

# **Cowboys and Cocks:**

## **The heterosexual construction and homosexual appropriation of masculinity**

Willie Schlechter

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Supervisor: Elmarie Costandius

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## **Declaration**

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

Signature:.....

Date.....

**Abstract**

This study explores the performative construction and appropriations of heteronormative masculinities by heterosexual and homosexual men respectively. My interest in masculinity as a culturally constructed fantasy is extended to imply a desire for the masculine. The idea of masculine desire is further developed by indicating a possible (homo)sexual desire for the heteronormative representation of masculinity.

In highlighting the artificial and material qualities of the assumed stable phallus, the impassable structure of hegemonic masculinities, such as manifested in the cowboy and bodybuilder, is turned into the penetrable penis as object of the male gaze. I will concentrate on the fetishization of heterosexual masculine signifiers in physique photography in order to demonstrate this shift in the male gaze.

Masculinity as a (de)attachable component allows the de-subjectification and thus, de-powering of heteronormative masculinity by the possible appropriation thereof by gay men.

### **Opsomming**

Hierdie navorsing ondersoek die performatiewe konstruksie en apropiasie van heteronormatiewe manlikhede deur onderskydelik heteroseksuele en homoseksuele mans. My belangstelling in manlikheid as 'n kultureel gestruktureerde fantasie word uitgebrei om 'n begeerte vir manlikheid te impliseer. Die idee van manlike begeerte word verder ontwikkel deur 'n moontlike (homo)seksuele begeerte vir die heteronormatiewe uitbeelding van manlikheid aan te dui.

Deur die artifiële en materiële kwaliteite van die veronderstelde stabiele fallus te beklemtoon, word die ondeurdringbare hegemonie van manlike strukture, soos dit voorkom in die cowboy en liggamsbouer, verander in die penetreerbare penis as objek van die manlike (male) 'gaze'. Ek konsentreer op die fetisering van heteroseksuele manlike tekens in 'physique' fotografie ten einde hierdie skuiwing in die manlike 'gaze' te demonstreer.

Manlikheid as 'n (ont)hegbare komponent veronderstel die de-subjektivering, en dus ontmagtiging van heteronormatiewe manlikheid deur die moontlike apropiasie daarvan deur gay mans.



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## Introduction

The title of this thesis implies the investigation of cowboys and cocks. However, in order to avoid possible disappointment, it is important to delineate in a few words the meaning of cowboys and cocks within this particular area of research. Although I will partly discuss the cowboy as a mythical character, the implied usage thereof in the title is that of its stereotypical associations with rugged macho (heterosexual) masculinity. I will thus not focus exclusively on the cowboy per se, but rather on macho masculinity which happens to manifest itself in the character of the cowboy. These associations are most striking in American representations of the cowboy, and therefore also determine the boundaries of my discussion thereof.

A macho demonstration of heterosexual (and homosexual) masculinities is, however, not only bound to the cowboy, and is evident in many other characters. In South Africa, rugby culture is determinately heterosexual and homophobic, yet is not as criticized as the mythical cowboy. The effect of gay appropriations of traditionally heterosexual American masculine stereotypes such as the cowboy, sailor, cop, etc is most notable in gay imagery and by gay men themselves. It is thus a more notable and recognized image to discuss in terms of heterosexual and homosexual masculine correlations.

Similarly, the use of the term cocks does not imply a discussion of the male sexual organ as such (although I do make reference to the penis and the phallus), but is metaphorically used as a signifier of male homosexuality. The word quite obviously suggests associations with gay slang and pornography, but is still not the real intention of my application thereof, though it does establish the position of the homosexual male.

*Cowboys and Cocks* is a word-play of “Cowboys and Crooks”, a traditional game played by mostly boys. My intention to such a reference undeniably associates heterosexual macho masculinity as the cowboy (the hero), while its opposite (the crook) is characterized by the homosexual male cock. It further places them within an all-male,

though not necessarily all-boys environment, thus emphasising their apparent homoerotic relationship, which is one of the concerns of this study.

From this position, the aim of this study is to explore how the cowboy as a signifier of heteronormative masculinity is a constructed and performed entity, which is further undermined through the appropriation thereof by gay men. I will expose both cowboy and cock as interrelated and suggest that the (homo)eroticization of the cowboy (phallus) places emphasis on the presence of the cock (penis). Such an accentuation will suppose the penetrable quality of men and thus masculinity as an accepted position of heteronormative masculinity as “stable”.

This thesis will mainly concentrate on the performative and subsequently fictional character of masculinity. It will underline, although not necessarily discuss in broader terms, the constructed “nature”<sup>1</sup> of male fantasy and desire. This seems like a straightforward enough premise with regards to the discussion of masculinity, but by assuming a position which differentiates between different types of masculinities, including heterosexual and homosexual masculinities, masculine fantasy and male desire stand the chance of becoming confused, or undifferentiated. In simpler terms, what is conventionally<sup>2</sup> perceived as a heterosexual male fantasy is also able to signify a homosexual male fantasy, and more alarming, heterosexual male desire for the masculine mirrors a homosexual male desire for the same masculinity.

Such a contention requests quite a broad spectrum of research methodologies which simply cannot be dealt with within the limits of this thesis. Though ostensibly falling within the scope of feminist/gender and queer studies, masculinity as a cultural fantasy is

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout the course of this argument, I will be inclined to place certain terms, like “nature”, “natural”, “normal”, etc in inverted commas, since they are unavoidable in any discussion of gender, but may potentially lead to misinterpretations. By placing them within inverted commas, I merely emphasize their assumed truthfulness, which are in fact regularized and accepted ideological aspects of the body and gender. The rest of the thesis will divulge more accurately on the constructed, and thus “unnatural” and “non-normal” characters of these terms.

<sup>2</sup> When I use terms such as “conventional”, “orthodox”, or “traditional” in describing masculinity or the male body, I am mostly referring to these constructs as they are classified by a modernist patriarchal system which assumes “normal” masculinity as undeniably heterosexual and superior.

indubitably embedded within visual culture, but is not contained within it. The body as a symbol within the broader spectrum of signs can be read using the same semiological glasses as one would in deconstructing any other cultural sign. I will however not exclusively focus on semiotics as a methodology in an effort to relocate masculine signs. This would be too limiting for the intentions of this study.

Other discourses, such as psychoanalysis, play an equal part in (de)constructing masculinities and male desire, but are frequently contested by postmodern representations which tend to rely on an eclectic assortment of signs which very often result in a parody of accepted normative laws and values. The arguments within this thesis make use of postmodern elements such as parody and pastiche which (sometimes) literally exposes the fragmented and performative qualities of modernist classification of masculinity<sup>3</sup>. The contributions of the French psychoanalytic theorist, Jacques Lacan should, however, not be underestimated and serves great theoretical importance to the discussion of the subject and the phallic.

The aim of this thesis is not to try and dissect masculinity, but rather to investigate the performative quality thereof as a socially constructed aspect of gender and in turn expose it as a cultural myth<sup>4</sup>. By seeing gender and masculinity as a performance, or in the feminist theorist, Judith Butler's view, a performative, we will be able to recognize it as a fantasy, a fiction historically created within a society, and which is interpellated over time to effectually create the illusion of reality. The French literary theorist and critic, Roland Barthes, explains that "myth is constituted by the loss of the historical quality of things: in it, things lose the memory that they once were made" (1973:58). This thesis

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<sup>3</sup> I specifically distinguish between masculinity and masculinities. Modernist classification depict the first mentioned as a stable unchanging aspect of heterosexual males, which, although constantly modifying its physical attributes, is perceived as an internal quality within the modernist male body. Masculinities, on the other hand are the result of postmodern representation of the male body as lacking an internal masculinity, and asserts that masculinity is performatively constructed in various ways by different males, which result in not one, but an array of differently structured masculinities.

<sup>4</sup> French literary theorist, Roland Barthes argues in his chapter from *Mythologies*, "Myth Today", that "[m]yth is not defined by the object of its message, but by the way in which it utters this message: there are formal limits to myth, there are no 'substantial' ones" (Barthes, 1973:51). This is an important definition with regards to masculinity as a myth. It will become clear that the performative qualities of masculinity which I will discuss produce these "formal" elements, which result in the ethereal quality of masculinity as insubstantial fantasy.



will expose the fictional character of masculinity and define it as a fantasy, which is consciously or subconsciously desired by men. This desire by men, according to the author Kaja Silverman's interpretation of Lacan, is a desire to fulfil or make whole the notion of a divided sexuality (Silverman, 1983:342). I will make extensive referencing to the notion of masculine lack throughout this thesis.

I do not wish to mock traditional representations of masculinity, but rather to draw representational similarities between the images of heterosexual male fantasy and a homosexual male desire for that fantasy. Both fantasy and desire in both cases are determined by the constitutive elements of the masculine (which, as I've mentioned is a myth or fantasy) and the one's desire could therefore not be more "natural" than the other. Both are socially determined, in other words, from outside of the male body. Once again, my intention is not to ask for the "normalization" of homosexual masculine desire, since all masculinities are by "nature" "unnatural" and thus "abnormal". The focus should be on masculine fantasy and whether or not this is a stable enough structure to allow different levels of power within gender segregation.

In an effort to try and find a solution to this problem, I will rely on a research strategy which focuses on an informational as well as an argumentative discussion of "traditional" representations of post-war American masculinity depicted in magazine covers and advertisements, as well as characters from the motion screen. I will compare these types of representation with the photographs of physique models which appeared in physique photography and specifically the gay magazine *Physique Pictorial* from the same period.

The nature of this research will rely on the feminist theorist's, Judith Butler's theories of gender performativity, although I will extend these theories to also include gender as performance. Butler distinguishes between performance and performativity as the difference between a wilful and deliberate act, and an enactment of conventionalized social practices. She notes that gender is not something which can be taken from the wardrobe each morning and be used to adorn the body (this, according to Butler, is mere performance), nor is it purely the result of biology. She insists that gender performativity

is the result of the body being controlled by “the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names”. (1993:2)<sup>5</sup>.

More specifically, I will focus on the prerequisites which imply and determine a performativity as well as performance of masculinity. The body’s musculature, behaviour and attire are literally physical constructions on the body’s exterior which participate in the composition of the male body. I will highlight their unreliable nature in exclusively advocating a heterosexual masculinity. This notion will be emphasised once more by demonstrating a homosexual appropriation of these constructs, which will successfully critique their “fixed” and “inherent” heterosexual quality.

Before I continue it is important to clarify some definitions which underline the topic of my research. Desire, within the context of this thesis should not be misinterpreted as a psychosexual element produced from within the biological human body, but rather be seen as an external manifestation of specific symbolic and ideological ideas about masculinity and manhood. The author/editor Dylan Evans describes in *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis* that desire, according to Lacan, is a social product. Evans elaborates on this by saying that “[d]esire is not the private affair it appears to be but is always constituted in a dialectical relationship with the perceived desires of other subjects”. (1996:39).

A term which perhaps defines desire in this sense quite adequately is “determined”. Our desires are determined by our surroundings and can never be more or less than what is offered to us as desirable. Similarly, Judith Butler realizes in *Undoing Gender* that “the social norms that constitute our existence carry desires that do not originate with our

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<sup>5</sup> I will distinguish between these two notions by applying performativity to “conventional” masculinity, and performance to the conscious appropriations by gay men of the elements which constitute “traditional” masculine performativity. However, it is important to note that such an application is not the only possible relation. “Conventional” significations of masculinity is very often a performance, as I will partly discuss in chapter one, while appropriations thereof by gay men may very well be performative, rather than a conscious and deliberate emphasis of its significations. For the purpose of this thesis, however, I will assume the position that “orthodox” masculinity are unconsciously performed in order to achieve a masculine fantasy, while gay appropriations are deliberate parodies of “traditional’ masculinity, thus conscious performances.

individual personhood” (2004:2). This is an important notion with regards to the critique of an “innate” male heterosexual fantasy and is crucial for grasping the notion that homosexual and heterosexual male desires are similarly constructed, and therefore display an indistinguishable fantasy imagined and desired by both sexualities.

Desire is thus not something which is uniquely attributable to different bodies, but is socially produced from the point of view of the other. Lacan argues that “the object of man’s desire ... is essentially an object desired by someone else” (cited in Evans 1996:38). Thus, according to Lacan, the object of one’s desire is determined separately from the subject’s own body and is therefore susceptible to a certain degree of manipulation. Keeping this definition in mind, it will become clear that masculine desire is a continuous performance of masculine roles in order to be recognized as a “complete male”.

Another concept central to the representations of masculinities is the gaze and scopophilia (the pleasure in looking). These concepts establish and tie desire and fantasy together. Feminist cultural theorist and film-maker/critic, Laura Mulvey quotes Freud’s definition of scopophilia in her essay *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*. She argues that Freud “associated scopophilia with taking other people as objects, subjecting them to a controlling and curious gaze” (1973:381). However, from this definition it appears that the subject is in control when looking at an object, or the other as object. In terms of pin-up photography, it will become apparent that the subject lacks ultimate control over the object which he is looking at. Lacan’s concept of the gaze is perhaps more apt when discussing the subject looking at the other as object with regards to desire and fantasy. Dylan Evans explains Lacan’s use of the concept, “[w]hen the subject looks at an object, the object is always already gazing back at the subject, but from a point at which the subject cannot see it” (1996:72). This spatial difference which determines the gaze relates to the definition of fantasy provided by the film studies lecturer, Elizabeth Cowie.

In her chapter “Fantasia” from *Representing the Woman*, Cowie stresses the important part that “setting” plays within the definition of fantasy. In relation to desire, she argues

that fantasy “is characterised by, not the achievement of desired objects, but the arranging...of desire: a veritable *mise-en-scène of desire*” (1997:361, emphasis in original). It is perhaps worth quoting at length Laplanche and Pontalis’s (1968) view of fantasy which Cowie quotes within her essay.

In phantasy the subject does not pursue the object or its sign: he appears caught up himself in the sequence of images. He forms no representation of the desired object, but is himself represented as participating in the scene although, in the earliest forms of fantasy, he cannot be assigned any fixed place in it... As a result, the subject, although always present in the fantasy, may be so in a de-subjectivised form, that is to say, in the very syntax of the sequence in question. (1997:361)

As with the structuring of desire, fantasy is built upon spatial difference. The subject, as the above quote determines, is never fully situated within the fantasy, but only takes part therein in a “de-subjectivised” form. In other words, the subject can never fully inhabit or claim its desired fantasy from the point of its position as subject.

The inversion or de-subjectification of the heterosexual male gaze as all-encompassing and powerful is challenged by homosexual representations of “traditional” heterosexual masculine imagery. More importantly, the male homosexual body as object of heterosexual scrutiny is, because of its maleness, at the same time situated within the position of the subject, which allows the possible objectification of other men, including heterosexual men. Masculinity is thus threatened by a possible objectification (thus feminization) from a homosexual male gaze.

Evans explains Lacan’s recognition of the power of images within fantasy. According to him, Lacan insists that images do not have any intrinsic qualities within itself, but rather inherit their qualities as a result of the place which they occupy in a symbolic system; “the fantasy is always an image set to work in a signifying structure” (Lacan cited in Evans 1996:61). Thus, like desire, fantasies are socially constructed in relation to other symbolic images. It is the constructed-nature of masculinity as fantasy which underlines this research. Following Lacan’s definition of the gaze, we may also deduct that fantasies

and desires as objects of the subject's imagination, are gazing back at the subject which place them in control over the subject.

My use of the definitions I outlined above is limited to their applications within gender theory, more specifically queer theory and masculine studies. Desire and fantasy function on many different social as well as political levels, but I will, however, limit my application thereof to the gendered body, in particular the male body. When I refer to heterosexual masculine desire, I am referring to the constructed fantasy which has come to signify a manly behaviour and image of (complete) men as virile, powerful, and heterosexual.

I will approach the argument of masculine fantasy from a social constructivist point of view which denies the supposed necessary biological relation to gender. According to social constructivism, gender is produced and assigned to concordant bodies through social descriptions and bodily inscription. The theories of Judith Butler (*Gender Trouble* (1990); *Bodies that Matter: On the discursive limits of sex* (1993)) demonstrate gender as performative bodily acts. Such theories are central to my discussion of masculinity as an appropriable element which can be acquired or rejected. One of the elements which Butler addresses and which manifests itself within the material I will be discussing, is the concept of drag as defying the inevitability of gender performativity. I will extend the traditional perception of drag to the acquiring of a hypermasculine image by gay men. Accordingly, I will touch on notions such as masculine parody and performance, which I regard as conscious and deliberate subversions of hegemonic heterosexual constructs.

In chapter one, "Making Men", I will investigate the construction of a heterosexual macho masculinity by heterosexual men. I will argue that such a particular construct was a reaction to the effeminizing image of the American family man in the 1950s. American culture saw the return of the cowboy on the movie screen, in television programs, fiction, magazines and advertising. The upsurge of male masculinization was, however, primarily a fantasy created by American culture but never fully achieved by its male citizens. The visualization of macho masculinity further emphasised masculinity as a role which has to

be played within culture. This in itself was an undermining of the modernist notion of masculine “inherency” within men, and drew certain similarities with feminine constructs, such as dressing, walking and talking in a culturally specific way.

In addition to performing a masculine fantasy, the male body as site of masculinity was redefined accordingly. Fitness and bodybuilding were reaching new levels of importance and advertisements unmistakably associated a muscled body with the “complete” male. However, like the appropriation of traditional masculine icons such as the cowboy, transforming the male body into a mass of muscle proved to be just as performative of masculine fantasy, and merely another means of “making men”. Furthermore, bodybuilding demonstrated masculinity as a narcissistic activity which is strikingly compared to stereotypical feminine behaviour and even a homoerotic pursuit. I will highlight some feminine associations with the macho man, and inject the possibility of subverting heterosexual superiority and subjectivity by exposing these feminine connotations.

These types of criticism may have fallen on deaf ears to heterosexual men who were eager to enhance their masculine appearance, but macho as a feminine and possible homoerotic performance is cleverly parodied in gay physique photography, pornographic illustrations, and movies.

Chapter two, “Cloning Men”, critically investigates the appropriation of a macho masculinity by gay men. Gay macho, unlike the performativity of (most) heterosexual masculinities, is an active and self-identified sexual performance of conventional masculinity. The adoption of traditional signifiers such as the cowboy, biker, and lumberjack are displayed as costumes, and although the gay body is physically transformed to the state of an obvious over-exaggerated and “cloned” image of orthodox masculinity, many critics view such an appropriation as merely reinforcing patriarchal stereotypes and emphasising a notion that homosexuality and masculinity are intrinsically divorced from each other. Such a criticism however fails to realize the subversive effect

which the homosexual (as masculine) gaze may have on hegemonic heterosexual masculinity.

Through my discussion of certain images of gay pin-ups in *Physique Pictorial* it will become clear that, although masculinity may be divorced from homosexuality, it brings into question the supposed marriage between heterosexuality and masculinity. It further demonstrates how heterosexual masculine fantasy is undermined and placed into the position of the other by making it the object of the male homosexual gaze.

I will conclude my research by proposing that the performative qualities of masculinities expose the ambivalent relationship between cowboys and cocks (as I've explained their definitions with regards to this study). By claiming heteronormative authority, the heterosexual cowboy represses his possible position as penetrable object, and thus denies the masculine signification of the penis, and instead highlights the phallus, albeit it's unstable and artificial nature. On the other hand, the appropriation of heteronormative masculine signifiers, or phallic symbols, by macho clones and physique models emphasised their possible transformation into the (homo)eroticized and therefore penetrable penis. These appropriations effectively de-subjectivise masculine normativity and successfully expose it as a cultural myth and fantasy.

## Chapter 1: Making Men

In this chapter I will investigate the construction of a heterosexual macho masculinity produced within post-war American visual culture. I will discuss the possible dilemmas involved in this construct as supposedly signifying a “true” or “normal” masculine appearance by laying claim to theories which argue that gender and thus masculinity is performatively constructed and not biologically determined. Consequently, I will demonstrate that heterosexual male fantasy is a fiction or myth and masculine desire is determined by the social need to discover and realize this fantasy.

I will limit myself to the visual representations found in magazines and on the motion screen. Visual culture, as producer of different masculine behaviours, creates a masculine fantasy as well as the desire to attain such a fantasy within men. The assumption that “true” masculinity is a stable construct within “normal” (heterosexual masculine) men is paradoxically undermined by depicting “true” masculinity within the media: the media as a performative of a fictionalized “reality”. The “reality” of masculinity is therefore a fiction, a fantasy only partially achievable through continuous desire.

The constant re-/appropriation of masculine ideals proved that masculinity, like all sexualities and genders, are constructs acted out according to a social script authored by society. Dylan Evans explains that “[t]he object of desire is continually deferred” (1996:38). Masculinity thus, as the fantasy of male desire, is something which is endlessly and actively strived towards, although desire can never be fulfilled. Masculinity therefore remains an “unreal” or utopian quality within the mind and bodies of men.

The focus of this chapter is the “unreal” quality of masculinity as a constructed representation of male fantasy and is emphasised in each of the subheadings which this chapter deals with. Desiring masculinity is characterized by gender performativity, or an active (whether conscious or unconscious) appropriation and rejection of heteronormative ideals. I will discuss the feminist theorist, Judith Butler’s, theories on the performative qualities of gender under the heading, Gender Performativity. In addition to gender



performativity means of communication, I will rely on the studies of English and Drama professor, Peggy Phelan, as well as the feminist theorist, Sarah E Chinn.

I will discuss the post-war American male as performing a socially accepted role under the topic of The Family Man. Professor in media and cultures, Bill Osgerby, as well as the sociologist, Michael S Kimmel, provide critical explorations of the production of American masculinities, which extends beyond its application to this theme. In contrast to the conforming family man, a rebellious delinquency appeared amongst non-conforming adolescent boys. This remonstrance of conformance is discussed under Masculine Protest, where I refer to the works of the theorist, Albert Cohen, and literature researcher, Franco La Cecla.

Masculine protests are exemplified in popular culture and fiction which I discuss under the heading of Escaping to Fiction. Once again, the work of Bill Osgerby demonstrates the profound impact which macho pulp magazines for men had on a construction of a new rugged fantasy of masculinity. These, sometimes hugely romanticized depictions of men and masculinity, assist in providing men with “secure” images of manhood such as the cowboy and the bodybuilder. Although these characters appear distinctly separate from one another, they share and exemplify a masculine performance and construction more prominently than other orthodox masculinities.

In my discussion of the cowboy, I will focus on advertising, clothing, and film. Kimmel provides a historical and critical analysis of the mythical cowboy, which I apply to the subjects of The Cowboy and A Man’s World of Flavour. Under the theme of Materializing Cowboys, I refer back to Butler’s notion that gender is a construction of acts and gestures which determines the body’s identity. In accord with Butler, the journalist/translator/author, Antony Shugaar, highlights the possible dissociations of cowboy gear and masculinity. Sociology lecturer, Tim Edwards and professor of philosophy and humanities, Harry Brod underline some of the ambiguities of representing the cowboy as a fictional character on the motion screen in my discussion of Cowboys at the Movies. I will extend Brod’s argument to the topic of Masculine Masquerade, which

acts as a bridge between the cowboy and bodybuilder as both displaying masculinity on the surface of the male body.

Bodybuilding, as a developing interest amongst American men, is introduced by the curator of designs at the V&A Museum in London, Shaun Cole. Cole associates this popularity to the increasing depictions of the male physique in magazines. By laying claim to non-masculine signifiers within the representation of the bodybuilder, heteronormative masculinity is demonstrated as self-undermining and a false identification of “complete” maleness. The critique of bodybuilding as sharing feminine characteristics, explained under *Feminizing Bodybuilding*, is informed by the author, Sam Fussell, and compared with Butler’s identification of drag. The subject, *Homoeroticizing Male Sameness*, extends this critique of bodybuilding to include homoerotic significations. The writer, Emmanuel Cooper relates this paradoxical signification to the bodybuilder’s inspiration from classical sculpture. I will also introduce the feminist philosopher, Susan Bordo’s, discussion on the threatening aspect of masculine feminization and male (homo)eroticization.

### **Gender Performativity**

In response to J.L. Austin’s article “How to do Things with Words”, in which he asserts that language is performative, Judith Butler argues in *Gender Trouble* that gender, as a way of communication, and therefore a language, should thus also be interpreted as a performative act. Austin criticizes the philosophical assumption that “to say something... is always and simply to *state* something” and argues instead that “to *say* something is to *do* something” and “*by* saying or *in* saying something we are doing something” (cited in Bial 2004:147, emphasis in original). One may therefore assume that Butler supposes “expression” to suggest “saying” and that the language of gender is made up of performative expressions. She asserts that “there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very “expressions” that are said to be its results” (Butler 1990:25). Butler thus makes clear that identity can only be interpreted or fully understood by means of the *expressions* which are used in constituting that specific identity.

If we continue this line of argument, we must suppose that expressions are the words within a language and must be intelligible by the person on the receiving end of such expressions. Similarly, one must be able to speak or read the language in order to understand it. Peggy Phelan makes it clear in her book, *Unmarked*, “what one can see is in every way related to what one can say” (1993:2). In other words, expressions as performative language, like any spoken language, would lose all possible meaning should one be unable to “utter” it.

However, Butler, like essayist Harry Brod and the sociology lecturer Tim Edwards, recognizes that conventionalized social practices can be re-enacted by non-conforming bodies and thus challenges these practices’ accepted legitimacy in describing and ascribing gender performatives. Feminist theorist, Sarah E Chinn clarifies this by explaining that one is able to “misperform” one’s gender. This assumes that bodies have fixed, albeit socially informed and constructed genders, and that those genders comprise an array of possible ways of expression. Should a body fail in expressing an accepted and conventionalized gender, then it becomes what Chinn calls a “non-subject... something we don’t have a name for or can’t recognize as human...” (1997:298). It is therefore essential that bodies consciously perform their genders in such a way that will make (non)sense to others.

Butler uses the example of drag in discussing such a challenge of conventionalized gender through conscious misperformance. This notion will be elaborated on in the second chapter. What follows will be an investigation of how certain gender performatives, or gendered roles have been “legalized<sup>6</sup>” within western cultures.

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<sup>6</sup> Although I do not intend to discuss the political impact of regulatory gender behaviour on the male body specifically, it is perhaps worth mentioning that the McCarthy era had a profound impact on the social representation of men and masculinity. Bob Mizer, who I will speak more of in chapter two, declared with reference to the prohibition of male nude representations in the 1950s, that “[t]he penalties in America for nude art are more severe than robbery, manslaughter or assault, official malpractice, and many other forms of undebatable crimes” (quoted in *Beefcake*, 1998).

American post-war masculinity established specific gender roles which were propagated as “normal” gender behaviour. In his essay, “Masculinity as Masquerade”, Harry Brod explains that “[t]he various gender theories, as a group, may be seen as a developing line of reasoning which arose out of the U.S. post-war experience, specifically, in reaction to the profound but repressed cultural anxiety over gender identity in the 1950s” (1995:17-18). Such anxieties had a significant influence on the construction of both masculine and feminine genders, although a greater tension was created within masculinity. More than ever, it (masculinity) proved to be a fluctuating concept in a constant state of action/reaction. Bill Osgerby notes in *Playboys in Paradise* that American society during the 1950s and 1960s can be seen “as a site where a variety of masculine identities existed alongside one another in a relationship of tension, conflict and struggle”. This tension resulted in the construction of quite identifiable masculinities amongst men, most of which received profound criticism with regards to signifying “complete” maleness. (2001:8).

### **The Family Man**

Bill Osgerby argues that after WWII, the middle-class family arose as a vision of “reassuring certainty in an unpredictable and threatening world” (2001:63). The trauma of the war left many men feeling unsure about their own masculinities as the loss of life and other horrors on the battlefield exposed masculinity to be unstable and fragile. In an effort to restore a “lost” sense of masculine authority, men were increasingly being portrayed and encouraged to enter the domestic domain<sup>7</sup>. In his book, *Manhood in America*, the sociologist Michael Kimmel looks critically at masculine issues ranging between concepts such as the “self-made” man and the biology of male aggression. He states that “[i]n the increasingly suburban postwar world, fathers embodied masculinity” (2006:150). Furthermore, he refers to the theories of Harvard sociologist Talcott Parsons, who argues “for the emotional normality of the nuclear family, as father and mother

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<sup>7</sup> Elaine Tyler May calls this “domestic containment” and contends that “deviation from these norms risked charges of abnormality, even deviance” (quoted in Osgerby 2001:63). Men thus had to perform a specific cultural role in order to attain and maintain a heterosexual and thus non-threatening masculinity. Ferdinand Lundberg and Marynia Farnham argue in *The Modern Woman: The Lost Sex* (1947) that non-conforming men such as “bachelors more than thirty, unless physically deficient,...[should] be encouraged to undergo psychotherapy” and should also “be subjected to differential tax rates so that they at least might enjoy no economic advantage over married men and fathers” (quoted in Osgerby 2001:67).

embodied instrumental and expressive functions, both of which are necessary for social order and stability”<sup>8</sup> (2006:150). The family construct as metaphorical battlefield once again recruited men to become heroes within their own homes.

The family man, however, failed to find certainty within his own domesticated masculinity and gradually began to regard this new self-image as a feminization of “true” masculinity. Bill Osgerby gives some clarification about the masculine crisis by referencing *Look* magazine’s contribution in 1958, a series of articles entitled “The Decline of the American Male”. According to these articles, the American male had become “too soft, too complacent and too home oriented to meet the challenge of other dynamic nations like China and the Soviet Union” (*Look* 25 February 1958, quoted in Osgerby 2001:71). During the beginning of the 1960s the possible associations with effeminacy through their role as “caring” fathers and domesticated husbands began to show signs of a weakening heterosexual masculinity.

### **Masculine Protest**

In reaction to the declining middle-class family man a new rebellious and non-conformist masculinity developed particularly amongst young boys. Kimmel explains: “In black leather on his motorcycle, the delinquent represented sexual and interpersonal power, control over himself and his environment” (2006:160). The delinquent as a hypermasculine image of rebellious masculinity was however perceived by theorists such as Albert Cohen (1955) as a sign of masking masculine inadequacy. Cohen related delinquency to a “masculine protest”. He argues that boys without adequate assurance of themselves as men, would turn “to dangerous methods of proof; engaging in bad behaviour and therefore asserting [their] masculinity” (cited in Kimmel 2006:160). Franco La Cecla explains in his essay “Rough Manners” (2000), “[b]eing men and showing that they are men seems to be the same thing, forming a common front, an

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<sup>8</sup> Parsons also discusses the possible problems with an unstable or disintegrating family structure, such as the absent father or over-dominant mother. Such an unstable structure could result in the gay and delinquent son. Fathers seemed to be caught in a catch-22; “real” men were supposed to be a breadwinner yet being away too long from the home meant the possible effeminization of his son.

acquired (made, however, to look “natural”) capacity to appear” (2000:41). This was caused, as I have noted earlier, by the absent father or the over-dominant mother.

In *Christella en die Rooi Stiletto*<sup>9</sup> the character, Christo, as an effeminate boy is sent to an “institution” by his parents to help him with his “condition”. His failure to appear macho and violent is clearly associated with a masculine pathology which is regarded as worthy of institutionalization. Furthermore, his lack of such “appropriate” masculine behaviour invokes in his parents a fear of Christo’s absent maleness, which they articulate by exclaiming, “dié kind sal nooit ‘n man kan wees (this child will never be a man)”. The parents’ resolve is to send him to a school which would teach him to appear manlier by asserting more aggressive behaviour. The schoolboys’ fear of possible homosexual identification, together with homophobia is represented in Christo’s observation that they are not wearing dresses. Instead, they all take part in physical contact sports such as wrestling and rugby, accompanied by the rebelliousness of alcohol consumption. What Butler perceives as not a fixed entity inherent within the body, but a set of “normalizing practices” which the body appropriates in relation to his/her society, is unfamiliar to Christo who has just arrived at such an “institution” where these “normalizing practices” are actively endorsed<sup>10</sup>.

Harry Brod explains that the elements which constitute masculine behaviour are produced from within a specific social arena, in this case the school. He argues that “gender is a social relation practised in social interactions, and therefore not reducible to one’s own or in the “separate spheres” of female and male “cultures”, nor reducible to the unfolding of instinctive psychosexual “drives”” (1995:16). The distinction between Christo’s effeminate appearance and the butch behaviour of the other boys are thus only

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<sup>9</sup> See appendix A for a complete copy of *Christella en die Rooi Stiletto*.

<sup>10</sup> Foucault’s theory that sexuality is the product of discourse (*History of Sexuality* 1978) and that the body is continuously regulated by social practices (which the school as education system is significantly a part of) (*Discipline and Punish* 1977) , is explained by Tim Edwards in terms of the regulated social body as a result of state apparatuses such as the school. He explains that “[i]t is also Foucault’s argument that society is increasingly held together not by overt or visible state apparatuses such as the police or the army, but by what he calls ‘bio-politics’ or the very development of covert or invisible regulations and disciplines practised within and outside such carceral institutions as prisons” (Edwards 2006:142).

created within the heterosexual and misogynist environment which Christo now inhabits. The reversal would be just as significant if one of the butch schoolboys had been forced to occupy a ballet class, where the social arena is stereotypically labelled as feminine or effeminate.

Masculinity, or more generally, gender, can thus be seen as functioning meaningfully only within a signifying structure, which already carries specific symbolic and ideological significations within the images represented within this structure. The Foucauldian premise which purports that sexuality is a product of discourse assumes that the gendered/sexual body is understood only in relation to this discourse (*The History of Sexuality* 1978). The words and signs within the language of gendered discourse inevitably determine how one reads the signifying body. Just as ideologies surrounding masculinity and femininity are constructed from within the limits of discourse, nonconforming bodies are labelled as deviant and “abnormal”.

In *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler explains how certain bodies are actively inscribed as deviant by hegemonic culture, but more importantly, she notes that these pathologized inscriptions are created from within heteronormative societies in order to establish the self (different from the other) as normative and pure. She explains this by referring to Mary Douglas’s theory in *Purity and Danger*. In Butler’s words,

Any discourse that establishes the boundaries of the body serves the purpose of instating and naturalizing certain taboos regarding the appropriate limits, postures, and modes of exchange that define what it is that constitute bodies. (Butler 1990:178)

It is also worth quoting Douglas herself:

[I]deas about separating, purifying, demarcating and punishing transgressions have as their main function to impose system on an inherently untidy experience. It is only by exaggerating the difference between within and without, above and below, male and female, with and against, that a semblance of order is created. (Douglas quoted in Butler 1990:178)

In continuing my discussion of *Christella en die Rooi Stiletto*, homosexual deviance is represented through the stigmatization of “moffies” (derogatory term for homosexual or effeminate men). In Fig. 1 the naturalization of taboos which Butler speaks about is depicted in its negative. The homophobic behaviour of the boys throwing “moffies” out of the school dance naturalizes the *absence* of the moffies’ supposed deviant bodies. To relate this more directly to the above quotes from Butler and Douglas; the “instating and naturalizing” of taboos allows for the normalization of the absences of these taboos from heteronormative societies. In reference to Douglas, the difference of inside and outside, or heterosexual and homosexual, illustrated by literally cutting away pieces of the paper’s surface, is highlighted in order to create “a semblance of order” (Douglas cited in Butler, 1990:178).

However, the suppression of deviance and social taboos, such as the homosexual body, fails to create a seamless representation of hegemony, or an undisturbed semblance of order, and causes traces of the tabooed body as absent from hegemonic order. The process of cutting the unwanted image (tabooed body) out of its environment physically leaves a hole within the picture. Butler further clarifies the idea of otherness as borne from within hegemonic social structures. She argues,

[B]eing “outside” the hegemonic order does not signify being “in” a state of filthy and untidy nature. Paradoxically, homosexuality is almost always conceived within the homophobic signifying economy as *both* uncivilized and unnatural. (Butler 1990:180)

By taking the characters in *Christella en die Rooi Stiletto* out of the context in which they are initially represented as “deviant”, they lose their deviant significations. The blank page/context on which they are now placed neutralizes their otherness, as there exists no boundaries in which to place them and thus to measure their “normality” by. The black and white photography, in which the school as backdrop is depicted, signifies the hegemonic nature of a heterosexual patriarchal society in which everything, including genders, is perceived as black or white, right or wrong, normal or abnormal. The



characters' nonconformity are emphasised by hand-colouring their images and sticking them onto the black and white school photographs. The collage quality of the images further accentuate the characters' out-of-place natures as entities which can be located within and dislocated from a structure which perceives them as unfitting. In this way it becomes clear how hegemonic structures (such as the school) produce "unnatural" behaviour from within its own established boundaries and highlights concepts of deviancy as homophobic constructions.

The irony of naturalizing taboos and a semblance of order reveals itself in American culture's perception which perceives order as a loss of autonomy and virile masculinity. The over-domestication of boys was indicated as the cause of their homosexuality. In order to combat effeminacy and possible homosexuality, men revolted against conforming to social conventions, thus pushing themselves outside of the confines which purportedly established a purified system within society.

### **Escaping to Fiction**

The threat of the possible homosexualization of his son forced the American father to return to his home in order to set appropriate manly behavioural examples for his son. However, the father, as hero to his son was not enough to fill the void of the 'once soldier as hero to a nation'. Michael Kimmel explains that

[d]omestic retreat and caring fatherhood were little compensation for the restless anxiety that has continued to haunt American men; all that sober responsibility left a gaping void in the hearts of men, where once adventure, risk, and sexual passion had reigned". (2006:165)

Kimmel explains in *Manhood in America* that during the 1950's men turned to fantasy in an effort to restore a "lost" masculinity (2006:165). With the help of popular culture, particularly the flood of magazines specifically aimed at men, a "sturdy maleness" was resurrected (Osgerby 2001:76). The first "Marlboro Man" advertising campaign in 1955 as well as an influx of "true adventure" pulp magazines (Figs. 2-5) all concentrated on establishing an image of the "complete male".

The new image of a rugged outdoorsman as signifier of a “truer” form of (heterosexual) masculinity was a forceful and a quite specific abhorrent departure from the family man. He is no longer trapped within the walls of the home, where a self-realization of masculinity purported to be impossible; instead he is continuously featured in the “wilderness” among wild animals and terrorists which become the “real” obstacles to conquer in order to assert his manliness. The manly adventurer treads uncivilized and dangerous territories (however fantastical) such as “the island of man-eating rats” (Fig. 5) where “the animals went mad” (Fig. 2) and the male hero is constantly trapped in life-threatening situations.

Such dangerous adventures and physical display of macho heroism is, however, not merely a “natural” demonstration of male, and supposedly innate, virility and the need for adventure, but is a conscious and motivated quest for the ultimate male reward – the uninhibited and equally (sexually) adventurous female. The escape from domesticity offered by these adventure pulps clearly also symbolize an escape from a controlling housewife. The “complete male” “wouldn’t marry an American girl” (Fig. 5), but instead seeks sexual satisfaction in “Pickup Paradise” (Fig. 5) where a “nice girl” (Fig. 5) is one who eagerly offers herself to men, such as those in “The Bordello of Rosa Del Hija” (Fig. 4).

From the titles of the articles in these pulp magazines it is thus apparent that the emphasis of a rugged masculinity was not specifically aimed at women, but rather at effeminacy, which was purported to be a characteristic of homosexual men. Osgerby explains this notion further. He states that

the blustering misogyny and homophobia of these ‘macho pulps’ can also be equated with the amalgam of social, sexual and political fears that fuelled McCarthyite paranoia... Communists and queers in the American government intent on betraying American interests. (2001:78)

Thus, the identification of a macho masculinity can be seen as not only a reaction to the fear of feminization through men’s domestication, but also the political and social threat

of homosexuality. The writer Norman Mailer assumes that the apparent rise of homosexuality in 1962 America can be attributed to “a loss of faith in the country, faith in the meaning of one’s work, faith in the notion of one’s self as a man” (cited in Kimmel, 2006:168).

Depicting the male body and masculinity as virile, aggressive, and adventurous, heteronormative masculine fantasy established itself as physically different to the (stereotypical) effeminate body of the homosexual, and therefore, undeniably heterosexual.

### **The Cowboy**

Perhaps one of America’s most recognized social characters is the cowboy. Today the image of the cowboy has been commodified to the extent that it has attained an infinite number of significations. However, during the 1950s and 60s cowboys were regarded as the epitome of masculine maleness. The cowboy coincided with the resurrection of the Western as a genre, and both signified a male fantasy constructed out of a reaction against the present uniformity and socialized images of men who were believed to be inherently wild at heart.

Kimmel explains that “[a]s a genre the western represented the apotheosis of masculinist fantasy, a revolt not against women but against feminization” (2006:101). As I have mentioned earlier, the home was increasingly being perceived as a domain which inevitably could lead to emasculation. The adventures in the pulp magazines and novels offered men ways to re-masculate their supposed lost manliness by once again being faced with danger and adventure as they had been in the war. However, as with the fictional character of the pulp magazines, the Western and the cowboy merely represented an idealized and quite clearly romanticized image of adventurous macho men.

The idealized and romanticized image of the cowboy encompassed the tension of a “complete” or “true” form of masculinity. The most patent paradox within the cowboy as

signifier of complete masculinity is its fictional origin. Although the cowboy was not entirely made up and did indeed occupy a “real” functional role within American culture, his initial character was hardly one admired and desired by other men. Michael Kimmel exclaims that the cowboy was not always perceived as a hero. He elaborates that during the 1860s and 1870s the cowboy was referred to as a “herder,” “and he appeared in public prints and writing as a rough, uncouth, shaggy, and dirty man, whose behaviour was violent, barbarous and rowdy”. (2006:99).

Kimmel states that by 1887 many cattle ranches had gone bankrupt and subsequently the cowboy became no more than “a hired man on horseback” (2006:99). Thus, he claims that the cowboy “emerged in literature at the exact moment of his disappearance as an independent craftsman”, while simultaneously “transform[ing] into a wage worker in a new industry of cattle ranching”. According to Kimmel, the idealized image of the cowboy was invented by a writer, Prentiss Ingraham, who wrote a fictional biography of a cowboy named Buck Taylor in approximately 1882. This fiction was later expanded into a series of dime novels, and consequently a new romanticized image of the cowboy was invented. (2006:100).

Such an escape to an idealized description of masculine roles shared similar outlooks to that of the hypermasculine delinquent. Both cowboy and delinquent were against complete social conformation and the uniformity and emasculation which were the perceived results of civilization. The escape to an untamed wilderness such as the western frontier provided men a chance to reclaim a lost sense of heroism. Kimmel explains that,

Westerns provided the re-creation of the frontier, the “meeting point between civilization and savagery,” where real men, men who were good with a horse and a gun, triumphed over unscrupulous bankers and other rogue versions of Self-Made Manhood. (2006:165)

Paradoxically, by taming, conquering and claiming the Wild West, the mythical cowboy proved to imitate and re-invent the civilized surroundings which he tried to escape from, although he considered this to be a heroic undertaking meant to tame the environment for

“women, children, and emasculated civilized men” (Kimmel 2006:100). Kimmel continues to elaborate on the social role of the cowboy:

The vast prairie is the domain of male liberation from workplace humiliation, cultural feminization, and domestic emasculation. The saloon replaces the church, the campfire replaces the Victorian parlour, the range replaces the factory floor. The western is a purified, pristine male domain. (2006:101)

### **A Man’s World of Flavour**

Ironically, popular culture in the form of advertising provided ways of bringing the mythical cowboy into men’s homes, or at least into their personal domains. Most cigarette campaigns have turned toward the cowboy and Western as male fantasies in selling their products (Figs. 6-9). However, the use of the cowboy in cigarette advertisements depicted, contrary to the romantic idea of taming and conquering the wild, the “purified, pristine male domain” (Kimmel 2006:101). In effect, the representation of masculinity in the cigarette cowboy was highly constructed and polished which exposed it as structurally weak and incomplete.

The display of masculine fantasy within the culture of consumerism merely assisted in “civilizing” the wild nature of the traditional cowboy by commoditizing it. By depicting masculinity as an obtainable element which is purchasable with certain products, masculinity is depicted as a *product* of culture which is manufactured from outside of the male body. I later explore this concept in terms of the cowboy’s macho dress, which falsely signifies the appearance of “true” masculinity or maleness.

The symbolic taming or civilizing of the adventure-seeking cowboy is further highlighted in the copy of the advertisement as well as by the product itself. *L&M* (Fig. 8) offers quite an intricate and almost scientific explanation of the filtering process which gives its product “more taste”<sup>11</sup>. In this way, smoking (clearly illustrated in these advertisements

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<sup>11</sup> “L&M’s patented filtering process electrostatically places extra filtering fibers crosswise to the stream of smoke...enabling today’s L&M to give you – *puff by puff* – less tars in the smoke than ever before. Yet L&M draws easy...delivering you the clean rich taste of the Southland’s finest cigarette tobaccos. The best tasting smoke you’ll ever find!” (Fig. 8)

as associated with being a “real” man) becomes a science, and cigarettes a product of civilized culture which is meticulously assembled. Such a scientific and almost poetic articulation of smoking associated with rugged manliness completely undermines the macho adventure-seeking image of the cowboy. Masculine ambiguity is further created by depicting the cowboy as the conqueror of the Wild West while simultaneously exposing him as a refined man of taste. The Marlboro Man lives in “a world of flavor” (Fig. 6) where tobacco tastes “richer” (Fig. 6) and “smoother” (Fig. 6). These cigarette cowboys, unlike the “herder” of a century earlier, “smoke MILDER Chesterfields” (Fig. 7) and prides himself in “Liv[ing] Modern” and smoking *L&M* cigarettes which offer “Less Tars & More Taste” (Fig. 8). Although not a self-made man, these cowboys appear to be as much, if indeed not more feminized than the domesticated family man which he abhorred.

The fantasy cowboy contrasts “real adventure” men, like those in the pulps, by displaying a preference to simplified methods of attaining manhood<sup>12</sup>. Even his cigarette and act of smoking is carefully depicted as not physically too demanding. The ideal cowboy prides himself on elements which paradoxically signify the lack of an inherent masculinity. These cowboys are built upon a process which denies or withholds a “completeness” or “wholeness” of the masculine, even if it is just in the act of smoking. He needs “extra filtering” (Fig. 8), “less tars” (Fig. 8), and a “clean rich taste” (Fig. 8) in a cigarette which allows him to draw “easy” (Fig. 8) and leaves “no unpleasant after-taste” (Fig. 7). These elements prove that maleness (at least in the cigarette cowboy) is too feeble to inherit an unaltered or unfiltered masculinity.

The emasculation of the cowboy further identifies itself in the amplifying of the masculine cowboy as a construct of fictionalized fantasy. As part of their product campaigns, cigarette brands insistently made use of Hollywood stars from well-known Western movies and programmes such as Tyrone Power (Fig. 7), James Arness (Fig. 8) and John Wayne (Fig. 9) to advertise their products. *Camel* (Fig. 9) highlights John

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<sup>12</sup> It should be noted, however, that the “realness” of these adventure pulps was only “realized” within the confines of the reader’s private sphere.

Wayne's status as "popular, handsome Hollywood star" (Fig. 9). By emphasising his famous rugged macho masculinity as a "role" being played, Wayne exposes this role as one which is built upon a lack or incompleteness. This concept of lack is demonstrated by Kaja Silverman in the chapter "The Subject" from her book, *The Subject of Semiotics* (1983). According to her, Jacques Lacan perceives the subject as built upon a "lack". She proceeds by describing Lacan's theory which asserts that such a "loss" first occurs within the womb from the moment of sexual differentiation. Thus, a lack based upon a sexual "divide". In Silverman's words, Lacan realizes that "the only way the subject can compensate for its fragmentary condition is by fulfilling its biological destiny – by living out in the most complete sense its own 'maleness' or 'femaleness'..." (Silverman 1983:342).

To come back to the discussion of the cigarette cowboy, the incompleteness of the masculine role is demonstrated by the cowboy's anxiety over "throat irritation". The "risk" of throat irritation poses a threat to the "demanding" roles which John Wayne plays on screen. By making us aware of the "risk" of smoking non-mild cigarettes, i.e. the possible throat irritation associated with it, the advertisement de-fictionalizes the cowboy as fantasy (he is "real" inasmuch as he is being played by the actor, and he experiences "real" discomfort such as throat irritation), but at the same time it stresses the performative character of masculinity as a whole. Achieving such masculinity, according to John Wayne, is a demanding role, which indicates that masculinity as a performed act *requires* from the participant/actor an effort in *becoming* masculine.

Despite the underlining incongruities within these cigarette advertisements, it (cigarettes, together with idealized images of macho Hollywood actors like Wayne) provided the necessary tools for men in acquiring some elements of masculine fantasy which contributed to the appearance of such a fantasy. This can possibly be substantiated by the fact that during the 1960s *Marlboro* was the best seller of cigarettes in America (Heimann 2002).

### **Materializing Cowboys**

I have already highlighted several instances which describe masculinity as a social construction and a fantasy which is actively desired (Marlboro's product sales account for this). Further, it is described as a performance, which is demonstrated quite literally in the importance of movies, actors and other forms of fiction, which display masculinity as rugged, macho, strong and virile, all neatly embodied in the image of the heterosexual cowboy. What becomes important to discuss, is not so much the body onto which fantasies are imposed, but the elements/props implemented in the construction of what consequently becomes or fails in becoming, the masculine body. These elements or constructs have so systematically been appropriated by hegemonic cultures that their artificiality or separateness to the body has become obscured and in some areas, completely lost or forgotten. They are commonly understood as gendered attributes which describe or articulate the sexed body.

However, in *Bodies that Matter* (1993), Judith Butler re-examines conventional views on gender and sex. She discards the assumption that the body's sex is fixed and informs the characteristics of particular genders. She instead explains that "sex"

is not a simple fact or static condition of the body, but a process whereby regulatory norms materialize "sex" and achieve this materialization through a forcible reiteration of these norms. (1993:2)

Such a reiteration of regulatory norms is quite easily detectable from a spectrum of different "types" of men which share a commonality or more accurately, a consistency in the way that their sex is materialized. The process of materialization, which produces itself through the body's performativity, serves to make the materialized sex identifiable, which is ultimately crucial for recognition amongst other identifiable bodies in society. The materialization of sex, therefore, also serves to make the body coherent. These concepts are further explicated by Butler. She explains that identification is an enacted fantasy and that "coherence is desired, wished for, idealized", which she argues are effects of a "corporeal signification" (1990:185).



[A]cts, gestures, and desire produce the effect of an internal core of substance, but produce this *on the surface* of the body, through the play of signifying absences that suggest, but never reveal, the organizing principle of identity as a cause. (Butler 1990:185, emphasis in original)

The cowboy as a fictional character proved that gender is indeed a behaviour learned through observation and interpellation. One merely has to look at the haloed role which the cowboy and the Western have played and still play in contemporary American culture and society as a whole. However, a masculine signification of the “traditional” cowboy has become no more than a commodity and fashion informant. The cover of a 1970s GQ magazine announces, “The cowboy look comes to town – how to add it to your urban wardrobe” (Fig. 10). This statement already supposes that the cowboy is not a “real” manifestation, but a “look”, a fashion constructed from the assembling of different elements of clothing. The symbolic signification of the cowboy as masculine and macho is further exposed as a fallacy by the ability of “adding” it to your wardrobe. Men are now able to “shop” for a suitable masculinity. Once again, as I have demonstrated in the discussion of the cigarette advertisements, masculinity is exposed as an incomplete construct. It is determined and created externally from the male body, which then acquires and adds elements to the body in order to create an illusion of the masculine as a seamless whole.

Despite the obvious proclamation that masculinity is a performed fantasy, it is further projected as a performance traditionally and still stereotypically associated with the feminine. In his essay, “The Comedy of Errors”, Antony Shugaar highlights the possibility of feminine characteristics in the masculine performance of the cowboy. He argues that such forms of machismo, like the cowboy, still persists, but is no longer exclusively reserved to men and continues to claim that cowboy gear “fits men and women equally well”. He explains that

[t]he outfit that Gary Cooper wore in a movie of the Fifties...is likely to be copied identically by Marilyn Monroe in a movie in the Sixties or by Kim Basinger in a movie of the Eighties. (2000:67)

Shugaar's statement does not portend in so much words that women who wear cowboy gear are, or could be regarded as masculine, but his observation that machismo is constructed through clothing is important with regards to the basic premise of this thesis, which aims to determine masculinity as a performatively constructed fantasy, which falsely signifies a "natural" aspect of manhood.

By making reference to the cowboy's clothing, Shugaar refers to the physical appearance which he supposes to signify masculinity. In this sense, gender becomes quite literally a garment which may be taken from the wardrobe. Butler assumes this to indicate a performance rather than a performativity, although in the case of popular cowboy representations, the two concepts become hard to differentiate, especially when clothing is assumed to be the primary marker of masculinity. In chapter two I will investigate whether or not a macho masculinity is still detectable or attainable once the cowboy is undressed.

### **Cowboys at the Movies**

Closely related to the performative and material aspect of masculinity as an object, is the idea of masculinity (in this case the cowboy as manifestation of traditional rugged manliness) as quite literally a performance. The extensive use of fiction in advocating male machismo provided men the sorely needed bridge between fantasy and reality; however illusionist it may have been.

Just as in advertising, a resurrection of the Western at the cinema "rearticulated frontier mythologies of masculine endeavour" (Osgerby 2001:76), expressing machismo in the image of actors such as John Wayne, Robert Mitchum, and Clark Gable. Tim Edwards argues that among other epic movies such as war films and action movies, Westerns tend to highlight

that they are concerned with various forms of heroism, in turn premised on ritualised notions of self-sacrifice; second, that the body is a critical site of both spectacle and (repressed) homoeroticism; and third, that the violence

in such films is often conceived as a form of endurance within the wider formation of a successful masculine identity. (2006:125)

Edwards thus views the Western as a site where masculinity's conflicting characters identify itself most visibly. Westerns tended to portray, like the juvenile delinquent of the fifties, an over-exaggeration of manly behaviour. The violence and aggression portrayed in such movies, as it is manifested in the schoolboys of *Christella en die Rooi Stiletto*, have a tendency to highlight that masculinity is maintained only through specific rituals which act as demonstrations of manliness. Despite the apparent self-consciousness of masculinity within the Western, the artificiality of its constructed "nature" helps to destabilize a "natural" or innate concept of masculinity in men.

Harry Brod investigates Steven Cohan's critique of Hollywood's depictions of masculinity within certain movies. Cohan demonstrates the contradiction of representing masculinity on the screen by focussing on the underlying ambiguities within the medium of film.

The cosmetic aspect of screen performance is crucial to the particular look of movie stars of both genders, although for men it runs against the grain of the traditional assumption that masculinity is the essential and spontaneous expression of maleness... Screen acting [in] particular blows the cover of a "natural" man in its technical acknowledgment that gendered sexualities are constituted out of fakery and spectacle... (Cohan cited in Brod 1995:18)

With regards to this statement, one may assume that masculinity, in the case of its manifestation in films such as the Western, is an imagined state layered with attributes, whether physical or psychological, which produces a fantasy that defines masculinity as a whole. The other side of the coin thus exposes the "nothingness" which a masculinity without the necessary "fakery and spectacle" supposes to be. Macho in the above sense can be regarded as a conscious additive process.

I will now demonstrate the construction of macho within the physicality of the male body. Although the male body's biological attributes is exploited in an effort to expose,

or more accurately, impose masculinity upon it, I will argue that such a conscious act quite frankly ties in with the additive process which I have discussed above, especially and more overtly in/on the body of the bodybuilder.

### **Masculine Masquerade**

As I mentioned, Harry Brod views masculinity as a masquerade, an act which borders more closely on performance than Butler's perceived performativity. Following a discussion of the distinction between gender and sexuality<sup>13</sup>, Brod argues that gender "is a role, not a biological condition" (1995:14). He continues by asserting that the concept of a role distinguishes the act played by the "actor" from the "actor" him/herself. Brod realizes that

To believe in the existence of gender as a role is to disavow the belief that one's gender *is* a part of one's essential self, because the conception of gender as a role entails the separation of one's gender from one's self. (1995:14, emphasis in original)

Following Brod's assessment of gender as a role, it is possibly more apparent to assess gender as a fantasy. In the introduction I have noted Laplanche and Pontalis' definition of fantasy. Like the subject of gender (according to Brod), the subject of fantasy is "participating in the scene although...he cannot be assigned any fixed place in it" (Laplanche and Pontalis cited in Cowie 1999:361). Thus, the "separation of one's gender from one's self" as Brod explains.

In *Henry and the Witch*<sup>14</sup> the performative and constructed nature of masculinity is illustrated. By making use of existing references to fantasy and fiction, such as the fairytale *Hansel and Gretel* as well as the musical *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, gender is depicted as a role, a story or script, which its characters have to adhere to. What

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<sup>13</sup> Brod accounts the accepted distinction between the two terms as "sex" being biological, while gender is social; "the one being the product of nature, the other of nurture, or culture" (1995:13). I have already discussed Butler's view that sex is not purely and exclusively determined by any fixed state of beings, but is constituted by a series of ritualized elements which determines what it is to be male or female (sex).

<sup>14</sup> See appendix C for a copy of *Henry and the Witch*.

follows is a short discussion of how masculinity as constructed fantasies is depicted in these narratives.

*The Rocky Horror Picture Show* parodies the bodybuilding fanaticism which has taken America by storm in the 1960s and 70s and depicts masculinity and men themselves as products of a series of scientific constructions. The film's visual, narrative, and character references to Mary Shelly's famous book, *Frankenstein*, are obvious, if not overstated. Both creatures are the project of a mad scientist who needed a male "companion"<sup>15</sup>. Similarly, in *Henry and the Witch* Henry is transformed into a pin-up through a series of vigorous exercises. The two narratives (*Rocky Horror* and *Henry and the Witch*) mirror the notion that a man can be made in seven days<sup>16</sup> by adhering to a set of practices including bodybuilding and dieting. Only after acquiring the "Charles Atlas seal of approval" is Rocky "good for relieving [Frank 'n Furter's] tension" (*The Rocky Horror Picture Show* 1975) and Henry "good to eat". These narratives demonstrate the possible repercussions of making men/masculinity.

Being a man (literally being able to perform a male function) is represented in these depictions as the result of being masculine *enough* (in both cases clearly identified with a muscled physique). Ironically though, such masculinity is simultaneously portrayed as lacking any intelligence which is produced primarily for sexual satisfaction. In both cases, the masculine product is annihilated after his role as sexual object is served<sup>17</sup>.

In bodybuilding and fitness advertisements from the 1950s (Figs. 12 – 13) the male body is presented as a site of physical masculine construction. Common understandings of gender and sex become blurred in proclamations such as "he-man", which assumes that

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<sup>15</sup> Though in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* Frank 'n Furter's creature is specifically created for a sexual purpose, many theorists have dealt exclusively with the homoerotic and possible homosexual narrative which underlines Shelly's *Frankenstein* (see Halberstam 1995).

<sup>16</sup> The title of one of the songs in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* is "I can make you a Man" with the lyrics specifying a time limit of seven days. *Henry and the Witch* borrows this line with the witch announcing to Henry, "In seven days thou'll be a man".

<sup>17</sup> Rocky is killed by a laser beam, while Henry is roasted on a spit. Ironically, both methods of killing are traditionally regarded as phallic weaponry and arenas. In the 1950s the barbeque, which happened outside in "nature" was regarded as a masculine domain in which men could safely inhabit his new role as family man without risking a possible feminization through domestication.

masculinity is an underdeveloped attribute of specifically males. It postulates that there exists a degree of “manness”, ranging from a “she-man” to a “he-man”. Furthermore, it assumes that without the prefix “he”, men are somehow not quite “real” and is perceived as “half a man” (Fig. 12).

Paradoxical to such a concept though, is the method of its propagation. By advertising masculinity as a consumable product which can be bought and achieved in just ten or fifteen minutes a day, the “realness” of being a man is placed squarely in jeopardy. The advertising itself compares the resulting increase of musculature as “a brand-new *suit* of beautiful SOLID MUSCLE”. It appears that Charles Atlas’s “real” *dynamic tension* lies within the assumption that a “natural” “swell” of the body could effectively “make you a real he-man” (Fig. 12).

### **The Bodybuilder**

On top of the growing popularity of body transformation advertisements, the new interest in specifically the male physique resulted in magazines exclusively featuring bodybuilders and men focussed on health and physical culture.

Shaun Cole explains that after WWII, “the increased use of photography and cheaper magazine production” produced a number of magazines which were entirely devoted to depicting the male body (2000:119). The vocabulary of masculine fantasy (now conveniently published and distributable) could be translated, appropriated and consumed by anyone who chose to do so.

An emphasis was placed on the male body as a supposed bearer of “natural” masculinity and bodybuilding became regarded as an appropriate and indeed necessary act in portraying a heterosexual manliness. Still, as a reaction against the social constraints of post-war American culture, the body as a way of reinventing the man became important elements in re-establishing a macho image of masculinity. Once again the confinements and respectability of the home inhibited men to display an authoritative masculinity and subsequently restrained him from asserting his male superiority. The delinquent turned

towards danger, the cowboy sought to conquer the Wild West, and now the muscle man aimed to reclaim his own body.

The bodybuilder's excessive display of masculine significations, like the pulp magazine adventurer and the mythical cowboy, appeared to be a reaction to women's newly acquired social and cultural status during the 1950s. More significantly, it coincided with the perception that manliness should be detectable on the surface of the male body. Franco La Cecla argues in his essay, "Rough Manners" that "you can never be masculine enough and if you are not sufficiently masculine then you are dangerously not male" (2000:41). Thus, bodybuilding was a way of physically acquiring and performing elements which signified a masculine body.

However, by literally performing the elements which identify his body as masculine, heterosexual masculinity faced the possibility of identifying with, rather than reacting against the bodies which it perceived as threatening "true" masculinity, i.e. the bodies of women and homosexual men<sup>18</sup>.

What follows will be an investigation of specific contradictions with regards to the bodybuilder as supposedly signifying a masculine body. I have already partly discussed this notion with reference to the constructed nature of the muscle man in advertising and fiction, but the bodybuilder himself displays certain characteristics which undermines the supposed connection between the muscled body and heterosexual masculinity.

### **Feminizing Bodybuilding**

In his essay, "Bodybuilder Americanus", Sam Fussell draws interesting yet sometimes a bit contrived similarities between the male bodybuilder and the stereotypical role of

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<sup>18</sup> I have made reference to Lacan's theory of the subject being built upon a "lack". Bodybuilding, like the appropriation of "masculine clothes" such as cowboy gear, is ways of metaphorically filling that "lack". These methods of filling can be equated with Lacan's definition of the phallus. Kaja Silverman explains, "'Phallus' is a word used by Lacan to designate all of those values which are opposed to lack, and he is at pains to emphasize its discursive rather than its anatomical status" (Silverman 2000:352). I will make more extensive reference to the phallus as opposed to the penis in chapter two, where I will highlight the imaginary transferable quality of the phallus.

women as the object<sup>19</sup>. Fussell extends this identification by arguing that bodybuilding is “inextricably intertwined with homosexual camp” (1994:45). Although Fussell makes the assumption that homosexual camp is somehow related to a feminine role or activity, he does purport that bodybuilding as an assumed manifestation of masculine strength and virility can be transcribed onto the homosexual body. Both stereotypical assumptions thus negate one another, and both lose any lasting significance. Fussell furthermore assumes a correlation between the delinquent “masculine protest” with homosexuality (or at least homosexual camp). He remarks that “[b]y making a labor of leisure, a vocation of creation, bodybuilders lampoon wage slaves and nine-to-fivers” (1994:45). Like the delinquent, and to some extent the cowboy, the bodybuilder uses his body as a display of masculine remonstrance against middle-class masculinity which was perceived as an ineffectual manifestation of masculine authorship.

However, in contrast to the propagation of a sturdy heterosexual masculinity represented in the idealized cowboy, the bodybuilder functions meaningfully purely on the level of bodily display. The heterosexual cowboy is practical. His clothes are fit for the rugged terrain which he seeks to tame. While the cowboy signifies a “natural” conquering of manhood and nature, the bodybuilder “doesn’t use his muscles to build bridges, but to raise eyebrows” (Fussell 1994:45). In contrast to the cowboy, the bodybuilder doesn’t wear (much) clothes. Instead, his muscles become his garb and are treated in a similar way as any fastidious dresser would mix and match his/her outfit. The bodybuilder sunbathes, waxes, and oils his body in order to achieve his desired macho look. Regardless however of the body’s intended purpose (physical labour or self-display), masculinity in both cases are constructed on the surface of the male body and is valued purely through the possibility of others noticing these signifying symbols. The

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<sup>19</sup> “Bodybuilders blur the distinction between He-men and Girly-girls. He shares her obsession with the scales (“Oh my God! I’m retaining water!” is their mutual lament). Both invest food with moral properties; for him, high in protein is “good,” high in fat is “bad,” for her all food is bad. His testosterone tizzies or ’roid rages are her hormonal mood swings of PMS. His joy in cleavage, accentuated by the tank-top, which is a restraint to his bouncing breasts looks like nothing so much as a male halter, is her joy in cleavage, accentuated by the push-up bustier. Both bodies are testaments to physical passion, made more so, in each case, by shaving the legs and the underarms. The bodybuilder combines David with Goliath, beauty with the beast. At this point, leather is lace.” (Fussell 1994:46, emphasis in original).



bodybuilder's "unnatural" muscles signify a dissent of working class productivity and instead prioritize the conquering of his own body and masculinity.

Judith Butler makes clear how "the disciplinary production of gender" (cited in Salih 2004:110) results in the regulation of the body as a construct of normalized gender patterns and behaviour. She explains that the construction of a coherent heteronormativity conceals certain gender discontinuities within all identities. The deliberate manipulation of the male body by bodybuilders concurs with Butler's theories on gender performativity. Masculinity, in this sense, is indeed something which has to be actively achieved through the body's performance. However, I want to suggest that misperformance, which Sarah Chinn describes as "a step down" (1997:302) from "normal" performance, can also be categorized as an over-performance. Just like the effeminate male is scrutinized as a non-subject, the bodybuilder exceeds accepted masculine coherence by fabricating its (masculinity's) underlying incoherence. Butler notes that

[w]hen the disorganization and disaggregation of the field of bodies disrupt the regulatory fiction of heterosexual coherence, it seems that the expressive model loses its descriptive force. That regulatory ideal is then exposed as a norm and a fiction that disguises itself as a developmental law regulating the sexual field that it purports to describe. (1990:185)

Bodybuilding, as a collage of symbolic masculine signifiers manifested on the material body of the male, becomes quite literally "unreal". Like drag, which I will refer to again in the second chapter, the bodybuilder's body displays a reorganization of accepted and conventionalized heterosexual norms in a way which describes these norms as seemingly unfit to the body and to some extent, a grotesque costume.

### **Homoeroticizing Male Sameness**

Fussell continues his critique of bodybuilding by giving examples which depict it as an auto-eroticism which he extends to narcissism, but argues in favour of a homosexual

root<sup>20</sup>. Bodybuilding has indeed become since the 1960s an almost deciding aspect of the American gay community. I will, however, discuss the appropriation of a macho masculinity by gay men in more detail in the next chapter. For now, I would like to highlight the underlying homoeroticism already prevalent in bodybuilding which was (and perhaps still is by some) widely perceived as a signifier of a more “complete” form of (heterosexual) masculinity.

In his book *Fully Exposed*, Emmanuel Cooper explains how the bodybuilder modelled his body and the poses in which he displayed it, on ancient Greek and Roman sculptures. He describes that the classical poses which bodybuilders adopted signified for them “a code of cultural meaning, indicating physical achievement” (1990:91). Cooper notices the fundamental flaw of the adoption of this classical image of masculinity as one which would carry no sexual significance. He notes that “[e]nthusiasts concentrated on the pose and stance of the statues rather than on the myths and legends they emblematised” (1990:91). Clearly from a semiological perspective such an argument would prove to manifest a problematical reading of the image of the “classical” bodybuilder. Classical props and poses as symbols would indefinitely signify alternative meanings for different readers. Despite the deliberate ignorance to the myths and legends which these symbols signify, the imitation of ancient Greco-Roman masculine figures further signifies a contradictory reading in the body of the bodybuilder. Ancient Greek and Roman culture is widely recognized as sexually liberal and same-sex intercourse was common amongst men. Although it may have signified male power and dominance in ancient Greco-Roman societies, modernist discourse has firmly established homosexual practices as a psychological pathology, which remained influential at the time when bodybuilding reached the peak of its popularity. Thus, to adopt an image which signified male intimacy as socially acceptable in depicting masculine heterosexual hegemony proved to be a major contradiction in the image of the bodybuilder.

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<sup>20</sup> Fussell attributes two examples of auto-eroticism in his essay. He quotes both bodybuilders Yukio Mishima and Arnold Schwarzenegger respectively, “The swelling of muscles encased in a sunlit skin” and “Seeing new changes in my body, feeling them, turned me on” (Fussell 1994:47).

The classical reference of the bodybuilder's image was not the only glitch in representing a macho masculinity. The bodybuilder's environment furthermore signified for Cooper a homoerotic venue. Like the cowboy who "moves in a world of men" (Kimmel 2006:100),

body builders [sic] trained in an all-male environment, exercised together, helped each other with weight training, and showered together. It was often other men who were most fully appreciative of body development and posing skill. (Cooper 1990:94)

The locker room as all-male environment and locus of (suppressed) homoeroticism is used in *Christella en die Rooi Stiletto* as a critique of the heterosexual authority of the school as symbol of hegemonic structures. The locker room is utilized as a backdrop to Ignatius's conflicting sexuality. As the popular head boy, Ignatius's (heterosexual) masculinity is threatened when Christella runs out on him at the school dance. Determined not to be made a fool of, he searches for Christella and not only finds her, but determines her "true" identity as Christo. Despite this realization however, Ignatius willingly compromises his own heterosexual façade by accepting Christo as homosexual.

These areas (locker rooms, toilets and showers) within the school, as well as other public spaces, are most often the site of bullying and humiliation toward boys who are unable or unwilling to conform to a required image of masculinity. On the other hand, it is also the place where the inconsistencies of heteronormative masculinity are most notably observed. Boys often compare the size of their muscles and genitals to each other without the fear of compromising their supposed heterosexual status. Conversely, boys who feel awkward about such a public display are often stigmatized as "moffies".

### **The Final Threat**

What might be perceived as an overt form of homoeroticism may not be regarded as such by the active heterosexual signifying participants within a heteronormative context. Heterosexual men feel comfortable showering together as long as their subjectivity is not threatened. The only way such a threat can be avoided, is to remain oblivious to any possible objectification of the male body. Tim Edwards explains in *Cultures of*

*Masculinity* that “relations between men...are characterized by the constant possibility of, and quite simultaneously the equally continuous prohibition of, homosexuality” (2006:95). Such a tension takes place in all male interactions, but displays itself more insecurely within “uneasy” spaces such as those described above. Edwards asserts that “homosexuality *per se* works as a primarily invisible mechanism in the maintenance of masculinity”. He continues by explaining that “the homosexuality of many films is demonstrated through the explicit lack or absence of portrayals of homosexuality”. (2006:95).

The suppression of homosexuality however is not enough to completely annihilate its existence. The homosexual gaze is ever-present, which compels heterosexual masculinity to constantly and continuously reinvent itself as a safety mechanism against objectification and feminization. I have highlighted some of the ways in which heterosexual masculinity seeks to define itself as masculine and normative. However, these conducts have only emphasised the constructed quality of masculinity as a fantasy.

Whenever the heterosexual male becomes aware of another objectifying gaze directed towards his own body, heterosexual masculinity is threatened and in danger of being feminized. Susan Bordo demonstrates how the eroticization of gender sameness can be perceived as a violation of masculinity. In her essay, “Reading the Male Body”, Bordo refers to Brian Pronger’s argument which supposes that “[t]he gaze of the homosexual male... is paradoxical in its relationship to masculinity”. According to Pronger such a paradox is constituted by a homosexual embracing of the penis in which the phallus is situated. (cited in Bordo 1994:284). Chapter two will explore exactly this embracing of the penis by homosexual men, rather than the desire for the phallus, which, as I have mentioned, signifies a certain loss or lack in men.

## Chapter 2: Cloning Men

The phallus is...a signifier for the organic reality or needs which the subject relinquishes in order to achieve meaning, in order to gain access to the symbolic register<sup>21</sup>. It signifies that thing whose loss inaugurates desire". (Silverman 1983:352)

With the above definition in mind, it is possible to acknowledge the features of masculine performativity (bodybuilding, cowboy appearance and rugged behaviour, etc) as phallic materializations. This chapter thus concentrates on the homosexual appropriation of masculine fantasy, or as I have now clarified, the phallus, I will explore the eroticization of the phallus by means of emphasising the penis.

The various subjects which this chapter will focus on are, like those in the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter, expressions of masculine appropriations, in this case, by homosexual men. They are, however, only limited demonstrations of gay macho articulation, and homosexual appropriations of the masculine fantasy is clearly much more widespread than the examples discussed.

Under the heading, *Physique Pictorial Magazine*, I will provide a brief history of the origins of *Physique Pictorial*. A number of sources have established the outline of this focus. Professor of history and women's/gender studies, John D'Emilio explains the cause of the increase of homosexual male-orientated magazines. Emmanuel Cooper and the essayist/critic Daniel Harris provide some insight into the posing as well as the models themselves. The film, *Beefcake*, affords much of the background as well as critical inquiries into physique models and posing. I will also introduce some aspects of the work of the semiotician, Roland Barthes.

Despite the practicalities of focussing on magazines as a medium of discussion, I will investigate the possible fetishization of the photograph as object which displays an erotic

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<sup>21</sup> The concept of symbolic register, according to Silverman, indicates cultural structures which determines the bodily behaviour and response in a signifying structure, which determines "acceptable" articulations of these symbolic roles (1983).

manifestation of the male penis. My discussion of Masculine Fetishism explores the arguments of the cultural theory critic, Susan Sontag, and the author Kaja Silverman's interpretations of the theories of French psychoanalyst, Jacques Lacan. In focussing on the fetishist object, I will concentrate on the work of the fashion author/editor, Valerie Steele, in particular her book, *Fetish*. I will also cite Peggy Phelan's reference to the American photographer, Robert Mapplethorpe's preference for the photo as (phallic) object.

Like the photograph, masculine dress becomes, for the gay reader, a fetishist replacement of the penis. The adoption and exaggeration of conventional masculine clothing are discussed under Masculine Drag with reference to Butler's discussion thereof. I will, however, also attend Butler's and Leo Bersani's criticism of gay macho appropriation under the heading, Homoeroticizing Masculinity. The gay Finnish illustrator Tom of Finland depicts this homoeroticization of the masculine distinctly in his drawings which illustrate macho men in uniforms as evidently male and homosexual. In my discussion of Tom of Finland, I will refer to Richard Mohr as he is cited in Susan Bordo's essay, "Reading the Male Body".

These fetishized images of traditional masculinity included the gay cowboy, which I will refer to in relation to Valerie Steele's research on leather and uniform fetishism. More significantly, though, the gay cowboy as well as other manly representations of masculinity has been the blueprints for a new macho gay clone. I will discuss this character by focussing on Shaun Cole's demonstration of gay semiotics in '*Don We Now Our Gay Apparel*' (2000), which deals exclusively with gay men's dress in the twentieth century. In spite of criticisms, the gay clone most strikingly illustrated how gay macho appropriations of orthodox masculinity symbolically turned the phallus into the penis.

The last three themes will concentrate on the de-valuation of traditional masculine structures which tended to imitate classical imagery. Under the heading, The Serious Physique, I will discuss how the "serious" bodybuilder and its equally serious and masculine structures are cleverly parodied by gay men and exposed as vulnerable to degradation and sometimes quite literally, collapse. This consideration is made by

investigating Emmanuel Cooper and the film critic, Jack Stevenson's assessment of the informal and unstable construction of classical set designs for the physique photograph and film. Such a collapse, however metaphorical, is fostered by means of re-directing the male gaze. I specify this re-direction as Reverting the Male Gaze. The term "revert", instead of invert or subvert, suggests that the homosexual male gaze does not necessarily function differently than the traditional heterosexual male gaze. Thus, by reverting the male gaze, homosexual men take possession of the subject position in threatening orthodox masculine heteronormativity. I will focus on Susan Bordo's argument that the gay male gaze is threatening to orthodox masculinity; while discussing Peggy Phelan and professor of film studies, Richard Dyer's view that the traditional associations of masculinity and men designate their position as undeniably subject. This notion is demonstrated by comparing the pose of the traditional bodybuilder with that of the physique model under the heading, Measuring Muscles.

The essentialist ideologies which plead for an internal masculine and feminine "nature" are physically criticized by gay men who actively portray these "natures" as theatrical roles performed to question the notion that masculinity is exclusively heterosexual. The examples which I will discuss share similar performative qualities which however in most cases become conscious and deliberate performances.

Masculine fantasies are effectively unmasked as heterosexual male fallacies by displaying their homoerotic desire to other (gay) men. More than this, it brings into question the power which these masculine fantasies as traditionally heterosexual and male, have over other bodies. I will argue that the premise of male equal subject, is effectively de-powered by demonstrating the male pin-up as the object of the male homosexual gaze.

I will investigate the inversion of the male gaze in more depth by exploring images from the gay (pornographic) magazine *Physique Pictorial*. This magazine is significant in discussing traditional heterosexual masculine signifiers such as the biker, the cowboy and

the bodybuilder as performative constructions, which were represented by popular culture as portraying a “complete” image of maleness.

### **Physique Pictorial Magazine**

Alongside the growing interest in depicting the male physique in magazines, the emergence of gay male pornography took place within the same genre. John D’Emilio states in his concise overview of homosexual cultures in post-war America, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, that “[t]he collapse of legal barriers against sexually explicit magazines and books [in the 1950s] also affected the output of gay male pornography”. He explains that the clearing of male physique magazines from charges of obscenity by the Supreme Court led to the elimination of prohibitions against the publication and distribution of pictorials, which resulted in the unrestricted production of this genre so that “by 1965 total monthly sales of physique magazines topped 750,000”. (1983:136).

One of the first and foremost pictorials aimed specifically at a male homosexual audience was *Physique Pictorial*. Together with two associates, the founder Bob Mizer, set up the Athletic Model Guild (AMG) in Los Angeles in 1945, which acted as an agency for bodybuilding models who sought to situate themselves within the film industry. Mizer took publicity photographs of men in briefs or posing costumes, which he intended for a catalogue from which film studios could “order” a specific type of model. These catalogues and individual photographs, however, soon found appeal outside the film world and were distributed by post to a nationwide audience. In 1951 Mizer started to publish his photographs in magazine form which was aptly titled *Physique Pictorial*. (Cooper 1990:100). Cooper states,

Though ostensibly about physical culture (a necessary legal euphemism for the ‘living art’ of classical sculpture re-enacted in body building, which combined aesthetics with muscle), *Physique Pictorial* was aimed at male homosexuals. (1990:100)



Cooper's declaration of the aims of this magazine provides much of the underlying incongruities regarding male physique models, and more generally, the display of the male body for visual consumption. The idea of bodybuilding as a "living art" undeniably states that the sole purpose of this act is for visual consumption. By "combin[ing] aesthetics with muscle", the bodybuilder's body becomes an objectified focus of the gaze (Cooper 1990:100). Despite the possible identification with feminine attributes, the muscled body continued to signify a heterosexual masculine fantasy for men. However, as Cooper notes in the above quote, the depiction of masculinity in *Physique Pictorial* is specifically aimed at homosexuals, which made them a threat to orthodox masculinity. Seemingly, the shift in how the masculine body is read, or what it signifies, is created through the *intentions* of the photographer; not the image of the male body per se, but how it is *constructed/played*. Such a perception concurs with Roland Barthes's definition of myth. He claims that "[m]yth is not defined by the *object* of its message, but by the way it *utters* this message..." (1973:51, my emphasis).

Fantasy and desire, as I've outlined them in the introduction, become interwoven in the physique model's pose. But more momentous is the disintegration of hegemonic borders which seek to comprise discernable desired fantasies within gay and straight audiences respectively. In perhaps the most edifying documentary/fiction movie concerning the origins of *Physique Pictorial* magazine, *Beefcake*, a childhood fan of the magazine reports that

[a] lot of the models were straight and most of them probably never had any inkling that there was anything homoerotic about the posing they were doing. They were Mr America, posing to show the youth of America how to be strong and healthy. That was all they saw it as. (Valentine Hooven cited in *Beefcake*)

Whether or not the models in the physique magazines of the fifties were heterosexual as Hooven stated, or working-class as Daniel Harris assumes in *The Rise and Fall of Gay Culture* (1997:91), the particular display of their (nude) bodies depicted a homoerotic aspect which in effect made them the essential components within a homosexual relation, albeit just a fantasy or desire for gay men. In more direct (and maybe slightly whimsical)

terms, the elements which comprised a macho and undeniably heterosexual masculinity for men, have now become quite undeniably an overt signifier of homosexuality, if only a homoeroticism. This premise will become clearer throughout the chapter, particularly with regards to the discussion of the gaze.

For now I want to start by investigating phallic objects as signifiers of masculinity and how they are appropriated in gay male representations as tools which simultaneously undermine masculinity's traditional heterosexual exclusivity, and become important fetishist components in the construction of a homosexual male fantasy.

### **Masculine Fetishism**

In the chapter, "The Image-World, Susan Sontag explains the relation of photographs as potential objects of reality. She argues that

[i]n its simplest form, we have in a photograph surrogate possession of a cherished person or thing, a possession which gives photographs some of the character of unique objects. (1978:81)

Although this chapter will not focus solely on the photograph as object, but rather what is depicted within it, I find it quite relevant to the argument that photos as objects of masculine representation (phallic materialization) is transformed into the metaphorical penis as object of reality.

The erotic photo (or drawing) as object becomes a replacement for the penis and acts as an aid in stimulating and fulfilling (sexual) desire<sup>22</sup>. Robert Mapplethorpe prefers the use of the photograph as an object, "I like photographs when you can hold them in your hand" (Mapplethorpe cited in Phelan 1993:38). Phelan explains that Mapplethorpe's photographic images invite "the spectator to fantasize [about] the pressure of...touch".

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<sup>22</sup> Kaja Silverman explains the "irreducible disequivalence" of the relation between the phallus and the penis. She argues, "during his entry into the symbolic order he [the male subject] gains access to those privileges which constitute the phallus, but forfeits direct access to his own sexuality, a forfeiture of which the penis is representative" (Silverman, 1983:353). Thus, the lack which masculinity as a desire for the phallus possesses is exemplified through the symbolic discarding of the penis, which, as erotic fetishist objects for the male homosexual, is symbolically acquired by turning them into photographic objects.

According to her, “[e]rotic photography solicits the touch and defers it: instead of skin, paper. Instead of sex, the devouring gaze”. Phelan extends Mapplethorpe’s fondness of the photo as object in suggesting his desire to transform the phallus into the penis. She notes that the “changing [of] the image into an object seems to hold a promising payoff” (1993:38). Such a perception undeniably connotes a sexual gratification obtained from being in contact with the masculine image as photograph. Thus, the photograph for Mapplethorpe, as for thousands of customers who ordered Mizer’s physique photographs through the post, became a sort of fetish, or in Freud’s terms a “substitute for the penis” (1927:324)<sup>23</sup>.

The photograph as object is further exemplified by making use of its material qualities. The sending of nude photographs of men was strictly illegal in 1950s America and in order to avoid prosecution, Mizer and his colleagues would “censor” the photographs sent out to customers. The physique photographer, Dave Martin, explains that they would cover the genital area of the model in the photograph with a watercolour pigment which could then be washed off by the customer and in turn expose the censored area (cited in *Beefcake*). Although this method was used as merely adhering to American laws, the implied act of covering and uncovering the male body should not be dismissed so easily from its implied aspect of fetishism. The customer, who acts as subject, is allowed to physically “undress” the model.

Within my own illustration, I have consistently explored the possibility of eroticizing the photograph as object by focussing on its tactical qualities. Along with the small format of the work, the cut-out figures and their clothes play with the photo as tangible object. In *Christella en die Rooi Stiletto* the reader has the possibility of dressing or undressing its characters, as well as dressing them in the assumed clothing of another character. In this way, dress and the act of doll-playing becomes a fetishist performance in constructing concepts and images of masculinity. By hand colouring the photos the idea of censoring as I have mentioned with reference to Dave Martin is explored, although in this case the

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<sup>23</sup> The importance of pornographic images as fetishes (objects not necessarily part of the human body) for many men (and women) can be observed in the prevalence of printed pornography, despite the more accessible medium of the internet.

colouring does not act as a covering of the body, but emphasises the nude body by giving it colour.

Despite the parallel drawn between the photograph and phallus as symbol of the penis, Bob Mizer's use of heterosexual masculine stereotypes further played with the idea of phallic ownership. Making use of "masculine props" such as swords, knives, chains, ropes, boots and leather jackets against the nude male body, he emphasised the material quality of the phallus. He further disrupted phallic stability within the masculine body by situating it within non-masculine contexts, such as the domestic.

In *Henry and the Witch* the fear of male homosexualization is realized through Henry's domestication. The witch as female impersonator already represents the (il)logical conclusion of over-domesticated men, which I have touched on in chapter 1. Here, such fears of emasculation are depicted by literally making Henry's phallic structure (his muscled body) the witch's dinner. The phallus is thus represented as an unstable and detachable component of masculinity. As Phelan claims, "[t]he phallus [is not] secure", if it was, "the phallic function would be redundant" (1993:17).

Perhaps the most common materialization of the phallus is represented within specific clothing which becomes fetishist objects. In her book, *Fetish*, Valerie Steele argues that in shoe fetishism "boots symbolize a big penis" (1996:104). She quotes a Brazilian man: "The shoe has the connotation of the foot, that the man who has a large foot, he... has a big prick.... It's a popular proverb" (cited in Steele 1996:104). This fetishist connotation is illustrated in the work of the Finnish illustrator Tom of Finland. In Fig. 20 the boots visually start to imitate giant penises. Steele continues to give various examples of pornographic fetishist magazines and literature which all connote boots and leather with male sexuality<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> Steele mentions fetishistic pornographic titles such as "*Boots and Saddles, Cock Crazy Cowboy, Cock-Hungry Cowboy, The Cocky Cowboy, Cowpoke, and Hard Horny Cowpokes*" (1996:176).

Tom of Finland emphasised the fetishist role which these types of uniform play within (some) homosexual fantasies. He remarked that “sometimes the attraction to the uniform is so powerful in [him] that [he] feel[s] as if [he is] making love to the clothes, and the man inside them is just a ...sort of animated display-rack” (cited in Steele 1996: 182). Although Tom’s powerful statement serves up a vast array of problems with (fetishist gay) relationships, it does accentuate the primary importance of clothing and shoes within the construction of a specific gay macho masculinity, as it did in terms of heterosexual macho.

### **Masculine Drag**

Judith Butler, however, feels doubtful that the appropriation of dominant norms would necessarily lead to its subversion. She instead suggests that such an act would rather strengthen the power of these dominant norms. According to Sara Salih, Butler suggests a “performativity proper to refusal” or “the strategic rejection rather than occupation” of hegemonic forms in order to undermine the authority of these hegemonic forms (2004:9).

For Butler, the rejection of hegemonic heterosexuality is effectively created through the act of drag. She exclaims that “drag fully subverts the distinction between inner and outer psychic space and effectively mocks both the expressive model of gender and the notion of a true gender identity” (1990:186). However, she specifically dotes on drag as an act of male to female or female to male impersonation. She assumes that the act of cross-dressing accounts for drag’s humoristic effect, which she argues is an inevitable result of the realization that there exists no “original” copy of gender. For Butler then, drag is a parody of hegemonic misogynistic culture, i.e. a “denaturalized and mobilized...recontextualization” of this culture (1990:188).

However, drag is not always a parody, and does at times present itself in ways which do not consciously attempt to invert gender, or in Butlers terms, “recontextualize” “normativity”. Nor is it always a male/female or female/male relation. Men can drag by wearing “hypermasculine” clothes. Frederick Jameson describes pastiche as a more apt

description of “serious” forms of drag, which does not necessarily prioritize the ridicule or humour which Butler assumes are integral to drag. Jameson explains,

Pastiche is, like parody, the imitation of a peculiar or unique style, the wearing of a stylistic mask, speech in a dead language: but it is a neutral practice of mimicry, without parody’s ulterior motive, without the satirical impulse, without laughter, without that still latent feeling that there exists something normal compared to which what is being imitated is rather comic. Pastiche is blank parody, parody that has lost its humor. (cited in Butler 1990:188-9)

Gay men’s adoption of the heterosexual macho image can be regarded as a form of drag making use of pastiche rather than comic parody. Although it appears like an uncritical mimicry of heterosexual masculine imagery, gay men literally over-emphasize and very often combine more than one masculine stereotype at once, which, instead of affirming these ideals, they portray them as loose imitations of images which have already been constructed from social contentions. This over-emphasization is further demonstrated in the discussion of the work of Tom of Finland. Still, from this point of view Leo Bersani insists that the hypermasculinity of gay clones<sup>25</sup> may reinforce patriarchal misogyny and argues that “gay men were, and are, in the uneasy situation of potentially desiring, and perhaps even sleeping with, their enemies” (cited in Edwards 2006:89).

### **Homoeroticizing Masculinity**

The main and almost obvious element which Bersani and Butler ignore in their criticism of macho appropriation is the sexual emphasis which is added onto masculinist signs by gay men. I have referred to the sexualization of the masculine in many different ways, most notably the materialization thereof. Gay macho or masculine impersonations by gay men are conscious and deliberate ways to signify the erotic appeal of the masculine/phallus. In other words, they highlight masculinity’s palpable and penetrable qualities, which effectively undermine patriarchal misogyny.

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<sup>25</sup> The gay clone is a term used for gay men during the 1960s and 70s who imitated the dress and behaviour of stereotypical macho masculinity such as the cowboy and the biker. This imitated look amongst gay men became so popular that it was copied and stylized by the gay populace at large, hence the term clone. I will discuss aspects of the clone a bit later in the chapter.

Thus, the appropriation of a macho or manlier image of masculinity by gay men does not simply reify masculinity as an authoritative display of male power, since the imitation of masculinity lies merely on the surface of the body, not always able to convincingly hide the “real” body beneath the clothes. Gay men are certainly aware of the excess meaning which would necessarily accompany their adopted image, i.e. their identification as homosexual, and exploit it in such a way as to make them simultaneously de-power heterosexual misogyny, while still empowering homosexual dissidence by eroticizing and thus sexualizing heteronormative masculinity. This was effectively done through the homoeroticization of the macho outfit which surfaces extensively within gay physique photography.

### **Tom of Finland**

An artist who visually emphasises the (homo)eroticization of macho symbols and specifically maleness, is Tom of Finland. I have already referred to his work in relation to clothing as fetishist objects of the masculine, but Tom’s emphasis on the hypermasculine as an erotic fantasy for gay men highlights their power in efficiently putting heteronormative concepts “under erasure” (Salih 2004:9).

Susan Bordo explains that Tom’s work reveals “the essence of the paradoxical relationship to masculinity”. She asserts that “the very overabundance of phallic power-icons...” in his work “negates the oppressive masculinist meanings of any one of them, and of the image as a whole”. (1994:285). Bordo demonstrates this by quoting Richard Mohr’s description of Tom of Finland’s work, in particular the hitchhiker (Fig. 21) in his book, *Gay Ideas*.

Here, the masculine is eroticized, but not in a way that affirms the oppressive features of traditional masculine roles. The various roles’ iconographies undermine each other. In pinning these uniformly gendered but clashing images on himself, the fellow cannot plausibly be taken to assume the privileges of any – not even one – of the roles to which his adopted postures allude. Indeed, the hitchhiker’s total presentational package exposes the stud to the charge of ‘faggot’. Far from endowing him with privilege, his public hypermasculine posture exposes him to violence. (cited in Bordo 1994:285)

With reference to Mohr, Bordo thus alludes that by means of over-exaggerating, layering, and fetishizing masculine symbols' conventional usage, the eroticizing of phallic symbols, such as the stereotypical macho uniform, in effect does not amount to a surplus of traditionally masculine (phallic powered) identifications. It in fact identifies the homosexual man as inherently lacking these identifications and he acquires them through the obvious pastiche of their iconic meanings.

This view strikingly resembles points I have made in the first chapter regarding the adoption of macho behaviour and imagery by heterosexual men. However, unlike the gay clone, which I will shortly investigate, heterosexual macho, although exposing masculinity as a fiction and performance avoids "access to his own sexuality" by focussing on depicting the uniform as phallus, rather than the uniform as *both* phallus and penis<sup>26</sup> (Silverman 1999:353).

### **The Gay Cowboy**

I have already discussed the materialization of the "cowboy look" in chapter one, with specific emphasis on its adoption by heterosexual men as a way of claiming and exhibiting macho masculinity. Like the boots, which serve as fetishist objects, the rest of the traditional<sup>27</sup> cowboy garb also signifies a homosexual desire for the masculine. Valerie Steele makes extensive referencing to Larry Townsend's *The Leatherman's Handbook* in describing the fetishist cowboy. With regards to Townsend, she assumes a correlation between the biker and the cowboy, and concludes that "[t]he cyclist and cowboy are brothers" (1996:176). She substantiates this connection by quoting from Townsend.

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<sup>26</sup> However, heterosexual masculinity can describe the same desire for gay men as a homosexual appropriation of masculine fantasy would. This merely reiterates the idea that masculine fantasy is constructed on the body's surface and implies reference to the body's sexual orientation.

<sup>27</sup> When I speak of traditional cowboy garb in this context, I do not mean to imply an "original" set of clothes preferred by actual cowboys in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but I make reference to the stylized outfit which has come to be associated with the romanticized image of the cowboy.



Groups of men “ride horseback and camp out,” wearing “leather chaps over Levis...or maybe over naked hips and thighs. Even if the group is dressed, at least half will have stripped to the waist.” Later on, “the group is mostly in the nude, except for boots,” “tooled boots with pointed toes and elevated heels,” and cowboy hats. (cited in Steele 1996:176)

Thus, the masculine in gay fetishist representations no longer differentiates between the delinquent on his motorbike and the cowboy conquering the Wild West on his horse. Both become erotic fantasies depicting the same thing – active, rugged and virile men whose machismo is quite clearly displayed in/on their tough clothes. At this point I would like to briefly discuss the gay macho clone, which, although highly popularized in the 1970s, has already appeared on the streets of major American cities during the 60s.

### **The Macho Clone**

On the surface (pun intended), it appears as if conventional macho masculinity and the macho gay clone, which is an over-emphasised and sexualized stylization of typical masculine stereotypes, represent the same misogynist masculinity which feminists argue are reinforcing patriarchal oppression to women and other minorities, including effeminate gay men. However, as I’ve mentioned, such an eager assumption notices only the surface of the male body as signifier of masculine misogyny, and fails in detecting perhaps the most important element(s) of the gay clone, i.e. the use of masculine signifiers in advocating quite specific homosexual tendencies and wishes. Clones modified the macho look by means of stylization. Shaun Cole quotes Joseph Bristow,

[S]tylizing particular aspects of conventional masculine dress, [gay men could] adopt and subvert given identities, appearing like “real men” and yet being the last thing a “real man” would want to be mistaken for: gay... (2000:95)

These stylizations were quite direct copies of traditional heterosexual masculine archetypes such as the cowboy, the cop, the construction worker, the biker, etc. Shaun Cole explains that the above mentioned archetypes “represented a traditional but non-conforming aspect of masculinity and sexuality... that were understood by the gay

populace”. He concedes that it was also understood by the wider American culture as signs of “toughness, virility, aggression, strength, potency”. (2000:94).

One of the ways in which gay men (most notably the clones) appropriated the masculine image as a signifier of homosexuality, was through the use of a complex arrangement of signs. These signs were anything from the positioning of key chains to the colour of handkerchiefs. Shaun Cole explains that “[c]oloured handkerchiefs in the back pocket became one of the most intricate and detailed systems of coding” (2000:112)<sup>28</sup>.

Although the semiotics of gay clothing is in itself quite a rich field of research, I want to use it within the context of an argument which suggests that traditional masculine attributes, such as handkerchiefs and keys, are successfully denounced as heteronormative in the representation of the macho gay clone. In effect, what the coded system of masculine clothes purports, is the exposure of the male body as a site of possible penetration. This reversal of masculine signification (the reversal being that of heterosexual to homosexual masculinity), which I propose to be the transformation of the phallus into the penis, is further explored in the images of the physique model to which I will now shift my attention.

### **Turning the Phallus into the Penis**

Such fetishist images, like those in *Physique Pictorial*, produce gay male desire by emphasising both masculinity and maleness at the same time. Unlike the heterosexual or orthodox cowboy who performs his masculinity by masking an underlying lack through the clothing and rugged behaviour of his fantasized identity, the homosexual cowboy (at least in erotic imagery) performs his identity by revealing his obvious maleness. Like the censored photographs of AMG, homosexual desire for the masculine is realized more fully by revealing the male instead of the masculine.

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<sup>28</sup> See Appendix C for a demonstration of the relation of specific colours with their signified activities.

Although such a shift in bodily representation entails the discarding of masculine clothes and exposing the masculine as “male”, the physique cowboy does not abandon all indications of masculinity or the phallic; instead he retains certain phallic symbols (pose, clothing, musculature, etc), but display them as sexual objects. In this way, they become part of the *maleness* of the male body (the penis), rather than mere ideological masculine signifiers (the phallus).

The physique cowboy thus confuses the desire for the masculine with the desire for the male. In other words, he supposes the symbols of masculinity as phallic properties to be extensions of the penis, rather than signifiers of the phallus. By appropriating the necessary elements which establishes him as macho, such as the phallic clothing of the cowboy – gun, holster, boots, chaps and hat; he places these masculine fantasy symbols against the naked male body, which, similarly to the ideas of Mapplethorpe and Tom of Finland, turns the phallic into the penis. As a penis, the phallic as supposedly an impenetrable aspect of manhood, becomes susceptible to a penetrable<sup>29</sup> male gaze, which in effect places the masculine in the position of the passive, receptive.

As I have mentioned above, the masculine uniform of the working class or “rough trade” as it was known in homosexual circles, was a common fantasy for gay men as it represented an image which was largely disassociated with homosexuality and effeminacy. Erotic fantasies are often depicted as social taboos which heightens their desirability. More important, though, than the mere sexual/visual pleasure which the (homo)sexual objectification of men can offer a reader, is the threat to a stable heterosexual signifying masculinity, which such objectifications imply. A possible threat to heterosexual masculinity is instigated by displacing the male body from the position of the subject to that of the object within the gaze. I will come back to this notion after I discussed the appropriation and subsequent critique of the phallus as a secure construct.

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<sup>29</sup> Although conventionally the penis is regarded as the object of penetration, rather than the penetrated, the possibility of penetrating the penis should not be overlooked. However, what I contend when I speak of the penetrable penis, is not so much a physical deed as a metaphorical implication. By using the term penetrable, instead of castration, I want to highlight the fact that the fear of losing the phallus is not restricted to the female, but can also be realized by other men.

### The “Serious” Physique

Emmanuel Cooper explains that in order to avoid prosecution for sending nude photographs of men through the post, “models had to be presented using the format of serious physique photography” (1990:102), such as men wrestling or posing as classical sculptures. I have already touched on the “traditional” bodybuilder as object of visual incentive without appearing to serve any function besides the aesthetic quality of its “sculpted” body. Some criticism has also linked such a passive display of masculinity to feminine attributes, as well as a possible homoerotic bodily display. Bob Mizer amplifies these connotations in *Physique Pictorial* by consciously incorporating and exploiting them within images of the male physique.

Cooper describes how the new physique images of Mizer “heightened the relaxed, informal presentation of the nude”. He explains, Mizer “took up the ‘straight’ health and strength image but subverted it with a particularly rich code of homoeroticism”. (1990:102). Like Mizer, Bruce of Los Angeles used the “traditional” imagery of male bodybuilders in deliberate erotic ways. His work, though not overtly homosexual in content or even signification, subtly introduces a homoerotic display of “traditional” masculinity and bodybuilding. In Fig. 29 the two models are holding hands with their fingers intertwined. Although this physical intimacy emphasises the body’s “genuineness”, it is at the same time contradicted by their highly static poses and hairless, oiled, muscled bodies, which display them as impassable structures. Such paradoxical representations of masculinity clearly titillate the homosexual reader with a “look-but-don’t-touch” aesthetic as Jack Stevenson iterates in his essay, “From the Bedroom to the Bijou” (1997:25). Stevenson quotes the film historian Thomas Waugh’s response to the posing film, “The static quality of a succession of stiff physical poses, frozen in a moving medium, seemed to exaggerate all the more the pretense [sic] and artificiality of the mask” (cited in Stevenson 1997:25-6).

Despite the obvious correlations between the “traditional” bodybuilder and the physique model, such as their posed passivity, there are essential disparities between them which assist in transposing heterosexual fantasy into homosexual desire. I have already

mentioned that the major contribution to the physique photograph is its underlying homoeroticism, but there are several other factors involved in the lampooning of “traditional” bodybuilding imagery which are worth mentioning.

Cooper describes the fundamental shift in the new physique images by highlighting their parodied classical interpretations. He notes,

With ‘art’ and classical antiquity as the legalising context, ancient columns, poles, pedestals, posing platforms, balls, hoops and the like set the scene, but the result was often sheer parody. (1990:102)

Stevenson explains the literal collapse of these phallic structures by describing the flimsy and fake set designs constructed by Mizer for photographic stills and later motion films which were born from the physique photography genre. He explains the set designs as “slap-dash” which “shook or threatened to collapse when the inevitable knot of brawling young lads careened into them” (1997:26). Like the appropriability of masculine stereotypes and attires, so-called masculine structures and milieus were proven to be just as invented and unstable, and therefore assumable by non-masculine characters.

Another motivating aspect in breaking down “traditional” masculine representations as heteronormative, lies within the assumed heterosexuality of (most of) the models. I have already mentioned that the physique models were thought to be mostly heterosexual men, and believed to be unaware of the apparent homoerotic nature of their posing. With reference to the posing films, Stevenson explains that these films

often featured seemingly slightly nervous and confused (and undoubtedly, in some cases, heterosexual) musclemen awkwardly taking instructions from off-screen directors. They appeared self-conscious and ill at ease as they offered themselves up as targets for the viewer’s unrequited gaze. (1997:25)

These images playfully, yet erotically mock heterosexual ideals as an entity which is “all”. By performing masculinity in this theatrical way, the physique model acquires and to some extent, which I will divulge more on later in this chapter, takes possession of the

symbolic phallic function of Phelan which I mentioned earlier. Though this phallic role-reversal appears sufficient enough in challenging patriarchal and heteronormative authority, it fails in such a quest because of the fictional character of the phallus. It should thus be assumed that neither heterosexual nor homosexual men can entirely *possess* masculinity.

How then is it possible for gay macho representations to undermine the heterosexual phallus, if indeed such an endeavour is at all possible? I will now attempt to find possible solutions, if only more insight into this dilemma by investigating the male gaze as subject.

### **Reverting the Male Gaze**

[T]he knowledge that gay men may be looking at them could be threatening to “orthodox” heterosexuals not because (or not only because) it stirs up their own suppressed homoeroticism..., but because they experience their masculinity as violated (Bordo 1994:285).

Susan Bordo states that the possible violation which heterosexual men might feel from being gazed at by gay men. By making reference to the ideological supposition that defines men as subjects and women as objects, Bordo explains that the gay male gaze as perceiving subject has the ability to turn “the other into a “woman””. (1994:286).

In the film *Beefcake*, a scene is depicted where one of the models, the character Neil, played by Josh Peace, is posing for a movie being filmed by Bob Mizer, played by Daniel Macivor. We are also shown two of the other models having sex while looking at Neil being filmed. Their conversation articulates both men’s (sexual) attraction to Neil, but recognizes him as “king-size square”<sup>30</sup>. Unaware of this scenario, the following conversation takes place between Neil and Bob.

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<sup>30</sup> Homosexual slang terminology for a straight/heterosexual man.

Neil: Who watches these films anyway?

Bob: Fellas, young fellas everywhere who look at you and fantasize...

[Bob interrupts himself by directing Neil to move closer to the camera]

They fantasize about being like you. You're their hero Neil...  
I think the youngsters are gonna admire that little film.

*(Beefcake 1998)*

Despite depicting Neil's apparent naivety towards his role in the production of these physique films, the scene portrays a more fundamental role which Neil, as a physique model who is made to believe that young men watches him in admiration for him (or more specifically his body), plays in situating a heterosexual male fantasy within a homosexual male desire.

However, the male gaze, as the character of Bob Mizer attends, is used ambiguously in the conversation with Neil (*Beefcake*). Although Bob purports that (heterosexual) men fantasize about other men's phallic power, the obvious eroticization of the phallus in these imagery denotes, in fact, a sexual fantasy for men in the sense of desiring the penis (Neil as a possible object of penetration). Thus, in a reversal of subject/object positions, the (heterosexual) male subject does not achieve his position as self through the gaze of the other, since the other's gaze in this case is similar to his own, i.e. male; instead he becomes the (sexualized) object of the other's gaze. Such an argument nonetheless does not necessarily conclude that the homosexual gaze succeeds in becoming the self, since it merely arranges itself as object whenever it assumes the position of the model. The possible ambivalence of the dislocation of self/other importance is explored, by once again, turning to Phelan.

Phelan rejects the idea that the repositioning of men's status within the gaze would necessarily de-power them as subjects. Instead, she assumes in her discussion of the work of the American photographer Robert Mapplethorpe, that the "[s]exual objectification of men allows for ascendancy toward 'power'"... and thus avoid becoming objects, "precisely because they carry the charge of the sexual..." Phelan concludes: "Despite the

fact that the homoerotic aspect of Mapplethorpe's photographs would seem to prompt a "degraded" valuation of his work, in fact the heterosexual valuation of maleness *per se* lends his work value". She thus views maleness, or the penis, as a deciding element in the "valuation" of Mapplethorpe's work. Being male, according to her, is enough to escape the fatality of objectification. (1993:51).

This view sharply contrasts to that of Susan Bordo, who, as I already noted, perceives the gay male gaze's objectification of the male subject, as a threat to heterosexual masculinity. Phelan's argument thus seems only applicable to the sexual objectification of gay men. When gay men are sexually objectified, their maleness becomes a valuable element in subverting male homosexuality's derogatory associations with effeminacy, and thus also the supposed absence of maleness and masculinity from their bodies. In other words, the homosexual male objectification allows for the confirmation of masculinity within gay men, and masculine fantasies such as the cowboy, the sailor, the biker, etc. (which are categorized within *Physique Pictorial* magazine), lend the male as object sexual valuation which denies a complete objectification of masculinity<sup>31</sup>.

Thus, a disposition of accepted heterosexual fantasies substitutes a heterosexual masculine desire with a homosexual masculine/male desire. In other words, to refer to Freud's theory of fantasy<sup>32</sup>, the subconscious desire is replaced by a conscious fantasy. The shift in the type of masculine fantasy which is now represented is perhaps not enough to completely objectify<sup>33</sup> homosexual masculinity and gay men as I mentioned with reference to Phelan, but it does open up (quite literally exposes) masculinity to (visual) consumption.

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<sup>31</sup> This problem however is not as simple as it appears to be. The homosexual "object", which in the context of this theory is identified as the physique model, has already been established as almost never actually being homosexual in sexual orientation. This may suppose problems to the identification of the placing of men into subject/object positions, but in keeping with our theory that masculinity, and homosexuality are products of social and cultural performativity, we must assume that heterosexual and homosexual identities are merely social constructs, which have been placed into valued and non-valued positions. Thus, despite the sexual inclinations of the model, we must read his gendered identity in the symbolic significations which he appropriates (these I have already supposed to be located on the surface of the male body).

<sup>32</sup> Dylan Evans explains that Freud uses the term 'fantasy' to denote "a scene which is presented to the imagination and which stages an unconscious desire" (1996:60).

<sup>33</sup> A complete objectification would entitle a loss of power from the subject being objectified.



Such a visual consumption is made explicit within gay physique photography. In *Don't Look Now*, Richard Dyer agrees that the male pin-up evades a complete objectification by acting out or posing his masculinity. Dyer argues that the act of looking at men undermines the,

passivity of the male object through a variety of mechanisms including the deflecting of the gaze so that the model, or indeed actor, looks aloft or through the camera, the implied activity of models as doing things or at least as ready to do things through the tautness of their pose or more simply their muscularity, and most directly the use of the accoutrements and implied roles of masculinity from work and sports to uniforms and the outdoors. (cited in Edwards, 2006:124)

Dyer's observation may clearly be applied to the models in *Physique Pictorial*. It is therefore important to briefly discuss some differences between the representations of the traditional (heterosexual) bodybuilder, and that of the (homosexual) physique model<sup>34</sup>.

### **Measuring Muscles**

The physique model as pin-up displays itself significantly different to the heterosexual or traditional bodybuilder. Unlike the bodybuilder who signifies the classical living statue which symbolizes a mythological fantasy or destiny, the physique model's physical musculature is "natural" rather than "pumped". Cooper explains that most of the models in *Physique Pictorial* were mostly young men "who liked to 'work out', rather than muscular hulks who took part in competitions" (1990:102). They represented the boy next door (and were often recruited from the streets) and thus displayed a more "natural", or rather a more recognized image of male fantasy. Whereas the traditional bodybuilder portrays the masculine body as a "living work of art" – a stable, solid and idealized object of beauty which defies possible subjugation by representing an unassailable structure, the

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<sup>34</sup> The reason I place "heterosexual" and "homosexual" in this context in brackets, is purely because these masculine representations are not restricted to either one or the other. When I speak of "traditional" bodybuilding as heterosexual, I simply refer to its manifestation as a representation which suppresses a possible homoeroticism and therefore denies the body any identification with the homosexual. The "homosexual" physique in the same way, as I mentioned earlier, were in fact heterosexual young men, but displayed their bodies in a homoerotic manner which, regardless of the body's sexual orientation, represent a homosexual fantasy for other gay men.

physique model appears very much alive and “real”. His body always appears to be in motion, although this is a “posed” movement.

The physique model never denies his role as passive object of the gaze, but employs this role in determining his position as a male subject. Thus, the physique model as both subject and object functions paradoxically by reverting his passivity into an activity. The apparent contradiction in gay subjectivity and objectivity is exemplified in the physique films of the 1950s and 60s, called the “posing” or “posing strap film” (Stevenson 1997:26). The films depict the physique model as an object of the male gaze, yet is never completely static. Although he might appear as the passive recipient of the gaze as well as queues from the director, the physique model looks beyond the camera/photographer and into the person gazing at him. He is thus always aware that he is being looked at, objectified and therefore, never averts the male gaze, but his (erotically playful) *interaction* with the subject’s gaze denies his object position. His responsive gaze is one which invites, challenges, and confronts masculine sexuality, unlike the traditional bodybuilder who merely projects this, however over-exaggerated. In this way, the physique model as active “poser” or performer gains power over a complete objectification.

## Conclusion

The seemingly respective embodiments of masculine fantasy on the bodies of heterosexual and homosexual men were placed into separate chapters. However, almost immediately such a structured approach uncovered various inconsistencies in the possibility of categorizing masculinity. An attempt to find solidity within heterosexual masculinity proves to be a futile exertion, just as the supposed inconsistencies in homosexual masculinity confirms to be nothing more than the appropriations of conventionalized and accepted heterosexual gender performatives, which in itself is incoherent.

Thus, what I sought to demonstrate in this research proved itself plausible by the seemingly disjointed structure of this thesis, i.e. that masculinity as a male fantasy is at once everywhere and nowhere. It is also not always where and how one expects to find it, and it cannot be contained within certain bodies and be denied to others. It is a structured attempt at realizing a fantasy which is unobtainable, and only partially displayed on the surface of (in the case of this research) the male body. Masculinity then, as a gendered attribute, is performatively constructed, and in some cases literally portrayed as a performance. Whichever way, it always contradicts the concept of masculinity as “innate” to the male body.

I have demonstrated the performative aspect of heterosexual masculinity in the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter by highlighting its fictional and tactile qualities. Here, I have established that masculinity lies not within, but on the surface of the male body. These skin-deep elements I have demonstrated are representatives of the phallus, which proved to be insecure and thus an unreliable determination of manliness. More than this, it provided the necessary ammunition for a homosexual appropriation of a macho masculinity.

By imitating signs of conventional heterosexual masculinity in their physical appearance, the gay clone, whether on the street or on the pages of physique pictorials, assisted in destabilizing a social recognition of masculinity and subsequently also stereotypical

perceptions of homosexuality. More important, however, than challenging the accepted heteronormativity of masculine behaviour, were gay men's appropriation and performance of heterosexual masculinity, which exposed its fictional character, and instigated a rethinking of "appropriate" gender performatives. Judith Butler emphasised the importance of differentiating between gender attributes as expressing (a supposed "natural" manifestation of the body's "instinctive" inclinations) or performing its cultural significations. She states that

[i]f gender attributes and acts, the various ways in which a body shows or produces its cultural signification, are performative, then there is no pre-existing identity by which an act or attribute might be measured; there would be no true or false, real or distorted acts of gender, and the postulation of a true gender identity would be revealed as a regulatory fiction. (1994:115)

Butler's theory on gender performativity was implied throughout this thesis, and underlines much of masculinity's apparent incongruities. It is precisely this performative aspect which made and still makes gay men and homosexuality be perceived as a threat to heteronormative masculinity. This is also the point which I would like to conclude with.

If masculinity and homosexuality are intrinsically divorced from each other, as Tim Edwards (2006:86) noted, then the fear of homosexuality could easily have been written off as a heterosexual paranoia. However, what seems to enflame such a fear in heterosexual men is not so much the possibility that gay men may potentially acquire masculinity, but rather the anxiety of not possessing or losing his own self-assured masculinity. Indeed, the loss of masculinity is made possible by accepting it as an unstable fantasy.

The gay clone became a threat to heterosexual machismo precisely because it (machismo) is a fictitious construct, and not a necessary signification of heterosexual masculinity. It has however, as a result of regulatory rehearsed conventions, "falsely" come to signify what we commonly associate with heterosexual masculinity. Susan Bordo recognized the

threatening aspect which macho gay men signified to heterosexual masculinity. She states,

[A]lthough it is the imagined effeminacy of homosexual men that makes them objects of heterosexual derision, here it is their imagined *masculinity* (that is, the consciousness of them as active, evaluating sexual subjects, with a defining and “penetrating” sexual gaze) that makes them the objects of heterosexual fear. (1994:287)

The importance of the (homo)eroticization of the phallus as gay macho representations have done by turning the ideological phallus into the material penis thus proved to serve a much more valuable function than merely ditching the effeminate stereotype in order to look manlier. It assisted gay men in subverting the “accepted” argument, man equals subject/woman equals object (which the homosexual as effeminate or “woman trapped in a man’s body” formed part of). The phallus as penis becomes a penetrable object and exposes men as prone to objectification. Herein lies the potential threat of homosexual “deviance” to heterosexual “normativity”. The role of masculinity as a performance or at least a constructed aspect on the surface of men’s bodies provided the necessary recognition of gay men as male subjects (however fictional this concept may be) with an equally potentially objectifying gaze. The homophobia of straight men being found desirable, flirted with, or ultimately kissed by a gay man is (at the least metaphorically) realized in gay physique (pornographic) photography which pervades all of the above anxieties.

Thus, the important part which masculine fantasy has played in the visual construction of heterosexual men as signifiers of manliness (strength, virility, aggression) became equally important elements which were appropriable by gay men as a form of criticizing these elements’ authoritative and oppressive power over non-masculine bodies. In other words, by exposing masculinity as a fiction, its privileged position is called into question by its ability to be transposed onto the bodies of non-privileged subjects, which are gay men.

This thesis has been a very succinct exploration of the performative “nature” of masculinity. It has merely succeeded in scratching the surface of the very rich field of masculine fantasy and male desire. Although I attempted to introduce the problems with the representation of male homosexual and heterosexual masculine desire as correlative, this area is still fertile soil for further theoretical exploration. Despite criticisms which deter appropriations of macho images by homosexual men as a way of inverting misogynist behaviour, the gay clone and physique model as gay fantasies are important bodies to investigate with regards to their “heteronormative origins”.

**Appendix A.** Willie Schlechter, *Christella en die Rooi Stiletto* (2006). Unpublished.

### **Christella en die Rooi Stiletto**

Eendag, nie so lank gelede  
verhoor die gode 'n jong meisie se gebede.  
En skenk aan haar 'n seun,  
wat eenvoudig weier om te speen.

Die kind was bleek en lam  
en wou niks weet van pram.  
Dus, met tyd het hy gesukkel  
om sy spiere te ontwikkel.

Die ouers het gevrees –  
die kind sal nooit 'n man kan wees.  
En stuur hom na 'n institusie  
om te help met sy kondisie.

Daar vind hy tot sy skok –  
die seuns dra glad nie rok.  
Hul stoei en skop  
en drink glad dop.

En so het dit gebeur  
dat Christo heelwat moes ontbeur.  
Daar was die aand 'n sokkie,  
maar Christo had geen bokkie  
(nie te praat van 'n rokkie).

'n Plan moes hy beraam  
en het dadelik na die kas gegaan.  
En daar tussen hemp en broek  
kry hy net waarvoor hy soek.

Nie sequece of fluweel,  
maar 'n vrou wat jou asem steel.  
“Noem my Dollie”,  
sê die antie ewe jollie.

“'n Sokkie is 'n groot affair  
en soebat vir 'n bietjie flair”.  
Sy gooi 'n corset uit die kas  
wat alte netjies pas.

“Gaan geniet vanaand die groot gejol,  
maar moenie met die noodlot lol.  
As prinsie onder daai corset sien,  
is hy miskien nie meer so keen”.

Die saal was alte mooi getooi.  
Met hooi die wêreld vol gestrooi.  
Die ouens het gedans en fluit  
en moffies uit die plek gesmyt.

Toe Christella inkom met ‘n wals,  
daal stilte oor elke broek en hals.  
Die meisies wou nie langer bly.  
maar elke seun wou ‘n rondte kry.

Christella was egter preuts  
en wou nie dans met vreemde seuns.  
Ignatius was so in haar kraal,  
want hy het hoofseunskap behaal.

Maar toe die prins sy lippies tuit,  
besef Christella dis sulke tyd.  
Sy los Ignatius en hardloop uit –  
die seun se mondjie steeds getuit.

Stiletos dra, dié moes sy leer  
en val toe sommer vinnig neer.  
Met die sesde tree wat sy gee,  
gee die skoene se hak mos mee.

Dollie het goedkoop raad,  
besef sy heeltemal te laat.  
En is vinnig op ‘n manke draf  
die verlate grondpad af.

Terug in die koshuiskamer  
raak Christo al hoe skamer.  
Sy gemoed is diep gedemp,  
want nou dra hy weer knopieshemp.

Ignatius was hoogs beneuk  
en reken hy is goed verneuk.  
Dié meisie sal hy vanaand nog kry  
om stormagtig mee te vry.



So vind die prins to op 'n rak  
'n rooi stiletto sonder hak.  
En was hy eers verstom  
toe Christo by die deur inkom.

Nie alle liefde is te mete  
Aan 'n skoen se lengte of sy breedte.  
Maar as hy wel jou voetjie pas,  
Haal hom gerus maar uit die kas.

**Appendix B.** Willie Schlechter, *Henry and the Witch* (2006). Unpublished.

## **Henry and the Witch**

Once there was a little boy  
named Henry Hank Malloy.  
He lived far outside a town,  
where people mostly frown.

Although he was adventurous,  
Henry had a nagging wish  
to have a tummy hard as stone  
and sturdy steel within each bone.

One day he was out hiking  
and saw a house much to his liking.  
He rang the bell and stood in awe  
to observe an apparition at the door.

Henry, numb with shock,  
saw the nails, the hair, but o, no frock!  
“Come in and have a bite”,  
a woman offered with delight.

Now Henry’s mother was a fool  
and thought that learning was uncool.  
Thus, he was never told  
that a woman bright and bold  
who walks around without a stitch,  
is deemed to be a dangerous witch.

And so, quite innocent,  
he entered her establishment.  
“My sweet young lad, feel much at ease,  
and take thy shirt off, if thou please”.

Henry was a bit distressed.  
As you know he wasn’t blessed  
with fruits of firmer flesh.  
In fact, his tummy was a mess.

The wicked witch was horrified.  
“I cannot have thee for dinner,  
thou hast a rather round behind  
and thy gut ought’ be much thinner.”

“I’ll lock thee in the attic”,  
She argued quite erratic.  
“A sit-up, push-up and a chin-up,  
makes any flabby boy a pin-up.  
In seven days thou’ll be a man  
with arms of steel and island tan.”

Henry huffed and puffed  
and soon was pretty buffed.  
“A credit to my genius”,  
the witch announced much too serious.

“A man of meat is good to eat.  
Come quick, come take a seat.  
I’ll have thee yet as my fair guest.  
We’ll wine and dine, and... well, all the rest.”

The rest my friends I fear  
is inappropriately queer.  
The witch roasted Henry on a spit  
and chewed his bones up bit by bit.

*Oh, heed my warning fair young boys,  
a chiselled pec has many joys.  
But a bare skin witch is o so sly  
and she will tell you many lies  
to have you as her special date –  
hot and healthy on a plate.*

**Appendix C. The Hanky Colour Code [Sa].**  
(Cole 2000:114).

<i>Colour</i>	<i>Left Side (Active)</i>	<i>Right Side (Passive)</i>
Red	Fist Fucker	Fist Fuckee
Dark Blue	Fucker	Fuckee
Light Blue	Wants Blow Job	Gives Blow Job
Black	Heavy S&M, top	Heavy S&M, bottom
White	Jack Me Off	I'll do us both
Yellow	Water Sports (Golden Shower), giver	Water Sports (Golden Shower), receiver
Brown	Spreads Scat/Shitter	Receives Scat/Shitee
Robin's Egg Blue	69-er	Anything but 69
Mustard	Has 8" or More	Looking for Big Dick
Green	Hustler, selling	Hustler, buying
Beige (Light Brown)	Likes to be Rimmed	Likes to Rim
Olive Drab	Military/Uniforms	Looking for same
Orange	Anything Top	Anything Bottom
Purple	Piercer/Genitotorturer	Piercee/Genitotorturee
Grey	Gives Bondage/Light S&M	Desires same
Pink	Dildo giver	Dildo receiver



**Fig 1.** Willie Schlechter, *Die Saal was alte Mooi Getooi*, from “Christella en die Rooi Stiletto” (2007). Gelatin silver print with incision.

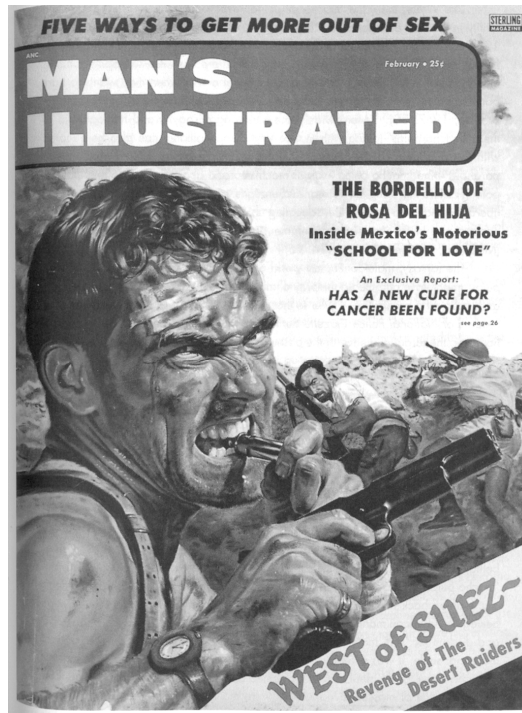


**Fig 2.** Man's Magazine, *The Animals went Mad* (1950s). Colour magazine cover. (Heimann 2002: 35).

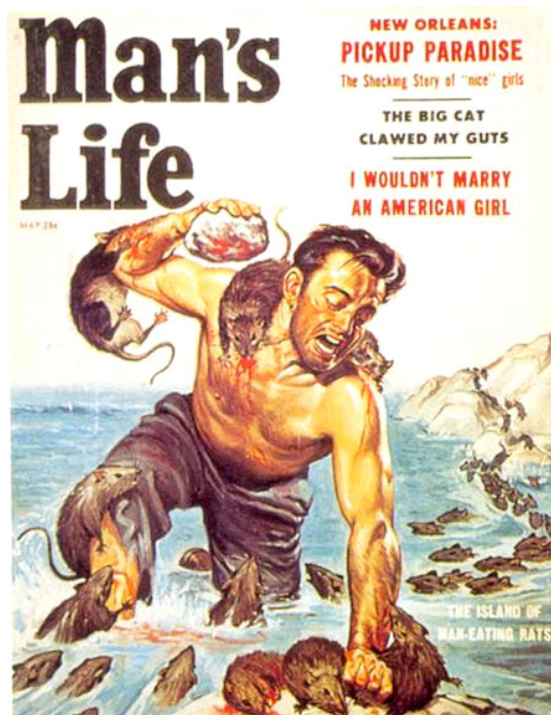


**Fig 3.** Sir, *A Magazine for Males* (1950s). Colour magazine cover. (Heimann 2002: 26).





**Fig 4.** Man's Illustrated, *West of Suez – Revenge of The Desert Raiders* (1957). Colour magazine cover. (Five Ways to Get More out of Sex) (Osgerby 2001:77).



**Fig 5.** Man's Life, *The Island of Man-Eating Rats* (1950s). Colour magazine cover. (Heimann 2002:28).

**Marlboro Country.** There's not another place like it. You get a bigger helping of flavor here. The tobacco in Marlboro's famous Richmond Recipe tastes richer... smoother, too, through the exclusive Selectrate® Filter. You get a lot to like: a man's world of flavor in a filter cigarette.



**Fig 6.** Marlboro, *Marlboro Country* (1963). Colour and Black & White magazine advertisement. (Heimann 2002:94).





Fig 7. Chesterfield, *Always buy Chesterfield* (1950). Colour magazine advertisement. (“Make MY brand your brand, smoke MILDER Chesterfields” – Tyrone Power) (Heimann 2002:85).



Fig 8. L&M, *Less tars & More taste* (1958). Colour magazine advertisement. (“Puff by puff... Less tars... More taste... that's today's L&M” – James Arness) (Heimann 2002:85).



*How MILD can a Cigarette be?*

MAKE THE 30-DAY CAMEL MILDNESS TEST—SEE WHY...

**MORE PEOPLE SMOKE CAMELS  
than any other cigarette!**



**“The roles I play in movies are far from easy on my voice— I can’t risk throat irritation. So I smoke Camels — they’re mild”**

*John Wayne*  
POPULAR, HANDSOME  
HOLLYWOOD STAR



“I’ve been around movie sets long enough to know how important cigarette mildness is to an actor. So when it came to deciding what cigarette was just right for my throat — I was very particular. I made a *sensible* test—my own 30-Day Camel Mildness Test!

“I gave Camels a real tryout for 30 days. The most pleasure I ever had from smoking. My own ‘T-Zone’ told me just how mild and good tasting a cigarette can be! I found out for myself why *more people smoke Camels than any other cigarette!*”



**MAN’S IDEA OF A MOVIE HERO**  
And the women agree! 6 feet 4 inches, John Wayne has smashed his way to fame in dozens of knock-down-and-drag-out — hard-riding . . . glorious motion pictures!

R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, Winston-Salem, N. C.

*Make your own  
30-Day Camel  
MILDNESS Test  
in your “T-Zone”*  
(T for Throat, T for Taste)



**Not one single case of  
throat irritation *due to smoking*  
CAMELS!**

Yes, these were the findings of noted throat specialists after a total of 2,470 weekly examinations of the throats of hundreds of men and women who smoked Camels — and only Camels — for 30 consecutive days.

Fig 9. Camel, *More People Smoke Camels than any other cigarette* (1951). Colour magazine advertisement. (Not one single case of throat irritation due to smoking Camels) (Heimann 2002:81).





**Fig 10.** Gentlemen's Quarterly, *Go West! The Cowboy Look Comes to Town*. (1970s). Colour magazine cover. (Heimann 2002: 43).



**Fig 11.** Dennis Stock, *John Wayne on the set of The Alamo* (1959). Photographic print. (Shugaar 2000:68).

# Don't Be Half A Man!

Let Me PROVE I Can Make You A REAL HE-MAN  
from Head to Toe—in Just 15 Minutes A Day!

## ARE YOU:

- Skinny and Run Down?
- Always Tired?
- Nervous?
- Shy and Lacking in Confidence?
- Overweight and Short of Breath?
- Constipated or Irregular?
- Suffering from Bad Breath?
- Troubled by Pimples and a Poor Complexion?
- Slow at Sports?
- Do You Want to Gain Weight?
- Are You Ashamed of Your Half-Man Build?

NOBODY ever called an Atlas Champion "Half A Man." They wouldn't dare. And nobody has to settle for "Second Best" . . . be "pushed around" by huskier fellows . . . or go through life feeling HALF ALIVE. CHARLES ATLAS, himself, tells you what you can do about it—and FAST—right on this page!

Take a good honest look at yourself! Are you proud of your body or are you satisfied to go through life being just "half the man" you could be?

NO MATTER how ashamed of your present physical condition you may be—how old or young you are—you have the DORMANT muscle power in your God-given body to be a real HE-MAN. Believe me, I know because I was once a 97-pound HALF-ALIVE weakling. People laughed at my build . . . I was ashamed to strip for sports . . . shy of girls . . . afraid of competition.

THEN I discovered the secret that changed me into "The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man." The secret I have shared with thousands of fellows like you to turn them into marvelous physical specimens—REAL HE-MAN from head to toe!

### My Secret Builds Muscles FAST!

My secret—"Dynamic Tension"—will turn the trick for you FAST! It's the NATURAL easy method you can practice right in the privacy of your own room—JUST 15 MINUTES EACH DAY—while your scrawny chest and shoulder muscles swell so big they almost split your coat seams . . . you get sledge hammer fists, a battering ram punch . . . ridges of solid stomach muscle . . . mighty legs that never tire!

NO theory. No gadgets or contraptions. When you develop your strength through "Dynamic Tension," you can laugh at artificial muscle makers. You simply use the SLEEPING muscle-power in your own body almost unconsciously every minute of the day—walking, bending over, etc.—watch it increase, and multiply until you're covered with a brand-new suit of beautiful SOLID MUSCLE. You're a REAL HE-MAN!

*Charles Atlas*

Holder of the title "The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man."



Silver Cup Given Away  
It is a dome cup, over a foot high, will be given to pupil who makes greatest improvement in next 3 months.

My 32-Page Illustrated Book Is FREE!

Here Are Just a Few of the Men I've Turned into Atlas Champions!

Five Inches of New Muscle  
"That is what you have done for me—and in almost no time."  
—C. W., W. Va.



Proud of His Build Now  
Gained 20 pounds. "My whole upper trunk is now in proportion to the rest of my body. I'm really proud of my body, thanks to you."  
—P. V., Va.

"New Health and Strength"  
"I feel like a lion. I can easily lift 185 pounds. You gave me new health, strength, and a perfect build."  
—W. D., N. Y.



Makes Wonderful Progress  
"I am sending you this snapshot showing my wonderful progress."  
—W. G., New Jersey

FREE My 32-Page Illustrated Book is Yours—  
Not for \$1.00 or 10¢—But FREE

Send NOW for my famous book, "Everlasting Health and Strength." 32 pages, packed from cover to cover with actual photographs, valuable advice, answers many vital questions. This book is a real prize for any fellow who wants a better build. Yet I'll send you a copy absolutely FREE. Just glancing through it may mean the turning point in your life! Rush the coupon to me personally. CHARLES ATLAS, Dept. 190-M, 115 East 23rd St., New York 10, N. Y.



CHARLES ATLAS, Dept. 190-M,  
115 East 23rd St., New York 10, N. Y.

Send me—absolutely FREE—a copy of your famous book, "Everlasting Health and Strength"—32 pages, crammed with actual photographs, answers to vital health questions, and valuable advice to every man who wants a better build. I understand this book is mine to keep, and sending for it does not obligate me in any way.

NAME..... AGE.....  
(Please print or write plainly)  
ADDRESS .....

CITY..... Zone No..... STATE.....  
(if any)

Fig 14. Charles Atlas, *Don't be half a Man* (1950s). Black & White magazine advertisement (Heimann 2002:377).



**In 10 Minutes of FUN a day I changed myself**

from this Bloodless, Pitiful **SKINNY SHRIMP** to this **NEW MUSCULAR RED-BLOODED HEAD-TO-TOE HE-MAN!**

Ken Grimm BEFORE mailing coupon

Ken GRIMM AFTER MAILING COUPON

Now, Buddy YOU Mail the Coupon below as I did! May be LAST CHANCE before \$1 price goes back!

GET ALL THESE PICTURE-PACKED COURSES **5 FREE** If you mail coupon NOW!

Millions have been sold at \$1.

1 Look at JIM NORMAN'S HEROIC CHEST NOW! You can have it **HOW TO MOLD A MIGHTY CHEST**

2 This is one-time SKINNY JOBBIE JACKSON AFTER mailing the coupon below **HOW TO MOLD A MIGHTY ARM**

3 MIGHTY BACK NOW **HOW TO MOLD A MIGHTY BACK**

4 **HOW TO MOLD A MIGHTY GRIP**

5 **HOW TO MOLD MIGHTY LEGS** By GEORGE F. JOWETT

I just **GAINED 35 NEW LBS.** OF SHAPELY POWER-PACKED **MUSCLES!**

You can do the same as I and THOUSANDS have

You can add 10 inches to your CHEST 6 inches to each ARM and the rest in proportion as I did.

**NO!** friend you don't have to be **SKINNY, WEAK** or **FLABBY** any more just mail **NOW** the **FREE** coupon below as I did. (MILLIONS HAVE BEEN SOLD FOR \$1.)

Besides getting ALL 5 Courses (pictured on this page) **FREE** you'll ALSO get **FREE** a big BOOK of PHOTOS OF STRONG MEN and BOYS who were WEAKLINGS like you BEFORE mailing coupon.

THIS THRILLING BOOK WILL ALSO TELL YOU

**LAST CHANCE-ALL FREE COUPON**

1. FIVE COURSES 2. MUSCLE METER 3. Photo Book of STRONG MEN

Dept. MS-412 Tell Me How To WIN \$100, etc.

Jowett Courses greatest in World for Building All-around HE-MEN R. F. Kelley Physical Director

JOWETT INSTITUTE OF PHYSICAL TRAINING 220 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 1, N. Y.

Dear George: Please mail to me FREE Jowett's Photo Book of Strong Men and a Muscle Meter, plus all 5 HE-MAN Building Courses: 1. How to Build a Mighty Chest, 2. How to Build a Mighty Arm, 3. How to Build a Mighty Grip, 4. How to Build a Mighty Back, 5. How to Build Mighty Legs—Now all in One Volume "How to become a Mighty HE-MAN" ENCLOSED FIND 10c FOR POSTAGE AND HANDLING (no C.O.D.'s)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ AGE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ ZONE \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_

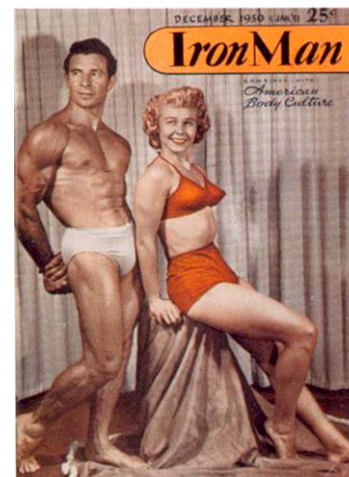
**MAIL NOW! SAVES YOU YEARS and DOLLARS!**

**HOW YOU CAN WIN A BIG 15" TALL SILVER CUP as I just did and how to WIN \$100.**

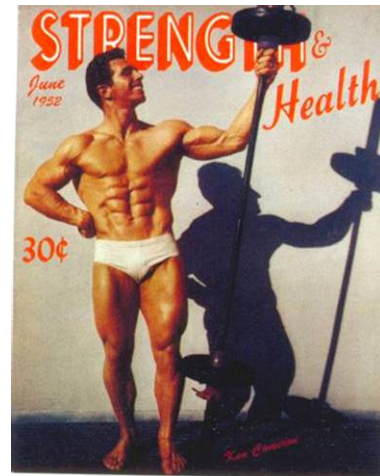
Fig 15. Jowett Institute of Physical Training, *In 10 minutes of FUN a day I changed myself* (1954). Black & White magazine advertisement. (Heimann 2002:376).



**Fig 16.** The Young Physique, *Exclusive... Unpublished Photographs "The Young Steve Reeves"* (1950s). Colour magazine cover. (<http://www.v-m-p.com/>).



**Fig 17.** Iron Man, *American Body Culture* (1950/1). Colour magazine cover. (Heimann 2002:38).



**Fig 18.** Strength & Health (1952). Colour magazine cover. (Heimann 2002:44).





**Fig 19.** *Ignatius was Hoogs Beneuk*, from “Christella en die Rooi Stiletto” (2007). Collage of gelatin silver print and hand-coloured sepia-toned fibre print.

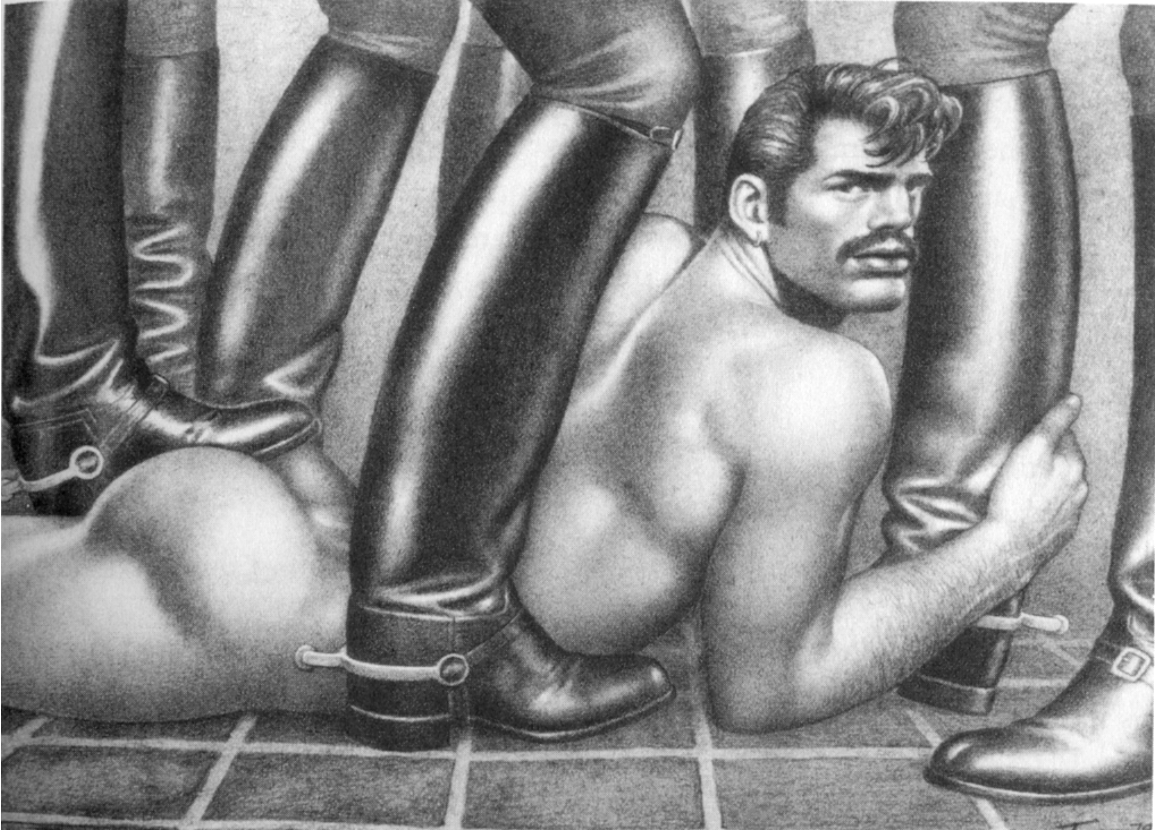


**Fig 12.** Willie Schlechter. *The Witch*, from “Henry and the Witch” (2007). Hand-coloured sepia-toned gelatine silver print.

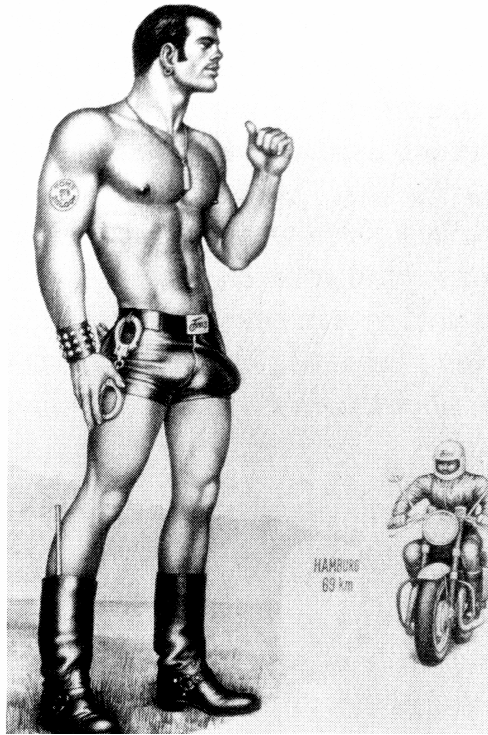


**Fig 13.** Willie Schlechter. *Henry*, from “Henry and the Witch” (2007). Hand-coloured sepia-toned gelatine silver print.

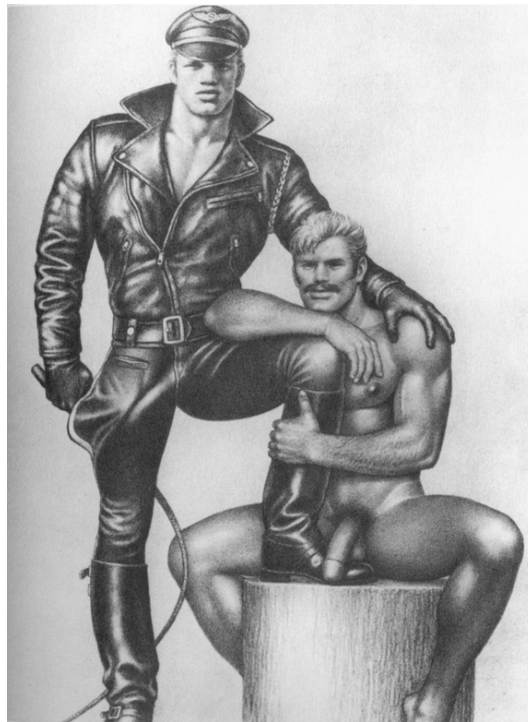




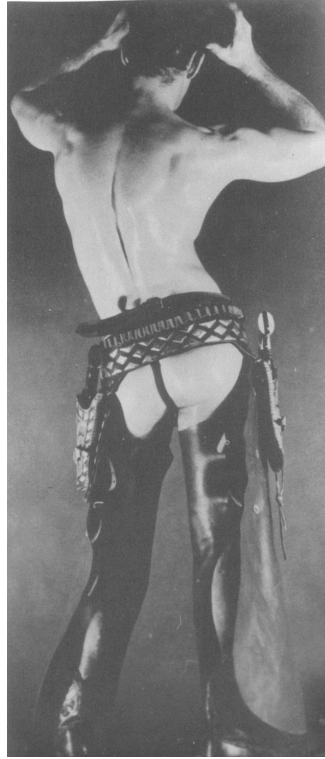
**Fig 22.** Tom of Finland, *Untitled* (1978). Drawing.  
(Steele 1996:105).



**Fig 25.** Tom of Finland, *Hitchhiker* (1976).Drawing.  
(Bordo 1994:286).



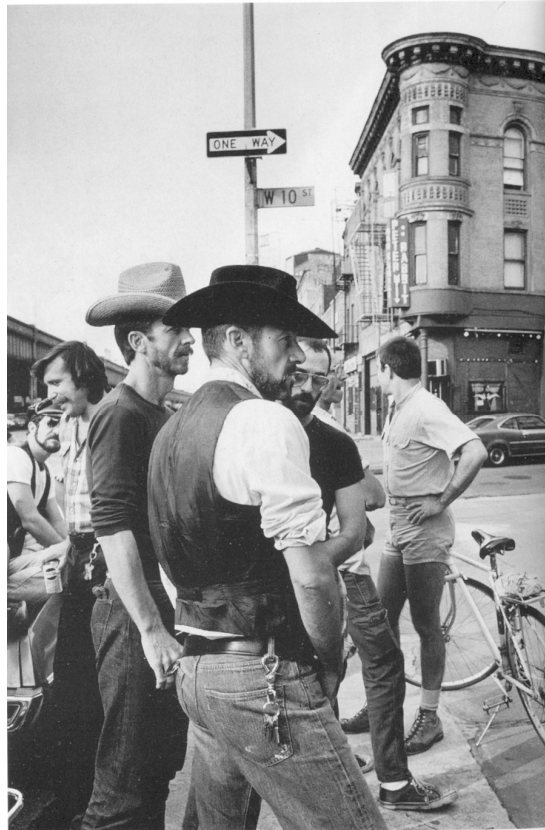
**Fig 26.** Tom of Finland, *Untitled* (1977).Drawing.  
(Steele 1996:177).



**Fig 23.** *Fetish Cowboy in Leather Chaps* (c.1960). Photographic print.  
(Steele 1996:178).



**Fig 24.** Jim French. *Untitled* (1955). Photographic print.  
(Riemschneider 2000:340).

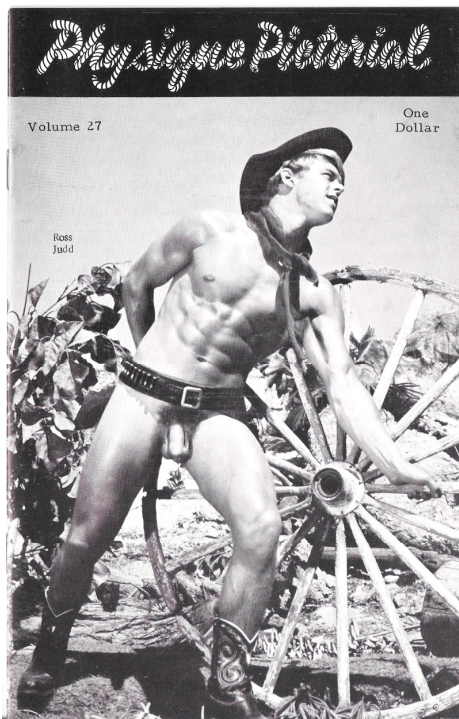


**Fig 29.** Leonard Fink. *Cowboy Clones* (1977). Photographic print.  
(Cole 2000:fig 16).

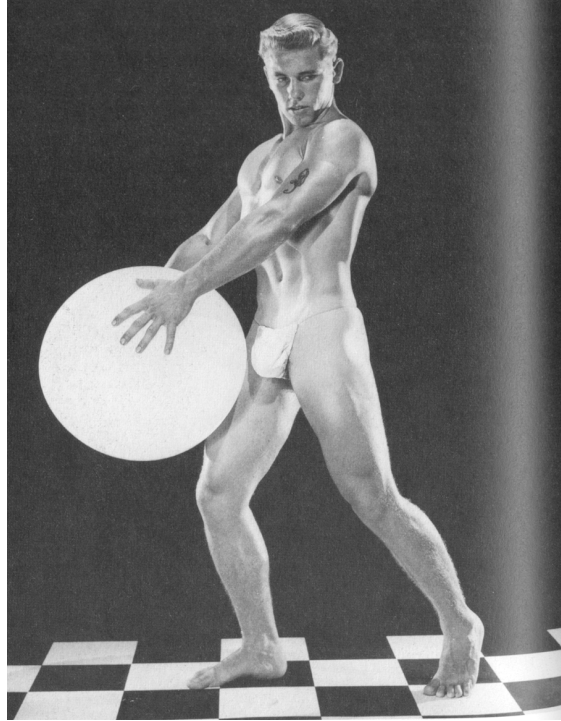




**Fig 27.** Bob Mizer. *Physique Pictorial*, *Ty Hardin*, *Warner Bros Star* (1965). Black & White magazine back cover. (<http://www.the-charmed-ones.net>).



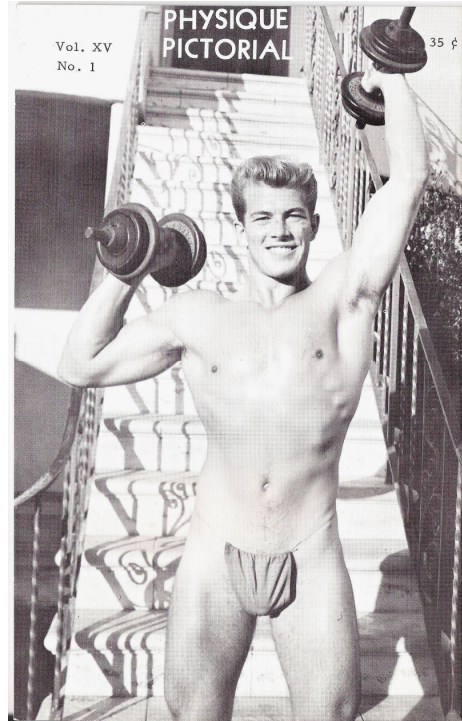
**Fig 28.** Bob Mizer. *Physique Pictorial*, *Ross Judd* (1974). Black & White magazine cover. (<http://www.the-charmed-ones.net>).



**Fig 30.** Bruce of Los Angeles. *Untitled.* (1950s).  
(Riemschneider 2000:380)



**Fig 31.** Bruce of Los Angeles. *Untitled.* (1950s).  
(Riemschneider 2000:376).



**Fig 20.** Bob Mizer. Physique Pictorial (1965). Black & White magazine back cover. (<http://www.the-charmed-ones.net>).



**Fig 21.** Bob Mizer. Physique Pictorial (1974). Black & White magazine cover. (<http://www.the-charmed-ones.net>).

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