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# TRENDS IN AFRICAN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN FATHERS' NURTURANCE AND INVOLVEMENT

**ABSTRACT** Using Perceived Parental Acceptance-Rejection Theory (PARTheory), the relationship between perceived paternal nurturing and involvement and psychosocial developmental outcomes in 202 college-aged African American and Caribbean American young adults were assessed. All dimensions of paternal nurturing and involvement were positively related to all positive psychosocial outcomes. However the relationship between the reported and desired parental behaviors was strongly negative for the African American population. This suggests that the assumption that father absence is undamaging and does not negatively impact psychosocial outcomes, may be false. Mean values of fathering variables and developmental outcomes also varied by ethnicity. Differences in correlations were also moderated by ethnicity.

**KEYWORDS** MINORITY FATHERS, FATHER INVOLVEMENT, ETHNICITY

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between fathers' nurturance and involvement and the effects of these variables on psychosocial outcomes for African American and Caribbean young adults. Fathers are immensely important to psychosocial development and yet their role in their children's lives is being increasingly marginalized by current social trends. This is particularly evident in African American and Caribbean communities, where fathers are generally portrayed as absent and/or uninvolved. This study has several potential implications for future research and social policy. Father involvement is important to normal psychosocial development and this should be reflected in social policies such as custody and visitation. Social policy should encourage and foster father-child relationships, benefiting not only the child and father but also society on a whole.

The theoretical perspective of this study is based on Perceived Parental Acceptance-Rejection Theory (PARTheory) because of its widespread use, cultural adaptability, and reliability. PARTheory has been influenced by the work of numerous researchers examining conceptual parenting models stretching as far back as 1930 (Rohner, Khaleque, & Cournoyer, 2005). In turn, PARTheory has been used as a theoretical perspective in hundreds of studies covering all major American ethnic groups as well as over 60 countries (Khaleque & Rohner, 2002; Rohner, Khaleque,

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<sup>a</sup> Department of Psychology, Florida International University.

All correspondence regarding this article should be addressed to Maria Reid, Department of Psychology, Florida International University, 11200 SW 8th ST, Miami, FL 33199. Email: Maria.Reid@fiu.edu

& Cournoyer). This theory has been tested multiculturally, across ages and genders, and is reliable in predicting negative affect and worldviews among children perceived to be rejected (Khaleque & Rohner; Rohner, Khaleque, & Cournoyer; Rohner, Kean & Cournoyer, 1991). Perception by the child of parental behaviors is paramount, because in PARTheory, only the child's perception is important. This helps in explaining why some children feel neglected by observably loving and attentive parents or contrastingly do not feel neglected or rejected by observably abusive parents.

PARTheory also substantiates the importance of paternal love (Rohner & Veneziano, 2001). Recent changes in family dynamics and the emergence of new theories on development have increased research on father involvement in child raising (Finley & Schwartz, 2004; Parke, 2004). Research shows that fathers are exceedingly important to the well-being of their children, effecting self-image, social and cognitive competency (Finley & Schwartz, 2007, 2010; Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 1997), psychological and personality adjustments, conduct problems and delinquent behavior, and cognitive performance (Rohner & Veneziano).

Effective fathering is also significantly different across race and ethnicity. In his essay on the "changing role of fathers," Parke (2004) found that fathers were essential socializing agents, a role especially important for minorities, where racial socialization prepares minority children for discriminating experiences (Lesane, 2002). However, the role of the father is being increasingly marginalized by accelerating trends in divorce and unwed parenting and, crucially, these rates are even higher for African Americans and Caribbean islanders (McLanahan, 2001; Roopnarine et al., 1995). Thus, children in these communities are at a greater risk than any other ethnic group of losing a meaningful relationship with their fathers (Mandara, Murray, & Joyner, 2005).

Both African American (Mandara, Murray, & Joyner, 2005) and Caribbean (Roopnarine et al., 1995) fathers have been characterized as non-resident and non-participant. Father absence is sometimes believed to have less of an effect on these children's developmental outcomes because it is "normative" (Gopaul-McNicol, 1993; Mandara, Murray & Joyner, 2005). However, in their study on ethnic differences in father involvement and nurturance, Schwartz and Finley (2005) found high levels of desired father involvement for children from divorced individuals in both of these communities. These results provide no support for the theory that, just because it is statistically "normative" and accepted, fathers' absence has no developmental impact (Finley & Schwartz, 2007, 2010).

Additionally, research on contributions by African American fathers show results similar to that of mainstream culture (Ahmeduzzaman & Roopnarine, 1992; Mandara, Murray, & Joyner, 2005) despite unwarranted comparisons to European American norms. Importantly, examination of within-group variations of Blacks reveal both similar and varied histories, influences and identities between African American, Caribbean American, and African cohorts (Phelps et al., 2001). In the present study African American fathers are compared with and contrasted to Caribbean American fathers by taking advantage of an existing dataset (Finley & Schwartz, 2004; 2007; 2010).

Considering first the similarities, African American and Caribbean American cultures both share genetic and cultural roots and a history of slavery. An overview of both cultures finds commonalities with sub-Saharan cultural dimensions such as affect (Ladson-Billings, 1992), similar family structure and extended kinship structures, similar religious practices (Lyons, 1997), and recent migration patterns (Fisher, Jackson, & Villarruel, 1998).

There are also important differences among these cultures which may prove significant to psychosocial outcome. Specifically, Caribbean Americans have the double hurdle of being both Black and immigrant (Kalmijn, 1996). While some have been touted as Black success stories, by the second generation Caribbean Americans appear to lose these advantages along with their immigrant status. Language has been found to be a moderating factor for the success of Caribbean Americans, with English speaking natives faring better than Spanish and French Speaking natives (Kalmijn). Despite this economic success, immigration comes at a price for Caribbean Americans of African descent. Assimilation for Caribbean Americans means a loss of status from a political and numerical majority to an ethnic minority of lowered status (Lyons, 1997; Ostine, 1998). Perhaps because of this, Black immigrants appear to “cling” to their national and ethnic identities more than White immigrants (Ostine, 1998; Phelps et al., 2001). Moreover, Caribbean societies foster nationality and ethnicity over race (Lyons; Phelps et al.).

English speaking Caribbean islands, all formerly British colonies, are often examined as a single entity although large cultural differences exist among them. Some islands experienced large influxes from other cultures (e.g., Trinidad) that effectively changed those societies (Gopaul-McNichols, 1993). Others, such as Jamaica, have long histories of male migration, creating a society where single parenting is much more common than among the other islands (Gopaul-McNichols, 1993). Haiti is considered the poorest and least developed country in the western hemisphere and has a French-influenced culture (Oswald, 1999). Uniquely distinct from other French speaking islands, Haitians migrate to the USA for political and economic reasons and, when there, experience lower rates of income, education, and employment compared to the other minorities (Kalmijn, 1996).

An additional, fourth category of ethnic identification was named *Other English Speaking* (OES). This group included all of the Anglophone Island nations except Jamaica. The reason for creating this group was multifold. First, the sample sizes for these individual countries were too small to be statistically relevant. Second, these countries are culturally different from French speaking Haiti and the non-conformist culture of Jamaica. Finally, this would be an opportunity to study the masking effects often seen when “Blacks” are studied as an undifferentiated group.

This study addresses the effects of paternal nurturance and involvement in African American, Jamaican, OES, and Haitian young adults. Research on African American and Caribbean children shows similar results of psychosocial functioning (Lambert et al., 1999). However, these studies have focused on young children and for the most part used teacher or maternal reports of child behaviors and paternal involvement (Samms-Vaughan, 2008). Also, these studies have not linked variability in paternal involvement and nurturance to psychosocial functioning.

The present study extends the important work of Finley and Schwartz by examining the effect of reported involvement on desired father involvement and other indices of psychosocial functioning (Finley & Schwartz, 2004, 2007, 2010; Schwartz & Finley, 2005). Desired father involvement can be used as a measure of "missed opportunities, and psychological distress" (Finley & Schwartz, 2007). Schwartz and Finley (2005) also found differences in involvement and nurturing between African American and Caribbean islanders. However, they did not look at the effect of these variables on psychosocial outcomes. The indices of psychosocial functioning addressed in their studies are self-esteem, life satisfaction, and future expectations. These are indicators of personal goals, self-reflection, and achievement, and have been found to correlate significantly with psychological distress, well-being, and personal stress (Makinen & Pychyl, 2001; Finley & Schwartz, 2007). Finley and Schwartz (2010) show that parental variations are positively linked to self-esteem and life satisfaction but negatively linked to psychological distress such as related to desired parental involvement. Previous studies have looked at moderators of these relationships, specifically family form, gender, and ethnicity. While all of these variables were shown to have some moderating effect, the most powerful has been family form (Finley & Schwartz, 2007, 2010; Schwartz & Finley, 2005).

The theoretical basis of this study is Rohner's view that children's perception of parental involvement is related to their psychosocial functioning (Khaleque & Rohner, 2002; Rohner, Kean & Cournoyer, 1991; Rohner, Khaleque, & Cournoyer, 2005). The uses of adult retrospective reports are uniquely suited to this perspective and consistent with other methodology (Finley & Schwartz, 2004; 2007). Emerging adulthood is a time of reflection and insightful understanding, where the individuals are considerably divorced from parental influence and young enough to remember it in its entirety (Finley & Schwartz, 2010).

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The focus of this study is to examine the relationship between fathers' nurturance and involvement and the effects of these variables on psychosocial outcomes for African American and Caribbean young adults. There are two questions. First: are paternal nurturing and involvement behaviors positively linked to all psychosocial outcomes? If supported, this would provide additional support for the multicultural findings of PARTheory (Rohner, Khaleque, & Cournoyer, 2005). Second: is the relationship between the reported and desired parental behaviors negatively correlated and is this relationship moderated by culture?

## METHOD

### *Participants*

A subset of a larger dataset (Finley & Schwartz, 2004), which had already been collected, was used in this study. Only the participants who identified themselves as Black or other (94.9% and 5.1%, respectively), and their fathers as being of Caribbean American or African American descent, were included. Nineteen indi-

viduals were excluded because their fathers were from places other than the categories specified below. A small group ( $n = 27$ ) of participants were studied together (Other English Speakers, OES). This included Trinidad (13), St. Lucia (2), Bahamas (4), Nevis (1), Dominica (2), Barbados (2), Grenada (1), St Vincent (1), and Antigua (1). Table 1 shows the sample sizes and other demographic information for each ethnic group.

The final sample was comprised of 202 college age adults (74% female; mean age 20.2; mean GPA 3.1) and represented 12% of the original sample. All of the following demographic information pertains to this subset. Participants were recruited from English and Psychology classes from three major universities: 88% from Florida International University, 6% from Florida State University, and 6% from the College of New Jersey. All university grade levels were represented: 51% freshmen, 21% sophomores, 14% juniors, 8% seniors, and 3% graduate students. The majority of the students resided with parents or other family (57%) or on campus (26%), and came from either intact married families (60%) or single-parent divorced families (31%), with a median income between \$30,000 and \$50,000.

### Measures

*Demographics.* Data collected included age, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, country of origin, education level, grade point average, family form, and father's ethnicity, education, and country of origin. The participants were also asked to identify a father figure who most impacted their life. Only those who identified their biological father in this capacity were used in this study.

*Nurturant fathering scale.* The Nurturant Fathering Scale (Finley & Schwartz, 2004) consists of nine items for participants to characterize their relationships with their father on a 5-point scale. These items measure closeness, support, enjoyment, and overall quality of the relationship. Possible scores on this scale range from 9-45 with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.95 (Finley & Schwartz, 2004). A sample item from this scale is "How much do you think your father *enjoyed* being a father."

Table 1  
*Sample Size and Mean Age of Each Ethnic Group by Gender*

Father's country of origin	Male		Female		Total	
	N	Mean age	N	Mean age	N	Mean age
U.S.	10	22.90	48	20.07	58	20.57
Jamaica	20	20.67	33	19.94	53	20.20
Haiti	16	20.40	48	19.40	64	19.63
OES	7	20.50	20	22.19	27	21.59
Total	53	21.02	149	19.91	202	20.20

*Father involvement.* The Father Involvement Scale lists 20 domains of father involvement and was developed from the Hawkins and Palkovitz (1999) review (Finley & Schwartz, 2004). For each domain, the participants first rated how much the father was reported to have been involved (on the left of each item), and then how much they desired him to be involved (on the right of each item). The linear scale for reported involvement ranged from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very involved*) and the curvilinear scale for desired involvement from 1 (*much less*) through 3 (*just right*) to 5 (*much more*). The reported involvement domains included were Instrumental (8 items, e.g., discipline and providing income), Expressive (8 items, e.g., providing care giving and companionships), and Mentoring (4 items, e.g., giving advice and developing competence). Possible scores on the total scale ranged from 20-100 and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the total and subscales ranged between 0.90-0.92 (Finley & Schwartz, 2004). The desired involvement domains included were desired instrumental (10 items, e.g., discipline and providing income), and desired expressive (10 items, e.g., providing care giving and companionships). Possible total scores on this scale ranged from 20-100 and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient across scales was between 0.92 and 0.96 (Finley & Schwartz, 2004).

*Psychosocial functioning.* Single items for three indices of psychosocial functioning were included. Participants were asked to indicate their overall life satisfaction, future expectations, and self esteem on a scale from 1 (*Very Low*) to 5 (*Very High*).

### *Procedure*

The Nurturant Father Scale, the Father Involvement Scale, and the demographics form were administered together as a single questionnaire in a classroom setting. Completion time ranged from 10-20 minutes. Data were collected between June 1998 and February 2000.

## RESULTS

### *Preliminary Analysis*

All the analyses were performed with SPSS 14 for Windows. The variability in cell sizes necessitated a preliminary analysis to determine the possible combination of groups. A one-way analysis of variance of all of the variables of the three main immigrant groups (Jamaican, Haitian, OES) yielded no significant difference between the U.S.-born and Foreign-born participants. Thus these participants were combined into three as opposed to six groups. In essence, the ethnicity of the participants was determined by the ethnicity of the fathers. Additional analysis of Jamaicans and OES showed that the former had lower means in all variables. Although these differences were not significant, the correlation patterns discussed below and seen within the Jamaican group were not present within the other, and therefore the decision to keep them separate was retained.

Prior to analysis, data were evaluated for a variety of statistical concerns. Pairwise deletions were used since only 6% of the data were missing. This procedure

makes use of all available data and produces unbiased estimates (Graham, Hofer, & Puccinin, 1994). No leverage scores were greater than four times greater than the mean centered leverage value (Fernández Pierna et al., 2002). Univariate indices of skewness and kurtosis and Multivariate normality revealed no abnormal distribution (Groeneveld & Meeden, 1984). Confirmatory and exploratory factor analysis and reliability analysis of the nurturance and involvement scales and psychosocial functioning, using this sample, revealed results similar to those previously reported.

### Means

To test the hypotheses for the study, the means of the variables were analyzed using ANOVA, followed by several *post hoc* tests to further explore the results. While analysis of variance revealed no overall significant differences between the four groups, the nurturant and involvement fathering variables were highest for African Americans and OES (ranging from 3.14 to 3.85) and lowest for Haitians (2.65 to 3.38). The effect sizes for nurturant fathering and expressive involvement were weak, indicating only a possible trend requiring further research. These data are presented in Table 2.

Analysis of the outcome or dependant variables yielded similar patterns with scores for African Americans being higher than the other three groups for all of the five variables (Table 3). Fisher's LSD showed significant differences between African Americans, OES, and Haitians for life satisfaction ( $F(3, 198) = 3.74, p < .05$ ) and self-esteem ( $F(3, 198) = 4.77, p < .01$ ), and between Haitians, Jamaicans and African Americans for future expectations ( $F(3, 198) = 3.39, p < .05$ ). The more stringent Tukey's HSD showed significant differences only between African Americans and Haitians for these three variables. ANOVA yielded no significant difference between groups for desired expressive and instrumental father involvement.<sup>1</sup>

Interaction contrasts were performed with gender and family form. A 4 (ethnicity) x 2 (gender) between-subjects factorial analysis of variance was calculated for each of the outcome variables. The interaction was significant for life satisfaction only ( $F(3,198) = 4.791, p < .01$ ) with a small effect size (partial  $\eta^2 = .072$ ). African American males had considerably lower life satisfaction ( $m = 3.1, sem = .17$ ) than African American females ( $m = 4.1, sem = .10$ ). Other interaction contrasts such as ethnicity X family form or ethnicity X family form X gender could not be performed because the cell sizes in some instances were too small (1 or lower).

### Correlations

Correlations were assessed using Pearson product-moment statistic (one-tailed). As a complete group, all of the psychological outcomes were significantly corre-

<sup>1</sup> Scores of 3 and lower indicated a perception that expressive and instrumental father involvement was either "just right" or wanted "less involvement," and as such were excluded from the analysis.

Table 2  
Means for Fathering Variables

Ethnicity ( <i>n</i> )	Nurturant Fathering (SEM)	Expressive Fathering (SEM)	Instrumental Fathering (SEM)	Mentoring/ Advising (SEM)
African				
Americans (58)	3.40 (0.16)	3.14 (0.17)	3.51 (0.17)	3.35 (0.18)
Jamaicans (53)	3.28 (0.16)	3.0 (0.16)	3.64 (0.16)	3.44 (0.17)
Haitians (64)	2.96 (0.14)	2.65 (0.14)	3.38 (0.15)	3.13 (0.16)
OES (27)	3.58 (0.20)	3.28 (0.23)	3.85 (0.23)	3.8 (0.25)
F ratio	2.38	2.41	1.05	1.04
$\eta^2$	0.35	0.35	0.016	0.016

Note. Response scales for all items range from 1 to 5.

All F ratios were non-significant and the effect sizes were below the cutoff for small effect size of 1.0.

lated with all of the fathering variables ( $r = .19 - .22, p < .01$ ). Jamaicans showed the highest number of significant correlations with fathering variables. For African Americans, Haitians, and OES, self-esteem did not significantly correlate with the four fathering variables, with Pearson's coefficient ranging from 0.08 to 0.24. Self-esteem was significantly correlated to father involvement but not nurturance for Jamaicans ( $r = .35, .35$  &  $.34, p < .01$ ). Life satisfaction in African Americans and Jamaicans was similar, both being significant for all of the variables ( $r = .27 - .39, p < .05$ ). These data are presented in Table 4.

The coefficients for expressive and instrumental desired fathering involvement ranged from  $-.44$  to  $-.63$  for African Americans and OES ( $p < .001$  or  $p < .05$ ). For Jamaicans and Haitians, the coefficients ranged from  $-.19$  to  $-.42$ , with only expressive fathering being non significant with desired instrumental involvement. These correlations are shown in Table 5. Data were also analyzed for relationships between paternal involvement and nurturance and GPA but no significant relationship was found between any of the variables.

## DISCUSSION

### Research Questions

The initial goal of this study was to show that all of the measured paternal nurturing and involvement behaviors were positively related to the psychosocial outcomes of life satisfaction, self-esteem, and future expectations for the four cultures. The second goal of this study was to examine the relationship between reported and desired paternal behaviors. The results were expected to be moderated by culture.

Table 3  
*Means of Developmental Outcome Variables*

Ethnicity (n) <sup>a</sup>	Self-Esteem (SEM)	Life Satisfaction (SEM)	Future Expectation (SEM)	Express. DFI <sup>b</sup> (SEM)	Instru. DFI <sup>c</sup> (SEM)
African Americans (58)	4.14 (0.11)	3.93 (0.1)	4.62 (0.8)	4.02 (0.8)	3.77 (0.8)
Jamaicans (54)	3.86 (0.13)	3.69 (0.1)	4.22 (0.11)	3.93 (0.9)	3.90 (0.9)
Haitians (64)	3.61 (0.1)	3.45 (0.1)	4.20 (0.11)	4.16 (0.8)	4.05 (0.8)
OES (28)	4.1 (0.19)	3.85 (0.1)	4.37 (0.15)	3.83 (0.1)	3.76 (0.1)
F ratio	4.77 **	3.74 **	3.39 *	1.35	1.43
$\eta^2$	0.067	0.054	0.049	0.036	0.035

*Note.* Response scales for all items range from 1 to 5.

DFI = Desired Father Involvement, Express. = Expressive, Instru. = Instrumental

<sup>a</sup> The sample sizes listed here are for self esteem, life satisfaction and future expectation.

<sup>b</sup> The sample sizes are 45, 45, 51, and 20 for the African Americans, Jamaicans, Haitians, and OES respectively.

<sup>c</sup> The sample sizes are 37, 36, 43, and 14 for the African Americans, Jamaicans, Haitians, and OES respectively.

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ .

As expected, reports of paternal nurturance and involvement were positively linked with psychosocial outcomes. This corresponds with results reported in previous research (Schwartz & Finley, 2005) but contrasts with the prevailing image of Black fathers as unimportant (Field, 2003; Mandara, Murray & Joyner, 2005; Roopnarine et al., 1995). More importantly, these results were consistent for all the cultures, indicating that these effects are indeed universal among Black fathers, regardless of ethnicity. However, different patterns (means) of parenting did emerge. Specifically African American fathers were more involved than were Jamaicans or Haitians. Although these differences were not significant, they could not be attributed to family form or social economic status and is most probably a cultural phenomenon. Further research would be required before any of these trends can be considered conclusive.

The conceptualized outcomes, instrumental and expressive desired involvements, were hypothesized to be negatively linked to fathering variables in direct contrast to prevailing characterizations (Field, 2003; Mandara, Murray, & Joyner, 2005, Roopnarine, 2002). The negative correlations found here suggest that the assumption that father absence is undamaging in these cultures appears to be incorrect. Further examination of these correlations by ethnicity revealed significant results that were difficult to interpret because of substantial differences in sample sizes. Again, this is indicative of the need for further research in this field.

Table 4  
*Pearson Correlations Between Fathering Variables and Psychological Outcomes*

Variable	Nurturant Fathering	Expressive Fathering	Instrumental Fathering	Mentoring/ Advising
All ( $n = 202$ )				
Self Esteem	.20**	.22**	.22**	.19**
Life Satisfaction	.29**	.27**	.25**	.22**
African Americans ( $n = 58$ )				
Self Esteem	.13	.08	.19	.13
Life Satisfaction	.27*	.28*	.36**	.27*
Jamaicans ( $n = 53$ )				
Self Esteem	.26	.35*	.35*	.34*
Life Satisfaction	.31*	.31*	.39**	.30*
Haitians ( $n = 64$ )				
Self Esteem	.10	.11	.13	.08
Life Satisfaction	.34**	.27*	.20	.23
OES ( $n = 27$ )				
Self Esteem	.22	.24	.21	.19
Life Satisfaction	.10	.07	.23	.21

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

While the results of this study are more suggestive than conclusive, they highlight unique cultural differences that are often masked in studies that examine Black fathers as a single category. For a variety of reasons (expedience, efficiency, indifference), it is the custom to "lump" minorities together. The four cultures that are examined here, which some would group together, clearly have different, in some cases significantly different, patterns of parenting and outcomes. This masking effect is most visible in the OES group which was very heterogeneous and had different results from the other two Caribbean groups. Critically, this shows how patterns are easily masked by having heterogeneous subgroups within Black or Hispanic categories combined, and can lead to erroneous conclusions.

#### *Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research*

While the results in this study were suggestive of several cultural differences, the analysis was hampered by several limitations. The sample sizes for the Jamaican, Haitian, and African American populations were sufficient to do overall analyses but were inadequate for the finer grain analyses. Using samples from populations that have higher densities of Black immigrants would be beneficial for future studies. To investigate causal linkages between culture and parenting involvement, it would be necessary to duplicate this research within the specific countries. This would also rule out possible self-selection immigration factors.

Table 5  
*Pearson Correlations Between Fathering Variables and Desired Father Involvement*

Variable	Nurturant Fathering	Expressive Fathering	Instrumental Fathering	Mentoring/ Advising
All				
Expressive DFI <sup>a</sup>	-.43**	-.43**	-.44**	-.44**
Instrumental DFI <sup>b</sup>	-.38**	-.34**	-.45**	-.43**
African Americans				
Expressive DFI	-.52**	-.62**	-.52**	-.59**
Instrumental DFI	-.45**	-.53**	-.55**	-.56**
Jamaicans				
Expressive DFI	-.30*	-.29*	-.33*	-.38**
Instrumental DFI	-.26*	-.23	-.34*	-.34*
Haitians				
Expressive DFI	-.36**	-.31*	-.39**	-.30*
Instrumental DFI	-.35**	-.19	-.42**	-.36**
OES				
Expressive DFI	-.63**	-.54**	-.56**	-.55**
Instrumental DFI	-.55**	-.44*	-.57**	-.49*

DFI = Desired Father Involvement.

<sup>a</sup>The sample sizes are 45, 45, 51, and 20 for the African Americans, Jamaicans, Haitians, and OES respectively.

<sup>b</sup>The sample sizes are 37, 36, 43, and 14 respectively.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

Other problems with the sample were reflected in the demographics such as high percentages of female participants. It is also possible that family dynamics contributed to the results of this study. The majority of the participants lived off campus at home and in two parent families in a middle socioeconomic bracket. The use of outreach community research may help to address this limitation by giving a more representative sample.

Despite these limitations, this research contributes to the growing body of research on the effects of paternal involvement and nurturance and more specifically on the critical contributions African American and Caribbean American fathers make to the social and emotional development of their children. Family policy should follow the relevant research data and become more encouraging, supportive, and facilitating of father nurturance and involvement in African American and Caribbean American communities.

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# Romanian Men's Masculinities in Online Personal Advertisements

**ABSTRACT** The present paper analyses Romanian men's masculinities via a quantitative and qualitative analysis of 380 online personal advertisements posted by men. The case of Romania is particularly interesting for understanding gender relations, since the country has recently experienced the impact of (post-)communism, democratization, and resurging traditionalism. Romanian men's advertisements often express traditional gender relations: men-seeking-women are interested in attractive, less educated partners, while men-seeking-men emphasize discretion. Some men resist such patriarchal standards: men-seeking-women who are highly educated prefer educated women, and some men-seeking-men give out recognizable photos of themselves. Limitations and further research directions are discussed.

**KEYWORDS** MASCULINITIES, PERSONAL ADVERTISEMENTS, INTERNET AND SEXUALITY, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, ROMANIA, CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Research on sexualities in Romania is limited (e.g., Bartoș, Phua, & Avery, 2009). Existing research generally focuses on sex and gender differences in attitudes toward family life and social issues (e.g., Bădescu, Kivu, Popescu, Rughiniș, Sandu, & Voicu, 2007). In most cases, studies are based on general opinion polls that include questions on these issues. Alternative sexualities in Romania are still a considerably controversial subject (Bădescu et al., 2007; Gallup Organization Romania, 2000; INSOMAR, 2009). Few studies examine the extent to which sexual orientation influences life choices and transitions in Romania (on homosexuality, see e.g., Spineanu-Dobrotă, 2005). However, Romania is an interesting country for such inquiry. Its modernity confronted traditional values in the past few decades, when the country joined the European Union (EU) and went through major socio-economic and political changes.

Focusing on the context of mate selection using personal ads, we follow a well-established line of research projects, and contribute to it by studying a relatively under-examined country (see e.g., Groom & Pennebaker, 2005; Kaufman & Phua, 2003; Lester & Goggin, 1999). Researchers who study mate selection using this data source generally focus on the English-speaking countries, studies on Eastern Eu-

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<sup>a</sup> Babeș-Bolyai University, Romania. Currently independent researcher.

<sup>b</sup> Department of Sociology, Gettysburg College.

All correspondence regarding this article should be addressed to VoonChin Phua, Department of Sociology, Gettysburg College, 300 N. Washington Street, #412, Gettysburg, PA 17325. Email: vphua@gettysburg.edu

rope being rather rare (for Romania, see e.g., Rusu & Bencic, 2007). In order to understand mate selection through personals in Romania, we focus both on gender relationships and sexuality. Notwithstanding, any study on men would be incomplete unless we provide some information on gender relations and situate men in a broader and changing context (e.g., Hearn, 2009).

#### MASCULINITY REVISITED

The concept of masculinity has received much scholarly discussion and has been continually contested and refined (e.g., Connell, 2000). For example, Connell (1995) criticizes Brannon's (1976) theory of the "male sex role" for creating an abstract, stylized masculinity to which no one can actually adhere and for its insufficient focus on power relations. The concept of masculinity is relational, hierarchical, and multidimensional (Connell, 2000). Masculinity belongs to a gender continuum and is different from, but not necessarily opposed to, femininity (e.g., Băban, 2000a; Smiler, 2004). Masculinity also becomes manifest in different forms. While different versions of masculinity exist, these masculinities have "definite [hierarchical] social relations between them" (Connell, 2000, p. 10). At any given time and location, the social organization of that society and one's social location within that organization influence which form of masculinity is culturally exalted over others (e.g., Phua, 2007). Băban (2000a) identifies at least ten different approaches to understanding masculinity. Many of them are applications of broader theories of gender issues, such as psychoanalysis, cognitive psychology, social-learning theory, and feminist critique.

Smiler (2004) argues that recent masculinity research departs from previous inquiry in three respects. First, theories of the 1990s and 2000s presuppose an indefinite number of gender identities, as opposed to earlier dichotomies and postulations of a bipolar continuum (male vs. female). Second, researchers have discarded notions of a unique, biologically essential masculinity in favor of historically constructed masculinities. Third, some recent scholars have argued for a more neutral stand on masculinity than their predecessors: hence, there are no "adequate" scores on questionnaires, and no masculinity is fundamentally better than the other. This underscores the idea that masculinity is a complex, relational concept that cannot be easily represented by numerical means.

#### ROMANIAN MEN'S MASCULINITY IN THE CONTEXT OF COMMUNISM AND RE-TRADITIONALIZATION

"A masculine man in Western societies is portrayed as a traditional bread-winning man, who is White, physically strong, rugged, manly, and displays the quality of heterosexuality" (Phua, 2007, p. 910). While Romania is not necessarily a Western country, the stereotypic image of a Romanian man is surprisingly similar to the Western version. Romanian men are expected to be different from women (e.g., Gallup Organization Romania, 2000). This could extend to choice of professions regarded as masculine, and avoidance of feminine or gay-like behavior. Boys are taught not to cry or express emotions, as this would interfere with rationality

and productivity (Băban, 2000a). More precisely, men ought to express only such emotions as anger and impatience, while love and fear are tabooed (Brannon, 1976).

Romanian men negotiate their masculinities in the context of post-communism, re-traditionalization, "ruralization" (Cîrstocea, 2003), and the absence of strong feminist movements in Romania as compared to settings such as the U.S. or Western Europe (Miroiu, 1998). Roman (2001) reports that the communist discourse on gender equality was highly hypocritical. While socialism may be programmatically degendering (Cîrstocea, 2003), Magyari-Vincze (2005) argues that this is a "false gender neutrality" (p. 203). According to Cîrstocea (2003), the downfall of totalitarianism was itself no more than a "conservative revolution" (p. 129), reviving rural traditionalism. Gender equality was much discussed in communist countries, but it never went beyond "the flowery thanks spoken on Women's Day" (Spencer, 1996, p. 269). Analyzing this issue in the case of post-war Romania, Cîrstocea (2003) points out that communist propaganda abounded in references to the "Soviet liberation of women," contrasted to "capitalistic slavery," but Romania's laws and institutions remained virtually unchanged.

For the last 20 years, these laws and institutions have been described in terms of a transition from a *national-communist patriarchy* (Roman, 2001) to a *post-socialist patriarchy* (Spencer, 1996). Values have been re-traditionalized and cities "ruralized" (Băban, 2000b). What in Romania is usually called "the Revolution" was, as far as gender is concerned, a "restoration of the 'natural order of things'" (Magyari-Vincze, 2005, p. 204). Whatever is deemed part of the natural order of things in a patriarchal system typically puts women at a disadvantage. With patriarchy maintained, women are still having a low participation in decision making: for example, there are few women in government (Roman, 2001), and most Romanians would not vote for a female president (Gallup Organization Romania, 2000). By late 2010, there are only two women in the acting cabinet, and less than 10 percent of the Members of Parliament are women.

Romanian women are less likely to work outside the home and are underpaid when they do (INS, 2001; Roman, 2001; Spencer, 1996). In addition, more than half of adults in Romania believe that men cannot take care of young children, and that there should not be any househusbands (Gallup Organization Romania, 2000). At the same time, about 66 percent of interviewees agreed that the husband should earn the money (Gallup Organization Romania). Nevertheless, harsh economic conditions have always made the typical family dependant on women's labor, a fact prompting Miroiu (1998) to call Romanian society "a patriarchy without 'fathers'" (p. 256), that is, without "breadwinners."

An interview study on Romanian men concluded that they construct motherhood as the natural state for a woman (Băban, 2000b). Moreover, social constructions of women's bodies tend to ratify naturalistic and medicalized discourses (see Foucault, 1990). When the issue of deliberate childlessness came up, an interviewee explicitly stated that "it must be a disease not to want children; so she [childless women] should get help" (2000b). In the context of this sharp dichotomy, feminism is placed in the field of "hysteria"—one man interviewed in the above study (2000b) argued that only "sexual trauma, frustration" of some women could account for such a political movement. It is worth stressing that "naturalization" is the main tool employed in constructing these views (Băban, 2000b; Magyari-Vincze, 2005).

According to a recent survey on abortion, half of Romanians are in favor, while the other half are against (Bădescu et al., 2007). Men view abortion as much as a democratic right as a necessary evil and a crime; roles as husband and father are constructed in terms of financial support; and men pass on their name to their children, a prospect that grants life meaning (Băban, 2000b). This may account for the finding that men are slightly more likely to want (more) children in the future (Galup Organization Romania, 2000).

A real man is expected to have as much sexual experience as possible (Băban, 2000b, 2003). Seventy-six percent of Romanian men admit having had sexual experience before marriage, as opposed to 38% of women (Bădescu et al., 2007), suggesting that premarital sexual behavior is more acceptable for men. Men tend to rationalize risk-taking (Shearer, Hosterman, Gillen, & Lefkowitz, 2005), adopting a *carpe diem* attitude: "everything is a risk in life," one man says, and this is actually part of enjoying it (Băban, 2000b). Modern contraceptive methods are well-known in Romania, and most men spontaneously mention condoms when asked about the subject. Still, traditional methods are generally preferred (Băban, 2000b, 2003; Bădescu et al., 2007), by which we mean such techniques as withdrawal (*coitus interruptus*) and the "rhythm method." Nevertheless, 28% of all sexually active people state they have never used contraception, and about 20% claim they have never heard of it (Bădescu et al., 2007). Romania is among the countries where HIV/AIDS mostly affects men (World Health Organization, 2003).

While the natural order of things favor men in many aspects, we should keep in mind three issues. First, relationships are dyadic: whatever happens to one partner, the other will be affected as well. We are not suggesting that experience and impact are the same for both partners, or that one is more important than the other. Instead, we are arguing that research needs to look at the dynamics within a union from the perspective of both partners, while acknowledging the potential power differentials within the couple. After all, when women are oppressed by a patriarchal system, the dynamics and interactions of the couple are affected.

Second, men do not uniformly benefit from a patriarchal system, and their experiences vary by other social statuses such as class, race, and sexuality (Connell, 1995). Under this system, particular formulations of manhood are being idealized to the point where few men can live up to corresponding expectations. A man is supposed to be successful, to have money, and to be looked up to by his peers (Brannon, 1976). But status is achieved by work outside the home. As a consequence, some men have to work to exhaustion and avoid passive leisure (Băban, 2000a). Since most men do not have exceptional careers, the family is often the context in which they gain status as the "breadwinner" (e.g., Băban, 2000a; Brannon, 1976). This pressure puts further strain on the couple, as women lose status not only inside but also outside of the home. We are positing that both sexes suffer when a system promotes gender inequalities, even when oppression is not uniformly experienced by both. In fact, women's oppression is worsened when their partners also face impossible pressures, making them less able to be supportive of their spouses.

Third, the characteristics of Romanian men's masculinities we have described may represent only one frame available to Romanian men for understanding and engaging in gender relations, though data indicated that it might be the more

prevalent one. Romanian men could be in the process of contesting such a frame or selectively using the frame to their advantage (for similar arguments on Asian Americans, see Phua, 2007).

#### HOMOSEXUALITY IN ROMANIA

Consensual same-sex relationships have been illegal under the Romanian Penal Code for half a century (ACCEPT, 2002). Before World War II, homosexuality had no legal status in Romania (Spineanu-Dobrotă, 2005). From 1938 to 1989, the country was governed by successive authoritarian regimes that criminalized homosexuality. Anti-gay laws oscillated between weakly enforced bans on open homosexuality and severe punishment for any homosexual act (Spineanu-Dobrotă). During the communist regime (about 1944 to 1989), being gay was often used as an official reason for prosecuting intellectuals unsympathetic with the authorities, according to a journalistic inquiry (Olivotto, 2007). It was not until 1996 that the Penal Code was modified. Despite pressure from Western Europe, homosexual relationships provoking “public scandal” continued to be criminalized (Spineanu-Dobrotă). Meanwhile, politicians’ attitudes remained ambiguous: some of them were openly homophobic, while the majority expressed indifference (Spineanu-Dobrotă).

Romanian mass media have treated gay issues only superficially throughout the 1990s. Newspapers systematically represented gay people as pedophiles, HIV-infected, mentally ill, and anti-Christian. A recurrent interpretation was that gay rights were forcefully imposed by the E.U. and represented a blow to Romania’s sovereignty (Crețeanu & Coman, 1998; Spineanu-Dobrotă, 2005). The language of some major newspapers was remarkably tendentious, often referring to anal sex apparent attempts to mock gay rights (Crețeanu & Coman, 1998). The Parliament finally abolished the anti-gay law in 2000, despite public protests (ACCEPT, 2002). That same year, the Parliament instated the National Council for Combating Discrimination (CNCD, 2007a) defending gay rights, for instance, to donate blood (CNCD, 2007b).

As far as we know, there are three organizations dealing with sexual minority issues in Romania: ACCEPT, founded in 1996, based in Bucharest, visible through pride parades and legal advocacy ([www.accept-romania.ro](http://www.accept-romania.ro)); Be An Angel, founded in 2002 in Cluj-Napoca, focusing more on publications and social and cultural events ([www.beanangel.ro](http://www.beanangel.ro)); and PSI Romania, concerned with research and intervention in health and social inequality ([www.psi.ro](http://www.psi.ro)). Recent survey results indicated that more than half of 1,201 participants (56.7%) think that discrimination against LGBT did not decrease after Romania joined the E.U. (INSOMAR, 2009). Fifty-four percent would not accept LGBT individuals as neighbors, while 54 percent, 70.9 percent and 90.5 percent would not accept them as a colleague, friend, or spouse of kin, respectively (INSOMAR). As expected, attitudes towards homosexuality vary by age, education, and religiosity (Moraru, 2010).

Unfortunately, there is no systematic study regarding recent media coverage, and it is difficult to say whether the public image of LGBT people has improved. Despite legal progress, surveys show many Romanians to be blatantly homophobic. A TV channel has been fined for primetime homophobia, remarkably without ac-

tual intervention of the CNCD (Bădicioiu, 2007). In the post-communist era, both mass-media and politicians have remained ambivalent towards LGBT issues (Spineanu-Dobrotă, 2005). Forty percent of respondents in a survey would not like gay people to live in Romania (Gallup Organization Romania, 2000), and 52 percent think they should not be accepted as normal people (Bădescu et al., 2007). About two-thirds of LGBT Romanians surveyed via a snowball sample reported experiencing discrimination and mistreatment ranging from being avoided and being the subject of jokes and pranks to facing unsolicited attempts to change one's sexual orientation, experiencing physical violence, and false denunciations to the police for child molestation (ACCEPT, 2005).

In the present study, we are interested in examining how attitudes on gender relations and homosexuality manifest in mate selection from the perspective of men. Specifically, we examine whether the content of personal ads, in terms of how men present themselves and what they want from potential mates, reflect attitudes highlighted above. Research on personal ads has been well-established (e.g., Jagger, 2005; Lester & Goggin, 1999; Phua, Hopper & Vazquez, 2002; Phua & Kaufman, 2003; Rusu & Bencic, 2007). Personal ads offer an unobtrusive way of examining dating preferences and minimize socially desirable responses, presenting as they do ways of screening out less desirable mates without in-person confrontation (Phua, 2002). However, the bulk of research using personals addresses Western countries.

#### DATA AND METHODS

We collected data from a Romanian Internet website in spring 2007. We used only personals posted by men living in Bucharest, Romania's capital. Initially, we examined the distribution across Romanian cities on that website. We decided that the capital yielded enough cases for sampling. We will have more reliable estimates as advertisements from Bucharest represent 45 percent of all cases, while the next city with the largest number of cases made up only 7 percent of all cases. The disparity in size would make it difficult to make any reliable conclusion even if we were to group all other cities together because of regional and rural-urban variations.

We first stratified the sample into men seeking men (MSM) and men seeking women (MSW). Within each group, we systematically sampled every third case until we achieved 200 cases. We deleted cases that were duplicates (e.g., two personals having the same photographs) and those who self-identified as foreigners. The final sample size was 380, with 187 MSM and 193 MSW. Consistent with earlier studies, men seeking men should not be interpreted simply as gay or bisexual, or men seeking women as straight (e.g., Bartoş et al., 2009). We remind readers that commonly-used sexual orientation terminologies may vary in meaning depending on cultural context (e.g., McLelland, 2000) and that MSM do not necessarily identify as gay (e.g., Phua & Kaufman, 1999).

Personals consist of two sections: the first part offers for selection a set of pre-coded answers that has an English version; the second part is written in Romanian by advertisers (here translated by one of the authors). Pre-coding suggests that pertinent variables probably refer to the most common characteristics used in personals. Translation was performed as literally as possible to preserve the "flavor" or tone of the messages. Supplementary explanations were provided for words with-

out English equivalent—typically describing specific Romanian values (e.g., *bun-simt*, which could mean good manners, good education, consideration, and so on). However, the amount of freely written text varied from one advertiser to another. Some ad texts were minimal, presenting the following reasons:

You ask too much I will let you describe me. What do you say? (msw#95)

I am a cool guy (honestly). I will let you discover the rest! (msw #149)

I'll let you do this ... not that I don't like showing off. (msw#123)

I don't like describing myself; I let others do it.... I think it is more honest that way. (msm#7)

I like participating in a dialogue not having monologue. If you are interested in anything, ask. (msm#8)

About me? I am a nice guy, likeable, a true friend as some say. Discover the treat yourself.... (msm #107)

Providing little information irked some users. In response to what he perceived as lack of information, one advertiser wrote "If your profile reads 'I cannot describe myself, I'd be subjective. Describe me yourself.' Then we have nothing to discuss" (msw #182).

## RESULTS

In the following sections, we will report advertisers' characteristics and their preferences in their mate in Romanian men's personals. While we are not explicitly employing role theory as our framework, we used related terms for descriptions. *Gender roles* denote masculinity or femininity, similar to what Carrigan, Connell, and Lee (1985) call *gender personalities*, while *sexual roles* refer to preferred sexual activities such as being the active or passive actor in anal or oral sex. We operationalized these two concepts by counting the specific words used, such as *manly*, *masculine* and *macho* for the first, and *top*, *bottom*, and *versatile* for the latter. We look at sexual and gender roles as socially constructed and learned roles (e.g., Carrigan et al., 1985). However, data limitations have prevented us to delve deeper into the problem of role strains and "questions of power and material inequality" (Carrigan, et al., 1985, p. 559).

### *Characteristics of Romanian MSW Personals*

MSW do not report their sexual orientation or sexual roles, or request them from their potential dates. Similarly, none of them specifically excluded dates of any specific sexual orientation. In fact, less than ten percent specifically reject potential dates based on any characteristics. Less than one percent of MSW mentioned their gender roles; those that do only emphasize their masculinity, like using the word *macho* (msw#39). These results suggest that heterosexuality appears to be taken for granted, along with all its associated and expected roles.

None of them specifically mentioned body parts. The most explicit reference was to "Unrest between my legs" (msw#11). These results are consistent with earlier

Table 1  
*Content of Men Seeking Women Personals*

Variable	Mentioning of respondent's characteristics (%) N = 187	Mentioning of preferences in match's characteristics (%) n = 193
Sexual Orientation	0.0	0.0
Gender Roles	0.5	0.0
Sexual Roles	0.0	0.0
Body Parts	0.0	NA
Sexual Acts	2.1	NA
Discretion	1.6	NA
Include Photo	61.7	NA
Exclude particular sexual orientation	0.0	NA
Exclude any characteristics	9.8	NA
Age	99.0	33.7
Height	99.0	27.5
Weight	97.4	24.4
Field of Work	97.9	34.2
Education	100.0	14.5
Income	37.3	2.6
Hobbies	90.7	79.3
Marital Status	86.5	15.5
Mentioned Children	95.3	10.9

research that shows that men seeking women are less explicit about sexual characteristics. However, this does not mean that they are necessarily less interested in sex, even though only 2.1 percent specifically mentioned sexual acts. Some examples include:

Virtual sex, live sex, I like stocky women with no inhibitions. I love mature women! Come into my world, let's try something new! (msw#61)  
 For a relationship with no sentimental implications .... (msw#20)

About 62 percent of MSW provided at least one photo (usually one of the photos is a clear face shot). Consistent with the high percentage of MSW willing to show their face in their personals, only 1.6 percent requested some form of discretion. In one of these cases, the need for discretion is to conceal a clearly sexual liaison: "looking for a female partner I think cleanliness and discretion are understood ..." (msw#59). Almost all MSW mentioned their age, height and weight. Other studies have found physical attractiveness to be an important criterion in mate selection, usually indicated by proxy characteristics mentioned parameters (e.g., Rusu & Bencic, 2007). In this sample, about a third or fewer requested specific characteristics from their potential dates (33.7% for age, 27.5% for height, 24.5% for weight). How-

ever, it is worth noting that twice as many MSW as MSM requested a specific weight and height.

All MSW mentioned their educational status and 98 percent mentioned their field of work. These percentages are in great contrast with those of people requesting the same information of their potential dates (14.5% and 34.2%, respectively). Similarly, 86.5 percent and 95.3 percent mentioned their marital status and whether they have children but only 15.5 percent and 10.9 percent inquired about these characteristics of their potential dates. While 37.3 percent of MSW mentioned their income, only 2.6 percent specified a preferential income level for prospective dates. These characteristics are consistent with a somewhat traditional idea of a bread-winning husband. Wiederman (1993) has shown that MSW are more likely to offer financial security in exchange for beauty and attractiveness. Conforming to a more traditional role, these MSW seem to be more concerned with their role as man of the house than the extent their potential mates may contribute to the family. Even if not all of them are necessarily affluent, these MSW are willing to show their worth and let their potential partners choose. The following descriptions support this argument:

A young family man who has about everything a man needs to grant a woman a peaceful life who wishes, like me, to have a life together and who still CAN and WILL give what he receives, that is love, affection, tenderness, fidelity, communication and reciprocal trust. (msw#168)

Family man ... feet on the ground! I have no higher education or such fancy stuff. If you want a family, let's try. (msw#122)

#### *Comparing Characteristics of Advertisers and Preferred Matches (MSW)*

To evaluate if MSW conform to traditional masculine ideologies in terms of mate compatibility, we examine five characteristics: age, height, weight, income, and educational level. More than 65 percent of MSW did not state any specific preferences in age (63%), height (72%), weight (74%), income (97%), and educational level (85%). Among those who did have a specific age preference, 67 percent prefer the match to be about the same age, 31 percent prefer younger partners, and 2 percent like older women. Physically, advertisers who stated a specific height or weight generally preferred someone shorter and lighter. Almost all advertisers wanted a match who earns less than they do, albeit the percentage of advertisers voicing a specific preference is low. Regarding education level preferences, the pattern is interesting. Those who completed college would accept someone with less education (69%) but those with a post-university education prefer their match to have the same (75%). A larger percentage of advertisers in these two groups have a specific preference when compared to those with less education.

#### *Characteristics of Romanian MSM Personals*

In an early study, Laner and Kamel reported that gay men "make explicit on the outset what one wants, looks like and does (sexually) than do other qualities, since

Table 2  
*Content of Men Seeking Men Personals*

Variable	Mentioning of respondent's characteristics (%) N = 187	Mentioning of preferences in match's characteristics (%) n = 193
Sexual Orientation	4.8	3.7
Gender Roles	2.1	3.2
Sexual Roles	8.6	7.0
Body Parts	2.7	NA
Sexual Acts	21.9	NA
Discretion	15.5	NA
Include Photo	26.2	NA
Exclude particular sexual orientation	2.1	NA
Exclude any characteristics	13.4	NA
Age	100.0	29.4
Height	96.8	13.9
Weight	95.2	12.3
Field of Work	100.0	30.5
Education	100.0	5.3
Income	17.6	1.1
Hobbies	84.0	67.4
Marital Status	78.6	5.9
Mentioned Children	88.8	5.9

once a sexually compatible partner has been located, personality traits will become evident and recreational or other interests can be negotiated" (1977, p. 160). Compared to MSW, higher percentages of MSM mentioned their sexual orientation, gender roles, and sexual roles, and requested the same information from their potential partners. However, these percentages are all less than 10 percent and are lower than in studies on American MSM (e.g., Phua, 2002). About 22 percent of MSM specifically mentioned sexual acts they like to perform, and about three percent mentioned their body parts. Several points are worth noting. First, those MSM who mentioned their gender roles only emphasized their masculinity. Second, the few MSM who mentioned their sexual orientation or request their partners to be of a specific sexual orientation are more likely to use the designation *bisexual*. Third, the complex variations that two men could have sex may require those with specific preferences to be verbal about them. Some examples include:

I'm a slave looking for Masters ... gay, bi, hetero, doesn't matter. What matters is their pleasure to humiliate me and mock me. (msm#29)

I'd like to suck and to be loved by a real man.... I'm top for now but want to try bottom. (msm#21)

- Total sex, unknown pleasure. (msm#15)  
 27 year old bottom gay, versatile... experienced, clean and very discrete, looking for a mature person for a relation I'm a committed slave looking for a real master, a trampling expert (that is someone who would smash me). (msm#71)  
 Looking for a relationship based on sex, no implications, preferably with a place, I am versatile.... Open to couples. (msm#177)  
 Looking for a bottom gay who knows what he wants.... (msm#181)

Only two percent specifically rejected a particular sexual orientation, which in this case is "straight." About 13 percent rejected partners with specific characteristics. About 16 percent mentioned the need for discretion, which is ten times higher than in the case of MSW. Consistent with this stronger desire for discretion, about 26 percent of MSM included at least one face photograph. Only two MSM who included a photograph did not include a face shot. Displaying one's face in personals may be a form of "coming out" for individuals who embrace alternative sexualities. Albeit only a quarter of MSM in Romania are *willing* to be out and proud, the fact that anyone is willing to take the risks in a rather conservative and traditional country where homosexuality is frowned upon, is remarkable (e.g., Bădescu et al., 2007; Crețeanu & Coman, 1998). Nonetheless, we have no information on the percentage of people in Romania who *are* out or are comfortable with their alternative sexualities. Many obstacles affecting how people choose to share and express their sexualities exist in Romania (Bartoș et al., 2009). In addition, we have to keep in mind that these advertisers live in the capital city.

Similar to MSW, almost all MSM mentioned their age, weight, and height but less than 30 percent requested a specific age and less than 14 percent requested weight or height. This does not necessarily mean that attractiveness is not important for MSM. It may be a strategy to see who is out there and then see whether any of the available men are attractive. In this way, the net may be cast wider. Most MSM mentioned their non-physical characteristics, but they rarely requested such characteristics from their ideal matches. For example, all of them mentioned their field of work and their education, and most of them specified their hobbies (84%), marital status (78.6%), and whether they had children (88.8%). Income was an exception, with only 17.6 percent specifying how much they earn. As for ideal matches, each of these characteristics was requested by less than 10 percent of the MSM, with the exception of field of work (30.5%) and hobbies (67.4%).

The lack of interest in marital status deserves further consideration. On one hand, the issue of marriage may be irrelevant, as same-sex marriage is not currently a legal possibility in Romania. On the other, MSM may be more understanding of the fact that many men who desire another man end up marrying a woman under the past and current gender and sexual systems in Romania (for similar explanations of Japanese gay men, see e.g., McLelland, 2000). What is more important than their marital status or sexual orientation for MSM may be whether the other person is willing to engage in sexual activities. Examples include:

I have a steady relationship with a man. I am married to a woman and I have a child with her!... but LOVE CAN SURVIVE ANY PRECONCEPTION! If you want the love

of two men to be a happy lifestyle, as I do, do not hesitate to contact me! I'm top only but I have a big heart! Or I am a big heart [soul]! If you're a bottom living in Bucharest just contact me. (msm#62)

Nice young man, no experience with such relationships. Looking for a mature, first of all discrete, person, preferably married, to experiment with new things. (msm#82)

This interpretation is also consistent with the fact that most of them do not specifically self-identify as gay or bisexual in their personals. Here, these MSM may either consider their sexual orientation being obvious and need not be explicitly stated or that they have different interpretations of the meaning and importance of such self-identifications (for similar arguments on Brazil, see Phua, 2010). However, this issue warrants exploration in future research.

#### *Comparing Advertisers' and Matches' Characteristics (MSM)*

Compared with MSW, more MSM did not state any specific preferences for age (71%), height (84%), weight (84%), income (99%), and educational level (95%). Among those who did state a specific age preference, 65 percent prefer their match to be about the same age, 15 percent prefer younger partners, and 20 percent like older men. In contrast to MSW, closer examination showed that those who prefer their match to be about the same age are on average younger than their match. MSM who stated a specific preferred height or weight generally prefer their match to be about the physically similar to themselves. MSM who specified a preferred income usually failed to give their own income, hence no comparison can be made. Regarding education-level preferences, the pattern is mixed, and too few MSM stated a specific preference to allow meaningful analysis.

#### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS:

##### ROMANIAN MEN'S MASCULINITIES IN MATE SELECTION

Romanian men have to navigate a social landscape with conflicting gender and sexual systems. On the one hand, the lingering influences of communism through re-traditionalization and "ruralization" continue to influence Romanian men (e.g., Cîrstocea, 2003); on the other, recent socio-economic changes led to an influx of new ideas and values. While the onset of Internet communication is independent of entry into the E.U., what can be posted, advertized, and viewed online may be changing and widening. The fact that there is a website that contains ads of MSW alongside those of MSM is a telling sign. For example, in some countries, such as Singapore, conservatism prevents such open display and acceptance of alternative sexualities.

In this paper, we have examined the perspective of Romanian men, more specifically, at the differences between MSW and MSM. Our results show that MSW provided and requested more information not related to sexuality than MSM. For example, a higher percentage of MSW specified and requested income and mari-

tal status. However, on characteristics related to sexuality, such as sexual and gender roles, MSM are more verbal than MSW. This may suggest that these two groups emphasized different characteristics. While Phua (2002) argues that “[men seeking] men’s personals are the real analytic lens here because they are the ones faced with the ambiguities that need to be negotiated” (p. 108) in the U.S., our results paint a different picture of being a man in Romania, whether MSW or MSM.

MSW preferences seem more consistent with the traditional role of a breadwinner. They generally prefer someone who is physically smaller than them (more so than MSM). MSW are also more likely than MSM to seek someone who is less educated and earned less than they do. However, because of data limitations, we cannot confirm whether these preferences are prevalent. While not conclusive, these results suggest that MSM prefer a match who is more similar, whereas MSW are more likely to conform to more traditional mate compatibility. Hearn (2009) suggests that the European Union members would be affected by the E.U.’s policy and approaches, for instance on human rights (including LGBTQ issues). What would be interesting is to re-examine these issues at a later date to evaluate how much social progress Romanian men would have made in terms of gender and sexuality equality in mate selection.

What is worth noting is the great number of MSM looking for mates in a relatively traditional society. In addition, 26 percent of the MSM included a photograph with a clear face shot. This phenomenon suggests that some people are resisting and contesting the relatively homophobic culture in Romania by revealing their alternative sexualities. However, these MSM all live in the capital and largest city in Romania. Though the magnitude was more modest, we also observed similar patterns in other cities during the sample stage. We remind the readers that the data did not capture the obstacles that these individuals may continue to face. As expressed by one advertiser, there may be hope for alternative lifestyles in Romania: “I’m outgoing but shy, tender and affectionate, bottom guy. I’m chasing my ideal gay family in Romania today—rare, but not impossible! Anyone else who would try!?” (msm#69).

We contribute to the current literature by studying an important but under-examined topic, and by adding to the few studies that examine sexualities in Romania. This paper has been limited to male online activities, and we recommend that future research explore female sexualities in Romania. The present cross-sectional examination of Romanian men’s masculinities could serve as a baseline for future comparisons across time. Another aspect worth exploring is that of racial preference (e.g., Phua & Kaufman, 2003). Parameters such as race, ethnicity, and location are conspicuously missing in the personal ads. We wonder whether this is a reflection of the racial tension between Roma and Romanians. A better approach to answer this question may be through surveys or in-depth interviews.

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## GENDER, CULTURE, RETIREMENT, AND OLDER MEN IN JAMAICA: FINDINGS FROM A SURVEY

**ABSTRACT** Retirement issues in Jamaica are fast increasing in salience to policy given rapid ageing of the population. A quantitative survey was conducted involving 2,000 men aged 55 years and over in one parish of Jamaica using cluster sample methodology. Information related to retirement patterns, practices and planning was collected. Approximately 66.5% of respondents had no plan to retire; 16.6 % did not think about it; 14.4% were self-employed and would work until an eventual death; and 2.5% said their children would take care of them. Of those who had retirement plans, the major concerns were where they would live (89.4%) and with whom (8.4%). Health care was a cause for concern for only 2.2%. Men generally had not thought out retirement plans well. Given a shift away from extended family systems, increasing life expectancy, increasing economic uncertainties, and shifting epidemiological patterns, there are implications for healthcare and social security policies, in the wider context of the developing world.

**KEYWORDS** MEN, RETIREMENT, CULTURE, AGEING, JAMAICA

Morgan and Kunkel (2007, p. 186) referring to Kinsella and Phillips (2005, pp. 30-32) have indicated that “retirement did not always exist in western societies and still is not common in many developing nations around the world.” According to Quandagno (1982), the start of large-scale retirement began at the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and this arose out of a mix of both social and economic changes. Prior to 1966 and the enactment of the National Insurance Scheme (NIS), retirement was not a commonly accepted phenomenon in Jamaica. The prevailing understanding in the Jamaican society, and more so in the rural areas, favoured the cultural condoning of, “working until death.” Few men or women contributed to any retirement scheme, or plan and consequently few expected or had any retirement benefits. The NIS was introduced in 1966 as a mandatory social insurance scheme to provide a minimum guaranteed old-age pension as well as employment injury, disability, survivors, and other insurance benefits. However, the existing differential in the age at which women (age 60) and men (age 65) become eligible for Na-

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<sup>a</sup> Mona Ageing & Wellness Centre, a WHO/PAHO Collaborating Centre for Ageing & Health, Department of Community Health & Psychiatry University of the West Indies.

All correspondence regarding this article should be addressed to Chloe Morris, Mona Ageing & Wellness Centre, Department of Community Health & Psychiatry University of the West Indies, Mona, Kingston 7, Jamaica. Email: [chloe.morris@uwimona.edu.jm](mailto:chloe.morris@uwimona.edu.jm)

tional Insurance pension is disadvantageous to men. Only approximately a third of older persons 60 years and above, meet the qualifying criteria and are beneficiaries of NIS pensions. The fact that the majority of older persons do not qualify for NIS pensions is mainly attributable to a lack of long-term unemployment, or sporadic employment, history during their working years, and informal sector activities that present many difficulties with respect to compliance with social security legislation (United Nations, 2005).

Historical analysis has provided some insight on the utilization of the NIS scheme. The 2001-2002 financial year, reflected a total NIS contribution of J\$2,640,702,000 which represented 13.4 percent of Individual Income Tax Revenues (James & Wallace, 2004). However, the number of persons receiving NIS pensions for 2001 was only 71,556 (see Table 1). Moreover, of the 61,851 beneficiaries aged 65+ years, males constituted 43% (or 26,878) of this number. Notably, males constituted 45.6% of the 65+ year-old population. There were 90,991 males in the over-65-years population indicating that a strikingly large number (64,113) of males, or 54.5% of that age-group, were not covered by the NIS. These findings underscore the need for an examination of retirement and retirement planning practices among this population.

Table 1  
*Distribution of NIS Pensioners by Age and Sex (2001)*

Age Group	Males		Females		Both Sexes	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
60-64	1,817	2.5	7,888	11.0	9,705	13.5
65-69	4,187	5.6	7,003	9.8	11,190	15.6
70-74	6,810	9.5	8,261	11.5	15,071	21.1
75-79	5,900	8.2	7,095	10.0	12,995	18.2
80-84	3,966	5.5	5,063	7.1	9,029	12.6
85+	6,015	8.4	7,551	10.1	13,566	19.0
Total	28,695	40.0	42,861	60.0	71,556	100.0

Source: James and Wallace (2004).

#### TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING MASCULINITY AND RETIREMENT (IN JAMAICA)

Gerontological research shows that men and women follow different life course paths, leading to variations in economic well-being and family resources throughout later life. For instance, because women tend to be financially dependent on men, have more irregular work histories (Wong & Hardy, 2009), and live longer than men, they have smaller pensions and are more likely than their male coun-

terparts to exhaust their financial resources in later life. Women's economic well-being in later life is influenced by their marital status in a way that their male counterparts are not (Arber & Ginn, 1991). Women are more likely than men to experience poverty for the first time in later life, while men are more likely to maintain the same relative social class in older age as they had when younger (McDaniel, 1989).

It is important to understand the way in which changes to work and retirement reflect gender arrangements and which activities create and maintain differences between women and men throughout the life course. Historically, women have been found to be more apprehensive about work career and retirement, differently so from men. Women are less likely than men to have achieved their career goals at the time their spouses wish to retire, or when employers' retirement incentives encourage their husbands' retirement (Streib & Schneider, 1972). Atchley (1976) reported women taking longer than men to adapt to the retirement transition. The dynamics of the retirement decision are different for women and men because of their dissimilar financial positions. Atchley (1982, pp. 58-70) has asserted that whereas men who work beyond state pension age do so mainly because of enjoyment of their work, women who delay retirement are more likely to do so because of low pension entitlement.

Disengagement Theory (DT) provides some theoretical underpinnings that enable further insight into the issue of retirement. According to DT, retirement can be envisaged as a process of mutual separation of older persons from the formal work processes and work structure of society (Moody, 2006). As part of the life course, it is inherently natural: part of a basic biological rhythm of life. Moody further argues that the latter conceptualization is reflected in modernization theory which recognizes that as society becomes more modern and efficient, older persons tend to disengage. Such disengagement, however, does not necessarily mean that persons transition to a "roleless" state. Disengagement via retirement does not equate to total withdrawal from mainstream society. Withdrawal from work activities may mean greater opportunities for family-focused activities and leisure pursuits. Retirement planning can mediate the disengagement process and its consequences, impacting the quality and experience of post-retirement life.

Roles evolve, and as masculinity is often role-allied and role-defined, it changes over the life course. Figure 1 is a summary conceptual framework that recognizes multifactorial influences on masculinity and the retirement experience. Retirement planning impacts the retirement experience. Simultaneously retirement planning is influenced by prevailing concepts of masculinity; the converse is also true. The dashed lines indicate that retirement planning (whether formal or informal), as well as men's experience of retirement, may be *indirectly* or *directly* affected by factors such as culture, work history, and family relationships.

### *Cultural and Societal Norms*

"Working until death" is a notion pertinent to men and women, but from two distinct perspectives. Men who work until death are generally self-employed

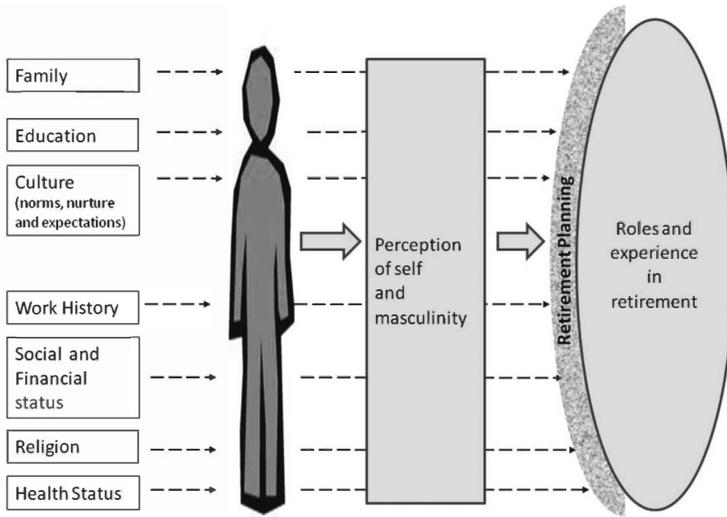


Figure 1. Masculinity, retirement, and retirement planning: Influences and interrelationships.

and/or farmers, who indicate that they see no need for retirement. On the other hand, women do not actually stop working; women's domestic responsibilities continue most times until they cannot manage physically. Laczko and Phillipson (1999) report that most non-employed older women do not regard themselves as retired, even up to the age of 74 years.

In Jamaica, education systems prepare individuals for the world of work with some career guidance and counselling. However, little consideration is given to what will happen when one can no longer work; not much thought is put into planning and preparing for retirement. A few organizations and companies have started to introduce pre-retirement planning in efforts to adjust this anomaly. These educational workshops and/or conferences often include such topics as financial planning, housing options, use of leisure time, and the adjustment to new roles. However, most of these preparatory plans are introduced so very late in one's adult life that little change can be effected, especially in financial management. That said, over the past twenty years there has been increasing recognition of the concept of "productive ageing": defined as any activity by an older individual that produces goods or services, or develops the capacity to produce them, whether they are to be paid for or not (Caro, Bass, & Chen, 1993). This phenomenon has always existed in Jamaican culture and is accepted as a way of life, especially so for rural older men whose professions have been linked to agriculture or other forms of self-employment.

One of the factors that will influence prevailing retirement norms is changing family structure. The usual family size no longer implies six children; today the total fertility rate in Jamaica has fallen to 2.1 (PAHO, 2007a). Consequently many families are now two-child families. This will have a significant impact on retire-

ment planning since it was culturally accepted that many children were considered to be security for one's "old age pension." Prior to this demographic change, there would always be a child to care the parents. Now even where there are more than two children in the family, this premise no longer necessarily holds.

### *The Jamaican Economic Situation, Men, and Retirement*

As Jamaica responds to economic challenges occurring nationally and internationally, the shock is transmitted to men in families throughout the country. Rising inflation rates have diminished the value of savings. Unfavorable exchange rates as well as moratoria on wage increases have further reduced the actual value and purchasing power of earnings. The net effect is an erosion of the security blanket that either earnings or savings would traditionally provide in old age. The overall effect is increased vulnerability of men and their families to poverty and reduced quality of life in old age. Consequently the imperative for retirement planning is thus more acute than ever, warranting scrutiny and study of men's retirement plans in Jamaica and other developing countries. In Britain, men's retirement and the extent to which men have left the labour market prior to state pension age has been an important focus of research (Laczko & Phillipson, 1999).

In search for employment opportunities, the young have migrated into the urban areas of the country. According to the 2001 census, the urban population rose by 13.6% between 1991 and 2001, whereas the rural population rose by only 4.3% (Statistical Institute of Jamaica, 2004). The increased rural-to-city migration decreases the likelihood of children being at their ancestral homes, such that issues related to support, household livelihoods, and upholding the traditional male roles of provider/leader (financially and economically) increasingly challenge the older man. Moreover, with high unemployment rates at approximately 11.3% (PAHO, 2007b), older males even if well-educated may have to yield to the young as they compete for jobs. Among blue collar workers, older males even when skilled are likely to find themselves "outmuscled" by the "young and restless" for jobs in areas such as construction and haulage. Farming is one of the few areas where older men remain prominent. However, the returns are often marginal for the majority of small farmers, a situation compounded by high rates of praedial larceny (theft of agricultural produce or livestock from a farm or estate). In this scenario, retirement planning assumes greater importance in the lives of men.

The way in which retirement planning is expressed will vary according to social class. Those of higher education and who have been formally employed for long periods are likely to benefit from institutional support with regard to retirement planning. This may include structured pension plans, retirement seminars, and investments in insurance instruments. However, these options are more likely to be realized in future generations of male retirees than in current retirees (60 years and over). For the majority of unskilled laborers, farmers, and blue collar workers, formal retirement planning is unlikely to be the norm. They do however have ideas and concerns about life beyond their working days, where and how they will live and survive, how they will remain independent, and how they will continue to be

providers, maintaining self-identity and masculinity. Given demographic, social, and economic trends, *ad hoc* informal retirement plans are unlikely to be sufficient.

While life expectancy for females has risen to 75.0 years, and currently a 4.1 year female-male gap in sex-specific life expectancy exists, males are living longer than ever before (life expectancy 70.9 years). Figure 2 shows the increasing trend in male life expectancy with time in Jamaica. According to the 2001 Jamaican census, 9.57% of the Jamaican male population was 60 years and over (United Nations, 2005). This is projected to rise to 16.23% in 2025 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007).

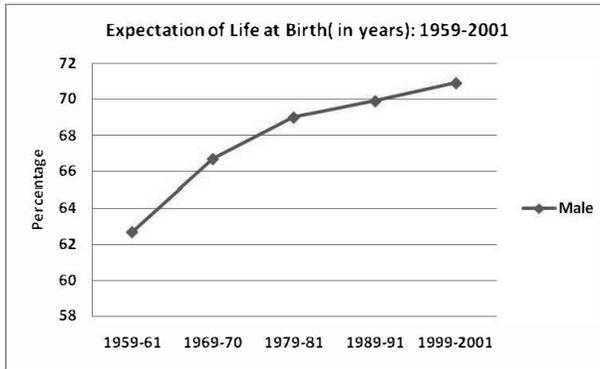


Figure 2. Temporal trends in male life expectancy at birth (years), Jamaica. Compiled using data from Statistical Institute of Jamaica (2000).

It is well-known that while ageing *per se* is not a disease, it is often accompanied by increasing morbidity and increased need for health care. The kind of health services needed often require intensive use of technology. Provider-driven use of health services as well as increasing awareness and availability of health care innovations (procedures, drugs, and devices) inevitably result in increased health care costs. For older men in Jamaica, diseases of the prostate and the heart are leading causes of morbidity and mortality. The average age-adjusted incidence (adjusted to the standard U.S. population) of prostate cancer in Kingston, Jamaica, has been cited as 304/100,000 men, the highest rate in the world; this type of cancer is more significant clinically with greater morbidity in Jamaica than in the United States (Glover et al., 1998). Mentioned diseases are not cheap to treat or manage. Older men must therefore consider health issues and their attendant care costs in their retirement planning. To date, older Jamaican men have largely side-stepped these issues as evidenced by under-utilization of health services and inappropriate health-seeking behaviours (Morris, 2009).

#### *Retirement and the Jamaican Man: Psychological/Emotional Issues*

Retirement presents a loss of power—the giving up of a prized position of control and authority (Cowgill, 1993; Foner, 1984, pp. 254-255). Loss of power, control, and authority (real or perceived) can affect the older man's image of himself. For some

men their work provides a source of personal validation. They experience the “I am my career” syndrome. Separation from the job creates a sense of loss, and they further feel stripped of their personal identity (Leedy & Wynbrandt, 1987, p. 252). In Jamaican culture it is not unusual for men in responding to the question, “Who are you?” to say for example “I am a mechanic,” rather than giving a name.

Retirement, according to Rosow (1967), can be a *seemingly* “roleless” condition; the familiar and comfortable being changed. Men may no longer know (or are unsure) where they fit; strangers to a brand new world, with new expectations. Work, a social entity that provided specific roles, cultivated and maintained a personage not only to the men themselves, but also shaped how other persons viewed them. Culturally, men are expected to be the provider, a powerful and important role. Retirement may move a man from a place of power to a “state of dependency.”

Similar sentiments have been alluded to by Jamaican researcher Figueroa (2004) who refers to a theory of male marginalization proposing that academic “under-performance” is linked to privileging of men and gender socialization. The notion that men do not need higher qualifications for success can lead to economic disempowerment later in life and thus influence retirement planning and the retirement experience. The inability to achieve economic security in the working years (which is partially linked to educational achievement) erodes the ability to continue to be provider in the retirement years. Being “provider” is a key feature of masculinity in Jamaican context. The familial roles of men are heavily centered on providing economic support and occasional discipline (Barrow, 1998)

Moynihan (1998) refers to the social constructivist view that each society ascribes “fixed” attributes to male gender that vary across cultures and between individuals. These include independence, aggression, inexpressiveness, ambition, and stoicism. The need to maintain independence underscores the importance of retirement planning in an ever changing social milieu. Masculinity is indeed not merely a single variable but as Moynihan suggests “a highly complex state of being.” Not surprisingly new forms of masculinity defined by emerging roles in the post-retirement period may well emerge. Personal observations by the authors of this paper suggest that it is increasingly more common for male grandparents to participate in caring for young grandchildren and to continue to make decisions about housing maintenance and choice of workmen for such activities, even when they are not responsible for the associated financial costs. Empirical data to verify these observations are however not yet available.

#### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The present study sought to document and explore relationships and influences of socio-demographic characteristics and culture on retirement planning among a cohort of Jamaican men aged 55 years and over. Primary objectives were:

- to document the socio-demographic characteristics of men 55+ years;
- to determine the preparedness for retirement and retirement plans of men 55+ years;

- to describe common health conditions and health care costs among men 55+ years for retirement and their implications for retirement planning.

#### METHODOLOGY

This study was part of a larger cross-sectional study conducted in the parish of St. Catherine, Jamaica, which previous surveys showed a mix of urban, rural, and socio-demographic characteristics that typify Jamaica. The parish is divided into nine constituencies which are further subdivided into enumeration districts (ED).

The Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN) maintains a list of EDs or census tracts. These EDs provided the sampling frame. The EDs were stratified by urban/rural status, and 40 EDs (clusters) were subsequently selected with the probability of selection being proportional to population size. It was determined by STATIN that fifty men 55 years and older in each ED would be interviewed yielding a sample size of 2,000. Households and the geographic direction in which to proceed to interview men were selected using a random starting point within each cluster consistent with standard cluster sampling techniques.

A structured questionnaire was administered to male interviewees. The questionnaire consisted of 132 questions divided into the following four sections:

- I: General demographic profile of the man/men in the household;
- II: Past and current health status, health seeking behavior;
- III: Retirement status and planning;
- IV: Social and functional status.

Data was entered into an SPSS version 12 database and subjected to relevant analysis. For the purposes of this paper, the focus was on the sections pertaining to socio-demographic characteristics, retirement planning, and associated variables.

#### RESULTS

##### *Demographic Characteristics*

The composition of the sample is shown in Table 2 with 49.1% and 51.9% of the respondents being from rural and urban areas, respectively.

Table 2  
*Sample Composition by Geographic Area*

Area	Frequency	%
Urban	981	49.1
Rural	1,019	51.9
Total	2,000	100.0

Age. By age, the majority of the older men interviewed was between 55 and 69 years old as illustrated in Figure 3. Overall, the age distribution of the sample was consistent with that of the 2001 census confirming that with regard to age, the sam-

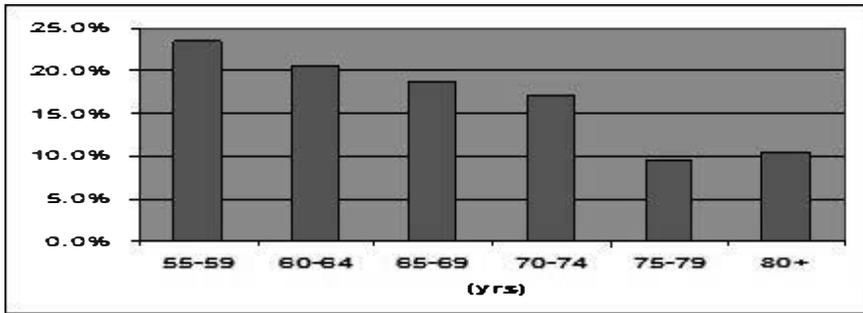


Figure 3. Percentage composition of sample by age.

ple was representative of the populations of the parish of St. Catherine, and of Jamaica. Additionally, the age distribution of the sample of rural *vis-à-vis* urban older men was found to be largely similar.

*Marital status and housing.* Most of the population was married, 44.7% (894); while 34.3% (846) were single (never married). Men who were widowed, separated, or in common law relationships constituted 21% of the sample. When marital status was examined by rural/urban distribution, among urban men, 45.6% (447) were married and 43.9% rural men were married. Thirty-six percent (36.6%) of urban men were single and a similar proportion of rural men (32.1%) were single. There was no statistically significant relationship between rural/urban residence and marital status. Overall 41.2% of the older men studied owned the house in which they lived and 88.2% of the time they were head of the household in which they lived. Their female partner was head of the household 6.1% of time. 46% of rural-dwelling men owned

Table 3  
Percentage of Men by Marital Status and Age-Group

Age	Marital Status					Total (n = 2000)
	single (n = 686)	married (n = 894)	separated (n = 112)	common law (n = 136)	widowed (n = 172)	
55-59	7.9	10.9	1.6	1.5	1.7	23.5
60-64	7.8	8.2	1.5	1.9	1.4	20.7
65-69	6.1	8.6	1.0	1.5	1.5	18.7
70-74	6.3	8.1	.7	.8	1.5	17.3
75-79	2.7	4.2	.6	.7	1.5	9.5
80+	3.7	4.9	.3	.6	1.1	10.5
all ages	34.3	44.7	5.6	6.8	8.6	100.0

Table 4  
*Distribution of House Ownership by Rural/Urban Residence (%)*

	Own house		Total
	Yes	No	
Urban	36.2	63.8	100.0
Rural	46.0	54.0	100.0
Total	41.2	58.8	100.0

their home as compared to 36.2% of urban-dwelling men. There was a statistically significant difference ( $\chi^2 = 19.96; p = 0.000$ ) in home ownership, with rural men more commonly owning their homes as showed in the 2x2 table (Table 4).

Less than 1% of the older male population lived alone. Thirty-three percent of older men lived with one other person while, approximately two-thirds of older men had at least two or more other persons living in the household. There was no statistically significant variation in the number of other persons in the household by age group (Table 5).

Table 5  
*Distribution Number of Other Persons in Household by Older Men's Age Category (Years)*

<i>n</i>	Number of other persons in household (%)*								
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	17	650	479	252	216	150	95	55	36
55-59	0.1	7.1	5.6	3.6	2.6	1.6	1.2	0.6	1.4
60-64	0.4	6.6	5.0	2.2	2.3	1.5	1.3	0.5	1.2
65-69	0.1	6.1	4.3	2.2	2.2	2.0	0.8	0.6	0.7
70-74	0.2	5.8	4.4	2.1	2.1	1.4	0.8	0.3	0.6
75-79	0.1	3.6	2.2	1.2	1.0	0.6	0.3	0.4	0.5
80+	0.1	3.5	2.7	1.5	.9	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.4
Total	0.9	32.5	24.0	12.6	10.8	7.5	4.8	2.8	4.3

\* Percentages are calculated as a proportion of the total sample.

*Working status.* About 74% of the population surveyed was not working. Most of the population was retired (53%, 1,077). As expected there was a statistically significant association between age and working status, with greater proportions of retired men being observed at older ages. Of the 26% (524) of men in the study who were still working, 67.1% (343) were aged 60 years and over. Figure 4 shows the distribution of occupations among those still working. The largest groups of working persons were found among the professional and the elementary occupations (the latter group consisting of workers such as messengers, domestic helpers, casual

agricultural laborers). Further analysis of the distribution of occupations by age group among those still working showed no statistically significant differences.

The distribution of reported monthly income among those still working is shown in Figure 5. The median income bracket was J\$5,000-\$9,999 (US\$71-US\$143). Al-

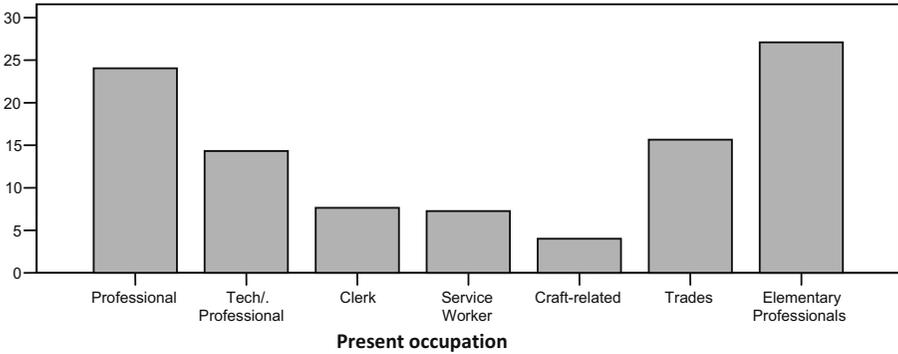


Figure 4. Percentage distribution of occupational category among older men who still work.

most 40% of men reported monthly incomes less than J\$5,000 (US\$71), a figure less than the national minimum wage. Less than 2% of working men earned over J\$20,000 (US\$286) monthly. There was no significant difference in the distribution of income by age-group among working men. Among pensioners, using the national figures previously quoted, the mean monthly income from NIS payments was J\$3,075 (US\$44).

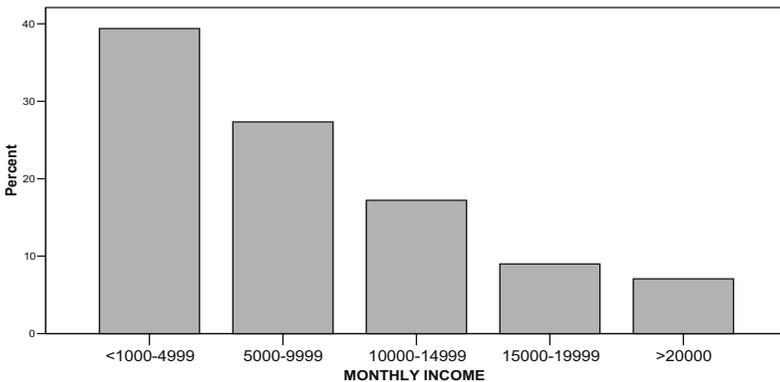


Figure 5. Reported monthly income (J\$) among men still working (N.B. J\$70 = US\$1 during study).

*Educational status.* Ten percent of the interviewees had no formal education, while 55.2% (1,104) and 28% (557) indicated basic/infant school education and primary (elementary/all-age) education, respectively, as their highest level of education. Some 5.2% had high school or trade/vocational training as highest level of educa-

tion. Only 1.9% had a diploma or first degree. While there was no statistically significant association between age category and highest level of education, there was a tendency for higher proportions of younger men to report advancing levels of education.

*Medical conditions and basic cost to access health care.* Kidney/bladder diseases (12.7%), hypertension (9.2%), prostate problems (7.2%), and diabetes mellitus (6.5%) were the most commonly reported medical conditions. Cancer (regardless of cause) as a diagnosis was reported by 16% of the older men surveyed. Miscellaneous conditions such as asthma, arthritis, eye problems, and non-specific pains constituted the “other” conditions reported. More than 80% of those who reported cancer had been diagnosed within the last 12 months and in fact more than 50% of said group had been diagnosed within the last 6 months. In comparison, 40-50% of persons with hypertension, diabetes mellitus, heart disease, and prostate problems had been living with a diagnosis for 6-20 years. In responding to how much was paid to access health care, 91% of respondents said that they paid less than five hundred Jamaican dollars (~US\$7); 8% paid between \$500-2,500 (US\$7 - \$35) dollars

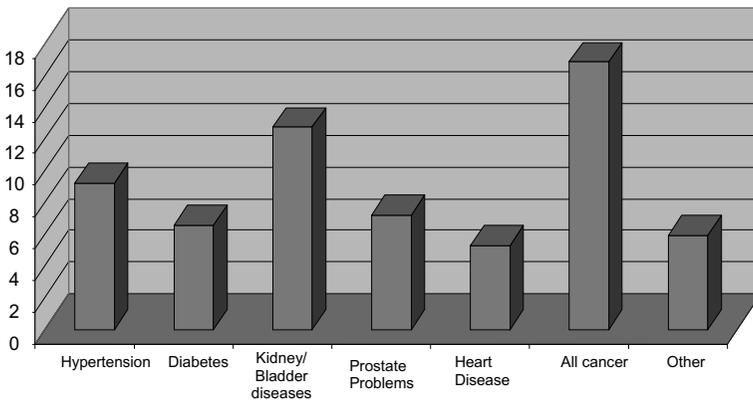


Figure 6. Percentage distribution of diagnosed disease conditions reported by older men.

for each visit; 1.6% paid 2,500 (US\$35) or more. These costs pertained mainly to registration and access to public care facilities. Amenity fees or fees associated with tests and procedures or the cost of drugs were not included. Among men over 60 years old surveyed, 46.8% were taking two prescribed drugs; 26.8% were taking six or more prescribed drugs.

### *Retirement Planning*

Bearing in mind that the retirement age for Jamaican men is 65 years, how had men prepared for retirement or how were they preparing for retirement?

More than half of the men surveyed did not have a retirement plan. Regardless of the two age-groups (“pre-retirement” and “post-retirement,” based on the statutory

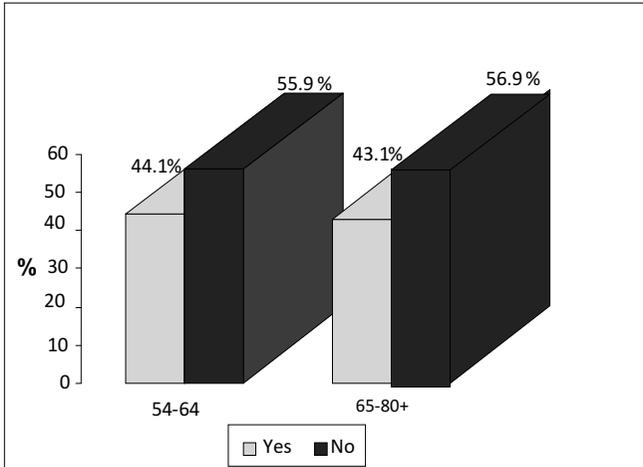


Figure 7. Distribution of men who had a retirement plan by age group.

retirement age of 65 years for men), the pattern remained the same. Of those who had no plan, the reasons given in both age-groups were very similar, with the majority indicating they did not intend to retire/stop working.

Of the 44.1% in the 55-64 age bracket and 43.1% of men in the 65-80+ bracket who

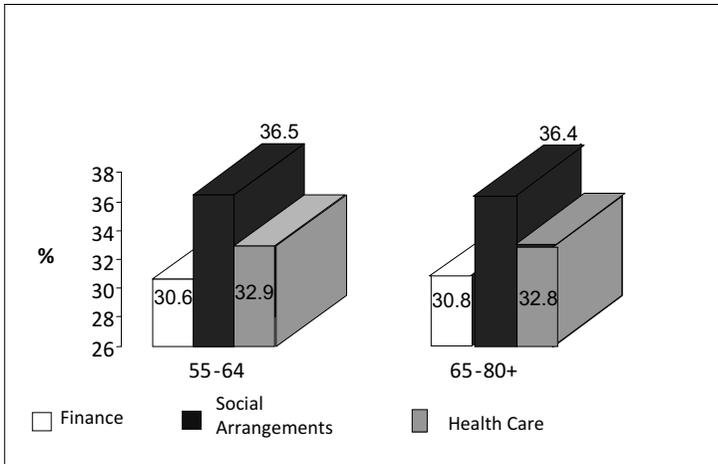


Figure 8. Reasons for no retirement plan.

had made plans for retirement, all indicated that their plan had three basic components: social arrangements consisting of religious, social, and civil activities; finance, including funeral fees; and family, travel, and health care provision, including doctor’s fees and money for their caregiver.

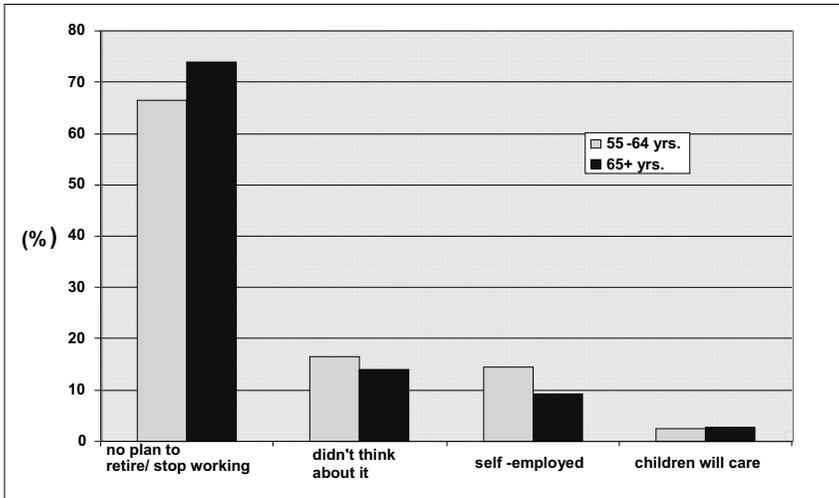


Figure 9. Elements included in retirement plan by age group.

## DISCUSSION

Retirement represents a life-cycle transition. According to Havighurst (2007), developmental tasks for the 60 and over include:

- adjusting to decreasing physical strength and health;
- adjusting to retirement and reduced income;
- adjusting to death of a spouse;
- establishing an explicit affiliation with one's age group;
- adopting and adapting social roles in a flexible way;
- establishing satisfactory physical living arrangements.

Retirement and pre-retirement planning demand mastery of these tasks. Plans for successfully navigating the post-retirement years must include elements aimed at accomplishing these tasks.

While there was no difference in the age profile of rural and urban participants in the study, retirement issues that both groups face will vary as union patterns, home ownership, and access to health care may be markedly different. Approximately 86% of men were in some stable union. Companionship, an important aspect of retirement influences the social and emotional wellbeing, capacity, and access to caregiving support. For men, it figures forth the continued responsibility to provide for companion/family.

Our study found that only 41.2% of men owned the home in which they lived and this has serious implications for retirement. Firstly, it means that nearly three out of every five men may be subject to relocation of domicile, should proprietors require their properties/building for other use or increase in rent/lease payments.

Relocation in the retirement years can be particularly traumatic as it removes individuals from the social milieu and support networks which they have cultivated over many years. Moreover, for men in retirement the lack of ownership of their “two shingles” (a roof over one’s head) is often construed as a “failure to achieve,” especially in a culture where by that age, ownership of a house is closely linked to value as a man.

In terms of living arrangements, less than 1% of persons lived alone. This is encouraging as it is well known that among older persons and retirees, living alone is known to be a risk factor for depression and accelerated decline in both mental and physical health. The current situation, however, will not necessarily hold true for the future. Persons entering retirement in 10-15 years from now are not guaranteed living arrangements with either nuclear or extended families. The urban/rural migration patterns noted earlier in the paper coupled with the emerging patterns of persons moving to where the jobs are to accommodate promotions, threaten to undermine prevailing living arrangements. The need to plan for retirement cannot be overemphasized in such cases.

Interestingly, men from the professional/technical occupational category were more likely to be formally employed post-retirement than persons with low educational levels. This has implications for retirement in at least two ways. Firstly, it results in an increase of economic disparity between social classes since the professional and technical persons would likely have been in a position to save and invest, and be more prepared for the retirement years. Secondly, the relatively small lifetime assets of the “poor and uneducated” are prone to dissipate faster in an inflationary environment. Furthermore, without steady formal employment among the more socio-economically disadvantaged groups post retirement, their earning opportunities are unpredictable and their capacity to sustain livelihood diminished. Traditional coping strategies have hinged on the goodwill of family, church and friends, but with rapidly increasing elderly populations the “carrying capacity” of these institutions are practically at breaking point.

The imperative for structured and formalized retirement planning is evident. The mean monthly payment to NIS beneficiaries is marginally above standard poverty lines. In Jamaica, NIS provisions cannot be the pillar upon which the health and welfare of the 250,000 persons over age 60 expected by 2025, rests. Men in particular will have to plan well to deal with the challenges of retirement given the cultural expectations placed upon them.

One of those challenges is the issue of health. Our survey has shown that Jamaican men face a battle with chronic conditions such as hypertension, prostate cancer, kidney and bladder diseases. Additionally, many men were taking at least two or more prescribed drugs. Health care is not cheap. If men’s health is to be promoted through quality, continuous, and preventive health care rather than sporadic and episodic care, then older men must adequately plan for health care and health maintenance in their post-retirement years. However, in Jamaica (and we suspect in many developing countries) getting men to plan for health care in the post-retirement years is challenging. Our men will need to transcend cultural barriers and

dogmas such as “men do not need to go to the doctor unless they are sick,” and “men who visit the doctor are *fenkeh-fenkeh* (weak).”

The percentage of men without retirement plans in the cohort studied was about 56. In light of the preceding discussion, it is not surprising that most of these men did not intend to retire or “stop working.” Approximately 15% did not even give it a thought. Given the foreseen future challenges of retirement, efforts must be made to spur men into action with regard to retirement planning. There are rays of light, however. About 44% of men have made some plans for retirement that address elements of finance, social arrangement, and health care. Men are also expressing concern about where and with whom they will live.

Attempts to address and improve retirement planning and the retirement experience among men must move beyond the current limited provisions by the state. Non-governmental organizations and civil society have been playing a role in this area, and will increasingly need to continue such efforts given the economic challenges facing the state. Faith based-institutions and philanthropic societies as well as service clubs are potential partners moving forward. The services provided include health care, food supplementation (meals on wheels), accommodation, financial assistance, and advice on coping with retirement. Technical assistance can be rendered by gerontology workers as programs are developed, and resources from these entities mobilized.

Our role as workers in the field of gerontology and men’s health must presently include:

- sensitization of men to retirement issues;
- facilitation and promotion of retirement planning in both formal and informal sector;
- education of young workers about planning for retirement, with emphasis on the fact that good retirement planning begins early in life;
- incorporation of health care as an integral part of men’s retirement plans; and
- placing men’s aging issues more prominently on the national policy agenda.

In developing countries such as Jamaica there are changing family structures (shifts away from extended family systems), increasing life expectancy, and increasing economic uncertainties. There are concurrent epidemiological trends including increasing morbidity from chronic non-communicable disease with attendant high health care costs. Men must begin to craft well-thought out retirement plans, and retirement planning must be actively promoted among men. At national level, the issue must be brought to the forefront of discussions as there will be implications for healthcare and social security policies. Such discussions must recognize the gender dynamics and cultural forces affecting men’s retirement planning.

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# RECONSTRUCTING VIOLENT RURAL MASCULINITIES: RESPONDING TO FRACTURES IN THE RURAL GENDER ORDER IN AUSTRALIA

**ABSTRACT** Men's violence against women is higher in rural communities compared to urban areas and many writers have identified the increased vulnerability of women in rural areas when addressing men's violence. This article will explore the implications of the emerging scholarship on rural masculinities for understanding how rurality invokes different modes of masculinity associated with men's violence in the context of rural restructuring. While the socio-cultural aspects of rural areas generate stronger enforcement of gender roles that perpetuate gender inequality, rural restructuring challenges dominant forms of masculinity, and this has contradictory consequences for reconstructing masculinities. Consequently, while many rural men are endeavouring to preserve traditional masculinity in the face of the rural crisis, other men are exploring alternative masculinities that are incompatible with men's violence against women.

**KEYWORDS** RURAL MASCULINITIES, RURAL GENDER RELATIONS, RURAL RESTRUCTURING, MEN'S VIOLENCE

The incidence and prevalence of men's violence against women in rural communities have become an issue provoking considerable debate in recent years (Hastings & Maclean, 2002; Hogg & Carrington, 2003; Neame & Heenan, 2004; Wendt, 2009). While men's violence against women in indigenous communities has been well reported (Hastings & Maclean; Neame & Heenan; Keel, 2004), White men's violence against White women in rural communities has until recently remained largely hidden. This may be related in part to Carrington and Scott's (2008) observation that there is an urban bias in research into men's violence against women, as most of the focus is on men in cities. Furthermore, there is little research on the differences in the perpetrators of men's violence in rural communities compared with men who commit violence against women in urban settings (Wendt).

Although some writers raise questions about whether violent crime more generally is higher in rural areas (Neame & Heenan, 2004; Wendt, 2009), there seems to be persuasive evidence that men's violence against women is a more significant problem in rural communities. Leviore (2003) demonstrates that there are higher

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<sup>a</sup> School of Health and Social Development, Deakin University.

All correspondence regarding this article should be addressed to Bob Pease, School of Health and Social Development, Deakin University, Geelong Waterfront Campus, Geelong, Victoria 3217, Australia. Email: bob.pease@deakin.edu.au

levels of sexual violence in rural communities and Carrington (2006) cites extensive research that demonstrates that violence against women is higher in some rural communities in Australia compared to urban areas. Hogg and Carrington (2006) found that 45 out of the top 50 localities for sexual assault in New South Wales were located in rural areas of the state. Also, of 50 domestic violence “hot spots” in New South Wales, 39 were located in rural and regional localities (Carrington & Scott, 2008).

A national Australian study of men’s violence against women found that women were more vulnerable to violence in rural communities compared to urban areas (Women’s Services Network, 2000). Studies in the United States also reveal that rates of sexual assault in rural counties were considerably higher than in cities, even though rural counties have lower reporting rates (Ruback & Menard, 2001).

Hogg and Carrington (2006) believe that men’s violence against women is more likely to be unreported in rural contexts in Australia. Low reporting rates of men’s violence against women may be due to a range of informal controls operating in rural communities, which include a more conservative social climate, a greater number of acquaintances, and a deeper mistrust of external interventions (Ruback & Menard, 2001; Wendt, 2009). Greater geographical isolation and more limited access to police and support services in rural communities are also likely to impact on reporting levels (Hogg & Carrington, 2006). Also, as perpetrators and the police are likely to share the same friendship networks, this may impact on women’s willingness to disclose the violence (Neame & Heenan, 2004).

People tend to assume that violence is higher in cities because of the belief in idealised images of rural communities (Hogg & Carrington, 2003). The “rural idyll,” as some refer to it (Bell, 1997; Wendt, 2009) is the notion of describing rural lifestyles as positive, friendly, safe and cosy (Struthers, 1994) where people live happier and simpler lives (DeKeseredy et al., 2007).

The rural idyll is a myth for many people in rural communities. Rural culture is likely to generate negative effects on some forms of difference. Those in rural communities who are marginalised by gender, class, ethnicity and sexuality are all too conscious of the myths surrounding egalitarianism in rural life (Kraack & Kenway, 2002). Furthermore, the romantic image of the idyllic rural community has been shattered by awareness of the increased vulnerability of women to men’s violence in rural contexts.

#### IMPLICATIONS OF SOCIO-CULTURAL ASPECTS OF RURAL AREAS FOR GENDER RELATIONS

Weisheit, Wells and Falcone (1995) identify a number of socio-cultural aspects of rural areas that may have implications for gender relations: greater social and political conservatism; stronger enforcement of gender rules and traditional roles in the family; a strong belief in the privacy of family matters; a mythology of mateship among men and reinforced patterns of female subordination; distrust of “outsiders” and a suspicion of policy solutions “imported” from the city; less anonymity and privacy; greater levels of surveillance, particularly of women and girls and strong social controls operating through informal and intimate processes and mechanisms. These social influences are seen as differentiating rural culture from an urban culture.

Research in rural communities has for some time identified the prevalence of patriarchal belief systems, conservative social norms, and stereotypical gender roles in shaping family life. In 1992, Ken Dempsey undertook an extensive study of gender inequality in an agricultural community in Victoria, Australia. Published as *A Man's Town: Inequality Between Women and Men in Rural Australia*, Dempsey identified "Smalltown" (the name given to the Victorian town) as a patriarchal system. This was reflected in men's superior power and the economic dependence of women that results, and the ideology of gender that defines men and their activities as superior and women and their activities as inferior. Men's dominance was reflected in the following: men's control of local decision making bodies; the segregated men's service clubs; men's control of the churches; the dominance of male sport; the role of pub drinking in gender segregation; the segregation of friendships and informal interaction; the domestic division of labour; the subordination of women in paid employment; and the traditional gender attitudes of men and women (Dempsey, 1992).

Fourteen years later Hogg and Carrington (2006) discovered the same dimensions of patriarchal control in the public and civic spheres of the rural communities that they studied. Such aspects of the public sphere and civic culture in rural communities appear to be more patriarchal than corresponding sites in cities (Hogg & Carrington). Thus it can be argued that rural communities are more likely to have conservative dominant ideologies in relation to gender and diversity issues.

Much of the literature acknowledges differences in the experiences of women who are subjected to men's violence in rural communities (Alston, 1997; Hogg & Carrington, 2003; Neame & Heenan, 2004). If family life is more privatised and kept secret, there is less possibility of encouraging women to speak out against the violence and to encourage men to address it through counselling and education. It has also been recognised that some aspects of rural culture inhibit women experiencing violence from seeking assistance. Wendt (2009) has identified the barriers that prevent women from escaping from violent men. These include financial factors, isolation, and limited access to services, information, and police assistance. Also, increased commitment to traditional gender roles means that there is a greater level of acceptance of men's dominance (Alston, 1997; Neame & Heenan, 2004). All of the issues that women face in cities are thus exacerbated in rural communities.

The difficulty of getting men's violence against women raised as an issue to be addressed in rural communities has been well noted (Hastings & Maclean, 2002). Alston (1995) identifies that women, as well as men, in rural communities are more likely to hold traditional views about gender roles. If women support the ideology of male dominance, they will be more willing to accommodate to unequal gender arrangements. Such women are less likely to respond positively to feminist arguments about men's privilege and power.

Many commentators have identified the particular challenges of enacting a feminist approach to practice in rural contexts (Alston, 1997; Hastings & Maclean, 2002; La Nauz & Rutherford, 1997; Neame & Heenan, 2004). In fact, there is some evidence to suggest that anti-violence campaigns are less likely to be successful in rural communities, and that it is more difficult to regulate the levels of men's violence against women (Hogg & Carrington, 2006).

While attention has been given to what rurality means for women's vulnerability and capacity to speak out against men's violence, less attention has been given to how these ideologies influence the construction of masculinity in rural communities and how they might impact on men's violence against women. Although there have been a few studies of men's violence against women in rural communities in Australia (Alston, 1997; Carrington & Scott, 2008; Hastings & Maclean, 2002; Jamieson & Wendt, 2008; Wendt, 2009), there has been little interrogation of how particular expressions of rural masculinity impact on and shape men's propensity for violence. What is it about rurality that increases men's propensity towards violence?

#### RURAL MEN AND MASCULINITIES

Masculinity studies as a field of academic scholarship emerged in the 1970s and 1980s. In the 1990s, this scholarship entered a new stage in which variations among men were seen as central to understanding men's lives. Thus we cannot speak of masculinity as a singular term, but rather should explore masculinities in the plural (Pease, 2000). Men are as socially diverse as women and this diversity entails differences between men in relation to class, ethnicity, age, sexuality, bodily facility, religion, world views, parental/marital status, occupation, and propensity for violence.

Historically, masculinity studies have been city-centric or "metro normative," as Kenway et al. (2006) put it. It is only in recent years that a literature on the relationship between rurality and the construction of masculinity has emerged. In recognition of the diversity between men, masculinity scholars have started to articulate differences between rural and urban masculinities through understanding the specific influences of rural and urban communities upon particular groups of men (Bye, 2003; Campbell & Bell, 2000; Campbell et al., 2006; Johnson, 2001; Kenway et al.). Thus just as we need to understand men in relation to class, sexuality, ethnicity, age, and able-bodiedness, we also need to see how men are situated in relation to the urban-rural continuum (Kramvig & Stien, 2003). We may thus posit that there is a connection between rural practices and activities, and the social construction of masculinities in rural communities (Little & Jones, 2000).

In recent years, geographers have started to explore the relationship between space and gender (Berg & Longhurst, 2003; Little, 2002; Longhurst, 2000; Horschelmann & van Hoven, 2004). The premise of the research agenda into rural masculinities is that spatial structures impact on gendered subjectivities. Thus different spatial forms construct different expressions of masculinity (Kenway et al., 2006). This means that masculinity is not only historically and culturally constructed but also spatially produced.

Hogg and Carrington (2006) argue that rural masculinities are constructed out of rigid divisions of labour and forms of hegemonic masculinity that are premised on subordinating women. They argue also that rural men are more likely to be heterosexist and homophobic than urban men. In their view, the existence of these issues leads to a greater level of tolerance of men's violence against women in rural communities. Empirical work carried out by Wendt (2009) demonstrates that rural men who are violent to women are less likely to see their behaviour as problemat-

ical and are more likely to regard it as a legitimate expression of their masculinity.

There is a sense in which a rural man is a “real man” (Sach, 2006), someone who manifests a particular form of masculinity as exhibited in notions of the pioneer or the logger (Campbell & Bell, 2000). Thus it can be said that rural men are closer to the hegemonic model of masculinity than urban men. If rural men are “real men,” then urban men are perceived as being more feminine and soft (Hogg & Carrington, 2006). Bell (1997), for example, talks about the role played by the country and nature in restoring city men who may be stressed and made soft by urban life. The natural wilderness is thus seen to promote a particular form of masculinity (Little & Jones, 2000).

Rural men, more so than urban men, are expected to be self-reliant and stoic in the faces of challenges and hardships (Wendt, 2009). The representation of the farmer struggling against significant odds is a common idealisation of rural masculinity. Leipins (2000) demonstrates how agriculture-based masculinities are constructed through notions of strength and battle. These particular forms of masculinity are seen to epitomize the masculine qualities of physical strength, male friendship, moral strength, courage, and survival skills (Connell, 2006; Hogg & Carrington, 2006). These masculine traits are the foundations of the particularly Australian notion of mateship, which seems to be stronger in rural communities (Coorey, 1990).

Johnson (2001), in his doctoral thesis, documented how young men in rural Australia live out various expressions of masculinities involving alcohol, cars, interactions with women, and sporting prowess. Alcohol consumption among men is considerable higher in rural areas, compared to large cities (Carrington, 2007, cited in Wendt, 2009). So pub culture has a particular place in constructing masculinities in rural communities (Campbell & Bell, 2000). The ownership of guns by men in rural communities also appears to be a significant dimension of the construction of what it means to be man in many rural areas. It is not just the fact that gun ownership by men is higher in rural communities. It is the passion with which gun ownership is defended as a human rights issue (Hogg & Carrington, 2006; Wendt).

Some critics have raised the question about whether rural masculinity can be separated analytically from urban masculinity (Brandth & Haugen, 2005). Campbell and Bell (2000) address this issue by exploring what they call “the masculine in the rural” and “the rural in the masculine.” By the masculine in the rural, they mean the diversity of ways in which masculinity is constructed within rural spaces. By rural in the masculine, they refer to the processes by which rurality produces forms of masculinity. Notwithstanding the problems associated with constructing polarised notions of rural and urban men, it is important to acknowledge that there are differences between men in terms of their location in different geographical spaces.

#### ACKNOWLEDGING THE DIVERSITY OF MASCULINITIES IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

In exploring the socio-cultural aspects of rural areas and the implications for gender relations, we must thus be careful not to homogenise rural communities and overlook the diversity of class, ethnicity, and sexuality divisions likely to be found within them (Hastings & Maclean, 2002). Most commentators agree that rural life is much more diverse than is commonly believed. There is no one notion of “the

rural." Campbell et al. (2006, p. 15) propose that we should talk of there being "multiple rurals," as distinct from one "real rural."

Wendt (2009) has raised questions about whether there is a homogeneous patriarchal culture in rural communities that is unique to them. In line with the notion of masculinities in the plural, there is not one monolithic form of rural masculinity but rather a plurality of rural masculinities (Campbell & Bell, 2000). We thus need to understand how the rural context shapes the way in which various forms of masculinity are enacted. While there are hegemonic forms of rural masculinity that are exalted, there are also contesting masculinities in rural areas that do not fit the image of the ideal rural man (Hogg & Carrington, 2006).

As Neame and Heenan (2004) point out, rural communities are not wholly conservative, any more than urban areas are uniformly progressive, on gender issues. So while it is important to highlight differences in rural and urban landscapes, we must not present rural life as homogeneous. Just as there are conservative people in cities, there are also progressive people in rural communities. They suggest that while the sexual double standard is more common in rural communities, it is not the only form of gendered subjectivity.

Rural life has taken on a renewed power of healing from city stresses with "sea change" and "tree change" migrations to the coast and the bush. Of course, this is not new in that counter-cultural communities have always established themselves in the country (Connell, 2006). When highly educated and politically progressive people move to the country, they contribute to the diversity of the populace.

Carrington and Scott (2008) also identify the rise of new rural-based social movements as a response to the current crisis. While alternative and oppositional masculinities in rural communities that are concerned with environmental issues, alternative lifestyles and gender equality may be subordinated, they nevertheless pose cracks in the hegemony of the upholders of patriarchal and traditional masculinities.

However, while a diversity of rural masculinities exist, it is the physicality of rural men's labour, as manifested in the roles of stockman, hunter, fisherman, farmer, and cowboy, etc., that represent the dominant forms (Carrington, 2007, in Wendt, 2009). Thus it can be argued that rural masculinities are less diverse than those in urban spaces.

Notwithstanding the diversity of cultures in rural communities, there is a persuasive argument that masculinist and patriarchal discourses dominate public and private life and consequently shape rural masculinities. This diversity is often marginalised and excluded in the context of dominant rural ideologies (Hastings & Maclean, 2002). This means that dominant rural ideologies which are conservative frame the ways in which men's violence against women in rural communities is understood.

#### RURAL RESTRUCTURING AND CHALLENGES TO RURAL MASCULINITIES

Back in 1992, Dempsey did not see any progressive change coming from within rural communities. Men's domination and exploitation of women was so pervasive across all areas of rural life—local government, the service clubs, the churches, unions, leisure activities sport, drinking at the pub, and informal interaction—that

there was little evidence of opposition. Rather, the only hope was for larger structural and cultural changes in the wider society to create spaces for change. Such changes may be occurring. Rural communities in Australia have undergone significant economic restructuring in response to globalisation leading to high levels of unemployment among men. This has come to be described as a “rural crisis” (Hogg & Carrington, 2006; Kraack & Kenway, 2002).

How have rural communities been transformed by economic restructuring? A number of writers identify a series of consequences of economic restructuring in rural communities associated with increasing globalisation. The main consequences are: high levels of youth unemployment; corporate downsizing; decline in real wages; changes in technology; decline in manufacturing jobs; decline in farming, forestry, and other traditional rural occupations; the increase of women on farms and as partners in family businesses; and the introduction of alternative forms of farming (Alston, 1995; Hogg & Carrington, 2006; Johnson, 2001; Kenway et al., 2006; Wendt, 2009).

What does this crisis mean for men and how does it impact on expressions of masculinity? The decline of the agriculture and forestry industries in rural areas will impact dramatically upon men who are associated with these industries (Brandth & Haugen, 2005). If these industries go through a process of restructuring or decline as a result of the rural crisis, we would expect that the construction of masculinities will also change. Johnson (2001) suggests that alternative forms of farming that move away from high technology challenge traditional notions of manhood. Men also experience challenges to their masculinity by women entering men’s domain on family farms as livestock managers and machinery operators and women becoming more involved in off-farm labour (Alston, 1995). This is exacerbated by changes to gun ownership legislation and drink and driving laws (Hogg & Carrington, 2006). Kimmel and Ferber (2006) identify similar changes to the rural gender order in the United States where economic restructuring has led to decline in wages, unemployment in the manufacturing sector, corporate downsizing, and changes in technology. In this context, the rural crisis has generated a crisis in masculinity, as many men rural men in America feel under siege. This has led to the rise of militias as men look for someone to blame.

These changes to rural life are transforming gender divisions in rural families and occupations (Carrington & Scott, 2008). Agricultural restructuring and challenges to traditional gender roles resulting from increased levels of male unemployment means that many men feel that their sense of manhood is under threat.

Of course unemployment among men in urban areas will undermine masculinity as well. However, there appears to be some differences in the ways in which men respond to economic crises in rural communities (Laorie, 2001). While job losses have occurred in both rural and urban contexts, there has been a more significant economic downturn in many rural communities. Many commentators have noted that men have been more affected by this economic restructuring and unemployment because they struggle to maintain traditional forms of masculinity associated with being the sole provider and head of the family (Carrington & Scott, 2008; DeKeseredy et al., 2007; Foskey & Avery, 2004; Sherman, 2005). For these men, relationships are likely to be more unstable and higher levels of family conflict are

expected because they are endeavouring to maintain expectations of a form of masculinity that eludes them.

Kenway et al. (2006) describe how men without work in rural communities exhibit various forms of loss and melancholia, which leads them to discuss what they call "melancholic masculinities." Johnson's (2001) research of farm men also reveals high levels of grief among men as they face the loss of their family farm along with the ability to meet the expectations associated with their roles as partners, fathers, and sons. The greater these men adhere to a form of masculinity associated with control and self-reliance, the greater the likelihood that they will find it difficult to address this loss and grief.

Research by DeKeseredy et al. (2007) revealed that marriages in the studied rural communities were characterised by very traditional gendered divisions of labour. However, these gendered arrangements were unsettled by the rural decline, as many women sought paid work when men were unable to provide for their families. In this context, men's self-worth was affected, and their marriages became unstable because they could no longer meet the expectations of being "head of the house."

Thus while rural masculinity commonly advantages men, it can also have negative consequences for these men. Attempts to maintain traditional masculinity in the face of the challenges to it, has implications for rural men's health (Sach, 2006). Laorie (2001) cites research that identifies high suicide rates of men in rural areas, and Campbell et al. (2006) demonstrate that rural men have higher levels of drunk driving and alcoholism. Foskey and Avery (2004) note the difficulties faced by rural men who adhere to stoicism and rugged forms of individualism in reaching out for support when their occupation is transformed by structural adjustment. Thus there is some evidence to suggest that dominant forms of masculinity are losing their legitimacy and power in rural communities.

#### RURAL RESTRUCTURING AND MEN'S VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

What is the relationship between rural restructuring and men's violence against women? The argument of this article is that the challenges to men's traditional masculine identity in rural communities, leads some men to enact violence against women. Over 13 years ago, Alston (1997) posited the possibility that levels of violence against women would increase in response to major changes in rural life. Increased stress associated with the drought and deteriorating conditions in rural communities, combined with already existing patriarchal belief systems and the internalisation of conservative gender roles, is likely to contribute to an increase in men's violence against women (Wendt, 2009). Ferrante et al. (in Women's Services Network, 2000) identified that the more disadvantaged rural communities had six times the rate of men's violence against women, compared to the least disadvantaged communities.

Hogg and Carrington (2006) posit that higher levels of men's violence in rural areas are reflections of these different aspects of the rural crisis. Because men are often threatened by women taking non-traditional roles, violence is one way for men to reassert their control (Carrington & Scott, 2008). As a consequence of these changes, men may resort to violence against their female partners to bolster their

masculinity (Wendt, 2009). DeKeseredy et al.'s (2007) study demonstrated that unemployed men whose masculinity was founded on patriarchal belief systems compensated for their declining economic power by exercising greater control over their female partners. They found that some rural men engaged in sexual violence and rape to maintain their status in male peer groups. Research thus demonstrates that when men's masculinity is threatened, it creates insecurity and greater likelihood of violence against women. There is clearly a tension between rural men's experiences of marginalisation with high levels of stress and high rates of suicide on the one hand, and men's continued control over rural communities with increasing enactment of violence against women on the other hand (Laorie, 2001). Any strategy to address men's violence against women in rural communities must engage with this tension.

#### BREAKING THE NEXUS BETWEEN RURAL MASCULINITIES AND MEN'S VIOLENCE: THE POSSIBILITIES FOR CHANGE

Because it is socially constructed, rural masculinity is something that can change (Campbell et al., 2006). There are some indicators of challenges to hegemonic masculinity in rural areas. Hogg and Carrington (2006) identify emerging forms of masculinity in rural areas that are incompatible with men's violence against women. Similarly, Sach (2006) writes that rural masculinities are shifting, and that this may create possibilities for constructing alternative masculinities.

While some men attempt to shore up their traditional masculine identity in the face of prevalent socio-structural and technological changes, other men are searching for new ways to express their masculinity that do not rely upon dominance and control over women (Carrington & Scott, 2008). In their interviews with rural men, Hogg and Carrington (2006) found evidence of masculinities that were not reproducing violence against women. DeKeseredy et al. (2007) also report on unemployed rural men who do not intensify their control and domination over their wives in the face of the current crisis. Instead, they have managed to adapt their masculinity to encompass more active fathering and involved family life. Sherman (2005) also found examples of men who were able to adjust their gender ideals to the changed circumstances of their lives.

To the extent that men are able to make these changes to their gender role, they will not feel the need to exert control over women or resort to violence to compensate for their loss of power and control in their work. Men who are able to move beyond a breadwinner masculinity are able to remake themselves as engaged fathers and involved family members. Consequently, they are better able to address the anxieties associated with economic restructuring and are able to see real benefits in moving towards more gender-equal relations with women. The more men are able to adapt their masculinity to changed circumstances, the more they will find fulfilment in the context of economic restructuring. This provides some hope for the future.

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## ANXIOUS MASCULINITY IN FRANK WEDEKIND'S *SPRING AWAKENING*

**ABSTRACT** Late-nineteenth-century Europe saw an unprecedented crisis in masculinity that resulted in an intensified fear of the feminine and of feminization. Triggered in part by the women's movement, sexologists' investigations into sexual pathologies, and the increasingly visible homosexual, this crisis was also exacerbated by a cult of masculinity that promoted a hypermasculinity unattainable by most. Using this crisis as the backdrop for his first critically acclaimed work *Spring Awakening* (1891), Frank Wedekind chronicles the lives of several adolescents, and in particular several young boys, as they begin their journeys into puberty. Looking in particular at the various forms of masculinity Wedekind projects onto the young boys in *Spring Awakening*, this article presents the marginalization of the ordinary male through characters who either express, reject, or combat the feminine dangers they perceive threatening their already precarious manhood.

**KEYWORDS** *SPRING AWAKENING* (FRANK WEDEKIND), MASCULINITY

*The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation.*

~Henry David Thoreau~

Late-nineteenth-century Europe saw an unprecedented crisis of masculinity which resulted in an intensified fear of the feminine and of feminization. The impetus for this crisis came from many quarters. In part, it was triggered by the women's movement which was speaking out with increasing enmity against patriarchal power structures.<sup>1</sup> The rise of sexologists and their investigations into sex-

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<sup>1</sup> While there is plenty of evidence of men's fear of women's emancipation in the works of philosophers such as Otto Weininger, physicians such as Richard von Krafft-Ebing, and even phrenologists such as Cesar Lombroso and Guglielmo Ferrero, Gerald Izenberg (2000) notes that the terror this movement evoked in many men was disproportionately large relative to the realistic threat the movement posed to male prerogatives.

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<sup>a</sup> Department of Modern & Classical Language Studies, Kent State University.

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All correspondence regarding this article should be addressed to Stephanie E. Libbon, Department of Modern & Classical Language Studies, Kent State University, Kent, OH 44242, USA. Email: [slibbon@kent.edu](mailto:slibbon@kent.edu)

ual pathologies was another contributing factor in that they brought ever more to the fore men's concerns with their own sexualities. The introduction of the term "homosexual" into the vernacular further added to this insecurity as it drew attention to individuals who appeared to express the ultimate transgression of the feminine into the masculine. Lastly, the rise of nation-states with their militaristic imperialism, their emphasis on social Darwinism and Nietzschean power worship also played critical roles as they prompted a cult of masculinity and an idealized masculinity unattainable by most men.<sup>2</sup> It is in this setting of anxious masculinity, where the ordinary male felt his manhood placed into question by the feminists who were emulating him, the homosexuals he did not want to emulate and the alpha males he could not emulate that Frank Wedekind stages his first critically acclaimed work, *Spring Awakening* (1891).

Best known for plays that exposed the sexual hypocrisies of his day and specifically for his focus on the most taboo of sexual behaviors, Wedekind was a highly controversial figure in late-nineteenth-century theatrical circles. Provoking extreme reactions from critics and public alike, Wedekind was lauded by many as an *avant garde* artist but decried by just as many as a peddler of pornography.<sup>3</sup> Even today one sees divergent responses in the scholarly community with some researchers reading Wedekind as a champion of women because his works acknowledge female sexuality and others construing him as a misogynist because he confines his female figures solely to their sexualities.<sup>4</sup> While Wedekind's male characters have not been excluded from these analyses, invariably scholarly investigations have examined them *vis-à-vis* their interactions with Wedekind's female characters. Where Wedekind's constructs of masculinity are concerned, and specifically, where the fears and anxieties of his male characters relative to their own masculinities are concerned, there has been a lacuna in Wedekind research. Addressing this gap in Wedekind scholarship, this investigation analyzes the various images of masculinity Wedekind presents in *Spring Awakening* and specifically the anxious masculinity he depicts as being triggered by a fear of the feminine and of feminization.

Set in the sexually repressive world of Wilhelmine Germany, *Spring Awakening* chronicles the lives of several adolescents as they begin their journeys into puberty. Lacking adult guidance, these teenagers struggle on their own to come to grips with the pubescent changes they are undergoing. Curious about the new urges

<sup>2</sup> In Germany, as Michael Kane (1999) notes, the nation itself was envisioned as a male body and the ideal German male as an expression and extension of that body.

<sup>3</sup> Due to the sexually explicit nature of his works, most of Wedekind's plays were not performed uncensored during his lifetime, except before private audiences. Indeed, for most of his professional life, Wedekind found himself battling censorship and even imprisoned once for *Majestätsbeleidigung* [insulting the majesty of the emperor]. For his part, however, Wedekind was proud of this reputation and even bragged to a friend: "at the moment there is no writer in Berlin with a more disreputable name than mine" (1924, pp. 280-281).

<sup>4</sup> For those viewing Wedekind's depictions of his female characters or his supposed denouncement of patriarchy in a more positive light see, among others, Völker (1965) and Lorenz (1976). For a counter-argument see, among others, Bovenschen (1979) and Diethel (1988).

they are feeling but simultaneously suffering from fear, guilt and shame, they fumble their ways through sexual exploration. Caught up in their own sexual anxieties, the adults in *Spring Awakening* try vainly to shield these youngsters from their emerging drives. In their misguided efforts, however, they unwittingly victimize their children further as they minimize, scrutinize, and even demonize their nascent sexualities. In their attempts to shelter their offspring, the adults reveal to what extent they themselves have been sheltered and thus ignorant where sex and sexuality are concerned. Their misconceptions are portrayed particularly well in their reactions to Wedekind's two male protagonists, Moritz Stiefel and Melchior Gabor, whom Wedekind presents as masculine antipodes to one another.

The first time we meet Moritz and Melchior (Act One, Scene Two), they are discussing masturbation and nocturnal emissions. In this dialogue, Wedekind presents not only the fears and anxieties of adolescents kept in ignorance about their sexuality, but in the boys' reactions to this topic, two very different images of masculinity as well. The one boy, Moritz, admits to a great deal of guilt and shame where his urges are concerned. Confused and tormented by his pubescent transformations, he wallows in anxious misery as he believes himself to be "suffering from an internal defect" (Wedekind, 1908, p. 18). In contrast to Moritz, Melchior seeks to learn as much as possible about puberty "partly from books," as he tells Moritz, "partly from illustrations, partly from looking at nature" (Wedekind, 1903, pp. 20-21). Whereas Moritz gives in to his fears and emotions Melchior controls his by distancing himself from them intellectually. Depicting these boys as diametrical opposites, Wedekind portrays Moritz as nervous, emotional, and fanciful and thus suffering from a morbid masculinity. Melchior, however, Wedekind presents as a strong, robust young man who not only attempts to control of his own life whenever possible but who takes life's unexpected twists in stride as well.

Juxtaposing Moritz to Melchior, Wedekind underscores the former's frailty by depicting him as physically weak and a poor student, in fact, the worst in his class. He cannot handle the pressures society puts on its male members and consequently is often given over to crying spells. Additionally, rather than being athletic and outgoing like Melchior, Moritz spends his time with unusual musings. Portrayed as weepy, nervous and plagued by a fanciful imagination, Moritz expresses many of the symptoms nineteenth-century physicians attributed to degenerative illnesses and deviant practices.<sup>5</sup> Several times throughout the work Moritz talks of fancying himself the headless queen of his grandmother's fairy tales. While the queen-image associates Moritz with the feminine and Melchior even tells him he's "like a girl" (Wedekind, 1908, p. 22),<sup>6</sup> the fact that this is a headless queen relegates Moritz yet further outside the masculine domain as it indicates a lack of rationality. Indeed, as we see throughout this work, headlessness is a leitmotif that is continually correlated with Moritz.

Moritz' lack of vigor and vitality is stressed further in Act One, Scene Four when he imagines that sex would be so much sweeter if one could assume the supine po-

<sup>5</sup> As George L. Mosse (1996) notes, high among these deviant practices was masturbation, which physicians believed could also cause headaches, voluptuous dreams, timidity, loss of appetite, hysteria and even homosexuality.

<sup>6</sup> Translations mine unless otherwise noted.

sition like women and again later when his female classmates refuse the candy he offers them because it has become soft and warm lying in his pocket. While the softness of the candy suggests the flaccidity of a penis, his lack of firmness and fortitude is also psychological, as we learn when Moritz commits suicide. Although his classmates believe him too "yellow-bellied" to kill himself (Wedekind, 1908, p. 38), for Moritz the torment of life is much worse than the terror of death and so he does indeed take his own life in order to escape the burden of living. While his suicide stigmatizes him as a weakling who lacks the resilience and courage to endure the harsher aspects of existence, the fact that Moritz shoots himself in the head underscores his unmanly nature even further as this destruction of his cerebral sphere once again situates himself outside the masculine realm of intelligence, logic and willpower.

In contrast to Moritz, we learn that Melchior is one of the best students in school and could even be first in his class if he so chose (Wedekind, 1908, p. 31). He is physically strong, as attested to by the girls who admire his swimming abilities and refer to him as a young Alexander.<sup>7</sup> Whereas the girls describe Moritz as a "sleepyhead," and make fun of him for his daydreams and his whimsical nature, Melchior is described as having "a wonderful head" and "a beautiful brow" (Wedekind, 1908, p. 31), a physical as well as intellectual accolade. When his female classmate, Wendla, gets lost in the woods, Melchior easily leads her back to town. It is not that he necessarily knows the way but that like a true trailblazer he will forge his own path as he makes clear when he tells Wendla "we will hack our way through the bushes" (Wedekind, 1908, p. 41). With this statement, Melchior illustrates not only his determination to find a way out of the woods, but his intent to slash a way by force if necessary. Whereas Moritz worries about whether he will be promoted to the next grade in school, Melchior's thoughts are occupied with existential issues, as the discussion about Wendla's motivations for helping the poor reveals. Unlike Moritz, who is overly emotional and allows his anxieties to consume him, Melchior remains aloof and distant from his feelings. Moreover, in stark contrast to the sweetness of Moritz, in Melchior one notices a detached coldness that is exemplified when he dismisses the suffering of Gretchen in Goethe's *Faust*: "This scandal cannot be the epitome of this artwork," he says to Moritz. "Had Faust promised to marry the girl and then left her he wouldn't have been any less to blame in my eyes. Gretchen could have died of a broken heart for all I care" (Wedekind, 1908, p. 55). Beyond this lack of compassion and empathy, Melchior's character is also defined by a potential for brutality which is first portrayed when he dreams of beating the family dog (Act One, Scene Two) and again later when he rapes Wendla (Act Two, Scene Four).

In presenting Moritz as an effeminate male who is frail, excessively emotional, hypersensitive, and prone to fantasies that relegate him to feminine roles, Wedekind epitomizes one of the many threats the feminine was thought to pose to masculinity in late-nineteenth-century Europe—the feminizing of men. While

<sup>7</sup> The reference here is to Alexander the Great and to the fact that nineteenth-century European society believed the proper virtue of a man was reflected in his physical beauty, which they in turn saw exemplified in the ancient Greeks (Mosse, 1996).

physicians such as Havelock Ellis and Krafft-Ebing hypothesized that this effemination, as Krafft-Ebing labeled it, was inherent in the individual from birth or brought on by deviant practices such as masturbation,<sup>8</sup> still others such as the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer asserted that it was caused by mothers whose overly doting natures infected their male offspring with their own feminine characteristics.<sup>9</sup> While Wedekind does not suggest how or why Moritz is effeminized in this work, Wedekind was well versed in the numerous theories of physicians and philosophers who attributed the feminine traits displayed in this character to masculine pathologies.<sup>10</sup>

It is not just the feminizing of men that Wedekind depicts as dangerous, however, but female sexuality itself, as the following episodes convey. In Act One, Scene Three, Wedekind depicts the girl Martha describing how she is torn out of bed by her mother, stripped and beaten by her father, and then forced to spend the night tied up in a sack. While no specific reasons are given for this abuse, the unspoken reproach is that Martha has reached the age of sexual maturity and that she has or soon will become sexually active lest the desire be beaten out of her. While Wedekind does not explicitly portray female masturbation until his later works, masturbation is a prevalent topic in this play and the allusion to it here cannot be overlooked especially in light of the reactions of Martha's parents. As Richard Dellamora (1990), observes, it was a commonly-held belief in the late nineteenth century that masturbation was a vice all children indulged in or were prone to indulge in. In attempting to prevent this practice, nineteenth century parenting manuals emphasized increased surveillance of children and even suggested physical and psychological coercion in order to prompt confessions of sexual wrongdoings (Cleverly & Phillips, 1986). Beyond the suggestion of masturbation, however, Elizabeth Boa (1987) notes that Wedekind insinuates something much more nefarious in this scene—an incestuous desire on the part of the father. “In Martha's father the desires aroused by his child lie close to the surface and emerge as sadism” (Boa, 1986, p. 40). Thus, Wedekind not only presents the daughter's masturbation as a danger to both parents, as it reflects, according to Daniel Beckman (1997), “an index of the parents own lack of virtue” (p. 56), but more importantly, he presents her sex-

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<sup>8</sup> Von Krafft-Ebing (1939) hypothesized that this “inverted sexuality,” which he categorized under *Antipathic Sexuality*, was either a congenital anomaly resulting from an inherited degeneracy or it was an acquired anomaly, an injury to the child's psychosexual constitution, brought on by an external cause.

<sup>9</sup> Schopenhauer (1913) held that while woman was well suited to raising young children since she herself was a middle stage between the child and the man, she should be precluded from raising older boys given the lascivious nature of her sexuality and the fact that too much contact between the mother and older male offspring could lead to effeminacy in the sons.

<sup>10</sup> Not only did Wedekind have friends and family in the medical profession, he was well versed in the writings of physicians such as Krafft-Ebing and Jean-Martin Charcot. Likewise he was well versed in the writings of philosophers such as Schopenhauer, Eduard von Hartmann, and Friedrich Nietzsche and familiar with the writings of feminists such as Irma von Troll-Borostyani, a leading feminist writer of her day.

uality as a danger specific to the father as it triggers illicit sexual responses in him which he attempts to deflect by blaming and then brutalizing his daughter.

This projection of male sin onto the female is picked up again in the next episode (Act Two, Scene Three) where Wedekind portrays the boy Hänschen locking himself in the bathroom in order to masturbate. Although Hänschen uses an image of Venus to arouse himself, once he climaxes, he vilifies this object of his lust: "You suck the marrow from my bones, bend my back, rob the last gleam from my young eyes. Your inhuman modesty is too demanding, your motionless limbs too exhausting" (Wedekind, 1908, p. 67).<sup>11</sup> Seeing Venus as a threat to both his physical and mental well-being, Hänschen describes his interaction with her in terms of battle. "It's you or me and I have carried off the victory" (Wedekind, 1908, p. 67). He then thinks of all the other pictures of women he has brought into the bathroom and all the other wars against these images he has had to fight. The conflicts Hänschen imagines are not just a matter of controlling the female but also of gaining power, since he envisions himself becoming mentally and physically stronger with each conquest. That Hänschen is struggling to come to terms with his sexuality and that he believes masturbation to be a transgression is evident when he blames Venus for this act: "You won't die for the sake of your sins but for mine. . . .my conscience will become quieter, my body will become invigorated once again, when you, you she-devil, no longer reside on the red silk cushion of my jewel box" (Wedekind, 1908, p. 68).<sup>12</sup> It is important to note not only the battle of the sexes that Wedekind portrays in this scene but the strength that is to be gained by the male in conquering female sexuality, for this is a theme that will resound louder and louder in Wedekind's subsequent works.

In Act Three, Scene Six Wedekind portrays Hänschen once again experimenting with sex, this time in a homoerotic encounter with his classmate Ernst. Unlike the previous episode in the bathroom, in this scene there is no interaction with females or female images and hence no threat to the male. Quite to the contrary, in this scene Wedekind paints a very romantic art-nouveau type of image: "Vintners in the vineyard. In the west the sun is sinking behind the mountain peaks. A clear

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<sup>11</sup> Known for interjecting episodes from his own life into his works and having indicated in his diaries that almost every scene in *Spring Awakening* was compiled from his own personal experiences or the experiences of his friends and class-mates (Hay, 1990), this scene clearly harkens back to an exchange of letters Wedekind had with a friend and former classmate, Oscar Schibler, in the winter of 1882. In this exchange, Wedekind tries to convince Oskar to break off a relationship he is having with an older woman of questionable reputation. He warns his friend that this relationship will cost him his youth and his health and that he will become a pale, spiritless machine devoid of life if he does not tear himself away from this woman. In a follow-up letter Oscar concedes the veracity of this warning as he admits this woman wanted nothing more than carnal pleasure and that he, not having the fortitude to withstand her animal nature, carelessly squandered the "poetry of his youth" (as cited in Kieser, 1989, p. 331).

<sup>12</sup> In having Hänschen project his own guilt onto the object of his desires, Wedekind espouses an idea Weininger (1980) would soon popularize throughout Europe—that woman was not so much sinning as sin itself, and more specifically, the reflection of man's sin projected onto woman.

sound of bells rises from the valley below. Under overhanging rocks, Hänschen Rilow and Ernst Röbel loll in the withering grasses at the top of the vineyard" (Wedekind, 1908, p. 128). There is a nostalgic quality to the moment as the boys talk of a future time when they will look back longingly to the beauty of this day. The boys kiss each other gently and confess their love. Romantic and sweet, this scene is in stark contrast to the masturbation scenes involving females or female images and, as we will see, to those centering on female sexuality. Furthermore, despite the homoerotic nature of this interlude, Wedekind depicts neither boy as feminized.<sup>13</sup> Unlike the weak effeminate nature displayed by Moritz, these boys acknowledge their masculine identities as they speak of their futures as husbands and fathers. Moreover, unlike the feminine softness that bespeaks a weakness in Moritz, the interaction between Hänschen and Ernst harkens back to the contemporary youth movement's emphasis on nudity in nature as a form of bonding meant to lay the foundation for brotherhood, manhood, and nationhood.<sup>14</sup>

While Wedekind portrays the single masturbatory girl and seductive female images as dangerous, the most prominent threat of female sexuality Wedekind presents in *Spring Awakening* is exemplified by the interactions between Wendla and Melchior. In the first scene where they are alone together in the woods (Act One, Scene Five), Wendla tells Melchior of the abuse Martha suffers at the hands of her parents. Speculating on how it would feel to be beaten, Wendla begs Melchior to whip her. While he initially rebuffs this request, Wendla persists until he acquiesces. Momentarily aroused by the beating, Melchior is quickly repulsed once he realizes he is in control of neither his actions nor his emotions. Appalled by his initial excitement, he reacts first with aggression, then with tears, and finally by fleeing the source of his distress. Although Melchior understands the concept of sexual arousal on an intellectual level, he is ill prepared for the intense physical response or the accompanying loss of reason that this first erotic encounter triggers in him.

While Wedekind clearly expresses Melchior's sexual naïveté in his initial shock and subsequent distress, he does not attribute the same innocence to Wendla. Rather than representing her request for a beating as simply curiosity or experimentation such as one sees with Hänschen and Ernst, Wedekind portrays Wendla intentionally goading Melchior, as the following exchange makes clear:

WENDLA:	Wouldn't you beat me [with this switch] just once?
MELCHIOR:	Are you out of your mind?
WENDLA:	I've never been beaten in my whole life.

<sup>13</sup> While Wedekind remained in agreement with the discourses of the day that defined the dangers of the feminine and of feminization, he did not see the sex act itself or the homosexual male, *per se*, as a threat to masculinity. Instead, by the very nature of their "feminine" qualities, it was the masochistic act or the weak, effeminate male that conveyed this danger. That Wedekind did not necessarily see a homosexual interlude as threatening is not only seen in the latitude he gives Ernst and Hänschen in *Spring Awakening* but likewise in his own life where he contemplates in the diary entry for July 9, 1889 whether he should have pursued this avenue of pleasure himself on that day instead of waiting until he had "feathered his nest" (Hay, 1990, p. 54).

<sup>14</sup> For a discussion of the youth movement and its connection to nature and nudity, see Mosse's (1996) *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity*.

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MELCHIOR: As if you could ask for something like that ...  
 WENDLA: Please, please!  
 MELCHIOR: I'll teach you to ask! (*He hits her.*)  
 WENDLA: I don't feel anything at all ...  
 MELCHIOR: I believe it—through all your skirts!  
 WENDLA: Then beat my legs!  
 MELCHIOR: Wendla! (*He hits her harder.*)  
 WENDLA: You're only stroking me! You're stroking me!  
 MELCHIOR: You wait, you witch; I'll drive the devil out of you!  
 (Wedekind, 1908, pp. 46-47)

Unlike the sexual inexperience Wedekind portrays in Melchior, his depiction of Wendla already suggests the sexual voracity that will become a trademark of Wedekind's female characters. Moreover, like the image of Venus to which Hän-schen masturbates, Wendla too is linked to the devil and thus to sin.

In their next encounter, Wendla happens upon Melchior lying by himself in a hayloft. No longer willing to trust himself alone with her, Melchior demands that she leave. While Melchior is unable to make Wendla obey him, his subsequent rape of her allows him to exert himself as one whose words should not be taken lightly. In sharp contrast to their first meeting, in this scene Melchior no longer runs away from the sexual threat of Wendla. Instead, as he now confronts and conquers her, we see a resolve to master sexuality, his own as well as Wendla's, emerging in Melchior. In these two scenes, as well as the one in which Martha describes being beaten, and, indeed, even the bathroom episode where Hän-schen struggles against the female images to which he masturbates, Wedekind repeatedly illustrates the late-nineteenth-century fear that female sexuality had become a feral element man had to control lest it control him.<sup>15</sup>

Throughout this play Wedekind presents the dangers of female sexuality as well as the males' fears thereof. In the bedroom episode, Martha's sexuality is a lure and hence a danger to her father. In the bathroom scene, woman is the menace Hän-schen perceives emanating from the pictures to which he masturbates. It is in the two encounters between Melchior and Wendla, however, where Wedekind most clearly delineates the female hazard to the male, since he portrays Melchior both times as unable to control his own sexual responses let alone those of Wendla. In addition to the warnings contained in each of these scenes, however, what we also see in them is the means for the males to master sexuality—their own as well as the females'. The father attempts to suppress his own desires by trying to dominate and crush those in his daughter. Hän-schen fights to get a grip on his yearnings by envisioning sexual battles that make him stronger with each female image he kills off. Even Melchior, who is portrayed both times as losing control, is already learn-

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<sup>15</sup> For centuries the general consensus had been that men were born with a limited amount of semen. Believing this fluid to be a vitalizing and strength-giving source of energy, Krafft-Ebing and his contemporaries warned that the more semen a man lost the weaker he became. For this reason, Krafft-Ebing cautioned men against too much sex and in particular warned them to avoid women "suffering from chronic nymphomania" as contact with them would inevitably lead to "heavy neurasthenia and impotence" in the male (1939, p. 486).

ing how to wield the whip, a leitmotif of male mastery and domination Wedekind uses throughout his works.

In addition to the danger of female sexuality, the threat of the female is also attested to by the way Wedekind portrays the interactions between the adolescents and their parents. Echoing concerns common in *fin-de-siècle* Europe that industrialization had removed the father and consequently the paternal influence from the family home (Tosh, 1999), Wedekind shows these adolescents having little to no contact with their fathers. Wendla's interactions are mostly with her prudish mother whose reticence to talk about sex misleads the girl into believing pregnancy can only occur in marriage. The other adults with whom she has contact outside of school are a married sister and the midwife who carries out the abortion that subsequently kills her. In Hänschen's case, neither parent is present; indeed, the only reference to a parent is when Hänschen mentions filching an erotic picture from his father's desk. Likewise with Moritz, there is little mention of parents and it is only at his funeral that we encounter the father who, mortified by his son's weakness, disclaims paternity as he states that Moritz was always a weakling and could not possibly have come from him.<sup>16</sup> Even Melchior, whose home-life Wedekind depicts as liberal and enlightened, has his mother to thank for his upbringing as his father's influence is nonexistent until the end of the play. With the exception of Martha, whose tyrannical father works in conjunction with her mother to control her through corporal punishment, none of the other fathers takes an active role in the raising of their children. While this paternal absence itself may have negative consequences for the children, in each case where the mother is shown as actively involved Wedekind depicts consequences that are far more dire. To be sure, the adolescent who suffers the least is Hänschen, whom Wedekind depicts as having the least parental influence of all the teenagers

Wedekind portrays the father's authority over his children as not just superseded by the mother's, but countermanded by the State as well. By moving the patriarchal privilege from the home to the school and thus from the *paterfamilias* to the professors, Wedekind remains in step with the shift in control Foucault (1977) identifies when noting that supervision and surveillance of children's sexuality had now fallen under the purview of public institutions (as cited in Luke, 1989). In *Spring Awakening*, Wedekind stresses this transfer of power when he has Moritz' father deliver the treatise on propagation Melchior had written for Moritz not to Melchior's father but instead to Melchior's teachers. Having received what they deem to be evidence of immorality, the professors expel Melchior from school and recommend his detention in a home for juvenile delinquents.

In the subsequent dialogue between Melchior's parents, Wedekind portrays the contemporary belief that women were incapable of raising male children without doing them irreparable harm.<sup>17</sup> Battling to save her child from incarceration, Mrs. Gabor tries to explain Melchior's expulsion as a misunderstanding and his treatise

<sup>16</sup>In Mr. Stiefel's rejection of Moritz, we see Wedekind expressing those evolutionary theories that suggested deviance as a hereditary taint transmitted from one generation to the next. In denying his paternity, Mr. Stiefel attempts to protect his own masculinity from the stigma of disease and degeneration he sees expressed in his son.

<sup>17</sup>See footnote 8 supra.

on propagation not as an act of deviance that the professors claim prompted Moritz' suicide but rather as a sign of an inquisitive mind (Act Three, Scene Three). It is at this point that her husband intervenes for the first time to voice his own opinions. In stating that he allowed her to raise their child as she saw fit rather than exerting the paternal influence he knew was necessary, he concedes that he is equally to blame for the downfall of their son:

For fourteen years I've silently observed your imaginative methods of rearing children. They contradicted my own convictions.... But I told myself, if spirit and grace can replace serious principles, then they might be preferable to serious principles. I'm not blaming you, Fanny. But don't stand in my way when I try to make amends for the wrong you and I have done the boy. (Wedekind, 1908, p. 108)

Now, as he finally asserts his authority as head-of-the-household, he tries to explain to his wife that the essay on copulation written by Melchior is proof of his corrupt nature and reason enough why their son must be sent to a reformatory.

You see minor peccadilloes when we are faced with fundamental defects of character.... Whoever can write what Melchior wrote must be contaminated in his innermost core.... None of us are saints; we all stray from the path. But his document ... [shows] a natural propensity for the immoral. It shows that rare spiritual corruption we lawyers call 'moral insanity.' (Wedekind, 1908, p. 110)

While these arguments do not persuade Mrs. Gabor that their son is immoral, her husband's subsequent revelation that Melchior has also impregnated Wendla does. With this disclosure, it is now she who insists Melchior be sent to the reformatory and she, as Paul Fechter (1920) observes, who now drops her facade of liberalism and becomes even more bourgeois and narrow than her husband.

Of all the adolescents depicted in this work, it is the girls and Moritz, the effeminate male, who suffer the most. Hänschen, as we have seen, comes away completely unscathed despite his masturbatory tendencies and homoerotic interlude. To be sure, Melchior also suffers severe hardships, but where the girls and Moritz are debilitated or destroyed by theirs, Melchior triumphs over his. To understand why this is so one must recognize the special role Wedekind assigns to Melchior as well as the types of hurdles he creates for Melchior to overcome. Reflecting the discourse of the day and the theories of philosophers such as Hartmann and Weininger who postulated sexuality as a continuum with the most feminine form of the female at one end and the most masculine form of the male at the other, Wedekind creates a continuum of masculinity, positioning Moritz, as the most effeminate male, at the one extreme and Melchior, as the most masculine, at the other. Expressing neither the weakness of Moritz nor the tenderness of Ernst and Hänschen but instead a strength of will and an accompanying cerebral aloofness reminiscent of Nietzsche's superman, as Wedekind understood him,<sup>18</sup> Melchior epitomizes the type of masculinity idealized in the cult of masculinity—cold, hard, and indomitable. The fact

<sup>18</sup> Noting that Wedekind seemed to focus solely on the pessimistic aspects of Nietzsche's philosophy when writing *Spring's Awakening*, Stefan Riedlinger (2005) questions

that Melchior has been incarcerated and is thus criminalized in the eyes of society only serves to underscore his exceptional nature further, since it harkens back to Nietzsche's premise that in following the dictates of his own will the extraordinary individual would by necessity be deemed a criminal in modern society.

In examining Melchior's ordeals, one is immediately struck by their similarity to a rite of passage. In keeping with traditional rites of passage that take place at puberty with a physical, often brutal separation from the mother and familiar surroundings (Mahdi, 1996 & Oldfield, 1996), Melchior's first test on his path to manhood is his expulsion from school and subsequent imprisonment. Unlike traditional rites that take place in group settings meant to reinforce solidarity among the initiates, however, the boys in the detention center do not forge friendships. To the contrary, they instead jockey for power such as when they partake in a circle-jerk that Peter Murphy (2001) states pits boy against boy in a sport where there is only one winner, he who ejaculates first.<sup>19</sup> Far from being a homoerotic moment, Murphy (2001) notes that this competitive masturbation is an effort to prove heterosexual dominance in order to establish masculine authority in the group. Therefore, unlike traditional rites of passage where initiates bond with one another in camaraderie and common hardships, the young men in this scene vie with one another to see who is the manliest and, by default, the least manly.

In another test, Melchior displays his skill and ingenuity when he overcomes the safeguards designed to prevent escape from the reformatory. Breaking out he makes his way to the graveyard to confirm Wendla's demise. It is here that he undergoes his last test the confrontation with death that marks the ultimate break with childhood and the end of most rites of passage (Badinter, 1992). For Melchior, this final trial comes in a surrealistic manner as the spirit of Moritz tries to convince him to join the afterlife.<sup>20</sup> To tempt his former friend, Moritz portrays death as a wondrous experience that is beyond good and evil, beyond human emotions, and beyond the trivialities of ordinary life. In describing the dead he states:

We know that it's all inane, the things men do and strive after, and we laugh at it.... We stand high above earthly things—each for himself alone.... We are infinitely above all despair and rejoicing. We are content with ourselves and that is all. We despise the living so much we can hardly pity them. They amuse us with their histrionics.... We smile at their tragedies ... and watch. (Wedekind, 1908, p. 136)<sup>21</sup>

how fully Wedekind understood] the more life-affirming aspects of Nietzsche's philosophy at the time.

<sup>19</sup> In reading through this article, my colleague Richard M. Berrong suggests that hierarchical dominance is attained not, as Murphy proposes, by the one who ejaculates first, but rather by the one who maintains control of his erection the longest before ejaculating. In *Spring Awakening* the test is to see which boy can come closest to hitting a coin and thus which can best control the direction of his ejaculate.

<sup>20</sup> In an ironically macabre twist on the fantasies Moritz had in life of being the headless queen of his grandmother's fairy tales, Wedekind depicts him headless in death as he wanders through the cemetery carrying his head under his arm.

<sup>21</sup> In "Vorfrühling [Early spring]," Rolf Kieser (1989) indicates that Nietzsche's writings played an important role already in Wedekind's earliest works. He contends furthering

In this very Nietzschean description of the superman's ethos, Moritz foreshadows the existence Melchior will lead. That his existence will take place in life rather than in death, however, becomes clear when a Masked Man enters the scene. Disguised as he is, this character reminds one of the tribal elders who obscure their identities in order to bring a sense of otherworldliness to the initiation rites. Unlike these elders, however, this individual is dressed in top hat and frock coat and thus is not just a Masked Man, as Wedekind labels him, but in fact a Masked Gentleman.<sup>22</sup> As such, he represents what Manfred Hahn calls the "real life ... the bourgeois life" (1969, p. 16), and moreover, the upper echelons of this life.<sup>23</sup> That he is a man of strong willpower, an attribute widely admired as a mark of true manhood in late-nineteenth-century Europe, is attested to when he forces Moritz to recant his fabrications of the afterlife and convinces Melchior to turn away from Moritz, thus choosing life over death. His commanding presence and cold calculating manner, which project what Artur Kutscher calls a "Herrenmoral" (1922-31, p. 349)—a morality of the masters, marks him as a self-made man, a leader in the world of men. As such, the mask that he wears suggests the anonymity of the nineteenth-century powerbrokers who, operating behind the scenes, controlled and manipulated the economy and by extension the lives of ordinary men. Additionally, this disguise also references Nietzsche's superman who wears a mask in order to underscore his superior detachment from those Nietzsche labels as "the herd" (1909-13, p. 367).<sup>24</sup> As the Masked Man guides Melchior out of the cemetery and back into the community of men at the end of the play, it is clear he will become Melchior's surrogate father and mentor as he tells him: "I will take care of your future success.... I will open the world to you.... I will take you out among men" (Wedekind, 1910, pp. 154-155). That Melchior will indeed follow this man and his

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in "Opening Pandora's Box," (1992) that Wedekind's early poem "Der Übermensch" demonstrates that Wedekind was familiar with Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* shortly after its publication in 1883. For his part, Riedlinger (2005) indicates that Wedekind begins to make numerous references to Nietzsche in his public and personal writings as early as 1887. Wedekind himself indicates his indebtedness to Nietzsche when he states that in modeling Moritz as the personification of death climbing out of the grave he chose Nietzsche's philosophy. ("Als Modell für den aus dem Grab gestiegenen Moritz Stiefel, die Verkörperung des Todes, wählte ich die Philosophie Nietzsches") (1912-21, p. 9:242).

<sup>22</sup> Although Friedrich Rothe (1968) is the first to draw attention to and argue that the dress of this character points to him as a symbol of imperialistic, bourgeois society, Alfred White (1973) counters this contention noting that while Wedekind wore tails when he performed this role, he does not prescribe any particular clothing to the Masked Man in the stage directions.

<sup>23</sup> For a discussion of the gentleman as an important part of the nineteenth century bourgeois ideology and in particular an ideology that implied a divide within the middle-class managerial elite, see Dellamora's *Masculine Desire* (1990).

<sup>24</sup> In analyzing this scene, Riedlinger (2005) contends that here Moritz Stiefel is Wedekind's representation of Nietzsche's nihilistic spirit and that the Masked Gentleman who sends Moritz back to the realm of the dead is the personification of Nietzsche's Will to Life.

reason for doing so is clearly stated when he takes his leave of Moritz: "Farewell, dear Moritz. I don't know where the man is taking me. But he is a man—" (Wedekind, 1910, p. 159).<sup>25</sup> In this final scene where these masculine antipodes come face to face one last time, Wedekind depicts Melchior rejecting all that is feminine as he opts neither to return to the home of his mother nor to choose the death Moritz offers but instead to follow the Masked Man, the figure to whom Wedekind dedicates *Spring Awakening*. Moritz, for his part, surrenders one last time to his feminine self and consequently to death as he returns to the grave and lays down in the supine position he had so longed for while still alive.

Writing during a period in which longstanding laws governing sexual behavior and sexual identity were breaking down, Frank Wedekind addresses the marginalization of the middle-class male forced to live in a world that had been turned topsy-turvy by the New Woman, the homosexual, and the sexologists all of whom were redefining and consequently undermining traditional concepts of masculinity. Recognizing that the crisis of masculinity was not just the result of women's sexual and economic liberation, the homosexual's blurring of gender, or the sexologists' pathologizing of sex, but also due to a patriarchy that was now valorizing a hypermasculinity as a counter-balance to the threat of the feminine and feminization, Wedekind portrays the ordinary male simultaneously caught between a crisis of masculinity and a cult of masculinity. Suffering from an overwhelming sense of inadequacy and disempowerment, Wedekind's masculine characters lash out against all that is feminine in an effort to prove their legitimacy and supremacy as men. It is this expression of anxious masculinity in the form of violence against and rejection of the feminine that Frank Wedekind portrays so succinctly in *Spring Awakening*—in the frightened male who tries to beat the female into submission, literally or in masturbatory fantasies, in the weakened male who himself must die because he is too feminine, in the subservient male who has conceded his paternal and patriarchal privileges to the female, and in the exalted male who must cut all ties with the feminine in order to survive in a man's world as a real man, a man's man.

#### CONCLUSION

Where the crisis of masculinity in the latter decades of the nineteenth century was prompted by rapid industrialization, the women's movement, and the medicalization of sexuality, this was not the first crisis of masculinity nor would it be the last.<sup>26</sup> With every new war, every new economic disruption or financial insecurity,

<sup>25</sup> The term *Mensch*, which Wedekind uses in the original work at this juncture, presents an interesting problem in that it can be translated either as *human being* or as *man*. The majority of Wedekind translators have opted to use the former word, which makes little sense in the context of the work; Francis Ziegler (1910), whose translation I use here, chose the more appropriate term *man*.

<sup>26</sup> Michael Kimmel (1987) notes that England experienced a crisis of masculinity between 1688 and 1714 (the period of the English Restoration), that France saw its first rupture during the Age of Enlightenment, and that the United States experienced a crisis of masculinity after the Civil War. Likewise, Catherine Gallagher (1985) identifies the period right after the French Revolution, when "the sexually uncontrolled woman [had

every new social movement that hopes to advance marginalized groups such as women, homosexuals, or people of color, the dominant constructs of masculinity and femininity are destabilized. This destabilization, in turn, prompts anxieties and backlashes from those who have vested interests in maintaining the traditional norms. Despite the advent of ever more social movements that draw attention to disparities in human rights, despite the rise of new disciplines such as Women's Studies, Gender Studies, Gay & Lesbian Studies, and Men's Studies that have revealed gender constructs not as essential, immutable entities but rather as ideologies of dominance, there are still numerous elements in our society and others that are resistance to change. Where these elements are the most entrenched is in those traditional bastions of male power—the military, the government, and the courts. The tensions that ensue between those who want access to these enclaves of power and those who want to retain their exclusive natures are invariably fought out in a battle of the sexes, where the “masculine” does not include all men but rather only the “elite” men and where the “feminine” is not associated solely with women but instead with any marginalized group that expresses defiance, disruption, and danger. While the struggles for power have remained, for the most part, defensive and confrontational, I would argue, that this is due not only to an entrenched ideal that those in power resist modifying, but likewise that those vying for power also perceive as monolithic and hegemonic. If we are to negotiate our differences in the future, it will be necessary to acknowledge that there is no universal masculine or feminine model valid in every time and place, but instead hegemonic models (in the plural), that are not only contingent upon but to some extent constrained by the time, place, and culture that constructs them.

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become] a threat to all forms of property and established power” (p. 296) as a second crisis of masculinity in France. Elaine Showalter (1990) observes that the economic depression that hit England and Western Europe in the 1870s prompted yet another crisis. While the crises of the 1880s and 1890s encompassed England, Western Europe and the United States, crises of masculinity in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries would encompass even more countries and affect even more men. For discussions on these later crises see, among others, Faludi (2000), Hearn and Pringle (Eds., 2006), Robinson (2000), and Savran (1998).

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# “LET’S HUG IT OUT, BITCH!”

## THE NEGOTIATION OF HEGEMONY AND HOMOSOCIALITY THROUGH SPEECH IN HBO’S *ENTOURAGE*

**ABSTRACT** Situating Raewyn Connell’s theories of gender hegemony in Angela McRobbie’s vista of “post-feminist society,” this paper interprets HBO comedy-drama television series *Entourage* (2004-...) as a significant object of study in understandings and negotiations of contemporary masculinity. It advances a new perspective on Connell’s notion of hegemonic masculinity as a constantly negotiated state requiring labour and an awareness of social ideas of masculinity. Homosocial relationships in *Entourage* illustrate Demetriou’s notion of a “hybrid bloc of masculinity.” Reflecting most prominently the politics and labour of producing hegemonic masculinity, *Entourage* character Ari Gold is an illuminating and compelling figure in this perspective.

**KEYWORDS** *Entourage* (TV series), post-feminism, masculinity, popular culture, speech acts

In this article, I view popular HBO television show *Entourage*<sup>1</sup> through the theoretical lenses of Connell, Sedgwick, Demetriou and McRobbie. I situate Connell’s (2000) theory of hegemonic masculinity and Sedgwick’s (1985) ideas of homosociality in McRobbie’s (2004) post-feminist society. The homosocial relationships in *Entourage* illustrate Demetriou’s (2001) notion of a “hybrid bloc of masculinity.” The characters draw on the influences of social change, specifically feminism, to modulate their performances of masculinity, consequently producing a hybrid bloc which perpetuates masculine dominance. McRobbie’s ideas of the cultural space of post-feminism (2004, p. 255) highlight the effort required to perform and maintain hegemonic masculinity, and provide a context for the present analysis. Television’s wide accessibility makes it a valuable site of analysis in which social politics can be critiqued or explored. Connell argues that gender issues have predominantly been regarded as “women’s business” (Connell, 2005, p. 1805), but programs such as *Entourage*, which arguably position men as their target audience, push gender issues

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<sup>1</sup> For a summary of core characters and plotlines discussed in this article, see Appendix 1.

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<sup>a</sup>Department of Gender and Cultural Studies.

All correspondence regarding this article should be addressed to Nancy Lee, Department of Gender and Cultural Studies, University of Sydney, Main Quad A14, NSW 2006, Australia. Email: nancy.lee@student.usyd.edu.au

further into the consciousness of male viewers. The popularity of the program and the issues it depicts show that the troping of modern manhood is heavily mainstreamed.

Academic discussion on *Entourage* has been sparse (e.g., Cross, 2008; Faucette, 2008), and the present study aims to establish it as a significant object of study in the field of masculinity research. Below I engage with *Entourage* through specific theoretical strands: post-feminist and post-structuralist. I apply and critique certain ideologies through a close reading of the program and propose that *Entourage* offers new and critical ideas of contemporary masculinities. Connell's ideas of hegemonic masculinity (2000) are useful in reading *Entourage*; however, these ideas need to be developed through a post-feminist reading. While Connell acknowledges that hegemony is open to challenge (Connell, 2000b, p. 37), I discuss the consequences of contemporary post-feminism in understandings of hegemonic masculinities within *Entourage*. This is to highlight how masculinities have been adapting to a changing social dynamic in order to retain legitimacy.

Dialogue in *Entourage* is analysed through Butler's ideas of *performance*; in particular, the performative and subjective power of speech. Through Butler's (1997) *Excitable Speech*, I present an analysis of the ideas of contemporary hegemonic masculinities that are depicted in the program. At its core, *Entourage* is a program about male homosociality. Its depiction of homosocial relationships produces contemporary understandings of masculinities, and what it means to "be a man." I use Sedgwick's (1985) work on homosociality to illustrate how homosociality contributes to the reconstruction of our understandings of contemporary masculinity. As well as through post-feminism, I modulate Connell's ideas of hegemonic masculinity by showing how ideas of hegemony are reinforced and legitimated by homosocial interaction. The men's friendships on *Entourage* facilitate understandings of what is acceptable masculinity, and produce performances of hegemonic masculinities.

#### HEGEMONY, HOMOSOCIALITY AND POST-FEMINISM

Fallen Hollywood movie star Vincent Chase is hallucinating on "shrooms" (magic mushrooms) in Joshua Tree Park with his lifelong friends—his "entourage"—E, Drama and Turtle. Vince is trying to decide whether he should risk his career-comeback on a G-rated family film, *Benji*, or if he should pursue a more "credible" role as a fire fighter in *Smoke Jumpers*, even though nobody wants to hire him. The men loll about in a daze, when Vince's brother Drama asks: "Why are you so attached to this Smoke Jumpers thing?"

"Because!" Vince responds. "Because E found the script and it's good. And I wanna be good. And I want us to be good, to make up for the bad. Everyone must know that *E makes Vince good.*"

Turtle sighs.

"You and E really have something special, Vin."

Vince looks directly at his best friend and manager, E, and smiles. E smiles fondly back.

“E’s a true friend.”

—*Entourage*, “Tree Trippers” (2008).

The quoted scene from *Entourage* encapsulates the homosocial bonds forged between four heterosexual men. As Eve Kosovsky Sedgwick argues in her 1985 book *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, homosociality is the relations between two people of same sex subtexted by a rejection of homosexuality (Sedgwick, 1985, p. 1). Throughout season five of *Entourage*, Vince struggles to get his once-bright acting career back on track—at the same time defending his masculinity and position within his friends’ “entourage.” Once the leader of the pack, he now must rely on his “boys” to help him financially and emotionally through this difficult time. They, in turn, tread carefully in order to not further bruise his ego. Financial problems and doubts about his artistic credibility plague him as he negotiates his way back into the industry. The dialogue and the characters on the program stage historical, social, and political articulations of masculinity and homosociality. I argue that homosociality is the key to the program, making *Entourage* a compelling object of study in the field of masculinity.

### *Language and Gender Performativity*

Judith Butler argues that “coherent gender” exists when we recognise certain norms that are present in the body of another (Butler, 2004, p. 58). We understand gender on the surface based on socially assigned “gender order” (Connell, 1992, p.735). To be (hegemonically) masculine is to be dominant, sexually aggressive, and inalterably heterosexual (Connell, 1992; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Connell argues that common Western social perspectives fabricate a dualism of masculinity and femininity (Connell, 2000b, p.21) such that masculinity and femininity become stereotypes of gender, with nothing much in between. “We ascribe an agency to language,” Butler argues (1997, p. 1). As language is performed by and connected to the body, it exists also to sustain the body (p. 5). Language is connected to what we “do” and the consequences of our “doings” (p. 8). In *Excitable Speech*, Butler analyses the work of Austin’s 1975 *How to do Things with Words*. She asks, “Is agency of language the same as agency of the subject?” (p. 7). Dialogue in *Entourage* is the act—the *performance*—of internalised social ideals of gender; language perpetuates and is informed by these ideas. If so, it pays to examine how dialogue in *Entourage* presents the labour and politics of performing contemporary hegemonic masculinity.

### *Understandings of Masculinity in a Post-Feminist Society*

This article is written within and for a post-feminist society. I define this era historically as post-UN’s 1975-85 Decade for Women, cited by Connell (2005, p. 1801) as a key occurrence in the feminist movement. Angela McRobbie describes contemporary, post-feminist “feminism” as a movement that “invokes” 1970s feminism but treats it as something “that is no longer needed, it is a spent force”

(McRobbie, 2004, p.255). The modern woman is seen as "empowered" — to the extent that a "forceful non-identity with feminism" becomes outright repudiation. In this context, critique of sexism is discounted as prudish and unnecessary, for women are now empowered enough to "own" their sexuality, perpetuating media attention to their bodies (p. 259). This lack of space for critique is endemic in popular culture (p. 259). Withholding critique of sexism and the evolving gender order, McRobbie laments, "is a condition of her [the modern woman's] freedom" (p. 260).

Rosalind Gill also looks at the transformation of feminism in media culture and the self-monitoring that is constantly conducted in order to adhere to the social constructs of femininity (Gill, 2007, p. 151). Socially constructed ideals of beauty, sexuality and indeed, gender, are internalised and "made our own" (p. 154). In post-feminist media culture, Gill argues, irony is used as self-referential tool to dismiss sexism, homophobia, and other gender politics (p. 159). As a feminist viewing *Entourage*, it is evident that the program does exactly this: it presents social notions of hegemonic masculinities in hyperbolic, humorous, and far-fetched ways, placing it between default "ironic and humorous quotation marks" (p. 160). The post-feminist context in which *Entourage* has been produced, as well as the energetically ironic and fantastical extremes it portrays, maps out a contemporary understanding of masculinities and media culture's negotiation of McRobbie's post-feminism. What does masculinity mean in a society in which women are encouraged to believe they are "empowered," and how is this masculinity asserted? How is hegemony maintained when young men *expect* women to "reject patriarchal social relations" (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 835)?

### *Irony and White Privilege in Entourage*

Set in the vacuous celebrity universe of Hollywood, the program is self-reflexive in its unrealistic portrayal of the everyday life of a movie star through its use of irony. In his article *Pumping Irony*, Tyson Smith (2005) examines the advertising campaign of popular bourbon brand, Jim Beam. Smith analyses the ads in terms of post-feminist discourse and argues that feminism of the 1970s and 80s has produced more critical readings of the media and advertising (para. 3). As a result, irony is popularly used to great effect when "sell[ing] masculinity to today's young men" (para. 5). While *Entourage* is a television program that primarily sets out to entertain with its humour and fantastical storylines, I argue that *Entourage* subtly asks the audience to question the legitimacy of the norms of hegemonic masculinity by presenting these ideas in each of the characters. Rather than dismissing the ironic humour of *Entourage* as part and parcel of the entertainment factor in television, irony can be considered a self-reflexive aspect of the program. Through irony, the legitimacy of hegemonic masculinity is questioned—a purposeful technique utilised to call attention to different representations of masculinity. Ari Gold, in particular, personifies the extremes of aggressive masculinity (to which I return below).

It can be argued that the study of *Entourage* might limit discussion to issues surrounding White, privileged masculinity because the characters depicted are seem-

ingly privileged White males. Jane Park and Karin Wilkins argue that mass media plays a role in “perpetuating problematic stereotypes” through depictions of race and culture in pop culture (2005, para. 2). Such depictions narrow the discourse surrounding particular cultures and leave no room for engaged discussion (para. 10). They argue that narrowed discourses create common stereotypes which acquire “cultural resonance” (para. 9), which in turn, makes stereotypes easier to use and easier to recognise. Cultural background and race of the *Entourage* men are mentioned casually and dismissively. While it is never expressly conveyed, the main character of Vince appears to be of Native American heritage.<sup>2</sup> E is often referred to as “the leprechaun,” alluding to his Irish Catholic background, and Lloyd ignores Ari’s exaggerated remarks about his Asian background. Ari pokes fun at his own Jewishness almost as much as he utilises Asian stereotypes to needle Lloyd. However, the politics of race are arguably not a primary theme in *Entourage*. This does not discount the need for considered discussion on race and gender in contemporary media, but I would argue that the strength of the homosocial bonds between the men is not substantially affected by issues of race or cultural background. I would also suggest that rather than being “silenced,” the observation that race is not depicted as an “issue” to be discussed in *Entourage* speaks to the program’s efforts to be inclusive: Ari’s deep respect for Lloyd is reinforced throughout the series, and the men acknowledge themselves to be equally flawed—a fact not linked explicitly to race or cultural heritage.

### *Understanding Hegemony Through Homosociality*

Connell’s *Masculinities* provides the foundation for my discussion of hegemonic masculinity. Hegemony is negotiable and is not a static concept (Connell, 2000b, p. 37). Hegemony, Connell explains, is negotiated from within and has the capacity to “disrupt itself” (p. 37). Hegemonic masculinity is defined via an understanding of patriarchy—that is, through a belief in the “universal” dominance of men over women—which Connell describes as the “main axis of power” (p. 74). Connell simplifies hegemonic masculinity somewhat as being an “ideologically legitimated” subordination of women by men (2005, p. 832). If hegemony is normative, everything else is shaped around it, ensuring a continued patriarchy. Hegemony exists through complicit consent (2000b, p. 77), and thus is legitimated. Connell refers to contemporary men’s issues as a “modernisation of patriarchy” (p. 41), in which men still reap the benefits of a patriarchal system. As a result, Connell repositions the role of men in a post-feminist society. In such a society, the concept of patriarchy is continuously questioned and criticised—as ahistorical, for example—by feminism (1992, p. 736) and as a result, the reproduction of hegemony in patriarchy is plagued by ideological negotiation between power and equality. As Connell argues, the most fruitful analysis will come from looking at “social dynamics generated *within* gender relations” (1992, p. 735, emphasis in original). The fractured

<sup>2</sup> Adrian Grenier’s (the actor who plays Vince) IMDB (imdb.com) profile states that he is of Irish and Native American parentage.

understanding of masculinities, then, is achieved through attempts to understand the tensions in negotiating patriarchy.

Relationships between men are built on historical assumptions of masculinity (Sedgwick, 1985, p. 2). I view *Entourage* through the lens of Sedgwick's work on homosociality as I argue that the hierarchy of friendships in the program are facilitated by homosocial relations. In her discussion of homosocial bonds, Sedgwick (1985, p. 21) discusses René Girard's (1961) theory of the erotic triangle, in which women act as a "conduit" for homosocial bonds. While there are numerous heterosexual interactions with women, the homosocial spaces between the main characters on *Entourage* are enduring. Tensions within these spaces are key to understanding the constructions of noticeable power dynamics in this group of friends: homosocial bonds between the men facilitate contemporary understandings of the norms of hegemonic masculinity.

#### THE PURSUIT OF HEGEMONY

Ari Gold bursts into the women-only luncheon for *Variety* magazine's most successful women rich list, on which his business partner, Barbara Miller, is featured for the first time. Earlier that day, he and Barbara had a falling out over the inclusion of Ari's old college friend, Andrew, in their talent agency, Miller Gold. Ari is incensed that she will not give his friend a chance because he believes strongly in Andrew's abilities as an agent. Barbara is not convinced.

"Attention, everyone! I'd like to make a toast, ladies—to Barbara Miller, number thirty three on your prestigious list. And you know what, it's actually amazing to me, that at her advanced age, this is the first time she's made the list! She probably thought, 'This is never gonna happen.'"

The room is awkwardly quiet as the women are unsure how to react. Barbara is embarrassed, but does not try to stop him.

"But this little lady is *sharp*. She went out, and she found herself a man to partner up with—and look what she was able to accomplish, huh?"

Barbara hastily interjects.

"Ari, you're making an ass of yourself!"

Ari ignores her and continues.

"It's gonna be interesting though, once she's lost that *man*, to see how she claws her way back into this banquet room."

The women at the luncheon start to murmur in disbelief.

"But anyway, cheers to you, Babs, and to all of you out there who have saddled up next to *powerful men*, just so that you can stand in our way. But remember this: just because you can stand in our way, you will never keep us down. Thank you."

—*Entourage*, "Seth Green Day" (2008).

Ari's speech is delivered in the context of a post-feminist, women-only environment, at a function celebrating successful women in business. Subsequently, we can see that the "main axis of power" (Connell, 2000b, p. 74), namely hegemonic male power, exists in the social fabric of *Entourage*. In contemporary times, such an

outburst could and should be seen as deplorably misogynistic and out of touch, but the historical power of patriarchy remains in some respects. This section examines how the “ideologically legitimated” subordination of women to men (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 832) can be linked to the negotiation and performance of hegemony by the characters of *Entourage*, particularly Ari Gold.

Hegemonic masculinity is always contestable because it is always relational (Connell, 2000b, p. 76) Connell argues that discussing the relations between kinds of masculinity will facilitate understanding (p. 76), because it allows for methods of domination to be seen in relief. Hegemony is shown as constantly in flux throughout *Entourage*, as the different characters negotiate the power structure of their relations. Masculinity is understood through performances of masculine behaviour (p. 68) which I argue are in turn based on a historical and social understanding of the concept. Hegemonic masculinity arises from the figure of a “universal ‘deep masculine’” (Connell, 2000a, p. 5), and is constructed through the cultural belief that men dominate women (2000b, p. 77). Connell and Demetriou elaborate this concept by proposing hegemonic structure *within* masculinity, where certain groups of men dominate other groups of men (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 835; Demetriou, 2001, p. 337).

*“Where Can a Man Be a Man?”*

In *Entourage*, the figure with the most critical understanding of the constructed nature of hegemonic masculinity is Ari Gold. In the episode “Seth Green Day,” we learn that Ari and Andrew are old college friends who were once extremely close: “Andy and I were once brothers. A twist of fate turned one of us into gold and one of us into, well, a broke, desperate, begging-for-money-cocksucker!” (“Pie”). Ari soon realises that Andrew is a very successful but little-known literary agent who would make a valuable contribution to the Miller Gold Agency, but comes up against a wall when proposing the idea to Barbara. He takes his anger out on his daughter one morning in the family kitchen.

“Jesus Christ, is it too much to ask for a God-damned egg in the kitchen? If a man can’t have breakfast cooked for him, is it too much to expect a trip to the store so he can cook it for himself?”

Ari’s daughter Sarah retorts, “Mom cooks us breakfast every morning; you’re always at work,”

Ari scoffs.

“Let me get this straight: all women defend each other blindly?”

This scene shows that a historical understanding of hegemonic masculinity is deeply embedded in the social conscience of *Entourage*: women are expected to manage domestic duties. The scene, however, also engages a post-feminist analysis of underlying assumptions:

Sarah asks her father what it is that is really bothering him.

"You wouldn't understand," Ari tells her. "You are a delightful, unspoiled little girl." Sarah presses him, and he explains: "Okay, Little Miss Adult. My problem is that I can't run my business the way I want to, not with that woman as my partner. Your mother controls me at home; she [Barbara] controls me at work. Where can a man be a man?"

Ari's question reflects the fractured masculinity that exists in contemporary Western society. While hegemonic masculinity has been historically constructed as the idealised norm (Connell, 2000b, p. 70), it cannot always be embodied. Masculine dominance has negative connotations in McRobbie's post-feminist society but in spite of this, Ari remains in "pursuit of hegemony" (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 834). Connell argues that conflict between masculinities can arise because of "unmanageable" expectations of masculinity, rather than any kind of repression (Connell, 2000b, p. 23). Unrealistic expectations, then, are the foundations for negotiating the politics of gender relations.

### *The Erotic Triangle*

For a television show that exalts male friendships and men in general, *Entourage* has no shortage of powerful women. Dana Gordon is a smart and bold studio executive with whom Ari has had a romantic relationship.

When Ari is offered the role of studio head ("Gotta Look Up To Get Down"), Dana calls him on the phone, determined to be his second-in-charge. "Am I gonna be your number two or not, Ari?"

"You'll always be my number one whore, Dana,"

Dana rolls her eyes. "Oh, *thank* you."

"Just not sure it's gonna be at the studio,"

"You piece of *shit*. You know I can do that job!"

"Just relax. I'm struggling with the decision, but I think I'm not gonna take the job."

Lloyd is eavesdropping and whoops in delight.

"Don't worry, Dana," Ari continues, "I'm sure you'll be able to grease the balls of the next guy in line and get yourself under him,"

"There is no next guy—there's a next *girl*. Amanda Daniels," Dana announces smugly. "Doesn't she hate you? That should work out well for you and yours,"

"Fuck. Me." Ari gesticulates in frustration.

Dana smirks.

"I'll second that."

Ari asserts his power over Dana through sexual innuendo: referring to her as a whore and suggesting that she should have to "get under" the next man in order to succeed. Dana, in turn, flippantly accepts Ari's demeaning comments and plays along, despite her dislike of the dynamic. Ari makes the assumption that the next person in line for this high-profile, high-pressure position is another man. He is well aware of Dana's abilities; yet, ideals of hegemonic masculinity are manifested

in his language and position him as the person with power. In order to avoid being trapped in a position of gross disadvantage in the industry, Ari suggests Dana for the role of studio head in lieu of Amanda Daniels, an agent with whom Ari and his star client Vince have a bad history. Ari's influence wins out and Dana secures the position. The way these events play out undermine Dana's professional ability: Ari's constant, demeaning jibes imply she was never in consideration for the role, and that it was singularly his influence that secured the job for her.

The "force" of the performative comes from social power, which is constructed by established social contexts (Bourdieu cited in Butler, 1997, p. 141). Ari's words not only demonstrate his own belief that he holds power over Dana, but that historically, because he is a man, this power pre-exists. Sharon Bird differentiates between *gender role* and *gender identity* as static assumptions and continual process—gender identity is constructed from an individual's understanding of how to represent and perform gender (Bird, 1996, p. 122) Ari embodies, perhaps as a caricature, extreme representations of a socially perpetuated understanding of hegemonic masculinity. Ari is the "accumulation of meanings" (p. 122) of hegemonic masculinities, and demonstrates the struggle and effort required to achieve hegemonic form.

### *The Hybrid Bloc*

Demetriou critiques Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity, claiming it oversimplifies the politics of masculinities by defining masculinity as hegemonic or non-hegemonic (Demetriou, 2001, p. 335). Far from condensing masculinity into two categories, Connell's work frequently acknowledges the changing dynamics of gender politics and their part in producing different understandings and performances of masculinities (Connell, 1992, p. 735; 2000b, pp. 38, 77). Connell makes explicit his argument that masculinity, like the generic concept of gender, is relational and reconstituted according to changing politics (2000b, p. 81; 2000a, p. 13). Demetriou prefers a "hybrid bloc" perspective of masculinities (p. 337), considering that the practices of different masculinities unite or resonate in order to reproduce patriarchy (p. 337).

In *Entourage*, power structures are negotiated between the men, producing a hybrid bloc as the men explicitly acknowledge their positions within a hierarchy. Their contributions to the bloc are marked in the dialogue. The men of *Entourage* reflect different aspects of masculinity as it is socially understood; this, along with their homosocial bonds, reinforces and reproduces a successful hybrid bloc. The strong homosocial bonds between the men are what facilitates and reinforces the power structure of masculinities in *Entourage*.

### HOMOSOCIALITY IN *ENTOURAGE*

Ari has just spoken on the phone with Dana, who has informed him that Amanda Daniels is next in line for the position of studio head, should Ari not accept the offer. Amanda was Vince's agent after Vince and Ari experienced a professional (and consequently personal) rift. Amanda and Vince also had a secret romantic affair which turned

sour when Vince decided to go back to Ari. Amanda holds a bitter grudge against the pair and could potentially stall Vince's career if she were in a position of higher power in the film industry.

Lloyd hurries into the office overjoyed upon overhearing that Ari is not planning to accept the offer of studio head and will stay at the agency instead.

"I'm so happy, Ari. You've made me very happy," Lloyd claps. "I hope you're happy too!" He is oblivious to Ari's reeling shock.

"DO I LOOK HAPPY?" Ari rages.

Lloyd is taken aback.

"What's wrong?" he asks in confusion.

"Has so much cum been squirted in your eyes that you can't see *what's right in front of your face?*" Ari bellows. "Amanda Daniels takes that job—Vince is fucked and I'm fucked. *We're all fucked.* And we're fucked in the way you like to get fucked, not fucked in the way that normal people like to get [Ari makes a thrusting motion with his middle and forefinger] fucked."

—*Entourage*, "First Class Jerk" (2008)

I shift my focus to the relationship between Ari and Lloyd, and will discuss how hegemonic masculinity is melded with "marginalised masculinity" (Connell, 2000b, pp. 26, 75) to produce hybrid masculinity. I do not seek to provide an extensive mapping of homosocial relations in the program; rather, I analyse the homosocial dynamics of specific moments in *Entourage* using Sedgwick's work to further an understanding of the ways masculinities are presented in the program. The exchange quoted at the start of this section is a snapshot of Ari and Lloyd's relationship dynamic. I argue that it is Ari's surface homophobic treatment of Lloyd, performed through his dialogue, which builds and strengthens their bond, simultaneously marking out their political positions within the hierarchy of masculinities in *Entourage*.

### *Homophobic Distancing*

Connell and Demetriou both discuss the significance of multiple masculinities and the ways in which such diversity affects gender relations (Connell, 2000b, p. 81; Demetriou, 2001, p. 338). In *Masculinities*, Connell analyses the dominance of heterosexual men and the subordination of homosexual men (Connell, 2000b, p. 78). Homosexual men are positioned at the bottom of the hierarchy of men—"gayness," Connell argues, is a rejection of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2000b, p. 78). Connell defines homophobia as not just an attitude but as a layered social practice (Connell, 2000b, p. 40). The term *homophobia* was first used in 1967 by George Weinberg and described as an "irrational revulsion" (Britton, 1990, p. 423). In contrast, as homosexuality is taken to be a negation of heterosexuality, then "antagonism" towards homosexual men occupies a strategic, situational, and definitional relation to masculinity (Connell, 1992, p. 736).

While the homosocial bonds between the men in *Entourage* are strong, the occa-

sional homophobic taunt serves to maintain distance and clarify their heterosexuality. Their language is flippant and performs a dismissive attitude towards, and at times distaste for, homosexuality. Homophobia, however casually it is expressed, is used as a tool to keep boundaries in place and to reinforce the importance of hegemonic masculinity. Yet while instances of homophobic utterances are commonplace in *Entourage*, any deep homophobia harboured by the men is never made explicit. Connell argues that homophobia causes “structurally induced conflicts” within masculinities (Connell, 1992, p. 737). In *Entourage*, homophobia is simply another tool *reinforcing* the hybrid bloc. In her 1990 research, Dana Britton argues that “homosociality directly affects homophobia,” serving as “a boundary between social and sexual interaction in a homosocially stratified society” (Britton, 1990, p. 437). This occurs throughout *Entourage* and is demonstrated in the dialogue between the men.

In “First Class Jerk,” Ari is distracted by indecision about the studio head position. Lloyd attempts to discuss the consequences of the options with him, but Ari is frustrated and becomes short with Lloyd.

“Lloyd! I’m on the phone!” he seethes when Lloyd knocks on the door.

“I know!” Lloyd snaps. “I put the call through! I’ve been putting your calls through for three years now and I haven’t interrupted or given you my opinion even when I know I can steer your twisted mind onto greener pastures. But I can’t keep my mouth shut anymore,”

“That’s because it’s filled with –” Ari interjects.

“Shut it, Ari!” Lloyd spits. Ari raises his eyebrows.

“I know you’re going to make some rude, inconsiderate, nasty comment about my sexual orientation,” Lloyd continues. “And I know that you always do that to deflect from your own insecurities and I’ve lived with it because I wanna learn, and I believed that someday you would promote me.”

“Lloyd,” Ari begins in a placating tone, “This is gonna be good for you, as well,”

“If you think working for some conglomerate is going to fulfil you, then fine,” retorts Lloyd. “But please don’t think I’d ever make myself a corporate bitch,”

Ari gapes at Lloyd as he leaves the room. Lloyd turns around.

“And by the way, even if I did, your little gay quips would not be tolerated in a publicly traded company. People need you *here*, Ari. I’ll leave you with that,” Lloyd walks out of the office with his nose in the air.

Ari leans back on his desk and shakes his head.

“You throw a lot of Jew guilt for a Chinaman,” he calls out the door.

Connell argues that homosexual masculinity experiences the same social influences as hegemonic masculinity, but that the construction of gender is shaped by a number of relationship dynamics and cultural processes (Connell, 1992, p. 742). Perhaps it is problematic to assume that men are universally affected by ideas of hegemonic masculinity, however it is useful in assessing what is regarded as the “norm.” Lloyd displays assertiveness in his remonstrance of Ari, generally a characteristic of hegemonic masculinity (Bird, 1996, p. 125). Ari continues with his ho-

mophobia, a choice seen by Lloyd as a way to bolster Ari's self-conceptualisation of masculinity.

Connell argues that the social identity of "gayness" is different from sexuality—the latter is a gradual construction from social influences. I argue that there is an inherent agency in embodying the idea of "gayness," while the former is a socially necessary and static "category" that can be imposed on people (Connell, 1992, p. 743). As such, the assignment of "gayness" from Ari onto Lloyd works to subordinate Lloyd, but the men reach an *impasse* because Lloyd has already accepted his gayness and clearly finds much pleasure in it. By presenting the assertiveness of Lloyd in reaction to Ari's dominating masculinity, *Entourage* clearly demonstrates that gay masculinities have much to contribute to a hybrid understanding of masculinities. Whether by virtue of Ari's hegemonic masculinity demanding acceptance or simply the long amount of time spent together, Lloyd thinks more of Ari than Ari deserves. Lloyd's comfort with his sexuality is contrasted with Ari's constant need to assert his power, whether through homophobic comments or declarations of his success in general. Ari constructs homophobia as a conduit through which an erotic triangle is formed (Sedgwick, 1985, p. 21).

### *Discursive Hegemony*

Michel Foucault argues that theory cannot be constructed without a "field of discourse" (Foucault, 1972, p. 26). I argue that the discourse that surrounds theory builds on existing social discourse. I view *Entourage* within the field of discourse provided by contemporary researchers of masculinity and propose that it extends the discursive understanding we have regarding post-feminist ideals of masculinity. Post-feminist hegemonic masculinity is a constantly negotiated performance based on internalised historical ideas. Butler argues that the listener (analogous to the viewer in the case of *Entourage*) occupies a social position, and it is from this social position that they understand language (Butler, 1997, p. 18). I argue that the context of post-feminism casts the dialogue of *Entourage* in a particular light: *Entourage* portrays a hyper-hegemonic understanding of masculinity that strives to maintain a social relevancy in contemporary times. *Entourage* traces and dramatizes hegemonic masculinity in Demetriou's hybrid bloc in order to perpetuate its existence.

Louis Althusser claims that "ideas" have their "existence ... inscribed in the actions of practices governed by rituals" (cited in Butler, 1997, p. 25). The rituals of hegemonic masculinity are reflected and clarified through language. We are "formed" in the language we use (Butler, 1997, p. 28), and so are the concepts by which we live. The dialogue in *Entourage* cannot be considered as informing some ultimate definition of masculinity, nor can it be read as representative of a general or global understanding of masculinity. However, the program is a persuasive and engaging reading of contemporary masculinity, and this is largely due to the dialogue between characters. *Entourage* is a small but useful snapshot of the social understanding of masculinity, constructed in the context of a contemporary, Western, heterosexual gender order. The discourse of *Entourage*, through its conflicted

characters and strong writing, “isolates small islands of coherence” within masculinities and subsequently reveals the “internal structure” of modern masculinity (Foucault, 1972, p. 37).

#### PERFORMING HEGEMONY

In “Unlike a Virgin,” Vince has decided to come out of hiding post-Medellin and is going into the office to see Ari.

Lloyd is running around excitedly at the prospect of seeing their young charge after many months.

“He’s here! He’s here! Vince is here!” Lloyd shouts excitedly.

Ari scrunches up his eyebrows in mild anxiety, also nervous about seeing Vince again. “What are you, speed ball and fairy dust?” he admonishes. “Go out and greet him like a man.”

Vince walks in soon after and Ari grins broadly.

“Vinnie! There he is!” he calls, arms outstretched. “How you doin’, baby?”

I will not attempt to link my own reading to the intentions of Doug Ellin, the creator of *Entourage*. I believe the television series speaks for itself through the characters depicted. Butler develops the concept of the “sovereign power” of speech: in which power lies with the person from where the voice emanates, and “to utter is to create the effect uttered” (Butler, 1997, p. 32). In *Entourage*, saying it is as good as being it: speech acts produce masculinity. Ari dismisses Lloyd’s fretting as un-masculine and thinks that his own boisterous greeting (including the diminutive “baby” reference to Vince) is a more “manly” way to act. The power performed in speech acts is located in the subject; however, in *Entourage*, such power is disseminated between the men, through their language of homosociality, in order to maintain the power order of the group. As Butler argues, language does not merely serve to describe, it “produces its social contours in space and time” (Butler, 1997, p. 34). The ways the men speak to each other reflect their understandings of masculinity and illustrate how these understandings operate politically within the group. Speech constructs boundaries that allow their masculinities and friendships to exist.

Lloyd is becoming suspicious of constant phone calls from a high profile studio trying to woo Ari (“Gotta Look Up to Get Down”). One day he walks into the office as Ari hangs up the phone, rubbing his hands together with glee.

Lloyd peers at Ari and asks, “Are you hiding something from me, Ari?”

Ari smirks mischievously.

“Only my cock and my asshole, Lloyd!” he calls as he bounces out of the office.

In *Melancholy Gender/Refused Identification*, Butler describes gender as “a kind of melancholy” and argues that heterosexuality is formed through “prohibitions” (Butler, 1995, pp. 21, 25). Through speech, Ari asserts his heteronormativity and prohibits notions of homosexuality through snide, disparaging comments. In his exchange with Lloyd, Ari responds with the action of “hiding” something from

Lloyd. Of course, Lloyd was referring to the goings on with the studio executive with whom Ari had been speaking, but Ari yet again brings sexuality into the conversation. This act seems to have the intention of asserting Ari's power and heterosexuality, but also reflects his insecurity in himself.

### *Homophobia and Power*

The characters of *Entourage* collectively reflect the tentativeness of contemporary hegemonic masculinity. McRobbie discusses the dynamics of social change in gender order as "reflexive modernisation" (Beck, Giddens & Lash cited in McRobbie, 2004). *Entourage* questions the necessity of hegemonic masculinity in McRobbie's post-feminist society. Ari's robust assertions of heterosexuality—used as a method of maintaining his power over homosexual Lloyd—also jar somewhat in the context of progressive society. The male characters are rarely portrayed as explicitly chauvinistic, but the dialogue hints at an acknowledgement of dominant masculinities. A criterion for acceptance into dominant masculinity is heterosexuality.

Ari is in a meeting with actor Jeffrey Tambor ("Gotta Look Up to Get Down"). Jeffrey is keen to secure the role of Marcel Proust in a possible feature film. Ari is trying to dissuade him.

"You don't think I have the acting chops to play Marcel Proust?"

"What I'm saying is," explains Ari, "I don't think anyone is going to buy you as a gay Frenchman,"

"Well, you know, I speak French," huffs Jeffrey.

"I meant it as a compliment," Ari says, frustrated.

Jeffrey looks at his agent darkly.

"Well, it didn't feel like one."

Ari's homophobic defence of his client's heterosexuality indicates the ubiquitousness of heterosexuality in the discourse of hegemonic masculinity. Ari sits on the border of hegemonic and marginalised masculinities, as a Jewish man with insecurities about his own masculinity. He guards the ideal of heterosexuality fiercely. Homophobic language is an illocutionary tool that *enforces* heteronormativity in *Entourage*. Hegemonic masculinities rely on heteronormativity. The speech acts in *Entourage* serve to perform and assert these ideals. In certain moments of *Entourage*, the consequences of some speech acts lead to (and stem from) recognition of wider stereotypes and social, historical ideas of masculinities. David Van Leer suggests that clichés are powerful "if only in their linguistic compactness; even when they are introduced as fallacious, that power tends to linger" (Van Leer, 1989, p. 589). The deployment of stereotypes and norms in *Entourage* is indicative of the social understanding of hegemonic, normative masculinities.

Ari is about to reveal to Lloyd a secret about his rival Adam Davies as part of revenge for [Adam Davies] sending male strippers ("The All Out Fall Out"). He leans in and gestures for Lloyd to do the same.

"I know you don't know the man code," he begins, as Lloyd frowns in disapproval, "so I want you to swear on Tom [Lloyd's boyfriend] getting gangrene on his cock that you will say nothing."

Lloyd glances at Ari and rolls his eyes.

"I won't utter a word."

Ari differentiates his idea of heteronormative hegemonic masculinity from Lloyd's sexual and gender identity. Ari emphasises the body and, specifically, the penis. By doing this, Ari cites the symbol of masculinity as an explicit signal of the importance of hegemonic masculinity. In his use of the term "man code," he links an idea of universal hegemony to the use of the penis in a homosexual context. As Butler argues, language brings the body into being by interpolating it within the terms of language. This is how the "social existence" of the body becomes possible; yet, if language can "sustain the body, it can also threaten its existence" (Butler, 1997, p. 5). This can also be applied to masculinities. Masculinity is a concept around which discourse can construct a space to be understood (Foucault, 1972, p. 56). It follows that language is a core part of understanding masculinities.

#### *How to Draw Lines with Words*

In *Entourage*, homosocial bonds between men do not allow them to engage in honest emotional exchanges about their personal experiences of sexuality. Rather, the men participate in shallow discussions about women during discrete homosocial moments. The men are close enough in friendship for homophobic utterances to be made. Their heterosexuality and homosocial relationships are confirmed through homophobic wisecracks. In certain moments of *Entourage*, the men maintain their homosocial relationships by drawing discursive boundaries through homophobic language: they can only be "best friends" as long as they occasionally question each other's sexuality. Calling sexuality into question, however dismissively, requires the other to state his sexuality—in this case heterosexuality—a statement that allows the friendship to progress. In *Entourage*, questioning friends by teasing them and generally giving them a hard time creates space for heteronormativity to be reiterated. Each time a homophobic jibe is made is also an opportunity for the men of *Entourage* to reassure themselves, and each other, that they are aware of their role in the hierarchy of masculinities. Through speech acts, they are able to maintain their sense of masculinity and subsequently their roles within the group. Language in *Entourage* is an explicit acknowledgement of gender—it is a tool of gender performance. The subject connected to the words spoken also speaks for the subjectivity of gender: words express the internalised ideals of gender and these are produced by the subject. *Entourage* uses the power of words to maintain power among men.

#### *Women, Power, and Masculinity*

Historically in Western society, men have never been a minority group (Connell, 1992, p. 736). Academic feminist critique of "patriarchy" assumes universal and unchanging male dominance (Rowbotham cited in Connell, 1992, p. 736), but so-

cially, men have been assigned the enduring, unrealistic gender role of hegemonic masculinity. Contemporary feminism brings this hegemonic masculinity into question. This is not to say that men are now a minority, nor are they disadvantaged, but socially, it is often now acknowledged that men can have unrealistic expectations to which they feel they must rise. This social movement is referenced continuously in *Entourage*. Powerful women in the men's lives appear in support roles. The women engage in masculine behaviour which earns them respect and attention from the male characters, yet this behaviour also gestures towards the effects of patriarchy—women behave this way, and are accepted to behave this way, in order to succeed. At certain points, these women encourage and necessitate men's assertions of their masculinities.

McRobbie argues that the concept of "empowerment" leads to "avid" self monitoring (McRobbie, 2004, p. 260)—she links this to women attempting to reproduce the ideal of the empowered woman and maintaining focus on the body. A parallel can be discerned for the men on *Entourage*. Their self-monitoring is intended to produce hegemonic masculinities in a way they feel is appropriate to their post-feminist context. In order to accomplish this, the characters of *Entourage* turn to their friends for support and guidance. Their diversity and shared understandings of hegemonic masculinities culminate to create a particular hybrid bloc of masculinity, while their strong homosocial bonds reinforce a hierarchy within the group. They may well be uncertain of what it really means to "be a man," but their enduring friendships—stated continuously in the dialogue—facilitate performances of hegemony.

#### CONCLUSION: *ENTOURAGE* AND CONTEMPORARY MASCULINITY

"Power is not as easy to identify or to localize as some speech act theory appears to imply" (Butler, 1995, p. 34). In *Entourage*, power is constructed through the dialogue between characters. We are constituted in the language we use (Butler, 1995, p. 28), and as such, power can be dissimulated (p. 36) or weakened through speech acts. My article illustrates the power of discourse within a specific social context. I have augmented Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity, which is based on a historical understanding of patriarchy (Connell, 2000b, p. 21; Demetriou, 2001, p. 339), through my reading of *Entourage* in McRobbie's post-feminist (McRobbie, 2004, p. 255) society. Hegemonic masculinity is performed with conscious effort in moments of *Entourage*, and the script facilitates this through strong characterisation, and by incorporating historical and social ideals of masculinity in characterisation.

Butler argues that the "power of discourse to produce that which it names is thus essentially linked with the question of performativity" (Butler, 1993a, p. 17). The dialogue on *Entourage* reflects the social impact of performance and illustrates the verbal maintenance of hegemonic masculinity. The intended humour and irony in *Entourage* builds an understanding of contemporary masculinity in a post-feminist Western society. The dialogue is based on historically and socially informed ideals that "accumulate the force of authority through ... repetition or citation of a prior, authoritative set of practices" (Butler, 1993a, p. 19). These ideals are tempered by a

contemporary society in which men might respond to feminism by asking (as Ari Gold in “Seth Green Day”), *where can a man be a man?* As Connell argues, it is not that men are repressed by feminism but that the expectations of men have become “unmanageable” (Connell, 2000b, p. 23). *Entourage* communicates this through humour and irony, presenting an extreme character in Ari Gold and varying degrees of hegemonic performance in an entourage of men. The humour employed in the program stages simultaneously the ubiquity of hegemonic forms and their unattainability, a post-feminist mise-en-scène where the validity of such behaviour is incessantly questioned.

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#### APPENDIX 1 SUMMARY OF CORE CHARACTERS AND PLOTLINES

This article covers the story arc of season five of the popular television show *Entourage*. For those unfamiliar with the program, a summary of core characters and plotlines that appear in the article:

**Vincent Chase:** successful young actor and previously "the next big thing" in Hollywood. In earlier seasons Vince's career was in an upwards trajectory after appearing in edgy "indie flicks," until hubris and overconfidence lead him to produce *Medellin*, a film that was panned by critics and relegated him into unemployment. Season five explores how a sudden lack of career success undermines Vince's understanding of hegemonic masculinity.

**Ari Gold:** Vince's agent. Ari is loud-mouthed, obnoxious and arrogant but fiercely loyal to those important to him. A Jewish man, Ari embodies a "liminal" masculinity; however, his character is the most compelling in portraying the constant negotiation of performance of hegemonic masculinity.

**Lloyd:** assistant to Ari Gold. Lloyd is clearly comfortable with his homosexuality and the constant homophobia exhibited by Ari reinforces their homosocial bond.

**Johnny "Drama" Chase:** Vince's brother and struggling actor. Drama, through his exaggerated expressions of masculinity, provides the comic relief in the program.

**"Turtle" and "E":** both childhood friends of Vince's. Turtle is unofficially Vince's gofer and driver, and at times suffers much insecurity about his non-hegemonic identity of masculinity. E is Vince's manager and closest confidante. He is the group's "sensitive" man, considerate and careful.



## INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP REPORT

“BETWEEN THE NATIONAL AND THE TRANSNATIONAL, 1945-1980:  
MASCULINITIES IN BRITISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE BETWEEN  
WORLD WAR II AND THATCHER/REAGAN”  
(JUNE 9-11, 2010, DRESDEN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, GERMANY)

If current trends in popular entertainment are anything to go by, it seems that gender concepts of 1950s and 60s culture are currently heading for a comeback. Successful TV series like *Mad Men* have been focusing on renegotiations of masculinity after the Second World War and its epitome, the “man in the gray flannel suit,” to cite the title of Sloan Wilson’s novel and subsequent film adaptation. Even then, “a normative masculinity functioned on screen to mask the social differences that stratified U.S. society” (Cohan, 1997, p. x), and the narrative constructions of masculinity have been indicative of this dialectic ever since: normativity on the one hand, challenging concepts and the notion of pluralism on the other.

The shadow of the “man in the gray flannel suit” was also one of the major themes to provide food for thought during an international workshop on masculinities that took place in Dresden in June, 2010. Organized by Professor Stefan Horlacher (Dresden), the workshop “Between the National and the Transnational, 1945-1980” was part of the ongoing research project “Towards Comparative Masculinity Studies” by Professors Stefan Horlacher and Kevin Floyd (Kent State), sponsored by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and Kent State University. Dedicated to in-depth analyses of national masculinities in British and American literature and culture, the project seeks an understanding of the larger context for the emergence of more plural, culturally differentiated, and ultimately transnational masculinities. The analytic methods employed show both diversity and commonality, with regard to redefinitions of “Britishness” and “Americanness” as well as masculine identities. At the heart of nationhood and gendered identity lies, we believe, the notion of narrative, crucial in conceptualizations of both rubrics, given that “masculinity, like femininity, is a fictional construction” (Murphy, 1994, p. 1).

In this workshop designed to facilitate conversation about the impact of globalization, migration, “new” subaltern subjects, and social mechanisms on different narrative forms, literary scholars from three different continents met in Dresden to discuss changing notions of masculinity as reflected in postwar British and American literature and culture, with the explicit goal of providing comparative analy-

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<sup>a</sup> Technische Universität Dresden.

All correspondence regarding this article should be addressed to Stefan Horlacher, Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Fakultät Sprach-, Literatur- und Kulturwissenschaften, Technische Universität Dresden, 01062 Dresden, Germany. Email: stefan.horlacher@mailbox.tu-dresden.de.

ses and exchanging perspectives on gender-oriented interpretations of texts, plays, films, and photographs.

After the welcome address by THOMAS KÜHN, Dean of Studies of the Faculty of Linguistics, Literary Studies and Cultural Studies at Dresden, representatives of the two cooperating universities shared their perspectives on the transatlantic framework and the aim of the workshop. Thus, RONALD J. CORTHELL (Kent State) stressed the importance of transatlantic cooperations as opportunities for comparative studies. According to Corthell, the Humboldt Partnership is treading on new territory, not only as far as the regular exchange between Dresden and Kent State is concerned, but also with regard to a transcultural dialogue on masculinities and interdisciplinary work, outside of the monolithic, one-sided framework of traditional scholarship. It was up to STEFAN HORLACHER (Dresden) to provide the "Theoretical and Cultural Framework" for such a comparative approach toward Masculinity Studies (see also Horlacher, 2006). Horlacher not only pointed out the social necessity of such a discipline in light of the perceived crisis of manhood, but also highlighted the importance of literary studies, that is, their potential to question seemingly immovable, essentialist models. By locating masculinity at the intersection of literary and cultural studies, works of literature (to give but one example) become accessible as parts of the symbolic order where culture reflects on itself. This in turn emphasizes the transgressive potential of art. Horlacher concluded with an appeal to pluralized notions of masculinity in order to open the web of power relations for inspection (compare Matus, 1995), while simultaneously extending the borders of what is possible and imaginable.

The opening session of the workshop, dedicated to *visualizations of masculinity*, was chaired by Stefan Horlacher and featured CHRISTOPH RIBBAT's (Paderborn) keynote address, a look into "The Colors of Masculinity" in contemporary photography. After hinting at the direct impact of second-wave feminism on photography (like Laurie Anderson's "Fully Automated Nikon," where the mechanisms of the medium are out for revenge against voyeurism), Ribbat introduced a diverse array of color photography of the 1970s and 1980s. Notable American photographers (like Diane Arbus and William Eggleston) were compared to their British counterparts (like Paul Graham and Martin Parr) with respect to the way their work evolved out of an exclusive "boys' club" of White heterosexual perspectives with rather naive notions of the authentic body, adapting to the changing sociopolitical climate of the early Thatcher years. Effectively, this change of perspectives meant that men in photographs were suddenly far from delivering a successful performance of hegemonic masculinity. On the contrary, the works of Eggleston and his contemporaries feature unemployed, marginalized men who have their picture taken while waiting at the unemployment office, or leave a rather desperate impression when featured in staged holiday snaps: the void is evident.

Moving on from photography to the narratives of feature films, KATHLEEN STARCK (Osnabrück) gave an impression of her ongoing research into "The Cold Warrior in British and American Early Cold War Films." Choosing from a selection of propagandistic movies of that era (like the John Wayne vehicle *Big Jim McLain*) as well as elaborate satire and subversive thrillers (like John Frankenheimer's original *Manchurian Candidate*), Starck demonstrated how the "war of ideologies" left no area of society untouched by the struggle for superiority. The degree of hyper-

masculinity exhibited in many British and American films of the 1950s, she argued, is motivated by the witch-hunt against communism, the cold warrior being modeled as an aggressive, tough weapon against the Soviet enemy. The foe may come from the outside (as in classical British films like *High Treason* or *The Prisoner*), or he may take the shape of the fifth column (as in the U.S. examples), in either case he is associated with weakness, homosexual subtexts, and effeminate behavior unlikely to hold up in a fistfight. The genderedness of this ideological theme is taken to an extreme in Stanley Kubrick's classic satire *Dr. Strangelove* (1964), where lunatic, cigar-smoking general Jack D. Ripper causes atomic disaster in his disastrous attempts to defend the hypermasculine American body against a suspected communist infiltration.

DIRK WIEMANN (Potsdam) proposed an intermedial reading of the fiction of Booker prize-winning British author John Berger, whose contemporary "Bildungsroman" *G.* (1972) corresponds closely to Berger's own theoretical reflections on Cubism. Reworking the Don Giovanni motif, *G.* offers a multi-faceted portrayal of a type of hyperseductive heteromascularity that is both dependent on and subversive of the patriarchal social arrangements into which it is embedded. In addition, the protagonist appears to represent a Deleuzian tension of the molar and the molecular which finds its textual equivalence in the frisson of a generically conventional macrostructure pitted against a thoroughgoing auto-fragmentation. Thus, cubist fragmentation is implemented as a narrative strategy: most of the pages consist of short, isolated stanzas of prose; consequently, Berger's protagonist is forced to "see fields where others see chapters." Against this background, masculinity emerges as another sex that is not one; heteronormative models of masculinity effectively putting themselves out of order in the process.

The second (and most comprehensive) thematic section of the workshop was taken up by literary analyses within the realm of the transnational and the global (chair: Ronald J. Corthell). Fittingly, the first contribution drew parallels between two of the most influential postwar novels on masculinities in crises on both sides of the Atlantic. In her paper entitled "Anxious Domesticity and Consumerism," CLAUDIA FALK (Heidelberg) focused on the 1950s as a period of affluence and improved living conditions, where the notion of male anxiety can be detected beneath the shining surface of suburban households (in the U.S.), and in feelings of inferiority within the social hierarchy (in the U.K.). In both popular and academic writing of the 1950s, domestic harmony and equality between the sexes were celebrated, yet at the same time, the contrast between men's wartime experiences and civilian life introduced feelings of crisis in masculine self-perception. Triggered by popular culture, different types of masculinity surfaced, such as the Angry Young Man who had little in common with the prevailing male ideal of the breadwinner. Both Joe Lampton, the protagonist in John Braine's *Room at the Top*, as well as Frank Wheeler (a rather troubled version of the "man in the gray flannel suit" in Richard Yates's *Revolutionary Road*), were examined with regard to their suffering from the tensions between conformity and nonconformity—the former character driven by his desires to overcome class restrictions and pursuing women like prize trophies, the latter bored and unsatisfied after having settled down with wife and children. At a loss for alternatives, their insecurity leads to a fallback on traditional gender roles; consumerism offering the means for establishing a stable, yet contradictory, concept of (domestic) masculinity.

The crisis of the domestic experience was also the basis for LISA FELSTEAD (Portsmouth) in her examination of “Male Anxiety and Consumerism” as a specific experience of White middle-class America. Drawing upon iconic American literature of the period, Felstead subjected James Dickey’s novel *Deliverance* (later to be made into the controversial film of the same title by director John Boorman) to a close reading with regard to its subtext of a “feminized” nature serving as a realm of reaffirming masculinity. Dickey’s protagonists—four friends living in the city who seek their lost manhood on a wilderness trip, in spite of homoerotic tensions within their group—fail to alleviate the problematic relationship between masculinity and the consumerized culture of post-war American society. Instead, the male subject is presented in this Cold War period as an anxious figure, constantly seeking a masculine identity that is purged of feminine influence. The motifs and themes of these perversions of the fabled “American dream” are not only present in many other novels and films of the same period (like *Midnight Cowboy*), but also in narratives at the end of the Cold War period, like Bret Easton Ellis’s *American Psycho* (1991), and Chuck Palahniuk’s *Fight Club* (1996).

Whilst *Deliverance* ends in acts of violence and traumatizing experiences for just about all involved, there is one model of masculinity during the same era which always seems to come away unindicted from the scene of the crime. In their joint paper, CHRISTOPHER BREU (Illinois State) and ELIZABETH HATMAKER (Illinois State) presented Patricia Highsmith’s infamous anti-hero Tom Ripley as an important mutation in the representation of noir masculinity. Constantly remaining resistant to the “other-directed” ethos of Fordism and bourgeois consumer conformity, Ripley’s individualist (and violent) behavior emerges as almost fully pathological in its refusal to adapt to the increasingly other-directed imperatives of corporate life. Thus, Highsmith’s novels are fully in line with other contemporary noir writers like Cornell Woolrich, whose protagonists act out their resistance through the obsessive destruction of individual (or privatized) others and/or themselves. Ripley’s malleable masculinity, in particular, enables him to elude the conventional fate both of the noir anti-hero and of the culprit in most detective fiction. Ripley becomes a transnational success story, constantly remaining in the liminal zone, never taking sides, parodying the figure of an American tourist in Italy, whose interest in travel and superficial relationships render him a perverse reconfiguration of the “other-directed” company man so celebrated by high Fordism—in mirroring the needs of others, he also literally annihilates them and takes their personalities for his own. This flexible masculine figure moves in an international landscape new to the genre, suggesting that Ripley represents a form of masculinity adapted to the international theater of the post-war era of the *pax Americana* (Wallerstein)—rather ironic, given the way Ripley came back to cause mayhem without ever being convicted in four more novels by Highsmith.

INES DETMERS (Chemnitz) extended the field of discussion to one of the major works of world literature, looking for interfigural “‘Quixotecentric’ Masculinities” in selected novels of the postwar era. On the basis of Cervantes’s unique creation of the highly defective chivalric (anti-)hero, who must be read as an allegory for a nation (and normative *machismo*) in decline and lacking virility, Detmers presented a number of examples where the (historical) socio-discursive qualities of Don Quixote’s masculinity were revisited in the form of successor figures in 20<sup>th</sup> century writing who reinvent their respective national masculinity.

Moving from one of the major texts of the literary canon to a rather forgotten text of African-American writing, KEVIN FLOYD (Kent State) introduced Sam Greenlee's satirical novel *The Spook Who Sat by the Door* in his paper dedicated to "Black Manhood as Technique." In Greenlee's book, a U.S. senator makes protagonist Dan Freeman [sic] the first Black member of the CIA, in order to secure Black votes and to stage visible evidence of his liberal politics. Freeman, however, uses his CIA training in order to coach some inner city youths to become a gang of "Black urban guerrillas" ready to fight for themselves. The narrative locates the struggle in the streets, where Freeman's training program turns the "Cobras" into a judo-fighting, bomb-building gang of snipers. At the same time, there is a subversive quality to the writing, since the reading process will inevitably provide some degree of manhood training for the reader, too. Thus, *The Spook Who Sat by the Door* corresponds to Judith Butler's understanding of gender as multi-leveled, locating gendered knowledge mainly in the shape of skills that can be acquired and performed. As soon as the acquisition of these skills lies no longer exclusively in the hands of the White governmental body, Black manhood is constructed as the superior form of masculinity, finally able to overcome oppression. However, both in Greenlee's book as well as in the subsequent film adaptation, Black manhood is characterized as sexually predatory, dominated by a patriarchal value system that totally excludes women from the revolutionary struggle.

In "Accounting for a Crisis," ERIK PIETSCHMANN (Tübingen) returned to the comparative angle that had opened this section, in order to bring it to a close. His paper focused on the language of crisis in male first-person narratives with regard to how they model identity constructions within a gendered framework. The narrators in the two controversial novels presented by Pietschmann (Martin Amis's *Money* and Evan S. Connell's *Diary of a Rapist*) present their gendered selves as severely affected by their inability to live up to normative ideals. In the case of Earl Summerfield, the narrator in Connell's book, this becomes manifest in the gap between the "American Dream" and the experience of a corrupt world that erodes his male identity. Within their heterodiegetic accounts, both characters attempt to reassert their gendered selves by employing strategies of the "engaged narrator" (Robyn Warhol), addressing their readers directly and drawing them into their twisted minds. By making use of the narratological tools supplied by Genette and Bakhtin, Pietschmann traced tensions and fears of failure at the heart of the novels, demonstrating how the crisis inevitably takes its toll on the narrative itself. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that the endings in both books imply suicide attempts on behalf of the narrators.

The penultimate section was chaired by Kevin Floyd and comprised three papers examining relations between masculinity and ethnicity. MIRJAM FROTSCHER (Dresden) added dramatic texts to the scope of the workshop, as part of her discussion of "The Reclaiming of Asian American Masculinities since the 1970s." While orientalist and sexist stereotypes regarding the perceived "Otherness" of Asian Americans, and the pejorative portrayals in popular literature (like the *Charlie Chan* books), had gone almost uncontested in the preceding decades, the 1970s saw a shift in the visibility of Asian Americans, with young writers starting to discuss the divisive power of blatant misconceptions. Frotscher addressed the controversy between Frank Chin and Maxine Hong Kingston regarding the problematic role of

orientalist sentiments and feminized writing styles. In addition to reflection on Chin's play *The Chickencoop Chinaman* and Hong Kingston's novel *China Men*, she offered an analysis of David Henry Hwang's deconstructive reworking of *M. Butterfly* which features a unique take on mimicry and its crucial role in subverting the stereotype of the effeminate Oriental. This myth was shown to have been instrumental in strengthening the image of a virile American national identity through exclusions of the racialized "Other" as a gendered "Other."

ANGELIKA KÖHLER (Dresden) revisited the Frank Chin play discussed by Frotscher, yet she embedded it within the framework of her approach to "Male Identity Constructions" and ethnic dilemmas addressed in three literary creations of the late 1960s and early 1970s. The texts presented by Köhler share the notion that masculinity is a performative construct, whilst mediating the complex subject matter through highly diverse literary techniques. The best-known out of these three is certainly Philip Roth's controversial *Portnoy's Complaint*, where the protagonist's desperate lament ("Bless me with manhood! Make me brave! Make me strong! Make me whole!") echoes fundamental uncertainties regarding masculinity. Portnoy blames his excessive sexuality exclusively on his repressive upbringing as a "nice Jewish boy," neither coming to terms with his overprotective mother nor with his failure to suppress his Jewish values and forms of cultural positioning. Köhler's analysis was completed by her interpretation of Ishmael Reed's antebellum slave narrative, *Flight to Canada*, which problematizes the dependency of Black manhood on White concepts by constructing a meta-narrative of African American self-liberation that includes a rewriting of Uncle Tom stereotypes and the incorporation of the Native American trickster myth.

The last contribution in this section showed effectively that discussions of masculinities in literature should not be limited to the works of male authors: JAMES TSAAIOR (Lagos) dealt with the "(De)Construction and (Re)Imag(in)ation of Masculinities in the Fiction of Buchi Emecheta and Toni Morrison," thus throwing light on two major authors of Black British and African American women's writing respectively. Tsaior introduced different feminist strategies of writing as literary means to interrogate the gender politics willed into existence by dominant regimes of masculinist power, stressing the focal need to revise such power structures and testify against them.

The final session, again chaired by workshop host Stefan Horlacher, featured two contributions on *Femininelist Juxtapositions*. In her examination of science fiction narratives, PAVLA VESELA (Prague) addressed the topic of "The 'Female Man' in British and American Women's Utopias from the 1970s." Vesela gave a brief survey of the notion of utopia as a male-dominated sphere, quoting classic examples from Thomas More and Francis Bacon. In contrast, books like Joanna Russ's *The Female Man* (1975) or Naomi Mitchison's *Solution Three* (1975) attempt to redefine conventional femininity within scenarios beyond the heterosexual norm. In these imaginary societies, gender roles are altered and wishfully bettered, going so far as to include visions of a "new and improved" masculinity. Ironically, this means that one of the four parallel worlds in *The Female Man*, for instance, excludes men entirely. In Mitchison's novel, on the other hand, the heterosexual norm is held responsible for all injustice and violence in the world, causing the social order to rely solely on cloning in order to procreate. A bold alternative was suggested in the

shape of Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976), where even physical differences between the sexes are deconstructed and a type of emasculated manhood takes part in the birth and nurturing of children. Here, ideal masculinity consequently results from men's acceptance of traditionally female roles and qualities.

The articulation of underlying male anxieties (like the fear of giving up biological uniqueness in Piercy's book) was readdressed by CHRISTA GREWE-VOLPP (Mannheim) in her paper on seminal American plays, titled "'It's One Hell of a Mess in Here': Masculinity, the Myth of the Frontier and the Renunciation of the Mother." Looking at texts by Arthur Miller, David Mamet, and Sam Shepard as representative of the dark undercurrents of the contemporary White middle-class family (a consistent topic in American drama since the 1940s), Grewe-Volpp read the domestic scenarios in these plays as symptomatic of the ills of American society at large. Set against the backdrop of the unfulfillable American dream and the frontier myth, a play such as *Death of a Salesman* emphasizes an idealized image of a rugged, often violent masculinity, closely connected to a boy's oedipal rejection of the maternal and his entrance into the patriarchal order. Willy Loman tries to flee from the realm of the feminine and idealizes both his father and brother in order to assert a masculinity freed from the restrictions of a domestic, female world. However, as Grewe-Volpp convincingly demonstrated, the fear of the maternal leads all of the characters in these plays to self-destruction (the mild ending of Mamet's *American Buffalo* being a notable exception), and the position of marginalized women in these texts, outside the myth of a masculinized frontier, can be interpreted as the only hope for a more mature American male identity.

Inevitably, the concluding remarks pointed towards the need for extended discussion, as the workshop program could but throw a brief glance at many aspects of literary and other cultural representations of masculinity and the way they may question and deconstruct received notions in order to testify to their fluidity and transitoriness. The proceedings of "Between the National and the Transnational, 1945-1980" will be published in 2011 with an American or German publisher. Moreover, there will be further periods of joint research between Dresden and Kent State, including a co-taught graduate seminar in the United States and a follow-up workshop at Kent State University in August 2011, focusing on the era between 1981 and 2011. Dresden will then, in turn, host a final international conference in June, 2012.

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