Soma-masculinities: centring the body within studies of masculinities

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Abstract

While feminist and queer scholarship has paid generous attention to bodies and embodiment in their attempts to better understand gender and sexuality, studies of masculinities have tended to lag behind. In this thesis, I attend to the theoretical strains within studies of masculinities to demonstrate that these studies are at an impasse, a point at which scholars remain reluctant or unable to push beyond current frameworks into new and, as I argue, productive territory. In particular, these studies have most readily employed social constructionist approaches in their analyses, however these frameworks have been unable to adequately describe and account for the complexities, contradictions and possibilities of masculinities and male subjectivities. I suggest that bodies are central to this understanding and must be brought into the frame in a more significant manner.

Throughout this thesis I draw attention to the blind spot within these studies and attend to bodies more closely through an examination of contemporary masculinities. In particular I consider three specific sites of the body: the phallic, the hegemonic and the homosexual body. I interrogate these through a number of case studies, including pornography, Australian rules football and online dating sites, all of which continue to arouse interest and debate within academic and public spheres. It is here that I draw attention to some of the limitations of current studies and attempt to produce a richer account of the key questions and problems within these debates.

In doing this, I introduce a new framework I call *soma-masculinities* which I employ to address masculinities in a more profound manner, and make some original contributions to the scholarship. In particular, this framework places a greater emphasis on the material body and its fleshy components; it aims to bring the *flesh* into bodies and questions of masculinity. *Soma-masculinities* is not one specific theory or concept but rather a mode of enquiry. Thus, it utilises a broad toolkit that incorporates conceptual models that are already available and engaged, particularly within feminist and queer theory. I demonstrate how this framework might offer a more capacious account of contemporary masculinities and the complex ways in which they are embodied and lived.
I declare that this thesis is my own original work and due acknowledgement has been made to all other material used in the thesis

I declare that this thesis is fewer than the maximum word limit in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices

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Introduction

‘Perspectival seeing is the only kind of seeing there is, perspectival “knowing” the only kind of “knowing”;’ and the more feelings about a matter which we allow to come to expression, the more eyes, different eyes through which we are able to view this same matter, the more complete our “conception” of it... will be.’ — Frederich Nietzsche, On the Genealogy of Morals.¹

The body has remained a conceptual blind spot in both mainstream Western philosophical thought and contemporary feminist theory.’ — Elizabeth Grosz, Volatile Bodies.²

‘The longer male theorists forestall attempting to tell the truth or say something specific about the male body, the longer we continue to bear witness to the truth of the phallic law and to reproduce ourselves as the agents of patriarchal domination.’ — Calvin Thomas, Male Matters.³

Key Concerns

I begin with these quotes since they succinctly point to the central concern of this thesis, that studies of masculinities have either neglected to consider the body or have dealt with it in a partial or simplistic manner. This, I argue, has produced conceptual tools and frameworks that lead to unnecessarily limited understandings of the worlds of men. Indeed, theoretical endeavours across the humanities and social sciences have demonstrated a remarkable reluctance or incapability to address the body as a central object of analysis. Elizabeth Grosz notes in Volatile Bodies, that even within philosophical and feminist thought where subjectivity is the focus, the body somehow vanishes.

The body is most often placed in a binary relation to mind, reason and culture, and located beneath these, as inferior. This hierarchy manifests as culture over nature, reason over emotion, and more palpably as mind over body; a division reified in the common expression, “mind over matter.” These binaries produce and reinforce a set of hierarchies and unequal power relations pertinent to gender. Men and masculinity are placed at one end of the binary with women and the feminine linked to the body (nature/emotion) and deemed inferior. This

logic, which has been foundational to patriarchy, is precisely what feminists have sought to challenge. Gender relations are underpinned by such ideologies, which produce and naturalise a gender binary and an uneven balance of power. This continues to have real effects for the organisation of gender and sexuality. Addressing these problems of the body and the binary logic that pervades western epistemology, remains a priority for feminist theory and politics.

It is my central concern in this thesis that studies of masculinities also find ways to address this crisis. The inability to conceive of the male body is implicated in this central thought-power configuration. Ignoring or devaluing the body within these studies does nothing to challenge or subvert the long-standing binaries. In fact, bodies challenge this system at its core. Ken Corbett writes: ‘Yes, the social order of the binary rules; it is the law that ticks loudest. But modern considerations and shifting social forces have ticked in return. Gender is being rethought, and newly lived. And binary schematics are insufficient to account for this new life.’ 4 The lives of bodies, which is subjectivity itself, escape this logic and cannot be captured within this system. Turning our attention to the body offers promising new ways through which to grasp, and account for, the lived lives of men and masculinities.

The body, particularly the female body has been central to feminist theorising and feminism itself; moving from a critique of biological essentialism to social constructionism, and increasingly to embodiment. Indeed, there has been a proliferation of work focusing on embodiment, stretching across a range of theoretical approaches and concerns. Such work has called in to question the viability of the sex/gender distinction and a purely social constructionist approach. Wendy Brown identifies two distinct strands occurring within contemporary feminist studies, which she terms “the persistence” and “the beyond” of sex and gender.5 On the one hand “gender as social construction” remains a constant and necessary framework for a continual critique of patriarchal systems and their effects on women. However, others problematise

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this structural focus and suggest that gender is inherently more unstable and complex. These scholars identify embodiment as a crucial component of subjectivity and have sought ways to disentangle bodies (and gender) from a purely structuralist and constructionist framework.\textsuperscript{6} Within queer and trans theory this theoretical debate has been particularly lively and productive.\textsuperscript{7}

Generative attention has been paid to the body in feminist and queer scholarship, but a similar focus on the body and embodiment within studies of masculinities has not occurred thus far. “Men’s studies,” as it was originally known, emerged in close alignment with feminist scholarship, however over the past few decades these studies have struggled to keep pace. This lag has not gone unnoticed. Prominent scholars Calvin Thomas and Raewyn Connell have both called for an interrogation of the male/masculine body, as a way forward for studies of masculinities.\textsuperscript{8} Nonetheless, that there has been only a trickle of work that addresses embodiment warrants a more sustained focus on the nexus of masculinities and bodies.

For the most part, current studies of masculinities employ sociological frameworks with an emphasis on empirical research. Within these studies social constructionism remains the primary theoretical lens, with a particular focus on social processes, norms and institutions. I argue, however, that these approaches have not been able to adequately account for male subjectivity. While social constructionism does attempt to account for subjectivity and the ways in which groups and individuals are socialised and formed, what is lacking is a focused


attention to the body and the psyche as well as social structures. Subjectivity is more complex than these constructionist frameworks and models, can often describe and account for.

Here I have in mind a group of scholars that have come to dominate studies of masculinities, and who approach masculinities within a constructionist framework, one that focuses its attentions on structures, social norms, and other cognitive aspects of masculinity, in shaping attitudes and subjectivity. This approach is typified by Connell’s concept of hegemonic masculinity, which has long been the primary route for theorising masculinities. This concept has been profoundly important for the analysis of gender relations and for a deeper understanding of the dynamics of masculinity. It remains vastly influential within the social sciences and as a framework for the analysis of empirical work specific to masculinities.

Hegemonic masculinity refers to the set of ideals and practices that denote the most prized ways of being a man in any given context. Power relations are central to this gender pattern which, as Connell argues, is primarily concerned with legitimising patriarchy and maintaining male power and privilege over women. However, hegemonic masculinity is constructed also in relation to various subordinated and marginalised masculinities. This ensures that there is a hierarchy amongst men, thus, it is the straight, white, middle-class man who benefits most from hegemonic masculinity and its strategies.

Importantly, Connell did intend this concept to be dynamic; hegemonic masculinity describes the currently accepted or dominant ways of being a man. These patterns are not necessarily upheld by force. In fact, hegemonic masculinity is deeply ideological, achieved and maintained through other persuasive, less forceful means. Importantly, it is a strategy that continues to privilege particular groups of men. In any given time or place, there is a dominant pattern of masculinity that is promoted, supported and upheld,

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9 The concept was first introduced in 1987 in Gender and Power, and developed further in 1995. See RW Connell, Gender & Power (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987) and RW Connell, Masculinities 2nd ed. (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2005).
through particular exemplars and representations, and within institutions. Thus, it is expected that the hegemonic pattern will change according to historical and cultural context.

Despite Connell’s objective that this concept be able to cope with the inevitable shifts and changes of masculinities, there have been numerous critiques directed at the concept, particularly regarding its unintended essentialising effects and its incapacity to properly grasp the nuances of male subjectivities and masculinities in practice.\(^{10}\) In particular, Wetherill and Edley provide one of the most significant dissections in this regard, arguing that hegemonic masculinity theorises social processes and patterns, but struggles to address what masculinity actually looks like in practice.\(^{11}\) Hegemonic masculinity describes a set of ideals which act as a reference point, however most men do not actually embody these ideals consistently, or with any significance. Thus, the concept can account for these ideals as they appear in institutions and within dominant discourses and representations. The realities of what is happening at the level of the body and of subjectivity, however, is far more complex, and this is where the concept struggles as a tool of analysis.

For some scholars, Connell’s articulation of the four categories of masculinity — hegemonic, subordinated, marginalised and complicit — is too rigid and does not account for hybrid forms that blur the boundaries between these categories. In other words, it cannot account for masculinities that are shifting or are in a state of flux, where multiple discourses are in play at any given time or place. The subordination of women, and the rejection of homosexuality are key features of hegemonic masculinity and for maintaining a hierarchy among men. Hegemonic


\(^{11}\) Wetherill and Edley, “Negotiating Hegemonic Masculinity.”
masculinity supports and legitimises men’s dominance over women, and importantly, it is also unambiguously heterosexual. Eric Anderson suggests this has become more complex as gay men are increasingly accepted into the dominant institutions and enjoy greater and more positive representation in the media and popular culture. The concept (coined in the 1980s) struggles then to account for the contemporary patterns that trouble these categories, for the social dynamics of groups of men not predicated on homophobic gestures or the rejection of women and the feminine, nor where these gestures are actively challenged by men.

Other researchers have joined this increasing dialogue which posits more inclusive or hybrid forms of masculinity. Demetrakis Demetriou suggests that Connell’s formulation wrongly sets up a dualism between hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities so that there is little possibility for these to inform and influence each other, despite there being numerous examples of hybrid patterns of practice and identification. Bridges and Pascoe directly employ the term *hybrid masculinities* to describe a blurring of hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities and to account for where traditional masculine values and practices mix with more subordinate or feminine types. Karla Elliott introduces the idea of *caring masculinities* in order to describe men that are increasingly rejecting traits associated with privilege and domination in favour of the more positive values of interdependence, relationality and care.

Moreover, there is some confusion around what hegemonic masculinity is actually referring to. Does it address representation, institutions, the practices, aspirations or experiences of men, or all of these at the same time? There is a significant amount of slippage here between the ideals and norms that are promoted and visible, compared to the realities of practice and experience. They do not necessarily line up. Thus, the concept is best used to describe the

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12 Anderson, “Masculinities and Sexualities.”
13 Demetriou, “Connell’s concept.”
overarching patterns and norms that are promoted and maintained in institutions and through representation, but becomes less useful for an analysis of how these patterns manifest in everyday lives. It accounts for large structural and cultural shifts that can be easily detected within our institutions and representations, however, there is still a lot unanswered here regarding the variation and multiplicity of identities, practices and bodies. As Jeff Hearn suggests, the concept is flawed largely because it imposes a ‘false unity on fluid, contradictory reality.’

Throughout this thesis I attend to the theoretical strains within studies of masculinities to demonstrate that these studies are at an impasse, a point at which scholars remain reluctant or unable to push beyond current frameworks into new and, as I argue, productive territory. The approaches that have become dominant within the field are unable to dissect and understand the complexities, contradictions and possibilities of male subjectivity or indeed the possibilities for masculinities beyond the male body. Bodies, I argue, are key to understanding subjectivity and masculinity, yet as it stands, the concept of hegemonic masculinity sheds too little light on the workings of embodiment. Whilst it emphasises the importance of gender in practice and acknowledges that masculinities are always embodied, the body still emerges primarily as a site for cultural inscription. The actual flesh of bodies, that is, the activities of the material body itself, is not greatly considered. Something occurs when culture (its norms and meanings) come into contact with real, fleshy, lived bodies and their capacities and functions. In chapter two, I outline exactly what this material body entails.

In her early work Connell does acknowledge the importance of this body. She suggests in *Masculinities* (1995), that when dealing with bodies both a positivist and social constructionist framework are inadequate. She writes: ‘Bodies cannot be understood as a neutral medium of social practice. Their materiality matters. They will do certain things and not others. Bodies are substantively in play in

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social practices.’ Here Connell introduces her term *body-reflexive practice*, a notion more attentive to bodies and their role in the shaping of subjectivity and social processes, than is the hegemonic masculinity paradigm. She explicitly states: ‘I want to argue for a stronger theoretical position, where bodies are seen as sharing in social agency, in generating and shaping courses of social conduct.’ Thus far these ideas have failed to have any significant impact on the scholarship of masculinities, a point I will illustrate, develop and complicate further in the following chapters. Scholars continue to centre hegemonic masculinity within their analyses of men and masculinities even as it is unable to offer a strong theoretical account of bodies themselves. The concept provides an analysis of the social and structural organisation of masculinity, that is, it describes a system of norms that operate both in a structural fashion through institutions, and also within cultural discourse and the interpersonal. The complex ways in which men position themselves in relation to these norms and structures, is less clear. In other words, this concept struggles to account for how masculinities are embodied in the world, how individual subjectivities are formed and lived in a real material sense. Making a case for and gesturing towards a more sophisticated evaluation of embodiment and its significance to masculinities, is the major objective of this thesis.

Given Connell’s significance within the field of masculinities, it is noteworthy that she herself rallies for a focus on the body and a greater understanding of embodiment. In response to the barrage of critique directed at the concept itself, Connell and Messerschmidt reach an important conclusion: that ‘the common social scientific reading of bodies as objects of a process of social construction is now widely considered to be inadequate.’ They write: ‘That hegemonic masculinity is related to particular ways of representing and using men’s bodies has been recognized from the earliest formulations of the concept. Yet the pattern of embodiment involved in hegemony has not been convincingly
This thesis therefore is a modest contribution to charting and accounting for those patterns.

The current conceptual tools and frameworks endemic to studies of masculinities struggle in several ways to account for and understand the world of men. First, they do not address subjectivity in an effective manner. Social constructionism explains what is constructed without properly addressing how this occurs. Gender norms as represented and policed through institutional and cultural means produce particular practices, behaviours and patterns of masculinity. How these norms actually seep into and constitute male subjectivity is less clear. Moreover, the model does not account for those practices that contradict or trouble normative patterns of masculinity. Second, the body is elided. These approaches tend to imply a cultural determinism where culture produces subjects. Subjectivity is rendered as thoroughly social rather than individual or material. There is a focus on external dominant structures of sociality rather than the activity and individuality of bodies. The body as expressive or “representational” is the limit of current studies of masculinities. Addressing this impasse by centring the body will generate new ways of understanding lived masculinities.

We implicitly understand, or feel, that the body is significant. We cannot live a life except through a body, without which there would be no life at all. The body allows us to connect to and interact with a world and with others. In this way it is a dynamic field of relations. Yet, despite the centrality of corporeality for human life, within dominant Western thought systems masculinity occupies the realm of mind and reason.

This pattern of denying or ignoring the materiality of masculinity has resulted in an often troubled encounter between men, masculinity and the body. For example, it is clear in the representations and discourses men encounter, there are normative, even ideal modes of bodily appearance and comportment. At the very least the male body must appear in ways that will secure its intelligibility as

20 Ibid.
male. This is evident from birth, and even prior to, where the body’s surface is marked as male (masculine) through a range of social practices and inscriptions. Beyond this there is an imperative to cultivate an ideal body, such that bodies are disciplined in order to approximate this ideal. This particular intersection of masculinity and bodies is marked by contradiction and anxiety. Robinson and Hockey note that the majority of men are unable to attain a ‘symbiotic relationship’ between their own bodies and dominant discourses of how the male body should appear, behave, react. In this thesis I examine the anxious relationship men develop with the surface of their bodies. This is an anxiety that, as a man, I also experience. I feel the weight of my body’s surface. I am aware of the ways in which it is read and I am made acutely aware of what it lacks. Changes to my body’s surface alter my sense of self, thus the flesh itself co-constitutes my subjectivity and my way of being in the world. I am but a body that is living in relation with the world and with others.

The psychic and bodily drives of the flesh, like emotion and desire, operate under the weight of normative masculinity. There is a requirement that these too manifest in a particular manner. Masculinity is equated with mind and culture, hence men are deemed to be less tied to emotional or fleshy states. Corbett recalls his experience of Mitchell, a young boy whose school teacher had criticised his gender expression. He writes: ‘It seemed he was “too pudgy,” “too colorful,” had “too much to say,” often in a “most animated way,” and that, above all, he felt too much; “sometimes he even cries.”’ Mitchell had troubled the usual expectations of masculinity. He had failed to properly retreat from, and repudiate, femininity. Calvin Thomas further describes this relation between masculinity and the body:

An abject masculine relationship to the maternal, to the feminine, to the non-identical, also interprets – and is perhaps over determined by – an anxious masculine relationship to the male body, to the visibility of that body, the traverse of its boundaries, the

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representability of its products, the corporeal conditions of male subjectivity, and the unavoidable materiality of the signifying process itself.23

Regarding desire specifically, there exists a confusing contradiction. On the one hand desire for power, independence and sexual activity, is essentialised as an inherent trait of men. One avenue that legitimates this is scientific discourse that posits testosterone as the chemical explanation for these particular traits. The behaviours and practices that emerge as a result are often normalised, even adulated. On the other hand, there is an expectation that desire can and should be repressed, that a proper masculinity exhibits reason over emotion, the mind over the workings of the body. Questions surrounding the male body are thick with contradiction and confusion. Explaining these tensions is an important task for scholars of masculinities.

I argue here that the disembodiment of masculinities is a political problem. If masculinity is a disembodied condition then what moves men to care about other bodies that are marginalised within contemporary patriarchal/capitalist structures? If masculinity is shored up through a repudiation and denigration of other bodies and experiences, then what do men draw on in order to understand the other, and themselves? In the fight for the rights of women and for LGBTI liberation, these groups and individuals have pushed hard to win greater freedoms and rights. This has never simply been handed over by men; who hold the power to do so. This is partly because men are instructed to disengage from the very entity (the body) that might compel them to empathise, to retreat, to understand the other and their particular struggle. Sara Ahmed attests to the uses of affect, which is always bodily, for political movement and organising. She writes: 'a movement requires us to be moved.'24

Scholars rarely address this disengagement. Not enough has been made of the body and the embodied states of men, of the desires and emotions that are necessarily embodied, in all men. Judith Butler’s notion of gender melancholy is

23 Thomas, Male Matters, 15.
one good example of how we might start to do this.\textsuperscript{25} The work done to produce a coherent, stable, intelligible masculinity, she argues, is also a repudiation or disavowal of an inherent desire. In this case, same-sex desire is buried deep within the psyche and the symptom of this repudiation is gender itself. In order to fit within a heterosexual frame and be read as heterosexual, men must express a masculinity that can be read as such. Hence, normative masculinity is underpinned by this repudiation of same-sex desire. Here, Butler centres the body and the psyche in order to explain how gender manifests in the world. She offers an account of how bodies are central to the doing of masculinity. If masculinity in its normative or dominant form is a political problem, as I suggest it is, then a more precise reading of bodies in our analyses, can help to address this problem.

This thesis addresses the theoretical frameworks and conceptual tools employed within studies of masculinities \textit{alongside} the diverse ways in which these masculinities manifest in the world, that is, the ways in which they are lived. A dichotomy or opposition between theory and lived experience is often erroneously cited. In fact, theory is what scholars use to describe and explain what is occurring in the world. Gayle Salamon writes: ‘how we embody gender is how we theorize gender and to suggest otherwise is to misunderstand both theorization and embodiment.’\textsuperscript{26} Theory is designed in order to articulate what is already occurring in the world, and in this case, a world intimately entangled in the problems of masculinity and men.

Following this, I identify three key sites for thinking about masculinities: pornography; sport; and online dating. Whilst pornography has been examined extensively from a feminist perspective there has been less said about pornography, men and masculinity. The bulk of scholarship emerges out of feminist concerns thereby focusing on women, not men. In particular it concentrates on the representations within porn and their effects regarding


\textsuperscript{26} Gayle Salamon, \textit{Assuming a Body: Transgender and Rhetorics of Materiality} (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 71.
gender relations, sexual violence and power. This of course has been an important focus. With some key exceptions, the literature has rarely addressed the multiple ways in which porn intersects with masculinities, for example how it might shape sexual attraction and sexuality or its impact on body image and sense of self. More centrally it has not considered the activity of the flesh, how this might intervene to undo or trouble the ideal male sexuality promoted in porn. Does the consumption of pornography affect men? If so, what are the specific effects, and how exactly do these occur? Moreover, do the sexual capacities of men align with the ideal portrayals in porn? Importantly, these concerns directly link to feminist concerns. Addressing the ways in which pornography might shape men offers potential for expanding knowledge about the existing power relations between genders.

In this thesis I specifically address the collision of representation and bodies; that is, the key ways in which representations of mainstream pornography seep into the sexual subjectivities of men. The employment of a purely social constructionist approach struggles to account for how particular discourses and images are grafted onto male bodies and their sexual habits. There is an explanatory gap between representation and practice. This gap I contend is tied up in the body. Further, the recent move of pornography onto the internet ushers in a new set of problems and questions to be addressed within feminist scholarship as well as studies of masculinities. Pornography is mediated, accessed and experienced differently via digital and virtual interfaces, thus a new reading of it is required to better account for its impact on bodies and subjectivities.

In studies of masculinities the intersection of sport and masculinity has garnered significant attention. Whilst the use of constructionist frameworks has been productive I contend they are less potent for a consideration of sport today. There are two key problems that emerge. First, contemporary masculinities in sports are becoming increasingly fluid. By this I mean that more traditional or normative models have become elastic. Attitudes towards women and towards masculinities that are traditionally subordinated, are shifting and being
reworked. Moreover, there has been a transformation in the gender expression and presentation of sportsmen themselves. Second, this “new masculinity” of the sportsman has ushered in new expectations regarding the behaviours and practices of these men, that are promoted and enforced at a structural (institutional) level. This does not mean that traditional types of masculinity have vanished from football. Rather, a tension now exists between new types of masculinity and traditional forms. The sportsman is expected to take on and display particular attitudes and behaviours but this may be unsuccessful, or may co-exist with other forms of behaviour that more closely align with traditional masculinity.

In my example of Australian Rules Football (AFL) these tensions are particularly apparent. The contemporary footballer is caught between competing discourses, at a structural level and a more individual level. Players are expected to adhere to a series of rules, initiatives and policies promoted and enforced through the AFL, however these often fail due to other more traditional forms of masculinity that are being inscribed and practiced at the level of the body. Current constructionist models such as the concept of hegemonic masculinity, struggle to account for these contradictions. This account is important in order to better address a number of key questions that have been asked of the AFL. How do we explain the violent and discriminatory attitudes and practices that continue to be directed towards women and some groups of men, even though the AFL has made attempts to address these? Are these attempts a genuine effort to discipline and restrict problematic behaviours and improve relations between the genders and between men? Why is there not one elite footballer who has “come out” as gay? A more sophisticated conceptual framework that addresses embodiment provides a more nuanced response to these questions and reaches a deeper understanding of the contemporary footballer.

The emergence of dating websites such as RSVP and Gaydar, and smart phone applications such as Grindr have revolutionised intimate interactions and relations. Through an examination of current dating sites and digital applications I consider how the sexual subjectivities of gay men, as an already subordinated
masculinity, are informed and shaped online. I argue these technologies mediate, enframe and categorise bodies, desire and subjectivity in ways that are limiting and restrictive. The profile user is represented within corporeal terms and enframed within a set of templates that order his subjectivity in accordance with deeply embedded (and persistent) ideologies and essentialisms regarding gender and sexuality. This case study illustrates the need to address our contemporary technological climate and its intersection with masculinity and issues of gender and sexuality. In many ways these sites are a perfect paradigm for the continuing problem of the nature/culture dichotomy. In particular I am interested in the reordering of masculinity that occurs; that is, the ways in which dominant tropes of masculinity reappear in different, even unlikely contexts. How is it that gay men also perpetuate the harmful norms of masculinity despite their experience of oppression as a consequence of these norms? And why are these tropes so difficult to shed?

The current scholarship on online porn, sport and dating technologies employs a range of approaches to read these sites in interesting and useful ways. Ultimately however their focus is too narrow, enacted through the lens of representation and social constructionism. This results in simplified or un-interrogated notions of masculinity and male subjectivity. The body and its pivotal role in the shaping and forming of masculinities and male subjectivities, is largely ignored.

Key Contentions

In view of the questions and problems outlined thus far I present a number of central contentions for this thesis. To begin, I argue that studies of masculinities have not adequately attended to the body and embodiment. Connell did gesture towards a more complex understanding of the body with her idea of body reflexive practices, however, this raises a number of questions that are central to this thesis. Why has this not been taken up within these studies? Why did hegemonic masculinity become and remain the dominant conceptual landmark?

27 Connell, Masculinities, 59-66.
By not sufficiently attending to the body I suggest that this scholarship is in danger of being itself, masculinist. I want this to remain an active question throughout this thesis. By persisting only with constructionist models, scholars fail to properly disrupt the production of knowledge that continues to privilege mind over body, reason over emotion, culture over nature, and therefore male over female. As Calvin Thomas notes, scholars of masculinities have at times been ‘agents of patriarchal domination.’ Masculinity has remained disembodied within theory yet it is always embodied in the world. There is a disconnect or gap between what is occurring in the real world and theory’s apprehension or understanding of this. This thesis seeks to address this gap.

Second, I posit the body as the starting and central point for examining masculinities and the world of men. To be clear, this is not a return to the biologistic model that has dominated much of modern western thought whereby the body is something objective, ahistorical and innate. This is the very thing that early feminists and those that embraced social constructionism attempted to overcome. Such an intervention has been hugely important and productive. However, the apparent eagerness to vanquish this biological model has meant that the body has been posited as too passive, as socially determined. The body itself must be thought of as an active and central force that co-constitutes subjectivity. The body as lived is the axis between the psyche, the corporeal and the social. Embodiment is therefore an individual process rather than purely social. The body is the point at which individual subjectivity manifests.

I contend that a new mode of theoretical enquiry is required in order to do this work, I start by introducing a model I call *soma-masculinities*. In addressing gender and masculinities it is imperative that scholars address how these are lived. The material body is central then, as the site through which we live and interact with the world — through which we can have a life. *Soma-masculinities* is a model that addresses masculinities through the material body and its fleshy components. It brings the *flesh* into bodies and questions of masculinity. It is a reminder that the body is the *sine qua non* of masculinity. *Soma-masculinities* is

not one specific theory or concept but rather a mode of enquiry. It utilises a broad toolkit which incorporates systems of thought that are already available and engaged, particularly within feminist and queer theory. In particular this toolkit includes phenomenology, Grosz’s corporeality, Connell’s body reflexive practice, Butler’s performativity and other concepts that attend to the body as lived. Greater attention to these frameworks offers a more capacious account of the questions and problems regarding contemporary masculinities. This significant emphasis on the body as active and animated, builds on and extends social constructionist readings of the body. The body co-constitutes subjectivity and is therefore central to a proper understanding of it. In chapter two I outline this theoretical framework in particular detail.

Finally, I argue that this turn towards soma-masculinities makes some original contributions. First, it adds to the broader scholarship on gender and sexuality. The study of masculinities is an increasingly important component of the field of gender studies and also has significant implications for the political and theoretical projects of feminism. Such a focus is critical when one considers that masculinity and male subjectivity have undergone a long history of theoretical neglect. The proliferation of these studies in recent years has been, in part, a reaction to this. Masculinity has been taken for granted, has been considered self-evident and stable. Indeed, men and masculinity are the referent of subjectivity. Unfortunately, this has meant that masculinity has occupied an unmarked theoretical space, thus, the project of turning masculinity into a visible object for analysis and critique has been crucial. It helps address the many tangible and often devastating effects of unchecked patterns of masculinity. As Kaja Silverman eloquently argues, ‘masculinity impinges with such force upon femininity that to effect a large-scale reconfiguration of male identification and desire would, at the very least, permit female subjectivity to be lived differently than it is at present.’

Furthermore, a central focus on the body within studies of masculinities is particularly subversive and important for broader scholarship on gender. As Iris

Marion Young notes, for centuries women have been excluded from important human activities and theoretical reflection ‘on the grounds that women’s essential natures are different from men’s.’ Female subjectivity is often reduced to the bodily realm, a strategy that has ensured women are both feared and devalued, the emotionally unpredictable female posited in opposition to the rational male. Grosz argues that corporeality must no longer be associated with one sex. She writes: ‘Women can no longer take on the function of being the body for men while men are left free to soar to the heights of theoretical reflection and cultural production.’ The gradual development of a feminist politics and scholarship focusing specifically on female subjectivity has challenged this. While this has been a necessary project, it has also meant that feminist theory, the theoretical space most equipped to examine the male body, has tended to focus on the female body and female subjectivity. This elision of male bodies from theory has implications for both men and women. As Tania Modleski suggests, ‘women... are made to bear... the burdens of masculine ambivalence about the body.’ A focus on the body in studies of masculinities can begin to dislodge and disrupt these patterns of knowledge production.

The interventions I propose also help to address the essentialisms and binaries that haunt and oversimplify studies of gender and sexuality. These binaries are problematic since they produce a set of essentialisms that lead to hierarchies and uneven power relations. Rather than addressing the body itself, scholars within the humanities and social sciences have emphasised constructionist frameworks as a way to counter the essentialisms traditionally attached to the body by science and earlier philosophical traditions. This approach has tended to establish new forms of determinism that universalise experience and practice based purely on social patterns and norms. This means the binary logic of mind/body, nature/culture is left intact. Grosz calls this ‘a crisis of reason.’ She notes: ‘given the prevailing binarized or dichotomized categories governing

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31 Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 22.
Western reason and the privilege accorded to one term over the other... it is necessary to examine the subordinated, negative, or excluded term body as the unacknowledged condition of the dominant term, reason." Leaving the body unexamined does nothing to challenge essentialist understandings of it or to disrupt its dualistic relation to mind and culture. These observations are not new. Grosz writes: ‘this growing interest in the corporeal has been largely motivated by an attempt to devise an ethics and politics adequate for non-dualist accounts of subjectivity.’ Concepts of embodiment provide a means of incorporating bodies more easily into questions regarding subjectivity.

A focus on soma-masculinities is important for a contemporary debate about masculinities. For some time there has been a growing public discourse concerning men, masculinities and the effects associated with them. In Misframing Men Kimmel writes that over the past decade or so ‘masculinity has been paraded before us, consciously and intentionally, as perhaps never before.’ In particular, Kimmel has in mind a number of major political, economic and cultural shifts that have occurred in the US since the early 1990s, which he argues, demonstrates that masculinity has become increasingly troubled, fragile and fragmented. The effects of this are vast, particularly for those excluded from masculinity altogether. However, there is some room here to think about the pressures imposed on men to engage with these constructs. Patriarchy imprisons men as well as women, although this manifests differently and unevenly. French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu cleverly notes how men are ‘dominated by their domination.’ They are subjected to the demands and ideologies of masculinity, and it is the enactment of these that produces such devastating effects. A detailed account of masculinities as lived and embodied is therefore vital. Moreover, this work must address the current technological

34 Ibid., 83.
36 These shifts he contends, were sparked by a number of significant events including the war on terror and the military masculinity of the Bush years, the rise in school shootings, the global financial crisis, and debates around homosexual rights.
climate and its impacts. Gender and sexuality cannot be accounted for in the same way, using the same tools. This technological turn has ushered in new questions and problems, particularly in relation to embodiment. A fresh reading is required that looks beyond purely social constructionist frameworks.

**Key Methods**

This thesis is concerned with lived masculinities in contemporary contexts, hence it employs a multi-faceted methodology. A large component of this thesis is concerned with theory. I stake a theoretical claim and argue that a focus on bodies through the frame of soma-masculinities can deepen our understanding of contemporary masculinities and the lived experiences, practices and behaviours of men. Across the chapters to follow I address this concern using various methods, but three in particular underpin the study. First, this thesis engages with a rich theoretical palette emerging out of philosophy, feminist theory, queer theory and the broader discipline of gender studies. Second, I analyse particular cultural sites and texts in order to underline and illustrate how this theory can be applied. Finally, I adopt a historical approach wherein I employ a genealogical lens to a history of the present, an acknowledgment that within both the theoretical and the cultural there is a vast history that has led us to, and can help us describe and understand masculinities in contemporary terms.

I contend that soma-masculinities can help to address the impasse in studies of masculinities by placing a greater focus on the body. This involves questioning the conceptual frameworks and methods used in these studies. In chapters three, five and seven, I point to a number of significant gaps within the scholarship and employ soma-masculinities to produce a stronger analysis of bodies and embodiment. Soma-masculinities utilises a number of concepts and theoretical frameworks that have emerged within philosophy, feminist and queer theory. The principle theorists I draw on include Raewyn Connell, Judith Butler, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Martin Heidegger, Elizabeth Grosz, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Ken Corbett. This rich toolkit can help add to the theoretical approaches that are
often lacking in studies of masculinities. Within current studies there is an emphasis on sociological research. Amy Wharton writes: ‘as a scientific discipline, sociology values systematic, theoretically informed analyses of the empirical world.’\(^{38}\) While empirical research is important I argue that the ‘theoretically informed analyses’ are often too thin, lacking a solid lens or model that can adequately explain the data and thus the contemporary world of men. To be clear, my intention is not to dismiss or disavow past or current theoretical or empirical scholarship, but rather to build on this scholarship.

This focus on theory raises an important concern regarding the production of knowledge. How is theoretical knowledge produced and under what conditions? In *Space, Time and Perversion* Grosz suggests that thus far the production of knowledges in the west has been an intensely masculine process, one that privileges the mind and reason. ‘Knowledge is an activity; it is a practice and not a contemplative reflection... Knowledges are... products of bodily impulses and forces that have mistaken themselves for products of mind,’ she writes.\(^{39}\) Grosz draws attention to the material process and conditions involved in producing knowledges. Do bodies enable or constrain how we might imagine subjectivity and how we produce knowledge regarding it? Certainly our bodies provide us with a specific experience of the world that can only be seen and lived from that perspective, and yet the significance of our materiality is often disavowed. This is particularly apparent where masculinity and men are concerned. Grosz writes: ‘men take on the roles of neutral knowers only because they have evacuated their own specific forms of corporeality and repressed all its traces from the knowledges they produce.’\(^{40}\) Yet, the ways in which men see and act in the world is a clear demonstration of their own corporeal interests. In this book Grosz suggests that bodies are more active than we have acknowledged, that they shape the ways in which knowledge is produced and employed. Regarding masculinities then, centring the body is vital.

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\(^{40}\) Ibid., 38.
Masculinities however, are not lived in theory. Rather, theory provides a way into some of the lived realities of men, a tool to better understand and account for the practices and subjectivities of men. It is like any language that we use to describe and explain the things we can see and experience. This thesis attends to theory however it also attends to masculinities as lived. Theory and the real world are intimately connected and must be thought of in relation to each other. Theory helps us makes sense of what is occurring in the world. It is a way to articulate this. The world demands that theory must be constantly reconfigured. Theoretical tools are developed to “keep up” with, to explain, to account for and better understand real world problems and questions. By drawing on three particular contemporary sites of masculinities, I ground and apply this conceptual work.

While the thesis examines contemporary masculinities, attention to the histories of this theoretical terrain is crucial. I employ a genealogical approach to demonstrate how scholars have arrived at the current theoretical positions. This approach can help uncover the specific political and historical contexts in which these patterns of doing theory, have emerged. Moreover, in order to uncover something about how men actually live in the contemporary world a consideration of the current environment is paramount. In particular I draw attention to our contemporary technological landscape. This is a key concern for this thesis, a consideration of technology and its effects. The internet has emerged as one of the most powerful and significant forces capable of controlling and shaping bodies. In many ways technology informs and marks contemporary western society.

A limitation of this thesis is that it does not incorporate many of the intersections that gender and queer studies currently address. The theories I draw on were formulated and employed within a western intellectual and political context, and their relevance beyond this context, is unclear and not assumed. I focus on cis-gendered men and cis-male bodies through western conceptual frameworks of masculinity. I use the terms men, male and male bodies in this way throughout the thesis unless otherwise specified. Therefore, it is not all encompassing and
does not speak to all men and male bodies, although it does still address a large group of men. The central point of this thesis is to interrogate current theoretical models within studies of masculinities hence my focus is on those subject positions addressed by these models; cis-men. Nonetheless, it is my hope that *soma-masculinities* will open up these conversations and provide a useful framework for thinking about queer (beyond gay men) and trans subjectivities. Theoretical frameworks that centre the body have already been employed within queer and trans scholarship to great effect. This is seen most potently in the work of Gayle Salamon and Ken Corbett.41 In the chapters that follow I draw on this work in relation to masculinities.

In the opening chapter I attend to the field of masculinities and draw attention to the key scholarship that has emerged since its entry into the academy. As I make clear, this focus on men has been approached in various ways, often in line with feminist concerns and at other times, as a direct reaction against them. In particular I address more recent studies of masculinities and their over reliance on Connell’s concept of hegemonic masculinity, as I also highlight a number of gaps regarding its treatment of the intersection of masculinities and embodiment. This opens the way for my examination of theories of embodiment in chapter two in which I pinpoint some of the most fertile theoretical terrain for a consideration of masculinities and embodiment. In particular I address Connell’s underdeveloped and forgotten concept of body-reflexive practice, a concept ignored by scholars of masculinities in favour of hegemonic masculinity. I then critically assess a number of key concepts and frameworks that can be deployed through my model of *soma-masculinities*. In particular I suggest that the insights offered by phenomenology, which I locate in the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Simone de Beauvoir and Martin Heidegger, is best equipped to account for the significance of bodies to masculinities and male subjectivities. My argument that a turn to *soma-masculinities* helps resolve the impasse that currently circles studies of masculinities, is bolstered in this chapter through an examination of the model’s conceptual toolkit.

41 Salamon, *Assuming a Body* and Corbett, *Boyhoods*. 
In the next section I address the phallic body. As a symbolic concept, the phallus is synonymous with masculinity in its ideal form. It maintains its power by remaining precisely that, as something immaterial, not of the body. The realities of the penis and male sexuality are therefore kept distinct from the ideas about them. This severance is apparent both in culture and within theoretical scholarship. In chapter three I examine the distinction made between the material and the symbolic, the penis and the phallus, and point to where this occurs and is accomplished. In particular I take up Peter Lehman’s argument that within contemporary cultural life, the material aspects of the phallic body are kept hidden or regulated to maintain the symbolic power of the phallus. This can be seen also in earlier Western cultures although as I will make apparent with the example of Ancient Rome, these societies demonstrate a greater acceptance of the inextricable links between the material and the symbolic. I then consider the prevalence of this separation in theoretical scholarship, suggesting that theorists have missed an opportunity to interrogate masculinity by drawing attention to the material body. The body itself, as an active and contradictory force, is rarely considered, yet it throws up all kinds of questions, some of which help to undo phallic masculinity.

In chapter four I consider representations of the penis in contemporary culture through the example of pornography. Scholars of masculinities have been relatively silent regarding pornography and masculinities, and in this chapter I shed further light on this intersection. First, I draw attention to pornography’s recent relocation to the internet and contend that even the vast feminist literature on porn is yet to adequately examine this shift. The assumption that traditional models are simply replicated online ignores the subversive possibilities that the internet might enable. I argue that this move onto the internet is hugely important for thinking about male bodies and masculinities, both in terms of how traditional scripts are upheld and how they might be challenged. In the second part of this chapter I show how soma-masculinities can be a useful framework for an analysis of masculinities and pornography. In particular it can help address one of the most pressing concerns in current
debate: the relationship between representation and practice, and the ways in which online porn might affect and seep into male bodies and subjectivities.

Whilst the concept of hegemonic masculinity has generated a range of important interventions there are a number of limitations. In chapter five I provide a more detailed treatment of the most significant critiques of the concept, through the example of sport. While there is a definite historical trajectory that neatly aligns sport with notions of hegemonic masculinity, this affiliation has been troubled more recently. I note how Connell’s concept sets up a dualism between hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities which is less useful for an analysis of contemporary sport in the wake of a number of significant political and cultural shifts. In other words, it is unable to account for the multiple and often contradictory behaviours and practices of the contemporary sportsman. A number of scholars have noted these limitations and formulated alternative ways of accounting for these. Despite this I suggest that soma-masculinities can better account for the behaviours and practices that confuse or contradict Connell’s concept. Furthermore, I attend to the concept of homosociality, a concept that is often used to explain how hegemonic masculinity is maintained, albeit typically framed within a social constructionist framework. A recovery of some of the richer elements of homosociality can help point to the more unconscious elements of embodiment, and in this way, is more useful for an examination of masculinities in contemporary sport.

In chapter six I examine Australian Rules Football (AFL) as a case study to underline the contentions of the previous chapter. Historically, the AFL has promoted and nurtured a traditional masculinity that aligns with the concept of hegemonic masculinity. Here I attend to this historical alignment and the range of ways in which football mirrors the components of Connell’s concept. However, due to the recent professionalisation of the game and in response to significant public debate regarding the violent and discriminatory antics of football players both on and off the field, there has been an increasing focus on the regulation of players via the introduction of strict policies and structures. I argue that the footballer’s body is caught between competing discourses, some of which
support the hegemonic ideal, and others that challenge or undo it. This has meant that the set of rules promoted through AFL and club policies are often ineffective due to other discourses that are being inscribed, taken on and practiced at the level of the body. Thus, there is a tension between what the footballer must do and what he actually does, between structures at the institutional level and discourses at the level of the body, between “new” sports masculinities and traditional hegemonic types. The concept of hegemonic masculinity struggles to account for these contradictions and here I argue that soma-masculinities is able to get underneath some of these tensions and reach a more complex understanding of the practices and behaviours of these athletes.

The next chapter takes us somewhere else in that it examines how gay men are often reduced to the body. Historically, there has been a discursive push to tie gay male subjectivity to the body and femininity, thus excluding them from normative masculinity. The advent of the Gay Liberation movement ushered in many challenges to these discourses. With the development of particular public identities in the 1970s, such as the clone, gay men sought to counteract and challenge these earlier impressions through an adherence to a normative, even hegemonic, model of masculinity. With the advent of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the 1980s, gay male sexuality and culture was cast as abject and diseased. Similar to the previous decade, specific practices emerged that were underpinned by dominant tropes of masculinity in order to counteract these associations. In this chapter I survey the scholarship on gay men which accounts for how these discourses were challenged by gay men in a conscious manner. However, the more unconscious motivations and investments are rarely addressed. Using soma-masculinities I demonstrate that a stronger consideration of the body can help describe and account for these unconscious elements and the ways in which the bodily practices of gay men helped to forge a viable identity and sense of self.

In the final chapter I consider how aspirations towards normative masculinity persist for gay men today and are replicated within the virtual world. This can be seen most easily in contemporary internet dating sites. Specifically, I examine how bodies are represented visually on these sites and consider the language
that is deployed around these bodies. Evidently these sites tend to reinforce ideals of masculinity, one that is thoroughly hegemonic - white, heterosexual and physically powerful. Moreover, they mediate and categorise bodies in ways that are limiting and restrictive. Profile users are represented within corporeal terms and framed within a set of templates that simplify or "thin out" subjectivity in accordance with deeply embedded (and persistent) ideologies regarding gender and sexuality. In raising these concerns I consider Heidegger's 1954 essay on technology and in particular his notion of *enframing*. I argue that his work provides a productive framework in which to examine the features of these sites and their effects. Moreover, his work emphasises the need to address technology and the relationship we have developed with it. In many respects these new dating technologies are a perfect paradigm for the continuing problem of the nature-culture dichotomy. The ways in which we develop and engage with them points to this ongoing investment and man's persistent attempt to control and order nature (bodies). By centring the body, scholars can reach a greater understanding of these problems and properly disrupt this binary logic.
Part One — The body in theory
Chapter One — Masculinities: Approaching the scholarship

‘Knowledge is an activity; it is a practice and not a contemplative reflection. It does things... knowledges are a product of a bodily drive to live and conquer. They misrecognize themselves as interior, merely ideas, thoughts, and concepts, forgetting or repressing their own corporeal genealogies and processes of production. They are products of bodily impulses and forces that have mistaken themselves for products of mind.’ — Elizabeth Grosz, *Space, Time, and Perversion.*

‘Bodies are involved more actively, more intimately, and more intricately in social processes than theory has usually allowed... It is important not only that masculinities be understood as embodied but also that the interweaving of embodiment and social context be addressed.’ — RW Connell and James W Messerschmidt, *Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept.*

Current studies of masculinities are attended to by scholars who adhere largely to constructionist frameworks and sociological understandings of gender. This group has also been instrumental in the transformation of these formal studies of masculinities into a viable field that sits across a number of disciplines, in particular sociology and gender studies. As numerous scholars have noted, masculinity has often been an unmarked space, the default for subjectivity. Thus, this scholarship addresses this gap. Amy Wharton writes that ‘the sociology of women has gradually given way to a sociology of gender,’ with a focus on men as ‘gendered rather than generic beings.’ This has resulted in an explosion of literature which critically analyses the subject of masculinity. In 1998, the *Men and Masculinities* journal, edited by sociologist Michael Kimmel, was first published and it remains the most prominent peer-reviewed journal in the field. It is noteworthy that this scholarship regarding men and masculinities did not simply appear within a theoretical vacuum. Much of the earliest work, although less formal and more fragmented, was heavily influenced by feminist discourse and politics. Indeed, it is largely due to feminism that studies of masculinities have been able to surface at all.

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In highlighting the historical detail of this field, I have divided them into three groups: early men’s studies, manhood theories and studies of masculinities. Though frequently placed under the umbrella term of “Men’s Studies,” there are stark differences between these three strands. The first two are intimately connected to feminism with one being an appropriation of it and the other a wilful reaction to or backlash against it. The third group describes more recent scholarship, what has come to be known as studies of masculinities. I argue that this third area of scholarship has ostensibly diverged from contemporary feminist work in that it remains tied to social constructionist models whilst feminist theory has become more diverse in its use of frameworks and in its aims. My contention here is that studies of masculinities have struggled to keep up with feminist theory and its fast pace, a point I will elucidate further. But first I outline some of the key studies produced in the 1970s and 80s.

**Early Men’s Studies**

The “second wave” feminist movement that had its beginnings in the late 1960s was the vehicle largely responsible for the emergence of early men’s studies. This marked a clear break from earlier sex-role theory, a conceptual framework that theorised sex roles as a socio-cultural elaboration of biological sex difference. Under role theory, masculinity was seen as the expression of the male role. Crucially, this socialisation was not necessarily seen as negative or oppressive, a position that was properly challenged during the second wave and in early men’s studies.45 Within early feminist discourse it was quickly understood that a feminist lens could be employed to scrutinise the traditional male role. A new emphasis was placed on the social and political construction of masculinity and the limitations and impacts of this on both men and women. These studies became less tied to sex role language in favour of addressing

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power and gender relations. While early men’s studies began as a number of organised groups and events, it soon entered the academy, resulting in an explosion of formal studies.

Jack Sawyer’s essay “On Male Liberation” (1970), is one of the first scholarly engagements with masculinity wherein he encourages men to reconsider sex-role stereotypes and interrogate their effects. According to Sawyer, the gender ideologies that underpin the particular role of women prove to be restrictive for men as well. Sawyer’s essay is an example of the male liberation discourse that emerged at this time, which stressed the ways in which sex roles affect men’s interpersonal relationships and emotional well-being. Similarly, Robert Brannon addresses the male sex role and its negative effects for both men and women. He divides masculinity into four categories: No sissy stuff, Be a big wheel, Be a sturdy oak, Give ‘em Hell. These describe the expectations and norms for masculinity; to be strong, independent, emotionally stoic and straight. Brannon’s framework became an important touchstone for the various groups and scholars working with sex role theory. Michael Messner argues however, that this new mode of enquiry did have its limitations. In particular it often remained too tied to sex role language which ignored issues of power and the privileging effects of this power, for men. He writes: ‘there were obvious strains and tensions from the movement’s attempt to focus simultaneously on men’s institutional power and the “costs of masculinity” to men.’

While liberation discourse did interrogate the problems of masculinity, it tended to focus on the effects felt by men rather than women.

One of the most important critiques of the male sex role emerges in Joseph Pleck’s *Myth of Masculinity* (1981).\(^{50}\) Pleck provides a thorough analysis of the normative male sex role and its limitations; being an unrealistic ideal that incorrectly describes the experiences of the majority of men. In particular he argues that the notion of power is often overlooked in sex role theory. Addressing this further in “Men’s Power with Women, Other Men, and Society: A Men’s Movement Analysis,” he analyses power relations within the context of patriarchy.\(^{51}\) Fully aware of the emerging anti-sexism men’s movement, Pleck attempts a feminist understanding of men and power, and the effects these forces have on the lives of women. Bob Lamm also aligns himself more explicitly with feminist concerns in his essay “Learning from Women (1975),” where he delivers a personal account of how feminist literature had enlightened him on the subjects of rape and sexism, and the effects of these on women.\(^{52}\)

These are a few examples of the initial work done on masculinity by male scholars. Although there was a focus on, and interrogation of the male sex role, the aims and outcomes of these studies varied greatly. Scholars like Pleck and Lamm were more closely aligned with feminist concerns, and their interrogations of masculinity and the male sex role, reflected this concern. For others, this focus on sex role theory would later underpin the anti-feminist position of the men’s rights movement, where feminism would be seen as an obstacle to men’s liberation. This is most clearly seen in the later work of Warren Farrell, whom I will address in the following section.

Another glaring limitation of the liberation discourse was that it focused on a particular group of men; specifically, men who were white, heterosexual and middle class. During this time the politics of sexuality, class and race were also placed under a microscope as inequalities amongst men became apparent.


\(^{52}\) Bobb Lamm, “Learning from Women,” in *Feminism and Masculinities*, ed. PF Murphy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 50-6. This essay is drawn from a speech made to the Queens College Women’s Union on October 28, 1975.
Within the Gay Liberation movement that began in 1969 and had started to flourish in the 1970s, there were a number of scholars who addressed the liberation of gay men within a feminist framework. Carl Wittman’s 1970 manifesto was a pivotal work for gay liberation, one that, as Peter Murphy notes, ‘inspired young gay men to embrace their homosexuality and join the gay liberation movement’. Whilst the focus is on men Wittman credits the women’s liberation movement as being an important catalyst, helping expose the oppression that gay men also suffer at the hands of a patriarchal society. In his paper “Toward Gender Justice” (1977), written after the movement had long been established, John Stoltenberg highlights that even within the gay male community the oppression of women is apparent. In this essay Stoltenberg implores gay men to reject the culturally programmed masculinity which privileges men over women. This privilege he argues, is specifically heterosexual, thus challenging its political and social order is crucial for the liberation of both women and gay men.

Alongside the politics of gender and sexuality, scholars interrogated inequalities based on class. This first began with the development of socialist feminism in the mid-1970s which blended Marxist concepts with those of radical feminism. Iris Marion Young notes how both radical and socialist feminists agreed that Marxism had failed as a theory of history and failed to account for the origins and dynamics of male domination over women. However, socialist feminists argued that a critique of the capitalist economic system was an important one to sustain. This group adopted a dual system theory which defines patriarchy and capitalism as the two identifiable systems that intersect and govern the individual. Regarding masculinities specifically, Andrew Tolson’s book The Limits of Masculinity (1977) was groundbreaking in its attempt to highlight the
effect of class distinctions amongst men.\textsuperscript{57} Whilst conceding that men as a whole benefit from patriarchy, Tolson draws attention to some of the variations amongst members of that group, insisting that class inequalities in particular, result in an uneven distribution of patriarchal dividends. However, this focus on class and economic structures was considered too limited. Michael Messner argues that the socialist feminist was in danger of ignoring “the woman question”, and inequalities among men were often reduced to class differences, thus ignoring issues of racism and homophobia.\textsuperscript{58}

Robert Staples provides one of the earliest critical engagements with feminist theory and black men. In \textit{Black Masculinity: The Black Male's Role in American Society} (1982), he examines the sexism of black men but also underlines the inequalities and powerlessness that black men suffer as a group compared to white men.\textsuperscript{59} The edited volume \textit{Black Men}, published a year earlier, also interrogates the institutional and social factors that position black men differently from their white counterparts.\textsuperscript{60} Both of these books are critical of the women's movement, which they argue, ignores the intersection of race in their analyses of power relations and patriarchy. These limitations were addressed also by prominent feminists such as bell hooks, who exposes the lack of intersectionality within the movement.\textsuperscript{61} In a later book \textit{We real cool} (2003), hooks addresses black masculinity head on, and describes the ways in which black men are adversely positioned and socialised within a white patriarchal society.\textsuperscript{62} Despite attending to the marginalisation and punishment of black men in this book, hooks never loses sight of the very real effects this has on black women and the black community in general, against the backdrop of a white mainstream society.

\textsuperscript{57} Andrew Tolson, \textit{The Limits of Masculinity} (London: Tavistock Publications, 1977), 141.
These works that arose within the liberationist, radical and socialist camps can be considered the first foray into studies of masculinities. Although as Murphy notes, it was less about men’s studies and more about what feminism had to say about men.\(^\text{63}\) Moreover, while they are all from a feminist perspective there are tensions that exist, with each approach tending to privilege one particular social group within its core analysis. Liberationists focus on race and sexuality, socialists on class, and radical anti-sexists are concerned mostly with patriarchy and inequalities between the sexes.\(^\text{64}\) Men’s studies at this point were splintered based largely on the subject in question. An adequate and comprehensive intersectional analysis had not yet been achieved. This question of intersectionality is something that would be taken up later by the sociologists.

**Manhood Theories and Men’s Rights**

Whilst a number of men employed a feminist approach to examine masculinity, others avoided it altogether maintaining an aversion to what they claimed to be the “feminisation” of men. There are three particular movements that demonstrate this: The Mythopoetic Movement, the Promise Keepers and White Supremacists. Although striking in their differences they all sought to recapture a “lost manhood”.

Robert Bly’s international bestseller *Iron John* (1992), remains a landmark for the Mythopoetic men’s movement. In what seems a direct response to the deluge

\(^{63}\) Murphy, *Feminism & Masculinities*, 10.
\(^{64}\) These differences were apparent also within the specific debates at this time, a good example being the debate around pornography. Those aligned with radical feminism view porn as synonymous with the sexual oppression of women while gay liberationists view it in terms of sexual liberation. Michael Messner notes that in a heterosexist society where homosexuality is seen as sick and unnatural, for many gay men pornography is seen as a positive affirmation of their sexual desire and pleasure. See Messner, *Politics of Masculinities*, 84. Others adopted the radical feminist viewpoint whereby, as Gary Dowsett argues, the ‘passive anus is read as an analogue to the dominated vagina.’ The representations of male bodies in gay porn is seen in relation to the feminist reading of bodies in “straight” porn. Thus, it is argued that all pornography reifies an uneven balance of power and is therefore oppressive. See Gary W Dowsett, “I’ll show you mine, if you show me yours: Gay men, masculinity research, men’s studies and sex,” *Theory and Society* 22, no. 5 (Oct 1993): 701, http://www.jstor.org.ezp.lib.unimelb.edu.au/stable/657991.
of feminist work produced in the 1970s he writes: ‘there’s a general assumption now that every man in a position of power is or soon will be corrupt and oppressive’. The Mythopoetic movement began in the 1980s as a series of events and retreats attended by men where figureheads like Bly encouraged men to rediscover and reclaim “the deep masculine” through myths and rituals they believed had been lost. ‘The true radiant energy in the male does not...reside in...the feminine realm, nor the macho/John Wayne realm,’ Bly writes. He implores men to discard femininity and hypermasculinity in favour of a “healthy” masculinity. The essentialist overtones here were in stark contrast to the more recent focus on gender as social construction. In the mythopoetic context, a return to the body means a return to a distinct biological determinism; men are urged to find their “natural,” primordial essence. This strand of men’s studies completely diverged from feminist concerns. Thomas writes: ‘some versions of “men’s studies,” particularly those influenced by the mythopoetic school of Robert Bly, are spectacularly uninformed by, and hostile to feminism.’

A christian group led by Bill McCartney, known as the Promise Keepers, also emerged at this time. McCartney writes: ‘Christian men all...around the world are suffering because they feel they are on a losing streak’. This was another direct response to the gains made by feminism and other liberation movements. This group attempted to ‘re-masculinise’ the church, facilitated primarily through spoken and written discourses portraying the figure of Jesus as manly and powerful. Although different in many ways, the white supremacist movement was also a reaction to the numerous liberationist strands that became so prevalent from the 1970s. Despite garnering a small female membership, it was overwhelmingly a movement for white men. The white western male is seen as

66 Ibid., 1-268. The book draws on a range of communities of men throughout history, ranging from the ancient Greeks, Tibetan monks and Celtic warriors, right through to the modern and contemporary western man.
67 Ibid., 8.
superior but he faces constant threats from Jews, blacks and other non-whites. Abby Ferber argues that while the supremacist discourse is centred mostly around race, this white identity is also a gendered identity, concerned with rearticulating white male privilege.\(^{71}\) Whiteness here is explicitly connected to masculinity and male power.

Although reactionary, these movements were closely tied to “second wave” feminism; effectively they were a backlash against the women’s movement. Where women have pushed for greater recognition and rights, men have pushed back. This is not a new phenomenon. Other similar responses transpired right throughout the twentieth century. Michael Kimmel argues that in the United States a ‘crisis of masculinity’ was experienced at the turn of the twentieth century with modernisation and the emerging feminist movement both seen as key catalysts.\(^{72}\) In response to these upheavals, various homosocial institutions, such as boy scouts, organised sports and college fraternities, were established. These were an attempt to re-establish “masculine” values. Messner and Kimmel argue that this should be seen as a direct response to what men feared to be the feminisation of society.\(^{73}\)

More recently this backlash is seen most clearly in the men’s rights movement where the ideologies of sex roles, liberation and manhood theories have seemingly converged. Warren Farrell’s book *The Myth of Male Power* (1993) clearly articulates the aims of this growing movement.\(^{74}\) Feminism has gone too far and now it is men who are disempowered. In *The Liberated Man* (1975), Farrell had interrogated the male sex role in order to address its negative effects on men.\(^{75}\) He was much less concerned with women and the question of gender relations. Decades later this concern for men reached new heights. He argues...

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\(^{72}\) Michael Kimmel, “Men’s Responses to feminism at the turn of the century,” *Gender & Society* 1, no.3 (1987). Modernisation resulted in a greater move towards urbanisation and industrialisation, meaning that physical strength in the workplace and home, was less valued or important. This led to fears that society was becoming feminised.

\(^{73}\) Ibid.


\(^{75}\) Farrell, *The Liberated Man.*
that women hold the balance of power, particularly within the structures of law that address sexual harassment, the family and the workplace. In her book *Backlash* (1991), Susan Faludi describes how feminism became the target here. Importantly, this collective backlash by men turns the gains won by feminism for women, into a loss for both men and women. She writes: ‘Women are unhappy precisely because they are free. Women are enslaved by their own liberation... the women’s movement, as we are told time and again, has proved its own worst enemy.’76

**Studies of Masculinities**

From the early 1990s there has been a significant proliferation of studies focusing on masculinities but with a greater emphasis on gender relations rather than sex role theory and liberation. This third strand of studies of masculinities, is largely sociological in flavour, and has produced a range of empirical work in order to better understand tangible social issues, like youth harassment at school, reproductive and sexual health, and domestic violence. Key scholar Michael Kimmel has produced a number of books, essays and edited collections that attend to gender and masculinities. In *Gendered Society*, he addresses the concept of gender across a range of chapters entitled ‘the gendered family,’ ‘the gendered media,’ ‘the gendered body’ and ‘the gender of violence.’77 Gender is seen as an organising principle of the practices and behaviours of men. In *Changing Men* Kimmel describes men’s studies as an interdisciplinary field that centres social constructionism and empirical research.78 This is echoed in *Men’s Lives*, an edited work with Michael Messner, where they examine masculinity within the classroom, at work, in relationships and in the family.79

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Connell suggests the scholarship has tended to focus on five broad areas: education, health, violence, fathering and counseling. Increasingly, however, other key sites of analysis have emerged. The subject of male sexuality has received significant attention with a range of scholarship appearing in the edited volume *Sexualities* (2004). Again, this is grounded within the social sciences and employs empirical evidence to ask specific questions about the construction of sexualities across different historical and cultural contexts. Sport has also become central to studies of masculinities. Messner’s extensive research on the intersections of sport and masculinity, remains the most prominent reference point.

The prevalence of empirical work within these studies demonstrates a trend to abandon theoretical endeavours in favour of applied research. Connell is one of the few to bridge this gap. Whilst maintaining an empirical focus in her research, she also places a particular emphasis on theoretical models with specific relevance to masculinities. Connell rightly acknowledges the connection between theory and praxis. The development of robust theoretical tools is crucial for making sense of masculinities as lived. Her concept of hegemonic masculinity (first established in 1987), demonstrates a more capacious understanding (than earlier studies) of the ways in which masculinities are produced, shaped and maintained. With this concept Connell collates some of the concerns of earlier men’s studies, bringing together the different aspects of gender, class, race and sexuality. Indeed, it has become a key concept for thinking critically about power.

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83 Todd Reeser’s book *Masculinities in Theory* is entirely focused on this question of theory. Although he doesn’t employ any particular theory he points to where theory can address some of the most pressing concerns for masculinities. Importantly, he posits the body as a key site for analysis. See Todd Reeser, *Masculinities in Theory: An Introduction* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).
relations between men and women, but also relations amongst men and the hierarchical nature of masculinities.

Connell is one of the few scholars to produce a detailed theoretical model for the analysis of masculinities. As Richard Howson notes, Connell has been a key contributor to more progressive research because her rejection of a conceptual singularity has opened up new possibilities for understanding masculinity as ‘a socially constructed multiplicity’. Her concept of hegemonic masculinity has been extensively applied by other scholars across a range of disciplines and also within the growing literature on masculinities.

Importantly, Connell does account for the body in her work. As already highlighted, her notion of body reflexive practice is an attempt to consider the body in greater depth. Unfortunately, this model has not been developed further or taken up within the field. Within her concept of hegemonic masculinity the body is seen as crucial for the enactment of hegemonic masculinity. She writes: ‘Gender is a social practice that constantly refers to bodies and what bodies do.’ In *The Men and the Boys* (2000), she dedicates five chapters to an examination of the male body in relation to sport, health and globalisation. Despite her efforts, the body as a key component of subjectivity — as an active agent, as lived, felt and expressed — remains largely under-theorised within this concept and within its many appropriations. In the following chapter I consider her ideas regarding the body in greater detail.

Susan Bordo is one of the few gender scholars to conduct a significant examination of the male body and in particular, the contemporary body. In *The Male Body* (1999), she examines how masculinity and male bodies are constructed and represented through various cultural sites such as film and literature, and within the media. Bordo attends to individual experience and

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considers the materiality of bodies within her analysis. Ultimately however, she is unable to properly account for the body as lived; that is, the multiple ways in which the body might intervene in and help shape subjectivity, and the ways in which subjectivities are formed and lived beyond a discursive framework. In chapter two I develop this further with a more detailed account of her ideas.

Historical studies of the male body are much easier to locate. One prominent example is *The Perfectible Body* (1995), in which Kenneth Dutton looks at the history of the male body in the west and the ways in which it has been constructed, presented and idealised. In particular, Dutton argues there is a persistent ideal that is reinstated across time, from the muscular-heroic bodies in Ancient Greece right through to the contemporary bodybuilder and gym-member. However, these studies do little to address the problem of embodiment and the complex interaction of the psychological, corporeal and social. Rather they are more concerned with the representation of bodies over time. The body is a construction rather than an actor in that construction.

Similarly, recent studies that focus on body image, gym culture and violence, do not attend explicitly to the problem of embodiment. Rather, masculinity is theorised as being a socio-cultural force that constructs and shapes bodies. There is a growing focus on the body which demonstrates that studies of masculinities cannot avoid a significant referencing of the male body. In *Masculinity in Theory*, Todd Reeser outlines a range of key theoretical approaches and asks how these might be used to interpret and better understand the most pressing aspects of masculinity: embodiment. As he aptly contends, issues of masculinity cannot be divorced from the male body: ‘it would be impossible to consider this aspect of gender [masculinity] without dealing with what might be the most central aspect of masculinity, namely the male

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Even more recently a number of scholars have attempted more complex accounts of masculinities and embodiment, most notably Steve Garlick’s recent monograph which reassesses the intersection of masculinity, nature and bodies. Further, the edited volume *Contemporary Masculinities*, presents a range of papers that complicate the traditional reading of bodies as simply a product of socio-political systems and institutions.

Nonetheless, the majority of current scholarship on bodies is still largely tied to social constructionist frameworks, concerned with how the socio-cultural determines and produces bodies rather than thinking about them as an active component of subjectivity. The flesh itself is repressed into insignificance; the recipient of a cultural masculinity. This concept of gender follows the sex/gender distinction posited within early feminist studies. Sex and the sexed body are seen as fixed but gender is the cultural overlay, a set of socially constructed behaviours and practices that are imposed on, and taken up by, the sexes. The biological is rendered less significant than the social. Gender is seen as a social construction and not the result of any essential or natural biological difference. While this position has been important to help dislodge the dominance of essentialist thought within scholarship, it also misses an opportunity to readdress the body within new terms, in ways that can be productive for thinking about masculinities.

These tendencies toward a purely social constructionist approach present a number of limitations. First, this approach fails to transcend or challenge the traditional binary logic that pervades western philosophical thought. That is, while the concept of gender was a necessary step to seek answers beyond biological essentialisms it sets up a new determinism that continues to privilege the mind, reason, culture. It leaves the material body unexamined and bodies remain within a traditional materialist framework whereby they remain a fixed,

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objective entity for scientific knowledge. There is a necessary focus on gender as constructed but this emerges from a fixed sexed body that is left unquestioned. This limits what we might uncover about masculinities and the category of male in a broader sense, that is, where masculinity is taken on and engaged with beyond the cis-male body or where trans bodies emerge. As I will argue further this is precisely where soma-masculinities intervenes. It confronts and challenges this reading of the body as fixed and passive.

Constructionist models struggle to explain many of the contradictions that emerge regarding masculinities and its practices. I discuss this in further detail in the chapters to follow, most extensively in my examination of sport in chapters five and six. Furthermore, these frameworks can be deterministic and they leave little scope for a proper analysis of individual experience, variation and difference. Bodies always exceed and resist the categories and regulations imposed on them. They cannot be fully accounted for or explained through constructionist modes and yet the use of these frameworks remains central to this field. In The Sociology of Gender Amy Wharton writes that ‘only by moving away from the purely subjective can we understand the broader social forces that shape our lives.’ While these social forces are important to understand and play a valuable role in the shaping of subjectivity, this ‘move away’ has been too extreme. Soma-masculinities works to find a middle ground, a means for holding the social and the corporeal together. The body is lived in a social world, thus theory must also hold these things together.

Similar questions must be asked of Connell’s hegemonic masculinity. This concept remains an integral part of these studies and is an important tool for addressing a range of concerns regarding masculinity, and in particular the effects of masculinity in its hegemonic form. Mike Donaldson writes that hegemonic masculinity ‘constructs the most dangerous things we live with’. This scholarship has occurred precisely because such a crisis has been acknowledged. However, the concept of hegemonic masculinity has become

93 Wharton, Sociology of Gender, 3.
hegemonic itself so that scholars remain fixated on its employment. Michael Moller writes that the concept ‘risks limiting how researchers are able to understand the experiences and meanings of men’s lives.’ Scholars place a huge amount of faith in this concept, thus it is vital to consider its limitations and shortcomings.

Throughout this thesis I contend that studies of masculinities are at a theoretical impasse. In order to move beyond this impasse I argue that scholars must venture beyond a purely social constructionist framework by centering the body and its materiality. I consider a number of key sites of masculinities that come with their own theoretical heritage, and I argue that a greater focus on embodiment can add to and deepen an analysis of them. Alongside an interrogation of these theoretical frameworks I also examine a number of contemporary cultural sites which have already been acknowledged as important sites for studies of masculinities. Using these sites, I attempt to demonstrate the merits of soma-masculinities and draw attention to the necessary link between theory and praxis.

Chapter Two — Soma-masculinities: Approaching the scholarship on embodiment

‘Bodies are never wholly material; psyches are never wholly immaterial. We live perplexed, and we grow between our bodies, our minds, and the cultural practices that infuse such growth.’ — Ken Corbett, Boyhoods.\textsuperscript{96}

‘There is, therefore, never determinism and never absolute choice.’ — Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception.\textsuperscript{97}

‘To be present in the world implies strictly that there exists a body which is at once a material thing in the world and a point of view towards this world.’ — Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex.\textsuperscript{98}

Scholars of gender and sexuality have often looked toward constructionist frameworks for an analysis of men and masculinities. This focus on the sociocultural has been important in order to disrupt the hierarchies that have dominated western thought, in which the white heterosexual male is seen as the default human subject, rendering other subjectivities as other or inferior. Importantly, these hierarchies are naturalised through a strategic deployment of the biological body. Constructionists aim to unsettle this arrangement and emphasise that these hierarchies are a construction. Susan Bordo notes that early feminist understandings of the female body viewed it as culturally disempowered.\textsuperscript{99} Thus, for these feminists, the move away from essentialist understandings of the body toward a constructionist framework has been calculated and necessary.

Despite this, it has become apparent that this move has been too extreme. Attempts to dispel essentialist notions of gender has meant that biological essentialisms have been replaced by a social determinism. In other words, an account that understands the body as culturally or linguistically produced also

tends to posit the body as a fixed entity whose meaning is reliant on external rather than internal forces. Neither position can sufficiently challenge the binary logic that pervades how we think about gender, nor do they adequately account for the individuality of gender. As Toril Moi writes, ‘the body is neither pure nature nor pure meaning, neither empiricism nor idealism will ever be able to grasp the specific nature of human existence.’

Regarding masculinities, it is evident that the world of men is shaped and lived in various ways depending on a multiplicity of factors. Practices of masculinities are often more complex and contradictory than what can be explained by a purely constructionist strategy. This thesis claims that a turn to *soma-masculinities* is able to reconcile these uncertainties.

In this chapter I outline a number of key concepts that address embodiment, concepts that I utilise within my framework of *soma-masculinities*. In particular I consider the feminist scholarship that emerges out of psychoanalysis and Foucault’s poststructuralist understandings of the body. While they complicate the constructionist model, their conceptualisation of the body is not without its limitations. They challenge the dualisms present in Cartesian thought but never fully escape them. There is still a division made between the mind, body and culture. Furthermore, their assessment of the body starts from culture. Constructionism considers how the “outside” maps onto bodies. Discursive models consider how the “outside” courses through bodies and makes them productive in the world in particular ways. The emphasis is on outside forces.

With soma-masculinities I aim to bring the *flesh* back into the body, and into discussions of masculinity. That is, I place an emphasis on the material biological body and its activity. Mind, body and culture are a complex matrix and cannot be disentangled from each other. They all co-constitute subjectivity. Within this triumvirate, the body is not simply a mental representation or cultural inscription. It is made of flesh, and this flesh *matters*. I suggest that the work that

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100 Toril Moi, *What is a Woman? And Other Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 69.
emerges out of phenomenology is most useful for soma-masculinities.\textsuperscript{101} It places an emphasis on the body as lived, which involves a greater acknowledgement of the biological body, the habit body, the felt sense of the body and individual lived experience. Crucially, it acknowledges some of the more unconscious elements of subjectivity.

\textit{Soma-masculinities} outlines a more capacious toolkit for addressing the complexities of masculinities and male subjectivities. It is not simply an abstract theoretical framework that cannot be grounded in the real world. Rather, it is a necessary intervention because, where masculinities are concerned, there is much to undo and there is much to change. \textit{Soma-masculinities} brings a more dynamic theoretical facility to the political problem of masculinity. In this chapter I return to the central problem and gap within studies of masculinities. Connell’s concept of \textit{hegemonic masculinity} remains the dominant theoretical model, but it does not adequately describe and account for embodiment and subjectivity. I suggest Connell’s abandoned and underdeveloped notion of \textit{body reflexive practice}, can offer a more complex analysis of bodies, and posits a number of useful insights for \textit{soma-masculinities}.

The body as a concept has a long history, thus to begin I outline a number of key historical moments that have influenced, and often continue to shape the contemporary terrain. In particular I emphasise how this history has tended to underline and preserve the binary logic, the very thing \textit{soma-masculinities} aims to dislodge. Within these conceptions, the body—meaning its matter, drives and desires is separated from, or at the very least subordinated to the other components of subjectivity; culture and the mind. The work of Rene Descartes continues to be a potent force in the perpetuation of such dualist thinking. Finding new ground whereby these binaries can be challenged and overcome, has remained a difficult task.

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\textsuperscript{101} Specifically, I have in mind the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Simone de Beauvoir, Martin Heidegger and Drew Leder.
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The Mind/Body Dichotomy

Early classical philosophy produced an array of compelling ideas on the human subject. From the outset Plato and Aristotle establish the body as distinct from the rational mind or soul. In his *Republic* Plato presents the allegory of the cave, in which the Forms, such as beauty and justice, are understood as ideas in themselves.\(^{102}\) The learned man (the philosopher) comprehends the Forms in this way; the ignorant man, confined to the darkness of the cave, gains partial understanding only through a physical representation of the Forms. Here we have the first hints of a separation and hierarchical organisation of the body or matter, from mind and reason. Although Plato did not explicitly separate the two, something Descartes would accomplish much later, his theory of the Forms mark the body as inferior and as a pale, lesser version of the mind. Physical matter, including the body, must therefore be transcended.

The emergence of Christianity during the late Roman imperial period was accompanied by a re-figuration of this classical distinction of body and mind. Through a Christian lens the body is seen as a distinct entity, as something to be disciplined and regulated. As Elizabeth Grosz notes, within Christianity emerges the idea of a God-given immortal soul housed within a mortal, sinful body.\(^{103}\) The body is an infliction that humankind must encounter and seek to overcome.

Rene Descartes’ *Discourse on the Method*, in which he outlines a mind-body distinction, underpinned the emerging scientific dialogue while drawing on the philosophical and theological discourses preceding it. With his ontological enquiry into the nature of mankind, Descartes successfully straddled the scientific and the philosophical. The human mind and body are separated even though the thinking mind is necessarily housed within a corporeal shell. The material bodies of man and animal are essentially the same, however mankind

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\(^{103}\) Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: toward a corporeal feminism* (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1994), 5.
also has a rational mind (soul) that interacts with the body but is not part of it.\textsuperscript{104} He writes: ‘I thereby concluded that I was a substance whose whole essence or nature resides only in thinking, and which, in order to exist, has no need of place and is not dependent on any material thing. Accordingly this I, that is to say, the Soul by which I am what I am, is entirely distinct from the body.’\textsuperscript{105} The reverberations of this doctrine cannot be overstated. Cartesian dualism as it came to be known, formed the basis of the dominant thought that followed within the epoch historians have termed the Enlightenment.

One observes a distinct shift over time from the classical conception, to Christianity and Cartesian thought. Each are proponents of a separation of mind and body, however these are based on different understandings. The Greco-Roman worlds produce early notions of a separate body and mind. Within Christianity this is translated into a separation of a mortal body from an immortal soul. Descartes places the body firmly within the natural world while the mind is a thinking substance separate from nature. Importantly, Descartes’ mind-body dualism is taken up within philosophical and scientific inquiries and knowledges. Cartesian dualism has remained central within western thought, right up to the present day. Only more recently, over the last century, has this dichotomy of mind and body been challenged with any significant force.

\textbf{Psychoanalysis}

Science has long sought to establish universal truths regarding the body. Descarte’s mind-body dualism remained dominant within the scientific discourse that proceeded him. With the exception of a number of thinkers, like Nietzsche, who emphasises the magnitude of bodily drives, psychoanalysis offered the first sustained challenge to Cartesian dualism early in the twentieth century.

\textsuperscript{104} Rene Descartes. \textit{A Discourse on the Method}, trans. Ian Maclean (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 35-49. He notes first that man has the ability to employ language and speak whereas animals cannot, and second that man’s actions are carried out with conscious thought. Thus, he concludes that the rational soul cannot be made of matter and must be the work of divine creation.

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., 29.
Psychoanalytic frameworks start with the body, and this body is the basis for ego (subjectivity). In his essay “The Ego and the Id” (1923), Freud asserts that the ego ‘is first and foremost a body-ego; it is not merely a surface entity, but is itself the projection of a surface.’ Freud develops this further with his concept of the id, the instinctual human drives; what science has classified as body. The ego acts like a filter between the demands of the id (instinct) and the demands of external forces (social laws). As Grosz aptly notes, the ego (for Freud) is ‘an agency serving two masters.’ It attends to the desires of the id while also accounting for external social factors. The ego is the meeting point between the body and the socio-cultural. Freud says the ego can be thought of as ‘reason and common sense’ in contrast to the id, but stresses that this ego is embodied. This is not simply a reiteration of the Cartesian separation of mind and body. Freud’s body-ego concept connects the two more explicitly and locates the mind firmly within the body and in interaction with it.

It is worth noting that the dominant strands of psychoanalysis have proved to be a point of division for feminist scholars with many reading Freud’s formulations as a justification for positing women as inferior. Freud’s concepts of penis envy and castration complex remain huge points of contention. Kate Millett, an ardent opponent of Freud, describes these concepts as strong evidence of his ‘gross male-supremacist bias.’ Echoing the sentiments of many of her contemporaries, Millett explicitly rejects the psychoanalytic model. Juliet Mitchell, however, argues that this rejection is a mistake. She writes: ‘psychoanalysis is not a recommendation for a patriarchal society, but an analysis of one.’

Despite the sexist overtones in much of Freud’s work, he did produce a rich palette of fertile ideas that would be appropriated and developed by other

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107 Freud posits an analogy of the rider who guides and restrains and his horse so that it moves in the direction he wishes. In a similar manner the ego must restrain and guide the id.
theorists. The most notable of these is Jacques Lacan whose re-reading of Freud has become hugely influential across many disciplines and theoretical junctures.\textsuperscript{111} Lacan’s \textit{mirror phase}, as a theory of the ego, articulates the initial formation of a unitary subject; through recognition and lack. The child sees their image in the mirror as a whole contained body yet experiences themselves as fragmented and deficient. The bodily image perceived by the child is a representation of the self, which Lacan argues is an imaginary, a \textit{Gestalt}.\textsuperscript{112} This is the first of many imaginary identifications appropriated by the subject in an attempt to fill this gap between the image and the felt sense of self. As Grosz notes, Lacan’s \textit{mirror stage} is important for feminist thought as it recognises that ones unconscious desires and identifications are co-constituted by psychical \textit{and} sociocultural structures.\textsuperscript{113}

In this way psychoanalysis remains an important reference point for \textit{soma-masculinities} since it attempts to describe some of the more unconscious elements of subjectivity such as desire and affect. It accounts for affect as a psychical function, but importantly the psyche is necessarily embodied. Despite this, there is still some confusion regarding how the \textit{flesh} comes into play here. Within psychoanalytic frameworks it is believed that affect is \textit{felt} and processed in the psyche, thus, the mind is still endowed with greater significance. Even with its radical departure from earlier scientific models, it fails to adequately account for the \textit{flesh} of bodies. As Tamar Pollak argues, psychoanalytic theory manages to challenge this dualism but ultimately reduces the body to a ‘matrix of mental representations.’\textsuperscript{114}

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\item[113] Elizabeth Grosz, \textit{Jacques Lacan: a feminist introduction} (London: Routledge, 1990), 48-9. She notes that Lacan’s concept of the ego has had considerable critical influence on post-Cartesian views of subjectivity. On page 141-2 she outlines a number of key feminists who engage with his work, including Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva.

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**Feminist theory**

The explosion of feminist scholarship in the second half of the twentieth century addressed the social, economic and political concerns of women. Crucially, the body was a central focus here. In *The Second Sex* (1949), Simone de Beauvoir made a critical intervention within the feminist canon. Male and female bodies are seen as biologically distinct however external factors (under the insistence of patriarchy) present female bodies with limited social and political possibilities. De Beauvoir famously writes: ‘one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman.’

In this book de Beauvoir argues that a woman’s role as the passive sex, as emotional and nurturing, is not the result of peculiar instincts and features of her body but rather is determined by external influences which indoctrinate her into a feminine way of being. For de Beauvoir, the female body places constraints on a woman’s access to freedom precisely because of the manner in which it is coded. The female body is coded a hindrance and thus becomes a hindrance. ‘Woman has ovaries, a uterus: these peculiarities imprison her in her subjectivity, circumscribe her within the limits of her own nature,’ she writes.

This attention to sexual difference greatly influenced the feminist scholarship that emerged in the 1960s and 70s. This diverse group of radical, liberal and socialist feminists, despite not always being aligned in their viewpoints or tactics, all placed an emphasis on body politics. Using either reformist or radical tactics, these groups fought for women to have more control over their bodies and particularly over reproductive rights, in an effort to extend the social and economic possibilities available to women. Like de Beauvoir, they actively contest the social meanings that are given to particular bodies, seeing this as the source of oppression. These feminists employ social constructionist approaches to posit a distinction between sex and gender. Bodies are perceived to be

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116 Ibid., 15.
biologically distinct and pre-cultural with gender being the cultural overlay that determines how sexed bodies will be thought and lived. In particular it is within political and social institutions that this construction occurs. By challenging and reforming structural inequalities, it was thought that women could attain greater equality. For the most part, they did win greater freedoms and rights, although not in all contexts, and not for all women.

There were some feminists that rejected de Beauvoir’s humanist position, and who attempted to recover the salient features of the female body. “Feminine qualities” such as maternal instinct and passivity, were seen as valuable and necessary. Referred to by Iris Marion Young as ‘gynocentrics,’ this group of women argued these qualities are essential to women but that the value attached to these needs to be elevated. While they recognised the importance of attending to sexual difference this position tended to essentialise gender, grounding it in truth or bodily fact. Consequently, the binaries that cast women as inferior remain intact.

Of these “second wave” feminists, de Beauvoir’s work aligns most closely with the concerns of *soma-masculinities*. Unlike the ‘gynocentrics’ who essentialise the body, she attempts to disrupt the binary logic; arguing there is a complex interaction between bodies and the world. Furthermore, she does not make a clear distinction between sex and gender, as did many in the “second wave.” For de Beauvoir, the body is always a situated body, a material reality in the world that is given particular meanings but which is also a perspective from which to approach the world and refigure these meanings. As Butler argues, for de Beauvoir, the body is ‘no longer understood in its traditional philosophical senses of “limit” or “essence,” the body is a field of interpretative possibilities.’

This phenomenological reading of subjectivity considers the material body without essentialising it or ignoring it altogether. Mind, body and culture are necessarily entangled.

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118 Iris Marion Young, *Throwing like a Girl and Other Essays in Feminist Philosophy and Social Theory* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), 6-11.
If for de Beauvoir, the body is a historical construct that can be refigured and reinterpreted, then there is no fixed essence or fact of the body. Butler suggests that this reading of her work lays the groundwork for a more radical disruption of the gender binary through language. She writes: ‘through the purposeful embodiment of ambiguity binary oppositions lose clarity and force,... gender itself thus promises to proliferate into a multiple phenomenon for which new terms must be found.’

For Butler then, bodies might be spoken about differently, that is, in new ways that disrupt their meaning and situation in the world. Here Butler draws on the post-structuralist ideas that emerged in the 1980s. These theorists attempt to challenge previous quests for absolute truths and certainties, and question the assumption that we can know the world ‘in a direct and unmediated way — as it really is.’

An emphasis is placed on the construction and formation of the subject, particularly through language and other discursive means. As with psychoanalysis the subject is de-centered rather than stable and fixed.

The post-structural turn emerged largely from the work of Michel Foucault, who places a new emphasis on the body. Foucault argues that the body is a site for power, he writes: ‘in every society, the body was in the grip of very strict powers, which imposed on it constraints, prohibitions or obligations.’ For Foucault, these “strict powers” are not simply a sovereign power which imposes itself in a visibly oppressive manner. Rather, power is everywhere, tied up in a matrix of knowledge and discourse. The knowledges and “truths” that are produced through dominant discourse impact how we regulate ourselves and how we alter our behaviours according to these “truths.” This power is productive as it does not require the state or sovereign to discipline its subjects. The individual does this work on themselves. Bodies are central to this as the site for this power. Foucault describes these bodies as docile bodies, but importantly, the term docile

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120 Ibid., 47.
does not denote passivity here. In fact, for Foucault bodies are both productive and resistant. Ways of speaking about bodies produces those bodies as normal, deviant, sick or abnormal, and positions them as such in the world. While Foucault argues that bodies do resist these truth regimes he is less concerned with the ontological status of bodies, arguing instead that the socio-historical conditioning of bodies is all we can understand and know.

Foucault's post-structuralism shaped the feminist scholarship operating at this time. In particular, his influence is evident in the work of Sandra Bartky, Susan Bordo and Judith Butler. Like Foucault, Bordo examines the role of discursive forces in producing, shaping and maintaining the bodies and subjectivities of both men and women. However, she departs from Foucault in one important way, in that she refuses to read bodies purely as a discursive effect. In Unbearable Weight (1993) and The Male Body (1999), Bordo never loses sight of the body as lived. She suggests that both the materiality of the body as well as discourse, produce particular subjectivities. In Unbearable Weight, Bordo critiques the post-structural imperative to posit the body purely as text and a discursive construction. However, as Susan Hekman notes, Bordo tends to appear 'both inside and outside the discursive', a confusion which 'cries out for resolution.' That is, her explanation of this relationship between the materiality of the body and culture is not clarified or developed. If the body is not purely discursive then how can we explain its non-discursive elements? This is precisely the question that I take up with soma-masculinities. The material body must be brought into discussions of subjectivity but this requires a more precise examination of how this body interacts with culture.

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123 Ibid., 135-169.
It is this explanatory gap that leaves Bordo open to a range of criticisms. Despite this, her work provides a number of useful insights regarding the male body. First, with her book *The Male Body*, she is one of the few feminists to conduct a thorough examination of the male body, and is therefore an important reference point. Second, a considerable part of this thesis focuses on cultural phenomena and their role in how bodies are gendered and lived, an intersection taken up in her work. Finally, like Bordo, I problematise scholarship that subscribes to constructionist models without considering the material body, its fleshy qualities and how these might impact subjectivity.

In the work of Judith Butler one finds a stronger alignment with Foucault's discursive reading of bodies. With a fresh reading of sex, gender and sexuality Butler prompted a re-evaluation of the category of woman, turning feminist theory on its head. Earlier scholarship had assumed and relied on the biological definition of woman. Under the sex/gender distinction, sex is what one is born with and the rest is gender, a social construction. This is precisely what Butler attempts to challenge; she writes: 'the very subject of woman is no longer understood in stable or abiding terms.'\(^{127}\) For her, sex is always already gender, meaning sex is also a construction; thus, Butler questions the ontological status of bodies. She employs Foucault's notion of 'regulatory practices,' the idea that truths and norms are produced through discourse and executed via the body.\(^{128}\) Her suggestion that the category of a person's sex is discursively produced disrupts the presumed authenticity of this category, one that is commonly normalised in particular ways so that sex seems natural or biologically fixed. The regulatory discourse itself is concealed so that subjects think of themselves as a stable identity that is tied to a fixed pre-discursive body, however, this is an illusion. Butler writes: 'the substantive "I" only appears as such through a signifying practice that seeks to conceal its own workings and to naturalize its effects.'\(^{129}\) In fact, the ways of speaking about bodies produces the subject itself.


\(^{128}\) Ibid., 23-4.

\(^{129}\) Ibid., 197-8. In this respect, Butler follows the line of thought first propounded by Louis Althusser, who describes how the individual is interpellated by specific ideological apparatuses which create the illusion that a subject chooses freely. See Louis Althusser, "Ideology and
Butler’s opponents note her tendency to textualise the body and here emerges one of the most sustained critiques of Butler; that there is an extended focus on discourse and language rather than the forces outside of this, such as movement, perception and observable physical difference. After the publication of her seminal work *Gender Trouble*, significant questions were raised regarding agency and the material body. Susan Bordo argues that Butler’s postmodern imagination seems to relegate everything to language and meaning but without a proper explanation of the materiality of bodies in practice and as experienced. She writes how Butler creates a world in which ‘language swallows everything up.’¹³⁰

In fact, Butler is primarily concerned with bodies. Her book *Bodies that matter* is a complex argument for a deeper consideration of the material body. She attends to materiality extensively in this book wherein she questions why it is that materiality must be thought of as an ontological entity rather than a construction itself. For Butler sex is therefore a construct that is forcibly materialised, not simply a biological fact of the body but a process whereby regulatory norms materialise sex. Her example ‘girling’ describes how sex is forcibly produced through normative linguistic and discursive devices. She writes: ‘Consider the medical interpellation which... shifts an infant from an “it” to a “she” or a “he,” and in that naming, the girl is “girled,” brought into the domain of language.’¹³¹

This is the first in a chain of discursive events that continue to produce (to “girlish”) the subject in such a way that the material effect of girl seems natural rather than something constructed. For Butler, materiality is a process that produces a material effect, hence there is a tendency for us to think and speak of the body and its processes as a *natural* phenomenon. Butler argues that materiality itself needs to be thought of as an effect of power. Materiality and the discursive cannot be disentangled or thought apart from each other.

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Butler is interested here in that which can be intelligible, understood, brought into language, thus she remains tied to a discursive framework. While this might seem like a radical position, Butler makes a compelling argument which she delivers with a high degree of coherence and erudition. Responding to charges that there is a simple materiality outside of discourse Butler writes ‘to posit a materiality outside of language is still to posit that materiality, and the materiality so posited will retain that positing as its constitutive condition.’ In other words, this process of thinking and claiming a “pure” materiality of the body is itself a discursive act.

Indeed, Butler offers a more complex explanation of materiality than her feminist predecessors. While her ideas on material bodies, as an effect of power and of speech acts, seem to sit firmly within post-structuralism, her concept of *performativity* demonstrates a stronger alignment with *phenomenology*. Performativity is at the core of Butler’s thesis and describes how through the repetition of gendered behaviors, the sexed subject is produced. For example, the act of putting on lipstick is a normalised and accepted (even expected) practice for women. It is through acts such as this that a woman is produced as woman, made intelligible and knowable. Where Foucault speaks of a deployment or circulation of power-knowledge that produces sexuality and the heterosexual/homosexual subject Butler’s performativity does something similar regarding sex and gender. Importantly, gender performativity is underpinned by compulsory heterosexuality. Men must constantly do masculinity so that they might fit neatly into the category of heterosexual male. The repetition is crucial so that both his sexuality and gender remain intelligible. Although, failure is central to gender performativity. Gender therefore is always a becoming. It is not a singular act but a repetition of acts over time, an ongoing project, a bodily practice. Identity and subjectivity are inherently unstable, always linked to the world and our interaction with it.

A crucial question emerges here: how much of this repeated behaviour or bodily practice, is conscious? This is where Butler’s account of the body is unclear and

132 Ibid., 37.
can be problematised further through a phenomenological framework that emphasises the forces at play outside of a purely discursive framework. As I will outline later, phenomenology considers what a direct experience of the world might be or feel like before or outside the domain of language. In other words, there is a direct experience that may not be cognizant or describable but that can be felt, one that presses upon an individual’s lived experience and behaviour. Butler herself alludes to this in a later work, the *Psychic Life of Power* (1997), where she considers the psychic form that power takes. She writes: ‘power that at first appears as external, pressed upon the subject, pressing the subject into subordination, assumes a psychic form that constitutes the subject’s self-identity.’\(^{133}\) Asking about the psychic form that power takes also asks how it is that the subject is formed and able to act in their own way beyond the terms of that original power. This suggests that there is a limit to the explanatory power of discourse since there are things that remain too difficult to understand. Butler contends that this epistemological gap is tied up in the unconscious and in the psyche.

The question still remains, does Butler deny the material body? She claims there is a “real” body that exists but we cannot know what that is. She writes: ‘The body however, is not simply the sedimentation of speech acts by which it has been constituted. If that constitution fails, a resistance meets interpellation at the moment it exerts its demand; then something exceeds the interpellation, and this excess is lived as the outside of intelligibility.’\(^{134}\) The material body then, becomes intelligible through linguistic/discursive systems; it comes to being at the same moment that we are able to think and speak about it. But surely the forces of the material body itself are at play here also. This is where a phenomenological account is useful, to further explain how the subject comes to repeat these behaviours so consistently. Within this account bodies are seen to be inbuilt with perceptual and sensory powers. Thus, our experience of the


world and our action in it is not always conscious or dependent on cognitive thought or language. It is as though the body has a learned language of its own.

Phenomenology

The framework of *soma-masculinities* I am developing draws its most potent tools from existential philosophy, specifically, phenomenology. During the middle part of the twentieth century there were significant philosophical discussions regarding freedom and the body. In a world that now places God on the periphery, ideas of an “a priori” human essence are replaced with notions of free will. In *Being and Nothingness* (1943), Jean-Paul Sartre produced what has become the central motif of the existential canon. Mankind is condemned to be free and must create his own essence, but this freedom is located within a thinking conscious mind, what he terms the being *for-itself*. The *in-itself* (or facticity of the body) and the *for-others* (the cultural) are integrated and together these three components form the subject. However, the mind is still given primacy here. He argues that the *for-itself* can reflect on what it is not (the *in-itself* and the *for-others*), and through this process of nihilation is therefore free and able to fully choose how to act or respond to these internal or external forces. He writes: ‘the being of consciousness, since this being is in itself in order to nihilate itself in for-itself, remains contingent; that is, it is not the role of consciousness either to give being to itself or to receive it from others.’

Although Sartre places a particular emphasis on the body, the *in-itself*, he still clearly privileges the mind over the body. Butler claims that despite Sartre’s efforts to free himself from this hierarchy, he remains haunted by ‘Cartesian ghosts.’ Sartre’s work sparked a barrage of critique by other existential thinkers who argue that his concept of freedom fails to acknowledge particular forces that inevitably interrupt this freedom. The most significant of these are

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136 Ibid., 77.
137 Ibid., 81.
Simone de Beauvoir, who raises the question of female subjectivity and its inhibited freedom, and Louis Althusser who argues that free choice is illusory as long as we live under the state and its ideologies. However, I am most concerned with the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who suggests that Sartre does not adequately acknowledge and incorporate the body within his account of freedom.

Unlike Sartre who separates the conscious subject from the body, Merleau-Ponty contends that consciousness is located within the material body itself and cannot be separated from it. Given that our knowledges of subjectivity are largely constituted through Cartesianism, this blurring of the mind/body distinction is a radical position. For Merleau-Ponty, the body as lived is something ontological, meaning it is what our bodies are. It is not an objective body that remains fixed or universal, rather, it is a body always in relation with others and with a world. He writes: 'I cannot conceive myself as nothing but a bit of the world, a mere object of biological, psychological or sociological investigation. I cannot shut myself up within the realm of science. All of my knowledge of the world, even my scientific knowledge is gained from my own particular point of view.'\textsuperscript{139} For Merleau-Ponty the psyche (mind), corporeal (body) and culture (world) are all intimately enmeshed. The body is our starting point, it gives us our perspective, it is the central compass and starting point of subjectivity, of being a subject in the world. The lived body 'opens me out upon the world and places me in a situation there.'\textsuperscript{140} He describes this further: 'our own body is in the world as the heart is in the organism; it keeps the visible spectacle alive, it breathes life into it and sustains it inwardly.'\textsuperscript{141} The body as lived is therefore subjectivity itself.

Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology posits the body as the starting point for a consideration of subjectivity. It avoids the very essentialisms and binaries that feminists have attempted to — although not always with success — fully dislodge. Importantly, Merleau-Ponty acknowledges the flesh of the body. This flesh is integral to an understanding of the body. The body has a materiality, it

\textsuperscript{139} Merleau-Ponty, \textit{Phenomenology of Perception}, preface ix.
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., 191.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid., 235.
has contours, proportions and surface. Flesh also describes the internal workings of the body, its drives and desires. The body and its flesh always intervene in how we relate to the world and to others. It also gives us our own unique perspective, understanding and experience of the world, its systems and meanings. Components of the material body help to shape the individual’s perspective and how one approaches, experiences or relates to their surroundings or situation. Merleau-Ponty is imploring us to think about the body in a far more complex manner.

The accounts of Merleau-Ponty and Butler demonstrate that the material is not a fixed entity. Rather it is inextricably linked to the world and to others, and is therefore open-ended, dynamic and changeable. Butler’s concept of performativity requires a stronger account of phenomenology which theorises embodiment and subjectivity beyond the discursive. The doing of gender is not simply a conscious reiteration of normative gender that occurs underneath the weight of a compulsory heterosexuality. Butler is not suggesting this but nor does she clearly explain how this repetition occurs below or beyond, the level of reflection. Using phenomenology, I suggest that these repetitions might be internalised so that they become unconscious bodily habits, almost as an automatic function. Merleau-Ponty writes: ‘When I move my hand towards a thing, I know implicitly that my arm unbends. When I move my eyes, I take account of their movement, without being expressly conscious of the fact.’

The body has its own structure where the forces of perception, motility and space operate beyond a purely cognitive realm. In this way both phenomenology and performativity provide a range of important insights for soma-masculinities.

Whilst Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology has been, and continues to be a valuable tool for feminist scholarship, there is one major critique that remains palpable: his failure to consider sexual difference. Grosz writes that despitedevoting an entire chapter to sexuality, Merleau-Ponty presents this ‘as if it were the same

\[142\] Ibid., 195.
dynamical force, with the same psychological structures and physiological features, for any sexed subject.\textsuperscript{143}

In her landmark essay *Throwing like a girl* (1980), Iris Marion Young attends to the problem of sexual difference through phenomenology.\textsuperscript{144} Here she places an emphasis on female embodiment; the body-self. She draws on the observations of Erwin Straus, who claims that the movement of boys and girls, and the ways in which they utilise the space around them, is vastly different. She describes three feminine modalities of motility: ambiguous transcendence, inhibited intentionality and discontinuous unity; and argues that girls often fail to utilise their full physical and spatial potential. The condition of subjectivity is that subjects have a body that opens out into the space around it, with an open directedness and intentionality towards the world. This is central to making a world for oneself. Young argues that for women, the body often remains in immanence or at least is overlaid with it. The space available to women is restricted space. Merleau-Ponty argues that the body cannot exist as an object but rather a subject with possibilities for action. Young notes how women often experience their bodies as objects. Their bodies are often coded with the *I cannot* rather than the *I can*.

Crucially, Young notes that this inhibited and tentative embodiment is not rooted in biology but rather in the particular situation of women (a clear connection to Beauvoir), a situation which is not an eternal fact, but rather is constructed for her. Women are objectified, are not encouraged to pursue physical endeavours, are valued for their appearance rather than their actions, and are not encouraged to explore their physical capabilities. Young places a significant emphasis on social structures and institutions, and this is important. Our bodies are situated within structures of meaning and we must act within these. We experience ourselves within a world already full of meaning, and we react, conform to, and resist those meanings in varying ways, in our own unique way. Regarding the question of gender Young writes: ‘gender as structured is also lived through

\textsuperscript{143} Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 110.
\textsuperscript{144} Young, *Throwing like a Girl*.
individual bodies, always as a personal experiential response and not as a set of attributes that individuals have in common."\(^{145}\)

**Soma-masculinities**

Within *soma-masculinities*, I draw on this work to bring the material body into the scholarship on masculinities, in a more radical and purposeful manner. The *body as lived* is the nexus between the psyche, culture and the *flesh*. It is not simply a biological fact, nor is it a completed effect of culture. It is co-constituted by these forces, a field of relations and possibilities, open to interpretation and reinterpretation. This framework works to problematise and blur the boundaries between self and other, the material and the cultural. Simon Williams and Gillian Bendelow write: ‘it is not therefore a question of choosing between order or control, materialism or constructionism, experience or representation, but of exploring their dialectical relationship to each other.’\(^{146}\) Subjectivity is a complex interaction of forces, thus these forces must be accounted for.

In *Masculinities in Theory* Todd Reeser advocates for the adoption of theoretical models that are both psyche and perception driven. He states: ‘the way in which the body is understood cannot entirely be subsumed under the category of culture.’\(^{147}\) Michael Messner also acknowledges that masculine identity cannot be said to emerge as a result of social forces nor due to some internal essence of a person. He suggests instead that subjectivity is ‘shaped and constructed through the interaction’ of the two.\(^{148}\) Thus, there is an increasing acknowledgment that a purely social constructionist account cannot capture the landscape of masculinities, and yet this acknowledgment has not been directed towards a more active engagement with other frameworks. As I have already


indicated, Connell’s hegemonic masculinity remains dominant in the field. This concept describes how the norms and ideals of masculinity might be produced and maintained through ideology and within institutions. It is a way to understand the social organisation of masculinity, however within this concept, the specificities and realities of how men are embodied and how they live, tend to disappear.

The popularity of this concept has meant that scholars have neglected her other, more productive observations regarding the body. Connell writes: ‘there is an irreducible bodily dimension in experience and practice.’ Bodies grow old, they change, they get sick, they experience pleasure. Here she prompts us to think about the intricate relationship between bodies and the social processes and structures they inhabit. The sociocultural does not simply determine how bodies will behave or appear. As she suggests, bodies often resist: ‘Not only are men’s bodies diverse and changing, they can be positively recalcitrant. Ways are proposed for bodies to participate in social life, and bodies often refuse.’ In *Masculinities*, Connell introduces her notion of body-reflexive practice through a number of case studies. These practices, she argues, describe the entanglement between the social, the psyche and bodies. The body itself is seen to have some agency in the world. It helps shape social processes and relations without being completely determined by them. Connell notes: ‘through body-reflexive practices, more than individual lives are formed: a social world is formed.’ She continues: ‘as body reflexive practices they constitute a world which has a bodily dimension, but it is not biologically determined.’

This notion of body-reflexive practice offers a more capacious account of the material body. The flesh is described here in particular terms, as sensory, desirous, and vigorous. There is an acknowledgment of the activity of this body, that is, the complex, multi-directional interaction that occurs between the psychic, the material and the socio-cultural. She writes: ‘through body-reflexive

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150 Ibid., 57.
151 Ibid., 64.
152 Ibid., 65.
practices, bodies are addressed by social process and drawn into history without ceasing to be bodies."153 Subjectivity is not fully determined by either the social or corporeal.

Despite this, there are a number of significant limitations. Connell still relies on a fixed, a priori body. This is especially apparent in relation to the sexed body. There is no challenging of a fixed sex nor of the male/female binary. The body is still seen only as biological; the biological and the social interact yet remain distinct from each other. Steve Garlick suggests here that Connell has replaced one dichotomy with another. He writes: ‘rather than mind and body, we now have the social and body.’154 Soma-masculinities utilises phenomenology to provide a better account of this. The body is not purely biological, rather it is the inevitable entanglement between the biological and the social. The body is better conceived of as the body-self, a dynamic field of relations rather than something biological, with fixed borders and meanings.

Unfortunately, these initial ruminations by Connell regarding the body, have failed to gather any significant momentum within studies of masculinities.155 It is time to reset the narrative. In this thesis I demonstrate how to start using the framework of soma-masculinities in order to centre the body within these studies and bring its flesh into sight. Culture might help shape and structure desire and our being in the world, but it is always the flesh that enacts. With this framework I place an emphasis on the body as lived and attempt to disrupt traditional binary logics. The theorists and concepts I employ throughout this thesis all problematise the binary of culture and nature, mind and body, determinism and absolute choice. Indeed soma-masculinities sits right within these tensions, thus making it a more sophisticated theoretical framework in which to examine masculinities. Incorporating this theory is a radical but necessary venture. It is

153 Ibid., 64.
155 In the conclusion of this thesis I acknowledge the current turn to new-materialism and specifically within this, the recent work of Steve Garlick who thoroughly addresses this relationship between masculinity and nature. See Steve Garlick, The nature of masculinity: critical theory, new materialisms, and technologies of embodiment (Toronto: UBC Press, 2016).
my hope that *soma-masculinities* can offer new possibilities for describing, analysing and imagining masculinities.
Part Two — The Phallic Body
Chapter Three — The Phallus and the Flesh: undoing masculinity

'Male embodiment, boy’s bodies, men’s and boy’s states of desire — what they seek, what they carry, what they bury — has, if anything, stalled with original Freudian formulations, or even regressed. It is almost as though the male body cannot be thought; it is disavowed now as once women’s bodies were.' — Ken Corbett, Boyhoods.156

'There is no way that we can move beyond the impasse surrounding the male body by simply ignoring it, since that is what patriarchy wants us to do and has, in fact, been quite successful in bringing about.' — Peter Lehman, Running Scared.157

In contemporary cultural and scholarly discourse, any reference to the phallus evokes an image of the penis, or at least of an object or idea that resembles its morphology and workings. Crucially, it has become synonymous with the male sex, masculinity and patriarchy. There has been varied debate on the penis and the phallus — which I will refer to as the material and the symbolic — and what the relationship between these entails. Within most psychoanalytic and feminist circles the phallus is viewed largely within a social constructionist framework in order to expose the underlying cultural mechanisms that construct it as something ideal and superior.

While such examinations have been important, scholars often fail to address the materiality (the flesh) of the body. This is a significant oversight since one of the key ways in which phallic masculinity maintains its power is by remaining disembodied. Within western cultural representations the male body — its complexity, multiplicity, contradictions — is rarely allowed to surface. The realities of the phallic male body (penis) are often concealed so that masculinity (phallus) can maintain its symbolic power. Grosz notes that ‘many features of contemporary knowledges… can be linked to man’s disembodiment, his detachment from his manliness in producing knowledge or truth.'158 This disembodiment regarding the phallus, needs to be urgently addressed.

In this chapter I consider the phallus both as it is represented in culture, and as a concept within theoretical discourse. In particular I am interested in those moments where the body disappears, and I demonstrate that in both cultural representation and in scholarship there have been attempts to separate the material and symbolic, the physical male sex organ from the phallus. My contention here is that they cannot successfully be disentangled. There is always a relation here, they are always interacting. The morphology of the male body is vital for the construction of the phallus; phallic symbolism always references the workings and proportions of the penis. Similarly, the phallus imposes itself on the male body, pressing it into particular submissions. Bodies desperately attempt to resemble and attain the ideal. As Bordo argues, the penis and phallus haunt each other.\textsuperscript{159} The penis always haunts the phallus, just as the material always haunts the symbolic, just as male bodies always haunt masculinity. I take this “haunting” to mean that there is always a connection between the two even if it is an uneasy or anxious one.

In the first part of this chapter I consider a number of ways in which the phallus has been represented and understood culturally. First, I examine its function, as an organising principle, within earlier western civilisations: Greece and Rome. I do this first, to demonstrate there was a strong acknowledgement, particularly in Roman societies, of the close relationship between material bodies and the symbolic. As is evident in their visual and literary sources the ancient Romans publicly promoted ideals of masculinity through representations of bodies. The morphology of bodies (penis) was central for the construction of phallic symbolism. However, this did not mean that the Romans acknowledged or attended to the realities of male bodies. In fact, the sources suggest the phallus operated as an ideal of masculinity which could regulate the practices of men and maintain a particular social order. Representations of the male body and the penis were overt and public, but these representations worked to produce and protect ideals of Roman masculinity.

\textsuperscript{159} Susan Bordo, \textit{The Male Body: A new look at men in Public and in Private} (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1999), 95. She writes that the penis 'haunts phallic authority.'
In more contemporary settings these outcomes have been achieved in two key ways. Using the work of Peter Lehman I demonstrate that within our current representations, the penis is either hidden, or its representation is carefully controlled. Both strategies work to maintain the phallus as an ideal. In particular I draw attention to Lehman’s analysis of the pornographic frame. In pornographic representation the penis is presented in its most ideal form; as hard, powerful and virile. This closely resembles the patterns in ancient Rome where idealised male bodies were routinely on public display. I argue that these representations, in both ancient and contemporary cultures, all demonstrate a sustained effort to maintain and protect ideals of masculinity. Furthermore, I suggest they reveal an anxiety regarding bodies. The relationship between masculinity (the phallus) and male bodies (the penis) is always an anxious one. This anxiety is evident in a number of contemporary practices and trends, like the increasing usage of penis enhancing drugs and surgeries. Thus, the persistent promotion of a disembodied symbolic masculinity within representation and discourse, helps produce a number of real bodily effects.

In opening this chapter I cited Lehman’s claim that patriarchy thrives and is bolstered when the male body is ignored. It thrives because the realities of bodies always threaten to undo masculinity and its ideals. The body then, is exactly what scholars must turn to. In the second part of this chapter I interrogate the major theoretical approaches that address the phallus and its representation. Specifically, I consider psychoanalysis, in particular its appropriation within feminist investigations. Feminist scholars have tended to reject Freud in favour of Lacan’s more symbolic reading of the phallus. Although this has been fruitful, it has meant that scholars have focused on the cultural (symbolic) components of masculinity rather than on bodies (the material). I argue that a focus on bodies is important for two reasons. First, it presents an opportunity to disrupt dominant forms of masculinity. The realities of the phallic body often challenge the ideals of the phallus. In other words, drawing attention to the penis and to male bodies can help undo or disrupt the phallic ideal. Second, by centring the body one can examine more closely how phallic ideals
impact bodies and the sexual subjectivities of men. These impacts are evident when one considers the specific responses and bodily practices that develop under the weight of phallic masculinity. As Bordo argues, this uneasy connection holds manhood 'hostage to an impossible ideal.'

While I do not propose a return to Freud it is important that scholars properly address the material aspects of bodies. Social constructionist models emphasise the construction of bodies but they rarely acknowledge how bodies themselves respond and at times, resist these constructions. Thus, I introduce somas-masculinities to this debate and consider a number of theorists who address material bodies more successfully. In particular I draw on Ken Corbett whose close attention to bodies works to uncover their vulnerabilities and complexities; states that trouble the ideals of masculinity. I then draw on affect theory to posit anxiety as a specific bodily affect of phallic masculinity. The realities of the male body (penis) threatens to undo masculinity (phallus) or weaken its power, thus anxiety always underpins this masculinity.

### Historical representations and concepts

Eva Keuls describes classical Athens as a phallocracy: ‘a cultural system symbolized by the image of the male reproductive organ in permanent erection, the phallus.’ Phallic imagery was central to Athenian culture and identity. In both Greek and Roman culture the connection of the symbolic phallus to its physical counterpart the penis, is made explicit. Keuls argues that the phallus was more than just a set of symbols or codes relating to the penis: ‘no such coding was necessary... Athenian men habitually displayed their genitals, and the city was studded with statues of gods with phalluses happily erect.’

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160 Ibid.
161 Eva C Keuls, The Reign of the Phallus: Sexual Politics in Ancient Athens (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 2. Keuls’ main source material is vase paintings; this suggests these representations were common and everyday, at least within aristocratic households.
162 Ibid. Small genitals were considered by the Greeks to be ideal as this denoted self-control, see p.68. In his own analysis of vase painting Kenneth Dover confirms this pattern. For the Greeks, an ideal penis was short, thin and straight. Alternatively, satyrs and barbarian slaves were
Similarly, Bordo notes that the western concept of the phallus — as the ‘symbolic double’ of the penis — was founded within the societies of Ancient Egypt and Greece.¹⁶³ There was a keen awareness of the phallus’ link to the penis, with symbols of male superiority and power explicitly linked to male bodies. Importantly the phallus denoted a reverence for the erect penis. Echoing Kuels and Dover, Bordo emphasises that it was the erect nature and not necessarily its size that mattered for the Greeks. Not just any representation of the penis could be worthy of the phallus. An incorrect depiction could denote an improper, feminised, or even excessive masculinity.¹⁶⁴

Like the Athenians the Romans also linked ideas of the phallus to the male sex, and to an idealised masculinity. Here I examine a number of literary and visual sources that reified this masculinity, where men were expected to maintain an ideal embodied sexuality and direct their sexual practices in particular ways. It becomes clear the Romans understood the power of symbols over their material conditions, social relations and political life. There was an acute awareness that the phallus is a symbolic construct, and its meanings were consciously directed towards particular material effects and practices. While the phallus was represented in corporeal terms this did not mean that the realities of male bodies come into relief in these representations. In fact, male bodies are always presented in an idealised manner.

The Roman’s viewed “manhood” as something cultural rather than biological. This understanding is reflected in their use of the term “man.” The latin term was vir, but this did not simply refer to a male in a biological sense.¹⁶⁵ Richard Alston

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¹⁶³ Bordo, Male Body, 84.
¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 90-1. Bordo describes the shift that occurred with the advent of Christianity which placed an emphasis on a god-given authority rather than in the natural world. Maleness became grounded in rationality and the mind. Bodies were seen as an impediment to the rational soul, thus there was a noticeable lack of representation of the penis from this time.
¹⁶⁵ Thomas Lacquer claims that the Romans did not make a distinction between sex and gender. He writes: ‘almost everything one wants to say about sex...already has in it a claim about gender.’ See Thomas Lacquer, Making Sex: body and gender from the Greeks to Freud (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1990), 11.
notes that *vir* referred to men of higher status, it was not a general term for all men.\textsuperscript{166} *Vir* was the root term for *virtus*, translated to mean “virtue” or “manliness.” Hence, the term *vir* could translate as “real man”, “virtuous man” or even “virile man.” This term had strong links with *potestas*, meaning ‘one who has power’ or ‘one who penetrates.’\textsuperscript{167} Since a “real man” was considered one who wielded power politically and socially, *vir* was used to describe freeborn adult males, those occupying the upper stratum in the Roman hierarchy.\textsuperscript{168} Certain groups of men were excluded such as the *pueri*, men who had not yet reached adulthood, and *hominess*, male slaves. The point I want to emphasise is that the term *vir* was attached to a social rather than a biological position.

Virility, power and authority were seen as essential components of Roman male subjectivity. The Roman man must never submit, rather he was expected to impose his will in all aspects of public and private life. His body, being the tangible or public demonstration of these values, must remain inviolable and impenetrable. Preserving ones corporeal integrity meant preserving ones masculinity. Thus, it was expected he would adhere to a stringent sexual corporeality and practice. In his sexual relations the Roman male took the active, insertive role. As Eva Cantarella explains, this pattern was ‘a manifestation of the social and sexual power of the stronger over the weaker, the master over the slave, the victor over the vanquished.’\textsuperscript{169} The male sexual role had to be an appropriate reflection of his social status.

While Roman men assumed a penetrative phallic role, the passive role was reserved for subordinated groups: women, slaves and prostitutes. Importantly, the sex of the participants was of little concern. In Plautus’ *Curculio*, a slave addressing his master states: ‘no one forbids anyone from the public street; as

\begin{footnotes}
\item[166] Richard Alston, “Arms and the Man: soldiers, masculinity and power in Republican and Imperial Rome,” in *When Men were Men: Masculinity, power and identity in classical antiquity*, eds. Lin Foxhall and John Salmon (London: Routledge, 1998), 206.
\end{footnotes}
long as you keep away from the bride, the widow, the maiden... and free boys, love whomever you want.’ Suetonius describes the emperor Claudius as being ‘of extreme lust towards women, completely lacking in experience of males.’ The manner in which Suetonius describes this sexual preference is revealing. Equally acceptable is the notion that he might choose a male partner. Furthermore, Suetonius does not have a term in which to describe this peculiarity, of heterosexuality. Choosing a sexual partner on the basis of their sex, rather than their status, was uncontroversial for the Romans. Freud writes: ‘the most striking distinction between the erotic life of antiquity and our own no doubt lies in the fact that the ancients laid stress upon the instinct itself, whereas we emphasize its object.’

The links between male sexuality and power is most succinctly articulated in the poetic and visual representations of the Roman god Priapus. Endowed with a large penis and wielding a sickle Priapus was often depicted protecting his garden from intruders by raping them. His popularity in Roman texts is demonstrative of how Roman men viewed themselves and how they were expected to direct their own sexual practices. Priapic ideology is most apparent in the Carmina Priapea, a collection of anonymous epigrams delivered in the persona of the god. In one epigram Priapus states: ‘you people... who try to steal from this garden, you’ll be buggered with my yardstick.’ Like Priapus, Roman men were expected to impose their will whether it be in a military or sexual sense. In fact, the two were explicitly linked.

Priapus’ physical characteristics and proportions further emphasise the importance of the phallus. In its crudest sense the phallus, in its material form as the penis, was a tool of penetrative domination, clearly evident in this

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174 “Priapea 28” in Homosexuality in Greece and Rome, 353.
representation. However, it was also a symbol of fertility and protection.\textsuperscript{175} Thus, an abundance of phallic references are apparent throughout the literary and visual cultures of Rome. In addition to the worship of deities like Priapus, phallic-like objects and symbols were often worn around the neck as a protective charm or hung above doorways of private dwellings. It has been suggested that the structure of Augustus’ forum was phallic, as were some of the artworks that adorned the walls of his forum.\textsuperscript{176}

Through these specific linguistic and visual examples we see the emergence of the phallus as a symbolic concept, as representing a patriarchal order in which Roman male citizens occupied the most powerful position. Importantly, the penis was referenced as the physical version of the phallus. References to the phallus took the form either of the literal penis on male figures like Priapus, or alternatively as something resembling the penis; as long, pointed, erect.

The phallus was central within everyday sexual practices. For the Romans sex involved an active and passive element where women were expected to assume the passive role. To be feminine was to be submissive. This is clearly demonstrated in the term a puella, used to describe a woman in her sexual role. Its most literal translation was “little girl” but it could also mean “sexual object.”\textsuperscript{177} This construction of the female sexual role made it difficult to comprehend how a sexual encounter between two women could be possible. First, it was considered an inversion of the normal sex role set out for women. Second, sex was phallocentric, meaning it contained two essential elements: the phallus and the act of penetration. Thus, sexual acts between two women were unintelligible, or considered an unnatural perversion. In the satirical writings of Juvenal and Martial women who had sexual relations with other women were described as a tribadas, meaning “female sexual pervert” or “masculine

\textsuperscript{175} Williams, \textit{Roman Homosexuality}, 91-5.


\textsuperscript{177} Parker, “The Teratogenic Grid, 49.
woman.”178 Philaenis is referred to as a tribadas because she penetrates boys ‘with the erection of a husband and pounds her axe at eleven girls daily.’179 As Hallett notes, Martial mocks these acts because they occur without the phallus. In another epigram Martial writes: ‘the wife and woman ought to know their own limits: let boys use their own part, you use yours.’180 In his Satires Juvenal describes (and endorses) the contempt directed at a woman who ‘shuns femininity and uses brute force.’181

Within these writings by Martial and Juvenal, the attitudes and behaviours of the Romans become apparent. As Sullivan explains, the satirist always reveals something of himself, his audience and the society in which he lives.182 As seen in these examples, the phallus was central to the sexual act. The Roman conception of sex did not allow for relations between women, this was seen as unnatural or perverse since it disrupted the “proper” patterns and roles.

The act of oral sex also presented a number of problems since penetration through intercourse was central to the male sexual role. As Holt Parker explains ‘any erotic activity that does not culminate in intercourse runs the danger of being labelled “passive” because someone is not being fucked.’183 This meant that at the very least the Roman man should not perform oral sex as this was seen to be degrading and passive. Catullus’ attack on Gellius underlines this logic: ‘for there is no villainy to which he could descend further, not even if he were to lower his head and devour himself.’184 Since sex was primarily concerned with male pleasure and power, performing oral sex rather than receiving it, was a violation of his sexual and corporeal integrity; the mouth is made into a passive vessel, penetrated by another. In fact, the penetration of a person’s mouth was seen as the most dominating and degrading act that could be inflicted. When

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179 Ibid., 186.
180 Martial 12.96 in Homosexuality in Greece and Rome, 427.
183 Parker, “The Teratogenic Grid,” 53.
184 “Catullus 88.7-8,” in Williams, Roman Homosexuality, 198.
Priapus issues a warning to rape any intruder that crosses his domain he adds ‘if so hard and weighty a punishment fails to dissuade, I’ll aim higher.’ Moreover, oral sex was seen as an unclean practice and befouling to the mouth of the person performing the act. The sources reveal that oral sex was indeed a part of Roman sexual practice, but for the Roman man this presented a number of difficulties. The penetrative role was the only acceptable role or practice for men, and the phallus was central to this.

Marilyn Skinner observes that Rome ‘built its sexual taxonomy...upon discrete practices’ with the use of a highly specific vocabulary and grammatical system pointing to a hierarchy of normal and contemptible practice. For the Romans, sexual relations were essentially an act of male power, and a reflection of the wider cultural and institutional structures. Parker notes: ‘every sexual act was based on the distinction between active and passive...and carries a burden of aggression or humiliation, power or powerlessness.’ Moreover, it was expected his sexual partner would be of a lower social status, thus, sex was based on an unequal power relation. As Cantarella observes, the sexuality of the Roman male was expressed without limitation; ‘he had to possess all the possible objects of his desire, independent of their sex.’

While these discourses around sexual practices and bodies were public and readily available, the realities of these practices remain difficult to verify. These readings of Roman sexual relations expose a dominant ideology rather than common practice. This is how the Roman man wanted to be seen. The representations laid out in their literary and visual culture suggests that such constructions and behaviours were seen as appropriate, even necessary. As Todd Reeser observes, symbols often function in ways that denote particular meanings

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185 “Priapea 28” in Homosexuality in Greece and Rome, 353.
186 Sullivan, “Martial’s Sexual Attitudes,” 424. In his writings Martial made it clear he opposed the practice as it polluted the mouth.
189 Cantarella, Bisexuality, 98.
a culture has already agreed upon. The male body was the ultimate symbol and expression of a wider gender system. Dominic Montserrat argues that it provided ‘an important symbolic gauge of discourses about power, identity and social position.’ How real bodies actually responded to these discourses is less clear. At the very least, we can ascertain that not all men had a rightful passage to Roman manhood; there were socio-political rules to obey and men were expected to act in a “correct” manner. The male body was the very thing that had to fall into line.

**Contemporary Representations**

In ancient Rome there is a specific connection made between the material and symbolic, a system where the phallus compels and shapes material practices and relations. Within their visual and literary sources the penis and the male body are cast in ideal terms, and these discourses point directly to the material body and the sexed body. The phallus is the symbolic double of the penis and is used interchangeably within representations of their sexual culture. In the cultural representations of the twentieth century these links are less apparent. As Bordo suggests, earlier Western civilisations appear to link the phallus and the penis — or masculinity with the male body — in a more overt manner. In the twentieth century, male bodies, and in particular the representation of the sexual male body, tend to disappear from mainstream culture.

In *Running Scared*, Peter Lehman accounts for this contemporary pattern. Using classic cinema as his key case study he argues that the penis is often hidden or elided from representation. This he notes, is a political problem. Concealing the male body, or carefully controlling its representation (which keeps the realities concealed), works to maintain and perpetuate patriarchal structures. Lehman

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191 Dominic Montserrat, “Experiencing the male body in Roman Egypt,” in *When Men were Men: Masculinity, power and identity in classical antiquity*, eds. Lin Foxhall and John Salmon (London & New York: Routledge, 1998), 153.
points to three specific reasons for this difficulty or reluctance to squarely address the penis in our cultural texts. First, and most important, the realities of the penis always threaten to underwhelm or demystify the phallus. It can never live up to the masculine ideal and is therefore kept out of sight, or it is presented in ways that imitate the phallus. Second, it allows women to see the realities of the penis and judge or compare men. This works to reverse the gaze and objectify the male body. Finally, he suggests there is a certain anxiety for homophobic men who might experience a fascination or pleasure in looking at it. Thus, there is a particular anxiety around representing the penis. The material realities of the penis are actively separated from the symbolic phallus (ideal masculinity) so that its ideological function might not be disrupted or dislodged.

In instances where the penis is displayed the representation is carefully controlled and regulated. He outlines a number of frames through which this regulation occurs: the pornographic, comic, medical and artistic. Within the pornographic frame, the penis is affirmed as the glorious and powerful phallus. In pornographic texts the penis is, above all other male parts, the central focus of the male body, thus mainstream pornography is commonly described as being phallocentric. It is presented in an ideal form, as large, hard and omnipresent. It is what women need and desire, even though it is also a tool of domination wielded against women’s bodies. There are strong links here to the sexual representations of Ancient Rome. Even though the distinction between the material and symbolic phallus collapses, the penis still resembles the phallus; thus, the realities of male bodies remain invisible.

This occurs also within the comic frame where the small, flaccid penis becomes an object of ridicule. Lehman examines a number of films that reference failed masculinity through the use of penis-size jokes. In these films it is often the antagonist that is implicated as possessing a small penis. This masculinity is seen as unworthy, in complete contrast to the phallic masculinity of the pornographic. ‘Laughing at failed men… protects the awesome spectacle of serious masculinity.

193 Ibid., 236.
If everyone measures up, it is hard to admire everyone,’ he writes.\textsuperscript{194} Although both discourses represent the penis differently, both still work to protect the meanings commonly associated with the symbolic phallus.

Susan Jefford argues that these patterns feature in the action films of the 1980s; films that were riddled with muscular active bodies on display, as spectacle.\textsuperscript{195} The \textit{Rambo} and \textit{Die Hard} franchises are two examples. In these films there is no direct reference to the penis. These bodies are very much an assertion of dominant masculinity, however, the penis is kept out of sight so that the masculinity of these bodies remains intact. Large weapons and fast cars commonly feature and these act as symbols of phallic masculinity; that is, they stand in for the penis.

This disappearance of real, visible male bodies from representation leads to a number of real effects. The realities of the male body (penis) are subordinated to a phallic authority that imposes a set of ideals. This uneasy relationship between the phallus and penis manifests in a number of lived realities at the level of the body itself. The Viagra drug, penis enlargement and enhancement, medical discourses regarding potency and performance; all of these conversations have become commonplace. Lehman writes: ‘we are currently undergoing a media feeding frenzy about penises…. indeed, the \textit{Wall Street Journal} gave front-page coverage to penis enlargement business in 1996.’\textsuperscript{196} Since then, a lucrative industry has emerged. Men’s magazines are awash with full-page ads for enlargement pills, various devices and lengthening tools have become available, and there has been a marked increase in enlargement surgeries.\textsuperscript{197} These

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\textsuperscript{194} Ibid., 256.  \\
\textsuperscript{195} Susan Jefford, “Can Masculinity be Terminated?” in \textit{Screening the male: exploring masculinities in Hollywood cinema}, eds. Steven Cohan and Ina Rae Hark (London: Routledge, 1993), 245.  \\
\textsuperscript{196} Lehman, \textit{Running Scared}, 237-8.  \\
\end{flushleft}
developments have emerged due to the impositions placed on the male body by an ideal phallic masculinity. The spectre of the phallus continues to haunt the penis.

Bordo draws attention to this occupation with size in the wake of a rapidly increasing business of penis augmentation. As she notes, the discourses that emanate from the offices of cosmetic surgeons alongside the various marketing campaigns for miracle products draws on a particular equation; ‘penis size = manliness.’\(^\text{198}\) Men are encouraged to see their penises as a measure of their masculinity, but this is based on a specific version that has been made readily available through particular cultural sites and texts, like pornography. Bordo writes: ‘if a Martian was planning a trip to earth and was given a *Vogue* or *Playgirl* to enlighten him on what to expect from human women and men, he’d get a very misleading impression.’\(^{199}\)

Furthermore, the ideals of the phallus are commonly mapped onto the entire male body. There is a demand that men be muscular, large, impenetrable; what Bordo terms ‘the cult of hardness.’\(^\text{200}\) Soft bodies are weak bodies, a source of cultural shame for men. It is no surprise then that many boys are increasingly attending gyms and health clubs in an attempt to build the body, make it stronger and harder, safer and more respected. The hard, erect penis like the hard, strong body, acts like an armour. Bordo writes: ‘it’s time to take that metaphorical armor off...to begin to think of the male body in terms of its varied feelings rather than an imagined ideal of constancy.’\(^\text{201}\)

While Lehman’s emphasis is on the representation of the sexual body within cultural texts he briefly draws attention to the major theoretical frameworks that address the phallus. He writes: ‘I am not concerned with psychoanalytic theory’s relationship to the phallus but with the relationship of the symbolic phallus to the literal male body. For it is not just psychoanalysis...that is tainted by the oft-

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\(^{198}\) Bordo, *Male Body*, 73.  
^{199}\) Ibid., 71.  
^{200}\) Ibid.  
^{201}\) Ibid., 65.
denied connection between the penis and the phallus; it is also the male body and male sexuality.'\textsuperscript{202} Both cultural and theoretical discourse within contemporary Western societies reveal a persistent tendency to deny the connection between the penis and the phallus. Here I briefly consider some of the central strands of psychoanalytic theory and its feminist appropriations, to address this dilemma.

**Psychoanalysis**

Within psychoanalysis the concept of the phallus is crucial for an explanation of how male and female identities develop and are formed. It is understandable then that such endeavours have been heavily scrutinised by scholars invested in feminism and gender. I briefly consider Freud and Lacan, and the critical responses to their theories of sexuality. In particular I focus on how the material/symbolic dichotomy emerges in their work, particularly within Lacan, and it is here that I raise some important implications for masculinity and the male body. In the introduction of his book Lehman writes: 'Western culture attributes profoundly important symbolic dimensions to the penis, at times even denying the connection between the penis and the phallus.'\textsuperscript{203} This is the crux of what I examine here, how psychoanalytic theory, and certain strands of feminist scholarship, persist with and even promote this separation.

Freud's account of the phallus is difficult to establish. With his theories of *penis envy* and the *castration complex* he demonstrates a preoccupation with an originary biological given, although this is murky and not without its complications. The penis is posited as the biological marker of sexual difference and consequently the centrepiece around which gender and sexuality for both men and women will develop and be lived. It is here that one encounters the persistent dilemma taken up by scholars: Did Freud intend this to be a literal interpretation or is it largely symbolic?

\textsuperscript{203} Ibid., 38.
Feminists have been quick to respond. Kate Millett describes his ideas as being underpinned by a ‘gross male-supremacist bias.’ According to Millet, Freud remains too focused on the biological. He grounds the construction of female sexuality, as inferior, in what she terms ‘the inevitable law of biology.’ These concerns are ostensibly confirmed in Freud’s writings. In his essay on female sexuality he writes: ‘she acknowledges the fact of her castration, and thus the superiority of the man and her own inferiority.’ ‘The psychical consequences of envy for the penis... are various and far-reaching. After a woman has become aware of the wound to her narcissism, she develops, like a scar, a sense of inferiority,’ he continues. There is a definite essentialist undertone here whereby this order of things is seen as natural and tied to the biological. Similarly, de Beauvoir describes Freud as too biologistic and too willing to preference masculinity and the male sex. She suggests that the positioning of the penis as the central anatomical signifier, is too implausible. ‘This weak little rod of flesh can in itself inspire them [women] only with indifference, or even disgust,’ she writes. The inequalities between the sexes is a cultural phenomenon rather than fixed in biology. She continues: ‘if the little girl feels penis envy it is only as the symbol of privileges enjoyed by boys.’ For de Beauvoir, Freud remains too tied to the biological and does not recognise the cultural nearly enough.

While Freud’s work emphasises the biological, there is some resonance within a more symbolic register. Rosalind Minsky and Juliet Mitchell both read his work in this manner, and suggest he is describing patriarchy and its mechanisms rather than approving of them. Psychoanalysis ‘is not a recommendation for a patriarchal society, but an analysis of one,’ Mitchell writes. Minsky describes this in greater detail: ‘Freud’s primary concern was to investigate and lay bare

205 Ibid., 187.
209 Ibid., 74.
the way culturally sanctioned gender positions are lived in the unconscious by men and women. He may, like many after him, have been unnerved by what he found.\footnote{Rosalind Minsky, \textit{Psychoanalysis and Gender: An introductory reader} (London & New York: Routledge, 1996), 64.} Castration is seen to be more symbolic; a boy’s entry into the world is based on early identifications with their fathers. Castration thus represents a displacement from this world. Similarly, Mitchell suggests that penis envy is ‘not about an anatomical organ but about the ideas of it that people hold and live by within the general culture, the order of human society.’\footnote{Mitchell, \textit{Psychoanalysis}, intro xvi.} The points at which Freud posits a biological and/or a symbolic emphasis remains difficult to reconcile.

Grosz presents the problem more clearly. While Freud demonstrates a more sophisticated understanding of sexual difference as psychically structured, his account of the phallus remains a masculinist one, rooted in biology. She writes: ‘it is the site of an amazing blindness...to explain why both the boy and the girl regard themselves, each other, and the others in their world as phallic unless the phallus has an a priori privilege in the constitution of the body image.’\footnote{Elizabeth Grosz, \textit{Volatile Bodies: toward a corporeal feminism} (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 58.} What she means is that the privileging of the penis as the central biological marker is confirmed by the very use of the term “phallus.” This “a priori” assumption is certainly one of the most puzzling and unsubstantiated aspects of his account.

\textbf{Lacan}

Lacan’s attempts to reconfigure Freud’s account starts with a clearer acknowledgement and emphasis of the symbolic. The phallus remains the central signifier however it is not a physical organ, rather it is symbolic which means no one can lay direct claim to it. Ellie Ragland-Sullivan writes: ‘the phallic signifier is intrinsically neutral, meaningless in its own right.’\footnote{Ellie Ragland-Sullivan, “Jaques Lacan: Feminism and the Problem of Gender Identity,” \textit{SubStance} 11, no.3 Issue 36 (1982): 10, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3684310.} This particular reading of
Lacan offers feminist scholars more appealing political possibilities regarding gender relations and power. The distinction made between the material and symbolic means that the privileged position attached to masculinity and men is the result of cultural law rather than being fixed or innate. Gary Taylor writes that in Lacan's account, 'both sexes are castrated.'\textsuperscript{215} This reading of Lacan opens up new understandings for how these power relations come into play through language and identification. The phallic signifier does not simply refer to the boy and his difference from the girl. Rather, it is a paternal metaphor. At the moment the child begins to develop language they also become aware of the father's presence. Up until that juncture the mother has been their primary attachment. Ragland-Sullivan describes this moment as 'a prohibiting force to the infant's merger with the mother.'\textsuperscript{216} This phallic signifier, the paternal metaphor, therefore disrupts the original, more spontaneous and unconscious identification. The infant enters a world of language and culture that immediately starts to impose limitations on the self in the same way that the recognition of the father disrupts the relationship with the mother. Ragland-Sullivan writes: 'the father's name appears to mean “no”.... culture has, thus, began to impose itself on nature.'\textsuperscript{217} Both sexes are castrated because they both experience a loss.

This reconfiguration of phallic masculinity in symbolic terms emphasises the significance of culture. This closely resembles a social constructionist position whereby culture imposes itself on nature via language and social law. For men, proper development entails taking on masculinity in a way that is meaningful in the world. Boys are expected to develop into men and embody masculinity in an intelligible and acceptable manner. In these cases culture has done its work. Improper development results in the man whose masculinity is aberrant or outside the norm. Phallic masculinity is therefore deterministic, culture has the final say. Importantly, a material/symbolic distinction becomes crucial for such an account. As Jane Gallop notes, making a clear distinction between the phallus

\textsuperscript{217} Ibid.
and the penis is a central concern for feminist scholars of Lacan.\textsuperscript{218} It is thought that this distinction shifts the emphasis from the inevitability of biology and sexual difference to an emphasis on language and a learned cultural law or system. From this vantage point one can begin to interrogate the specific processes of socialisation that shape gender relations and hierarchies at any given time or place.

Although this division of the material and symbolic opens up a number of possibilities there are some real limitations. First, it is not clear that Lacan has successfully secures this distinction. He claims that the phallus is neutral and therefore no one has a privileged or unique relation to it, yet there are particular moments in his work where the penis is approached in similar terms to the phallus, as the signifier. He writes: ‘the fact that the penis is dominant in the shaping of the body-image is evidence of an autonomous, non-biological imaginary anatomy. Though this may shock the champions of the autonomy of female sexuality, such dominance is a fact and one moreover which cannot be put down to cultural influences alone.’\textsuperscript{219} Does Lacan revert back to a Freudian biologism here? How can the phallus be a neutral signifier and yet also tied to the male body?

This confusion is expressed by a number of scholars. From her extensive survey of Lacan’s work, Grosz concludes that his concept of the phallus ultimately privileges masculinity and situates the feminine in a position of lack, as castrated. This privileging occurs because the phallus always refers back to the sexual organs, which are the point of sexual difference. Grosz writes: ‘the phallus is not a neutral term functioning equally for both sexes, positioning them both within the symbolic order... it is a term privileging masculinity, or rather, the penis.’\textsuperscript{220} Ragland-Sullivan disagrees with this summation, she writes: ‘an identificatory logic locates the phallic signifier as the origin of culture, and arbitrarily links the

\textsuperscript{220} Ibid., 122.
male – *qua* father – to the principles of law and reality. However, her use of the term arbitrary seems problematic here. Any attempt to attach a neutral meaning to the term phallus is puzzling considering the specificity of its historical meaning; as directly linked to the penis. This itself is a castration of history.

Bordo extends this debate. She notes that scholars are too quick to insist that Lacan’s phallus is purely symbolic and not a body part. This, she argues, ignores that it has emerged historically ‘out of forms of reverence that did have a reference in biology’ and in particular the morphology of males and the image of the erect penis. This tendency is counterproductive as it reproduces the exact binaries gender scholars have attempted to problematise. Bordo writes: ‘to proclaim that the phallus has nothing to do with the penis is to suffer from a sort of advanced “phallus” complex oneself, in which mind stands supreme over body, human over animal, symbol over flesh.’

Butler claims that an insistence on this separation has the reverse effect; it keeps them bound together. Like Grosz and Bordo, she argues that the phallus always refers to the penis, there is always a connection between them. In her interrogation of his two key essays “The Mirror Stage” and “The Signification of the Phallus,” Butler verifies this connection: ‘the narcissistically invested organs in “The Mirror Stage” serve a function parallel to that of the phallus in “The Signification of the Phallus: the former establish the conditions of knowability; the latter establish the conditions for signifiability.’ Yet he posits the phallus as a neutral signifier independent of its anatomical origin. How can we say that these two entities are not linked in some significant way? Butler suggests that the repeated attempts to establish a distinction between the phallus and the penis ensures that they remain bound to each other. By saying that the penis is what the phallus must not be, the relationship between this particular body part and the phallus is established. She writes: ‘if the phallus only signifies to the

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223 Ibid., 91.
extent that it is not the penis, and the penis is qualified as that body part that it
must not be, then the phallus is fundamentally dependent upon the penis in
order to symbolize at all... the phallus requires the penis for its own
constitution.'\textsuperscript{225}

Lacan does not convincingly disentangle the material and symbolic, however, I
suggest that even if this distinction was successfully established, as some
feminist scholars have proposed, there are limits to how this can be utilised.
These scholars insist that Lacan’s work denotes a radical re-reading of Freud’s
biologism because they see that it can offer a real challenge to the norms and
ideals of masculinity. Some have seen his work as crucial for feminist politics. I
suggest instead that this distinction might in fact hinder other, more productive
avenues for mounting this challenge. Maintaining a distinction between the
material and the symbolic keeps masculinity and male privilege in the realm of
the symbolic, free from any of the realities of the male body that may threaten
that privilege. Both culturally and within theory there is a reluctance to join the
phallus and its corporeal double. Phallic masculinity therefore remains
disembodied, ensuring its power. Even feminist theory has remained fixated on
the phallus as being a social construction, but this ignores the material aspects.
Again, the body is lost here and the penis and its material realities are hidden
from view. Yet this materiality can and does destabilise this power.

This social constructionist position also tends to set up a determinism that
remains difficult to break, and this dampens the possibilities for theorising
gender differently. Malcolm Bowie laments Lacan’s insistence on retaining the
term phallus as this seems to undermine some of the more promising
possibilities of his work. He notes that paradoxically one of Lacan’s intentions
here is to ‘maintain the neutrality of that structure on questions of gender.’\textsuperscript{226}
However, his retention of the term phallus as central signifier not only alludes to
sexual difference and the privileging of the male, but also moves this beyond
anatomy into the realm of what he calls ‘a universal semantics.’ He writes: ‘this

\textsuperscript{225} Ibid., 51.
tale of a voyage beyond male and female is disingenuously told, and often contradicted. For Freud and Lacan both seek the patronage of Priapus and write with unashamed enthusiasm of his magical powers.\textsuperscript{227} The uncertainties and variability of the penis and of male bodies therefore evaporate under the phallus.

Juliet Mitchell points to this dilemma in relation to sexual difference. Mitchell regularly utilises Freud but is less captivated with Lacan who she sees as 'more dismal for feminist politics.'\textsuperscript{228} She notes that with Lacan, 'the law of sexual difference is in itself inviolate. If any reversals of “gender” position are undertaken unconsciously, then they are pathologies — if they are pursued consciously, then they constitute political choices.'\textsuperscript{229} Such choices then would be seen as subversive and a disruption to the norm. Adhering to gender norms then is posited as a sign of proper development and socialisation.

While I do not suggest a return to Freud's essentialist account of the body, which ties power to male bodies, a closer treatment of this body is required. Feminists have tended to find virtue in Lacan's work and his more social constructionist reading of sexual subjectivity. This helps account for the ways in which ideals are constructed and enforced. Thus far, addressing culture has not been able to dislodge these ideals and their effects. Scholars can supplement this approach by addressing the body within their analyses. This too can do a lot of work. Bodies reveal things that properly disrupt the ideals of masculinity.

**Keeping the body in mind**

What might the penis and the phallic body reveal if thought in other terms beyond this cult of hardness, in terms that do not conflate them with phallic masculinity and its mechanisms? Within scholarship an emphasis has been placed on masculinity as a cultural construction. Within this frame bodies are often read as a blank text; written on (produced) by culture. Masculinity is read

\textsuperscript{227} Ibid., 128.
\textsuperscript{228} Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis*, intro xxxi.
\textsuperscript{229} Ibid., xxxii.
here as negative and harmful and is therefore contested. It becomes a thing to deconstruct, curtail and overcome. Masculinity is a socio-political construction that presses on male bodies and subjectivity in a negative manner. What this does, however, is focus on the idea or concept of masculinity rather than thinking about male bodies themselves — the penis, desire, emotion — and what these might reveal to us or what they can challenge. By examining the penis and male sexual subjectivity only through a culturally constructed phallic masculinity have we properly understood the complexities and dimensions of these? Indeed, the ideals of masculinity have real effects; men must always negotiate a relationship with these ideals. We live in a world full of meaning and cannot avoid a relation with this. However, we also have a body with its own flesh. Is there a way to hold these ideas together; to focus also on the things bodies reveal that are not captured by a culturally prescribed masculinity.

What I mean here is that the phallic body is more complex than phallic masculinity allows. Scholarship on masculinities has tended to ignore this. Ken Corbett suggests that within theory, the penis and the phallic body has become unthinkable. Scholars are right to consider the social development of men and the often harmful implications, however in losing sight of the body we lose an opportunity to better understand all of the dimensions and potentialities of male subjectivity itself, that which might exist and occur beyond the narrow boundaries of ideal masculinity. By tending only to the socio-cultural we ignore what is occurring at the level of the body. There is a tendency to simplify the phallic state and therefore to simplify male subjectivity. In his introduction Corbett writes: ‘boys are always more than the category that is masculinity. Gender is rarely, if ever, totalizing.’

Corbett suggests that a certain “phallophobia” informs current theory and practice. Here he is particularly concerned with clinical psychology practice informed by psychoanalysis, but suggests that most gender theorising suffers under this complex. There is a relentless scrutiny of masculinity and its discontents without any reference to what is happening at the point of the boy’s

230 Corbett, Boyhoods, 15.
body. This extinguishes some of the complexities and possibilities. Corbett writes:

Paradoxically, might this phallophobia also issue from the conundrum of the phallic ideal and the fantasmatic character of the penis? Has the penis become unthinkable? Consider that Freud’s position regarding the penis as originary, as an originating idealization, or maleness as the original ideal, has been repeatedly criticized and shown to be logically inconsistent with his propositions regarding the body as fantastically materialized. Yet we have not moved very far from either Freudian idealization or the critique thereof. We have not managed to create much in the way of potential space to imagine the fantastic phallic body, including the penis.231

He asks us to think about phallic states in a broader sense. Scholars tend to focus on the phallic state as something possessive, aggressive, even violent and yet there is also eroticism, surrender, pleasure, anxiety, regression. Corbett writes: ‘to lose sight of these dynamics is to lose sight of many men and boys, the variety of fantastic phallic states, the complex potentialities of masculinity.’232 It means we also lose an opportunity to attach other meanings and values to men, meanings that can produce worthier models of masculinity.

While Corbett is concerned largely with clinical practice involving boys, his work presents a timely challenge for feminist scholars and studies of masculinities. First, he extends how we might theorise the phallic body by incorporating bodies and bodily states. Second, he points out the limitations of employing dominant frameworks to explain, deconstruct and discourage certain behaviours and practices of men. The fact that men experience or feel a range of drives, desires and emotions that might lead to these behaviours, is often denied or simplified. This means he places an importance on lived felt experience. Rather than simply theorising the boys that emerge in his book, he actually listens to them. In this way he gives them a voice to express a range of desires, fantasies and vulnerabilities, not just their own but also those that inevitably enter the lives of

231 Ibid., 219.
232 Ibid., 233.
all men. In this way, Corbett is able to account for and provide a space for more alternative masculinities and boyhoods.

Corbett demonstrates the significance of addressing the material body. In our cultural and theoretical systems, the attempts to separate the phallus from its material counterpart effectively maintain an ideal symbolic masculinity that continues to function in an oppressive manner. The new radical understandings of the body offered through psychoanalysis have been taken up within social constructionist frameworks which focus on a culturally constructed body. This sets up new cultural determinisms that remain difficult to overcome or break. These gender norms work at extinguishing the ever-increasing variation of human experience and desire, and ultimately simplify masculinity and male subjectivity. More important, as Lehman and others suggest, this persistent circumvention of the corporeal means we lose an important opportunity whereby we might dismantle this rigid symbolic masculinity.

In this chapter I have addressed the tendency within theoretical and cultural discourse to disembodify male sexual subjectivity. In particular the appropriation of psychoanalysis within feminist and social constructionist discourses has borne the brunt of this critique. Psychoanalysis does, however, offer a useful starting point for thinking about emotion and affect. I suggest that addressing the phallic body might start with thinking about affect. The body is always central in affect; the point at which symbolic meanings, ideals and norms become entangled with lived subjectivity. In other words, it is a mechanism to describe how bodies take on or are affected by the world. These affects produce a range of conscious and unconscious emotional responses that might shape ones presentation, behaviours and practices. Psychoanalysis is an important tool for describing this process because it theorises the elements of subjectivity that are less visible. Kaja Silverman states: ‘psychoanalysis is after all, the theory par excellence of the affective.’

Increasingly, affect is employed as a theoretical

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lens within gender studies and queer theory. One of the most prominent examples is Butler’s notion of *gender melancholy*.\(^{234}\)

I propose foregrounding *anxiety* as a particular affect of masculinity. This is not a new idea with a number of scholars linking anxiety and masculinity. In drawing attention to the increasingly lucrative business of penis enhancement, sexual potency and gym culture, Lehman and Bordo point to an anxiety that pervades the male body. These practices are an attempt to align the body with phallic masculinity. The penis must either be hidden or must resemble the phallus as closely as possible. The title of Lehman’s book *Running Scared* alludes to an anxiety that underpins these hidden or controlled representations of the male sexual organ. The realities of the male body always threaten to undo ideal masculinity, thus men anxiously seek to maintain this ideal; patriarchy is literally “running scared.”

The representations in ancient Roman culture are also evidence of this anxiety. The male body was central to the social and political fabric of this society. While depictions of the penis were readily available and visible, it was still governed by a set of specific laws regarding bodies and sexual practice. There were still ideals to uphold and these ideals were seen as central for sustaining their political and social hierarchies. Moreover, these early societies adhered to a one-sex model; a single-sexed body manifests as at least two different genders. Importantly, these genders are constructed rather than innate. Thomas Laqueur writes: ‘the boundaries between male and female are primarily political; rhetorical rather than biological claims regarding sexual difference and sexual desire are primary.’\(^{235}\) The assigning of bodily difference was deeply ideological, as were the hierarchies attached to this difference. This meant that the tightly woven socio-political systems were not bound by any essential fact or truth. They were a construction, a potentially fragile one. Bodies entered the world and were given meaning. Laqueur claims that for the Romans, ‘mind and body are so intimately bound that conception can be understood as having an idea, and the body is like

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an actor on stage, ready to take on roles assigned it by culture.' The Romans demanded that male bodies consciously reflect an ideal masculinity. This too generated an anxiety to conform and bring bodies into line.

In a contemporary context normative masculinity requires a rejection of same-sex desire and the feminine. In fact, these two are interlinked. To fit neatly into a heterosexual framework, men must do their masculinity well. The repression or denigration of the feminine is a way to achieve this. Ian Cook suggests that one of the primary reasons masculinity is anxious is that it necessarily involves a repression of the primary attachment to the mother (the feminine). The boy must give up the mother and enter a world that demands he adhere to a normative, intelligible masculinity. Cook argues that this creates an always unstable identity built upon an anxious relationship with not only the feminine, but also with one's own masculinity. He writes: 'In short, heterosexual masculine identity can be understood to be performed against anxiety. This anxiety is a function of the (failed) repression of femininity that is central to the production of male identity.'

In particular Cook is concerned here with how these anxieties manifest in pornography, a point I will address in the following chapter. However, Cook's argument helps describe the forces that drive men to desperately seek out masculinity. Men undertake a repression of same sex desire and the feminine, both of which can be achieved through an anxious performance of normative masculinity. Within Western culture this normative masculinity is a disembodied one, an anxious split between an ideal that is continually disseminated via culture and the body that can never measure up to or properly absorb that ideal. Both culturally and within theory we continue to foster this dichotomy. We remain stuck on the idea and on that which emerges from culture. Attempts to shift or reshape this becomes the political aim. This overlooks the importance of the body, as the thing that can truly undo those ideals we hope to shatter.

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236 Ibid., 61.
Affect is an encounter between bodies and the world, one that occurs below the level of reflection. When we are affected by something, we are describing something felt by the psyche, which is necessarily embodied. This is where phenomenology can add something further since it describes how affect reverberates in the flesh of the body. Gayle Salamon writes that Merleau-Ponty moves the ‘capacities of the unconscious from the domain of the mind to the domain of the body,’ This is a crucial distinction between psychoanalytic and phenomenological frameworks. In the following chapter I examine how affected bodies might form particular habits and how these can become embedded in the unconscious of the body, so that they function in an automatic manner. In order to do this, I take up that frame which presents the penis in its most idealised form, the pornographic, and examine how these representations might seep into the embodied sexual practices of men.

Chapter Four — Entering the Pornhub: Internet Pornography, masculinity and bodies

‘Pornography is an irreducibly embodied practice.’ — Joan Mason-Grant, Pornography Embodied.239

‘Internet porn participates in the larger drama of a technological confrontation between men and nature – one in which control and the meaning of masculinity is perpetually at stake.’ — Steve Garlick, Taking Control of Sex.240

‘The Internet fundamentally changes the social meaning of pornography by embedding it squarely in the epistemological shift from knowledge to information, and the political shift to information becoming democratically accessible to everyone.’ — Margret Grebowicz, Why Internet Porn Matters.241

In this chapter I shed further light on the phallus and its persistent “haunting” of male bodies. In particular I address the intersection of internet porn, masculinity and bodies. A focus on pornography extends the discussion of the phallus since its content has been and continues to be phallocentric. By this I mean that an ideal masculinity — as dominant, active and aggressive — is exemplified. This is one of the few spaces where the penis is made visible. In fact, the penis is the focal point of male bodies. David Buchbinder highlights the tendency of pornography ‘to conflate the actual physical penis with the culturally significant symbol of the phallus.’242 Thus, the porn star represents a ‘mythic ideal’ and the penis is represented in terms that seek to match the phallus; as large, hard and powerful.

There has been much political and scholarly debate on pornography, most significantly within feminist circles of the late 1970s and 80s, during the debate called the “sex wars.” Within this debate, the question of free speech and censorship dominated the discussions and the literature. In this chapter I begin by revisiting these feminist debates to see where we have landed. Feminism

today is largely concerned with the representations of women in porn, and the
effects of these. It is curious then that the current literature tends not to address
the question of bodies and new technologies. A focus on these questions I claim,
is necessary in order to describe and account for the effects of representation
today, if and when they occur. Thus, pornography’s recent relocation to the
virtual world and its intersections with gendered bodies, is the primary focus of
this chapter.

This focus is crucial since it has become apparent that internet technologies have
altered pornography in ways that render earlier debates and critiques of it, less
useful for an analysis of contemporary concerns. The internet has transformed
the way we encounter porn and these shifts have been rapid. It has meant a
marked expansion of pornography, its production and distribution. This
proliferation of online porn *appears* to have ushered in a greater number of
hardcore representations that are more easily accessed, resulting in increased
impacts on bodies and subjectivities. On the other hand, the internet offers
alternative possibilities for subverting some of these patterns. I maintain that
feminist scholarship has not properly addressed these affective processes and
possibilities, particularly in relation to men and masculinities. By doing this,
scholars can begin to shed further light on the complex and often contradictory
tensions at work and better understand the possible impacts online porn has on
sexual and social lives.

I have divided the chapter into two main parts; both draw attention to these gaps
within feminist porn studies. To begin, I address the key feminist debates and
argue for a greater focus on pornography as it appears to us today, embedded in
new technologies and a largely virtual world. I then look more closely at what is
occurring on the internet regarding the representations of gender relations and
gendered bodies in porn. I argue that there is a paradoxical tension here. First, it
is apparent that hardcore narratives and their presentation of ideal phallic
bodies, remain a constant force online. One might even argue that these have
intensified. The wider distribution offered via the internet has meant that users
have greater access to such representations. However, it appears the internet has
also enabled alternative possibilities that act in more subversive ways. In particular the advent of amateur porn sites has ushered in varied representations that break some of the traditional models. This is the tension I examine in the first part of this chapter.

I then directly address the gap in studies of masculinities regarding bodies and male embodiment. As this thesis argues, these studies have remained largely within a social constructionist framework and have struggled to account for male bodies on two accounts. First, they rarely acknowledge and examine the ways in which bodies play an integral role in social processes and cultural production. Second, there is a focus on the representation of bodies rather than an analysis of exactly how bodies are impacted by these representations. I focus on this latter point. Specifically, I argue that the ways in which pornographic discourses might be grafted onto male bodies and embedded in the everyday lived practices of men, needs further interrogation. Masculinities have pointed toward these problems and concerns but have rarely addressed them. In order to account for this, scholars must centre the body in their analyses, and make this their starting point.

In particular I foreground *soma-masculinities* and employ phenomenology to help describe how the consumption of internet porn can be considered a material practice and also, how its qualities and meanings might be embedded in the sexual subjectivities of men. Furthermore, I engage recent scholarship that addresses the intersection of online porn and masculinity to consider the larger question regarding technology. What is our relationship to technology and what can this reveal about us? By examining this relationship we might uncover something significant regarding masculinity and its workings. I begin, however, with an outline of the feminist debate on pornography and its relative silence regarding the internet.

**Feminist Porn Studies**
Within the vast feminist debate on pornography there are two major strands that have remained consistent up until the present day: the anti-pornography feminists and the pro-sex, anti-censorship. This clash of ideologies sparked the feminist sex wars in the early 1980s; pornography was the key contested site in the debate. The anti-pornography position as expressed by key figureheads Andrea Dworkin and Catherine MacKinnon, states that all pornography is sex discrimination and harmful to women. As Courtenay Daum notes, these feminists see pornography as inherently problematic for feminism because it ‘eroticizes hierarchy and sexualizes inequality in tangible ways.’

That is, it conditions men to hold particular attitudes towards women and encourages sexual violence. Dworkin boldly states in the conclusion of her book, ‘we will know that we are free when the pornography no longer exists. As long as it does exist, we must understand that we are the women in it: used by the same power, subject to the same valuation.’ Dworkin suggests that pornography itself needs to be abolished. These feminists attempted to bring about this abolition, drafting a Model Anti-Pornography Law that would classify pornography as sex discrimination and therefore a civil rights violation. This fervent political engagement occurred during a time when pornography was largely in print form and on film. Since its move online this particular faction, for the most part, has been relatively silent.

Conversely, other feminist groups opposed this position, interpreting the eradication or censorship of pornography as an eradication of free speech. These feminists adopt an anti-censorship stance, a viewpoint now often associated with the “third wave.” They argue that censorship is not the solution as this stifles free speech, including women’s freedom of expression. Free speech is seen as a

243 Courtenay Daum, “Feminism and Pornography in the Twenty-First Century: The Internet’s impact on the Feminist Pornography Debate,” Women’s Rights Law Reporter 30 (2009): 549. Joan Mason-Grant argues that the Dworkin-MacKinnon analysis of pornography is often wrongly ‘assimilated to the speech paradigm’ and therefore caught up in questions of legality and censorship. She believe this obscures their other important observations that pornography is a real material practice that shapes particular behaviours, a point I will revisit in the second part of this chapter. See Mason-Grant, Pornography Embodied, 1-11.


246 Carol Vance and Gayle Rubin are two key figures. A number of groups also emerged, like Feminists Against Censorship which was formed in the UK in 1989.
crucial component of equality; ‘women are entitled to both free speech and equality and cannot have one without the other.’

It is seen to be a vital tool for counteracting patriarchal norms. While these groups of feminists argued for free-speech, at times they held conflicting views of what the content of this speech should entail. The pro-sex feminists examine the subversive and liberating potential of pornography for women. The solution to countering the harms of free speech, such as violent pornography, is to encourage more free speech from a female perspective whereby different, more egalitarian forms of pornography might be produced. Others maintained an anti-censorship stance but advocated for the use of non-sexually explicit speech to rally against the consumption of pornography. Similar to anti-porn groups, these feminists have remained largely silent on the subject of online porn. This is particularly puzzling considering that the internet is now the space where free speech occurs, where anyone is able to contribute and distribute their viewpoints.

Natasha Walters argues that feminists must turn their attention to the internet. She claims that the internet, with its global reach, has ushered in an increasingly hypersexual culture in the west, and has produced a collective numbness to representations previously considered problematic. ‘It’s hard to object to any of the mainstream aspects of hyper-sexual culture, from Nuts to lap-dancing clubs, given the great leviathan of obscenity that anyone can access at any time with a couple of clicks of a mouse,’ Walters writes. Pornography has become part of the everyday. This, she says, has made the anti-pornography argument more difficult to make: ‘rather than arguing against the very existence of porn, they [feminists] are looking more for equality within a world already saturated by pornography.’ Online porn, she suggests, has contributed to the rise of newer, more explicit forms of sexism within mainstream culture. This echoes a sentiment expressed by Linda Williams who claims that the “sex wars” debates concerning abolition ‘have paled before the simple fact that still and moving-image pornographies have become fully recognizable fixtures of popular

247 Daum, "Feminism and Pornography," 553.
249 Ibid., 105.
Williams makes this claim during a time when porn was largely produced for videocassette and dvd. This is dramatically intensified in our current context. Walters writes: ‘once upon a time someone... might have found, with some difficulty, ten, or twenty, or a hundred images to satisfy themselves, now anyone can click on a single website and find... a thousand choices of videos and images.’ The internet has dramatically fractured the original debate. Walters believes scholars need to interrogate the content of internet porn, its effects and its saturation of our culture in order to properly address sexism and its effects on women.

Walters position tends to ignore the subversive possibilities that the internet might open up regarding this debate. While a focus on the internet is imperative, this need not entail censorship or a stringent regulation of it. Daum suggests the internet could provide feminists with a unique tool for counteracting harmful depictions and thus open up new avenues for a feminist politics. Its peculiar features — accessibility, scope and anonymity — make it vastly different from previous forms of media communication. First, the internet has provided a platform for women to produce their own porn. Traditionally the industry has been controlled by a small number of male producers and studio executives. This influx of female representatives might enable new depictions that display the diversity of women’s interests. This has the potential to debunk some of the traditional models that tend to either regulate or ignore female sexuality and pleasure; that many women experience sexual desire which manifests in a variety of ways. Second, the enormous span of the internet enables more liberating forms of pornography to reach a global audience. The specific demographics are more fragmented and unknowable thus opening up production possibilities. What Daum means here is that producers, specifically female producers, cannot know who the recipient is and therefore are less likely to cater for a purely male audience. Finally, there is greater anonymity with the internet. Whereas once pornography was accessed in public places such as the

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251 Walters, Living Dolls, 106.
252 Daum, “Feminism and Pornography,” 560.
newsstand, theatre or video store, on the internet it can be accessed with increased privacy. This enables women to access porn easily and in an environment that is safe.

It is evident the internet engages a public who continue to produce, access and consume pornography in its traditional form, however, it also generates other possibilities. This contradiction is one of my central concerns regarding online porn. On the one hand the internet enables the proliferation of traditional models of porn, and alternatively it offers the potential to break these patterns and enable more subversive representations. I address this tension now in relation to masculinity and male bodies.

Within studies of masculinities there has been some attention given to pornography and its intersection with masculinity. Robert Jensen is one of the few to venture here although he doesn’t move very far from the radical feminist position.253 Jensen argues that pornography acts as a mirror. By this he means that the content of mainstream porn is a reflection of patriarchal attitudes that seek to oppress and degrade women. The mainstreaming of porn within wider culture demonstrates a persistent investment in these patterns of masculinity. He writes: ‘pornography as a mirror can take us beyond sex into even more disturbing territory, which leads back to masculinity.’254 With his focus on masculinity Jensen’s work adds a degree of political clout to this debate, however, there is little focus on internet porn.

In Gender of Desire Michael Kimmel provides an in depth analysis of male sexuality; what it is, what affects it, how male desire works. Kimmel draws attention to what he considers a significant gap in studies of masculinities: ‘what have men had to say about the pornography debate? Frankly, very little.’255 Across three chapters he addresses the intersection of pornography and male

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254 Ibid., 17.
sexuality. The most striking omission here are bodies themselves, a point I will return to later. In chapter five he addresses different media, concluding: ‘the changes in violent content among media... has more to do with the definition of hegemonic masculinity than it does with technological proliferation and democratization.’

There is a presumption here that porn operates similarly across different media. Thus, the internet is seen to mirror the patterns of gender that are always already occurring. I suggest, however, that the internet is more particular than this; it has the potential to dramatically alter how bodies are represented and impacted by pornography. Thus, an interrogation of this intersection is vital.

Within this first section I have drawn attention to a number of gaps. Much energy has been poured into earlier debates hence there has been scant attention to the pressing matter of the internet and new technologies, and very little scholarship has been produced on this topic in relation to men and masculinities. In the following sections I conduct a closer inquiry into the intersection of the internet and pornography, in relation to masculinity and embodiment.

A proliferation of traditional representations?

Gail Dines is one of the few feminists to focus on porn’s relocation to the internet. In Pornland she argues that the internet has enabled a new wave of entrepreneurs who produce porn, particularly gonzo porn, that is more violent, and which displays an increased misogyny and racism. These pornographers, she claims, have hijacked sexuality and sold it back to us in ways that have negative effects both at the societal and individual level. She writes: ‘although I have been studying the porn industry for over two decades, nothing prepared me for how quickly hard-core, cruel porn would come to dominate the Internet...the Internet

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256 Ibid., 109.
257 Gonzo porn is a particular genre of porn that depicts hardcore sex with camera shots that are close-up. The camera is often right in the scene. The term "gonzo" is used because it attempts to depict real unedited sex.
caused a revolution in porn.’\textsuperscript{258} This, she emphasises, is spurred on by the commerciality of internet porn which has become a highly competitive market. This is a key point raised by other scholars, most notably Robert Jensen who describes commercial pornography as ‘the collaboration of capitalism and patriarchy.’\textsuperscript{259} With the increased accessibility of internet porn and its low production and distribution costs this collaboration has intensified. Producers, she claims, go to great lengths to entice an increasingly de-sensitised audience in order to increase revenues: ‘what they [porn producers] will admit is that porn is becoming more extreme, and their success depends on finding some new, edgy sex act that will draw in users always on the lookout for that extra bit of sexual charge.’\textsuperscript{260} Internet porn, she concludes, is a public health concern that must be addressed.

Dines is largely concerned here by the endless cycle of hardcore content within internet porn, much of which continues to depict harmful gender relations with increasing intensity. Importantly she does not restrict her analysis to women alone, but considers the representations of male sexuality and bodies. ‘Men in porn are depicted as soulless, unfeeling, amoral life-support-systems for erect penises who are entitled to use women in any way they want,’ she writes.\textsuperscript{261} The penis is the central focus, the ultimate physical manifestation of the phallus. Such a construction does nothing to challenge the symbolic phallus or its attending ideals of masculinity and male sexuality.

Steve Garlick examines this intersection of internet porn, masculinity and bodies in more detail. He raises a number of philosophical questions regarding technology itself and how this might shape representations of bodies. His position differs from Kimmel’s in that he believes the form and content of pornography does alter across different media. Across two essays he claims that

\textsuperscript{258} Gail Dines, \textit{Pornland: How porn has hijacked our Sexuality} (Boston: Beacon Press, 2010), preface xiii.
\textsuperscript{260} Dines, \textit{Pornland}, intro xvi.
\textsuperscript{261} Ibid., intro xxiv.
new sexual representations are always closely linked with developments in technology, from the printing press, film and video, through to more recent digital and virtual technologies.\textsuperscript{262} Dines argues that traditional forms of pornography are reproduced (even intensified) online, but statements like these oversimplify the matter. Garlick writes: ‘research on pornography needs to consider the changing technological environment and to ask whether the Internet is more than simply another medium for the delivery of familiar pornographic representations and a “distorted” version of sexuality.’\textsuperscript{263} While he identifies the larger scope of possibility provided by the internet, something I will examine later, Garlick does concede that these familiar representations do persist in online environments. The internet complicates how pornography is produced and consumed however there is still no guarantee of an escape from the dominant forms.

Why does it remain so difficult to dislodge these dominant forms? It is here that Garlick delves further and poses a deeper question regarding the fundamental mechanisms that underpin traditional representations in porn. He argues that pornography ‘stages a confrontation between man and nature.’\textsuperscript{264} By this he means that there are ongoing attempts to control nature and bring it to order to maintain a dominant masculinity. This relates to men’s power and control over female bodies in porn. Men tend to fear sexual difference, unable to understand women or the feminine and must keep it under their control. Although Garlick suggests there is more at stake than simply the control of women’s bodies. Porn, he claims, participates in something larger. Men confront nature in a technological sense and this is all entangled with the meaning of masculinity.

What he means here is that men have a desire for control, not just of women’s bodies but also of their own. ‘The male body in pornography is almost always figured as a machine that functions with an almost emotionless, technical efficiency,’ he writes.\textsuperscript{265} This echoes some of the central concerns raised in the

\textsuperscript{263} Ibid., 223.
\textsuperscript{264} Garlick, “Taking Control of Sex,” 608.
\textsuperscript{265} Ibid.
previous chapter. Phallic masculinity relies on either the disappearance of the body or in this case its careful regulation. The status of masculinity depends upon a mind-body, culture-nature split where men must occupy one end of the binary and control the other.

Garlick extends this further using Heidegger’s notion of enframing. Heidegger argues that modern technology enframes natural energies, it orders them in particular ways so that the truth of their complexity is not revealed or able to come to presence. In line with this Garlick suggests that masculinity is a technological category that brings male bodies into line through a denial of their individuality. In other words, masculinity reveals male bodies in highly specific ways. Garlick claims this enframing is more apparent with the move to the internet where the ‘complexities of desire, emotion, and bodily response are swept up into… categories of standing reserve.’ Online porn sites contain a list of categories and thumbnail images pointing to a particular preference or fetish; categories such as “group sex,” “anal,” “military.” There is a semblance of greater variety of representation and yet all of these still present a one-dimensional model regarding masculinity; the male body is still phallic and dominant over the female bodies. Garlick writes: ‘bodies, acts, body parts are called to order… technologically revealed within a pre-existing framework that collapses differences even as it seemingly multiplies them.’ Garlick is correct here where he suggests that in order to escape the dominant modes of being regarding gender, as we see reiterated in the pornographic narrative, this relation of masculinity to nature must be addressed through an interrogation of the male body.

Dines points to the commercial imperatives that underline this continued investment in harmful hardcore representations. Garlick is more philosophical and suggests that the tendency to represent sex in this manner is underpinned

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267 Garlick, "Taking Control of Sex," 605.
268 Ibid.
269 Ibid., 607-13.
by a desire for control. Masculinity demands that men stand above nature, that they bring it (bodies) into order. Both provide compelling explanations for the persistence, proliferation and even intensification of this content in mainstream online porn.

A disruption of traditional representations?

Since the advent of the internet there has been a vast expansion of online porn. Garlick maintains that the majority of porn remains unaltered even with its move to the internet and that there are deeper ideological reasons for why this is the case. However, he also examines how the internet might enable new sexual representations, in ways that could signal a democratisation of sexual representation in media. He suggests amateur porn might be the first sign of Heidegger’s saving power; a disruption of the mode of enframing.270

To begin he claims there is a central paradox regarding internet porn and the way in which we see it, what he refers to as technovision. Internet porn seems to promote the standard models and yet its ongoing proliferation threatens also to fragment the visual field. It is this fragmentary quality that can help disrupt previous modes of representation. By this he means that the narrative that traditionally guides the viewers pleasure is not always present, something seen specifically in user-generated content. The way in which we see porn on the internet (technovision), is ‘as fragments of people’s everyday experience — affective images unencumbered by the guidelines of narrative.’ In other words, internet consumers are confronted with endless images that they are able to access with increasing regularity; anywhere, anytime. The seeing eye is the central point of this frenetic exchange. This easy accessibility of online porn and the ways in which consumers access it, means audiences are exposed to a daily catalogue of sameness thereby becoming desensitised to such images; bored even. The internet might instigate a particular boredom with regular mainstream content. He writes:

270 Ibid., 612.
With this shift onto the Internet, the technological drive to enframe and control (sexual) nature is perhaps reaching its culmination as it realizes itself in a culture of profound boredom. The question posed here is whether the fragmentary images that are simultaneously appearing at the margins of pornographic technovision contain possibilities for saving us from a sexual culture in which contemporary gender relations are endlessly reproduced.\(^\text{271}\)

Amateur porn sits at the margins and may offer a remedy for this boredom. The fragmentary quality of the internet means first, that this new type of content exists and second, that viewers might seek out this content as their eye becomes bored.

As Garlick suggests, the content of amateur online sites may be more democratic and partial since anyone is able to produce and distribute pornographic material. The internet is not simply a domain for major porn studios and producers. This means the internet can be employed in ways that ‘combine eroticism and social critique.’\(^\text{272}\) Here he outlines two examples: Sensual Liberation Army (SLA) and Positive Porn (PP).\(^\text{273}\) SLA uses pornography to advertise a number of political activist groups. Alongside the images of naked women are links to organisations like treehugger.com and freepress.org. Garlick suggests that this strategy ‘trades on the long history of using sexual expression, especially nudity, as a form of political protest.’\(^\text{274}\) The tag line on the home page states: ‘See some nudes/Save the world.’ PP directly addresses the problems of mainstream internet porn, acting as a database containing links to other sites and galleries with more “ethical” representations. The manifesto on the home page reads:

Most porn advertises itself as 'nasty' for good reason. Because it is. But porn does not have to be disgusting, exploitive or evil. Scattered among the bad are quite a few porn sites and erotic photography portfolios that are sex-positive, respectful toward the women they portray, and sophisticated in their presentation. Despite all its virtues, positive porn is usually much more erotic than the mainstream drivel most people

\(^{271}\) Ibid., 613.
associate with the word porn. If you don't believe me, peruse the galleries and reviews on this site, and see for yourself that porn doesn't have to be bad to be good.275

Each link to another site, is placed within one of four categories: Unique Porn, Erotic Photography, Tasteful Porn and Indie Porn. There is a description of each site and sample clips. Users are able to navigate to these sites; PP introduces audiences to other forms of pornography and provides a direct path to these.

Both SLA and PP present material that is more diverse, innovative and seemingly less oppressive to women. However, there are still limitations here. The female body is still the focus as the sites tend to cater for a male audience, thus there is no challenge to the male gaze. More importantly there is an absence of male bodies. Within these sites the male body disappears. Garlick concedes: ‘it is almost as if the male body is unable to be represented within the space of “positive porn;” as if its presence is unable to be contained within the narrative of “sensual liberation.”’276 In mainstream representations the male body is shown to be in control; as a machine that functions with rational efficiency in contrast to the uncontained, passive female body. Male bodies are phallic, in that they are never penetrated, always strong and well-endowed. In these more alternative sites the male body disappears altogether. Thus, online porn in all its forms, continues to present a one-dimensional view of masculinity and male bodies.

The porn site Beautiful Agony (BA) is, I suggest, more subversive in its representations of the male body. In 2003 Richard Lawrence and Lauren Olney founded BA, first as a video series and then as a website.277 BA is a user-generated site which relies on video submissions from its online audience. Users of the site are charged a subscription. Contributors are paid a monetary sum and receive dividends from any excess revenue. Primarily the site depicts individuals, couples or groups in a state of orgasm. However, as the Positive Porn review states ‘nowhere on Beautiful Agony will you find a picture of a nipple, vulva or

penis. The site contains nothing but videos of faces.'278 This is what the site calls the "Agony Principal." It states: 'Beautiful Agony began as a multi-media experience, to test a hypothesis that eroticism in human imagery rests not in naked flesh and sexual illustration, but in engagement with the face.'279 Unlike other sites there are many representations of men. More important, these depictions break some of the common patterns because the focus is taken away from the penis and other phallic aspects of the male body. There are greater opportunities for more queer representations both in terms of the object one desires and the nature of the acts in which they engage. Participant discuss their desires and sexual practices, and this reveals surprising variation. In this way, Beautiful Agony provides a more solid example of how the internet might offer ways to disrupt the traditional representations of gender and of male bodies.

Similarly, Lehman considers the subversive potential of Voyeurweb, a website established in 1997, which also relies on user-generated content, and shifts some of the representational power into the hands of the consumers themselves.280 Voyeurweb is made up of images and videos that are uploaded and exhibited within a number of categories. Viewers pay a membership that allows them access to the site where they can engage with the content through chat forums and rating systems. Lehman draws attention to the representation of male bodies, noting that a large number of images of penises can be found on the site. The discussions that take place around these images tend to focus on penis size and sexual performance. This, he argues, opens up distinct possibilities to challenge normative representations. As Lehman suggests, at the very least the internet enables people to 'seize control not just of the representation of their bodies but the distribution of the images and the opportunity to enter into discourse with others about it.'281 In Running Scared Lehman demonstrates how the penis either disappears or is highly regulated within cultural discourses. On Voyeurweb the penis is present and seemingly less regulated. No one person or

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278 http://www.positive-porn.com/unique.html
group controls its representation, something that seemed impossible prior to the internet. The anonymity of the internet is of key significance here. Voyeurweb enables men, at times unwittingly, to publicly display their corporeal peculiarities and thus point to the large variation amongst men, something often lost in mainstream representation.

Despite this, Lehman observes that most of the representations still follow dominant discourses. He writes: ‘many of the images posted on Voyeurweb replicate rather than challenge the dominant discourses.’\textsuperscript{282} The penis is still presented in ways that emphasise its virility. The representation is still generated by the man who is presenting himself, so it is likely he will conform to the dominant patterns of representation. He might even draw other technologies into this process of representation, like editing software. This provides the means to edit or alter bodies, thus the realities of the penis might continue to be hidden.

While there are a growing number of alternative porn sites, there is no guarantee these will enter the mainstream. First, there is a widespread investment in the mainstream representations. This is precisely how discourse works. Second, the way in which these sites operate on the internet, in particular through its search functions, is also an important consideration. Kristian Daneback notes that porn sites are often found through pop-up advertising.\textsuperscript{283} The internet resembles a marketplace; mainstream sites therefore remain mainstream due to a loop that occurs. These sites have a larger audience and are therefore more commercially viable, with the means to purchase advertising space. Thus, the cycle continues, ensuring a continual reiteration of dominant forms of porn. Consumers are more likely to be directed towards these sites. In order to access more alternative forms consumers would need to actively seek these out.

\textsuperscript{282} Peter Lehman, "You and Voyeurweb: Illustrating the Shifting Representation of the Penis on the Internet with User-Generated Content," \textit{Cinema Journal} 46, no.4 (Summer 2007): 111.

\textsuperscript{283} Kristian Daneback, "Love and sexuality on the internet: A qualitative approach" (Ph.D., Goteborg University, 2006), 42.
Search engines operate in a similar manner. A “free porn” search on Google reveals a list of popular sites that fill the first webpage: *pornhub, youporn, xvideos, redtube, tube8* and *xhamster*. These appear on the first page because they are accessed by the largest number of users. This works to sustain mainstream viewing habits. Significantly, all of these sites feature mainstream hardcore presentations that do nothing to challenge traditional representations of gender. In their amateur porn categories, the scenes are still studio produced and made to appear “amateur.” Daneback explains the difficulty of distinguishing between the amateur and professional sites. He argues that it remains difficult to ascertain whether these sites are ‘produced by “bona fide” amateurs or amateur couples with exhibitionist interests or whether they are created by the professional porn industry, trying to make money on the appreciation of amateur-like pornography.’

**Internet porn and male bodies**

In this chapter I have outlined a number of ways in which online pornography persists with traditional depictions of bodies and gender relations, however, such an interrogation takes us only so far. In this second section I consider more deeply how we might centre male bodies by shifting the current focus which is largely discursive, to a focus on the possible real effects of these discourses on bodies and subjectivities. A large part of the scholarship on porn rigorously exposes the content of these representations however very few venture further and provide a solid theoretical basis for *how* these representations might materialise and seep into everyday corporeal life and practice. Scholars of masculinities have also tended to employ social constructionist frameworks to address the content of porn rather than the specific ways in which this *might* inform bodily practice.

In *Gender of Desire*, Kimmel argues that pornography provides men with a fantasy of sexual freedom and abandon. It is ‘a world in which gorgeous and sexy
women are eager to have sex with us, a world in which we, and our partners, are always sexually satisfied. Porn is seen here as a fantasy that differs from men's own realities. Kimmel writes: ‘pornography may be a sexualized “Fantasy Island,” an oasis where men can retreat from everyday life’s pressures, but it is not “Gilligan's Island,” from which there is no escape once stranded there. Men can return from the fantasy paradise of pornography. And they do return.' It is unclear here whether Kimmel is separating the constructed fantasies and ideas of male sexuality from the ways in which they are actually lived out. However, the argument that porn is simply fantasy also presents some real limitations.

In the previous chapter I noted that in pornography the male body is presented in its most ideal form, as the phallus. In this way, pornography is fantasy. The links between bodies and practices in porn and those in real life, are not automatic. However, this does not mean there is not some real relation between the two. They haunt each other. The realities of male bodies always threaten to demystify the ideals, but these ideals might also affect bodies in specific ways.

This does not mean that porn will negatively affect all men at all times. Nor do I advocate the censorship of pornography. Kimmel writes that we can certainly reflect on the sexism in porn and its effects on women, however, this should not mean ‘removing sexual fantasy or constraining men’s desire and capacity to imagine a world unlike the one in which they live.’ Here he acknowledges the feminist concern, and advises men to scrutinise the content of pornography, especially its more violent, sexist qualities. Despite this, Kimmel attempts to demonstrate that there is little correlation between the content of pornographic material and real sexual violence against women. In one study he surveys the circulation of pornographic material in particular locations and compares this to statistics of rape and sexual violence. He concludes: ‘we can clearly see that the

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285 Kimmel, Gender of Desire, 91.
286 Ibid., 93.
287 Ibid., 95.
rates of rape are, at the very least, unaffected by the rates of circulation of pornographic magazines.\textsuperscript{288}

I would agree that the links between pornographic representation and violence against women, are not automatic. First, porn is just one form of media amongst many which reflect and promote uneven power relations regarding gender and sexuality. In many ways, the graphic nature of porn causes up to be more alert to its problems compared to other forms, like advertising. Second, fantasy does not necessarily translate into real practice. Consumers of porn are thinking subjects who can read media critically, and be aware of its performative elements without taking it on as “real.” However, it would be careless to assume there is never any affect.

Furthermore, the body itself is largely ignored here. This complete separation of reality from fantasy mirrors the material/symbolic distinction and the mind/body split. When Kimmel writes that men will return from the island we have to wonder what habits and bodily practices are learned during this process. His position here is not clear. At various points he emphasises the importance of interrogating porn because it is ‘a central mechanism by which our sexuality has been constructed.’\textsuperscript{289} He acknowledges that pornography is an educational tool for many men; a fantasy tool of masturbation that teaches men the penis is central and sex is phallocentric.\textsuperscript{290} Despite this, any blurring of fantasy and practice is not addressed. He writes: ‘it may be true that violent pornography could suggest to some viewers that violence against women is reasonable on the sexual menu. But even here it is more likely to end up with a suggestion of a little consensual S/M, and not necessarily in rape.’\textsuperscript{291} Kimmel places a specific emphasis on the role of fantasy but does not explain how this might shape men’s views of their own bodies, or shape their desires and sexual interactions. Pornography is characterised as a site of phallic masculinity that informs male

\textsuperscript{288} Ibid., 122. One glaring limitation of this study is that it focuses on print material even though video was the more popular media for the consumption of porn at this time, in 1989.

\textsuperscript{289} Ibid., 70.

\textsuperscript{290} Ibid., 72-3.

\textsuperscript{291} Ibid., 94.
fantasy and yet he does not address the important question of how contemporary pornographic representations might become embedded in lived behaviours and bodily practices.

In *Performance Anxieties*, Buchbinder draws attention to this gap. Although published in 1998 and referencing earlier forms of pornography, Buchbinder makes an important observation:

> Left largely unexplored in the attack of pornography, then, is how a man, reading a pornographic novel or watching a pornographic film, responds — and perhaps may even be encouraged toward degradation, actual or ideological, of women, not excepting violence against them — even when he recognises that the text before him is fictional and fanciful in its depiction of human sexuality and desire. We need, then, to explore pornography... from the point of view of men who look at or read it, in order to understand what its interest for them might be... in other words, with how a pornographic text might interpellate the male reader or viewer as a subject.\(^{292}\)

Buchbinder rejects the idea that fantasies associated with the consumption of porn are a mere substitution for real sexual activity. The auto-erotic practice of masturbation is seen to engage fantasy in a manner similar to hetero-erotic activity. He writes: ‘the text leaves gaps in the narrative so that consumers may enter and “inhabit” it, by inserting themselves into the narrative at the various points where their own individual erotic interests and fantasies are triggered and aroused.’\(^{293}\) Importantly, this arousal is bodily regardless of whether it leads to auto-erotic (as in masturbation) or hetero-erotic (penetrative sex) activities. This resembles MacKinnon’s radical feminist stance: ‘pornography is... defended as “fantasy,” meaning not real. But it is real; the sex that makes it is real and is often abuse, and the sex that it makes is real and is often abuse.’\(^{294}\)

Buchbinder highlight this dilemma and suggests that bodies are central to this dilemma. He locates this gap within porn studies but does not venture further or theorise how men inhabit these representations in their everyday lives. The

\(^{293}\) Ibid., 107-8.
framework of *soma-masculinities* can start to address this gap in a more meaningful way, and reach a better understanding of the complex interaction between representation/discourse and lived subjectivity. By thinking about internet porn as a material practice and in terms of bodily affect scholars can begin to bridge this divide between the symbolic and the material, representation and bodies.

**Embodied practices**

In *Pornland*, Dines interrogates the form and content of internet porn, however she also raises a number of important questions regarding affect and lived experience. She writes: ‘this shift in both quantity and quality has had profound implications for the ways boys and men experience porn.’ Like MacKinnon and Dworkin, she suggests there is a correlation between violent representations in porn and real life sexual violence against women. Pornographic images are seen to shape men’s own view of themselves and their sexuality — as violent, powerful or inadequate. Although Dines employs a range of empirical data to support her claims, there are some serious limitations. First, her conclusions are drawn primarily from anecdotes based on her own interactions and observations of men, largely those men attending her seminars. One can presume that the men in attendance are there precisely because they have experienced some of the effects of online porn in their own lives. This seems to skew the data and Dines’ suggestion that many men are affected by porn, is unconvincing. Second, Dines focuses on hardcore (gonzo) forms of pornography without a proper acknowledge of the more subversive forms emerging on the internet. Despite these limitations there is an important tension underlying her thesis. Dines is suggesting that an explicit correlation exists between the consumption of porn and its affect on male subjectivity. In chapter five Dines refers to what she calls “leaky images,” and writes: ‘media scholars accept that images have some effect in the real world.’

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296 Ibid., 81.
unclear in her book. While I suggest that the majority of men are not affected by porn in the manner Dines suggests, it is still worth examining how this affect might occur, if and when it does.

This is where a phenomenological reading of bodies is useful, as it offers an avenue for addressing embodied practices in more concrete ways. This model suggests that particular habits can become embedded in bodies so that they are acted out and repeated in an unconscious, automatic manner. Merleau-Ponty writes that consciousness itself is ‘in the first place not a matter of “I think that” but of “I can.”’

Consciousness is necessarily embodied; bodies, through their perceptual and sensorimotor capacities, provide us with access to the world. We learn new capacities and skills as we move through the world. Once we come to learn these skills we no longer consciously reflect on how to do them. They become part of the body’s “I can,” part of the habit body, and they sit below the level of reflection.

This is what Drew Leder calls incorporation. He writes: ‘this skill acquisition is accomplished via a process I will term incorporation... A skill is finally and fully learned when something that once was extrinsic, grasped only through explicit rules or examples, now comes to pervade my own corporeality... a skill has been incorporated into my bodily “I can”’

This process is not immediate or simple. As Leder highlights, ‘these bodily transformations are not accomplished via an intellectual “flash of understanding” but through something akin to a sedimentary process. Over time, that which is acted out, rehearsed, and repeated seeps into one’s organismic ground.’ Incorporation involves both temporal and spatial components. Importantly, these habits become fixed. Leder writes: ‘it is also via incorporation that abilities sediment into fixed habits. As a result of ongoing patterns of action, the body can develop automatic tendencies to repeat....the vast reach of the “I can” contracts into the “I do.”

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299 Ibid., 32.
300 Ibid.
Employing this framework, Joan Mason-Grant argues that pornography is an embodied material practice. Here she recalls the work of Dworkin and MacKinnon, and recovers the ideas that are rarely acknowledged in their work; porn was not simply a representation of ideas but also a ‘material practice of subordination.’ Mason-Grant suggests that their work came to be dominated by legal and speech debates which has meant the deeper conceptual implications of their approach have been buried. MacKinnon and Dworkin were unable to alter legislation precisely because they could not demonstrate how the consumption of pornography has tangible effects and could cause real harm to women. Mason-Grant attempts to reanimate and extend this description of porn as material practice.

Mason-Grant starts by employing and extending Judith Butler's ideas of bodily practice. For Butler, gender is performative, a set of repeated stylised acts which make ones gender intelligible and liveable in the world. A man's sense of his masculinity is not an innate feeling or expression. Rather, men learn how to embody an “acceptable” masculinity and they do this by aligning themselves with these discourses through a repeated social performance which appears, even feels, natural, but is not. Butler notes that these social performatives are always bodily practices; gender is always done through the body. She writes that language/discourse 'enter the limbs, craft the gesture, bend the spine.' Does this mean that for Butler, the body is purely discursive, and if so, how can we account for the unconscious ways in which bodies act? Surely, the repetition of gender is not called to mind at every gesture, every movement. How do these repetitive bodily practices actually crystallise into unconscious bodily habits? This part of Butler’s work is ambiguous. At the very least, her account offers a way to think about the reiteration of social norms, not as a singular act but rather as a process of repeated behaviours, a bodily practice.

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This is where Mason-Grant uses Drew Leder’s idea of incorporation to extend Butler’s account and demonstrate how these habits might be entrenched in bodies. Leder, she writes, ‘links the production of agency — our ability to act intelligibly in the world — with the bodily practices in which we engage... the structure of our practices is incorporated at the level of the lived body and sedimented in the form of tacit personal know-how.’\footnote{Mason-Grant, \textit{Pornography Embodied}, 8.} Thus, through reiterative practice we incorporate habits into the body and this process of incorporation ‘operates over time and below the level of conscious awareness.’\footnote{Ibid.} To explain this further she refers to Merleau-Ponty’s notion of the “I can” where the perceived capabilities and know-how of the body, developed over time through bodily practice, are tested in interaction. The subject feels an innate bodily sense of whether they can or cannot accomplish a task, but this sense has developed over time and is shaped by many discursive and experiential factors. Mason-Grant states: ‘the very phenomenological structure and process that enable us to expand our corporeal “I can” is also the mechanism of its contraction into mere habit.’\footnote{Ibid., 110.}

Following this, she suggests the consumption of porn is a sexual practice, an interaction. She explains: ‘there is a chiasmatic process of exchange, a dynamic and constitutive intertwining, between the ecstatic practices in which we engage and the formation of our functional “I can,” our tacit know-how.’\footnote{Ibid., 113.} Porn is therefore a bodily sexual practice (interaction) that significantly contributes to our sexual habits and personal know-how. Furthermore, we are likely to experience these bodily habits thinking they are an innate part of us. She concludes: ‘when we construe it as a bodily practice, we understand the exchange of meaning and influence to occur through a reiterative process and in far more diffuse ways than it does on the model of political speech.’\footnote{Ibid., 114.}
It is significant also that the body — its desire, arousal and pleasure — is always drawn into this interaction with pornography. This exchange is not purely cognitive, nor is it only fantasy. Rather, the representations produce a *bodily response*. In this way, the watching of porn is a bodily practice.

In the previous chapter I addressed the psychoanalytic model of affect, as a useful way to think about how the world impacts subjectivity. In phenomenology, these mechanisms are distinctly corporeal whereby the practices one engages in, help form ones bodily habits. These occur below the level of reflection and help form the body's "know-how." Leder writes: 'the successful acquisition of a new ability coincides with a phenomenological effacement of all this.'

In learning a new skill one must remain conscious of how to do this skill in the body. Once it has been fully acquired it becomes more automatic. The conscious and cognitive forces that were required to learn the skill, disappear. In learning to drive a car, open a door, or play a musical instrument, this process, from learning the skill to automatically performing the skill, is apparent.

This phenomenological framework provides a compelling way to understand how the content of pornography might shape the sexual attitudes, desires and practices of men. It demonstrates how the consumption of mainstream pornography may produce effects that extend beyond the realm of fantasy. Pornography can be conceived of as a corporeal practice, one that helps to establish particular sexual habits. Through constant repetition these habits become embedded in the sexual subjectivities of men so that they feel natural and automatic. Importantly this can make one less aware of the social conditions under which such "sexual know-how" is produced. This opens up other avenues to think about the effects on those who are routinely subordinated within pornographic representations, like women. Mason-Grant suggests that women who engage with porn are more likely to align themselves with the women in porn, and display a host of degrading qualities in their sexual behaviours. She writes: 'consider a young woman whose sexual know-how consists primarily in

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practices of portraying herself as an object for men, making herself always available for and ready to engage in sex.'  

Internet porn and affect

Mason-Grant addresses pornography in its earlier format, prior to the advent of the internet. I suggest that its recent move onto the internet might result in an increased impact on bodies and subjectivities. The internet has a unique affective charge that differs from other technologies, one that facilitates a more intense affect. This occurs due to a number of interrelated factors. The internet has become a part of the everyday; it facilitates our work and play. Online porn is easily accessible, cost effective, time efficient and anonymous. All of these factors have meant the consumption of pornography has become more habitual, a regular part of daily life. In view of this the representations that one encounters are crucial considering this deeper impact.

For men this might result in an increased anxiety regarding their masculinity and their bodies. Ian Cook observes that porn narratives tend to focus on two tropes: the availability/willingness of women; and the importance of phallic penetration and performance. He suggests that these narratives are a source of anxiety for men who feel pressure to measure up and foreclose anything that might be deemed passive. Cook suggests that this anxiety is intensified on the internet: ‘the increased and enhanced accessibility of Web porn make it significant both as an expression of the anxiety that underpins performances of Western heterosexual masculinity and as a source of the intensification of that anxiety.’

Thus, this anxiety does not just make men feel anxious but might also underpin their harmful practices and attitudes towards women. The pressure to measure up might compel men to prove their masculinity, thus alleviate their anxiety, in ways that impact women negatively.

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309 Mason-Grant, Pornography Embodied, 142.
Margret Grebowitz sees these factors of accessibility and regularity, as symptoms of a greater upheaval. In *Why Internet Porn Matters* she argues that the internet has shifted and altered the political and social operations of pornography. Pornography, she suggests, has become democratized information in the age of the internet.\(^{311}\) Her position differs from Mason-Grant who emphasises material practice, and also from earlier feminists who address the free speech debate. She writes:

> Internet pornography demands the re-conception of pornography once again, this time as neither ideas (as in the traditional speech paradigm) nor materials (as in the practice paradigm), but information... Pornography conceived as information requires... a suppression and forgetting of materiality and of information's fundamental dependency on a medium.\(^{312}\)

Pornographic material is no longer seen as something transgressive or niche, belonging to a particular medium, time, place or people. Rather, it is a part of a world-wide web of information which is easily accessed and distributed. Grebowitz argues further:

> The intersection of pornography and Internet distribution effects yet another shift in what pornography means and how it functions in the world... The internet fundamentally changes the social meaning of pornography by embedding it squarely in the epistemological shift from knowledge to information, and the political shift to information becoming democratically accessible to everyone.\(^{313}\)

Furthermore, the internet is a social networking media. Grebowitz argues that within this current context the governable subject is transparent, global and communicative. Indeed the internet is how we connect to and communicate with the world and with communities. This is apparent in the virtual world of pornography with the emergence of a vast porn community consisting of chat rooms, message boards, webcams and file sharing. Importantly, all of these are public spaces. What was once transgressive and private has now become normalised:

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\(^{312}\) Ibid., 29.

\(^{313}\) Ibid., 2.
As pornography becomes more private (cheaper, faster, and easier to access discreetly than ever before), the pornographic imaginary becomes one of communities, networks of support, sharing and open discussion. The paradox is only apparent. Commercial pornography consumption has always been a phenomenon of “the masses,” but what happens when it imagines itself as such rather than as something individuals do in hiding?^314

Grebowitz demonstrates why internet porn does matter. Concerns regarding the content of pornography and its socio-political effects are only intensified with its move onto the internet. It becomes more accessible and a part of a world-wide information system of accepted knowledge. Rather than focusing on how we might alter the content itself Grebowitz says we need to look at the “cyber-ness” of internet porn. For it to be transgressive again and not be “everywhere,” this she says, requires a disruption of the internet itself and its central place in ‘the logic of democratization.’^315 At the very least it requires that we think about or interact with it differently. Grebowitz suggests that this disruption will not occur with the production of more alternative content or increased censorship measures. Rather, it can only occur if the very practice of consuming internet porn becomes transgressive or risky. Grebowitz cites the “computer virus” as an example; as something which risks damaging or invading the tool itself.^316

Increasingly there are public discourses concerned with correlations between the consumption of porn and its impacts on gendered relations. It has entered debates involving the family, body image, sex education, boyhoods and the law. Within these spaces there seems to be a growing panic regarding its effects on male sexuality and what this means for both men and women. I want to be clear that I do not advocate a moral panic on this issue, or any kind of censorship of porn. Pornography as a discourse has been hugely important for many groups,

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^314 Ibid., 48.
^315 Ibid., 121.
^316 Ibid., 122. She writes: ‘We hear this, for instance, in the fears voiced about viruses spread by porn sites. This fear shows pornography’s potential to effect change – not in the transgressive nature of the sex acts depicted but in the considerable risks involved in the practice itself. The consumer risks damage to the very tool that connects him or her to the community. Suddenly, information becomes less immediate and available, and instead brings with it imaginaries of unwelcome invasion and contagion.’
like queer and trans men, who use it to make sense of themselves in a world that suppresses or makes invisible any viable representation of their sexualities. This is just one example of its more positive role in society. However, the viewpoint that porn is simply fantasy is also problematic. Scholars must interrogate porn as we do all media. A more detailed account of its effects on bodies equips us to better understand some of the mechanisms and processes at play, and how we might address these through our models of sex education and within our cultural institutions. This is especially important for those men (boys) who are less able to read images critically and whose bodily habits are still being formed. Thus, male sexuality and male bodies must be centred within studies of pornography. Rosalind Coward writes: ‘in spite of the ideology that would have us believe that women’s sexuality is an enigma, it is in reality men’s bodies, men’s sexuality which is the true “dark continent.”’

Attending to male bodies requires that we do more than simply deconstruct how bodies are represented and discursively produced in porn. Scholars must examine exactly how these representations impact bodies; that is, the ways in which these are taken on, practiced and lived by men. Moreover, scholars must address these concerns within its contemporary context. This means paying attention to the format through which both men and women commonly access and consume pornographic material. Internet porn continues to depict a large range of traditional and often harmful, sexual representations. This needs to be acknowledged. However, the internet also enables other possibilities that might disrupt these patterns. In this way, it remains a paradoxical force. More important, it dramatically alters the ways in which bodies now practice and engage with pornography, and is therefore something we cannot ignore.

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Part Three — The Hegemonic Body
Chapter Five — Complicating hegemony: Hegemonic masculinity, homosociality and sport

The sportsman enacts...the main patterns of contemporary hegemonic masculinity: the subordination of women, the marginalization of gay men, and the connecting of masculinity to toughness and competitiveness.318 — RW Connell, The Men & the Boys.

The continuing dominance of the usage of the concept of hegemonic masculinity may not be entirely fruitful for further analyses of the articulations between masculinities and sport.319 — Richard Pringle, Masculinities, Sport, and Power.

'Referring to how men, through their relations to other men, uphold patriarchy tends to simplify and reduce homosociality to an almost descriptive term.'320 — Nils Hammaren and Thomas Johansson, Homosociality: In between Power and Intimacy.

Since its entry into the theoretical landscape of masculinities, Raewyn Connell’s concept of hegemonic masculinity has remained one of the primary modes for understanding men and how ideal forms of masculinity are produced, nurtured and practiced. In some sense, the concept itself has become hegemonic, employed across a large range of disciplines, including education studies, criminology, media and health studies. Housed primarily within sociology, the concept adheres to a social constructionist framework, one that seeks to theorise and account for the practices and behaviours of men. In this way Connell addresses how these practices are socially and culturally constructed, and also how they are maintained by men and for them.

While there are similarities to earlier scholarship, Connell’s concept takes men’s studies somewhere new. In particular it diverges from sex role theory which sought to understand the socialisation of men into their assigned sex roles. Hegemonic masculinity theorises masculinity as a multiplicity, moving away from the static, unitary model of masculinity often presented within role theory. In addition, there is an emphasis on power and the hierarchical construction of gender. In her critique of role theory Connell observes its ‘fundamental difficulty

in grasping issues of power.’

By reducing these issues to matters of role differentiation, role theory fails to explain all the different social dynamics at work and the complex processes occurring between and within gender relations.

Although Connell’s concept attends to men and masculinities this is done through a feminist lens. She continues to lay a strident critique on the overarching patriarchal framework that pervades the constructions of masculinity. In other words, the concept emphasises the persistent dominance that men have over women, which is accomplished particularly through social structures and institutional settings. From this standpoint she also considers the relations amongst men, arguing that there is a hierarchy that exists here. Connell pinpoints a number of subordinated and marginalised masculinities that stand in a hierarchical relation to the hegemonic position. Thus, she accounts for some of the intersections of gender with sexuality, class, race and ethnicity.

While Connell takes a largely structuralist approach, she also considers the range of cultural discourses that promote these hegemonic ideals, particularly within sport and other cultural sites. Hegemonic masculinity is seen as a set of ideals and practices that most men rarely attain; thus, masculinity is a construction. As this thesis argues from the outset, a constructionist position tends to reduce the body to an artifact for socio-cultural or linguistic inscription. Hence, the body as lived, practiced, as an active component and generator of ones masculinity, is left under-theorised and underdeveloped.

As I have already noted, Connell did attend more closely to bodies through her model of body-reflexive practice. She clearly states that bodies are not neutral or passive entities, but are a crucial element of masculinity and male subjectivity. She writes: ‘Bodies cannot be understood as a neutral medium of social practice. Their materiality matters. They will do certain things and not others.’

This more explicitly acknowledges the matter and flesh of bodies, and their significance for how one is embodied and lives in the world. Yet curiously it is

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322 Ibid., 58.
hegemonic masculinity that has resonated within men’s studies and other scholarship. Hegemonic masculinity remains for the most part, a model for interrogating the social organisation of masculinities. This attention to the social aspects of masculinities has dominated the scholarship. Bodies themselves, including an examination of processes of embodiment, have been largely absent.

In this chapter I attend to this problem through the example of sport, which remains a key site for hegemonic masculinity in that it produces, nurtures and maintains a set of powerful ideals of masculinity. Violence has loomed as a particular practice that flourishes under the weight of these ideals. In the late 1980s Lois Bryson pointed to the significance of these patterns in sport. She writes: ‘sport needs to be analyzed along with rape, pornography, and domestic violence as one of the means through which men monopolize physical force.’

Since that time scholars of masculinities have launched numerous examinations of sport and its links to masculinity. The professional sportsman has always been and remains an exemplar of hegemonic masculinity. Sport is largely considered a male domain with women excluded or marginalised in various ways. Furthermore, sport is often underpinned by homophobia and has also been forced to address issues relating to race and class. These features neatly fit within Connell’s concept. In the first part of this chapter I outline this close alliance between sport and hegemonic masculinity.

Conversely, this ostensibly neat alignment has been troubled more recently due to various shifts in the cultural and political structures of sport. It is apparent that the concept has become less useful for an analysis of contemporary sport. There are a range of contradictions and questions that have emerged as female sports stars become more prominent and various sporting codes attempt to combat sexism, homophobia and racism through a range of policies and initiatives. Such initiatives might be seen as an attempt to re-mould masculinities in sport. Thus, there is a tension between a traditional masculinity that operates

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within a hegemonic framework and new types of masculinities that sportsmen are expected to adopt. I argue that Connell’s concept cannot deal with this tension sufficiently. It ultimately operates as a dualistic model where practices are either hegemonic or non-hegemonic. Importantly, Connell did intend this concept to be dynamic; hegemonic masculinity describes the currently accepted or dominant ways of being a man. Thus, it is expected that these ideals will change according to historical and cultural context. Despite this, it still struggles to account for masculinities that are shifting or are in a state of flux, that is, where multiple discourses are in play at any given time or place.

I attend to a number of critiques leveled at the concept and argue that greater attention and focus must be placed on the body and embodiment, as a way beyond this impasse; in order to account for these multiple discourses. Furthermore, centring the body is useful for an examination of those moments in which more traditional masculinities trump these contemporary models; that is, where the new rules of sports institutions fail due to a deeply embedded culture of masculinity. Where there is a contradiction between what occurs on and off the field. For example, professional sportsmen are often trained to enact violence and to regard other bodies as objects, and yet new rules and policies are increasingly introduced into male contact sports that require athletes to “switch off” this practiced embodiment beyond the stadium. A phenomenological account of the body is therefore needed here, as a way to account for this interaction between mind, body and culture. Through such an account one can understand how bodily discourses and practices function below the level of conscious awareness, and therefore how these attitudinal/cognitive strategies may fail to have any impact on behaviour.

Alongside this, I argue that a consideration of embodiment and sport requires an account of *homosociality*; male bonding. Some scholars have emphasised the links between homosociality and hegemonic masculinity. Homosociality is posited as a key **conscious** strategy for maintaining and nurturing hegemonic masculinity. I suggest that homosociality can also offer a rich account of bodies as lived since it draws attention to the emotional investments men develop with
other men through sport. This produces a more complex account of why sportsmen adhere to particular ideals of masculinity. This emphasis on emotional affect and the relationship between male bodies and subjectivities can start to fill a number of explanatory gaps regarding how sportsmen might be moved to act in particular ways.

**Hegemonic masculinity**

Connell’s concept of hegemonic masculinity is derived from Gramsci’s Marxist term *hegemony*, used to describe class relations and how the ruling class establishes and maintains its power within social and economic life. Gramsci suggests that this power is not simply exercised through “top down” domination but also through a more nuanced hegemonic culture. The culture is underpinned by particular ideologies and values that are seen by the majority, as common-sense values worth aspiring to. Thus, these ideals are promoted and upheld, but importantly, this benefits only a small group of people. The ruling class advances its own interests not purely through overt force and domination but also through a more nuanced network of power which necessarily involves the state, but which also works through social norms and values. In Connell’s appropriation, she notes similarly that hegemony ‘extends beyond contests of brute power into the organization of private life and cultural processes.’ Hence this ascendancy is not necessarily based on forceful coercion, rather it emerges around a series of culturally mandated ideals and exclusions.

Importantly, hegemonic masculinity refers to a set of ideals that are distinct from the realities of what men might feel or practice in their own lives. Still, these ideals are a reference point for all men; their gender is lived in relation to these ideals. Hegemony is about ‘relations of cultural domination, not of head-

counts.\textsuperscript{326} Rather than describing masculinity as a fixed type, the term refers to the dominant form of gender politics, the masculine ideal that occupies the most powerful cultural and political space in any given society, and therefore one that is historical and can undergo change or be replaced. Power relations are central to this gender practice which, as Connell argues, is primarily concerned with legitimising patriarchy in order to ensure the continued dominance of men over women. This gender dynamic, characterised by oppression and inequality, follows traditional feminist thought whereby women are subordinated politically, economically and socially. The feminist movement can be seen as a contestation of this.

Furthermore, hegemonic masculinity is constructed ‘in relation to various subordinated masculinities as well as in relation to women’.\textsuperscript{327} The dominant discourses of masculinity in Western culture defines it first and foremost as heterosexual. This is a key point for Connell. The homosexual man is the most obvious example of a subordinated masculinity, one that suffers political, economic and social discrimination within the media and other institutions. Heterosexual men might also be subordinated and ‘expelled from the circle of legitimacy’ either because they display “feminine” characteristics or actively shun the ideals of the hegemonic form.\textsuperscript{328} This subordination is also underpinned by a patriarchal framework in that it is still concerned with the domination and exclusion of women and the feminine. Hegemonic masculinity is part of the strategy for reproducing this framework, with the gay man most easily connected to effeminacy and therefore not hegemonic. This direct opposition to what is considered hegemonic, is encapsulated with the use of the term \textit{subordinated}. The Gay liberation movement can be seen as a contestation of this internal hegemony.

\textsuperscript{327} Connell, \textit{Gender & Power}, 183.
\textsuperscript{328} Connell, \textit{Masculinities}, 79.
Connell also addresses the interplay between hegemonic masculinity and various class and racial groups, or what she refers to as *marginalised* masculinities.\(^\text{329}\)

The white, middle class man occupies the central privileged position, thus marginalised masculinities might include black or working-class masculinities. It is true that these men might display hegemonic masculine ideals. Black and working-class masculinities are often represented as being sexist and aggressive, and their bodies are seen as powerful. However, these bodies are often positioned as excessive, as embodying an excessive or “out of control” masculinity, and this is translated into a lack. Todd Reeser describes this strategy:

> If the effeminate Asian man and the hypervirile black man are taken together not as two separate constructs but as part of a larger system of race-gender codings, the white man may be privileged as the man in the middle, neither too masculine nor too unmasculine…

> the man with the right or perfect amount of masculinity.\(^\text{330}\)

Connell notes that these masculinities may even become exemplars of hegemonic masculinity. For instance, a number of black athletes are publicly revered and celebrated. Basketballer Michael Jordan and professional golfer Tiger Woods, are two good examples. They are both wealthy, popular and successful. However, Connell emphasises that these are isolated examples and do not bring about a greater social or economic authority for the broader group in general, that is, for black men as a group.\(^\text{331}\)

Connell’s structuralist approach is apparent here; the achievements of a few does not challenge or rupture in any way, the larger political, social and economic structures that are already in place, that black men inhabit.

There are different masculinities, but some are exemplary and hegemonic, and all men engage with these at some level. Male subjectivity is therefore constituted through a complicit or resistant stance regarding hegemonic masculinity. It is this final group of *complicit* masculinities that describes the majority of men. Few men are able to actually reach or practice the ideals of

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\(^{329}\) Ibid., 81.


\(^{331}\) Connell, *Masculinities*, 81.
hegemonic masculinity, and yet the majority “collaborate” in sustaining these. Connell writes: ‘the public face of hegemonic masculinity is not necessarily what powerful men are, but what sustains their power and [therefore] what large numbers of men are motivated to support.’\footnote{Connell, Gender & Power, 185.} Men benefit from hegemony, thus they do nothing to challenge it. This is what Connell calls the 
\textit{patriarchal dividend}.\footnote{Connell, Masculinities, 79.}

This suggests an implicit tension between what is considered to be normative masculinity and what is an ideal hegemonic type. The former describes the norm (in practice) and the latter is an ideal (which is sometimes practiced). They are not necessarily describing the same thing. More recently, the term “toxic masculinity” has come into popular use; denoting the practice of harmful forms of masculinity.\footnote{Here I refer only to this particular use of the term, where toxic masculinity describes some forms and not others. There are other employments which more closely link toxic masculinities to hegemonic and normative, whereby masculinity is seen to be toxic to its core. This too has a number of limitations as it tends to flatten everything out, leaving no room for an intersectional analysis or an account of the pleasures and investments involved in doing masculinity.\footnote{Ibid., 77.}} I suggest that the normative, hegemonic and toxic are not identical however there is a thread between them, a continuum. Hegemonic masculinity is still normative in that it is the ‘currently accepted strategy’ for how men should be and what they should aspire to.\footnote{Ibid., 77.} The term toxic masculinity is not intended to be a description of what is commonly practiced or ideal, however it would be incorrect to divorce it entirely from hegemonic or normative types.

When toxic or harmful masculinities are posited as alien and an anomaly, it ignores that these behaviours and practices have strong links to more accepted, normative types of masculinity. These three terms describe particular incarnations of masculinity which are all on a continuum, and at times, interacting. As I will demonstrate, the very behaviours that we condemn in male spaces like sport, are often the end result of a culture and set of values we continue to support. There is a link here, and it would be wrong, even dangerous, to sever this link.
Hegemonic masculinity and sport

Connell stresses that ideals of hegemonic masculinity are produced, promoted and importantly, are practiced, through various institutions, for example the workplace and school, and also within cultural sites like sport. Thus, the bearers of hegemonic masculinity are generally public figures, such as film or sports stars. In her book The Men and the Boys, she dedicates a chapter to an examination of sport, which she argues is one of a number of bodily practices whereby masculinity in a Western context, is defined. Through the site of sport masculine ideals are practiced and secured, and the sportsman is the active participant and exemplar of these ideals.

Michael Messner also makes this link in his extensive research on sport. In particular, Messner places an emphasis on violence as a key practice that links sport with hegemonic practice. Both Connell and Messner suggest that violence often underpins hegemonic authority whether this be direct violence or through more indirect, subtle forms. Within organised sports men ‘actively construct meaning around their acts of aggression and violence,’ Messner writes. High contact sports such as football and boxing, or what he refers to as men’s sports, ‘glorify and reward violence.’ The employment of violence against opponents is seen as a necessary objective. Messner writes: ‘men are rewarded when they successfully objectify their own bodies as weapons to be used against opponents, who are in turn objectified as legitimate objects of violence.’ The linking of these sports with hegemonic masculinity becomes an easy connection to make. The athlete’s body is the location through which these ideals are practiced and reproduced. Messner writes: ‘the embodiment of hegemonic masculinity entails the embedding of force and skill in the body.’

336 Connell, Men and the boys, 69-85.
338 Ibid., 5.
339 Ibid., 5-6.
340 Ibid., 104.
Furthermore, sport tends to execute the exclusions outlined in Connell’s concept. She writes: ‘the sportsman enacts... the main patterns of contemporary hegemonic masculinity: the subordination of women, the marginalization of gay men, and the connecting of masculinity to toughness and competitiveness.’

Sport has been seen as a largely male domain, interwoven with notions of masculinity. The powerful male athlete is a construction we easily digest however there is much suspicion surrounding the female athlete, who is seen as an imposter. Her presence in this domain automatically casts doubt on her femininity and heterosexuality. Katharina Bonzel captures this perfectly: ‘the attributes of the successful athlete, for example, strength of mind and body, competitiveness, a certain degree of selfishness, and so on, stand in stark contrast to traditional conceptions of an “ideal” womanliness... [thus] the female athlete becomes a problematic figure.’

It is no surprise then that media reports commonly focus on her appearance and sexual desirability rather than her physical skill or sporting acumen. Connell further describes this with her notion of emphasised femininity. While there are expectations on men to be masculine in a normative manner, for women there is the imperative to be “feminine.” Connell writes: ‘central to the maintenance of emphasised femininity is practice that prevents other models of femininity gaining cultural articulation.’

The female athlete risks subverting or rupturing this cultural pattern.

This sexual “difference” is not simply produced and reproduced within the realm of professional sport. As Daniels, Sincharoen and Leaper argue, ‘boys and girls receive differential support for being physically active from an early age.’ Boys are encouraged and rewarded for behaviours that involve vigorous activity and engage their gross motor skills. The expression “boys will be boys” naturalises and legitimises the clumsy aggression that boys are expected to embody. On the other hand, girls are discouraged from engaging in rough physical activity, and

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343 Connell, *Gender & Power*, 188.
this expectation is often essentialised through a range of myths; sport is harmful to the reproductive system, it masculinises women's bodies, and it is unimportant female social development since the values of competitiveness and aggression are seen to be irrelevant to a woman's life experience. Although many studies refute these claims, they continue to shape how women and men are socialised, and this affects how they navigate their own participation in sport.

These myths are used as justifications for the sex segregation that occurs in sport, particularly those sports considered more “male-oriented.” Eileen McDonagh and Laura Pappano argue that the separation of the sexes in sport does not make it equal. They write: ‘sex segregation does not reflect actual sex differences in athletic ability, but instead constructs and enforces a flawed premise that females are inherently athletically inferior to males.’ Lorber and Moore suggest that sport masks the extent to which male and female bodies are socialised differently from a young age. They raise a number of questions: ‘What if boys and girls were grouped into teams by size or ability and learned to use their bodies together? What if there were some professional gender-integrated sports playing on television? What variety of physical capabilities would we see if gender was not constantly inscribed on bodies?’ As Mariah Nelson argues, the bodies of professional athletes are anything but natural; they've been shaped by various cultural, behavioural and even chemical factors. Moreover, we tend to celebrate those sports suited to male capabilities. These sports then become reference points to bolster the myth that men are physically and athletically superior. Evidently, the ways in which we link sport with gender is based firstly on ideology.

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346 Eileen McDonagh and Laura Pappano, Playing with the Boys: Why Separate is not equal in Sports (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 7.
The other key group that is marginalised within sport, is gay men. As Eric Anderson has noted, sport is theorised as being ‘one of the last bastions of cultural and institutional homophobia.’ Homosexuality is linked to physical and emotional frailty, thus, the gay male athlete is a contradiction. During a series of interviews with Connell, iron-man Steve Donoghue is asked what is means to be a man, he replies: ‘to be strong’ and ‘not be gay.’ This demonstrates that manhood is dependent on a repudiation of homosexuality. DA Miller suggests that male heterosexuality is ‘not a desire for women, but the negation of the desire for men.’ The ideologies and exclusions of hegemonic masculinity are clearly at work here and this points to the difficulties gay men face should they wish to “come out” in their sport.

What I have underlined thus far is the neat alignment of the concept of hegemonic masculinity with some of the dominant mechanisms and discourses occurring in sport. In contemporary terms however, it is messier and more complex than this. The cultures within sporting institutions have shifted and this has impacted how men in sport are expected to behave and conduct themselves. Later in this chapter I explore this contemporary shift and demonstrate how sport’s alignment with Connell’s concept is not so apparent and clear-cut today. First however, I outline a number of major critiques that have been directed at the concept itself.

Key critiques

Since the inception of the concept a number of critiques have emerged. Scholars have noted its tendency to operate within a binary model of gender. Masculinity is posited in relation to women and femininity, thus masculinity within this concept is always attached to the male sex and to cis-male bodies. In this way, it is in danger of determining or reifying the character of men, even if this is simply

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350 Connell, Men and the Boys, 83.
a construction. The concept does not address how masculinity is done by women and those who are gender non-conforming.352 The concept is bound to social constructionist models and the sex/gender distinction; sex is fixed and gender is socially constructed. While it is important to acknowledge the constructed-ness of masculinity, ultimately the concept retains a particular essentialism in that gender itself becomes deterministic, a powerful cultural construction that remains difficult to break or undo. Connell does note that hegemonic patterns are not fixed and can shift according to historical and cultural context. However, this still accounts only for large structural shifts where new ways of attending to masculinity in an institutional and meta-cultural sense, can be easily detected. The multiplicity and variation already occurring, particularly at the level of identity and subjectivity, are much more difficult to see.

This dilemma of how to account for subjectivity is a key consideration in my examination of sport. The concept of hegemonic masculinity struggles to theorise the male subject — how it is formed and lived — and it does not adequately account for the body within these processes. In other words, it struggles to grasp the complex ways in which masculinities are taken on and internalised, or how they look and are practiced in real terms. Connell developed the concept through both a materialist and psychoanalytic lens. Therefore, she was concerned with the interconnections between social structures and the individual. Gender is tied to structures but it is also intimately connected to subjectivity.

Connell acknowledges these links, however there are a number of limitations with her delivery of this. First, she does not take this further to posit a solid framework for thinking about the specifics of how hegemonic masculinity is internalised. Alsop, Fitzsimons and Lennon note that there is an attempt to ‘integrate elements of psychoanalysis with the insights of a materialist account.’353 However, these psychoanalytic elements are not executed with any precision. In other words, the detail of what this interaction between the

352 Jack Halberstam addresses these intersections in significant depth. See Judith Halberstam, Female Masculinity (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998).
structural and the individual actually consists of, is hazy. Connell outlines four broad groups of masculinity however this tends to oversimplify individual experience, and ignores the variation that inevitably occurs. Within this theoretical structure it becomes ‘easy to lose sight of the specificity of men’s practices.’

Second, the concept has been taken up by other scholars in ways that simplify and reduce to a purely structuralist model, a problem Connell herself verifies:

The concept of hegemonic masculinity originally was formulated with a strong awareness of psychoanalytic arguments about the layered and contradictory character of personality, the everyday contestation in social life, and the mixture of strategies necessary in any attempt to sustain hegemony. It is somewhat ironic that the concept is criticized for oversimplifying the subject, but it is, of course, true that the concept often has been employed in simplified forms.

As outlined already, Connell did propose the notion of body reflective practice which places greater emphasis on bodies and subjectivity. However, it is her concept of hegemonic masculinity that has been taken up and endorsed by scholars and researchers, and this has been deployed largely to interrogate the social construction of gender through institutions and structures.

The concept cannot adequately account for the subject which means it cannot do the same for bodies. Within a social constructionist model, bodies are largely presented as passive, as entities that are constructed. They simply fall into line with culture rather than being an active element of subjectivity. Attending to bodies more closely provides a better account of the variety of ways men engage with and negotiate masculinity. Connell and Messerschmidt acknowledge this difficulty. Reflecting on the concept they posit ‘social embodiment’ as a key future direction for the concept: ‘That hegemonic masculinity is related to particular ways of representing and using men’s bodies has been recognized.

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from the earliest formulations of the concept. Yet the pattern of embodiment involved in hegemony has not been convincingly theorized.\textsuperscript{356} A greater emphasis on body practices is required. The authors note that trans identities, in particular, expose the deficiency of simple models of social construction. The need for a more sophisticated treatment of embodiment in hegemonic masculinity is made particularly clear by the issue of transgender practices, which are difficult to understand within a simple model of social construction,’ they write.\textsuperscript{357} In her original formulation Connell rejects that bodies determine patterns of gender. While this is certainly true there must be some account for how they come into play, as agents and co-constitutors of subjectivity.

Finally, the concept struggles to explain the ambiguities and contradictions that arise within practices of masculinity. Connell posits four neat categories: the hegemonic, subordinated, marginalised and complicit. Connell does suggest there will be crossover here; subordinated and marginalised masculinities might display hegemonic ideals, ultimately however, this does not disturb the hierarchy of men. Michael Kaufman explains this in a different way. He writes: ‘Each sub-group, based on race, class, sexual orientation... defines manhood in ways that conform to the economic and social possibilities of that group.’\textsuperscript{358} Again, there will be some blurring here, but this will not radically transform the structures that these men work within. Black men as a group do not necessarily benefit in a social or economic sense, due to the hegemonic practices of a few individuals in that group. While this might be true, a more nuanced account is needed that can address subjectivity. This model still struggles to describe those individual masculinities that contradict or confuse the current hegemonic model, or the ways in which marginalised masculinities might contribute to, shape or powerfully underline, the hegemonic.

\textsuperscript{356} Ibid., 851.
\textsuperscript{357} Ibid.
Subjectivity and its complications

Scholars have made some attempts to address the dualistic nature of the concept by complicating and expanding it in order to account for some of the workings of male subjectivity. Margaret Wetherell and Nigel Edley, for example, add a psychological depth with a focus on how the hegemonic ideal enters the psyche and how this looks in practice; that is, the ways in which men live their masculinity. Men, they suggest, adopt particular strategies in relation to hegemonic masculinity, in order to make sense of their own personal masculine identity. They write: ‘men might conform to hegemonic masculinity, but we are left to wonder what this conformity might look like in practice.’

From their qualitative research the authors posit three distinct psyche-discursive practices to describe how men construct themselves as normatively masculine; that is, three imaginary positions: the heroic, the ordinary and the rebellious. This focus on imaginaries draws particular links to Lacan and Barthes, but importantly, these imaginaries are taken up by subjects rather than created by them. They note: ‘original expression and self-description is always ready-made; always social first and personal second.’

The heroic closely resembles the hegemonic position described by Connell; it is a more conventional or traditional masculinity. From the interviews conducted the men characterised within this group included an amateur boxer, electrician and an accountant who plays rugby. The ordinary describes those who see themselves as normal and average. This type of masculinity is more reflexive. These men were aware of the ideals of hegemonic masculinity and viewed them as a set of stereotypes for desirable masculinity. The rebellious is distinctly non-conformist. Here there was an active repudiation of the social norms surrounding masculinity. The authors note that despite the different features of these positions, all three types still see themselves as masculine. Either they fit


360 Ibid., 343.
closely within the norm or feel they are actively choosing how to be despite the norm. Thus, they see their masculinity as “real” and worth aspiring to.

Wetherill and Edley argue that by theorising masculinity in this way, as a variety of imaginary positions, one can better account for and extend how masculinity is practiced. It helps to explain how men might appear both hegemonic and non-hegemonic, complicit and resistant at the same time. They write: ‘we need to consider the multiple and inconsistent discursive resources available for constructing hegemonic gender identities, and, second we need to allow for the possibility that complicity and resistance can be mixed together.’\textsuperscript{361} There are conflicting hegemonic positions and men make sense of these in ways that do not follow one uniform pattern. While Connell is concerned with the ideas that inform behaviours of men, Wetherill and Edley attempt to understand exactly how norms are navigated, internalised and conveyed in everyday life. Hegemonic masculinity’s account of subjectivity is seen to be too vague; they ask: ‘how do men conform to an ideal and turn themselves into complicit or resistant types, without anyone ever managing to exactly embody that ideal?’\textsuperscript{362}

Wetherill and Edley extend and address some of the problems with this concept however their own reformulation has a number of limitations. They elucidate three specific positions that emerge in their study which they link to hegemonic masculinity. While this complicates the model developed by Connell, the range of expression is still contained to three broad positions. It is therefore a starting point for the elaboration of further positions and practices. Larger studies and alternative methodologies will surely reveal a range of other positions beyond these three.

Furthermore, despite their attention to the workings of the psyche this is still very much about external discourses and the ways in which men position themselves in relation to these. Masculine behaviour and practice is largely determined by the discourses that are present. The authors do attempt to explain

\textsuperscript{361} Ibid., 352.
\textsuperscript{362} Ibid., 337.
how these macro sociological patterns translate into individual lived experience and practice but it is this connection that remains hazy. If men are consciously negotiating and positioning themselves within these patterns how much of this is determined and how much is their own agency? Which other factors help determine how one will take up these positions? What is the role of the body here? Ultimately, the authors still rely on a discursive determinism.

Underlining this, Susan Speer writes: 'Wetherill and Edley... seem to advocate some form of discursive determinism, treating discourse as itself an extra-discursive, constraining influence on talk.' What she means here is that individual orientations are lost because they are overlaid with constructionist explanations. An emphasis is placed on particular patterns of discursive practice that have been developed over time. Speer continues: 'from this perspective, then, identities are not created anew each time a person speaks, but are developed progressively, over time. They are not fluid resources, but a sedimentation of past discursive practices, which can subject and regulate individuals.' An account of individual subjectivity then, would involve an account of bodies and the particular processes that occur when bodies and discourse become entangled.

Wetherill and Edley expand the discourses through which men construct their masculine identities, however the material out of which these identities emerge is still largely discursive. The other elements of subjectivity, specifically the body, are largely absent from this account. Connell's concept is reworked here in ways that are productive but that still fail to adequately explain how male subjectivity is formed and lived. It is also unable to address those contradictory moments of practice where there is a mixing of hegemonic and non-hegemonic elements. Wetherill and Edley focus on how the male subject manifests in relation to hegemonic masculinity through other discursive positions. The focus is still on the social rather than the individual or subjective. They suggest the

364 Ibid., 112.
contradictions that occur within hegemonic masculinity can be better understood by expanding the meanings of it and locating multiple hegemonic positions. However, this only takes us so far as it still relies on a set of broad patterns rather addressing the specificities of what is practiced and lived.

Demetrakis Demetriou confronts this problem of contradiction in another way. For Demetriou, hegemonic masculinity remains too simplistic because it amplifies particular values and practices while ignoring others. He argues that Connell constructs a dualism between hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities. Hegemonic masculinity, he suggests, is clearly demarcated from the non-hegemonic so that there is no potential for these to influence or inform each other. He writes: ‘it is a form of masculinity that is never infected by non-hegemonic elements.’\textsuperscript{365} Demetriou insists that hegemonic masculinity is not so discriminate, and suggests that a process of negotiation, rather than negation, is at work here. The increasing acceptance of gay men in western societies is a clear example of this process at work.

In his research on gay male athletes Eric Anderson notes that even within the intensely hegemonic institution of sport, openly gay athletes are tolerated when they contribute to the overall objective of sport: winning.\textsuperscript{366} This mirrors Connell’s analysis of this contradiction, where she describes that even though men who are marginalised or subordinated can at times participate in or even become exemplars of hegemonic masculinity, there is no trickle-down effect. That is, the existence of openly gay athletes does not help gay men in general, as a group. Demetriou argues that this position is too simple. He suggests that particular subordinated masculinities are often accommodated and incorporated into hegemonic spheres through a process of negotiation whereby their very incorporation is part of an overarching strategy or end goal.

To explain this Demetriou posits what he calls the \textit{hybrid bloc}, which draws on Gramsci’s notion of a historic bloc and Homo Bhabha’s usage of the term hybrid.

\textsuperscript{366} Anderson, \textit{In the Game}, 50.
The hybrid bloc, he writes, ‘unites various and diverse practices in order to construct the best possible strategy for the reproduction of patriarchy.’\textsuperscript{367} In other words, in order to remain dominant, hegemonic masculinity appropriates and includes other forms of masculinity. Here Demetriou refers to the example of the “pink dollar,” where gay communities and their consumptive capacities are exploited for capital gain. Thus, the assimilation of gay men within mainstream middle-class culture is not disruptive to the patriarchal framework (which is interlocked with capitalism), but is in fact integral to that intersection.\textsuperscript{368}

During the 1980s and 90s, homophobia and sport were considered synonymous. In more contemporary terms the masculinities of sportsmen have “softened” and there has been a greater inclusion of queer elements and influences. Openly gay athletes are slowly emerging at a professional level. Anderson charts this shift, arguing that homophobia within sport has decreased and this has enabled what he calls ‘a culture of softer, more tactile and emotional forms of heterosexual masculinities.’\textsuperscript{369} Here one sees the typical collision of gender and sexuality. Where homophobic attitudes dissolve, masculinities become more relaxed and fluid. This is what Anderson calls \textit{inclusive masculinity theory}.\textsuperscript{370}

To be clear, Anderson is not suggesting that homophobia no longer exists in sport. His earlier research demonstrates that the inclusion of the gay athlete within team sports partially depended on how well he performed in that sport. While official bans on homosexual athletes did not exist there were other means of exclusion. In particular gay athletes have existed within a culture of silence; unable to be open about their identity. In more recent times Anderson observes: ‘there is increasing evidence that as cultural homophobia continues to dissipate (particularly among male youth) team sport athletes are coming out in greater numbers.’\textsuperscript{371} Anderson suggests that this less hostile climate might also affect the

\textsuperscript{367} Ibid., 348.
\textsuperscript{368} Ibid., 350.
\textsuperscript{370} Ibid., 6.
\textsuperscript{371} Ibid., 7.
ways in which straight men conduct themselves. He suggests that a decrease in homophobia 'frees heterosexual men to act in more feminine ways without threat to their heterosexual identity.' Connell’s concept struggles to account for these hybrid masculinities or indeed how they are able to manifest. In the proceeding chapter I consider these limitations through the example of the AFL footballer.

Demetriou and Anderson offer greater possibilities for an understanding of contemporary masculinities. They describe the shifting dynamics of masculinities, and account for the blurring between hegemonic and subordinated masculinities, what might be called *hybrid masculinities*. While this term has not been meaningfully adopted within the scholarship, Bridges and Pascoe use it to refer to ‘the selective incorporation of elements of identity typically associated with various marginalized and subordinated masculinities and – at times – femininities into privileged men’s gender performances and identities.’ For Anderson, this signals an increasing dissipation of homophobia, and presumably, sexism as well. Demetriou is less hopeful, suggesting that it is a strategy that upholds and perpetuates the existing structures, but it does this in new ways. It points to what might be referred to as ‘the flexibility of patriarchy.’ Bridges and Pascoe extend this further by suggesting that these appropriations and strategies not only reflect and reproduce gendered inequalities but that they also ‘obscure this process as it is happening.’ These developments are more superficial than indicative of any real shift of power relations nor of the boundaries between masculine and feminine, gay and straight. Importantly, this focus on hybrid masculinities is a good attempt to conceptualise the rapid shifts and contradictions of contemporary masculinities. Demetriou’s *hybrid bloc* describes some of the conscious strategies that might be at work and underpinning the greater acceptance of gay men into the mainstream. Anderson’s *inclusive masculinity theory* adds to Connell’s concept

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372 Ibid.
374 Ibid., 256.
375 Ibid., 247.
with a consideration of how the borders around hegemonic masculinity might become more elastic in less homophobic environments.

Despite these elaborations, what is missing from these accounts is an analysis of how bodies come into play. Both models describe large-scale shifts on a structural and cultural level but there is little focus on subjectivity and the other multiple discourses at work on the individual, thus, it remains too easy to miss all of the different ways in which men navigate their masculinities, beyond these broader patterns. For example, there is no guarantee that the presence of gay men in sport will result in more fluid masculinities in general. How then, do we account for this? Furthermore, how can these models explain the persistence of hegemonic patterns, like sexism and homophobia, even though sporting institutions combat these through their official policies and initiatives? An account of bodies — their emotional investments and habits — can help account for some of these complications and dilemmas.

**Soma-masculinities and the lived body**

Contemporary masculinities are also produced and lived in a number of less conscious, more embodied ways. A framework of *soma-masculinities* incorporates the body in a more significant manner and casts a wider net on these problems of contradiction, internalisation and practice, all of which cannot neatly be explained with the concept of hegemonic masculinity. In particular I employ Iris Marion Young’s formulation of the *lived body* and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s *homosociality*, to further complicate masculinities and sport.

To be clear, approaches that attend to embodiment more closely *do not* exclude culture or minimise the importance of socio-political structures. Young’s lived body approach plainly illustrates this. A proper examination of the body as lived ‘recognizes that a person’s subjectivity is conditioned by socio-cultural facts and the behaviour and expectations of others in ways that she [they] have not
chosen.” This she says, is important for describing and understanding ‘the structures and processes that produce differential opportunities and privileges in contemporary society.’ Her use of the term *conditioned* emphasises that subjectivity is not determined but rather is shaped by the world, its meanings and structures. These structures are significant because they operate in the world and individuals act within this world.

Young also places an emphasis on the individual and the body as lived. She writes: ‘at the same time, the theory of the lived body says that each person takes up and acts in relation to these unchosen facts in [their] own way.’ Unlike the four broad categories outlined in Connell’s concept which focuses on a number of intelligible patterns of masculinity, the lived body centres the individual and makes this the starting point. This offers a better vantage point from which to observe and detect the multiple discourses and meanings an individual encounters and engages with. She continues: ‘If we conceptualize individual identities as constituted by the diverse group identities — gender, race, class, sexual orientation, and so on — there seems to be a mystery both about how persons are individualized, and how these different group identities combine in a person.’ Hegemonic masculinity focuses on these broad structural positions rather than on individual subjectivity and lived experience. A lived body approach incorporates facets of social construction but as Young concludes, ‘Gender as structured is lived through individual bodies, always as personal experiential response and not as a set of attributes that individuals have in common.’

This approach draws attention to bodies and their significance. The way a man lives in the world is certainly mediated by the contents of that world, however, there are a range of other forces that occur at the level of the body, at the level of experience. Men become attached to, invested in, and practiced in social norms

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377 Ibid., 421.
378 Ibid., 418.
379 Ibid., 417.
380 Ibid., 426.
through their bodies, thus the body does matter. The lived body describes the complex and contradictory ways in which men live their lives. By focusing on this alongside external forces, one can more easily see all the different elements at work. These observable differences in practice and identity are a result of particular individual experiences over time, experiences that are often charged with emotional affect, desire and so forth.

Hegemonic masculinity describes the ideals that are produced and maintained by political, economic and social structures, however, it cannot aptly account for the investments beyond these visible structures, that is, the other less visible, less tangible forces that affect subjectivity. The human subject is necessarily embodied, and this body must engage with the world and with others. The world and its structures do help to shape how we live, think and feel, however, the flesh of the body also intervenes and influences how we live in the world. There are emotional investments, desires and pleasures that work within us. Alsop et al write: ‘a body is experienced not only cognitively but also affectively. The ways in which our bodies are experienced are a result of initiation into social and cultural norms, but also of the particular sets of emotional encounters which individual bodies have borne.’

Connell’s concept fails to account for these less knowable factors. It is unable to account for how particular practices of masculinity feel to those doing them. Michael Moller writes that scholars must ‘explore the plurality, complexity and contradictions of masculine experiences and feelings rather than seek only to locate their respective positions in relation to a single, coherent pattern of masculinity.’ A thorough account of the emotional investments of masculinity is needed.

The practices of men are shaped by both conscious and unconscious forces. We have the capacity for agency, meaning we can accept or reject social norms and laws in a cognitive manner. However, norms are also internalised and can manifest in more unconscious ways. We form habits that sit below the level of reflection, that become a part of our habit body. Alsop et al write: ‘Embodiment

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381 Alsop et al., theorizing gender, 174.
is our mode of being in the world. The body in the world is an intentional body, apt for or engaged in projects. The mode in which our bodies inhabit the world is shown in habitual action. The formation of these habits is complex. It is not simply determined by the socio-cultural although our habit body does reflect significant tampering or influence from the world.

In relation to sport, scholars would do well to consider how dominant discourses of masculinity translate into everyday bodily practice, thus, how the bodily practices of sportsmen form bodily habits. Indeed, the bodies of sportsmen are mediated by external forces, however, this does not mean that they are wholly determined by them. Men might consciously and actively resist or comply to the norms of masculinity or this adherence or resistance might be underpinned by more unconscious forces; emotional investments, pleasures, desires and fears that are difficult to pinpoint. In the next chapter I examine this through the case study of Australian rules football. I also suggest that homosociality (male bonding) is a key mechanism that works on the male athlete, one that helps describe some of the more unconscious elements informing their behaviours and practices.

Soma-masculinities and homosociality

The concept of homosociality is a useful tool for soma-masculinities since it accounts for the emotional and physical interaction between men; the flesh of bodies. I suggest it can be a powerful means for describing the conscious and unconscious ways in which normative masculinities are continually reproduced and maintained. Men can and do move other men towards particular behaviours and practices. How might one begin to understand the powerful forces, desires and fears that are at work here?

Scholars have tended to emphasise its alignment with hegemonic masculinity. Sharon Bird argues that the hegemonic ideal is maintained through

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383 Alsop et al., theorizing gender, 172.
In this way she extends Connell’s concept by attempting to describe one of the ways in which hegemonic masculinity is continually perpetuated and sustained as the dominant form. Bird observes that homosociality and hegemonic masculinity both promote clear distinctions between men and women, and this often involves segregation within institutional settings, such as sport. From personal interviews and field observations she posits three key strategies for maintaining homosocial relations: emotional detachment, competitiveness and the sexual objectification of women. Emotion is characterised as a flaw, something that women do, and men do not. Competition is a means through which men relate to each other. This is particularly apparent within competitive sports. Perhaps the most powerful mechanism for male bonding manifests in the sexual objectification of women. This is simultaneously a rejection of the feminine and homosexuality.

While Bird’s study explains some of the further dynamics of hegemonic masculinity it still prescribes a set of strategies and positions that do not account for the many other lived experiences of men. Nor does it address the ways in which discourses are internalised or how they manifest in lived behaviour. Homosociality refers to the ways in which men bond with other men. This suggests that bodies must be central to its workings, and yet the three strategies outlined by Bird demonstrate a constant attempt to disembody masculinity; bodies are objectified, competed with and lived without emotion. A richer reading of homosociality would reveal it to be a more affective mechanism of desire, intimacy and deeply felt attachment. This is what is underlying and driving this wanting to be close to other men. In fact, homosociality is largely concerned with these aspects of bodies.

In direct response to Bird, Steven Arxer suggests that in more contemporary terms there has been a shift in the strategies for maintaining hegemonic

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385 Ibid., 121.

386 Ibid.
masculinity and male dominance. He observes that homosocial strategies are becoming more unconventional, involving emotive sharing and cooperation, and not simply competition. Furthermore, the lines drawn between normative masculinities and more alternative forms are becoming less clear. The non-hegemonic is not always outrightly excluded but in some cases is ‘incorporated into the strategies of gendered domination… hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculine practices are not strictly segregated in homosocial interaction among men.’ There are clear links here to Demetriou’s hybrid bloc and its emphasis on negotiation rather than negation. Demetriou critiques Connell’s concept for being too dualistic. Arxer is suggesting something similar regarding Bird’s account of homosociality and masculinity.

Eve Sedgwick, who remains the reference point for studies of homosociality, articulates a more complex and productive version of male bonding. I suggest that scholars have tended to ignore some of the more productive elements of her argument. In her landmark book Between Men, Sedgwick defines homosociality as the relations between men, that is, the ways in which men form social bonds and attachment with each other. Her use of the word homosocial is interesting here. Its meaning is marked out as distinct from homosexual and yet Sedgwick does not extinguish any potentialities for the erotic. She suggests that desire is the ‘affective or social force… that shapes an important relationship.’ This relationship is likely to be antagonistic, competitive or protective rather than sexual however a sexual force may be present. She writes: ‘How far this force is properly sexual… will be an active question.’ Male homosocial desire is the name she gives to the entire continuum ranging from bonds that are characterised as distinctly heterosexual (often through the deployment of homophobic behaviours and speech acts) right through to what she calls ‘genital

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388 Ibid., 400.
390 Ibid., 2.
391 Ibid.
homosexual desire. While the practices and mores of the Greeks seemed to sit seamlessly along this entire continuum Sedgwick argues that this example stands in stark contrast to our contemporary society where the relation between male homosocial and homosexual bonds is far less apparent. While a compulsory heterosexuality has been and remains a constant feature of patriarchy, Sedgwick suggests that homophobia is far from being a necessary fixture. These patterns have changed over time and they will change again.

Sedgwick’s attention to desire here opens up a number of productive avenues for thinking about male bonding. Yes, there are other components in Sedgwick’s framework that mirror hegemonic masculinity; men are seen as oppositional to women and homosexuality is excluded. However, her characterisation of desire as a continuum is meaningful. Hammaren and Johansson suggest that contrary to much scholarship that explicitly link hegemonic masculinity and homosociality, Sedgwick provides ‘a more complex, refined and dynamic view.’ Her paradigm helps to explain why the behaviours of men do not always neatly fit within the strict categories presented within models of hegemonic masculinity. Most readings of homosociality link male bonding to conscious elements of structure and power. Within this reading, bonding between men is always a conscious assertion of their heterosexuality (masculinity). This tends to obscure the more unconscious elements of bonding like felt intimacy and other affective attachments. Sedgwick leaves these questions open and active.

Hammaren and Johansson’s notion of vertical and horizontal homosociality, extends this further. Vertical homosociality describes bonding in similar terms to the dominant viewpoint (Bird), which explicitly links hegemonic masculinity and homosociality. Thus, homosociality is an extension of the hegemonic and a way to maintain male dominance. Horizontal homosociality is different in that it accounts for more inclusive forms of relations between men. These might include emotional intimacies and interactions often at odds with traditional masculinity. They describe horizontal homosociality for men in similar terms to Sedgwick’s

392 Ibid.
393 Hammaren and Johansson, "Homosociality," 1.
394 Ibid.
formulation of female homosociality whereby relations are based on ‘emotional closeness, intimacy, and a non-profitable form of friendship.’ This provides a much richer account of homosociality and the conscious and unconscious affects at work on men. It appears that as hegemonic masculinity is challenged and seen to be inadequate so too are the dominant readings of homosociality.

These explanations by Sedgwick and others provide a richer account of male bonding in sport. They describe how affective (embodied) investments come into play when men encounter each other. Thus, we can more accurately understand the lived realities of men and how they might be moved by other less obvious, less tangible, investments. I suggest that these readings of homosociality can be an essential tool for *soma-masculinities*, a way to look beyond the structuralist frameworks, towards some of the more unconscious and embodied elements of masculinities. In the next chapter I turn to a case study of Australian Rules football and the AFL to underline the theoretical concerns highlighted in this chapter, and to demonstrate how *soma-masculinities* is able to more skillfully explain some of football’s most puzzling questions and tensions regarding masculinities.

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*Ibid., 5.*
Chapter Six — Australian Rules Football: bodies caught in contradiction

'It’s a man’s game.' — Matthew Knights, AFL Coach.

'A skill is finally and fully learned when something that once was extrinsic, grasped only through explicit rules or examples, now comes to pervade my own corporeality.' — Drew Leder, *The Absent Body*.

'We cannot understand men’s commitment to risk-taking, playing with serious injuries, and constructing their bodies as machines or weapons, unless we understand how sport provides a context for men’s emotional connection with other men.' — Michael Messner, *Out of Play*.

Sport remains one of the central sites for producing and sustaining masculinities. In Australia, the sport that occupies the greatest cultural space is Australian Rules Football, the only football code indigenous to Australia. Its well-established professional league, the Australian Football League (AFL), is played in every state and territory to a broad audience. Most importantly, it outlines and codifies what an ideal masculinity in Australian culture might look like. As Sue Hedley suggests, this enculturation begins in the school setting. She notes that even at this early stage, boys are immersed in a football culture that promotes violence, aggression, and the marginalisation of women and gay men. This participation serves to underline the social expectations for how boys should behave.

The AFL has been researched extensively from a historical and biographical perspective. The co-written *A National Game* and Geoffrey Blainey’s *A game of
our own, are complete histories of the game. Likewise club histories are prevalent, Brian Hansen’s *The Blues Boys* and Richard Stremski’s *Kill for Collingwood*, are two good examples. In *The Red Fox*, Ben Collins provides an account of Norm Smith, regarded by many as the greatest coach in the history of the AFL. There is a similar biographical attention accorded to the great players; Steve Hawke’s 1994 account of Graham “Polly” Farmer and the more recent biography, *The Danihers*. Clearly, there is no shortage of literature on the key figures of football.

Scholarly approaches have been employed to a much lesser degree. In *Up Where, Cazaly?* Sandercock and Turner observe that very few scholars have engaged with Australian football. In this book they address a number of key sociological questions regarding football. One of the chapters is dedicated to football fandom, a subject taken up more extensively in *Footy Passions* by John Cash and Joy Damousi, which examines the emotional investment of supporters in barracking for a team. In *The Game in the time of War*, Martin Flanagan examines the social and political links between war and football. There is even less scholarship on the topic of gender and sexuality. In *Football’s Women*, Kevin Sheedy and Carolyn Brown celebrate the role of women in the AFL and examine their particular ties to the game. The co-edited *Gender, Sexuality and Sport*, houses two brief essays by Margaret Lindley and Michael Burke, which deal

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specifically with masculinity and the AFL. Both are an attempt to challenge and interrogate the dominant masculine culture of the sport.409

Despite these initial rumblings, masculinities have been largely ignored in the literature on the AFL. In the first part of this chapter I bring these bodies of work together. In particular I highlight the ways in which this cultural institution has produced and maintained a particular masculinity over time; one, I contend, which corresponds with Connell’s model of *hegemonic masculinity*. Connell outlines a number of values that are produced and nurtured within the hegemony: aggression, violence and physical prowess. In this chapter I consider a number of examples where the parallels between Australian Rules football and these ideologies, are particularly vivid. The on-field violence of the 1945 *Bloodbath* Final and other significant games, and also the training regimes of the Hawthorn football club under John Kennedy, are all given some attention here. Moreover, I outline some of the key ways in which sexism and homophobia have manifested within the AFL. As Connell argues, hegemonic masculinity excludes the elements that subvert or challenge it in order to maintain its potency and dominance. In this regard, the treatment of women and gay men within the AFL has been very telling.

In the second part, I suggest that since the professionalisation of the AFL there has been a gradual problematising of this culture of masculinity. New practices and initiatives have been developed more recently that contradict, or are in tension with, traditional patterns of masculinity. There has been a steady introduction of policies and initiatives that address discrimination and aim for greater inclusivity. Despite this, I suggest that these developments have not resulted in a significant shift in its culture of masculinity. AFL football remains a

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409 See, Margaret Lindley, "Taking a Joke Too Far and Footballers Shorts," in *Gender, Sexuality and Sport: A Dangerous Mix* eds. Dennis Hemphill and Carolyn Symons (NSW: Walla Walla Press, 2002), 61-7. Lindley recounts a lecture she presented which proposed (humorously) that football is played by men for the sexual pleasure of women, and she recalls the furor this created within Australian sporting circles. See also, Michael Burke, "Joshing and Nudging the Big Boys: Sports Comedy Shows on Television," in *Gender, Sexuality and Sport: A Dangerous Mix* eds. Dennis Hemphill and Carolyn Symons (NSW: Walla Walla Press, 2002), 81-91. Burke examines two football television shows, *Live and Sweaty* and the *Footy Show*, arguing that the former challenges and deconstructs the dominant male discourse of football while the latter reinforces it.
male domain, with women on the periphery. Sexist attitudes and behaviours are still apparent across the different levels of the sport. There are still problems of violence enacted by players on and off the field, and while there is increasing support for gay men, still not one gay player has come out. Despite all of these changes at an official level, a traditional culture of masculinity persists within the AFL, and the effects of this continue to be troubling.

There are two key reasons why these changes have not produced a deeper shift in its culture of masculinity. First, I suggest these modifications are largely symbolic. The impetus to change this culture of masculinity is not underpinned by a primary concern for its direct effects on women or other men, but rather, they are an attempt to present the AFL in more respectable and marketable terms in the face of a broader shifting cultural and economic climate around masculinity. The AFL is largely concerned with maintaining and expanding its brand. Second, I argue that this culture persists because the attempts to address masculinity have been cognitive rather than bodily. The body is left out of consideration here and yet this component is crucial for an understanding of subjectivity and how we might generate real change. The footballer is caught between competing and contradictory discourses, those at the official and cognitive level, and those at the level of the body. These imposed rules of conduct are cognitive and will effect some change regarding behavior and attitude, but this is often overruled by desire and affect; by the body. How footballers are oriented to the world through their bodies is in stark contrast to how they are now instructed to conduct themselves. The bodily habits that are formed as players (not displayers) of the game is what orients them to the world. Yes, this world, their world (of football) does shape and structure their desire and habits through rules and cognitive meaning, however, these are also always affective and emotion laden. Footballers comport themselves through desire and affect as much as they do through strategy and rules.

Here I interrogate the institution itself, to demonstrate that if the AFL hopes to enact real change, it cannot simply address rules of conduct. This chapter is also an interrogation of the conceptual frameworks of masculinities that are routinely
employed, but which cannot account for these tensions. Hegemonic masculinity remains the dominant framework for addressing these sites, however, this concept is ultimately too dualistic and cannot explain how hegemonic and non-hegemonic elements may be present at the same time, within the one institution or setting. These recent developments within the AFL seem to contradict and subvert the hegemony, that is, they are in direct opposition to the traditional masculinity that continues to be nurtured in football, however, the concept is unable to account for the contradictions that occur.\(^\text{410}\) Hegemonic masculinity is not able to grasp how traditional modes and given forms of masculinity exist within the AFL despite all of the changes — organic changes, cultural change more broadly, and, as is the focus of this chapter, the imposed or demanded changes within the AFL itself. Why do these older forms still exist?

There are a number of scholars that consider the limitations of Connell’s concept, in an attempt to reform it and better account for these contradictions and tensions. In this chapter, I posit corporate masculinity as a useful framework, and I revisit Demetriou’s hybrid bloc. These I think, are productive for extending an understand of the motivations behind the “progressive” action of the AFL. However, they are still unable to explain the persistence of more problematic practices, or indeed how to address and shift these. Within these frameworks the orientation of the fleshy feeling footballer’s body to their worlds of combat, of competition and physical prowess, is left out of the frame. It is clear that hegemonic masculinity has remained the default paradigm for grasping masculinities and I argue that even with the augmentations of corporate masculinity and the hybrid bloc, it still struggles to account for the changes, shifts and tensions surrounding practices of masculinity. This is what hegemonic masculinity and these other models, cannot grasp.

\(^{410}\) In a more recent paper Connell draws attention to this limitation, and suggests that internal contradictions can and do occur. See RW Connell and James W Messerschmidt, “Hegemonic masculinity: rethinking the concept,” \textit{Gender and Society} 19, no.6 (Dec 2005): 829, doi: 10.1177/0891243205278639.
I contend that *soma-masculinities* is able to better address these contradictions and tensions. While hegemonic masculinity has been useful for describing and understanding masculinity in various settings, *soma-masculinities* provides a much deeper understanding of the AFL today and the contemporary footballer. First, this approach begins its enquiry at the level of the body, thus it is able to better detect and explain the discourses, practices and affects at work on the individual, and account for the ways in which one is oriented to the world in their own unique way. This multiplies the possible subject positions beyond Connell’s broad categories. Subjectivity is therefore shown to be more complex than what her concept can articulate. Second, this framework is useful for examining why and how traditional forms of masculinity *persist* within the AFL, irrespective of the shifts occurring at a structural level. Institutions help to structure and shape desire and intention in a cognitive sense, but it is the flesh that *enacts*. *Soma-masculinities* accounts for the activity of the flesh and its role in these re-occurring and persistent behaviours.

**Ideologies of violence, aggression and physicality**

Australian Rules Football is one of a number of team sports characterised by a high degree of aggression and violent contact. While these have always functioned as an integral part of the sport, some commentators have problematised this. In his report on violence in sport, Brian Wenn suggests that despite the attempts made to restrain violence in football only a complete revision of the way it is played, could result in any real change. These attempts to remove excessive violence from the game ignores that football is intrinsically violent. The objective of winning ultimately requires the physical domination of one team; its very design is underpinned by violence. Players must try and penetrate the goal space while the other team protects that space using

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411 John H Kerr, *Motivation and Emotion in Sport Reversal Theory* (East Sussex: Psychology Press, 1997), 115. Kerr compiles a list of team sports that are known to be physically violent including Australian Rules football, ice hockey and rugby league.

412 Brian Wenn, *Violence in Sport* (Woden, ACT: Australian Institute of Criminology, 1989), 5. He explains that the introduction of the Brownlow Medal (which rewards excellence and good conduct on the field) was an attempt to reinforce principles of fair play.
aggressive tactics and heavy blows. In his memoirs published in 1963, Lou Richards notes how rough play was used as a tactic and employed routinely like other codified practices such as marking and handballing. Verbal and physical force was used strategically to ruin another player’s concentration.\textsuperscript{413} Similarly today, jostling, knocking and heckling the opponent are seen as fundamental aspects of the game. According to Connell, violence often underpins hegemonic masculinity.\textsuperscript{414} Situating the violent ideology of football within the concept of hegemonic masculinity is an easy connection to make.

This ideology of violence is threaded throughout the history of Australian football. The 1945 “Bloodbath” final between Carlton and South Melbourne is arguably the most significant amongst a number of football games remembered for their excessive violence. In his book Bloodbath, Ian Shaw describes the events of the violent fourth quarter where a succession of incidents and brawls left a number of players unconscious and others with deep wounds and broken limbs.\textsuperscript{415} Six policemen were required to restore order to the game. Upon completion of the match, nine players were reported and charged as a result of illegal rough play.\textsuperscript{416} The October 6th edition of the \textit{Truth} featured the front-page headline ‘Pictures of Bash from Bashball’ above graphic photos of injuries sustained by a number of players. 'The Carlton-South premiership match was the game's greatest blot and the most repugnant spectacle League football has ever known,' it states.\textsuperscript{417} The \textit{Sporting Globe} called it a 'disgusting exhibition of larrikinism'.\textsuperscript{418} The \textit{Age}, while providing a thorough analysis of the match, conceded that rough tactics had 'badly marred the game'.\textsuperscript{419}

\textsuperscript{413} Lou Richards, \textit{Boots and All: as told to Ian McDonald} (London: Stanley Paul, 1963), 24.
\textsuperscript{414} RW Connell, \textit{Masculinities 2nd ed} (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2005), 81-4.
\textsuperscript{415} Ian Shaw, \textit{The Bloodbath: The 1945 VFL Grand Final} (Melbourne: Scribe Publications, 2006), 166-70.
\textsuperscript{416} Ibid., 177. See also \textit{VFL on Film: 1909-1945 Marking Time}, directed by Tim Lane, Russell Holmseby and Ken Berryman (Canberra: National Film & Sound Archive Australia, 1996). In his commentary Michael Roberts recalls that Ted Whitfield of South Melbourne was suspended for an entire year for his misconduct.
\textsuperscript{417} Frontpage, \textit{Truth}, 6 October 1945.
\textsuperscript{419} Percy Beames, “Carlton makes History: Another spiteful game,” \textit{Age}, Oct 1, 1945.
The game was played in the immediate post-war period and it has been suggested that this context of war functioned as a key factor underpinning the violence. Historically there is a strong connection that exists between sport and war. In Ancient Greece, sport began as a preparation for war. Both are key sites of hegemonic masculinity; similar in their training regimes, their use of language, and in their characterisation of the opponent as the enemy. Among the 63,000 spectators at the 1945 final many were recently returned soldiers and two of the players had also served. One of these players Clinton Wines, dismissed the connection between football and the war: 'In football you have to protect your body. In war you have to protect your life. War is a far grimmer business'. Journalist Martin Flanagan believes there is a connection, suggesting that the events that unfolded during this game could be linked to the unsettled mood of the time. He claims that many of the players, most of which had not been to war, were playing a game seen as a measure of their masculinity in front of a crowd where some players had served. Sandercock and Turner argue that the violence in this final and in the seasons to follow, 'signified a need for release from war-time strains and tensions'. Considering that the Bloodbath final was a significantly violent football game it is conceivable that the context of the war was played out, in varying ways, through the violence that occurred.

At the very least, the war did influence the public discourse surrounding the Bloodbath final. Original film footage of the match failed to capture many of the violent incidents, however in his commentary Michael Roberts described Princes Park as 'a battlefield'. Furthermore, both world wars were characterised as

420 Nigel B Crowther, *Sport in Ancient Times* (Connecticut: Praeger, 2007), 76. Sports played in Ancient Greece would be considered extremely violent by modern standards; they often resulted in the death of participants.
421 Jonathan Salisbury and David Jackson, *Challenging Macho Values: Practical Ways of Working with Adolescent Boys* (London: The Falmer Press, 1996), 205. The authors draw attention to the language employed in school sports; expressions like “hit them hard, lads” and “let’s kill em”.
423 Ibid., 40.
424 Ibid., 40-1.
426 *VFL on Film.*
'the greater game'. Allusions to warfare became a part of the media language at this time and this contributed to the various connections that were made between the game and the war.

While this historical context is important to consider, it would be wrong to account for the violence using only this frame. The 1945 final does not stand alone as the only display, in the sport’s long history, of considerable violence. According to the Carlton players, the preliminary final of the previous week was more ferocious. A number of other particularly violent games were played outside the context of war altogether. Shaw compiles a list of significantly violent incidents that occurred in football games between 1920 and 1945, resulting in life suspensions and players being carried from the field unconscious. Kerr describes what he considers ‘one of the most infamous incidents in Australian sport,’ in the 1989 AFL Final between Hawthorn and Geelong. In a move that was pre-planned by the Geelong coach, player Mark Yeates deliberately charged at Dermott Brereton on the first bounce and injured him below the ribs. The AFL has since altered the rules to prevent similar centre square incidents. Nonetheless, violence is an inherent part of the game of football, something that has always existed and continues to do so.

After the 1990 grand final, in an article entitled “It’s time to send off the hitmen,” Garry Linnell asks: ‘How much longer must we put up with... acts of thuggery and violence?’ Linnell suggests that the send-off rule should be introduced rather than relying on a tribunal process which penalises players and clubs in the week following the game. ‘We can expect the usual response, players will be hauled before the tribunal, some of them suspended... until next year when they go out and do it all over again,’ he laments. On-field violence has lessened in recent times largely due to the changes made within the AFL tribunal. However, violence is still a key problem for the AFL. The current tribunal guidelines

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431 Garry Linnell, "It's time to send off the hitmen," *Age*, Oct 8, 1990.
432 Ibid.
(updated in 2015), includes a table of offences from 2005 to 2014, displaying consistently high numbers of offences, charges and suspensions.\textsuperscript{433} While the recent tightening of these guidelines is to be applauded it also highlights that there is a problem. The very existence of the tribunal is testimony to the violent and aggressive ideology that exists and is inherent in the game of football.

Another key marker of hegemonic masculinity within sport, is physicality. During the 1960s and 70s John Kennedy led Hawthorn to three premierships. Most importantly he pioneered a particular culture around physical training, one that ensured Hawthorn would become the most successful team of the 1970s and 80s. When Kennedy assumed the role of coach in 1960 his objective was to produce a team that was fitter and stronger than any other.\textsuperscript{434} Kennedy believed footballers had achieved a very ‘limited level of fitness,’ thus, he introduced a fitness regime boasting an intensity unlike ever before.\textsuperscript{435} Later, the Hawthorn football team would be dubbed “Kennedy's Commandos.”

This training ethic became the blueprint for Hawthorn’s success in the 1970s and 80s. Under Kennedy they won the 1961 premiership, however, it was not until a decade later that this new culture would translate into greater success. In the lead up to the 1971 semi-final, football writer Peter McFarlane predicted a Hawthorn win ‘because of its greater physical strength.’\textsuperscript{436} After winning the premiership that year, two articles in the \textit{Sun} attributed the win to superior physical conditioning. Referring to Kennedy’s training regimes, Lou Richards wrote: ‘Kennedy started planning and building for Saturday’s win years ago… Kennedy's Commandoes just couldn't be stopped.’\textsuperscript{437} Ron Barassi describes how Kennedy had been criticised throughout the season for his rugged training program with many concerned that this was affecting the team’s performance in

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\textsuperscript{434} Harry Gordon, \textit{The Hard Way: The Story of the Hawthorn Football Club} (Paddington, NSW: Lester-Townsend Publishing, 1990), 116. Gordon observes that there was less emphasis placed on finesse and more on strength and speed.
\textsuperscript{435} Ibid., 118. He moved the pre-season training forward from March to February and players trained on more days of the week with work-outs involving gruelling runs and weight training.
\textsuperscript{436} Peter McFarlane, \textit{Age}, Sept 11, 1971.
\end{flushleft}
the final quarter of their matches. This proved to be unfounded: ‘the Hawk’s magnificent last quarter... was a smack in the eye for all the doubting Thomases,’ he writes. On their march towards the 1976 premiership Ron Carter wrote: ‘Hawthorn has found the secret of winning finals’ games... You just have to hold off the opposition for the first half, wear them down, then kill them off.’

This new radical investment in physical conditioning underpinned Hawthorn’s growing success. By 1989 they had played seven finals in succession and won four of them. After their 1976 premiership win, Lou Richards writes that Hawthorn had ‘created an entirely new ball game in Victorian football.’ This legacy is apparent in the modern game where physical training and conditioning is an essential component of every AFL club, and is directly linked to success within the competition.

These ideals of violence, aggression and physicality have long been associated with notions of masculinity and are central within the site of sport. Connell writes: ‘men’s sport... has become a major arena for the promotion of dominant forms of masculinity.’ Regarding Australian rules football this ideology is and has always been an integral part of the sport. However, hegemony does not rely on ideology alone. Hegemonic masculinity is constructed ‘in relation to various subordinated masculinities as well as in relation to women,’ therefore it seeks to exclude elements that might challenge or subvert it. To illustrate I consider two particular groups, women and gay men, and highlight a number of examples within the AFL, that are noticeably sexist and homophobic.

**Exclusions: Women**

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440 Lou Richards, *Sun*, Sept 27, 1976. Richards describes the physical nature of their tactics, which included ‘hard smothering, steamrolling and sticking to the opponent.’
In *Football’s Women*, Kevin Sheedy and Carolyn Brown observe that football is often considered a site exclusively for men. While the premise of the book is to celebrate women in football, they tend to focus on their complicit roles; as supportive mother, wife or girlfriend. After nearly two decades since the publication of the book this is still the case overall, although as I will discuss later, there have been a number of significant changes. Currently, approximately forty two percent of the total television audience are women. The official AFL website lists the growing numbers of accredited female coaches, AFL club members and participants. Furthermore, the AFL has incorporated the “women’s round” into the regular season, a round dedicated to celebrating their contributions to the sport. Most telling is the very recent addition of the professional women’s league.

Despite this, women are still marginalised within football. First, they are excluded from competing in the official AFL competition. This is not surprising considering there are virtually no professional sports with mixed-sex competition. In the AFL this segregation occurs as early as the age of twelve. The current AFL Victoria Gender Regulations Policy states: ‘AFL Victoria Affiliates will exclude females who reach 14 years of age as at 1 January in the year of play from playing in any competition that is not “female competition.”’ Further it states: ‘people of one sex or gender aged 12 and over can be excluded from participating in competitive sporting activities in which the strength, stamina and physique of competitors is relevant.’

In early 2017, the inaugural season of the AWFL (Australian Women’s Football League) was played. This league resembles the AFL in a number of ways. There are eight teams in participation which are affiliated with the established AFL

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443 Sheedy and Brown, *Football’s Women*, 1.
444 The current AFL Respect & Responsibility Equality Resource states that 42% of all television audience is female, 35% of AFL members are women, there are 1500 accredited female coaches and approximately 95,000 women play Australian Rules Football. See “Respect and Responsibility,” AFL, last modified Nov, 2005, http://www.aflcommunityclub.com.au/fileadmin/user_upload/Play_AFL/RespectandResponsibilityPolicy.pdf.
446 Ibid. This latter clause is particularly telling since it assumes that physical (and therefore sporting) capabilities between men and women are inherently different.
clubs. The stadiums they train and play at, and the match format and rules, are all similar. However, a closer look reveals a number of stark differences. Prior to the commencement of the competition, the ABC website revealed that female players in the league are ‘paid 125 times less than their male counterparts.’

Furthermore, it is still qualified as being a “women’s” competition. The default, and central competition is the AFL where only men are permitted to compete. The discourses produced within the media have also tended to diminish and belittle the women’s league. After one of its first feature games Graham Cornes wrote: ‘They had the skills, the balance, the fitness, the aggression and the competitive edge that defines good sportspeople but there was something amiss. It just didn’t look right!’ He concludes: ‘Perhaps it was the outfits. They wore boys’ footy jumpers and shorts. Not particularly flattering.’ This follows a pattern that is prevalent in the media reporting of women’s sports. There is an emphasis on appearance rather than skill and bodies are objectified rather than seen as active and powerful.

Off the field, women have secured roles within the media, on club boards and various other official positions within the league. Samantha Lane and Caroline Wilson are a central part of the media landscape of football, both writing regular columns for the *Age* (Wilson is the chief football writer of the *Age*) and appearing on weekly football shows. Christi Malthouse is a regular presenter on the *Sunday AFL Footy Show*. There has also been an increase in the number of women who serve as board members throughout the AFL clubs, the first being Beverley Knight’s election to the Essendon board in December 1993. In 1996 Elaine Canty became the first female appointed to the AFL tribunal, an appointment that has been considered a landmark case for women. More important has been the additions to the AFL commission, Sam Mostyn in 2005 and Linda Dessau in 2008. The number of female officials has increased with reports that in 2014, there were three female goal umpires in the AFL competition.

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In August 2009, the AFL website declared that the commonly held view that AFL football is a male domain was ‘being gradually eroded.’ This has been reiterated more recently and at first glance these figures demonstrate an attempt to include women in a more meaningful way. Despite this, female representation is still decidedly “thin”, considering almost half the sport’s audience is female. Of the more than 150 committee and advisory personnel listed in the current annual report, only a handful are women. The 2005 appointment of Sam Mostyn to the AFL commission was groundbreaking simply because many believed this would never eventuate. In 2002, Caroline Wilson noted that AFL presidents did not want a woman on the commission because ‘the game’s not ready for that yet.’ While this appointment was a breakthrough, there has only been two female appointments since 1985, the year that the commission, the power base of the AFL, was established.

Furthermore, the treatment of these women by the media and other sections of the AFL community demonstrate that football is still a “boys club.” On the now infamous episode of the Footy Show, April 3, 2008, Sam Newman placed a picture of Caroline Wilson’s face on a scantily clad mannequin, which he groped while his male co-hosts Garry Lyons and James Brayshaw, watched. On Footy Classified the following week Caroline Wilson revealed: ‘it was degrading, it was insulting, it insulted me... it insulted a lot of women.’ Newman claimed his actions were satirical and not offensive; what he simply called the ‘manhandling of an inanimate object.’ Wilson’s appointment on Footy Classified had been seen as a step forward for women. As Samantha Lane writes, ‘Wilson is referred to as football’s “first lady,” which made the incident ‘all the more staggering.”

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453 Sport Liftout, Age, April 10, 2008.
454 Frontpage, Age, May 1, 2008.
455 Sport Liftout, Age, April 10, 2008.
In response, Susan Alberti, director of the Western Bulldogs, and four other female AFL directors, submitted a letter of complaint, to which Newman responded by declaring that female board members of AFL clubs ‘served very little purpose.’

It was suggested that all three hosts receive counseling, with Lyons stating: ‘we accept that you’ve been critical of us... if you can’t get over it, well that’s your problem.’

Alberti was vindicated in court with Channel Nine lawyers apologising: ‘it was not our intention to demean your valuable contribution as a board member of the Western Bulldogs Football Club.’ That these comments were expressed so publicly provides a clear insight into how women who hold these official positions are viewed and treated. As Samantha Lane suggests, this type of misconduct is an issue for the AFL. She notes: ‘the Footy Show broadcasts a snapshot of our code’s culture into hundreds of thousands of homes around the country every week.’

Despite the official inclusion of women into AFL institutions and administration, women have still encountered attitudes that seek to demean their contribution and exclude them from the sport.

These patterns have also been apparent amongst the player group. The online “chicken sex” video created by the players of the North Melbourne football club in April 2009, is one example. The short video features Boris the toy rooster; the player’s mascot. A rap song entitled “Move Bitch,” provides the soundtrack for Boris’ adventures. The audience first encounters Boris in a supermarket aisle, wearing a condom on his head and attempting to penetrate a frozen chicken. He moves from the supermarket to the TAB pub where he drinks beer, and to the club locker room where he engages in more sex acts with the chicken. In the

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456 Frontpage, Age, May 2, 2008.
457 Ibid.
459 Sport Liftout, Age, April 10, 2008.
closing scene the chicken is flattened by a car, with Boris continuing to perform sex acts on the dead carcass. After the video was made public, anti-violence campaigner and former player Phil Cleary responded: ‘it’s degrading of women …. a sad indictment of the sensibilities of the sub-culture of a footballer.’ On the Footy Show, Sam Newman appeared dressed as Colonel Sanders carrying a bucket of fried KFC chicken, clearly making light of the issue. During this episode two of the guilty players issue an official apology, however, it becomes obvious throughout the segment that the club is primarily concerned about maintaining their brand and appeasing the sponsors. When questioned about the serious nature of the video, player Adam Simpson replies: ‘we have damaged the brand.’ The harmful attitudes that are promoted, and the encouragement of violence towards women, are clearly not the central concern. Yet, there is much at stake. As Deb Waterhouse-Watson explains, this type of “locker-room” culture underpins some of the more serious sexual assault incidents that are prevalent in football.

The problem of sexual violence is taken up by Anna Krien in Night Games, where she examines the 2010 rape trial of young footballer Justin Dyer. Despite being unable to ascertain whether Dyer was guilty as charged, through this examination Krien cleverly questions and exposes the attitudes and behaviours that continue to exist amongst players, the media and other parts of the AFL. In particular she addresses football’s culture of group sex and what it reveals about attitudes towards women. She writes: ‘treating women like shit shades into a culture of abuse, which in turn can shade into rape.’ Krien reveals a darker side of football, one that continues to foster a culture of masculinity that mistreats women.

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462 “The Footy Show,” youtube, April 8, 2009, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QbTyPP9uiDs. Throughout this segment, the hosts praise the two senior players for their courage in taking responsibility for their actions.
463 Ibid.
466 Ibid., 200.
The case of St Kilda player Stephen Milne remains the most prominent and enduring sexual assault case in football. In 2004 rape allegations were made against Leigh Montagna and Stephen Milne. Initially this did not result in any charges, however, the case against Milne was opened more recently, and finalised in 2014; Milne was handed a $15,000 fine but no conviction. The justifications made for this verdict are telling. The ABC reports: ‘Judge Bourke said Milne has been reckless’ but that his actions were ‘out of character.’ As the report reveals, the judiciary expressed a particular sympathy towards Milne:

> Judge Bourke said it was clear the impact of a 10-year lag in the case had also caused “very considerable disadvantage and distress” to Milne and his family and that that distress had been “exacerbated by the heavily publicised nature of proceedings”.... He said he hoped by not recording a conviction, Milne would find it easier to get a job.

Carolyn Worth, from the Centre Against Sexual Assault observes that verdicts like these send a series of strong messages regarding sexual assault and the difficulty of conviction. She states: ‘It's a very high-profile case and I think that means people have opinions and have been watching it very closely. To come out with no conviction I think really sends a message that you're not going to get justice from the courts.” This raises important questions regarding the efficacy of the legal system and the difficulty of laying charges of rape, all of which continues to silence and shame victims of sexual assault.

Importantly Milne was found guilty of indecent assault, demonstrating that he had acted wrongly towards his victim. At the very least then, this exposes a culture and system that allows such actions to manifest and escape punishment from public institutions. The legal and public discourses surrounding this case favoured Milne, which reveals the particular privilege that accumulates around masculinity, and in particular, the footballer. Despite his vindication from

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468 Ibid.
469 Ibid.
charges of rape Milne still acted in ways that are problematic and indicative of some of the more misogynistic strains with the culture of the AFL.

**Exclusions: Gay Men**

Team sports in general have maintained strong links to homophobia, and Australian rules football is no exception. To date no professional AFL footballer has publicly “come out,” and some attribute this to the homophobic culture that surrounds the sport. Caroline Wilson believes there are gay footballers in the AFL but it is ‘a boy’s club,’ which makes it very difficult for players to come out.\(^{470}\) Former Collingwood player Tarkyn Lockyer believes that if a player did come out the reaction of his team-mates would be difficult to predict because ‘it’s taken for granted that you’re heterosexual.’\(^{471}\) More recently the coming out of Yarra Glen footballer Jason Ball sparked huge media attention. While this did not occur at the premier league level the very fact his story resonated and became so significant is revealing. Ball states: ‘in the absence of any elite level player coming out in this male-dominated team sport, my story managed to capture the public and the media’s attention.’\(^{472}\)

Is it possible there are simply no gay AFL players at the professional level? In his book *The Arena of Masculinity*, Brian Pronger argues that rather than avoid sport, gay men are often drawn to it.\(^{473}\) Sport can provide a guise of heterosexuality and acts as a deterrent from realising homosexual desires. In an extensive survey of gay men who participated in team sports at high school and college, Michael Bryant found that 27 percent played these sports in order to get physically closer with other men despite being unaware that they themselves were gay, while 21

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\(^{470}\) Watts, *In the Pink*, 15.
\(^{471}\) Ibid., 16.
percent did it to conceal the fact that they were gay. It is highly likely that there are men playing AFL football at a professional level who are same-sex attracted, or who might even identity as gay. The more important question is why none of these players have come out or felt able to be open. This suggests there is something in the culture of the AFL that acts as a barrier or deterrent.

In 2010, player Jason Akermanis was heavily criticised when he suggested that gay AFL players should stay in the closet because the game was not ready to embrace them. Despite his own apparent discomfort with gay players, his comments confirmed firstly that there are gay players currently playing in the AFL. Furthermore, he revealed that homophobia is very much alive, particularly amongst the players and within the locker room. Effectively, he had suggested that gay players should not come out because it would be difficult for them to exist as gay within the current culture. This aligns with other team sports where male participants are encouraged to maintain heterosexual desires and behaviors. This is accomplished primarily through the sexual objectification of women and also through the marginalisation of gay men and use of homophobic discourse.

In August 2001, Richard Watts formed the gay and lesbian Collingwood supporters' group the "Pink Magpies." At the time, the media reacted negatively with the Herald Sun stating that the group would destroy 'our great Australian game.' More telling were the reactions of the players of Collingwood. When questioned, Lockyer indicated that while not entirely comfortable with the group, players had understood that it meant an increase in their support base. 'If they barrack for Collingwood they barrack for Collingwood,' he declared, although Lockyer also conceded that players had engaged in homophobic banter with some vilifying the group. This kind of discourse amongst the players he

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474 Michael Bryant, "Gay male athletes and the role of team and contact sports" (Masters Thesis, Seattle Pacific University, 2001).
477 Watts, In the Pink, 15.
explains, is considered normal. As Watts observes, AFL supporters have also displayed similar behavior. He writes that homophobic taunts and abuse from the supporters, were commonly directed at players who may be performing badly or even at players of the opposition who are performing well.

In July 2008 Hawthorn club president Jeff Kennett provoked a media storm when he endorsed the 2007 sacking of trainer Ken Campagnolo from the Bonnie Doon football club after it was discovered he was bisexual. Kennett states that the club ‘was trying to do the right thing’ by relieving the trainer of his duties which included being ‘close to young men,’ and he suggested the club had a duty of care to the boys in the club; ‘it’s the same if you have a pedophile there as a masseur, right?’

Kennett’s comments are particularly disturbing considering his high profile as former state premier of Victoria alongside his role as president of an AFL club.

There are many factors that have allowed these attitudes to endure amongst AFL clubs, their supporters and within the media. One core reason is due to the AFL’s policies. Prior to June 2013 Rule 30 of the official AFL policy on discrimination stated: ‘no person... shall act towards or speak to another person in a manner... which insults another person on the basis of that person’s race, religion, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin.’ What had been clearly absent from AFL policy was a code that discouraged and penalised discrimination based on sexual orientation. This suggests the AFL had fostered a tolerance of homophobia. Watts writes: ‘the abuse of a player’s sexuality... is implicitly condoned by the lack of any specific strictures to the contrary.’ Since February 2013 this rule appears in the AFL’s National Vilification & Discrimination Policy and has been altered to

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478 Ibid.
479 Ibid., 16. Watts suggests that rarely is a game played which does not include a barrage of taunts involving the terms “poofter” and “faggot.”
482 Watts, In the Pink, 16.
include discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation and ability.\textsuperscript{483} What this demonstrates however is how sluggish the AFL has been at addressing this particular issue.

More recently, the homophobic outburst by commentator Brian Taylor sparked a heated social media storm. In the pre-game commentary on 12th July 2014, Taylor labeled Geelong player Harry Taylor a ‘big poofter,’ and as a result, was asked to withdraw briefly from his commentary duties on 3AW radio, offer an apology and undergo counselling. While some felt this to be an overreaction of politically correctness, others pointed to the underlying homophobic discourse within football and its effects. Jason Ball claims that homophobic language is a powerful way of keeping players and other athletes in the closet. Responding to Taylor’s apology, he states:

\begin{quote}
I didn’t think it really showed understanding towards the impact that homophobic language has. Brian’s apology was focused on saying sorry to Harry Taylor directly. I don’t think that is where the apology needs to be issued…. What needs to be done is some awareness that homophobic language has a profound impact on young people who are gay [and] who are coming to terms with their sexuality.\textsuperscript{484}
\end{quote}

**Contemporary shifts and contradictions**

These historical and contemporary examples describe a dominant pattern of masculinity that exists within the AFL. However, visible measures have been introduced to combat these attitudes and practices. Football’s hegemonic culture, produced and maintained through a set of ideals and exclusions, has been troubled. Hegemonic masculinity continues to manifest within the behaviors of the players, clubs and the media, however it has become increasingly clear that the AFL is fostering new values and practices that stand at odds with traditional

\textsuperscript{483} National Vilification & Discrimination Policy, last modified Feb 2013, \url{http://s.afl.com.au/staticfile/AFL%20Tenant/AFL/Files/Respect%20and%20Responsibility/Schedule-4-National-Vilification-Discrimination-Policy.pdf}.  

forms of masculinity. These contradictions challenge Connell’s dualistic concept which is unable to account for these ruptures of traditional masculinities and the introduction of more nuanced, fluid masculinities that incorporate both hegemonic and non-hegemonic elements. In other words, the concept struggles to explain how non-hegemonic forms might assimilate into and exist within the hegemonic patterns usually associated with the AFL.

A consideration of what I call corporate masculinity, is one way to understand these contemporary shifts. Since the professionalisation of the AFL there has been a steady interrogation of its policies, attitudes and practices in line with the shifting climate of broader society. Thus, the emergence of a more professional and corporate AFL has triggered a paradoxical force. The need to appeal to its diverse audience and to keep pace with contemporary representations of masculinity, has meant that its existing culture of masculinity has been scrutinised. Over the past two decades the AFL has become a powerful and lucrative corporation and this has created a tension between the existing masculinist culture of many clubs and the professional image they are expected to display. It is caught between a traditional “boys club” culture and a corporate masculinity, one that must engage with and appropriate a range of other masculinities in order to maintain its brand and public standing. A conflict exists between the traditional male culture of football and the increasingly professional environment in which it must reside.

There have been few studies that specifically address the links between corporate masculinity and sport. In his study of media representation in sport, Garry Whannel writes that the professionalisation of sport has meant that ‘on-field performance, public image and financial success have become, in the sports industry, very closely linked.’ Smith and Westerbeek call this “corporate social responsibility,” and suggest the sporting and corporate worlds can greatly influence and promote positive social and cultural objectives. Increasingly,
sports organisations (corporations) are expected to create and maintain a responsible and appealing public image.

James Frey and Stanley Eitzen argue that sport has adopted a corporate model and is therefore more like work than play.\(^{487}\) It lies largely in the hands of managers, sponsors and the media rather than those that directly participate. They write: ‘play is replaced by display.’\(^{488}\) Professional sport, they claim, is primarily concerned with extrinsic reward, that is, success, profit and prestige. The sport itself is a product, indeed a highly lucrative one. The media is central to its success; in fact, professional sport is an economic force due to its ‘symbiotic relationship’ with the media.\(^{489}\) They write: ‘once a sports entity has been displayed on television and received financial support from television, the sports organization is forever changed.’\(^{490}\) Professional sport needs to appeal to a broader audience, which requires sports leagues and organisations to exercise greater control over its components.

During the last few decades Australian Rules football has adopted this corporate focus, which as Ian Warren outlines, began with the establishment of the national competition, from the VFL (Victorian Football League) to the AFL.\(^{491}\) The rapid professionalisation of the game has resulted in increased revenue, media coverage and sponsorship. Warren argues that this has triggered a response whereby codes and policies have been established to ensure players and clubs conform to appropriate rules of conduct both on and off the field.\(^{492}\) Within this corporate environment, values and practices of the existing male culture in football are being increasingly scrutinised.


\(^{488}\) Ibid., 508.

\(^{489}\) Ibid., 509.

\(^{490}\) Ibid., 510.


\(^{492}\) Ibid.
Earlier I pointed to the intrinsic violence in football, however, this has declined in recent times due to one important factor: the professionalisation of the tribunal. The violence and rough play exhibited in earlier periods, has been codified and penalised more diligently and consistently. This shift is significant, with acts of on-field violence now tempered and discouraged by clubs, coaches, managers and agents. The penalised footballer costs the club money and success. This is clearly demonstrated in the case of Barry Hall, whose repeated misdemeanors resulted in his eventual resignation from the Sydney Swans in 2009. He had simply become too much of a liability for the club. The current tribunal guidelines are detailed and stringent, with powers to suspend and penalise players. This acts as a deterrent from enacting violence on the field. Similar to a professional court, the AFL tribunal has become an important body within the AFL. Its primary mission is to establish a sense of “fair” play.

Despite the persistent discriminatory attitudes towards women, new policies and programs have been developed in an attempt to combat sexist behavior and address the exclusion of women. In particular, the Respect & Responsibility Policy attempts to address this, through the introduction of anti-harassment models, changes to AFL rules relating to conduct and the implementation of a public education campaign. Upon launching the policy in November 2005, AFL CEO Andrew Demetriou states: ‘we need to shift attitudes that have been embedded in the industry a long, long time’ and ‘look closely at our football culture.’

This policy is therefore an attempt to rupture the misogynistic currents present in football. Increasingly clubs are developing their own guidelines and initiatives that fall into line with AFL policy, in order to combat sexism at the club level.

The Respect & Responsibility policy was formed in response to various women who had shared their experiences of sexual assault, both publicly and in private to the AFL. Melanie Heenan writes: ‘together these women challenged the notion

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that the allegations were aberrations.\textsuperscript{494} The rape and sexual assault of women by footballers has long been a contentious issue and these policies are an attempt to address this problem in an official capacity. Increasingly, footballers are being held accountable for their actions. The underlying motivations however, are important to consider. On February 15 2010, Andrew Lovett was officially charged with raping a woman while she was asleep. On the following day, the St Kilda Football club dismissed Lovett on the basis that the allegations and subsequent charges had hurt the reputation of the club. Club vice-president Ross Levine told a press conference ‘we’ve got members, we’ve got sponsors, we’ve got players...[and] our general brand’ to think of.\textsuperscript{495} Clearly, the reputation of the club is of primary concern rather than a real concern regarding violence against women. Corporate masculinity is therefore a useful model to account for these recent reforms.

More significant is that Lovett was suspended from the club some months earlier when the allegations were initially made. This is in stark contrast to the 2004 rape case faced by the club, where players Milne and Montagna were permitted to continue playing. The \textit{Herald Sun} reported that even with allegations hanging over them, the AFL had given ‘the green light’ for both players to play for St Kilda in Round One of the football season.\textsuperscript{496} Furthermore, the club rallied around Milne and Montagna with coach Grant Thomas praising the other players for supporting them.\textsuperscript{497} This double standard has not escaped attention. Samantha Lane notes that all three men had pleaded innocent as soon as the allegations were made, however Milne and Montagna, unlike Lovett, were supported by both the club and the AFL throughout the investigation.\textsuperscript{498} Much has changed even over the past decade. Lane writes: ‘these are very different times... across the

\textsuperscript{494} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{496} Sport, \textit{Herald Sun}, March 17, 2004.
\textsuperscript{497} Sport, \textit{Herald Sun}, March 18, 2004, 72. Thomas states, 'it’s been a...tough 24 hours for the whole club...but two of our own boys are doing it extremely tough so we are giving them one hundred percent support.’
\textsuperscript{498} Sport Liftout, \textit{Age}, Feb 11, 2010. It is worth noting that Lovett is of aboriginal descent and whilst this cannot be explored further here this different treatment can be linked to other patterns where black masculinities are characterised as excessive and dangerous, and treated as such.
AFL generally. The league has policies on violence against women and player conduct broadly, which now guide clubs when they impose... sanctions.499

Following the “chicken sex” incident James Brayshaw confirms that the AFL had contacted the club to ensure they were following the Code of Conduct.500 These public apologies and disciplinary actions demonstrate how vital it is that the AFL and its clubs maintain a professional image. Brayshaw laments that the club had tarnished the relationship with its major sponsor Mazda, suggesting that the players will take the appropriate steps to ‘re-build the brand.’501 In the current professional climate the AFL and clubs alike are acutely aware of the image they portray and of the brand they must protect.

Football players are marketable products. The demands of this might even interfere with traditional notions of masculinity. It is more common to see players appear in fashion advertisements, lifestyle magazines, and at “red carpet” events. Fashion and grooming has become a significant part of their public brand. Even more transgressive is their appearance as models in calendars, as objects for both the female and gay male gaze. The Men for all Seasons calendar, on sale periodically since 1993, displays AFL football players partially or fully naked. All of this interferes with a traditional masculinity. As Connell notes, ‘there is a definite narcissism’ in the body-reflexive practice of sport anyway.502 However in football this interest in the body of the footballer extends to other spaces outside of the stadium.

The rules of hegemonic masculinity dictate that “real men” should never resemble women or be feminine. However, as Susan Alexander explains, over the past few decades ideals like these have been ‘mutating under the stresses of a new social structure in which consumption is more important than production’.503 John Beynon suggests that over recent decades masculinity has

499 Ibid.
501 Ibid.
502 Connell, Men and the Boys, 84.
been shaped by economic and commercial forces resulting in a new type of man that wavers between nurturer, narcissist and lad. In his book *The Metrosexual*, David Coad considers the rise of the term metrosexual and argues this is largely attributed to sports culture, the place in which the most celebrated metrosexuals of our time seem to reside. He claims that with an increasing emphasis on grooming and appearance, traditional mythologies of masculinity which reject such behavior, have been properly challenged. Practices commonly considered feminine are more routinely embodied by men.

These contradictory practices seem to challenge the existing culture of masculinity in AFL football. By contextualising this within a framework of corporate masculinity these behaviors are less puzzling. The masculinities in football and within the institution of the AFL have clearly shifted to some degree, and this is most apparent within its official structures. In its attempt to be more inclusive and professional the AFL must subscribe to current expectations and nurture a type of masculinity that will be acceptable to its large support base. The important question of whether this signals a deeper change within the core of its culture of masculinity, is far from clear.

Recent developments in the AFL also suggest that traditional attitudes are shifting regarding the LGBTI community. On April 2010, the front page of the *Sunday Age* featured a new player-group initiative aimed at combating homophobia in football. In this advertisement some of the biggest names in football were photographed holding hand-written signs calling for greater acceptance of homosexuality in the sport. AFL CEO Andrew Demetriou told the *Age*: 'homophobia has no place in our sport.' Since this time, there have been growing efforts to combat discrimination against this community.

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505 David Coad, *The Metrosexual: Gender, Sexuality, and Sport* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008). Coad points to a number of specific examples, including David Beckham, Denis Rodman and Ian Thorpe.
507 Ibid.
In 2012 Jason Ball became the first player to discuss his sexuality openly and publicly. While not a player at the elite level his “coming out” has had a huge impact on the professional league. A number of elite-level footballers, past and present, have publicly supported the Yarra Glen ruckman. New anti-homophobia campaigns have been developed, and in 2012 the AFL agreed to show the “No To Homophobia” advertisements at the preliminary finals matches. This was in response to an online campaign led by Ball where he garnered 27,000 signatures calling on the AFL to run the ad campaign during the AFL Grand Final. After the Harry Taylor incident, AFL spokesperson Patrick Keane promised that similar homophobic slurs on the field would result in a player facing disciplinary action under the National Vilification and Discrimination Policy. Furthermore, in 2016 St Kilda and Sydney participated in a pride match within the premiership season.

It is likely that this new mood sparked the recent formation of the *Purple Bombers*, a group of LGBTIQ supporters at the Essendon football club. The official club website states: ‘The Purple Bombers aim to assist the Essendon Football Club and the AFL in being leaders of change by creating a safe environment for LGBTIQ supporters and players, by encouraging and promoting diversity, tolerance and acceptance within the wider football community.’ The group was officially launched on 31st July 2014, by founder Jason Tuazon-McCheyne, alongside club player Brendon Goddard. This stands in stark contrast to the Collingwood *Pink Magpies*, who were formed without any official support or affiliation with the football club. Essendon player Brendan Goddard states: ‘As a society we have come a long way in terms of sexual equality, and while there’s still plenty of work to do, our footy club continues to promote diversity through

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the #EFCRespect campaign and Purple Bombers is an extension to that.⁵¹² Despite acknowledging that homophobic language is still a problem amongst football fans, Tuazon-McCheyne is optimistic:

The Essendon Football Club does care about its fans. We have indigenous and women’s things in place and now they’re saying we love our gay and lesbian fans and we want to create a safe environment for them. The AFL doesn’t have any out players and a lot of its fans aren’t even out in the audience. It’s time that changed.⁵¹³

Although I suggest the underlying motivations are not so clear. It is noteworthy that the club’s chief marketing manager Justin Rodski helped to establish the group. In an official sense there is an appearance of greater tolerance and equality within the AFL and its clubs.

Corporate masculinity provides a useful framework to help understand these changes and what underlies them. Demetriou’s hybrid bloc might also be applied since it addresses those moments where the hegemonic group appropriates or incorporates non-hegemonic elements in order to preserve its dominant position. Rather than maintaining a sharp division between gay and straight masculinities, Demetriou claims that gay masculinities are assimilated into mainstream hegemonic masculinities but without subverting or overthrowing their dominant position. He suggests that a process of negotiation takes place, one that can continue to reproduce the same power relations and advantages currently enjoyed by the majority of men.⁵¹⁴ As seen also through corporate masculinity, this incorporation may be necessary, a way to align with shifting attitudes and thus maintain a broader market appeal. The emergence of more hybridised masculinities might indicate a shift in normative constraints,

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Within his concept of \textit{inclusive masculinity} Anderson notes that as homosexuality finds greater acceptance in a society (assuming that this is the case), institutions such as sport follow suit.\footnote{Eric Anderson, “Masculinities and Sexualities in Sport and Physical Cultures: Three Decades of Evolving Research,” in Sport, Masculinities and Sexualities, ed. Eric Anderson (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 7-9.} Thus, a gentler stance towards homosexuality is required. This, he says, results in new hybrid forms of masculinities that are more fluid and less extreme. Similarly, Matthew Klugman argues that in AFL football a heterodox masculinity is apparent.\footnote{Matthew Klugman, “I Love Him in an Absolutely Gay Way’: Heterodox Fragments of the Erotic Desires, Pleasures, and Masculinity of Male Sports Fans,” Men and Masculinities 18, no.2 (2015), doi: 10.1177/1097184X15584911.} This does not mean that hegemonic forms no longer exist but rather, these forms are mixed with others that are more fluid. Klugman focuses on the contradictory practices of the male football audience who express love, emotion, even bodily desire for their footballer heroes while also celebrating and reproducing more aggressive hegemonic behaviours. He writes: ‘the erotic play and more homophobic forms of masculinity can sit alongside each other in the same person.’\footnote{Ibid., 206.} Importantly, Klugman notes that these heterodox fragments displayed by supporters may not necessarily challenge or subvert the hegemonic masculinity still present in football.

The collaborations between the AFL, its clubs and players to address homophobia are positive, but the fact remains that there is still not one openly gay AFL player at the elite level. Research conducted by Victoria University found that the most common sport gay men wanted to play but felt they could not, was Australian Rules football.\footnote{Frontpage, Age, April 11, 2010.} Ball explains: ‘I was fine coming out to my school friends and my family but I was terrified coming out to my football team.’\footnote{Jill Stark, “I didn’t know any footballers who were gay,” Age Sept 9, 2012, https://www.theage.com.au/sport/afl/i-didnt-know-any-footballers-who-were-gay-20120908-25ler.html.}
player group and amongst audiences, are therefore yet to produce any real effects. This suggests there is something in the culture of AFL that is not being addressed. Indeed, the introduction of these initiatives demonstrates that these problems are current and persistent.

**Soma-masculinities**

This points to some of the limitations of *corporate masculinity* and the *hybrid bloc* as conceptual frameworks for examining the AFL in contemporary terms. They are useful for problematising the dualism of hegemonic masculinity and understanding how and why non-hegemonic elements are accepted into the hegemony. That is, they emphasise other strategies at work, specifically those that align with the demands of a capitalist market alongside other *conscious* strategies for maintaining the hegemony and patriarchy. For Demetriou, this involves an incorporation of non-hegemonic elements, and his focus is on gay men in particular. These concepts extend the possible motivations at work but do not address the other less conscious investments and motivations more closely related to the body and the individual. A greater incorporation and acceptance of women and gay men at an official level does not explain all the complex ways in which an individual will engage with these changes.

Both Anderson and Klugman describe the blurring of hegemonic and non-hegemonic dynamics in sport. But when Klugman suggests that for the football fan, an expression of love for other men and a repudiation of this love exists simultaneously, how are we to account for this? Anderson and Klugman describe the messiness of masculinity and its contradictory practices, however a stronger account of bodies, pleasure and desire is needed here. That is, it requires an account of the *flesh*, one that can explain how bodily pleasures and desires shape, and are shaped by, how one lives in the world.

Moreover, these models struggle to account for those moments where traditional hegemonic form *persist* despite attempts by the AFL to eradicate these. Why are
there no “out” players even though there are official and visible attempts to address homophobia? Why do footballers continue to behave in violent and sexist ways despite the increasing ramifications for such behavior? Tolerance is enforced at a structural level but there are other forces at play here, something deeply ingrained within the culture of the AFL so that these official changes are unable to take effect.

I argue that the framework of *soma-masculinities*, using the concepts of *phenomenology* and *homosociality*, is more useful for an examination of masculinities in the AFL today and the contradictions that occur. *Soma-masculinities* posits the body as the starting point for any examination of masculinities, and attends to what is occurring at the level of the body and the flesh. This reveals that there are multiple discourses at work on the footballer’s body beyond simply those that are visible and official. The AFL produces a particular set of official discourses however there are other discourses in effect. The behaviours embodied by footballers are not simply determined by a deliberate adoption of official rules and guidelines set out by the AFL. Rather, these lived behaviours are a combination of conscious and *unconscious* habits that are learned by the body over time. This embodiment is strictly individual rather than social. Not every footballer internalises or engages with these discourses in the same way.

In AFL football there are multiple contradictory forces at work. *Soma-masculinities* compels scholars to consider the range of available discourses — the official and the everyday — and how these might manifest in lived practices and behaviours. I suggest that the discourses instilled directly in the body, through training and other bodily practice, are most powerful in forming players’ behaviours and habits. This raises a number of questions: What does the training of the body involve and how might this affect a player’s subjectivity and embodiment both on and off the field? Who attends to the bodies of footballers and what are the effects here?
The coach-player relationship has been considered the 'epicenter of football ritual'.\textsuperscript{521} Players are exemplars of masculinity but coaches act as the gatekeepers and mediators of it. From their interviews with American football players, Donald Sabo and Joe Pinepinto observed how coaches were central to the lives of athletes: ‘coaches impose training rules such as curfews, exercise regimes, dietary and dating restrictions, study programs, and sometimes clothing regulations.’\textsuperscript{522} Training regimes were often a form of physical punishment in preparation for the physicality of a game, with players taught to enact violence and inflict pain on their opponents. In fact, bodily pain was central to this ritual and to an athlete’s experience of their bodies; they are taught not only to inflict pain but also taught how to tolerate it. Playing while hurt, excessive training drills and injury were all part of this ritual. Sabo and Panepinto write: ‘Coaches de-emphasized the degree of physical suffering and probability of serious injury. Players were taught to deny pain. Coaches encouraged boys to toughen up, to learn to take your knocks and to sacrifice your body.’\textsuperscript{523} Verbal criticism, ridicule and humiliation were key tactics used by coaches to exert their control and push athletes to excel; ridicule that, as the authors observe, was ‘often tinged with homophobia and misogyny.’\textsuperscript{524}

These patterns are evident also within the AFL. Between 1955 and 1964 Norm Smith, regarded as one of the game’s greatest coaches, led Melbourne to a staggering six premierships.\textsuperscript{525} When asked about Smith’s coaching style, Ron Barassi noted 'he never failed to get my competitive juices flowing. He’d always have us fired up and ready for battle'.\textsuperscript{526} Norm Smith himself describes how a coach must ‘build himself up to a pitch before the game’. He recalls how a player

\textsuperscript{522} Ibid., 119.
\textsuperscript{523} Ibid., 123.
\textsuperscript{524} Ibid., 120.
\textsuperscript{525} The introduction of the "Norm Smith Medal" in 1979 illustrates the validity of this claim and his importance in the game. This is awarded each year to the best player on ground in the Grand Final match.
\textsuperscript{526} Collins, \textit{The Red Fox}, 289.
might go to a match hating the thought of playing but after hearing his (Smith's) pre-match speech would get worked up like 'he wanted to murder somebody'. During pre-game speeches the coach calls on the footballer to put their skills (bodies) into action. Players are impelled to fight harder, to put themselves and their bodies on the line, to die for their team mates. They are told to be hard, pay the price, stand up and win the contest.

Similarly, the coaching staff are responsible for the training of the footballer's body. In AFL football this includes main training days, smaller training sessions, daily fitness regimes, pre-game warm ups and pre-season training. This is where specific skills are learned and practiced, and the body is sculpted so it can enact and inhabit these skills; skills like smothering, spoiling and shepherding. The three types of tackles — behind, front and hook — are highly specific. Players are taught how to use their bodies to excel at these skills through training drills and repetition. For example, smothering requires strong locked hands with open palms, while spoiling requires clenched fists. The footballer learns to comport and utilise their bodies in highly specific ways, and this is practiced, until the skill is learned and habitual. I suggest that this training and repeated practice help form bodily habits and tendencies.

Keeping these training practices in mind, one can see how powerfully this all orients players (bodies) to their worlds and how everything is subordinated to this. This focus on bodies allows us to address why the hegemonic practices of violence and aggression still persist despite the introduction of official policies and initiatives across the different levels of the AFL. The violence enacted through the body in training regimes and in competition is instilled as bodily habit and therefore predisposes the footballer to be more violent than a man who does not practice violence with such regularity. Recalling Leder’s phenomenological notion of incorporation, he states: ‘A skill is finally and fully learned when something that once was extrinsic, grasped only through explicit rules or examples, now comes to pervade my own corporeality…. a skill has been

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527 Ibid., 290.
incorporated into my bodily “I can.” Importantly these abilities are embedded into bodies as habits, the result of repeated practice. He writes: ‘As a result of ongoing patterns of action, the body can develop automatic tendencies to repeat... the vast reach of the “I can” contracts into the “I do.” The footballer learns how to enact violence using the body, becomes practiced in it and is therefore more likely to re-enact this, firstly when it is called for by coaches in training and in a game, but also in more unconscious ways both on and off the field. This explains why the tribunal has become such an essential body within the AFL. It exists to help regulate and police the violence that occurs during games. After each round there are numerous cases that come under scrutiny by the match review panel. The tribunal booklet includes a table of offences which list the reports of illegal rough play and violence, that have occurred over the past decade. These have remained consistent, and there are no signs of this abating. This suggests that the tribunal's attempts to temper this violence has remained, and will continue to remain, ineffective due to other habits and discourses that are instilled at the level of the body through training and match play.

With a similar focus on embodiment, Deb Waterhouse-Watson addresses the particular problem of sexual violence within the two most popular Australian football codes: the NRL (National Rugby League) and AFL. In this compelling account, Waterhouse-Watson suggests an ‘imaginary’ footballer's body is produced which helps to construct a subjectivity disposed to committing sexual violence. This, she argues, is accomplished through a number of specific discourses. First, she observes that an inherent part of the team culture is ‘locker-room talk;' a discourse where women are spoken about in a degrading manner, as sexual objects. Second, she examines how the language employed by the media and by coaches dehumanises and legitimates violence both on and

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529 Ibid.
530 Waterhouse-Watson, "Playing defence in sexual assault."
531 Waterhouse-Watson examines the group sex culture that is prevalent in football, a culture which, she claims, is the result of a prevalent sexual discourse amongst players. One rugby player reveals in an anonymous interview that out of 600 fellow players 'maybe five of them didn't play up', suggesting that many had engaged in group sex. See p. 111.
off the field. Finally, she interrogates the discourses surrounding player injury, arguing that footballers are trained to ignore injury and disconnect themselves from it. The violence enacted is seen as legitimate violence, thus the blame for injury is unclear and rendered unimportant in the context of the game. This helps to remove the agent of violence, and encourages players to shed any responsibility.

While Waterhouse-Watson employs a psychoanalytic framework and posits an imaginary body, this body is still a real lived body. The unconscious mechanisms occur within the psyche however they still move the footballer to act in particular ways. The contours and abilities of the body come into being for the footballer through the psyche and its contents. Waterhouse-Watson is suggesting that these spoken discourses that emerge from the locker room, coaches and the media, help structure the psyche, the footballer’s idea of his body and its capabilities. A phenomenological approach can extend this further as it moves these unconscious mechanisms from the psyche to the body itself. Within this framework the capacities and habits of the body come to being through sense rather than thought or language. The body is formed through relation with the world and with others. The training of the footballer’s body is therefore a crucial consideration. Footballers are taught to treat other bodies as objects and enact violence on those bodies. They are taught to suppress empathy and ignore pain. All of this produces an embodiment more disposed to treating other bodies as objects, and to enacting sexual violence. Both the imaginary body and the phenomenological body are useful frames through which to understand some of these tensions regarding football players and their behaviours towards women.

The footballer’s body is a skilled and practiced body. It is also a fleshy body that is full of drives, desires and emotional investments. Martin Mills points to a number of further motivations that compel men to engage with violent sports and other risk-taking activities. He writes: ‘much of the pleasure for men of playing football is tied to the social organisation of masculinity, and in particular
to the adoration which hegemonic practices attract.⁵³² This is confirmed in Messner's account: 'The larger societal context valorizes, romanticizes, and rewards men’s successful use of violence. This tendency of men to be rewarded for being alienated from their own bodies, and for treating others as objects to be defeated, is extreme and obvious in the world of sport.'⁵³³ Footballers enjoy a high social status, are well paid, sexually desirable and are seen as a measure of masculinity. Thus, there are particular investments and pleasures here that need to be accounted for.

Using *homosociality* as a framework can help address this more thoroughly. Mills notes: 'the ability to play football serves as a means of uniting men as the superior sex.'⁵³⁴ Football is often described as a “boys club” and the relations and bonding that occurs amongst these men is powerful. A cohesive team is imperative for success and so this bonding is nurtured and encouraged. There is an emphasis on teamwork and giving up ones body for the good of the team. Sabo calls this the *pain principle*; where using the body in violent ways, playing hurt and playing through pain, is considered a necessary sacrifice.⁵³⁵ The enactment of violence and aggression is underpinned by a desire to be validated as part of the team, to be one of the boys, a “real” man. It enables the bonding and intimacy between men to occur in a safe way. Sport is a safe space because it reaffirms the masculinity and heterosexuality of its male participants; that is, it offsets the inevitable relations and intimacies that threaten this. Importantly, it remains a space in which men can relate to each other and form bonds. Thus, we can more easily understand why men are often driven to participate in sports and engage in even its toughest aspects. Messner writes: ‘we cannot understand men’s commitment to risk-taking, playing with serious injuries, and constructing their bodies as machines or weapons, unless we understand how sport provides a context for men’s emotional connection with other men.’⁵³⁶

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⁵³⁴ Ibid., 12.
⁵³⁵ Donald F. Sabo, "Pigskin, Patriarchy and Pain" in *Sex, violence & power in sports: rethinking masculinity* eds. M.A. Messner and D.F Sabo (Markham: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1994), 82.
Homosociality can also be used to account for the prevalence of group sex cultures in sport and the more serious practices of sexual assault. Merrill Melnick writes: ‘most experts agree that episodes of gang rape are usually, but not always, associated with males bonding together in tightly knit groups.’\textsuperscript{537} In chapter seven of his book Messner addresses group sexual assault in sports and pinpoints four key elements underpinning this problem: sexist discourse, heterosexual voyeuring, suppression of empathy towards self and others, and a culture of silence.\textsuperscript{538} Sexist discourse is produced primarily in the locker-room, often in the form of jokes, boasting and pranks. Voyeuring works to collectively bond members of the group through positing women as other and the object of desire. The suppression of empathy is fostered through training and preparation for the game. This is particularly apparent in contact team sports. Finally, a culture of silence is encouraged. There are rewards for loyalty and punishments for betraying the group and other teammates.

As Waterhouse-Watson’s study demonstrates, in Australian football codes there exists a long-standing culture of group sex. On the surface, this seems at odds with hegemonic masculinity and its central expectation of heterosexuality. These men are sharing a sexual experience, with each other. However, as Anna Krien observes, the group sex culture in Rugby and AFL football is less about sex and more about bonding between the men. She recalls the reflections of rugby coach Roy Masters: ‘sexual satisfaction isn’t the aim of this sleazy exercise, during which the guys laugh at the sexually incompetent... The sex isn’t equalizing; rather it’s the intimacy within the tribe, being ‘one of the boys,’ which is the bonding mechanism.’\textsuperscript{539} There is an acknowledge here of some of the more unconscious mechanisms at work; emotion, desire and intimacy. The woman’s subjectivity is unimportant in this instance. Rather this is about her utility. She acts as a vehicle for the intimate encounter between the men. This is an intimacy or desire that remains largely unacknowledged and unconscious. Importantly

\textsuperscript{538} Messner, \textit{Out of Play}, 111.
\textsuperscript{539} Krien, \textit{Night Games}, 50.
her presence confirms the heterosexuality of these men and thus preserves their masculinity. Sedgwick addresses this with her example of the triangle, whereby the bonding between men is done through the figure of the woman. She is an object in this exchange and a symbolic reassurance of their heterosexuality.\textsuperscript{540} Thus, she is crucial to this interaction. Through her, the men can “safely” be together and with each other’s bodies. It masks that these men are engaging in sex also with each other, there is no conscious acknowledgment of this.

In a similar manner, the display of emotion and intimacy on the field is seen as legitimate and acceptable because it occurs in the context of playing sport. Leigh Boucher draws attention to this paradox in his examination of media representations of the crying AFL player.\textsuperscript{541} The footballer’s tears — in injury, triumph or loss — undermines the neat alignment between the footballer and hegemonic masculinity or ideals of Australian manhood. Boucher argues that this threatens to disrupts the supporter’s attachment to players as it ‘seems to represent a powerful psychic betrayal.’\textsuperscript{542} He suggests that ultimately, these ‘new modes of representation have actually intensified supporter engagement in these players.’\textsuperscript{543} Footballers’ bodies overflow well beyond the cognitive and attitudinal ideals of masculinity, but why are these tears acceptable? Boucher suggests there is a complex entanglement here where increased access to public emotion, through the footballer, has become an ‘affective vector,’ an outlet for supporters to live out their own emotional lives.\textsuperscript{544} While this is true, I suggest that this is also allowed to occur due to the meanings of masculinity that are explicitly tied to football. The crying footballer might even be a heroic figure, since his tears are the overflow of an affective attachment to football above-all. These men train together, play together, shower together and cry together, but this is all legitimised. The intimacy that these encounters necessarily involve are

\textsuperscript{542} Ibid., 1560.
\textsuperscript{543} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{544} Ibid.
offset by what these interactions lead to. These men play football with other men and this is what “real” men do.

The persistence of homophobic attitudes within football can also be explained through homosociality. Jason Ball’s decision to “come out” to his teammates at the Yarra Glen football club was not easy. He recalls: ‘the biggest fear for me was that my own teammates wouldn’t accept me. In the locker room, gay was a word used to mean “bad,” “weak” or “soft.”’ Homophobic as well as sexist discourse remains a feature of the locker room. The sexual objectification of women and the othering of gay men serves the same purpose. It confirms the normative masculinity of the AFL footballer, one that is always underpinned by a compulsory heterosexuality. Homosociality describes this particular ordering of masculinity. These conscious strategies of objectification and othering work to offset the more unconscious elements that occur. The display of “masculine” qualities such as physical strength and aggression, alongside the display of sexism and homophobia, allow other more subversive bodily acts to occur; that is, the emotion, intimacy and bonding between men.

Historically, the masculinities produced and nurtured within the AFL have neatly aligned with Connell’s concept of hegemonic masculinity. This is most clearly seen in the attitudes and practices that have consistently marginalised women and particular groups of men. However, this alignment has been troubled more recently due to attempts by the AFL to address these problems. I argue, however, there is still some way to go. These attempts by the AFL, to challenge violence, sexism and homophobia are largely attitudinal and behaviourist. Its increasing focus on professionalism is explicitly (pragmatically rather than ethically) brand and reputation focused. It is primarily concerned with maintaining the brand of the league rather than being motivated by a concern for those groups affected by its persistent culture of masculinity. There is even less evidence that the AFL is concerned with changing its culture (and broader cultures) of masculinity; a pattern that is present across most institutions and professions. Changing a culture requires a more radical approach. It requires that the AFL adopt tactics

545 “Gay footballer,” News
beyond simply the structural (official) level. In particular, it must acknowledge what is occurring at the level of the body, and properly address the discourses and practices that inform and help shape the AFL footballer's embodied subjectivity. This will reveal that the rules of conduct will endure as policing of misconduct rather than any meaningful change or shift, because they are enforced at the level of the mind and mindful behavior. Everything else that is demanded of the players (as players) and their bodies, works against this mindset.

For scholars of masculinities and sport, this requires an engagement with theory that addresses embodiment in a more significant manner; theory that acknowledges the fleshy components of embodiment and not simply the cultural. Affect, passion, drive and desire (all of this is flesh), overrule the conduct (attitudes and behavior) sportsmen are being asked to cultivate. The current frameworks are limited because they do not adequately address this. It is my contention that by employing the framework of *soma-masculinities* scholars of masculinities will be better equipped to address these problems and tensions in a more meaningful and productive manner.
Part Four — The Homosexual Body
Chapter Seven — The homosexual man made visible: sexuality, masculinity and the body-self

‘Sexuality, without being the object of any intended act of consciousness, can underlie and guide specific forms of my experience. Taken in this way, as an ambiguous atmosphere, sexuality is co-extensive with life.’ — Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*.546

‘Sexuality is a matter not of seeing but of sensing, which takes place below and beyond the threshold of the visible.’ — Gayle Salamon, *Assuming a Body*.547

‘Macho, macho man. I gotta be a macho man.’ — The Village People, *Macho Man*.548

The Gay Liberation movement of the 1970s accelerated the entry of gay men into the public sphere, laying the groundwork for the formation of new visible communities, identities and cultures. In this chapter I consider two landmark junctures that led to this greater visibility: the liberation movement itself and the HIV/AIDS crisis. In particular, I point to the political and social responses, and address the subsequent terms and discourses that clustered around gay men during this time. For the most part, these discourses posit the gay male body as sexually excessive, unstable and diseased. This mirrors the discursive patterns that emerged in the 19th century. Moreover, it recalls a long history where female and feminine bodies have been reduced to the body and objectified. In particular, women have been tied to their reproductive capacities and their role as mothers, and yet they are also valued for their appearance and sexual availability. Their bodies are characterised as nurturing and emotional, but also as unstable and sexual. There are similar contradictions at work in relation to gay men, who are likened to women; feminised and sexualised simultaneously. There is an emphasis on the body but this body is characterised as excessively sexual and potentially dangerous.

Through this examination I contemplate the more complex phenomenon of why gay men embraced this hyper-sexualised body for themselves. Following other

scholars, I argue firstly that within an increasingly visible gay culture, this sexualised body is underpinned above-all by a particular discourse of masculinity, one that is culturally dominant. Gay men attempt to recast themselves in masculine terms and this is done through the body, through the expression of specific forms of embodiment that align with ideals of masculinity. This is seen most clearly in the presentations styles and practices of the *gay clone*. Within the mainstream discourses at this time, the body was made the central focus, thus the body was crucial for gay men, for forging visible identities and a sense of masculinity. It has often been noted that gay male culture is indeed a body culture. In surveying this history and the attending scholarship, I explain why bodies, and in particular the sexualised, masculine body, have been central to the liberation and articulation of gay male identities, as a way to counteract previous discursive frames and forge a more liberated existence.

The scholarship I address focuses largely on the representations and discourses of bodies, and how gay men either resisted or embraced these. I suggest that while this approach is productive, it tends to ignore the affective, felt aspects of these bodies, that is, the body as lived, or what I refer to here as the body-self. In the final part of this chapter I demonstrate how a consideration of these attachments and investments might generate a more capacious account of gay male subjectivity. Gay men do engage with available discourses of sexuality and gender in order to *consciously* articulate their identities and make them more visible, however something even more profound is occurring here. Using my framework of *soma-masculinities*, specifically the work of Merleau-Ponty and Butler, I suggest that gender and sexuality are central to how gay men make sense of themselves and how they live in the world. They are modes of being. That is, they are not simply bodily or simply cultural, rather they are integral to subjectivity itself, to a *felt* sense of being in the world. In fact, they are integral to the human condition, to being and feeling human. For Merleau-Ponty, sexuality is life itself because it draws the body (desire) into relation with the world. For

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Butler, the tight relationship between sexuality and gender is paramount. They are intimately entwined and central to how we make our lives intelligible and liveable in the world. This helps to explain why gay men have expressed, and continue to express, their identities in a highly sexualised, masculine manner. These identities, whilst seemingly political and cognitive, are also deeply felt.

This chapter is therefore an examination of the dominant historical discourses regarding gay male bodies and of the complex negotiation that occurs for many gay men as they engage with these discourses. This engagement is both conscious and unconscious, and ultimately crucial to understanding how (and why) gay men forge their identities and their culture in a world that posits their sexual desire and its related practices, as abject. To begin, however, I turn to the discourse of sexual difference, to help describe the binaries and hierarchies in operation regarding gender and sexuality.

**Sexual difference**

In *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus* John Gray spectacularly reaffirms the popular essentialist understanding of sex and gender whereby the specific gendered behaviours of masculinity and femininity are ontologically bound to male and female bodies. Gray imagines men and women to be from different planets. He writes: ‘when you remember that men are from Mars and women are from Venus, everything can be explained.’ This echoes a long historical imperative in the west to posit the “nature” of men and women as diametrically opposed; a position that remains a contentious one for scholars of gender and sexuality. Those adhering to essentialist notions, like Gray, imagine difference as fixed in the body or psyche while social constructionists seek to evaporate any fundamental difference by placing bodies within a framework of construction and socialisation.

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Sexual difference has operated within a binary-driven framework throughout history, right through to today. In the societies of ancient Greece and Rome this difference was written into their literature, performed on their stages and made official in their social and political systems. Within the central text of Christianity sexual difference is marked out from the outset, as divinely ordained. In the scientific discourses of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries bodies underwent a rigorous classification based on sexual difference. Thomas Laqueur problematises this historical route, arguing that earlier Western societies operated under what he calls, the one-sex model. He argues that the boundaries between male and female were explicitly cultural and political rather than biological: ‘sex before the seventeenth century... was still a sociological and not an ontological category.’\textsuperscript{551} In the eighteenth century the division of sex into male and female is given a biological foundation. This historical context is crucial to an understanding of sex, and here Laqueur echoes Foucault’s reading of sexuality. Both sex and sexuality are underpinned by historically produced systems of knowledge, thus they should not be approached in essentialist terms, as though they are natural. Nevertheless, such terms have and continue to constrain bodies and shape the discourses surrounding them.

In the early part of the twentieth century Freud’s research on sexuality rose to prominence. While feminists have rightly expressed a range of objections regarding his ideas, at the very least, he pointed to the complexity of sex and desire. Laqueur suggests that Freud was successful at collapsing the two-sex biological model in favour of a more sociological model, and was one of the first to complicate the relationship between biology and culture. Laqueur writes: ‘Freud... showed how difficult it is for culture to make the body fit into categories necessary for biological and thus cultural reproduction.’\textsuperscript{552}

Although Freud’s ideas on sex and sexuality presented a number of rich possibilities, there was still a clear differentiation of the sexes. The erotic life of each sex, he suggests, is discrete due to their peculiar sexual development: ‘we


\textsuperscript{552} Ibid., 243.
long ago abandoned any expectations of close parallelism between male and female sexual development.\textsuperscript{553} In the psychoanalytic models that emerged after Freud there is still a retention of sexual difference. Within feminist thought this binary is expressed through the constructionist concept of gender. Jessica Benjamin suggests that psychoanalysis ‘cannot simply dispense with the frame of binary gender opposition... where such binary oppositions play a major role in organizing our experience.’\textsuperscript{554} The point I want to make here is not whether sexual difference is biologically fixed or socially constructed, both offer up powerful ontological arguments for ways of being. Rather, it is that this differentiation and discourse exists and is powerful in the way it produces sexed subjects.

Within sociology, recent studies on love and sex also tend to focus on differences in behaviours whereby women in general are seen to be focused on and more skilled in love. Francesca Cancian argues that while women may demonstrate greater interest and skill in love than men, the notion of love itself is feminised, being primarily about emotional intimacy and expression.\textsuperscript{555} Men on the other hand are seen as independent, as material providers and as having a fixation on sex. Sex is stereotypically seen as the male domain. Linda Lindsey expresses this in another way: ‘it is clear that males and females are socialized into different attitudes and behaviors regarding romantic love and that the idealism associated with romantic love serves to weaken women’s endorsement for its sexual component.’\textsuperscript{556}

**Homosexuality**

\textsuperscript{554} Jessica Benjamin, *Like Subjects, love objects: essays on recognition and sexual difference* (New York: Yale University, 1995), 12.
\textsuperscript{555} Francesca M Cancian, “The Feminization of Love” in *The Gendered Society Reader* eds. Michael Kimmel and Amy Aronson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 545-554. Cancian clarifies that these gender roles are constructed, yet she remains tied to gendered terms, concluding that healthy relationships would benefit from an ‘androgynous love;’ the incorporation of both a feminine and masculine style of love.
This sexual difference is always occurring within a framework of heterosexuality. In *Gender Trouble* Butler writes of a compulsory heterosexuality that depends upon the protagonists of man and woman. She asks the question: 'To what extent does gender hierarchy serve a more or less compulsory heterosexuality, and how often are gender norms policed precisely in the service of shoring up heterosexual hegemony?'\(^{557}\) Thus, homosexuality is seen as an aberration, but one of the key points Butler makes here is that sex, gender and sexuality are intimately related. This is what she calls the *heterosexual matrix*. In order to fit neatly and surely within a heterosexual norm one must do their gender well. In other words, to be read as straight gender must be expressed in a manner that correspond with an assigned sex. Compulsory heterosexuality is accompanied by an array of prohibitions and punishments around homosexuality (and therefore gender). Butler's point is that heterosexuality is the assumed position, the default. This means that even the registering of homosexuality is done through a heterosexual lens. Monique Wittig states:‘when thought by the straight mind, homosexuality is nothing but heterosexuality.’\(^{558}\) Hence, a relationship between two women is characterised as butch and femme, with two men often seen in similar terms. Homosexuality is therefore seen through a heteronormative lens, through a lens of sexual (gender) difference. I will revisit this relation between gender and sexuality throughout this chapter.

Homosexuality has remained a complicated historical category. To illustrate, in ancient Rome applying the modern concept of homosexuality to Roman men who engaged in same sex relations, would be a mistake. Ones sexual role was expected to reflect their status and this dictated the types of acts they would perform. There was a focus on sexual roles and acts rather than on the biological sex of the sexual partner. Men having sexual relations with other men did not present a problem providing the Roman male took the active role and the male partner taking the receptive role was not a Roman citizen. Thus, to apply our


\(^{558}\) Monique Wittig, *The Straight Mind and other Essays* (New York & London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992), 28. She argues that heterosexual society is based on difference and other, and this difference is threaded throughout its economic, political, symbolic, and linguistic systems.
current concepts to this historical context grossly misrepresents the ways in which the Romans understood their own sexual practices.

The importance of historical context is underlined by Foucault. Our current concept of homosexuality, he suggests, is the product of the medical and legal discourses of the late 1800s. Foucault writes:

We must not forget that the... medical category of homosexuality was constituted from the moment it was characterized. Homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyny... The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species.559

Sexuality as we know it, as an identity and mode of being, was born. Thus, it was established that one’s sexual behaviours and desires denoted the truth of who they were. The homosexual was a person who engaged in any kind of sexual and intimate relations with another of the same sex.560 The term heterosexual also emerged at this time and was posited as the “normal” sexual identity around which everything else would be classified and judged. Within medical discourses homosexuality was a sexual deviation, an illness. Within legal discourses it was immoral and criminal. The ways of speaking about bodies produced those bodies as such.

Within the discourses of love and sex, heterosexuality then has been seen as the healthy sexuality, a space for love and relationships to occur while homosexuality is seen largely in sexual terms, reduced to a bodily urge. In particular gay men are seen in this way while lesbian sexuality for the most part, has been ignored or erased. John Gray’s concepts of love are explicitly heterosexual. Indeed, his entire thesis on love and relationships relies on the sexual difference of man and woman. Some have seen male homosexuality in

sexual terms simply because it involves relations between men. Men are seen to be inherently preoccupied with sex, what is often referred to as the male sex drive, the result of biology. Gray suggests then that the coming together of the two sexes provides the perfect balance. Within this viewpoint, gay male sexuality is cast as unbridled and too sexually driven.

Psychoanalysis posits heterosexuality as the proper social form of sexual development with same sex attraction being the initial libidinal impulse. Butler encapsulates this where she writes: ‘bisexuality and homosexuality are taken to be primary libidinal dispositions, and heterosexuality is the laborious construction based upon their gradual repression.’\(^{561}\) Within this model the gay man is seen to be infantile and dictated by sexual desire. Freud writes:

> What is at issue are the innate roots of the sexual drive, which in many cases develop into the true vehicles of sexual activity (perversions), and in others are insufficiently suppressed (repression)... while in the most favourable cases which fall between these two extremes, they bring about a so-called normal sex life by means of effective restriction and other forms of modification.\(^ {562}\)

Herdt and Boxer present a further essentialist reading of the gay male psyche where they write: ‘sexuality is more basic to gay men’s views of their being,... eroticism is not only easier in gay culture; it is more a part of gay men’s view of human nature.’\(^ {563}\) The authors suggest that gay men are more tied to sex and imply this that this is grounded in the facts of the body and the psyche. Missing from this account is an acknowledgement of the cultural and political components of this construction. Sharif Mowlabocus writes that during the middle of the 20\(^{th}\) century, even during the 1970s, gay subculture was seen by

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561 Butler, Gender Trouble, 105.
the mainstream as a ‘murky world of experimentalism, promiscuity and strange sex acts.’\textsuperscript{564}

Prior to gay liberation and throughout the decades following it, the focus on and classification of gay male bodies as sexually deviant was deliberate and relentless. There was a constant surveillance of gay male bodies by broader society. Unsurprisingly, this came to be a dominant discourse, one that gay men themselves would adopt and identify with.

\textbf{Pre-Liberation}

In the decades leading up to the Stonewall riots, a specific public discourse on homosexuality emerged through the print media which posited it as perverted and dangerous. Rodger Streitmatter cites the March 1, 1950 dismissals from the US State Department, as a key moment. The media reported that ninety-one employees were dismissed, and suggested this was due to the homosexual orientation of the employees.\textsuperscript{565} Prior to this, media outlets were reluctant to even mention the word “homosexual” for fear of offending their readership. Streitmatter argues the events of March 1950 marked a historic shift, the beginnings of a visible media discourse on homosexuality. These discourses were noticeably negative with the gay man represented as ‘absurdly effeminate’, hysterical and even violent.\textsuperscript{566} In particular, he was considered to be a sexual deviant and sex obsessed, unable to control his sexual desires. In that same year the \textit{New York Post} wrote: “The homosexual is always on the prowl.”\textsuperscript{567} The presentation of gay men as sexual predators was a common theme pervading the media at this time. In Britain, a discourse on homosexuality had also appeared in

\textsuperscript{565} Rodger Streitmatter, \textit{From perverts to fab five: The Media’s changing depiction of Gay Men and Lesbians} (New York: Routledge, 2009), 6.
\textsuperscript{566} Ibid., 10.
\textsuperscript{567} Ibid., 13.
the press during this time.\footnote{Jeffery Weeks, \textit{Coming Out: homosexual politics in Britain from the nineteenth century to the present} (London: Quartet Books, 1979), 162.} Prior to this, the word had rarely appeared in the newspapers. In similar terms to the US, the gay man was portrayed as a predator, as uncontained, as fixated on sex.

Michael Bronski suggests that even though these stereotypes were derogatory, they enabled gay men to forge their identities and become what he calls ‘obvious homosexuals.’\footnote{Michael Bronski, \textit{Culture Clash: The making of gay sensibility} (Boston: South End Press, 1984), 80.} In many ways gay men appeared to adopt these stereotypes. Bathhouses, beats and bars became a hive of activity where men could meet other men for sex.\footnote{Homosexuality was illegal at this time, which is another important factor for why these activities became popular and necessary.} The media was quick to report these activities and present them as synonymous with the gay lifestyle. In the years that followed, scholars were able to gain a greater sense of how the restrictions and persecutions of this time, coloured the ways in which gay men forged their public identities within the emerging gay liberation movement. The identities and subjectivities that materialised were shaped by a constant surveillance of the gay male body by both the media and the broader public.

\textbf{Liberation}

On the morning of June 28, 1969, police raided the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in Greenwich Village, New York City. This was not an unusual occurrence, however on this particular night the patrons fought back, sparking a violent riot that lasted for several days.\footnote{David Carter, \textit{Stonewall: The riots that sparked the Gay Revolution} (New York: St Martins Press, 2004), 123. Carter notes that in that month of June leading up to the riots, five gay bars in the Greenwich Village area were raided by police, and three of those bars were closed down.} David Carter suggests that violence played a critical role here because it not only deepened the impact but also challenged the stereotype depicting homosexuals as passive and effeminate.\footnote{David Carter, “What made Stonewall different?” \textit{The Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide} 16, no.4 (July 2009): 11, http://find.galegroup.com.ezp.lib.unimelb.edu.au.} This response was a turning point for gay people in the United States and across the world. One
of the activists declared: 'No event in history, with perhaps the exception of the French Revolution, deserves more [than Stonewall] to be considered a watershed.' In 1999, President Bill Clinton named the Stonewall Inn a national historic landmark.

In the following month, the Gay Liberation Front was established, followed by the Gay Activists Alliance; both focused specifically on civil rights. Within a year the number of organised gay groups in the US had risen dramatically from 50 to approximately 1500. The international response was significant, with Canada, Britain and parts of western Europe, all forming liberation groups and initiatives. The symbols and language used in the American movement, like the rainbow flag and the term “gay,” were adopted by these movements. This diasporic pattern was described as a ‘transnational diffusion.’ Dennis Altman writes: ‘Gay liberation, as both an ideology and form of organization, belongs very clearly to a certain period in American history.’ For many countries around the world this became a model to follow; resulting in a globalisation of the gay movement.

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575 Dennis Altman, Homosexual: Oppression and Liberation (Sydney: Angus & Robertson Pty Ltd, 1972), 106. The newspaper “Come Out” was founded in November 1969 by Gay Liberation Front.
576 Carter, What made Stonewall different?” 11.
577 Alkarim Jivani, It’s not unusual: A history of Lesbian and Gay Britain in the Twentieth Century (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 159-70. In Britain, the “Committee for Homosexual Equality” and the british “Gay Liberation Front” were set up in response to events in the US. The growth of the movement in Britain was rapid; the first pride parade held in July 1972, and Gay News became the largest circulation gay newspaper in the world by the mid-1970s.
578 Barry D Adam, Jan Willem Duyvendak and Andre Krouwel, “Gay and Lesbian Movements beyond Border?” in The Global Emergence of Gay and Lesbian Politics eds. Adam, Duyvendak and Krouwel (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), 344-71. They claim that compared with other social movements, gay liberation was less influenced by national borders, which helps to explain the similarities that were evident across different countries.
These political shifts were momentous but this did not necessarily translate into liberation. The negative societal attitudes, most visible in the media, did not simply disappear with the advent of the gay liberation movement. Media outlets continued their relentless depictions of gay men lusting after young boys and having sex in public places. Some have argued that the events at Stonewall prompted publications like the New York Times and Newsweek to intensify its negative portrayals of homosexuality.\(^{581}\) Furthermore, the violent nature of the riots incited new discourses. Gay men were now also considered to be violent terrorists posing a threat to civilised society.\(^{582}\) They had emerged within the media and yet were unable to control these representations. Although homosexuality gradually became less vilified in a structural sense (in particular, a legal context) and had gained a much larger degree of visibility, gay men still struggled to forge a visible and coherent identity and community, against the backdrop of a heterosexual society. During the 1970s the discursive links made between sexual promiscuity and gay male culture had intensified.

I suggest that these associations have continued right up to the present day with gay men still seen largely in sexual terms by the heterosexual mainstream. More interesting is that such markers have formed the basis for how gay men themselves self-identify. For Dennis Altman, writing soon after Stonewall, this self-identification was a symptom of a long history of oppression and vilification. Gay men were seen in specific terms and then adopted those terms for themselves. He writes: ‘the tragedy of the baths/bars/beats scene is not their sordidness... but rather that so many of those who are involved refuse to accept their homosexuality as anything other than a genital urge.’\(^{583}\) In Public Sex, William Leap asks the question: ‘Is men having sex with men really the centerpiece of contemporary gay culture?’\(^{584}\)

During this time the hyper-sexual and promiscuous gay man was a prominent stereotype. Regarding this I suggest that the problem is not whether gay men are

\(^{581}\) Streitmatter, From perverts to fab five, 19-25.
\(^{582}\) Ibid.
\(^{583}\) Altman, Homosexual, 20.
highly sexual nor whether they engage in activities that are centred on sex, but rather that these discourses were (and are) produced in ways that vilify and exclude them from public life. Although Altman wants a greater acknowledgement of the non-sexual components of gay male subjectivity he does not vilify what he considered a healthy sexuality. In fact, he suggests that the more casual approach to sex common amongst gay men simply emphasised the strong repression of sexuality that was apparent within the broader heterosexual society.\textsuperscript{585} He even claims that these patterns within gay culture might assist in liberating a heterosexual society from unwanted anxieties and repressions regarding sex; ‘our sense of being different enables us to see the sexual component in much of life,... to escape... the repressions upon our sexual and erotic impulses.’\textsuperscript{586} Bronski maintains that in the years following Stonewall, gay men helped to shift discourses of sexuality: ‘the boundaries of sexuality were broadened when gay men spoke openly of their sexual desires and activities.’\textsuperscript{587}

Gay liberation meant demanding a ‘revision of society rather than an incorporation into it.’\textsuperscript{588} Visibility and “coming out,” became important for ‘rejecting the shame and guilt.’\textsuperscript{589} Thus, for Gay liberation to work, activists had to make conscious attempts to undo the shame that had long been cast upon the act of men having sex with men. This meant shifting the negative discourses that had been attached to the sexual practices of gay men. Thus, forming and establishing a visible gay male sexual culture became necessary.\textsuperscript{590}

Bodies were also central to this visibility. In the sections to follow I consider the bodily discourses and practices that emerged in the latter half of the twentieth century. In particular I note the emergence of a highly sexualised and body-
focused gay male culture. While there are numerous key factors at play here, I argue that above all, this culture was underpinned by particular discourses of masculinity. The gay clone that emerged during the 1970s and the culture that developed after the advent of HIV/AIDS, demonstrate that gay men actively, and self-consciously sought to craft hyper-masculine bodies and identities; this could offer a way to counteract discourses of gay men as effeminate, diseased and abject.

Clones

Following Stonewall, the gay clone, emerged as one of the first visible gay identities. Martin Levine writes: ‘when the dust of gay liberation had settled, the doors to the closet were opened, and out popped the clone.’ Clones populated the major urban centres of America, adopting uniform behaviour patterns and styles of dress. The typical clone rejected earlier feminine stereotypes in favour of a more archetypal masculinity, with comparisons often made with the Marlboro man. They donned neatly cropped facial hair, wore jeans, flannel shirts and boots, which were all displayed over a muscular gym-built body. In keeping with the counter-cultural climate of the time, clones followed a hedonistic lifestyle consisting of hard drugs, partying and anonymous sex. Whilst the clone does not explain or account for all gay men, it became culturally dominant as a visible style both within the gay and straight community. Shaun Cole writes: ‘the straight press had by this time identified that the macho clone was now the prevalent image of homosexuality.’

Similar to the other counter-cultural movements of this time, values of freedom and self-expression were central to gay liberation. Gay men pursued this through building their own communities. In the early 1970s, gay suburbs (areas inhabited predominantly by gay men) materialised in cities like New York and San Francisco. These communities were soon flooded with bars, restaurants and

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591 Levine, Gay Macho, 7.
shops, which catered to the increasing public presence of gay men.\textsuperscript{593} Forging a visible public identity meant creating solidarity and community; a way of life. Clones would come to symbolise this “coming out,” or liberation, of the gay man.\textsuperscript{594}

Scholars have noted the economic implications of this new sense of liberation. John Lauritsen suggests that the gay clone was an economic construction that had emerged due to ‘the profit-logic of an expanding sex industry.’\textsuperscript{595} These identities and communities were seen to revolve around the consumption of particular fashion, grooming styles and music. Lauritsen suggests that rather than seeing the clone lifestyle as a celebration of gay liberation or in political terms, it must be seen as an economic exercise, one that exploited the desires of the gay male community. Similarly, Ian Young describes this moment as a move ‘from community to commodity.’\textsuperscript{596} Young claims that the gay liberation movement had failed to properly develop into a diverse gay community largely due to these economic patterns which encouraged style over substance. The optimism and political promise of the early movement seemed to fade in the wake of this adherence to a capitalist mainstream ethic.

Not everyone was able to assimilate into this way of life, but for many this assimilation into the mainstream could result in greater acceptance. Daniel Harris suggests that the commercialisation of the gay male body is the true reason for the shifting attitudes and greater tolerance. He writes: ‘it is not by accident that we were accepted by mainstream America first as consumers and only second as morally respectable individuals... the one did not simply precede the other, it made it possible.’\textsuperscript{597} Bronski writes: ‘the commercialization of a subculture is one way to promote the assimilation of that culture into the

\textsuperscript{593} Levine, \textit{Gay Macho}, 30-40.
\textsuperscript{594} Mowlabocus, \textit{Gaydar Culture}, 93. Mowlabocus argues that invisibility/visibility is what ‘dominates the history of gay subculture,’ hence the adoption these symbols from popular culture — like particular fashion styles and music genres — functioned as a ‘form of outing;’ a way to ‘render homosexuality visible.’
\textsuperscript{596} Ian Young, \textit{The Stonewall Experiment: A Gay Psychohistory} (London: Cassell, 1995), 60.
\textsuperscript{597} Daniel Harris, \textit{The Rise and Fall of Gay Culture} (New York: Hyperion, 1997), 110.
mainstream.’ Other scholars emphasise that the political movement itself had produced these greater inclusions. Altman writes that this emerging gay movement and culture had ‘created the conditions for greater freedom and diversity than are present in any other society yet known.’ It is undeniable that the movement was founded on resistance, a fighting against the normative structures and systems that had oppressed and excluded these groups of people. Seen in this way, the community were freedom fighters. However, the economic forces were significant here also, particularly in relation to the clone.

While the liberationist and economic patterns could be seen to underlie these newly formed identities, I suggest that above all, the gay clone was underpinned by gender norms and a particular rhetoric of masculinity. This did not mean there wasn’t an entanglement here — a link to liberation and to economics. In fact, this masculinity was produced within these contexts and were necessarily entangled. It was a way to seek liberation and greater acceptance. Prior to Stonewall, within a “closet” culture, homosexuality was explicitly linked to effeminacy. The advent of gay liberation however, was marked by a re-organisation of ‘the presentational strategies of the closet culture,’ Gay men forged a new type of gay masculinity, one that mimicked traditional heterosexual models. Laud Humphreys called this phenomenon a ‘virilisation.’ Writing in 1971 he observes: ‘few bars are now distinguished by the presence of limp wrists and falsetto voices.’ The clone was indicative of the change sweeping through the gay male world. It had become the exemplar of this new rhetoric of gay masculinity. The clone symbolised liberation, and yet ironically, this mimicry of intelligible, even dominant masculinity; an assimilation into these norms.

This masculinity was marked by a number of exemplary behaviours and body types that followed traditional forms of heterosexual masculinities. Although this was the case it is crucial to note that this was still a distinctly gay masculinity.

598 Bronski, Culture Clash, 177.
600 Levine, Gay Macho, 57.
Clones appropriated masculine styles that fitted well within the heteronormative gender code and yet the aim was not to pass as heterosexual. By way of interrupting the enduring misconception that the homosexual male was effeminate, they might be considered “real” men. Thus, their presentation was styled in a conscious manner. As Cole writes, ‘there could be little doubt about whether someone was a heterosexual macho man or a gay macho man.’

Terms such as “macho” and “butch” entered the gay lexicon at this time. The 1978 song Macho Man, by US band The Village People, is a direct reference to clone culture and the patterns of masculinity that accompanied it:

Every man wants to be a macho man
To have the kind of body always in demand
Joggin' in the morning, go man go.
Workouts in the health spa, muscle grow
You can best believe me, he's a macho man
Glad he took you down with anyone you can.

You can tell a macho, he has a funky walk.
His western shirts and leather, always look so boss
Funky with his body, he's a king.
Call him Mister Ego, dig his chains
You can best believe that he's a macho man.
Likes to be the leader, he never dresses grand

Every man ought to be a macho, macho man
To live a life of freedom machos make a stand
Have your own lifestyles and ideals.
Possess the strength of confidence, that's the skill
You can best believe that he's a macho man.
He's the special godson in anybody's land

Macho macho man, I gotta be a macho man
Macho macho man, I gotta be a macho

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There are striking references here to a powerfully built body and masculine presentation, and importantly, these are linked to values of freedom, confidence and individuality. The chorus reiterates what is considered the only correct way of being; a real (macho) man.

The opening lyrics of the prologue underline the importance and centrality of the body:

- Body wanna feel my body; body baby such a thrill, my body
- Body wanna touch my body; body baby it’s too much, my body
- Body check it out my body; baby don’t you doubt, my body
- Body talking about my body; baby checking out my body

Clone culture is clearly a body culture, concerned with the practices and presentations of bodies. Steven Gdula notes how clone fashion was adopted according to its ability to complement the clone body. He writes: ‘it was the sculpted male form and the way a man’s clothing clung to it that would redefine the gay uniform from the 1970s onward.’

This body was above all, a highly sexualised and sexually active body. Michael Kimmel writes that the gay clone was ‘a specific construction of masculinity that used sexual activity as a major vehicle for gender confirmation.’ In other words, the sexual conduct of clones was seen as a reflection of their masculinity and status as “real men.” Sex was hard and rough. Levine writes: ‘the clone took it like a man and he also gave it like a man.’ Within clone culture, all sexual roles were seen as masculine. The active sexual partner was dominant in the traditional sense however the passive partner was still seen as masculine in that he could ‘take an enormous amount of sexual activity and pain.’ Colin Spencer describes sex between clones as ‘rough, uninhibited and phallocentric’, and often

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603 Steven Gdula, “Dandies, Dudes, Queens & Clones,” *refFresh Magazine*, Nov-Dec 2008, 42.
606 Ibid., 98.
objectifying. These sexual patterns, he suggests, were gay men attempting to mimic ‘the worst excesses of the chauvinistic sexist male.’

Importantly, sex was linked to liberation. Rather than having to hide itself, gay sex was now ‘a publicly acknowledged and preached-about religion.’ Gay men found a way into mainstream masculinity by shedding the effeminacy traditionally attached to their identities. The hyper-masculine sexual performance and bodily expression of the gay clone produced what Martin Humphries calls a ‘safe eroticism.’ He writes: ‘for many the attraction of machismo is an acceptable way of openly celebrating the eroticism of the male body,’ in this case, the gay male body. Discourses of sex flooded the gay media and posited clones as the first liberated form of male homosexuality.

However, images resembling the gay clone were in circulation prior to liberation, seen most clearly in the Tom of Finland drawings by Finnish artist Touko Laaksonen. His early work in the late 1950s, depicted a particular masculine aesthetic, in particular, images of men in uniform or men doing manual labour. The policeman was a favourite motif. Martti Lahti argues that these depictions of a strong physicality could be read as a ‘counter tactic against pathologising discourses that define homosexuality as sickness and deviance.’ However, there are competing discourses at work here. On the one hand they can be seen as bodies of resistance, however, these same images often reinforce oppressive discourses around gender and power. The homo-sexualisation of the powerful

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608 Michelangelo Signorile, Life Outside: The Signorile Report on Gay Men – Sex, Drugs, Muscles, and the Passages of Life (New York: Harper Collins, 1997), 60. Edmund White suggests this reflected more wider reconfiguration of mores regarding sex. In his travels throughout America in the late 1970s Edmund White observes how the counter-culture that had shot through the western world had ushered in a collapse of the traditional social values of that world. He writes that sex ‘has been forced to take up the slack, to become our sole mode of transcendence and our only touchstone of authenticity.’ See Edmund White, States of Desire (New York: EP Dutton, 1980), 282.
610 This is significant considering that at this time, the police heavily targeted gay men at beats and had become a figure of oppression. Thus, the homo-eroticisation of this figure can be seen as a tactic of resistance.
male body subverts traditional definitions of gay men as being weak and effeminate, and yet the presentation of such bodies reifies male privilege over women.

These images were part of the growing discourse of masculinity for gay men. The strong muscular body has long been as ‘the sign of power — natural, achieved, phallic;' seen as a ‘biological given.’ Aspiring to this body was an avenue through which to affirm the naturalness of ones masculinity and maleness. Lahti writes: ‘it is safe to argue that Tom of Finland drawings have been part of discursive formations that created and disseminated the gay macho look....[which have] provided gay men with a style to follow, and a model for building their bodies and adapting their body languages and wardrobes.’ It is understandable then that in the 1970s amidst the emerging clone culture, Tom of Finland images became more popular and available.

The sudden increase of gay pornography during this time underlines these patterns. Daniel Harris writes: ‘with the spread of pornography [beginning in the 1970s], we have been inundated with so many irresistible images...that we have stampeded to the gyms...to sculpt our flaccid bodies.’ New glossy gay magazines Honcho and Blueboy, ‘saturated gay culture with an unprecedentedly coercive body of masculine iconography' and images of ‘buffed bionic males.’ This sudden availability of pornography meant that ideal bodies flooded the gay male psyche, providing a script for how bodies should appear and how sex should be done. Harris writes: ‘pornography shows us how sex should look, not how it really looks... its effect is essentially prescriptive and judgemental.’

Despite these narrow patterns of representation, pornography was also an important site for gay men. In a climate where newly liberated gay men were establishing new identities, this medium could be a confirmation and celebration.

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613 Ibid., 192.
614 Harris, *Rise and Fall*, 126.
615 Ibid.
616 Ibid., 133.
of gay male sexuality. Bronski notes that in its glorified presentation of homosexual desire and bodies, pornography was one of the few ways that gay men could ‘assess and affirm their sexual feelings.’\textsuperscript{617} In this way pornography has been, and remains, an important part of gay male culture. It provides a set of discourses and representation through which gay men have been able to make sense of their desires and articulate their sexuality.

Altman observes that by the beginning of the 1980s ‘a new type of homosexual man had become visible.’\textsuperscript{618} Through its visibility on the streets and within media representations and pop-cultural texts the gay clone became the dominant model of self-identification and self-presentation for gay men. This continued to form the blueprint for many gay men in the decades to follow. White argues that gay men emerge from a heterosexual world through an act of reinvention. Everyone is ‘raised to be straight,’ as soon as someone realises they are gay they adopt new ways of being, new behaviours and practices.\textsuperscript{619} The gay clone was this reinvention; a touchstone for many gay men. Importantly, this was an identity realised through the stylisation of the body and particular bodily practices.\textsuperscript{620} The body was a vehicle through which to assert a visible gay sexuality and masculinity.

**HIV/AIDS**

This new liberation was abruptly interrupted by the HIV/AIDS crisis that emerged in the early 1980s. This marked the beginning of an era of intense scrutiny of gay male culture and its activities, and a new era of visibility. Leo Bersani states that in America, ‘nothing has made gay men more visible than

\textsuperscript{617} Bronski, *Culture Clash*, 161-2.
\textsuperscript{618} Altman, *The Homosexualization of America*, 1.
\textsuperscript{619} White, *States of Desire*, 16.
\textsuperscript{620} Jeffrey Weeks complicates this notion of homosexual identity, which he argues, operates in a number of ways, as destiny, resistance, choice and ultimately as a ‘historical fiction’ albeit a necessary one. See Jeffrey Weeks *Against Nature: Essays on history, sexuality and identity* (London: Rivers Oram Press, 1991), 68-85.
AIDS. This epidemic prompted specific discourses regarding gay male bodies. Gay men continued to be sexualised but this was now seen through a lens of disease. These bodies were cast as dangerous, a threat, and the culture (sexual) of gay men was interrogated and stigmatised in new ways. The virus impacted gay male bodies in a literal sense, but this impact was also felt in other ways. The identities and subjectivities that had formed after liberation were the target of intense scrutiny. The responses to this, however, demonstrate a continued investment in a hyper-sexualised, dominant masculinity. This became an avenue through which to counteract the discourse of disease and abjection.

When HIV/AIDS first emerged in the US, the gay male body was quickly subsumed within a stringent medical discourse. In the previous decade, the increasingly usage of social constructionist frameworks had mounted a challenge to the essentialisms inherent in traditional medical models of sexuality. In the wake of the HIV/AIDS crisis there was a reversion to these traditional models; a ‘remedicalization of sexuality.’ Levine argues that during this time the disease was linked to a ‘pre-social determinant.’ Tragically, this misdirected and impeded initial research and prevention efforts. AIDS was considered to be a “gay cancer,” originally referred to as GRID, Gay Related Immune Deficiency.

Gay male sexuality was posited as the problem, and debates around sexual morality were reopened. Barry Adam writes that from its genesis, AIDS was ‘socially constructed along a series of moral oppositions.’ For the Christian right, AIDS was seen as a direct punishment from God against the gay community. In the media, these interrogations of the gay lifestyle were even more widespread. Streitmatter notes how initial television commentaries about

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623 Levine, Gay Macho, 243.
AIDS ‘were eager to report that the victims had been promiscuous.’\textsuperscript{626} The \textit{New York Times} and \textit{Newsweek}, went further by reporting the specifics of sexual activity. \textit{Newsweek} reported that ‘early victims had 1,160 different sex partners.’\textsuperscript{627} As some have argued, under the weight of these discourses the gay social world reverted to a more conservative mode underlined by heteronomative values. This included a move towards steady relationships, monogamy, celibacy, adoption of safe sex strategies and health maintenance.\textsuperscript{628}

Specific sexual practices were interrogated and linked to the transmission of the virus. The lifestyle and practices of gay men, and in particular the clone lifestyle and its culture of random sexual encounters, drugs and parties, were placed under the spotlight. The clone lifestyle had been culturally dominant within the gay male community, with the advent of AIDS medics and scientists were quick to classify this lifestyle as ‘toxic.’\textsuperscript{629} It was seen that abandoning the clone lifestyle would be the best way to avoid the epidemic.

This shifted the dynamics and definitions of masculinity and gay sex. The passive sexual partner became the ‘focus of much negative attention’ since it was the role more closely linked with the contraction of the disease.\textsuperscript{630} Such attention led Leo Bersani to ask the provocative question ‘Is the rectum a grave?’\textsuperscript{631} Bersani’s thesis here is a complex one. The hatred and punishment of passive male sexuality is a trope that emerges throughout history; through this the rectum is made a symbolic grave. With the AIDS crisis however, this is given a literal translation. Other scholars note the general negativity that pervaded all homosexual sex acts and roles. Levine suggests there was a de-eroticising of the gay male body and its associated imagery.\textsuperscript{632} In particular he notes how butch
presentational styles, so prevalent with clone culture, were diluted, and there was much less emphasis on sex and a visible gay sexuality.

The sexual habits of men had started to shift, with random sex increasingly replaced by more traditional notions of sex. It was a time marked by stringent medical surveillance. Mowlabocus writes that in the age of AIDS ‘urges are to be overcome and behaviour held in check as the gay man subjects himself to the disciplinary mechanism of HIV testing.’\(^{633}\) He was held accountable for his sexual practices through this testing even though the large-scale introduction of testing and protected sex were also a pivotal part of the gay community's fight against the epidemic. Levine writes: ‘the AIDIES [1980s] is the era of latex love.’\(^{634}\)

On the other hand, the advent of safe sex could provide an avenue or way back to a former lifestyle. Signorile claims that the hyper-sexual culture that had formed in the 1970s was simply 'lying dormant.'\(^{635}\) Through the adoption of safer sex practices many gay men were able to return to the clone lifestyle. Thus, it would be a mistake to assume that sex had suddenly faded or disappeared from gay male culture. Even if gay men were not doing sex they were still looking at it and thinking about it. The rise of pornography during this time, is confirmation of this. In many ways this came to dominate the sexual landscape. Daniel Harris writes: ‘if pornography once served merely as a mood enhancement for sex and cruising, the AIDS epidemic has made it an outright replacement for sex.’\(^{636}\) The sexual culture that developed in the 1970s, did not simply vanish with HIV/AIDS.

While the crisis interrupted the dominant bodily practices of gay men, what remained was a persistent focus on sexualised bodies. This generated specific responses by the gay male community, and the adoption of particular body practices that continued to be underpinned by a rhetoric of dominant masculinity. This was done firstly through the roles taken in sex. The submissive role was viewed negatively; linked more explicitly to AIDS. Thus, taking the

\(^{633}\) Mowlabocus, *Gaydar Culture*, 77.
\(^{634}\) Ibid.
\(^{635}\) Signorile, *Life Outside*, 62.
\(^{636}\) Harris, *The Rise and Fall*, 131.
active, more “manly” role in sex was associated with being both masculine and free of disease. Signorile notes how the term ‘straight-acting’ was widely-used amongst men during this period.\textsuperscript{637} I return to the contemporary usage of this term in the next chapter.

Furthermore, the desire for strong muscular bodies intensified, it was a way to appear powerful and healthy, and more closely resemble a heterosexual man. Those who appeared “gay” (effeminate) were more likely to be connected to the disease. Thus, a new “gym culture” emerged during this time, where many men adopted ‘rigid regimens of exercise, altered their diet and worked out in the gym.’\textsuperscript{638} Weight-loss and muscle wasting were visible signs of the virus, thus the attainment of larger built bodies was desirable. Streitmatter writes: ‘for every gay man in the country, so much as stepping onto the bathroom scales and seeing that he weighed a pound or two less than the day before could hurl him into a state of anxiety and panic.’\textsuperscript{639}

There was a sudden rise of steroid use during this time. The drug had been introduced to treat HIV-positive men, however, this was taken up more broadly in an effort to transform bodies, and appear healthy, masculine and desirable.\textsuperscript{640} Steroids were initially used for therapeutic purposes, but their ‘fringe benefits’ were quickly realised and taken up by large numbers of gay men, many who had a negative status.\textsuperscript{641} The clone life of the 1970s was therefore replaced by a drug-fueled scene of a different kind, for the purpose of building larger, more masculine bodies. This sparked new health concerns with steroid abuse linked to other medical problems like high blood pressure, organ damage and some cancers.\textsuperscript{642}

\textsuperscript{637} Signorile, \textit{Life Outside}, 67.
\textsuperscript{638} Spencer, \textit{Homosexuality}, 375.
\textsuperscript{639} Streitmatter, \textit{From perverts to fab five}, 55.
\textsuperscript{641} Signorile, \textit{Life Outside}, 139-40.
\textsuperscript{642} Ibid., 156-65.
This narrative was not universal, but simply one dominant narrative of the responses of gay men during this crisis. Others resisted and fought the negative discourses and discriminations more directly and in a more radical manner. In other words, there was also a re-politicising of gay men. As Spencer attests, the treatment of gay men in the wake of the crisis coupled with the ‘slow and inadequate’ response by governments demonstrated that gay men were still for the most part, ignored. This signaled an ongoing oppression. Eric Marcus argues that the AIDS crisis brought persistent issues of discrimination into ‘sharp focus.’

The group ACTUP (AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power), was the most visible example of this new emerging radical politics. ACTUP member, Michael Cunningham, writes: ‘Do we play by the rules, court public sympathy, and push steadily but politely for recognition?…. I believe the AIDS epidemic has taught us that nobody will listen unless we scream.’ ACTUP employed new theatrical, and at times shocking, tactics in an attempt to shift the blame, change perceptions, and inspire new political action. Cathy Cohen suggests that the emergence of ACTUP can be seen as a response to mainstream AIDS activism which aimed for assimilation tendencies or what she refers to as ‘de-gaying.’ ACTUP was an important voice during this time not only because it found new ways to fight the crisis, but also in the way it could disrupt and address the mainstream politics of the gay community.

The body-self

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643 Spencer, Homosexuality, 376.
644 Eric Marcus, Making Gay History: The Half-Century Fight for Lesbian and Gay Equal Rights (New York: Perennial, 2002), 245. Many afflicted with the virus were dismissed from their employment, denied health insurance and forced to fight other legal and custodial battles.
645 Michael Cunningham, “If you’re queer and you’re not angry in 1992, you’re not paying attention. If you’re straight it may be hard to figure out what all the shouting’s about,” Mother Jones Magazine 17, no.3 (May/June 1992): 63.
The sudden visibility of the gay male body in the latter part of the twentieth century was marked by a rampant classification and surveillance of these bodies, which produced particular discourses of the gay male body as being sexually obsessed, unstable and diseased. Importantly, this corporeal discourse was underpinned by a self-conscious masculine discourse. The sexually-active, powerful body, came to symbolise a new gay masculinity. Also, within its gym culture gay men found strategies to build strong bodies, create new identities and counteract the linking of HIV/AIDS to gay male bodies. All of this was underpinned by traditional discourses of masculinity.

Much of the scholarship attends to the said discourses and their impacts on gay men. Thus far in this chapter, I have attended to this scholarship to demonstrate some of the possible motivations at work; the cognitive and conscious ways in which gay men formed a sexual identity and culture that was visible and livable. This was achieved through counteracting certain dominant discourses and embracing others. However, I suggest there are also more unconscious and affective investments that underpin how gay men sought liberation and made their identities visible. An account of the body can deepen an understanding of these patterns and motivations. There is a complex interaction occurring here between mind, body and culture, and between desire, visibility and livability.

Gary Dowsett suggests that the flesh of the body is significant in ways that are difficult to qualify. In his essay Bodyplay, he observes that the particular sexual practices of gay men, like cruising and beats, have often occurred outside a discursive framework of sexuality. He writes: ‘these bodies-in-sex, willfully oblivious to definition and denial, were producing a collective sexual culture long before any of the boys heard of... gay men.’ Bodies here are not simply passive or a blank canvas; they are doing things even when there are no terms to describe those things. Dowsett asks us to pay closer attention to the body, in particular desire, and its generating power. Gay male identities and cultures are built also out of on enactment of a specific bodily desire. We tend to posit

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sexuality as a cultural and historical construction but without a proper acknowledgement that it was born out of desire first of all. Dowsett suggests we think about where sexuality is ‘constructed (not “represented”) by bodies-in-sex’.648

Similarly, *soma-masculinities* places bodies (the body-self) at the centre of these questions of sexuality, and extends this account of how bodily desire is drawn into relation with the world. In particular, I employ Judith Butler and Maurice Merleau-Ponty within this framework, to describe the importance of sexuality for how one lives in the world. Bodies are central to this. The gay clone enacts a felt bodily desire for other men but this enactment occurs in the world. He must reconcile how to enact it in a way that makes him intelligible, that gives him a sense of self, and makes him *feel* safe and viable in the world. This helps to explain why this sexuality is enacted through particular modes of masculinity. The gay clone is simultaneously a sign of liberation and assimilation. His sexuality is made visible through the embodiment of an intelligible masculinity, one that might allow him the *felt* experience of fitting in and being a valid subject in the world. Similarly, the responses to HIV/AIDS are also a *felt* response, a way to assimilate, avoid punishment and maintain a sense of self. Homosexual desire and bodies are made palatable (possible?) through gender and the enactment of intelligible masculinity.

Butler’s notion of the *heterosexual matrix*, or what she describes as ‘the compulsory order of sex/gender/desire,’ helps to understand this further.649 Sex is the category through which one becomes a knowable subject in the world. Butler writes: ‘“Sex is, thus, not simply what one has, or a static description of what one is: it will be one of the norms by which the “one” becomes viable at all, that which qualifies a body for life within the domain of cultural intelligibility.”’650 Sex, therefore, is a construction and not a bodily fact. Through gender then, sex is materialised and stabilised over time. Ones repeated expression of normative gender is what accomplishes this stabilisation. If done in a “correct” way, a

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648 Ibid., 30.
person is read as their assigned sex. Thus, sex and gender are always inherently unstable. Crucially, Butler suggests that a compulsory heterosexuality underpins ones expression of gender. Sexuality must be heterosexual, the enactment of desire between opposite sexes. Gender is the means by which both of these categories are stabilised. This is the logic of the heterosexual matrix. In order to fit neatly into heterosexuality and also into a sexed category one must express their gender well; that is, it must be presented in a way that is read as normatively masculine or feminine. She writes: ‘the “unity” of gender is the effect of a regulatory practice that seeks to render gender identity uniform through a compulsory heterosexuality.’

Gender is central to sex and sexuality, which are central to living as an intelligible subject in the world.

Through this frame, it is easier to understand how for gay men during this time, sexuality (the enactment of desire in the world) is formed through normative expressions of gender which enables a reading of “straightness” and “maleness.” Butler asks: ‘How often are gender norms policed precisely in the service of shoring up heterosexual hegemony?’ When we speak of the discriminations and punishments (frequently violent) that gay people experience, this is often because they ‘fail to “appear” in accordance with accepted gender norms.’ I suggest that this gender policing is also done by gay men themselves, a way to approximate straightness and maleness, to be read as straight, or at least to make their sexuality more palatable and acceptable. As is evident in the media and public discourses on gay men, it is the feminine gay man that is particularly abhorrent and most troubling to the heterosexual matrix. There is an explicit link made between his sexuality and a failed gender; this is exactly the link gay men seek to disrupt.

Merleau-Ponty also suggests that sexuality, which for him is the body in its sexual being, is central to subjectivity (the body-self). He writes: ‘there is no explanation of sexuality which reduces it to anything other than itself, for it is

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651 Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 43.
652 Ibid., xiii.
653 Ibid.
already something other than itself, and indeed, if we like, our whole being.\textsuperscript{654} Sexuality is of the body in that it necessarily involves the drives, workings and pleasures of the body, that is, sexual desire. However, it is not an automatic cycle nor is it purely a bodily function. Sexual desire is a key component of sexuality however it is always intentional, towards the world and to others. Sexuality then is a relation, a mode that draws the body and the world into relation with each other. It is an embodied existence; the \textit{body-self}. Salamon explains this further: ‘through desire, my body is no longer a conglomeration of its various parts in their expressions as “inner phenomena,” but is suddenly the vehicle through which I am compelled into relation with the world, where it is finally only that relation that gives me a body.’\textsuperscript{655} To say that we make sense of our bodies through interacting with the world is the same as saying we make sense of \textit{ourselves} through this interaction. We can talk about the fleshy body, its contours and functions, but the body is also much more than this. If indeed it is a conscious body then it is living. If it is a living body it lives always in relation with the world and with others. This is the \textit{body-self}.

If sexuality can be understood as the \textit{body-self}, that is, the mode in which the body lives and has meaning in the world, then the discourses present in the world are crucial for an understanding of sexuality. Sexuality then is a mode of being that draws bodily desire into relation with these discourses in complex ways. As Merleau-Ponty suggests, ‘the intensity of sexual pleasure would not be sufficient to explain the place occupied by sexuality in human life.’\textsuperscript{656} Thus, the dilemma of how to enact this desire in the world, is a complex and important one. In this chapter I suggest that gay men enter a complex negotiation of how to live in the world as sexual beings despite the multiple discourses that render their bodies and desires as abject, unintelligible and unlivable. Gay men make themselves visible so that they can live. This is about visibility; being seen and known. However, sexuality, as Salamon suggests, is also about sensing rather

\textsuperscript{654} Merleau-Ponty, \textit{Phenomenology of Perception}, 198.
\textsuperscript{655} Salamon, \textit{Assuming a Body}, 56.
\textsuperscript{656} Merleau-Ponty, \textit{Phenomenology of Perception}, 194.
than seeing. Sexuality is deeply felt just as living in the world is felt; full of affect and experience.

Both Butler and Merleau-Ponty help describe the centrality of sexuality for gay men (or anyone). For Butler, the relation between gender and sexuality is paramount. There is a conflict for gay men; that is, a bodily desire which is of the body but which is made abject in the world. Gay men resolve this conflict by adhering to particular norms of gender (masculinity) in order to make their sexualities safe, intelligible and livable. Importantly, this is not always a conscious process but rather is felt as well as cognitive. For Merleau-Ponty, sexuality is life itself; bodily desire that is deeply entangled with the world and its meanings. How to live that sexuality then is the same as asking how to live. For gay men then, there is much at stake. Sexuality was (and continues to be) central to the ways in which they seek liberation, community and a sense of self.

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657 Salamon, Assuming a body, 47.
Chapter Eight — A technology of masculinity: the gay male body in contemporary online dating sites

‘Man is a historical idea and not a natural species.’ — Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*.658

‘But Enframing does not simply endanger man in his relationship to himself and to everything that is. As a destining, it banishes man into that kind of revealing which is an ordering. Where this ordering holds sway, it drives out every other possibility of revealing.’ — Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*.659

In this chapter I consider some of the dominant patterns of gay male culture today. I attempt this through an examination of social media and online dating technologies, where gay male sexualities and bodies are most visible and public. In the previous chapter I examined the increasing visibility of homosexuality via the articulation of particular identities and bodies. Here I examine how these manifest in contemporary terms, within these virtual spaces. As these online sites are composed largely of text and image I consider the visual representations of these bodies, and also the language that is deployed in relation to these bodies. In particular, I focus on the smart phone application, *Grindr*, the most current and most utilised site for gay men.

From this backdrop, I posit a number of contentions regarding exactly what these technologies *reveal*; patterns, I suggest, that closely align with historical discourses on gay male bodies. First, observes the persistent sexualisation of the gay male body. This hyper-sexualisation, as examined in the previous chapter, is complex. I suggest, however, that these new technologies reinforce and even promote this discourse of the sexualised gay male body. Second, I argue that they tend to reinforce ideals of masculinity that align with Connell’s *hegemonic masculinity*. In other words, there is a centring and privileging of whiteness, heterosexuality and powerful bodies. This marginalises those bodies and subjectivities that do not wish to, and/or are unable to, approximate these ideals.

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While this alignment is evident, there are some limitations in applying this model. In particular, it is unable to address why hegemonic masculinity is expressed by men within a subordinated group. If hegemonic masculinity depends on the exclusion of subordinated masculinities, gay men being a prime example, then how can we account for its display and embodiment within this group? I suggest that *soma-masculinities* can provide a more convincing analysis. As I suggested in the previous chapter, there is an intricate thread between sexuality, masculinity and the body-self which can help explain why and how dominant discourses of masculinity and heterosexuality are taken on and lived by the individual, at the level of the body. Grindr is not simply fantasy or play. It demonstrates a particular entanglement between the surface and contours of bodies, inner desire, identity, visibility and ways of being in the world. It is gay male culture being lived, and this is inherently complex.

On the other hand, I consider what these technologies *do not reveal* in relation to gay male culture and subjectivity. In particular, I survey the catalogue of terms and discourses that emerge within these sites and argue that profile users are framed within a set of templates that simplify or “thin out” their subjectivities in accordance with deeply embedded (and persistent) ideologies regarding gender and sexuality. In other words, the more mainstream tropes of sexuality and masculinity are dominant to the point that it can seem as though gay bodies and identities are only these things. There is an ordering of bodies and desire in new technologies which is at the same time a re-entrenchment of dominant historical discourses. To address this, I turn to Martin Heidegger’s essays on technology and more explicitly, his notion of *enframing*. I suggest that his work provides a productive framework in which to examine the features of Grindr and its effects. In particular I outline the ways in which categories work to *reveal* bodies (and not reveal others) in specific ways. In doing this I interrogate our relationship with technology. As Heidegger suggests, the relationship we have with developed technology demonstrates a persistent occupation with dominating, ordering and enframing nature (and bodies).
Finally, I suggest that technology itself is not the problem. There is a particular panic directed at social media and new technologies. Specifically, it is said that they facilitate an impoverished form of interaction and intimacy, are inauthentic, that they have altered subjectivity and our way of being in the world in a deeply profound manner. This raises a number of complex questions, however, I argue that technology is not to blame here. For Heidegger, enframing describes how we approach the question of being, how we employ technology in an instrumental manner to order being so that it is not revealed in all its complexity. I suggest that in many ways technologies such as Grindr are a perfect paradigm for the continuing problem of the nature/culture dichotomy. The ways in which we use these technologies points to an ongoing obsession with this dichotomy and our determined attempt to control and dominate nature. This acts as a loop whereby we reveal things in the same ways, over and over again, across time. This is about us rather than technology. In fact, Heidegger suggests that technology might be the key to disrupting this enframing; what he calls saving power. In the final part of this chapter I examine a number of the ways in which online technologies might disrupt the particular enframing that pervades Grindr, with a focus on the blog *Douchebags of Grindr*.

**Sexualities online**

The personal phone acts as a gateway to the virtual world, thus it is unsurprising that Grindr has become the most popular online space for gay men. Alongside this, internet websites *Gaydar* and *Manhunt* have been and continue to be, synonymous with gay male culture in contemporary America, Britain and Australia. Based in the UK and US respectively, they remain two of the most utilised dating sites for gay men. Each site contains over 4 million members world-wide, with an average of approximately 50,000 users online at any one time. Over the past two decades they have come to define and facilitate the romantic and sexual attachments between men. Moreover, they are brands in their own right, with a visible presence at pride parades, gay parties and clubs.
While each site, in observing technological trends, has progressively added a number of features, I focus here on the homepage and profile templates.

Within these sites, one is immediately confronted by representations of highly sexualised bodies. Thus, the historical trope of a visible, hyper-sexual, gay male culture, finds contemporary form in these sites. Sharif Mowlabocus describes this pattern with his concept *cybercarnality*: defined as 'a particular discourse that has come to structure and permeate gay male digital culture.' In other words, it is a discourse which describes how gay male culture is presented and lived in a hyper-sexual manner. He highlights two key ways in which this discourse manifests and is maintained. First, he suggests that within gay culture there is an investment in the ‘rhetoric and representational strategies’ of pornography, or what he calls the pornographic remediation of the body. These strategies are taken up and translated within the digital world. This is clearly evident in these sites I examine. Familiar pornographic motifs fill the homepages and members often replicate these motifs within their own profile images.

Second, he emphasises the systems of discipline that help construct and shape male homosexuality; specifically, through technologies of self-surveillance and corporeal regulation. Here, he points to specific historical discourses that have informed the self-representation and regulation of bodies in digital spaces. As discussed in the previous chapter, in counteracting homophobic discourses generated by the media and other popular representation, gay men have often articulated their identities through a particular set of discourses. I suggested that gay male culture focused on the sexualised body, which was seen as a liberated body. Moreover, this was underpinned by a particular discourse of masculinity whereby a visible and active sexuality is posited through an intelligible, normative masculinity. Cybercarnality — the pornographic remediation, and corporeal surveillance and regulation — is a useful way to frame these patterns, and is clearly evident in these online dating sites.

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661 Ibid., 59.
For the first six years following its conception in 1998, the Gaydar homepage featured one static image of a tanned, toned, naked male body; the model's arms were outstretched, the head bowed and the photograph cropped just below the waistline.\textsuperscript{662} It is a representation of the gay male body in an ideal form; as sexually active, masculine and physically attractive. This static image has since been replaced by sets of moving images that automatically oscillate on a loop. Each time a member opens Gaydar in their browser they are confronted by one of these images. Again, these images depict a highly sexual male body. These bodies are predominantly youthful, toned or muscular. Most of these images contain one male model [Fig.1]. In images containing more than one model, the interaction is noticeably explicit in tone, with a suggestion or even overt display, of particular sex acts [Fig.2]. In encountering these images the viewer is confronted with what could be a still shot from any pornographic scene. The Manhunt homepage follows a similar pattern. Sexually desirable bodies are primarily featured alone and partially naked. When there are two or more bodies, they are involved in, or at least suggest, a sexual act.

\textsuperscript{662} Ibid., 95-6.
Each homepage contains a number of specific terms and phrases which underline these implications. “Gaydar,” as an extension of the word *radar* advertises itself as a space to search for and pursue other men. “Manhunt,” functions in a similar manner. On Gaydar, *what you want, when you want it*, appears under the trademark logo, seemingly a direct reference to the cruising culture that has long facilitated the sexual encounters between men. On Manhunt, *if he’s out there he’s on here*, underlines the shifting dynamics of dating culture. These sites are the spaces where this cruising occurs.

Whilst the homepage sets the tone, the profiles are the central feature of these sites. Both profile pages are framed by a template where members list their details and their intentions. In essence, this acts as a dating advertisement. The main template on Gaydar presents a number of options to choose from regarding body type and dimensions, sexual orientation, sexual preferences and habits. There is a space for free text, where members describe their personal features, values and preferences in greater detail. There is also an option to tick specific hobbies and interests from a set list. The member is able to upload one main profile image, which is always visible to other members, and they can upload secondary images including private photographs which can be accessed with their permission. It is evident within these features, that the physical and sexual potential of the body is the focus.

Manhunt makes a more direct link to bodies and bodies in sex. The template is brief, with a focus on particulars like age, ethnicity, physical characteristics, penis size, sexual position, and HIV status [Fig.3]. Members can state their availability and indicate their preferred location for meets. There is a check list of “intos,” or sexual preferences, which employ a lexicon well established within gay sexual culture, like *nipple play* and *watersports*. There is a space for free text which, like Gaydar, has a word limit.
In newer technologies like Grindr, these patterns and features are more pronounced. In 2009 Grindr was released as an application for smart phones. With its incorporation of the Global Positioning System (GPS) and real-time, profile users are able to chart the location of other members, a feature that has overseen the evolution of this site into that predominantly focuses on personal interaction, and as some would argue, the pursuit of real-life sex encounters. Shaka McGlotten writes: ‘it has become part of the texture of gay life, part of the media ecologies that shape our daily practices and desires, that transform how we think of ourselves and how we move through the world.'

Unlike its predecessors, Grindr is designed specifically for the personal mobile phone and therefore offers a more direct path to other men. Users tap the application icon in their mobile phone and immediately encounter the Grindr

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homepage; a checkerboard layout displaying a series of thumbnail pictures which are linked to individual profiles [Fig.4]. The GPS in the phone locates other profile users that are in the vicinity, displaying the nearest profiles. Users have the option to display their approximate location and distance from each other, for example “92 metres away.” In fact, this is the app’s primary feature. Each profile contains one image and again the profile categories are limited, focusing on ethnicity, age and dimensions of the body. There is a small space available for free text to indicate interests and intentions. The four icons located to the right side of the profile page allow users to chat directly using instant mail, block, report or add as a favourite.

[Fig.4]

The brevity of the template along with the GPS function underline what seems to be the fundamental purpose of this app; to facilitate real-time contact and meetings. Users have the option to ignore any notifications received from another user or they can block a profile. It is crucial therefore that the choice of image (there is only one), along with the language employed in the limited space, make an impact on others browsing the site. Upon entering Grindr, one is bombarded with images of sculpted bodies and torsos, and with language that is often highly sexualised. Importantly, the restrictive template (script) focused on bodies and on sex, directs these men down this path.
Blendr, the first heterosexual counterpart to Grindr, helps illustrate this point. Upon its release in 2011 reviewers were concerned with how a heterosexual demographic might engage with the site considering that traditional notions around dating for women and for straight couples, posit love as the aim. It was thought that women in particular, may not embrace this new dating format. The earliest versions of Blendr resembled Grindr, but with a number of key differences. In particular, the privacy and safety measures were enhanced with the intention of making women feel more comfortable with using the app. Moreover, Blendr was created with a different profile template, one which focused on hobbies and interests through a series of twelve links. These included relationship status, parental status, education and employment details. One of the twelve links addressed physical appearance; including height, weight, body type, hair and eye colour, however this aspect was clearly not the focus. Joel Simkhai, chief developer of the software, describes Blendr as ‘a social network that allows you to meet people based on your interests.’\footnote{Michael Murphy, “Blendr App Dating Review,” Michael Murphy, Best Technology, last modified Sept 18, 2011, www.besttechnology.org.} A public profile image could only be uploaded if it clearly identified the profile user. The profile itself was linked to other social media sites, like Facebook.

The initial versions of Blendr and Grindr were vastly different in this way. Blendr was more general in its aim, and Grindr was explicitly sexual. The template structure directs members toward a particular script as members select from an list of options already decided for them. These options follow a dominant script which present the individual only within these terms. This point will be discussed further using Heidegger. My point here is that this emphasis is written into the format of the Grindr profile itself. Users of the site are directed down this path.

These differences are apparent on Gaydar, Manhunt and their heterosexual equivalents. RSVP remains the most popular heterosexual dating site in Australia, and Match.com is the largest world-wide. Unlike Gaydar and Manhunt, these sites are constructed in ways that better facilitate meaningful romantic
connections. On the RSVP homepage, the rotating images portray smiling couples in idyllic settings. The models are never alone, but are always portrayed with another person of the opposite sex. The couples are often embracing each other, or they are engaged in everyday activities like bike-riding. Importantly, these images are set in daylight [Fig.5]. The language deployed on the homepage is directed towards dating, compatibility and partnership. Each profile offers a much larger template, of a less sexual nature. There is room to indicate particular body type but the focus is on other aspects; hobbies, occupation, ambitions and personal likes. The space for free text is also significantly larger. While these sites also have a provision for profile members searching for same sex partners, this is still very much a heterosexual space with profiles of same sex orientation, rarely surfacing. The scripts for these mainstream dating sites are more general and less sexual. This does not suggest, however, that these are less restrictive, simply that they point to, and are framed by, specific dominant discourses that align with heterosexual norms of relations and intimacy.

[Fig.5]
Masculinities online

In chapter seven I argued that gay men articulate a visible sexual identity through particular expressions of normative masculinity. The ways in which gay men behave and present themselves online demonstrates an investment in being both visibly sexual and masculine. There are links made here between sexuality and gender. These discernable tropes of masculinity also neatly align with Connell’s hegemonic masculinity. Images of muscular, powerful bodies feature across many of the profiles. These are often punctuated with preferences for “masc guys” and “real men.” Even within a space primarily for gay men, there is a clear investment in the ideals of hegemonic masculinity.

This is also accomplished through the exclusion of particular elements. Grindr users often explicitly state what it is that they do not want. Grindr is littered with profiles that are sexist, racist and, rather ironically, homophobic. The profile entitled “Discreet Musc” states that he is seeking 'str8 acting 80+ kg musc/buff
blokes.’ ‘Pansies and fairies move on,’ he writes [Fig.6]. Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity describes the norms and strategies that maintain the continuing privileging of men over women. It relies on an opposition between masculinity and femininity. Within these profiles this denigration of femininity and effeminate men, is stated in clear terms. Another profile states ‘not into blk, asian or fem guys’ [Fig.7]. Again, there is an emphasis on a normative masculinity, one which also privileges whiteness. The profile in figure 3 states this in more explicit terms, ‘sorry but only into white’ [Fig.8]. Connell’s notion of marginalised masculinities describes the types of masculinity excluded or degraded along the lines of race, ethnicity and class. The white, middle-class, straight man occupies, and benefits from, the hegemonic status quo. Within these examples, both sexism and racism are clearly on display.

To say that these profiles are homophobic seems contradictory, especially considering Grindr is designed to facilitate relations and interactions between gay men. However, this is less surprising when one considers the close
relationship between sexism and homophobia. If a gay man professes to be seeking “masculine” men this is a devaluation of “gayness” as well as femininity. In other words, to be read as masculine is to be read as straight. The header of one profile states ‘Don’t be gay’ [Fig.9]. Evidently, this member does not mean you should not have sex with other men, as this is precisely what he is seeking. Rather, he means, be “masculine” so as not to appear gay. Within the text box he explains exactly what being masculine does not entail, that is, being short, Asian, fat or femme.

[Fig. 9]

Connell accounts for the othering and exclusion of gay men within her category of subordinated masculinity, however, this account is not useful for this particular analysis. In chapter six, I argued that her concept is dualistic and cannot account for those moments where institutions and groups of men who clearly fit within hegemonic masculinity (ie. AFL football), embody practices and behaviours that might contradict or trouble the ideals and exclusions that secure the hegemonic position. In other words, in this more contemporary climate, the AFL and its participants are exemplars of hegemonic masculinity however the increasing inclusion and support of women, gay men and other marginalised masculinities complicates and contradicts this. My question was whether the concept could account for these tensions and I concluded that it could not
explain these without a deeper consideration of embodiment and its intersections with masculinity.

In this chapter, the question I ask is different: How can the concept account for how subordinated masculinities (as a group and as individuals) embody the tropes of hegemonic masculinity? Connell suggests that exemplars of hegemonic masculinity might also be members of a subordinated or marginalised group. The successful black male athlete, she notes, is a key example; he is physically powerful, earns large amounts of money and is revered within his sport and within broader society. Connell argues that despite this, there is no “trickle-down effect;” that is, the presence of this particular example does not benefit the group as a whole.665 Black men as a group do not experience the same benefits and privilege. I take Connell to mean that this privilege is not transferrable in both a structural and cultural sense. Black men as a group are still discriminated against within the law and within other institutions. Also, within popular culture and the media, discourses are produced and reproduced that continue to vilify and other black men. This argument is a sound one, however it does not account for how black men as a group also uphold hegemonic masculinity, why this occurs and what the effects of this are.

In my case study of Grindr, these concerns are the same. If gay men, according to Connell, occupy a subordinated status then how can we account for those men who display and aspire to hegemonic masculinity, its ideals and exclusions? This question is seemingly more urgent considering that in mainstream online spaces such as Grindr, these aspirations have congealed into a visible discourse of hegemonic masculinity. Connell did intend this concept to be dynamic. From the outset she emphasises the importance of historical and cultural context. In the wake of much structural change over the last few decades, most notably the recent inclusions of gay men within the anti-discrimination and marriage acts in Australia, it is clear that the borders of these categories of masculinity have become more elastic. However, the four categories of masculinity she introduces do not offer an adequate account of this blurriness.

I contend that *soma-masculinities*, using Butler’s *performativity*, is a useful starting point for addressing these recent shifts. Butler places an emphasis on *compulsory heterosexuality* and the ways in which this underpins the doing of gender. While this resembles Connell’s own emphasis on the centrality of heterosexuality for hegemonic masculinity, Butler’s more post-structural position properly gets underneath the ways in which individuals are produced on a daily basis, through the embodiment and enactment of gender norms. This explains how gay men might also conform to those norms within these online spaces. This mirrors my reading of the gay clone and his motivations for adopting a traditional masculinity. In order to be intelligible as a man, one must approximate a normative and intelligible masculinity also. As heterosexuality is a key tenet of masculinity, he therefore strives to approximate straightness. Within these few examples on Grindr, these aspirations are palpable.

For Butler, intelligibility is crucial to subjectivity. It describes how a person sees and makes sense of themselves in the world. It is about being visible and being read as “normal,” a viable human subject. It is about feeling safe and avoiding the punishments and exclusions for being “different.” For gay men, this may involve a complex set of identifications. That is, while one may remain sexually oriented towards the same sex, he can at least be read, or pass as, straight (masculine). While this desire to be normative is understandable it is still important to critique the complex matrix at work here. The assimilation of gay men into mainstream masculinity is likely to bring with it, a more comfortable, livable life, however the effects of this process of assimilation, require some attention. This is particularly important considering that this process tends to secure a new hegemony, one which works to privilege some members of that group and exclude others. The long and hard-fought battles against homophobia and transphobia are impoverished indeed if the hierarchies and discriminations they seek to challenge are simply reproduced within the queer community, along the lines of hetero-patriarchy.
Subjectivities online

As outlined throughout this thesis, the body as lived is central to subjectivity itself; an entanglement of psyche, body and world. In the previous chapter I outlined a phenomenological reading of sexuality and the body-self. I suggested that sexuality is integral to subjectivity and life itself, it is the point at which bodily desires and intentionalities are engaged and lived in the world. In view of this, I suggest that alongside the problematic re-occurrence and persistence of these discourses of masculinity and male sexuality, there is a more philosophical concern regarding the simplification of subjectivity. In this thesis I have argued that often the complexity of bodies and their integral role in subjectivity, is not properly accounted for or even acknowledged. Regarding these online dating sites, I argue that the categories and options available within the templates, are too broad and fail to adequately account for the inevitable diversity of bodies. For example, under “body type” on Manhunt, users describe themselves as slim, athletic, as having a swimmer's build, or being heavy set. These definitions are too prescriptive and general; that is, they cannot accurately identify the specificities of that individual's body. A “body type” is taken here to denote only size and frame. This category is unable to signify what that body is, what it looks and feels like. Even its exact size and shape are still uncertain. Categories fail here. Instead, members of the site are guided by these very general descriptions. What is at stake here is intelligibility, desirability and ultimately, success. Profile members are seen as desirable or not, based on these descriptions (prescriptions) of body type. Regarding Grindr McGlotten writes, ‘then there are the categories that can make or break your chances: size, age, race, among others.’

As discussed in chapter four, there are similar patterns that manifest in online pornography. Upon entering a mainstream porn website one is confronted with sets of categories. Steve Garlick convincingly argues that these categories act as a call to order whereby bodies are ‘technologically revealed within a preexisting

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666 McGlotten, Virtual Intimacies, 128.
framework that collapses differences even as it seemingly multiplies them.\textsuperscript{667}

There are an array of categories which seemingly appeal to a diverse range of desires, however, the discourses of gender and sexuality that underpin these categories are far more uniform and narrow than this range might suggest. With these categories there is an impression of greater variety and yet the representations within these different types of porn (rough, amateur, interracial) still follow the usual discourses regarding gender. The male and female performers still assume their oppositional roles and the male body is presented as being active, dominant over female bodies. Likewise, on Grindr the categories provide an impression of variety and diversity. Ultimately however, these are underpinned by a narrow discourse of masculinity. They are thought about and engaged with in relation to this discourse. The slim body is less masculine, the muscular body is more masculine. Each are positioned in relation to this central reference point, an ideal masculinity.

Garlick also draws attention to the fragmentary quality of internet porn. By this he means that the narrative structure of pornography has become increasingly fragmented with its move online, where viewers are able to browse (surf) the net and shop for a specific site, image or sex scene. Watching a porn film no longer entails the watching of that film from start to finish. The viewer can click to a specific scene or frame. Something similar is occurring within these online dating sites. Bodies are framed or presented within restrictive templates that dictate the terms under which other members might “shop” for them. These terms refer to the parts of that body, its appearance, what that body desires and what it can do. Categories therefore act as identity markers, short abstracts of the individual in question. Importantly however, the whole individual can never actually come into view. For example, one who has a preference for slim men scrolls past any profiles where the body-type category does not match this. There is an endless supply of bodies which are discarded as the viewer moves from profile to profile, image to image. Like porn, these sites are accessed from a private computer, or in

the case of Grindr, the personal mobile phone. Users act but can remain anonymous. This allows them to skip past profiles, block members and ignore advances, all with little difficulty. These initial interactions are still virtual in that they occur online rather than in person.

With these considerations in mind I contend that on Grindr, bodies, desire and subjectivity are all reduced to categories underpinned by a few narrow discourses, and that the technology itself is implicated here. This case study perfectly illustrates the need to address our contemporary technological climate and its intersections with these discourses and with bodies. Here I turn to Heidegger, whose work I place within the framework of *soma-masculinities*. In particular I am interested in how technologies such as Grindr have been taken up in order that such discourses persist. Heidegger’s essay on technology is particularly useful for this interrogation.

**Heidegger and technology**

Heidegger’s thought does not lie in any one philosophical tradition. William Lovitt outlines, Heidegger is neither an existentialist, a romantic, nor a determinist. His ideas draw heavily on Greek philosophy and on phenomenology, whereby he is concerned with the relationship between humankind, nature and being, not in a deterministic way or only in terms of representation but also in other modes beyond language and culture. For this analysis of the gay male body and technology I turn my attention to his essay *The Question Concerning Technology*, originally presented as a lecture in 1949 before its eventual publication in 1954.

Technology, for Heidegger, is not simply an instrument or a means to an end. It is also a mode of *revealing*. He explains this using a number of ancient Greek concepts and terminologies. The greek word for technology is *technikon*,

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meaning that which belongs to techne. This ancient concept of techne is what lies at the heart of his thesis. He writes: "techne is the name not only for the activities and skills of the craftsman, but also for the arts of the mind." In this way techne signifies a skilled understanding or knowing; one that reaches such depths so as to enable an "opening up" or a revealing. Techne is what Heidegger calls a "bringing forth," or poiesis. The scope of poiesis is vast and includes not only those things that are brought into appearance through artistic and poetic means, but also that of physis or nature, where something comes out of concealment to be fully revealed. Heidegger describes this as something that bursts into bloom, it is what he calls a "bringing forth."  

He then outlines the four Aristotelian causes that are responsible for this "bringing forth": the Material, the Formal, the Final and the Efficient. The Material refers to the matter out of which something is made. For example, a silver chalice has a material component; it is the silver. The Formal is the form or shape into which the material enters and the Final is the end aim or purpose for which the object is required. However, it is the concept of the Efficient (causa efficiens) that troubles Heidegger most. The Efficient is the maker or the one that assembles all the elements. In this example it is the craftsman or silversmith. The craftsman seems to have the most significant role, as the maker. However, Heidegger insists that each of the causes are equally responsible for the item that is produced. They are in co-operation with each other.

Heidegger contrasts this ancient concept with what he calls "modern technology." Modern technology also reveals being, however rather than being a "bringing forth" Heidegger describes it as a "challenging forth." Under this type of revealing the causa efficiens (maker/creator) is privileged above the other causes. The maker sets upon these other causes with the intent of ordering, regulating and classifying them. Heidegger writes that within modern technology, ‘the causa efficiens, but one among the four causes, sets the standard

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670 Ibid., 10.
for all causality.'671 This he says, results in a narrow, restricted depiction of being. Steve Garlick’s treatment of Heidegger here is useful. He writes:

Whereas ancient *techne* is a mode of revealing that accommodates itself to the energies of nature as it allows them to emerge, modern *technology* is a revealing that is more concerned with the regulating and securing of these natural forces… with the goal of maintaining a closed system that continually reproduces itself.672

We might think of this as a particular response to the chaotic energies of nature. Humans find ways to discipline this "chaos" into a more ordered form.

Heidegger then explains why it is that humans order things in this way, and here he introduces his concept of *enframing*, derived from the German word *gestell* or “frame”. He writes: ‘Enframing is the gathering together that belongs to that setting upon which sets upon man and puts him in position to reveal the real, in the mode of ordering, as standing reserve.’673 In other words there exists a phenomenon that traps us, one that acts as a default state for humans whereby we order nature (being) in a particular way thus ruling out alternative ways of being. What is revealed is impoverished and incomplete. This is the phenomenon of *enframing*. Heidegger warns that this *enframing* is dangerous, it ‘banishes man into that kind of revealing which is an ordering’ which he writes, ‘drives out every other possibility of revealing.’674

What exactly is this problem of technology? Is this a literal reference to technologies? The answer is both yes and no. Heidegger describes the hydroelectric plant and the airliner as examples of modern technology, but he clearly states that technology itself is not where the danger lies. This is not an anti-technology treatise. Rather, the danger lies in the relationship we have developed with modern technology; that we might utilise it in particular ways in

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671 Ibid., 7.
672 Garlick, “Taking Control of Sex,” 603.
674 Ibid., 27.
an attempt to control nature.\textsuperscript{675} Our obsession with ordering and imposing ourselves over nature is most clearly seen in how we approach and use technology. This is the point made here. Thus, the definition of technology is broader than how it is utilised today. Any category, classification or discourse that we employ to describe and classify nature can be thought of as an enframing technology. Garlick uses the concept of sex as an example. He writes: ‘sex as a concept representing (hetero)sexual difference, is central to the way that the energies and forms of nature are revealed and ordered in modern societies... we might say that the body is enframed by a technology of sex.’\textsuperscript{676} The problem of technology then, is less about technology itself, and more about how we approach nature/bodies through technology.

Even though his essay presents a number of powerful insights there are clear problems that arise. First, the links he makes with the Greeks are tenuous, especially considering he hangs the bulk of his thesis on these ancient concepts. In his account of \textit{techne} he references the four Aristotelian causes, and suggests that each is equally important. David Waddington notes that within the writings of Aristotle there is little to support this claim.\textsuperscript{677} I suggest further that Aristotle would favour the \textit{final} above the other causes. Throughout his writing he emphasises that all things are teleological with the \textit{telos} or endpoint, being most important. Heidegger’s references back to the ancients, are therefore ambitious and unsubstantiated. Furthermore, the reasons as to why Heidegger problematises the modern period compared with earlier periods remains unclear. The mode of thinking which he says is bound up in enframing or a challenging forth is presented as a unique feature of modernity. He isolates this period from all others but without any explanation of this. Finally, throughout most of the essay it is difficult to establish Heidegger’s true meaning. His writing style is more poetic than precise. Waddington states: ‘reading Heidegger is a lot like trying to navigate a ship through a dense fog.’\textsuperscript{678}

\textsuperscript{675} Heidegger writes this in post-war Germany and clearly concerned with how technologies have been used in often devastating ways; like the nuclear bomb.
\textsuperscript{676} Garlick, "Taking Control of Sex?,” 603.
\textsuperscript{678} Ibid., 567.
There are clear problems that emerge and yet none of this diminishes the importance and relevance of his essay. Heidegger introduces a range of new ideas regarding technology and our relationship with it, and he produces a compelling account for the persistent problem of the culture–nature dichotomy. He urges us to interrogate our relationship with technology and the modes of thinking that underpin this relationship. It is too easy to adopt a literal interpretation here, where our analysis might focus on the technologies themselves. Heidegger wants us to address technologies but think about this in the broadest sense. The ambiguity and lack of clarity in both his writing style and in the concepts he proposes, ultimately invite broader and more involved interpretations. He asks an open question here which allows other philosophers and theorists to appropriate his ideas accordingly. Richard Rorty characterizes Heideggerian thought as being like a ‘toolbox.’

There has been a renaissance of Heideggerian thought in recent years. One good example is Barbara Bolt’s *Art Beyond Representation* which explores the utility of his philosophy within art theory and practice. Bolt argues that contemporary artists tend to reduce their materials, tools and practice so that they become a means to an end. This is particularly the case as art becomes increasingly commodified within art business. The artist is made acutely aware of the type of work they should produce for the gallery, the client, or the patron. Thus, the properties of the material and the environment in which the artwork is produced, bend to the wishes of the maker. According to Bolt, art is often characterised by an enframing mode of revealing whereby art remains purely representational rather than a true revealing. She argues that art should operate in the realm of *revealing* rather than *ordering*. This would require artists to be sensitive to what the art materials and environment could contribute to the final work. If artists are made aware that the essence of technological revealing is also a concealing then they might be able to overcome this. That is, the artwork might

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be a complex revealing rather than a work that is regulated from the beginning
to produce a particular result.

Grindr and Enframing

In this chapter I direct this reading of Heidegger toward the subject of
masculinities, and in particular gay male bodies. Regarding current internet
dating sites it is evident that these operate in this mode of enframing. These sites
are set up with features that follow traditional scripts of gender and sexuality. In
other words, within these sites, bodies, desire, sexuality are all enframed. In his
reading of Heidegger, Garlick suggests that modern technology can be conceived
in broader terms, beyond a literal definition of the technological. Enframing and
discourse operate in a similar mode. They are both an ordering and regulation of
being. Where Garlick writes that the body is ‘enframed by a technology of sex,’ he
means that the forces of the body are ‘challenged forth, regulated, and secured
within a putatively natural order that seeks only to reproduce the same.’ Using
this reading in relation to Grindr, it might be argued that gay male bodies are
enframed by a technology of hyper-sexuality and hegemonic masculinity.

The person engaging with these sites is confronted by a script that focuses on
bodies and on sex. Importantly, this is underpinned by a dominant discourse of
masculinity. They are therefore required to confront the “facts” of their own
bodies, what type it fits into, its desirability. Or their body type could foreclose or
enable particular preferences regarding sexual roles and practices. On this point,
Moskowitz and Hart examine the correlation between sexual roles (top, bottom
or versatile) and physical body traits such as penis size, muscularity and
hairiness. These traits, they argue, act as measures of masculinity. They write:
‘the presence or absence of a large penis, muscularity, and/or masculinity might
ultimately decide the actual penetrative role.’ The body as lived therefore

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681 Garlick, “Taking control of Sex,” 603.
682 David A Moskowitz and Trevor A Hart “The Influence of Physical Body Traits and Masculinity
on Anal Sex Roles in Gay and Bisexual Men,” Archives of Sexual Behavior 40, no.4 (2011): 836, doi:
10.1007/s10508-011-9754-0.
emerges as the middle point around which the physical features of bodies and external meanings of culture, collide. The meanings and practices that are associated with a particular body (or body part) help constitute and shape how that body will be read and thus, how that person will live that body. Importantly, the flesh itself, the matter of that body, is significant here.

These bodies exist as categories of standing reserve; as white, asian, muscular, slim, top, bottom. Within these frames they are contained and ordered. Users “shop” for dates, for sex and for friendships, however this “shopping” is based on categories which can never fully reveal that person or body. Rather these men are presented in a narrow manner, filtered through a distinct set of discourses regarding gender and sexuality. The terms “straight-acting,” “masc only” “no femmes” have become commonplace on Grindr profiles, terms that demonstrate this enframing; where bodies are reduced to a set of culturally constructed categories. Desire, bodies and subjectivities are swept up into categories of “standing reserve.” Culture imposes itself over nature and the culture-nature binary and hierarchy remains intact. Heidegger's phenomenological reading of nature and technology draws attention to these problems.

This particular focus on the body demonstrates the value of Heideggerian thought for soma-masculinities. Where Foucault speaks of discursive power Heidegger uses enframing in a similar manner, however, there is a key difference. Heidegger places a more significant emphasis on the pre-discursive body. With his focus on ordering and revealing he is suggesting there is much more to bodies than simply discourse. There are other modes of being, however, one remains dominant. Humans remain tied to particular discourses, but importantly this is not fixed, there is potential to access other modes of being. We operate within a mode of enframing but this simply means that the truth of nature (of bodies), are never fully revealed. His solution to the problem of enframing is not simply to alter the discourses, but rather to allow these forces to be wholly revealed, not as standing reserve (categories and discourses). Here, there is a greater acknowledgment of the agency of nature itself, a recognition of what might lie beyond the discursive, what could emerge and be revealed.
Importantly, the body itself plays a more significant role than is often acknowledged or imagined.

**Grindr and Saving Power**

This potential to access other modes of being is what Heidegger calls *saving power*. He explains that even though we are trapped in enframing there is potential for a bringing forth, a different mode of revealing. Enframing is a default mode, but it is not the essence of humans, hence there is potential for alternatives that are broader, more varied and more truthful. This potential, or saving power, comes from within this default state (enframing) itself. He writes, ‘the essence of technology must harbor in itself the growth of the saving power.’ 683 Exactly how this saving power emerges is difficult to ascertain. Heidegger writes that this saving power depends on our ‘catching sight of what comes to presence in technology, instead of merely staring at the technological.’ 684 Here he places an emphasis on questioning and reflection. By being aware of the ways in which enframing works we might be able to disrupt it. By questioning the essence of technology, being the tendency to order and regulate life as it occurs, we might access and reveal other ways of being. As Heidegger notes in *The Turning*, the danger of enframing is that the truth remains ‘veiled and disguised.’ He writes: ‘this disguising is what is most dangerous in the danger.’ 685 This calls to mind Althusser’s notion of the interpellated subject whereby individuals are conditioned by numerous ideologies in order to fit neatly into a social and economic structure. 686 The danger however is in the belief that we freely choose how to live. This notion of free will is simply an illusion, and one that ensures we remain blind to any alternative.

684 Ibid.
Heidegger explains that it is necessary to look beyond this mode of enframing, to look towards the margins and contemplate what real bodies are doing. This is a central concern also for scholars of embodiment, to acknowledge a tendency to follow dominant scripts and discourses, and ponder what might lie beyond these. In this case, it means looking at the multiplicity, diversity and individuality of bodies. Furthermore, it involves an acknowledgment that we cannot simply accept the broad structures which categorise subjects in a prescriptive manner. New technologies might facilitate a broader revealing if we are able to relinquish control over them, to cease using them as tools to order and regulate life. This is not a critique of technology itself. It is not that we should change technology in order to break this enframing. Rather, it concerns the ways in which we utilise technology for a particular end. This is what must be challenged and altered.

In Garlick’s examination of online porn he suggests that amateur porn is at the margins and holds the potential to reveal sexuality and bodies in ways that disrupts the usual systematic representations. He writes that the ‘partial and diverse character of amateur porn, insofar as it resists the imposition of a natural order, might be a sign of Heidegger’s saving power.’ Garlick’s notion of technovision helps extend this point. In online porn the audience is confronted by a seemingly endless array of sites and images which can be accessed anywhere and at any time. He argues that audiences can become de-sensitised and the eye becomes bored. He suggests that amateur porn might be a symptom of this boredom, as users seek content that sit at the margins and is different from mainstream representations, content that might, he writes, ‘contain possibilities for saving us from a sexual culture in which contemporary gender relations are endlessly reproduced.’ Heidegger’s saving power requires that we reflect and make ourselves aware of what is revealed and what is not being allowed to emerge. Following this, Garlick suggests we ‘need to attune ourselves’ to this boredom and experience it for what it is, so that we are moved to free ourselves.

687 Garlick, “Taking Control of Sex,” 607.
688 Ibid., 613.
from it and see things differently.\textsuperscript{689} This notion of the “bored eye” can also be applied to Grindr. Users of the app are met with endless images and profiles that reproduce the same discourse; thus, they might seek out other types that differ from the usual patterns, and notice the more subversive profiles sitting at the margins.

While this example offers some potential for thinking about how the dominant ordering of gender and sexuality might be disrupted, I suggest that the “bored eye” is not a strong example of Heidegger’s saving power. Garlick himself concedes that amateur porn is likely to be commodified within the online market economy and bend to the supply and demand of that economy, one that invests in mainstream representations. He writes: ‘Indeed, much amateur sex appears to reinforce existing patterns of gender relations and sexual exploitation.’\textsuperscript{690} Grindr works in a similar manner. The “bored eye” might move one to look for different possibilities however this offers little hope of sufficiently disrupting these narratives and representations. Saving power is more active than this. It has real potential to break the dominant modes of revealing. It is a conscious reflection and a catching sight of what comes to presence. It requires an acknowledgement that we are caught in a mode of revealing that is also a mode of enframing. Only then might we be able to reveal bodies/subjectivities in a different way, without the ordering and control.

I suggest the blog \textit{Douchebags of Grindr}, established in July 2011, is a more powerful example of saving power.\textsuperscript{691} Douchebags is a collection of social media responses that target and re-post Grindr profiles that are considered problematic. For the most part, these include racist, sexist and homophobic content. The re-posted profiles are given a headline and specific tags that highlight their offences, tags like “sexism,” “femmephobia,” “body nazi” and “racist.” There is a link at the top of the site which allows visitors to the site, to email a Grindr profile to the administrators. The headline on the homepage states: ‘Have you come across a douchebag on Grindr that you simply MUST

\textsuperscript{689} Ibid., 612.
\textsuperscript{690} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{691} See http://www.douchebagsofgrindr.com
share with the world?" The site aims to expose these men who adhere to and promote these tropes. The “douchebag” is shamed and called out for this behaviour. I suggest the use of this word “douche” is questionable however, especially considering its association with female genitals and also its function as a tool for gay men, in preparation for received penetrative intercourse. The site uses the term as a slur to describe largely white, sexist men but these other associations make the very use of the term, problematic. Ironically, this uncovering of sexism and homophobia, occurs through the reproduction, in this small way, of these very things.

Despite this, Douchebags is able to properly challenge these discourses. There is a conscious reflection of how bodies and desires are portrayed on Grindr, an acknowledgment of the exclusions that occur when dominant discourses of masculinity and male sexuality are in effect. In this way, it is an example of Heidegger’s saving power. On Grindr, bodies/subjectivities are often revealed in the mode of enframing. Douchebags seeks to disrupt the dominant discourses and modes by critiquing the more problematic aspects of these patterns. This site is not simply the result of boredom, of feeling bored with the dominant representations. It exists to actively challenge these representations, which are both problematic and too prescriptive. It is acknowledged they are unable to capture the inevitable diversity of bodies and of who these men are.

Extending this further, the saving power emerges also from technology itself. This is not what Heidegger means where he writes that technology contains the saving power. However, in this example it is clear that the technology has also enabled this disruption of the enframing. Both Grindr and Douchebags are sites of social media technologies. First, the features of social media are crucial to what Douchebags aims to do. Douchebags exposes the categories of standing reserve, as being limited and problematic, however it is the technology of social media and the internet itself, which has enabled this platform. In this way, it is a perfect example of Heidegger’s saving power. It has great potential to disrupt the dominant modes of revealing bodies because it consciously seeks to do this, and

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692 http://www.douchebagsofgrindr.com/contact/
because the technologies of social media and the internet, allow it a wider reach. It is a form of social media that can be shared and proliferated on social media.

This is about "us," not technology. Grindr exists in the mode of enframing and the technology is implicated here, however, the problem lies in how we utilise the technology. It is not something essential about technology. In many ways technologies such as Grindr are a perfect paradigm for the continuing problem of the nature/culture dichotomy. The ways in which we use these technologies points to an ongoing obsession with this dichotomy and a determined attempt to control and dominate nature. This acts as a loop whereby we reveal things in the same ways, over and over again, across time.

In his report Love and Sexuality on the Internet Kristian Daneback examines how the internet has altered our social interactions. With regards to dating he writes: ‘the internet milieu lacks facial expressions, gestures and other properties that have to be recreated by text and, increasingly more common, graphics.’

The questions we need to ask of these sites are firstly, to what extent are they set up in a mode of enframing? For example, what is featured in the interface, and what is the language used here? How is the body displayed and referenced, and does this reproduce traditional scripts of gender and sexuality? From here we can contemplate how to challenge this ordering in the hope of enabling a broader and more truthful revealing of these bodies and desires.

Daneback suggests that what separates the internet from earlier technologies is that it introduces a new type of interactivity. He writes: ‘the internet isolates us and makes us more interactive simultaneously.’ The anonymity of the internet creates a space where people can ‘experiment, transgress and challenge the scripted norms’ with less risk of social sanction. These dating sites are accessed on a personal computer, which allows a degree of privacy and anonymity. Grindr, is housed within the personal phone so its privacy is even

693 Kristian Daneback, "Love and sexuality on the internet: A qualitative approach" (Ph.D., Goteborg University, 2006), 5.
694 Ibid., 3.
695 Ibid., 6.
more pronounced. It is possible then that these new developments could encourage more subversive behaviour, a straying from the scripts and a breaking apart of the modes of *enframing*. This would require a conscious effort and reflection on our part, to use these technologies, their features and capacities, in new ways that might enable a different revealing of bodies and subjectivity.
Conclusion

In December 2017, players from the Melbourne Football Club sought advice from the AFL Player’s Association (AFLPA) in what would become a successful endeavour to cancel the club’s brutal and vigorous summer training camp. In previous years the ‘brutal two-night camp’ had included ‘sleep deprivation, torturous physical assignments and army-style rations.’\(^696\) Unsurprisingly, this recent development was met with backlash from the media and fans. The players were labelled too soft; petulant brats who had disrespected the hierarchies of authority within the club.\(^697\) These lamentations reflect the traditional models of masculinity I have examined in this thesis, where “real” men are expected to be strong and unbreakable. However, this protest also demonstrates a disruption of the typical training and treatment of the footballer’s body. It suggests there is a new generation of professional players who are resisting and challenging traditional training styles, citing its physical and psychological rigours, and speaking up for what they are willing to put their bodies through. This implicitly questions some of the conventional views that this is a “man’s game,” and what that means. In this instance, the players themselves are shaping expectations regarding the training of bodies.

The training models in football have been further challenged by recent changes in the coaching style of some clubs. Throughout 2016, Western Bulldogs coach Luke Beveridge repeatedly suggested that players do not respond well to the traditional “tough love” tactics of shouting, drilling and humiliation. Beveridge adopts what has been called a ‘caring man management approach.’\(^698\) Football writer Rohan Connolly argues that during the 2016 season, the coach-player relationship was taken ‘to a new level’ by Beveridge; his coaching was delivered

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‘with clear direction, empathy and care.’ Not only had he led the Bulldogs to a premiership victory, but he had introduced new (softer) coaching strategies and styles. Similarly, in 2017, “mindfulness training” was credited as a key factor underlying Richmond’s premiership win. Throughout the season mind expert Emma Murray instructed players on how to meditate, to build emotional awareness and be vulnerable. Players were taught how to openly discuss their fears and frailties to the coaching staff and other players. This approach is ‘virtually counter-cultural,’ football writer Colangelo explains; ‘traditionally at footy clubs you push through pain, you don’t speak about performance challenges for fear of being deemed weak and you use the fear of failure to drive you.’

These recent shifts tell a story that challenge traditional understandings of the links between masculinity, bodies and emotion, especially in relation to sport. Bodies are drawn into relation with masculinity in new ways, in ways that treat the body as a complex entity full of affects, pleasures and pain. Bodies are not simply passive vessels that can be moulded and sculpted at will. Furthermore, these examples reflect some of the changes that have been observed in relation to masculinities more broadly, where some scholars have employed the term hybrid masculinities to account for this blending of traditional masculine values with more subordinated or feminine types. In this thesis, I have attended to the norms and categories of masculinity, but also to the practices that cannot be fully accounted for within these descriptions, moments like these recent mutations in AFL clubs. I have argued that interrogations of masculinities require a stronger account of the body, one which posits it as a dynamic field of relations, as the site where the living of masculinities, happens. Indeed, it has

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been demonstrated time and time again that this living of the body is a complex process.

I have claimed that studies of masculinities are at an impasse whereby scholars in the field remain attached to conceptual frameworks that are unable to effectively theorise the body and subjectivity; that is, they struggle to account for the complex ways in which they function, particularly in a contemporary context where contradictory behaviours and practices are increasingly at odds with dominant frameworks. Connell’s *body-reflexive practice* offered promising possibilities for addressing this intersection of embodiment and masculinities, and yet there has been a reluctance to take up or further develop frameworks of this manner. I have suggested that by ignoring bodies or attending to them in an insufficient manner, these studies remain masculinist; within the realm of ideas, rationality, culture, language. The binary logic — of mind/body, reason/emotion, culture/nature — remains intact. Yet, as this thesis demonstrates, these dualisms are untenable, completely unable to describe or accommodate the complex makeup of masculinities as lived.

I have suggested that a framework of *soma-masculinities* might provide one way out of this impasse since it links the scholarship on embodiment with scholarship on masculinities by drawing on theoretical models that account for the body in more complex ways. Thus, while this framework centres the body, this body is not simply made up of flesh. It does not essentialise the body. Bodies are not simply biological or material, nor are they a set of mental representations in the psyche, nor a social construction. Bodies are all of these things at once, they are the site where corporeal, psychical and socio-cultural forces are entangled and folded around each other. It is my claim that this framework offers greater possibilities for describing and accounting for the complex ways in which masculinities are embodied and lived in the world.

While I have centred psychoanalytic and phenomenological models within my framework of *soma-masculinities*, there are other models that attend to materiality in generative and promising ways. In my final chapter I employed
Heidegger to make sense of how bodies and nature are ordered and enframed in ways that suppress their agency and potency. This question of the agency of matter has been taken up more thoroughly by scholars who have been linked to a new material turn, what has been called new materialism. This movement describes a body of work that sits across a range of disciplines within the sciences, social sciences and humanities, and it is increasingly employed within feminist and queer theory. Above all, this work seeks to address materiality in new and innovative ways. Anne Fausto-Sterling, Karen Barad, Rosi Braidotti, Nikki Sullivan, Vicki Kirby and Elizabeth Grosz, are all key figures.703 These scholars return to biology and matter, but not in an essentialist manner. Rather, they seek to understand the role of nature/bodies/matter in how subjectivity is shaped and lived, or indeed how these entities function beyond human activity.

In this thesis, I have argued for a new emphasis on the flesh of bodies and its necessary entanglement with the world, where this materiality is seen to have agency also. New materialism takes this even further with a consideration of the agency of matter, even at the cellular level. This scholarship offers new possibilities for thinking about the importance of bodies, and it does this through a range of methodologies, both philosophical and scientific.

Furthermore, new materialism interrogates the relationship between technology and nature. In my case studies on pornography and dating sites I raised a number of important questions regarding our current technological climate. This has emerged as a key factor in how subjectivity is formed and how gender is lived. It has become apparent that as the technological proliferates throughout our worlds, the borders of the body become increasingly blurred. I suggest that future research on masculinities and bodies should aim to centre technology in its studies and analyses. In particular, an employment of frameworks of affect

are important for addressing this intersection. This technological climate has the potential to significantly increase and alter the anxieties, pleasures and investments of masculinity. Thus, conceptual models of embodiment that attend to affect, emotion and felt experience, are valuable for future research endeavours.

In writing about the body, as I have done here, parts of the body itself are already lost. By this I mean that bodies cannot be fully contained within language or our discursive systems; written, spoken or otherwise. The body always exceeds the discursive and the terms used to describe or analyse it. Language accurately points to what can be intelligible and thinkable but cannot account for the direct experience of something and what this feels like. I have attempted to describe how the consumption of pornography might impact the embodied sexual practices of men, or how footballers might be moved toward particular practices due to the training of their bodies or their attachments with other men. These accounts are still not complete, and they might never be completed. As Judith Butler states, ‘the body perhaps is the name for our conceptual humility, the limit of our conceptual schemes... perhaps it is the site of our linguistic failing.’

Furthermore, these terms cannot wholly account for the contradictions and tensions that emerge with the doing of masculinity in the body, nor do they describe all men or all bodies who do masculinity. Corbett writes: ‘the terms boyhood and masculinity signify our efforts to catalogue the experience of a group of people... categorical speech, though, always fails; someone always falls out.’ There are many bodies that have fallen outside of the descriptions and attentions of this thesis. The models I addressed focus on cis-gendered men and cis-bodies within a western framework, and my intention was to interrogate these models and their uses. However, I contend that soma-masculinities is able to bring other bodies into the frame and generously address the intersections between these bodies and masculinity. From their beginnings to their ends, bodies are never fixed or absolute. Rather, they are a dynamic field of relations,
an entanglement of flesh, psyche and world. From this starting point, trans bodies, queer bodies, bodies of colour, differently aged and abled bodies; all of these bodies come into view.

Studies of masculinities will remain a vital and productive field of research as long as we continue to develop and foster a toolkit that can keep pace with contemporary practices and subjectivities. This means being able to more generously account for the intersection of masculinities and bodies; for where the body takes us, and ultimately, for how it makes us.
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