GENDER FORUM
An Internet Journal for Gender Studies

Historical Masculinities as Intersectional Problem

Edited by
Prof. Dr. Beate Neumeier

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About

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Editorial: Historical Masculinities as an Intersectional Problem

By Norbert Finzsch, University of Cologne

1   Gender, race and class used to be seen as separate categories for members of the dominant and repressed groups, until scholars started to understand that the intersection of these issues, in combination with age, sexuality, abilities and others, are integral to the position a member of society may hold. These intersections are referred to as the "race-class-gender matrix, the intersectional paradigm, interlocking systems of oppression, multiple axes of inequality, the intersection and intersectionality."(Berger and Guidroz, 2009, 1) Because of its "[...] critical stance toward knowledge in the traditional disciplines, its interdisciplinary approach, and its orientation toward social change and social betterment, women's studies has been most open to self-critique for its exclusion of multiply oppressed groups such as women of color, working-class women, and lesbians." (Weber 2004, 121)

2   Intersectional work on masculinities in general is actually rare, a fact that may have its cause in the history of the concept intersectionality itself. It originated in the context of discussions between white middle class liberal feminists and African American women who reproached the white liberals color blindness and their lack of concern for questions of class. Kimberlé Crenshaw, founder of Critical Race Studies (Crenshaw 1995), was interested in the relationship of race and law. She not only coined the term "intersectionality", but wrote two ground-breaking articles that investigated the law's inability to make visible black women's experience of discrimination, which was a problem of intersectionality. (Crenshaw 1988, 1991) Nira Yuval-Davis and others started to investigate the interrelationship of ethnic and gender divisions in the early 1980s. (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1983). Intersectionality became a concept that allowed for the understanding of gender differences as mediated and transformed by other categories of repression such as class and race. So far, the intersectional approach has not yet been applied on masculinities in historical studies. If gender is a relational category, it is only logical to assume, that this lacuna has to be filled. Intersectionality as an approach that attempts engage with historically specific forms of power and domination does not lend itself easily to the analysis of masculinities, because men have been perceived as being the Other in possession of power and privilege. It may be argued however that masculinity is no fixed and uniform concept. If one applies the concept of hegemonic respective non-hegemonic masculinities in accordance with Connell (Connell 1995, 2005), it may be scholarly useful and politically functional to apply the intersectional approach to the study of masculinities as well, especially since masculinities can be found outside of traditional male roles and bodies (Stoller

1997, Halberstam 1998). If masculinity is a contested terrain that produces exclusions, hierarchies and stratifications within itself, if there is indeed something like hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinity, if in other word one has to speak about the striations within the masculine space, it may be justified to speak of the application of intersectionality within the history of masculinities, even if this seems to contradict older feminist contentions and initial usages of the concept.

3   Multiple masculinities, among them hegemonic masculinity, a concept founded by Raewyn Connell (Connell 1995, 2000, 2005, 2006) has been criticized by various authors since the time of its inception (Petersen 1998, Demetriou 2001) but is still upheld as valid, albeit in a modified form. The concept of hegemony was derived from Antonio Gramsci's analysis of class relations and "[...] refers to the cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social life." (Connell 2005, 77) "Hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees [...] the dominant position of men and the subordination of women." (77) It has to be mentioned that hegemonic masculinity "[...] embodies a 'currently accepted' strategy. When conditions for the defence of patriarchy change, the bases for the dominance of a particular masculinity are eroded. New groups may challenge old solutions and construct a new hegemony." (77) It follows that if not all men participate in hegemonic masculinity simultaneously that there has to be some kind of relation between the hegemonic men and those that are seen as non-hegemonic. These relations can have the form of subordination, complicity and marginalization. It also follows that the concept of hegemonic masculinity is inherently intersectional, since the "interplay of gender with other structures such as class and race creates further relationships between masculinities." (80) The common tie that binds all men in one camp, despite their different masculinities, is the dividend that they receive from maintaining women in subordinated position, independent of their individual motives and inclinations. The term dividend refers to a material gain, but not exclusively. Next to the differences in income and wealth distribution, access to positions of power and influence are only one part of the dividend that is paid to men. Patriarchy is also sustained by violence and indeed it is obvious that men receive a masculinist dividend for upholding the unequal distribution of wealth, income and power through violence both directed against women but also directed against other men in order to draw boundaries and to make exclusions, but also in the struggle for an assertion of a hitherto non-hegemonic form of masculinity. (83).

4   Despite the existence of a considerable body of research on the history of masculinities it is evident that masculinity has hitherto not been discussed as an intersectional problem. It

was Pierre Bourdieu who pointed at the fact that masculinities are constructed in a series of competitions that men play with each other (Bourdieu 2001). The goal of these games is the accumulation of symbolic capital in the forms of "[...] fertility strategies, matrimonial strategies, educational strategies, economic strategies, inheritance strategies, all oriented towards the transmission of inherited powers and privileges". (48) It was also Pierre Bourdieu who pointed at the fact that constructions of masculinity can be „postural" since they presuppose not only speech acts but also poses, positions within space, body postures and gestures. (74) Bourdieu also warned to equate the existence of hegemonic masculinities with harmony within the group of hegemonic men, since the idea of masculinity is one of the last resorts of the dominated classes (Adkins and Skeggs 2004, 131). Masculinity has also been studies in the relation with the production of knowledge and truth in the sense of technologies of power. I would like to restrict my following remarks therefore to three subjects: Studies on the history of masculinities, masculinities in the context of race and class (intersectionality) and "doing gender" as everyday practice.

4   Historical research pertaining to masculinities has been a field that has yielded relatively rich results in the last 20 years, especially in the United States. Here, in contrast to Germany, we find comprehensive histories of masculinities (Kimmel 2005, Kimmel 2006, Kimmel, Hearn and Connell 2005). In German speaking countries historians tend to shy away from a field that is perceived as being closely linked to gender history. The American advances in the filed of masculinity history can partly be explained by the overwhelming success of feminist discourses since the late 1960s which have made visible masculinist counter discourse, resulting in male organizations like the Promise Keepers (Heath 2003, Newton 2005) and events like the Million Men March (Hagan 1992, Boyd 1995, Bartkowski 2004). Since masculinity is always already a contested field, which must be constantly defined, redefined, patrolled and defended against intruders and imposters, in order to maintain the illusion of a fixed and biologically permanent masculinity, masculinity seems to be in the state of crisis. The masculinist discourse attempts to push back the cultural and institutional gains of feminism since the foundation of NOW. This could be perceived as a "back-lash", but it is more likely part of the constant necessity to define masculinity, which evades precise definitions and suffers from relentless historical erosion by the forces of social and cultural change. Since the 1990s there exist a number of groundbreaking studies on historical masculinities, even if one disregards the numerous media studies, especially on film and masculinities. What I discuss here is situated in the field of "history proper" and disregards both the medial representations of masculinities and masculinities as part of literary criticism.

5   Given the lag and the lack of research on masculinities by historians in Germany (Schissler 1992), it may seem ironic that the first impulse of a historical study of masculinities came from a German cultural historian. Klaus Theweleit submitted a two-volume study on the members of the right-wing militias (Freikorps) in 1977, expounding the genesis of the Nazi system within a male cult of misogyny. This massive study was translated into English rather late, and failed to contribute to the emerging field in the US and Great Britain also because of its heavy reliance on Freudian theory (Theweleit 1977, Theweleit 1987). Since then, German historians have been busy claiming the field for themselves, but their number is confined to a few historians who are firmly grounded in the post-structuralist cohort. (Finzsch and Hampf 2001, Finzsch 2003, Martschukat and Stieglitz 2005, Martschukat and Stieglitz 2007, Martschukat and Stieglitz 2008). Among the ground-breaking studies one could also count Elizabeth Pleck's book, since she discusses the emergence of social politics in the context of domestic violence from the 18th century to the present (Pleck 1987). Dating from the late 1980s, Critical Men's Studies developed as a sub-discipline of sociology, but has been able to influence historiography to some extent. Cynthia Cockburn was among the scholars who has widened traditional women's history to intersectional gender studies by including men in her research (Cockburn 1983, Cockburn 1985, Cockburn 1998). With the development of gay and lesbian studies *Critical Masculinity Studies* emerged in the attempt to study alternative conceptions of masculinity. These have to be seen in stark contrast to *Masculinist Studies*, which are based on a biologist gender essentialism thus refusing the necessity of historization (Dawkins 1976, Bly 1990, Greenstein 1994).

6   David Pugh was one of the pioneers of the history of masculinities, since as early as 1983 he published a study on the revolutionary „Sons of Liberty" and the emergence of a male consciousness in the 19th century (Pugh 1983). Mangan and Walvin followed soon with an analysis of the connection of morality and masculinity in Great Britain and the US between 1800 and 1940. Both authors concentrated their inquiry deliberately on men of the middle class (Mangan and Walvin 1987). Mark Carnes and Clyde Griffen moved on similar paths when they studied the constructions of masculinity in Victorian America (Carnes and Griffen 1990). Thomas E. Mosmiller and Michael Kimmel documented the writing and thinking of "pro-feminist" men between 1776 and 1990, an approach that despite of its apparent lack of definitorial precision nevertheless presents us with a useful collection of primary sources (Kimmel and Mosmiller 1992). Anthony Rotundo focused on the idea of the transformation of masculinities in the periods between the American Revolution and the present (Rotundo 1993). Gail Bederman succeeded in presenting a complex analysis of selected aspects of masculinity

in the years between 1880 and 1917. She was also one of the first historians to expressly include the category of race in her path-breaking book (Bederman 1995). Angus McLaren studied one of the many crises of masculinity between 1870 and 1930 in what was an analysis of petit bourgeois masculinity, informed by Queer Studies (McLaren 1997). Writing about the life and work of the scandalous painter Thomas Eakins, Martin Berger succeeded in presenting a surprisingly dense description of non-hegemonic masculinities in Gilded Age America (Berger 2000). Bryce Traister underlines the necessity to steer away from heteronormativity in masculinity studies (including literary criticism), but he certainly has a point in the sense that queer theory and the history of masculinity still have to find a way to speak to each other (Traister 2000). What is missing are works that center on masculinities in the context of violence. Although there are studies on domestic violence, the historical dimension in these studies is usually lacking. William Pinar and Pieter Spierenburg were the authors of general works on the topic of race and violence, but Spierenburg's study encompass the US only partially and Pinar's book is informed by the problematic and ahistorical notion of a "crisis" of masculinity. (Spierenburg 1998, Pinar 2001). Suzanne Clark pursued the configurations of masculinity during the Cold War era, a plausible and obvious question since communist fellow-travelers and homosexuals were often portrayed as belonging in the same pathologized field (Clark 2000). Tom Pendergast approaches a similar problematic since he correlates masculinity and consumer behavior during the first half of the 20th century (Pendergast 2000). Situated in the borderlands between cultural history and literary criticism is James Catanos' book on the character of Ragged Dick, similar to John Kasson, who wrote the history of the male body focusing on fictional and actual characters such as Tarzan and Houdini (Catano 2001, Kasson 2001). Thomas Winter's study of the history of the YMCA is intersectional in its scope, since he combines the analysis of class and masculinity (Winter 2002). Athena Devlin studies the period between 1880 and 1917, an era that yields rich results for an understanding of the transformations and transfers in the contested history of male identities (Devlin 2005). Amy Greenberg examines the expansionist tendencies in the context of male subjectivity before 1861 (Greenberg 2005). David Anthony has recently presented an inquiry of economic male identities in the context of paper money, a legal tender that was censured as unmanly until after the Civil War (Anthony 2009). Nicholas Syrett has published an overdue history of white college fraternities in the US, orienting himself along the concepts of Connell's hegemonic masculinity (Syrett 2009, 3).

7   If masculinities in the sense of Connell are the result of practices one should at least risk a glimpse into the historiography of gendered every day practices. The practices can be based

on language performances but can be also postural (see above). Cultural practices that are repeated over and over again may form sediments that prefigure and structure social behavior. *Doing Gender* relates to a methodology in Gender research that understands gender as the product of performative practices that are directed by social rules. (West and Zimmerman 1987, McDowell 1992, Pyke and Johnson 2003, Sharp, Briggs, Yacoub and Hamed 2003, Trautner 2005, Simpson 2009) As put in 1987, doing gender is defined as "[...] an ethnomethodologically informed, and therefore distinctively sociological, understanding of gender as a routine, methodical, and recurring accomplishment. We contend that the "doing" of gender is undertaken by women and men whose competence as members of society is hostage to its production. Doing gender involves a complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional, and micropolitical activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine 'natures.'" (West and Zimmerman 1987, 126) „We argue that gender is not a set of traits, nor a variable, nor a role, but the product of social doings of some sort. What then is the social doing of gender?" (129) The connections to Connell's theory of hegemony as practice are obvious and have not escaped the attention of theoreticians of Doing Gender. (141, 147; Pyke and Johnson 2003, 35)

8   The scholars assembled in this issue of gender-forum come from different disciplinary backgrounds but see their work as a contribution to the widening field of historiography. The range of the articles in this issue testifies to the advancements made in masculinity studies in general, albeit an intersectional approach has hitherto been applied rather sporadically. It was my intention therefore to encourage a discussion of an intersectional methodology beyond its original scope of a critique of white middle class feminism. Even if the authors gathering in this issue owe a lot to Crenshaw's concept, it is our contention that it has to be broadened to include other axes of discrimination. Anti-Semitism for instance was not a notion that figured largely in the development of intersectional approaches, but "Being-Jewish" is definitely an item on the long list of "interlocking systems of oppression". Whether talking about "black masculinity" in the face of an economic and political crisis during the 1990s or about "white masculinity" in the context of the role of fathers vs. explorers in the 1950s, it can be amply demonstrated that concepts of masculinity sustain a longevity that overlaps the narrow rims of decades. The discourse about the alleged loss of masculinity in the wake of feminisms or the tension between the father and the explorer predates the 1990s and the 1950s respectively. Two contributions in this volume focus on media history in connection with masculinity studies. They both try to put masculinity studies within a wider context of media theory, thus stepping away from the one-sided approach that looks at masculinity in film as an isolated matter without connection to

other regimes of oppression. One cannot talk about gender if one is silent about the body. Therefore the two film articles in this volume examine specific filmic bodies which oscillate "between hypervirility and effeminacy" (Karremann) or generate a "posthuman male fantasy" (König).

Men in Gray Flannel Suits: Troubling Masculinities in 1950s America

By Jürgen Martschukat, Erfurt University, Germany

Abstract:

This essay deals with American family life in the 1950s. In its first part, the text scrutinizes how the corresponding gender stereotypes were culturally shaped by an array of discursive enunciations and a vast number of social and political practices. A closer look at the 1950s focus-on-the-family will reveal that the breadwinning father was not at all the undisputed hegemonic male stereotype of the age. A conflict between differing norms of masculinity has to be attested: On the one hand, after World War II the restoration of the father to the leading position in the family promised to stabilize post- and cold war-America, on the other hand critics bemoaned a loss of virility among the fathers of the 1950s. A fear of masculine decline permeated American society, caused by the conformist urge and the obviously limited options of suburbanized and corporate life. Talk about a "crisis" among heterosexual white men was everywhere, and this supposed crisis was perceived as a crisis of America at large. The troubling masculinities in 1950s America will take center stage in the second part of my essay. This will be exemplified by an analysis of *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, a 1950s book and movie, whose protagonist Tom Rath (Gregory Peck) epitomized the American suburbanite who felt overpowered by the requirements being addressed to him as a man.

Introduction

1   "The father" belongs to the most powerful concepts in American history. Since the foundation of the republic, being a caring and responsible father, protector, and provider, has been declared the most important part of every man's existence and the ultimate object of his longing. More than that, as embodiment of responsibility, reliability, and rationality, "the father" has been not only the seemingly "natural" head of his family, but he has also been defined as cornerstone of the liberal republic and its social and political order. By stressing the interdependence of individual, familial, and social/national well-being, politicians from John Adams and Thomas Jefferson to Bill Clinton, Newt Gringrich, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama have re-enforced the notion that men have to live up to the ideal of good fatherhood to be good republican citizens. From the American Revolution to the Reagan Revolution and beyond, functional families with fathers and mothers were deemed "the fundamental building block of our society."[1]

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[1] The quote is from the congressional debate about the so-called "Defense of Marriage Act," Congressional Record. 104/2, Vol. 142, No. 102, July 11, 1996: 7441-47. Introductions to the history of families and fatherhood in America are provided by Cott, Public Vows; Griswold, Fatherhood in America. Critical studies about the focus on the family and its interdependence with the political organization of U.S. society are for instance offered by Kann, The Gendering of American Politics.; Yazawa, From Colonies to Commonwealth.; Martschukat, "Vaterfigur und Gesellschaftsordnung um 1800."; Adam,"The Defense of Marriage Act and American Exceptionalism." and May, "`Family Values´: The Uses and Abuses of American Family History."

2   Recent scholarship in the field of social and cultural history has convincingly argued that this concept of responsible fatherhood has been immensely powerful, persistent, and normalizing over the centuries, for instance by pointing out that the stigmatization of black men as deficient fathers and their continuous exclusion from political, economic, and cultural resources are two sides of the same coin (Finzsch*; Estes*). The compelling normativity and longevity of this father-and-family-nexus is all the more astonishing since the nuclear family with breadwinning father and homemaking mother has hardly ever represented the household arrangements of a majority of Americans. That is why historian Stephanie Coontz named her most influential book on the history of American families "The Way We Never Were." In her study, Coontz argues that the current American obsession with family values and the constant invocation of the seemingly traditional family as embodiment of a better past has contributed to the creation of a nostalgic myth which, after all, strengthens existent power structures and social stratifications along the lines of race, class, gender, and sexuality.

3   However, as Coontz also stresses, if there ever was a period in American history when the normative ideal of the nuclear family and real life came close, it was the 1950s. Accordingly, in today's intense culture war about family values, the 1950s are often glorified as years of an ideal society, carried by a strong white middle-class perfectly organized in nuclear families, consisting of men and women leading their lives as married couples according to their supposedly natural determinations defined by their sex.

4   After the Great Depression and World War II, the re-solidification of American society seemed to require the re-invocation of the gender stereotypes of breadwinning father and homemaking mother. "Building a straight state" was the paramount object of American postwar politics (Canaday). As historians Elaine Tyler May and Kyle A. Cuordileone have argued convincingly, the upcoming conflict with the Soviet Union and the penetrating nuclear scare gave this drive towards a family centered heteronormative society further momentum – a society that consolidated itself by excluding everybody non-heterosexual, non-white, non-normalized. According to Elaine Tyler May, "the nuclear family in the nuclear age" was one of the most powerful images of the 1950s (May, *Homeward Bound*).

5   Yet, as I will show in my article, even with regard to the family centered 1950s, historical scrutiny confounds easy answers. Therefore, in the first part of my essay, I will discuss how this seemingly natural lifestyle and the corresponding gender stereotypes were culturally shaped by an array of discursive enunciations (in the social sciences, in magazines, film, literature etc.) and a vast number of social and political practices. Second, complementary to historian Joanne Meyerowitz' argument that American 1950s society was less straight than

it seemed on the surface (Meyerowitz, *Sex Wars*; Meyerowitz, *Transnational Sex* 1280), my closer look at the 1950s focus-on-the-family will make the assertion that the breadwinning father was the undisputed hegemonic male stereotype of the age, a contentious one. Even if we focus on white heterosexual middle-class men, a conflict between differing norms of masculinity has to be attested: On the one hand, the restoration of the father to the leading position in the family promised to stabilize post- and cold war-America, on the other hand critics bemoaned a loss of virility among the fathers of the 1950s. A fear of masculine decline permeated American society, caused by the conformist urge and the obviously limited options of suburbanized and corporate life. Talk about a "crisis" among heterosexual white men was everywhere, and this supposed crisis was perceived as a crisis of America at large: of its strength and stability. These antagonisms between different male stereotypes captured something quintessential about America at that time, and both, the caring, responsible father as well as the strong-minded man who pioneered the continent and built American greatness, were deemed indispensable for America's stability and survival.[2] The troubling masculinities in 1950s America will take center stage in the second part of my essay. This will be exemplified by an analysis of *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, a 1950s book and movie, whose protagonist Tom Rath (Gregory Peck) epitomized the American suburbanite who felt overpowered by the requirements being addressed to him as a man.

De- and re-centred men

6   Understanding the obsessive urge of American postwar society to reinstall the man as head of the household requires going back to the early 1930s when a long process of masculine de-centering began. With the Great Depression and unemployment rates of up to 25% of the labor force, the quintessential male stereotype of father and breadwinner was not accomplished by a significant number of men any longer. In the 1930s, sociological studies researched the psychological and material effects of constant unemployment upon men, their position in the private and in the public sphere. These studies diagnosed a fundamental dislocation of traditional gender roles in both, families (and particularly white lower middle-class and upper working class families) and the society at large. Often enough, men had to accept relief and, on top of that, put up with the fact that wife and children filled the gap they had left by contributing to the family income with more or less meager jobs (Martschukat, "I relinquished power in the

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[2] For a study on white middle-class men in 1950s America see Gilbert, *Men in the Middle*.

family").[3] "The Depression was emasculating both at work and at home," writes historian Michael Kimmel, "unemployed men lost status with their wives and children and saw themselves as impotent patriarchs" (199).[4]

7   The Great Depression lasted all through the 1930s, and, at last, economic recovery was brought by World War II and the transformation to a war economy. However, regarding the ideal of American nuclear families, war and mobilization meant further dislocation through potentially absent fathers and working mothers. Sociologists, psychologists, politicians, and the press raised their voices against drafting fathers into the army, because if fathers carried their responsibility as citizen soldiers and fought the war abroad, the dissolution of the American family and a lack of parental guidance at home were fearfully expected as a consequence. It was widely argued that without fathers as role models and patriarchal educators, young boys would get spoiled by "the pathology of maternal overprotection" and by "momism," and they would finally transmute into either effeminate homosexuals or violent criminals (Whiley). Consequently, "rebels without a cause" would emerge, a term that was coined by psychologist Robert Lindner in 1944 and taken up in the mid-1950s as argument in the debate on the decay of American men and the deterioration of their gender role.

8   These devastating consequences were stressed in 1943 by Senator Burton Wheeler in intense congressional debates on exempting fathers from the draft. Wheeler and his supporters pointed out that absent fathers and husbands meant promiscuous wives, disoriented children, dysfunctional families, destroyed homes, and social decay in general. As consequence, not only the total annihilation of the traditional, self-reliant American family unit lurked (which had been weakened by the economic depression, anyway), but the loss of the American way of life as such – and totalitarianism stood in the doorway: „The home is the backbone of a democratic republic, is it not?", Wheeler asked rhetorically, "if you destroy the home, you destroy your country, you destroy America."[5]

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[3] Sociological studies on unemployed men and their families were conducted by E. Wight Bakke Unemployed Worker and Citizens Without Work, and by Mira Komarovsky. The disrupting effects of unemployment on men are also shown by numerous letters written to President Franklin D. Roosevelt and edited by McElvaine, Down and Out.

[4] The dislocation of gender roles during the Great Depression is also discussed by Griswold 143-160, and Jarvis 15-35, whereas the only historic monograph on 1930s fathers focuses on the modernization of fatherhood (LaRossa).

[5] U.S. Congress, Senate. Subcommittee on Military Affairs: Hearings on Married Men Exemption. Drafting of Fathers, 78 Cong. 1st session, 1943, 310. See also the related hearings on juvenile delinquency as effect of absent fathers: U.S. Congress, Senate. Subcommittee of the Committee on Education and Labor: Hearings on Wartime Health and Education: Juvenile Delinquency, parts 1, 4 , 78th Congress, 1944. For the contemporary debate see for instance Malkin or Modell and Steffey.

9　　　Though the majority of congressmen rejected finally Burton Wheeler's idea, nevertheless fathers were drafted in a less rigorous manner, and they were the first to be released from the service when the war came to an end. In addition, the functional family was in the center of national wartime rhetoric and iconography. A powerful national discourse of political debates, propaganda, radio shows, or commercials constantly repeated that young men fought this war for the protective and cozy family, and it emphasized that the currently de-centered world of work, social life, and gender should be limited in time. The war aim of reclaiming the traditional social and gender structure was for instance explained by a young man to his girl in a popular 1942 radio show named *to the young*. According to the boy's words, the Second World War was "about love and gettin' hitched, and havin' a home and some kids, and breathin' fresh air out in the suburbs ... about livin' and workin' *decent*, like free people." Obviously, the family provided some understandable substance to abstract values like freedom, democracy, and humanity, as argued by historians Elaine Tyler May, Robert Westbrook, or Matthias Reiss in an article on the famous New Haven-Railroad advertisement about the *Kid in Upper* 4 (Cott 187; May, *Homeward Bound* 51; Blum 28; Prinzon and Swain).

10　　　In addition, even before D-Day and the first GIs disembarked on the shores of the Normandy, the U.S. federal government had begun to prepare for the return of the veterans and the reconstruction of a male and father-focused society after the war. After all, though fathers were reluctantly drafted into the service, every young man fighting in World War II was at least a *potential* father who would need the support of his government to live up to the totally different expectations of a peacetime society (Modell and Steffey). In June 1944, the *Servicemen's Readjustment Act* was adopted, and it declared all soldiers to be future providers. The so-called *GI-Bill* supported World War II-veterans morally, socially, and financially. It provided educational opportunities to every veteran, preferred treatment on the job market, health insurance, and affordable family housing through subsidies and cheap credits. It is noteworthy that veterans were 98% male and 96% white, which underscores the fact that white men were reinforced as the focal point of American society. Historian David Onkst underlines this point by demonstrating that African-American veterans were largely denied their GI Bill benefits through local offices of the Veterans Administration.

11　　　After the war, countless experts, a flood of advice-literature, and increasingly intense TV programming constantly reiterated that men, women, and children needed each other to rebuild a "normal" and safer world where everybody would fulfill his or her so-called naturally defined duties. Also, the wedding and family enthusiasm unfolded in full force. Americans married younger (women at 20.5 years and men at 22.5 years on the average), had more children

(3.2 on the average), and built more houses than ever in rapidly growing and exclusively white suburbs. After fifteen years of depression and war, suburban postwar utopias like the notorious "Levittowns", in combination with the financial subsidies of the federal government under the GI Bill, opened up new opportunities to white Americans to own affordable housing in what was considered a family-friendly environment (Canaday).The building contractor and entrepreneur William J. Levitt sold the most moderately prized houses for $ 6,990, and even a higher class ranch-style house sold for less than $ 10,000, with no (or a very limited) down payment and an interest rate of 2-3%. For instance Levittown, New York, had 17,400 houses, each equipped with a living room with panorama window, and three bedrooms, fully equipped kitchen and bathroom, and a barbecue place, giving room to 82,000 residents – and according to historian Kenneth Jackson none of them were black. Between 1945 and 1960, 12 million houses for 40 million people were built throughout the US. Sixty-two percent of the American population owned property, and more than half of the male household heads had been supported by federal government funding (Coontz 76ff.; Halberstam 132-139; Jackson 241; Hayden 128-153; see also Keating; Wiese).

12   The suburban sprawl was of major significance in the project of reclaiming the American way of life. After fifteen years of abdication and austerity in depression and war, and, moreover, facing the new threat of communism and collectivism, living the American way of life more than ever meant property, consumption, family life, and distinct genders, all of which seemed to signify and assure individuality. Within this "reproductive consensus" of the postwar world, to use a term coined by sociologist Barbara Ehrenreich, women's place was declared to be at home and with the family. Though the absolute number of working women hardly changed after the war, women did not proportionately participate in the postwar boom of the labor market, and the wartime heroine in overalls disappeared from American culture and discourse (Ehrenreich; May, *Rosie;* Meyerowitz, *Not June Cleaver)*. Popular magazines like *Life, Look* or *Esquire* demonized working wives as "menace" or "disease," and the concept of an independent woman was declared a "contradiction in terms." The desire to re-create a clear-cut social and gender structure seemed to require the institutionalization of a male provider and a female homemaker at its core. In post- and cold war culture there was only room for a straight and conventional heterosexual gender identity, and American society was permeated by a manic fear of the privately and politically destructive potential of non-conform genders and sexualities outside of the boundaries of married relationships (Friedmann; Johnson; Cuordileone).[6]

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[6] The confusion created by Alfred Kinsey's studies on sexuality have been discussed by Gilbert, *Men in the Middle*, 81-105.

13   This cold war was a war without a front, where a man proved his civic responsibility by having success at home and at the workplace, by being a good father and provider, a good producer and consumer, rather than a soldier, fighting at the front with a gun in his hands. The political constellation matched perfectly with Sigmund Freud's writings, which were particularly influential and culturally all-embracing in those years (Yalom). Responsible fatherhood was defined as the one and only form of sound manhood and citizenship, as the unmistakable sign of male "maturity," a keyword of the 1950s. Every other lifestyle but a heterosexual relationship with children was deemed immature and an indicator of escapism; an escapism that was deemed the more threatening by the mainstream culture because it seemed to be spreading. For instance H.A. Overstreet, author of a 1950s non-fiction bestseller entitled *The Mature Mind*, stressed that a man is immature if he regards the support of a family as a kind of a trap in which he, an unsuspecting male, has somehow been caught. Again, the person who cannot settle down, who remains a vocational drifter, or the person who wants the prestige of a certain type of work but resents the routines that go with it, are immature in their sense of function.

14   It is important to note that being immature and unmarried was not only considered an aberration from the path of the good and the normal, but a pathological disorder. Overstreet's conclusion was just one small item in an encompassing discourse. As sociologist Morris Zelditch put it in a 1955 essay published in a collection by Talcott Parsons, the American male, by definition, *must* 'provide' for his family. He is *responsible* for the support of his wife and children. […] His *primary* function in the family is to supply an 'income', to be the 'breadwinner'. There is simply something wrong with the American adult male who doesn't have a 'job' [and a family]. (339) Obviously, after long years of social, political, and gender confusion, the American man and his family finally seemed to be re-centered. According to a representative public-opinion poll, at that time only ten percent of Americans believed that an unmarried person might achieve happiness. One of the highly popular advice manuals got to the point by stressing the normativity and the seeming self-evidence of the marriage- and family-focus: "The family is the center of your living. If it isn't, you've gone far astray." (Coontz 25)

Men in gray flannel suits

15   Dominant as the "reproductive consensus" and the concept of family and fatherhood in the American suburban utopia of the postwar world was, it still caused a certain cultural uneasiness inspired by an increasingly threatening fear of masculine decline. After all, a man's

life seemed extremely limited when his ultimate object of desire was a fully equipped "ranch-style family home" in one of those Levittowns, with three children in the house, a station wagon in the garage, a highball in his hand, and a steak on the grill. Soon, those residential areas were given nicknames like "rabbit hutch" or "fertility valley." (May, *Homeward Bound* 153; Jackson 235) This sort of life offered no great expectations or prospects, and it restricted men in their opportunities and their ambitions. One of the questions which concerned more and more American writers and intellectuals was, what sort of men were shaped by these standardized homes in standardized suburbs, rushed every morning to catch the 8:26 downtown train to spend the day in their standardized offices from nine to five? Didn't a life like that mean total emasculation, the complete loss of virility, male death by conformity?

16   It was just the beginning of the 1950s, when sociologist David Riesman characterized modern men as "other-directed conformists." According to Riesman, modern men had been taught to conform to group designs and to please others. They had no sense of direction any more, and in his version of postwar America, its men and its masculinity, the suburban utopia of consumerism and family life distorted into a conformist dystopia. According to historian James Gilbert, "David Riesman was the reluctant prophet of the new man in this purportedly feminized modern world of togetherness, suburbs, personnel manipulation, and mass culture." (Gilbert, *Men in the Middle* 61; see also Gilbert, "David Riesmann und die Krise der Männlichkeiten") Riesman's diagnosis was widely supported, for instance by social critic C. Wright Mills who complained that white middle-class men did not take their lives into their own hands anymore – and in the 1950s 60% of Americans were considered belonging to the middle class. They did not act, but were mostly acted upon, were "never talking loud, never talking back, never taking a stand." (Riesman, 11-12) Whereas according to the established gender concepts in 1950s America, other-directedness and woman matched perfectly, other-directed men appeared as contradiction in terms. They seemed effeminate, soft, and – in a word – "emasculated." After all, these men were not in control of their lives any more and not able to govern themselves, and self-control and self-government were defined as crucial features of real men in liberal societies.[7] Obviously, two predominant male concepts were deeply antagonistic, and that posed a troubling dilemma. In this world of suburban family fathers and "corporate clones" (Kimmel, *The Gendered Society* 117), men's masculine drives seemed to vanish. Men who controlled their own destinies, pushed frontiers and conquered the unknown, envisioned progress, and turned nature into culture and civilization – men who had made

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[7] On self-government, masculinty, and liberalism see Martschukat "Vaterfigur und Gesellschaftsordnung um 1800", and Martschukat "Feste Bande lose schnüren."

America great, in other words – did not exist any more.[8] In the suburban residential areas, the American frontier in the wilderness had degenerated into a "crabgrass frontier," to borrow an expression from historian Kenneth Jackson. The American male was "domesticated" and seemed to vanish in a state of deep "crisis," as numerous voices in the public American discourse moaned in the early 1950s. He subordinated himself and his manliness to the conformist urge and finally disappeared as "real man." After all, the act of subjection was perceived as incompatible with straight masculinity, liberal capitalism, and democracy, but as an inherent feature of femininity, homosexuality, and totalitarian societies. (Jackson; Cuordileone; Canaday)

17   In 1955, the archetype of the other-directed, domesticated, conformist man was invented. Tom Rath was the main character of Sloan Wilson's novel *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit,* which was initially published both as a book and a serialized version in *Collier's Magazine.* Though contemporary critics dismissed the book as low-brow literature, the story was turned into a movie within less than a year, starring Gregory Peck as Tom Rath and Jennifer Jones as his wife Betsy. Tom perfectly incorporated the 1950s' male dilemma of opposite demands. On the one hand, he lived his life according to the familial imperatives of the postwar world, and yet, on the other hand, he was grayish, conformist, not in control of his own existence, subordinated, and consequently considered "no man at all."[9]

18   Tom Rath lives in one of the burgeoning suburban residential areas, commuting between wife Betsy and children in Connecticut and his boring job in New York City. All of Tom's life is focused on a moderate increase in salary and a larger house which appear to be worth giving up masculine self-determination. At first, Tom plays according to the rules of the conformist game, and he is willing to get along with everybody and everything just to get ahead. When Tom's story was published, critics immediately took his fictional life as paradigmatic of most American men's real life. In a book review, the magazine *Look* (1 May 1956, 104-106) emphasized that in real life "nearly every white-collar man" was in the same situation as Tom, and, similarly, *Life* magazine pointed out that Tom was caught in the "Gray Flannel *Trap,*" (9 April 1956, 111-114) and as such, he was the prototype of the contemporary American suburban man. According to the critics, a man like Tom, be it in real life or in fiction, had been transformed into a "professional yes-man," an "unprincipled robot" of company and family,

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[8] On the concept of conquering masculinity see Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire*; see also Greenberg, "Männlichkeiten, territoriale Expansion und die amerikanische Frontier im 19. Jahrhundert"

[9] Gerald Weales, Life in Modern America, in: Commonweal (26 Aug. 1955), 526, maintained that Tom Rath is "not everyman, but no man at all." Book and film are discussed by Rosenberg; Wood,17-29; Cohan, 68-78; Bruzzi, 37-50.

had lost his self-determination, and had stopped being a man. It is important to note that none of the critiques was limited in its scope to film and book. They all stressed that Tom's story represents the typical American male life in 1950s America.

19   Tom's malaise cannot be understood without taking the role of his wife Betsy into consideration. After all, she urges her husband Tom to apply for a better-paid job because she longs for a bigger and more costly house. It is her desire to move on in the feminized world of consumerism that forces Tom to play according to the rules of the conformist game. Yet, as soon as he has learned to sidle through the world, please his boss, and advance in an unobtrusive way, Betsy complains about her husband having lost his drive and his self-determination. She wants a good father for her children, a good provider, and "a real man" at the same time. In one of their countless debates she gets to the point by saying, "I wanted you to go out and fight for something *again* – like the man I married [before the war]. Not to turn into a cheap, slippery yes-man." (Wilson 185)[10]

20   By referring to Tom's fighter qualities, Betsy relates the 1950s father to the soldier who fought for family and democracy in World War II. Besides the powerful urge to conform, it is the war memories that make Tom suffer most. In the postwar-world, and facing the upcoming cold war, there was neither room nor time for American soldiers to cope with their disturbing war experiences, be it the cruelty of war or marital infidelity in the face of death. (Michel; Förster and Beck; Bourke; Engelhardt) While Tom had spent the summer of 1945 in Rome, waiting to be transferred from the European to the Pacific war theatre, he had fathered a child. In book and film, that child breaks into utopian family life in suburban Connecticut and makes its quandaries visible. Only when Tom finally confesses his infidelity to Betsy does he regain control over his life once again. Through intense marital struggles, Tom earns Betsy's understanding and even her support for the decision to take responsibility for his child in Italy. This is Tom's coming out as father *and* self-directed man because he consciously decides to live for family and fatherhood. After having taken that decision, his life as father is not an expression of other-directed conformity any more but of autonomous self-control. Tom has solved the male dilemma and bridged the gap between the antagonistic male concepts – *seemingly* antagonistic, as we know now, after the presentation of Tom's solution. (Wilson 260-276)

21   Yet, in the American public and among American intellectuals, the way Tom solved the dilemma of antagonistic male concepts did not gain him as much popularity as epitomizing the

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[10] The conversation is quoted acc. to the movie; in the book she stresses that "I don't like the idea of you becoming a cheap cynical yes-man and being so self-satisfied and analytical about it [the problem they are discussing];"

man in gray. Soon after the publication of book and film, Tom evolved into one of the dominant male representations of the age, he was the incarnation of the "dishwashing dad" and the "slippery yes-man." When for instance sociologist William Whyte revealed his thoughts on *The Organization Man* in 1956, he declared Tom Rath to be "paradigmatic of corporate life in America." In November 1956, a popular magazine like *Woman's Home Companion* referred to the man in gray to stress the importance of conserving a strong-minded and strong-bodied masculinity for America: "If the masculine drives are always and completely inhibited," it warned its readers, "the man in the gray flannel suit will stop being a man." In 1958, *Look* published a special edition on "conformity," including essays that emphasized the interconnectedness of an allegedly sound masculinity and a stable and democratic political and social system: "One dark morning this winter, Gary Gray awakened and realized, he had forgotten to say the word 'I'. ... He had lost his individuality. In the free and democratic United States of America, he had been subtly rooked of a heritage that Communist countries deny by force."(Whyte 146, 278)[11] Finally, the *Playboy* magazine has to be mentioned, which since the mid-1950s was one of the bestselling magazines on the American market, and it constantly battled against "conformity, togetherness, anonymity," explicitly fought the "gray flannel mind" and the "womanization of America" (Wylie, *The Abdicating Male* 29).[12]

Exit options

22 American culture and society developed several strategies and instruments to cope with this perceived dilemma of antagonistic male concepts, to keep the father alive and revive the dominating male explorer. One way, demonstrated by Tom Rath, was the conscious decision for family and fatherhood. By launching his *Playboy* magazine in December 1953, Hugh Hefner opened up an alternative option. The *Playboy* was sold to millions of men and fathers by boasting that "we aren't a 'family magazine.'" Hefner earned a fortune by selling the fantasy of individual and masculinized consumerism to millions of family men: While they remained within the boundaries of their family life, consuming the *Playboy* nourished the dream of owning a fast sports car instead of a station wagon, of living in an urban skyscraper playboy

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[11]Lyndon, 107; besides the Look - special see on conformity Lindner, Must You Conform? Leonard, "The American Male: Why Is He Afraid to Be Different?"

[12] See also Wylie, "The Womanization of America"; Panel: "The Womanization of America" Playboy (June 1962). Interestingly enough, when in 1965 Daniel Patrick Moynihan published his notorious Moynihan-Report purporting the dysfunctional black family, he refers to the "gray flannel suit" to characterize a life-style nonexistent among black men. On the other hand, Norman Mailer (White Negro) establishes in his article on the "White Negro" the urban black outlaw as counterpoint to the effeminate white suburban man in gray. I would like to thank Nina Mackert (34) for drawing my attention to this reference.

penthouse instead of a suburban ranch-style family home, of wearing elegant silk instead of gray flannel, and of loving pretty young bunnies instead of their wives (Osgerby).

23   Another outlet for the supposedly generic male drive and the creative energy of the explorer that was inhibited by cold war family life was "the hobby," which gained new momentum in the 1950s. The hobby was supposed to channel male energies and exploit them for the benefit of the family. For instance, most standardized suburban family houses had unfinished attics or basements which father could turn into an extra room in his spare time. Thus, many gray flannel men changed into handymen at weekends and gave their houses an "individual" touch. Psychologist Henry C. Lindgren even recommended building model ships "as one of the numerous ways of finding an outlet for creative needs."(479)

24   Those exit options are only two more examples of a powerful discourse on American men with their lives torn apart by antagonistic male concepts. It is particularly important to note that this discourse re-generated its own object: it shaped a hegemonic concept of the male as heterosexual, middle class, and white. Furthermore, this hegemonic white middle-class man had to be a family man who at the same time was willing and able to take his life into his own hands – a man who was caring and responsible as well as free and forward-moving. It was the constant reiteration of this type of man being in a state of deep crisis that created a cultural feeling of anxiety and of an urgent necessity to re-stabilize this character and his position in society if America was to be saved. Thus, by complaining about the loss of a certain type of male character, the talk about "the man in gray" reiterated the notion that this character had to be at the center of American society and culture.

25   By the end of the decade, it was John F. Kennedy who demonstrated the effectiveness of this discursive *modus operandi*. Kennedy took the American public by storm by uniting the seemingly antagonistic masculine stereotypes. After the Democratic Convention at Los Angeles in July 1960, author Norman Mailer was stunned and boasted that "superman comes to the supermarket."(Mailer, *Superman;* Dean) Kennedy blemished the "softness" and "corrosion" of the 1950s consumer society, and he demanded a revitalization of the American "pilgrim and pioneer spirit of initiative and independence." He generated himself as forward marching, powerful, and energetic explorer with, according to Mailer, "savvy and go-go-go," and he was a womanizer par excellence. At the same time, JFK presented himself as family man, as husband of a beautiful wife and as father of two wonderful children, playing in the Oval Office of the White House while father was taking America to new frontiers.

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The Pure and the Sodomite: Masculinity, Sexuality and Antisemitism in the Leo Frank Case

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Abstract:

By examining the Leo Frank case in respect to the perceived crisis in white premodern manhood, the article demonstrates the connection between changes in gender relation, as a result of industrialization and urbanization, and the rise of antisemitism. The environment of urban regions and the increasing number of female wage laborers undermined the male mastery of women which was an important component of premodern white manhood. Especially, the changes regarding sexuality, which resulted from growing autonomy of women, evoked a sentiment of emasculation among white men. This anger and bewilderment about losing control over subordinated women played an important part in the Leo Frank case. By attributing this loss of male mastery to "Jewish power," which was symbolized through "Jewish lusts," Jews became responsible for this development. This alleged responsibility contributed to the conviction that Leo Frank, and not Jim Conley, was the murderer of Mary Phagan. Since, in the antisemitic discourse, "the Jews" became responsible for the emasculation of white men, antisemitism was considered as a defensive measure against the perceived Jewish activities to reconstitute white manhood.

1   On August 16, 1915, a group of white citizens, who called themselves 'The Knights of Mary Phagan,' broke into the state prison farm of Georgia, kidnapped the detained, northern-born, Jewish factory superintendent and part owner of Atlanta's National Pencil Factory, Leo Frank and lynched him a few hours later. Before this horrible outrage occurred, the Leo Frank Case had occupied the people of Atlanta and of the whole United States of America for two years. The starting point for this two-year-long affaire was provided by the murder of the thirteen-year-old white Mary Phagan on the ground of the National Pencil Factory, where she had labored as a wageworker to support her family. After her corpse was found on April 27, 1913, the police of Atlanta, under great pressure from the publicity, hastily started the inquiry into the murder. Rumors that Mary Phagan had been raped before she was killed, sprawled through Atlanta and elevated popular outrage. Within a short time criminal investigations into the case focused on Leo Frank and Jim Conley, the latter an African-American who labored in the pencil factory and who had been in conflict with the law a few times before the murder of Mary Phagan. After being convicted of Mary Phagan's murder, Conley started to give evidence that Leo Frank had in fact been the murderer of the young woman and that he had just helped Frank to get rid of the corpse. The police and the state attorney accepted the information as true and used Conley as the key witness in the trial against Leo Frank.

2   After a long trial, which had aroused great attention and commotion among the population of Atlanta, Leo Frank was sentenced to capital punishment. Following this verdict,

Frank and his attorney appealed against this sentence as far as to the United States Supreme Court, but without success. After the denial of the appeal, supporters of Leo Frank, including journalists and editors of mainly Northern newspapers and journals, started a movement to achieve commutation. Starting in fall of 1914 this engagement resulted by October in a statement of William M. Smith, the lawyer of Jim Conley, in which he accused his own client as murderer of Mary Phagan. On June 21, 1915, Governor Slaton, after exactly grappling with the Leo Frank case and the including inconsistencies, reduced capital punishment of Leo Frank to life imprisonment (Dinnerstein, *Leo Frank* 114-125). Part of the population reacted with an exclamation of fury and blamed Slaton of committing "treachery." Assuming that Slaton, as associate in the attorney's office of Rosser, who acted as lawyer of Leo Frank in the case, was bribed, *The Jeffersonian*, a newspaper published in Georgia, concluded that "Jew money has debased us, bought us, and sold us – and laughs at us" (Anonymous, Old Paths 2).

3   This essay deals with the discourses concerning manhood and antisemitism in a political milieu, which is titled 'reactionary populism' by Nancy MacLean. MacLean subsumes to this idea all grassroots movements which attack the social and economic elites, but which also represent a political programme that is based on the subordination of other groups of people. (920) The leading spokesperson for such a "reactionary populism" in the Leo Frank case was Thomas E. Watson, who in his political views strongly adhered to the principles of Thomas Jefferson. William J. Bryan, who was supported at the beginning of his political career by *The Jeffersonian*, described the societal imaginations of Jefferson as a programme, based on the idea that "all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that, to secure these rights, governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. He believed that the people could be trusted to govern themselves" (671). At least in the understanding of Thomas E. Watson at the time of the Leo Frank case, this equality of all men did not merely count for only white men, but it moreover required the mastery of African Americans, Jews, Catholics, and women. This political view became clearly apparent in his approach to the Ku Klux Klan. On the one hand Watson justified the action of the Ku Klux Klan after the Civil War as a measure to "defend Southern homes, Southern women, Southern civilization" (Anonymous [Watson], Klux 5). On the other hand Watson had a great impact on the foundation of the second Klan by paving the way ideologically:

> The North can rail itself hoarse, if it chooses to do so: but if the L.&N. Railroad, the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, the Roman Catholic School-Book Trust, the Liquor Dealers' Association, and the Paul Warburg Money Trust, doesn't quit meddling with our business, increasing offices, raising taxes, and getting pardons and commutations for assassins, poisoners, and rapists who have a "pull," *another Ku Klux Klan may be organized to restore Home Rule*. (Anonymous [Watson], Woodward 7)

4   The reactionary populist discourse dealing with the Leo Frank case provides an insight into important aspects of Southern white manhood at the beginning of the twentieth century. For example, the constellation of suspects and the conviction of Leo Frank appear to be very unusual and astonishing to the contemporary observer of New South history. Astonishing, because for two reasons: First, after the end of Reconstruction the white population of the South[1], concerned about losing their domination of African-Americans, propagated the myth of the 'black beast rapist.' According to the logic of this anti-black discourse, which also circulated in reactionary populist circles, Jim Conley would actually represent the typical African-American rapist and therefore it would have been logical to consider him as the culprit. Second, because it was totally unusual that a testimony of an African-American against a non-black citizen was regarded as sufficient. For that reason, the question comes up which social, economical and cultural changes occurred that induced reactionary populists to view a Jew a more adequate delinquent - respectively victim - than an African American in this case.

5   This essay posits that reactionary populism considered urbanization and industrialization, especially the consequential increase in female autonomy and changes in female sexuality, as a great threat to white premodern manhood and by attributing a large share of this development to "the Jews," the resistance against them was regarded as a measure to reconstitute white Southern manhood.[2]

6   Because of the important part of Thomas E. Watson within the 'reactionary populism,' the journal *The Jeffersonian*, which Watson edited at the time of the Leo Frank affaire, is a very instructive source for examining the connection between manhood and antisemitism in "reactionary populism."

Urbanization, Industrialization and the Erosion of White Premodern Manhood

7   Since the defeat of the Confederate Army in the Civil War, Southern society was subjected to a multitude of social, cultural and economic transformations, and these changes evoked an increased perception of crisis in manhood. The abolition of slavery, which had a central importance for the self-conception of white men, and the severe damage to their function as protector of white southern women, which was a result of the military reverse against the Union Army, attacked integral constituent parts of white manhood (Michel 145-147). Despite

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[1] In this article, the phrase "the South" will be used as denomination of the states, which had declared their secession from the United States and built the Confederate States of America.
[2] Of course, it is not the intention of this article to state that the perceived crisis of masculinity was the only reason for an increasing antisemitism during the Leo Frank Case.

these occurrences and the temporary modifications of gender relations during the Civil War, the reconstitution of white manhood was accomplished during Reconstruction and in the centuries thereafter via segregation from the "black beast"and the promotion of being guardian of white women. By this means, mastery of African Americans and white women could be preserved as central aspects of white southern manhood. In 1901, one of the most prominent proponents and representatives of the New South, Daniel A. Tompkins, stated about white men: "The white man loves to control, and loves the person willing to be controlled by him. The negro readily submits to the master hand, admires and even loves it" (Janiewski 294). However, since the end of the nineteenth century, this great importance of mastery for white manhood became an increasing problem for a growing number of white men. Advancing industrialization and urbanization had an important impact on this development.

8   In the Old South, the economy was shaped overwhelmingly by large plantations and by smaller farms, which were operated by white yeomen procuring subsistence agriculture (Rabinowitz 5-6). The resulting freedom from supervision in production and work shaped the understanding of white manhood. The rural structure of the economy in interaction with bondage made larger urban regions dispensable. In the census of 1850, only thirty-four cities with a population of over 2,500 people were presented, most of them seaports for shipping commodities. But after the South was defeated in the Civil War and slavery was abolished, a change took place which began slowly in the economic structure. A great number of yeomen modified their mode of farming. Temporary high prices prompted them to cultivate solely cotton for the national and international market, instead of producing a variety of crops for their own requirements. With declining cotton prices, this decision should have had serious consequences for the farmers, but also for the societal development of the South, especially for the cities. A great number of yeomen got in debt, lost their farms, and as a final consequence moved to the growing quantity of cities and towns. These economic changes led to increasing urbanization. In the period between 1860 and 1910 the share of population who lived in urban places climbed from 6.9 percent to nearly 20 percent (Doyle 1-10).

9   Entwined with this development was the increasing industrialization of the South. Whereas in 1860, 21,000 firms were producing in the South, its number rose to 69,000 at the beginning of the twentieth century. The required workforce was not only supplied by ruined farmers, but also by their wives and children. Whole families migrated from rural areas into developing cities to work as industrial laborers. And because the wages paid were not sufficient to feed a family, wives and daughters had to support the family by earning money in the factories.

10   Atlanta, the main stage for the Leo Frank Case, was particularly strongly affected by these changes. As a spearhead of the urbanization and industrialization in the South, the population of the city exploded from 9,554 to 154,839 in the period between 1860 till 1910 (Doyle 15). Interwoven with this growth in population was a huge rise in industry, and therefore in the employment in the industrial sector, which was accompanied by a great increase in female wage labor. In 1919, women made up more than 25% of all workers in factories (Hickey 26).

11   This development led to severe changes in the structure of family. With the dependence on the wages of women and daughters and by working beyond the control of the patriarch, the female members of the family achieved a higher autonomy than they had ever before and undermined the "patria potestas" to a certain degree (Bardaglio 131). This attack on the mastery - and therefore on the manhood of the affected men -produced the discomfort of the advocates of premodern manhood and made them aspire to the past social and economic circumstances of the Old South, often embodied by veterans of the Confederate Army:

> Only in memory can he visit again the scenes of his childhood, the home of father, mother, brothers, and sisters, where he roamed the hills and dales at his own sweet will, climbed the hickory, cherry and chestnut tree, chased Molly Cotton Tail, or the nimble squirrel, built traps for old Bob White and fished and bathed in the rippling brook, or to visit again the scenes of his young manhood, when he for the first time saw sweet Nellie home, or the home of his declining years when surrounded by children, grandchildren and the partner of his joys and sorrows, his best girls of sixties urged him on when duty called. How sweet she looked in her homespun dress, spun, woven and made with her own fair and nimble fingers. … Sad, yes, sad indeed, that the old heroes of '61, who represented American manhood on the heights of Gettysburg and Malvern Hill and the chivalry of the South on the plains of Manassas, Sharpsburg and Franklin should thus have to pass away, but such is fate. (Andrews 11)

In adition to the general yearning for a society, in which the women rest at home doing domestic work and, hence, are under control of their husbands, another important aspect of premodern manhood, which men in urban regions had largely lost, was expressed in this reader's letter: the recreation in nature, and especially through hunting. Like Ted Ownby has shown, hunting incorporated values like freedom and excitement, which were central for rural white manhood in the South (27f.), and which were nearly impossible to realize in old style in the newly spreading urban regions.

12   But this nostalgia for a perceived better past, in which white men lived independently and practised mastery of women, does not explain why the perceived loss of manhood had contributed to the spread of antisemitism. A fundamental aspect of this connection was the association of 'the Jews' with industrialized capitalism, which caused the social and cultural

changes responsible for the pressure on premodern manhood.[3] In the perception of reactionary populists, it was a result of the triumph of industrialized capitalism that the South had lost its own, previously agricultural character.

> We are no longer the same: too many foreigners have come in, too many Montags and Einsteins have settled, locust-like on the green places. […] Before the War, a Haas Finance Committee would not have had the audacity to set on foot a Big Money campaign, to defeat our Law, and cover our people with a tidal wave of slander. (Anonymous [Watson], Louisville 2)

By connecting "the Jews" with industrialized capitalism, they became responsible for the social changes that made proving manhood more and more impossible. The Jews were perceived as one of the leading aggressors against the mastery of white manhood. *Urbanization, industrialization, and sexuality*

13   In the Leo Frank Case, the bewilderment and anger of white premodern manhood, evolving from the changed socio-economic circumstances and the accompanying increasing independence of white young women, leading inter alia to an alteration of their sexual behaviour, had an important impact on the perception and reception of the Leo Frank Case and on the spread of antisemitism.

14   An essential aspect of southern white manhood was the control of the sexuality of people subordinated to the patriarch. In the decades before and at the time of the Leo Frank Case, the changes in the social order, caused by urbanization and increasing female wage labor, had a strong impact on the area of sexuality and intensified the perception of a crisis in premodern manhood. In the South, already during slavery but especially after the defeat in Civil War and the abolition of slavery, sexuality constituted an important way to uphold social stratification and the subordination of African-Americans, but also of white women. A focal point in the politics of sexuality had been the propagation of the purity and virtue of white women. In some sense, white women were construed as asexual. Frances Newman, a Southern author, flippantly remarked, that "in Georgia a woman was not supposed to know she was a virgin until she ceased to be one" (d'Emilio 186). This alleged purity of white women, and the supposition of rampant sexual desires of black men towards them, which was articulated in the construction of the "black beast rapist," authorized white men to perceive themselves as guardians of white womanhood. The sad result of this delusion was an upsurge of violence against African-

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[3] Catholics were another social group suspected to undermine the social order of the South. They played an important part in the conspiracy theory of reactionary populism and were also suspected of abusing Protestant white young women. Referring to the alleged Catholic dominance Thomas E. Watson stated, that "our schools authorites seem to be absolutely owned by this Catholic Trust – a Trust which naturally wants to sell as many books as possible to the Protestants, but which, being Catholic, is rejoised [sic] to see Protestant children kept out of the public schools" (Anonymous [Watson], Louisville 2).

Americans during Reconstruction and in the following decades. Over 3,386 African-Americans were murdered by white lynch mobs between 1882 and 1920 and these cruel acts of violence were most often justified in the public by citing the rape of white women by black men. However, the primary intention of these lynchings was the upholding of the subordinate status of African-Americans (Odem 28f.).

15   Besides African-Americans - although to a much lower degree - white women were the second social group, which had to pay a high price for the concept of sexual purity dominant in the South. It was a question of honor, and therefore of white premodern manhood, to preserve the purity of the daughters until marriage and to prevent physical contact of their daughters with the male sex. Every perceived sexual encounter called for a strict and often violent answer of the father to restore the honor of the family and to avert damage for his manhood. Even, from a present-day perspective, usual physical contact such as patting a shoulder of a girl could be received as assault on the sexual purity of the daughter, and were responded to violently (Klotter 124). This connection between male honor and female sexuality becomes even more apparent in the perception of rape. The sexual assault was less seen as a violation of a woman's physical integrity and her bodily autonomy than as an attack on her honor and on the honor of the household. Hence, every rape of a woman was perceived as an insult against manhood (Bardaglio 65).

16   Especially in the dynamically growing and increasingly industrialized Atlanta the undermining of the control over women and therefore of the "sexual purity" advanced. One aspect of the erosion of patriarchal control of female sexuality was forming in the new emerging factories. Some employers used their power of hiring and firing to intimidate and abuse female workers. (Simon 381) The frustration and rage of white working-class men, powerless against their employers, fortified racial hatred and sometimes led to violent attempts to protect and reconstitute the purity and virtue of white women.

17   Such an attempt was the three day furor against the African American population of Atlanta. The result of the Atlanta race riot of 1906, which received national and international attention, were at least 25 slayed and several dozens of bruised African Americans. This upheaval was brought about by rumors about four white women, sexually assaulted by black men (Burns 5).

18   This anger regarding the undermining of white manhood by losing control over the sexuality of the daughters within the bounds of the factories was also articulated in the Leo Frank case. The vehement opponents of female wage labor feared that the security and purity of white womanhood was endangered "when good-looking girls depend on their work for a

living, and take employment under Jewish libertines, like Leo Frank, they either have to submit to his lusts, leave his employment, and lose their lives, as Mary Phagan lost hers" (Anonymous [Watson], Woodward 7). Taking up the discourse circulating nationwide about sexual abuse of female workers by their employers, the antisemitic discourse realigned this narrative by claiming that Jewish employers were the sexual assaulters on their daughters.

19   Although there had never been any evidence for this assertion, the allegation that Mary Phagan was sexually abused before she was murdered circulated and endured persistently. Against the backdrop of evidence that Mary Phagan was sexually active, the alleged rape was the only possibility to retain the image of pure white womanhood, and therefore to retain the honor of white premodern manhood. Following this image of purity, the articles and readers' letters, published in *The Jeffersonian*, construed Mary Phagan as a symbol of white purity. The secretary and treasurer of the 'Committee on Raising Funds for Mary Phagan Monument,' C.W. Arnes, wrote that "little Mary Phagan was a sweet pure, refined girl: and the greatest thing she had on his earth was her virtue; and all will agree that she gave up her life for her virtue" (Arnes 12). Again and again, the attributes of virtue and purity were repeated in connection with Mary Phagan. In the eyes of reactionary populists Mary Phagan was a model of virtue, who "looked as bright and fresh and clean as a flower of springtime" (Linkous 8). But it was not only this alleged act of martyrdom, which made Mary Phagan a symbol of pure white womanhood, and therefore a means of premodern manhood to propagate the gender relation of past times, which was now under threat, namely that white men had the absolute mastery over their wives and daughters.

20   A further important aspect in this portrayal of Mary Phagan as purity and morality personified was the description of her recreation and pastimes, which was clearly influenced by the reform discourse of the first decades of the twentieth century. At this time, reformers, both male and female, started a campaign against vice. They condemned the admittance of white women to public places like dance halls and theatres and tried to reverse the trend of increasing white female wage labor, because both the modern places of recreation and amusement and the new workplaces out of home were suspected to dissipate young women's purity (Hickey 4). Tying in with the description of Mary Phagans immaculate sexual morality, the depiction of her pastimes seemed to be another counter model to the modern mores of industrialized society and the resulting changes in gender relation. Against this background, the depiction of Mary Phagan as "a little innocent Christian girl whose last act on this earth was to iron with her own hands the white dress that she expected to wear, next day, at the Bible school of First Christian

church" (Anonymous [Watson], Negro 2) has to be understood as a strategy for the reconstitution of the subordinated status of white women.

21   Another aspect of this strategy was the discursive connection of Mary Phagan to commemorative activities by referring to her intention of leaving her home on the day she was murdered "to see the Confederate Veterans parade their thinning, tottering lines through the streets of Atlanta, on Memorial Day" (Felton, 2).[4] These commemorative activities provided the basis for the 'Lost Cause.' The integral contribution of the 'Lost Cause' to restore white men's mastery of women was described by Sonya Michel with much apropos:

> White women served the Lost Cause not only as architects and orchestrators of ritual and as spokespersons for its message, but also *as the message*. In person and as symbols, they came to embody the essence of the Old South that was to be recovered and defended. They were either unaware or unconcerned that the ideology they sought to promulgate once again positioned them as subordinate to men. (151)

22   By construing Mary Phagan as a pure and chaste "little girl," who honored the courage, bravery and sacrifices of Southern white men in the Civil War, she became a symbol of the Old South, and therefore for the old gender relation, which upheld the mastery of white men. On this account, Mary Phagan became a "little Georgia heroine," whose destiny needed to be a reminder for the following generations. For these purposes, the 'Committee on Raising Funds for Mary Phagan Monument' was founded and the collection of money to erect this monument was promoted by the treasurer and secretary as "a movement that every fair-minded man in Georgia should be interested in" (Arnes, untitled 12).

23   In the imagination of premodern manhood the antithesis to pure and virtuous Mary Phagan in this affaire was Leo Frank, whose representation in *The Jeffersonian* was flaunting antisemitic stereotypes and who was drawn as the counterpart to protective and honorable white Southern men. In this depiction of Leo Frank as the anti-type, his sexuality played a major, perhaps the preeminent role. The description of Leo Frank as a "libertine reprobate," as a "sexual pervert" or as a "filthy and murderous Sodomite" permeated the reporting of the Leo Frank Case in *The Jeffersonian*. Innumerable rumors and assumptions about the sexuality of the Jewish superintendent circulated in Atlanta and were apprehended as evidence for his "degenerate proclivities." One of these hearsays concerned the alleged sexual practices of Leo Frank, based on a testimony of a girl, "that she had a scar, *on the tenderest part of her thigh*,

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[4] This statement of "Mrs. W.H. Felton," who in 1922 became the successor of Thomas E. Watson as senator, shows that also among white women of reactionary populism the want for reconstituting the old gender relations was common.

made by the teeth of Leo Frank" (Anonymous [Watson], Negro 3). This sensual horror and indignation of the readers was further increased by a statement about "sexual perverts":

> It is well known to the doctors, that a sexual pervert stops at nothing. Some of them are not aroused by women, at all. They crave boys, men, and even animals. Instances that are almost incredible are given in "Human Sexuality," a book which none but doctors can procure. (Anonymous [Watson], Negro 15)

24   Another aspect of Leo Frank's lusts was his apparently insatiable appetite for sexual intercourse with multiple young white women, who were employed in his factory and therefore were dependent. This fear of seduction and forced sexual relationships between female workers and their employers was a common motive in the regions of the USA progressing in urbanization and industrialization (Odem 16f.). But in the Leo Frank Case this concern combined with antisemitic knowledge which, at the time of this affaire, was also represented by prominent scholars like sociologists Edward A. Ross, who was inter alia professor of Stanford University and president of American Sociological Society. Ross claimed in his broadly-received book *The Old World in the New* that Jewish businessmen preferred "Gentile girls" instead of Jewesses (150). With this antisemitic cliché in mind, Thomas E. Watson, who explicitly referred to Edward A. Ross, stated that "Frank would creep around the ladies' dressing room, while they were partly undressed, and leer at them with the disgusting look which the lascivious Jew is in the habit of casting upon young and pretty Gentile women" (Anonymous [Watson], Big Money Campaign 3). Indeed, this passage seems to contain at least a part of the ordinary behavior of Leo Frank towards his female workers. But ironically, at least if the statement of Irene Jackson, a worker in Atlanta's National Pencil Factory, corresponded to Frank's behaviour, the protectors of the purity of white womanhood lynched their ally. Admittedly, Jackson confirmed that Leo Frank had entered the dressing room without knocking, but only to end the flirting of female laborers with men on the streets (Hickey 36).

25   Important for the understanding of the nexus between reconstitution of manhood and antisemitism is, that the perceived sexual perversion of Leo Frank was not considered to be the result of a distorted individual person, but was attributed in different manners to "the Jews" as a race. This attribution of behavior to races was legitimized by a scientific racism which developed at the turn of the eighteenth century and eventually removed religious and philosophical argumentations to arrange races in a strict hierarchy since the 1850s (Finzsch 90f.). In the second half, and especially in the last decades of this century, an antisemitism based on racialistic reasoning spread in Europe, which claimed a connection between the physiognomy and the character and behavior of Jews. As Sander L. Gilman in *The Jew's Body* depicts, this connection was so virulent in scientific, especially in medical antisemitic discourse,

that no "aspect of the representation of the Jewish body in that sphere, whether fabled or real, is free from the taint of the claim of the special nature of the Jewish body as a sign of the inherent difference of the Jew" (38). Houston Stewart Chamberlain, the author of the racist and antisemitic standard reference *Die Grundlagen des Neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, was such a great proponent of categorization by means of physiognomic characteristics that he even differentiated between different phenotypes of Jews. But instead of concluding that there is no existence of a Jewish race, the inconsistency of "Jewish phenotypes" served him as evidence for the "degeneracy" of the Jewish race (440f.).

26   At the beginning of the twentieth century, "the knowledge" about the connection between character and physiognomy was common in the discourse of antisemitism in the United States. In the context of the Leo Frank case this correlation between body and mind appeared in the establishment of Jewish "perverted sexuality" in their physiognomy. It seems as if reactionary populists assumed that "the Jews" were provided with their special physicalness to indulge their extravagant sexuality:

> These thick-lipped rakes glut their eyes upon handsome Gentile women, on the trains, on street cars, on the streets, in hotel balconies, and in the foyers of theatres. It fills a decent Gentile with murderous indignation, to see a red-mouthed Jew *undress a Gentile woman with his horrible eyes*. (Anonymous [Watson], Woodward 22)

27   The assumed knowledge about "Jewish sexuality" was so immense, deeply enrooted, and efficacious in the antisemitic discourse of reactionary populism that it obtained the character of evidence for the culpability of Leo Frank. The thinking was racialized in such a way that every assumed human race was furnished with a special kind of sexuality. And the knowledge about this diverging sexualities formed an additional evidence for reactionary populists that Leo Frank was the rapist and murderer of Mary Phagan.

28   The concept of civilization acts as the key to the understanding of the notion that different races act out different kinds of sexuality. As Gail Bederman has shown, civilization, in the understanding of the US-citizens at the turn of the century and in the first decades of the twentieth century, was a marker which attributed special characteristics to gender and race and was used by a variety of Americans to legitimate and to obtain white supremacy (Bederman 23). Whereas a few reactionary populists analogized Leo Frank's sexuality with that of African-Americans by describing it as "the beastly lust of a savage beast" (Mullis, Carpet-Bagger 10), generally the sexualities of Jews and of African-Americans were understood as opposing each other with regard to civilization.

> The vice of Sodom is the vice of civilization, not of barbarism. The sadistic monster is the rotten product of the higher race. All doctors will tell you so. … A negro rapist would

have not needed to open his pocket-knife and cut her drawers all the way, on one leg. A negro rapist would have left the spermatozoa! No spermatozoa was found; but the girl's inner leg had been bared, and some sort of violence had been done to the vagina. (Anonymous [Watson], Negro 3)

In this "scientific" discourse, both, "the Jew" and "the African-American," are connected with a sexuality that differs sharply from that of civilized white men. But whereas the African-American sexuality was described as a result of remaining in barbarism, the Jewish one appeared as a "degenerated" product of civilization.

29   "Jewish sexuality" and "Jewish manhood" were not only described in absolute terms by biologizing but also by basing them in Jewish culture and history. For these purposes the Talmud was predestined. The Talmud is one of the most important scripts of Judaism and was developed in Ancient Palestine and Babylonia (Anonymous, Talmud 797). Again and again, it was the target of antisemitic abuses and attacks. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, some inflammatory opera such as August Rohling's *Der Talmudjude* were released in Germany and other countries in western and central Europe, the homestead of modern racial antisemitism. These scripts propagated the conviction that the Talmud legitimized Jews to act deviously against Gentiles. At the time of the Leo Frank case, such "knowledge" also circulated in the antisemitic society of Atlanta and was integrated in the narrative of "Jewish sexuality". With this in mind Thomas E. Watson wrote that the Talmud "glorified the crimes of ancient Jews against pregnant women and chaste daughters of Midianites and Cannanites" (Anonymous [Watson], State 1). The "degenerate" sexuality appeared to be inherent in the "Jewish nature", because in all historical ages and in several social systems Jews acted as violators of female chastity.

30   Herein, the constructions of Jewish and African-American menace to white womanhood resembled each other, despite the diversities which were a result of the different settings in "civilization". However there seems to be a difference in the production of these two anti-types of white Southern manhood, which perhaps made comprehensible that Leo Frank was considered the murderer of Mary Phagan in the antisemitic and racialistic reactionary populism.

31   According to the image of Jews in the antisemitic discourse, they were not only a menace to white pure womanhood because of their own sexual lusts and appetites for Gentile women but they were also noted as manipulators organizing "white slavery." Reactionary populists perceived Jews as pimps who "grow up with the ambition to find some Gentile girl to go out and 'work for them'" (Steiner 11). The fear that white young women were trapped and were forced to become prostitutes circulated throughout the United States of America in the late nineteenth century and during the first decades of the twentieth century. At the beginning

of twentieth century vice crusaders distributed tracts called *House of Bondage* or *The Girl That Disappears*. Furthermore films like *The Inside of White Slave Traffic* were produced to make the people attentive to the alleged destiny of young women (96f.). Within the antisemitic perception of "white slavery," "the Jews" seemed to be the leading force in this morally condemned traffic, since they allegedly had almost a monopoly in this business. Franklin Steiner claimed in his reader's letter that "anyone acquainted with the facts will tell you that they form fully ninety per cent of this class" (Steiner 11). Therefore, the undermining of "white female virtue" became another facet of the construction of "greedy Jews, who love money, and never know what it is to get enough" (Anonymous [Watson], Big Money Campaign 1). Adding the blame of prostituting white women, the discursive construction of Jews as the "destroyer of white womanhood" gained another facet.

32   The focal point in the perception of Jews as destroyers of white womanhood was the persuasion that Jews acted as manipulator of the miscegenation between white women and African American men. This idea of Jewish business jeopardizing white womanhood's purity by supporting the desire of African-Americans' for white women expressed itself in the perception of the saloons and restaurants dedicated to African-Americans' pastime, mostly run and owned by Jews. Rumors spread that in these stores pictures of nude white women decorated the walls and hence were presented to the African Americans (Dinnerstein, Atlanta 181). More explicitly, this fear of white premodern manhood was articulated in the article "While Leo Frank Is Loafing at the State Farm, the Rich Jews Continue to Defame the People and the Courts of Georgia," written by Thomas E. Watson:

> The store referred to is the great Department Store, and mail-order house known as *R. H. MACY & CO. Nathan Strauss owns it, and he makes WHITE WOMEN THE SERVANTS OF NEGRO MEN IN IT*. (State Farm 5)

Beyond the accusation against Jews of undermining white men's mastery in respect to the sexuality of subordinated persons, this statement also reveals the attribution of perceived white men's emasculation to Jews in a broader sense: the ascription of Jewish involvement in the dissolution of the societal order of the South, and therefore of white supremacy.

The Perceived Destruction of White Womanhood as Symbolization of Jewish Power

33   In addition to the alleged sexual abuse of white women by Jews and the associated undermining of white men's mastery, manhood and sexuality also played an important part on a more abstract level in the discourse of reactionary populism: as symbolization of alleged Jewish money and power, which threatened to destroy Georgia's societal order. As Joan Scott

has shown, gender is not only an important element of social relations, but also a category expressing relations of power between competing forces (56).
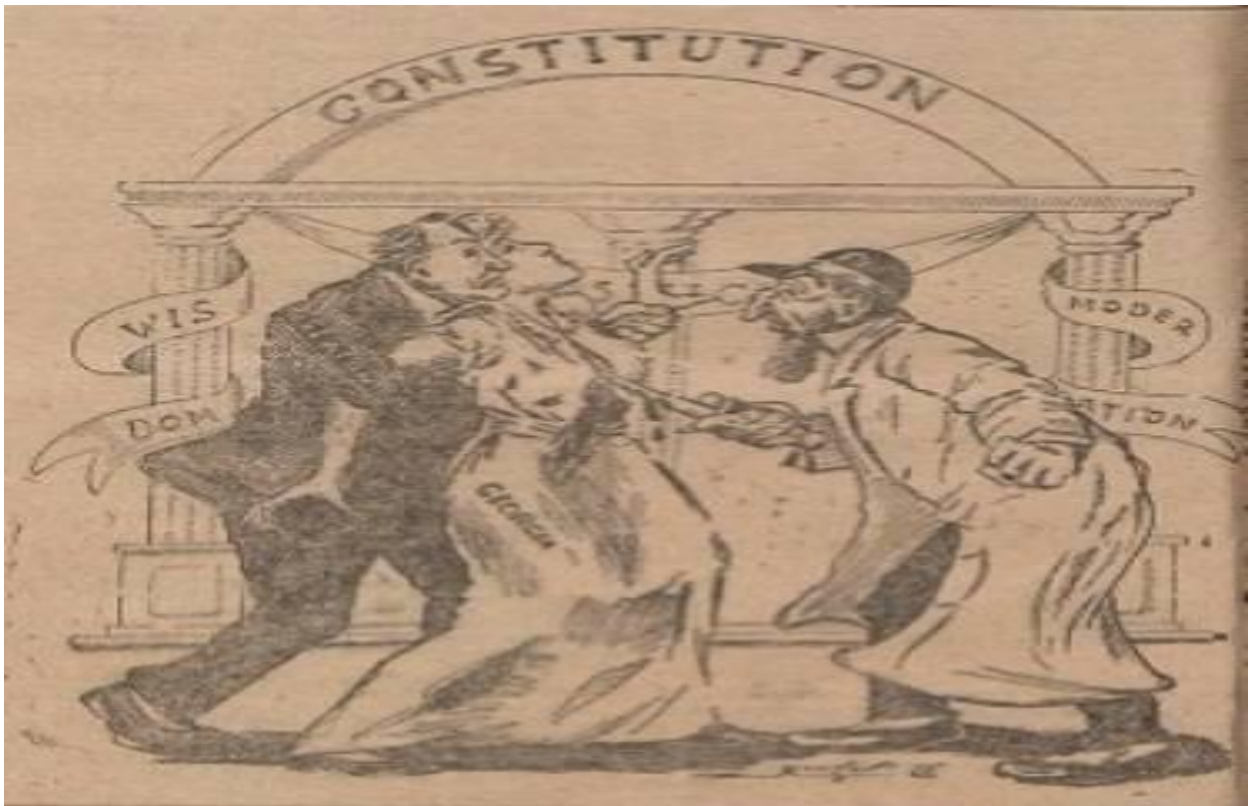
Caricature published in *The Jeffersonian* (Anonymous, 2)

34   Since the defeat in Civil War Northern capital had streamed into the South and pushed forward the economic transformation towards industrialized capitalism. At the turn of the century, a lot of factories and companies, located in the South, were owned by Northern companies and capital. Economically the South was dependent on the North. Paul M. Gaston even describes the situation of the South as a colonial one (121). Among these Northern companies investing capital in the South, there had been some Jewish corporations.

35   In the antisemitic discourse this involvement of Jewish companies in the enforcement of capitalistic principles in the South appeared in the antisemitic stereotype of Jewish domination. The perception of a Jewish conspiracy causing the economic decline of the South, especially of the farmers, was already widespread during the 1880s and the 1890s (Dinnerstein, Antisemitism 49). The same thought patterns also circulated among reactionary populists during the Leo Frank case. Lee Green asserted in a reader's letter that "the Romanists and Jews have been allowed to rake in about all of the wealth, capture the public offices and corrupt the courts without interference" (10). Thomas E. Watson articulated this perceived subjugation of

Gentiles, and the resulting emasculation of white men by Jewish power inter alia as a result of "this Rothschild-Belmont corporation throwing its tentacles around the papers and politicians in Atlanta" (Daily Paper 7) or in other words that "the Jew-made Money Trust" (Memory 7) ruled the country. One indicator of this asserted Jewish power was the commutation of the capital punishment into lifelong imprisonment in the Leo Frank case. The perceived special status of the Jews was articulated in the insistence that "the Jews who live in Georgia must *come under* the Laws" as the Gentiles did it (Anonymous [Watson], Assassination 5).

36   Because of the centrality of independence and mastery for premodern manhood this alleged domination of Gentile men by Jews was perceived as emasculation. In this sense, reactionary populists claimed that "all men must bow to this new Money System, and all men must go for it for loans" (Anonymous [Watson], Memory 7). To express this perceived emasculation, reactionary populism accused 'the Jews' of abusing white womanhood in a metaphorical sense by complaining that the "grand old Empire State HAS BEEN RAPED" (Anonymous [Watson], Old Paths 1). Because of white men's role as protector of white womanhood and its essential character in white premodern honor this stated rape implicated the call for defending Georgia against "the Jews."

Antisemitic violence as reconstitution of manhood

37   In the mind of reactionary populism only two patterns existed for white Gentiles to react to the changed social, economic, and cultural situation which hit premodern white manhood so hard: the subordination to or the fight against contended Jewish mastery. Both of them were strongly gendered.

38   The first reaction, the alleged subordination, was attributed with weak manhood and even emasculation. Governor Slaton was considered as a representative of such a weak and feeble manhood. In the eyes of reactionary populists Slaton has proved himself by commuting the capital punishment into lifelong imprisonment as "the weak joint in our armor, the vulnerable heel that lets the fatality enter our body politic" (Anonymous [Watson], Old Paths1). This unmanly weakness of Slaton also appeared in the description of his decision-making procedure in the Leo Frank case, in which his wife was construed as the person making the decisions for her husband. In doing so Slaton appeared as the opposite of white premodern manhood with its mastery of women, he appeared as getting "behind his wife's petticoats" (Anonymous [Watson], Treachery 3).

39   The second possibility to react to the 'crisis' of premodern manhood, resulting out of the perceived Jewish subjugation of the South, was to fight back and therefore to reconstitute

manhood. The connection between manhood and the soldier with its attributes of heroism, sacrifice, and battle readiness made a great impact on this. As already mentioned, violence played an important part in Southern premodern manhood, but also in the effort for reconstitution. This connection between violence and reconstitution of manhood became apparent in the legitimization of the lynching of Leo Frank by a mob of white men. By making recourse to the American revolution and the following independence of the United States, reactionary populists stated that "the 'mobs' were Liberty Boys in those days – the old days before we became lollywops, vegetarians, grape-juicers, and sissy-boys" (Anonymous [Watson], Mobs 6). In doing so, violence appeared as an integral part of manhood.

40   In the context of the rise of antisemitism and male reconstitution the reference to Confederate soldiers was essential, because it provided the "bowed" white men with a model of heroic fighting manhood. Analogizing the alleged invasion of "General Strauss, Colonel Haas, Major Ochs with their gang Gideonite sodomites" (Anonymous cited in: Anonymous [Thomas E. Watson] , Lambdin 1) with the invasion of the Union army during the Civil War, reactionary populists invoked Southern white men to raise up their arms, and get in line to defend the South against the offender. As one reader of *The Jeffersonian* wrote to Thomas E. Watson, he "felt like greasing up old Betsy and hitting the trail as [he] did in Johnson's Army in '64 and '65" (Anonymous cited in: Anonymous [Thomas E. Watson], Lambdin 1). In this desired battle, the denouement was not as important as the act of fighting itself which was considered as reconstituting premodern manhood. In this sense, Thomas E. Watson invoked that "this Belmont-Rothschild combine will never get *this State* under its dirty feet, without a fight that will be a memory for the next fifty years" (Harris 7).

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Masculinities: The Million Men March

By Norbert Finzsch

Abstract:

Norbert Finzsch analyzes the Million Men March (MMM) of 1995 as an alleged attempt to redefine African American masculinities in the context of the exclusion of other forms of non-hegemonic masculinity. As a relational category, masculinity invokes and implies definitions of femininity and of other categories that support the dominant paradigm of the patriarchal, racist, heteronormative and capitalist order. It is Finzsch's contention, therefore, that masculinity should be defined in concordance with theoretical models based on the model of intersectionality, despite the fact that this notion was developed by women of color in the context of a feminist critique of liberal (white) feminism. He also believes that the MMM should be contextualized in the history of different marches on and in Washington DC, since the MMM evoked images and myths of previous mass demonstrations in the capital.

1   Let me clarify what I want to achieve in my contribution by explaining the concepts of the article.

1. Masculinities in my title is a plural, because there is no such thing as a masculinity, according to sociologist Raewyn Connell. "Masculinity is simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture" (Connell, Masculinities 71). According to sociologist Jessie Krienert, instead of seeing masculinity as something that just happens to men or is done to men, masculinity is seen as something that men do. In an iterative process called *Doing Gender*, specific patterns are learned through the socialization process that appropriately represents masculinity (Krienert).

2. Masculinity as a singular must be performed and presented recurrently in any situation. Constant self-presentation occurs throughout every social interaction in which a man is involved. Ongoing re-creation is a defining feature of masculinity. This re-creation occurs in the family, at work, in school, and in all other social settings. The underlying goal of this performance is the assertion of power and dominance (Krienert). Since the aim of Doing Gender is the creation of a stable heterosexual hegemonic masculinity, it follows that there are other, conflicting and competing concepts of masculinities within the same society. Nonetheless, heterosexuality and homophobia are the bedrock of hegemonic masculinity.(Donaldson 645). Non-hegemonic masculinities, however, usually fail to influence structural gender arrangements significantly because their expression is either relegated to heterosocial settings or suppressed entirely (Bird 120).

3. I speak of the Million Man March as a myth in the sense of Roland Barthes, a second-order sign, because it is my contention that the Million Man March served primarily in order to signify, achieve, reinscribe and solidify a uniform black petit-bourgeois masculinist discourse by using a primary signification of black brotherhood, atonement and solidarity (Barthes). The material foundations of this masculinist discourse are found in the various marches for Civil Rights and the historical discourses of a non-hegemonic black masculinity.

2   In order to make my point evident will first make a few remarks about the March itself, followed by an example of the issues that were excluded from the march. I will then dwell upon the precedents of the Million Man March, which was not, contrary to what its organizers have claimed, a unique event in the history of African American men, but has a long history that goes back all the way to the construction of black masculinities after emancipation. Finally, I will come back to my initial contention of the Million Man March as a myth and explain the connection between this myth and other attempts to invoke the March as a tool to contribute to the issue of masculinity in America.

Fig. 1.

3   The Million Man March of October 16, 1995 was an event that received extraordinary attention in the media and in political discourses, although it remains unclear whether literally a million or just 400.000 African American men participated in the march.[1] Although primarily organized by the Black Nationalist organization Nation of Islam (NOI) and used by its charismatic leader, Louis Farrakhan, in order to promote the NOI as the foremost organization of African Americans in the US, the march received attention and positive comments all over the United States. The march itself and Farrakhan's speech was reported on CNN and various participants in the march were given media time. Most of the participants underscored their perception of the march as being beyond adherence to the beliefs of the NOI. Rev. Vernon Clay from the Lincoln Congregational Temple in Washington was quoted saying: "It's not about a march, a man, words. It's about a movement." (USA Today) Harold Ickes, Deputy White House Chief of Staff and former legal counsel to labor unions said, "This group is not Farrakhan's group. This is a group of black men from around the country who are coming here for a day of atonement and to talk about how to take responsibility for their own lives." (USA Today, CNN) Jesse Jackson, a close supporter of Martin Luther King, was heard on CNN, saying "It's important we have such a march to focus attention on the urban crisis and move from the negative urban policy of chasing welfare mothers, chastising their fathers and locking children up to some real commitment of reindustrialization of urban America." (CNN) The participants belonged in their majority to the so-called black middle class. "The middle class is dissatisfied, the masses are dissatisfied, but what we do with this dissatisfaction and frustration must be creative. That's why the Million Man March could have been, and yet may be, that catalyst for real change in, our own community. I was surprised when I learned that 44 percent of the men that were there had some college education. Over 20 percent of those men had businesses; they were entrepreneurs. It was tremendous. Here's a black middle class that comes to a march called by a man who is considered radical, extremist, anti-Semitic, anti-white. What does that say about the hunger, the yearning, of that black middle class? They really want to connect with the masses." (Farrakhan and Gates 149-150) According to a sociological study directed by Robert Joseph Taylor and Karen D. Lincoln at the University of Michigan, the Million Man Marchers tended to be more middle-aged, have higher levels of education, and higher incomes than black

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[1] The National Park Service counted the number of participants from a helicopter – like animals in a National Park. Although it was touted as the "Million Man March", official figures from the National Park Service estimated about 400,000 men. Because of this count, Farrakhan and other organizers have sued authorities over the number, with claims of one million and even two million men being actually there. Organizers claim that racism, white supremacists, and the hatred of Louis Farrakhan affected the count. The photos used by the Park Service were then examined for some days by a ten-person team of experts at Boston University's Center for Remote Sensing, which estimated the crowd at some 873,000 plus or minus 20 percent. (Center for Remote Sensing, URL not longer in service).

men in general. One out of three (33%) marchers were aged 18-30, 42% were aged 30-44, 20% were between 41 and 60, and 4% were 61 years of age or older. Only 5% of the marchers had less than a high school education, 22% were high school graduates, 59% had some college or were college graduates and 14% had some post graduate education, thus marking the average marcher as a member of the middle class. This is also reflected by their average family incomes. "Only 10% of the respondents reported that their 1994 family incomes were $14,999 or less. Sixteen percent of respondents had family incomes between $15,000 and $29,999, 33% had incomes between $30,000 and $49,999, 17% had incomes between $50,000 and $74,999, 11% had incomes between $75,000 and $99,999 and 8% had family incomes of $100,000 or more." (Taylor and Williams).

4   Taylor and Lincoln also studied the reasons why African American men participated in the march. Comparing their own findings with those of a study conducted by Lester & Associates, a market research firm based in Washington DC, they found out that only a minority of about five percent of the respondents indicated that the single most important reason they were participating in the March was to show support for Louis Farrakhan. Three of ten participants (29%) indicated that the most important reason they participated in the Million Man March was to show support for black families, 25% stated to show support for black men taking more responsibility for their families and communities, 25% to demonstrate black unity, and 7% stated to demonstrate African American economic strength.[2] Apart from the critics who denounced Farrakhan and the NOI as anti-Semitic and racist, there were critical voices questioning the gender politics of the march. Angela Davis, black feminist and intellectual, raised doubts about the othering effects of the march. "No march, movement or agenda that defines manhood in the narrowest terms and seeks to make women lesser partners in this quest for equality can be considered a positive step."

Exclusion

5   Angela Davis's remark directs my questions to the issue of inclusion versus exclusion. The Million Man March was clearly aiming at establishing a racial harmony between African American men at the price of excluding women in general as well as Caucasian and Asian men. The organizers of the march were very specific about this and invited only a very small group of handpicked African American women to attend the march. One of the female participants remarked: ""I had to pinch myself constantly. Didn't know whether I was watching a white religious right's rally or an all-male religious, Islamic gathering in Iran." ([Anonymous] 63) As

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[2] Compare this with the results of a survey among black academics. ([Anonymous])

bell hooks has pointed out, a march for blacks that deliberately excludes women is not really a march for black people, but rather a march for something like rejuvenated black patriarchy. Gay black men were discriminated against or downright excluded (Reis-Pharr 38-39). The African American gay activist Cleo Manago was invited to deliver a speech during the gathering on the Mall in Washington. It was only shortly before the scheduled speech that he learned that he would not be allowed to give his speech. No reason was given, but it can be assumed that Manago was denied the possibility to address the participants because of last-minute reservations against him due to his sexual orientation and the controversial issues that he would in all likelihood address in his speech. Since I had access to the text of his never delivered address, it is obvious that Manago clearly intended to question the prevalent notions of masculinity and tried to expand manhood as something that encompasses more than the traditional concept of a protecting patriarch, who provides for his nuclear family, while the black mother stays at home and takes care of children and household. Manago invoked different images of black masculinity when he intended to speak of black role models like Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, accused of sexual harassment in 1991, "King of Pop" Michael Jackson, accused of pedophilia in 1993, actor O.J. Simpson accused of murder in 1995, and rap musician Snoop Doggy-Dogg, also accused of murder in 1995.[3] Manago then asked the crucial question: "Who is defining us, defining Blackness, manhood, male responsibility? Who created the model? Does the model work? And work for who [sic?]? Why do we want to be men? Why don't some of us […] want to be Black men? Why are we all here today? Might it be because the model, wherever it came from, doesn't work -- for the Black community?"[4]

Historical Masculinities

6   Manago's indictment of the model of black masculinity defined as "Afrocentric" "hard, strong, masculine, heterosexual, responsible" culminates in a questioning of the historical essentialism that antedated the Million Man March by at least 100 years. The invoked model of

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[3] "Are we a Million 'men' here today? YES -- today we are classified as Black or African-American men. It's important to remember that for much of our experience in this country, our 'manhood' has been subject to the whims of another culture. 'Our' manhood defined for us, not by us. Clarence Thomas is a superior court judge supposedly a great achievement - is he a man? Michael Jackson has achieved fame unattained by almost everyone else in the Western world -- is he a man? O.J. Simpson achieved fame and wealth, was accused of murder found not guilty, leaving two white people and a large section of white America, some feel, with no retribution. Is O.J. a man […]? What is a man, a Black man? Snoopy Doggy-Dogg is a house-hold word. He's walking down the street smoking endo sipping on gin and juice, with his mind on his money and his money on his mind -- is Dogg a man? (Manago, MANHOOD). This site was no longer available in 2010.

[4] Louis Farrakhan obviously reversed his earlier position on GLBT-people, since he allowed Cleo Manago to represent a gay perspective during the Millions More Movement rally in 2005, commemorating the 1995 Million Man March ten years after the event. (Manago, What Really Happened). The text is no longer available on that site.

the black male is a role that emerged at the end of the 19th century in an elitist discourse created by members of the very small black intelligentsia and middle class in order to promote a patriarchal version of the Black family that would then be permitted to lead a marginalized existence at the fringes of white America. It served to counteract the dominant two-layered image of the black male as "Sambo", a submissive, weak, child-like, almost feminine buffoon (Schroeder 74-87) on the one side and as the "buck", a hypermasculine, violent brute and rapist on the other side, so vividly described by Martha Hodes in "White Women, Black Men." (Hodes 176-208.)

Fig 2.: Sambo.

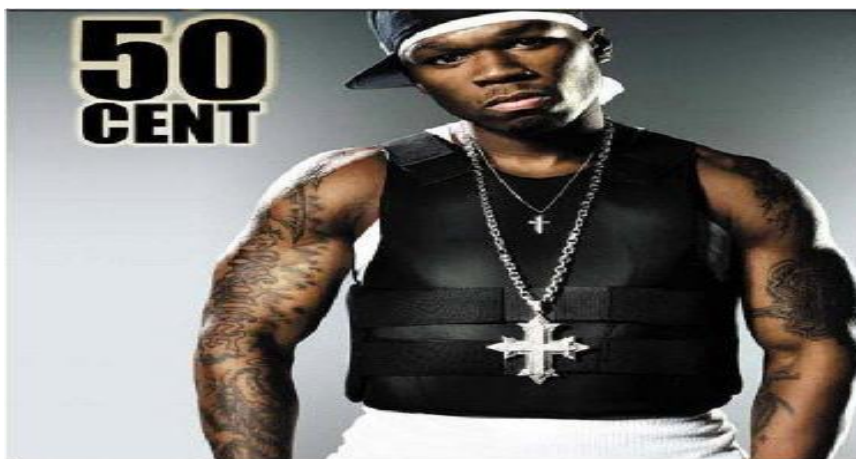**Fig. 3.: Fifty Cent and Hypermasculine Ideals.**

7   After the emancipation from slavery, African American men reconstructed their lives in the South on the basis of a sharecropping economy, which allowed men to control the means of agricultural production while the women took care of the children and the housework. On the other hand, White men had to reconstruct their lives after a humiliating defeat on the

battlefield and the loss of their property, thereby also reinforcing the values of middle-class respectability and patriarchal power (Whites 158-159). In other words, the Black male as a responsible, reliable yet patriarchic head of household, who protects and provides for his family, is a doppelganger of an older white male role model that was constructed in the middle of the 19th century, when the nuclear family emerged as a result of a gendered division of labor and the creation of separate spheres for both women and men (Finzsch and Hampf 47-49).[5] In order to enjoy "manhood's rights" i.e. franchise and office holding, African American men had to conform to middle–class whites' definitions of manhood (Gilmore 61-63).[6] Simultaneously, post-bellum Black Migration enlarged black communities in the northern cities dramatically.[7] African American men perceived this new life not only as deracination but also as a possibility to achieve (economic) independence and survival, in economic as well as in gendered terms. In the South the first Jim Crow laws had been passed in the 1880s, which had "redeemed" the South and had reestablished the old order in which white Planters owned the land and black families tilled the earth. These Jim Crow Laws "emasculated" African American men by denying them civil rights. Under Jim Crowism, Black men were also threatened physically since thousands of them were subjected to torture and lynching which, in a very literal sense, included the emasculation of the victim before or after death. "Escape from such conditions meant the opportunity to be a real man as well as a free man." (Kimmel 86) Under these circumstances, the idealized reproduction of the nuclear family in the emerging African American communities

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[5] In 1903, Edward Augustine Benner wrote to Booker T. Washington, referring to his son Booker [sic], who had spent some time in the Tuskegee Institute: "My dear Dr. Washington: I am very glad to report a great improvement in Booker's spirit and way of going to work. He seems to have acquired more manliness and feeling of responsibility." (Harlan and Smock, vol. 7, 309). The notion of masculinity or manliness (in order to use a 19th-century concept) only rarely transcended the realm of labor. When a military training unit was established in Wilberforce, Ohio, a traditionally black school, Charles Young wrote to Booker T. Washington, "It would be impossible, however, for me to do creditable work with the boys without the General Government would with your permission furnish guns and equipment for them. […] The boys at Wilberforce have had such equipment and arms in their possession for 5 years with the best results. The pride and manliness, the self-respect and obedience, the strong virtues of promptness, reverence, neatness, and command – things consequent of this training – are not to be had without a gun, a uniform, and authority at the back of the whole department." (Harlan and Smock, vol. 5, 69-70).

[6] A large number of books appeared beginning in the 1880s, which portrayed Black "Best Men", i.e. Black role models. They invoke "specimens" of "true manhood" in contrast to "true womanhood". (Simmons and Turner, Kletzing and Cragman, Richings).

[7] The reconstruction of Black masculinity after 1865 was based on the assumption of gender roles that would not respect the "natural division" between the public and the private. This is very clearly stated in the analysis of gender relations among slaves by an imprisoned member of the BPP. "That beautiful black woman was the one who stood up and fought our slave masters while we so-called men ran to our safety or hopped a train to flee the scene. We left our women to do a man's job, feeding our children, clothing them, milking the cows, cutting the wood, drawing the water, slopping the hogs, plowing the fields and going hungry to let our babies eat, hoping that one day we would become men and make a better place for them to live. And all the while, the racist red neck pig slave master exploiter who forced or bribed her into immoral and degenerate acts to satisfy his [curiosity]. Brothers when we left her, we did more than disrespect her, and she knows it as well as we do." ([Wheeler], Kimmel 1996, 85-86.

in the North gave a sense of security to the uprooted, despite the fact that many Black women not only contributed to the family salary but quite often were the only steady providers of income in a racialized and gendered split labor market (Bonacich 1975, Bonacich 1976, Bonacich 1972, Thomas, Herring and Horton).

8   It was exactly during this period that Black educators, intellectuals and writers such as Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois started to comment on the apparent threat to the Black family and the gender roles within it (Pendergast 65-69):

> I am an earnest advocate of manual training and trade teaching for black boys, and for white boys, too. I believe that next to the founding of Negro colleges the most valuable addition to Negro education since the war, has been industrial training for black boys. Nevertheless, I insist that the object of all true education is not to make men carpenters, it is to make carpenters men; there are two means of making the carpenter a man, each equally important: the first is to give the group and community in which he works, liberally trained teachers and leaders to teach him and his family what life means; the second is to give him sufficient intelligence and technical skill to make him an efficient workman; the first object demands the Negro college and college-bred men—not a quantity of such colleges, but a few of excellent quality; not too many college-bred men, but enough to leaven the lump, to inspire the masses, to raise the Talented Tenth to leadership. (Washington 21)

Black masculinity was debated not only among Black activists and intellectuals, but soon the first African American magazines like "Colored American", "Alexander's Magazine", "Horizon" and "The Voice of the Negro" tried to acquire a niche in the market for an emerging Black middle-class (Pendergast 65-111). This discourse then permeated into a professionalized discourse of social scientists by way of activists and intellectuals such as W.E.B. Du Bois and E. Franklin Frazier (Frazier 1932, Frazier 1939). W.E.B. Du Bois wrote in "Souls of Back Folk": To-day the young Negro of the South who would succeed cannot be frank and outspoken, honest and self-assertive, but rather he is daily tempted to be silent and wary, politic and sly; he must flatter and be pleasant, endure petty insults with a smile, shut his eyes to wrong; in too many cases he sees positive personal advantage in deception and lying. His real thoughts, his real aspirations, must be guarded in whispers; he must not criticize, he must not complain. Patience, humility, and adroitness must, in these growing black youth, replace impulse, manliness, and courage (Du Bois 90).

9   E. Franklin Frazier wrote in 1939 "[...] the Negro woman as wife or mother was the mistress of her cabin, and, save for the interference of master and overseer, her wishes in regard to mating and family matters were paramount." (Frazier 1939, 125)[8] According to Frazier,

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[8] The trope of the Black woman as "mistress of her cabin" reappeared over and over again. It resurfaced as late as 1976 in a sociological study (Rubin 5)

slavery taught African American women the value of self-reliance and initiative and prepared her for the questioning of male authority. Black masculinity, on the other side, was constantly threatened and undermined by slavery, due to the Black male's inability to protect his wife, sister or daughter from sexualized aggression by White men. The Frazier hypothesis received recognition and support from other social scientists and historians, such as Kenneth Stampp, Stanley Elkins, and Daniel Patrick Moynihan (Stampp 344, Elkins 130, United States 31, Finzsch 2002). In the mid-sixties and early seventies the "Black matriarchy thesis" was taken up, first by Black nationalists and radicals, by the Back Panthers and the Black Muslims alike, then by conservative critics, who blamed the women's movement and feminism for a vilification of traditional and essentialist masculinity. (White in DuBois and Ruiz, 22-33, Finzsch 1999, Finzsch 2003):

> We must have a Black Men's Movement to correct the negative effects of the 1970's White Women's Feminism Movement. This Feminism movement had nothing to do with being 'feminine' per say [sic]. Instead, it taught against men and the family itself; and after 25 years, we can now see that it has destroyed the proverbial "nuclear family's" health by getting women out of the kitchen. And Ironically [sic], as a result, everyone is more overweight and unhealthier since women 'abandoned ship' and deserted 'house work'. And contrary to popular opinion, Black men did not 'abandon' their role and duty as 'bread winners' -- women abandoned theirs!!! (Blacktown.Net)

The Men's Rights Movement of the 1970s eventually influenced both African American masculinist discourses as well as its predominantly White Christian and misogynist counterpart, the Promise Keepers. (Clatterbaugh 61-63, Abraham, Allen, Bartkowski 2000, Bartkowski 2004, Bloch, Claussen, Donovan, Heath, Johnson).

10   Marches of protest have a long history in America that extends from national meetings of fraternal orders like the National Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic in Washington DC in 1892, to the protest of Coxey's Army in 1893 and the parade of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) through New York in 1920 to the Bonus Army March to Washington DC and its consequent violent dispersal by the police in 1932 (Debouzy). An impending march on Washington, organized by Black labor leader Asa Philip Randolph in 1941 was called off at the last possible moment after President Franklin D. Roosevelt gave in and issued Executive Order 8002, which not only outlawed discrimination in government-contracted defense industries but also established the Fair Employment Practices Committee to investigate breaches of the order. The one march on Washington that stood out among the many demonstrations of the Sixties was undoubtedly the one in 1963, organized by A. Philip Randolph and Bayard Rustin and best remembered for Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream"-speech (Doak).

Fig 2.: 1932s Bonus Army March to Washington DC in 1932.

Fig.5.: March on Washington, organized by A. Philip Randolph and Bayard Rustin in 1963.

The march on the National Capital has a specific meaning that is conveyed through the effectiveness of the previous marches, even if they only served as a means of political blackmail, and the media attention that accompanied every one of the marches mentioned here. The march functions as a sign in itself. It signifies not only dissatis-faction and anger, but holds the promise of redress and atonement at the same time. Through the charging of the previous national marches with the image of successful protests for Civil Rights, the Million Man March has acquired the status of conveying politicized de-mands although the actual topics of the Million Man March were "brotherhood", "solidarity" and "atonement", values that are more in accordance with traditional religious and middle class values than with politics.

11   Because of the necessary ambiguity of the Million Man March through its construction as a myth, the myth can be told over and over again and lends itself easily to other causes, thereby reinforcing the mythical function of its original invocation. There was a Million Woman March on October 25, 1997 in Philadelphia (Campbell), a "Stand in the Gap" rally of the White Christian Promise Keepers on Washington DC on October 4, 1997, a Million Youth March on September 5, 1998 that has meanwhile turned into an annual event, a Million Family March on October 16th, 2000, and from 2002 to 2004 the Christian Promise Keepers managed to assemble another "Million Men at the Cross". Although the Nation of Islam and the Christian Promise Keepers are unlikely allies, they focused on the same value system: Strengthen the heterosexual nuclear family, take back control and responsibility in the family, and reassert patriarchal control over women and children:

> The charge that the Promise Keepers are about oppressing women is a charge borne of a deliberate misunderstanding of the Promise Keepers basic beliefs. The Promise Keepers are all about supporting women. The part that NOW [National Organization of Women, N.F.] trumpets is the command (derived directly from the Apostle Paul's writings) that men take the leadership role in their families. The part it conveniently neglects is what immediately precedes: that husbands must love their wives and care for them as much as they would their own bodies. That explicitly precludes using women as doormats, punching bags or other accessories." (Tipton)

According to NOW, the National Organization of Women, the

> Promise Keepers do not encourage a relationship of equals in a marriage. Rather, they call for men to "take" their role as the leader in the family. Promise Keeper Tony Evans stated "I am not suggesting that you ask for your role back, I am urging you to take it back. There can be no compromise here." (National Organization of Women)

12   Louis Farrakhan has been reported to have supported the "Stand in the Gap" rally of the Promise Keepers, as Promise Keepers had endorsed the Million Man March of the NOI.[9]

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[9] Reuters News Service reported the Promise Keepers' (PK) call for unity was also extended to Louis Farrakhan and his Nation of Islam in the form of an invitation to join the 1997 PK rally in Washington, DC Reuters News Service, Tues., Feb. 4, 1997, 1:46 PM, Reuters Internet News Service.

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"The Sea Will Make a Man of Him?": Hypervirility, Effeminacy, and the Figure of the Queer Pirate in the Popular Imagination from the Early Eighteenth-Century to Hollywood

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Abstract:

The figure of Captain Jack Sparrow, charismatic rogue and best pirate ever, has captured the cinema audience like no other pirate before him, it seems. Ask anyone what they think about *Pirates of the Caribbean*, and their response will very likely be centred on Johnny Depp's flamboyant performance. Sparrow's insistence on status ("It's *Captain* Sparrow!"), on physical prowess, his skills in navigation and his having a bride in every port seem to mark him out as the typically virile pirate familiar to us from so many pirate movies of the twentieth century. Yet from the start, Sparrow's virility sits oddly with his other signature character traits: his failure as a leader, his preference of negotiation to open fight ("Why fight when you can negotiate? All one needs is the proper leverage."), his slightly drunken swagger and mannered gesticulation, his mixture of elaborate wordplay and slurry pronunciation, let his demonstrative virility look like an act. Indeed, his performance of pirate manliness forever hesitates – almost uncannily, always hilariously – between hypervirility and effeminacy. This essay traces the "queer" pirate figure to the eighteenth-century popular imagination and explores the fascination its ambiguous gender performance holds for audiences, then as now.

I.

1   The figure of Captain Jack Sparrow, charismatic rogue and best pirate ever, has captured the cinema audience like no other pirate before him, it seems. Ask anyone what they think about *Pirates of the Caribbean,* and their response will very likely be centred on Johnny Depp's flamboyant performance. Sparrow's insistence on status ("It's *Captain* Sparrow!"), on physical prowess, his skills in navigation and his having a bride in every port seem to mark him out as the typically virile pirate familiar to us from so many pirate movies of the twentieth century.[1] Yet from the start, Sparrow's virility sits oddly with his other signature character traits: his failure as a leader, his preference of negotiation to open fight ("Why fight when you can negotiate? All one needs is the proper leverage."), his slightly drunken swagger and mannered gesticulation, his mixture of elaborate wordplay and slurry pronunciation, let his demonstrative virility look like an act. Indeed, his performance of pirate manliness forever hesitates – almost

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[1] James Robert Parish's reference guide, listing all theatrical feature films, television movies and sound serials featuring pirates from 1914-1991, focuses entirely on the "derring-do, courage and right of might"-appeal of the manly pirate-hero and manages to ignore all campier or downright queer filmic, theatrical, musical or operatic incarnations of this figure (1995: 1). Similarly, while his introduction meticulously (if quite superficially) lists the general literary heritage of piracy, mutiny and seafaring since Daniel Defoe's adventure novels, it omits such famous studies of all-male society on board a ship as Melville's *Billy Budd, Sailor* (1849). For a brilliant reading of the homosexual trajectories of the latter, see the chapter in Sedgwick's *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990).

uncannily, always hilariously – between hypervirility and effeminacy.[2] Where does this ambiguous style of masculinity come from, and what (apart from the fascination this very ambiguity holds) is its particular appeal?

2   While Depp himself claims to have modelled Jack Sparrow on rock-star legend Keith Richards and, less prominently, on the womanizing cartoon-skunk Pepé Le Pew, drawing on their decadent outlaw image and over-the-top virility respectively, I propose to explore an alternative model: the pirate as an ambiguously gendered figure in the popular imagination from the early eighteenth century until its most recent Hollywood incarnation. At the very moment that the Golden Age of Piracy was over, the figure of the pirate entered the popular imagination as a fascinating anti-hero who habitually transgressed the limits set by society. In this essay I am concerned with exploring precisely these limits of what counted as normative and successful masculinity at that time. While sea-faring was widely believed to "make" a man – in terms of financial success, military career and, more generally, of character – apparently much could go wrong on board a ship. The sea will make a man of him? Not always, if we take into account the myriad of cross-dressed women, effeminate gentleman-captains, inhumanly brutal first mates or sodomitical sailors that abound in popular literature from street ballads and sensational rogue-biographies to Smollett's *Roderick Random* (1749) and beyond. Drawing predominantly on Captain Johnson's *General History of the Pirates* (1724), a collection of factual and fictional biographical accounts, this essay will show that much of the fascination the pirates held for the eighteenth-century audience rested on their – at times highly ambiguous – gender performances. Exploring the gender history of the pirate figure can tell us much about how Depp's performance in *Pirates of the Carribean* works, and that it is this gender ambiguity that holds the audience in a spell, now as much as then.

II.

3   The story of Britain as a naval power is a success story. Beyond the material impact of sea trade on the economic and cultural life at home, "it is a story of what binds and unites the nation, a story in which the country believes its best qualities are on display," as John Peck asserts in his study on *Maritime Fiction* (27). The naval supremacy of Britain was and to an extent still is a matter of national pride. The loud chanting of "Rule, Britannia" (1740) at international sports events, for example, illustrates that this connection between maritime

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[2] Prompted by this oscillating performance, Heike Steinhoff, too, explores the "queer positionalities" of Jack Sparrow as well as offering a queer reading of the seemingly securely heterosexual couple Will Turner and Elizabeth Swann.

dominance and national pride is alive even today. In the eighteenth century, enlightenment values such as liberty, freedom of expression and unrestricted development of liberal thought were linked with maritime trading powers like Holland or England (see Brown). And indeed, naval historiography up to our days likes to stress the intimate connection between trade, maritime warfare, the circulation of capital and credit, and a progressive society: "The intellectual, artistic and technological achievements flowed [...] from the freedoms necessarily accompanying merchant power. Liberty, tolerance and wealth unlocked natural genius." (Padfield 184)

4   How much this naval success story contributed to the political process of "forging the nation" (Colley), becomes clear when we look at eighteenth-century statements such as the following by Lord Halifax from 1694, who asserted that, "[t]he first article of an Englishman's political creed must be, that he believeth in the sea." Half a century later, Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke characterized his country men as "amphibious animals," who "must occasionally come on shore: but the water is more properly our element, and in it [...] as we find our greatest security, so we find our greatest force." (*Idea of a Patriot King*, 1749) During the eighteenth century the navy became so important for the country that the future Duke of Wellington described it in 1808 "as the characteristic and constitutional force of Britain" (quoted in Peck 27-28).

5   In naval historiography as well as in biographies and fictional accounts, this story was being retold again and again over the course of the century. Invariably, the narrative follows the pattern of sailors as men taking control of and dominating their environment. Be it the triumph of superior naval strategy or the triumph of trade – the maritime story is always about successful commercial enterprise, about seeing an opportunity and seizing it. Encoded in these stories, in other words, is a distinctly middle-class ideology and identity that is increasingly regarded as an expression of the national character. Also inscribed in this "energetic, and money-making spirit" (Peck 4) is, I would argue, a specifically middle-class notion of manliness. Life on board a ship, already an exclusively male environment, fosters culturally masculine qualities such as aggression and risk-taking, and requires physical prowess. As Peck puts it, "Life at sea is [...] a life built upon the notions of manliness, in which strength is the only quality that really matters." (5) Stories about seafaring, both fictional and historical, can thus be seen as a cultural site where an idealized male identity is being constructed in terms of nation, class, and gender.[3]

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[3] Add to this, race or ethnicity, but since I will not be dealing with either the slave trade or the seafarers' contacts with native people on Caribbean or Polynesian islands, they remain at the margins of my focus here.

6	I would like to articulate my mistrust of such an unequivocally positive story and argue that it never tells the whole story but rather a selected version of life at sea from a specific perspective and to specific purposes. I will *not* do this, however, by referring to the hard, even brutal reality of life on board a ship as in tension with idealized accounts into which that reality will inevitably erupt from time to time.[4] Such an approach fails to acknowledge that we cannot know what this reality actually was like, since all we have to go by are textual representations of it. I will therefore look at the way popular literature – and here I include early representatives of the novel along with street-ballads, pamphlets and sensational biographies – has taken up motifs and figures excluded from the idealized, "official" version of maritime life. This official version, or rather its tangible results in terms of naval supremacy as well as individual and national profit, went a long way to legitimize the maritime enterprise and through it, of colonial expansion and trade. It is rather in the popular "unofficial" stories about life on board of a ship that the concomitant anxieties about nation, class, and above all, about gender, reveal themselves – anxieties that have necessarily been excluded from the ideal of the success story described above. From the perspective of popular literature, as we will see, the hypervirile pirate and the effeminate gentleman-captain emerge as transgressive figures that push the limits of what counts as non-deviant masculinity in the eighteenth century (Turley 8). I will explore these limits through the topos of the *rite de passage*, the notion that the sea journey (at least in its official, middle-class version) will "make" a man, both in respect to fortune and to manliness.

III.

7	The almost magical transformative powers of the sea journey are encapsulated in the phrase "the sea will make a man of him," a phrase that I would attach an emphatic question mark to for the purposes of this essay. That the notion of the sea as a space of *positive* transformation was already a familiar one in the early eighteenth century is illustrated by the sarcasm Ned Ward pours over it in his *London Spy* (1709): I could not forbear Reflecting on the Prudence of those Persons who send their Unlucky Children to Sea to Tame and Reform 'em, which, I am well satisfied, is like sending a Knave into *Scotland* to learn Honesty; a Fool into *Ireland* to learn Wit; or a Clown into *Holland* to learn Breeding; by any of which Measures, they that send 'em may be sure that instead of mending the ill Habits they have contracted, the first will return more Wild, the second more Knavish, the third more Foolish, and the fourth a greater Booby. (XIV, 324) Significantly, seafaring here functions as some kind of catalyst or

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[4] See, for example, the chapter „Life on Board an Early-Eighteenth-Cetury Ship" in Hans Turly (1999), which proceeds largely along such ethnographic lines.

amplifier of characteristics already acquired on shore. As a kind of society apart, life on board a ship seems to provide an imaginative space for the negotiation of anxieties prevailing *within* society at large: what happens at sea is perceived as a reflection, as under a magnifying glass, of what happens on shore. Nevertheless, these anxieties were usually projected and through this displaced onto the figure of the sailor who returns profoundly changed into a radically other. Clearly, not every man who goes to sea will return as a "sea-made man" but rather as what Ward ridicules as "those *Maritime* kind of Monsters, who had little more to show they were Men, than that they Walk'd upright" (ibid.).

8   *The Metamorphos'd Beau: or, the Intrigues at Ludgate* (1700), an earlier short tale by Ward, provides an (ironical) illustration of such a transformation into the monstrous other. The story sets in with the narrator going down to the harbour "in pursuit of a Friend" who has a "considerable Post of Command" aboard the – tellingly named – *Royal Britannica,* just returned "after many brave and glorious Exploits perform'd in the Service of its Country." He finds his friend, he tells us, "but so Transmogrifie'd" that he can hardly believe his eyes: "Ye Gods! Cry'd I, What do I behold? Or are my Opticks deceiv'd?" The "Noble Figure" his friend used to cut, inspiring admiration in his men and love in the fair sex, has turned into a "weather-beaten," "frightful" brute, "so Tann'd his Hide, that he seems to be the offspring of an Ethiopian" (Ward, *Beau* 3). The friend himself cannot really see why the narrator is so upset by his being "metamorphos'd," since after all he has returned alive, "sound in Wind and Limbs" (if a bit lame), "full fraught with Vigour, and dare[s] attack a whole Fleet of Female Frigates" (4). Although his journey has been a successful one and he returns victoriously, considerably richer and full of heterosexual desire (as he protests himself), this is clearly not what counts for his friend on shore. Desperately crying out "Oh ye Powers! What a strange Metamorphose have ye Created, not to be parallell'd!", he counts up his friend's lost beauties in a kind of inversed Petrarchan *blazon* of powdered locks now "as Lank, as the Mane of an Old Hackney;" a "Charming Phiz" now disfigured by "most fearful scars;" eyes, once "fatal Luminaries" now turned dull and heavy; a once "fluid", "bewitching" tongue now "Seal'd with Silence;" his once elegant and "dextrous" attire now "as shattered as the Rigging of thy Ship;" and the odour of "Fragrant Perfumes" and "Odiferous Scents" now "usurpt by the more powerful Pitch, Tarr, and Oakum" (3-4).

9   This description sets up a dichotomous pattern of the effeminate gentleman-captain and the virile sailor-hero who carries his scars "as so many Badges of Honour, attain'd in the Service

of your Country" (5).[5] About fifty years later, we find the same pattern in Tobias Smollett's *Roderick Random* (1748) in the descriptions of Captain Whiffle and Captain Oakhum, whose names echo Ward's "fragrant perfumes usurpt by the more powerful oakum", yet with a telling difference: in Ward's story, the ironic tone clearly indicates that the once effeminate beau has metamorphosed into something actually much more eligible, a vigorous and victorious naval commander who is characterized by his physical prowess and loyalty to the English nation, not to mention his unshaken heterosexuality. He embodies the successful version of the "the sea will make a man of him"-topos, as it were. By the time Smollett is writing his novel, the dichotomous pattern is obviously still available – the effeminate Captain Whiffle is explicitly described as "in everything the reverse of Oakhum" (Smollett 197) – but now *both* figures are rejected as two extremes of *negative* manliness at sea. Much has already been said about the perfumed and powdered Whiffle as the first authentic description of the effeminate sodomite in modern culture; I refer the reader to G.S. Rousseau's still relevant analysis of this figure's sartorial display in "The Pursuit of Homosexuality in the Eighteenth Century: 'Utterly Confused Category' and/or Rich Repository?" from 1985. Probably just as much has been written about the "real" life on board a ship and the inhuman violence of some captains, of which Captain Oakhum, "an arbitrary tyrant, whose command was almost intolerable" (Smollett 165), is an obvious example.[6] Both figures are of course exaggerated to the point of grotesque caricature, but this in turn only shows the extent to which this strange couple had turned into a familiar, indeed a stereotypical pattern by the middle of the century.

10   What I am interested in here is the way in which Smollett employs these two figures in order to demarcate the limits of normative masculinity in the eighteenth century, limits which coincide with the borders of human society, indeed of the human itself. Their respective liminal status is made clear, for example, when Oakhum's brutal reign is described as "inhuman" (Smollett 162, 190), while the effeminate Captain Whiffle even borders on the non-human: "he is more like a papoon than one of the human race" (199). Behind this spectacle of ape-like affectation lurks the spectre of simple, honest "Jack Tar" being changed into such a "maritime monster" (Ward, *London Spy* 324): Whiffle is "disguised," "transfigured," even

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[5] However, the dichotomy does not extend to a reassuring national image of the successful English sailor-merchant, since the weatherbeaten visage of the friend is repeatedly likened to that of non-European 'savages', while the narrator, who had safely stayed behind in London, bears all the insignia of the effeminate which usually is associated with continental, especially French, styles of masculinity. On the figure of the fop in eighteenth-century popular culture, see Carter (1997 and, more general, 2001).

[6] Peck (2000), for example, focuses exclusively on the "lack of respect for the body" as "the most notable feature of Roderick Random", indeed, "the most distinctive feature of maritime fiction in general." (22-27). For an more detailed discussion of Smollett's representations of the human body in pain, see Aileen Douglas, Uneasy Sensations: Smollett and the Body (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

"transmogriphied" with affectations and whimsies (Smollett 199), thus recalling the metamorphosis of Ward's beau in reverse. However, I do not merely want to argue that these two figures function as mutually excluding opposites and that normative maritime masculinity, instead of being heightened and economically bolstered by the seafaring enterprise, is here anxiously represented as harbouring a dangerous potential to metamorphose into either of the two. I also would suggest that these stereotypical, extreme examples of what can go wrong at sea do not remain stable and apart, but rather tend to collapse into each other: In the popular imagination, anxieties about what might happen to the male body on board a ship seem to turn equally and, as I will argue, interchangeably, on both physical prowess and the conspicuous consumption that signals effeminacy and sodomy. This tendency to perceive of hypervirility and effeminacy as separated by a mere threshold can be traced in popular accounts of this most hypervirile of all sea-faring men, the pirate.

IV.

11   Although the Golden Age of Piracy had come to an end by the early eighteenth century, public interest in pirates remained high and even increased from the 1730s on. In sensationalized biographies, trial pamphlets or ballads, pirates function as the cultural other, marked by their violence, their often arbitrary cruelty, and an "over-the-top masculine performance when they wreak havock," as Hans Turley puts it (40). Because pirates left no records of their own (most were illiterate, none wanted to testify against himself), their stories were open to manipulation and imaginative embellishment by writers to suit their own purposes (Duncan 100). Thus the pirate of eighteenth century popular literature, as an increasingly fictionalized figure invested with cultural fantasies and anxieties, can in turn provide insights into how certain ideals of masculinity came to be understood as appropriate and "normal" at that time (Turley 1). As romanticized antiheroes outside of society, pirates are depicted as culturally, economically and sexually transgressive figures, and anxieties surrounding such transgressions *within* society are habitually projected and displaced onto them. The above quote from *The London Spy* (324), with its suggestion that life on board a ship functions as a microcosm of society as well as an amplifier of national characteristics, demonstrates this.

12   In what follows, I would like to argue that in part at least, these anxieties – or, perhaps, wishful fantasies? – articulate themselves through the intriguing gender-instability of the pirate figure as that trait which most clearly demarcated the limits of normative masculinity and simultaneously overstepped them. In order to describe this curious oscillation of the pirate figure between hypermasculinity and effeminacy, I would like use Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's

notion of gender identities as "threshold effects". Such threshold effects, she argues, occur in "places where quantitative increments along one dimension can suddenly appear as qualitative differences somewhere else on the map entirely." (Sedgwick, "Gosh, Boy George" 16) Applied to the figure of the pirate, this means that the quantitative augmentation of manliness, namely his conspicuous display of fierceness and physical prowess, can suddenly become visible as a qualitative difference, as something else altogether: by taking the insignia of a traditional male gender identity to an excess, the hypervirile pirate crosses a threshold of manliness and becomes visible as – effeminate.

13   Before proceeding to illustrations of this phenomenon, which are surprisingly ample in the early eighteenth century, one word of caution is in order. I do not want to argue that we simply recognize the figure of the pirate as potentially sodomitical. It is of course possible, and to a degree instructive, to show how piracy served as a trope for sodomy in the eighteenth century, just as mutiny became a trope for sodomy in the nineteenth century.[7] While this undercurrent of homoerotic/homosexual desire is undeniably there, we should, however, be wary of reducing the pirate to a mere chiffre for sodomy.[8] The obvious danger lies in reinstating what Sedgwick has called "the homo/heterosexual definition of personal identity" – that is, the reductive interpretation of every aspect of personality in terms of homosexuality and heterosexuality – and in realigning it with deviant and normative notions of masculinity. This opposition has been irrevocably deconstructed by Sedgwick in favour of a "potentially unbroken continuum between homosocial and the homosexual" (Sedgwick, *Epistemology* 1). Hence I would like to keep the question of the pirate's sexuality unresolved and focus rather on the microstructures of this continuum of gender styles, in our case, the ways the pirate's gender can oscillate between hypervirility and effeminacy. In tracing this always only transitory threshold effect, I will draw on descriptions of piratical self-fashioning in *The General History of the Pirates* (1725).

14   The *General History*, probably written by Daniel Defoe and published under a pseudonym to give it the appeal of authenticity, focuses on the "Golden Age of Piracy" between 1695 and 1725. The biographical tales assembled in this publication intermingle fact and fiction, thus marking a starting point for the process which turned the pirate into both,

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[7] For the seventeenth century, see B. R. Burgh, Sodomy and the Pirate Tradition (New York: NYUP, 1983); for the eighteenth century see Turley (1999); Eve Sedgwick's reading of Melville's *Billy Budd* in her *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990) establishes the connection between mutiny and closeted homosexual desire.

[8] While uncovering male same-sex desire has been a genuine interest of early studies like Burgh's, later studies – which mostly follow Sedgwick's line of argument – offer more sophisticated accounts. A good example is Hans Turley's study, which traces the analogies in cultural representations of the (virile) "piratical" and the (effeminate) "sodomitical subject." However, although he decribes the pirate's sexuality as "ambiguous", this model remains within the pattern of hyper-masculinity versus feminized sodomite as diametrical oppositions.

romanticized hero and abominable fiend in the popular imagination (Turley 3). The pirate figure's capacity for myth-making as well as his oscillating gender become obvious in the description of Captain Teach, which provides the *locus classicus* of the pirate as hyper-masculine:

> [...] our Heroe, Captain Teach, assumed the Cognomen of Black-beard, from that large Quantity of Hair, which, like a frightful Meteor, covered his whole Face [...] This Beard was black, which he suffered to grow of an extravagant Length; as to Breadth, it came up to his Eyes; he was accustomed to twist it with Ribbons, in small Tails, after the manner of our Ramilies Wiggs, and turn them about his Ears. (Defoe 87)

This "extravagant" beard serves as a mark of both Blackbeard's fierce manliness and his transgressive nature. His beard is explicitly compared to a wig worn in military circles and connected to a military campaign, the battle of Ramillies in 1706, in which the British gained a decisive victory over the Franco-Bavarian troops in the War of the Spanish Succession. Yet this wig as a sign of normative masculinity and of military success is here transformed into a sign of transgressive masculinity and illegal warfare against one's own country and economy.[9] As Marcia Pointon has shown, the wig could function as a symbol of both successful *and* failed manliness in the eighteenth century, depending on whether its design and dimensions remained within the bounds of propriety or not. In keeping with the logic of the threshold effect, then, the wig has the capacity to signify cultural and, in particular, masculine authority; but when carried to an excess, as for example in the exaggerated hair-dos of the Italianized Maccaroni or the Frenchified Fop, it signifies disorderly sexuality and un-English decadence. Captain Teach's black beard is so prominent that it becomes his signature trait: he is best known as Captain Blackbeard. Yet the way in which it is foregrounded and made part of his self-conscious performance of manly fierceness, turns it into a rather instable signifier of masculinity, indeed even of humanity:

> In Time of Action, he wore a Sling over his Shoulders, with three Brace of Pistols, hanging in Holsters like Bandaliers; and stuck lighted Matches under his Hat, which appearing on each Side of his Face, his Eyes naturally looking fierce and wild, made him altogether such a Figure, that Imagination cannot form an Idea of a Fury, from Hell, to look more frightful. (Defoe 85; see fig. 1 and 2)

The pirate figure is demonized here: attention is drawn to his "naturally [...] fierce and wild" physical appearance, which is augmented by Blackbeard's tying long, slow-burning matches to his curls to emphasize his frightful appearance (Turley 3). The early modern one-sex model

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[9] Pirates were legally defined as hostis suis generis, enemies of all mankind, and depicted as such in trial accounts: "A Pirat is in perpetual War with every Individual, and every State, Christian or Infidel […] They are worse than ravenous Beasts." (Tryal of Thomas Green 50).

identifies the highest degree of manliness as the highest degree of human-ness; according to this, Blackbeard's hypervirile performance should catapult him onto the top of the chain of being, close to the realm of angels. Instead, he crosses a threshold of the human and is propelled into the depths of the demonic.

Fig 1.

Fig. 2.

15   In an episode about Blackbeard's nuptials, his ferocious bestiality operates as an instable signifier in terms of sexuality. Defoe records how Blackbeard marries a young girl of fifteen and, "after he had lain all night with her," forces her to prostitute herself to "five or six of his brutal Companions" while he watches. Moreover, the narrator points out, such a "Behaviour in this [married] State" is less "extraordinary" with him as, in fact, "his custom" (Defoe 75-76). Again *quantity* – he has no less than fourteen wives, "whereof, about a dozen might be still living" (a tantalizing conditional that recalls the story of his literary cousin Bluebeard) – becomes visible as a different *quality*: marked as bestiality, his notorious heterosexuality slips over a threshold into sodomy.[10] Curiously enough, this episode is *not* given as an example of his "extravagant Wickedness […] aimed at making his Men believe he was a Devil incarnate" (88), but rather left uncommented and therefore open to diverse interpretations on the part of the readers. What, then, are we to make of this scene? In terms of heterosexual desire, it speaks of the connection between sexuality, voyeurism and violence which will resurface as a marker of (rather more than less) normative masculinity in eighteenth-century texts such as Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1749) or in gothic novels such as M.G. Lewis' *The Monk* (1795).[11] With a view to the dynamics of heterosexual and homosocial desire, it is quite obvious that this brutal ritual serves not so much to satisfy the first, but rather to cement the relationship between Blackbeard and his companions through the female body shared between them (on suchlike erotic triangles and homosocial desire, see Sedgwick's *Between Men*). Perhaps as a distant echo of the trial against the infamous Earl of Castlehaven in 1631, who engaged in sodomitical acts with the house staff and encouraged a servant to rape his wife in his presence (Herrup 1999), this episode projects a social anxiety onto the outlawed pirate: how close manliness can be to beastliness, and how easily normative male sexuality can slip over the threshold into the deviant.

16   Finally, I would like to turn to the role dress and its paraphernalia play in the performance of pirate masculinity. While the pirates' usual dress amounted to little more than dirty, salt-water ruined rags after months at sea, some pirates were best known for their sartorial elegance. One example is "Calico Jack" Rackham, remembered not only for sailing with the cross-dressed female pirates Anne Bonny and Mary Read (see Paravisini-Gebert), but also for his colourful clothes which earned him his nickname. Another example is Captain Roberts, who apparently took great care of his dress even and especially in battle: Roberts himself made a

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[10] 'Sodomy' here does not refer to homosexual intercourse but, in the wider, early modern sense of the word, to the act of (enforced) adultery.

[11] For a reading of these and other texts in terms of the genderd economies of the gaze, see my study on the anxieties of masculinity in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century novel, *Männlichkeit und Körper* (2008).

gallant Figure, at the Time of the Engagement, being dressed in a rich crimson Damask Waistcoat and Breeches, a red Feather in his Hat, a Gold Chain round his Neck, with a Diamond Cross hanging to it, a Sword in his Hand, and two Pair of Pistols hanging at the End of a Silk Sling, slung over his Shoulders (according to the Fashion of the Pyrates;). (Defoe 243) This rather foppish way of dress might seem at odds with the aggressively masculine embodiment maintained by other pirates. The immediate context of this quote, however, modifies this effeminacy. Roberts is actually an example of active courage, and while "the greatest Part of his Men were drunk, passively couragious, unfit for Service," he himself gives "his Orders with Boldness, and Spirit" until he is hit by a lethal bullet, and dies (ibid.). His dressing up for battle can be seen as an echo of Blackbeard's ferocious performance as "a Figure from Hell" – we recall the lighted matches stuck under his hat – while at the same time, and quite in keeping with the logic of gender as a threshold effect, his dress matches the description of the effeminate Captain Whiffle in *Roderick Random* almost verbatim:

> […] our new commander came on board […] dressed in this manner: a white hat, garnished with a red feather, from whence his hair flowed upon shoulders, in ringlets tied behind with a ribbon. His coat, consisting of pink-coloured silk, lined with white, […] a white sattin waistcoat embroidered with gold [..] a broch set with garnets, that glittered in the breast of his shirt, […] crimson velvet breeches […] shoes of blue Meroquin, studded with diamond buckles […] A steel-hilted sword, inlaid with gold, and decked with a knot of ribbon which fell down in a rich tossle [sic]. (Smollett 198)

With his dress an orgy in pink, crimson and white, and flashing diamonds, Whiffle is a copy of the elegant Roberts, down to the red feather in his hat. Yet while in the figure of the effeminate beau dress and gender reinforce each other, Captain Robert's performance brings together the ferocious hyper-virility of a Blackbeard and the effeminate habitus of a Whiffle. Thus he embodies in his person the two limits of maritime masculinity, usually evoked as opposites, but actually separated by only a threshold.

17   A scene from the biography "Of Captain Martel," in which pirates posture as effeminate beaus, demonstrates again the sartorial closeness of hypervirility and effeminacy. In one of the letters added to the second volume of the *General History*, one Captain Evans describes how his ship fell victim to Martel's crew and how the pirates raided his personal cabin. This is what he sees when they return: Notwithstanding the melancholy Situation I was in, I could not refrain laughing when I saw the Fellows who went on board the *Greyhound*, return to their own Ship; for they had, in rummaging my Cabin, met with a Leather Powder Bag and Puff, with which they had powder'd themselves from Head to Foot, walk'd the Decks with their Hats under their Arms, minced their Oaths, and affected all the Airs of a Beau, with an Aukwardness [that] would have forced a Smile from a Cynick. (quoted in Turley 88-89) These powdered pirates

parody the habitus of a/the kind of masculinity represented by the effeminate gentleman-captain or, more generally, the beau. What makes this scene so hilarious is that the pirate still shows under the "aukward" performance: their oaths are minced, their gestures affected, while underneath they are still rugged, dirty, essentially *virile* men. A scene that here still forces a smile even from a "cynick," will be represented as abhorrent behaviour in Smollett's Captain Whiffle only twenty-four years later. Interestingly, the powder is found in the cabin of a merchant sea-captain, who apparently uses it as well, yet certainly does *not* perceive of himself as effeminate. I would suggest that the powdered pirates appear as effeminate in a way the powdered captain does not, because their over-the-top masculinity is already ambiguous and in this scene easily tips into its "opposite", or, more accurately: it crosses the threshold from the hyper-virile into the effeminate. The pirates' parody of the beau is in fact a mask of effeminacy that reveals another mask: that of hypervirility.

18   It is precisely in his performance of pirate manliness as a meeting of these seeming opposites, I would argue, that the figure of Captain Jack Sparrow in *Pirates of the Caribbean* resembles the pirates of the *General History*. His insistence on status, on physical prowess, his aptitude with sword and navigation, his fierceness, and his having a bride in every port (or rather, several in one) seem to mark him out as the typically hypervirile pirate. With his dark, wild mass of hair and his kohl-blackened eyes he even recalls the demonic portrait of the infamous Blackbeard (see figures 1-4). Yet it is clear from the start that this is nothing *but* a performance: Sparrow loves an audience, puts himself and his fierceness on display, makes sure he goes through the motions he believes one expects of a pirate – we are watching Johnny Depp playing a pirate playing a pirate, as it were.

Fig. 3.

Fig. 4.

V.

19   An awareness of the history of pirate manliness I have outlined in this essay makes it nearly impossible to read the figure of the virile pirate, omni-present in twentieth century pirate movies, unequivocally straight. (The performances of Errol Flynn as gallant gentleman-rouge are a case in point, I think.) What is more, from the perspective of this "unofficial" history, an alternative tradition of queer pirates becomes visible: take, for example, Dustin Hoffman's performance in *Hook* (1991, dir. Steven Spielberg), where his exaggerated wig and his sartorial display seem an echo to both Captain Teach sporting his black beard Ramillies-wig style and "Calico Jack" Rackham. Another outstanding example is John Belushi's queer "Captain Ned" from *Saturday Night Live* (season 4, 1978/79), who takes young Miles Cowperthwaite (played by *Monty Python*-member Michael Palin) on board the fittingly named *Raging Queen* because Miles' godfather believes "that a term of service at sea would make a man" (SNLtranscripts 4:18). In this sketch, too, the topos of "the sea will make a man of him" is parodied through the homosexual goings-on on board and below deck, while the sheer over-use of the word field "manliness" empties it of all meaning: "Captain Ned, I learned from my shipmates, was a very manly, virile, manful person, and a firm believer in strict discipline, corporal punishment, and nude apartment wrestling." (ibid.)

20   In a similar vein, Johnny Depp's incredibly camped-up performance of the hypervirile pirate exposes this figure as the cliché it became from the early days of the eighteenth century on, without, however, reducing it to the gay stock-figure Hollywood cinema has come to rely on increasingly as an audience magnet.[12] Instead, Depp manages to let this iridescent figure continually, if ever only for a moment, cross the threshold between hypervirility and effeminacy, demonstrating that masculinity and its various limits only ever exist in performance, today as in the early days of the eighteenth century.

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[12] Interestingly, the German dubbing of this movie makes sure to identify Sparrow as an unambiguously gay figure by giving him a voice that emphasizes his queerness to an extent that even turns his body language into an unmistakable message. Apparently the German audience cannot be trusted with ambiguities.

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Not Becoming-Posthuman in the Ultimate Postfilmic Posthuman Male Fantasy: Queer-Feminist Observations on James Cameron's *Avatar* (2009)

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Abstract:

This article examines mainly the following: In what way is the digital mobilized in *Avatar* and in what complex ways are the filmic and the digital mutually constitutive? If one ever assumes, that cinema has some kind of (historically changing) specificity, if not an essence, but as a medium, and if one further assumes that cinema is a cultural technology, then what types of images, what kind of narratives and discursive strategies are enabled through the digital in conjunction with the cinematographic in *Avatar*? Furthermore, if cinema is supposedly, in a Deleuzian fashion, a system with specific features to reflect on, to show and to tell mainly about time, movement and their cognition, then what does *Avatar* tell us about the relation to the real, about lived, embodied time proper and therefore about subjectivity in general? What kind of subjectivity is addressed here? Closely related to this question is the last one, very seriously raised, if *Avatar* can ever be called a serious reflection on the philosophy of the subject brought to the fore by Rosi Braidotti as Zoëism. This article will, finally, answer this question negatively in showing that *Avatar* is the ultimate postfilmic posthuman male fantasy in the spirit of capitalism's schizophrenic spectral logic.

Preliminaries

1   With *Avatar*, as it was widely acknowledged in press and film criticism alike, James Cameron had gone viral – again, not only in terms of another elegiac U.S.-American Narrative – like *Abyss* (1989) or *Titanic* (1997) – but also in the sense of vaulting cinema into its next phase of digital enhancement. Critics excelled in mentioning the specific 3D-cameras, Cameron had have built for this special occasion, the improved motion-capturing device which recorded the actor's movements and facial expressions in front of a blue screen but whose results (data) could be seen within the simultaneously generated graphic context of the environment of Pandora planet.[1] Much has been written since, about Avatar's digitally enabled world of spiritual enchantment – even if criticised by religious groups for neo-paganism or natural religion respectively[2] –, of a collective society living in total harmony with the conditions and requirements of a globe in a seemingly natural state. This has been mostly interpreted as an

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[1] See for example Appleyard, Rodney. „'Avatar'. World of the Na'vis" inside film: FX, Issue 129 (March 2010): 32-34 and Turan, Kenneth. „A dazzling relevation. James Cameron's ‚Avatar' restores a sense of wonder to moviegoing that's been missing." Los Angeles Times. Dec. 17 (2009). 24 pars. But also Kimberly N. Rosenfeld, who is critical about Avatar's content and stresses the shift to the posthuman in comparison to Cameron's former Terminator-series; see Rosenfeld, Kimberly N. „'Terminator' to 'Avatar': A Postmodern Shift." Jump Cut. A Review of Contemporary Media, 52 (Summer 2010). 28 pars.

[2] An enchantment so intense, so compelling and convincing, that there is much rumor about people who wanted to commit suicide after leaving the movie theater and being confronted with an ever so harsh, cruel and ugly ‚reality'. See Boucher, Geoff. „'Avatar' is a Pandora's box of pop culture." Los Angeles Times. February 3 (2010). 5 pars

expression of (counter-cultural)[3] *zeitgeist* in the light of pressing scocial problems such as global warming, increasing pollution, augmented technization of human living, hyperaggressive and -exploitive capitalism and so on.

2   But also critical voices were raised, from celebrity philosopher Slavoj Zizek to unknown-logogram directors on YouTube[4], that pointed fingers at the movie's legacies of Euro-American Imperialism (Pocahontas-Story), of the myths of the white man's supremacy and redemption, especially in comparison to other wellknown movies like *Dances With Wolves* (Kevin Kostner, USA 1990) and *The Last Samurai* (Edward Zwick, USA 2003).[5]

3   Some critics – media-wise-guys, like media theorist and internet specialist Ken Hillis, in analytical accordance with Klaus Theweleit,[6] called the network that connects the trees, animals and the Na'vi on Pandora by its real name: It is a global network, wired and WiFi based, just a little bit more biological wetware, with an allusion to a global brain (as the Sigourney Weaver-character, scientist Grace Augustine, puts it) and its electronic impulses and synapses like a fully biological version of a global village à la McLuhan. Interestingly enough, Hillis interprets the function of the connectedness of the Na'vi among themselves and with their environment on the semantic level as a Neoplatonic fantasy, wherein a deity engenders all matter. That is to say, all the living creatures on Pandora are meant to signify the embodiment of the one and only godly Spirit (Eywa). Though speaking of material hard wires, he sees in them the bodiless substance of transcendental abstraction.

4   What strikes me when I read those interpretations is, generally speaking, their double strand of argument: Either, there is first the technique that attracts the interpreter's awareness, which is finally at such an advanced stage to fulfil a director's longlasting dream or is now the ultimate means to catch the audience's eyes and nerves. Or, there is a foregrounding of the level of content, of semantics or of the narrative of the film, to whose' old imperialist story the technology is just a very sophisticated supplement. In each case, though, the technique (technical reproduction of signs) and the cultural (cultural production of signs) seem to be ominously exterior to one another. Contrary to this dichotomous view on *Avatar*, I will argue in this article, that it is exactly the specific mutual constitution of technical reproduction and

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[3] See especially Davidson, Rjurik. „Avatar. Evaluating a Film in a World of its Own." Screen Education, 57 (2010), 10-17.

[4] See Zizek, Slavoj. „Return of the Natives." New Statesman, March 4 (2010). 18 pars. and (the clip of) jxhensely. „The Progressive Racism of James Cameron's 'Avatar'." YouTube. January 10 (2010).

[5] See MacNamara, Alison, Anti-Racist Social Work, Lisa Moy. „An Anti-Racist Critique of ‚Avatar'." and also Newitz, Annlee. „Wen Will White People Stop Making Movies Like *Avatar*." *io9: we come from the future*. November 3 (2009). 15 pars.

[6] Theweleit, Klaus. „Menschliche Drohnen" („Human Drones", transl. by C.K.). Spiegel online, March 3 (2010). 18 pars.

cultural production which lies at the very heart of the movie's theme and is worth scrutinizing: the complex relations between materiality and immateriality, between real and virtual, between matter and idea, between embodiment and disembodiment that is broached with digital technologies per se.

5   As a movie *Avatar* does not only joyously allude to actual digital environments on a semantic level but also is heavily based on digital technologies. Approaches that do not take into serious account that what we deal with here is a film *as* medium that tells/shows something about digitality by which it is simultaneously starkly inflected do lose a great deal of not only the meaning of the film but also of how digital technologies challenge film as a site of cultural production and meaning – as a cultural technology. To make it more obvious: The movie's body is intruded by the body of the computer. But that is not just a way of integrating a new tool that make some director's fantasies come true, because the body of digital technology has, if not an essence, but also epistemological, discursive and narrative features of its very own – what I will call "the digital" in the course of this article. Thus, the movie as film (as medium, as discourse and story) deals with not only the body but with the epistemological, discursive and narrative meaning of the digital alike – including the bodies it calls into being through this. Let me state clearly what I am saying and am not saying here. I do not accuse those interpreations wrong that come to the conclusion – on the semantic level – that Avatar is a racist movie about U.S.-american white supremacy and imperialism. But claiming that Avatar is a mere reproduction of the Pocahontas-myth in a new shape is losing the option of registering the movie's qualitative difference to the myth as a (contemporary) movie. Nor do I think Zizek is beside the point with his pop-lacanian result in saying that the ugly world of the bad humans is the needed phantasm for the two lovers' perfect world not to desintegrate. I have done that with his conceptual help referring to the trilogy of The Matrix myself some years ago (see Imagendering II. Gender and Visualization. gender forum 13/2006). My attempt here is just to stress the mediality of both the movie as film/medium and the digital technologies insofar as it is by their specific features that this world comes into being. Garrett Stewart stresses within this context that nowadays postfilmic cinema is inflected very much by the digital even if digital technologies are not explicitly addressed but modify film on a more deep-structural level – what he calls narratography. He has reconstructed a whole typology of the digital changing the discursive and narrative organization of film.[7]

6   The questions I am asking therefore in this article are the following: In what way is the digital mobilized in *Avatar* on a technical and a thematic plane and in which complex ways are

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[7] See Garrett Stewart. *Framed Time. Toward a Postfilmic Cinema*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

they mutually constitutive on the level of filmic discourse and story? If one ever assumes, that cinema has some kind of (historically changing) specificity, if not an essence, but as a medium, and if one further assumes that cinema is a cultural technology, then what types of images, what kind of narratives and discursive strategies are enabled through the digital in conjunction with the cinematographic in *Avatar*? Furthermore, if cinema, in a Deleuzian fashion, is supposedly a system with specific features to reflect on, to show and to tell mainly about time, movement and their cognition, then what does *Avatar* tell us about the relation to the real, about lived, embodied time proper and therefore about subjectivity in general? Closely related to this question is the last one, very seriously raised: What kind of subjectivity is produced and addressed in *Avatar*? Can it be grasped by the philosophy of the subject brought to the fore by Rosi Braidotti as Zoëism? In the philosophy of Zoëism the subject is captured beyond the phall-logo-centric logic of the One with its derivatives of imperialism, racism, disavowed posthumanism, and spectral, schizophrenic capitalism as a non-unitary, nomadic, diasporic entity that constitutes itself mainly through embracing not the sociopolitical (bios), but the lively side of itself (zoë) which it shares with all other living creatures. On a metaphysical level, this literally means not only seeing and accepting the Other but also being deliberately and uncompromisingly lived and thought through the Other, without any repugnance or denial. Deleuze' concept of becoming (Other) evidently resonates in this concept of feminist material posthumanism. Is there - one could ask the question differently - any "becoming" in *Avatar*?[8]

7   I will try to answer this questions within a Deleuzian framework, that I find very apt not only for thematic and/or theoretical reasons but also for the reason that it enables us to contextualize the question of the digital within cinema historically. Further thoughts to clarify this will be elaborated by the help of Garrett Stewart's observations, following herein much Deleuze' own, on the cinematic in the aftermath of the intrusion of the digital. Within this theoretical framework, I will address fristly the concept of the digital with its phenomenological, its epistemological, its discursive and narrative facets and therefore its cultural meaning in very broadly terms. Then I will, secondly, specify this in the context of film and cinema with direct respect to *Avatar* and show the consequences concerning, on the one hand, the lived and embodied time, and on the other the so constituted (male) subjectivity. Finally I will show, following my question about *Avatar* possibly enabling an other subjectivity that is indeed in accordance with the posthuman but beyond the spectral, schizophrenic system

of the euro-, androcentric unitary, white male subject as we know it, that it cannot – despite some very alluring signs thereof which should be taken very seriously for the time being – be read as such. (Please cut into smaller sentences) This is so, because in the ultimate conclusion, *Avatar* is *the* cinematographic-digital (postfilmic, in Stewart's words) fantasy of schizophrenic posthumanism according to the heterosexual, white, western logic of the One who fantasizes himself out of his body along with his mind to be a warrior's body (and not a mind at all) that is but of the quality of a spectral shadow along with the whole seemingly ‚biological-natural' environment – unmarked from the scars, the cruelties, the inequities and the deaths of the (social, political, historical) real.

Grasping the Digital

8   The are many ways to interpret the phenomenology, the communicative and aesthetic characteristics, the social roles and functions of digital technologies in the first place. And there might be a good reason for that, in so far as digital technologies not only address the broader question about the overall relationship between technology and humanity (interface), but also the problem of it being a medium to record, store, process, select and proliferate data in a specific manner. Following Marshall McLuhan's observation that you can judge a society by the media it uses (but does not reflect on), we can conclude that the digital has some special characteristics far away from other media like books, photography or film. The problem to grasp them starts when one tries to catch its features on the basis of technics.

9   Much has been written about the fact that the technics of the digital is to be broken down to a fully electronic device that has implemented Turing's universal calculating machine, runs algorithms in time within a John v. Neumann's hardware archicture according to Booles binary algebra.[9] Seen accordingly, we face with this methodological move the first (political) decision that contextualizes digital technology historically (beginning in the 1930ies, in the advent of World War II, in the context of geopolitical ambitions of the U.S., Great Britain and Germany alike). But that is legitimate, in so far as most of the digital technologies we live with today are in fact still the described ones (like PCs oder laptops) or derivates of them. Some theorists have in succession asserted that the impact of digital technologies had created a radical break with what Michel Foucault called *epistème*, that is to say, they create a new Order of Things on the

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[9] It is not possible to give an encompassing overview to the debates about what the digital is or does. I will just mention a few authors whose' positions are crucial to the topic, as Friedrich Kittler, Bernhard Dotzler, Wolfgang Hagen, Georg Ch. Tholen and Wolfgang Ernst on the side of the German debate, Lev Manovich, Mark B. Hanson, David J. Bolter/Richard Grusin, Alluquère Stone, Sherry Turkle, Katherine N. Hayles, Donna Haraway, Ken Hillis and Sean Cubitt on the anglo-american front, Pierre Lévy, Bernard Stiegler and Gilles Deleuze in the french corner.

basis of a new order of organizing knowledge beyond the age of classic representation (ultimate end of Gutenberg-galaxy, so to speak). The argument is primarily based on the technical phenomenology of digital technologies.

10   In contrast to other ("analog") media, digital technologies have nothing to show in the first place; due to their physical base, they do not transport any "contents", they just create the proceeding differential states of an ON/OFF-logic. In this sense, the data they record, store, select and process, have no connection to the belonging referents whatsoever, except in form of implemented, thus, processed astract-mathematical formalisms. Abstraction is driven further in the sense that what is transmitted in digital environments is not a message but information. Information, however, is supposed to be weightless because it is nothing physical as such but only a state of difference. Something that makes sense of something in the realm of the digital must, thus, comply with information that has its constitutive opposite, its non-signifying other, which is noise. But here, again, we have to face another (political and historical) decision that sets a standard how to interpret digital processing when one lumps information together with the terms pattern and order (entropy) in opposition to noise together with randomness and chaos (negentropy). Within this conceptual framework, Katherine N. Hayles has impressively shown, that digital technologies operate mainly on the mutual constitutive relationship of pattern and randomness, which is to say, that they, in the course of their operations in time, exceed exactly the logic of a exlcusively binary difference.[10] The machine does not stop there but takes binary difference to generate difference as complexity (the behavior of clouds, of shock waves, also of swarms and of human crowds for example). One central outcome of this, often seen in Computer Graphics and Animation in film, is the generation of seamless continuity, the malleability and manipulability of timespace of digital "images". This chiasm between a relatively static binary difference and proceeding complex, sometimes unforeseeable patterns lies at the very heart of the onto-logic of the digital.

11   After all, digital machines usually do this by themselves. Which is to say, they organize knowledge (of the world in general, of our senses and motoric skills in particular) as amounts of data in abstract-mathematical terms, in time and on their own. For that reason one can claim that digital machines have agency which we can call their mediality. The only conclusion one can draw form this is that digital machines are in no way just tools, „extensions of man"

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[10] Hayles, Katherine N.. *How We Became Posthuman. Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999. Hayles observes brillantly how the epistemology of the paradigm pattern-randomness intervenes in the older, binary structured one of absence-presence and how the cooperation of both creates with reference to the opposition of materiality-immateriality new patterns of writing in literary texts. Inforasmuch as my attempt in this article is to elucidate how film as medium deals with what I call the digital, my approach stands in close proximity to Hayles'.

(McLuhan), that is, prostheses for neither human's powers nor for their senses. The relationship humans have to digital machines is in fact that those machines can simulate very closely almost all human capabilities (from calculating, producing knowledge, representing and symbolizing to perceiving, sensing and acting) – in a state of half-autonomy. But, because they do this in a fashion only partially conceivable to humans, one has to be careful about the claim of the break in the episteme. For, we have to use our familiar ways of perceiving and producing knowledge when we reflect on the digital – including the binary logic of language (absence – presence) with its textural procedures of metaphor and metonymy.

12   It is in this very sense that the digital is not only technics that intervenes in the social but is constituted through the (traditional) ways we make sense of the world, discourses produce their objects and narratives organize the meaning of the world and of ourselves. Even if one can undeniably acknowledge that digital machines and technologies have a great impact in terms of their above described mediality, the process by which they refashion the social sphere in general and the category of the subject in particular and vice versa is still a continuous and open one.

13   In sharpening the focus concerning this mutually constitutive relationship between the digital and its mediality and the social as the realm of human agents, I would like to draw attention to the configuration of the interface between human and machine – because that is what it is about in a nutshell. The human-machine interface is constituted as a site of a double mutually constitutive envelopment which unfolds in the ever changing course of historical time: The digital is constituted by the ways of humans producing and materially organizing knowledge of and symbolizing their world and themselves, of which the digital is part as a means to record and to produce this knowledge as well as to reflect upon it. Through is, the world and human subjectivity is already reorganized by the digital as technology, as medium, but also as discourse with respect to the human's production of knowledge, of symbolizing the world and themselves. And because the question of how something signifies or exists on a material (organic or non-organic, let alone, physical) basis is of such central relevance to both terms, I would like to add to the concept of interface the dualism materiality-immateriality.

14   One could bring this into a more systematic shape. If you put those two axes together, machine-human, materiality-immateriality, with the axis machine-human as assumed continuum on which there is the interface on every spot as constitutive difference (endless mutating configurations), among which the endpoints figure the extremes that do not account for the other term at a time (machine equals technics, human equals human), then you can reconstruct a three/four-dimensional space of knowledge of this interface. In this spacetime you

can inscribe a great variety of interface-configurations that range from theories of cybernetic machines (machine-material), above symbol theories (human-immaterial), to theories of signifying difference, like the calculus of the symbolic within Lacanian Psychoanalysis or the structural anthropology of Lévi-Strauss (middleground of human-machine, material-immaterial). Central to my point is that those subject-like machines uncannily are in one sense as human as subjects in that they are always also submitted to repetitivities, regularities, recursivities and to feedback loops of their physical and psychical material base. In epistemological terms, both sides are always integrated in one another, reflected upon and actively produced *as* differene in each case.

15   What is of my concern here in particular, yet seen in this epistemological light, is to ask what happens if the interface of the digital-human is carried to film (and cinema, respectively) that possesses a mediality in its own right. Even though film is a medium usually subsumed under the rubric of "analog media", it is nevertheless an electro-opto-mechanical technology that likewise deals very much with the senses, the movement, the corporeality, the affects and the processes of cognition of those entities we are used to call humans. It differs, however, from the digital in an epistemological and historical way. That is why I will elaborate on this further in the next paragraph with the intention to illuminate the impact of the clash between the digital and the filmic. This scenario is called remediation by David Bolter and Richard Grusin,[11] postfilmic narratography by Garrett Stewart. What I am mostly interested in here is to see what happens with those constituents of sense (seeing), motory skills (movement), of corporeality (bodies), affect (conjunctions) and cognition (thinking, reflecting, hence, "subjectivity") in time/space when the filmic and the digital come together to generate a specific posthuman-postfilmic body/affect/mind in *Avatar*.

The Digital in Postfilmic Cinema with Deleuze concerning *Avatar*

The Digital and the Filmic

16   To start with, *Avatar* is not the first movie inflected by CGI of course. The history of this "intrusion" is about twenty-five years old.[12] We are not talking about a new phenomenon. With *Avatar* it is the staggeringly extent to which the digital has spread itself across the entire film. But one has to be careful about drawing conlusions from that. In my view, it is not so

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[11] Bolter, David, Richard Grusin. *Remediation. Understanding New Media*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998.
[12] The U.S.-american movie *Young Sherlock Holmes* (Di. Barry Levinson, USA 1985) is the first one to be solidly recorded in using CGI, to a very small extend indeed, in the form of a picture of a knight in a church window that jumps out of it and begins to move.

much about affirming the movie's seemingly peculiartiy with reference to its use of the digital ("stunning", "outstanding"), but more about thinking of larger historical processes of standardization in use and normalization in consuming those kinds of "images" and movies. Therein, as Stewart has convincingly shown, intersected are at least three strands of cinematic traditions, each of which carries its own discursive, narrative and semiotic traditions along, as "the european", "the U.S.-american'" and "the Asian" (more Japan and China then Thailand and/or India) that models or uses up the digital in different ways. To think of the digital transforming the filmic – and vice versa – one has to come to terms with how cinema deals with the registration of movement, of bodies in space, of how this is shown (gaze) and what affects, which cognitions (will to power) are produced hereof – with time as vector to all those components.

17   When we think of cinema in archaeological terms, it was always already a „machine of the visible" (Jean-Louis Comolli),[13] first seen as a technical device that gave the spectators the opportunity to see the world as moving picture, other objects, human and nonhuman alike, for the sake of something thrilling, frenzy, as Tom Gunning has shown.[14] But it was also, from the start, a device that excerted a will to power, that dwelled on the power to see and to know and the lust of this power to see and know, insofar as particularly the (moving, living) objects shown (especially gendered, but also "deviant" bodies) could be controlled, stigmatized or normalized by the way they were brought into sight, initially mainly through gaze and repetition, as Linda Williams[15] and Lisa Cartwright[16] brilliantly demonstrate in their works. The power to control manifested itself very quickly, first, in the manipulation of the recorded – think of the "invention" of the stop-motion-trick through Georges Méliès in the first decade of the 20th century. Secondly, as Mary Ann Doane states,[17] confronted with an exuberance of recorded time, space, movement and bodies on the one hand and the possibility to control these with mainly cutting and montage (editing) on the other, euro-american cinema changed into a system that organized selectively the overwhelming amount of analogue data to find its form as narrative cinema.

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[13] Comolli, Jean-Louis. „Machines of the Visible". The Cinematic Apparatus. Eds. Teresa de Lauretis, Stephen Heath. London/New York: Macmillan/St. Martin's, 1980. 121-142.
[14] Gunning, Tom. „The Cinema of Attractions. Early Film, Its Spectators and the Avant-Garde." *Early Cinema. Space, Frame, Narrative*. Ed. Thomas Elsaesser. London: British Film Institute, 1990. 57-62.
[15] Williams, Linda. *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure, and the „Frenzy of the Visible"*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989.
[16] Cartwright, Lisa. *Screening the Body. Tracing Medicine's Visual Culture*. Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997
[17] Doane, Mary Ann. *The Emergence of Cinema Time: Modernity, Contingency, the Archive*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002.

18   This is exactly the starting point for Deleuze's reflections on cinema as a system of signs of movement and time, affect and cognition that unfolds in historical time, and for which he tries to find terms to reflect on in a philosophical fashion, or, the other way around, to acknowledge, that since the beginning of the 20th century, cinema is the system (a prelingual, -signifying matter, in Deleuzeian terms) that shapes not only our senses and our movement (Benjamin) and our affects (Gunning) but also our ways of thinking – it is the condition of possibility of philosophy as such. Henri Bergson, who is his referee in this transaction, always denied that cinema, in his understanding, could ever restore subjectivity in the sense of lived, embodied time (*durée*). He was a sturdy humanist in this respect, clinging to the anthropological in humans. Deleuze, in contrast, whilst trying to show cinema's power to produce something like "subjectivity" (which he does not call as such), acknowledges exactly that the human condition is always already determined by the human-machine-interface.

19   His point of entrance in elucidating his concept of cinema is cinema's technical process of recording (time), whereby the initial recorded world is moved by the transportation of the frames of the film strip. Admittedly, this can not be *durée* in the Bergsionan sense, as Deleuze makes clear. But cinema finds a solution to the problem of emancipating itself from this blunt extension of technical movement and time in that it begins to transmit them from the tracking of the frames to movement within the film itself. This is exactly the essential meaning of movement-image. For Deleuze, cinema as a technical automaton, a system of prelingual, presignifying matter constitutes itself historically along two lines: The production of sings as terms that can be reflected upon is connected to the mental automaton that tries to get his autonomy from the recorded world by reflecting upon it and upon itself. The production of signs as inner processes (like dreams, hallucinations, obsessive ideas), however, is connected to the psychic automaton, which is also autonomous like the mental automaton, but not able to think, but just to act. The image type of time-image corresponds to the former, the latter to the image type of movement-image.

20   In historical terms, cinema loses its faith in the movement-image and its corresponding characters and stories in the aftermath of World War II and concentrates on the time-image. The concept of the time-image comprises a subject which has lost connection to a stable "reality" entirely. To put it differently, the subject cannot live in a presence – which is a historical and therefore a social and political presence of the worst kind – any more.[18] As a

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[18] Deleuze makes explicit reference to the usurpation of cinema through the Nazi-regime in this context which leads him to the observation that there is always a will to power inherent in cinema as a mental automaton. Hitler, Deleuze writes, as a mental automaton, subsumed the movement-image as the psychic automaton of the subjected masses in Nazi-Germany. To break this historical spell, to restore a new psychomechnics, as Deleuze states, one

consequence, it splits itself into a vector of past and future, but not in the sense of a past that is followed by a presence that is followed by a future, but into the virtual and the actual, whereby affect is their contingent, abrupt, unforseeable connection. Time-images are those entities that actualize something like the past and/or the future of a subject, that enables it to reflect on them, which is to say, on its own past and its own possible future as a subject (in contrast to memory and history). The be-coming images have no prescribed order, they appear in terms of probability, their timespace is very particular in accordance with Einstein's specific "Theory of Relativity". By this means, the reflecting subject is the effect of the uncalculable clash of the virtual and actual of a past/future, that could be in a sense individual but also sociohistorical. According to this and related to the problem of presence is that the e/affected "subjectivity" does itself not move but is transformed into a viewer of general incidents as it is of its own life.

21   In the last chapter of the second volume of his Cinema-books, Deleuze then, addresses the digital. But not in the sense of "computers in film" (he refers explicitly to Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* from 1969) or "digital technologies" in the first place, but he asks what kind of mental and psychic automatons arise from information theory and cybernetics. There he makes the connection between new kinds of images, characters and stories and the condition of possibility of their appearance explicit: „New automatons could not take hold of those contents if form was not changed by a new automatism. The modern configuration of the automaton is the correlate of an electronic automatism." (254) His conclusion reads as follows: „The electronic image, that is, the tele or video image, the upcoming digital image – is either going to change cinema or to replace it, which will lead to its termination." (254)

22   He goes on by describing the new type of image that comes along with the electronic automatism: those images have no hors-champs, they have a reversible front and a back without being adaptable to each other, they rotate and are permanently reorganized. As a consequence, the vertical loses its privileged alignment position of the cinematic (screen) in favor of an omnidirectional space that endlessly changes its coordinates and angles. Those images are more like informationboards, opaque surfaces on which the data are enregistrated. Information replaces nature, Deleuze writes, and electronic surveillance (third eye) subsitutes nature's eye. This new automatism is not valuable in itself but one has to watch out for a power to art with a strange and ominous will to express itself in unmotivated movements. So far, Deleuze comments, one does not know where this new automatism does lead cinema altogether. He only

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has to watch out for new connections between the mental automaton and the psychic automatons. The emancipation from the usurped movement-image is, in this sense, found its way first and foremost in the time image.

states that it is some kind of transformation of the time-image exceeding itself in an unknown direction. One has to keep in mind that Deleuze, publishing the book in 1985, could not foresee all those upcoming movies generated with CGI, but he was talking about the films of Syberberg, Fellini and Kubrick (until the beginning of the 1970s). But, in a very strange way, Deleuze's typology of images of the digital resounds very much the images we are confronted with nowadays, especially in *Avatar*.

23   Stewart writes, that this has to be interpreted as some kind of writing *avant la lettre* by Deleuze, but he also makes clear, that those images and the corresponding movies are more a kind of mockery, a satire or ironic commentary on Deleuze' mutation of the time-image. Because, what Deleuze describes and anticipates as an overcoming of the time-image under the verdict of information is exactly a type of image that escapes from a totalizing view which is inserted by the regime of information, that grounds its power on endless perturbations of hollowness on the one hand, but that is able to state something new beyond this regime of information on the other (creation beyond information). The new subjectivity that corresponds with those types of images would be a „pure informed person" (258), who could receive in his (!) visible body a pure speech act of the inventive creation kind.

24   But, as Stewart clearly shows in his typology of european and U.S.-american postfilmic movies from the 1990s onwards, this new kind of mental and psychic automaton, anticipated by Deleuze, is nowhere to be seen. Rather, those types of images are ever more unmotivated, reversible images that endlessly change their angles and vectors in which the correlated subjects are thrown. He speaks of timespace-images in this respect and he sees the central feature of the narrative organization of those movies in something he calls temportation. With temportation, past and future alike are actualized in random ways that evacuate all lived "human" time (presence) entirely. For in most of the films Stewart discusses, the strange elapse of time which is the onto-logic of the new digital images, produces an abberant construction of past-presence-future, that rather consists in feedback loops and resursions than in flash backs or back projections. Some of those narratives tell their hero's story from beyond his already happened death. Stewart describes how difficult it is not only to differentiate reliably the levels of story as reference points (reality vs. dream, fantasy) but also to make sense of the successive order of things, hence, lives of the mostly male protagonists altogether. The general tendency of these movies, Stewart remarks, has to be interpreted as fantasies that have no connection to reality with its political and ethic demands and consequences whatsoever. His conclusion with special reference to the more technical Hollywood gothic reads as follows:

> With assumptions not only escapist but reality denying, such films of temportation in the mode of the ontological gothic seem to imply, or pander to, a sociology of looking detached from causation and consequence. And in this, as guessed [...] they may well solicit acquiescence not only in a culture of fantasy but in a politics of the unreal. (205)

25   Even if Stewart is able to demonstrate his thesis by means of convincing interpretions – from *Johnny Mnemonic* (David Longo, USA 1995), *Being John Malkovich* (Spike Jonze, USA 1999) and *The Thirteenth Floor* (Josef Rusnak, Ger. 1999), via *One Hour Photo* (Mark Romanek, USA 2002), *La Mala Educación* (Pedro Almodóvar, Sp. 2004), to *Eternal Sunshine of A Spotless Mind* (Michel Gondry, USA 2004) and *Caché* (Michael Haneke, F 2005) – this all sounds very much like „male subjectivity in crisis" that transmogrifies itself into escapist fantasies that are enabled by the digital to overcome the burdens of social reality. And I will not disagree entirely, but will, firstly, change the angle of perspective a little bit in oder to, secondly, show the contrasting specificities of *Avatar* in this context.

Avatar's Digitalism and Male Subjectivity

26The first thing that catches one's eye when watching *Avatar* is that there is no such troubling organization of time and space on the level of narrative. When we see Jake Scully for the first time, he lies in a cryotank, waiting to be retrieved from the tank by some medical person while being shipped to Pandora. Interestingly enough, the film finds an image for such precarious situatedness in the world without any reliable reference points in a time and space leaping universe. It freezes those ever changing coordinates and vectors of timespace of which Stewart is talking in one single frame, when we see the room filled with other cryotanks where people float weightlessly around in any direction.[19] Insofar as the movie frames an ontological problem (troqued spacetime of the subject's mindfucking temportation) in one picture and thereby reduces it to a mere question of visibility (aesthetics), one can read this as an allegory of how the film belittles the problematic of the subject's vanishing reliable relation to a stable world in general.

27   The organziation of the following story is very traditional in the sense that first we have a parallel-montage that informs us about the circumstances of Jake's opportunity getting into the Avatar-project: firstly, the death of his twin brother (monozygotic), who was not only the Ph.D. scientist and partner of Grace Augustine in the project but shares identical genes with Jake and therefore can be called his ("natural") clone; secondly, the lucrative offer he gets from

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[19] This kind of regulating, of appeasing the timespace-image with its endlessly changing coordinates and angles whithin some regluar frames is repeated in those many shots where either humans ‚fly' around in their technical devices or the Na'vi fly on their dragon-horses. I will talk about the epistemological consequences of this analogies and their power to undermine a clearcut difference between the Na'vi and the humans later on.

the company's executives. It is a common way to confront the spectator with a part of the past as preconditions for the story's unfolding future.

28   We get familiar with Jake's own past as a corporate soldier who was injured in one of his war missions so much that he now is paralyzed from the legs down, sitting in a wheel chair.[20] This is paralleled to the transport to Pandora planet. When the star glider stets off from the interstellar station all events are set in a traditional cinematic present, which is the main organizing principle of the movie. There are two slight exceptions to this when Jake reports, in terms of content, his experiences among the Na'vi to his coherently (up-)dating videolog, that is in visual terms a direct address to the camera and the spectator. He reports past events that are shown subsequently in the following sequences.

29   On the level of narratography, we can resume, that this is a very *filmic* way of staging the events, which means, *Avatar* goes beyond postfilmic cinema and its ways to deal with the digital as timespace temportation just to go back to good old patterns of filmic narrative. In sum, the male hero, Jake Sully, has no problem to orient himself within this narrative and to make sense of the recorded world. On the contrary, he is not only a reliable narrator, with full overview of and full authoritiy over this represented world, but also in full control of it and himself.

30   This tendency to order things traditionally, to generate order and stability referring to the levels of time and the organization of space also holds seemingly true of the other area into which Jake immerses himself, the (for humans) life-endangering environment of Pandora's surface. The transition is visually staged through the flight (of the human spirit?) through a tunnel that could be the spinal cord, but at each endpoint the hero finds himself, together with the specator, on a plane of story that is always already familiar to him/her.[21] But in opposition

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[20] This is what makes him a ‚broken character', a less manly man, within the logic of its militaristic, masculinist and capitalist environment. Yet, within the semantic logic of the film as a whole this precondition is needed to show exactly what makes him more exceptional than the other men around him. This, insofar as he is the one to overcome his bodily disability through first his development as a leader in the world of the Na'vis and then, second, in distanciating himself in an ethical fashion from the ‚bad humans' whilst deciding to handle himself over to the quite risky substantiation-process of Eywa. The disabled male person, degraded and stigmatized, the film seems to say on the semantic level, is in the last consequence the bodily, mentally, and ehtical strongest and most reliable. On the level of narratography, as I will show later on, things look differently.

[21] Slavoj Zizek, in his article, made a very interesting observation that underscores easily his thesis of Pandora being a phantasm: He states that on an aesthetic level the world of the Na'vi could be compared to the world of the toons in the movie *Who framed Roger Rabbit* (Di. Robert Zemecki, USA 1988). In this movie there are two registers of representation, one of realistic referentiality, the other the animated cartoon. The specificity lies in the two registers cooperating smoothly together on a semantic level, but are kept clearly seperate on the ontological level as on the level of visibility. In my view, Zizek is correct and wrong at the same time with his comparison. The crucial point here is, however, that in Avatar the digital technology eradicates the difference of the two registers on an ontological level whilst generating a seamless continuity between exclusive CG images and the images of realistic referentiality. As a consequence, what appears as difference between humans and Na'vis on the level of visibility does not come from their different aesthetics in technical terms (‚cartoon' vs. ‚realism') but from their asserted differences as living entities on two levels: firstly, we, as humans, assume, that aliens would look

to a movie like *The Thirteenth Floor* for example, where two radical different levels in an ontological sense (reality vs. virtuality) exist to indicate the subject's very problem to differentiate those two in terms of referentiality per se, in *Avatar* what looks like different levels of narrative at first glimpse is just one.

31   The world Jake inhabits at one moment or the other is never called into question, he is always somewhere on Pandora, either in the shack, or on the station, or in his avatar in the "outback". As a consequence, the existential problem of undecidability of a "reality" for the subject is transformed into the epistemological phenomenon of telepresence and the concept of the avatar in Cyberspace.[22] Undeniably, Jake exists sometimes at two spaces at the same moment (bodily and mentally), which is definitively a kind of torqued timespace-experience for the subject, but not in terms of the subject's ontological problem of (not) having a stable relation to the world in the sense of referentiality. In this very sense, *Avatar* is beyond the problematic of lived time as engendered by the digital in film in Stewart's terms. But, notwithstanding or not least because of the usage of digital technology, it is so in a reactionary way, since it generates one plane of narrative in which it totalizes the phenomenon of going into Cyberspace and coming back whenever one wants.[23]

32   But it is not only one unquestionable level of referentiality, produced by the narrative, that is at stake here. This apparently narrated world as a whole is reenforced by the digital technology's production of a seamless continuity of CG images and indexicalic film images that eradicates their difference exactly on the ontological level. As a consequence, the film generates one whole world in which all differences are not ontological differences, but just differences on the level of visibility – what I will call the spectral character of the images. Which means, by analogy to the theme of telepresence, where the problem of an ontological undecidability of referentiality induced by the digital as the problem of the subject's lived time is shifted to the epistemological problem of using an avatar, ontological difference in terms of different registers of referentiality is transformed into difference of mere visibility.

33   The related problem is, that the ontological difference to the Other, which is also a constitutive part of the subject's lived time that is troubled by the intrusion of the digital as the (colonial, imperial) past's returning – like in Haneke's *Caché* for example –, is once more

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differently. So this is a question of imagination and fantasy and its fictional realization; secondly, Cameron wants to make us believe in a political sense that Na'vis and humans are essentially different.

[22] In Cyberspace an avatar is an electronically generated, symbolic, customized body/persona ‚image' that substitutes the subject in the world of Computer Games and/or social environment, like MUDs or Second Life for example. I will elucidate the specific usage of the avatar in Avatar later on.

[23] Even if one can acknowledge that those moments in the movie when Jake is in two different places at the same time are states of enheightened vulnerability of the subject.

reduced from an ontological problem of a "mindfucking", troqued timespace that the subject cannot hold on to a simple level of epistemology and semantics where it can easily be regulated and controlled. For *Avatar*, this means that the difference between the Na'vi and the humans is primarily an evidently visible one (tall, blue catish creatures vs. humans) which looks like the difference between indigenous people and capitalist, militaristic, exploitive (Nature and other people alike) people at the first glimpse and which is then, in turn, supposed to be an essential (,natural', ,biological') one, thus, it is naturalized.

34   But, as it is the fate of every double logic, even the differences generated by those spectral images are not stable ones. Following Klaus Theweleit, who very poignantly states, that the essential difference between humans and Na'vis does not lie neither in their descendence from different planets, nor in their different genetic equipment, but more in their technologies and the different usages thereof, the Na'vi are neither just a simple indigenous people nor „noble savages" but they are a people that has the even more sophisticated digital technology that connects all creatures on the planet, because it doesn't look like a technical network, with plugins, cables and apparatuses anymore but like something wholly biological and organic. The human, in turn, is tied to old-fashioned wired technology and big, clumsy mechanical machines. As a result, those differences as spectral images can not be more than two different sides of the same coin (or two positions on an endlessly divisable continuum), set up as a positive and a negative one in the first place, with the apparently condemnation of the negative, the human side.

35   I do not disagree with Theweleit entirely, because I think he is very correct in his estimation of the Na'vi as a posthuman networked, media-ecological society that comes along in a natural shape. But if one sets the difference between advanced "new technology" (Na'vi) and "old technology" and judge the humans as presumably old-fashioned "moderns", one does not only reify a clearcut difference between Na'vi and humans once again, but loses exactly sight of the human's world's undercurrent – which is as posthuman as the Na'vi's but in the shape of the "old-fashioned" posthumanism according to the tradition of European Enlightment, of teleologic development and technics as tool for the male, heterosexual, euro-, androcentric Subject's perfectibilization, as with the old idea of a human spirit that will one day get rid of its flabby, fleshly decomposing body entirely and substantiate in a new, much better substrate like the computer-machine for example. The world of the humans is full of such devices, wich are not questioned at all but celebrated semantically and also prominently on the level of visibility, like cryotechnology, like star wars, like experiments with hybrid-cloning (Na'vi and human DNA), like Xenotransplantation (Jake would "get his legs back" in any case)

and the like. Moreover, they do have advanced holography-technologies and wireless dataprocessing, encompassing ubiquitous surveillance almost everywhere.[24] Those kind of technologies are very similar to the ones the Na'vi use (they just do not look like that), not just with respect to their usage but exactly with reference to their power to transform the society into a network-society in general and the subject into a knod whitin this web in particular, whose cognition and knowledge is shared and actively produced by other such knods.

36   This is symptomatic for the subject's existence in the condition of schizophrenic capitalist posthumanism: The humans do live in a posthumanist condition whilst still thinking machines and media as tools, as mere amplifiers of their own capabilities, hence assuming a coherent subject to which the machines are exterior. Which is confirmed by the film's narrative insofar as the difference between the Na'vi's and the humans' use of their technologies is that of the right or wrong means to an end.

37   But because the Na'vi, on the contrary, are already in a post-posthumanist relationship of mutual constitution of "machines"/technologies and "subjectivity", that just does not look like that any more because it is naturalized, one has to address the following. If one assumes that the differences between the Na'vi and the humans are just visible, hence, superficial ones, and that their categorical difference lies in their relationship to their technologies, and if one further assumes that this difference is not that categorical either but more subtle (bad old posthumanism vs. good new posthumanism), one might ask the question seriously what is really at stake with the Na'vi's posthumanism. Can the Na'vi, not in opposite, but in comparison to the (posthuman) humans present a new philosophy of posthuman subjectivity in the sense of Braidotti's Zoëism? Within this philosophy the subject is not unitary, but multiple in full acknowledgement of the Other (as femininity or alieness or matter) as its constitutive side, but not as Difference of/to the male, heterosexual, euro-, androcentristic One, but as becoming-Other (woman, alien, zoë), becoming a nomadic multiplicity in transposition.[25] To finally answer this question I have to make a small detour via the topic of the avatar in *Avatar*.

Not Becoming-Posthuman - *Avatar* as Ultimate Cinematic-Digital Posthuman Male Fantasy

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[24] In this sense, the war between Na'vis and humans is neither one human knowledge vs. Pandora spririt, nor creatures vs. civilized, but rather a war of information technologies. This becomes clear, when the datastorage of the helicopters fails because of the indecipherable ‚noise' that is produced around the Floating Mountains of Pandora which could be read as some strategic resistance to any invasion on a very high-tech-level.

[25] See Braidotti, Rosi. *Transpositions. On Nomadic Ethics*. Cambridge, UK/Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2006.

38   On the level of narratography, the digital as the evacuation of the subject's lived time through troqued timespace, of undecidable referentiality, of the split between actual and virtual is totally regulated in *Avatar*. The film's main strategy of doing this is to shift this ontological problem to the phenomenon of telepresence within the diegsis where it is totalized. Jake (together with Grace and Norman) is able to immerse himself into the life-endangering world of Pandora whilst his mind is transmitted into his avatar. By the same means, the problem that goes along with the topic of avatar is reduced to a simple matter of matter. The avatar in Cyberspace is an electronically generated symbolic image of the body/person of the human subject at the interface of the computer. As one would assume this relationship is a more distant one that Jake has to his avatar. Yet, this is by no means a simple but a complex matter that comprises exactly not only the symbolic or semantic level, but also that of affect, of bodily and also psychic conditions. What one has to acknowledge when thinking about avatarism in Cyberspace is that the subject is neither transparent to itself in all its aspects nor is it coherent per se, but has to create an imaginary body-image of itself that holds together its disparate components – as Jacques Lacan very clearly stated in eludicating the subject's constitution within the mirror stage. An avatar in Cyberspace is the figurative allegory of such a body-image.

39   Jake, instead, has no body-image of himself but incorporates this image entirely on the basis of the film's reductionist version of the epistemology of the avatar. In this, the relationship between human and avatar is reduced to a crude materialism, insofar as it is connected to the bodily matter and thus biologized. This reducionist version of the avatar, furthermore, strongly echoes the old mind-body-dualism. It looks as if one can transmit one's mind into this inanimate puppet one can enliven with one's mind, but which then returns into an inanimate thing as soon as one's mind comes back to the science lab. To look the other way around: The bodily matter of the human that is transmogrified into the avatar also is something that can easily be left behind, except that it would fall totally apart and therefore has to be nurtured (Jake has to eat; but neither to sleep nor to shit, by the way).

40   There is, hence, some overt preference of spirit over body along these terms. The body (of the avatar and the human alike) is almost reduced to some piece of meat, like in the *Visible Human Project*, where the snippets of a former human are everything that is left whilst its zombielike resurrection in the digital realm proclaims its wholeness. This is so much so, that one can even stage a paraplegic character who's ability to move is very much dependent on a technical apparatus, but that is legible as recognition of difference on the semantic level. What happens, for example to Grace's avatar after she is „gone with Eywa"? The movie just drops it/her. At this point we have to address the other side of this double logic.

41   The avatar is not just a general medium, insofar as it has to be individualized, in *Avatar* this means coming to terms with organic matter once more. Which means not everybody (!) can transmit him- or herself into just any avatar, but it has to be the fitting person. Think, for example, of the Max-character, Grace's black assistent in the lab, who belongs to the chosen ones that are allowed to stay on the planet of Pandora after the war. Contrasting Norman, who possesses an avatar, Max not only never had one but also has to stay on Pandora in his human shape. Why, one could ask in casual language, couldn't he not just use Grace's? Which would have been not only a black-queer impersonation – a little like what is happening in *Being John Malkovich* – but it would also have exactly called into question the traditional male, logocentric mind-body-dualism and the traditional male, logocentric posthumanist anti-essentialism all at once.

42   But instead, in *Avatar* not only subjectivity is re-essentialized, but its own male, logocentric posthumanism is reaccomplished in a racist fashion. One can take this rascim even further in the following sense: Apart from the fact, that the avatar is the product of DNA-mixing, which is to say, a hybrid of human and Na'vi, and in that sense a real cyborg in Donna Haraway's terms, the avatar's body is not only a medium for the human's mind but also the sign of that human's personality. Mind, in this occasion, is now reduced to matter in the sense that it can leave a mark on the face as its expression. But strangely enough, just on the face, the rest of the body is standard Na'vi body, effacing for example one's specific ‚human' features of identity, as paraplexis in Jake's or age in Grace's case.[26] To sum this up: The hybrid avatar is an entity in which a human mind navigates a Na'vi body, which in the face has to express the human's personality. One could call this imperialism/colonialism on deepest level of interface-technology.[27]

43   When one returns the gaze once more, one can see that the concept of the avatar in *Avatar* follows exactly the logic of traditional white, male logocentric posthumanism, insofar as it figures the following: Mind presides over matter, one can easily transmit one's mind into different substrates without damage, leaving bodies almost entirely behind; bodies in turn are just blunt matter to be used and formed by preferably the mind's, features and, additionally, abilities and norms of (good, hence, politically and ethically correct) white people, males by

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[26] Considering that, the bodies that are produced in Avatar are obivously not only standardized but also normalized bodies that are stronger, more beautiful, with more capabilities than ‚normal' human bodies could ever obtain.
[27] And I would go even one step further in analogizing exactly this to the digital technology of motion-capturing that Cameron used in shooting Avatar. With respect to the actor's personal facial features which were turned into visible signs on the Na'vi's bodily surfaces, one can say, that the difference in bodily conditions between white and black actor's (figuring most of the Na'vi) were inscribed as racial difference in the body of the film.

preference.[28] Bodies as matter, as pure flesh are just as malleable as to the white mind's/man's will (that's exactly where I see Killis' Neoplatonic Twist in). Apart from that they do not matter at all, which is to say, all differences, like race or ethnic descent or age or gender are just a secondary imprint on the body's surface but nothing that is always already the material-semiotic substance of cultural or social or political or historical issues. Jake's substantiation into a Na'vi can be seen as the final step or crowning conclusion to this neoplatonic version of male logocentric posthumanism. When Jake "goes with Eywa" he finally leaves his old, crippled human body behind and in his avatar impersonates the ultimate posthuman male fantasy come true and with it the totalizing of the spectral images of this one whole world which reifies the status of fantasy anew.[29] Ultimate in the sense, that the transition, which is an inherently technical process, is so complete, so perfect, that one does not even need a medium any more, neither for the transmission nor as source/receiver, but only Nature and Biology.

44   What he immerses himself into is something whole and completely virtual at the same time, something that forecloses the real as ontological problem of referentiality, as mindfucking, torqued timespace of the subject's lived time, of the return of the other as ghost of the subject's past/future – all the aspects that are brought up by the intrusion of *the digital* as a new automatism into cinema as film, pressing the time-image out of its shape. On the contrary, *digital technology* in *Avatar* generates and reinforces Jake's true fantasy that lends him over to a world where everything seems to be connected, transmutable from one substrate into the other, a world of a collective in full harmony with its environment, that moreover approves of differences beyond any asymmetry. It is in fact the ultimate posthuman male fantasy in its ultimate escapist fashion. It denies in its entirety the scars and pains of deaths, losses and asymmetries, the wills to and the clashes of powers, but also the lust, the joys, the desires of/in the real. Instead, it creates a world as a whole, stable and organized one, that seems to be beyond the capitalist, exploitive, racist, sexist, militaristic facets of (post-)human existence. It effaces (colonial/imperialist) history, politics, technology and ontological difference all at once, to which correlates a stable, coherent male subject that becomes the successful, invincible leader of this perfect virtual world, thus, a fantasy, of which it's seemingly grounding in nature and biology is its ultimate closure.

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[28] This becomes clear when comparing the long, tedious process of winning the Na'vi's confidence by learning their language, teaching them English, and so on, but failing in the end wholesale on Grace's side, whereas Jake becomes the Na'vi's glorified leader and successful warlord after a couple of months.

[29] It would be wrong to say, that whilst his mind leaves his body, Jake will be transposed fully into his avatar. That would be the humanist version of the transaction. The posthuman outcome prescribes that Jake's new life in his avatar is only possible via the connection to the Tree of Souls (hardware)/Eywa (software) who ‚resurrects' him. This is the anti-essentialism of traditional posthumanism.

45   To conclude this article with a last turn to the philosophy of Zoëism it should by now have become obvious that this male fantasy, generated out of spectral images, operates according to the logic of white, male, phall-logocentrism and of white, male logocentric posthuman anti-essentialism alike which is not that of a non-unitary, non-heteronormative, multiple, nomadic posthuman subjectivity, a becoming-posthuman in Braidotti's terms at all. Alas, there is no becoming-posthuman in *Avatar*.

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