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**THE MALE  
REPRESENTATIVES  
OF  
CONTEMPORARY MAINSTREAM  
CINEMA.**

**BY  
DANIEL JAMES HENSON**

Submitted to the Faculty of History of Art and Design  
and Complementary Studies in Candidacy for the Degree of Bachelor of Fine Art  
Painting, 1998

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## Introduction

In recent decades the study of cinematic representations of masculinity has challenged notions of androcentricism. It has been shown that masculinity is not a monolithical construction, but is influenced by issues of gender, race, and class. A remodelled masculinity within the mass media and contemporary cinema is defined with a more fluid representation. Now there are more varied male roles, which owe little to the stereotypes of classical Hollywood narrative cinema. In today's society, alongside potent masculine stereotypes, such as the action hero, the androgynous male has been recognised as equally relevant to a representation of contemporary masculinity. Previously effeminate or sensitive men were viewed with suspicion, as were gentle or intellectual men. In *BROKEN BLOSSOMS* (D.W.Griffith, 1919) Chinky, a refined man from the East, eventually suffers death not least because he cannot make the transformation to the American way. He refuses to be a man of action. Other examples could be noted with regard to *LAURA* (Otto Preminger, 1944), and more recently, *HEARTBREAK RIDGE* (Clint Eastwood, 1986). Both these films suggest that men who are not physical are necessarily soft, wimpish cowards. In short, to be a man is to celebrate and ultimately rely on violence.

This stereotype of the ideal phallic muscular superman has not completely disappeared as the above example illustrates; however at least now it is often handled with an extreme sense of irony. *JUNIOR* (Ivan Reitman, 1994) presents Arnie, ex-Mr.Universe winner, as a muscular but pregnant man. Such a change in the representation of the male within popular culture is, in part, a response to feminist studies, and the postmodernist and deconstructionist projects of destroying fixed and stable categories; as Lyotard, the French philosopher has said, "Let us wage a war on totalities." In their different yet interrelated ways, writers such as Silverman and Dyer on the one hand, and Lyotard and Derrida on the other, have exposed (and continue to do so) the myth of power





and strength and the nature of control.

It has been suggested that a display of power and acts of aggression represent a form of phobic behaviour to ward off feelings of insecurity and weakness. After all as Pacteau remarks, "the injury to a body that wants itself whole is repaired through an abolition of the other." (Pacteau 1986, p69-70) Likewise, Showalter notes in relation to the male hysteric that "quarrels with the feminine element in their own psyches became externalised as quarrels with women." (Showalter 1987, p173)

If we examine the feminist (driven) assertion that representations of women and men are unequal, we understand that this is due to the patriarchal structure of Western society. However once the cause has been revealed, a new perception, and method of representation becomes possible. The effects of this can be seen with regard to the critical and cultural debate which surrounds the new sensitive man. While he may have been more of an invention of eighties' advertisement, such a new configuration of manhood has helped to open up progressive notions of gender and articulate new points of identification. It is, increasingly, no longer the case that one has to identify with the white, caucasian, heterosexual, middleclass male. This project which seeks to deuniversalize the male subject and acknowledge fragmentation, contradiction and ambiguity, is central to masculine studies. Although feminine and masculine studies should be intrinsic to one another, unfortunately, at times, one senses that feminists prioritise the concerns of women over, and to the detriment of men. (Perhaps there is an understandable feeling — if not always expressed — that men have been the oppressors for such a length of time that they now deserve to do their share of suffering and that there are more pressing issues of basic women's rights.) This understanding of and call for a marriage of the two areas of study is best expressed by Christina Lane, Sue Murray and Connie Shortes in their introductory essay in an issue of The Velvet Light Trap.

The first section of the paper discusses the historical context of the research. It begins by outlining the evolution of the field from its early roots in the 19th century to the more recent developments in the 20th and 21st centuries. The author then discusses the various theoretical perspectives that have shaped the field, including functionalism, conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism. Finally, the author discusses the methodological approaches that have been used in the field, including both quantitative and qualitative methods.

The second section of the paper discusses the research findings. It begins by outlining the main findings of the study, which are presented in a series of tables and figures. The author then discusses the implications of these findings for the field, including the need for further research and the potential for policy change. Finally, the author discusses the limitations of the study and the need for future research to address these limitations.

Masculinity and femininity are inextricably bound in ways that cause the study of one to reveal productive conclusions about the other.

(Lane, Murray, Shortes. The Velvet Light Trap, No. 38, Fall 1996,p1.)

Film theorist, Victor Seidler, has identified what has been described as an invisible masculinity. The invisibility which he recognises is the failure of a man to see or define his masculinity according to its own terms. It is only understood against which difference can be recognised. In other words, it is against whiteness and maleness that all people are measured. This can be explained with recourse to Lacan and his trinity of the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real. According to him, the Imaginary is marked by the infant's connection to his mother; his relationship is so close that he does not view himself as separate from her; therefore it is considered as the maternal realm. In order to become a subject (which is always subject to rules) the infant has to realise that he is an individual. This transformation from an undifferentiated ego to an ego identity occurs between six and eighteen months and is called the mirror phase. It is based on recognition and misrecognition; a child looks into the mirror and (helped by the mother) recognises the image as his own, however he misrecognises the image in that he thinks that it is better than him and that the reflection is more coordinated. In Mulvey's words, the image represents a more complete, ideal ego. (It has been argued that it is this distorted image that we continue to look at when we admire our screen heroes.) Once the child becomes a distinct entity and acquires language — the word 'I' — he is part of the symbolic and bound by its rules. The symbolic is the world of the father, it incorporates all the rules of society and determines those rules and ideologies. The infant therefore must conform to, and be measured against his father. Masculinity, then becomes the neutral part of a scale because it exists as the blank tape onto which 'difference' is





interpreted, rendering the 'self' as (blank or), invisible. The Real is all the things that cannot be accommodated by the male rational order of the Symbolic and include events such as birth, death, and sex. These events challenge the notion of fixed boundaries and revel in inbetweenness and nothingness. They are abject in that they refuse the border. Abject is according to Kristeva a place where meaning collapses. (Lacan 1981. Kristeva 1982)

Within this essay I will comment on the remodelling of masculine identities in cinema. Firstly, I will attempt to reveal some past and present discourses that surround the male and his representation. It is my intention to highlight the move away from theories which have rendered masculinity invisible and fixed to ones of visibility and malleability. Secondly, I will look at the cinema and identify contemporary forms of masculine representation, but also draw on the history which has influenced this. Here again it will be seen that there has been, increasingly so, an attempt at representing marginalised masculinities; themes and characters have been explored in a manner that explicitly addresses male anxieties. At times this exploration identifies a sympathetic view to a gender seemingly in crisis. Anxiety based films such as FALLING DOWN (Joel Schumacher 1992) and FEARLESS (Peter Weir 1993) address the alienation of the the white male in an environment he once had control over and a purpose within. "Feeling-man" films like PHILADELPHIA (Jonathan Demme 1993) or DYING YOUNG (Joel Schumacher 1991) express the fragility of human life, and shows the Real rupture and disturb the ordered world of the Symbolic. Jameson among others has pointed out that under late capitalism people do not feel that they are in a position to affect change within society and therefore the only thing that they are actually in control of, is their own bodies. However even the private halo of individuality has been attacked, in that we can no longer be sure where our body begins or ends. For example, in a case of man on a life-support machine, the boundary between man and machine becomes unclear. This intrusion of machine or more generally society into man has been written about by McLuhan and developed by Baudrillard. the anxieties defined where man loses his





humanity to technology creates justification for the representation of the cyborg and the android in films such as ROBOCOP( Paul Verhoeven 1982 ) and TERMINATOR (2) (James Cameron 1984 and 1991).

An analysis of transvestitism and transsexualism will explore the areas of masquerade. TOOTSIE (Sydney Pollack 1982) and THE ADVENTURES OF PRISCILLA; QUEEN OF THE DESERT (Stephen Elliot, 1993) Both deal with the notion that masquerading (paradoxically) exists as an element of their national and masculine identity. The darker anxieties of the male ego are explored through perversities which are often associated with fantasy. Examining the fantasy realms of contemporary science fiction and horror movies, reveals the celebration and coming to terms with the abject (the degraded enigma which is the horrible in 'horror') as being coded feminine.

According to Mulvey, the female form is positioned and appreciated by its male audience in a sadistic manner. For her, as with most textual and psychoanalytical theorists Hollywood cinema is one based on the male sadistic and voyeuristic fantasy entirely detrimental to women.

If a monster in horror is male, he becomes feminised by his association with the abject. Yet as a more feminised man becomes an accepted masculine identity within mainstream cinema, is the value of the abject as feminine, in the horror movie compromised? Perversions aimed towards female victims are still questioned. A sadistic exploitation of the the female body, can also be interpreted as a masochistic fascination. The displayed body of the female, exploits a male's fascination, which is associated with his existence as an individual, separated from the womb or his mother's breast.

The areas of masculinity on which I have commented, are present in THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW , the cult film/stage show. This case study concludes my findings on the investigation of masculine identities through these chosen genres of contemporary mainstream cinema.



### **A patriarchies effect on masculine subjectivity.**

Speaking from a white, Eurocentric point of view, the *articulation* of any masculine definition falls short of an easy explanation. Feminist discourse attempts to redefine women's role in society in a reaction against existing notions of female desire and (in)ability. Feminist discourse brought with it the awareness of culture, race and gender. Different theories surrounding the oppressive patriarchy, have highlighted an awareness of a non-white, non-male, non-capitalist consciousness; in short 'Otherness'. However, this has left the male without a clear definition of masculinity and the need to identify and make visible what has always been invisible. Normalisation absorbs masculine experience, creating a neutralised norm by which others are judged, and when the status or meaning of the "normal" is challenged it necessarily renders him in a state of crisis.

In any psychoanalytical study the question must be asked with regard to the formation of gender identities: who or what has already prejudiced our conscious or subconscious perceptions? We are unsure as to whether it is nature or nurture which is the source of our individual subjectivity. To fall on the side of the nature argument is to believe that nature genetically passes on the instincts of our ancestors, meaning that humans are biologically determined. In other words that the masculine stereotype of the dominant man is a logical development demand by his primitive, sexual, and territorial instincts, which were most evident in the prehistoric past and a time of less social opposition. The opinion that nurture is capable of influencing an individual's gender identity is to suggest that an infant is born as a blank sheet and can be modelled completely by his or her education and social environment. Under this model the adult person is entirely the product of a particular society and its treatment. While this may be valid to a certain extent, in that we are immersed within ideology and are affected and bound by it, it is also true that some people have a greater tendency to do certain things than others. Some





display a "natural" flare, ability, or talent that seems to be outside simple nurture and more likely owe to their genetic structure. If it was purely a case of nurture then why do only some shine?

The study of neuroscience has revealed that the human identity is not blank — *a tabula rasa* —before it enters into social consciousness. In contrast to Freudian and Marxist theory, Edward O. Wilson says the human brain is more like "an exposed negative waiting to be slipped into developing fluid." (Tom Wolfe Sunday Independent 2-2-1997) Freudian psychology privileges the heterosexual and regards bisexual and homosexual behaviour as a mode of perversion. The discovery of the 'gay gene' surely provides enough evidence to conclude that homosexuality is genetic and any laws against it would be a law against nature. Contrary to a popular opinion that holds boys without a strong male role model may be driven into a perverse sexuality, it may well be the case that boys within an heterosexual environment may repress their natural inclinations and become straight in order to conform to the dominant ideology.

As previously noted, Victor Seidler observes that one of the problems which is constant with the examination of masculinity is the self-criticism, or self-awareness which involves the process of turning the analysis back on to the analyst. We are incapable of defining masculinity because of a sociologically programmed form of interpretation, which limits our understanding. We are restricted by language and other forms of communication and interaction. Such unwillingness to define one's sexuality may have acted as a form of protection. By not defining it, it cannot be open for debate and therefore is beyond discussion or challenge. At a certain level then it could be argued that omnipotence derives from a concealment of insecurity. In silence the strong male is born. When we venture away from that white, western heterosexual standard (an ideal), which until recently has been an obligatory requirement regarding male subjectivity, we encounter fears of emasculation.

The invisibility to themselves which results in men power and the propensity to impersonalise and universalise their





own experience, tempts them into constantly talking for others whilst presenting themselves as neutral voices of reason. This constitutes as a limit to men's experience

(Seidler 1989)

Presently our society seems to be adjusting slowly to ideas of an emancipatory consciousness regarding sexuality, only because the breaching of certain borders has been sanctioned. One may regard pedephilia as a marginalised sexuality. One should note that it is not the sexual act, but the dynamics of the power which define the elements of control and abuse. One person can love another, if the first person is fifty and the second forty, the difference in power with regard to age is equal. If the first person is fifty and the second, ten, then one would assume that the dynamics of power fall in favor of the elder. When we add this power difference in to the context of a sexual love it becomes an abusive senario, assuming the elder person to be the abuser and the younger the abused. When we look at this love senario in LEON (Luc Besson 1994)(plate 1)



plate1

we see that the power belongs to Matilda. It is her who instigates any romantic notions, Leon is the innocent party because of his emotional naivety. The dynamics of power complicate all relationships which are defined by law. At eighteen years, the legal age for homosexuality in Britain is two years older than in many other parts of the world. These laws are enforced as a form of protection, influenced by a patriarchal definitions of moral correctness. The voyeur derives sexual gratification from looking at another's sexual actions, rather than partaking in the action him or herself. In the case of cinema, this pleasure is to the forefront.



Although classical Hollywood is characterised by an economy of the image and is driven along by its narrative, there are times in which the visual is privileged and we are offered the spectacle of the human body. Steve Neal has spoken about how the cinema often delights the viewer with a very visceral image. Certain images of violence are fetishised, and the camera lingers for an unnecessarily long time on the muscular male body which alternatively is seen as a living phallus or as a beaten and bloody mass of flesh and bone. CONAN THE BARBARIAN (John Milius 1981) (Plate2) offers the perfect example of Arnie in his prime, as *the* spectacle of contemporary cinema, he epitomises the violent phallic idea.

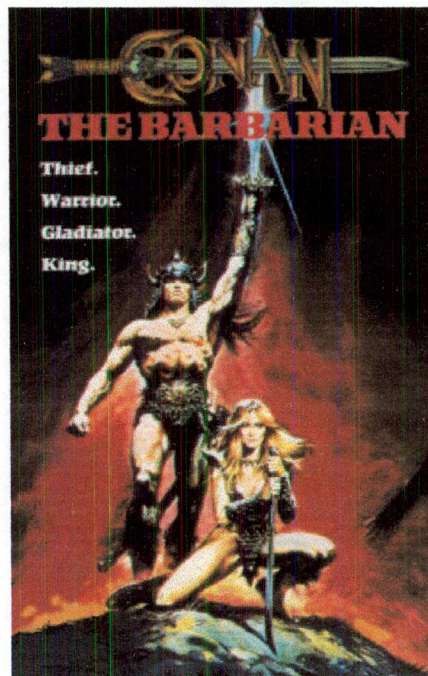


plate2





spectatorship we come into contact with the notions of sadism and masochism. Prior to a clear understanding, these terms carry derogatory connotations; however these "perversions" are elements of our subjectivity and (in less extreme behaviour) play an important part in the way we perceive the world around us and the way we identify. Metz relates the pleasures of cinema viewing to a reactivation of a primal scene which is experienced when a child observes parental intercourse. The primal scene stages the emergence of the individual; the primal fantasy of that individual, presents a solution to whatever constitutes as a major enigma for that child. An individual's fantasy of seduction dramatises the emergence of their own sexuality and a fantasy of castration represents the origin of sexual difference. Cinema viewing, like the primal scene, can evoke feelings in relation to an individual's conscious reality, it can get rid of anxieties and provide a sensation which in turn builds this relationship between cinema and viewer.

Metz identifies three main points in relation to cinema which are relative to the primal scene. First is Spectator solitude. Second is the understanding that the cinema's apparition is ignorant of its spectator (the peeping tom scenario). Thirdly, the cinema is totally inaccessible to its viewers. Spectator solitude is womb-like, due to the dark quiet environment of a movie theatre with its individual seating, it is generally a lot less socially orientated, however this has a lot to do with the cinema you are in. *THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW* (Michael White 1975), is an example of extreme audience participation which is intimate with the film's display. In conventional cinemas a concentrated direction of energy towards the screen is encouraged, which makes the film audience more fragmented and isolated. Isolation of emotion with the cinematic apparition can also be related to the internalisation of male emotion, illustrated in Peter Middleton's book, *"The Inner Gaze"*. Middleton compares the male and female handling of grief in reaction to the death of a friend. When attending the funeral, the gentlemen internalised grief; as man-to-man, they assume the grief of the other in unspoken certainties. The ladies of the group shoulder each other's grief and would





group together in the knowledge that they are unrestrictedly capable of giving and receiving emotion. Males internalise, females are more aware of the ability to externalise. The isolation of experience within cinematic formulas starts by subjecting its audience to a male sensation of internalised emotion. Metz second association of cinema with primal scene presents an audience with absent objects and absent characters, which is seen to be ignorant of a spectator, which as I shall explain in the next chapter is a position the male nude assumes when represented in the form of the pin-up (as Dyer observes in his essay 'The Male Pin-up'), he is unaware of any spectator, if his attention is directed towards the viewer it is usually with a castrating look. Metz's third association relies on the the space between spectator and spectacle. Existing in totally different spaces; the screens image is totally inaccessible. The distance that Metz identifies, between spectacle and spectator is considered by Mulvey when she argues that cinema is a sadistic male fantasy. The distance that Mulvey describes as an element of the male look, has similar attributes to that of a peeping tom. This position facilitates control over the subject of fascination therefore retaining a power in relation to that scene. The subject of the males voyeuristic fascination; the woman, represents the "lack" because of her lack of penis. The male must assume a position of power over the woman in fear that her resentment of the phallus which may result in his castration. The Femme Fatale represents a floor in Mulvey's sadistic identification of spectatorship. The Femme Fatale represents a phallic woman more capable of castration, she is fetishised through close ups of her long black stilettos and her sleek body. This imagery is seductive because it pouts into the face of its audience with a close up of dangerously seductive lips. Studlar and Silverman challenge Mulvey's interpretation of a sadistic look on the grounds that the close ups, which are to seduce the audience, are no longer distant. The male viewer no longer has power over an image he has been forced to surrender to. The overwhelming image of femininity forces the male gaze into submission, which can only mean it is a masochistic perception.





In A CLOCKWORK ORANGE (Stanley Kubrick 1971)(Plate3),we find a chillingly ironic reference to the more masochistic dangers of cinemactical voyeurism in the scene of Alex's experimental rehabilitation. Psychotic extremes are experienced when we are subjected to certain cinemactical apparitions which maybe beyond our control. Alex; a young man who's principle interests are rape, ultra violence and Beethoven, is pitted against a disturbed and equally unjust society. Kubrick's interpretation of the division between justice and the morality of this particular individual are slight and equally as sickening.

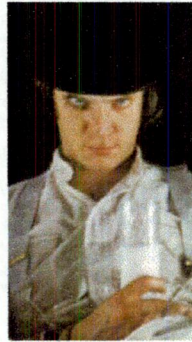


plate3



## The Masculine Representative(s)

The history of human representation can be traced back thousands of years to the times of the Greeks and the Egyptians. Hieroglyphics of the Egyptians depicted Gods and Goddesses in various animal and human forms. These forms were pictured alongside the pharaohs of the time, during the span of their life's and after life. The representations indicated a hereditary power with a much broader form of class separation. From a contemporary interpretation, ancient Egyptians do not seem to share a realistic obsession which depicted the athletic idealisations of men and a fetishized female aesthetic in the same way that the Greeks and Romans did. The history of perspective in painting may have meant that if Ancient Egyptians did share the same fascination within the human form, they used a form of voyeuristic representation which doesn't translate accurately for our interpretation.

Masculine representation is revived again within this classical context. What is represented, is the ideal of man: 'The God in the form of The Man.' We are also aware of this affiliation that the classical representation of the body has with the Olympics, due to the origins of the games. These idealised athletic representations are male competitors and the female is not a predominant competitor.

In his article "The Spectacle Of His Body", Laurence Goldstein comments on the revival of this classical appreciation used in the Nazi propaganda film OLYMPIA(1937). Leni Riefenstahl's documentary of the 1936<sup>1</sup> Berlin Olympic Games has only recently been awarded its recognition in the realms of the earliest film making as "a work of pure and spiritual beauty celebrating human strength and human grace".<sup>2</sup> Previously OLYMPIA was only recognised as a Nazi glorification of *will* rather

<sup>3</sup> Leni Riefenstahl recognised by Susan Sontag as the most interesting talent and effective artist of the Nazi era. Riefenstahl is also praised by Kevin Brownlow, who claims OLYMPIA(1937) to be, "the last visual masterpiece of the silent era" and "a film almost impossible to surpass": Goldstein, L. Michigan Quarterly Review, 1996. Pg 686.

<sup>2</sup> Goldstein, L. Michigan Quarterly Review, 1996 Pg 686.

## The Mammalian Reproductive System

The system of human reproduction can be divided into two main parts: the male and the female. The male system consists of the testes, which produce sperm, and the vas deferens, which transport the sperm to the urethra. The female system consists of the ovaries, which produce eggs, and the uterine tube, which transports the egg to the uterus. The uterus is where the fertilized egg develops into a fetus. The vagina is the birth canal. The mammary glands produce milk for the infant.

The reproductive system is controlled by the hypothalamus and the pituitary gland. The hypothalamus releases gonadotropin-releasing hormone (GHRH), which stimulates the pituitary gland to release gonadotropins. The pituitary gland releases follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH) and luteinizing hormone (LH). FSH stimulates the development of follicles in the ovaries. LH stimulates the release of an egg from the ovary (ovulation).

The testes produce testosterone, which is responsible for the development of male secondary sexual characteristics. The ovaries produce estrogen and progesterone, which are responsible for the development of female secondary sexual characteristics. The menstrual cycle is a regular change in the uterine lining, which is caused by the changing levels of estrogen and progesterone. The cycle typically lasts about 28 days. The first day of the cycle is the first day of menstruation. The cycle ends with the start of the next period.



than *intellect* and the *muscle* rather than the *fist*. The philosophy's installed into the German nation was reacting against what was regarded to be the insidious *Jewish* life of the mind. In these early representations the athletic poses of straining and contorted muscular effort can be easily compared to the earlier classical models of the Roman era, depicting Apollo, Achilles and Paris. The images of these muscular gods are taken from below and silhouetted against the sky. The film mix's these images with shots of the crowds applause and adoration. The book version displays photographic stills from the film showing an enormous range of postures and attitudes of athletes both male and female. These images are eroticised in a form we would associate with the pin-up, which generally hardens the body of the male in muscular contortion and softens the female, capturing her in the midst of "graceful eurhythmics," The masculine frame in its classical form reached filmic representation through the means of Nazi propaganda. Artistically praised for its aesthetic beauty OLYMPIA identifies an argument taken by feminist analysts, recognising the active male and the passive female. Power is assumed to be active. This activity is portrayed predominantly by a (Aryan), Eurocentric male.

It is the treatment of the human form on film which has inspired criticism from feminist camps. The female body provides a fascination for the voyeur and the male presence provides an identification for the viewer. The purpose of an identification places the viewer into the frame in a form of fantasy which I earlier related to Metz theories on primal fantasy, this identification exercises the desire's or anxieties within that particular individual.

A postmodernist attitude experienced in recent years has allowed and encouraged new and old styles and stereotypes to exist alongside one another. Steve Neale's "Masculinity as Spectacle", quotes John Ellis from his book *Invisible Fictions* who argues that the identification of masculinity in film is not necessarily as simple as male identifies the male and the female identifies with female protagonists....

The situation is more complex than this, as identification

involves both the recognition of the self in the image on the screen, a narcissistic identification and the identification of self with the various positions that are involved in the fictional narration; those of hero and heroine, villain, bit-part player, active and passive character. Identification is therefore multiple and fractured, a sense of seeing the constituent parts of the spectators own psyche paraded before her or him.

(Ellis 1982)

Richard Dyer relates cinemactical representation to the realms of the pin up. Despite similar representations which provide an eroticised male and female, it is the viewers interpretation which defines erotic appreciation. Conventional codes of looking are built up around "socially sanctioned practice whereby men look and women are looked at."<sup>3</sup>

Where as the female pin up deals with the controlling male gaze by averting her eyes in order to suggest modesty , the male looks either up or away. The look either off or away suggests something important has captured his attention.... while the look up implies he is thinking of higher spiritual matters. Whereas the womens averted look always acknowledges the gaze of the viewer, his look (always elsewhere) ignores the viewer altogether. When he does look it is usually a penetrating castrating look.

(Dyer 1992 p296)

We are restricted in the way that we look by patriarchies such as religion, associating imagery of a violence with wisdom and from that wisdom, we expect a transcend to paradise. In film we unfortunately identify in a way which associates the male form with violence, "Cinema is action and action is violence". (Benjamin W: Assault)

Traditional modes of representation have influenced today's gendered spectacle. The masculine *look* of the viewer is masochistic to enable the male form to be eroticised. We are unable to view the male body in the same way we are allowed to

<sup>3</sup> A Screen Reader In Sexuality . Images of men Pg 262 Routledge 1992





view the body of the female. The male is depicted in contrast to the passive female body as active. The man is more likely to be pictured as; straining or in conflict, for example the male nude is often associated with violence or competition (sporting activity) and when addressed with a sexual theme, a female body is centred to deflect attention that may be given to male nudity. Religion is interpreted as a pillar of moral correctness in western society. The crucifix is a (nearly) nude man nailed to a cross. The bible along with its stories of wisdom, pedestal the struggle of its predominantly male saints.

..the spectators voyeuristic gaze is displaced from an appreciation of the male face and figure.. Narrative flow is interrupted as the spectacle takes over.. In scenes of fetishistic looking as in a shoot out between two men, the male body is often fetishized through editing and close up shots, but the viewer is denied a look of direct access; instead the spectators look is mediated by the looks of other characters, looks characterised not by desire but by fear and aggression.

(Dyer 1992 p 271)

Film makers have tried gendered parody in extremes. In a comical form (for example, a pregnant Schwarzenegger in JUNIOR) film makers occasionally appear to be mocking a criticism which has cultivated its invention, rather than acknowledging it.(Perhaps I'm starting to loose my sense of humour!)

There has been a similarity drawn between the portrayals of male figures in Hollywood and the Presidency of the United States. The Reagan era was a time which portrayed an extreme representation of the male through the characters of those such as Stilone, Willis and Schwarzenegger. These represented the most popular protagonists of 'blockbuster' cinema, whose hard bodied muscular frames were used in what seemed to be the start of 'big money', action hero films. Reagan was considered to be instrumental in this trend due to him once being a Hollywood 'tough man', and his rather hard line approach to politics. Bush



represented a transitional stage in politics with his softer approach. The impression this had on masculine representation manifested itself in a sensitive, less active protagonist, which was a considerable adjustment to the muscles of Reagan. The 'pretty boy', Clinton offered a rather more feminised icon, similar to that of Kennedy which encouraged the introduction of ambiguously gendered protagonists who could just as easily be male or female. Tom Hanks representation of the softer male stereotype has proved to be a successful leading protagonist in the films PHILADELPHIA (Jonathan Demme 1993) and FOREST GUMP (Robert Zemeckis 1994)

Popular identities are significant. The amount of money that is grossed in a hit film requires a popular theme. During the period of the action hero genre, people wanted to see blood, guts, war and plenty of stunts. They only wanted to hear one line (reticence of speech was regarded as one of the key indications of the hard bodied action hero) "In silence the omnipotent male is born". Western man (male) had to appear capable of achieving the impossible. Political and technological interests joined the cinema with Reaganite projects such as the *STAR WARS* defence programme. The reality of space travel, evolving feminist power, Communist and nuclear anxieties spiralled in to what some interpreted as the beginnings of a crisis in masculinity. This could really be interpreted as the end of a 'macho male'. The machismo of the Reagan era was a final stand for the extreme representations including the likes of Johnny Rambo and John MacLain.

THE ABYSS (James Cameron 1989) (plate 4) demonstrates an increase, in women's authority. Linzi (Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio), heads a team of deep sea miners when she takes over authority of a very deep sea mining station from her husband Bud (Ed Harris). Their mission is to find and disarm a sunken nuclear submarine. Linzi is pitted against nuclear threats and an oppressive patriarchy. Marriage is the first indication of a patriarchy which oppresses Linzi, the other is represented by the military, both represent failing masculine







identities.

Due to a realisation that the woman is becoming less of a 'house keeper' and more of a career seeker, the position of marriage is less desirable. Her ability to withdraw from an environment which in the past has been identified as the pillar of 'the family', means the males now have to understand that a woman partner has equal sexual requirements which are capable of straying. The marital and the military presence in this film demonstrates a fading popularity with the macho hard man. The Navy Seals characters are confused but obsessed with power. Bud and Linzi save their marriage by revealing a sensitive side which was previously internalised.



plate4

"it's not easy being a cast iron bitch . It takes years of training  
 . I'm sorry I cant tell you this to your face . I have to wait 'til  
 you are alone in the dark," (THE ABYSS)

The failing of one particular masculine identity and the emergence of another is apparent in this film. The purpose of extra terrestrial beings exist's as a vehicle for these issues whilst displaying some improving special effects with computer animation. Today we still have the hard muscular body representing a smaller proportion of the masculine ideals and we relate to it in varied ways. An appreciation of the more sensitive and androgenised male, the over emphasising of muscle is viewed as a masquerade, the hardness of the male form suggests a need to exceed a normal signification of male questioning its appearance in the form of a paradox. Viewed in a traditional frame of reference, the same muscular body that maybe subject paradoxical interpretations, is also able to be a signifier of potent masculinity.



...the built male star functions as 'a parodic performance of "masculinity", Which both enacts and calls into question the qualities they embody.

(Tasker Pg 111 )

In TERMINATOR 2 (James Cameron 1991)(Plate5), there is an interesting exchange of masculine purpose compared to the first Terminator film (TERMINATOR, James Cameron 1984). Schwarzenegger's android character is transformed from a killer into the ultimate protective father. The character is softened from its original incarnation but its masculinity is retained by its 'father figure' image. Schwarzenegger, cast in contrasting roles, enables us to make sense of Tasker's previous quote. Schwarzenegger's android character represents the inhumane and then the humane. Any android/cyborg character introduces the notion of a mechanisation of man kind, this represents another source of anxiety for man. Firstly man sees himself being replaced by man, secondly, man sees himself becoming a machine which will result in his loss of humanity.

other  
Cyborg  
T2 →



plate5

1. The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country and the results of the survey.

2. The second part of the report deals with the results of the survey in the different regions of the country.

3. The third part of the report deals with the results of the survey in the different regions of the country.



The other characters in the new plot undergo gender shuffles as well. The new model of Terminator is singular and sexless but appears more masculine than feminine due to its favoured gendered forms.(this may be a reflection of sociological privileges) Sarah (Linda Hamilton), shrugs off the motherly stereotypes to adopt a much more aggressive role as Dyson's promised assassin.

An idealised image is made up from the disguise of an actor, along with modern conventions of editing and direction; the film makers are rendered invisible. The image portrayed, despite being idealised, is a "realistic" landscape on to which is staged situations questioning anxieties and desires within the fantasies of a predominantly male thinking patriarchy.

Despite film makers like Tarantino who continue to successfully portray the male protagonists with "virility, relentless brutality, and adolescent swagger"(Fuqua 1996), a "feeling / sensitive man " has been appreciated in films such as DYING YOUNG (Joel Schumacher 1991), and FEARLESS (Peter Weir 1993). These films indicate the prevalence of a new masculine understanding, which effects the main protagonist in a form of 'realisation', or 'reinvention', in reaction to an irreversible illness. PHILADELPHIA (Jonathan Demme 1993) has also indicated the emergence of an accepted gay male and the issue of AIDs in a drama combating a white American patriarchal "law ". Emotionally charged, PHILADELPHIA addresses and unites its audience regarding the moral injustices and prejudices facing not just HIV sufferers but also gays. This is done by recreating a tearful melodrama not a painful detailed documentary which immediately shocks an audience who are ordinarily unfamiliar with this form of character representation. MY OWN PRIVATE IDAHO (Gus Van Sant,1991), shows another shift in explicit but positive representation of a gay leading protagonist (River Phoenix).This offers its audience homosexuality on a sensitive and honest level: A love story with a victim.There are also enough heterosexual deflections (mainly derogatory associations with power) to be able



to address the explicitness of this movie full on. The scenes of very tastefully composed sexual posing offers an identification with the male body which has really only ever been used on a female body with regards to the big screen.

At the same time it was evident that there were elements of sex role exchange and masquerade in Hollywood. Women were becoming more like men and vice -versa , partly due to "under advanced capitalist forces," having less involvement with the production side of cinema therefore previous definitions of gender (males are active females are passive) were no longer relevant.

(Tomasulo 1996 p3)

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The exchange was made in the exchange and the exchange was made in the exchange.

(The end of the world)



## **Masquerade**

It does not follow that the construction of 'men' will accrue to the bodies of males or that 'women will interpret only female bodies.....When the constructed status of gender is theorised as radically independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free floating artifice, with the consequence that man and masculine might just as easily signify a female body as a masculine one.

( Butler,J 1990 p57)

Masquerade is most often discussed in the context of the woman exaggerating her femininity through means of make up, clothing and flirtatious gesture. Joan Riviere implies that the woman behaves in a hyper-feminine manner in order to deny her own " wish for masculinity," and to prove to herself and to others that she is not a man. Doane argues that femininity in excess creates distance between the person and the image and thus destabilizes the image ,therefore the (male )'look' must also be destabilised. If the female is capable of putting on a mask she is also capable of taking one off. In a short film by Ardele Lister SO WHERE'S MY PRINCE ALREADY? (Ardele Lister 1976), the image of the wedding dress symbolises the epitome of a feminine requirement and Lister comically places it in mundane everyday circumstances. The female protagonist is never seen without the dress on from when she is married, to the end of the film

Clothed in the fabric of patriarchy, Lister takes on the potent symbol of the wedding dress and through the syntax of the film, literally wears it out,

( Baert 1994 p154).

Highlighting the surrender of the female to a feminine stereotype of "the good house wife" shows the symbolic nature of the wedding dress in masquerade(Baert 1994). The male also is able to accentuate his physical masculine appearance as a masquerade but only more recently has he reacted against that patriarchal ideal



of the 'straight' stereotype by dressing in womens clothing. CLIFFHANGER (Renny Harlin 1993) and JUNIOR (Ivan Reitman 1994) are two film's which where released within weeks of each other and prove that two very muscular bodies which are usually associated with the action hero stereotype, can by placed in totally different roles.

A cross dressing theme has been evident in film for a while. Disguising one's sex is normally viewed with a comical intention especially in the films SOME LIKE IT HOT (Billy Wilder 1959) and the more recent MRS DOUBT FIRE (Chris Columbus 1993)

TOOTSIE (Sydney Pollack 1982) proved to be a hit becoming the biggest grossing comedy of its time. Dubbed as a "male feminist film" ,TOOTSIE ran into criticism which opposed the intentions of the film because despite its transvestite theme, its overall cinematic structure is of the heterosexual male to the core.

The story tells of an out of work actor Michael Dorsay (Dustin Hofman) who disguises himself as a woman in order to get a job in a TV (Television not Transvestite) soap. While working Dorsay assumes the identity of Dorothy Michaels who becomes the ideal role model for the American house wife and a pillar of strength, leading the fight for equality. Unfortunately it is the fact that Dorothy is an model of the perfect woman, yet a male heterosexual, adheres to conventional methods which centres the middle-class, white, male. Dorothy is created out of necessity as a last resort, this is familiar with some other Hollywood depictions of cross dressers. MRS DOUBTFIRE and SOME LIKE IT HOT, both have white heterosexual males masquerading out of necessity. MRS DOUBTFIRE as in TOOTSIE, has a lead protagonist which manages to become a better father when impersonating a woman than he ever was in his normal guise. Transvestites and transsexuals in cinema, who exist out of choice rather than necessity are either given unstable environments or mental disorders: The Drag Queen in the FISHER KING (Terry Gilliam 1991), who delivers his drag-o-gram to woo Lidiya (Amanda Plumber), is literally pulled from the rubbish of New York, THE CRYING GAME (Neil Jordan 1992), offers similar mental







instabilities in the character of Dill and Norman Bates hardly represents the most stable of characters.

TOOTSIE does however have the intentions of encouraging the white heterosexual male to realise the potentials of understanding ones feminine side. Dorothy also raises the issue of lesbianism which is not dealt with in TOOTSIE because of the characters unwillingness to talk about its possibility. After abandoning his feminine identity, Michael makes his peace with Julie the woman he has pursued throughout the movie by saying to her " I was a better man, with you, as a woman than I ever was with a woman as a man... I just gotta learn how do it with out the dress," The film doesn't say that the man makes a better woman than the woman although all the other characters pedestal Dorothy / Michael due to them being the very much weaker stereotypes of both the male and the female. This sensationalises the awareness of femininity in order to reach a higher understanding of 'self' and of 'other'.

Dorothy functions less like a woman with a penis rather than a man with breasts. For Dorsay, being a woman is less a matter of living out castration than of prolonging the pre-Oedipal attachment to the mothers breast- by incorporating them on to his body - while also maintaining the post - Oedipal privilege of the bearer of the phallus.

(Tomasulo 1996 p6)

The 'performance', of Dorothy I feel, is not a true articulation of transvestitism despite donning female clothes. Michael says "If you can't make the part yourself, you can't play it." Dorothy and Michael are simultaneously revealed and unveiled to become the male (with the breast's of the mother, whilst retaining the phallus), remaining clinically heterosexual as the actor Michael Dorsay.

THE ADVENTURES OF PRISCILLA; QUEEN OF THE DESERT (Stephen Elliot 1993), tells the story of two drag queens and a transsexual who put on cabaret shows across the out back of Australia. The parody of the man struggling to be identified as a glamorous woman, is paralleled by an Australian identity which feels unable to enforce its presence, as humans, on a "Hellish and



hostile land". Both issues deal with a form of sociological intention, combating a "natural"(is heterosexuality natural?) environment.

Unlike TOOTSIE, the protagonists of this film are gay or transsexual, their masquerade is obvious to their audience despite their hyper feminised appearance. These Queens are without a doubt male, which means the performance of the Drag Queen in the context of transvestitism can be viewed as a self- mocking abdication of power, not by mocking the woman but the femininity that is forced upon her, therefore exhibiting a humorous way of giving the two fingers to the patriarchy which enforces these stereotypes. On the stage and on the screen the image of the drag performer portrays an icon of a gay man.



plate6





## The Horror

It could be argued that Science Fiction and Horror represent the most misogynistic genre within cinema( particularly now that the Western has hung up its cow boy boots). Up until the last twenty years, the Science Fiction and Horror genre has been predominantly dominated by the teenage male. Both styles deal with a fantasy world which depicts the anxieties of the white, male, heterosexual, which consist of unstable identities and desires.

In horror cinema it is not just character representation which offers an identification for the viewer. Anxieties are portrayed collectively through the film's composition using increasingly elaborate special effects and more original plots. These factors display(according to Creed) a sense of fascination with the *abject*. Masculine interpretation relates uncertain aspects of the abject within his own identity, to the feminine.

The woman's relationship to the male, stands as an enigma which has generated much fascination and analysis. Horror cinema, influenced by mythological representation according to ancient cultures (Folk tales and superstition), has placed the female as the *deviant* in opposition to a male norm. Mythical understanding of the difference between the two sexes has the woman as a mutation of the man, in the case of mediaeval(pre 18th Century), interpretation <sup>according to which</sup> the woman was considered to be the inside out version of the male.

A classic narrative of horror generally assumes the monster to be male and the victim female. The monster's gender although not entirely masculine is generally of the male persuasion. The purpose of the monster is predatory, to stalk and frighten often in a violent, evil manner. The deadly protagonists prey on predominantly female victims. At the same time a strange affinity, shared with the monster becomes the victims saving knowledge or force. In SILENCE OF THE LAMBS(Jonathan Demme 1991) the relationship built between Dr Lector(monster) and agent Starling (final girl) enables Starling to catch her killer (Buffalo Bill; Lecter's alter ego). When Lector escapes, Starling is certain he will not entertain the thought of attempting to find her



because, in the words of Clarice Starling, "...he would consider it rude". This affinity the leading protagonists share is not always as clear cut and advantageous to the victims

My earlier reference to the monster of the horror movie as being 'not entirely masculine', indicates that it possesses feminine qualities. It is not that all monsters are visually female (physically speaking). It is the difference that monsters display that can be related to natural feminine symbols. The moon and tides are often responsible for the metamorphosis of man into werewolf, this monthly regenerative process can be associated with the woman's monthly menstrual cycles. The representation swelling or metamorphosis with or without blood can be associated with birth and the maternal body.

The affinity portrayed in horror which links the monster to the victim is sometimes represented in a seductive nature to the viewer. The recently released Bram Stoker's DRACULA (Francis Ford Coppola 1992) has a sound bite which reads "Love never dies."



plate7





Creed interprets her understanding of a feminine abject from two of the most common monsters of the horror genre; Dracula and the Werewolf ;

Dracula is a sexually ambiguous figure. Not only is his appearance and behaviour feminised, Dracula needs to replace his blood at periodic intervals suggesting he experiences a form of menstrual cycle, the vampire myth is a rite of passage story to explain the onset of menstruation in girls.

(Creed .B 1988 p123)

Creed's interpretation goes on to relate elements of the Werewolf's existence in superstition, to a masculine fascination with the female's menstruation. The menstrual cycle indicates a fertile womb which symbolises the site of man's own birth (his mother). The reasoning which presents the female as an enigma has less to do with her being identified with the 'lack', and more to do with the (inferior) significance given to the male's role in genesis. Belittled by the role of the mother surely the male represents a significant physical 'lack' of womb.

Contemporary monsters portrayed in movies such as HALLOWEEN (John Carpenter 1978) and NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET (Wes Craven 1984) subject their viewers to brutal violence and gore, interwoven with superstitious ghost stories. During the late seventies, eighties and early nineties, these male monster, shock horror movies, overwhelmed viewers with a masochistic sensation of partial participation (hence the flinching and jumping of an entire audience when characters such as Freddy Krueger makes another —surprise— appearance on to the screen.) The broader the gap between good and evil, the greater the spectatorial impact. This is not a case where the (masculine) monster is in one corner and the pristine white (feminine) virgin cowers in the other.

The 'final girl' depicted in the horror film is gendered differently to others. Jamie Lee Curtis in HALLOWEEN (1978), is obviously a masculine woman. Other feminine stereotypes of a softer effeminate girl have been easy prey for Jason, Curtis is only able to 'defeat' the monster and overcome evil by adhering to what has

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been deemed to be a masculinised violence.

When the villain is a female in the case of rape revenge movies, the attacks which often involve castration are executed by the woman as her own form of justice. The violent actions adopted by the female protagonist in 'rape revenge', places her in a territory which is responsible for the masculinisation of the 'final girl'; this is the phallic womens territory. As a *femme fatale* figure she is dangerous, however, her vengeance has morality on its side, despite being outside of the written laws of the patriarchy. The woman who seeks revenge is no longer passive, she now exercises a masculine attribute of violence to compensate her for the (male) wrongs that have been forced upon her.

The rapes are represented in a more confronting manner and are depicted as violent, sadistic and horrifying whereas the castration scenes are represented within a seduction scenario in which the atmosphere is initially romanticised.

(Creed 1988 Pg 129)

Creed interprets the seduction scenario as working on two levels. the first asserts the sexuality of the monster/heroine as she lures the rapist to his doom with a promise of sexual bliss and the second links mans "sexual desire with a desire for death."

Kaja Silverman's understanding of masochism may explain Creeds description of a males desire for death, in-keeping with philosophies regarding representation and the viewers pleasurable masochistic identification.

even the clinically masochistic woman does not really exceed her subjective limits ; she merely stretches them a bit. The male masochist on the other hand, leaves his social identity completely behind -actually abandons his "self "- and passes over into the enemy terrain of femininity .

(Silverman1993 Pg 37)

The relationship between the monster and the female victim is of a more natural affinity with the abject. This could be interpreted as a male semblance with the female. The male is abject in the appreciation that at birth he was expelled from the female body, in







recognition that his identity is no longer belonging to the unity of the mother, he may regard his difference as inferior, again constituting grounds for womb envy.<sup>5</sup> THE FLY (Cronenberg 1990) and JUNIOR (Ivan Reitman 1994), both demonstrate how the male obsession with the maternal body could be interpreted as a need to actually become the mother

Forms of spectatorial appreciation have been linked to masochistic pleasure. This pleasure operates under feminine and moral modes of masochism. The male whilst longing to find an alternative to maternal love, must understand the separation from the maternal body. The male subject is of a female maternal origin until he becomes aware of himself as an individual. This status influences the child's need to seek out a mate in order to find a way of returning to the mother figure, to be reinstated with a maternal unity. The heterosexual males relationship with the female according to Freudian and Lacanian readings register a valid reasoning regarding the pursuit and fascination of the female form. When we think of masochism we must think of it in three separate forms, although separate they rarely exist in their singular identifications.

The first form is erotogenic masochism, which operates on a purely 'pleasure in pain' principle.

The second is feminine masochism which is not specific to the female, but is more of an exchange of power. The subject that is being punished has assumed the feminine role, which is labelled '*feminine*' because it is associated with the *weaker*, which would indicate it is a need for discipline within a paradox of authority or power.

The third and final masochism is moral masochism, which as in feminine masochism requires a diminished position of power; the subject is to be ruled over by an authoritative presence. This presence is required to discipline the subject for the wrongs that they have done. In this case the subject would be known to deliberately do wrong in order to be punished for that sins, and cleanse themselves of the guilt they have bestowed upon

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<sup>5</sup> Robbins H,W 1990 ' More Human Than I Am Alone Pg137.



themselves.

### **Masculinity in The Rocky Horror Picture Show**

THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW (Michael White 1975), is an ugly cabaret of horror and science fiction. An all singing, all dancing performance which although acts as a spoof, is advantageous to the enlightenment of gendered representation. The film embraces all the conventional stereotypes associated with , good and evil. Good is characterised in the form of Janet Weiss and Brad Majors, two very 'well-to-do,' individuals who get engaged in the first scene to cement their sickly sweet love of one another. Due to the misfortune of a flat tyre the young couple find themselves drawn to the castle of Frankfurter (evil), where they arrive on a night of chaos, when "the master is having one of his affairs." Janet and Brad throughout the course of the film are systematically stripped of their clothing, morals and virginity, following their almost simultaneous seduction from the mad Doctor Frankfurter. Frankfurter who is a transvestite alien, is responsible for the murder of Eddie (Meatloaf) and the creation of 'Rocky'. (who exists purely for the sexual pleasure of his master.) Brad and Janet following the entrance of Dr Frederick Scott, the uncle of the murdered Eddie, spiral towards destruction amidst the decadence of the rock and roll opera from hell. Frankfurter is finally slain by his (randy) "handy-man" Riff Raff (O'Brien) and his sister / lover; Magenta and Brad, Janet and Dr Everett are left writhing in mud as the castle,

(revealed as a space craft), blasts off back to "The moon drenched shores of Transsexual on the planet of Transylvania." The story line of the Rocky Horror is taken from classical horror. The anxieties of the heterosexual male regarding the female, distance him further from femininity. Femininity can be worn (Frankfurter Transvestitism), the fetishised lips in the opening sequence, attempt to seduce the male look of the audience, in a masochistic manner. The heterosexual male is punished from the start, for a pleasurable interpretation of the movie he must take on board homosexual modes of voyeuristic appreciation. The inability to give







birth or to create life (womb envy) is another theme familiar with the horror film, evident in THE FLY (Cronenberg 1986) and the hundreds of Frankenstein movies. In THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW, Frankenfurter's farcical invention of Rocky whilst clad in drag, mocks the driven mind of the masculine heterosexual. This 'mocking', could suggest that behind an effeminising quest for a maternal capability, symbolised by the (mad?) male scientist, lurks a perversity that would be detrimental to the subject created because the 'god like separations within the dynamics of power. For the viewer Frankenfurter represents a 'Marc Bolandesque' transvestite, the epitome of coolness, hence such a cult following. When Frankenfurter is placed next to Janet and Brad in all their moral 'squareness', we can see that the masquerade is not only transvestitism but is also the correctness from which Brad and Janet simultaneously become liberated from. To explore the characters of Brad and Frankenfurter, I will contrast them accordingly to their environment and the characters they share the frame with.

Brad acts as a symbol for the patriarchy which governs this society, he is the embodiment of the boring tone on the radio. This pantomime of paradox relishes a ridicule in every extremity of the 'traditional' heterosexual stereotype. Stiff young Brad is insistent (till his point of seduction by Frankenfurter) to uphold the values of 'the model American gentleman' adhering to a stereotype which stems from the clean cut college boy, denying to himself but not the viewer that he is strong enough in physique and character to cope with the unpleasentries that face him. As a viewer we interpret him as being a bit boring and also a little wimpish, the Buddy Holly spectacles round off Brad Majors' identity with the sound of "*Oh Boy !*" echoing in the background. Brad's transformation into his more liberated incarnation, is quite easily taken on board. Frankenfurter points out with relation to Brad's enthusiasm to explore the rest of his gender, "he is very adaptable". Brad's willingness to identify with the surrounding ambiguities, starts with a naivety, extending his hand shake to all.



"Hi. My name's Brad Majors and this is my fiancée Janet Weiss"

This is Brad's welcome to Columbia when he and Janet are being undressed by Riff Raff and Magenta, this indicates his inquisitive desire to go further. The last stand of Brad Majors as we knew him, comes with his outburst in the lab, which is a denial of his willingness to participate in the venerable scenario he and Janet have found themselves in. This outburst is quickly diffused when it is referred to by Frankenfurter as "...a perfect specimen of a man. So Dominant!" The giggling of the guests, emphasises the ridiculed heterosexual identity. The bedroom seduction scenes which starts the assimilation of the model American guests into Frankenfurter's eroticised puppets, are identical on the part of Frankenfurter. The difference between Brad and Janet's bedroom scenes are marked by one line which Frankenfurter uses to secure his promise of secrecy from the other party. When he swears his secrecy to Janet regarding their 'quick fling', he crosses his heart and hopes to die. When he swears the same secrecy to Brad, he swears on his mother's grave. This shows the extent of a masochistic depth within male pain in comparison to the female. To Janet the worst case scenario stops at death, Brad's interpretation of the deepest depths of secrecy goes before birth and beyond death reaching back over to the maternal body that was once a site of unity. The male marks a site for his ultimate respect in the loins of a woman which preceded his existence. Not with the inferior identity of his 'self'.

Frankenfurter represents one of the grooviest mad scientists that ever graced the silver screen : A prima-donna, trapped in the body of Dr Frankenstein, displays the feminised monster to the hilt. His creations; Eddie and Rocky are tame in comparison. Apart from the narrator, Frankenfurter is the only other character to address the viewer, cementing a relationship with the audience which no other character shares. The direct access that we have to Frankenfurter, pedestals him in our familiarity compared to every other character in the film.







“ Don't get strung out by the way I look,  
don't judge a book by its cover .  
I m not much of a man by the light of day.  
By night I'm one hell of a lover”  
(THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW)

Frankenfurter describes himself as not much of a man, never the less he is still male which constitutes grounds for a frustration which has plainly sent him into insanity. This '*being*' see's the woman, admires the woman and is subsequently envious of the woman because of his lack of a maternal significance. The feminine aesthetic of the woman's clothes are plagiarized in his glamorous drag queen appearance. The maternal properties of the woman are emulated with the creation, or "birth" of Rocky. Frankfurters envy of the woman is shown through his reaction to Janet after he catches her and Rocky at the site of Rocky's birth, the truth being (as shown), Janet would have quite happily slept with everyone in the castle because she was feeling so randy after Frankenfurter's advances. Frankenfurter was unhappy with Rocky's identification with Eddie in case he became a role model. Frankenfurter, jealous of Eddies diverted affections toward Columbia (The enormous pin-up of Eddie in Columbia's room indicated the scale of her adoration) and felt possessive of Rocky's affections, an identification with Eddie may cause Rocky to wander. To prevent Eddies potent heterosexual identification (a fault in Eddies creation which imprisoned him in the deep freeze until this particular moment of his escape), being passed on to Rocky, Eddie's life is not only terminated, he is eaten. Janet was spared such violent treatment despite her fling with Rocky, as was Columbia for her romance with Eddie. Frankenfurter; The transvestite scientist who can not escape from the phallic relationship that his name suggests, plots a self destructive course to hell passing through the.....

“warm waters of sins of the flesh.  
Erotic nightmares beyond any measure,  
sensual day dreams to treasure forever....”



### (THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW)

This self destructive anxiety is visualised in a metaphoric form when Frankenfurter surrenders himself to the fate of death, he prostrates himself at the cervix of ~~of~~ the maternal womb. Symbolised as the life saver of the S.S. Titanic floating in the swimming pool. It suggests a doomed future for Frankenfurter in the shadow of the (huge phallic) RKO Transmitter. This phallus is latter used by Rocky who (in the style of King Kong) climbs to the top of the transmitter with Frankenfurter over his shoulder. Rocky's symbol of motherhood has identified Frankenfurter as his '*phallic* mother' which was not far from Frankenfurter's design.



plate8





### **conclusion**

The identification of masculinity in cinema falls into a representational and a spectatorial analysis. The representation of masculine identities adheres to certain requirements of spectatorial pleasures, one being masochistic (Silverman) and another sadistic (Mulvey). While the male 'look' of an audience appreciates the absent world of the cinema, it also revels in an overwhelming intimacy with active and violent depictions. The male body is experiencing an emancipatory evolution from the constraints of a patriarchy which has previously frowned upon the emasculation of the strong, potent, heterosexual male stereotype. The increasing popularity of an ambiguously gendered androgynous male in cinema is influencing the sociological nurture of those who are genetically challenged by heterosexuality. While the muscular frame of a traditional heterosexual male ideal still exist, present gendered identifications have become ambiguous and they interpret muscles as a masquerade of masculinity forcing us to question its sexual orientation. Like the drag queen we ridicule phalocentric ideals of masculinity as we do femininity. As feminine elements are welcomed into the male identity should we still relate the abject (which has been labelled 'feminine'), to the woman? It is evident in the horror film that the maternal woman constitutes a major enigma for the male. The cinema auditorium in which the films are viewed has a womb like quality which the male seems drawn to it in order to seek the maternal unity of the imaginary. Womb envy has been identified as a cause for the creation of films which represent the male as the creator. The ability to create allows the male to identify with the imaginary state, this collides with the symbolic because it is technology which enables him assert his maternal capability. It is mans increasing fear of losing himself to technology which adds to the anxieties portrayed in horror. A Postmodern society accepts traditional narratives of film as well as promoting new ideals and stereotypes in and out of cinema. Masculinity is defusing but not entirely into an androcentric definition because the female body will present a fascination for the majority of society for a long time to



come, however an equal appreciation of the male body may come with a less violent and more sensitive representation.

Somehow, in the early afternoon of the first day, they  
with a less vocal and more sensitive representation.



**Filmography**

**THE ADVENTURES OF PRISCILLA:  
QUEEN OF THE DESERT**

Stephen Elliot 1994

**THE ABYSS**

James Cameron 1989

**BRAM STOKERS DRACULA**

Frances Ford Coppola 1992

**BROKEN BLOSSOMS**

D.W.Griffith 1919

**A CLOCKWORK ORANGE**

Stanley Kubrick 1971

**CLIFFHANGER**

Renny Harlin 1993

**THE CRYING GAME**

Neil Jordan 1992

**DEAD RINGERS**

David Cronenberg 1988

**DYING YOUNG**

Joel Schumacher 1991

**FALLING DOWN**

Joel Schumacher 1992

**FEARLESS**

Peter Weir 1993

**THE FISHER KING**

Terry Gilliam 1991

**THE FLY**

David Cronenberg 1986

**HEARTBREAK RIDGE**

Clint Eastwood 1986

**JUNIOR**

Ivan Reitman 1994

THE ADVENTURES OF PHILIP

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**LEON**

Luc Besson 1994

**LAURA**

Otto Preminger 1944

**MRS DOUBTFIRE**

Chris Columbus 1993

**MY OWN PRIVATE IDAHO**

Gus Van Sant 1991

**PHILADELPHIA**

Jonathan Demme 1993

**ROBOCOP**

Paul Verhoven 1982

**THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW**

Michael White 1975

**SOME LIKE IT HOT**

Billy Wilder 1959

**TERMINATOR**

James Cameron 1984

**TERMINATOR 2: JUDGMENT DAY**

James Cameron 1991

**TOOTSIE**

Sydney Pollack 1982

LEON  
1975 Belson 1975

LAURA  
1975 Belson 1975

MRS. DOUBTFIRE  
1975 Belson 1975

MY OWN PRIVATE IDAHO  
1975 Belson 1975

PHILADELPHIA  
1975 Belson 1975

ROSCOP  
1975 Belson 1975

THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW  
1975 Belson 1975

SOME LIKE IT HOT  
1975 Belson 1975

TERMINATOR  
1975 Belson 1975

TERMINATOR 2: JUDGMENT DAY  
1975 Belson 1975

TOOTSIE  
1975 Belson 1975



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The first fundamental concept of psychology is the study of behavior.

Psychology is the scientific study of behavior and the mind.

Behavior is any response that can be observed and measured.

The mind is the internal state that causes behavior.

Psychology is a science because it uses the scientific method.

The scientific method is a systematic way of gathering information about the world.

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