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FROM PETER PAN TO HANNIBAL LECTER.

THE VARIOUS FACES OF MASCULINITY IN POPULAR CINEMA.

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Sheffield Hallam University for the degree of Master of Philosophy.

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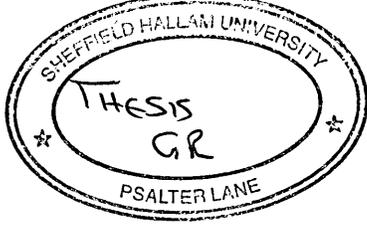
ABSTRACT

The object of this enquiry is to investigate how mass appeal within a popular media is possible given the cultural diversity of modern society. My hypothesis is that as well as differences between ethnographic groups there is probably similarities. As patriarchy is an aspect of our culture that crosses class, racial and religious boundaries I intend to investigate the possibility that patriarchy can provide a common understanding of pleasure that can temporarily exscribe other potentially divisive issues. Therefore I will examine how a particular mass media form addresses a masculine subject position.

The investigation will take the form of a textual analysis of six films that have already achieved U.K box-office success. Film has been selected because it requires a relatively large commitment on the part of the audiences, i.e. travelling to a cinema and paying an entrance fee which could concievably militate against mass appeal. Also most producers of popular film are engaged in a capitalist enterprise, the circumstances of which require the attraction of a mass audience. I have selected the three top grossing U.K box office hits of two consecutive years to ensure that I am examining those films that have proved to be popular rather than films I assume are aimed at a popular audience; to allow for a variety of films to be popular in any one year and to allow for year to year differences in the kind of films that achieve popularity. I am presenting a textual analysis because I am testing whether there is a common element in those films that have proven to be popular that addresses the needs of a masculine subject position.

The work will be presented in five sections or chapters beginning with an elaboration of the theoretical basis of the hypothesis. The textual analysis will be divided into three sections; genre, stars and narrative as these three elements have been identified as reasons why individuals choose to visit the cinema. The final section will be the conclusion.

From this research I aim to contribute to our understanding in three areas. Firstly our understanding of current hegemonic masculinity. Secondly I aim to gain a greater understanding of the concept of pleasure from an examination of how the medium of film is enjoyed. Finally I aim to extend our understanding of how mass appeal is possible in a diverse culture.

CHAPTERS	PAGE

INTRODUCTION

In this dissertation I will be examining how mass appeal is possible in the field of cultural commodities given the cultural diversity of modern industrial society. The work done by Hall & Morley (1980) on encoding and decoding draws attention to the issue of cultural diversity by showing that any media message can be decoded in a variety of ways according to the situational ideology of the reader. This suggests that mass appeal is possible partly because the reader can take the message and use it in ways not necessarily intended by the encoder. Does the possible polysemy of the media message mean that the media producer need not consciously try to appeal to popular tastes because whatever is produced will be interpreted in the way that is most useful to the reader ? (I am not suggesting that Hall's work is supporting such a statement). Hall points out that the polysemy of the message is not unlimited. The patterns of selective perception exhibit significant clusterings around particular ethnographic groups. In some situations it is possible for the producer of a media message to acknowledge the increased fragmentation of the potential audience and address particular demographic sections.(1) I am interested in those situations where the achievement of mass appeal across diverse ethnographic groups becomes an economic imperative and consequently cultural diversity would appear to be a barrier to the goal of the media producer. What I am suggesting is that any cross section of the population will not only exhibit differences but also similarities. By addressing one such similarity in the time it takes to consume a cultural commodity any problems in addressing a mass audience presented by ethnographic diversity could be temporarily avoided.

My hypothesis is that patriarchy can provide one such similarity and therefore some common understandings between people of different class or racial backgrounds. Patriarchy is both a middle-class and working-class value system. Patriarchy can be described as one means by which power is distributed; a system of inheritance and property ownership and an ideological interpretation of appropriate gender specific behaviour, all legitimised by reference to the biological division of male and female.

Patriarchy can also be used as a protest value system for those men who would not otherwise achieve status through social or material gain in a class and racial hierarchy. In these circumstances machismo can provide a sense of value and power. By addressing a discourse on male authority, strength and bravado within a cultural product it is possible to exscribe issues of race and class and involve a diverse group of people with that discourse. It is my intention to test whether or not patriarchy influences common understandings of pleasure to the extent that it can afford a means of maintaining mass audiences.

I will use cinema as an example of a cultural commodity for several reasons. Firstly the economic structure of popular cinema, which in practice means cinema produced in Hollywood, requires the maintenance of mass appeal. Hollywood has dominated British cinema ever since cinema gained mass appeal. In 1991 over 80% of the U.K market share went to four big studio names(2). In 1991 nineteen of the twenty top grossing U.K cinema hits were Hollywood productions and the remaining film was a Hollywood co-production.(3) Hollywood studios are primarily businesses, a successful Hollywood studio is a profitable one. I am not dismissing the significant differences between an entertainment business and a business producing an object such as a chair or a kettle. The pursuit of art or some understanding of quality is an integral part of the film industry. Nor am I suggesting that American film has been an elaborate con trick, I believe it possible that the Hollywood producer can see film-making as both a worthwhile endeavour in itself and as a possible method of getting rich. For the purpose of this study I wish to emphasis the central importance of profit making because this necessitates the maintenance of mass appeal. Bearing in mind that this success is neither easy or predictable (4) we can see that film-makers are under a great deal of pressure to define something as undefinable as pleasure.

If we look at how cinema is used we can see how important it is to find that one film that attracts a mass audience. According to statistics gathered in <u>Cultural Trends</u> (Eckstein 1993) covering the years between 1987 and 1992 the percentage of the population that visit the cinema regularly, once a month or more, is thirty-one per cent

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for fifteen to twenty-four year-olds and fourteen per cent for twenty-five to thirty-four year olds. The figures for the occasional visitor, those that visit once a year or less, are quite different. For the same age groups the figures are eighty-nine and seventy-three per cent of the total population. The figures for all age groups over seven are that sixty -two per cent of the total population do at some point visit the cinema during the course of a year (5). The regular cinema goers are largely young, middle-class and slightly more likely to be male than female. The occasional visitor to the cinema come from a much wider demographic pool. For instance the demographic split for the three biggest box office successes of 1991 reflects what Docherty (et al 1987) identified as a typical pool cinema audience,

	A,B,C1	C2,D,E
Prince Of Thieves	58%	42%
Terminator 2	52%	48%
Silence Of The Lambs	59%	41%.

If we compare this to the demographic split of a film like Howards End (Merchant Ivory), which was the thirty-seventh most popular film of 1992, we can see a marked contrast.

	A,B,C1	C2,D,E
Howards End	74%	26%

(Taken from Cultural Trends 17, 1993)

I do not have the space for an in depth demographic analysis of the cinema audience or to comment on the wider demographic appeal of Terminator 2 compared to Howards End. I will just point out that Howards End grossed 2.2 million in the U.K and Terminator 2 grossed eighteen million. It is going to be easier to make a profit on a film that attracts an audience from the sixty per cent of the population that occasionally visit the cinema rather than from a film with an appeal to the smaller group of regular regular visitors. Finding the film that excites the interest of the larger pool of film goers is probably what makes investment in the film industry extremely lucrative. Therefore the incentives for maintaining mass appeal are very high, the risks are equally high(6).

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Under these circumstances it is unlikely that popularity in film is a simple matter of mass deception or some plainly obvious consensual understanding of pleasure. Exciting the interest of the larger pool requires engaging a diverse cross section of a potential audience in the discourse of a film. Therefore I would argue that some similarity in experience or common understanding must be addressed. I am suggesting that patriarchy provides the greatest scope for such similarities in experience and therefore common understandings of pleasure.

One point that Docherty (1987) makes is that whether in the cinema or not film is still immensely popular

> 'That films are 'on tap' has not detracted from their popularity. Persistent demands from all sections of the population for more films on television and for a wider range of films in video stores presents a picture of an insatiable audience, which although critical of individual films, will watch what is dished up and evaluate films more highly than most other programmes."
> (p.77)

The reason I have chosen cinema rather than video or television as an example of a popular medium, despite the general over representation of A,B,C1 in the average audience, is the greater commitment required ,in terms of effort and financial outlay, to visit the cinema. This suggests a higher expectation of the experience of cinema and strengthens my argument that film producers must be able to connect with an audience in a deeply pleasurable way. Understanding how a film can be pleasurable to a varied ethnographic audience is how I aim to show how a mass audience is possible in a culturally diverse society. As I am approaching the problem of how mass appeal is maintained in cinema by examining how a film is experienced as pleasurable I need examples of film that have already proved they have mass appeal. Therefore I will examine those films that were the biggest U.K box office hits over a two year period, 1991 and 1992. I made this selection before I knew what those films were because I am interested in what is popular rather than specific stars or genre that have elicited critical attention. I have chosen three films from each year to allow for a variety of film styles

obtaining mass appeal at any one time. I have taken the figures for the most successful U.K box office hits from Screen International, the figures are published each January for the preceding year.

The films selected are:

1991:

ROBIN HOOD: PRINCE OF THIEVES
TERMINATOR TWO: JUDGEMENT DAY
THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS

1992:

BASIC INSTINCT
HOOK
LETHAL WEAPON 3

(Listed in order of gross box-office takings.)

Before I look at these films I will elaborate on the theoretical basis of my approach.

PATRIARCHY AND POPULAR CULTURE

Central to my understanding of appeal is an understanding of pleasure. The theoretical ideas of negotiation and relevance help to draw out an understanding of pleasure. As engaging in the real experiences of the audience is part of the pleasure of popular culture I need to understand the relationship between patriarchal ideology and the experience of masculinity, hegemony affords this understanding. Firstly I will explain how I think similarities in experience can occur in a diverse culture

MULTIPLE SUBJECT POSITIONS

Even if I were to state categorically at this point that popular cinema does address a masculine subject position this would not explain how a largely white middle-class community of film producers manages to articulate desires and anxieties that are relevant to men of different class and racial backgrounds. This is where the idea of multiple subjectivities becomes useful. In ' Masculinity As Signs: Post-Structuralist Feminist Approaches To The Study Of Gender ' (Craig et al 1992). Diana Saco points out that it is necessary to understand that subjectivity is a symbolic category that emerges out of a discourse; for instance the subject positions of masculine and feminine arise out of a discourse on gender. Saco goes on to point out that identity should be regarded as a compal backgrounds. This is where the idea of multiple subjectivities becomes useful. In ' Masculinity As Signs: Post-Structuralist Feminist Approaches To The Study Of Gender ' (Craig et al 1992). Diana Saco points out that it is necessary to understand that subjectivity is a symbolic category that emerges out of a discourse; for instance the subject positions of masculine and feminine arise out of a discourse on gender. Saco goes on to point out that identity should be regarded as a composite of multiple subjectivities, some of which may be contradictory and will vary in importance according to situation. Which subject position becomes prominent will depend on an investment, something between an emotional commitment and a vested interest.(1) An

investment will be made in a particular subject position at a particular time according to the perceived satisfaction or reward to be gained, whether this reward is real or not.

If I were to say that within our diverse, heterogeneous culture there existed so many fixed homogenous groups then the pursuit of mass appeal would be impossible. If I accept that identity is made up of a composite of different relational subject positions then as well as differences between groups there will be differences within groups and similarities between groups. This not only presents a picture of an audience that can be engaged with in a variety of ways it also suggests that there could be some shared experience between the largely white, male, professionals of Hollywood and the rest of humanity. For example I would suggest that a black, male, factory worker can share an interest or interpretation of pleasure with a white, male, factory owner. This is not to deny that there will inevitably be times of conflict of interest between these two men and probably a great deal of mutual indifference. I am suggesting that there are times when the identity of employer and employee are foremost in the minds of these two schematic individuals and times when the identity of being male is uppermost. The possibility of a certain fluidity of identity would allow if not cross ethnographic alliances then temporarily shared needs and understandings depending on the discourse being addressed. These temporarily shared understandings can allow the mass interest needed to sustain mass culture. However useful this theory is to me in explaining how common understandings of pleasure can occur it cannot explain why something is pleasurable. I will now examine how something can be experienced as pleasurable.

NEGOTIATION, RELEVANCE AND PLEASURE

I have taken the idea of negotiated reality from the work of Clarke, Hall, Jefferson and Robert's (1975) on youth culture. This work shows that the emergence of youth culture coincided with the emergence of a growth in consumer culture. By creating their own meanings for and interpretations of ideas and objects around them young people managed to create for themselves a reality that was more rewarding than it might otherwise have been. This is what Hall et al referred to as negotiated reality. Although

youth culture, or any other sub-culture, may noytnecessarily be politically oppositional it is not a passive response but a creative response to the world we find ourselves in. This example is useful to this study because it shows us how popular cultural forms are used and consequently gives us an insight into the experience of pleasure. This negotiation was a response to the experience of industrial capitalism and the lack of self expression that this social environment affords, however it was not necessarily a politically conscious perception of a lack in the social environment. Such perceptions were and are available but would not afford the same degree of pleasure that popular culture can provide. The example of youth culture gives us an insight into what pleasure is because the self expression provided addressed the participants on an emotional level. One must remember that the ideological strands that make up our culture are not just experienced as governing structures. Ideology, culture, society is experienced on an emotional level, it creates feelings. It is at this point that we can understand how an ideology like patriarchy can influence our understanding of pleasure and therefore be of use to mass mediated popular cultural forms.

To expand this understanding of pleasure it is necessary to look at the importance of addressing the real experience of people, or as John Fiske (1989)calls it the relevance to peoples lives. Although youth culture demonstrated that people have the ability to create their own meanings and therefore to subvert the intended meanings and uses of cultural goods this does not mean that any item was accepted and then re-labelled. In the case of youth cultures young people will select and reject products according to the ability of that item to be used to create meaning. John Fiske suggests that relevance is an essential element in the success of a popular cultural product as relevance minimises the difference between text and life. I do not mean that a popular form can be successful simply by reflecting some consensual understanding of patriarchal ideology in its discourse. In order to be relevant to the extent of reducing the difference between text and life the discourse initiated by a popular form must reflect something of the experience of patriarchy for those subjected to its laws. Research into popular forms aimed specifically at women show how deeply those forms relate to the lives of many women. Work on romance novels and soap operas (Radway 1982, Modleski 1984, Brunsden 1980) show how these forms fit into the structure of women's lives and how

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they address the traditional female subject position. This work also shows that these forms reveal the contradictions and anxieties that go with the traditional female subject position, suggesting that their appeal goes beyond a consensual understanding of the traditional female role and extends to an understanding of the experience of that role, both the pleasures and anxieties. This is how popular forms address an audience on an emotional level and will provide a connection with the lived experience of an audience. It is this relevance to the real experience of people, often felt as much as recognised, that provides the greatest pleasure.

My understanding of popular culture is that it is used as a source of pleasure, however the taken for granted feeling of pleasure can be complex. In the case of youth culture or popular film pleasure becomes the complex accumulation of social and historical factors. To be particularly pleasurable I am arguing that popular film must be relevant to the experiences of its audiences and this involves not only reflecting the desires of the audience but also the anxieties and contradictions of lived experience. Only by addressing the real experiences of the audience can the medium connect on a personal and emotional level and this personal/emotional appeal seems to add greatly to the rewards of the experience. Perhaps reward would be a more appropriate term than pleasure but I do not want to lose sight of the importance of enjoyment or fun in the appeal of popular cinema. Pleasure in this situation becomes the site of struggle between social structures and individual needs. Popular culture is an arena where the experience of a society is managed or negotiated. This provides the justification, if any were needed, for the study of popular culture. In examining discourses on masculinity in film the ways in which men interpret and live with patriarchy should become apparent. In order for me to understand the role patriarchy can play in the construction of desires and anxieties and therefore in our interpretation of pleasure I will have to do more than elaborate on a list of requirements needed to fulfil the role of a man. I will have to arrive at an understanding of the experience of masculinity in a patriarchal culture.

I do not have the space for a full discussion of how gender differences occur or even give a comprehensive list of what these differences might be.(2) Therefore, in the interests of clarity, I will simply state my position on this issue. When talking about masculinity I am not referring to the biological category male. In this instance I am not concerned with a discussion of any essential biological gender attributes. As I do not know anyone who grew up outside a culture I am only prepared to commit myself to the facts that women lactate, menstruate and gestate and generally speaking men prefer to pee standing up. However it is obvious that in most cultures the understanding of the 'essential' differences between men and women go beyond any provable biological certainties. Such understandings shape role expectations based on gender. I am interested in these gender role expectations, specifically how they effect the experience of masculinity. Therefore I am referring to a culturally constructed set of expectations that effect how individuals see their place in the world and how they construct an identity. I am not implying a deterministic relationship between an ideology and an individual. When I talk about masculinity in this context I am referring to the currently dominant understandings of what men ought to be, that is hegemonic masculinity. Hegemony indicates that a group becomes dominant not only through coercion but through achieving an 'intellectual and moral leadership'. Gramsci writes that

> "Undoubtedly the fact of hegemony presupposes that account be taken
> of the interests and the tendencies of the groups over which hegemony is
> to be exercised, and that a certain compromise equilibrium should be
> formed." (Mouffe 1981)

The forming of a compromise equilibrium means that hegemony must be an active process, constantly being negotiated and re-negotiated although as Gramsci states without touching the 'essential', the power of the dominant group. Such a negotiation suggests that those groups over which hegemony is exercised have some influence over the interpretation of the dominant ideology, provided this interpretation does not mean a dramatic shift in power relations. Indeed all we can do even as the most passive social

subjects is interpret the world from our own experiences. Therefore hegemony takes on an almost organic life as those who live with it interpret ideologies and negotiate a place for themselves within an hegemony. Hence the possibility of movements like youth cultures.

When I refer to hegemonic masculinity I am not referring to a single character type that represents the official version of masculinity, Connell (1995) describes hegemonic masculinity as,

> "the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently
> accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy" (p.77)

Within the parameters of hegemonic masculinity different men, or men at different times, will occupy different situations in relation to hegemonic masculinity. Connell (1995) identifies three situations that men occupy within hegemonic masculinity complicit, sub-ordinate and marginalised. Roughly speaking complicit masculinity suggests actual or perceived success and therefore acceptance of hegemonic masculinity. Sub-ordinate masculinity suggests some partial or total failure within hegemonic masculinity, for instance a low position within a class or racial hierarchy or physical weakness, but not necessarily a rejection of it. Marginalised masculinity suggests illegitimacy in terms of hegemonic masculinity such as homosexual men. Connell is not trying to suggest a typology, that all men will fit into one category or another at all times simply the possibility of a variety of relations to the dominant ideology. There will also be a variety of masculinities that exist within the parameters of hegemonic masculinity. For instance Connell (1991) identifies one response to sub-ordinate masculinity as 'protest masculinity', which I have called machismo. This is a form of masculinity that emphasises the value of physical strength, bravado and difference to women over education, wealth and social status as signs of successful masculinity. This is a negotiation of the contradictory demands of class and patriarchy in the favour of the interpreter that does not undermine the legitimacy of patriarchy.

In this discussion of hegemonic masculinity I am not denying the fact that the operation of hegemony reinforces social inequalities. Neither am I ignoring the power of individuals to ignore, reject, resist or oppose such hegemonic forces. When referring to hegemonic masculinity I am referring to the currently dominant understandings of appropriate masculine behaviours and the gendered positions that operate within this general parameter, I do not mean the total experience of every man in every situation. I will now look at how hegemonic masculinity effects the experience of the masculine subject position.

THE EXPERIENCE OF HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY

I find it difficult to separate out the ideological strands of patriarchy and industrial capitalism when examining the influences on gendered identity. As capitalism as we know it emerged in a patriarchal setting it seems unlikely that the former was not influenced by and accommodated with the later. Zillah Eisenstein (1979) points out that although women were mothers before the onset of the industrial revolution this was not an exclusive role.(3) When work was taken out of the home the socialising agency of the family was disrupted. This disruption could have been solved in several ways, for example some state or public provision of child care. However influenced by patriarchal ideology the solution arrived at was the full-time wife and mother (for those households that could manage on one income). Thus the role of the full-time wife and mother became integral to the social stability of industrial capitalist society. This transition of women's role into a purely domestic one and of men's role away from any domestic responsibilities has lead to a polarised interpretation of appropriate male and female behaviour. Connell (1995) points out that before the industrial revolution society saw women as pale reflections of a humanity exemplified in men. This clearly places women in an inferior position to men but not as their characteristic opposites. The separation of work and domestic spaces and the consequent gendering of those spaces was behind the evolution of an understanding of qualitatively opposite gender characteristics. What has emerged from this gendered division of labour is an understanding of femininity consisting of domesticity, nurturing and passivity and of masculinity consisting of activity and consequently intellectual expressivity and power. Obviously men held power over women before industrialisation but as a consequence of it for a long time

men had exclusive access to intellectual creativity and wealth. Today despite women's most courageous efforts men still dominate the most powerful positions in society and across the board generally earn more than women.(4)

This polarisation of gendered characteristics has a very disturbing influence on the construction of a gendered identity for men. I will begin with the starting point of this polarisation process the mother present father absent system of child-rearing. In The Reproduction of Mothering (1978) Nancy Chodorow elaborates on the problems for boys of the absence of an appropriately gendered role model. Girls grow up in the space they are expected to live and work in for the rest of their lives. The role they are expected to fulfil is played out in front of them everyday. For boys the opposite is true, adult men are often absent for the larger part of the child's day .(5) Added to this the world a boy is expected to eventually inhabit is a distant and unknown place. This gives boys a disadvantage in terms of their ability to construct an appropriate gendered identity. The biggest clue boys have regarding appropriate masculinity is that it is not like mummy.(6) Many theorists on masculinity emphasis the power of the anti-feminine aspect of masculine identity (for instance Meth 1990, Miles 1991, Connell 1995, Burn 1996). Mishkind (in Kaufman & Brod 1994) describes the inherent insecurity of this position,

> "Masculine identity is born in the renunciation of the feminine, not in the
> direct affirmation of the masculine, which leaves masculine gender identity
> tenuous and fragile."
> (p.127)

Chodorow (Jackson et al 1993) points out that this feminising of the domestic space and masculinisation of the outside world influences women toward a relational identity and men toward a positional identity. Generally men are more concerned than women with their position within society, their relative power. I will take this positional identity to mean their relative power within our society as a whole and/or their relative position within an immediate environment such as a peer group. One way of gaining prestige is to establish in public an appropriate masculine identity. I have already stated that it is

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easier for a boy to establish what masculinity is not, to use a comparative method of interpretation. This methodology could easily transfer into the outside world. For instance Mishkind (1994) when writing about masculinity as homophobia states,

> Being seen as unmanly is a fear that propels American men to deny
> manhood to others, as a way of proving the unprovable-that one is
> fully manly"
> (p.135)

Searching out any sign of femininity in other men is part of men's attempt at constructing an identity. It also re-affirms the anti-feminine position of hegemonic masculinity. What is 'acceptable' and what is 'feminine' varies according to many other situational influences. For instance a coal-miner may interpret a white-collar job as feminine whereas a lawyer may view overly compassionate or uncompetitive men as feminine. What this situation provides for many men is an experience of fear of other men. Therefore even in a working-class peer group competition between members may exist. Undermining the position of another member within the group improves ones own position. Examples of such competitive behaviour can be found in Willis (1991)in his descriptions of shop-floor humour and Miles (1991) in her description of physically threatening, and occasionally fatal, initiation ceremonies into male gangs and work places. As Mishkind (1994) put it when talking of masculinity as a homosocial act,

> "We are under constant careful scrutiny of other men. Other men
> watch us, rank us, grant our acceptance into the realm of manhood.
> Manhood is demonstrated for other men's approval" (p128)

Another aspect of capitalist patriarchy that will undermine a mans attempt to establish an appropriate gender identity is the impossibility of relative success within a class and racial hierarchy. Success, being in control, ones own master is not an immediate experience of working-class, non-white and even most middle-class men. As such they have failed to establish a successful masculinity within patriarchal terms. Which brings me to the point, how does a hegemonic masculinity that most men fail in persist. Given

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the stated insecurity of identity of hegemonic masculinity, the experience of fear and failure it brings with it I cannot help wondering why men bother. Some men may reject hegemonic masculinity or some aspect of it but apparently not enough do to end its influence. So why do men bother? We must remember that children acquire a sense of gender at around two or three long before any significant biological differences emerge (Oakley 1978, Meth 1990, Burn 1996). Conformity to perceived gender norms is one way of fitting in with the environment we find ourselves in. Gender hegemony also provides a cognitive schema, a starting point for interpreting the world, without it we would have to re-invent the world for ourselves all over again. (7) Men also learn that it is better to be male than female. Whatever their status within a class or racial hierarchy they are entitled to be honoured by the women of their group. Given a positional identity this one privilige may be very important to a man's sense of worth. As Connell (1995) puts it,

> "The number of men rigorously practising the hegemonic pattern
> in its entirety may be quite small. Yet the majority of men gain from
> its hegemony, since they benefit from the patriarchal dividend, the
> advantage men in general gain from the overall subordination of women."
> (p.79)

Abandoning hegemonic masculinity means abandoning this patriarchal dividend. It also results in derision and rejection by ones peers. Any man abandoning hegemonic masculinity will saddle himself with a feminine identity in the eyes of others, he may then share a sense of inferiority that goes with a feminised position in a patriarchal culture and will certainly appear inferior to other men. These are strong negative motivations. An essential part of patriarchal ideology and men's complicity with it is the derision of the female. Association with the feminine brings automatic demotion.

This brings me to my final point regarding the polarisation of gendered identity. I have stated that patriarchal hegemony requires the derision of the feminine. At the same time mature masculinity requires the successful courting of women. Given that men must separate from all that is associated with femininity, including nurturance and love, then a

female partner will also be the only legitimate source of affection and sexual gratification available. I would argue that the cold and competitive world of men, while ridiculing the need for love as childish, also exacerbates that need. I have just given three reasons why men need women; as proof of mature masculinity; as the only acceptable source of affection and sex and as compensation for the emotionally barren world of men. Yet women represent everything that men see as weak and derisable, this appears to me to be a major contradiction in the experience of patriarchal hegemony. Most men will manage this contradiction within their own relationships with varying degrees of success. Some men do not. Given the dramatic break many men make from the space of love and security some will inevitably idealise the memory of that time and will have to fight harder than others to repress the desire to return there. This is a desire that men learn to be deeply ashamed of and if indulged would result in the failure to establish a masculine identity. If such a desire were indulged men would be less powerful than women, equal to a child. Even the sexual attractiveness of women to the most needy men will act as a reminder of the desire to submit to the safety and warmth of a woman/mother. This poses a threat to identity, to some men this is tantamount to annihilation. This is one explanation of the pathological levels of violence experienced by women at the hands of men in patriarchal cultures.(8) Rosalind Miles describes male hetero-sexuality in the following terms.

> `Adult male sexual possession rests then on the twin pillars of compulsion:
> first the original, monolithic desire for the ownership of the creature woman,
> and second the sense that attachment to a woman is only emotionally
> bearable, and consistent with maleness and male solidarity if both she
> and the feelings she provokes remain under strict control.'
> (p 30)

I find this explanation of female induced masculine nightmares more plausible than a psychoanalytical approach. Although the origins of such anxieties are formed at a sub-conscious level they do not stem from an infantile misunderstanding of the absence of a penis on women. I do believe women, and women's sexual attractiveness causes men anxiety. This is because if men want or need women too much then women may be able to exert power over men, thus undermining their masculine identity. I am stating that

female induced terrors occur because of an ideological anomaly that creates a contradiction in the experience of hegemonic masculinity. In psychoanalysis these terrors seem to be a 'normal' aspect of a progression towards a mature masculinity, an inevitable consequence of biological differences.

To sum up hegemonic masculinity offers men a gendered identity that affords greater power than at the very least the women of his social group. It affords them greater training for success in the outside world.(9) Men earn more than women and have more opportunities for intellectual expression. However men are also left with an insecure definition of their gendered identity; they learn to fear the censure and competition of all other men; most fail to succeed in patriarchal terms within a class and racial hierarchy and their sexuality is illegitimate when directed at men and paradoxical when directed at women. Therefore hegemonic masculinity must be experienced in varied and contradictory ways. When looking at popular cinema it would be easy to assume that cinematic representations of masculinity would be complicit and celebratory. However if cinema is to be relevant then it must engage with the actual experience of hegemonic masculinity, complicit, sub-ordinate, celebratory or anxious. As Krutnik (1991) points out when talking about classical narrative cinema,

> "This process engages the 'metapsychological economy' of the spectator,
> who makes identifications not solely with the desires or goals of specific
> characters, but with the dialectic of narration itself (which pulls between
> pleasure and anxiety, between equilibrium and disequilibrium, between
> process and stability). (p.4)

This pull between anxiety and pleasure is where a film achieves relevance and as such will prove a fruitful source of information on the current state of negotiations between individuals and hegemonic masculinity.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion I will summarise the points made and outline the approach I will take to the film analysis. I am interested in popular culture because given my understanding of the ethnographic diversity of any large number of people, mass appeal would seem unlikely. In some mass media forms fragmentation is acknowledged and specific 'audiences' are targeted. Popular film interests me because the economic goals of popular film-makers requires the maintenance of mass appeal and they occasionally achieve this, this seems to me to require an explanation. I am suggesting that it is possible for people that live in different situations in a class, racial and sexual hierarchy to share a common experience of pleasure depending on the discourse being addressed. By concentrating on how films address experiences of masculinity I can assess if the shared experience of hegemonic masculinity actually affords an opportunity for the maintenance of mass appeal. I may also learn some of the ways individuals manage the demands of hegemonic masculinity.

As I am examining popularity in terms of an analysis of the complex ways that films give pleasure I will be presenting a textual analysis. As I will be relating patriarchal structures, capitalist motivations and individual experiences I need a model of analysis that would take account of social and historical forces. A psychoanalytical approach would not take account of such forces. Also, although I accept the existence of a sub-conscious, such an approach would suggest my acceptance of interpretations of the sub-conscious such as Oedipal conflicts and castration anxieties. I do not accept these interpretations. A semiotic analysis would allow me to take account of the external influences on the content of the text. For instance Barthes (1993) orders of signification would allow me to analyse the deeper meanings that can be read from the star image of Arnold Schwarzenegger, the connotations of his physical form, the myths about masculinity that this initiates and the ideology that this image suggests. All of this should be part of my analysis. However the broader scope of a discourse analysis allows me to take into account feelings and experiences, the pleasures and the contradictions of

the Schwarzenegger image. An example of such a discourse analysis is provided by Richard Dyer in <u>Stars And Society</u> (1987).

A discourse analysis of six films would be too long, I will limit my analysis to aspects of film that appear to be popular. It must be remembered that the earliest cinema was mostly documentaries and shows of cinematic magic. The adaptation of the novel form and the use of recognisable stars from the stage came about because film-makers noticed that these forms were most popular with audiences (Wade 1985). The classical narrative form and the use of recognisable stars have been so persistently successful it is not unreasonable to assume that they have some appeal beyond that of familiarity. Docherty et al (1987) in his research on the use audiences make of cinema asked people to identify what was most likely to influence their decision to go and see a film in the cinema. His sample identified narrative, genre and star, in that order, as the most cited reason for going to see a film. As I am interested in why certain popular forms are popular it would be suitable to limit my analysis of film to those aspects that audiences recognise as being enjoyable and have proved to be popular over a considerable period of time. Therefore I will limit my analysis to narrative, genre and star. I will further limit my analysis of the six films to these three aspects and how they address the experience of hegemonic masculinity and ignore other possible areas of analysis. The following chapters will be divided into stars, genre and narrative.

GENRE

Before examining specific genres I would like to address some general points concerning cinema genre. As Docherty's work shows genre is a recognised means for audiences to select those films they suppose will give them the most pleasurable viewing experience. Krutnik (1991) points out that genre is a system of standardised variation. Genre offers choice within the parameters of classical narrative cinema. This allows film makers to reproduce a previously successful formula as well as offering the incentive of variety. In this instance my interest in genre is solely the examination of those genres that apply to the six top grossing U.K cinema hits of 1991 and 1992. Identifying the relevant genre is not a simple task as cinema genre are not a strict set of organising categories. As Steve Neale (1990) points out genre is a process with each new text drawing on previous understandings of that genre and adding to those definitions. Most importantly for this study genres are rarely pure and distinct categories. For instance there have always been elements of detection in horror films and elements of horror in science fiction. These elements may play a significant role in addressing audience experiences and in the pleasure of the film. The push for variety will always lead to blurring of understood genre distinctions as film-makers try to cram more and more entertainment into our occasional cinematic treat. Consequently I cannot select out six distinct genres, one of which will apply to each of the films being analysed. For instance I could describe Terminator 2 as a science fiction film but also as an action film. I could take this further and say that there are elements of comedy and melodrama in all the films analysed but I would find it difficult to argue that Terminator 2 was a 'comedy film'. In deciding which genres should be analysed in relation to which films I have found Steve Neale's (1990) definition of genre the most useful,

> "particular genres can be characterised, not as the only genres in
> which given elements, devices and features occur, but as the ones
> in which they are dominant, in which they play an overall, organising
> role." (p60)

Using this definition I have selected out those genres that have an organising function within each narrative or are a dominant feature of the film. Even though I have limited my discussion of genre in this way I can still identify eight genres that apply variously to the six films in question. Using the table over the page I have listed those genre that initially seem to apply to the six films in question as well as those that on analysis have an organising function within the narrative. I have done this because in certain instances it is necessary to explain why a seemingly relevant genre does not have a significant influence on the narrative. For instance there are three 'cop' films in this selection but not all of these offer the pleasure of participating in solving a puzzle. Given the above comments I will limit this discussion of genre to a description of which genre has an organising role within the films under analysis and how the pleasures and rewards of those genres address a masculine subject position.

There are precedences for the analysis of genre and gender. Those that apply to genre and masculinity will be referred to in the analysis. I would like to give an example of a study of gender and popular culture to show how I see the connection between genre and gendered subject positions. Tania Modleski (1984) in her work on romance novels explains that the gothic novel coincides with the emergence of the nuclear family. For women this often meant that marriage brought disconnection from the environment that they were familiar with and emersion into an unfamiliar environment married to a barely known and more powerful partner. When I say that the gothic novel reflects the situation of many women at this time I do not mean that it was common for women to marry handsome, rich, strangers; move far away from home to a forbidding, many towered castle and consequently encounter homicidaly insane relatives locked in one of the towers. The appeal is not literal but emotional. The feelings of insecurity many women must have felt when entering into a marriage at that time is reflected in the gothic novel. These reflected feelings add relevance to even the most fantastic stories. The pleasurable resolution of seemingly real feelings make any resolution all the more satisfying. Similarly when I look at action films or science fiction or detective films I am not suggesting that in reality men face homicidal criminals or futuristic monsters but that some of the feelings they invoke are relevant to the experience of the masculine subject position.

Film Genre	R.H	T.2	S.L	B.I	H.K	L.W.3
Action/adventure	X	X				X
Science-fiction		X				
Film-noir				X		
Thriller			X	X		
Detective			X	X		X
Melodrama					X	
Comedy					X	
Children					X	

R.H= Robin Hood: Prince Of Thieves; T.2= Terminator 2: Judgement Day; S.L= The Silence Of The Lambs; B.I= Basic Instinct; H.K= Hook; L.W.3= Lethal Weapon 3

ACTION/ADVENTURE

Action/adventure is a genre and a category into which some other genres will fit. For instance the films I have labelled action films could also be labelled historical/folk legend, science fiction and detective films. Action/adventure genres are male oriented dramas that use action and spectacle to entertain an audience. By male oriented dramas I mean they are more often than not centred around a central male character, they are set in an outside or non-domestic space mostly populated by men and most importantly engage in discourses with most relevance to the experience of the masculine subject position. Cawelti (1978) states that in the action/adventure genre the main focus of interest is the hero and how he overcomes a series of obstacles. Any romantic interest or plot machinations come secondary to this main aim. The three films I have identified as action/adventure can be divided into a series of chases and confrontations. In the case of Robin Hood the narrative can be broken down into ten sequences each ending in a chase or a fight involving the central, heroic character. Terminator 2 is one long chase with most sequences ending with the central characters evading capture until they finally destroy their pursuer. Lethal Weapon 3 is a detective film in which the two male leads, who are policemen, do not do any detecting. The plot exposition and detection

functions are carried out by the romantic interest and comic relief characters. Once directed the hero/heroes then pursue and confront the villains. In all three films chase, pursuit and confrontation are central organising themes of the narrative.

An essential element of the action genre is the action hero. The star images of the four actors Kevin Costner, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Michael Douglas and Mel Gibson are all associated with action/adventure roles. Our expectations of the roles of these actors in a narrative are that they solve the central dilemma through their direct personal intervention, that they will act heroically. Such heroes are easily related to a masculine subject position. The self sufficiency and competence in all situations reflects the expectation that men deal with everything the outside world throws at them. The constant stream of obstacles reflect something of the initial fear that must occur in the transition from a familiar domestic to an unknown work space and the sense of threat from the competition of other men. Ultimately the action hero offers the fantasy of overcoming those fears. Action heroes present those qualities that men require to fulfil the masculine role, they are ego-ideals. It is often believed that this positive pleasure offered by the popular action hero is the only basis for the popularity of action films. However as I mentioned earlier relevance is essential to the experience of pleasure and pride in the theoretical ideal of masculinity is only one aspect of the experience of masculinity. When talking about the body image of Sylvester Stallone, Yvonne Tasker (1993) relates this star to a specifically working-class masculinity where the male body is both the sight of endurance, of manual labour, and also of resistance. Traditional methods of gaining prestige for the working classes has been the attainment of physical endurance and strength in manual labour and in sport. The physicality of the action hero reflects this association between strength and prestige/masculinity. Fanon (1985) in The Wretched Of The Earth describes how men in colonised countries often have dreams where they achieve unusual physical prowess. He interprets this as a fantasy of overcoming limitations and of the achievement of freedom. I would apply this argument to explain the popularity of action heroes particularly those that emphasis the physical power of their bodies. The action/adventure genre presents the opportunity of watching action heroes repeatedly displaying unusual physical prowess through a series of obstacles. Although the example I used from Tasker refers to a working-class view of

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masculinity the relevance of the discourse goes beyond that. A physically powerful masculinity as an ideal gives virtue to the performance of manual labour. This is a re-negotiation by working-class men of their status in a class hierarchy. Physical prowess as a positive male attribute was a response to the demands of manual labour but it was also a response to relative powerlessness. The ability of the physically powerful to overcome obstacles, in theory, also liberates the individual from the constraints of the outside world. This gives the pleasure of the action genre a wider appeal than just working-class men. Powerlessness is a feeling that many will have in a complex society. It is also a symptom of the many unrealisable demands of masculinity which most if not all men will fail to achieve at some time. Therefore watching heroes overcome obstacles both reflects the demands of the masculine subject position to be able to act and the sense of threat that these demands create. The discourse on power reflects a need to be powerful, an essential component of successful masculinity, and a sense of threat and powerlessness. The repetition of situations of threat, which is a defining element of this genre, suggests that coming to terms with a need for power that exists alongside a sense of powerlessness is a key component of the pleasure of the genre, rather like the compulsion to play with a painful tooth. Even though the feelings of threat addressed in action/adventure largely stem from the demands of the masculine role, exacerbated by the contradictory demands of a class and racial hierarchy, the solution to these anxieties is always the masculine ego-ideal. As Tasker puts it the male body is the only place of safety. This reinforces the demands on masculinity and the definitions of masculinity that I have identified as causing anxieties. The action genre and its stars have a circularity that helps to maintain the emotions that are the basis of these pleasures making it a potentially lucrative commercial product.

SCIENCE FICTION

It could be argued that Lethal Weapon is an action film that is set in a police department and that is the only link this film has with the detective genre. Similarly it might be tempting to argue that the science fiction elements of Judgement Day are just a setting for the heroic actions of Arnold Schwarzenegger. However on closer examination we can see a curious compatibility between this star and this genre that adds to the complexity of the discourse of the film. Annette Kuhn (1990) points out that in science

fiction spectacle becomes an end in itself. Narrative will often be interrupted to display the wonders of future technologies and also for the audience to appreciate the current wonders of film technology. As Kuhn puts it

"cinematic illusion displays the state of its own art in science fiction film."
(Kuhn 1990 p.7)

Thus one appeal of the science fiction genre is a fascination for technology both cinematic and futuristic. This film uses the latest computer technology to create a liquid metal monster that can change shape in front of our eyes without resorting to cut-a-ways or other editing techniques. I say that this genre and star are particularly compatible because Arnold Schwarzenegger is almost always associated with technology in his films. By this I mean that Schwarzenegger usually carries around with him an impressive array of modern weaponry. One of the problems I have encountered while examining the films of Arnold Schwarzenegger is my complete lack of a vocabulary with which to describe this star's personal arsenal. Also Schwarzenegger is often filmed in a way that associates him with machinery. For instance in the opening sequence to Commando (1985 Lester) we see the feet of a man walking through a forest. The camera then moves very slowly up the length of a power saw. Then the camera moves up the length of a mans arm in a way that mirrors the previous shot, emphasising biceps and pectorals. Inter-cut with shots of feet walking through the forest there is a close up of an arm bent in a way that flexes the biceps, the arm is holding a large log on the shoulder. There is then a head and shoulders shot that reveals the log to be a tree trunk, the tree hides the face of the man. Finally there is a shot of the upper body taken from a little below revealing Arnold Swartzenegger effortlessly holding a power saw in one hand and a tree trunk on the opposite shoulder as if it had no weight at all. This sequence highlights the supposed physical strength of Arnold Swarzenegger and it creates confusion about where Swartzenegger's body ends and the power tool begins. I will take up the point that Arnold Schwarzenegger is associated with modern technology when I look at his star image. I will now discuss how a fascination with technology can address a specifically masculine subject position.

Other aspects of the genre identified by Kuhn are the themes of spatial and temporal displacements and the conflict between technology and humanity. In Terminator 2 the Terminator travels back in time to try and influence events in the future. Another of the narrative concerns of Terminator 2 is how the pursuit of technological progress for its own sake could result in the destruction of the human race. This concern addresses a very contemporary issue, particularly for men, but it is also a contradictory stance to that of a fascination with technology. The contemporary relevance of many science fiction films is based on highlighting the contradiction between our fascination with technology and our fears of its potential power. I would argue that the eventual resolution of this film reflects the requirements of the action/adventure genre for closure, for the hero to have achieved his goal, but leaves unresolved the contradiction that is often a central discourse in science fiction narrative. The inclusion of an action hero is one way that this contradiction is, in Dyer's terms, managed. The lack of any real resolution to the contradictory discourse on science fiction, far from being a disadvantage makes the genre relevant to the real experiences of the audience in a way that a more ideologically neat approach could ever hope to do.

Just as there is no reason why the central character in action films should be a man there is no reason why a fascination with and fear of technology should be a male preserve. However in action film the heroes are invariably male and in science fiction the creators of the new technologies are invariably male as is the hero that defeats the new threat. This is a patriarchal culture. The way technology has developed and been implemented has been structured by men. The pursuit of technological advancement is largely seen as taking place outside the domestic space and therefore as part of the masculinised world of work. Historically and culturally technology has been part of the masculine environment. In Terminator 2 the theme of a specifically male desire to pursue technological innovation for its own sake is taken up and extended. The product of the latest technology is Arnold Schwarzenegger shaped, it is powerful and masculine. The villain is not as masculine as the hero but largely remains masculine in appearance, an appearance that gives it a veneer of authority. The scientist that develops the computer Skynet that creates the Terminators is a man, Miles Bennett. The fear of a male dominated technology is expressed by the character Sarah Connor. In an outburst at

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Bennett's home Sarah accuses 'men like him' of wanting to control life by destroying it because they cannot create life as women can. Referring back to the work on masculinity, the contradictory feelings of fear and fascination also apply to hegemonic masculinity. Masculinity offers an identity that affords power and prestige. It also ensures the constant threat from the masculinity of other men. This star in particular, with his physically powerful masculinity, produces a response of both fear and fascination. Therefore this narrative and this star both associate technology with masculinity which proves a compatible match on an emotional level as both technology and masculinity produce feelings of fascination and fear. Both offer power which can be used for or against the individual. It is possible to assume a non-gender specific discourse within science fiction but in the case of this film it would require ignoring significant elements within the narrative and within the star image of Arnold Schwarzenegger, not to mention the habit of patriarchy which will see technology as masculine.

FILM NOIR

An examination of this genre will prove very fruitful in determining if and how Basic Instinct addresses a masculine subject position. Firstly I will explain why I think the genre of this film is noir rather than detective. The film begins with a murder and is followed by the arrival of the police and a subsequent investigation. As such this film fits into the detective genre. Christine Gledhill (Kaplan 1980) describes the thriller/detective story as offering a world defined in male terms and that the investigation assumes there is a truth that the hero can reveal through tracing the logical processes of cause and effect. However Basic Instinct lacks resolution on a narrative level and I will argue it lacks resolution on an ideological level. Those people whom I have spoken to that have seen the film cannot agree on 'who did it.' The legal resolution , that the psychiatrist Beth Garner is the murderer, is undermined by the central character Nick's (Michael Douglas) limp and confused attitude when the guilt of Dr Garner seems to emerge and by the final shot of the ice pick under the bed where Nick and Catherine (Sharon Stone) are making love. This lack of resolution results directly from the narrative emphasis on the relationship between Nick and Catherine and what this means for Nick over plot and narrative resolution. Based on this narrative

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emphasis I will argue that although Basic Instinct is a cop film it has more in common with film noir which gives this film very different emphasis and concerns than in other non-noir detective films.

Although film noir is not a genre but a critical label applied to a group of films some time after their production enough has been written about this style to make it a recognisable option for film-makers of the nineties. Film noir is associated with particular themes and visual styles, for instance Gledhill (Kaplan 1980) talks about elaborate visual style, artificial and incomprehensible plot structure and baroque stereotypes in particular the femme fatale. Krutnik (1991) describes some common themes of film noir as unflattering representations of the law and society, disturbed criminal behaviour, excessive sexuality and a fatalistic or existential thematic. All of these could be found in Basic Instinct as would the general interpretation that film noir is most concerned with a highly sexualised and destructive femininity. (Harvey & Place in Kaplan 1980). Elaborate visual effect is apparent in this film. The opening title sequence has shadows and lights playing over a complex pattern of shapes with ominous music playing in the background. This music carries on over the first scene which is the murder scene that instigates the investigation. This same music re-appears at those points in the film when Nick and Catherine are alone and acts as a clearer clue of the trajectory of the narrative than the police evidence. Lighting and mise en scene are used to create mood, to undermine the logical trajectory of the investigation, to highlight the centrality of Nick's emotional state and what Catherine represents to him. For instance Catherine is initially filmed at her beach house and on five subsequent occasions she is filmed there. At this location there is a flickering light effect. The naturalistic explanation being that this is created by the movement of the ocean outside, but it also gives a dream like quality to Catherine, she could almost be a figment of Nick's imagination. She is also filmed twice standing behind a fire, with the fire between her and the audience as if she were in the fire. This association of Catherine with fire and water adds to the suggestion of destructiveness that this woman carries as murder suspect, as femme fatale and as Nick's nemesis. The fire and water theme could also be seen as analogous to the central character's and masculinity's ambiguous feelings toward the feminine discussed in the section on masculinity.

Although temporal displacement is a normal aspect of classical narrative film this is usually to create the sense of a linear passage of time. In this film the extreme jumps from darkness to bright light, the darkness sometimes created by walking from one space to another, disrupts any sense of real time and adds to the sense of confusion already created by the emotional instability of the central character. This instability, drawn out in the narrative, is also evidenced in the way point of view is used. In many investigative thrillers the central character, the one who solves the mystery, has an authoritative point of view. Alternatively the audience can have a privileged point of view, we know more than the protagonist and we watch how he puts the pieces of the mystery together. Neither convention applies in Basic Instinct. Not only is Nick's point of view undermined narratively by questioning his judgement, the camera is not used to see through Nick's eyes. Often the camera moves around a space like an extra unseen character and as Nick's authority is progressively undermined, during the course of the narrative, the camera becomes more and more independent. In some sequences the camera follows Nick with the back of his shoulder just in view of the frame. During sequences of sexual or violent excess the camera is positioned directly above the action putting the viewer right out of the space. It is as if we are watching our own or Nick's dream (or night mare) in the third person. The potential distancing effect of this third person point of view is counteracted by the central character being in every scene. We see nothing that takes place outside of Nick's experience from his first appearance until his partner is murdered. From my own point of view I am watching Nick's consciousness as the film is playing out specifically masculine anxieties. It is these anxieties that link this narrative with the concerns of other noir films and gives this film a specifically masculine subject matter.

Frank Krutnik (1990) points out that in Hollywood classical narrative the protagonist is engaged in two related trajectories; the generic story and the hetero-sexual love story. In comedies and romances the love story dominates over the generic story. In male oriented dramas, the action/adventure genres, the generic story takes precedence over the love story. In noir Krutnik points out that the generic story and the heterosexual

love story become confused. As Gledhill remarked in noir woman becomes the object of the male protagonists investigation. Consequently the representation of women in noir reflects masculine definitions of femininity and these definitions depend on how the feminine relates to male identity. As with other male oriented dramas the noir film is concerned with testing and defining masculinity. The central dilemma for masculinity played out in noir is the contradictory need to dominate and be loved by women. I have outlined this central contradiction of the male experience in the section on masculinity. The relationship of sexuality to criminality and the general mood of paranoia evidenced in noir plays out the dilemma for the masculine in relating to the feminine in a patriarchal culture that condemns emotional dependence on women and requires emotional involvement with women. Krutnik comments on how the femme fatale in noir films is often idealised by the central protagonist. The obsession induced in the hero by the sexualised female causes him to break with the law. Krutnik explains this is both the law of the land and the law of the father. The desire for the sexualised female represents both a rebellion against the demands of patriarchy and a desire to return to what Miles (1991) refers to as the "primal eden", that is a place of love and security that childhood is supposed to be. A good example of this dual desire can be seen in <u>Double Indemnity</u> (Wilder 1944) where the narration of the dying Walter Neff explains that he both wanted the woman and to "buck the system". As discussed previously the world in which men are expected to operate can seem uninviting. One response to this is to create ego-ideals that actually have the qualities needed to survive in an environment that is perceived as threatening, as is the case with the star Arnold Schwarzenegger. Noir indulges the desire to reject the demands of patriarchy and remain with the nurturing mother. Krutnik (1990) describes film noir as

" an obsession with the non-correspondence between the desires
of the individual male subject and the cultural regime of masculine
identification." (p 85)

However this position is an illicit one. Often in noir films of the past the transgressive male is punished as well as the sexualised female that induced the transgression, for instance <u>Out of the Past</u> (Tourneur 1947) and <u>Double Indemnity</u>. What inevitably happens is the sexualised female becomes the 'castrating phallic' woman or, as I would

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describe her, a threat to the maintenance of a hegemonically appropriate masculine identity. As discussed earlier women holding power over men seems to hold more terror for men than the trials and tribulations of a threatening and competitive masculine environment as the former undermines the ability of the individual male to create for himself a masculine identity whereas the latter is an essential part of that identity.

The concerns of noir narratives; the unflattering portrayal of the law, and excessive sexuality embodied in the femme fatale, indulge the desires of masculinity to reject the excessive and, in my opinion, uninviting demands of masculinity in favour of the idealised and highly sexualised feminine. One simple explanation of the pleasures of the noir film is that it indulges desire and rejects social responsibility. The association of the sexualised female with criminality, destruction and the mood of paranoia in these films reflects the illicitness of the desires played out. Sylvia Harvey describes the concerns of noir as

> " the product of that which is abnormal and dissonant "
> (Kaplan 1980 p22)

The dissonance of these desires lies in the fact that they are the product of a patriarchal culture and also a threat to its continuation. The relationship between desire and anxiety is very close in such films as both are induced by the same object, the sexualised female. The fulfilment of these desires will result in destruction in terms of an identity within patriarchal culture and literal destruction within the narrative. Therefore the pleasures of film noir can be seen to be quite dangerous, on the border between what is representable and what is not. It is also dealing with specifically masculine desires and anxieties.

DETECTIVE/THRILLERS

I have combined these two genres because I have found that most genre analysis does not distinguish between thrillers and detectives. I will begin by briefly attempting such a

distinction. David Glover (1988) in his examination of the thriller points out that before the nineteen twenties terms like 'mystery', 'thriller', 'detective', 'adventure' were all used inter-changeably within popular fiction. Eventually the fiction of detective writers such as Agatha Christie and Dorothy Sayers was aimed at a female readership and a promise of adventure and mystery in a detective story was used to attract a male audience. Jerry Palmer(1978) identifies two invariant and symbiotic elements to the thriller; a mysterious conspiracy and a hero. The difference between the detective and the thriller seems to be that in a detective the puzzle is the central organising principle of the narrative while the thriller often, but not always, will have a puzzle but will also have other generic elements more prominently emphasised such as action, or horrific adversaries.

There are three 'cop' films in this selection, it would be useful to compare these films to identify how they fit into a detective, thriller or other genre. I have already discussed two of the 'cop' films in relation to the action genre and film-noir. In the case of Lethal Weapon 3 I have argued that this film is an action film with a police setting. Those who enjoy the aspect of the detective film that allows them to gather clues and work out 'who did it' would get little from this film. We see the villain early on and the details of his identity and crimes are provided by the police computer. The narrative is organised around the relationship of the buddies and a series of dangerous stunts and violent conflicts encountered by the hero Riggs. This description still allows the possibility of this film being seen as a thriller. However a thriller would suggest a mystery, the threats to the hero coming from an unknown source, perhaps a conspiracy of powerful groups or an unknowable monstrous maniac. In Lethal Weapon 3 the threats come from an obvious and knowable bad guy. The other two 'cop' films do have mystery and monstrous maniacs and can be described as both detective and thriller. However I have already discussed Basic Instinct as film-noir. As discussed earlier genre is not necessarily a pure and exclusive set of categories. There is no reason why a particular film cannot have elements of several genre within it. In this case those members of the audience who take pleasure from picking out clues and guessing 'who did it' still have those pleasures on offer in Basic Instinct. They do not have the pleasure of resolution, of a truth being made explicit, but something of the detection process remains. There is

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also the pleasures of the thriller, the ominous mystery, action and threat to the hero. These pleasures are similar to the pleasure of the action genre with a threat to a central, mostly male, character. The form of the threat is the monstrous conspiracy, a slightly more paranoid threat than is usually the case in action film. In the case of Basic Instinct the threat is from a monstrous femininity. However the dominant themes of the narrative of Basic Instinct are those of noir. If a particular individual does not take pleasure or reward from the noir genre then Basic Instinct is extremely unlikely to be enjoyed by that individual.

In the case of Silence of the Lambs there is the element of puzzle and of a mysterious conspiracy. Although we the audience see the murderer, the main character does not and we watch her gather the clues that eventually lead to the heroine capturing the villain. We and the heroine also know that Lecter already knows the identity of the murderer and is playing games. Given the nature of the villain and the games Lecter imposes on the search the element of 'monstrous conspiracy' is added to the detection. Although Christine Gledhill (1980) describes the detective genre as a male oriented drama there are several precedents for a female detective in popular fiction. Glover (1988) describes the Miss Marple style sleuth as aesthetisized and domesticated, the mysteries largely taking place within a house or family. Clarice Starling cannot be described as a Miss Marple style sleuth and a lead female cop in a thriller is unusual The fact that Starling is a woman operating in a male environment is emphasised in the narrative in a way that adds to the sense of conspiracy and threat to the heroine, making this a thriller about the capture of a serial killer and about a woman operating in a man's world. For instance Lecter is not the only character to be hiding things from Starling, both Dr Chiltern and Starling's boss, Jack Crawford, play games with the truth. Starling is filmed in such a way as to make her look threatened not just in those spaces occupied by villains. For instance the opening titles appear over the scene of a young woman running through a wood. The camera is positioned behind her, following her like a stalker. We see the camera running after her and hear her heavy breathing, this could be our first introduction to a victim. It is not until Starling is interrupted by an F.B.I instructor that we realise we are being introduced to the heroine at her place of work.

How can I argue that a film with a female protagonist that deals with issues specific to a female experience addresses a masculine subject position. A female protagonist within a genre that usually addresses a masculine subjectivity does not automatically cancel out those pleasures. The elements of getting to the truth and restoring order can still be enjoyed because it relates to a demand that men maintain order, provided the detection takes place in a masculine space, for instance a Police Department. The sense of threat and paranoia that is expressed in the thriller, and in this case enhanced by the presence of a female protagonist, can still address the sense of threat men may feel from their competition with each other in the world of work. What the female protagonist alters is the number of ways the audience can be addressed, bringing in issues that might address a feminine subject position or not according to the reward available from this discourse to each individual. Therefore the option of taking pleasures from this film that are most relevant to a masculine subject position is still present and in some respects enhanced by a female protagonist. The female protagonist also opens up other discourses, widening the appeal of the film.

MELODRAMA

The last three genres analysed are all pertaining to one film, Hook. Hook is most obviously a comedy and children's film, the combination of children's story and the humour of Robin Williams appealing to a wide age range. However if I continue to select the genre for analysis on the basis of what generic elements are dominant or have an organising function within the narrative then I will have to consider the melodramatic elements in Hook. The narrative of this film concentrates on the relationship between Peter Banning and his family, particularly his son with whom he has a poor relationship. The traditional elements of the Peter Pan story are secondary to this narrative emphasis which suggests that melodrama rather than children's fantasy is the dominant theme. If I look at some definitions of film melodrama style I can show how these filmic devices run through Hook. Mike Hammond (Kirkham & Thumin 1993) describes melodrama as irresolvable conflict and repressed emotion returning in the form of excess in the mise-en-scene and music. Thomas Elsaesser describes melodrama as

"the heightening of the ordinary gesture and a use of setting and decor

so as to reflect the characters fetishist fixations. Violent feelings are

given vent on 'over-determined' objects."

(p.294 Grant 1986)

One of the earliest examples of repressed emotion returning in the form of excess occurs shortly after the Banning family return to Granny Wendy's house. Peter walks up the stairs to the children's room that he had flown in to when he was Peter Pan. The walk up the stair case is filmed with foreboding music, in darkness and shadow and the walk is filmed from above giving the space a large deep tunnel look. In the children's bedroom there is very little light except that coming from the window even though it is evening. The window is blown open, Peter shuts this window and stands in its light in the traditional Peter Pan pose. Fixation on certain objects is also present in Hook. Peter Banning is frightened of open windows, also of flying two situations necessary to Peter Pan and two situations that arise at the beginning and the end of the film. Most obviously there is a fixation on two objects; a mobile phone and a baseball. The mobile phone is a necessary tool of the successful corporate lawyer that Peter Banning has become, a career that prevents him from taking part in his children's life. The baseball is carried around by his son Jack. Jack has the ball in the school theatre, he also carries it in the aeroplane where Peter confiscates it because he is worried Jack will break open a window with it. Later when Captain Hook is trying to win Jack's affection he gives Jack a baseball and organises a game for Jack. Peter had failed to attend Jack's school games because he was working. The mobile phone becomes the cause of a family row and Peter's wife throws it out of the window. In the final scene when Peter and Jack have made up Peter throws the phone out of the window again.

Given the strong melodramatic elements in this film how can I argue that it has the ability to address a masculine subjectivity? There is no logical reason why an action/adventure hero cannot be a woman but culturally we tend to associate action heroes with masculinity. The same can be said of melodrama, culturally we associate drama that foregrounds relationships and their problems with women. The structure of melodrama and today of soap reflects the assumption that the audience will be female.

However there is no reason why melodrama could not be directed at a masculine subject position, although to be successful it would probably be necessary to disguise the film as something else. There are previous precedence for doing this. The rights of passage narrative could be argued to be a male melodrama. Robin Williams stared in such a film, Dead Poets Society (Weir 1989). John Newsinger in his work on the Vietnam war film (Kirkham & Thumin 1993) argues that political controversy is exscribed in the Hollywood Vietnam film and rights of passage narratives dominate. Another disguise for the male melodrama is the comedy format. Male comedy performers do not have to be ego-ideals, they can be cowardly, dishonest and less able than their female partners. Within the parameters of the comically absurd masculinity can be deconstructed. In Hook the symptoms of Peter Banning's emotional inadequacy are an inability to play and a fear of flying. The lost boys attempts to help him regain these abilities are dealt with in a comical way. Also the main obstacle to Peter re-establishing a relationship with Jack becomes Captain Hook, an absurdly comical character. Therefore this melodrama is played out within a children's fantasy in a comical way avoiding any culture shock that an openly male directed melodrama might create. There will be significant differences between a traditional melodrama aimed at a female audience and a male melodrama. This melodrama foregrounds the relationship between the father and son. In this case Peter's redemption is very goal oriented, he must learn to fly, fight and crow. Also in Hook it is the world of work, of men, that is preventing Peter Banning from living a happy life. In a drama directed at women the domestic space becomes the claustrophobic centre of emotional turmoil. The discourses around issues of masculinity that this film addresses will be dealt with in more detail in an examination of the narrative.

COMEDY

When I refer to comedy here I am referring specifically to film comedy and within that parameter to a narrative comedy. Neale and Krutnik (1993) point out that for centuries comedy was the presentation of 'low' or 'vulgar' characters that were the object of derision and amusement. Today the character that everyone laughs at still persists though this derision is not usually based on class position but on stupidity or lack of any

likeable characteristics. In <u>Hook</u> both Captain Hook and Smee are such derisable characters, they are the villains and every aspect of their character is ridiculous. Another aspect of comedy identified in Neale and Krutnik's book is the use of non-verisimilitude. Even before Peter reaches Never Land his corporate lawyer persona excludes and isolates Peter within the family. This is particularly apparent in the aeroplane and at Granny Wendy's house. When Peter is taken to Never Land the incongruity of his persona becomes so glaring it becomes amusing. The absurdity of Peter's behaviour within the context of the children's fantasy world of Never Land is obvious to the other characters and to the audience. Although Peter's behaviour in all situations outside his office is non-verisimilitudinous he is not a ridiculous character. We empathise with his goal to retrieve his children and therefore to an extent with him. Neale and Krutnik identify much narrative comedy with the comedy of the eighteenth century bourgeois theatre. There developed at this time a comedy that did not laugh at its characters but sympathised with the situations that characters found themselves in. The similarities between certain kind of comedy and melodrama stems from this period.

I would like to look at an aspect of comedy that applies to <u>Hook</u> and that also relates to a masculine subject position. Jerry Palmer (1987) in <u>The Logic Of The Absurd</u> talks about 'comic insulation', by making a situation comic errors become less painful. Freud (1976) described humour as a triumph over reality by making reality seem less threatening and more like a game played by children. Without accepting that the most pressing threat posed by reality is the threat of castration I will go along with the thread of this argument. I would describe this aspect of comedy as a means of interpretation. Comedy can be a comfortable way of dealing with reality, a means by which we can look at situations that might otherwise cause anxiety and cope with them simply through our power of interpretation. I have already mentioned that <u>Hook</u> is also a male melodrama and that such melodramas are often disguised as something else, for instance war films, to avoid addressing emotions in a way that does not fit within the parameters of a masculine hegemony. In <u>Hook</u> the central theme of the narrative is the impossibility of being a success in the competitive world of work and a success as a father. This is a central dilemma of a capitalist patriarchy that has separated and gendered the work and domestic spaces. To a address this issue head on in an unadulterated melodrama would

mean presenting the issue in terms of a choice between achieving a successful masculine identity within a hegemonic masculinity or taking part in the lives of your children. By interpreting this issue through comedy instead of facing the reality of a choice between failure or loss we are presented with the silliness that results from adapting too completely to the demands of a competitive world of work. This seems to be a pleasant perspective even if its only visited for the duration of the film. The use of comic insulation is evident in other films. When I examine Lethal Weapon 3 I will show how comedy is used to ease the awkwardness of issues relating to a masculine subject position. Comedy is not a masculine genre in the same way as action/adventure is masculine oriented. However in this film comedy is a useful tool for re-interpreting some uncomfortable contradictions in masculine hegemony.

CHILDREN'S FILMS

By children's films I am simply talking about films aimed either exclusively or partially at the under eighteens. Within this there is a wide variety of styles and genre from cartoons such as Pocahontas (Disney 1995) aimed at the under twelves to The Last Star Fighter (Castle 1985) which would have appeal for all age groups who enjoy science fiction or action/adventure. I would like to make a point about children as an audience before I proceed. In the acres of research carried out on the 'effects' of television on children, their is relatively little research on children and cinema. From the early studies of Hilda Himmelweit (1958) to more recent work (for example see Dorr 1986 or Lull 1990) it seems that children like the same television programmes as adults. I make this point because I do not see an audience of children as a whole other species, a separate biological or cultural category. For me the biggest difference between 'adult' and 'children's' cinema is the classification system. Adult society has decided that the portrayal of sex and violence in films accessible to children should be in some way different to its portrayal in films theoretically inaccessible to children. How they are different, I would not go as far as saying there is no sex or violence in a film like Pocahontas, is a whole topic of research in itself. Apart from conforming to the standards of a U or P.G classification I would argue that there are more similarities than differences between films aimed at adults and films aimed at children. The differences that exist are few and subtle. I will now look at some of those differences.

One of the more obvious differences between adult and children's films was pointed out by Marina Warner in the 1994 Reith Lectures. What Warner refers to as the 'Spielberg school of film-making' and I will refer to as the Hollywood style of film-making will put child characters in films aimed at children and flatter the child audience by showing those child characters outwitting the adult characters. The Home Alone (1991 Colombus) films are the most obvious example of this strategy. This cannot be seen as a defining element of children's films or as exclusive to children's films. For instance there is a child character in Terminator 2 and this character is the morally superior character. Is Terminator 2 a children's film? It is just one method of engaging with a younger audience and does not necessarily alienate the older audience. If I look at a discourse around a child character pitted against an adult adversary I can show how this discourse can be just as relevant to adults. A child hero addresses a discourse about the power of adults and the powerlessness of children. The relevance lies in the threat to the child character and the relief in that child character's ability to outwit the more powerful adult. As many adults will at some time feel threatened by other adults or symbols of authority these pleasures are not beyond an adult audience. In the case of Robin Williams he has often played an adult threatened by other adults. In Mrs Doubtfire (Columbus 1993) he plays a child-like adult cast out by his wife and penalised by the legal system and social services for being different. In Hook he plays an adult who has lost his identity in the stressful and competitive world of work.

Another aspect of children's cinema that is pertinent to this study is the interpretation adults put on childhood. Jacqueline Rose (1984) talks about how adults see children as a 'repository of innocence'. She also talks about 'an essential truth' that children possess because of their supposed pre-cultural existence. Certainly in the case of Hook Peter Banning must return to a child-like state to remember certain truths about himself that he needs to be a good parent. How does a discourse around a pre-cultural essential truth and the loss that being socialised or grown-up can cause relate to a masculine subject position? There is no reason why this discourse should be gender specific. However in Hook it is Peter Banning, father, that has lost this truth not Moira Banning,

mother. Moira is a good parent. Moira has also retained some of her child-hood innocence. When the Banning family arrive back at Granny Wendy's house Moira becomes excited. When Peter asks her why she replies, "some of the things I was when I was young have never left me". In referring back to the work on masculinity we can see that men must make the most dramatic break from the domestic space where they were children. The idea that women are children then grow up and become mothers without ever venturing from the domestic space has always been more of a myth than reality. However working or not mothers still play the biggest role in the lives of children which may give the impression to fathers that women never completely leave the domestic space. Also men still largely define themselves according to what they 'do' in the work-place. All this and a desire to disassociate themselves from the female defined domestic space makes men's break with childhood more necessary to their identity within patriarchy than it is for women. This makes a discourse on the losses that adulthood brings more relevant to the experiences of the masculine subject position.

I would like to look at another point regarding adult interpretations of childhood. A quote from Marina Warner (1994) will illustrate this point.

> "Contemporary child mythology enshrines children to meet adult desires and dreams, including Romantic and Surrealist yearnings to live through the imagination, with unfettered unrepressed fantasy" (p.42)

Adults see children as unrestrained by culture. This is where their essential truth comes from. It also allows them freedoms not enjoyed by adults. According to this theory children do not need to suppress their personality in order to conform to a restricting society. The reasons why this discourse should relate more to a masculine subject position than any other are the same as discussed in the previous paragraph. For the reasons discussed earlier in a patriarchal culture there is a tendency to see men as more 'grown-up' than women, more socialised. In the case of Hook the children who can imagine food and have it appear or think happy thoughts and fly are all boys. However they are lost boys, they have to live in another world where grown-up society does not exist and there are no feminine spaces for them to disassociate themselves from.

Therefore in the narrative of <u>Hook</u> the children's fiction element becomes a method of managing an uncomfortable discourse most relevant to a masculine subject position

IN CONCLUSION

The object of this analysis was to establish whether the pleasures of the selected genre were most relevant to the experience of the masculine subject position. This relevance is more apparent in some genre than others. I have argued that film noir is most relevant to the contradictory experience of male heterosexuality in a patriarchal culture. I am not suggesting that film noir offers no pleasures to women. As the idea of negotiation suggests humans are very inventive when it comes to adapting their needs to the resources available and women have been adapting to a world organised around men's needs for a long time now. What I mean is that film noir is most relevant, not only relevant, to the experience of hegemonic masculinity. Film noir deals with a specific contradiction in patriarchal ideology. Other genres are associated with a masculine view of pleasure more from cultural habit than anything else. Action/adventure, science fiction and detective/thrillers set in a non-domestic space bring with them the expectations of conflict and a series of obstacles that a male central character will overcome. A narrative set in the future need not be structured around a futuristic monster threatening a heroic male character, however that is what we have come to expect from the genre within popular cinema and this reflects the importance of defining and testing hegemonic masculinity in popular cinema. Again this does not exclude an audience that is not male and hetero-sexual. In my discussion of multiple subject positions I pointed out that there will be similarities as well as differences between subject positions. For instance I talk about an inevitable sense of threat that is part of the experience of the masculine subject position. A sense of threat from masculine non-domestic spaces could easily be shared by women and gay men. This similarity only exists on the level of feeling, rather than opinion or ideology and it is at this level that there is the greatest scope for addressing a diverse audience and achieving mass appeal.

The last three genres discussed are not associated with a masculine subject position. In conjunction with other elements of the film they do add to a discourse relevant to a

masculine subject position. In particular melodrama is almost always seen as a 'feminine' genre. On its own the children's film offers the pleasure of child characters outwitting adult characters and comedy offers the pleasures of laughing at ridiculous characters and incongruous situations. In Hook comedy is used to deconstruct Peter's hegemonically successful masculinity. The children's film elements are used to manage the dilemma of a man desiring a nurturing relationship with his children in a culture where nurturing takes place in the female domestic space. The melodrama of Hook is concerned with a man's choice between his career and his children, an experience common to women but in this film presented as a man's problem. Although these genres do not automatically address a masculine subject position the way they are used within the narrative creates a discourse most relevant to the experience of hegemonic masculinity.

All the films in this selection have recognisable Hollywood stars acting in them. Before examining the star images individually I will make some general points about the importance of stars to audiences. The use of known stars from the stage and film developed as a response to audience preference for films starring favourite performers. From the earliest days of cinema, audiences have shown an interest not only in the films starring their favourite actors but in the stars themselves. Hollywood developed an elaborate publicity machine to promote stars in their own right quite apart from their involvement in individual films. The private lives of stars make headline news, not just in gossip columns. Stars have been persistently popular with audiences, they obviously matter to us. My task will be to determine how they matter. The approach I will take will be to examine the discourses instigated by each star and how this discourse relates to issues of masculinity outlined earlier. This is an approach taken directly from Dyer's (1979) work on stars and society but more specifically focusing on the relationship of star image to issues of masculinity.

Dyer writes,

> 'Stars matter because they act out aspects of life that matter to us;
> and performers get to be stars when what they act out matters to
> enough people. Though there is a sense in which stars must touch on
> things that are constant features of human existence, such features
> never exist outside a culturally and historically specific context.'
> (p19).

The star images I will be examining are Kevin Costner (from Robin Hood: Prince Of Thieves) ; Arnold Schwarzenegger (from Terminator Two: Judgement Day) ; Jodi Foster (from Silence of the Lambs) ; Michael Douglas (from Basic Instinct) ; Robin William's (from Hook) and Mel Gibson (from Lethal Weapon 3). For reasons of space I have only considered one star out of each film, I could for instance include Danny

Glover from Lethal Weapon 3 and Anthony Hopkins from Silence Of The Lambs and more obviously Julia Roberts and Dustin Hoffman from Hook. However I would say that the stars I have selected are easily identified as the lead characters and/or the biggest stars from each film. On an initial glance at this list two names seem to stand out as two distinct minorities, Jodi Foster and Robin Williams. The remaining four names are all stars associated with macho, heroic, action roles whereas Jodi Foster is considered to be a dramatic actress and Robin Williams is largely seen as a comedian. I will look at the four stars associated with action/adventure roles first.

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER

I will begin with Arnold Schwarzenegger for several reasons. Firstly because Arnold Schwarzenegger is more of an icon of the action hero than any of the other stars I have included in the action hero category. Schwarzenegger's star image is the most coherent of all the stars being examined here. It is likely that people who do not enjoy popular film have an understanding of the star image of Arnold Schwarzenegger, and probably some definite opinions on that image, just as they are likely to have an understanding of the star image of Marilyn Monroe or John Wayne. Schwarzenegger has also attracted more media coverage and critical debate. For many this star synthesises everything that is wrong with popular film. Therefore much of the debate around this star will be relevant to all the stars of action/adventure cinema. There has been a lot of debate about the rise of stars with body builder shapes like Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Swarzenegger. Critical analysis indicates a concern that such stars represent a backlash against advances made by the feminist movement. An examination of some of these arguments will prove useful in understanding the discourses that surround this star. Barbara Creed (1986) describes the body-builder stars as an outcome of a crisis in the master narrative. Creed points out that the key terms in most narratives of a white, heterosexual masculinity have been undermined in a post-feminist, post-Vietnam world. This also suggests that the hyper-mesomorphic stars are either a parody of masculinity or an hysterical and reactionary over emphasis of traditional masculinity. Certainly in the films of Arnold Schwarzenegger parody is present. In Judgement Day the character John Connor tries to teach the Terminator to talk more like humans. John teaches the Terminator the phrases "no problemo" and "Hasta la vista baby". These were both

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catch phrases associated with Schwarzenegger from other films. This example shows that the film-makers realise the impact that this star and his films have had on popular culture, with certain phrases and poses being instantly recognisable to popular culture literate audiences. Also in <u>Commando</u> (1985 Lester) a female character provides commentary during a prolonged and destructive fight between Schwarzenegger and another character. Her comments, such as "I can't believe this macho bullshit" reflect an understanding on the part of the film-makers of the heated debates in the press about the meaning and effect of the levels of violence in Schwarzenegger's films, a knowledge the audience is assumed to share. However the characters that Arnold Schwarzenegger plays are not meant to be taken as a parody of masculinity, with the possible exception of the comedy <u>Twins</u> (1990 Reitman). If these characters were meant to be a parody of white heterosexual masculinity then the way they were filmed, the narrative and their actions would reflect this. An example of a film that sets out to parody macho film stars might be the comedy film <u>Hot Shots</u> (1991 Abrahams). These jokes are more likely to be playing with audience knowledge and expectations rather than undermining the pleasure of the heroic action of a male star. Such self referential jokes recognise and include the audience in a popular media literate group in much the same way that literary references in high art novels include the reader in an educated and knowledgeable group. This will add to the relevance the film has to the experience of the audience. Jonathan Rutherford (Chapman & Rutherford 1988) also describes how the pressures of the post-feminist, post-gay rights and post- imperialist age have affected ideas of appropriate masculinity. He describes two possible adaptations to these modern pressures, the new man or the retributive man. As with Creed the suggestion here is that the powerful frame of stars such as Schwarzenegger represents an hysterical reaction against modern liberal thought that has undermined traditional definitions of masculinity and that the hyper masculinity of these stars signals a regressive return to concepts that heroes must be white, heterosexual and above all male. Those who feel threatened by advances in feminism can take pleasure from a reactionary interpretation of Swcharzenegger but there is much more to the star image of Arnold Schwarzenegger than that.

Mishkind (Kimmel 1987) points out that most of the traditional masculine archetypes are either anachronistic, as in the Lord or the frontiersman, or no longer exclusively male, as

in the scientist or bread winner. The one remaining archetype that is still historically relevant and mostly perceived of as male is the soldier. Mishkind then goes on to associate the body builder form with the soldier archetype, with the developed muscles being seen as a form of body armour. Although this is not exactly the same argument as Creed or Rutherford's hysterical reaction against a post-feminist culture it does suggest that the popularity of the body-builder has been influenced by the shrinking number of exclusively male role models available in a post-feminist world. I would argue that Swcharzenegger, and stars like him, represent a response to historical changes but not so much as a hysterical reaction to change but as a re-definition within knew boundaries. I would also point out that if Arnold Schwarzenegger's appeal were based exclusively on his ability to restate the supposed natural physical differences, and physical strengths, between men and women then why are so many of his heroine's muscular, gun-toting action women? This is not just the case in Terminator 2 but also in Predator (1987 McTiernan) the Conan (1981 Milius, 1984 Fleischer) films and Total Recall (1990 Verhoeven). I will argue later that within a narrative a heroine can be as capable as a man but not as capable as a hero. This keeps a post-feminist narrative within patriarchal boundaries. Part of Schwarzenegger's appeal will be that he is so butch that not even the most feminist heroine will out butch him. This is not an hysterical reaction to feminism but a re-drawing of boundaries to accommodate historical changes brought about by feminism while maintaining the pleasure of a masculine ego-ideal that operates within a patriarchal hegemony. This is an example of negotiation between competing ideologies and needs. However this is only part of the explanation of Schwarzenegger's massive appeal. If we look at how Arnold Schwarzenegger is filmed we can see that the display of his body for its own sake is as important as how he uses it. Sometimes the way he is filmed reminds me of certain kinds of car advertisements where the car remains stationary while the camera moves around it and the commentary gives us the reasons why we should buy this car. Similarly Schwarzenegger is often filmed stationary while the camera moves around him. In the case of Judgement Day the comparison of how Schwarzenegger and the villain/T100 is filmed emphasises the importance of Schwarzenegger's body as a spectacle for the audience. In Judgement Day both the Terminator and the T100 arrive from the future naked. The Terminator arrives in a crouching position and remains motionless while the camera approaches and moves around his body. As he stands up the camera moves with him resting on a shot of his

head and muscular shoulders. We then see a shot from the Terminators point of view as he walks towards a truck stop or bar. As he opens the door there is a portrait shot of him standing in the doorway, framed by the door, with the camera holding on that shot for several seconds pointing slightly upwards. This sets the style of future shots of Schwarzenegger, with the camera slightly below looking upwards and often moving around or up his frame. We are given another Terminator point of view shot as he walks into the bar which shows us several women admiring his body. When he stops again the camera moves around him from his back to his front resting on another still head and torso picture emphasising biceps and pectorals. The filming of the arrival of the T100 is strikingly different. Firstly the sequence is a lot shorter, reflecting his junior position in the Hollywood star hierarchy. More significantly the camera remains motionless, there are cuts from one position to another but the camera does not follow the T100 or move around his frame. At no point is the T100 motionless in front of the camera or framed to emphasise the spectacle of his nudity. I have used this comparison to show how important the display of Arnold Schwarzenegger's body is to his persona and popularity. This and his association with machinery presents an image of the latest model of masculinity with the biggest horse power. This state of the art masculinity operates within post-feminist boundaries while still out butching previous masculine images and post-feminist heroines.

Another aspect of Arnold Schwarzenegger's shape that has caused comment is the possibility that the prominent display of his body might arouse homoerotic desire. In a predominantly heterosexual society and in a medium that has largely ignored or criminalised images of homosexuality how does a star like Schwarzenegger display his body for male fans without contravening heterosexual norms. The option of watching such stars precisely for the pleasure of homo-erotic desire is ,of course, available. However I would argue that much of the appeal of such stars is not about their sexuality in terms of 'sexiness' or their perceived ability to satisfy sexual desires but about their ability to overcome obstacles and fulfil the demands the role of hero makes of them. When they display their bodies they are displaying the latest working model of heroism. Of course the dividing line between sexuality and the performance of an ego-ideal is not all that clear but the dilemma that such stars, while making a spectacle of their

masculinity, might undermine heterosexual norms is more apparent than real. I will add that this argument assumes a preference in male homosexual desire and female heterosexual desire for the bodybuilder shape. I would argue that the sexual desirability of stars like Kevin Costner and Tom Cruise are exploited more in film than the sexual desirability of Arnold Swartzenegger.

In my discussion on popular action heroes I emphasised the importance of power to the pleasure of the audience. Schwarzenegger's efficient, male machine itself initiates a discourse on power, masculinity and class. I will now outline one last historical influence on the popularity of the body-builder shape, and probably the popularity of action heroes, which relates more directly to a discourse on power. I would argue that the economic and political swing to the right in the U.S.A and U.K during the eighties is at least equally responsible for any crisis in masculinity as the advances into male territory made by women in a post-feminist era. The eighties saw a massive shrinking in the employment market, particularly in the manual labour markets. There has also been a shrinking in the value of salaries with fewer working men able to be the sole financial support for a family.(1) These factors undermine many men's ability to fulfil their traditional role in the family of breadwinner and often to even have a place at all in the traditionally masculine world of work. Peter Lilley, a Conservative associated with the right-wing of the party, conceded in a speech that the pursuit of low wages has undermined the ability of certain sections of the population to support a family (Guardian 21.6.94). Through the eighties whole communities of men became redundant, for instance the U.K steal and coal industries were decimated.(2) Young men in particular have been affected with twenty-five per cent of under twenty-fives being unemployed.(3) This point is worth noting as Arnold Swarzenegger has a particular appeal to young men.(4) All these factors would further undermine the ability of men to fulfil the expectations of the masculine subject position and increase the sense of threat experienced by many men, particularly the working-class and the young. As I mentioned earlier powerlessness feeds a need for powerful heroes. This suggests that the action/adventure genre has a particular relevance to the post Thatcherite/Reaganite world and that stars like Stallone and Swartzenegger have a particular resonance to audiences of this time, particularly the young and the working-classes who are most

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effected by changes in the economy and have few sources of prestige other than their masculinity. Kevin Costner does not have the exaggerated masculine physique of stars like Stallone but he does operate within the action/adventure genre and probably benefited from the increased relevance of the genre to this particular historical period.

To draw these points together the star image of Arnold Schwarzenegger became possible and attractive because of certain cultural changes. Advances made by the feminist movement has meant that the number of exclusively masculine role models is shrinking. At the same time the adoption of the idea of the new man by the advertising industry, which was only possible because of the advances made by the feminist movement, meant that it became acceptable for men to show concern with their appearance which in turn made body-building an acceptable pass time. The presentation of body-building as healthy meant that stars like Schwarzenegger could be promoted as the latest technologically advanced model of man the machine, which made him a suitable masculine role model. Figure 1 shows a typical promotion still of Arnold Schwarzenegger tooled up and an efficient killing machine. His exaggerated masculinity gave him a particular appeal to those members of the audience who most keenly felt the gap between the expectations of masculinity and their ability to fulfil these expectations. His rise to prominence in the cinema industry coincided with an economic climate that made many men insecure about their ability to live up to these demands. In all I would say that Arnold Schwarzenegger was an ideal eighties and nineties icon, not because he represents 'retributive man' or is simply a response to a crisis in the master narrative but because he reflects so much of the influences of the eighties and nineties.

KEVIN COSTNER

When looking at the star image of Kevin Costner we see a very different set of discourses being initiated. Although Kevin Costner does appear in action films and does incorporate the need for the action hero to defeat the villain and restore order through physical combat, his masculinity is not situated in his physical form in the way that it is with Arnold Schwarzenegger. In the biography Kevin Costner : Prince Of Hollywood (Caddies 1992) Kelvin Caddies describes Costner as a clean-cut hero in the tradition of

Gary Cooper and Henry Fonda. In Costner's most successful, and therefore most visible films he has played an individual with a cause which is pursued despite mass objections. In The Untouchables (1987 De Palma) he played Elliot Ness, the incorruptible agent working to defeat the Mafia. In Field Of Dreams (1989 Robinson) he played a farmer who hears voices telling him to build a baseball field on his land. He does so despite the derision of neighbours and the nearly ruinous financial cost. In Dances With Wolves (1990 Costner) as well as directing and producing this film he plays a cavalry officer who abandons his post to live with a community of Sioux. After playing Robin Hood, Costner plays Jim Garrison, the former New Orleans District Attorney who pursues a theory that there was a conspiracy to assassinate Kennedy in Dallas, in Oliver Stone's JFK (1993). Although Kevin Costner's films often do include action and violence Costners heroes are identified more with moral superiority than with the innate physical superiority associated with Stallone and Schwarzenegger. Comparing Costner to Henry Fonda seems apt as long as we are associating Henry Fonda with specific films such as, The Grapes Of Wrath (1940 Ford), Twelve Angry Men (1957 Lumet), and The Young Mr Lincoln (1939 Ford) and if we associate Kevin Costner with the films noted above. Both actors have appeared in a wider range of films but it seems that both are associated with the honourable good guy role.

Referring back to the work of Mishkind on male archetypes (Kimmel 1987) what he identifies as increasingly obsolete archetypes such as the frontiersman and the lord have been resurrected in the films of Kevin Costner in Dances with Wolves and Prince of Thieves. Brian de Palma, who directed Costner in The Untouchables said of the actor

> "Kevin is one of those actors who can make all the old clichés seem real
> again." (Caddies 1992)

suggesting that Kevin Costner has re-vamped the old fashioned hero in his roles. However, we are living in a time when the morality of many recognised hero types ; for instance cowboys, pioneers and cops is no longer unquestionable. Richard Dyer (1990) talks about stars operating around contradictions and that their ability to reconcile or balance these contradictions is part of their appeal. Kevin Costner operates around the

contradiction of the appeal of hero images of the past that pleasurably work through a construction of an ideal male identity and the obsolescence of such images. In the case of Kevin Costner's most famous heroes this contradiction is managed not by abandoning those hero types, but by repositioning the hero on the side of a modern liberal morality without dispensing with the need for action on the part of the heroic character. For instance Costner's cowboy sides with the Indians. The requirements of a hero of the action/adventure genre and the requirements of modern liberal morality may seem incompatible. Managing this contradiction without giving a sense of jarring is the particular talent of this star.

I would argue that Costner is as influenced by a post-feminist, post-imperialist and post-gay rights world as Arnold Schwarzenegger. I am not suggesting that Costner's characters represent a right-wing backlash, but that Costner's films adapt to these changes by attempting to rewrite the history of the U.S.A and U.K. An examination of the narrative of Prince Of The Thieves will show a self conscious attempt by the film-makers to avoid a charge of sexism and racism. This reclamation of mythic heroes from a less than politically correct past allows the audience the more simple pleasures afforded by the ego-ideals of a world where gender is more clearly defined. It also allows a discourse on appropriate masculine behaviour that is defined by actions and attitudes. The particular success of this film can probably be attributed to its ability to present politically correct medieval knights without dispensing with the need for action and violence that is so central to the pleasure of the masculine subject position. Compared to the stars I will examine below Kevin Costner's appeal to a masculine subject position is positive and unambiguous. He portrays the fantasy of being able to act out of moral certainty. I shall demonstrate that stars mostly do not portray such an unambiguous response to the demands of hegemonic masculinity.

MEL GIBSON

Mel Gibson's image cannot be so clearly identified as the two stars mentioned above because he is not as fixed within a particular genre of film. Gibson has appeared in both action/adventure films, political thrillers and melodramas. However his most visible

films, i.e. the most popular, are the series of Mad Max films and the Lethal Weapon films. There may be Mel Gibson fans who prefer his work in films like The Year Of Living Dangerously (1983 Weir), and Gallipoli (1981 Weir) and obviously Mel Gibson's success in these two Australian made films contributed to his subsequent success as a Hollywood leading man. However it was the unexpected popular success of the first Mad Max film and the Hollywood backing of two further Mad Max films that established Mel Gibson as a popular hero. Gibson's appearances in these films means he shares much of the same associations as other popular action heroes. Gibson's characters will have elements of the ego-ideal. His heroes will deal with all the problems thrown at them, he will restore order and he will beat the crap out of the bad guy. This carries with it all the pleasures and connotations discussed earlier. To begin to understand Gibson's specific appeal we should look at the success of the Mad Max series of films and how some of that character has persisted into the Lethal Weapon films.

In the first Mad Max (1980 Miller) film the character Gibson plays, the Max of the title, starts out as a good cop in a post holocaust city. He is part of an attempt to maintain order in a world disintegrating into anarchy. After his wife and child are murdered by one of the gangs that have become powerful since the breakdown of order, Gibson's character transforms. He becomes the avenging angel, a nice guy driven over the edge. There is more than a suggestion of insanity but this just makes him more efficient in the environment in which he finds himself. In the second Mad Max (1982 Miller) film Gibson's character becomes more immersed in his environment and his humanity, his niceness, is all but lost. By the third film (1985 Miller) something of the original character returns when he comes across a colony of children. The Lethal Weapon (1988,1990,1992 Donner) series of films continues the theme of a nice guy turned mad by a cruel world. In the first film we learn that Martin Riggs (Mel Gibson) recently lost his wife, this had made him suicidal and he had to seek psychiatric help. Roger Murtaugh (Danny Glover) is unhappy when Riggs is assigned to work with him because Riggs is notorious for being reckless and unpredictable. The opening sequence of Lethal Weapon 3 re-establishes Gibson as mentally unstable. Riggs and Murtaugh arrive on the scene of a reported bomb. The building has been evacuated and the bomb squad alerted

so there is nothing for Riggs and Murtaugh to do. However Riggs insists on entering the building to see if there is a real bomb. When he finds the bomb he tries to disarm it himself despite Murtaugh's protestations and the fact that he obviously does not know how to disarm the bomb. At this point we are given a series of close-up full face shots of Riggs, eyes wide and manic with an expression of barely contained hysterical laughter as Riggs proceeds to blow up a large building. Again Gibson is playing the good cop turned crazy cop by an insane world that has deprived him of his domestic security. His specific appeal seems to be based on his ordinariness in extraordinary situations. His own persona of a shy family man who lives in Australia and only visits Hollywood to make films fits in with this screen persona very well.

The pleasures of this persona can easily be related to the masculine subject position. Going back to the mother present father absent child rearing system we can understand the association between emotional stability and the family. As men have to make a dramatic break from the source of security and love, that is the mother figure, and given the hostile and competitive nature of the masculine environment men have a particular need for the 'love of a good women'. At the same time this need can lead to an undermining of his masculine identity. One response to this situation is to demonise women, as in film-noir. Another would be to acknowledge the positive effect for men of a long term heterosexual relationship while acknowledging the impossibility of maintaining such a relationship and keeping a masculine identity intact. The nice guy element that Gibson brings to these characters suggests a desire for the need for love to be acknowledged and open. At the same time the death of the loving and nurturing relationship is required to tip him over the edge of respectability and into efficient heroism. Figure 2 shows a reckless and determined Riggs in pursuit of the villain on a broken up motor bike. Therefore Gibson's screen wives and girlfriends are murdered and wounded by bad guys. This allows Gibson's screen characters the expression of the pain of men being denied a loving and nurturing relationship while at the same time benefiting from the absence of domestic responsibility, an absence legitimately achieved in patriarchal terms. Once freed from the confines of a domestic relationship he becomes more efficient in the world of men. The assumption that domestic entanglements will somehow emasculate men is not exactly new. Heroes generally ride

off into the sunset John Wayne style because only someone who is not restricted by the ties of respectability and normality, not to mention heterosexual love, can have the power to defeat the evils that lie outside the domestic space.

The importance of Gibson's lack of responsibility is highlighted by the character of Murtaugh. Danny Glover plays a character that has been married for twenty years, he is comparatively ineffective and often plays the buffoon. His position as a family man makes him reluctant to take unnecessary risks and opens him to blackmail because of threats to his family. In the first Lethal Weapon film Murtaugh's daughter is kidnapped by the villains. Lethal Weapon 2 begins with Murtaugh and Riggs involved in a car chase. Their colleagues start to bet on whether or not they will catch the criminal until they realise that Murtaugh is driving and he is driving his wife's car. They then assume that Murtaugh will not apprehend the villain. Later in the film Murtaugh's family is threatened in their home. In Lethal Weapon 3 he is the butt of several jokes; he wears a corset to hide his middle-aged spread and he is sexually harassed by a predatory female. Murtaugh is the comparison by which we can see how much more effective the single and insane Riggs can be. The insanity of Riggs and the domesticity of Murtaugh draws attention to the impossibility of the demands of the masculine ego-ideal. Not only does the world of men cause men emotional deprivation the demands placed on men are not realisable by an 'ordinary' man. Given that Gibson does not have Schwarzenegger's super human strength or inhabit a morally unambiguous past as in the case of Costner he must find another way of acquiring the power to act. He does this by living outside the rules, by becoming insane.

Overall Gibson's heroes are more obviously paranoid than the first two stars mentioned. Paranoia may be an aspect of the genre and narrative of Schwarzenegger and Costner films but their heroism is more simply defined as physical/masculine or moral/masculine. Gibson's heroes reflect the impossibility of being a nice ordinary guy in a hostile masculine world. Therefore Mel Gibson's screen persona not only offers the pleasures of the popular action hero he also acknowledges on an extra level the impossibility of the demands of the masculine ego-ideal and the emotional price men must pay to achieve

it by making that price part of his characterisation. This element of his appeal is more felt than understood. Ironically it provides the element of relevance that makes the more spectacular actions of the hero seem less outrageous, it reduces the gap between text and life.

MICHAEL DOUGLAS

I talked about a greater level of paranoia in the screen persona of Mel Gibson. Michael Douglas portrays a more intensely paranoid masculinity than any of the other stars in this selection, including Mel Gibson. Like Gibson, Douglas has appeared in films of a variety of genres. He first gained recognition in the popular television detective series 'The Streets Of San Francisco' as the youthful sidekick to Carl Malden. His film career immediately after this mainly involved supporting roles and was quite distinct from his career and image after the success of Romancing The Stone (1984 Zemeckis). In this film and its sequel The Jewel Of The Nile(1986 Teague) Douglas plays an action hero in a romantic comedy which to some extent parodies this role. In the detective thriller Black Rain (1989 Scott) Douglas plays a jaded action hero and in the same year appeared in a comedy War Of The Roses (1989 DeVito). In the film Falling Down (1993 Schumacher) he plays an ordinary man pushed over the edge action character but this is complicated by his character acting outside the law. From a critical perspective Douglas has been most noticeable in three of the most controversial films of the last decade. He was the object of a homicidal woman's obsession in Fatal Attraction (1987 Lynne), he was manipulated by at least one homicidal woman in Basic Instinct (1992 Verhoevan) and he was the object of sexual harassment from a female boss in Disclosure (1994 Levinson). Some of Douglas's films offer the pleasures of the action/adventure genre but quite often Douglas's characters complicate the action hero image. In the film Basic Instinct Douglas plays a detective in a detective thriller. As he is also an established Hollywood star we might expect him to play the action hero and solve the problem. This expectation is played on to good effect in the narrative of the film. However Douglas's character falls short of the expectations of the hero. It is this film along with Fatal Attraction, Falling Down and Disclosure that gives Douglas's screen persona a certain meanness that I would call paranoia. His bitter and inadequate heroes reveal the specific image and appeal of this star.

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Douglas's characters portray an almost totally negative experience of masculinity in the modern world. Many of his films promise the pleasures of the action hero and fail to deliver. Why would an audience used to certain conventions of the popular action hero take pleasure in heroes that are easily victimised by women, that go through nervous breakdowns and that fail to work out who did it? There is room in the comedy genre for men who are inadequate to the task of heroism or who are dominated by women. In most of the genres that Douglas has appeared in such portrayals of masculinity in a leading role would go against the genre they are working in. This dilemma is managed by allowing the audience to see that it is not his fault that he cannot pursue the typical heroic role. This star more than any of the others in this selection reflects Creed's argument of a crisis in the master narrative. In the worlds inhabited by Douglas's heroes women no longer behave like women; white, male middle-class Americans can no longer move freely and safely around American streets and an alien culture has become a more powerful economic force in the world than the U.S.A. How can the white, male, heterosexual hero operate in a world where he no longer belongs.

This crisis in a masculine identity often portrayed by Douglas has particular historical relevance. It is logical that the masculine subject position in a capitalist, patriarchy should feel a sense of threat and sometimes paranoia, particularly at a time when the situation of men in the family and work place is changing. Both the U.S.A and U.K have problems of unemployment. Traditionally the breadwinner has been the only significant role for men in the family. At the same time more women work. The media have often mis-represented this phenomenon suggesting that women are taking traditionally male occupations simply out of ambition. This may be the case in some situations but largely women work because they need the money and they work predominantly in low paid, part-time jobs that generally do not attract men.(5) In my opinion the traditional masculine identity is being undermined simply because it is no longer useful to the economy and no longer desirable to many heterosexual women, and this is a fortuitous situation for everyone. All this suggests to me that we need to re-negotiate men's role within the family and how we manage the separation of work and

domestic spaces. If such a negotiation were completed where would this leave the male action hero? As discussed earlier the heroic identity is based on a perception of a hostile world outside the domestic sphere that is largely masculine and a perception that too much involvement in the domestic space will emasculate a man. In the characters of Michael Douglas we have what Creed and Rutherford identified as an hysterical backlash against the advances of a post-feminist, post-imperialist and post-industrial society. In the narratives of his films we see Douglas pursued by a series of demonic career women and his ability to act restricted by the environment.

The reason I included Michael Douglas in a category of popular action heroes is because he plays the popular action hero but one that can no longer fulfil the role because the world has changed too much. His characters have a particular historical relevance as the world has and is changing. Douglas's screen persona suggests a discourse on the role of a traditional masculine identity in a modern world. The bitterness and paranoia of his characters suggests that this identity is subject to a deliberate and subversive attack which has left him angry and confused. Unlike Arnold Schwarzenegger, Douglas has not managed to redraw the boundaries between masculinity and femininity, or re-write the history of previous heroes as is the case with Kevin Costner. Like Mel Gibson his persona reflects the impossibility of the heroic role but unlike Mel Gibson this is not because the demands of masculine heroism are unrealisable for the ordinary, sane, man but because the world has changed so much that the hero no longer has a role, he has become an outcast and a victim.

ROBIN WILLIAMS

In the last of the male stars to be analysed the pleasures of the popular action hero would not apply. It would not be impossible for Robin Williams to appear in a film that offered the pleasures of action cinema in the genre or narrative, but Williams is unlikely to play the gun-toting action hero. Williams is mostly recognised as a comedian. His particular style of comedy is manic, fast-paced almost infantile in its energy level which made him the ideal choice to play a grown up Peter Pan. However his screen persona and comedian persona are not exactly the same. His first cinema hit was <u>Good Morning</u>

<u>Vietnam</u> (1987 Levinson) where he played a D.J who entertained the American troops with his humour. This allowed some space for Williams the comedian to express himself and therefore did not disappoint audience expectations of a role played by Williams. Since then he has also played a man driven insane by the violent death of his wife who then takes on a fictional and fantastic identity in <u>The Fisher King</u> (1991 Gillian) and a man who owns a toy factory in <u>Toys</u> (1992 Levinson), both of these roles fit in with Williams persona of a comedian. He has also appeared in the film <u>Awakenings</u> (1990 Marshal) playing a shy and quiet doctor and in <u>The Dead Poets Society</u> (1989 Weir) playing a literature teacher in a film described by Mike Hammond in ' The Historical and Hysterical: Melodrama, War and Masculinity in <u>Dead Poets Society</u> (Kirkham&Thumin 1993) as a male melodrama. These two films did not require a comic performance. From the roles Williams has played I would argue that he works well in both comedy and melodrama and often combines the two. In the case of <u>Hook</u> I have shown that this film is as much a male melodrama as a comedy.

As mentioned above there are two main aspects to the screen persona of Robin Williams, the comedian and the melodramatic actor. Both put Williams in a unique position to take a critical stance on any issue including hegemonic masculinity. Firstly Robin Williams the comedian can express views and point out flaws in dominant beliefs more freely than others can. Comedy allows us to be critical about our lives in ways that might otherwise cause anxiety or boredom. An obvious example would be Williams character in <u>Good Morning Vietnam</u> who constantly mocks the military on his radio show, particularly the idea of military intelligence. I am not suggesting a political agenda or a feminist pre-disposition. At times this character's monologues re-enforce masculinist prejudices, for instance the laughable incongruity of an effeminate army officer. However his character does allow the expression of a grudge against the overly restricting values of military life. In <u>Hook, Toys</u> and <u>Mrs Doubtfire</u> (1993 Colombus) Williams characters are either child-like or feminine. As a comedian he can occupy spaces most men cannot admit to wanting to occupy. The child-like characteristics of his persona offer the pleasures of refusing to grow-up. This can be a desire born out of a wish to reject the demands of adult masculinity and/or a desire to return to a space of freedom and imagination that adults assume children occupy. In a non-comic milieu

such desires, if fulfilled, would deny the character a successful masculinity and make it virtually impossible to present him as a central character in a Hollywood film. Of course on a conscious level there are ways of interpreting these roles that remain within hegemonic boundaries. For instance I may have enjoyed the scenes in the recent film The Bird Cage (1996 Nichols) where Williams and his screen partner Albert (Nathan Lane) are trying to impersonate 'straight' male behaviour because I saw them ridiculing such stereotypical 'straight' behaviour. I could easily have seen Williams as ridiculing gay male behaviour or simply Williams as being funny whether impersonating 'straight' or gay behaviour. But as a comedian he can indulge illicit pleasures and express grudges against the tyranny of hegemonic masculinity from a position of relative safety.

His melodramatic actor persona also offers opportunities for a critical stance, or rather an expression of unhappiness with hegemonic masculinity, but one that feels very different. The comedian can pour scorn on 'meat head' military machismo but the actor in the melodrama portrays emotional oppression. In both his melodramatic and comedy roles Williams has played an unusual or atypical character that has suffered at the hands of an authority who has a rigid idea of appropriate behaviour for soldiers, fathers, teachers or men generally. In Good Morning Vietnam and Dead Poets Society he is silenced by authority and in Mrs Doubtfire he is denied access to his children because of his lack of conformity. Willaims is not in any way offering an alternative to patriarchy, he is appealing to a more flexible and thoughtful masculinity, a 'new man' rather than a 'retributive man'. This more thoughtful masculinity can also be associated with a more middle-class, or perhaps more accurately an educated approach to appropriate male behaviour. Williams character's in Awakenings and Dead Poets Society and to some extent in the more comic roles of Toys and Good Morning Vietnam emphasis the ability to reason as important features of adult masculinity. His persona does however express a need to rebel occasionally against the restrictive demands of hegemonic masculinity. I would argue that Williams appeal, although not necessarily politically conscious, addresses a desire to express discontent.

Looking at all the male stars examined so far I began with an icon of masculinity and moved down to an image of masculinity under threat from a female/foreign dominated world. In Robin Williams screen persona we have the nice guy that stays nice whatever happens. Some similarities can be drawn with Kevin Costner in so far as Williams characters seem to espouse an intellectual and moral integrity. However in all of the Costner films mentioned apart from Field Of Dreams, his moral superiority is enforced by physical superiority. No-one expects Williams to fight his way out of trouble with an automatic weapon, or to learn to kick-box. His identity, masculine or otherwise is not grounded in his physical strength or his ability to use physical force. From this I would argue that the screen persona of Williams does not relate to an existential sense of threat that I associated with a capitalist-patriarchy but to a conscious and specific rejection of certain aspects of masculine hegemony. As I have mentioned earlier there are many responses possible to the demands of masculinity including complete rejection.

JODI FOSTER

The final star to be analysed in this selection is Jodi Foster. This star does not appear to have much relevance to a masculine subject position. This is not just because she is a woman. It is wrong to assume that a central female character will in some way exclude a male audience, or vice versa. It is useful to describe melodrama as addressing a female subject position and action/adventure as addressing a male subject position as this helps us to understand what connection is being made between the media producer and the real experiences and understandings of an audience. The fact that in Aliens (Scott 1979, Cameron 1986) the protagonist is female does not detract from the generic pleasures of overcoming an obstacle and defeating an enemy using physical strength, wit and the available technology. These pleasures are addressing a male subject position. A female star may also appeal to a heterosexual masculine subject position because of her sex appeal. Her glamour could appeal to a competitive element of the masculine subject position that sees the possession of such a woman as a symbol of success. Richard Dyer (1987) has shown how a female star had particular relevance to a homosexual male subject position when he looked at the popularity of Judy Garland. Jodi Foster cannot be described as a sex symbol or the ultimate accessory to a sports car or as a female equivalent to Rambo. In Foster's most successful films she has played a victim of male

abuse. In <u>Taxi Driver</u> (Scorsese 1976) she played a child prostitute working for a male pimp; in <u>The Accused</u> (Kaplan 1988) Foster played the victim of gang rape and in <u>Silence Of The Lambs</u> Foster's character is visually and narratively associated with male verbal and visual abuse. Given Foster's slight build, youthful looks and victim roles she would make an ideal motivation for a male stars retributive heroism. However this was not the case in the films noted above. In <u>The Accused</u> her character emphasises the double standard still operating regarding the expression of sexuality for men and women. These roles deliberately challenge patriarchal values and this is an obvious interest of the actress. In an article on Foster by B Ruby Rich in 'Sight and Sound' (1991) Rich quotes Foster as saying,

"I wouldn't do anything regressive or repressive or that advocates
an old moral regime"

From this article it also appears that Foster pursued the role of Starling in <u>Silence of the Lambs</u> because she saw it as a feminist film. In an interview with Melvyn Bragg on 'The South Bank Show' (1995) Jodi Foster said she wanted to play the part of Starling because it was a female action lead and because the character felt compelled to act for powerless women. In another article from 'Sight and Sound' Amy Taulsin (1991) describes <u>The Silence of the Lambs</u> as a 'profoundly feminist film'. If this were the case then it would seem that Jodi Foster and her films have no relevance to a masculine subject position. I intend to show that the narrative of <u>Silence Of The Lambs</u> does relate to a masculine subject position partly because of the characterisation of Starling/Foster within it. I will also show Jodi Foster, even when seen in the most oppositional light, does address something of the experience of the masculine subject position.

If I examine the difference between Foster's protagonist in <u>Silence Of The Lambs</u> and other female protagonists I can demonstrate something about her star persona and how it works within a genre that traditionally features male leads. Tasker (1993) described the new phenomenon of female action heroines as 'women in drag'. Talking about heroines like Sigourney Weaver in the <u>Aliens</u> series and Sarah Connor in <u>Terminator 2</u>

Tasker talks about their masculinised appearance. In both these examples the characters wear combat gear, have developed muscles and use sophisticated weaponry. Action heroines almost certainly came about because of changing attitudes towards appropriate behaviour for women. As I mentioned before, an action heroine does not change the pleasures of the action genre from a masculine subject position although there may be other ramifications. In Silence Of The Lambs Foster/Starling plays the detective that solves the crime, a role mostly associated with male leads. However Starling is not masculinised in fact she is visually compared and distinguished from the male characters. The first instance occurs when Starling gets into a lift occupied entirely by male F.B.I students. The men are all dressed in the same red sweatshirt, Starling is wearing pale blue and all the men tower over her as shown in figure 3. Starling is also visually and narratively associated with the female victims. This begins with the opening sequence when Starling is running through a wood. Tasker (1993) also points out that in the past in film when a female character becomes the protagonist or aggressor she is usually given a specific motive for this transgression, rape revenge or the death of a father. Ambition is the initial motivation suggested for Starling's pursuit of Buffalo Bill. However we eventually learn that Starling's childhood experience of witnessing the slaughter of spring lambs and the terror this provoked in the lambs is Starling's motivation, briefly compassion is her motivation. Both Ripley in Aliens and Sarah Connor are motivated by a maternal protectiveness. This is a similar motivation to Starling's compassion. However both are motivated to protect specific individuals, they have not chosen a career that requires them to protect all individuals.

Therefore Starling's character differs significantly from other action heroines just as Foster's screen persona differs from other Hollywood actresses. She has not masculinised her appearance. Her motivation is a belief system instigated by her compassion. The difference between Starling and other action heroines is that the 'women in drag', even though they show that women can do more than nurture, also reinforce the values inherent in the masculine ego-ideal whereas Starling continually highlights the oppressiveness and monstrous cruelty that exist in a masculine environment, particularly from the point of view of women. Starling's struggle to fulfil a role in a masculine environment where she is harassed by colleagues and villains alike

gives this character a great deal of relevance to the female subject position. However Foster has made popular films. Without wishing to appear too cynical those films would have to have a broader appeal than a feminist oppositional stance to the patriarchal order would provide. I have already mentioned that one possible response to the masculine subject position is rejection of the demands of that role. Foster's screen characters highlight the dangers and injustices inherent in a male dominated world. Women are not the only victims of male violence and injustice. In the U.K up until the mid-seventies most murder victims were women. In the U.S and since the seventies in the U.K men are the most likely victims of violent assault and murder and their assailants are almost always men (6) (unfortunately this is not because fewer women are being murdered). As discussed earlier men easily become accustomed to the idea that other men present a threat. Therefore Jodi Fosters screen persona as someone who is subjected to male harassment but survives with dignity has a more universal appeal than might be obvious at first glance. Jodi Fosters screen image may not suggest a discourse on masculinity as obviously as that of Arnold Schwarzenegger but I would argue that on an emotional level her image appeals to the real experience of the masculine subject position as strongly as the other stars in this selection.

IN CONCLUSION

It is not surprising that those stars associated with action/adventure are most relevant to a masculine subject position. What is surprising is the variety of ways this subject position is addressed by these stars. Arnold Schwarzenegger and Kevin Costner provide the clearest examples of masculine ego-ideals but they have very different star images. Both Mel Gibson and Michael Douglas offer the pleasures of a masculine ego-ideal but ones that are, to a greater or lesser degree, compromised. Such a variety of responses to hegemonic masculinity within a popular medium suggests that our responses to ideology are neither straight forward or consistent and that there are more choices than complicit or oppositional. The example of Mel Gibson shows how an audience can have its cake and eat it. Gibson's characters indulge the fantasy of the heroic ego-ideal as well as ridiculing such an unrealistic expectation. This variety also suggests that it is the appeal to the emotional, the feelings created by real experience that provides the opportunity for variety in the small example of the stars of Hollywood action/adventure

films. Robin Williams and Jodi Foster do not, in themselves, suggest pleasures most relevant to a masculine subject position. However they can be used to add to a discourse about hegemonic masculinity. Foster, in particular, has a star image often associated with a feminist oppositional stance. In <u>Silence Of The Lambs</u> this image works to emphasise an area of similarity between the experience of the masculine subject position and the experience of a feminine subject position. If this similarity did not exist I do not think this film could have become one of the most visited films on release. In <u>Hook</u> Robin Williams' comic and melodramatic personas are used to manage uncomfortable contradictions in the demands of hegemonic masculinity. As well as adding to the discourse of the film that is relevant to a masculine subject position these two stars will broaden the possible appeal of these films. Again by looking for the relevance that connects with the audience on an emotional level we can see an enormous scope for variety in what many people think of as a limited medium.

NARRATIVE

I have chosen to analyse narrative because it was identified by Docherty (et al 1987) as a recognised reason for enjoying a film. This begs the question what exactly was understood by the term narrative. I doubt if a cinema audience has a particular concern for the strict adherence to Aristotelian principles. I suspect that the surveyed audience understood narrative to be the story, the fabula rather than any of the other possible aspects of narrative (see Bordwell 1985). I am not suggesting that fabula is the only source of pleasure in a narrative, only that the 'common sense' understanding of narrative is a consequential series of events, a story. Also the purpose of this analysis is to establish if and how a film is relevant to the real experience of hegemonic masculinity. In this instance an analysis of a story about a man discovering a problem and how he goes about resolving it is more apt than a discussion of, for instance, whether or not the tale is told in the first or second person. Given these points I will limit my analysis to how the story is relevant to the experience of the masculine subject position.

I have noticed some cross generic similarities in these films in the way they address a masculine subject position. Therefore I have divided the six films into three groups of two. The first group portray the most complicit and heroic masculinities, one because of the hyper-masculine image of the star and the other because of the morally simplified world that the heroic character operates within. The second are two films that attempt to show a positive heroic masculinity but this is undermined to a greater or lesser extent in the narrative. Finally two films that portray a negative response to hegemonic masculinity, one that portrays the demands of hegemonic masculinity as emotionally restrictive and one that portrays masculinity itself as monstrous. I am not suggesting a definitive schematic, these are rough groupings and there will be differences within and similarities between the groups. I am not suggesting that each film consciously scripted a particular attitude to hegemonic masculinity, although I would guess that this was the case with The Silence Of The Lambs. I simply wish to demonstrate by contrast and comparison that within a relatively small sample of popular films there are significant variations in the way the masculine subject can be addressed.

COMPLICIT MASCULINITY? ROBIN HOOD: PRINCE OF THIEVES and TERMINATOR TWO: JUDGEMENT DAY.

I have headed this section complicit masculinity with a question mark because one of the films portrays both an icon of cinematic masculinity as well as a dread of masculine power. In the opening scenes the camera lovingly follows Schwarzenegger around, women admire his body and he beats up all the men. This sequence could be a commercial for the ultimate masculine ego-ideal. As the narrative of Terminator 2 unravels it shows a growing anxiety about masculine power. Strangely Prince Of Thieves, with its concern with constructing a politically correct masculinity, is the most complicit and unproblematic in its response to the masculine subject position than all of the other films in this selection. Prince of Thieves is concerned with constructing an ideal masculinity from a less than perfect beginning, a made to measure hero rather than the factory made version presented in Terminator 2. Robin's journey towards a mature masculinity is accomplished through his relationships with other men and to a small extent with Marion. Once Robin has overcome the main obstacle, the villain, this ideal is achieved and the ending is happy and complicit. On the other hand the defeat of the villain in Terminator 2 requires the destruction of the hero, which gives us a more ambiguous ending. Firstly I will look at how Prince of Thieves defines mature masculinity through the leading character of Robin Hood. Our introduction to the character of Robin Hood comes when we learn that he ran away to the crusades because of a long running argument with his father. In his two brief scenes Loxley senior is presented as the genuine chivalrous knight. His last action is to charge at a crowd of Sheriff's men shouting 'for God and King Richard'. On the other hand various characters refer to Robin as 'a whelp' or an arrogant boy and the Sheriff initially does not see him as the threat his father represented. Through his interactions with other characters we see how this character has matured and what he matures into is a particular definition of appropriate masculinity.

The main character that influences Robin's understanding of appropriate masculinity is Azeem. It is important to remember that the crusades need not have been mentioned

and thus the question of racism and imperialism could have been avoided. In the original ballads the Robin Hood tales took place two hundred years after the reign of King Richard.(1) In other film versions the crusades have been used to explain the absence of the king. The crusades are used to explain the absence of the king in this version but also to explain the appearance of a black character and to denounce the crusades thus aligning the hero with an anti-imperialist perspective. Azeem is quite heavy handily presented as a positive black character. Giving a Medieval character from north Africa superior technological knowledge to medieval Europeans is not unrealistic, giving an individual character the knowledge to make gunpowder and perform a caesarean section is an attempt to underline this reality. There are discourses of race to be examined around the character of Azeem, for instance his acceptance by Robin and the woodsmen is mostly based on his extraordinary abilities not simply on his existence. However I only have the space to examine discourses that address a masculine subject position. Sometimes the discourse of race and gender overlap. Donald Boyle (1991) points out that a common function of a black character in cinema is as a supportive fatherly figure, something along the lines of a 'mammy'. Such a supportive role is a comfortable compromise because it provides a non-criminal portrayal of a black character without giving that character the power of the hero. In this instance the side-kick function of Azeem also helps to define heroism; firstly because of this character's sense of chivalry but also because he is black he defines Robin's heroism as non-racist. Azeem is used to challenge European racism, Robin challenges the woodsmen's reluctance to share a drink with Azeem and a child questions Azeem about their differences in colour. However these scenes are brief and do not provide the dramatic tension in this film that they could have done if European racism were more central to the narrative. Azeem's primary function is to re-align Kevin Costner's portrayal of a medieval knight with an anti-racist perspective, successfully negotiating the desire for a white male hero with the demands of a post imperialist age.

The character of Maid Marion could be used to associate white, male, heroism with a post-feminist perspective. Given the heavy handed attempt to up-date the morality of the Robin Hood myth with the characters of Azeem and Loxley senior, whom we are told believed it was folly to force one's religion on another people, it is interesting to

speculate why Marion fails to alter the traditional role of the damsel in distress. In this version Marion has undergone some adaptations to the nineteen nineties. Firstly she is never refereed to as maid, completely dropping the issue of her virginity. She is the mistress of her own household and the protector of those within it. Marion also fights. However Marion is not able to protect herself from the unwanted advances of the villain or to defeat the unarmed Robin. The difference is in packaging not in function or effectivity. The point at which Marion becomes a willing object of the heroes desire is the point at which her character returns to the damsel in distress function. Thompson and Pleck (Kimmel 1987) in their work on contemporary attitudes to appropriate gender behaviour briefly highlight a modern contradiction in thinking on gender. A large number of male college students expressed liberal attitudes to appropriate behaviour for women, seeing that women should be allowed to compete with men for a career. Yet the same male students expected all men to always be competitive, competent and to avoid overtly female behaviour. This indicates more of a willingness to accept changes in attitudes towards women than towards men. I see a problem in these contradictory attitudes for men when relating to women on a personal level. Accepting women as equals at work might be possible as this does not alter the need for men to be competent and self sufficient. Within a personal relationship equality would threaten men's image of themselves as breadwinners and as in control of their emotional lives. In the fictional instance of Prince of Thieves Marion has the mannerisms of a modern career women but when she becomes involved in a romantic relationship with the hero she reverts to the traditional role of the heroine in action/adventure films and has to be saved by the hero. This is not solving the real contradiction in male experience but is managing it in favour of an ego-ideal manufactured to be pleasurable to a male subject position. In this instance the need to re-align the hero to a post-feminist perspective is subordinated to the need to create a pleasurable heroic masculinity. The attempt to modernise heroic masculinity is still kept within patriarchal boundaries. However Marion does set the terms by which she will be won by the hero and these terms are another method of placing masculinity in a modern liberal perspective. Marion's affection is won when she sees Robin as the elected leader and protector of the woodsmen rather than as a spoilt aristocratic boy.

Robin's encounters with the woodsmen both confirms his heroic masculinity and his liberal perspective. In order to be accepted by the woodsmen Robin must fight John Little 'the best man o the woods'. After an extended brawl in a river John Little concedes that Robin has 'balls of solid rock'. The audience is already aware that Robin can fight many men at once and win, we have seen him fight his way out of a Moroccan prison and take on a band of the Sheriff's men. The fight in the river demonstrates Robin's action heroism for the other male characters. He performs masculinity for other men's approval, their acceptance confirms that masculinity. I have discussed the importance of other men's approval in the establishment of a successful masculine identity. In action films this approval is an important function of other male characters, particularly the sidekick. I will discuss the point further when I examine Lethal Weapon 3. In this instance the woodsmen not only approve and therefore confirm Robin's masculinity they associate that masculinity with democratic ideals. Robin becomes their leader, not because of his class position but by demonstrating the solidity of his bollocks on various occasions. He rises through a system of hormonal meritocracy which can be interpreted as both liberal and patriarchal.

The portrayal of villains is as relevant to how the narrative addresses the experience of masculinity as the portrayal of the hero. In Prince Of Thieves the Sheriff provides a bad version of masculinity that compares with the good examples presented by Azeem and Robin's father. This distinction is not subtle or overtly ideological, the Sheriff does not represent imperialism or racism. Paul Hoch's (Hoch 1979) analysis of adventure narratives is useful when relating this villain to a discourse on masculinity. Hoch identifies three stock characters in narratives from the Egyptian Osiris-Isis-Set myth to Luke Skywalker-Princess Lear-Darth Vader in the Star Wars films (Lucas 1979). Hoch calls these characters the white hero, the black beast and the white heroine. The black beast represents all that men must repress in order to attain an acceptable masculinity. The white hero must battle with the black beast and win if he is to attain that masculinity. The white heroine is simply the prise of the hero or the victim of the beast. The Sheriff is portrayed as a caricature of evil and Alan Rickman's camp performance reflects this (2). He is ambitious, treacherous, exaggeratedly libidinous and a Satanist. Alternatively Robin is continually referred to as Christian, setting up a simple binary

opposition between well behaved masculinity and badly behaved masculinity. The filming of hero and villain plays on their distinctions. In one shot Robin, who is assumed killed after falling from a great height, is seen to rise from the dead saviour like. He is shot with the sun rise behind him, surrounded by mist and out of focus so that he looks like an apparition rising out of the ground. Rickman is fair haired but for his role as Sheriff he is given black hair and black clothes while Costner keeps his fair looks. Apart from two short scenes the sheriff is filmed either at night or in dark rooms. Once Robin reaches England he is filmed almost entirely outside and during the day. Figures 4 and 5 are publicity shots that reflect Costner's saint like representation within the film and Rickman's image of evil. The exceptions are one well lit evening party or whenever he encounters the sheriff. The series of obstacles that structure this narrative all lead up to the final confrontation with the villain. Once the villain is defeated the hero wins the heroine, the king returns and order is restored.

Bearing in mind that all action heroes cause anxiety for the masculine subject position by re-affirming the impossible demands of hegemonic masculinity, Prince Of Thieves is an uncomplicated celebration of action heroism. In order to achieve this the central character has to be positioned on an ideological par with nineteen-nineties sensibilities. This is a particular talent of the star Kevin Costner. Within the narrative this is achieved through the central character learning to be more like his father. Robin progresses towards an interpretation of masculinity which is democratic, anti-racist and decidedly patriarchal. In Judgement Day Schwarzenegger's central character does not have to establish his ego-ideal credentials. His initial filming suggests that his effectivity is apparent in his shape. In the Terminator's first few sequences he lives up to the expectations of a Schwarzenegger hero. He beats up bikers, blasts his way out of a shopping mall and escapes a car pursuit by blowing up his pursuer. This is undoubtedly a central pleasure of the star Arnold Schwarzenegger and the action genre. The series of chases and confrontations that punctuate the narrative guarantee that these pleasures are available throughout the film. At the same time the Terminators relationships with John and Sarah Connor and the nature of the villain all act to create a perception of fear of Schwarzenegger's ideal masculinity.

The first indication of this fear occurs in the scene where John Connor realises the Terminator must do whatever he tells him to do. John is arguing with the Terminator in a deserted parking area. The Terminator is refusing to rescue Sarah from the asylum and from being the T100's next victim. John flings himself at the Terminator fists flying, the Terminator picks John off the floor and as John yells "put me down", the Terminator drops him. Lying on the floor John realises that he can order the Terminator around and like a kid at Christmas he says "wow, my very own Terminator" and proceeds to try out his new toy. In the mean-time two men have come over to see if John needs help. John insults them knowing he has the Terminator to rely on. The would be rescuers attack John and in the confrontation the Terminator moves to shoot one of the men. John is horrified that such a small incident nearly ended in a killing. He stops the shooting and asks the Terminator "Don't you know you can't just shoot people". This is a particularly horrific incident considering the pleasure the audience and John have been taking in the Terminator's physical and destructive power. As the relationship between John and the Terminator develops John tries to make the Terminator more human and forbids him to kill. As the obsessed and distant Sarah refuses to respond to John he increasingly confides in the Terminator. It is this affection between the man-machine and the boy that makes the Terminator realise that his presence threatens the human race.

If we look at the villain and the female lead I can show how this theme of fear and fascination is continued. The function of the villain in Judgement Day is a little more complex than the cartoon bad guy of Prince Of Thieves. As an example of a powerful technology the T100 allows a display of visual effects as well as a formidable opponent for the Terminator. This villain just keeps coming back; after being blown-up in a lorry, a crash in a helicopter and after being frozen solid. The greater the threat the greater the pleasure of victory. This also allows the repetition of confrontation that is so necessary to the action genre. The T100 (Robert Patrick) addresses the masculine subject position in two ways. Firstly the actor Robert Patrick was chosen for the role because of his physical difference to Arnold Schwarzenegger. He is much more slender than Schwarzenegger, almost cat like and feminine, as shown in figure 6, which emphasises

the masculinity of the Schwarzenegger ego-ideal. Like the Sheriff this villain sets up an opposition between hero/appropriate masculinity and villain/inappropriate masculinity, this time based on gendered appearance rather than moral rectitude. Within the narrative the T100 can also change his appearance at will, from masculine to feminine to inanimate object. Given the difficulty of establishing a masculine identity in a father absent child-rearing system this lack of physical determination and therefore identity not only contrasts with the solid masculinity of Schwarzenegger it also recalls the anxiety of establishing a fixed masculine identity in a father absent child caring system. Secondly the T1000 is identified by Sarah Connor (Linda Hamilton) as the product of a masculinity that seeks to control through destruction because they cannot create. If the T1000 represents the destructiveness of hegemonic masculinity then so does the Terminator, they are both the product of the same science only one is a fantasy and the other a nightmare.

As in the case of Prince Of Thieves, a woman can be as powerful as a man but not as powerful as a hero. In this instance the ambiguities around expectations of the male role model expressed in the narrative cannot be played out around the image of Swartzenegger as his image represents the ultimate solution to any problem. It is the action heroine that embodies the narrative neurosis about masculinity. The initial filming of Sarah Connor mirrors the way in which Arnold Swartzenegger is often filmed. The camera moves up her arm as she is doing chin ups emphasising her developed biceps, the camera then moves behind her and cuts away to show her whole body from behind as she exercises. This image of a powerful body is undermined by the question of Sarah's sanity. Her son has already described her as a loser and a psycho. We know that she is being detained in a psychiatric hospital. The images of Sarah exercising are inter-cut with images of psychiatrists walking down a corridor, passing male orderlies or nurses restraining a variety of female patients. The psychiatrist conducting the tour, Dr Silberman, describes an interesting patient who suffers from ' acute schizo-affective disorder'. He then describes the fantasy of this patient, this fantasy the audience will recognise as the plot of Terminator. This suggests that Sarah is sane as she is not imagining the Terminators. However the first shot we see of her face reveals a manic, almost possessed expression. We see her, shot from slightly above, starring through a

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mass of unkept hair. This play with the issue of her sanity is kept up through most of the film. We see Sarah and Dr Silberman watching a video of Sarah becoming hysterical while recounting the story of the Armageddon which she knows will take place. When Dr Silberman refuses to believe Sarah when she says she is feeling much better and refuses to transfer her to a minimum security ward she attacks him and has to be restrained (see figure 7). Later when she is questioned by the police about a sighting of the Terminator she appears to be catatonic. All of this is inter-cut with narrative that confirms Sarah's version of events. We know Sarah is not having paranoid fantasies but she is still portrayed as hysterical.

Even after she escapes from the asylum Sarah is seen as driven and neurotic, particularly compared to the mechanical efficiency of the Terminator. Eventually Sarah relinquishes her parenthood of John to the Terminator. In a scene where Sarah is watching John and the Terminator together we hear her narrative explanation that the Terminator would never leave him, shout at him, hit him, be too busy to spend time with him. She goes on to say

> "of all the would be fathers that came and went over the years this thing, this machine was the only one that measured up. In an insane world it was the sanest choice,"

In her eyes under the threat of world-wide destruction, the Terminator/Swartzenegger is the ultimate parent. At this point Sarah goes off to assassinate the scientist most responsible for the creation of the computer that tries to wipe out the human race. However, Sarah is unable to kill the man in a face to face situation. During this sequence John, Sarah and the Terminator explain to the scientist, Miles Bennet, the consequences of his research. Sarah has an outburst saying that men like Bennet make her sick, they have to create weapons of mass destruction because they cannot create life. In other words men suffer from womb envy. This outburst is dismissed as another example of Sarah's neurosis, curtailing any possible debate on the issue. However this outburst and the narration quoted above add a lot to the levels of discourse on gender that run through this film. It is necessary to unravel the layers of this discourse. Sarah

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is portrayed as a she-man. Tasker points out (1993) that such characters have been labelled women in drag. Sarah is physically muscular and her dress and manner are masculine. She is a capable fighter, weapons expert and seems to have the necessary knowledge to conduct guerrilla warfare. Her character will add to the generic pleasures of witnessing a character overcoming obstacles through violent conflict. Sarah has power, through physical strength and technological knowledge. However Sarah is not as strong as the Terminator, she does not save her son from the main threat of the T1000 and ultimately she lacks the determination to assassinate Bennet. This adds to the heroic stature of the Terminator/Swartzenegger character. I would argue that this comparative weakness of the heroine is not just about reaffirming the physical and mental superiority of masculinity. Sarah has become masculinised in response to a threat, a threat she later interprets as a result of masculine controlled science. She is incarcerated and wrongly diagnosed by a masculine dominated institution, where there are only women inmates. As a result of her masculinisation she has lost the ability to be a good mother. As a result of her nightmares about the impending Armageddon, brought about by men, she is driven to the edge of sanity. Sarah is the result of living in a male dominated and consequently threatening world. Sarah is addressing a discourse on the perceived thin boundary between acceptable masculinity and destructive masculinity. Her character embodies the fear of a powerful masculinity leaving us free to indulge our fascination with Schwarzenegger's dangerously powerful masculinity. In 'Judgement Day' masculinity is both a reward and a threat, the narrative oscillates between impressive displays of Schwarzenegger's physical power and narrative fears of such power. The conclusion of the narrative reinforces this discourse. The Terminator realises that if he remains he will represent a threat. This is a common theme in action films, this ending brings to mind the ending of The Searchers (1956 Ford) where John Wayne is the one who restores order but who cannot fit into an ordinary life. This in itself articulates a dilemma for the masculine subject position. The ego-ideals represented by characters portrayed by stars like Arnold Swartzenegger and John Wayne are the most effective at dealing with obstacles, particularly when the obstacles are other men. However such masculinity is itself threatening, there is a thin boundary between the pleasure of an heroic masculinity and the threat of masculinity.

SOME TROUBLE WITH MAINTAINING A MASCULINE IDENTITY.
LETHAL WEAPON 3 AND BASIC INSTINCT.

In the first two films analysed the ego-ideals presented are mostly unflawed. They are both unrealistic ideals against which all real men will appear inadequate but as such they indulge the fantasy of being the most powerful man. In the narrative of Terminator 2 we also see expressions of fear of a powerful man, but this does not diminish the Terminator's masculine perfection. In the next two films analysed the fantasy of the masculine ego-ideal is there but within the narrative and characterisation of the heroes this ideal becomes difficult to maintain. In my examination of the star image of Mel Gibson I showed how his screen characters displayed a mental instability which explained his ability to deal with any obstacle that confronted him and which signified a sense of loss concomitant with exclusion from the domestic space. Gibson's screen characters showed a flaw in the masculine ego-ideal of the action hero. In the narrative of Lethal Weapon 3 I will look at two areas where the cracks begin to show in the establishment of the masculine ego-ideal. Firstly the buddy relationship and secondly the use of humour.

I could describe Lethal Weapon 3 as a series of pre-ambles to a car chase, a chase at an ice hockey match, a shoot out at a hamburger stall, a fight in a garage, another fight in another garage a chase on an underground system and a show-down at a building site. As mentioned earlier the element of detection is either absent or fulfilled by secondary characters. The car chase and shoot out at the hamburger stall provide the mystery, that is who is supplying criminals with illegal weapons that have already been seized by the police. Riggs and Murtaugh become involved in these accidentally and the mystery is identified by the internal affairs detective and romantic interest Lorna Cole (Rene Russo). It is Lorna that identifies the garage where the criminals are working and that there is something amiss in the underground storage facility. It is the comic relief character Leo (Joe Pesci) that knows that the villain will be at a ice-hockey match and at the building site. It would be easy to argue that the central character Riggs is used only to display action heroism because his involvement in the narrative detail of the crime and the solving of the crime is limited to confrontations with the bad guy. Certainly such a display is a priority in this film, an organising structure and a central source of pleasure.

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However the narrative is also structured around the build up to Murtaugh's retirement. In the opening sequence Murtaugh tells us he knows there is a real bomb in the building because he has only eight days to retirement. In the following sequence Riggs and Murtaugh have been demoted because Riggs' unnecessary interference caused the bomb to detonate prematurely. Murtaugh complains " six days to retirement and I'm busted down to patrolman". At another stage Murtaugh's daughter writes five days to go on a notice board in the family kitchen and the film ends on the day Murtaugh is due to retire. The importance of this element of the narrative is particularly interesting to this investigation because it concerns the relationship of the buddies.

I have already mentioned certain aspects of the buddy relationship when discussing Prince of Thieves and the star image of Mel Gibson. In Prince of Thieves I talked about the portrayal of Azeem as providing a positive black character that did not undermine or supersede the white hero. Murtaugh is a respectable man who is black, but he does not have the power of Riggs just as the female cop Lorna has skill and power but in the finale fails where Riggs succeeds. Murtaugh could also be described as a 'mammy' figure for Riggs. Murtaugh's family provide a surrogate family for Riggs and Murtaugh generally follows behind Riggs backing him up. In examining the star image of Mel Gibson I pointed out that Murtaugh's domesticity acted as a comparison to the heroic efficiency of the single Riggs, with Murtaugh's ability to act being restrained by the possibility of threats to his family. The dramatic tension that Murtaugh's retirement causes provides another insight into the buddy relationship. The scene on the boat when Murtaugh is depressed and drunk finally reveals the true necessity of the buddy relationship. Riggs finally gets angry with Murtaugh after many small jibes about his retirement. Riggs explains that what happens to Murtaugh happens to him, that he doesn't know what will happen to him when Murtaugh retires. He also makes the extra-ordinary claim that Murtaugh's family is his family; Murtaugh's kids are his kids; Murtaugh's wife does his laundry and he eats Murtaugh's food. At this point Murtaugh and Riggs tell each other they love each other. If I go back to the theories of the development of masculine identity the importance of the buddy aspect becomes clearer. Men perform masculinity for other men, it is the acceptance of ones masculine identity by other men that confirms the success of that identity. This is the primary function of

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the buddy, to accept and thus confirm the heroic identity of the central character. Murtaugh's absence would not only deprive Riggs of a surrogate family he would no longer have the confirmation he needs of his superior masculinity, either through comparison to Murtaugh or through acceptance by Murtaugh, therefore his identity would be less defined.

This need for affirmation from other men is a point at which the maintenance of a masculine ego-ideal becomes more difficult. In <u>Prince Of Thieves</u> Azeem's relationship with Robin does not become too uncomfortable because their alliance is temporary, until Azeem fulfils an obligation to save Robin's life; because Azeem is a mentor or father figure and because Robin never expresses a need for Azeem to be present. In <u>Lethal Weapon 3</u> Murtaugh is not Riggs' mentor, he is an emotional anchor, a substitute for the emotional comforts of a domestic life. This co-dependency, of men in general for other men, and between Riggs and Murtaugh undermines the hegemonic understanding that men be emotionally self sufficient. It also risks men being seen in a feminine light either as object of desire or as a nurturer. Given the logic of hegemonic masculinity discussed earlier this need for affirmation from other men stems from the insecurity of masculine identity not sexual desire, but it is also logical that men would fear that their need for affirmation from other men will be interpreted as a sexual need. This fear is addressed within the narrative, highlighting the uncomfortable nature of this buddy relationship. Both men's hetero-sexuality is confirmed prior to and after the scene on the boat. Riggs has sex with Lorna Cole just before this scene and just after Murtaugh tells his son that he loves him, making the relationship of Riggs and Murtaugh seem more like father and son. Also humour is used throughout in relation to the Riggs and Murtaugh twosome. As discussed in the chapter on genre, humour can be used to re-interpret uncomfortable situations. One example would be when Leo is showing prospective buyers around Murtaugh's house and reveals to them that the house has been remodelled after drug dealers drove through the front window and after bomb damage. Murtaugh moves to attack Leo, Riggs restrains him just as the couple viewing the house walk into the room. This tableau encountered by the couple looks like a passionate clinch. Another example is when Delores arrives at the police station with chocolates and flowers looking for Murtaugh. Delores is a comical predatory female who has become attracted to

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Murtaugh. Murtaugh hides under the table, in itself a joke, until she leaves. Before Murtaugh stands up Riggs hands him the chocolates and flowers. At this point the station counsellor arrives to see Murtaugh kneeling in front of Riggs with flowers and chocolates in his hands. She interprets this situation as a sign of Murtaugh's disturbed personality. Apart from both scenes re-affirming the 'obvious' criminality of a homosexual relationship both scenes portray such an interpretation of Riggs and Murtaugh's relationship as ludicrous, so outrageous it is funny, pre-empting any alternative interpretations of the buddy relationship. However this attempt at apology reveals the possible anxieties behind the situation.

The relationship of the buddies with Leo and Riggs' relationship with Lorna Cole all ultimately confirm the centrality of the relationship between Riggs and Murtaugh. I have mentioned how the establishment of a masculine identity can be achieved by searching out men to exclude from that identity. Leo fulfils this role, he is comic relief, because he is silly and because he is so much less masculine than most men would like to see themselves. Riggs and Murtaugh often gang up on Leo, confirming their position on the right side of masculinity. Lorna at first appears to be at least as good a buddy as Murtaugh, she can detect and appears to be a better fighter than both Murtaugh and Riggs. Despite Lorna's apparent efficiency in the hero department she never understands that when Riggs counts to three before breaking cover he means to move after three not on three. Murtaugh always gets this right. Also in the final show down Lorna is injured and has to be saved. Murtaugh on the other hand is there to throw Riggs a gun with armour piercing bullets which saves Riggs' life. The film predictably ends with Murtaugh deciding to stay in the force for a few more years. The last shot is of Riggs and Murtaugh driving away and we hear the usual banter between them over a panoramic shot of Murtaugh's neighbourhood. If I were to suggest another possible conventional ending, that Riggs and Lorna are re-united at her bedside, we can see how dominant the buddy relationship is over any disabling heterosexual bond.

As well as diverting anxiety about the buddy relationship humour is used to undermine the credibility of the action hero, yet this is not a parody of action films and the pleasures

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of the action hero are left intact. Humour is used to confirm the power of the hero to some extent. In all encounters with Leo humour is used to ridicule Leo and therefore exaggerate Riggs' appropriate masculine behaviour. Similarly humour is used to accentuate the inefficiency of the domesticated Murtaugh compared to the unhindered Riggs. For instance Murtaugh's need for a corset to get him into his old patrolman's uniform provides two gags. However humour is also aimed at Riggs. For instance when Lorna takes Riggs to a garage/warehouse where villains are cataloguing stolen weapons they are confronted by a large guard dog. Rather than fighting his way out of this situation Riggs gets on all fours, makes canine submissive gestures and feeds the dog dog-biscuits from his mouth. The following scene is played as parody. Riggs confronts the villains, pointing a gun at them. Another armed villain comes up behind Riggs and disarms him. As they slowly strangle Riggs Lorna comes in with her gun drawn, but another villain comes in behind her and forces her to put down her gun. At this point Lorna kick boxes her way out of danger, rescuing Riggs and the dog. The comedy of this situation undermines the action heroism of Lorna Cole, again ensuring that heroines are not quite as powerful as heroes. It also makes a buffoon out of the hero for the duration of the sequence. Yet whenever Riggs is solely involved in a chase or confrontation humour is absent. This oscillation between undermining the hero and action narratives with humour and celebrating the hero in long action sequences shows a complex position with regard to the hegemonic ego-ideal. Within the narrative, through humour, there is a recognition that action heroes are a bit silly and we can share in a joke at the expense of this unrealistic ideal but this does not mean that we do not want to indulge in the fantasy of an all powerful masculine ego-ideal. Parody highlights the impossibility of maintaining a heroic masculine ego-ideal, within this narrative this acknowledgement does not undermine the pleasure of the hero in action. This offers an appeal to both the lived experience of the masculine subject position and the desires of the masculine subject position.

In Basic Instinct we have the expectation of an heroic masculinity, as with the other three films discussed. As with Lethal Weapon 3 this expectation becomes difficult to maintain. A close analysis of the narrative will show that there is a deliberate play with conventions and expectations of noir film and with our expectations of an heroic central

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character. As already argued much of the narrative is given over to tracing the emotional state of the central character Nick. This is drawn out through his relationship with the murder suspect Catherine and to some extent through his relationship with Beth Garner his psychiatrist. In the first sequence after the initial murder the first doubts about Nick's competence are aired. However these comments are made by a senior officer from the D.A office who came to the scene only because the victim was a friend of the Mayor, a character played to the full as a typical lackey of the establishment. This plays with a common expectation within 'cop' and 'action' films that the hero is to some extent an outsider. This offers the rewards of a hero who can be identified to some extent with an ordinary, unsuccessful, excluded from positions of power citizen. It also works well within a noir narrative which will play with the fantasy of rejecting patriarchal authority. There would still be an expectation that the hero Nick, the only 'big name' in the film, will unearth the truth and restore order, this expectation is drawn out and disappointed throughout the narrative. This portrayal of Nick as a little off the rails is continued when he visits his psychiatrist and former lover Dr Beth Garner. We learn about Nick's drink and drugs problem and that he hasn't had a drink in four months. A central character that has committed some misdemeanour that he must somehow make up for is still within the parameters of acceptable heroic behaviour. At this stage Catherine Trammel has already been introduced as a probably bi-sexual, definitely sexually excessive murder suspect. Given the noir convention of having a 'good' women in comparison with a 'bad' women, Beth could be read at this stage as being the good woman to Catherine's bad women and could even be the motivation for Nick to redeem himself of his former errors and fulfil our expectation of a hero.

This bad girl expectation is continued in the next four sequences which build up a picture of Catherine as a manipulative femme fatale and show Nick's decent into obsession with Catherine. When Nick and Gus go to Catherine's house to pick her up for questioning she lets them see that she has all the newspaper reports on the accidental shooting of tourists by Nick during a police operation. This further undermines our belief in Nick's judgement, although the conventions of the Hollywood star system lead us to expect his vindication or redemption. It also implies the duplicitous nature of Catherine. We see Catherine change clothes and we see that Nick is watching. We

learn later that Catherine knew he was watching. In the car Catherine plays games with Nick. She informs him that she is working on another book about a policeman who falls for the wrong girl and gets killed. During the interrogation Catherine continually directs her answers to Nick, and those details reveal to Nick her sexual preferences. She specifically asks Nick if he has ever fucked on cocaine. At this point the ominous music returns, Catherine uncrosses and crosses her legs possibly revealing naked crotch to the assembled male interrogators, and explains that she likes fucking on cocaine. This scene portrays Catherine as sexually excessive, predatory in her intentions towards Nick, manipulative in the way she uses her sexuality to disconcert the male interrogators but mostly it shows that she is knowledgeable about Nick as he probably has fucked on cocaine. The sexual excessiveness of Catherine plays on sexual desire but the circumstances under which the excess is revealed reminds us of the danger of that excess. It also reveals a weakness in Nick for illicit pleasure, a weakness apparent in the victim Johnny Boz and a weakness that Catherine seems to be aware of. Catherine volunteers to take a lie detector test which confirms her assertion of innocence. Nick is still convinced of her guilt as he believes it is possible to cheat a lie detector. When he is driving Catherine home their conversation reveals that Nick also took a lie detector test and the suggestion given is that he knows it is possible to cheat this test because that is exactly what he did. Here we have similarities drawn between Nick and Catherine. This undermines Nicks moral integrity but not our expectation of him restoring order. In fact it is not unusual for heroes to operate outside conventional morality to an extent as such heroes have a better understanding of the behaviour of the villain.

There then follows a sequence that I found more disturbing than anything I have seen so far in these film analysise, including Silence of the Lambs and any of the Arnold Schwarzenegger films I have watched in the course of this work. This sequence reveals the ideology at play behind the film, an ideology which will ultimately deny the possibility of a heroic masculine ego-ideal. Both Beth and Nick seem highly aroused by a bar room fight and agree to go back to Beth's home. Nick initiates sex between them and although this begins a little roughly at first the scene is erotic. Quite quickly Nick's aggression becomes real rather than playful and he forces Beth to be penetrated before she wants to be and in a way that she objects to even though she clearly says no. Beth

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questions Nick about his attitude and guesses that he has seen Catherine Trammell that day. Within the narrative Nick's behaviour, the drinking, the rape and the first cigarette are signs of the effect Catherine is having on him. His rape of Beth could be seen as an attempt to assert control over his desires as well as a sign of his losing control of those desires. The trouble with an ideology that requires the domination of a group of people with whom one is expected to form heterosexual bonds is how to prevent our love for that person undermining our authority and how to maintain a hierarchical gender relationship with a person while you are having sex with them. The exclusive use of the missionary position was one attempt. Another could be to humiliate the person with whom you are having sex. Within a narrative that was attempting some sort of analysis of this aspect of patriarchal culture this scene would have been quite enlightening. However Nick does not redeem himself for this act. Why should he, it was Catherine's fault that he raped Beth. This scene is part of the charting of Nicks journey into sin. I am not worried that such a scene would encourage men to try the erotic delights of rape. I am worried about the association between sex and evil. As Nick becomes increasingly attracted to Catherine and tempted by her obvious sexual excess and as he gradually abandons social responsibility, he drinks despite the requirement of his employers not to, he becomes a rapist. The ideology at play here is that to lose oneself in sexual desire will lead inevitably to rape and murder, the logical extension of this is that to be erotic a thing must be bad, evil, illicit. The real problem of course is that abandonment in sexual desire may result in loss of control, in openness to manipulation by women and the loss of patriarchal authority and therefore masculine identity. Yet heterosexual desire is a requirement of hegemonic masculinity. This indicates a no win situation.

In Nick's next encounter with Catherine he loses what is left of his credibility. He visits Catherine as an interrogator but Catherine conducts the interrogation. While apparently seducing Nick, Catherine reveals that Nick had been working undercover as a drugs dealer. He had been living the life of a wealthy criminal, taking drugs and had taken cocaine when he had accidentally shot four tourists. Just as Nick appears to be succumbing to Catherine's seduction, Catherine tells us that Nick was enjoying this illicit existence and as a consequence his wife committed suicide. At this point Nick loses control and storms out, Catherine goes to the arms of her lover Roxy. Whilst still in a

rage Nick attacks Beth and then Nilsen, the internal affairs officer who investigated Nick about the shootings. He is sent home and while lying in a drunken stupor he becomes the prime suspect in the murder of Nilsen. He is suspended from duty and is interrogated in the same room where Catherine had been interrogated. His answers mirror her answers, reinforcing a sense of similarity between suspect and investigator.

At this point we expect a concerted effort on Nick's part to redeem himself. Through the latter half of the narrative this is apparently what we get. Nick seems to be more in control, he tells Gus that if Catherine wants to play games he will play games. He starts by taking control of Catherine when she next teases him seductively. There follows a love making scene between Nick and Catherine which almost qualifies as a pleasant erotic heterosexual coupling. However towards the end of the scene Catherine, on top of Nick, ties Nicks hands to the bed with a white silk scarf and mirrors exactly the movements of the woman that killed Johnny Boz. In a later conversation we discover that the fear induced by this act was what made the sex so exciting. Hear we have the ultimate fusion of desire and anxiety to the extent that fear induces excitement, the bad and the evil become erotic. Given that this film was sold partly on the basis of its eroticism (see figure 8) this is an ideologically puritan narrative. Following this courtship Nick and Roxy clash. Roxy tries to kill Nick and in the process is killed. With Roxy dead and Nick now Catherine's lover Nick's attitude changes, he is more in control having established his authority over the woman and he starts to do more in the way of investigative research. At this point we have quite a cocktail of masculine fantasies in operation. Firstly there is the myth that lesbian women are particularly good at sex, Catherine provides the fuck of the century, and that once a lesbian has experienced sex with the right man she will be cured of her lesbian inclinations. Nick usurps and then kills Roxy. Most importantly as sexual desire is dangerous to men then the ultimate sexual experience should be dangerous. This point is emphasised by Gus later in the film when he is telling Nick he should not sleep with Catherine. Gus explains that he could get laid by "god dammed blue-haired women" but this does not appeal to him. However sleeping with women he finds more exciting would be, in some unspecified way, dangerous and not conducive to good policing. Again this highlights what is for me a major contradiction for the masculine subject position. The

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attractiveness of women undermines the emotionally needy heterosexual man's ability to dominate women and control his emotions and therefore undermines his masculine identity.

From this point most of our expectations of noir and heroic masculinity look like they could be fulfilled. Nick begins to investigate. Since learning that Catherine or Beth became obsessed by the other while at Berkeley Nick investigates both women. He investigates the women to discover who is the 'bad' woman and who is the 'good' woman. Nick finds more evidence to suggest that Beth is not only responsible for the murder of Johnny Boz but of Catherine's lecturer at Berkeley, Nilsen and possibly her ex-husband. While he does this Gus constantly reminds him of the dangers of the sexually excessive and predatory Catherine. Just at the point where Nick is convinced of Catherine's innocence he visits her at her home and Catherine dismisses him because the book is finished, she no longer needs to research him therefore she no longer wants him. Catherine walks away from him to join the murderess Hazel Dobkins. Nick also notices that in the last pages of the novel the detective's partner is murdered in a lift while the detective is running up the stairs to get to him.

In the next sequence Gus is murdered in the way described in Catherine's latest novel. Nick arrives too late to save him and finds Beth in the building. Nick believes Beth has a gun and he shoots and kills her. He then finds that all she had in her pocket was the key-ring he gave her. Her dying words are "I love you". From this point Nick's authority as a policeman, hero and man look lost. Nick's colleagues find evidence that Beth had an obsessive hatred of Catherine but Nick's reaction to being proved right is bordering on the catatonic. It is as if he no longer believes he was right. Which ever woman was guilty they had gone to a great deal of trouble to manipulate Nick's behaviour and he now seems unsure of himself. On returning home Nick finds Catherine. She is apparently moved by his latest loss and explains that she cannot allow herself to care about him because everyone she cares about dies. This could be taken as a possible rationale for her previous aberrant behaviour. They make love again and at this point the burden of guilt moves slightly closer to Beth. However when Nick

suggests that they "fuck like minks, raise rugrats and live happily ever after" Catherine says she does not like rugrats. Not only does this reinforce her image of an aberrant woman, she does not like children, but it echoes Gus's ridiculing of the idea at a stage when he thought Catherine was a murderer. Finally there is a replay of the threat that the man will be murdered in bed by his lover. Catherine looks like she is reaching for something beside the bed at the same time as the ominous music re-appears. Instead of stabbing him Catherine and Nick make love again but as they are doing this the camera moves down to show us the ice-pick underneath the bed.

What is surprising about this ending is the lack of narrative and ideological resolution. Throughout the film there is a play with audience expectations of both the detective genre and noir narrative. The plot often suggests one conventional plot possibility then undermines that possibility. The ending defies all expectations because we do not really know 'who did it' and the central character seems to know as little as we do. The play with noir convention's is even more surprising. Krutnik stated that it was necessary to punish the transgressive female and to recoup the tempted man into patriarchal authority. Basic Instinct fails to do either. Catherine, the temptress of our hero, is not punished. Nick does not have to give up his sexual obsession for Catherine even though her innocence and his authority are left in question with the final shot re-stating the dangers of sexual fulfilment for the hero. The pattern of indulging illicit desire while reminding us of the dangers of those desires is what this film has in common with noir and as such is addressing a particular contradiction in male experience within patriarchy. To have the hero continue to indulge in illicit desire even though he clearly is not in control of the object of desire is very surprising. The ending still operates within patriarchal ideology, it just does not give us a 'happy ending'. If the desire remains so does the anxiety.

I would like to read this ending as fulfilling the desire to reject patriarchal order and remain in a female associated space, but this would be a very optimistic perspective given the obvious dangers the hero still faces at the end of the film. We could assume that Nick was unable to re-establish order because he was too fond of illicit pleasures

and was therefore operating too far outside patriarchal authority. We might also assume that there are no 'good' women in which case there is no safe haven for Nick's desires and therefore no resolution. This last reading fits in well with the star image of Michael Douglas, an image of an heroic masculinity under siege from predatory women and foreign invaders. It also reflects most accurately the experience of men within patriarchy. If there is no escaping desire for women, because of patriarchal edicts prohibiting desire for men or because of sexual preference, then there is no escaping the anxiety that this desire induces. There is no resolution. In a patriarchal culture desire for and anxiety about women go together like spots and measles. Therefore the maintenance of a masculine ego-ideal is impossible.

THE WRONGS AND WRONGS OF MASCULINITY. HOOK AND THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS.

In the last four films the pleasure of the action hero has been central. As already pointed out this is not an unproblematic celebration of a version of masculinity. In Terminator 2 the perfect man-machine is seen as a threat as well as an ideal. In Lethal Weapon 3 the ludicrousness of the demands of the action hero is acknowledged in the characterisation of Riggs and in the humour of the narrative. In Basic Instinct we are promised the pleasures of the action hero but we are let down in favour of the illicit pleasures of obsession with the feminine. However there is an acknowledgement that the action hero is a masculine ideal. In the last two films the action hero is absent. Both Hook and The Silence Of The Lambs address the real experiences of the masculine subject position and not the desires and demands of that position. In doing so they highlight the fears and losses of the masculine role to a much greater extent than the other films.

Peter Pan could easily have made a children's adventure hero with Peter and the lost boys battling against pirate kidnappers. However confrontations and obstacles do not drive the narrative, it is Peter's transformation from a cold and distant corporate lawyer into a fun loving play-mate that propels the story. Within the narrative the generic elements of comedy and children's film are used to highlight the melodramatic plot. There are two main sources of humour, the comic relief of Captain Hook and Smee and

the ludicrousness and impotence of Peter Banning successful business man in a children's environment. The setting of Never Land where the children are, per adult specifications, natural, expressive and dominated by imagination and magic highlight the losses that Peter Banning has made to succeed in the adult world. The issue of the disadvantages of growing up is the central theme of the film and this issue is played out over the objects of Peter's mobile phone and Jack's baseball. As well as missing his sons baseball game in the process of trying to apologise to Jack he loses his temper, tells Jack to grow up and confiscates Jack's baseball. At Granny Wendy's house he yells unnecessarily harshly at his children because they are making a noise while he is talking to a business colleague on his mobile. At this point Moira, his wife, throws the mobile out of the window and warns him that he has to pay more attention to his family and less to his business. This is the disadvantage of growing up, in becoming a successful corporate lawyer Peter Banning has become a bad father, he is too cut off from the world of his children and too obsessed by the competitive world of work . Granny Wendy best describes the characterisation of Peter Banning when she asks what exactly Peter does for a living. Jack explains, despite Peter's efforts to stop him, that if a big company is in trouble Dad moves in and if there's any resistance he blows them out of the water. Granny Wendy replies "so Peter you've become a pirate".

Peter's forced return to Never Land is the beginning of his journey towards being a good father. This begins by highlighting the ludicrousness of Peter Banning corporate lawyer in the context of Never Land. In reality a successful and rich lawyer is a successful masculine identity. The ludicrousness of the demands on men to achieve this status are being acknowledged in Peter Banning. The melodrama of the comic scene on Hooks ship is re-introduced when Hook makes the offer that if Peter can touch the hands of his children who are hanging from the rigging in a net he and his children will be freed. Peter tries to climb towards his children but fails to reach them because he has become afraid of heights. Significantly Maggie says "don't give up Daddy Mommy could do it". Also while the lost boys are trying to change Peter Banning into Peter Pan, Hook tries to steal the affections of Peter's children. Hook fails immediately to convert Maggie but succeeds with Jack. These two incidents show a definite emphasis on the importance of establishing a good relationship between a father and a son over any

concerns for other family relationships, which makes this a specifically masculine melodrama. This reminds me of the work on the role of fathers done by Cohen (1993). Cohen reports a definite desire in most of the men interviewed to be more involved in the lives of their children than their fathers were because they felt a definite absence of a paternal relationship. I do not know if boys feel this absence more than girls, no-one has surveyed women on this issue. If we assume that Bem (1985) was correct in that children use gender as a cognitive schema then it is logical to assume that boys miss their same gendered role model, their father more than girls. There is certainly an assumption throughout the film that girls and women do not have problems with domestic relationships, which suggests an orientation to a masculine experience of the world.

As the narrative progresses Peter's understanding of the situation deepens. Initially his plan is to learn to fight fly and crow in order to confront Captain Hook and rescue his children. He finally begins to adapt when he learns to use his imagination. When the lost boys sit down to dinner Peter cannot see any food. Ruffio begins an insult competition with Peter who resists the game at first. When he eventually joins in he flicks some imaginary food at Ruffio and as this food hits its target Peter sees the food. One of the boys explains "you're doing it , you're playing with us". Ruffio retaliates by throwing a coconut at Peter, someone throws Peter a sword and he remembers how to use it, cutting the coconut in half in mid-air. However he still can't fly. When he finally manages this we have confirmed the central theme of the narrative. After this initial breakthrough Peter attempts to rescue his children. This attempt ends when he witnesses Jack playing baseball with the pirates and Hook calling Jack 'my boy'. At this point Peter realises that his problem with his son is not just that he has been kidnapped. Soon after Jack's baseball and symbol of his child-like freedom, hits Peter on the head. This leads to Peter remembering that he left Never Land to become a father. This is the central dilemma, a good father is loved by his children. In order to be loved a father must spend time with his children and play with them, in order to be a breadwinner and achieve a successful male identity men must spend most of their time away from home at work. The two demands are contradictory and within the narrative Peter must choose work or family. Peter finally has his happy thought that enables him to fly, the birth of

his son. The relationship between father and son is the most important relationship in the narrative, the publicity shot shown in figure 9 emphasises this. The pain of an absent father is seen as a masculine pain. This view is confirmed when Ruffio is killed by Hook. His dying words are "I wish I had a dad like you", that is a Dad who played with him. Peter re-establishes his relationship with Jack after he learns to play, fight, fly and crow, behaviours inappropriate to a professional work environment and appropriate to the play ground. Peters relationship with Maggie was never in danger.

The film concludes when Peter returns to Granny Wendy's house via the drain pipe and in through the dreaded window, and throws his mobile phone out of the window. Peter has resolved a main contradiction in masculine experience by rejecting the demands of the masculine work environment in favour of spending time with his son. This would present the dilemma that he would have to reside in a feminised environment, the home, in order to do this. But this is not necessary if you can fly to Never Land. Boys can resist the pressures of adult masculinity without becoming feminised in a world where there are no women and no feminine spaces. The children's fantasy element allows this film to address the desire to reject, and ridicule the demands of adult masculinity without seeing this position as feminine. This fulfils a fantasy of rejecting the demands of adult masculinity and appeasing a sense of loss experienced by the masculine subject position. All this is done without stepping over the boundaries of hegemonic masculinity and associating this fantasy with a desire to be feminine. Here Hook succeeds where Basic Instinct failed. Hook manages a contradiction in the demands on the masculine subject by indulging an illicit desire without really challenging hegemonic masculinity. Although Basic instinct indulges illicit desires it ends with those desires producing a threat to all men.

In Hook the expression of feelings of loss is central and there is no action hero ego-ideal to indulge fantasy as well as anxiety. Hook manages to express feelings and indulge fantasies that stem from a desire to reject certain aspects of hegemonic masculinity. Yet it does this without necessarily being oppositional or illicit. It is possible to read a radical message to feminise masculinity from this film if you are so inclined but it is not

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inevitable as the drama takes place in a world where there are no feminine spaces that the masculine spaces must distinguish themselves from. The loss the dramatic break from childhood causes and the consequent paucity in a father's relationship with his children is expressed and solved without the feminisation of the man. The Silence Of The Lambs also takes place in a purely masculine environment, as does all the films in this selection, but unlike the other films there is no clever balance between the expression of desire and of anxiety. This film can also be distinguished from Hook because there is no solution to those anxieties. In Terminator 2 masculinity is seen as threatening but also as desirable, in this film masculinity is monstrous with no redeeming or attractive features.

I have already discussed how the star image of Jodi Foster can be used in a genre that can address a masculine subject position. An examination of the narrative of this film will show that the image of Jodi Foster adds to a narrative concern with issues of gender and that this issue does have relevance to the real experience of a masculine subject position. The narrative follows a trainee F.B.I agents attempts to identify a serial killer who murders young women. Starling becomes involved initially as a ploy by her boss Jack Crawford to enlist the help of Lecter in the pursuit of Buffalo Bill as Crawford knew Lecter would not respond to a direct request. The assumption is that Lecter will respond more favourably to a young woman. Starling is unaware of this strategy and as a result of running this errand Starling is harassed by Dr Chiltern, the director of the institute holding Lecter, and she has to walk down a long dark corridor past the cells of criminally insane men who jeer at her. This walk is filmed slowly and closely giving it an emotional intensity that reminiscent of those scenes in horror films that occur just as a female character comes across the monster. This also echoes the title sequence and the scene in the lift. Such scenes visually associate Starling with female victims of male violence and differentiate her from the male characters. This polarisation of gender is the main discourse apparent in this narrative, and this discourse is relevant to both a masculine subject position, a feminine subject position and a feminist subject position.

Crawford's ploy to enlists Lecter's help almost fails until on the way out another inmate throws semen at Starling . Appalled by this discourtesy Lecter decides to help Starlings career. He does not do this directly, he gives Starling a riddle. When Starling works out the riddle she finds the severed head of Buffalo Bills first victim a discovery that leads to Starlings direct involvement in the hunt for Buffalo Bill. Lecter agrees to further help but only in exchange for personal information about Starling. This help is used by Lecter to play a game. It is obvious he knows the identity of Buffalo Bill but wants to keep on playing mind games with Starling. It is one of his riddles that leads to Starlings eventual capture of Buffalo Bill, but this help is conditional on Starling competing in some intellectual competition. Lecter's concern has never been with preventing Bill from committing any more murders and until his last encounter with Starling Lecter assumes her motivation to be ambition. This polarisation of the feminine and masculine becomes obvious if we notice that all the male characters abuse Starling at some point. Buffalo Bill quite unsurprisingly tries to abuse Starling as do the inmates of the asylum. In the sequence where Bill stalks Starling around his darkened basement we see the ultimate expression of Starling's visual association with victims (see figure 10). Before this we often see Starling being watched by men; in the lift, in the asylum, while exercising, at the autopsy. This watching is uncomfortable even threatening. Starling is also manipulated by both Lecter and Crawford. Crawford not only uses Starling to lure Lecter into the search for Buffalo Bill, he attempts to win the trust of an unco-operative local Sheriff by including him in a male only conference and excluding his female colleague. In doing this he invites the visual abuse of Starling by a group of male policemen. During the meeting Starling is left alone with these policeman who are filmed surrounding her in an oppressive manner, all of them watching her. The camera moves in a full circle of male faces, all of them taller than the camera. All through the narrative men and masculinity are associated with abusers and women with the abused. Ultimately Crawford fails to capture Bill. This highlights another comparison between the masculine and feminine, the masculine is inefficient and the feminine efficient. For instance Chiltern sabotages a plan by Starling to enlist the direct help of Lecter, his reasons are jealousy and ambition. This leads to Lecter's escape and Dr Chiltern's death. A last opposition can be identified that begins in the earlier sequences in the F.B.I centre and re-appears towards the end when Starling is pursuing/being pursued by Buffalo Bill. In Starling's first encounter with Jack Crawford he tells us that Starling

gave him a grilling over the Bureau's record during the Hoover years. When Bill is shot by Starling he pulls down a blind when he falls. The light from the window reveals an American flag and a swastika flag. Earlier we had seen a swastika pattern in Bills patch work quilt. This binary is between mascuilinty-facism or intolerance and femininity/liberalism or tolerance.

In Starling's last encounter with Lecter we can see the culmination of a gender binary that places masculinity on the side of monstrosity and femininity on the side of compassion. Dr Chiltern has secured a transfer for Lecter in exchange for the name of Buffalo Bill. The name Lecter gives is another riddle but Starling is the only one who has recognised this. In a last attempt to get one more clue that might lead to Bills capture before he kills his latest victim Starling tricks her way into seeing Lecter. Lecter insists on Starling first disclosing more personal information about herself. At this point we hear the story of the slaughtering of the spring lambs. We learn that Starling was so moved by the terrified screams of the lambs being led to slaughter that she tried to release them. When they were too frightened to move for themselves Starling tried to save just one lamb by running away with it. From this we learn that Starling's motivation is compassion and she genuinely wants to save the life of the girl Bill has recently kidnapped. At this point Starling is ejected . Lecter hands her his case notes and they touch hands briefly suggesting some sort of attraction between the two. Despite Lecter's attraction or admiration for this compassionate woman Lecter then commits a horrific act of violence. In his bid to escape Lecter not only kills his two guards but also disembowels one of them, hanging him up in a crucifixion pose in front of the American flag. This is a very dramatic contrast between a masculinity that calmly dismembers another human being in the pursuit of a dramatic gesture and a femininity that abandons all home comforts in a bid to save one frightened lamb.

The association of masculinity and monstrosity is easily associated with Foster's feminist persona. As with other roles Foster is playing a victim of masculine abuse who survives these threats with dignity and ultimately challenges her abusers. However, as I have already pointed out, men are also the victims of male abuse, more often than women.

Even disregarding actual instances of physical assault I have already discussed the inevitability of fear of other men to the experience of hegemonic masculinity Having Foster in the lead role rather than a male actor adds to the sense of intimidation and threat from masculinity within the narrative and keeps a clear opposition between masculinity and femininity. The further oppositions created, giving all qualities that are good and right a feminine gender and all qualities that are bad and wrong a masculine gender, also highlights the perceived monstrosity of masculinity. Such a gendered set of oppositions makes sense as our culture has seen gender as characteristically opposite since the work and domestic spaces have been separated. In relation to hegemonic masculinity this is a very pessimistic film. Although Starling overcomes the disadvantage of being a woman in a man's world and survives visual and physical abuse to catch Buffalo Bill, the world Starling operates in is masculine and therefore irretrievably evil. If the film had ended when Starling received her F.B.I. badge this film might be argued to be solely a celebration of a powerful heroine winning against fantastic odds. Pleasure from the resilience and ultimate triumph of Starling is an important element of the film. However the final shot speaks to a response of terror to an inevitably monstrous masculinity. The effect of Lecter's phone call to Starling at the moment of her triumph undermines our confidence in the power of her compassion. The last shot of Lecter walking down a street to his next murder shows that ultimately the monstrous masculine is not contained. This ending suggests a dominant narrative emphasis on the portrayal of a threatening masculinity over the portrayal of a resourceful heroine. This emphasis increases the relevance of the film to a masculine subject position and is probably why a film that has the potential for a feminist interpretation became a box-office hit.

IN CONCLUSION

I began this chapter by explaining that I had grouped the films according to three apparent positions in relation to hegemonic masculinity. The way I grouped the films also allowed me to show a sliding scale of complicity or pessimism, with Prince Of Thieves being the most complicit and The Silence Of The Lambs being the most pessimistic. However, these groupings were simply a method of demonstrating a variety of responses to hegemonic masculinity expressed in a small sample of films chosen

because they were popular. There are elements of complicity and pessimism and everything in between in all the films. For instance I could also have grouped The Silence Of The Lambs with Terminator 2 as both dealt with a monstrous masculinity, or Hook with Basic Instinct as both dealt with illicit desires. I could argue that some of the films have relevance to a feminist subject position, i.e. The Silence Of The Lambs, Hook and if I were to stretch the point Terminator 2. However I would argue that although some of the films may have the potential to address subject position other than masculine they are *all* relevant to a masculine subject position. If they were not their potential for box-office success would be negligible.

What is more surprising is that only one of the films is almost exclusively celebratory and complicit, i.e. Robin Hood: Prince Of Thieves. All the other films either oscillate between fascination and fear/absurdity (Terminator 2 & Lethal Weapon 3); are constructed around major contradictions in the experience of hegemonic masculinity (Hook & Basic Instinct); or portray masculinity as monstrous (The Silence Of The Lambs & Terminator 2). I am arguing that these anxieties provide a relevance to real experience that the simple portrayal of an ego-ideal would lack and that this relevance connects with an audience in a personal/emotional way. This connection with the personal/emotional allows a level of variety that makes the maintenance of a mass audience more likely. However, the top grossing film of all the six films examined was the complicit Prince Of Thieves (3). I can say that Prince Of Thieves not only portrays a heroic ego-ideal but re-constructs that ideal to fit more closely with nineteen-nineties sensibilities. This reflects a contemporary need to find a definition of heroic masculinity that is not obsolescent. Such a need is also apparent in the hyper-masculinity of Arnold Schwarzenegger and the unresolved narrative of Basic Instinct. Unlike Basic Instinct, Prince Of Thieves succeeds in avoiding obvious obsolescence. However this film is mostly concerned with reflecting the desires of the masculine subject position, it only indirectly deals with the anxieties of this situation. But it is still only one out of six films that does not delve deeply into the impossibility of success within hegemonic masculinity.

CONCLUSIONS

I was not particularly surprised by the persistence of discourses relevant to the masculine subject position in the films analysed, I am not the first person to perceive a masculine bias in popular cinema. What was much more surprising was the predominance of themes of anxiety about the experience of masculinity. Even in those genres, and with those stars that emphasise the pleasures of the heroic masculine ego-ideal, themes of anxiety were ever present. Implicit in the action hero is a reminder of the impossibility of living up to the ideals of hegemonic masculinity, a theme made more explicit in the star image of Mel Gibson and in the humour of Lethal Weapon 3 . A recurring element of the action/adventure genre is the threat posed to the hero from the masculinity of others. This is most apparent in the discourse of Terminator 2 and is a consistent theme of the action/adventure genre. A similar discourse to that of the threat posed by the masculinity of others is the fear of the potential monstrosity of masculinity. This is the dominant discourse in The Silence Of The Lambs. Two of the films in this study are structured around the management of a contradiction in the experience of the masculine subject position; the contradictions of an anti-feminine imperative and the requirement of hetero-sexual relationships with women and the contradiction of being a success in the masculine space of work and a good father in the feminine space of the home. These themes of anxiety are as important, if not more, than the pleasures of the heroic ego-ideal. As most of us cannot be heroic ego-ideals it is anxieties that add the level of relevance that connects with the lived experience of the audience. I might conclude from this that masculinity is in a state of crisis. If I were to use these film analyses to make that statement I would have to relate the anxieties apparent in the film discourse to a specific historical situation. All of the issues mentioned above can be related to the description given of the experience of masculinity in our patriarchal culture. However not all those issues are historically specific to the late twentieth century. For instance the anomalous position regarding women within hegemonic masculinity may be more apparent in a post-feminist age but this contradiction is an inevitable result of an anti-feminine patriarchy that requires sexual relationships between men and women and therefore must have been part of the experience of patriarchy from its beginnings. Others are specific to the here and now. I have argued that Arnold

Schwarzenegger is a star because his image reflects so much of the influences of his time, in particular the undermining of traditional definitions of masculinity. Kevin Costner's heroes make apparent the more liberal values of the nineteen-nineties, particularly compared to the values of nineteen-thirties Hollywood. Michael Douglas reflects the extreme paranoia that could result from the undermining of traditional patriarchal values. I would not use a film analysis such as this to make a quantitative measurement of which themes of anxiety persist through the ages and which are relevant to this historical period and thus judge whether or not masculinity today is in a state of crisis. Also I have argued that hegemonic masculinity is constantly being negotiated, managed and defined in which case any period of stability or crisis will be relative.

However the persistence of themes of anxiety has led me to some conclusions that could be the basis of further investigations regarding the state of hegemonic masculinity today. The major contradiction in hegemonic masculinity's attitude towards women warrants further investigation. For instance, as this is a persistent experience of masculinity, even through periods of relative stability, this contradiction may prove useful in an examination of male violence, individual and institutional, that is directed at women. In my opinion the level of such violence exceeds the requirement of economic and political domination. This issue could also be helpful in understanding some gender specific psychological problems. In the analysis of Arnold Swartzenegger I looked at how feminism and economic changes were undermining traditional definitions of masculinity. The iconic status of this star and the persistence of this theme in other stars and genre (e.g. Michael Douglas and in the use of humour in Lethal Weapon 3) suggests that an instability in definitions of masculinity is being particularly felt in the popular consciousness at this time. It would be interesting to examine if this particular theme were present in Hollywood films of another era, in other contemporary media and whether it is understood on a conscious level by individuals at this time. We already know that we are living in a period of economic change. An examination of other media will enlighten us as to how this is felt and managed by those that are living through this change.

The persistence of themes of anxiety in popular film suggests that the experience of the masculine subject position causes a great deal of emotional turmoil and therefore requires a great deal of negotiation and management. Conversely popular cinema is an important arena where individuals manage and interpret their environment and as such it is a rewarding area of study for those examining the relationship between individuals and their culture. Another conclusion I will make is that relevance provides important insights into this relationship between the individuals that make up an audience and this particular mass medium. From my point of view relevance allows me to take into account structural influences such as gender expectations as well as individual capacities for interpretation. Also if we accept that popular film in some way addresses the lived experience of the audience we can understand how a medium operating within a limited combination of narrative style and genre can provide a variety of cinematic experience. For instance all the male stars address a masculine subject position but all in different ways. This reveals a complexity and subtlety in popular cinema. Also analysis of how cinema is relevant to the lived experience of the audience has shown the variety of possible responses to any given discourse. For instance one response to an unknown, threatening and punishing masculinity is a fear of the monstrosity of masculinity. This is apparent in Terminator 2 and The Silence Of The Lambs. This fear is dealt with in Terminator 2 by creating an heroic masculinity that is stronger than the threatening masculinity while the other film presents a pessimistic view of masculinity as endemically monstrous. The study of relevance gives a better understanding of pleasure. Ignoring any purely sensual pleasures and concentrating on cinema, in order to really engage with an audience it is necessary to address their feelings not just their conscious desires. Obviously the desires influence the lived experience and vice versa but what this shows is that popular cinema is not only about wish fulfilment and ego-ideals but also about interpreting, negotiating and managing our world. Therefore pleasure can be understood as a complex psychological, historical and social phenomenon, a site of struggle between individual desires and social expectation. Even outside the study of popular culture relevance could be a productive area of investigation. I have looked at the masculine subject position. I could study class in the same way. The structural influence of class should not be under-estimated: it effects access to health-care, education, mortality rates and even height. But class is also a culture and an experience.

How people manage the experience of class may help to explain many class related phenomena.

On the whole I believe the examination of relevance to the lived experience of people is one explanation of how mass media appeal is possible in a culturally diverse society. As human responses are themselves diverse, relevance affords the opportunity of variety. Relevance to lived experience also addresses an audience on a deeply personal level which will add to the reward of the experience. My original question was, can patriarchy provide the common experience needed to maintain mass appeal. Within the limited scope of six popular films I would argue that although some of the films had the potential to address a feminine or feminist subject position, all the films addressed a masculine subject position. I realise that I am saying that relevance to a masculine subject position is an essential component of a popular film in a society made up of at least fifty-per cent women. However, this is a patriarchal culture and whether we are looking at medicine or mass media the masculine is the 'norm' from which we begin and the feminine is something extra. Hollywood is very much dominated by men and it stands to reason that those films that address a masculine subject position will be seen by those that make the decisions as a film that will be enjoyed. As Docherty's (1986) work shows men are now the dominant economic force in cinema audiences. More men visit the cinema and when people visit the cinema in mixed groups it is generally the man that chooses the film. This dominance will be reflected in the type of film that achieves box-office success. Apart from such structural influences, as I mentioned earlier women have been adapting their needs to a world structured around the needs of men for some time and consequently are probably better at adapting a film that mostly addresses masculine desires and feelings than men would be at adapting a film that mostly addresses a feminine subject position. All this would make addressing a masculine subjectivity a safer commercial option. Therefore I would say that a popular film may address subject positions other than the masculine as well as the masculine but if there is no means to engage a masculine subject position at all then I doubt whether such a film could achieve box office success in our current society. However, what this research has also demonstrated is that popular cinema can overcome any demographic bias and attract a mass audience because it can address an audience on an emotional level.

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Therefore I would argue that the cultural bias of patriarchal culture and the nature of hegemonic masculinity make addressing a masculine subject position a safer commercial option but it is relevance that makes the connection with the masculine subject position really work and also makes possible other connections than the masculine with each film. It is therefore relevance that makes mass appeal possible despite a bias towards the masculine.

The examination of cinema in terms of relevance shows us how a film that deliberately sets out to attract a masculine audience need not exclude other sections of society. How women negotiate a position regarding popular forms that apparently address the masculine is a topic of research in itself. This research begs the question of how the female audience fits in. One explanation can be drawn from this research. I have pointed out that cinema addresses an audience on the level of feelings produced by lived experience as much as by addressing conscious desires. On this level a masculine subject position is not necessarily a polar opposite to a feminine subject position. For instance the sense of threat and potential monstrosity from masculinity is part of the experience of the masculine subject position, it is also a feeling shared by just about everybody, a generalised feeling of threat becomes relevant to a very wide cross section of society. Our current understanding of masculinity tends to produce a fear of violence from men; in men, women or any distinguishable minority that might make an obvious victim in the pursuit of the approval of other men. I could argue that <u>Terminator 2</u> addresses this common fear of the monstrosity of masculinity and this is how women can be drawn into the pleasure of the film. However I feel this would only be a partial explanation. Some of the female audience must have gone to see this film because they, not the boyfriend, wanted to see the film. It is also possible that they enjoyed more than the representation of a dreaded masculinity that is eventually defeated. I have found examples of studies that explain why women enjoy popular forms directed at women, and studies that explain how gay men adapt popular forms directed at a hetero-sexual audience. There is little understanding of how women who genuinely enjoy films such as <u>Terminator 2</u> get their pleasure. I feel an examination of how such masculine oriented popular forms can be relevant to a feminine subject position, or how women can engage in such a discourse from a subject position other than the feminine would

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add to our understanding of a fragmented and complex society that somehow has not disintegrated.

FOOT NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. This is becoming the case more and more in television, for a discussion of this see Fiske (1994) in Denzin & Lincoln.

2. Warner Bros 32%, U.I.P 22.7%, Twentieth Century Fox 9.2%, Guild 5%(Screen International).

3. Screen International, Jan 7 1992.

4. Lees & Berkowitz use the example of the success in the mid-seventies of Star Wars, Deer Hunter and Rocky despite the conventional wisdom that Vietnam, science fiction and sports topics did not succeed at box office and despite two of the films having no leading star s in them.

5. Key Data figures show a slightly higher per centage that visit the cinems. Of all the groups surveyed 69% had visited the cinema in the last three months compared to 45% that had attended a live sporting event and 41% that had been to the theatre.

6. Fiske points out that the estimated failure rate for new products (including film) in the U.S is as high as 80%-90%, despite extensive advertising. There is no reason to assume that the failure rate for new products in the U.K is drastically different than in the U.S.

7. taken from Cultural Trends 17: 1993, Eckstein.

PATRIARCHY AND POPULAR CULTURE

1. Saco takes the idea of investment from De Lauretis 'The Technologies Of Gender' in Technologies of Gender: Essays On Theory, Film And Fiction.

2. for a review of current research on gender and character see Shawn Meghan Burn 1996.

3. for an analysis of the emergence of the exclusive wife and mother role see Oakley 1978.

4. In 1990 women who worked full-time earned, on average, 77% of the hourly earnings of male full-timers. Employment of women in managerial, professional and related occupations was 27% of the total in 1990 although women made up only 4% of senior and middle management and 1-2% of senior executives.

Information is taken from <u>Women And Men In Britain</u> Equal Opportunities Commission 1991.

5. Some would argue that the mother present father absent system of child-rearing is no longer the norm. A short qualitative piece of research by Theodore F. Cohen (in Hood 1993) called "What do fathers provide" suggests that modern American men are more involved in child-care than their fathers were but not as involved as women. Interestingly many of the men expressed a desire to be further involved then they were at the time but were unable to because of the demands of work. Research by David Piachaud (1984) for the Child Poverty Action Group identified basic tasks of child-rearing; that is feeding, washing, toileting rather than education, leisure or on call duties, as requiring fifty hours a week. Of that, on average women were responsible for nine out of ten of those hours, whether they were working or not. This suggests that domestic tasks, even in a world where women work outside the home, are still regarded as feminine tasks. It also suggests that children have much more contact with adult females than adult males. Research indicates that it is easier for women to step outside gender role norms than it is for men, for instance Mishkind 1987 and Burn 1996. Therefore it is likely that more women will be able to take on the role of breadwinner than men will be able to take on the role of child-carer.

6. for an examination of the argument that men rebel against the feminine in an attempt to break away from the primary carer see Dinnerstein 1971.

7. For an examination of gender as cognitive schema see Bem 1989 'Gender Schema Theory And Its Implications For Child Development'.

8. This view can be supported by reference to Cameron & Frazor 1987; Pornography And Sexual Violence-Everywoman 1988: Miles 1988 & 1991.

9. for instance see Weitzman & Friend 1985 or Burn 1996 for examples of how parents and schools responses to boy children gives boys an advantage in the skills required to compete in the outside world.

10. see Elliot (1994) Psychoanalytical Theory : An introduction.

STARS

1. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation 'Inquiry Into Income And Wealth', Vol 1 Feb 1995, reports that income inequality almost doubled between 1977 and 1989 and that

the proportion of the population with less than half the average income has more than trebled.

2. For an analysis of the decline of the coal and steel industries in the north-east over the last two decades see A Tale Of Two Industries: The Contraction Of Coal And Steel In The North East Of England. Benynon, Hudson, Sadler.

3. The Joseph Rowntree report quoted above also shows that between 1979 and 1992 the proportion of unemployed under twenty-fives rose from 14% of the total age group to 27%.

4. see Cultural Trends 17: 1993. Terminaror 2 attracted an audience that was more weighted towards the C2DE groups and towards a male audience than the other films in this study.

5. The E.O.C report (1991) quoted above shows that 43% of employed women work part-time compared with 8% of employed men and that part-time work is the only work on the increase.

6. This phenomenon is examined in The Rites Of Man (Miles 1991) in the prologue, it is also dealt with in The Lust To Kill (Cameron and Frazer 1987).

NARRATIVE

1. For an analysis of the Robin Hood myth see J.W Walker (1952) The True History Of Robin Hood

2. Rickman's performance contains its own discourse for the cinema literate on the clichés of cinema villainy, and his performance saves the film from accusations of cliché, unfortunately I do not have the space to go into this.

3. see filmography

FILMOGRAPHY

1991

ROBIN HOOD: PRINCE OF THIEVES

starring-Kevin Costner; director-J Reynolds; distributor-Morgan Creek productions;
grossed-£19.8 million.

TERMINATOR TWO: JUDGEMENT DAY

starring-Arnold Schwarzenegger; director-J Cameron; distributor-Carolco;
grossed-£18 million.

THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS

starring-Jodi Foster; director-J Demme; distributor Rank
grossed-£17.1 million.

1992

BASIC INSTINCT

starring-Michael Douglas; director-P Verhoevan; distributor-Guild
grossed-£15.4 million

HOOK

starring-Robin Williams; director-S. Spielberg; distributor-Columbia Tristar
grossed-£13 million

LETHAL WEAPON 3

starring-Mel Gibson; director-R.Donner; distributor-Warner Bros;
grossed-£11.1 million
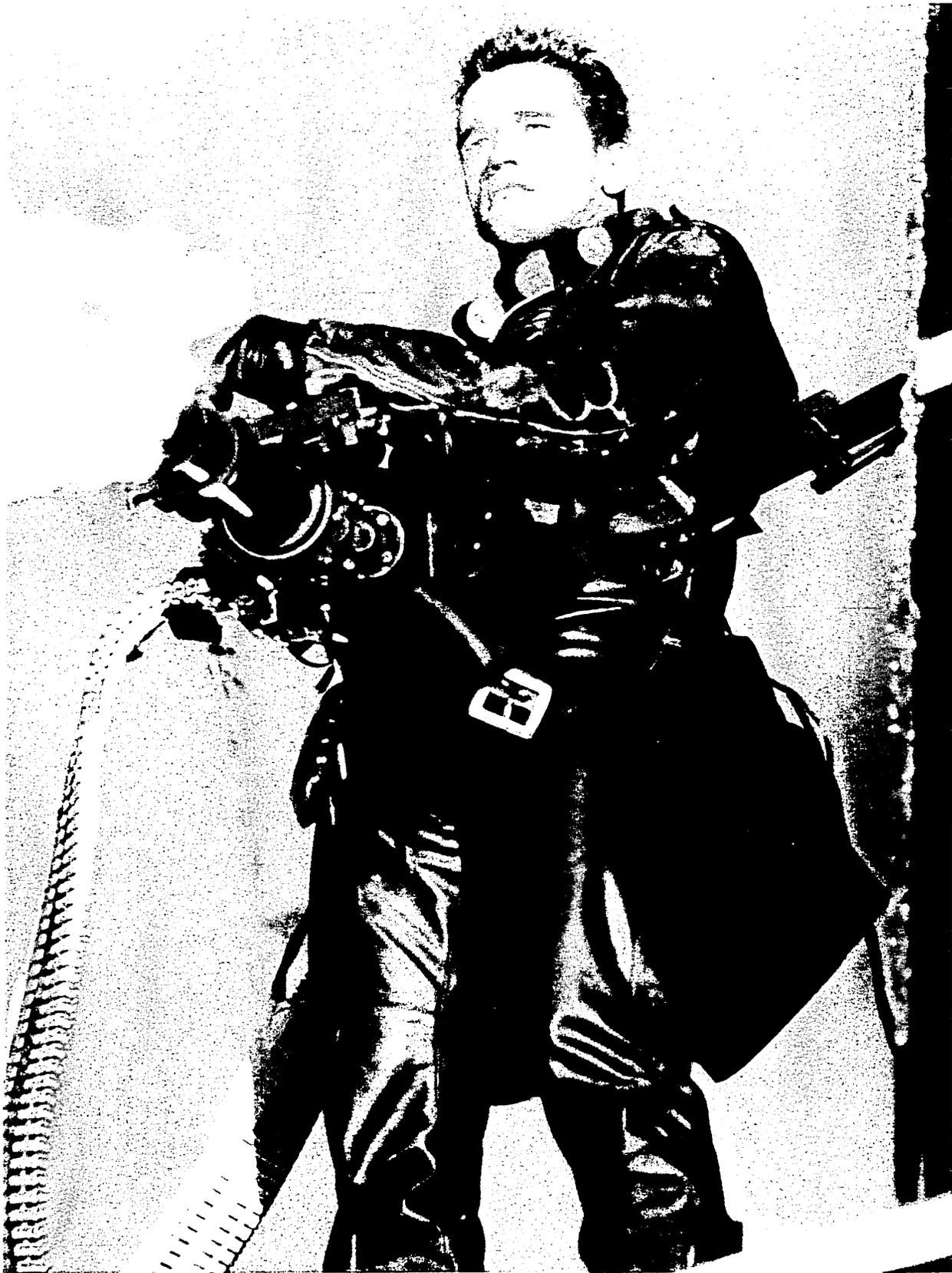
Figure 1. The perfect man-machine. B.F.I Stills Poster And Designs.

Figure 2. Insanely efficient masculinity. B.F.I Stills Poster And Designs

Figure 3. A woman in a mans world.   B.F.I Stills Posters And Designs

Figure 4. White hero. B.F.I Stills Posters And Designs.

Figure 5. Black beast   B.F.1 Stills Poster And Designs.

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Figure 6. Unstable masculinity. B.F.I Stills Poster And Designs.

Figure 7. Victimised heroine, another woman in a man's world. B.F.I Stills Poster And Designs.

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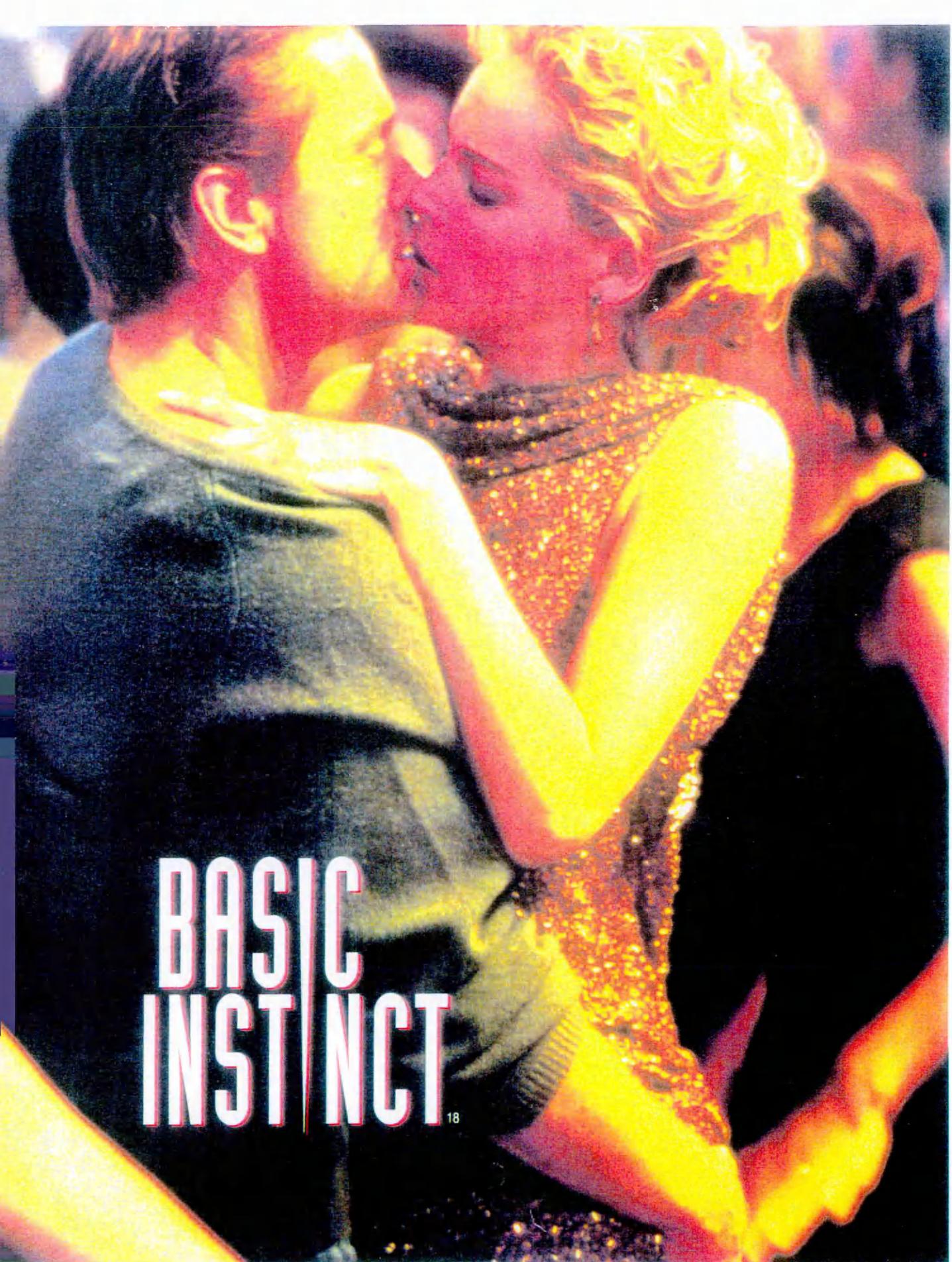
Figure 8. Naughty but not nice.   B.F.I Stills Poster And Designs.

Figure 9. A film about fathers and sons.   B.F.I Stills Poster And Designs.

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Figure 10. Another victimised heroine.   B.F.I Stills Poster And Designs.

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ROBIN HOOD: PRINCE OF THIEVES

The film begins with a written explanation that eight hundred years ago Richard the Lionheart led the third crusade and that most of the noblemen who followed him did not return. We next see Kevin Costner, later introduced as Robin Hood, escape from a prison in north Africa with his friend Peter and a Moor Azeem. Peter is killed but Robin and Azeem escape. Azeem promises to travel with Robin until he can save Robins life in return for freeing him from prison. We then return to England where Robins father is shown desperately trying to locate Robin and we learn that father and son had quarrelled before Robin left for the crusades. We also learn that dark forces are abroad in England. The father figure/Brian Blessed is killed by the villain when he goes to the aid of a tenant or serf whose daughter has been abducted by men in masks.

When Robin arrives home with Azeem he finds his father accused of devil worship and executed , his lands confiscated and himself declared an outlaw for saving a boy from the sheriff's men. Robin, Azeem and Duncan, the family servant, escape from the Sheriff's men by hiding in Sherwood forest. There they meet the woodsmen. Robin must fight the best man of the woods, John Little, before he is allowed to pass through the forest. Robin wins the fight and consequently the respect of the woodsmen. Robin goes to Nottingham to question the bishop about his father's conviction and meets the Sheriff for the first time. Robin scars the Sheriff and the Sheriff threatens to cut his heart out with a spoon. At this point Robin announces "so it begins". From this point Robin persuades the woodsmen to follow him and to wage war on the Sheriff. Using the basic resources of the wood Robin and his men seem to effortlessly capture most of the taxes extorted by the Sheriff, aswell as providing a safe haven for the families of the woodsmen. Marion visits Robin in the wood and is impressed with his achievements. As she has become romantically interested in Robin she agrees to help him get word to King Richard about the Sheriffs plot against the throne. Consequently she is taken prisoner by the Sheriff and the Sheriff discovers the hideout of the woodsmen. Taking his witches advice the Sheriff hires Scots who destroys the hideout, he captures many of

the woodsmen and coerces Marion into agreeing to marry him.. At this point we discover that Will Scarlet, who has always hated Robin, is in fact his half brother and the cause of Robins argument with his father. Robin and Will are reconciled and the remaining woodsmen agree to rescue those of their number who are to be hung on the Sheriff and Marion's wedding day. After the rescue Azeem persuades the people of Nottingham to rebel against the Sheriff, the rebellion allows Azeem and Robin to enter the castle and rescue Marion from the attempted rape by the Sheriff. In the penultimate sequence Robin fights and kills the Sheriff and Azeem fulfils his promise to save Robins life by killing the witch as she attacks Robin. The film ends with the marriage of Robin and Marion and the return of King Richard.

TERMINATOR TWO; JUDGEMENT DAY

The film begins with scene's from the nuclear holocaust and Sarah Connor's narration. We are told that three billion lives are lost on August 29 1997 when the computer Skynet starts a nuclear attack. After the holocaust the surviving humans are fighting a war of resistance against the machines. Skynet sends back in time two Terminators to kill the leader of the human resistance. The first is sent to attack Sarah Connor, the mother of the future leader John Connor, before he is born (this is the plot of the first Terminator film). The second Terminator is sent back in time to kill John Connor as a boy. In both cases a protector is sent by the resistance. The first Terminator failed to kill Sarah. The narration ends when we are told that we must see who gets to John first the Terminator or the protector.

The narrative proper begins with the arrival of the Arnold Swartzenegger /Terminator. The Terminator takes the clothes, gun and motorbike from a biker after an extended brawl. The Robert Patrick/Terminator, later identified as the T100 model, arrives and takes the uniform and car of a police officer. It is not clear in the initial scene if the policeman is killed or not. The two Terminator's are then in a race to find John Connor. The Schwarzenegger/Terminator rescues John from the T100 in a shopping mall, there is then a high speed chase on motorbike and lorry resulting in the first escape from the T100. The villain then poses as John's foster parents and kills them. The Terminator

guesses that the T100 will then look for Sarah so that he can take her physical shape and trap John. John insists on rescuing his mother. This leads to an argument between the Terminator and John when the Terminator tries to kill a man who asks if John is all right. John tells the Terminator that he is no longer a terminator and that he should not kill anyone. In the next sequence Sarah is escaping from the asylum, she meets up with John and the Terminator and they are chased by the T100. They drive to Mexico where Sarah has stored an impressive selection of weapons. At this point Sarah decides to leave John with the Terminator and try to assassinate Miles Bennet, the inventor of Skynet, whom we know develops a new microchip from studying the remains of the Terminator destroyed in the first film. John and the Terminator follow Sarah, when they catch up with her they find she has been unable to carry out her intentions. They explain to the injured Bennet the consequences of his work . They all decide to destroy the offices at Cyberdyne Ltd where the work is carried out. During this operation they are under siege from the police. They escape from the police and destroy the Cyberdyne laboratories but Bennet is killed. They are followed from Cyberdyne by the T100. They are escaping in a police armoured van, the T100 is chasing in a police helicopter. When these are both crashed, the Terminator, John and the injured Sarah take a small van and the T100 chases in a tanker lorry filled with liquid nitrogen. These both crash in a steal foundry. It looks like the T100 is destroyed when he freezes in the escaped liquid nitrogen and the Terminator shoots him causing his frozen body to shatter. However the heat from the furnaces causes the T100 to re-form. In the chase sequence in the foundry the T100 traps the Terminators arm in some machinery. It then traps Sarah. The Terminator frees himself by pulling his arm off and rescues Sarah. In the next fight the T100 kills the Terminator. It then traps John, Sarah arrives and shoots the T100 but runs out of ammunition before the T100 is destroyed. At this point the Terminator re-activates and shoots the T100 with a bullet that explodes once it has entered its target , this causes the T100 to fall into a vat of molten metal. This finally destroys the T100. When John asks if it is over the Terminator points out that there is still one chip left that can be used to develope Skynet and points at himself. The Terminator lowers himself into the vat of molten metal. The film ends with a shot of road from a moving vehicle with Sarah's narration. Sarah says that if a Terminator can learn the value of human life then she can look forward to the future with some hope.

SILENCE OF THE LAMBS

The story follows the involvement of a trainee F.B.I agent Clarice Starling in the hunt for a serial killer nicknamed Buffalo Bill. Starling becomes involved initially when she is asked to run an 'errand' and persuade the captured serial killer Hannibal Lector to complete a survey for F.B.I records. This turns out to be a ploy by Starlings superior in the F.B.I, Jack Crawford, to enlist Lectors help in capturing Buffalo Bill. Lector offers to help Starling in way of apology when one of the other inmates at the asylum throws his semen at her as she is leaving. The first clue given to Starling leads to the discovery of the severed head of one of Lectors former patients. Lector denies murdering the man, he says it is the work of a fledgling killer. Starling realises he knows the identity of Buffalo Bill. Lector offers a complete psychological profile of Buffalo Bill in return for a transfer to a cell with a view that is away from Dr Chiltern, the head of the institution in which Lecter is a prisoner. When a Senators daughter is kidnapped by Buffalo Bill Starling makes an offer to Lecter to transfer him if he helps to identify Buffalo Bill before the Senators daughter is killed. Lecter agrees as long as Starling swaps information about herself for information about Buffalo Bill, Starling agrees to this. Dr Chiltern is bugging this conversation. He goes to Lecter and reveals that Starlings offer is a ruse. He offers Lecter a deal that he had organised himself that will also advance his carer. Lecter agrees to give the name of Buffalo Bill but only directly to the Senator. As a result Lecter is transferred. Starling realises the name he has given the Senator is a false clue. She goes to see him in a make-shift cell arranged for him before he is transferred to a permanent site. She asks for more help in tracing Buffalo Bill, Lecter insists she has all the information she needs in the case file and will not elaborate until she tells him more about herself. Starling tells Lecter about the morning she woke up hearing a strange noise. She followed the noise and found lambs screaming in terror, waiting to be slaughtered. Starling tries to free the lambs but they are too terrified to move so she picks up one of the lambs and runs away. She is eventually caught and all the lambs are slaughtered. Lecter speculates that Starling still dreams about the screaming lambs and that if she can save the Senators daughter she will stop dreaming of the lambs. Before Lecter has a chance to help Starling any further Dr Chiltern arrives and evicts Starling. During this transfer Lecter escapes, killing and mutilating his guards.

Based on the clues given to her by Lecter, Starling works out that Buffalo Bill knew his first victim. Starling visits the home of the first victim and discovers that Buffalo Bill is trying to make a woman suit out of real women. She telephones Jack Crawford who tells her that he knows who Buffalo Bill is and he and a S.W.A.T team are on their way to arrest him. Crawford asks Starling to collect more background information in the town of the first victim. During the course of her investigations Starling goes to the house where Buffalo Bill is living and still holding the Senators daughter. Realising that Crawford has gone to the wrong address she tries to arrest Buffalo Bill. He escapes to his basement which is a series of corridors and rooms. Buffalo Bill turns out the lights and stalks Starling wearing the night glasses he uses to capture his victims. Starling hears Buffalo Bill pulling back the hammer of his gun and fires at the noise, killing him. In the last sequence Starling is graduating from the F.B.I when she receives a phone call from Hannibal Lecter. He informs her that he will not pursue her but he also informs her that he will be having an old friend for dinner, meaning that he intends to kill again. As he says this we see Dr Chiltern getting off a plane. The film ends with Starling repeating the words ' Dr Lecter ' over and over again and Dr Lecter walking down a street.

BASIC INSTINCT

The film begins with a man being murdered at the point of orgasm by his lover. In the next scene the police are examining the scene. The main character Nick arrives with his partner Gus. They learn that the victim Johnny Boz was using cocaine, had an unusual sexual capacity, was very rich and a friend of the Mayor. Nick and Gus go to the home of Johnny's girlfriend, Catherine Trammel, who was the last known person to see him alive. At her home the two police officers interview a good looking young woman whom they assume is Catherine. She is in fact Roxy, Catherine's friend and lover. Roxy directs the policemen to Catherine's beach house. When they get there Catherine is expecting them. She has no alibi, she tells them she was not Johnny's girlfriend she just liked fucking him. She then refuses to answer any more questions.

Nick then keeps the previously referred to three o'clock appointment. This is with his psychiatrist, Beth Garner. From this we learn that Nick is getting over a drink problem and that he had had an affair with Dr Garner. Back at police head-quarters Nick learns that Catherine's parents were killed in an unexplained boating accident leaving Catherine a multi-millionaire. We also learn that Catherine studied psychology at college and is a thriller writer. We later learn that Johnny Boz's murder was a re-enactment of a scene from one of Catherine's novels. Nick becomes increasingly convinced of Catherine's guilt. He predicts that she will not bring a lawyer with her when she comes in for questioning. Catherine does agree to questioning without a lawyer. When Nick and Gus pick her up she has press cuttings of an accidental shooting by Nick of some tourists. On the way to the police head-quarters she is obviously playing games with Nick. She tells him she is writing a novel about a cop who falls for the wrong girl and is killed. During her interrogation Catherine is frank about her drug taking and sexual habits, directing most of her answers to Nick. Catherine suggests she take a lie detector test. She passes this test. Nick drives her home where a cryptic conversation between the two suggests that Nick knows she cheated the test because he took a lie detector test and cheated it. After this encounter Nick meets up with his colleagues and starts drinking. A detective, Nilsen, from internal affairs teases Nick about this calling him shooter. Nick attacks Nilsen and Dr Garner steps in to prevent a fight. After this Nick and Beth go back to Beth's home and have sex.

The next morning at police head-quarters Nick learns that one of Catherine's lecturers at Berkeley was murdered with an ice pick. He is assigned to following Catherine. He looses her in a chase but finds her car outside the home of Hazel Dobkins. He looses Catherine again when she leaves Hazels. He finds her car again outside her beach house. He then watches Catherine undress in front of a picture window. We learn that Hazel had murdered her family for no apparent reason and that Roxy had murdered her brothers at a very young age. Nick visits Catherine the next day at the beach house. He sees in her possession the internal affairs file on his shooting accident. During the interrogation Catherine takes control questioning him about his under cover work with narcotics. Her questioning is more like a seduction until she suggests that Nicks behaviour at this time was the reason his wife committed suicide. At this point Nick pushes her away. Roxy comes in and is greeted by Catherine like a lover. Nick then

goes to Beth and then to Nilsen threatening them to find out who gave Catherine his file. He gets suspended for this. That evening he is visited by Beth. They argue and Beth attacks him. She apologises and leaves. Later Nick is woken from a drunken sleep by the phone. He is called out to a murder. It turns out to be Nilsen's murder and he is the chief suspect. Back at his home Catherine is waiting for him. She seems sympathetic to his situation. They agree to meet that night at a club. When Nick arrives at the club he finds Catherine taking drugs in the toilets. She then dances flirtatiously with Nick and Roxy. Take hold of her and they go back to her home and make love in the same way as Johnny Boz and his murderer had done. Nick goes to the bathroom and finds that Roxy had been watching. She says that Catherine likes her to watch, then warns Nick to leave Catherine alone. The next morning Nick meets Catherine at the beach house and says it was the fuck of the century but that he is still going to 'nail' her for the murder of Johnny Boz. He meets up with Gus in a bar, Gus tells him that Catherine will murder him. Driving home someone in Catherine's car tries to run him off the road. After a chase it is Nicks assailant who is run off the road and killed. It is Roxy in Catherine's car. Nick visits Catherine who confides in him that when she was at Berkeley a women student she had an affair with had become obsessive and she had had to file a complaint. Nick investigates this and eventually finds out that the student in question was Beth. Beth claims that it was Catherine who was the obsessive. Nick finds out that Nilsen had been to Berkeley and removed the file that would confirm who had made the complaint against whom. Nick also learns that Beth's former husband had been shot and murdered and that there had been a rumour that Beth had left him for another woman. Nick returns to Catherine's home and is dismissed by her because she has finished the novel. Nick notices on the print out that the fictional partner of the fictional Nick is murdered in a lift while the fictional Nick is running up the stairs. Nick then meets Gus who says he has found Catherine's room mate from Berkeley and she can tell them who made the complaint. Gus tells Nick to wait in the car while he keeps this meeting as Nick is still suspended. While waiting Nick suddenly realises something. He runs after Gus but is too late. Gus is murdered stepping out of the lift with an ice-pick. Beth then comes out of a room and asks Nick what he is doing there. Nick tells her to put her hands up. She says she had a call on her answer machine asking her to meet Gus there. She keeps walking towards Nick with her hands in her pockets. Nick shoots her. All her finds in her pocket is her key ring, her last words are I love you. Nick becomes catatonic. His

colleagues find evidence that implicates Beth in all the murders. Nick goes home and finds Catherine. She says she cannot let anyone close to her because they always die. Nick and Catherine make love again. The film ends on them making love and the camera moves down to show an ice pick under the bed.

HOOK

Hook begins with Peter Banning, his wife Moira and son Jack attending a school performance of the play Peter Pan with his daughter Maggie playing Wendy. During the performance Peter takes a business phone call and arranges a business meeting for the next morning. He had already arranged to go to his sons baseball game that morning but Peter assures Jack he will make it to the game. Peter does not go to Jacks game he sends an employee with a cam cam-corder. Jack notices the employee just as he is expected to make a catch and consequently misses it.

The next sequence takes place on the aeroplane trip between the U.S and London. The Banning family are visiting Moira's granny Wendy because she is the guest of honour at a dinner to celebrate the Great Ormond Street naming a new hospital wing after Granny Wendy for her work rescuing orphans. Jack is still angry with his father and draws a picture of an aeroplane in flames knowing his fathers fear of flying and in the picture Moira, Jack and Maggie have parachutes and Peter does not. Peter tries to talk things through with Jack but only succeeds in starting another row. When they reach Granny Wendy's house Peter loses his temper with his children for making a noise while he is on the phone to a colleague, at this point Moira warns him that he is losing his family.

While Peter, Moira and Granny Wendy are at the presentation the children are kidnapped. A note is left requesting the presence of Peter Pan and it is signed by Captain Hook. Granny Wendy tries to explain to Peter that the Peter Pan stories are real and that he is Peter Pan. Peter does not believe this. While looking around the children's room Tinker Bell arrives, after failing to persuade Peter that he is Peter Pan and he must go to Never Land to save his children she knocks him out and carries him off. When Peter wakes up he is in Never Land, a fact he fails to understand. Tinker Bell takes Peter, disguised as a pirate, to Hooks ship where Hook is promising the other

pirates a war when Peter arrives to save his children. Jack and Maggie are hauled out of the hold in a net, Peter pushes forward demanding the return of his children, threatening litigation and attempting to bribe Hook. Hook is disappointed at what Peter has become. He tells Peter that if he can fly up and touch his children's hands he and they can go free. Peter cannot do this so Hook orders that they are all killed. Tinker Bell persuades Hook to give her three days to turn Peter into Peter Pan so he can have his war, but the bound Peter is accidentally pushed overboard. Peter is saved by Mermaids and delivered to the lost boys.

Initially the lost boys do not believe that Peter is Peter Pan, particularly their new leader Ruffio. When they are persuaded they decide to help get Peter into shape. In the mean time Smee, Hooks second in command, has devised a plan to make Peters children love Hook. This fails with Maggie but succeeds with Jack. Although Peter still can't fight, fly or crow he makes an attempt to save his children but finds Hook referring to Jack as 'my boy' while watching Jack play base ball. Peter becomes depressed and goes back to the lost boys hideout. Just as he gets there the ball Jack hit out of the park lands on Peters head. He then sees his reflection in a pond as the reflection of Peter Pan. His shadow then directs him to the den he made for Wendy. In the den Tinker Bell helps him remember who he is, and he remembers the birth of Jack which gives him the happy thought he needs to fly. Peter becomes Peter Pan again and is even accepted by Ruffio, but he forgets about his children. Tinker Bell reminds him of his wife when she makes herself human size and kisses Peter. After this Peter and the lost boys prepare for a war.

Peter arrives at Hooks ship just as Hook is preparing to give Jack his first ear ring. Jack doesn't recognise his father. The lost boys invade and during the fight Peter explains to Jack what has been happening. Just as Peter confronts Hook he hears Maggie calling for help. Ruffio fights Hook and is killed. Jack asks Peter not to fight Hook but to go home. Hook argues that if he does not fight he will kidnap his grand-children and their children. A fight ensues and Hook seems defeated, Peter spares his life and banishes Hook. However Hook has a concealed weapon and almost hits Peter, Tinker Bell intercede and Hooks knife goes into the crocodile he has turned into a clock. The crocodile comes alive and swallows Hook. Tinker Bell guides the children home while Peter says good-bye to the lost boys. Peter wakes up in a Park in London. He climbs

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into his children's bedroom where the children have been re-united with their mother. His mobile phone rings and he throws it out of the window.

LETHAL WEAPON 3

The film begins when Riggs and Murtaugh investigate a suspected bomb and cause the bomb to explode prematurely. As a result they are demoted to patrolmen. While on patrol they witness a bank robbery, they catch one of the villains and one gets away. This arrest attracts the attention of an internal affairs officer Lorna Cole, who insists that Riggs and Murtaugh are no longer involved. In the mean-time the villain who escaped is murdered by his boss because the robbery was not sanctioned by him. While Riggs, Murtaugh and Cole are arguing this boss walks into the police station and shoots the bank robber in custody. This boss is identified by Cole as Jack Travis, an ex-police man who disappeared one day. Cole still insists that Riggs and Murtaugh are not involved in the case even though they have been re-instated to their old rank. While Travis's image is still on screen Leo arrives to discuss selling Murtaugh's house. He recognises Travis, and takes Riggs and Murtaugh to an ice hockey game as he remembers getting a season ticket for Travis. Travis is spotted but escapes shooting and wounding Leo on the way.

After taking Leo to hospital Riggs and Murtaugh go to a hamburger stall owned by a friend of Murtaugh. While Murtaugh prepares to cook a hamburger Riggs notices a drugs deal in operation. He approaches the men involved but is knocked out. Murtaugh arrives at the scene and is fired at. He shoots back killing a young man that turns out to be a school friend of his son. Cannot face going home after this incident. Back at the police station Riggs and Cole fight and then agree to co-operate. Cole informs Riggs that the guns used in the bank robbery and in the shoot out at the hamburger stall had already been confiscated by the police. Only another police man would know where they were kept and which ones to steel. This confirms the guilt of Travis. Cole then takes Riggs to a garage where these stolen guns are stored. They escape after a fight where Riggs has to be rescued by Cole they take the dog Riggs befriended their with them. Cole and Riggs then have sex. After this Riggs goes to see Murtaugh on his

boat. Murtaugh cannot face the fact he killed a boy who was a friend of his son. After an argument Murtaugh and Riggs are friends again. Murtaugh returns home, talks to his son then attends the boys funeral. At the funeral the father of the boy asks Murtaugh to find the man that gave his son a gun. Cole, Riggs and Murtaugh then raid a number of homes and a garage in search of Travis. While at the police station Cole notices that there has been an unofficial access of the computer file regarding the storage of confiscated weapons. Cole takes Riggs, Murtaugh and a young police officer to the facility. Travis has gained access to the new facility by kidnapping Riggs Captain. The young police officer is killed because Travis is using armour piercing bullets. Riggs Chases Travis for some time until Travis escapes. At which point Leo arrives to tell them that Travis owns a housing development. Riggs and Murtaugh go there and are met by Cole. There is a shoot out, Cole is hurt and Travis is killed. The film ends with Murtaugh refusing to retire.