masculinity based, not only on the island's remaining men, but also the hollow remains of what the fathers have left behind.

With the departure of their father, Abuelo—Rafa and Yunior's grandfather and one of the "remaining men"—once again becomes the man of the house and, by extension, the masculine role model.

But Abuelo is a broken man: "when Abuelo was around (and awake) he talked to me about the good old days, when a man could still make a living from his finca, when the United States wasn't something people planned on" (73). With his lands dried up and his eyes failing him, Abuelo becomes a shell of a man who is either asleep or off building rat traps. For Rafa and Yunior, then, fatherhood and *real* masculinity are accessible to them only in the paltry remnants of their father: "he was the soldier in the photo. He was a cloud of cigar smoke, the traces of which could still be found on the uniforms he'd left behind" (70). For the fatherless generation, the emblem of masculinity, witnessed through the blurring haze of cigar smoke, becomes the juvenile hope of somehow, someday, being "man enough" to fill the empty uniforms in the closet. Like toddlers inserting dainty feet into father's oversized shoes, the absent masculinity of the immigrant father is a tall order to fill.

The paucity of male role models and the unshakable reality of their poverty leave Rafa and Yunior starved, not only for food, but also for male role models. Fuller explains, however, that this is not such an easy desire to fulfill: "la masculinidad es también un campo móvil, sometido a un proceso continuo de redefinición y crítica" (27). In the case of the two brothers, Rafa and Yunior, the absence of their father compounds the fact that masculinity is already a slippery, shifting terrain. In their case, the process of redefinition is sparked by a dramatic shift in their understanding of how to go about acquiring the trappings of men. The result is that it is their peers and not their fathers who will be responsible for teaching them how to be men.

The all-too-predictable effect of this peer dynamic is that the young men left behind must create, out of the romanticized vestiges of their imaginations, their *own* vision of masculinity, a hyper-masculinity hopelessly disconnected to reality and selfish in the way that only adolescent machismo allows. When Rafa and Yunior get sent to the *campo* for a few weeks while their mother straightens out financial affairs, Rafa says plainly that this "is shit. . .when I get home, I'm going to go crazy—chinga all my girls and then chinga everyone else's" (4). For Rafa, overt, boastful sexuality is the only tangible cure for the humiliation of poverty and his only means of establishing the virility he craves both personally, for himself, and externally in the desire for his absent father. Díaz's construction of Rafa in these terms, sexualized and egocentric, allows us to consider Rafa as a stand-in for the hegemonizing process of masculinity. Rafa demonstrates the way in which oppression over women and girls functions as a direct means towards the assumption of patriarchal privilege. By fucking his girls and everyone else's, Rafa is assured of his virility both in his

own eyes, but more importantly, in the eyes of others. Central to this adolescent construction of masculinity is the figure of the feminine and its association with the emotional category of empathy.

The Coding and Consequences of Empathy in *Drown*

For Díaz's male characters, however, empathy is a dangerous and problematic sentiment. In the story "Edison, New Jersey" the narrator, who may or may not be Yunior **(**see footnote 1**)** makes a conscious decision not to empathize when faced with his partner Wayne's desire to commit adultery:

> I really want to pile her, he tells me. Maybe on one of the Madisons.
>
> Man, I say, cutting my eyes towards him. Don't you have a wife or something?
>
> He gets quiet. I'd still like to pile her, he says defensively.
>
> And what will that do?
>
> Why does it have to *do* anything?
>
> Twice this year Wayne's cheated on his wife and I've heard it all, the before and the after…Wayne can be a moody guy and this is one of those nights; he slouches in the driver's seat and swerves through traffic, riding other people's bumpers like I've told him not to do. I don't need a collision or a four-hour silent treatment so I try to forget that I think his wife is good people and ask him if Charlene's given him any signals. He slows the truck down. Signals like you wouldn't believe, he says. (117)

The narrator's initial impulse is to empathize with Wayne's wife who he considers "good people;" however, as the novel establishes, empathy brings immediate consequences like the punishment of a "four-hour silent treatment" or the possibility of a car accident. In the end, the narrator believes that the consequences of empathy far outweigh the benefits, and he wills himself to forget that he respects Wayne's wife. The narrator, rather than trying to show Wayne the callousness of his actions, sacrifices Wayne's wife for a peaceful work-day making her, in a sense, the victim of this rejection of empathy. The victimization of women, which runs throughout the novel, is intricately tied to their association as empathetic beings.

The representation of empathy and its associations with femininity, however, are only part of the story. Ultimately at stake here are the male characters' efforts to fashion their own sense of masculine identity. In a world coded symbolically in these terms, sympathizing with someone like Ysrael is a path to feminization and its associated consequences. Fuller, again writing about masculinity in Peru, explains:

> lo femenino actúa como frontera simbólica de lo masculino, como la *abyecto* que presiona pero, sobre todo, permite visualizar sus fronteras, reconocer sus rasgos y adquirir, por esta vía, consistencia y fijeza. Consecuentemente, la masculinidad se mueve dentro de dos paradojas: la ilusión de su fijeza (origen biológico) y el temor de perderla amenazada por lo femenino. (27)

What is crucial about Fuller's observation is that it signals the manner in which femininity functions as a symbolic border. The adolescent, fatherless boys go about crafting their masculine identities via their interaction with, and reactions against, all that is feminine. For them, crafting a masculine identity is profoundly connected to the daily struggle to keep the feminine at arms length thus enabling the boys to rightfully claim their masculinity.

For Fuller, the true source of male anxiety rests in its very fragility, the fact that masculinity can be lost, or worse, taken away. In the story "No Face" Ysrael is, as always, being chased by his peers who wish to hurt him simply because of his disability. In a moment of distraction, he is caught unawares and tackled by the boys:

> The fat boy with the single eyebrow sits on his chest and his breath flies out of him. The others stand over him and he's scared.
>
> We're going to make you a girl, the fat one says and he can hear the words echoing through the meat of the fat boy's body. He wants to breathe but his lungs are as tight as pockets.
>
> You ever been a girl before?
>
> I betcha he hasn't. It ain't a lot of fun. (156)

In this scene the assault of Ysrael is made all the more terrifying by the threat of rape. The rape, however, also serves as a deeply significant lesson to the other boys, the ones doing the raping. As they lord their collective strength over Ysrael, their oppression of him and their ability to "make him into a girl" become a concrete reminder, albeit an unconscious one, of their own weakness. Empathy, by virtue of its association throughout the novel with the feminine, thus becomes a marker of weakness and a dangerous vulnerability, a vulnerability described with startling clarity in the opening story "Ysrael." The scene is, once again, the meeting between Yunior, Rafa and Ysrael. Yunior begins a sincere conversation with Ysrael:

> Where did you get that? I asked.
>
> Nueva York, he said. From my father.
>
> No shit! Our father's there too! I shouted.
>
> I looked at Rafa, who, for an instant, frowned…
>
> What the hell are you wearing that mask for anyway? Rafa asked.
>
> I'm sick, Ysrael said.

> It must be hot.
>
> Not for me.
>
> Don't you take it off?
>
> Not until I get better. I'm going to have an operation soon.
>
> You better watch out for that, Rafa said. Those doctors will kill you faster than the Guardia….

This passage reveals the essence of the context in which Yunior comes to understand the consequences of empathy. A naturally curious nine-year-old, Yunior begins to show signs of a budding empathy. Upon hearing that Ysrael's father is also in Nueva York Yunior unconsciously recognizes a common humanity which transcends No Face's disfigurement. The enthusiastic exclamation of "No shit!" reveals an instinctual empathy which immediately elicits a frown of contempt from his older, more street-savvy brother. As the scene unfolds Rafa's voice becomes easily distinguishable from Yunior's. While Rafa assumes the tone of an inquisitor, Yunior peppers the conversation with comments like, "It must be hot" and "Don't you take it off?" that reveal a profound and growing sense of empathic connection. Yunior's empathy reaches a point in which he even abandons his brother's side in order to catch up with Ysreal who has run ahead of them.

> Are you still into wrestling? I asked.
>
> He turned to me and something rippled under the mask. How did you know that?
>
> I heard, I said….
>
> The mask twitched. I realized he was smiling and then my brother brought his arm around and smashed the bottle on top of his head. It exploded, the thick bottom spinning away like a crazed eyeglass and I said, Holy fucking shit….Roll him on his back, my brother said and we did, pushing like crazy. Rafa took off his mask and threw it spinning into the grass.
>
> His left ear was a nub and you could see the thick veined slab of his tongue through a hole in his cheek….The damage looked old but I still jumped back and said, Please Rafa, let's go! Rafa crouched and using only two of his fingers, turned Ysrael's head from side to side. (16-19)

Rafa's silence during their prattle about wrestling betrays his sentiment that he has seen enough. At exactly the moment when Yunior's empathy reaches its peak, when he is able to recognize the twitching under Ysrael's mask as the workings of a smile, Rafa breaks his silence by bringing the bottle crashing down on an unsuspecting Ysrael.

This scene, which is arguably the most powerful in the novel, functions on a number of important levels. Perhaps the most immediate is the lesson which Yunior learns about empathy. Psychologist

Robert Katz has described the empathizer as one who, "tends to abandon his self-consciousness. He does not feel with the other person as if running along on a parallel track. The sense of similarity is so strong that the two become one—his identity fuses with the identity of the other" (9). I would argue that Yunior's desperate cry of "Holy fucking shit" is wrenched out of him because of this kind of total empathetic identification with Ysrael; It is as if, for a moment, he is unaware that it is not his own head which has been smashed by the bottle. The explosion of the bottle, Rafa's awful, cruel disregard for Ysrael, whom he touches with two fingers as if to avoid dirtying himself, and the terrible sight of Ysrael's disfigured face serve to inform Yunior as to the totalizing and inevitable consequences that empathizing with another brings.

For Bourdieu, this is precisely the manner in which patriarchy perpetuates itself: "Like the disposition towards submission, those which underlie the pursuit and exercise of domination are not inscribed in a nature, and they have to be learned through a long labor of socialization, in other words, as has been seen, of active differentiation from the opposite sex" (49). Ysrael's disfigurement places him in the same category as the feminine, what Fuller has described as "la abyecto." That the neighborhood boys' goal in chasing Ysreal is to feminize him, is a concrete manifestation of what they already know: in their world, weakness, disfigurement, and non-conformity are all vulnerabilities which are to be exploited and castigated. By the time we see Yunior all grown up and living in the U.S. we understand that he has learned his lessons well. Díaz, however, understands that the masculinity of the abandoned boys is only one half of the story.

Fictions of Masculinity: Immigration and the Emasculation of Men

The romanticized vision of the immigrant man going off to the U.S. to provide for his family is not the sole product of the Dominican boy's imagination. This vision, born in the painful middle word between hope and desperation, is a creation of the Dominicans and their need to, as Abuelo says, "plan on the United States." The men who depart daily for the mainland take with them a small suitcase and the idea that they are going to a land which embraces those willing to work for a living. In the imaginative world of the immigrant, success is inevitable for one armed as Papi[3] with "two hands and a

[3] Yunior and Rafa's father is referred to, throughout the novel, as both Papi and Ramón.

heart as strong as an ox" (167); poverty is the fate of those who do not leave.

The problem for Papi is that in the eyes of mainstream America any "new" immigrant is expected to play the role of Jo-Jo (his Puerto Rican friend, who represents the assimilationist Bootstrap Puerto Rican) or the successfully assimilated Cubans who came before him. This expectation is, of course, dangerously flawed in that it negates absolutely the material conditions which mark Cuban or Puerto Rican immigration as dramatically different from that of other Latin Americans. Díaz's Dominican characters do not benefit, as the first Cubans did, from refugee status; instead they groan under the dual pressures of assimilation: they are expected, as Jo-Jo does, to embody the American way, but also to fulfill a common notion of what it means to be "Latino."

Ramón's resistance to the pressures of assimilation begins with a rejection of Jo-Jo's good-natured proposal that he buy one of his hot dog carts, and the sure-fire success it offers. Papi makes no effort to reject the system or even the script (he does, after all, acknowledge that he is "looking for an investment"); he seems only to reject the specific details of Jo-Jo's plan for him: "I'm not a food man." Jo-Jo's retort, however, is illustrative: "What sort of man are you then…You Dominicans got restaurants in your blood" (191). Jo-Jo's response reveals an important fact. The script he offers for assimilation and success is also central to the formation of a genuine masculine identity. To not follow Jo-Jo's time-proven script is to risk failure and, consequently, to have your manhood questioned: if you are not the kind of man who wants to succeed (i.e. assimilate the American way) then "*what* sort of man are you?" Papi is not, counter to Jo-Jo's construction of his Dominican identity, a restaurant man, but he is also not a Bootstrap Puerto Rican who will make his money the way Jo-Jo did. Perhaps unconsciously, Papi believes that to simply accept Jo-Jo's *way* is to accept the categorization that all Latinos are the same.

Ramón's concerns and frustrations are made all the more troubling by his lack of monetary success, a lack which acts as a second blow to Papi's notion of his own masculinity. Keith Nurse describes the process by which Caribbean men are affected by the myths of masculinity they themselves help construct: "The social construction of the male breadwinner role is therefore an important mechanism by which men are ensnared into their own oppression. And because it is mythologized—taken out of historical context and made natural and eternal—it becomes an invisible force, especially to men" (15). Ramón's desire to come to the U.S. and make it on his own, convinced as he is of the strength of his own hands, competes with the

largely unconscious threat to his masculinity manifest in his failure as a provider. To *not* send for his family is to admit that he has come to the U.S. and failed to regain the role of provider which Dominican poverty had stripped him of. That this process of socialization is invisible means that the threat Papi perceives is one which emanates from an unknown source. The conflicts he experiences with the larger Anglo and Latino society, therefore, mix with the internal psychological battles rooted in his conditioning as a male.

Immigrant masculinity: Performance and Nostalgia

Throughout the course of the novel the nostalgia for this lost masculinity becomes inextricable from Papi's nostalgia for home, a home that, as time progresses, bears little in common with reality. The story "Fiesta, 1980" reveals both the compensatory masculinity which the immigrant male adopts but also the way in which this nostalgia for home manifests itself.

In "Fiesta, 1980" we see a different Papi. Having suffered a complete physical and emotional breakdown, Papi parts with his "American" wife and brings over his Dominican family. The Papi we see in this story is strikingly different from the demoralized, angry Ramón we see earlier in that he has finally given up resisting the script of assimilation by bringing over his family and making money (signaled in part by his Volkswagen van: "Brand new, lime-green, and bought to impress" [27]). Presumably it is the embracing of the American way which has reenabled Papi's masculinity. The masculinity we see now, however, is very clearly a compensatory machismo—a bravado which, like the bright green van, is adopted "to impress." Díaz sprinkles "Fiesta 1980" with details showing Papi's need to prove his masculinity: "He [Papi] and Miguel gave each other the sort of handshake that would have turned my fingers into Wonder bread" (31). The show of strength inherent in possessing a "manly" grip, is only superceded by the power of his voice, which he lords above everyone else's.

Tío Miguel and Papi's machismo is, of course, a show—squeeze harder, speak louder—but it relates directly to the way in which immigrant men actively reconstitute themselves. Integral to this reconstitution is the way in which they manage to reconstruct their past. With assimilation comes emotional distance and a renewed sense of masculinity which ultimately enables a very specific kind of selective reconstruction of the Dominican Republic. Uncle Miguel, speaking to Yunior aged 11 or 12:

> Do you want me to get you a drink? Tío asked. We got beer and rum.
> Miguel, Mami said. He's young.
> Young? Back in Santo Domingo, he'd be getting laid by now. (31)

The reality of the Dominican Republic is one of near abject poverty—zinc roofs, partitioned rooms and plates of food where everything is boiled—yet, for the newly reconstituted immigrant male, home becomes the site of a virile hyper-sexuality. Poverty and desperation drop out of the masculine memory and all that remains is a gloating sexual past which only serves to further confirm a masculine identity which sees sex and the bravado of sexual conquest as the most concrete and salient ways in which to obtain and affirm manhood.

Conclusion

Papi's own struggle against both assimilation and emasculation leave him marked as one incapable of empathy. The danger, then, which the novel taunts us with is the very real possibility that Yunior, with whom we have somehow come to sympathize, may someday turn out to be just like his father. That Yunior would consciously reject empathy comes as no surprise, for as we have seen, Yunior learns the lesson against empathy early in his life. Complicating this, however, is the fact that his development as a person takes place in a social context which devalues and, in fact, actively rejects empathy. For social scientist Pittu Laungani, "values, like air, pervade our cultural atmosphere, and we imbibe them often without a conscious awareness of their origins" (285). For Yunior, the world where empathy is both limited and troubled becomes *fact*, and more insidiously, *truth*, a truth which he cannot perceive as merely possibility or even interpretation. "Yunior's unconscious" assumption of values as well as his admission, in regards to his father, that "Our fights didn't bother me too much. I still wanted him to love me" (27) lead the reader to assume that Yunior, like Rafa, is fated to become like his father. This is not, however, what Díaz has in mind.

The turn to empathy is by no means quick or easy but culminates with Yunior's efforts in "Negocios" to construct the real story of his father's return. Yunior's desire to imagine his father's return is a staple of his early childhood when he and Rafa would lay awake at night inventing the scene over and over again. Their grasp of reality, however, provides only wild fictions: "Rafa used to think that he'd come in the night, like Jesus, that one morning we'd find him at our breakfast table, unshaven and smiling. Too real to be believed. He'll be taller, Rafa predicted. Northamerican food makes people

that way" (87). The element of fantasy which marks Rafa's story (the father as Jesus, the magical North American food which can make a grown man even taller) are entirely absent from "Negocios," Yunior's story about his father's return. Even though, as he says, "anger has a way of returning," (206) Yunior is finally able to finally imagine the "truth" of his father's return by piecing together a story which chronicles the genuine hardships of his father's time in the States, a time which, rather than make him taller, would break him down until he was much, much smaller than when he left. "Negocios," however, ends poignantly: "The first subway station on Bond would have taken him to the airport and I like to think that he grabbed that first train, instead of what was more likely true, that he had gone out to Chiuto's first, before flying south to get us" (207). This beautiful but also realistic portrait of his father is significant precisely because it neither heroicizes nor demonizes his abusive father. It represents Yunior's ability to finally move beyond his anger and to construct this final, honest picture of his father. It is, I believe, Díaz's impassioned declaration that to empathize is not, finally, to become vulnerable but rather to become human.

John Riofrio
Penn State University
United States of America

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'THINGS MEN MUST DO': NEGOTIATING AMERICAN MASCULINITY IN JACK LONDON'S *THE VALLEY OF THE MOON*

Katie O'Donnell Arosteguy

Feminist critic Clarice Stasz, in her landmark 1976 essay entitled "Androgyny in the Novels of Jack London," spearheaded what was to become the feminist literary response to Jack London —an author usually valorized for writing "boy's books and machismo survival epics" (Reesman, "Jack London's New Woman" 181). Reaching so far as to claim that London's novels "display the development of a radical, visionary conception of masculinity and femininity," Stasz greatly influenced other feminist thinkers who wanted to open London's work up to an analysis of gender relations, among them Susan Gatti, Jeanne Reesman, Sam Baskett, Scott Derrick, Charles Watson, and Bert Bender ("Androgyny" 122).[1] Common among these critics, however, is a desire to "find the feminist" in Jack London. To do this, many argue that London empowers female characters by advocating androgyny in his works, thus liberating them from "conventional sexual attitudes of his age" (Baskett 93). Several critics such as Stasz and Watson use biographical details to prove that London's ideal genders were a careful mixture of femininity *and* masculinity and/or that London intended for female characters to play leading roles in some of his works. Aside from the fact that we should always be careful when applying biographical information to interpret literary texts, Scott Derrick also warns us that understanding androgyny

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[1] See Clarice Stasz, "Social Darwinism, Gender, and Humor in 'Adventure,'" Jeanne Reesman, "Jack London's New Woman in a New World: Saxon Brown Roberts' Journey into the Valley of the Moon," Susan Irvin Gatti, "Mettle Not Metal: Jack London's *Smoke* and the Evolution of Masculine Identity," Sam S. Baskett, "Sea Change in 'The Sea-Wolf,'" Bert Bender, "Jack London and 'the Sex Problem.'"

as necessarily liberatory runs the risk of essentializing femininity and masculinity; it "fails to consider how women's transgressions of gender boundaries may still function within a patriarchal economy rather than challenge it" (256). Other critics eager to defend London's feminism endorse the idea that London presents progressive ideas of the New Woman in some texts, heralding some female characters as "independent" heroines who "reinven[t] codes of womanhood" and "heroically equa[l] or outperfor[m] men in treacherous, unfamiliar country" (Gatti, "Mettle Not Metal" 183).

I question the viability this feminist project has and advocate in this essay an alternative feminist approach to studying gender in one of Jack London's works. Would it not perhaps be more useful to study gender relations in London's work without the overarching goal to declare him a feminist? One aspect of London's work that needs further consideration in this vein is how he exhibits anxieties over national identity and manhood during a time when white manhood was becoming "socially attractive, legally desirable, aesthetically ideal, a national imperative" in response to both the stresses of a changing economy and class structure, as well as threats posed by the New Woman's movement and large waves of European immigrants (Nelson 28). *The Valley of the Moon* has been acknowledged by leading London scholar Jeanne Reesman to be "richly rewarding" "especially with regard to gender issues," a comment that leads me to ponder the following question: How does London, in choosing to endow Saxon Roberts with the narrative voice and a female gaze continually focused on Billy, display anxiety regarding the status of white masculinity in early twentieth-century America? ("Jack London's New Woman" 181). Far from being an active subject in her own right, Saxon's role in the novel is to focus the reader's attention on Billy's performance of masculinity in order to naturalize updated notions of middle-class white male power in the literary imagination. The female gaze, in this respect, functions as a transformative lens that complicates the way in which we understand the construction of masculinity.

The small but growing field of feminist masculinity studies encourages critics to interrogate representations of masculinity that seek to maintain hegemonic power structures by appearing unchanging, transhistorical, or natural, when in reality they are "contingent, fluid, socially and historically constructed, changeable and constantly changing . . . and recreated through media representations and individual and collective performances" (Gardiner 11). As we realize masculinity to be a cultural and ideological construct whose identity is constantly renegotiated through various outlets and envision ways to interpret hegemonic masculinity's efforts to maintain dominant

power structures, a new field of analysis in literary studies opens to us. In the words of contemporary gender theorist Cynthia Enloe, "Any group or institution becoming patriarchal is never automatic; it's rarely self-perpetuating. It takes daily tending. It takes decisions—even if those are masked as merely following 'tradition" (245). This daily tending of American masculinity is arguably reflected in London's *The Valley of the Moon*, as Billy reflects the anxiety felt by middle-class white American men who faced the critical task of reclaiming a national manhood that now required these men to support their families, amass capital, and take advantage of the new opportunities for commercial leisure.[2] The coinciding woman's movement, fear of the feminization of men forced to move to cities and take jobs in factories alongside women and minorities, and the brutal strikes and labor unrest exemplified by the working class put extra pressure on white men to distinguish themselves in turn-of-the-century America. Additionally, increased public attention to "neurasthenia"—or the fragility of men's bodies—persuaded middle-class men to "fin[d] new ways to celebrate men's bodies as healthy, muscular, and powerful" (Bederman 15). This resulted in an increased emphasis on exercise and team sports, fraternal organizations, speaking out against women's rights, and, to some extent, appropriating working-class activities of boxing and prizefighting to express the "virile survival skills of primitive men" (Bederman 23).[3] In this novel, we watch (and I choose this verb carefully) a working-class Billy Roberts negotiate his way up and out of the restrictive tangle of city-life labor strikes into the Valley of the Moon, an idyllic pastoral landscape where his dreams of amassing capital, participating in physical exercise, and encompassing the roles of the protector and provider are finally realized. In contrast to other feminist critics who have claimed this as Saxon's story, I argue that London selectively uses Saxon in an effort to provide a mirror of Billy's masculinity for the reader. As the narrative lens of the book, Saxon is actively invested in proposing a new style of masculinity for the modern era. The book as a whole, then, is a project in confronting changing realities of white masculinity and seeking out methods to maintain the invisibility, stability, and rootedness of hegemonic masculinity.

Amy Kaplan's *The Anarchy of Empire* has served as an anchor text for examining historical connections between manhood and

[2] See Gail Bederman's *Manliness and Civilization.*

[3] Extensive research has been done on how Theodore Roosevelt exemplified this new consciousness for reclaiming an American manhood. See, for example, Gail Bederman's chapter, "Theodore Roosevelt: Manhood, Nation, and 'Civilization" and Amy Kaplan's work in *The Anarchy of Empire*.

nationalism and the important role women's complicity plays in actualizing new conceptions of manhood. Kaplan stresses how literature documents social conditions that produce a nostalgic desire for an "authentic manhood" made recoverable by defining American masculinity abroad.[4] As Kaplan indicates, the role of women in these historical romances was to provide the "eyes of the world for which masculinity [was] performed" (93). Kaplan effectively argues that manliness is not actually real until *seen* by someone. Kaplan's interpretation of the New Woman is also important to my study of *The Valley of the Moon* in that, instead of viewing the 'New Woman' as "independent, self-reliant, and adventurous," she argues that this very desire to be liberated from traditional domestic roles resulted in women submitting to new adventures of empire. Now they accompanied men and served as his "chief spectator" or "witness"—someone who "validates the hero's virility" so that manhood can indeed become *real* (107-111). Similar to Cynthia Enloe's espousal that "the perpetuation of a patriarchal institutional culture relies on many women finding patriarchal relationships comfortable, sometimes rewarding," Saxon's embodiment of the New Woman role serves not to empower her, but rather to indebt her involvement in a new project of patriarchal power (Enloe 245). Despite London's own documented intention to make Saxon "the guiding force" of the novel or critic Charles Watson's belief that, because the action is mediated through Saxon's point of view, Saxon is thus "the focus" of the novel—a 1983 reading that has influenced much of the feminist interpretations to date—Saxon's role can be analyzed and complicated by using a feminist masculinity studies lens that finds her viewing critical to the project of realizing American manhood at this time (qtd. in Watson 190).

For a book that is deemed by many critics to be largely about Saxon Roberts, we get very little description of her except a brief passage describing her clothes near the beginning of the book and short references to her throughout as small, delicate, and/or flower-like (9). As Charles Watson outlines in his chapter on the novel, London got the idea for the novel from a story he read in the *Saturday Evening Post* by Le Roy Armstrong. London did, in fact, "adher[e]

[4] While some critics, such as Robert Peluso, Christopher Hugh Gair, Andrew J. Furer, and James Slagel discuss tropes of empire-building and white supremacy in London's work, it would perhaps also be a fruitful study to look at how London involves himself in recreating a distinctive American, or national, masculinity abroad in his works that deal with the south seas and/or London. In *The Valley of the Moon*, however, London seeks to reclaim this masculinity by embarking on a quest to an illusive West that awaits reclamation after having been pioneered, settled, and lost by Anglo-Saxon ancestors.

closely to his source in the Armstrong story"—allowing Saxon, the female protagonist, to have "the vision" (Watson 190). It is problematic, however, to assume as many critics have that because Saxon is endowed with the ability to *see* that this necessarily empowers her. Instead, London uses Saxon's ability to see as a lens for the reader to watch how middle-class white masculinity could re-imagine and re-negotiate national identity. From the very beginning of Saxon and Billy's relationship, Saxon is described as the one who can really *see*. It is her viewing of Billy that provides the longest textual description of a character thus far in the novel and is representative of the intricate detail many other textual descriptions of masculinity in the book contain:

> As their hands clasped and she felt the teamster callouses on his palm, her quick eyes saw a score of things. About all that he saw was her eyes . . . She, on the contrary, saw his eyes as they really were—deep blue, wide, and handsome in a sullen-boyish way. She saw that they were straight-looking, and she liked them . .. Then, too, . . . she had perceived the short, square-set nose, the rosiness of cheek, and the firm, short upper lip, ere delight centered her flash of gaze on the well-modeled, large clean mouth where red lips smiled clear of the white, enviable teeth.—*A boy, a great big man-boy*, was her thought . . . she was startled by a glimpse of his hair—short and crisp and sandy, hinting almost of palest gold save that it was too flaxen to hint of gold at all. (12-13)

While Billy lacks the ability to really see Saxon, Saxon describes Billy in depth—from his eyes, to his personality, to the curves in his muscles, etc. Saxon further visualizes Billy for the reader, noting his ability to "radiate muscular grace" in every "supple, slow, and apparently considered" movement; she describes how "the calm and certitude of all the muscular play of him" allows for "the grace of those slow-moving, certain muscles of his" to "accor[d] perfectly with the rhythm of the music" (13). This prolonged physical description of Billy functions to establish Saxon's ideal image of the male Viking ancestor she is continually enamored with and nostalgic for throughout the book. Indeed, their first conversation reveals a euphoric recognition that both are of Anglo-Saxon stock as Billy declares: "We're the real goods, Saxon an' me" (19). Within pages of meeting Billy, then, Saxon's descriptions of his appearance crystallize an image of the Anglo-Saxon heroic man, albeit a little rough around the edges from a working-class life. It is these kinds of descriptions, these acts of seeing, that need to be complicated in London's work. Failing to analyze such depictions, such functions of a female gaze, causes us to neglect the interrogation of masculinity and to leave it unproblematized. In other words, because white males are usually presented as the norm around which "the rest of gendered and sexualized

representations are defined," we tend to see no need to interrogate that norm, hence leaving the norm intact (Edwards 118).

Similar to Saxon's reliance on the Anglo-Saxon family heirlooms she continually fondles and ponders—such as her father's sword and her mother's scrapbooks—in looking at Billy, she is "reminded of her wonderful mother's tales of the ancient Saxons and sea-foragers of the English coasts" (83). Because Saxon envisions her ancestors as rightful claimants to the land, she automatically associates Billy with this prophetic dream: "There was no mistaking it. The striking blondness, the face, the eyes, the mouth were the same" (83). Billy's smooth muscular white body, his beautiful "royally young" "blondness," the calluses that indicate his emphasis on work and power, his ability to be gentle but fight when necessary, his ability to have men obey and succumb to him, and the way in which women are inherently attracted to him all make Billy "see[m] to her one of those Saxons" (59 and 31). It is imperative to note that the images and relics of the 'Mother Myth' Saxon has imaginatively endowed with such sacred and pioneering qualities forms the crux of her viewing purpose: to imagine a purely Anglo-Saxon past that can potentially be recreated. The function of her viewing, then, is pointedly political because whether she is viewing Billy or re-imagining the Anglo-Saxon prowess of her sometime ancestor, she never asserts agency; her visions are always already formulated by imaginary renderings of ancestral power. Her visions function to further London's racist and sexist ideologies and, more abstractly, womanhood becomes a useful tool not only for articulating racial purity but also for "mediating anxieties emerging in the production of professional manhood" (Nelson 26-27). As we see in contemporary debates concerning the female gaze, it is not enough to assume that instances of gendered power play in viewing relations "could be overturned by 'giving' woman the gaze"; rather, we need to "expos[e] the impossibility of anyone ever owning that visual agency" (Silverman 152). In other words, just having 'the gaze' is not enough in and of itself to empower women. In the case of Saxon, 'the gaze' is used to shore up certain performances and understandings of men, as well as to help imbue the male hero with traditional characteristics of whiteness.

While they live in the city, the forces of capitalism threaten Billy's ability to achieve the expectations set forth by the new mantra of the middle-class man. Even though Saxon holds a job as a laundry worker, once they are married, Billy, overly concerned with being the sole provider of the new small family, refuses to allow Saxon to work. Subsequently, his wages are cut at his factory job. This anxiety over loss in pay—which leads to the frustration that he will not be "the

bread-winner" who "works harder" than Saxon—manifests itself in Billy's violent increase in drinking and fighting (106). A combination of these new additions to Billy's character ultimately leads to the demise of the family and any hopes for being 'American' in this space. Billy's drunken violence and change in character leads Saxon to declare: "Another man looked out of his eyes—a man whose thoughts were of violence and hatred; a man to whom there was no good in anything, and who had become an ardent protagonist of the evil" (180). Saxon cannot recognize the man Billy has become, and despite Saxon's ability to see and observe, she is completely powerless as her marriage falls apart before her eyes. Billy was relatively happy when the two were first married and he was able to participate eagerly in what Clyde Griffen terms the middle-class pressure of a 'companionate marriage,' where the man participated in the marriage, family, and home, but gendered divisions of labor still preserved male dominance (201). As Billy becomes more and more preoccupied with attaining a middle-class lifestyle, however, he begins to call the shots as to what happens in the home. He stops Saxon from working, demands dinner be prepared for him, and anticipates a happy family life with Saxon's impending pregnancy. Even their house, as Gatti points out—an "immaculate cottage strategically cordoned off from working class by the classic white picket fence"—seemed to protect them from the harsh realities of their working-class life and give the illusion of middle-class freedom ("Stone Hearths" 52).

Saxon and Billy's fantasies of middle-class life come crashing down when the realities of violent scab fights outside Saxon and Billy's house surface. Saxon observes that: "These things were not men. They were beasts, fighting over bones" (152). The harsh realities of city life take their toll on men's bodies—reducing them to either violent animals or ultra-feminized fathers like Tom, Saxon's brother, whose "weary, patient look," "bent shoulders," and "labor-gnarled hands" represent the effects of a life wasted by the demands of physical labor, children, and time spent dreaming for unrealistic Socialist goals (149). Ultimately, one of these "beasts" is struck by a pick-axe and dies on Saxon's fence: "Slowly, with infinite effort, he caught a gate picket in his right hand, and, still slowly, as if lowering himself, sank down" (152). This tragedy shows the ultimate betrayal in Saxon and Billy's fundamental belief that hard work would assure them a middle-class American existence. Manhood is emasculated by the city and the dream of recreating their ancestors' journey to find the land and life that befits those of the "good stock" is destroyed here; ultimately, their dissatisfaction serves to refuel their desire to embody Anglo-Saxon ideals in another space.

In an effort to negotiate the new expectations of middle-class white manhood, Billy and Saxon set out on a romanticized, individualistic pilgrimage across the California landscape, reclaiming their Anglo-Saxon heritage through a re-colonization of the land settled and lost by their pioneer ancestors. During this venture, Billy once again appears to Saxon as "one of the Vikings" (239). This "search for new beginnings in a new West," as David Fine terms it, is seen throughout London's Sonoma novels (70). Fine notes that after London's seafaring voyages to the South Pacific, he returned to the San Francisco Bay Area and began to emphasize "the fulfillment of Anglo American destiny [as] linked with the reclamation of California land" (57). London's emphasis on retrieving history, rights, and American manhood necessarily involves traversing physical space and feeding the fantasies of Westward expansionism. Lee Clark Mitchell, in his book, *Westerns: Making the Man in Fiction and Film*, argues that the primary function of any American Western text is to construct masculinity. How 'the man is made' goes hand in hand with how the landscape—"celebrated consistently in the Western as the opportunity for renewal, for self-transformation, for release from constraints with an urbanized East"—provided magically fertile ground upon which to build a national masculine character that needed to be renewed and molded at the time (5). The land—as changeable, fertile, and resilient—"create[s] a surreal clearly false natural world capable of naturalizing a broad (and changing) range of behavior as distinctly American" (Mitchell 57). This open, optically lawless land creates a safe space full of possibilities away from the harsh realities of an increasingly industrialized and urbanized nineteenth-century America represented in this book by the city of Oakland. Whereas the city threatened Billy and Saxon's happiness with the harsh realities of market forces, labor unrest, and an unachievable ideal of middle-class family life, London suggests that the Valley of the Moon will provide a utopian space where the American family can be restructured according to middle-class values, a place where "will is expected to triumph over economic reality" (Gair 155).

No longer stressed by the threat of reduced wages and the inherent violence this brings about in the Oakland city space, Billy is free to engage in "things men must do" out in the country landscape (376). Billy uses his status as prizefighter in the first half of the book with great caution and skill—to threaten or fight men because he feels a need to protect others or because his very manhood is challenged. Additionally, when his wages are cut and he falls into a bout of drinking and violence, he fights in order to make money. In either case, Billy's fighting is portrayed as a necessity to maintaining

order in a chaotic space. Susan Gatti suggests, in "Jack London on Boxing: The manly Art of Making it," that boxing was a way for men to escape the drudgeries of working-class life as well as to display ownership of one's own labor. Gatti asserts that boxing was the way for working class men to assert themselves as men (78-80). Billy's fighting in the city space, then, can be seen as a release of pent-up frustration for the "violence and exploitation" he feels in his job as a teamster (82).[5] From the beginning of the novel, Saxon is enamored with the idea of Billy as a prizefighter: "And he was a prizefighter. The thought of it almost made her gasp . . . . Prizefighters were such terrible and mysterious men . . . they represented romance" (35). The way Billy engages in fighting in the different sections of the book reflects the anxieties encountered when moving from working-class to middle-class American manhood. Once out of the city, there is no need to fight for money or to prove a point to another man, as all of the good-natured men and women Billy and Saxon meet along the way to the Valley of the Moon are middle-class people of "the old stock" (300). Because the kind people they meet offer them food, shelter, and advice on how to survive in the country, Billy and Saxon are never hard-pressed for money again. Once they go into the farming business and Billy lands a job hauling for the local brickyard company, they become "the very capitalists they opposed in Oakland" in the sense that once they have their own place, Billy then wants more and more things—a wagon, more land, more horses, and, on top of it all, paroled Chinese convicts from the local prison to work their land (Gair 156). This new idealistic space provides Saxon with the opportunity to witness both Billy's quest for capitalism and his "fighting spirit" noted earlier in the book. The purpose of this fighting, however, has changed; it now functions to display the physique of the male body as it engages in the kind of sports activities Bederman emphasizes as key to reasserting American masculinity at the time. We might also interpret this spectacle of masculinity as a response to neurasthenia of the time, or a built-up nervousness in men regarding their social

[5] Gatti makes the argument, in "London and Boxing," that since boxing is an individualistic venture and sport geared to make money and move one up and out of working-class life, Billy—whose disillusionment with capitalism draws him to the "heady feeling of control" experienced in boxing—portrays London's indictment of capitalism. Because Billy doesn't find "success and security in boxing," Gatti argues, he "quits the urban ring in favor of the farm" (82). This move to the farm provides the rationale, for Gatti, that "[he] who 'goes it along' cannot survive" (83). This essay, however, fails to examine the boxing Billy does later in Part III of the book, where he does not fight for money necessarily or to put someone in their place. Instead, he fights to display the male body engaged in sport, further solidifying London's emphasis on making the American man in this text.

and familial roles brought about by changing notions of work in the quest for upward social mobility (Lutz 25).

London first emphasizes the beauty and importance of male bodies and their ties to a distinct American middle-class identity when Billy becomes enamored of "physical prodigy" Jim Hazard's swimming abilities—first noticing him on the beach, and, later, following the muscles of Jim's body with "admiring eyes" (299). As the two men admire each other, Jim observes: "You're some body of a man. . . . You'd strip with the best of them. Am I right in guessing that you know your way about in the ring?" (299). Out in the safe space of the country, the focus for boxing is not on making money or rising out of the working class. The emphasis, instead, is on the beauty of male bodies and muscles and the pleasure men take in challenging each other in displays of sport and power. In the boxing fight against 'the Iron Man,' set up for fun by Hazard, Billy "was too completely the master, guarding every blow" so that when the match was over and Billy's identity was divulged as a well-known prizefighter:

> The Iron Man accepted the joke on himself with the best of humor. It had been a splendid exhibition on Billy's part. His mastery of the sport, coupled with his self-control, had most favorably impressed the crowd, and Saxon, very proud of her man-boy, could not but see the admiration all had for him. (317)

Violence is no longer for the purpose of defense or acting out against those stealing a working man's job; instead, the function of violence has become purely aesthetic. Saxon is the witness to this display of masculinity, as are the others watching a performance that commodifies a version of masculinity for the consumption of the American, "old stock" audience. Furthermore, Saxon serves as the eyes and ears to the negotiation of American masculinity when she grows "very proud . . . that she belonged to the race that gave them [Jim and Billy] birth. She could only listen to them talk" (300). Saxon's character is easily diminished here through comparison to Billy. Whereas throughout the book Saxon continually acts as a witness, by the end of the book she seems to embody nothing more than a passive vessel through which great men such as Billy and Jim are born and re-imagined. However, these viewing relations are more complex than they seem, in that Saxon's viewing is still performing a very important function: on the one hand, she allows masculinity to be *seen* so that it can be *real*, but she also ensures that this masculinity is achieved in this space by permitting the male body to become so naturalized that it disappears. Saxon's actual participation in any meaningful activity in Part III is close to non-existent, a fact carefully left out by Charles Watson, whose analysis lauds Saxon as the force

of the novel and then completely discounts any material from Part III that would challenge his thesis. He declares that London's "didactic impulse soon leads him astray," going so far as to suggest that London could have shortened or left out the scenes in this part of the book (209). The obvious problem with this reasoning is that Saxon's true function, and London's (unintentional?) mission, does not come to fruition until Part III.

In Part III of *The Valley of the Moon*, men like Jim Hazard and Mark Hall—who challenges Billy to a rock climb and whose muscles Billy fondles—incite Billy's faith "in the old stock again" and serve to solidify the new kinds of homosocial male bonds needed for middle-class manhood (300). Masculinity theorist Eve Sedgwick further defines these male bonds as the primary instrument of social control in that these relationships work to "maintai[n] and transmi[t] patriarchal power" (25). As Billy's bonds with other men become stronger and begin to form the backbone of white American masculinity for this novel, Saxon necessarily becomes further marginalized and functions now as a body through which this masculinity will be negotiated. The emphasis on male bodies during these scenes and valorization of muscles and skin highlights the notion of an ideal, American body. At one point, Billy is tempted to massage Mark's muscles. The description reads with almost orgasmic undertones: "And anywhere and everywhere Billy touched, muscles large and small rose up, quivered, and sank down, till the whole body was a ripple of willed quick" (307). In this way, the homosocial-homoerotic continuum Sedgwick discusses blurs to naturalize potentially homoerotic behavior between men into the national imaginary of masculinity and sport. Interestingly, the solidarity among men that allows them to dominate women arises out of the seemingly harmless activities of sport and play. It becomes indeed 'American' to engage in displays of sport, energy, and muscle, and, consequently, the New Woman lapses into the communication device whose job is to articulate this masculinity for us.

Normalizing Billy's connection to Anglo-Saxon roots, his powerful and perfect male body, and his whiteness during this time begs us to read this novel as an attempted restoration of the American middle-class man. While London's treatment of race is in great debate amongst scholars, most agree that London had a long-held belief in Anglo-Saxon supremacy. Scholars such as Robert Peluso further argue that London's "growing interest in imperialism," as seen in some of his London stories, acts "as a way of actualizing" this Anglo-Saxon supremacy (59 and 57). Saxon's treatment in this novel, then, is as a witness to this actualizing. In *Valley of the Moon*,

Saxon lacks any independent female agency precisely because her visions of Billy and her subsequent decision to flee to the country are guided by an imaginative history of race purity that becomes more and more confused as Saxon reveals how few of her nostalgic visions are based on real facts: "And how little she really knew of her mother, and of how much was conjecture and surmise, she was unaware; for it was through many years she had erected this mother myth" (38). This 'mother myth,' or conjecture that people like Billy and her are "the real goods" and that they can truly claim the label of 'American' if they move out of the impoverished and violent city to the country, is a fantasy that London establishes through the character of Saxon. As Christopher Gair points out, becoming a true Anglo-Saxon, according to this novel, requires more than being born one. He argues, "To be born a Saxon . . . does not automatically confer membership in the Anglo-Saxon race. Instead, it is only the first half of a doubling process in which birth and action must be united" (145). This mission, then, to become Anglo-Saxon, to become a true American, is embodied in the trip that Saxon initiates to the country because it is only in this utopian land that Billy can become a true man by doing the "actions" prescribed by his birth heritage.

In London's *The Valley of the Moon*, the portrayal of American masculinity is distinctly white and is only negotiated among those of Anglo-Saxon heritage. While Anglo-Saxon nativism was undoubtedly a strong sentiment of the time, we should never fail to interrogate London for the ways in which he reproduces these anxieties and constructs a distinctly white American masculinity in his work.[6] In emphasizing Billy's whiteness, London predicates the success of this American masculinist project on the naturalization of certain characteristics within the realm of whiteness. Many whiteness scholars today encourage us to critically examine how whiteness presents itself as a stable, neutral, and standard entity in literature and to interrogate ways in which "current power relations of gender, sexuality, race, and class are reproduced through the unspoken privilege of assuming racial neutrality" (Aanerud 36).[7] The American qualities of masculinity associated with sport, muscle, and power are juxtaposed to the 'unAmerican' ways of the immigrant men Billy comes into contact with, especially throughout Part III of the novel. In the country space

[6] David Fine, for example, in his essay, "Jack London's Sonoma Valley," takes this Anglo-Saxon nativism almost as a given, stressing that Anglo-Saxon nativism was common for the time. As evolving literary critics, we must never allow this to become an excuse not to interrogate London for his blatant racism.

[7] Toni Morrison's *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* is arguably one of the most insightful literary theory texts on this topic.

detached from the social realities of the city and working class, masculinity displays itself as a playful show of power between white men, as seen through Saxon's eyes. As Billy declares he will "never . . . work steady for another man for wages as long as [he] live[s]," the independent 'a man's gotta do what a man's gotta do' mantra prevails in a place where the white man is being outdone by immigrant farmers who have learned more effective ways to work with the land (336). Quick to distinguish his superior masculinity from that of men of other races, Billy interrogates the Chinese:

> Does a Chink ever want to ride a horse . . . Did you ever see a Chink go swimmin' out through the breakers at Carmel?—or boxin', wrestlin', runnin' an' jumpin' for the sport of it? Did you ever see a Chink take a hotgun on his arm . . . What does a Chink do? Work his damned head off. That's all he's good for. (341)

Saxon once again serves the purpose of witness to the racist diatribe that articulates the qualities necessary to be considered a true American man. Although the Chinese farmer is far more successful at working the California land than Billy is, he is not an American man because he works too hard and fails to engage in the playful, leisurely activities middle-class white men have had the advantage to take a new interest in. Billy, the true American man, "want[s] a valley of the moon, with not too much work, and all the fun we want" (342). The leisurely lifestyle in this country space is of course only available to white men like Billy; it is not available to immigrant farmers who must daily overcome potentially violent struggles waged against them because of their race. In this way, London condones the desire to escape from the drudgeries of working class life into the land of the middle class—where "free will" conquers all and the opportunity to be the employers instead of the laborers allows one to "become a man of affairs" (156).

The invention of this "man of affairs" is carefully constructed as a white man with enough money and means—and in possession of a passive enough woman willing to take the back seat to his objectives and goals—to be able to engage in such playful and "childlike" activities as fitness competitions and leisurely hunting expeditions with other men (316). The Saxon of Part III of *Valley* contrasts markedly with the Saxon depicted at the beginning of the book. Although a working class laborer in the laundry industry in Part I, Saxon seems to have some degree of agency when she decides where and when she will go out, what men or friends she will occupy her time with, how she will spend her money, and, even though she lives at her brother's, what small space she will call her own. Once she meets Billy and, especially, when they reach the country, however, London greatly

simplifies her role into either that of a child or a mother. At one point, London diminutizes her by saying that never since she was a little girl did she feel "such spontaneity of vivacity," such excitement to engage in playfulness with Billy (313). Several times she is described as simply sitting and singing, satisfied with the "fairy tale or book story come true," and impressed by "their excessive jollity, their childlike joy, and the childlike things they did" (315-316). While reading and understanding books is clearly a task "depressingly beyond her," London's infantilization of Saxon eerily blends with an emphasis on her maternal qualities near the end of the novel (323).

Saxon's future fecundity in the Valley of the Moon, which assures restoration of the Anglo-Saxon line, is foreshadowed in a scene in Carmel where Saxon is envisioned as the image of Venus—Roman goddess of love, beauty, and fertility. The fact that Mrs. Hall and other women friends admire her for her resemblance to Venus, something that Billy seconds, seems to trap Saxon in a narrower gender role than she previously possessed in Oakland. Both women and men "were open in their admiration of Saxon, in an above-board manner" (334). Although she does not "lose her head" about this, the image of her as Venus-like carries through to the end of the book, where London "quietly preserves maternity as a crucial component of womanhood" (London 334; Derrick 113). The fact that London portrays Saxon as someone unable to understand the complexities of a book, ultimately driven to be a mother, and fully satisfied in play must lead one to question the assertion made by many critics that Saxon embodies the progressive ideas associated with the New Woman of the early twentieth century. The New Woman, in fact, displayed a sincere intellectual interest in the newfound educational opportunities afforded by the opening of women's colleges. She also tended to eschew motherhood in favor of an economically autonomous life that involved participation in social justice concerns and a more complex understanding of women's sexuality (Smith-Rosenberg 245-296). However, as Derrick reminds us, London remained committed to Social Darwinist understandings of sex throughout his life and tended to preserve basic biological gender categories (113). Clearly, London either had a misunderstanding of the characteristics of the New Woman movement or he had little interest in really exploring such progressive and potentially threatening ideas in his writing. Consequently, London's novel works to employ a female gaze that simultaneously empowers the man and disempowers the woman. She is, in effect, what Derrick terms "the male adventure companion," whose human complexity wanes as Billy's project to re-build American manhood takes center stage—forcing Saxon to embody more traditional female qualities.

As many masculinity theorists stress, the project of gender is always underway. And one of the ways white hegemonic masculinity is so successful in preserving dominant patriarchal gender relations is by maintaining an appearance of stability (Gardiner 11). When we examine these portrayals of masculinity closely in London's *The Valley of the Moon*, we see how historically-specific American notions of masculinity are continually being created and re-created through literature. When Billy explains near the end of the book that there are things "a man has to do" and that these are known by "instinct," we need to complicate his assertion because we have seen that in order for the project of American masculinity to be successful, women's complicity as witness or observer is necessary (376). Billy's exclamation at the end of the book—"Honest to God, Saxon, you've ben the makin' of me"—is correct in a way that London may not have intended for us to understand (413). Saxon has indeed played a critical role in "makin'" the American man, but it has not been one inspired by newfound independence away from the domestic sphere and expectations of the 'Cult of True Womanhood,' nor has it been one that explores the pleasures of a more androgynous gender. She has not in any way found agency or identity of her own. Instead, London ultimately constructs a female protagonist whose only function is to bring her mate's American manhood to fruition; Saxon functions as the vessel or witness through which the goal of racial purity and national identity is ultimately realized. As Gatti indicates, by the end of the book, Billy and Saxon have indeed veered back "to traditionally gendered divisions of labor" and the reclaiming of white masculinity has been effectively achieved ("Stone Hearths" 53). In London's own words: "Were Saxon driven . . . to express what Billy meant to her, she would have done it with the simple word 'man.' Always he was that to her" (335).

Katie O'Donnell Arosteguy
Washington State University
United States of America

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"BAD RAYMOND" AND "THE DESPERADO MANDATE": MASCULINITY IN RAYMOND CARVER'S EARLY POETRY

Robert Miltner

In his early books of poems—*Near Klamath* (1968), *Winter Insomnia* (1970), *At Night the Salmon Move* (1976)—Raymond Carver presented the stereotypical masculine persona of his formative years during the 1950s: a young man given to drinking, working blue-collar jobs, hunting and fishing, posing as the "tough guy" engaged in the reckless, destructive behavior that dominated the first half of his life, the alcoholic "Bad Raymond" days that preceded his sobriety and his generous, reflective "Good Raymond" years which typify the work in his late books of poems—*Ultramarine* (1985), *Where Water Comes Together With Other Water* (1986), and *A New Path to the Waterfall* (1989).

Richard Ford recalls, in his memoir *Good Raymond,* those "Bad Raymond" days that characterized Carver in the late 1970s; his first impression of his friend in 1977 illustrates Carver's economic status: "[h]is teeth needed work" and he "looked as if he'd just stepped down off a Greyhound bus from 1964" (np). Carver's class status contributed to his behavior, for he was a child not of the economic boom that fueled middleclass growth and suburban living of the 1950s, but of its poverty. Carver grew up among the 25 percent of the 1950s' population that was poor or working poor (Coontz 29), and in his essay "My Father's Life," he recalls the first house he grew up in Yakima, Washington, where "our toilet was the last outdoor one in the neighborhood" (79); no wonder, then, that Carver was quick to claim, "I'm a paid-in-full member of the working poor" (Gallagher 10). As an adolescent, Carver experienced the wildness of coming of age in the 1950s, what he called his "bozo days," his "high-school times in Yakima—stealing hubcaps, hanging out with his pals Jerry King, Dick Miller, King Cook, and Lyle Rousseau" (Gallagher 9), and a New Year's Eve when he "got horribly drunk, really drunk," so much so that "people thought I had died" (Carver "Unpublished letter" 21).

Like others of his generation who grew up in the 1950s, he and his wife Maryann "married at a younger age [and] bore their children earlier and closer together" than their parents (Coontz 26); as a result, he experienced the same core problem of many working class families, the "failure to create harmonious gender roles" (Coontz 28). Struggling against the perceived restraints of the "unrelieved responsibility and permanent distraction" (Carver "Fires" 24) of raising children, coupled with his realization that "hard work and dreams [of economic success] were not enough" (25), Carver's rebellion and his frustrated acting out created his persona as "Bad Raymond." As his friend Richard Ford recalls,

> There was…a whole job set of "Bad Raymond" stories (his name for himself, a name he liked), tales from drinking days in San Francisco, Cupertino, Iowa City again: certain citizens struck with chairs; an inadvertent blow delivered to a certain vulnerable artery occasioning a race down to a city street to catch an injured party before he/she bled to death. Bankruptcy. Cars towed away, rows with everyone, unpaid debts, stolen checks, stolen kisses, stolen time. The old days. (np)

The fact that Carver "enjoyed telling [the "Bad Raymond" stories] them on himself" (Ford np) indicates his actions were by choice as much as by consequence.

The "Bad Raymond" persona closely echoes what Norman Mailer labeled in 1963 as "the desperado mandate" which presented a model of men who could

> fight well…love well and love many, be cool, be daring, be dashing, be wild, be wily, be resourceful, be a brave gun. And this myth, that each of us was born to be free, to wander, to have adventure and to grow on the waves of…the unexpected, had a force which could not be tamed. (Qtd. in Faludi 37)

As a product of the 1950s, the post-war era in which the U.S. had "a sense of itself as a *masculine* nation" (Faludi 16, her italics), the persona in Carver's early poems manifests many of the characteristics of Mailer's desperado mandate. Richard Ford's anecdote about his joking offer to shoot the troublesome boyfriend of Carver's daughter—an example of being daring, fighting well, being resourceful, and having an adventure—prompted Carver to "amplify life by seeing [Ford] as a *desperado*" (np, my italics), emphasizes the generational use of the term.

In many ways Raymond Carver's poetry typifies the realistic poetry that is central to contemporary to American literature. Expressing actual experiences and emotions, it uses personal anecdote and narrative, as well as the honesty of the lyric, to give common vernacular voice to the concerns of real people. Critic Jonathan Holden

believes such realism derives its impetus "from acts of exposure...of the hidden costs of middle-class comfort in American culture" (264); extending Holden's comment further, Carver's lyric-narrative poems can be seen as presenting a working-class *dis*comfort, as expressed through the desperado persona from "Carver Country." While there are traces of several characteristics of Mailer's desperado mandate in Carver's early poetry, this essay will limit its discussion to hard-drinking and wild-loving. "Drinking" is shown in "Drinking while Driving" (3), "Luck" (3-5), "Alcohol" (10-11) and mirrored in "Photograph of My Father in his Twenty-Second Year" (7) while the idea that men should "love well" is presented in "For Semra, with Martial Vigor"(11).[1]

"Drinking While Driving" presents youthful boasting, a kind of desperado bravado. Indicating his current state of affairs, the speaker of the poem apologizes for having only read *The Retreat from Moscow*, a title that both indicates failed campaigns and foreshadows the dangerous aimlessness of the speaker and his brother who drive purposelessly, and where "Any minute now, something will happen," including either possible excitement or a possible accident, though, as Arthur F. Bethea notes, "[a]lcoholism is steering the larger car of the speaker's life, and a crash is imminent" (211). The fact that the brothers are drinking directly from a pint bottle of Old Crow they seem to be passing back and forth suggests wild, hard-core drinking, while the possibility of danger is implied through the speaker's references to the way in which, if he closed his eyes he would be "lost" (as in lost at sea, or lost in an avalanche), and how he would "lie down" as if in death and "sleep forever." The problem, of course, is how to find oneself, and like most problem-solving for men who grew up during the 1950s, the speaker seems to knows that "[w]hatever troubles the American man, the outlets of mass culture from Hollywood to pop psychology to Madison Avenue tell him, can be cured by removing himself from society… by driving ever faster on an empty road" (Faludi 15). Still, despite the underlying menace of the situation, the speaker reports he is "happy / riding in a car with my brother" especially since "We do not have any place in mind to go, / we are just driving" and living fully in the moment and fulfilling his being born "to have adventure and to grow on the waves of…the unexpected," as desperados should.

Admitting that some of his poems have "at least a slender base in reality," Carver commented on the autobiographical nature of this poem in his essay "On 'Drinking While Driving'," discussing how in

[1] All page numbers for poems refer to *All of Us: The Collected Poems* by Raymond Carver. New York: Knopf, 1998.

the poem he is "presenting a sense of loss and faint desperation on the part of the narrator who seems—to me anyway—at dangerously loose ends" (179), that is, the hidden cost of working class discomfort, as Carver noted:

> When I wrote the poem I was working an eight-to-five job in a more or less decent white-collar position. But, as always with a full-time job, there was not enough time to go around. ... Once or twice during that period I had ridden around at night with my brother in his car, both of us feeling aimless and hemmed in and working on a pint bottle of Old Crow. Anyway, there were these vaguely remembered facts or traces in my head, along with my own very real feelings of frustration at the time. (179-180)

Carver's sense of aimlessness and frustration, and the temporary relief offered by "drinking and driving," demonstrate his acting wild, daring, and the need to feel "free, to wander, to have adventure and to grow on the waves of…the unexpected" that are part of the desperado mandate.

Growing up in a house where alcohol is central to the family lifestyle can imprint and influence the child toward his adult life as an alcoholic, and "Luck" gives readers a tour of that home, showing the early influence of alcohol on Carver's life, as he opens the poem by stating,

> I was nine years old.
> I had been around liquor
> all my life. My friends
> drank too, but they could handle it.

The separation of "all my life" after a line break from the word "liquor" indicates the long reach of that family influence. Certainly, there is wild drinking bravado of a nine year old who brags,

> I had a straight shot
> from the bottle, then
> a drink of warm collins mix,
> then another whiskey.

Such a description prepares the reader for the two brothers who pass the bottle of Jim Crow in "Drinking while Driving," yet it also prepares the reader for the irony of what Carver calls the "luck" of the boy's going from room to room after the party, helping himself to whatever is left around after the adults have left or passed out. Yet, when time passes and the boy is now a man, the picture shifts from social to private:

> Years later,
> I still wanted to give up
> friends, love, starry skies,

for a house where no one
was home, no one coming back,
and all I could drink.

While the "lucky" moment of the boy's drinking after his parent's party is one of instant gratification, the sadness that reverberates both from the secretive excess of "all I could drink," and the loneliness, is emphasized by Carver's repetition of "no one" that concludes "Luck." Arthur F. Bethea's assertion that "Luck," like "Drinking While Driving," illustrates Peter Donahue's claim that Carver presents alcoholism as "a kind of mind-enthralling ideological force" (211) that drives the actions of his characters or speakers in some of his poems. Given the boy speaker's attraction to and early participation in the adult world of alcohol, it seems impossible to discount its force for "all [his] life."

"Alcohol" is a then-and-now poem, a double mirror, a two-part poem in which the speaker shows one of the "problem[s] with alcohol": that it creates an alternate yet powerful force that readjusts how we see reality under the influence and after. Part one offers a romantic view of wild loving, fueled by hard-drinking: the Citröen is exotic, part of the vision of "Paris; April 1934" to which the speaker is transported through time and space; the scene is idyllic as his actions are seen through a romantic, nostalgic gauze with its Delacroix brocaded drapery, red cummerbund, tarboosh and personal driver. Love is in the air, once let out of the bottle, as they drink and he "make[s] love" to "that pretty woman / [he's] had and had all night," celebrating the feats of the virile desperado speaker of the poem. But once sober, the veil parts and the gauze is removed, and the speaker experiences his epiphany: there is "a problem with alcohol, always alcohol" and the realization of "what [he's] really done / and to someone else." The speaker's sense of disconnection from responsibility in part one of "Alcohol" perpetuates the myth of the desperado who "was born to be free, to wander, to have adventure and to grow on the waves of…the unexpected," yet it displays as well the "uneasiness of self, time, emotionality, and social relationships with others" (Denzin 12) that characterize alcoholism.

Like the car in "Drinking While Driving," the cars in "Alcohol" act both as vehicles of escape and as talismans, as highlighted in the shift between a woman in a Citröen in Paris in April 1934 and a woman in a dusty Ford in San Jose in a contemporary August; such a dichotomy emphasizes the disconnection between a world seen through the glow of alcohol and the dim reality of its hangover. Carver moves from his scene *noir* which begins when "the street lamps are lit" and ends "when the sun comes up over the Quarter / next morning" to the harsh light of afternoon with "sun striking/ the hood of a dusty

Ford" and readers note the kind of "disruptions in time and in narrative continuity that mirror the psychic state of the narrator [speaker in the poem]… intertwining the individual threads of their stories, rendering them oddly inseparable, fusing them" (Nesset 61), at least for the reader, though not for the narrator who seems to claim it is not a problem if "you don't remember. / You honestly don't remember." His belief that acknowledging the glare of the real, like the afternoon sun gleaming on the hood of the Ford, by his insertion of "honestly" into the repetition, compensates for the actions of a true desperado who is wily, resourceful, and cool. Still, as Bethea observes, "amnesia does not lessen his guilt" (210).

"Photograph of My Father in His Twenty-Second Year" is a poem Carver wrote "at a time when I found myself, like my dad, having trouble with alcohol. The poem was a way of trying to connect with him" ("My Father's Life" 85). Based on a photograph his mother gave him, the poem was first published in 1968, the year after his father's death, when Carver was thirty. Carefully divided into three five-line stanzas, the poem shows a formal respect that is inherent in the content. The first stanza presents Carver's father as he appears in the photograph, looking "embarrassed" and "sheepish," holding equally a string of perch and a bottle of beer, images of an American male represented by success at fishing and drinking. The second stanza shows his father trying to enact an image of how he wanted others to see him: he "would like to pose bluff and hearty" by leaning against the fender of a car, that symbol of escape from all troubles, with his hat "cocked over his ear" in a way that he believes makes him look cool and dashing, like "a brave gun," for "All his life my father wanted to be bold." Carver's father is constructing an image of manhood with its "essence…of selling the self" for "in the age of celebrity, the father has no body of knowledge or authority to transmit to his son" (Faludi 35), a point which seems reinforced in the final lines of the poem when Carver acknowledges necessary things his father did not teach him: "yet how can I say thank you, I who can't hold my liquor either, / and don't even know the places to fish?" The third stanza offers a reversal ("But"), showing how despite his father's posing, his eyes and hands "give him away" so that he "limply" offers the fish and the beer, weak images in contrast to the image of traditional masculinity, of boldness, he would like to project in the picture. Nevertheless, the poet still loves and respects his father, even though he himself, "who can't hold my liquor either," has concerns about possible alcoholism.

In his essay "My Father's Life," Carver discusses how he altered some realistic elements of "Photograph of My Father in His Twenty-Second Year," commenting

> The poem is true in its particulars, except that my dad died in June and not October, as the first word in the poem says. … I wanted a month appropriate to what I felt at the time I wrote the poem—a month of short days and failing light, smoke in the air, things perishing. June was summer nights and days, graduations, my wedding anniversary, the birthday of one of my children. June wasn't a month your father died in. (85-86).

Carver reconstructs the poem so that his father dies in the autumn, in a wise, patriarchal month fitting of a man who in 1964 suffered a breakdown and went through electroshock therapy (82) and who had "lost everything in that time—home, car, furniture" as well as his "good name," his self-respect and his virility (83), only to recover. In a moment of revelation, Carver express regrets about his father's passing: "I didn't have a chance to tell him…that I thought he was doing great at his new job. That I was proud of him for making a comeback" (84). Perhaps his father's comeback from many of the same problems that plagued Carver during his "Bad Raymond" days made him airbrush the memory in the poem so that he could, despite his loss, remain cool, a brave gun, a desperado still.

"For Semra, with Martial Vigor," which presents the idea of the man who can "Love well and love many," is a poem about "the combination of dating and drinking" with its "drunk speaker willing to say anything to get sex from a bar pickup" (Bethea 213). Of course, the desperado poet will need to be cool, daring, dashing, wily, resourceful, and wild to try to win Semra's affection, and, as a verbal sparring partner, he has met his match. In the ensuing dialogue, the speaker reveals his background as a working class poet, one who can do other things like "working in mills," "sweeping floors," and "picking fruit," but Semra quips that

> In my country she said
> someone who has been to college
> would never sweep floors

In a later exchange, after Semra asks if the speaker has been in the military, and they quibble over who should be in the military, he offers a volley of bravado:

> Well hell I said
> looking around for a saber
> drunk as a post
> damn their eyes retreat hell
> I just got here

Earlier, when the speaker offers to write a love poem, and writes her name on a napkin with a pencil, this witty, erotic dialogue occurs:

> Not now silly she said

nibbling my shoulder
I just wanted to see
Later? I said
putting my hand on her thigh
Later she said

Such stylistically talking back-and-forth dialogue hearkens to the work of Charles Bukowski, who was an early influence on Carver. Bukowski's work is characterized by conversational bar-talk in his distinct voice with its tough, machismo tone, often delivered by the drunken gambler and brawler who is valorized by the 1950s' culture as the epitome of masculinity. Poet and critic Hayden Carruth comments that Bukowski's poems "are full of stock figures from American Romanticism: noble drunks, sensitive whores, [and] downtrodden artists" (4), while poet Paul Hoover notes that the gritty rooming house lyricism of Bukowski's autobiographical narrative poems is influenced by Ernest Hemingway (one of Carver's major influences), "the most accessible modernist [who] provided Bukowski with a macho role model…and an experimental style already pushed in the direction of American speech" (56). What readers find in "For Semra, with Martial Vigor" is Carver's version of Bukowski's noble drunk and of Mailer's desperado, the dashing brave gun who fights well, albeit with teapots, and who is wily enough to win Semra, at least for the night. Then again, his victory could be his due to his loving well, for, as he tells us, "All poems are love poems."

Raymond Carver's early poems are a young man's poems, cultural statements that, through a gender studies lens, reveal much about men who came of age during the 1950s, a time of "relentless and self-conscious preoccupation with masculinity" (Gilbert 2). Some of that preoccupation developed into the tough veneer of Norman Mailer's desperado mandate and the issues that are at the center of many of the young Raymond Carver's poems, a number of which are connected to his actions that lead to the persona of "Bad Raymond" and his embracing that label. Yet the wild loving and hard drinking ran their course, eventually leading Carver to familial estrangement, divorce, and alcoholism before he achieved the sobriety that led to his "second life" as "Good Raymond," the recovering alcoholic, and his late poems which celebrate creativity, memory, relationships, aging and mortality. Nonetheless, readers and scholars of Carver's poetry need to embrace each of these two phases of his poetry so that the whole of his poetic oeuvre can be understood and appreciated. In doing so, the poems become valuable additions to gender studies, as they are documents and texts that offer examples of how poetry, at least in Carver's case, can show two phases of one writer's life:

1950s "Bad Raymond" masculinity with its Desperado Mandate and 1980s "Good Raymond" post-midlife masculinity.

Robert Miltner
Kent State University Stark
United States of America

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"NAMING" SEBASTIEN: CELEBRATING MEN IN EDWIDGE DANTICAT'S *THE FARMING OF BONES*

W. Todd Martin

When asked in an interview if *The Farming of Bones* was about women, Edwidge Danticat responded:

> It's about women, but about men, too. I always tell people—sometimes they look at the work and they don't believe me—you can't imagine how much I love Haitian men. . . . This book was my chance to show it. I was so in love with Sebastien's character. You know he's the kind of man I really admire: simple and hardworking and strong, emotionally open and dedicated. Kongo and Yves too. . . . I wanted to write about how [men] love under these circumstances and how the women love them back. (Shea 18)

Yet, despite her comment, critics have largely ignored the men in Danticat's fiction or, when discussing men, they have typically relied on the limited, binary paradigm of oppressor/oppressed. Susan Strehle, for example, considers Danticat's interweaving of history and romance as a means of "exposing the power relations that structure love" (32). According to Strehle, "By conjoining a fractured love story with a historical tale of genocide, the novel suggests that women's roles as lovers emerge from the same cultural values that express themselves in the historical slaughter of the racialized other, while women's roles as victims and observers of history bespeak the same cultural values that can make them the helpless mates of tyrannical men" (28). Such a reading, though, essentializes masculinity, presuming that all males are aligned with the hegemony, when in fact the power structures portrayed in the novel oppress Sebastien as much as they do Amabelle. Danticat's portrayal of Sebastien as a physically powerful yet sensitive lover creates a more complex and sympathetic character than any such reductivism can capture.

Danticat's earlier fictions suggest a trend toward a positive depiction of men. In *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, for example, the focus is on the Caco women. But Marc and Joseph, though they are not always successful, at least try to understand and accommodate Martine and

Sophie, respectively, as each woman struggles with her previous sexual subjugation. Because of Martine's rape by a *tonton macoute* and Sophie's abuse by her mother to ensure her sexual purity, each woman must come to terms with herself before she can enter into a healthy relationship with a man, and these men attempt to meet these women on the latter's own terms. Marc helps Martine through her night-terrors, and Joseph tries to respect Sophie's sexual hesitancy (though Sophie often succumbs out of a sense of duty). Danticat's *Krik? Krak!* again emphasizes intergenerational relationships between women in the stories, but Danticat also introduces readers to men living in Haiti under oppressive conditions. Whether it is the father in "Children of the Sea" who must remain hidden with his family in their latrine listening to the brutal murder of their neighbor or the father of "Wall of Fire Rising" who cannot find work to help provide for his family, helplessness haunts the men of *Krik? Krak!*. Danticat is in essence demonstrating the oppression of the men as well as the women in these circumstances, showing that while gender equality is important, the disrupting patterns of hegemony require addressing more general issues of poverty and violence which will liberate everyone.

Danticat's works are not without their oppressive male figures, typically represented by the *tonton macoutes* in the earlier works, and Señor Pico in *The Farming of Bones* becomes the embodiment of misogynistic and hegemonic perspectives. But Pico's role in the novel is as a foil to Sebastien—emphasizing Sebastien's positive characteristics—as much as it is as a villain. Critics like Strehle who would align male characters like Sebastien with the hegemony err by applying a predominantly "western feminist" paradigm to a text which more likely adheres to the tenets of "third world feminism." For more than a decade, women like bell hooks, Alice Walker, Myriam Chancy, and Chandra Mohanty (among others) have insisted that some strains of mainstream feminism emphasize concerns more typical of middle-class white women, often ignoring the implications of what Mohanty pinpoints as "race, colonialism, and imperialism" (211). These feminists of color worry that an emphasis on gender equality without regard to cultural contexts and circumstances limits political action. Forces other than those that are specifically gender-related contribute to the oppression of women, and in many instances these forces are more debilitating and must be overcome before any other advances for women can be made. Cheryl Johnson-Odim explains:

> In 'underdeveloped' societies it is not just a question of internal redistribution of resources, but of their generation and control; not just equal opportunity between men and women, but the creation of opportunity itself; not only the position of women in society, but the

> position of societies in which Third World women find themselves. . . . Thus, Third World women cannot afford to embrace the notion that feminism seeks only to achieve equal treatment of men and women and equal access and opportunity for *women*, which often amounts to a formula for sharing poverty both in the Third World and in Third World communities in the West. (320)

Although dedicated to the cause of women, feminists like Johnson-Odim prefer to avoid what Angela Gilliam refers to as the "reification of gender" which, because it identifies men and women as discordant, transforms men into oppressors and therefore necessarily into the enemy of women (216). These feminists, rather than necessarily pitting women against men, often strive for social changes which are empowering for both genders.

Further, relegating Sebastien to the role of oppressor may also derive in part from what Michael Kaufman describes as the error of "add[ing] up categories of oppression as if they were separate units" (152). In this light, Amabelle would be considered more oppressed as a Haitian woman living in the Dominican Republic than would Sebastien who, while also a minority Haitian, is male. That he is male implies he is less oppressed; he brandishes some assumed advantage. The faults in this thinking, according to Kaufman, are that "sources of oppression do not come in such discreet units" and that experiences of oppression are unquantifiable (152). An indirect result of such fallacies is that Black men often do not receive the attention that they deserve. In "Men in the Third World: Postcolonial Perspectives of Masculinity," Robert Morrell and Sandra Swart suggest that Black men have been silenced or rendered invisible because, as they contend, most work "in underdeveloped world contexts and in terms of race" has focused on women (96). Masculinity studies, however, has worked to remedy such oversights by acknowledging that social structures do often privilege men but also arguing for the need to differentiate along the lines of a hierarchy of masculinities, such as Robert Connell's four categories: hegemonic, complicitous, marginalized, and subordinated (qtd. in Ouzgane and Coleman pars. 14-15). The value of such distinctions, particularly to postcolonial texts, is that they allow for "multiple vectors of power within and between the poles of hegemony and subordination" (Ouzgane and Coleman par. 20). So, rather than reducing men to simple oppressors, critics must consider their social context; masculinity is seen as more complex.

I do not wish to suggest that men—even equally subjugated countrymen—do not contribute to the oppression of women within these non-Western cultures. Myriam Chancy, in *Framing Silence: Revolutionary Novels by Haitian Women*, addresses the ways in which

a patriarchal society like Haiti silences women; she demonstrates that women's role in Haitian history has been ignored and that "Haitian women have been subsumed under the overtly male-identified national identity" (13). In Sebastien, though, Danticat chooses to create a positive male character, one who does not wield power over women. Instead of vilifying Sebastien, turning him into a one-dimensional caricature of patriarchy, Danticat celebrates him, lifting him up even as she does Amabelle from the constraints and limitations of the hegemonic forces with which they struggle. Rather than relegating him to silence and anonymity, as so often happens according to Morrell and Swart, Danticat (through Amabelle) names him: "Men with names never truly die. It is only the nameless and faceless who vanish like smoke into the early morning air" (*Farming of Bones* 282). Thus, the opening line of the novel—"His name is Sebastien Onius" (1)—indicates not Amabelle's subjugation to this male character, but rather her desire to give Sebastien an essence. Sebastien is an integral part of Amabelle's life and loss, and Danticat humanizes both of them, turning both into subjects rather than objects. In fact, Danticat's constructive portrayal of Haitian men reflects a larger agenda to de-objectify all Haitians by raising them above their reductive misrepresentations as "boat people" or helpless victims of police brutality (Scott 78-79), or even as vodouists or AIDS victims (Danticat, "AHA" 40-41). Danticat attempts to confront such portrayals of victimization by asserting, as Helen Pyne-Timothy suggests, "an essential humanity, an abiding spirituality" in Haitians (130).

Thus, although Sebastien is oppressed by his work as an, for all intents and purposes, indentured servant, he remains—as Danticat suggests—"simple and hardworking and strong, emotionally open and dedicated" (qtd. in Shea 18). While he has no social power, Sebastien does not flinch from hard work, especially as it enables him to consider a future with Amabelle. Likewise, he shows an emotional openness and dedication to Amabelle, sharing his thoughts and even his fears with her. The latter characteristic is demonstrated in the intimate moments Danticat shows between Sebastien and Amabelle. Early in the novel, both Amabelle and Sebastien recount their shared experience of losing their parents with one another. Sebastien begins the conversation, asking Amabelle to speak of her father, though he really wants to speak of his own father (33-34). But, despite the self-serving purpose of his asking, he listens patiently as Amabelle describes her father. He also allows himself to be vulnerable in front of Amabelle by sharing his own loss. Their shared loss draws them into a more intimate relationship. One of the more beautiful interchanges, however, takes place without a word. Amabelle and

Sebastien, escaping momentarily from their lives of servitude, share a glance over a cup of coffee. Amabelle narrates:

> For some, passion is the gift of a ring in a church ceremony, the bearing of children as shared property. For me it was just a smile I couldn't help, tugging at the sides of my face. And slowly as he caught glimpses of me between sips of his coffee, he returned the smile, looking the same way I did: bashful, undeserving, and almost ashamed to be the one responsible for the look of desire always rising in a dark flush on the side of his face. . . . His eyes . . . paus[ed] only for an instant when our pupils met and trying to communicate with the simple flutter of a smile all those things we could not say because there was the cane to curse, the harvest to dread, the future to fear. (130-131)

The exchange is more than a gendered power play, and while it may enable the two to momentarily "escape from poverty, pain, and servitude," it is not an "illusion of escape" (32), as Strehle suggests, but a true transcendence beyond their plight of oppression. Rather than a mere flighty romance to be easily thrown off, their union, as captured in this glance, is as sacred and as binding as the rite of marriage, and it is clear throughout the novel that their relationship is a spiritual bond that cannot be broken—even in death.

In fact, the depth and interdependency of the relationship between Amabelle and Sebastien might even be compared with that of the "*marassa*." While critics typically evoke the term to discuss the relationship between Sophie and her mother, Martine, in *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, Marie-José N'Zengou-Tayo explains that in "recent Haitian [political] discourse, the word '*marassa*' (twins) has been used figuratively to define close relationships, bonding between two people that are not family related" (129). Similarly, in the context of the novel, Martine explains to Sophie that the *marassa* were "two inseparable lovers" who are so alike that they are practically the same person (84). Each is a reflection or extension of the other. While Martine is jealous of the possibility of Sophie finding a man—in part due to her own reservations with men, caused by her rape—she still attributes the possibility to relationships between men and women. She notes: "When you love someone, you want him to be closer to you than your *Marassa*. Closer than your shadow. You want him to be your soul. The more you are alike, the easier this becomes" (85).

The reference to the image of the shadow in relation to the *marassa* becomes particularly significant in the first chapter of *The Farming of Bones*, for Amabelle associates Sebastien with her shadow: "At times, Sebastien Onius guarded me from the shadows. At other times he was one of them" (4). In the first instance, shadows for Amabelle have a nightmarish quality, being tied to the loss and pain they have in common, and Sebastien helps diffuse their effect on her by

listening and comforting her (even as she does for him), just as he acts as a healer in her dreams at the end of the novel. The second reference is more ambiguous. As a shadow, does Sebastien become one of these nightmares? Most likely, yes, as his death does haunt Amabelle, even as the deaths of her parents do. Significantly, though, just before Amabelle makes this association between Sebastien and shadows, she notes that as a child, "Playing with my shadow made me, an only child, feel less alone. Whenever I had playmates, they were never quite real or present for me. I considered them only replacements for my shadow" (4). In this context, Sebastien is tied to an essential part of her being, one that is more real to Amabelle than other people. Toward the end of the novel, Amabelle notes:

> "His name is Sebastien Onius and his story is like a fish with no tail, a dress with no hem, a drop with no fall, a body in the sunlight with no shadow.
>
> His absence is my shadow; his breath my dreams" (281)

Here, in the first sentence, Amabelle suggests Sebastien's story is incomplete: "a fish with no tail . . . a body in the sunlight with no shadow," for what happens to him is never fully known. But her testimony gives him a name, keeping his memory alive; she provides a type of shadow—evidence of his corporeal existence—which would otherwise remain disembodied. Likewise, in the second sentence of the passage, Amabelle creates a strikingly contradictory image which identifies Sebastien's absence with her shadow. While he is not physically present, he remains an inseparable part of her. Like the *marassa*, Amabelle and Sebastien are unified with an unbreakable bond, as indivisible as one's shadow in the sunlight. Significantly, neither is any less of an individual due to this union; neither submits to the other. They have merely bonded on a spiritual level, becoming complements.

Unlike Sebastien, Señor Pico personifies patriarchal authority. As a ranking military officer, he literally wields the social and political power that oppresses the Haitians living in the Dominican Republic, and he runs his household as a true patriarch: it revolves around him. Everything and *everyone* has his/her place—even as the Dominican Republic is setting its affairs in order in preparation to expel numerous Haitians from the country to purify it by eliminating what is considered a stain on its economy and its racial purity.

Both Pico's misogynistic and hegemonic views are most fully demonstrated in his response to the birth of his twins, a boy and a girl. Even while both children are alive, Pico clearly prefers his son to his daughter. Viewing the children for the first time, "Señor Pico's

body shook as though he wanted to scream; he held his fist to his mouth to contain his joy. His eyes lingered on his son, his heir. Raising the sheet covering the child's body, he peeked beneath his diaper to check the boy's testicles" (36). He ignores his daughter. Even after his son dies, he goes out of his way to avoid her. Leaving to take the coffin of his infant son to the churchyard, he lightly kisses his wife on the forehead, but he "avoided his daughter's tiny hand, which she intuitively held out towards her father as if in recognition of his face or to ward off the stinging expression of disfavor growing more and more pronounced on it each time he laid eyes on her" (112). His concern is clearly only in his male heir.

Compounding his dislike for his daughter is her darker skin. April Shemak points out that each of the children reflects the "'true' diverse racial origins of the Dominican people. The 'dark' daughter, Rosalinda, becomes a metonym for the African segments of the Dominican Republic, while the 'white' son, Rafi, is a metonym for its Spanish ancestry" (90-91). Later, Shemak also considers the symbolic significance of the twins as they reflect the national division of the island with Rafi symbolizing the Dominican Republic and Rosalinda symbolizing Haiti (92). With both of these interpretations in mind, Pico's rejection of his daughter reflects not only his misogynistic attitudes, but also demonstrates his racial and nationalistic prejudices—the same prejudices that underlie the rationale for the massacre, itself. And this is further emphasized by his naming his son Rafael, after Generalissimo Rafael Trujillo (36), the instigator of the genocide of as many as twenty-thousand Haitians.

What truly emphasizes Sebastien's positive characteristics, though, is the contrast between the relationship he shares with Amabelle and that shared by Pico and Valencia. Rather than maintaining a close, spiritual connection such as that between Amabelle and Sebastien—even in death—Pico and Valencia live separate lives. Pico keeps his wife waiting at home while he is off pursuing his ambition, namely to rise through the ranks of the military and eventually become president (28). Amabelle notes on several occasions that the husband and wife appear distant, unconnected. Shortly after Rafi dies, Amabelle remarks:

> He [Pico] was silent while she [Valencia] sobbed, not offering a word. Perhaps he was suppressing his own tears, but his silence seemed to me a sign of failure for this marriage, the abrupt union of two strangers, who even with time and two children—one in this world and one in the other—had still not grown much closer. The short courtship and the even shorter visits after marriage had not made them really familiar with each other. The señora did not know him well enough, nor he her. (98)

Their emotional and spiritual distance is reinforced on a literal level at the end of the novel, for Valencia is still living at home in Alegría while Pico, who has made his way through the government hierarchy, lives in the capital (289).

Likewise, Valencia surrenders to Pico's authority, demonstrating the patriarchal construct of their marriage and again contrasting the relationship between Sebastien and Amabelle. For example, while Valencia notices the slights toward Rosalinda, she refuses to acknowledge the implications, choosing rather to disregard them. When Rosalinda is held out to her father on another occasion, he again avoids her touch, and Valencia "ignores his avoidance of their daughter and of herself, as she did all the other things he did that were not pleasing to her" (137). Given the fact that Rosalinda symbolizes certain racial connotations along with her symbolic tie to Haiti, as Shemak contends, Valencia is in essence ignoring her own husband's racial, hegemonic views, choosing to remain silent, instead. What is worse, she attempts to justify his actions toward Haitians and especially his acts at the border. In her meeting with Amabelle at the end of the novel, she claims that he was just following orders (300), even though she recognizes the destruction that occurs at his hands and ignores his prejudices. Valencia argues that she helped numerous Haitians during the massacre, claiming she did so in Amabelle's name (299), but she never condemns the slaughter. Instead, she falters, revealing her own weakness: "If I denounce this country, I denounce myself. I would have had to leave the country if I'd forsaken my husband. Not that I ever asked questions. Not trusting him would have been like declaring that I was against him" (299). Rather than take a stand for what she knew was right, she chose to ignore the atrocities even as she ignores the slights to her daughter, all for the sake of her unquestioned loyalty to her country and to her husband. Such blind devotion demonstrates her compliance with patriarchal attitudes and implies a subjugated relationship.

By creating this foil to the relationship shared between Sebastien and Amabelle, Danticat iterates the value she places on their bond. She sets out to demonstrate that a man and a woman can come together in a mutual relationship without one necessarily having the upper hand. She celebrates their union. And rather than wanting to create a typically conceived male who holds power over his female lover, she creates a loving male partner who loves and respects his mate, avoiding the trap of objectifying her. In her Foreword to Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Danticat reflects on the character of Janie Crawford. She recounts a debate in which she participated at Barnard College over the novel. "[A]s young feminists

and womanists" they questioned: "Was Janie Crawford a good female role model or was she solely defined by the men in her life?" From that discussion, Danticat concluded that Janie "did not have to be a role model at all. She simply had to be a fully realized and complex character, which she was" (xvii). The same could be said about Amabelle. Speaking Sebastien's name so that he does not become another one of the nameless and faceless victims, she does not sacrifice her own subjectivity as Florence Jurney suggests (par. 13). Her love of Sebastien need not be a weakness, relegated to an either/or dichotomy which subjugates one to the other. And Sebastien need not be associated with the limited role of oppressor. Instead, recognizing the indiscriminate victimization of male and female alike in the imperialist context, Danticat—and Amabelle by extension—want to elevate Sebastien (and Haitian men in general), to de-essentialize him and give him a part in the story even as she emphasizes the reemergence of women of power and strength. Amabelle, then, makes real her own experience through her testimony of the massacre, giving Sebastien a name even as she finds her own voice.

W. Todd Martin
Huntington University, Indiana
United States of America

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INTERROGATIONS OF MASCULINITY: VIOLENCE AND THE RETRO-GANGSTER CYCLE OF THE 60s

Brian Faucette

American manhood is governed by a sense of exclusion and fear, elements that have been incorporated into many of the films produced in classical Hollywood as well as contemporary Hollywood. The metaphor of the "suit" in 1950s Hollywood films as a representation of manhood symbolized conformity, consumerism, and the American masculine experience. However as Michael Kimmel notes, "by the 1960s American men felt increasingly alienated, stuck in a rut, unable to escape the dull monotony of a cookie-cutter corporate identity, a suit that was ready-made and waiting to be filled" (264). Yet in gangster films from the 1930s into the 1960s, suits replaced the cowboy's Western garb as a metaphor of masculinity. The men in the suits were more than simple corporate clones. They were men of action who engaged in violent and sexual acts, and who took control of their destinies. These men illustrated that it was possible for American white males to be more than weak, timid creatures who feared the influence of foreign powers, the threatening potential of women, and the encroachment of African Americans into the public sphere (Kimmel 6-9). In short, these gangster figures demonstrated a form of masculinity that was without emotion, remorse, or even at times intellectual foresight but by the mid to late 1960s this perception would be questioned. Nevertheless these were and remain the qualities celebrated as exemplar of the American male experience.

What was often lacking in the classical Hollywood period was a realistic portrayal of the sexual tension and violence which men may be capable of enacting upon society, especially women. No other genre of film has better represented the desire to capture the feelings of self-interested and selfish men than that of the gangster film.

Robert Warshow identified these characteristics of the genre when he argued that, "the gangster movie…is a story of enterprise and success ending in precipitate failure. Success is conceived as an increasing power to work injury, it belongs to the city, and it is of

course a form of evil (though the gangster's death, presented usually as punishment, is perceived simply as defeat)" (Warshow 89). Thus, the world of the gangster that Warshow mapped was one primarily defined by the city as an environment where men wore suits, lived in fancy apartments, dined in expensive restaurants and relaxed and conducted some business in nightclubs. While on the surface these aspects of the lifestyle seem normal, it was the violence that enabled the upward mobility of these figures which, Warshow argued, mirrored the American dream (Warshow 83). His analysis consisted of his recollections of the 1930's gangster films that had been popular with American audiences. However, the gangster figure has never disappeared from the American consciousness. In fact, the gangster films of the late 1950s and into the 1960s display the true brutality of the gangster in all his sadistic glory. The films *The Rise and Fall of Legs Diamond*, *Murder Inc.,* and later *Bonnie and Clyde* portray male gangsters as brutal, psychotic figures who enact violence towards other gangsters, forces of law and order, and women to validate their own masculinity.

The first two films I discuss, *The Rise and Fall of Legs Diamond* and *Murder Inc.,* have traditionally been lumped together with a cycle of what Carlos Clarens and other scholars refer to as either "syndicate films" or pseudohistorical biographies (Clarens 251). Syndicate films like *The Racket* (1951) were gangster films in which the "mob" was depicted to function like a corporation rather than a singular enterprise. Films about gangsters such as *Baby Face Nelson* (1957) and the *St. Valentine's Day Massacre* (1967) returned the legendary criminals of America's past from the era of the Roaring 20s to the Depression into the public mindset, in effect creating an element of nostalgia that both mythologized and demythologized the historical figures (Fran Mason 122). The use of the term "cycle" to discuss these films is as equally inadequate as simply lumping these films together as examples of bio-pics which deal with the lives of American gangsters of the 20s and 30s because, as Lee Grieveson notes, "cycles are small, nuanced groupings of films that are not transhistorical and often operate only within one or two seasons of production, whereas trends are broad and inclusive categories made up of interconnected cycles" (3-4). I would argue that the gangster films of the 50s into the 60s represent a trend rather than a cycle because these films span a period of nearly ten years and are linked together in subject matter.

The Rise and Fall of Legs Diamond (Boetticher 1960) premiered in New York on 3 February 1960. The film was produced by United States Productions and released by Warner Brothers Pictures. The picture received fairly good reviews and was predicted to break even

at the box office. As *Variety's* review of the film, which appeared on January 27, 1960, indicates, the film was a "well-made gangster biopic with average b.o. outlook" (*Variety* 6). In addition the reviewer chose to highlight the fact that the film was an old fashioned gangster pic "supersaturated with gun fire and fear" (6). It is the fear and fascination of the gangster that engages the viewer as we watch this young man Legs Diamond (Ray Danton) rise through the criminal ranks of the underworld.

In short, he is the exemplar of the self-made man, a term first coined by Henry Clay in a speech to the senate in 1832 (Kimmel 26). The use of the term 'self-made man' became ubiquitous in the 19th century as a way to identify American masculinity and to link it with the ethos of hard work, and rugged individualism.

This idea of the self-made man is easily applicable to the American gangster films of the 1930s. Yet when the gangster again becomes the subject of public fascination in the 1960s, the emphasis shifts from depicting the gangster as a figure who is dangerous and abnormal, a strategy brought about with Hollywood's decision to self-censor from 1934-1967, to that of a debonair, dashing figure that has success with the ladies and uses his ill-gotten wealth to buy all the things that he desires, even respect.

The Rise and Fall of Legs Diamond is one example of how the gangster is presented in 1960s Hollywood films. From the opening credits we know that this figure, Legs Diamond, is a man of the city. The title sequence begins with the silhouette of a man in a topcoat and fedora, and as the credits fade into the film this silhouette is superimposed over the image of a 1920s American city. In using this technique the filmmakers highlight the fact that this is the story of a man who towered over his environment and his personal relationships, believing that through violence he could command respect and ensure his success as a man. After the silhouette fades, a brief description of Jack 'Legs' Diamond is inserted over the images of the city. It reads "Jack "Legs" Diamond was spawned in the 1920s—an era of incredible violence." This brief exposition sets up the story while also providing the film the distance that is required to depict the gangster in a more realistic manner compared to those of the 1930s.

The film is the story of a man who enters a non-descript 1920s American city with his brother. Immediately, the camera shows that these men are visitors to this city because they are each carrying suitcases. These men look like everyone else, but there is the sense that these men are more than average men. This is illustrated when we see Legs grab his brother and duck into a doorway after overhearing

gunshots. There is a cut and then from the character Legs's perspective we see a man being shot as he is trying to rob a jewelry store. Two other men run into the street holding guns and fire at a car as it attempts to escape the scene. The driver is hit, and just like in the Warner gangster films of the 30's we see the car careen out of control as it finally plows into the front entrance of a movie theater. In this brief sequence the film is able to establish its heritage with the classic gangster films. This technique allows the film to deconstruct the older films, which were restricted in the amount of sex and violence that could be shown by the Production code administration. This ability to depict sex and violence in a more realistic and frank fashion occurs in the scene after the shoot out between the cops and robbers. Legs looks down at the bodies with all the other onlookers. The bodies are arranged so that we can see them in the awkward positions in which they fell as they were shot. Also we can see their blood on the pavement and on the black velvet display of the jewelry store window. In the classical era we would only have seen the bodies, but now the brutal truth of crime may be displayed in its ugly reality. Legs looks up at the ledge above them then over to the jewelry store window, and he exclaims, "He didn't use his head."

While this line is whispered to his brother and may seem to be a throwaway intended to generate a sensation of irony and comedy in the viewer, it incorporates Diamond's philosophy of the world. He is a man who believes in acting alone to get what he wants, which in this instance is the jewels. He uses his date with a dance instructor named Alice (Karen Steele) later in the film to enable him to steal the jewels. Thus like other gangster films of the past where women serve as objects of desire and little else, this film uses Alice as a device by which Legs may steal, in the guise of romantic interest.

A second example of Legs acting alone occurs after he has quit his job as a dancer with Alice at the Hotsy Totsy Club. He and his brother are sitting down to celebrate the end of his parole when they see a well-dressed man enter the club surrounded by bodyguards. The man is the famous gang lord Arnold Rothstein and in a single instance Legs decides that he wants to be one of Rothstein's bodyguards. This desire sets up the conflict of the rest of the film and illustrates two types of masculinity in the film, that of the self-made man (Legs) and that of the father figure (Rothstein) who has everything including a beautiful woman, fancy suits, bodyguards and respect. In order for Legs to validate his own masculinity and existence he must take everything Rothstein has— including his life. After he kills Rothstein we watch as Legs begins to kill and destroy each of his competitors. Each murder is celebrated on screen, and the image of

Legs as someone to be feared is altered by this strategy. The review of the film for *Motion Picture Herald* notes that the film "makes of him a sort of hero in reverse, an emphasis which is ineffectively neutralized by pointing out the destruction of the gangland legend that he could not be killed" (*Motion Picture Herald* 573). The importance of Legs as an outlaw figure is that he cannot be killed despite being shot multiple times in the film, and in each case he survives only to kill off those who have attacked him.

It could be argued that Legs' masculinity is in fact tied to his relationship with Alice, whom he will later marry to avoid prosecution for five murders. While Legs believes that he can achieve anything through a singular activity, what the film demonstrates is that American masculinity is oftentimes coupled with a heterosexual relationship. This reinforces the idea that in Hollywood American men are incomplete without the love and desire of a woman. For example, when Legs marries Alice and provides her with luxury goods such as fur coats, expensive vacations and fancy cars, it corresponds to his rise as more than a body guard—he becomes the boss. Unfortunately, Legs and Alice's marriage is strained by his desire to be number one and she begins to drink heavily. In an effort to save himself from prosecution Legs suggests that the two of them take a trip.

Thus, he and Alice go to Europe where he finds out through the newsreels that the collective forces of law and order are abolishing his world. The role of the group in the film is juxtaposed with the individual acts performed by Legs and is equated both with law and order as well as crime. When Legs returns and tries to reclaim his place as boss, he discovers that crime is no longer a singular enterprise. It has joined the ranks of the American corporate system and as a result men who go it alone are no longer needed. Legs tells the men of the syndicate that he doesn't need anybody because he is Legs Diamond. His belief that he is greater than his wife, his friends and his life in the end is shown to be a fallacy. His wife tells him that as long as someone loved him he was safe, but now that he has revealed himself for what he is, a self-centered psychopath, there is no one to save him. Rather than sacrifice herself further, Alice leaves Legs alone in his fancy apartment, where he will be killed because of his arrogance.

When he is finally killed by the syndicate Murder Inc. Boetticher chooses to place the audience in Legs's position but does not allow them to see the actual hit. The camera is positioned from floor level and looks up at the killer as he opens fire with his gun. By using this technique, the director allows viewers to vicariously feel as if they are being shot. The film ends with Legs's body being driven away in

an ambulance. His death symbolizes the death of the ideal of self-centeredness that might have been the norm prior to the 1960s, yet it becomes impossible to not consider the effects of women, as well as society, and furthermore perhaps offers viewers an opportunity to rethink masculinity and its qualities in the realm of the 1960s.

The importance of the syndicate Murder Inc. became more than a plot point in the film of the same name that was released in July of 1960. In his review of the film, Bosley Crowther noted that the character of Abe Reles was played by Peter Falk in "an amusingly vicious performance" (Crowther 26). Furthermore he notes how Falk is able to create this character into a cold-blooded killer, arguing that "viciousness pours out of him." While it is impossible to ignore the brutality of Abe Reles in the film, what has not been commented on is the fact this is a man who on the surface seems confident but deep beneath that cold veneer lurks a masculine identity that is in crisis.

In this film the sordid history is laid bare of one of the syndicate's primary killers, Abe Reles (Peter Falk) and Joey Collins (Stuart Whitman), a down and out entertainer, who is pressed into helping Reles. Collins, role as an entertainer encourages the more ruthless male characters like Reles to challenge his position as a man and the fact that Reles is able to force Collins into helping the gangsters can be read in terms of a masculine feminine dynamic. In essence Collins becomes a victim equated with the masculine notion of women as weak-willed, easily manipulated individuals who can be coerced into performing any act.

However, Reles like Legs is a self-made man who uses his prowess as a killer and his desire to inflict cruelty on others as a means to influence and impress. Yet unlike Legs Diamond, who is suave and debonair, Abe Reles is shown to be a man who is not good looking and is in fact capable of even greater cruelty. The level of his brutality is indicated in the beginning of the film when we see him shoot an unarmed man in the shadows of his apartment.

As a result of his skills, Reles is recruited to work for Lepke Buchalter, a well- dressed gang lord who controls organized crime in Brooklyn. Reles and his partner are sent to settle one of Lepke's accounts in upstate New York, and this leads to his involvement with Joey Collins. After committing another murder Reles shows up at the Collins' apartment where he sees Eadie (May Britt), Collin's beautiful young wife. He tells Joey that he and Eadie are old friends but she takes umbrage with this claim and this leads Reles to become angry. This anger will manifest itself again in one of the most important scenes of the film.

Reles shows up to call on Joey and finds Eadie alone. She lets him in the apartment and asks him, "What do you want?" As he walks into the space he is annoyed, which Falk emphasizes through the use of his hands. Reles tells Eadie "I wanna get somethin' straight in my mind. Now what was that all about the other day? Why did you insult me? Did I ever bother you?" He inches further into the apartment and Eadie, frightened by his determination, tells him, "You better get out of here." This annoys Reles even more and he says, "Get out? I just got here. I just wanted to talk to you. What's the matter? You're too good for me?" These lines are spoken as he moves closer to her. Eadie backs further into the apartment and he asks her, "What are you runnin for? Come over here!" he commands before grabbing her and ripping her blouse. She runs into the bedroom and he follows saying "Touch ya. I'll touch ya. I'll touch ya good."

This leads to him slapping her and then forcefully throwing her down onto the bed. He dominates the frame and her as he leers over her body. The two of them scuffle and we see his hat slip off his head. Over the images as they slowly dissolve we see the image of a train and we hear the train, which sounds like the scream of a woman. The use of the scream and the train imply that Eadie is being raped and this interpretation is validated in the following scene when Eadie tells her husband Joey that Reles has put his hands and his dirty fingers all over her. This scene also caught the attention of the reviewer for *Motion Picture Herald*, who notes that "Falk is rather an animal type and in due time rapes Miss Britt" (756). Reles' actions demonstrate that he is more of a man because as he says later on if there is something he wants, then he takes it. This belief that men should domineer over women is indicated within the concept of the self-made man, yet interestingly within the film this horrific act ennobles Collins to fight against the mob.

Joey reacts by kicking at a door and swinging his fists in the air violently. He screams, "I'll kill him." Joey is emasculated in this scene and throughout the rest of the film because he has not been able to protect his wife. This inability to protect Eadie ultimately leads to her murder, and Joey testifying against Lepke and his associates.

Reles eventually becomes the target of his employer and this leads to his cooperation with the police and his murder. Interestingly, Reles's death parallels the cinematic technique used to stage Legs Diamond's murder, only this time the camera is placed at the level of the sidewalk so we can see Reles as he plunges to his death from a hotel window.

If there is a moral to these gangster films, as there was to some

of the ones produced in the 1930s, it could be argued that these films are speaking out against the notion of the self-made man and instead endorsing a new type of masculinity. This new masculinity is one that embraces the idea of group efforts, honest and equal heterosexual relationships. However, this group approach and the notion of the self-made man in regard to questions of masculinity would as Kimmel points out begin to come under fire and was often thought of as a disease, one that was crippling American men by creating patterns of alienation and emptiness (Kimmel, 265).

This belief that masculinity of the 1960s was a diseased one may often be located within the cultural products of the decade, especially the films and television programs. For example, Kimmel notes that "*Star Trek* revealed, perhaps more clearly, if unintentionally, than any other TV show, the growing crisis of masculinity" (290). Another example and one that has been the center of controversy from the moment of its release was the film *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), typically recognized for its influence on the further development of counter culture in America in the late 1960s. As Lester Friedman argues:

the appeal of *Bonnie and Clyde* for its late-sixties audiences seems clear: it fired a subversive shot across the prow of main-stream American society. By doing so, the film forced an older generation of moviemakers, critics, and audiences—one shaped by their Great Depression and World War II experiences—to confront the emerging power and rebellious values of a new and different generation… (4).

The new generation that Friedman identifies thus embraced the film and its ability to anger or inspire American audiences to re-think their own feelings and expectations as Americans, as a nation and the importance of cinema as an art form. William Free echoes Friedman's assessment of the film in his essay *Aesthetic and Moral Value in Bonnie and Clyde*, noting that "Bonnie and Clyde has become the *cause célèbre* of contemporary American film making" (99). In becoming the champion of leftist causes and youth culture, Free argues that "here is an American film which deserves close analysis usually reserved for literary works, more serious drama, and the films of European directors like Bergman, Fellini, and Antonioni" (99). Pauline Kael said of the movie that "*Bonnie and Clyde* is the most excitingly American American movie since the *Manchurian Candidate"* (178).

However, in all the critiques and discussion of the film, ironically gender and in particular masculinity are overlooked. Like the aforementioned *Rise and Fall of Legs Diamond* and *Murder Inc.,* this film is deeply invested in examining the gangster and how constructions

of masculinity impact the character as well as the viewer.

The character of Clyde Barrow (Warren Beatty) is based on the real-life petty gangster of the 1930s, yet in the film this lesser known entity becomes a modern day Robin Hood who struggles with his sexual abilities and his need to make a better life for himself and his partner/lover Bonnie Parker (Faye Dunaway). From their first encounter outside Bonnie's house, it is obvious that Clyde is a man of no real worth. The camera shows him attempting to steal Bonnie's mother's car, leading Bonnie to holler down "hey boy!" In this brief exchange director Arthur Penn creates the dynamic of the film, that of questioning and re-thinking American manhood. When Bonnie calls Clyde "boy" she is in a position of power because she is looking down at him from her window and more importantly she denotes that this stranger who looks manly is not acting in ways that respectable men would in the scene. Penn depicts Clyde as a shady character who would steal and yet he is willing to stop when hailed by the voice of a woman. Pierre Bourdieu describes masculinity as "that established order, with its relations of domination, its rights and prerogatives, privileges and injustices" (1). However, within this film Penn seeks to show that if there is a masculine order of domination at work, it exists within mainstream culture and forces of law and order. This is why I would argue that Clyde already a small time thief takes the opportunity to rob a grocery store using a pistol. These actions demonstrate for Bonnie, who had previously questioned whether he was capable of finding a job, that in fact he is a man of action.

Ironically, it is after this, their first robbery that Bonnie attempts to consummate their relationship through sex. As they drive away, she is shown kissing him and nearly crawling into her lap, a moment in the film that is strangely enough quite touching and comic. Unfortunately for her Clyde is not a man who can perform sexually as he explains to her when he says "look here. I might as well tell you right off. I ain't much of a lover boy. That don't mean nothing personal about you. I mean…I –I-I never saw percentage in it. Ain't nothin' wrong with me…I don't like boys." This exchange between the two challenges the traditional expectations of masculinity that men are always interested in sex, because as Penn shows, it is possible that there are men who are not governed by their sexual desires. It is also interesting that Clyde feels the necessity to state to Bonnie that he is not into "boys" just because he cannot function sexually. The reality that Clyde is not what he appears to be, a virile, good looking man who might possess sexual secrets comes as a great surprise and disappointment to Bonnie. She tells him "your advertising is just dandy. Folks'd just never guess you don't have a thing to sell." Within this

exchange Bonnie's language demonstrates how the idea of sex being a commodity is problematized. In many cases and within Hollywood films, it is usually the women who are sexualized or commodified, yet here Penn emphasizes that Clyde is a man whose masculinity is both questioned and in fact diseased. He is diseased because he buys into the notion of the self-made man, believing that through his criminal exploits he can give Bonnie all the nice things she deserves, thus becoming her source of financial and emotional support. Yet, as Kimmel argues the notion of man as the bread winner was under fire in the 1960s as a result of progressive movements such as civil rights and the burgeoning feminist movement. Many of these elements are incorporated into the film.

When Clyde and Bonnie are finally able to consummate their relationship, it signals the end of their escapades. After escaping the law and being nearly killed they go with C.W. Moss to his father's farm and hide out. While on the farm they rest and try to heal from their wounds. In the process their relationship intensifies to the point when in the scene where the camera shows Bonnie reading the poem she wrote about the two of them to Clyde, he becomes sexually aroused by her. At first this could be read as Clyde simply reacting to the narration of his own exploits; however, Penn's direction and earlier conversations between the two highlight that Clyde is a man who respects women and their abilities, especially Bonnie's. He tells her "you made me somebody" which is an interesting line of dialogue to reflect on when considering the status of Clyde's masculinity. For if American masculinity is defined by men's actions and insecurities, then in this case it becomes apparent that Clyde's are determined by other people's feelings and opinions of him. Thus upon hearing Bonnie's poem, Clyde is able to recognize himself as a person and this is what leads to their sexual union. After finishing the act, Clyde nervously asks Bonnie about his performance and she replies "you did just fine." If it is possible to read their story as a tragic love affair then this moment both highlights and deconstructs the anxieties of this new post-World War II generation.

Clyde is not like Legs Diamond or Abe Reles despite the fact that he makes his way in the world by committing crimes, and this is the subtext of the film. Clyde represents the new men who must come to terms with their own limitations and the erosion of their dominance of the world. The idea of the self-made man must be challenged in this film, just as it is in the end of *Rise and Fall of Legs Diamond* and *Murder Inc.* In addition the idea of corporate conformity would have to be challenged if there was to be any hope for real change that accepted the contributions of women and minorities. Together these

three films indicate how questions of masculinity and its importance on the fabric of American society were being interrogated by filmmakers as well as by the culture at large.

Brian Faucette
University of Kansas
United States of America

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JEWISH MEN AND THE EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICAN CODE OF MASCULINITY THROUGH ETHNIC LENSES

Dana Mihăilescu

The study of masculinity has recently bloomed as a serious scholar enterprise especially under the stimulus of feminism (Traister 280) and as a reaction to the tendency of considering the issue of manhood as a settled one (Pugh XV). Ever since these early stages, there has been an interest in assessing the complexity of the field. For instance, when defining the scope of his study *Manhood in America*, Michael Kimmel highlights the complicated history of masculinity as best revealed in the relation between hegemonic and subordinated groups:

> A history of manhood must, therefore, recount two histories: the history of the changing 'ideal' version of masculinity and the parallel and competing versions that coexist with it", […] [a] tension between the multiplicity of masculinities that collectively define American men's actual experiences and this singular 'hegemonic' masculinity that is prescribed as the norm […] Yet, in another sense, it is at least indirectly the story of marginalized 'others' – working class men, gay men, men of color, immigrant men – how these different groups of men and, of course, women were used as a screen against which those 'complete' men projected their fears and, in the process, constructed this prevailing definition of manhood. (6)

In accord with Kimmel's idea of complex masculinity above, my essay sets out to investigate the relation between mainstream and marginal masculinity in early twentieth-century America by focusing on the case of one particular ethnic group—Jewish Americans. Other studies have had a similar focus, and this essay owes an intellectual debt to Sander Gilman, Mary-Ellen Prell, Michael Biberman and Ted Merwin[1] who have not ignored the issue of masculinity when

[1] The works I refer to here include: Sander Gilman's *The Jew's Body* (New York: Routledge, 1991) and *Jewish Frontiers: Essays on Bodies, Histories, and Identities.* (Gordonsville: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Mary Ellen Prell's *Fighting to Become*

discussing Jewish American identity. My goal is to see how this relation was recorded in first-generation Jewish American prose writings by considering the differences and similarities characterizing men and women writers, their attitudes vis-à-vis the mainstream position and each other. This essay therefore also makes a contribution by looking beyond the simple interethnic issue of masculinity, as a code prescribed by the dominant WASP culture on a marginal group like the Jewish one which has most often been the subject of existing studies on the history of American masculinity and Jewish men. Instead, I link the interethnic dimension with the intra-ethnic one and probe into the way in which Jewish men and the code of masculinity were rendered by Jews themselves. In this way one can determine the sharpness of nativist prejudices as well as American Jews' profoundly gendered encounters between tradition and modernity.

More precisely, I mean to postulate and investigate the dynamics of the faulty masculinity associated with early twentieth-century Jewish American men in the time's Jewish American prose. As already mentioned above, I argue that this dynamics is brought to life by the inter-relation between interethnic and intra-ethnic representations of the place occupied by Jewish American men in relation to the idea of masculinity. I will start from the main features of masculinity in mainstream America of the early twentieth-century: physical vigor, palpable achievements and lack of emotionalism. To be added, as indicated by Amy Kaplan, aggressiveness as performance rather than aggressiveness as actualized violence becomes the prop of American masculinity at the time.

My interest is to show how this outside imposed prescription triggered different gender reactions inside the Jewish community per se and as exemplification of this I use the literary works of Marcus Eli Ravage and Anzia Yezierska. I will show how Jewish American men and women writers alike posit performance as a hallmark of American masculinity in the early twentieth-century. If this identification allows Jewish men easier access to American culture, for Jewish women it becomes the trigger for changing their negative attitude against the weakness of Jewish men; this is made possible by their discovery of fakeness behind Gentile masculinity.

Thus, I argue that Jewish American men record their paradoxical relation to the norm of American masculinity as different from their

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Americans. Assimilation and the Trouble between Jewish Women and Jewish Men (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999); Michael Biberman's *Masculinity, Anti-Semitism and Early Modern Literature: From the Satanic to the Effeminate Jew* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2004); Ted Merwin's *In Their Own Image. New York Jews in Jazz Age Popular Culture*.

traditional values but also as a relevant path to Americanization by its very departure from the values of their own ethnic community. By contrast, Jewish American woman writer Yezierska manages to carve out the space for the impassioned intellectual as an alternative to the indifferent intellectualism promoted by mainstream masculinity and hereby offers the solution of a different masculinity characterizing Jewish American men.

Emasculated Jews and American Masculinity

> The genuine American recognized but one distinction in human society – the vital distinction between the strong, effectual, 'real' man and the soft, pleasure-loving, unreliant failure. (Ravage 211)

This excerpt from a book originally published in 1917 and entitled *An American in the Making* records the 1910 experience of narrator-protagonist Max, an immigrant Jewish American student at the University of Missouri, and whose experiences closely resemble those of the Romanian-born author Marcus Eli Ravage. His affirmation at once identifies that what lies at the core of American culture is a strong sense of masculinity understood as highly dependent on aggressiveness. In fact, among the early twentieth-century Jewish American prose authors, I am aware of only this one writer who explicitly tackles the dominance of masculinity in the American society of the era. His account of what masculinity means for mainstream Americans thus becomes a precious tool for understanding the clash between the hegemonic and marginal claim to masculinity and the positioning of the marginal man in relation to mainstream masculinity.

Thus, in recording the significance of manhood for mainstream America, Ravage singles out its characteristic features as physical vigor and palpable achievements. To be added, the idea of masculinity also takes shape by negative definition, i.e. by pointing to what prevents a person from qualifying as manly. In this respect, Ravage indicates the realm of emotions as a certain disqualifier of manliness.

In fact, Ravage's position vis-à-vis masculinity closely corresponds to the findings of the era's historians. Concerning this, it is worthwhile mentioning Amy Kaplan's study of the relation between masculinity and American imperial power in the 1890s. Kaplan identifies the elements constituting the norm of masculinity at the time, noting that this was the time for redefining "white middle-class masculinity from a republican quality of character based on self-control and social responsibility to a corporeal essence identified with the vigor and prowess of the individual male body" (223). In other words, the

central feature of masculine identity in the 1890s was "the muscular robust physique" (222), an idea also developed by Bryce Traister in his brief overview of the stances of masculinity throughout time, in which he describes the early twentieth-century masculine image as emphasizing "aggressiveness and domination" (288).

Yet, in order to understand what the aggressive muscleman model stood for in the early twentieth century one of Kaplan's observations is particularly useful, namely that the athletic field became the new site of masculinity from the 1890s onwards. As a consequence of this, Kaplan makes another important statement in stressing that during the same period performance replaces primitive violence as the trigger and redeemer of one's masculinity. In other words, in the changed context in which college replaced war as the site of expressing one's manliness, the early twentieth-century man is one for whom aggressiveness no longer refers to physical violence but to a valorization of sports as a national icon to the American mind. Aggressiveness as performance rather than aggressiveness as actualized violence is the direct result of such a situation.

Indeed Max, the narrator of Ravage's book, identifies athletics as the primary conversation topic at the University of Missouri and at the same time doubts its relevance as a suitable academic pursuit: "the hero worship bestowed on the overgrown animals who won the battle irritated me. I could not see what place this sort of thing had in a university" (215). Thus he names once more the characteristic features of American masculinity which he had previously stressed in the passage earlier cited: on the one hand, we have the physical vigor implied by the heroic image of "overgrown animals" and on the other hand, the palpable success associated with the winner. However, in contrast to the previous neutral assertion, this time we also find reference to his positioning vis-à-vis the code of American masculinity. The outsider position becomes obvious thanks to his using the phrase "overgrown animals" which implies depreciative connotations in the choice of a noun designated for non-humans used to identify humans. It would seem that the Jewish perspective on the American masculine norm highlights its negative function.

The dehumanizing image is completed in considering the place ascribed to emotions within American masculinity. Two episodes are worth considering from this perspective. First, there is Max's expertise in learning languages: "In particular, I was taking effective hold of the work in languages, so much so that my English instructor had twice read my themes to the class without (thank goodness!) divulging my name" (213).

The use of "thanks goodness" represents the key element here and sets one thinking, why should divulging the name of the best student put Max in a bad light? The reason comes a little later in the book, when Max talks about his American room mate's hidden passion for playing the fiddle: "My friend [Harvey] was […] ashamed of his talent" (247). A little later on he notes, 'He said, "It is thought a bit effeminate for a man to care for music"' (248). It ensues from here that any activity associated to the arts was labeled as effeminate and, through the voice of Max, his protagonist, Ravage goes on to indicate the wide scope of such a mindset by suggesting its effects on the curriculum of art classes:

> The mania was having its effect on the course of study and the whole life of the university. The departments of the arts were thrown on the defensive. The professor must adopt an apologetic tone for being interested in such unmanly things as poetry, music, or painting. Sentiment being tabooed as effeminate, it followed inevitably that whatever in the curriculum addressed itself to the emotions must be avoided like a plague. (249)

Thus, in making the above claims on Max's proficiency in emotional arts, Ravage points to the effeminate Jew; in also recording American Harvey's hidden passion for music he manages to problematize the American code of masculinity. More precisely, thanks to Harvey's ambiguous stance, the authenticity of manliness is questioned and, in keeping with Kaplan's findings, its primary performative role becomes highlighted:

> It was the fashion, you see, to be masculine in Missouri, and when a thing becomes fashionable it ceases to be genuine. Those whom nature had endowed with the virtue made a fetish and a self-conscious pose of it, and those who lacked it became obsessed with the desire to imitate it. The final insult to a Missourian was to suggest that he was 'sissified'. There was something like a panic among the more refined of my fellow-students at the mere mention of effeminacy. Even the girls dreaded it. (248)

This insistence on manliness as performance enables Ravage to point to the inauthenticity of the American code of masculinity, less a real accomplishment of the individual than an advertised pose. To a certain degree, this unmasking of American masculinity as a parade of a more or less mimed masculine attitude helps us better grasp the complexity of the issue, even if on the surface level the situation seems to be straightforwardly simple. At the same time, however, Ravage does not mean to expose its limitations in order to counteract the faulty image of the effeminate Jew which it had helped create. As a marginal man in America, in his position of a 16-year-old Romanian-Jewish immigrant reaching the U.S. in 1900, his main interest is that of assimilating to the new hegemonic culture rather than that of oppos-

ing it. Consequently, Jewish American masculinity emerges as less a reaction to perceived threats to its stability than as the occasionally gradual and often rebellious appropriation of prohibited masculine positionality. In this respect, the discovery of the performative function of American masculinity not only counts as negative inauthenticity but, by this very characteristic of being inauthentic, it enables Jews to more easily adopt the American masculine norm.

In this respect, I believe that it is by learning about American Harvey's double position, as an American strong 'man' in public and a sensitive art-drawn soul in private, that Max finds a way to bridge the gap between the overtly sensitive behavior of a Jewish man and the public coldness associated to an American man.

The inauthenticity of American masculinity in its performative character thus becomes the means by which the immigrant Eastern European Jew manages to take up the normative code and appropriate it. Indeed, Max's final image in Ravage's book is not that of the effeminate Jew but of the American 'man'; in the transition to this latter posture a central role is given to the rags-to-riches story. From Harvey's life story Max learns of the poverty-born hero worshiped as an epitome of American masculinity because of the implications of financial independence from one's family. On these grounds, Max's life of immigration and his jobs in America (peddler, bar-tender, sweat-shop worker and college student) make him the perfect manly hero for an American audience.

Furthermore, on Max's return to the Jewish ghetto in New York, the emphasis falls on the distance he has acquired in relation to his kin; as proof of this, we note his checked emotions as opposed to the affective outburst of his brother:

> There was Paul faithfully at the ferry, and as I came off he rushed up to me and threw his arms around me and kissed me affectionately. Did I kiss him back? I am afraid not. […] I had become soberer. I carried myself differently. There was an unfamiliar resolve, something mingled of coldness and melancholy, in my eye. (259-260)

The image of the cold-hearted man seems to have gradually taken hold of the former Jewish greenhorn and to draw him closer and closer to the mainstream norm. At the same time, the empowering masculinity of the young scholar is interdependent on the disempowered effeminate figure of relatives who have remained in the New York ghetto, a traditional transplanted enclave of kindred immigrants and fellow-citizens who only experienced extremely limited contact with what Ravage terms "the America of the Americans": "I needed sadly to readjust myself when I arrived in New York. But the incredible thing is that my problem was to fit myself in with the people of Vaslui and

Rumania, my erstwhile fellow-townsmen and my fellow-countrymen. It was not America in the large sense, but the East Side Ghetto that upset all my calculations, reversed all my values, and set my head swimming" (61). In other words, the Jewish man's masculinity is sanctioned by contrast with the tradition-preserving community to which the student returns during the holiday.

All in all, Jewish American men record their paradoxical relation to the norm of American masculinity as different from their traditional values but also as a relevant path to Americanization by its very departure from the values of their own ethnic community.

Focusing on issues similar to the above-mentioned tension between Americanization and ethnic preservation, Ted Merwin's recent book on Jewish image in the 1920s popular culture, entitled *In Their Own Image: New York Jews in Jazz Age Popular Culture* needs to be mentioned at this point. Though only fleetingly mentioning the issue of masculinity, one of Merwin's indisputable merits is to supplant the discussion on Jewish masculinity with that on Jewish femininity. In this respect, in referring to popular culture, Merwin indicates the change of theme undertaken by women characters in post-1920 popular entertainment: if up to that moment, what dominated was their complaint against a hostile elite society, by the 1920s the complaint was directed against "the ill treatment they received from men" (49). As a consequence, not only Jewish femininity but also Jewish masculinity got complicated at the time. Yet, most scholarly studies ignore the situation of Jewish masculinity and only pinpoint the complexity of Jewish feminity which resulted from the negative gender stereotypes that Jewish males projected on Jewish females in the anxiety to assimilate to the materialistic anti-Semitic mainstream culture, a thesis amply documented in Riv-Ellen Prell's *Fighting to Become Americans. Assimilation and the Trouble between Jewish Women and Jewish Men*. Instead Merwin identifies this limitation and completes the above thesis by illustrating the equal relevance of Jewish women's emasculated stereotypes of Jewish men: "Jewish men were viewed as indecisive, unmanly, and unable to provide for their women. If Jewish men were not '100 percent American' according to the mainstream culture, then to Jewish women they were often less than 100 percent men" (Merwin 51). In analyzing this attitude of Jewish American women, my focus, in contrast to Merwin, is not on vaudeville representations but on Jewish American women's prose and my aim is to determine the correspondence between Merwin's popular culture findings and the case of literature best featured by Anzia Yezierska's love stories.

Gentiles, Jews, and Masculinity through Jewish American Women's Lenses

> Sonya and Manning, tricked into matrimony, were the oriental and the Anglo-Saxon trying to find a common language. The overemotional Ghetto struggling for its breath in the thin air of puritan restraint. An East Side Savage forced suddenly into the straight-jacket of American civilization. Sonya was like the dynamite bomb and Manning the wails of tradition constantly menaced by threatening explosions. (Yezierska, *Salome* 132)

This excerpt is emblematic as the main coordinate characterizing Anzia Yezierska's literary representation of masculinity is the binary opposition between Jewish affect and American reason. In fact, the study of the characters' affective natures informs the existing scholarly literature on Anzia Yezierska, among which I only remember the works of JoAnn Pavletich and Lori Harrison-Kahan both sustaining the rhetorical value of affect in a context of racialized discourse and cultural hybridity. While for Harrison-Kahan emotions are only a subsidiary prop to the broader multiethnic and modernist milieu of the Jazz Age and the Harlem Renaissance, Pavletich foregrounds the case of affect in Yezierska's short stories and specifies the writer's aim in manipulating the image of the emotionally intense Jewish female immigrant so as to establish the immigrant woman as an important figure in U.S. culture precisely because of effective emotions. Using Pavletich's observations as a point of departure, I develop the discussion of Anzia Yezierska's uses of affect on two levels: first, I expand the scope of Pavletich's analysis beyond the writers' short stories by concentrating on her subsequent novels; more importantly, I analyze the way in which Yezierska correlates the uses of affect with men, in contrast to Pavletich who only concentrates on affect as a womanly characteristic.

First of all, as also shown by the two critics mentioned above, affect serves as the differentiating factor between Jewish American women and Gentile men, accounting for the tension between the denigrated emotional expressivity of the marginal woman and the valorized emotional restraint of the hegemonic manly culture. This has been already indicated in the opening excerpt of this section from Yezierska's *Salome of the Tenements* with the phrases "overemotional Ghetto" and "puritan restraint." It is Harrison-Kahan who interprets this emotional gap between Jewish American women and Gentile men as a matter of racial power relations in asserting that "Whiteness, as a position of power, often becomes inextricably entwined with masculinity and is thus unreachable for Jewish heroines" (422). Just like Jewish American male immigrant writers, Jewish American

women also consider mainstream masculinity as a necessary step on the path to assimilate to the new culture.

Moreover, at the heart of Jewish American women's encounter with mainstream masculinity there is the primitive vogue of 1920s America, a decade that saw an unprecedented interest in the primitivism of ethnic minorities as recorded by Harrison-Kahan. As a result, ethnic women were objectified and stereotyped as exotic and sexually free. For instance, in *Salome of the Tenements* Manning, the rich philanthropist of the East Side, sees in the Russian-Jewish Sonya "the primitive fascination of the oriental," "the intensity of spirit of the oppressed races" (101); likewise, for his family and kindred Gentiles the Russian Jewess is labeled as "a creature of sex" (128), emphasizing passion and over-emotionalism as features of an inferior civilization. Obviously, as also indicated by Friedman, Manning's fear that he will succumb to the hidden inner "primitive" reflects the time's national paranoia related to the "rising tide" of ethnic immigrants and the threat they posed to the imaginary, Puritan ideal of American behavior—stoicism, temperance, civilized manners (Friedman 180). The relation between masculinity and Jewishness then continues scholarly analyses of the early twentieth-century American context as the time of nativist rhetoric and the eugenics movement cohering towards prejudiced laws that featured catalogues of negative attributes of the immigrant body and considered the effects of 1891-1924 immigrant statutes on the regulation and repression of the immigrant body. If such positions emphasized the inassimilable character of new-comers because of the mental and physical inferiority of the immigrant body, as discussed by June Dwyer, the rhetoric of masculinity as affect-free broadens the discussion of assimilation to the realm of emotions and race. In relation to this, Harrison-Kahan goes on to affirm that interest in the opposite sex has little to do with heterosexual romance and more to do with the desire to wed one's self to America: "Recognizing this connection between masculinity and whiteness, several of Yezierska's protagonists pursue other means of Americanization. If they cannot be men, so the logic goes, they can, at the very least, have men" (Harrison-Kahan 422).

Though pertinent in her remark, what Harrison-Kahan and the other critics fail to consider in order to demonstrate such a claim is that Yezierska's writings also feature the relation between affect, Jewish-American men and Jewish-American women and the relation between affect, Jewish-American men and Gentile men, relations I mean to analyze in the following pages.

As transpires from the following excerpts of Yezierska's *Salome of the Tenements*, the two categories to be considered in view of under-

standing the relation between affect and the early twentieth-century American code of masculinity are gender and ethnicity:

> [Sonya Vrunsky:] "A woman should be youth and fire and madness – the desire that reaches for the stars. A man should be wisdom, maturity, poise. John Manning has everything I need to save my soul. He can give me the high things of heaven and the beauty and the abundance of the earth." (Yezierska, *Salome* 7)

In Sonya's opinion above, gender determines one's relation to affect and what she means to say is that affect is a natural characteristic of women in contrast to men being associated with reason. John Manning supplements the criterion of gender with the equal relevance of ethnicity, suggesting that affect can be a cross-gender feature in the case of certain ethnic groups such as the one to which Sonya belongs:

> [John Manning:] "You have the burning fire of the Russian Jew in you, while I am motivated by a sickly conscience, trying to heal itself by the application of cold logic and cold cash." (Yezierska, *Salome* 3)

Indeed, early in the book, one notices that gender differences animate protagonist Sonya Vrunsky, affect being the domain of women and tempered reason men's territory. While sanctioning the binary perspective of the woman, Manning adds the category of ethnicity to the discussion in conjoining over-emotionalism not with one gender but with one ethnic group—Russian Jewry. Thus the outset of Yezierska's novel offers a grid of interpreting masculinity on whose basis will be judged Manning, Lipkin and Hollins, the three men in Sonya's life. According to this grid, masculinity resides in a valorized emotional reserve and a denigrated emotional expressivity. It is by means of this grid that Sonya initially considers the men in her life. Following this very same logic, she rejects Lipkin, the Russian-Jewish poet because of his overflowing emotionalism: "You get me tired always making poetry out of everything you feel" (68); "That's why I never could love a Jew or a Russian, because they let loose their feelings too much" (69). In contrast, Sonya praises the indifferent intellectuality of Manning, his "austere saintlike face—calm—aloof from the desires of the earth", with "frosty blue eyes—impersonal, miles away from her" (70).

Moreover, Manning himself reveals the denigrated over-emotionalism of poet Lipkin, being bewildered by the degree to which the Jew is lost in his own thoughts: "Those Jewish intellectuals—those chaotic dreamers are a mystery to me" (81). While the problem of the impossibility of understanding is the one tackled here, Sonya further identifies weakness as a characteristic of Jewish men making them faulty in point of masculinity: "All I have for him [Lipkin] is pity. And a

man that rouses pity don't deserve even pity. A man who lets himself be crushed by anything or anybody is not a man worth saving" (93). In other words, lack of physical and moral strength corresponds to the faulty masculinity of the Jewish American man in the eyes of the Jewish American woman.

However, the situation is more complicated than this and Manning's assertion above, which suggests the possible case of misunderstanding an ethnic group or another provides the keyword which will allow the reversal of this initial positioning of affect-free masculinity as a positive Gentile posture which Jewish men lack. This is represented by the danger of inter-ethnic misunderstanding which rouses Sonya's doubts: "Will I set him on fire with my nakedness or drive him from me in disgust? Who knows? Men of my kind—they would understand. But he and his kind, what do they know of life—of love!" (99). In contrast, the strong affective penchant of Jewish men permits an easier contact with women.

Furthermore, after marrying John Manning, Sonya discovers that Gentile masculinity not only triggers misunderstanding the gender and ethnic other, but it is also mainly performance, a characteristic that Ravage had also indicated in his book:

> The Anglo-Saxon coldness, it's centuries of solid ice that all the suns in the sky can't melt. Nobody can tell what that frozen iciness is, except those that got to live with it. Think of the bloodless inhumanity of it, when we hate each other like poison, when our eyes stab each other like daggers, *he wants me to stay with him yet under one roof, for the sake of his puritan pride that there was never a divorce in his family*! (Yezierska, *Salome* 157, my emphasis)

As suggested above, saving face as a happy couple before the outer world is the only impulse which drives Manning's actions. Sonya discovers the egoism behind all this, realizing that Manning's only interest is to clear his name ("His name, that's all he cares about" 157). In that, she discovers that the masculinity of Manning as the model domestic husband boils down to make believe, to protecting a false image of a superior, caring and providing man. His letter to Sonya after her fleeing away from his house back to the ghetto proves beyond doubt that Gentile masculinity is primarily performance: "Your rash flight laid us both open to disagreeable publicity, but I have been able to silence the newspapers. Nothing has appeared in print about our domestic problems, and if you will return at once, even my friends and relatives need never know" (Yezierska, *Salome* 166).

A kindred situation is also featured in Yezierska's *Arrogant Beggar* in point of the relation between the poor Jewish immigrant Adele Linder and Arthur Hellman. Though he agrees that she should es-

cape from the Hellman House for Working Girls and comes after her, Adele discards Arthur's advances for his egoism and performance of masculinity: "You couldn't rest until you righted the wrong that had been done to me? You *are* Sir Galahad. It's not *me* you're interested in. You're only interested in being Sir Galahad" (Yezierska, *Arrogant Beggar* 116). This time the performance of masculinity is rendered by Yezierska's use of the Sir Galahad posture, the knightly figure renowned for his purity and chastity, therefore itself a version of the model domestic husband.

So, Jewish American men and women writers alike posit performance as a hallmark of American masculinity in the early twentieth-century. If this identification allows Jewish men easier access to American culture, for Jewish women it becomes the trigger for changing their negative attitude against the weak Jewish men and for reconsidering their worth by contrast to the fakeness behind Gentile masculinity. Thus, what we finally get in Yezierska's stories is a case of three possible male typologies: the over-emotional Jewish American immigrant man who highly clings to Jewish traditions, the affect-free Gentile man whose position of power is affected by his primary identification with performance, the sensitive Jewish American immigrant man who has carved a new life in America at quite a distance from Jewish traditions. Indeed, the two novels I have considered are structured around the relation of a woman-protagonist with three men aligned to the above positions. In *Salome of the Tenements* Sonya Vrunsky is courted by Lipkin, John Manning and Jacques Hollins; in *Arrogant Beggar* Adele Linder is disputed by Shlomoh Bernstein, Arthur Hellman and Jean Rachmansky.

The best instance showing how Gentile man's masculinity is discarded because of its performative function occurs at the end of *Salome of the Tenements*, when Manning visits Sonya one last time and passionately discloses his love for her in the safety of privacy:

> "You – you – you're mine. You belong to me. You're part of me. Mine. I want you. I can't live without you. I dream of your lips – your eyes – your hair. I'm hungry for you. Oh, my beautiful maddening Jewess."
>
> Custom, tradition, every shred of convention, every vestige of civilization had left him. He was primitive man starved into madness for the woman. […]
>
> But her triumph over him died as it was born, for it was not the gentleman, not the arrogant Anglo-Saxon who stood before her. It was a human being – suffering – wounded – despised and rejected in his hour of need. (Yezierska, *Salome* 181-182)

Thus, the restrained Gentile man can become as weak and pitiful

as the over-sensitive Lipkin. The difference is that the latter would do so in public, and henceforth risk his status of strong manhood, the former would only reveal his sensitive side in privacy in order to maintain his superior status. However, for the woman to whom he unveils his true nature he becomes even more spiteful because of the fakeness of his posture.

Therefore, Gentile masculinity as indifferent, reasoned intellectualism declasses itself as make-believe in Yezierska's fiction. The question that ensues is what happens to the Jewish man's masculinity? We have already seen how Yezierska renders it problematic because of its over-emotionalism. Even after unmasking the fake pretenses of Gentile masculinity, Jewish men like Lipkin and Shlomoh remain unsatisfactory because of their lives circumscribed to Jewish tradition. Lipkin, for instance, rejects Sonya as a betrayer of the Jewish race, following her marriage to a Christian. As for Shlomoh, the PhD student from Columbia College, he is unfit for Adele because of his Melamid and schlemiel postures. As a melamid, he places himself in the traditional lineage of his ambitious father by merely replacing religious education with secular learning. Just as his father had previously lived on his wife's earnings his total dependence on the mother is what renders such a partner undesirable in Adele's eyes: "If his mother forgot to feed him, he'd forget to eat. If she didn't put the shoes on his feet, he'd go barefoot and never know it. Even when he is a Doctor of Philosophy, he'll never be anything but a Melamid like his father, who spent his days poring over old, muster books, learning and learning for the next world!" (Yezierska, *Arrogant Beggar* 14).

This traditional learned man so much praised by Jewish standards is on a par with the Gentile indifference for human outreach and understanding, so both types finally are more similar than would have been expected at first sight. Not only in learning does Shlomoh prove his misunderstanding but also in love, as when Adele rejects him and he returns like a schlemiel to ask for cab-fare money. Like the traditional Jewish ignorant fool, in his action, Shlomoh proves incapable of love. Unaware, he is close to the performance stance of the Gentile, trying to find in Adele the needed wife who would materially upkeep him.

Should we conclude that Jewish men's masculinity is as unsatisfactory as the Gentiles'? Not really, as in both Yezierska's novels there is another Jewish man who finally becomes the accepted lover of the heroine. In *Salome*, this is Jacques Hollins, the tailor who shares the overt emotionalism of the other Jews, also reflected in his job—that of an artist. He becomes the superior man thanks to his humanity, "an artist with a born understanding for crazy people like me" (155). This

is "the man who had dressed her so divinely for the love of beauty, who had valued her for the very things that Manning hated" (156) —a person for whom an ideal can be as relevant as the real. In *Arrogant Beggar*, Jean Rachmansky the pianist is the better man for his music speaks of the voiceless, the hungry, the hopeless—born out of mutual understanding. Through these men Yezierska manages to carve out the space for the impassioned intellectual as the alternative to mainstream masculinity, one who offers the solution for an oppressed and marginalized group like the Jewish one.

Through the above analysis, I show how both Jewish American men and women writers of the early twentieth century question the authenticity of the American code of masculinity by stressing its performative function. In this sense, I believe that bringing together the perspectives of both men and women writers has been essential in attempting to offer a comprehensive, true-to-fact picture of the relation between Jewish men and American manliness, thanks to their disparate positions in the matter (with men as directly concerned and women in a more objective, detached position). More precisely, thanks to the different perspectives of Jewish American men and women writers as to the relation between affect, Jewish American men, Jewish American women and Gentile men, these authors' emphasis on manliness as performance has exposed the inauthenticity of the early twentieth-century American code of masculinity as non-emotional and has identified affect as representing, in truth, an essential part of one's manliness, though mainly delegated to one's privacy at the time. In this way, the Jewish American ethnic lens has proven to be instrumental in revising the American norm of masculinity as more complex than the official mainstream version of it and has shown how Jewish American men's paradoxical relation to it can be overcome by undertaking an alternative affect-based version of masculinity.

Dana Mihăilescu
University of Bucharest
Romania

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THE WORST FATE: MALE RAPE AS MASCULINITY EPIDEIXIS IN JAMES DICKEY'S *DELIVERANCE* AND THE AMERICAN PRISON NARRATIVE

Angela Farmer

Epideictic, rhetoric of praise and blame, addresses perception of goodness, shame, honor, and dishonor, and remains an excellent method to formulate, maintain, and solidify ideas concerning virtue and vice. According to Lawrence W. Rosenfield, "Epideictic's understanding calls upon us to join with our community in giving thought to what we witness" (489-496). It is with this conception of epedeixis that this article looks toward literature and film, to critique the representation of sexual assault, its causes, its consequences, and most importantly, its effects on the apperception of masculinity. Early novels, like Rousseau's *Emile* and Richardson's *Pamela*, only barely shrouded literary conventions that reproduced acceptable gender identities as fiction, literature that, like the courtesy book before it, served as a call for normalization. The novel called for normalization by creating sympathy for some characters and scorn for others. Victorian authors, such as Charlotte Brontë, Charles Dickens, and (notorious for his depiction of "The Angel in the House") Coventry Padmore, appealed to readers for generalized acceptance or rejection of particular behaviors and gendered identifications. The Victorian marriage plot can be read as a coded epideictic where the characters who met the anticipated gender materialization—those who conformed to "gender obedience"—were rewarded with praise, while those who did not meet the anticipated gender materialization were penalized with blame. Chaim Perelmen and Lucy Olbrechts-Tyteca say of epideictic that, "The speaker engaged in epideictic discourse is very close to being an educator. Since what he is going to say [promotes] values that are shared in the community . . ." (52). Therefore, the only way that the marriage plot could function as an epideictic is if the reading members of the audience already ascribed to the heteronormative patriarchal imperative. This method worked until the late nineteenth century when the Emma Bovarys, Edna

Pontilliers, and Anna Kareninas began drinking poison, drowning, and walking headlong into moving trains. The Realist novel, ending with the heroine's death rather than her wedding, interrogated the customary narrative and opened the door for the audience to question assumptions concerning "successful" gender representation. With the expansion of proto-Feminisms, Freudian psychoanalytic theory, continued industrialization, and decolonization, ideas surrounding gendered identities lost some of their hegemonic durability.

Just as each culture (and each era within each culture) decides what feminine characteristics support its ontology best, it also decides what masculinities are most useful; that culture in turn supports those masculine "useful"characteristics. It seems natural and it seems to function organically; however from a Foucauldian standpoint, we have to consider the docility of the body that causes it to manifest characteristics based on discipline. In Foucault's model (which intends to demonstrate how meticulous "discipline" of the human body in turn develops a social discipline where functioning collectively ends in greater utility) collective action is the objective. Like interchangeable parts of the industrial age, such standardization of gendered action presumably ends in a greater utility to the ideology it supports: "useful masculinity." What's more, there are penalties for failing to meet these standards; in other words, men become categorized as "manly" in order to avoid the punishment of becoming "unmanly." But this still begs the question, how do we determine what is "useful" masculinity? Judith Halberstam states: "although we seem to have a difficult time defining masculinity, as a society we have little trouble in recognizing it, and indeed we spend massive amounts of time and money ratifying and supporting the versions of masculinity that we enjoy and trust" (1). In our contemporary mediated culture, the images of masculinity that characterize the expectations of the male body are significant. In a society where gendered individuals are, from a very early age, bombarded with images of "proper" gender materialization in commercial advertising, action films, and music videos, men and women formulate ideas about who they should be, and what they should want; this, unfortunately, circumscribes the limits of their potential. The visual nature of how we come to understand, interpret, and perform gender is part of how our culture defines norms for masculinity and femininity. Western culture uses fiction, on the page or on the screen, to create gendered realities. Our acceptance of these fictions requires that we consider ways in which our notions about consent, coercion, dynamism, passivity, retribution, and acquiescence formulate our ideas about real men. What's more, the perpetuation of these fictions suggests that our culture has

become so ingrained with ideas concerning male rape that we have established and accepted a system of rhetorical formulation for the violable male body.

But if our novelists have (perhaps) finally abandoned the "smart girls marry rich men" paradigm of Austenian literature, how does American culture represent and therefore begin the hegemonic sorting out of men who are perceived to be manly and men who are not? More importantly, how does American culture encourage masculinities believed to be "proper" and discourage what is believed to be "unmanlyness"? Since we cannot deny them the marital hand of the Mr. Darcys, what happens to male characters who do not measure up to cultural expectations of masculine materialization? For the answer to this we must look to the circumlocutious systems of power knowledge and materialization where that which is supported is replicated and that which is replicated (correctly) is supported. We identify manly-men when we observe them and recognize their endorsement by culture (often the only way we recognize endorsement is by a lack of punishment); likewise, we identify unmanly-men when we observe them and recognize their condemnation. This cultural dialectic of approval and disapproval is a dance, negotiating values and beliefs. To impersonate naturalness, the dialectic "dance" must be subtle; in order for it to thrive it must remain a masked ideological struggle. What's more, it must be kept under surveillance; such surveillance serves to not only monitor actions, but to reinforce values for the viewer. By observing praise and blame, the onlooker is "taught" a culture's value system.

Such "visual epideictic" strategy plays an important role in cultivating cultural mores and understanding. The dialectic of approval and disapproval can increase an audience's disposition to act in accordance with an ethics that informs judgment and behavior within a culture but it can also encourage the adoption of an altered opinion (which Kenneth Burke calls an "incipient act"). The assignment of praise and blame is further engaged in constructing both individual subjectivity and culturally articulated identities. Most importantly, epideictic rhetoric strives to reduce the occasion for resistance or debate by veiling itself as customary praise or blame by presuming—or simulating the assumption—that the rhetor and the audience already assent to the same ethics. Epideictic rhetoric, therefore, is an effective forum for rigorous, although often opaque, ideological struggle. In the case of masculine identities, epideictic rhetoric works toward constructing a persuasive image of accomplishment and evolution that solidifies patriarchy's aspirations for masculinity. At this point, I begin my investigation into the cultural epideictic of the male body

represented in contemporary literature and film. In literature we can see that male characters who subscribe to accepted norms are praised as "heroes." In this article I will discuss the representation of male rape as part of a system of coercion: not just physical coercion but a coercion of materialization. I neither intend to present a psychosexual analysis of rape (male or female) nor to map out every textual treatment of violent sexual behavior. Rather, I will briefly discuss the function of male rape within power structures.

In "Rape: On Coercion and Consent," Catherine MacKinnon—who is often criticized for her deductions—makes the argument that all sex is rape (43). Even when there seems to be consent, acceptance of male initiatives toward women is, according to MacKinnon, actually about avoiding rape; all assumptions of consent are actually about avoiding violence. MacKinnon goes further to argue that it is not necessary for all men to rape of for all women to be raped; but the fact that some men *do* rape and some women *are* raped establishes the possibility of rape and therefore creates fear. It is in this line of reasoning that MacKinnon concludes that all sex is coerced—there is no such thing as consensual sex under male dominance. On a PBS talk show, *Think Tank* MacKinnon explains: "I think . . . there are forms of force that involve authority, power, where something can be rape, but it isn't always violent at that moment. But there's always an element of force and domination going on in it and there is—in which a sexual interaction is coerced without the person who is having it wanting to have the sex" (Wattenberg and MacKinnon). We can take MacKinnon's ideas and apply them across the board. In other words, this phenomenon is not restricted to heterosexual encounters. As a matter of fact, when asked by host Ben Wattenberg, "Do men also discriminate against other men? . . ." MacKinnon answers, "Based on race, you bet they do. . . . And based on class and a lot of other things." In regard to male on male rape, MacKinnon's argument holds true. In regard to both literature and film which involve the threat of male rape we can see that while some sexual encounters between male inmates appear to be outwardly consensual they are as bound up with intimidation, coercion, and the size and strength of the aggressor as they are in MacKinnon's heterosexual representation. This is to say that in the narrative surrounding the American prison system, not all inmates have to be raped—the possibility alone creates enough fear for all encounters to be coerced. There is another component to male on male rape in America which is not altogether unaccounted for in MacKinnon's argument: the threat of feminization. Given that McKinnon's argument hinges on the coexistence of misogyny and patriarchy, feminization becomes perceived as a

negative consequence. Were it not for those concomitant factors, the dynamics of male / male rape would change completely.

Paedestry aside, from the ancient Greeks onward, Western hegemony held to a tradition which defines the female as receptive/passive and the male as dynamic/active. In the paradigm where the female is passive and receptive, the female body is defined by its capacity to be penetrated; it is violable. Because in a dualistic system, we still only have two options for sexual identification, active or passive, even when the body violated is a male body we read sexual aggression along the same paradigm where one subject assumes the masculine while the other assumes the feminine. For a man to be raped is for him to be feminized and, in a misogynistic culture, this is a fate worse than death. Roger Lancaster, writes in "Subject Honor and Object Shame: The Construction of Male Homosexuality and Stigma in Nicaragua," the delineations between maleness and *machismo* in Nicaraguan culture—where there is no identity as "homosexual"—it is typically an *hombre-hombre* male who plays the active subject role in sexual intercourse with *cochones*, receptive object males (44). Lancaster points out that the more aggressive—even violent—the sexual encounter, the more the initiator identifies his role as *Machista*, dominant masculine. We can see the same representation of subject/object masculinity as a predominant factor in the American prison narrative. It bears stating that even male on male rape is more about power and subordination than it is about sexual drive and release. While there are components of consent imbedded in this narrative, there is also a menacing factor of violence.

"Don't drop your soap in the shower" is cliché advice given to any male sentenced to serve in a general population prison and it reveals an anxiety surrounding anal rape in prison. It is a notion derived from fear rather than veracity. In popular American culture, jokes, sitcoms, and even television commercials indicate that male rape in prison is widespread and prevalent. In fact, it appears that the average person in our culture assumes that almost everyone who fits the stereotypical victim profile *will inevitably* be raped in prison. Despite the absence of empirical data, early prison researchers declared that rape in male prisons was "rampant" and that sexual assault of inmates by inmates had become "epidemic" (Weiss Friar 4, Davis 9). However, this claim is not substantiated by the empirical data on male rape, in part due to the fact that no studies have succeeded in establish the frequency of male rape through a systematic examination of official records (i.e., incident reports or protective custody records) (Eigenberg). It seems that statistics—which are problematic for a variety of reasons (including reticence to report incidents)—show that few inmates are

ever raped at all (Kappeler). Those who are raped, report being raped repeatedly or recurrently (Alarid and Dumond). This may suggest that popular belief is true and that there is a system of "targeting" in which certain inmates are singled out for rape. Or it may be true that only "expected" situations of rape are reported or are reported more readily; it could also be true that authorities find expected scenarios more believable and accept the veracity of reports more readily. Either way, the situation represented in film is supported by the case reports available; in American movies, perpetrators tend to be physically hyper-masculine inmates while targets tend to be described as "slight-built" and therefore identified as effeminate and therefore violable or penetrable. Even in the lexicon of prison rape there is an imbedded system of feminization. Consider the rhetoric: the recurrent victim, the inmate who resorts to acquiescence in order to avoid violence, in prison jargon is called a "punk," he is someone's punk—a possession. When a man is raped, it is said that he has "been punk'd," he's "getting punk'd." The action occurs to him—on his body; he is passive, therefore feminized. To continue the antifeminine rhetorical connection, he is said to be "made someone's bitch" or "made someone's wife." On the other hand, the aggressor is active and maintains his status as subject and therefore masculine. The initiator/rapist is called a "jock" or "jocker" he is said to "jocky;" he is rhetorically active. Also, as with the Nicaraguan *Machista*, the more violent the encounter, the more feminized the victim, the more the aggressor can therefore retain his status as masculine.

To illustrate, I now turn to an exploration of four major motion pictures set, at least partially, in prison. All of these films include the subject of male rape, even when the plot does not necessitate the action. In *The Hurricane*, though there is no perceptible rape, the screenwriters included dialogue which alludes to inmate rape; I will argue that rape in *Midnight Express*, though pivotal to the plot, is represented in a peripheral yet menacing manner; in *The Shawshank Redemption*, the repeated rape of the main character, part of the main plot, is menacing and the character is developed in relation to assault. Though we must extrapolate this argument to encompass an overarching theme, the claim remains intact. Because prison itself is not a strong enough deterrent to some Americans, the threat must be heightened. (The classist and racist implications of this phenomenon are staggering, and not something I will attempt to address here.) Nevertheless, the prison narrative is constructed, not as a narrative of truth, but rather a narrative of deterrence. Prison may not be perceived as "so bad" but rape, on the other hand is represented as "the worst fate."

Keep in mind that the characters who fall victim to rape in film need not be the literal equivalent to the "target type" indicated by case studies; authors use popular belief to draw rhetorical parallel between characters and the supposed target type. The purpose of this is to serve, as Perelman says, as an "educator." Because few of us have experience in male high-security penitentiaries, we must be taught what to suppose about the interior goings-on of prison life; more importantly we must be taught which actions and reactions earn praise and which warrant blame. Of course, none of this is to say that cinematic representations are in any way true and accurate. Movies are, of course, movies. They are a cultural construction and serve to represent a fictive circumstance; however, film has the unique ability among texts to make people believe what they see. As I stated above, mediated culture formulates ideas about who we should be, and what we should want; and the visual nature of gender hermeneutics often creates (false) gendered realities.

Many prison films suggest that "real men" can courageously bear great adversity, including rape. *The Hurricane* represents the main character, Rubin "Hurricane" Carter, an African American boxer who is, despite his innocence, convicted of murder, and his capacity to endure with his masculinity undamaged, with dignity, and with his self intact in spite of his circumstances. Though *The Hurricane* contains no visual scenes of either overt or suggested rape, the film dialogue contains two vague references to rape. In the first reference, Carter explains that he "had to fight to survive" which seems to imply that he had to "fight" to avoid sexual assault. In the second reference he states: "I'm free in here [indicating his "inner" personhood]. . . . This place doesn't allow you to be human. The only contact you get in here is being stabbed in the back or gang raped in the shower." These remarks are not uncommon in prison films but are particularly noteworthy here because the crux of the movie concerns Carter's self imposed isolation. Often, without being necessary to plot development, characters refer to rape, threaten rape, engage in or are victims of rape. This phenomenon seems salacious; it only serves to give the impression of the inevitability of male rape in prison. It also serves to reinforce the relationship between two equally ruinous states of being: going to prison is "bad" and being feminized is "bad." The cultural epideictic "teaches" men to avoid both. Unfortunately this method of epideictic does not teach men not to become rapists. The opposite may even be true. Within the prison narrative, there is punishment for the male rapist but that punishment is never shame. While male rape victims are often portrayed as being so full of shame that they commit suicide, the perpetrators of male rape must be punished in other

ways; he is never sorely ashamed of what he has done. (If one can imagine a scene where the typical male prison inmate rapist breaks down in tears crying, "What have I done," one is more likely imagining a satire than a drama. It is not until the *Dead Man Walking,* based on a true story, that, to my knowledge, a rapist expresses remorse in a prison film—and Poncelet was convicted of raping a woman, not a man. What's more, female rape victims typically have to seek justice for themselves in film. Consider the string of rape-revenge films: *I Spit on Your Grave, Sudden Impact*, and *Straw Dogs*. Films that do portray the justice system for female rape victims regularly portray the "victim on trial" paradigm: *The Accused* and even *A Time to Kill*.)

Several other prison movies contain rape as a central theme; in these films, the hero must typically endure great humiliation in order to maintain masculine dignity. Such characters who cannot preserve their manhood under these circumstances inevitably die during the film. This functions as a rhetoric geared toward reinforcing the body/mind dichotomy for audiences: as Carter stated, "I'm free in here." The audience is supposed to agree that it is superior to be sound in the mind than whole in the body. This is reinforced in *Midnight Express*, also based on a true story, a film which uses an attempted rape as a plot device: the attempted rape of Billy Hayes instigates his escape from a Turkish prison. Though the scene was represented as a nonessential event (most of the film is about the injustice and conditions of the Turkish prison system), it is critical to the storyline as it enables Hayes to escape. He attempts to bribe a guard which ends in the rape attempt; he resists and accidentally kills the guard. What is most interesting about the scene is Hayes' reaction to the threat. At the end of the film, Hayes is a broken man; physically exhausted and barely able to communicate, and his sanity is questionable. Given Hayes' deteriorated physical and mental condition, his forceful resistance suggests that he can withstand anything except rape.

In *The Shawshank Redemption*, an adaptation of a Stephen King story, "Rita Hayworth and the The Shawshank Redemption," Andy Dufresne is convicted of murdering his wife and sentenced to a life term. When Andy arrives at the gates of Shawshank with several other prisoners, they are greeted by scores of inmates who taunt them by crooning "fresh fish," taunting that lasts through the night: "Hey fish, fishy, fishy, fish, . . .You scared of the dark? . . . They's gonna be queers later. . . . Poke your ass out and give me a first look." And in a reference to the film version of *Deliverance*, one of the inmates jeers, "I want me a pork chop." This too is not uncommon for prison films. Most prison films depict a sort of distorted "welcome wagon" on inmates who goad, taunt, and threaten incoming inmates—often

placing bets on the first to "get punk'd." What's more, the "pork chop" comment is clearly a reference to James Dickey's infamous scene in the film version of *Deliverance*, a scene which has become so ingrained in the American psyche that we are still able to recognize the allusion despite the lexical shift. Further, the welcome wagon phenomenon reinforces the myth of "type-targeting" discussed above. In rhetorical terms, this is a method of discouraging men in the audience to disassociate themselves with a violable "type." It sends the message, "I should be able to look at you and tell if you are an impenetrable man or if you are a 'punk.'" In *Shawshank*, Andy is immediately targeted for rape by a group called "The Sisters." During the rape, Andy throws punches, fighting back; the camera shows the fight but fades away from the rape as Red offers the following narration: "I wish I could tell you that Andy fought the good fight and the sisters let him be. I wish I could tell you that, but prison is no fairy tale world." Interestingly, Stephen King is able to portray Andy in a positive light despite his rape victim status. Andy's masculinity is intact because he fights back—even to the point of almost getting killed.

In a majority of films that take place in prison, rape scene occur early, almost immediately after the inmates enter the facility (*American History X*, *An Innocent Man*, *Sleepers*, and *American Me*). This serves to reinforce the idea that rape is prevalent and inevitable. Rape innuendos also are common and, as I pointed out in regard to "pork," intertextual. Actual rape scenes are, for the most part, quite short, lack detail, and employ obscured camera angles. This is not so for the typical female rape scene (*The Accused*, *The General's Daughter*, *Sudden Impact*, even Alfred Hitchcock's *Frenzy*) which does not shy away from depicting female rape. Consider *American Me*, a film which contains various instances of both male and female rape; the female rape scenes are far more graphic than the obscured prison rape scenes. Though there are these occasional variances, rape is always and clearly portrayed as an act of power; once the protagonist bests his aggressors, they lose their standing and no longer commit rape or threaten rape. In these cases, the rapists typically meet with misfortune and are killed in an act of retribution.

There is one film which depicts male rape in a way that has captured and tormented the American male imagination more than any other. In 1972, John Boorman directed a film based on the poet James Dickey's novel, *Deliverance*. Beyond the eloquent language of Dickey's prose, more than the messianic imagery which has the hero, Ed Gentry, "nailed" to a cliff like a crucifix, more striking than the class bigotry and the political tension of the Tennessee Valley Authority's exercise of eminent domain, one image lingers in the mind's eye of

those who have seen the film or read the novel. Astonishingly, the image is equally recognizable to those who have not had direct contact with the text. This image is not Lewis Medlock's / Burt Reynolds' hyper-sexualized body in a scuba suit, it's not Ed Gentry's / Jon Voight's body at risk climbing a perilously steep cliff; it's not Ronnie Cox's / Drew Ballinger's dead and mangled body floating in the mystic river. All are powerful images, but at the mention of *Deliverance* or the sound of "Dueling Banjoes," Americans picture Bobby Trippe's / Ned Betty's feminized body bent over a log with a toothless man behind him cajoling, "I want to hear you squeal like a pig."

Written in 1970 and filmed in 1972, *Deliverance* has an enduring quality; aside from the intensely disturbing rape and subsequent murders, the novel as well as the film is filled with Dickey's beautifully poetic melancholy. The basic plot involves four Atlanta businessmen who make a canoeing expedition down the Cahulawassee River which runs through the isolated Georgia wilderness but the plot turn to a terror film when the foursome's canoes are separated. The occupants of one canoe (Bobby and Ed) run across a pair of mountain men wielding a loaded shotgun. It is at this point that Bobby is forced at gunpoint to strip naked before being brutally raped while Ed, tied to a tree and held at gunpoint, helplessly looks on. After humiliating and torturing Bobby, the two turn to Ed saying, "He's got a real purty mouth, ain't he?" Before the stranger is able to force Ed to fellate him, Lewis relocates his friends and kills the rapist with an arrow. The rest of the film is occupied with hunting down and killing—all while trying not to be killed by—the other man. It is necessary to kill the second rapist for many reasons. Overtly Lewis argues that he and his friends would be arrested for murder and would never receive a fair trial if the jury were composed of the dead man's kin. What is not spoken, but is nevertheless communicated, is that neither Bobby nor his friends want what had happened in the woods to be known. In *Deliverance*, there are plot elements of justice, vigilantism, property rights, and ecological consequences. Nevertheless, this one scene overshadows the legacy of *Deliverance*.

What happens linguistically in the novel cannot be portrayed in the film without heightening the aggressive taunts spewed by the rapist. Interestingly enough, the phrase, "I want to hear you squeal like a pig" does not appear in the novel and was added to the screenplay of *Deliverance*, serving to intensify the humiliation of Bobby's rape in the back-woods of Georgia, and this one line has become a stock referent to male anal rape. In the novel, however, Dickey is able to use language to feminize Bobby in way that cannot be portrayed visually. In dialogue the rapist uses feminized words like "panties" and Dickey

uses descriptors like "pink" and "hairless" to portray Bobby's body and therefore represent him as feminized; Dickey also describes Bobby's modest posture, "like a boy undressing for the first time in gym," "thighs shaking," "wincing," "head bowed," and "legs close together." While receiving instructions from the rapists, Bobby keeps his head bowed and he is silent. He seems to consent to this act; he does what he is told, he removes his clothes, leans over the log, and submits to rape—but, as Catherine MacKinnon points out about female rape, his consent is only out of fear of greater violence. In both the novel and the film, the men are positioned so that Ed is compelled to watch Bobby's molestation; though he is tied and cannot help Bobby, he is vertical while Bobby is bent over a log. This rhetorically lessens Ed's humiliation in comparison to Bobby's. Further the audience's gaze is directed at Bobby. We can read the subject and object of this scene easily along a Mulvian paradigm: we are looking at Bobby, the men are looking at Bobby, Ed is looking at Bobby, and we are looking at Ed looking at Bobby. The woodsmen are the subjects and Bobby is the object of the gaze—Ed is a secondary object, he is in the liminal space between subject and object. He is the woodsmen's secondary object as well. Also, consider Bobby's name; he is not called Rob, Bob, or Robert, but "Bobby." This is Dickey's way of letting reader know that this character is more "boy" and less "man."

We can take the feminist philosophies concerning visual pleasure and consent to this scene, not in an attempt to usurp feminist theory or to claim that male rape is the same problem as female rape, but to point out that a dualistic ideology inevitably leaves one subject in power and one object without. As Lancaster points out, men can assume object masculinity. Because this position is regarded as feminizing, it perpetuates female oppression and should be critiqued as part and parcel of a hegemony of sexual subjugation. The philosophy of dualism is profoundly compelling; it seems uncomplicated to be able to break the world down into either/or, this or that. But when we examine the consequences of, the limitations of, dualism, we begin to uncover a system that not only allows oppression based on gender—biological, rhetorical, or otherwise—but sets a precedent for it. It is easy for us to relegate male rape to a position of triviality or freakishness to be gazed upon uncomfortably because it doesn't fit into our *a priori* schema of sexual practices and we know that it doesn't quite fit with theories of queerness and consensual homosexual intercourse. When it becomes integrated into a rhetoric of passive versus active, we say; "Oh, that I understand. It's really, male/female, just with two male bodies." This stance is problematic; to suggest that simply because we recognize that it is acceptable for sexual representation to

fall along two parallels—male/female, subject/object, active/passive, power/substance. This relegates us forever to a struggle to achieve an ethics in sexual relations, to find consent in desire.

Angela Farmer
Auburn University
United States of America

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"JUST GIT THE WOMENFOLKS TO WORKING AT IT": THE CONSTRUCTION OF BLACK MASCULINITY IN *GO DOWN, MOSES*

Tracy Bealer

Go Down, Moses (1940) is a novel about men. From the enigmatic Isaac McCaslin to the unnamed mulatto son of "Delta Autumn," the novel concerns itself with the way masculine subjects encounter the Southern world from the time of slavery to Jim Crow. In many ways, the men in the novel are not born, but made. Isaac's complicated understanding of his relationship to nature, history, and property is undeniably connected to his conception of what it is to be a man (Davis). As gender theorists such as Judith Butler have argued, gender identity is largely performative, with the characteristics of masculinity or femininity changing according to arbitrary, but communally agreed upon, definitions. Faulknerian scholars have investigated masculinity in *Go Down, Moses* by analyzing the particular characteristics that "make a man" in the world of the novel (Brooks, Martin). However, as much as white masculinity is a societal construct, black masculinity is even more predicated on outside influences. As Thadious Davis argues in *Games of Property*, the laws of the South during the novel's time frame were designed to deny black slaves, and later black citizens, status as persons. Largely, this negation took the form of categorizing black people as either animals or children, incapable of mature human emotion (Davis 16). A way for black people to challenge this contemptuous assumption was to assert themselves as heterosexual beings. This pattern explains Tomey's Turl's radical courtship of Tennie and Lucas Beauchamp's refusal to accept a divorce from Molly. In order for black men to create an identity independent from racist assumptions, they must conform to a gendered identity that establishes them as mature sexual beings or married men under white law. Black masculinity therefore depends upon black femininity to define itself through and against. The major black male figures in the novel, from Tomey's Turl to Samuel Beauchamp, follow this paradigm. However, Davis does not explore the

consequences that this definition of masculinity exacts on the stability of identity for both black men and women.

Any conception of gender that relies upon outside forces is inherently unstable. This is especially the case with black masculinity in the novel. In his chapter discussing *Go Down, Moses,* Cleanth Brooks focuses on the different male characters' attempts to prove their honor. For Isaac, the struggle involves repudiating his exploitative ancestry, and for Lucas, asserting himself against Zack even in the face of possible lynching. Though Brooks realizes that "the virtues of the two men are rather different and even stand in contradiction" (253), he does not connect this contradiction to the way the two construct their masculinity. Women, black or white, are largely missing from Brooks's discussion, aside from brief treatments of Molly and Isaac's wife. Whereas for the white men in *Go Down, Moses* marriage is a secondary consideration for masculinity formation behind property ownership and hunting, black men for the most part are excluded from legally owning property or participating fully in the homosocial world of the hunt. Sam Fathers is an exception to this generalization, but his brand of primal masculinity is not feasible in the modern world. Therefore, black men must rely upon sexual, and to a lesser degree, maternal, relationships to black women as the sole entry into societal legitimacy; their entire sense of personal and communal identity is reduced to familial relationships, and later marriage. The construction of black masculinity relies upon the presence of a black female body, unavailable to white appropriation. Because this domestic placement of the black female body is so crucial, gender roles in the novel become hierarchical. Black masculinity asserts itself through the reification of traditional gender roles. The consequences of this construction are twofold. First, black women in the novel become subsumed by their responsibilities to provide identity to black men. They are defined solely by their bodies, and their worth is only measured by their ability to legitimate black men within a hostile community. Second, black male identity is under constant threat of dissolution because a man's entire self-conception depends upon a single human body. The repercussions of the instability of black identity formation allow a continuity between sections of the novel that otherwise seem disparate.

"The Fire and the Hearth" presents the central definition of black masculinity through marriage, as experienced by Lucas Beauchamp. His reverence for history extends to the world and time of "Was," when his father, Tomey's Turl, also enacted identity formation through courtship. After establishing the terms of black masculinity, Faulkner shows the possible result of dependence on black women to establish mas-

culinity by detailing the complete dismantlement of identity in both "Pantaloon in Black" and "Go Down, Moses." Whereas Rider's story describes the disintegration of one man who cannot define himself without his wife, Samuel's communal identity is reconstructed after his death by his grandmother, still doing the work of black masculinity formation. Dirk Kuyk, in *Threads Cable-strong,* identifies the "stability of family" (45), particularly black matriarchal families, as the common thread among the three sections. I also plan to discuss the recurring black female figure, but will problematize the idyllic portrait of black family life Kuyk presents. Though he is right in figuring black women as "satellites" that either stabilize black men by their presence, or disorient black men by their absence, he does not include the other side of the dichotomy. Black women are crucial to black men, but their role is inevitably submissive in the gendered hierarchy. All of these sections also foreground the paradoxical presence and absence of the black female body, crucial for establishing the gendered hierarchy that makes black masculinity possible, but not valued for anything beyond the presence of their bodies in the home.

The opening paragraphs of "The Fire and the Hearth" establish that black masculinity is constructed differently than white masculinity in the novel. For white men, money, property, and hunting are the markers of participation in the masculine community. Lucas has satisfied these three qualifications: "He already had more money in the bank now than he would ever spend" (34) due to his inheritance from his white grandfather, old Carothers McCaslin. The land he works "was his own field, though he neither owned it nor wanted to nor even needed to" (35). Lucas enjoys a stewardship of the land reminiscent of the primal masculinity embodied by Sam Fathers. He no longer hunts "not because he could no longer walk a day's or a night's hunt, but because he felt that the pursuit of rabbits and 'possums for meat was no longer commensurate with his status as not only the oldest man but the oldest living person on the Edmonds plantation" (36). Lucas has already proven himself as a hunter, and now defines his refusal to hunt as part of his maturity and status. However, his manhood is still under threat from a social system that refuses to acknowledge his place in society because of his race. Though Lucas is technically a mulatto, Bernard Bell argues that he "moves beyond the stereotypical fate of the tragic mulatto and succeeds realistically in asserting his individuality as a black McCaslin" (226). Lucas betrays his continuing preoccupation with establishing his black manhood by placing himself firmly in the patrilineal line extending back to the patriarch of the white and black McCaslins: old Carothers.

Lucas consistently defines himself against the Edmonds branch

of the McCaslin family that descends matrilineally, terming Roth, and his father Zack before him, as "woman-made" (51) as opposed to his "man-made" (52) connection to the pater familias. Lucas's insistence that he is "the man McCaslin" (45) betrays a deep psychic need to affirm his manhood in the face of a society whose laws refute that reality. Lucas constantly establishes his connection to "the old days, the old time" when "better men than these" (43-44) were markers of masculinity. He is nostalgic for the past when "men black and white were men" (37). Of course, this reminiscence is actually a fiction. Lucas's nostalgic construction of the time of old Carothers ignores the reality of enslavement. What he does imagine is a space where masculinity was firmly ensconced in a superior hierarchical position to femininity regardless of race, and he attempts to enact a similar power dyad in his own marriage to Molly Worsham. According to Davis, "*Go Down, Moses* is predicated on the hierarchical location of men as owners" (89), and Lucas emphasizes the gendered, rather than the racial, implications of that dynamic.

Lucas voices his connection to the hierarchical masculinity of old Carothers when he feels his claim on Molly, and therefore his manhood, to be most tenuous. His identity as a man is dependent on Molly's presence in his home. The title of the section references the fire on the cabin's hearth that symbolizes Molly and Lucas's marriage. Though the fire is enduring, it must be tended, or it, and the stability of Lucas's identity, will be extinguished. Lucas's marriage and manhood is tested by Molly's relocation to Zack Edmonds's house to tend Roth as an infant. Though there is no confirmation that sexual activity occurred between the white man and the black woman, Lucas knows it is a distinct possibility, and therefore a threat to the viability of his marriage in the eyes of the community. The placement of Molly's body is of utmost importance because he will not be taken seriously as a man if he cannot keep his wife from other men. He is first troubled when he finds "his own wife already established in the white man's house" (45). Neither Molly nor Zack are named, and the repetition of possessive words ("his own") highlights the threat for Lucas. The one thing society has sanctioned him to own, a black woman's body, has been appropriated by a white man, therefore challenging the legitimacy of the marriage itself. His later demand of Zack echoes this emphasis on the location of Molly's body: "I wants my wife. I needs her at home" (46). It is clear that any emotional investment Lucas might have in Molly as an individual is not relevant to him in this episode. Diane Roberts realizes that "Molly in this context is a sexual commodity; possessing her implies power" (56). What is at stake is Lucas's self-conception as a man, and its dependency on

his publically-acknowledged ownership of a black woman: "Maybe when he got old he would become resigned to it. But he knew he would never, not even if he got to be a hundred and forgot her face and name and the white man's and his too. *I will have to kill him,* he thought, *or I will have to take her and go away*" (48). Even after the individuals have been forgotten, Lucas realizes that the damage to his identity will be lasting unless he asserts his rightful possession of his wife by fighting Zack man to man, or reclaims his wife's body and relocates it to a community unaware that his masculinity has been contested.

Lucas answers this challenge by invoking his connection to old Carothers. He believes his participation in the gender hierarchy renders the racial hierarchy fluid. Since he is a "man McCaslin," he believes himself able to transcend the racist assumptions that create the question "How to God . . . can a black man ask a white man to please not lay down with his black wife? And even if he could ask it, how to God can the white man promise he wont?" (58). Lucas answers this dilemma through affirming to Zack his connection to an indubitably masculine heritage: "'I'm a nigger,' Lucas said. 'But I'm a man too. I'm more than just a man. The same thing made my pappy that made your grandmaw. I'm going to take her back'" (46-47). Bell reads Lucas's persistent allusions to old Carothers as indicative of his status as a marginal man, who must choose "white patriarchs, not black" (228) to establish himself as a man. Though Lucas nominally affirms his masculinity through his familial connection to the patriarch, ultimately his racial identity problematizes his connection to a stable masculine identity. In truth, he relies on Molly, not old Carothers, to establish his personhood.

Lucas's physical attack on Zack stems from the white man's refusal to acknowledge his black kinsman as a man capable of threatening his own family line. Once Molly is back in Lucas's cabin, he is enraged that she has brought the infant Roth, heir to the Edmonds line. He is not angered because Molly's maternity has been appropriated by the white infant, but rather because Zack was unconcerned about the child being in Lucas's house. He cries in disbelief, "Don't tell me Zack Edmonds know where he is" (49). Lucas insists that the racial hierarchy be erased in his dealings with Zack, "I went to Zack Edmonds' house and asked him for my wife. Let him come to my house and ask me for his son!" (50). When Zack does not come, Lucas is forced to acknowledge that he is not involved in a stand-off between equals; he realizes that the white man does not consider Lucas's possession of his son a threat to his white manhood: "Then he knew that the other was not even waiting," and it is only then that

he imagines standing above "the undefended and oblivious throat, the naked razor already in his hand" (50). White society, represented by Zack, does not share Lucas's conviction that manhood is derived directly from his connection to old Carothers. Zack admits as much when he challenges Lucas, "maybe you aint even a woman-made McCaslin but just a nigger that's got out of hand" (54). Lucas is forced to realize that he cannot "beat old Carothers" (53) by killing Zack with a razor or a pistol, by committing suicide or being lynched. His inferior status as a black person is unavoidable, and his manhood depends upon maintaining his household with Molly.

Many years later when Lucas becomes obsessed with discovering gold on the plantation, Molly threatens to dissolve their union and obtain a divorce. This threat again throws Lucas's hold on a stable identity into crisis. On the one hand, his definition of masculinity demands that he not let Molly assert her will over his own. Therefore, his initial response when Roth attempts to broker a truce between the two is again to invoke his connection to old Carothers: "I'm a man . . . I'm the man here. I'm the one to say in my house, like you and your paw and his paw were the ones to say in his" (116). However, if Molly obtains the divorce, though Lucas would be able to have his way and continue to hunt gold, he would no longer be legitimized in the white community through his marriage. A suggestion of the racial hierarchy he would be forced to acknowledge comes at the courthouse, when the clerk insultingly establishes his authority over Lucas by demanding, "You, nigger! Take off your hat!" (123). It is no coincidence that Lucas immediately retracts his divorce petition, and appeases Molly with a bag of candy for the drive back to their cabin and still-burning hearth (125). Kuyk's reading of this episode figures the marriage as a "treasure" (40) that Lucas values above all others, and "to obey Molly has become . . . homage" (59) for him. What this reading ignores is the fierce resistance Lucas demonstrates against Molly's wishes. His swift change of heart seems more complicated than a sentimental realization of the importance of romantic love. Davis realizes that "Lucas's marriage to Molly is one of the viable signs of his freedom and manhood" (139). Ultimately, it is not old Carothers but Molly who makes Lucas's manhood operative in the community, and that is why he ultimately is unable to abandon her.

Though Lucas does not acknowledge it in his nostalgia for times "when men black and white were men," his father reenacts the same dependency on a black woman for identity formation. Old Carothers fathered Tomey's Turl by Tomasina, a slave on the McCaslin plantation. Tomey's Turl's story is told in "Was," a section that initially seems to foreground the construction of white masculinity. The gendered

negotiations of Buck, Buddy, and Sophonsiba (Isaac's lineage) are no doubt an important element of this chapter. However, as Thadious Davis points out, the companion narrative detailing Tomey's Turl's exploits is equally important for characterizing black masculinity. Tomey's Turl's name immediately indicates that his identity is predicated on his relationship to a black woman, his mother Tomasina, rather than on old Carothers. Dependency on black women persists in Tomey's Turl's relationship with Tennie, a slave on a neighboring plantation. The resulting familial line, which includes Lucas, replicates this pattern by taking Tennie's surname, Beauchamp, rather than McCaslin. Tomey's Turl claims his "right to sexual expression" (Davis 47) by escaping from the McCaslin plantation to court Tennie. As a slave, he could not legally marry, but he does assert individual agency and defy his subordinate status by "breaking out" (5) to foster a mature heterosexual relationship. As Davis states, "By means of his creation and play of the game, Turl defines a black masculinity within a space that otherwise, given the cultural conditions of enslavement, would deny not only his manhood but also his very personhood" (47). Again, the presence of a female body is crucial for Tomey's Turl to assert this manhood. His comment that "anytime you wants to git something done, from hoeing out a crop to getting married, just git the women folks to working at it" (13) is eerily applicable to the formation of his identity as a black man. However, Tennie's conspicuous absence from "Was" indicates another commonality in Tomey's Turl's and Lucas's stories: the insignificance of black women outside their role as constructors of black masculinity.

Molly's characterization in "The Fire and the Hearth" echoes Tennie's absent presence in "Was." Tennie never appears in the section, but her existence is crucial to further both the plot and Tomey's Turl's affirmation of masculinity. Unlike Tennie, Molly is an embodied, speaking character in the section, though her individuality is minimized. Initially, Lucas does not even name her, referring to her only by her relevant role: "his wife." When he is conceptualizing her relocation to the Edmonds house, he only conceives of her as "his own wife, the black woman" (46). Lucas reduces Molly to the two essential qualifications providing him with a stable masculinity: a possessed object, and a nameless black female body. Molly's physical presence in the text replicates Lucas's reductive conception of her body into merely a signifier of femininity. She is "a small woman, almost tiny, who in the succeeding forty years seemed to have grown even smaller" (97). Diane Roberts, analyzing Molly in her chapter on the "mammy figure" in Faulkner's fiction, is puzzled by her physical: "her body is nearly insignificant, a conscious reversal of the copious

body of the conventional Mammy" (55). This reversal is explained when Molly is read in terms of her relationship to black men rather than white men.

The shrinkage of Molly's body corresponds to the appropriation of her individual identity by the demands of Lucas's masculinity formation. Her physical body seems to disappear within the clothing that marks her as female: "[Roth] took her by the arm which, beneath the two or three layers of clothing beneath the faded, perfectly clean dress, felt no larger than the reed stem of the pipe she smoked" (98). The dress, a visible indicator of her femininity to an outside observer, completely subsumes the distinctiveness of her individual body, which itself is compared to an inanimate object. The text suggests that beneath "the voluminous layer on layer of her skirts and underskirts" (98) Molly's individual personhood has literally disappeared. In *Gender Trouble,* Judith Butler suggests that gender is entirely constructed by costuming the body; that femininity is more so the clothes an individual body wears than a biological certainty (179). Following this argument, the description of Molly in this passage implies that she has been reduced to a marker of femininity with no inner individuality separate from her gender.

Lucas is highly invested in maintaining this traditional conception of gender, both for himself and others. His relationship with his daughter indicates that he conceives of her in the same possessive terms that he does his wife. Nat's first appearance is not as a speaking character, but a footprint which her father identifies, "knowing that print as he would have known those of his mare or his dog" (40-41). Lucas's conventional conceptions of women suggest that there is not much difference between the three in his mind. Once Nat marries George, against her father's wishes, he is forced to respect the marriage, telling his son-in-law "I don't give no man advice about his wife" (75). Though Nat and George have defied Lucas by marrying, he is more invested in accepting the union than saving face, because he realizes that the cultural viability of black marriage is the only way to render black masculinity meaningful.

"Pantaloon in Black" reveals the possible fate of black men, like Lucas, who must center their masculine identity on their wives. Rider is able to distance himself from the immature and racially-degraded community of dice, whiskey, and promiscuity through his marriage to Mannie (134). With her, he creates a routine of domesticity and familiarity that acquires a great deal of meaning in the six months of their marriage before her death. He plays the role of the traditional provider, working at a sawmill, building the home they live in, and delivering his wages into a kitchen that Mannie has cleaned to eat a

dinner she has prepared (134). Rider's distinctively masculine physical presence, "he was better than six feet and weighed better than two hundred pounds" (131), makes his descent into confusion and disarray even more striking. Though the text implies that the emotional relationship between Mannie and Rider was a heartfelt and genuine one, the same gender politics that guide Lucas and Molly's marriage are also at play in "Pantaloon in Black."

Mannie's name itself is suggestive of her function in Rider's life: she has made a man of him. Even after death, she is remembered entirely in terms of her domestic function. Rider is wearing "the worn, faded clean overalls which Mannie herself had washed only a week ago" (131) to the funeral. Even when Mannie's ghost appears to Rider, she is in the kitchen (136). Mannie and Rider's marriage is a conscious textual echo of the relationship between Lucas and Molly. Rider builds "a fire on the hearth on their wedding night as the tale told how uncle Lucas Beauchamp . . . had done on his forty-five years ago and which had burned ever since" (134). However, the fire in Rider's cabin has been extinguished with the death of his wife, and the consequences on his self-conception and identity within the community are swift and devastating.

Though Molly and Tennie represent the paradoxical necessity of a black woman's absent presence, Mannie's body is entirely absent for the whole of the section. Her appearance to Rider only further emphasizes to him that she is no longer available to stabilize his masculinity. "That very strength which could handle alone a log which would have taken any two other men to handle," physical strength which should be the marker of his masculinity, is instead the "insuperable barrier" that keeps him from his wife (136-137). Rider futilely tries to define his place in the world through Mannie, even after her death. He envisions that "somewhere beneath [the wheel marks] vanished but not gone, fixed and held in the annealing dust, the narrow, splay-toed prints of his wife's bare feet" are decipherable, as he walks, "his body breasting the air her body had vacated" (133). Rider urgently tries to imaginatively construct a physical body for his wife, but the attempts are useless. He no longer has a female body to which to anchor his identity, and he immediately begins to regress from stable masculinity to unhinged desperation.

After Mannie's death, Rider's identity is destabilized textually by his persistent disassociation from a mature masculine body. Davis points out Rider's assumption of a "toy shovel" and the reappearance of his childhood nickname "Spoot" (Davis 75). I agree with Davis's argument that Rider's powerlessness to prevent Mannie's death results in a regression to a childlike persona. However, even more disturbing

than the images of childhood are the suggestions that Rider has no stable identity whatsoever after Mannie's death. After he refuses the help of his aunt, and presumably a resumption of that pre-adolescent family dynamic, Rider's identity becomes progressively more incoherent. He tells his uncle that "Ah'm awready home" (144) when he is found in the wilderness, and in many ways his psyche has indeed become utterly chaotic and unfamiliar. Rider demonstrates a growing disconnect from his physical body. He seems to have lost the ability to connect volition with physical results, "feeling the muscles of his jaw beginning to drag his mouth open" (137) as if his body were unconnected to his mind. By the end of his night of drinking, the boundary between his body and the outside world seems to have dissolved completely: "he could not tell if it were going down inside or outside" (147). Chillingly, in the moments before Rider murders Birdsong, he becomes completely divorced from his former self: "one who was called Rider and was Rider" (147) approaches the circle of gamblers and cuts Birdsong's throat.

Mannie's death also results in Rider's inability to remain understandable to the black or white community. Rider's eyes "which had been strained and urgent . . . now seemed to be without vision too" (142). He has closed himself off from sensory contact with the world. He refuses the assistance of his aunt and uncle, insisting "Ah doan needs no help" (145). His frantic enactment of grief alienates him from his fellow workers at the sawmill. Though they watch Rider endanger himself by moving an enormous log by hand, "none of them moved" (141) to assist him. Even his dog abandons him, after Rider throws an empty moonshine jug at it. Eventually, Rider even exempts himself from participation in linear time. His binge after Mannie's death is only nominally marked by the rising and setting of the sun, and the eventual inability of his body to consume alcohol. Rider sets himself against time, calling it a "trepan" (147); a trickster figure that has robbed him of his wife and identity. His answer to escaping earthly time and join Mannie is to "cross[ing] the junctureless backloop of time's trepan" (147) and murder a white man.

Unsurprisingly, the white community misreads Rider's final actions. The second chapter of "Pantaloon in Black" features a retelling of Rider's story from the perspective of a white deputy who was involved in his arrest. Interestingly, the last moment the deputy is able to understand is the marriage: "His wife dies on him. All right" (150). Immediately following, the white man misinterprets Rider's actions as a descent into debauchery. His estimation of the events reinscribes Rider into the very racist assumptions that marriage and masculinity are designed to battle against. The deputy pronounces,

"they aint human. They look like a man and they walk on their hind legs like a man, and they can talk and you understand them. . . . But when it comes to the normal human feelings and sentiments of human beings, they might just as well be a damn herd of wild buffaloes" (149-150). The deputy later compares Rider to a "little child" (151). As Lucas realized through temporarily losing Molly, black female bodies are essential to both maintaining a coherent identity as a black man, and to achieving at least a modicum of participation in the dominant white society. The reason Faulkner only narrates Rider and Mannie's marriage in retrospect is to foreground the centrality of her physical body to Rider's identity.

On one level, "Pantaloon in Black" is a story of Rider's mourning and its illegibility to the white judgmental gaze. In another reading, the section vividly demonstrates the tenuousness of black masculinity. Kuyk analyzes Rider's behavior in a way that accounts both for his grief and the loss of his coherent identity: "Rider has lost Mannie, the fire on their hearth has died . . . Rider's universe has fallen apart. As planets exert gravitational force on one another, so black men and women are joined by the power of love" (68). Again, Kuyk's sentimental reading must be complicated by consideration of the social power of marriage to constitute black male identity. Without Mannie, Rider must negotiate the world "like someone engaged without arms in prolonged single combat" (Faulkner 138). Rider's identity collapses entirely without the weapon of a black female body to combat racism and isolation.

However, black identity formation does not necessarily end with the death of a black man. The concluding section of the novel, "Go Down, Moses," can be read as a response piece to "Pantaloon in Black," with two black male protagonists who have become disassociated from their identities as black men, and whose identities are reconstructed after their deaths. Whereas the deputy in "Pantaloon" creates a racist portrait of Rider that repositions him in a subordinate position within the racial hierarchy, Molly Beauchamp (now "Mollie") creates a narrative of her own that reclaims her dead grandson and reestablishes him in the black and white community.

The opening paragraphs of "Go Down, Moses" characterize Molly and Lucas's grandson Samuel Beauchamp as a black man who has lost his identity completely. Unlike Rider, whose crisis of identity manifests itself through a violent fragmentation of self, Samuel has constructed a new personality that is a direct denial of his black southern heritage. His voice "was anything under the sun but a southern voice or even a negro voice" (351). He has treated his hair so it "covered the skull like a cap. . . . He wore one of those sports

costumes called ensembles in the men's shop advertisements" (351). Much as Molly's body became subsumed by the outside markers of femininity in "The Fire and the Hearth," Samuel's appearance lacks all humanity, and is similarly defined only by masculine clothing; even his hair is described as part of his wardrobe. Samuel tells the census taker his real name, and thereby reveals that he has killed a policeman under a different name. As Rider eventually loses touch with his name and murders someone, Samuel also becomes disassociated with his true identity and becomes a killer. He first experiments with new names as a troubled youth in Jefferson, going by the moniker "Butch Beauchamp" (354). Once his identity transformation is complete, he goes so far as to comment "it was another guy killed the cop" (352). Samuel has lost all subjectivity, and is described as an object, "black, smooth, impenetrable" with a head that "resembled a bronze head" (351). Samuel's self is all performance and costume, meant to distance himself from southern black masculinity.

Whereas Lucas excludes himself from the court system by refusing a divorce, and Rider bypasses the same authoritative body by succumbing to a lynching, Samuel is completely subsumed by the white courts. He is confined and guarded by symbols of white justice, and those same symbols strip him of his constructed identity prior to his execution: "after a while they came and slit the expensive trousers and shaved the expensive coiffure" (352). The opening chapter of the section suggests that Samuel's fate will resemble Rider's in that a white man will tell his story after his death. The figure of the northern white census taker is considerably more sympathetic than the deputy of "Pantaloon in Black," but similarly ill-equipped to reconstitute Samuel's identity as a black man. His grandmother Mollie will assume that role.

Lucas's wife Molly reappears in this section, with her name now spelled "Mollie." The unexplained shift in spelling is curious, but perhaps again indicative of the unimportance of Mollie as an individual. For Lucas she is Molly, for Samuel, Mollie, but her function is the same. Mollie goes to the local white attorney, Gavin Stevens, to help her find Samuel. She is already doing the work of reimagining Samuel's story. Instead of accepting a version that terms Samuel as "some seed not only violent but dangerous and bad" (355), she recasts his exile to the north in epic biblical terms. She tells Gavin, "Roth Edmonds sold my Benjamin. Sold him in Egypt. Pharaoh got him" (353). Mollie manipulates the biblical story to reestablish Samuel in the southern community he abandoned.

In the narrative found in Genesis, Benjamin's older brother Joseph is exiled to Egypt. He was sold by his brothers to Ishmaelite

traders for twenty pieces of silver (Gen 37:25-28). After Joseph is established as governor over the land, some of his brothers come to him, not recognizing him, to ask for food during a time of famine. Joseph insists that Benjamin, the youngest, be brought with them. Benjamin was Joseph's full brother, sharing Rachel as a mother (Genesis 43:29). Joseph later accuses Benjamin of stealing from the royal palace, and uses the ruse as an opportunity to reveal himself to his brothers (Genesis 44-45). Her appropriation of this story in particular is significant in several ways for her project of recovering Samuel as a member of the Jefferson community.

First, she is reestablishing Samuel's connection to black southern manhood that he severed through jettisoning his African American hair, rural clothing, and southern accent. Her assertion that he was sold to Pharaoh connects Samuel to his black heritage. The reference to Pharaoh, a relatively benevolent character in the Joseph story, is in this case meant to refer to the Pharaoh of the Moses story, who is referenced in the section's and novel's eponymous spiritual. "Go Down, Moses" is a song about enslavement and eventual freedom that black slaves used as a mask to express their own desire for liberation. The "call and response" Mollie and her sister-in-law employ when speaking of Samuel's death further suggests this black tradition of establishing community in opposition to oppression: "'Sold him in Egypt and now he dead.''Oh yes, Lord. Sold him in Egypt.' 'Sold him in Egypt.' 'And now he dead'" (363).

Even more significantly, Mollie chooses a biblical narrative that is imminently concerned with the reunion of estranged brothers. Though Roth and Samuel are more distant cousins than brothers, the sentiment is the same. The novel as a whole is absorbed with the black and white branches of the McCaslin family, and by extension, black and white people as a whole "recognizing" the shared blood and history that binds them together. Though Roth had nothing to do with Samuel's flight north directly, Mollie accuses him of selling Samuel not because he is directly responsible for the escape and resulting tragedy, but because she wishes to reaffirm their blood relationship. Casting Samuel as Benjamin rather than Joseph serves a similar purpose. In the biblical narrative, it is Benjamin who is the catalyst for the reunion of the brothers. What might appear to be the confused ramblings of a biblically-obsessed old woman is actually a complicated attempt to reconstitute her grandson into his black and white families, what Minrose Gwin,, discussing the function of African American women in the novel, would call her ability to create "an alternative narrative space, a space which contains both female and Africanist stories" (92).

As Molly and Mannie served to give their husbands a legitimate place in the white-dominated community, Mollie does the same for her grandson in this section. She insists that Samuel's story be placed in the Jefferson paper: "Is you gonter put hit in de paper? I wants hit all in de paper. All of hit" (365). Gavin's condescending response that she will not be able to read it demonstrates that he has missed her point. She wants the white citizens of Jefferson to read about Samuel, and to accept that he was part of their community. For the same reason, "*she doesn't care how he died. She just wanted him home, but she wanted him to come home right. She wanted that casket and those flowers and the hearse and she wanted to ride through town behind it in a car*" (365, emphasis Faulkner's). Mollie is not superficially concerned with appearances in this request, she wants all proper social rituals performed so her grandson will be legitimate within the community. By constructing a new narrative explaining his exile in the north and insisting on custom and propriety, Mollie translates the communal memory of Samuel from "A bad son of a bad father" (357) into the matrilineal tradition of identity formation.

Throughout *Go Down, Moses*, black men derive their identity from relationships to black women. This is a complicated and ambivalent relationship. Davis argues that "black women in particular, because of their removal from the active space of recognized physical agency, become the ocular, the sighted, and the seeing" (147). The empowerment Davis recovers in the role of black women in the novel is problematic. Though Mollie is the dominant maker of meaning in the final section, she is still locked in a dyad that insists she use her narrative power to recover black male identity. Davis recognizes that the return of Samuel's body indicates the reunification of the "black communal body" that has been fragmented by law, death and dispersal (235). Though Mollie accomplishes this important cultural work, she does so to recover a "communal body" that is problematically gendered male. Black femininity and masculinity are locked together in a mutually dependent dyad of identity formation in *Go Down, Moses*. The laws of white culture and society forced black masculinity to depend entirely on black women, to the detriment of both.

Tracy Bealer
University of South Carolina
United States of America

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"[T]HE VERY WORST…THE OLDEST, DEEPEST FEAR": MASCULINE ANXIETY AND MALE RESPONSES TO EMASCULATORY THREATS IN MARTHA GELLHORN'S *POINT OF NO RETURN*

Peter Nagy

"The turn of the century," writes Christopher Breu, "marked a gradual but decisive shift in the cultural ideology of what constituted a valorized male identity, moving from the older discourse of manliness to a newer celebration of an active, exteriorized, and more violent conception of masculinity..." (6). In opposition to the Victorian model of manliness as genteel, intellectual, and moral, twentieth-century American constructions of manhood came to emphasize physical attributes over interior qualities. Accordingly, the male body became integral to cultural conceptions of masculinity and with "the late nineteenth century and the rise of the physical culture movement, the body itself important to definitions of masculinity" (Jarvis 5). Additionally, with the body as a vital component of manhood, athletic prowess, strength and appearance became the litmus test for manhood.

This incipient conception largely emerged in response to threats against masculinity perceived in changing socioeconomic circumstances, especially the enervated status of masculinity precipitated by the Great Depression—in which many men lost their breadwinner status—and the rise of commercial culture and technology (Jarvis). While efforts were taken to remedy damaged models of American masculinity, it was not until the Second World War that major transformations to conceptions of manhood transpired. With the United States's full-scale mobilization surfaced representations of males as "physiologically intact, well-muscled steeled entities" (Jarvis 87). As Michael Kimmel and John Adams note, World War II, for many, represented an opportunity for masculine regeneration, a proving ground in which men could regain their identities as "providers and

protectors," and revive the breadwinner image weakened in the unmanning Depression (Kimmel 147). But the insidiousness of war betrayed any optimism for the rejuvenation of American manhood, and the concept of a physically tough, machine-like masculinity collided with the challenges of battle (Adams 66).

As modern American masculinity became tied to the male body, the potential physical harm of war became particularly threatening. In World War II, wounds resulting from "combat, accidents, and other diseases offered more serious challenges to servicemen's bodies and masculine ideals" (Jarvis 85). Battle's capacity to penetrate or sever men—via bullets, mines, and shelling[1]—undermined the cultural definition of manhood predicated upon the idea of an impenetrable and whole male body. Martha Gellhorn's literary representation of the Second World War, *Point of No Return*, belies the early twentieth-century idea of battle as a locus of masculine renovation by capturing the male anxiety that resulted from wartime pressures on manhood. In the text, protagonists attempt to salvage their identities as men from a war fraught with numerous emasculatory threats, such as the weapons that produce abject masculinities by severing, penetrating, or somehow injuring an otherwise coherent male body fundamental to the construction of masculine normalcy.[2]

Of the little scholarship that attends to *Point of No Return,* many criticisms discuss the text in relation to Gellhorn's journalism or wartime politics, but surprisingly few focus on the underlying theme of masculine anxiety. Evincing Gellhorn's realism, Giovanna Dell'Orto, for instance, suggests that the author tackles the issue of veteran readjustment with Lieutenant Colonel Smithers. In a similar vein, Phyllis Lassner, who writes that Gellhorn argues for the morality of the conflict, characterizes Jacob Levy as an embodiment of "a generalized and continuous history of Jewish persecution and survival" standing against the Nazi war-machine (807). Though cogent, such readings overlook the fear that drives the Levy and Smithers narratives and underlies *Point of No Return*, a novel whose main protagonist significantly describes castration as "the very worst…the oldest, deepest fear" (*Point* 277). Levy's thematizing of castration centralizes the fear

[1] Christina Jarvis describes shelling as especially threatening: "A destructive technology that could atomize bodies from a great distance, shelling threatened both the wholeness of the body and the masculinity of men who could not directly confront this enemy fire" (93).

[2] Jarvis's term refers to the war's "hundreds of thousands of physically and emotionally injured men who represented damaged masculinity in one form or another" (102).

of emasculation and establishes male anxiety as a lens by which to read Gellhorn's novel.

Aside from the literal removal of the phallus, castration in *Point of No Return* metonymically represents the emasculations present in the various threats to the male body, but especially the emasculating effect of what Kaja Silverman calls a psychic disintegration—that is, the disintegration of masculinity's "bound and armored ego, predicated upon the illusion of coherence and control" (62). Often resulting from the trauma of war, this breakdown of masculinity leads men to seek remasculinization in various ways, sometimes through female submission. This essay examines masculine anxiety in *Point of No Return*, as it stems from subversions of manhood consisting in battle's production of abject masculinities and the deterioration of the illusion of control. Accordingly, I contend that the protagonists' fears are specific to the tension between their identities as men and their experiences of the emasculating conditions of battle.

I begin by discussing the masochistic rituals of Marvin Busch and Royal Lummox, but primarily trace the theme of masculine anxiety through three protagonists—Bill Gaylord, Lieutenant Colonel Smithers, and Jacob Levy. Responding to threats to manhood, these soldiers defend their masculine identities, either in relationships, where women serve as "others" against which they define manliness, such as the parallel romantic flings of Lieutenant Colonel Smithers and Jacob Levy, or in the escape offered by hypermasculine fantasies, such as Bill Gaylord. As castration poses the greatest fear, I argue that the "hope" (56) Levy additionally thematizes not only relates to general survival, but the salvation of manhood. Consistent with *Point of No Return*'s prevailing sense of hopelessness, however, I conclude that these endeavors for remasculinization are in vain. Just as her novel undermines the notion that war produces "real" men, Gellhorn's conclusion betrays any optimism for masculine rejuvenation as it lingers with a sense of war's futility and the impossibility of a return to normalcy.

Perhaps the most conspicuous example of male anxiety manifests in the masochistic rituals of Marvin Busch and Royal Lommax. In these spectacles, which seem almost parodic of the hypermasculine displays one finds in Hemingway, Busch, who consumes the shards from a broken light bulb, and Lommax, who drops a knife blade between his toes, act out what Christina Jarvis labels "instances of malingering," in which men reveal the extent to which they desire "to escape the possibility of more extensive bodily injury—damage over which they would have no control" (93). These self-destructive acts, Jarvis notes, ironically derive from the urge to "preserve the appear-

ance of masculinity and the wholeness of the body" (93). Though neither Lommax nor Busch incurs any physical damage, the masochistic entertainment in which each partakes appears a defensive act, an attempt to preserve, as Kaja Silverman defines it, the veneer of masculine self-control in a minatory and largely uncontrolled war, where a man loses dominion over his body to the happenstances of battle.

The remasculinizing rituals of Lommax and Busch serve as a paradigm for the journeys of Gaylord, Smithers, and Levy, who similarly attempt to return to a sense of masculine normalcy. In *Point of No Return*, threats to manhood surface in the physical injuries that undermine the notion of an impenetrable male body (the aforementioned abject masculinities), which Lieutenant Colonel Smithers surveys in a casualty list laden with "Head wounds, trench feet, pneumonia, the punctured, the dismembered, and the plain dead: dead getting nowhere…dead for nothing" (31). As a servicemen, Bill Gaylord undoubtedly encounters such treacheries, but his anxiety particularly results from the discomfort produced by male proximity, the smells that make closeness akin to "those outdoor gent's rooms in Paris" (31), and more specifically from the inescapable emasculations he perceives resulting from this closeness. For Gaylord, neither the outside, where the cold might "freeze your balls off" (32), nor the inside, where "You couldn't even stretch your legs without kicking some-one in the crotch" (32), provides a safe haven from the unmanning environment of war.

Gaylord responds to these potential emasculations by escaping "into his favorite paperbound world"—books that mark a last "refuge" (194) from a life "stifled in boredom" (194) and a reality failing to mirror the promises of fantasy: "Everything panned out badly, war and peace; nothing was ever enough, shiny enough, fast enough, never as gallant, exciting and stylish as he wished" (194-195). But the novels signify more than an evasion of general ennui; for Gaylord, they are temporary rescues from war-specific fears, especially threats to his masculine identity. Fittingly, the fantasies in which he frequently hides himself are hypermasculine novels that involve "hard-faced men" who always escort "frightened platinum blondes, draped with rubies" (32). Central to this imaginary world is the "infallible man, the private detective" with "his magic appeal to women, all women" (32). And, as Gaylord states, only when reading these male-dominated texts is he "comfortable" (85).

In reading Saint's adventures, Bill Gaylord recalls the twentieth-century conception of masculinity reflected in and informed by the private-detective story, a cultural fantasy, Christopher Breu writes,

that usually features a "hard-boiled male" detective "characterized by a tough, shell-like exterior, a prophylactic toughness," and by emotional detachment (1). Additionally, these hard-boiled detective stories often include the femme fatale—also seen in the gambling, murderous women of Gaylord's paperbound worlds— who functions as "the gendered figure through which the hard-boiled male narrates a larger sense of cultural loss and betrayal toward which he places his displaced aggression and self-loathing" (Breu 71). The femme fatale is a "whorish" figure that threatens male superiority and autonomy, whom the lone detective suppresses in order to assert his supremacy.

Bill Gaylord's fiction serves as a microcosm for his real-life environment. Not unlike war, Breu asserts, the urban battle central to hard-boiled narratives is "just as chaotic and confusing, the weapons are just as deadly, and the struggle is as potentially pointless" (15). Yet, as they are worlds that the invincible detective always conquers, Gaylord's fantasies serve as sanctuaries from his war-driven anxieties. Breu suggests that the "hard-boiled masculinity" of detective novels "represents an aggressive reformulation of male hegemony as much as a defensive reaction to what might have been perceived as a set of economic and social threats to this hegemony" (5). Though Breu defines hard-boiled fiction as a response to the emergence of corporate capitalism, for Gaylord it counteracts dangers specific to his context. Responding to the potential emasculations he perceives in the cold weather, male proximity, and the general vulnerability of the male body exposed by battle injuries, Gaylord attempts to re-masculinize himself through the powerful, tough-exterior maleness of detective stories.

Yet the emasculating conditions of battle are only one threat to which Gaylord's novels attend. The reality of the "good old home front" similarly haunts Gaylord's sense of manliness, as it reduces him to "a two room apartment with a woman who sulked and quarreled and lived like a slut and blamed you for not being rich" (*Point* 194). Not a perfect mirror of the femme fatale, Gaylord's wife, as he describes her, nonetheless cuts a whorish figure—a "bitch" that, in grabbing "all his money" and treating him "like dirt," deflates his bread-winner identity and undercuts the hegemony he attempts to salvage through his hypermasculine detective stories (193). The hard-boiled fiction, therefore, reacts against the enervated manhood that Gaylord additionally experiences at home. Accordingly, the appeal of the male detective is not only his tough, unaffected exterior, but the opulence and magically irresistible sexuality lacking in Gaylord's own masculinity—a quality that might resolve the domestic issue of

his wife's supposed promiscuity.

But Gaylord cannot sustain his dream of ideal masculinity, because threats, both warlike and domestic, constantly intrude. The remasculinizing escapes are but temporary comforts that cannot remedy the "meemies" nor rectify a dissolving marriage (162). The fantasies fail Gaylord, who desires, but does not possess, the invincibility and magnetic sexuality of the hard-boiled detective. Indeed, his life resembles a bleak inversion of his idealistic fictions. Unlike the urban crime scene of hard-boiled narratives, war is a constant and unconquerable battle in which real men are severed, or killed; and instead of an undeniable attraction to his magical sexuality, Gaylord's wife wishes for divorce. Attempting to adopt the unaffectedness of a fictional detective, Gaylord nevertheless remains emotionally defeated. Out of frustration, he rips the covers from one of his novels, symbolically destroying the dream of an ideal masculinity that refuses to translate into reality.

Suitably, Bill Gaylord's demise occurs subsequently to the news of divorce, when he finally runs "out of books" (194) in which to salvage his sense of manhood. Deprived of manly fictions, Gaylord tries remasculinizing himself on the battlefield. As Jarvis states, "during World War II the myth 'that combat was the ultimate test of the soldier's courage and manhood' was still very much alive. Thus wounds incurred while fighting bravely, in the context of killing a large number of enemy soldiers or taking a key location, could bestow honor or a sense of purpose to the individual" (94). Jarvis's description suits Gaylord, who, following emotional and psychological wounds—"meemies" and divorce—rekindles his interest in warfare and seeks the thrill of combat. Gaylord perceives battle not only as remedying life's stifling boredom, but as "a time when a man has to take matters in his own hands" (199), a proving ground in which to regain a feeling of control and secure an attenuated manhood. Yet his endeavor for remasculinization, proves self-undermining and otiose, because, unlike the fictional, all-conquering, hard-boiled males, Gaylord is a vulnerable male, easily killed in the treacheries of battle.

The emasculating conditions of war similarly drive Lieutenant Colonel Smithers to seek remasculinization. Threats to the male body are not explicit in his narrative, but one must understand that, as leader of the platoon, the colonel is fully aware of the abject masculinities produced in warfare, especially as he studies the "casualty list" (31) rife with descriptions of permeated, severed, and destroyed male bodies. Moreover, recognizing his own leadership as "acting" (39), Smithers acknowledges his lack of control in a war where must continually send men to their deaths. In addition, the subversion of

masculinity implicit in Gaylord's divorce compounds the colonel's subjection to chaos and abject maleness; it personally affronts Smithers, who universalizes the threat by condemning all women as "goddam whores" who, by disrupting traditional gender roles, act unfeminine, and thus, "ought to shave their heads," or shed their feminine disguises (193).

Dreams about returning to a life of socioeconomic prestige comprise one mode of escape for Smithers. While Giovanna Dell'Orto shrewdly identifies that Gellhorn tackles issues of domestic readjustment in Smithers's "dreams about peace and love at home," she overlooks the male-female interactions prominent in the colonel's wistful fantasies (8). Along with opulence and high social status, the colonel's dreams involve power relationships with females characterized by feminine "weakness"—a nineteenth- and twentieth-century male concept, Anthony Rotundo notes, describing appealing females as dependent, dainty, and gently submissive, such that they offset a man's assumed natural aggression, boldness, and self-confidence: "To men, feminine dependence dramatized their own hard-won independence and, in so doing, affirmed their sense of manhood" (106). In Smithers's fantasies, the modern-male conception of feminine appeal predicated upon daintiness and acquiescence materializes in the daughters of high-class, Georgian families, with whom the colonel frequently imagines himself.

As with Bill Gaylord and his detective novels, the colonel seeks to regain a sense of masculine power. Imagining himself a self-confident male conqueror of coy, acquiescent women dressed with hair like a "floating mist of gold," and a "delicate string of pearls," Smithers seems to enact Silverman's claim that males often react to war's destruction of the illusion of masculine control by requiring a submissive response from women: "And he knew what she wanted: indulgently, triumphantly, he put his arm around her and drew her close. It'll be much better on the way home, he thought, when we're parked and I can use both hands. 'Johnny,' she sighed, snuggling against him, 'I belong to you'" (*Point* 7). Girlish submissiveness and dependence are essential to Smithers's imaginative libidinal game, because, without them, the colonel would be unable to enjoy a sense of triumph, to contrast, and thereby, reaffirm the control and aggression integral to his sense of masculinity. Fittingly, he tosses aside the "too easy" (7) Elise for the smaller and more fragile Mary, as the promiscuity of the former threatens to disrupt his cat-and-mouse fantasy.

In his sexual pursuit of Dorothy Brock—whom the colonel reduces to "Dotty"— Smithers attempts to literalize his fantasies about hegemonic manliness. That Dorothy Brock figures as a sexual object—like

Mary and Elise—whom the colonel is "in a hurry" to lead "down the hall to the last bedroom and the advertised soft bed" (70-71) is evident in the initial, explicitly physical survey in which Smithers sexually appraises and objectifies the Red Cross girl: "She's got pretty hair, I like that color brown, Lieutenant Colonel Smithers thought, pretty ankles, a good build, the kind that went all to the chest and nothing to the hips. She's not too hot in the face, he went on, weighing what he'd got…" (70). But, simultaneously, Smithers's recognition that "there was something disturbing about her face too, or her eyes, as if she thought different from what she was saying" interrupts his catalogue, and more importantly, anticipates the disruption of his sexual pursuit effected by Dotty's "disturbing" qualities (70).

What the colonel only superficially registers is the bleakness that lurks beneath Dotty's appealing exterior—that is, the war's corruption of her perception of love and intimacy. Dorothy Brock feels obligated to don the feminine veneer, but, at the same time, wishes to quit the "lies" (75), to embrace the hidden reality of a woman defeated by war—a woman for whom the old dialogue between men and women—that of "sympathy, jokes, and advice" (71)—has become an apathetic and perfunctory routine: "Like working in a button factory, she thought, you could punch button holes all day long but you wouldn't have to think about buttons" (71). The corruption of intimacy and perversion of love for Dotty surfaces in her bleak observations, especially as she notes the war's mutation of romance into prostitution by likening the houses to "bordels for ladies" (70) and remarking that liquor glasses have become the new staple of femininity. Dotty's dismal outlook additionally derives from the fact of her friend's loss of a lover, in light of which she discovers that war's transmutation of authentic intimacy and love into danger. Much like the initial Jacob Levy, who perceives hope as vulnerability, Dotty is a hopeless figure who protects herself by remaining unaffected—all she wants "is not to have anything" (112).

This disillusionment catalyzes the miscommunications and the ideological gap between Dotty, who only wishes to leave her date with the colonel and cannot reciprocate his pretend sentiment—"'Dotty,' he whispered, 'I love you, darling'…'Of course you do,' Dorothy Brock murmured" (76)—and Smithers, who wants "everything complete with lies" (75). Though the war destroys Dotty's hope by transforming authentic affection and communication into a mechanical charade, Smithers still hopes for a post-war return to normalcy and a family in Georgia with a "good girl," "white picket fence," and "toddlers" (110). Accordingly, even though his initial intentions are purely sexual, the colonel wishes to maintain a sense of "decency" (74), to

sustain the pretences that Dorothy Brock can no longer support. A hopeful man and a defeated woman, Lieutenant Colonel Smithers and Dorothy Brock suitably climb "into bed from *opposite* sides" (75, italics added).

Due to the war's perversion of romance, Dorothy Brock cannot "perform" (75) the part of the idealistically submissive female that Smithers can aggressively pursue in order to regain his masculinity. The colonel craves sex, but desires it wrapped in a coy submissiveness like the shy and dependent girls of his socioeconomic fantasies, around whom he protectively wraps an arm. Consequently, while he hopes to remasculinize himself with Dotty, her methodical approach to, and willingness towards, sex frustrates his libidinal game: "No respectable girl, where he lived, would behave like Dotty…[she] made him feel cheated and disgusted" (74). The colonel cannot play the aggressive male because Dotty already assumes the role by aggressively seeking and expediting the sexual process in a business-like manner (74). This disruption effects a gender-role reversal whereby Smithers acts like the dependent female he desirably imagines, and Dotty, the aggressor, who disgusts the colonel by wanting "it the way a man would" (74), and protector, who reverses the interaction of Smithers's fantasies by affectionately wrapping her arm around the nightmare-stricken colonel.

Only after Dorothy Brock emotionally falls "to pieces" (112) and behaves "the way Lieutenant Colonel Smithers expected a girl to behave" (113) does the reversal disengage and is the colonel able to find "what it is he wanted" (113)—the role of masculine aggressor/protector. As Dotty displays emotional vulnerability by crying "herself into another girl" (113) she fulfills Smithers's expectation of coy and dependent femininity: "You could really fall for this girl because you'd know you mattered to her. He was happy undoing her coat and taking off her blouse; happier than he had been when the other Dotty, willing and indifferent, undressed herself. And she still wouldn't meet his eyes she was shy now, and this made her more desirable than ever" (114). The colonel accordingly reduces the broken Dorothy Brock to an affectionate and needy "sweet kid" (114) against whom he can contrast his manly toughness and autonomy. With this new Dotty, whom Smithers perceives himself paternalistically protecting "as if she were a child on a dangerous street" (113), the colonel regains a sense of power and control, the feeling that "He was in charge now" (114).

Smithers subsequently replaces his old socioeconomic fantasies with a renewed feeling of manliness predicated upon a submissive Dotty—not the real, hardened Dorothy Brock, the colonel admits, but

an ideal construction that requires protection, a "memory suitable to his needs and desires" (192): "Lieutenant Colonel Smithers invented with love a girl named Dorothy Brock…but his plans did not extend beyond finding her, and taking her in his arms…" (192). Like Bill Gaylord, however, Smithers's solacing reveries inexorably collapse on the realities of war, in the defeat of his sense of masculinity built upon a romantic delusion the colonel was bound to lose: "He remembered how he had dreamed about her, from Luxembourg to Hurtgen and all the way back…He had feared though, always that the dream was false; and he could not say she had ever given him grounds for dreams of any kind. So that was over too" (313). Smithers surrenders any hope for the salvation of his manhood, a return to normalcy, and, in his last words, recognizes the futility of a war amounting to nothing more than a loss of "three years of his life" (313).

Before his final emotional surrender, however, Smithers clings to his friendship with Jacob Levy as a last rescue. Critics such as Dell'Orto and Lassner claim that Levy, a Jewish soldier, functions as a symbol of ideological defiance for Smithers: "Kill everybody and not get Levy, our only Jew, when he's what they got their real grudge on. It was like spitting in the krauts' faces, for Levy to survive. Lieutenant Colonel Smithers gave a grunt of laughter and fell asleep" (31). Yet, of equal importance is Smithers's recognition of Levy's pleasing countenance—a face that the colonel significantly compares to that of a movie star. In likening Levy to silver-screen men, Smithers places him among the hard-boiled[3], sexually irresistible males of Bill Gaylord's fiction. And Gaylord also perceives in the Jewish solider an ideal masculinity that might "'have the women squirming from New York to California'" (19). Tall and "handsome," Levy not only belies the expectation of a "greasy little kike with those eyes they've got," but, for Smithers, who cannot "get over that pan of his" (19), embodies an iconic manliness, and thus, hope for manhood in a war of various emasculations (9-10).

As he believes the colonel's luck will keep him from a possible "third wound" (11), Jacob Levy reciprocally invests hope in Smithers. Even though he seems to agonize over the potential wound simply because of its promise of fatality, Levy specifically attaches the threat to a "minefield" (29). And as Christina Jarvis explains, in World War II, mines,[4] aside from a general danger, bore the explicit threat of

[3] Christopher Breu notes that, after the war, hard-boiled fiction was adapted for the silver screen.

[4] As Jarvis notes, mines embodied the horror of castration, often considered the worst injury by servicemen: "While in combat, infantry men often crossed their legs

castration, which Levy later designates the "very worst fear" (277). The danger of being unmanned, for Levy, lives not only in the mines, but also the irremediable neurosis he experiences at Wipfel—"But would a man ever be allright [*sic*] again if once his eyes looked like they were glass and he screamed out crazy things he didn't even hear?" (38). As Smithers remains miraculously unharmed throughout battle, he epitomizes invulnerable masculinity and therefore represents, for Levy, a rescue from emasculatory threats (Breu 87).

Akin to Smithers, Levy, who doubles the colonel throughout the text[5], seeks to remasculinize himself through a submissive and dependent female—Kathe, a hope "clothed in a body and called by a name," but also a romantic invention with whom he only imaginatively converses (145). And in his pursuit, Levy echoes Smithers, as his explicitly physical observation exposes his initially sexual intent with the Luxembourg waitress: "Kathe had a nice fat little rear and nice fat little front and good teeth, with a gold filling somewhere when she smiled. And friendly blue eyes and she wore her black hair in a braid around her head…He enjoyed watching Kathe bring in the trays, with her little bottom moving under the thin black wool of her dress" (47-48). Unlike Dotty, whose corruption frustrates Smithers's pursuit, Kathe, a café waitress who does not "follow or understand the war" (63), remains sexually and emotionally untainted, and thus someone who returns Levy to a sense of masculine normalcy (46). Perceived as a child-like, puppyish innocence, Kathe embodies the feminine coyness and dependence by which Levy contrasts his own aggression and autonomy.

The renewal of Levy's masculinity comes not only through his sexual transgression, in which he betrays his original nobility by essentially raping the waitress, but by reducing Kathe to an object requiring his paternalistic protection: "'I'm in a kindergarten bed with a Christmas present doll,' Jacob Levy thought, and laughed softly but aloud. Then he gathered Kathe in his arms and said, 'You funny little kid,' and patted her as if he had been presented with a baby to hold, soothe and put to sleep" (83). Paralleling Smithers's perception of himself as a paternal nurturer of a helpless Dotty, Levy, figuring the waitress a "dopey kid" and a "lost kitten," perceives the crying

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under shell fire, and bomber crews would frequently sit on their helmets…men frequently privileged the safety of the penis over the rest of the body in order to maintain a sense of phallic masculinity" (87).

[5] Levy's frequent sharing of Smithers's language and his use of Smithers's name as a pseudonym validates this claim.

Kathe as a "helpless pitiful little creature" who requires his embrace and protection from other predatory men (84).

The attempt at remasculinization continues as Levy imagines himself engaged to Kathe and her caretaker. Replaying the traditional relationship of his parents, he returns to a sense of masculine normalcy by assuming the "responsibilities" (158) of a husband similar to his father, who "was the head of the family, the man who paid" for his mother's various purchases—"egg beaters or lamp shades or sofa cushions or dresser sets or bath salts" (158). Purchasing clothes for Kathe, Levy assumes a breadwinner status and feels like "a man who took care of a woman," just as his father cared for his mother (157). And in this fantasy relationship, Levy retains his role as a paternalistic guardian: "Then too, because of what the sight of Kathe did to him, he had become the old one, the sure one, the man" (152). By assuming the role of provider and a protector standing "between [Kathe] and a hard world which she did not even know about," Levy attains a "life after dark," a renewed sense of manhood built upon "the security of being depended on, the protection of being needed" (158).

The fear of emasculation finally drives Jacob Levy to the self-destructive reprisal at the novel's denouement. Dell'Orto argues that Levy's concluding murder of German civilians marks his sudden personalization of a war in which his Jewish heritage initially meant "a little more prejudice to sustain" (Dell'Orto 8). And Phyllis Lassner similarly sees Levy's rage stemming from his heritage and Levy himself as the force of Gellhorn's polemic against Dachau. Yet, both critics overlook that emasculatory threats are central to Levy's terrifying experience in the death camp. In Dachau, threats to masculinity manifest in two forms: in the castration practices of the torturous Nazis, which present the "oldest, deepest fear" (277) (at the thought of which the soldier's "hand slid down to" protect his genitals), and in the deterioration of femininity present not only in the abject women of Dachau, whom Levy barely recognizes as females, but in the removal of "'gold fillings,'" similar to those of Kathe, and the black hair, similar to that of Levy's mother, from women's bodies (285).

In addition to Jewish heritage, such dangers provide the impetus for the indignant Levy, who attaches emasculatory threats to the Germans. The castrating, women-destroying Germans come to embody a threat to manhood, which the Jewish soldier attempts to run down and destroy. Fittingly, Jacob Levy not only obsesses over the absurdity that "They were murdering people for nothing. For nothing, for nothing, for nothing. For being Jews" (289), but the Nazi affront to the sort of femininity central to Levy's identity as a man. He therefore incessantly reminds himself that, like the women used to

stuff mattresses, "Momma has black hair too, long black hair…My mother has long black hair, my mother has long black hair" (290-291) as he drives onto the "laughing Germans."

Similar to Bill Gaylord and Lieutenant Colonel Smithers, Levy's hope for remasculinization proves false, a self-destructive attempt "failed, with anguish." In running over the Germans, Levy incurs the "third wound" he incessantly dreads by destroying his face, and thus, his most masculine feature, by which Smithers and Gaylord mark him as a tall, good-looking, manly man, and with which he fulfills Kathe's romantic expectations of American soldiers. Rather than Lassner's assertion that Gellhorn's ending "reflects the necessity of 'the next battle'" (805), the novel closes with the emptiness of victory and the impossibility of a return to normalcy—all of which Bert Hammer recognizes in his enumeration of destroyed and injured companions: "Suddenly, Bert Hammer thought, with real surprise: Marv is dead. Goddamit, Marv was dead and Dan and Roy were shot up bad and the Sarge didn't have any legs" (265). Even though Levy retraces his hope and rests in optimism, *Point of No Return* concludes with a lingering hopelessness deriving from Dorothy Brock's attestation of war's futility and Smithers's realization that battle earns "nothing, nothing, nothing" (302).

The investigation of Gellhorn's exploration of masculinity not only exposes the greater complexity of *Point of No Return* unnoted by journalistic studies of the novel but perhaps inaugurates a new area of critical interest for the prolific American novelist, travel writer, and journalist, whose portrayals of male identity have been largely ignored while those of her ex-husband, Ernest Hemingway, have long been examined, debated, and celebrated. Elucidating the masculine discourse within the novel establishes a lens by which to analyze other Gellhorn works and will potentially complicate critical approaches to her fiction and perceptions of the writer herself. And continuing to unearth her gender discourse will perhaps secure Gellhorn greater notice within the canon of modern-American fiction, stock the dearth of critical attention afforded to Gellhorn's war novel since its incipience, and liberate the author and her work from the immense shadow imposed by Hemingway's celebrity.

Peter Nagy
Villanova University
United States of America

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"WHAT MAKES A MAN, MR. LEBOWSKI?": MASCULINITY UNDER (FRIENDLY) FIRE IN ETHAN AND JOEL COEN'S *THE BIG LEBOWSKI*

Jakub Kazecki

When Joel and Ethan Coen released their impatiently awaited new movie in 1998, the audience and critics expected to see in the movie an acknowledgment of the artistry of Raymond Chandler, the author of popular detective stories and Hollywood screenplay writer of the late 1940s. This expectation was set by pre-release interviews with the movie creators, in which the Coens openly acknowledged their attraction to Chandler's novel *The Big Sleep*, to which the new movie alludes in its title. In addition, one of the earlier Coens' movies, *Miller's Crossing* (1990), has been described as a tribute to another 'hard-boiled' story writer from Los Angeles, Dashiell Hammett, and the Coens did not make a secret of their fascination with American detective fiction and of their plans to continue with the appreciation of their authors in cinematic form. The new movie, *The Big Lebowski*, was supposed to be another 'film noir.'

Critical reception of the new movie, judging by magazine and newspaper reviews, was not overly enthusiastic. *The Big Lebowski* did not fulfill the expectations of the critics. The fact that the Coens' previous movie, the acclaimed thriller *Fargo* (1996), had been awarded two Oscars and had won the prize for best director in Cannes (for Joel) also played a role. "Fargo suggested that the Coens might be growing up a little, but now they've managed to drop back down the evolutionary ladder" wrote Paul Tatara in the CNN review of the movie (Tatara), and a similar tone is repeated in many discussions about the newest 'failure' of the talented brothers. Compared to their debut *Blood Simple* (1984), *Fargo* or *Miller's Crossing*, the story about an aging hippie from L.A. who finds himself involved in a complicated kidnapping plot and mostly induces the audience's laughter just does not appear sophisticated enough (see the reviews by Jay Carr, James Verniere or Steven Rosen). Quentin Curtis remarks in his review of *The Big Lebowski* that "you have always the feeling in Coens' films

that the works are not so much thought out, intellectually, as doodled over coffee and doughnuts—pieces of fooling around rather than tracts on human nature [...] Comic genius of the Coens' order is for enjoyment rather than analysis" (Curtis).

One can argue about whether a movie made for the enjoyment of the audience (as an artistic by-product of the apparently childish behaviour of the Coen brothers) and a motion picture that can easily undergo a critical analysis (as would be expected from 'grown up' filmmaker) are really two opposite and exclusive directions along which we have to orient our thoughts about the movie. In this article, I hope to show that *The Big Lebowski* is not so 'analysis-resistant' or 'analysis-proof' as most film critics would like to see it. I want to investigate the subversive effect of humour and laughter on the masculinity models presented in the movie and to demonstrate that the humour challenges the heterosexual gender norm supported and confirmed by popular American film genres and by the star system developed in the 1930s and 1940s in Hollywood's dream factory.

To introduce the term 'masculinity models,' it is necessary to remark that the dominant discourses surrounding gender and sexuality are not only reflected and mediated by film and other cultural forms, but are also directly shaped by these forms. Film especially significantly contributed to the shaping of masculinity and femininity models. The cinema's power lies in its special position between the audience's fantasies and lived experience: it depicts the reality in depersonalized, consumable form, which allows the recognition of the self and identification with the person on the screen, at the same time at which it serves as a projection of a desired, idealized 'self' in an 'other' who serves as a cultural model.

The representational system offered by American film, which developed rapidly from the early 1920s, divided human practices shown on screen into 'masculine' and 'feminine' characteristics, offering certain cultural models of 'masculinity' and 'femininity' through the actors and actresses in leading roles. The main accents have been, however, put on the male protagonists, around which most American movie plots revolve. Steven Cohan and Ina Rae Hark argue in their essay collection *Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood Cinema* that movies have always served as one of the primary sites through which the social construction of masculinity has been hidden from view in American culture (3). Masculinity is perceived by the wider film audience as a stable, universal and unchanging essence and not as a construction, as an effect of culture or as a performance.

In American cinema, masculinity has been driven by the classical

Hollywood fiction film, which, according to Frank Krutnik, "tends to pivot around individual characters, their emotions, desires and actions" while they are engaged within and defined through two basic lines of action: the adventure story and the heterosexual love affair (4). The development of film genres can be connected to the changing balance between those two components in different movies. The changes were forced by the wishes of the audience, which wanted to see its hero in more 'romantic' situations or to see more 'adventure' for the male hero to test his masculinity in different ways. The popularity of certain narrative solutions (manifested in box office results) created an impulse to repeat the formula, the particular combination and articulation of elements that appeared to be successful for specific, historically-situated audiences. As a result, filmmakers developed sets of narrative procedures and stylistic emphases which, along with the reoccurring presence of the same actor types, have been described as film genres. Along with the genres, certain masculinity models have been formed. Genres such as 'western,' 'horror film,' 'crime thriller,' 'musical' or 'romantic comedy,' to name just a few, have been established in the practices of American cinema. Thomas Sobchack, in his essay "Genre Film: A Classical Experience" notes that "consciously or unconsciously, both the genre filmmaker and the genre audiences are aware of the prior films and the way in which each of these concrete examples is an attempt to embody once again the essence of a well-known story" (103). The awareness of the genre tradition, whether the set of genre characteristics is recognized and systematized or not, is the key to fulfilling the expectations of the audience—or to playing with them. The results of the play, however, may vary.

It seems to me that in the case of *The Big Lebowski*, the Coen brothers get involved in a risky play with film genres well known to the audience. The fact that the movie has not been received very warmly by both moviegoers and critics because of its apparent 'emptiness' and 'narcissism,' for its being mainly about "its own cleverness" (McCarthy), and the difficulties of categorizing it into one specific film genre, are, in my opinion, worth a detailed investigation. What genres does *The Big Lebowski* jump between, confusing the audience and, through their multiplicity, posing the possibility of multiple and alternative masculinity models?

Before I try to shed some light on the cross-genre character of the movie, I would like to make an observation on the film narrative. The plot of *The Big Lebowski* does not reflect the narrative structure typical of American motion pictures, where the male hero, through his own actions, successfully overcomes the unbalance of the narrative

caused by the initial atrocious deeds of a villain. Roger Ebert in the *Chicago Sun-Times* hits the nail right on the head by noticing that "[s]ome may complain [that] *The Big Lebowski* rushes in all directions and never ends up anywhere. That isn't the film's flaw, but its style" (Ebert 37). The "rushing in all directions" can be noticed already in the first sequences of the movie: against a music background provided by Sons of the Pioneers, the Dude (played by Jeff Bridges), is accompanied by the voiceover—the cowboy-narrator The Stranger (Sam Elliot)—on his way to the supermarket. The narrator, rambling nonsensically and losing his "train of thought" quite often, introduces the Dude in a way that may suggest that his story portrays "a cowboy's opium dream of life at the end of the trail" (Bergan 189). Is the Dude, as a successor of the pioneers, a hero of westerns who has found his quiet place after a troubled life in the West, going to be bothered by evildoers and forced to fight them again? That's what the narrator's introduction, combined with the soundtrack and camera work (long panoramic shots of L.A. at sunset), seems to imply.

Next, the Dude is attacked in his own apartment and his head is repeatedly submerged in the toilet. Even when subjected to brutal violence, the main character retains his laid-back attitude and makes cocky comments which promise the audience a hero who is a strong individualist with an ironic sense of humour, like Chandleresque PIs. This type of male hero is characterized by Frank Krutnik as dominant in the "male suspense thriller," a subcategory of *film noir*. According to Krutnik, the hero emerges from the position of marked inferiority against both the criminals and the police and seeks to restore his secure superior position by solving the mystery (86). This type of male hero can lose everything and not care (and the Dude is introduced as such by the narrator in the opening sequence), but he still keeps his wit and intelligence. The illusion that we will follow the Philip Marlowe of the 1990s (the movie is set at the time of the Gulf War in 1991), and the hope that we will see a modern variation of *The Big Sleep* ends soon, however, after a series of events over which the Dude has no control and—even worse—which remain incomprehensible to him to the very end. His bold assumptions and theories about the kidnapping plot are revealed as false, or at least unexplained, one after another. The closing movie sequence finds the Dude exactly at the same point at which he found himself at the beginning of the story: completely satisfied with his life (unlike the hero in Chandler's stories), because his "aim in life, the goal to which he moves and the hope which sustains him" is not the "unravelling of obscure crimes, the final solution of which affords him little or no satisfaction" (Houseman 161). His repetitious and failed attempts to explain

the complicated plot to his friends, his moments of illusionary glory when he thinks he sees clearly the motives of the other characters involved in the fake kidnapping, and his failures as an enthusiastic but amateurish detective, negate the image of an active hero typical for the *film noir* genre, such as—to follow the Coens' fascination with Chandler—Humphrey Bogart or Robert Mitchum's characters in both main-stream Hollywood adaptations of *The Big Sleep* (Howard Hawks' film from 1946 and Michael Winner's from 1978). The audience will also never get an answer to the main question of the mystery—who took the million dollars—which remains unresolved, as do so many 'why' questions.

The inconsistencies in the narrative patterns are not accidental, however. According to Joel and Ethan Coen, the idea of the movie was to create the plot as "a Chandler kind of story—how it moves episodically, and deals with the characters trying to unravel a mystery. As well as having a hopelessly complex plot that's ultimately unimportant" (Stone). In another interview about the movie, Ethan Coen expresses his vision of Jeff Bridges' character: "It just seemed interesting to us to thrust that character into the most confusing situation possible, the person, it would seem, on the face of it least equipped to deal with it" (Leyland). The two masculinity models presented in the opening scenes of the movie, the cowboy who gave up his bloody work and the private investigator in the urban jungle, typical for the American western and *film noir*, despite audience's expectations, are just not the measure of the Dude's actions. What the director and writer of the movie judge as "interesting" is the confrontation of the 'masculine' developed and re-produced by the American movies with the male figure in their movie, who, due to external circumstances, happens to be the protagonist and carrier of the narrative. Jeff Lebowski, as a "man of inaction" (Robson 189), is not acting in the sense of the typical male protagonists—he is being acted upon. He is always one step behind his counterparts. And the audience laughs at his belief that he keeps up with them.

The comic effect appears to be the element that is mentioned most repeatedly in reviews of the movie. Although complaining about the genre inconsistency of *The Big Lebowski*, most critics approve of its humorous effect, even if, according to some of them, the laughter does not last for long (Matthew Sweet, Alexander Walker). When looking at Jeff Lebowski, the question of what makes him funny, of what causes the comic effect and what is the relation between the comic and masculinity models in the cinema seem to be legitimate.

Comedy is often developed in situations where both male and female characters do not measure up to cultural expectations for their

gender. In other words, if the physical appearance and the actions of the characters do not comply with the normative image for their gender in the specific circumstances conditioned by the culture, they can induce laughter. In his *Philosophy of Laughter and Humor,* John Morreall offers a cognitive theory of laughter, in which laughter results from the encounter with many types of incongruous situations (Morreall 188-205). In his view, the human reactions to incongruity can be organized into three different groups. The first group contains negative emotions, like fear, anger, disgust, and sadness, the second puzzlement with the experienced, and the third humorous, pleasurable laughter. The incongruity is a subjectively perceived deviation from the consistency of the world structure. The contrast between our expectations (the understanding of the world needed for physical survival) and the event that does not fit into the 'normal state of things,' can be experienced as dangerous. Negative emotions and puzzlement are reactions that motivate us to resolve aberrations, e.g. through escape, aggression or the adoption of the new occurrence into our knowledge about the world. Humorous laughter, on the other hand, allows us to enjoy situations which do not threaten our physical survival, at the same time stimulating our ability to deal with newness in the future. Thus, laughter has a subversive function: it allows questioning and overthrowing the norm, and adopting the exception in the changed world view. According to Morreall, there is also another situation possible in which we can burst into laughter. When the overwhelming nature of the incongruent situation makes action completely impossible, we can overcome the unpleasurable experience over which we have no influence and turn it into its opposite: a pleasure accessible through the sublimation of the negative impulse—Nietzsche's "'slaves' joy at the Saturnalia" (137), when the forces of nature, potentially dangerous, do not cause any harm.

What Morreall understands only in a narrow, biological sense (incongruity allows the human being to deal with the impulses from the outside world and, in consequence, to physically survive), can be also applied to the type of incongruous situations we encounter in *The Big Lebowski*. The 'normal state of things' is created by the Hollywood representational system, with its various film genres. As mentioned before, within the framework of a specific genre, the audience expects certain narrative solutions based on the combination and articulation of story components, stylistic emphases and gender models. The genres as "systems of orientations, expectations and conventions that circulate between industry, text and subject" (Neale 19) are the structure that constitutes the viewer's secure position. To this position belongs the genre's treatment of the "masculine,"

which reflects broader ideological constructions of gender that inform and often determine certain attitudes and behaviours in society. The constructed character of masculinity is, according to Judith Butler, not recognized as such and hidden from the viewer:

> [...] acts and gestures, articulated and enacted desires create the illusion of an interior and organizing gender core, an illusion discursively maintained for the purposes of the regulation of sexuality within the obligatory frame of reproductive heterosexuality. If the 'cause' of desire, gesture, and act can be localized within the 'self' of the actor, then the political regulations and disciplinary practices which produce that ostensibly coherent gender are effectively displaced from view. The displacement of a political and discursive origin of gender identity onto a psychological 'core' precludes an analysis of the political constitution of the gendered subject and its fabricated notions about the ineffable interiority of its sex or of its true identity. (Butler 136)

One of the most important sources of humour in the Coens' comedy is the confrontation between the actions of the male protagonists and the dominant ideological constructions of masculinity, which are marked by numerous allusions to and visual references from movies belonging to different film genres. The audience's—the male audience's—laughter is the laughter at the 'other' visible on the screen, the viewer's gender identity is not directly threatened. Nevertheless, the viewer recognizes that the masculinity models promoted by the representational conventions of American cinema can, and in fact are, subverted by his laughter. The Coens initiate a cognitive process: they present the Dude as the hero of a cowboy saga or a detective in the big city only to later destroy the anticipated narration scheme and aesthetic choices. The laughing viewer goes through the process of acknowledging that the masculinity can be constructed through (re)acting in various historical and social contexts. The cowboy Stranger sitting in the bowling hall in Los Angeles in the early 1990s and talking to the Dude about the ever-changing course of life ("Wal, a wiser fella than m'self once said, sometimes you eat the bar and sometimes the bar, wal, he eats you") looks indeed strange, talks strangely and gives the impression that he originates from a different movie (as a matter of fact, the actor playing the Stranger, Sam Elliot, whose physical type predestines him to play in westerns, asked the Coens on the set of *The Big Lebowski*, "What am I doing in THIS movie?") (Robson 176). His inappropriate presence in the movie surprises the viewer and distorts the narrative flow. His connection to the narrative remains unexplained. His character proves, however, that, if his appearance is rather misplaced, 'borrowed' from another film genre, other male figures can be as strange as he is, if not in this particular movie, then in another. For *The Big Lebowski* there is no advocated masculinity model, for in another time, or in another place

of narration, the 'normal' patterns of behaviour marked as masculine can be questioned, subverted and, eventually, compromised. Judith Butler notes in *Gender Trouble* that thinking in relative terms about the 'normal' gender behaviour can cause amusement:

> The loss of the sense of the normal,' however, can be its own occasion for laughter, especially when 'the normal,' 'the original' is revealed to be a copy, and an inevitably failed one, an ideal that no one can embody. In this sense, laughter emerges in the realization that all along the original was derived. (138-139)

Similarly, the audience laughs at the beaten-up hero, the Dude, and the rambling Stranger, and comprehends that 'being a real man' is performed, is re(acted) after an ideal that is formed through discursive practices, and can be freely taken out of context.

The Stranger fulfills another important function in the movie. Along with the wide-angle lenses, the visual allusions, the soundtrack and the period setting, the character of the cowboy helps to create distance between the viewer and the narrative. His comments frame the events on the screen; he interrupts the course of action and prevents the viewer from emotionally engaging in the unravelling story, stressing the fact that the occasionally dramatic action was just a story told to amuse the viewer, not to make the male hero more popular. "Wal, uh hope you folks enjoyed yourselves," he summarizes the movie, setting up the distance to the viewed picture.

The range of masculinity models presented in *The Big Lebowski* is not limited to the heroes of film noir and western. The Coen brothers describe their work as "in a strange way, kind of a buddy movie" (Lowe 163) and the figure constellation reflects the intention to put the men in the foreground: two main male characters, the Dude and Walter Sobchak (John Goodman), accompanied by Donny (Steve Buscemi). Walter, a war veteran, lives in the reality shaped by the Vietnam conflict. His aggressiveness and the tendency to take command in every social interaction, along with his never-ending references to the long-past war against which he measures every aspect of life, place him in the lineage of the well-built, loud and violent action heroes of war movies. The masculinity model represented by Walter supposedly fits into the specific time and place, in the United States during the Gulf War: as a reference, a speech by George Bush is shown on TV when the Dude passes by, while Walter quotes from official political rhetoric in the course of action ("This aggression will not stand!", "I'm talking about drawing a line in the sand, Dude!"). Walter's manly behaviour is tested, however, in circumstances that have nothing to do with battlefield situations, far from the jungle of 'Nam: he is putting up his gun in the bowling hall, provoked by a minor violation of

game rules by another player, and he calls for constitutional rights to use cuss words in the family diner. His repetitive references to the war and confrontational attitude are out of place (and out of time) in the 1990s. The US has supposedly recovered after the failure in Vietnam; in addition, the character of war has changed: war is now more technological, more impersonal, the war actions are watched mostly on TV, and the war hero has to change, too. Walter's manner of dealing with the world is turned into ridicule. When it eventually comes to a violent conflict between the Dude's bowling team and the 'German nihilists,' and the agon can take place, Walter fights in a way that contradicts martial arts. He throws a bowling ball at one of the opponents, hits another with a portable radio and bites off the ear of a third, in a gesture reminiscent of Mike Tyson and his unsporting violation of box rules in 1997. The style of this final challenge does not meet the engagement rules praised by him on another occasion: "I had an M16, Jacko, not an Abrams fucking tank. Just me and Charlie, man, eyeball to eyeball."

The one casualty of the bloody fight with the 'Germans' is Donny, the best bowler of the three friends. He is not hit or wounded by the aggressors, nor does he hit anyone; he simply does not survive a heart attack caused by panic and fear. However, in his funeral speech, Walter compares Donny's death to the heroic sacrifices of combat:

> He died—he died as so many of his generation, before his time. In your wisdom you took him, Lord. As you took so many bright flowering young men, at Khe San and Lan Doc and Hill 364. These young men gave their lives. And Donny too. Donny who... who loved bowling.

The funeral scene is a bitter parody of the celebratory military and police funerals portrayed in mainstream Hollywood war movies, in action movies and in thrillers. Usually, the funeral of the protagonist's close friend constitutes one of the most important points in the narrative, motivating the male hero to take revenge on the villain. In the masculinity models presented by these genres, male grief, anger and memory are usually overcome by direct, assertive action which implies violence and brutality against the other. The Dude and Walter go bowling. And in the last scene of the movie we see the Dude relaxed and thinking only about the finals of the bowling league.

The Big Lebowski is often described primarily as a 'movie about bowling.' To categorize the film as a sport movie would be misleading, however. Although reviews of the film evaluate Donny as a 'sportsman,' the term has a different implication for bowling, a "not really physically taxing thing. You can be a slob and do it" (Lowe 164). Bowling, although present in Hollywood movies, has not been evaluated as a big spectacle or a field for the creation of a masculine model in

which physical strength and a sense for tactics and competition play an important role—a direct successor of the ancient hunter. "Bowling is not a sport to feature greatly in movies, but it does have an image as the game for the 'average Joe,'"good enough for Homer Simpson, for example" (Bergan 190). The audience reacts with laughter when Maude Lebowski, the millionaire's daughter, inquires after sex with the Dude for more details from his life, and asks him what he does for fun. "Bowl," answers the Dude, summarizing his achievements in a very short curriculum vitae. Being a bowler does not require the characteristics needed from a man in the production-oriented modern capitalist society.

The question of achievement appears many times in the movie, mostly in scenes with the Dude's namesake, Jeffrey Lebowski, called the Big Lebowski, the millionaire from Pasadena. The two characters cannot communicate at all, because they speak two different idiolects. The millionaire despises the Dude's lifestyle, and stresses the role of achievement in a man's life. Wealth and successes in the realm of work are the measures of competence in being a man. The figure of the Big Lebowski is an example of a masculinity model in which achievement is equal to work production. The audience finds out much later that the masculine ability "to do the right thing," "to achieve," proudly expressed by the disabled millionaire, has to be demystified. He does not have any money; he inherited it through his wife.

From his wife, the Big Lebowski has also 'inherited' Maude, a feminist artist (resembling the Fluxus painter and performer Carolee Schneeman), who invites the Dude to her loft and informs him that she is aware of the kidnapping of her stepmother, Bunny. She presents to the guest a film sequence that should convince him of the fake character of Bunny's abduction and low moral standards. The movie, called *Logjammin,'* is the Coens' parody of the porn movie genre. The distinct characteristic of the infamous genre is its emphasis on the visibility of male and female genitals. Being a man in a porn movie (like Karl Hungus, one of the 'nihilists') means being able to demonstrate an erect penis and perform a sex act. In this context, Karl Hungus threatens the Dude in the worst possible way, for cutting off his penis would be an attempt to take away his masculinity. The audience identifies with the terrified Dude until Donny asks "What do you need that for, Dude?"—in fact, the Dude does not seem to require his penis to prove anything.

The number of male characters exposed in the movie is much greater than the few most important representatives I have described here. Worth noticing are also the figure of the Dude's landlord and

Jesus Quintana, the Dude's bowling competitor. The landlord is a passionate modern dancer, although his physical type contradicts the ideal of dancer: in his white body stocking adorned with strategically placed foliage, gracelessly dancing a heroic part on the stage, he is the very incorporation of incongruity. Jesus, a talented bowler, enters the story as a dynamic macho, sexualizing the game (slow-motion shots of him scoring the maximum points are a visual celebration of the male body in motion). Not much later, the viewer hears from Walter that Jesus is a paedophile. His machismo is questioned, his performance at the bowling hall revealed to be just a show.

In all cases, the male characters of the movie are situated in time and place by the music they listen to and by the clothes they are wearing. Joel Coen describes the main idea behind setting up the figure constellation: "[A]ll the characters refer to the culture of thirty years ago, they are its aftermath and its mirror. [...]It's a contemporary movie about what's become of people who were formed and defined by that earlier period." (Ciment and Niogret 168). Different movie genres with their dominant masculinity models serve as inspiration for Joel and Ethan Coen: the brothers make a satirical comment on the male hero figures developed in American cinema. The viewer enjoys the incongruent confrontation between his expectations, shaped by his knowledge about cinema, and the realization of individual characters in *The Big Lebowski*. Thus, the Coens demonstrate that the masculinity models developed by the Hollywood movie industry are constructions rather than unchanging, coherent instances. This corresponds to what Butler has noted about the performative character of gender:

> Gender ought not to be construed as a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow; rather, gender is an identity tenuously constituted over time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts. The effect of gender is produced through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and styles of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self. (Butler 140)

"Well, you know, the Dude abides," confesses the male protagonist of *The Big Lebowski*, "the man for his time'n place," and the double meaning of his words best illustrates the arbitrary nature of all assumptions about him, about his masculinity and about all masculinity models in the movie.

Jakub Kazecki
McMaster University
Canada

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STRONG WOMEN AND FEEBLE MEN: UPSETTING GENDER STEREOTYPES IN MARY ELIZABETH BRADDON'S *LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET*

Herbert G. Klein

The usual cliché about Victorian men and women states that men had to be strong and hard-working, prepared to fight a fierce struggle in the outside world, whereas women had to be passive and weak and provide domestic comfort and relaxation for their mates. As several studies have revealed by now, the situation was far from being so simple. Thus John Tosh has shown that a considerable number of men craved domesticity, and Herbert Sussman has demonstrated how difficult it could be to prove oneself a man, while feminist studies like Nancy Armstrong's have emphasised the interaction between women's position in society and their portrayal in literature. In Victorian fiction a considerable number of women who actively take the initiative can be found, but it is rare to find passive men, at least as protagonists. Just that, however, is the case in Mary Elizabeth Braddon's novel *Lady Audley's Secret*.[1] Although the title seems to indicate that Lady Audley will be the main character, it is the lethargic Robert Audley who becomes the hero of the story. Interestingly, he does not achieve this through the traditional manly means of muscular strength and bodily exertions, but rather through his powers of ratiocination.[2] In fact, Robert Audley turns into a kind

[1] Mary Elizabeth Bradddon, *Lady Audley's Secret*, ed. David Skilton (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998). Page numbers in the text refer to this edition.

[2] The precept was of course established by E.A.Poe's C. Auguste Dupin in "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841). For Braddon's debt to Wilkie Collins cf. Robert Lee Wolff, *Sensational Victorian. The Life and Fiction of Mary Elizabeth Braddon* (New York and London: Garland, 1979), 6. Ronald R. Thomas sees the emergence of the Victorian detective as a response to revolutionary movements ("Detection in the Victorian novel," *The Cambridge Companion to the Victorian Novel,* ed. Deirdre David, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001, 170-172). This would provide a wider background for the contest between Robert Audley and Lady Audley.

of amateur detective.[3] Although Braddon probably introduced this element in order to profit from the fashion for crime fiction, she also added a new twist to it by making an intense homosocial relationship its cause (Cvetkovich 45-70). Ratiocination is a male preserve that gives men power over women, and in *Lady Audley's Secret* it is indeed used to subjugate unruly women and to reinforce male bonding. The novel is not, however, a simple story of the power of patriarchy being challenged and reinforced as a number of critics, such as Elaine Showalter and David Skilton have maintained, but rather a subversive deconstruction of gender stereotypes, because men are shown to be essentially weak and therefore in need of a strong woman to take them in hand for their own good. Not just any woman will do, though, as the novel demonstrates.

The story opens with the affluent but elderly Sir Michael Audley getting married to the pretty and impecunious young governess Lucy Graham who as a result becomes Lady Audley. It is made abundantly clear throughout the novel that Sir Michael is completely dependent upon his much younger wife who rules him in every way. With his marriage he gives up all claims to independent activity and even to independent thought. His wife's word or even her slightest whim are law to him and he would never dream of disobliging his spouse. Although this is clearly a case of the elderly besotted husband who submits willingly to this role reversal, it is even more an instance of the endangering of the social and moral order, because Lady Audley not only comes from humble origins but is also a bigamist, an impostor, an absent mother, an arsonist and a would-be murderess.[4] To some degree, Sir Michael becomes implicated in these doings through his trusting passivity. That too much love and compassion for a woman might be a typical male weakness is suggested by the narrator's comment upon husbands who forgive their cheating wives, which declares men's capacity for suffering to be many times greater than women's (284). Hence men are in much greater danger from their sentimental feelings than women. It is a surprising reversal of the stereotype that says that women are more emotional than men and it makes men appear much more vulnerable and also weaker than women. The passage also suggests that men who are not prepared to be strong and even perhaps cruel lose their honor, for which, however, they are more to be pitied than blamed. Undeniably,

[3] Robert Audley already shows some of the eccentric behavior that will become a stock characteristic of the detective.

[4] For the Victorian fascination with swindlers cf. John Kucich, *The Power of Lies. Transgression in Victorian Fiction* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1994).

over-indulgent love for a woman is at the back of most mischief in the novel, but a counter-model to this dangerous male failing is provided by Robert Audley, Sir Michael's nephew and heir apparent.

Robert Audley lives a very quiet and self-sufficient life as a barrister in London, but he has never had a brief and never intends to have one. His choice of profession is solely due to the pressure of his friends which he thought less trouble to comply with than to oppose (32).[5] His outstanding quality is his passivity which—to different degrees—he shares with most men in the novel. In blatant contradistinction to Victorian ideals of manliness, he idles away his time without any purpose apart from smoking and novel reading. He has no female contacts except for his elderly char-woman and his cousin Alicia who would like to marry him, but in whom he shows no particular interest apart from a generally friendly disposition. According to his own testimony, he has never been in love, and Alicia does not think him capable of it (56, 139). Even when things come to a head, he never offers her more than "brotherly affection" (363). The narrator stresses this palpable indifference several times, attributing it to an innate insensibility regarding his own feelings (33, 60). Indeed, Robert seems to have no particular affection for anyone, except perhaps for the stray dogs that he gives a home to. Although he has a number of male acquaintances, he leads a solitary, but outwardly contented life. This complacent existence is disrupted and finally shattered by the encounter with his old friend George Talboys whom he has lost sight of since leaving school. This friend is introduced in terms that depict him as a very attractive but rather androgynous individual:

> He was a young man of about five-and-twenty, with dark face bronzed by exposure to the sun; he had handsome brown eyes, with a feminine smile in them that sparkled through his black lashes, and a bushy beard and moustache that covered the whole lower part of his face. He was tall, and powerfully built; he wore a loose grey suit and a felt hat, thrown carelessly upon his black hair. (13)

From the moment of their accidental reunion, Robert takes an

[5] Severe doubts about Robert Audley's attitude towards his profession are raised by his not reporting the apparent murder as well as the other crimes of Lady Audley and her consequent imprisonment without the consultation of any authority but his own. He clearly puts his own family concerns before the demands of society. D.A. Miller argues that this is to be expected in "a male order of things" (*The Novel and the Police,* Berkeley: U of California P, 1988, 170). Elizabeth Langland takes the view that this silent removal of Lady Audley is necessary for maintaining the class system ("Enclosure Acts: Framing Women's Bodies in Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret,*" *Beyond Sensation*, 13-14). For Robert Audley's self-interest in the removal of Lady Audley cf. Gail Turley Houston, "Braddon's Commentaries on the Trials and Legal Secrets of Audley Court," *Beyond Sensation,* 21.

extraordinary interest in George, whom he vehemently declares to have never forgotten (35). This interest is converted into solicitude when it turns out that George has just lost the wife that he had abandoned for three and a half years. Robert takes it on himself to soothe the inconsolable George, inviting him to share his rooms, taking him on a trip to Russia and on an outing to Audley court. In fact, for about a year the two are inseparable—a fact that is jealously commented upon by Alicia (85). Robert seems to have found a purpose in life through caring for his friend like a faithful wife, and this obviously means very much to him.[6] From the fatal day when George vanishes mysteriously, though, Robert, to his own surprise, becomes a completely transformed person, obsessed by the sole idea of finding out what happened to his friend:

> If any one had ventured to tell Mr. Robert Audley that he could possibly feel a strong attachment to any creature breathing, that cynical gentleman would have elevated his eyebrows in supreme contempt at the preposterous notion. Yet here he was, flurried and anxious, bewildering his brain by all manner of conjectures about his missing friend, and, false to every attribute of his nature, walking fast. (82)

Robert is not only extremely disturbed by his friend's disappearance, but he also develops qualities that nobody (including himself) would have suspected in him. He reveals the capacity for very strong emotions and attachments as well as a quite unexpected pertinacity and decision (88-89). Most importantly, though, he uses his brain—probably for the first time in his life. In fact, Robert turns into a detective who tenaciously follows tracks, meticulously unearths evidence and rationally puts two and two together. This new personality does not diminish with the passage of time: Robert misses his friend intensely and becomes obsessed with the search for him, which becomes the sole purpose of his life (151,158, 161, 172-173).[7] No hardship is too much when he believes it might lead to the clearing up of the mystery of his friend's vanishing. It soon becomes apparent that Lady Audley is very much implicated in George's disappearance and Robert concentrates his efforts on finding out about her past, unearthing bit after bit of evidence until he can confront her with the truth. It is in these encounters that the previously weak and indolent Robert most demonstrates male supremacy, indeed even savageness, until he has vanquished his foe—the person who has wronged his friend and

[6] It is tempting to see this as a homoerotic if not homosexual relationship, but this must remain pure speculation. It is doubtful whether George returns Robert's feelings in the same way, although he is obviously also happy with their relationship so that they actually end up in a sort of ménage à trois.

[7] Houston calls this "monomaniacal homosocial desire" (27).

his uncle. In fact, for the first time in his life Robert takes on an active role and asserts himself as a man through the particularly masculine means of using his powers of ratiocination. These allow him eventually to best the archetypal female, Lady Audley who, though very cunning, is no match for him on this field (119-120).

From the moment that Robert detects George's disappearance up to their reunion, Robert's whole life is devoted to his quest. Twice, though, does Robert believe he has come to the end of his search. The first time when he seems to be stalled in his inquiry, and the second time when he believes George to be lying dead at the foot of the well. In the first instance he is made to continue his efforts by George's sister Clara, although he already believes her brother to be dead, whereas in the second instance he feels that part of his own life has come to an end (395). The eventual clearing up of George's disappearance is therefore not due to Robert's efforts—or at least only indirectly, and his final reappearance is quite unconnected with them. Nevertheless, the experience has changed Robert completely: he has not only indefatigably worked on the uncovering of the mystery, but at the end he has also become an active and respected member of society.

George Talboys, the cause and object of Robert's remarkable change, may at first glance appear to be quite different from Robert, perhaps even his opposite: he quite clearly takes an interest in women and he works hard in Australia to make a fortune. But when looked at more closely, it appears that he is reacting towards events rather than acting himself: it is obvious that he has been "caught" by Helen Maldon who had been looking for just this chance to better her fortune. Her complaints after she has realised that her dreams will not be fulfilled are what make him run away without confronting her face to face, and he runs away again after she has married another man and intended to do away with her first husband. In his relationship with Robert he is also rather passive, mostly acting upon the other's suggestions.

At the bottom of all the trouble is of course Lady Audley herself who outwardly possesses all the signs of femininity and thereby is able to enchant practically all men, but not quite all women. She is very pretty, somewhat childish, and behaves nicely to everyone. She represents at least one Victorian ideal of womanhood: the child-bride who appears to be entirely subservient to her husband to whom she gives the feeling that he is her master and protector (52).[8] Lady

[8] For the significance of Lady Audley's childish appearance cf. Katherine Montwieler, "Marketing Sensation," *Beyond Sensation*, 49-50.

Audley exerts an almost magical sexual attraction over men that is even felt by Robert. Her alluring exterior and childish ways, however, hide a cunning and intriguing, even criminal personality. Her gifts enable her to make an astounding career from semi-genteel daughter of a retired marine to admired first lady of the county. This is due to her ruthless ambition to leave behind her sordid life and the unremitting selfishness with which she pursues her goals (347-357). It takes a man like Robert to see through the disguise: his general disinterest in women allows him to observe her dispassionately as an object on which to exercise his powers of ratiocination. He even takes a grim pleasure in demonstrating this to her, thereby proving the superiority of male logic over female wile. Lady Audley who has transgressed social, legal and moral boundaries is finally contained and put into place by the combination of male homosocial solidarity and male intellect. Symbolically, it is a victory of the male over the female principle. If this were all, though, the novel would just be an affirmation of Victorian gender stereotypes. The case is complicated, however, by the respective qualities of the other gender relationships in the novel that point in a different direction.

Not only men, but women are also unscrupulously manipulated and used by Lady Audley. Only towards her maid Phoebe does she seem to possess some feeling:

> There were sympathies between her and this girl, who was like herself inwardly as well as outwardly - like herself, selfish, cold, and cruel, eager for her own advancement, and greedy of opulence and elegance, angry with the lot that had been cast her, and weary of dull dependence. My lady hated Alicia for her frank, passionate, generous, daring nature; she hated her step-daughter, and clung to this pale-faced, pale-haired girl, whom she thought neither better nor worse than herself. (299)

Ironically, it is Lady Audley's confidant Phoebe who blackmails her. Phoebe, whose resemblance to Lady Audley is several times remarked upon, mirrors her ambition on a lesser scale and without quite the same unscrupulousness. She is far less successful in manipulating men, although she also gets married in order to gain a better social position. But she is actually afraid of the physically brutal Luke Marks and seems to retain some moral scruples, which do not, however, stop her from searching through her lady's possessions and availing herself of incriminating evidence in order to blackmail her. She also betrays her lady's apparent murderous deed to Luke, whereas he in turn does not tell her of George's escape. So, although outwardly and to some degree in character she resembles Lady Audley, she is far more subject and even loyal to her husband than the latter, although she desperately tries to control him. Still,

she has no affection for her husband and his death will set her free to pursue her own course.

Sir Michael's daughter Alicia has been the ruler of her father's household and his affections since the early death of her mother. With his marriage to Lucy Graham she loses this position to regain it only after the downfall of Lady Audley. Alicia's almost masculine appearance is juxtaposed to Lady Audley's archetypically feminine one—and they both battle over the same man. Her enmity towards her stepmother probably adds force to her wish to get married to Robert, but her quite open and determined attempts to catch him are foiled by his passivity. One might say that Alicia acts a man's part in courtship, but fails to evoke the desired response. Her masculine traits are emphasized by her directness, her sporting activities and her bouncing gait, which are negatively commented upon by Robert (116, 125). Not only with regard to Robert, but also to Sir Harry Towers, who appears to be quite her slave, she is the stronger partner. But whereas the latter admires her masculine qualities, the former prefers them to be tempered with some admixture of conventional femininity, although he is really afraid of women.

Robert's remarkable lack of interest in women is turned into fear and loathing by his trying to solve the mystery of George's disappearance. He comes into closer contact with women than ever before, because: "It's all woman's work from one end to the other" (207). Indeed, in *Lady Audley's Secret*, women appear mostly as unscrupulously selfish and jealous persons: thus Robert comments upon the willingness of the teacher, Miss Tonks, to give destructive evidence against Lady Audley:

> "How pitiless these women are to each other," he thought, while the teacher was absent. "This one knows intuitively that there is some danger to the other lurking beneath my questions. She sniffs the coming trouble to her fellow female creature, and rejoices in it, and would take any pains to help me. What a world it is, and how these women take life out of our hands. Helen Maldon, Lady Audley, Clara Talboys, and now Miss Tonks—all womankind from beginning to end." (237)

"All womankind" appears to be evil and dangerous, even Clara Talboys. This is not the only passage where Robert talks negatively about the moral qualities of women. It is hardly any wonder, then, that the thought of marriage fills him with anxiety, since it is almost impossible to choose the right partner:

> "Who is to say which shall be the one judicious selection out of nine hundred and ninety-nine mistakes! Who shall decide from the first aspect of the slimy creature, which is to be the one eel out of the colossal bag of snakes?" (204)

The metaphoric equation of women with snakes makes them appear unredeemably evil creatures, and it hardly improves matters to find an eel among the "slimy creature[s]." This eel, presumably, is Clara Talboys and she fills Robert with dread as well, although he acknowledges her to be "a noble and beautiful woman" (204). Nevertheless, he is afraid of what she will force him to do: "I see her, and she forces me onward upon the loathsome path - the crooked by-way of watchfulness and suspicion" (204). He goes on to reflect upon the evil influence women have had upon men throughout history and traces its roots to their restless ambition to triumph over others and to use men as their tools to this end. He consequently comes to the conclusion that the general view of women is quite mistaken: "To call them the weaker sex is to utter a hideous mockery. They are the stronger sex, the noisier, the more persevering, the most self-assertive sex" (207). No wonder that Robert states that he hates women and that he would much rather not marry his cousin Alicia, although she is apparently only "a nuisance" (208). Given this diatribe against all womankind it is somewhat surprising that Robert has no stronger term for marriage than "petticoat government" (206). As he delves ever deeper into the mystery of George's disappearance and Lady Audley's past he even equates women with witches who bind men with their spells (247), and remembers "… the horrible things that have been done by women, since that day upon which Eve was created to be Adam's companion and help-meet in the garden of Eden" (273-274). These thoughts make him afraid not only of Lady Audley, but of all women, and it is the more surprising then that he finds it desirable to be married to Clara Talboys.

After the first encounter with Clara, Robert feels that "She was different to all other women that he had ever seen" (200). The first thing Robert notices about Clara Talboys is her astounding outward resemblance to George, which soon makes him feel a strong familiarity with her (187, 196-197, 202), so that she and her brother quickly become interchangeable (208). In one point, however, she differs from her brother, namely in her strength of character and decidedness of action. Although Clara appears outwardly obedient to her father as long as she is dependent upon him, she demands further search for George without her father's knowledge and against his express wish. Robert recognizes this strength when he sees her handwriting for the first time: "Yes, from Clara Talboys, most decidedly; I recognized a feminine resemblance to poor George's hand; neater than his, and more decided than his, but very like, very like" (209). The strong attachment that Robert had felt for George, he now transfers to his sister, with the difference that whereas he had been the more

active one in the relationship with George, the one who made plans and suggested activities, it is now Clara who clearly determines the course of his life. She is adamant in bringing the destroyer of her brother to justice. Robert has already given up the search for George when Clara makes him promise to continue, and the thought of her spurs him on whenever he is in doubt:

> "What am I in her hands?" he thought. "What am I in the hands of this woman, who has my lost friend's face and the manner of Pallas Athene? She reads my pitiful, vacillating soul, and plucks the thoughts out of my heart with the magic of her solemn brown eyes. How unequal the fight must be between us, and how can I ever hope to conquer against the strength of her beauty and her wisdom?" (258)

Robert falls for Clara Talboys, because she is outwardly so much like George, but also because she tells him what to do. This not only concerns the search for George, but also increasingly the way he spends his life and he is even glad "to humiliate himself and depreciate himself before her" (436). One might say that in Clara he finds the man he had been looking for in George. Already at an early stage of their acquaintance he forms hopes that she will think well of him—always with his lost friend as the common point of reference (371). When they eventually become engaged, it is under the premise that they will continue the search for George together (440-441), and when Robert finally marries her, he practically also marries George, since the three of them will live together (444). In fact, this is fulfilling an old dream of George's who already at their very first reunion had planned almost exactly the scheme that Robert will carry out:

> "I shall take a villa on the banks of the Thames, Bob," he said, "for the little wife and myself; and we'll have a yacht, Bob, old boy, and you shall lie on the deck and smoke while my pretty one plays her guitar and sings songs to us. She's for all the world like one of those what's-its-names, who got poor old Ulysses into trouble," added the young man, whose classic lore was not very great. (35)

The roles of the men have been reversed and the nefarious woman has been exchanged for a benign one, but the male idyll remains almost the same. This does not mean, however, that male supremacy has been reasserted, but rather that the men have contentedly resigned themselves to "petticoat government."

In *Lady Audley's Secret*, Elizabeth Braddon describes men that do not conform to the usual stereotypes of manliness but yet are portrayed sympathetically. They have their faults, but most of them mean well. Even the brutish Luke Marks shows gratitude and a sort of repentance on his death-bed (although expressly only towards another man, Robert, not towards his wife). Both George and Sir Michael appear to be hapless victims of female malevolence, whereas Robert

apparently only escapes the same fate through his lack of interest in women. This de-sexualised individual finds his arousal to activity and to participation in human society first through the relationship with another man and, at least initially, through his animosity towards a woman. It is only later in the novel that the two impulses are turned into different channels: Robert's affection for George is transferred to Clara as is the impetus to pursue and destroy her brother's nemesis. The successful completion of this task eventually enables Robert to become an integrated member of society. As a matter of fact, unbeknownst to himself, he has been acting as the avenger of society all along in unearthing Lady Audley's anti-social crimes.

Although most women in *Lady Audley's Secret* are not quite as strong and powerful as Lady Audley herself, they still appear stronger than the men so that one might even speak of a role reversal: Robert is passive and compliant, George and Sir Michael are absolutely dependent and incapable of decisive action (even after they have learnt the truth). Ironically, the lethargic Robert turns out to be the most energetic of them, and interestingly enough, he is the one who possesses the greatest number of feminine traits. Women, indeed, rule the novel. It is their actions that determine the course of things, most remarkably of all Lady Audley who from an early age on had decided on shaping her own destiny. This *femme fatale* is able to manipulate all men (and quite a few women) who come into contact with her in her favour until she comes up against the sexually indifferent (or possibly homo- or bisexual) Robert Audley. He, in turn, is kept to his objective of unravelling the mystery by Clara Talboys. Thus the two most important women are clearly able to dominate and manipulate men for their own purposes, and they both possess an iron will and determination. Men are allowed to feel that they are their protectors, but actually they are no more than tools.

That women are more active and cleverer than men in this novel seems indisputable, but there is a licit and an illicit way in which they may exert their power. The illicit one is mainly represented by Lady Audley who offends not only against moral but also against criminal law in order to achieve her ends. As Lucy Graham, she pretends to be content with her situation as governess, but is really ambitious of climbing the social ladder. Her legend of being a poor helpless orphan evokes Sir Michael's protectiveness, while her apparent passivity in courtship gives him the illusion of being active. During their marriage she pretends to be submissive and docile, while she is really headstrong and domineering. Her ostensible sociability and considerateness hide her unflinching self-centeredness. Lady Audley gives Sir Michael the illusion that she conforms to the Victorian ideal

of womanhood and that he can play the ideal Victorian male, but in reality she violates gender, social and moral boundaries. She cunningly practices deception and commits crimes wherever it is in her interest and is consequently punished in the end by being removed from society forever. Interestingly, Phoebe Marks, who is repeatedly described as her counterpart and who commits the crimes of theft and blackmail as well as becoming a silent accomplice in the case of George's apparent murder, is finally rewarded by being rid of an obnoxious husband. This may be seen as a kind of compensation: after all she had been forced into this marriage and borne up under it remarkably well. On the other hand, her husband might be seen as her punishment for her crimes, because he takes advantage of them and forces her to do things against her will. Essentially, both Lady Audley's and Phoebe's motive is to gain a respected place in society and they both use matrimony to achieve this end.

Matrimony is also the aim of Clara and Alicia, but they go about it in different ways. Whereas Alicia is rather aggressive in her hapless attempts to catch Robert and therefore only gets the wealthy but obtuse Harry Towers, Clara appears to be quite passive as regards her matrimonial intentions. It is her adamant will to find out about her brother (and her outward resemblance to him) that makes Robert find the brother in the woman. More tenacious and more determined than any man in the novel, Clara nevertheless never transgresses the conventional boundaries of her sex: she does women's work, she is an accomplished musician and she stays under her father's roof and completely obeys his wishes until she marries Robert. No less unswayable in the pursuit of her aims than Lady Audley, she never violates the bounds of decorum—not to mention the law.

Conformity to the female stereotype thus seems to be rewarded in the novel, deviance from it punished. This outcome seems to strengthen patriarchal power, but paradoxically the woman who gives the impression of being the most conformist, namely Clara, is the one who exerts most power in the end. Doubtless this is due to the masculine traits that she exhibits both outwardly and inwardly. Without her, Lady Audley would not have been punished and Robert would not have become active in his profession. Clara is thus the one who not only passively upholds but actively enforces the values of society. This is the more surprising as this is the role that Sir Michael should fill: the scion of an ancient family, he should by rights be not only the representative but the defender of society. Quite to the contrary, he is the one who becomes the dupe of an unscrupulous adventuress who represents the opposite of what he stands for. Only due to the combined efforts of his heir apparent and the daughter of a squire

can this threat be averted, but, although his house is prevented from tumbling down, it is eventually shut up and the younger generation prefers pleasanter surroundings. The old oppressive order is thus symbolically destroyed and a new, apparently more pleasing one, established.

The over-all winner is thus Clara who has her brother returned to her, has his undoer punished, and gains a prestigious (and after Sir Michael's death rather rich) husband whose actions she presumably controls completely. The runner-up is probably Alicia who regains her former influence over her father and also makes an advantageous and prestigious marriage to a man who is absolutely devoted to her. Third place goes to Phoebe Marks who is rid of an intolerable husband and will make her own way in the world. Women, however, are not generally shown in a positive light in this novel—quite to the contrary: women continually appear not only as the suppressors or even the destroyers of men, but also as mutual enemies: Lady Audley, of course, unscrupulously uses other women as tools to achieve her own ends, but these women are only too glad to harm her in their turn. Alicia takes an instant dislike to her stepmother who in turn hates her, and the two only keep an uneasy truce. Phoebe avails herself of all opportunities to blackmail Lady Audley, and Clara is her deadly foe who will stop at nothing to avenge her brother (199-200). All these women appear to possess a surprising amount of strength, initiative and aggression.

The negative picture of women is complemented by unflattering portrayals of men, at least as regards conventional ideas of masculinity: Sir Michael, although outwardly quite the patriarch, is first under the rule of his daughter, then of Lady Audley, then of Alicia again. George Talboys runs away whenever he is in difficulties and does not seem to be able to take his life into his own hands. Robert Audley is a wimp until he is forced into action by the loss of his friend and eventually reformed by a woman. Even the brutal Luke Marks is only physically strong, but is really guided in most matters by Phoebe. Fathers come off especially poorly in this novel: Sir Michael is by turns an over-indulgent, an insensitive and a dependent father. Lady Audley's father, "Captain" Maldon, is by nature a weak character and apparently afraid of his daughter, but also devoted to her. He implicitly obeys her commands and tries to protect her. Mr. Talboys appears to be stern and decided, but is made to look ridiculous and is quite ineffectual: his outwardly obedient daughter makes Robert continue the search for George against her father's express wish, the banishment of his son is taken back on his reappearance, and Clara conducts her marriage campaign under his nose without his being

any the wiser until he is confronted with the facts.

Despite their obvious failings, men on the whole fare somewhat better than women in this novel, and this is due to the fact that they are often given characteristics that are usually thought of as feminine. Thus not only love and care but also passivity and docility mainly characterise men, whereas most female protagonists possess qualities thought of as masculine like aggression, perseverance, dominance and initiative. Paradoxically, the woman who possesses these qualities in the highest degree, Lady Audley, is also the one who outwardly appears to be the most feminine. Sir Michael, on the other hand, has the manliest appearance but may also be said to be the most womanish man in the novel as he gives up all independence to his wife and is completely passive and docile. Apparently, this explosive mixture of gender traits can only be overcome by the combined efforts of a man who in some ways behaves like a woman, and a woman who not only looks like her brother but is even more of a man than he. In fact, these two achieve a harmonious relationship and become successfully integrated into society because they are able to mutually balance the masculine and feminine parts of their personalities. Lady Audley's secret thus seems to be that happiness is to be found in the joined transgression of gender stereotypes.

Herbert G. Klein
Freie Universität Berlin
Germany

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Poesía / *Poetry*

POEMS BY CHRISTOPHER KELEN

the tyrant

the tyrant was the one
we cheered for
unseater of injustices
his time has come
and has gone
the dictator
grub in the ground
he is now
can't even crawl
but once
wind spoke him here
his was our one breath
we wished it so

the brute has been toppled
all statues must fall
but let's admit
once we loved
those muscles
that hairy chest
let's admit it
for once and for all

Blokes

for Peter Kirkpatrick

Blokes are always coming over.
Arrive in droves or in their ones.
Wear thongs in summer, boots
for weather. Won't be tied, won't
be predicted. No one says mind
my clean floor love.

Arriving in their utes and vans
they're always round here, day and
night, courting our Penelope.
Know what's next, what's what, when
why. Blokes know what to do and

what you need and even if you
can't decide. Blokes'll sort your
trouble out. If it aint broke it's
easy fixed. Take care but not
responsible. They're always late
and rude and wet. Blokes like to
be outside the best. They dare
the ozone at their backs. Sleep with
someone else. They say things you
wouldn't. Feel less, do more. You've
got to love them though. Hide in their
frothy beards to weep. You feel for
them. The camera shies. Cuddle
them and know they're bad. Take
them all for granted.

Don't like to be told. Won't take
hints. They slink away to shed when
dark. Grow blacker under moody trees,
shed their lacks among the fauna.
They won't be caught. They get away.
Get down to pub and dab and dab.
Until they're almost in the clink.
They tell their temporary comrades.
Blokes tell the truth and when they don't
they've got the story all worked out.

Blokes all know the pecking order,
how to fit, not rock the boat. They
make a play for the affections. Trust
the passing moment, loathe permanence
of plans. Won't stand still in all that distance
unless it's advertising beer. They have
terrific urgency. Already yes they've climbed
your tree, know what you've lost before it's gone.
What's down that pipe, what ails your pet.

Blokes give each other pointers. They
stand off when strain requires. Keep their
level on the job, the issue well in hand. And
prime themselves with jests, digress.

Blokes are slaves of circumstance. It's
not their fault, the way they are. Was
done to them as blokelings. They can't help
being rough with stuff. Have to give it all
a test. See if it's well made or not.

Blokes are mates or so they say.
Won't let a bastard down. The blokiest
are your best mates. Your mates are blokes
if you're a bloke. Women can be mates
or ladies. Can't be blokes. Mate with them
to make new playmates. Blokes or no. If
you're a bloke you mustn't mate with other

blokes. It doesn't work. A dreadful thing.
Unblokemanlike. Besides -how could
you tell your mates?

Some things are better left unsaid.
And out of earshot of the nagging
blokes won't need your looking after.
Dinners tabled, washing done.
Blokes go lean in filth and glue
their rotting jeans together.
Blokes know it's bad luck to speak
when gesturing would do the trick.

As insects lead the faster life
they've lost a leg before you've
finished telling them precautions.
Enemies of labour saving, scoff
at ingenuity. They do a thing
the hardest way. Heaviest, most
arduous, most danger to their backs,
their hearts. They use their tools
with no protection. Clog noses
and their ears fall off. Eyes are
full of filings. It shows what
blokey blokes they are. Drown
in beer to build a gut. They suffer
beef to have the dripping. Sneak
from the ward at last for fags and
curse their curtailed freedom.
That's with their last breath.

Bloody this and bloody that is what
your bloke ghost says at last. And
when the dirt's dug and well sifted
where are those blokey souls all fled?
They've gone to blokeland. Hellish
spot. Celestial shed. And dim or bright
to their deservings.

There's always more after that.
There never was a drought of blokes
- not since the war. Blokelings grow
to blokehood's full bloom. Blokes
abound, they pull their weight. Just
ring for blokes, they will appear.
Show some leg, offer beer. When
all else fails you needn't fear.
Just stir him up.
Your bloke is here.

Dad's Borneo

All the grog's gone.
Brew up trumpets.
War is for waiting. Never
stopped what we did.
Ages pass us yet we listen
itching for our faraway.
Time written in the record's
wrong. In pocket letter's
decomposing. Battle
everywhere, jungle in rifle
sights. Dropped perch to earth,
the monkeys seeing things
see us. Toy with a stillness
of enemies facing, not quite.
Soldier falls from his tree, I fall.
Wake in the skull house.
Brew up no trumpets.
The waiting is war.

Dad

man with chainsaw sought
for primal scene

a beer drowning, gut sweat
great strides show

he is a voice at first
far as time's extremity
aside of where I'll be
– a cure

his winter's wood
to frame those blows
to catch at chimney walls come light

and nails blacked deftly scratch
the hairs in which air noses
the presence of no one over this paddock

that is a knowledge rendered me
one step inside you'll always stand
knowing this arcane resolve

skies open on
it does no good

o gather close you mute attenders
hear my paradoxes, pleas

and soon the dark folds
fortune brings
fat the road behind
to whistling
itself

o father forgive
the shed throws this spirit

it's then the kookas sing

old keys and the form dry
type is worked home

one cycle

I learned to walk
because it was expected
spoke as per schedule
sleep came to me of course
I went to school
and got the basics –
wife, religion
military service
rose to the right level for me
demobbed came home
to the Bible yellow
that was a ripe old age
in which the stars
were something piercing
they told the last
of truths
with me
I'm not prepared
to share

Christopher Kelen
University of Macau
China

Número Especial - Convocatoria

La junta editorial convoca a la entrega de trabajos relacionados con **tiempo y temporalidad** para la publicación de un número especial (junio 2009) de la revista.

Los ensayos pueden concentrarse en varios aspectos del tema, incluyendo:

- Cronología
- Teleología
- Tiempo y percepción
- Temporalidad y eternidad
- Representaciones y conciencia del tiempo particularmente relacionado con: Historia, Narrativa, Cine, Memoria, (Auto) Biografía, Cultura

Fecha límite para entrega: 15 de noviembre de 2008. Véase las normas para entrega de manuscritos en http://www.uprm.edu/atenea para información sobre el formato de manuscritos.

Los ensayos críticos (15-18 páginas) deben seguir las guías estipuladas por el MLA. Favor de acompañar todos los materiales para publicar con una hoja de cobertura que indique que el trabajo sometido no ha sido publicado anteriormente, o de lo contrario, provéase detalles sobre la publicación previa. Incluya nombre, dirección, números de teléfono y de fax, dirección electrónica y nombre de la institución a la que pertenece el autor. El manuscrito debe ser sometido en duplicado a la editora para ser evaluado anónimamente.

Se aceptarán consultas por correo electrónico (atenea@uprm.edu) pero no se considerarán trabajos enviados por este medio. De ser aceptado para revisión, se le solicitará al autor una copia del trabajo en MS Word.

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- Teleology
- Time and perception
- Temporality and Eternity
- Representation and consciousness of time particularly in its intersection with History, Narrative, Film, Memory, (Auto) Biography, Culture

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Critical essays (15-18 pages) must follow MLA style. All submissions should be accompanied by a cover page with the author's name, address, phone and fax numbers, email address, institutional affiliation, and a statement that the submitted piece has not been previously published or, if this is not the case, provides details of earlier publication. The typescript should be formatted for blind review and follow the guidelines stipulated by the Modern Language Association of America (MLA) and be mailed in duplicate to the editor.

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