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1

Setting the Scene: Masculinity, Jealousy and Contemporary Culture

This book offers a new understanding of the relationships between masculinity and male jealousy. Its focus is the representation of jealousy in contemporary cinema as a marker of the relationships between masculinity, fantasy and cultural change. Jealousy has played a key role in the shaping of masculine identities and provides a useful focus to explore the tensions and contradictions of Western masculinities, within the shifting and uncertain terrain of late modern culture.¹ Historically, male jealousy and its relationship to the shaping of men and masculinities remains under-researched within cultural and psychosocial studies. The main debates around jealousy tend to unfold with reference to either psychology or sociology. Psychologically, jealousy is closely related to envy, but whereas envy involves two people, jealousy involves three. Sociologically, the emphasis generally distinguishes between envy and jealousy. As sociologist Van Sommers suggests, 'Envy concerns what you would like to have but don't possess, jealousy ... concerns what you have and don't wish to lose' (1988: 1). This book carves out a space in which to consider the psycho-cultural manifestations of heterosexual jealousy by exploring key images of its themes of loss and anxiety as well as its emotional significance.

The insecurities that underpin male jealousy can be discussed in the context of recent discussions about the alleged 'crisis' of masculinity (Coward, 1999a; Segal, 1990). The psychosocial and cultural meanings of this crisis and whether it signifies a shift towards more positive reflexive masculinities have also been the subject of debate. On the one hand, some suggest that changes in contemporary culture have, in a positive fashion, opened up new cultural spaces for the emergence of more fluid, less defensive masculinities (Minsky, 1998; Segal, 1990). On the other hand, it is often argued that the changes and uncertainties of

contemporary culture have provoked a more defensive response in the media, and that new so-called 'feminized' images of men, have contributed to a paranoid cultural 'backlash' against both feminism and new masculinities (Faludi, 1991, 1999).

This book applies cultural, social and psychoanalytic theories to engage with these debates through the study of masculine jealousy and its representation in Hollywood films. It challenges the binary model of theorizing masculinities as being either positive or negative, to argue that contemporary representations of masculinity often contain different elements of both these positions. This ambiguity reflects the doubts and fears about the loss of male entitlement more generally and a new cultural awareness of the contradictions and costs of more traditional definitions of masculinity (Bainbridge and Yates, 2005).² Such feelings may also reflect an acceptance of a more nuanced vision of masculinity as a psychological, social and cultural construction.

Jealousy is a useful lens through which to explore such dilemmas as it tests the ability to cope with complex emotions and affects that arise in relation to wounded narcissism and feelings of loss.³ Socially and culturally, the rules governing the codes of masculine jealousy have played a significant role in guarding the social and emotional boundaries of Western men and masculinities (Stearns, 1989). Male jealousies are shaped by historical factors and the cultural contexts in which they are symbolized and expressed. It is commonly argued that male jealousy has not fared well in the modern Western history of the emotions (Clanton, 1996; Mullen, 1991; Stearns, 1989). Before the twentieth century, jealousy was regarded in social rather than psychological terms and as an appropriate defensive response to a man's wounded social pride and honour (Baumgart, 1990; Van Sommers, 1988). Male jealousy was sanctioned as a male prerogative, and as a way to defend against the adultery of women and the threat of the 'cuckoo in the nest' (Moi, 1987: 136). But this is no longer the case. The rules of entitlement and possession have changed and male jealousy is now often pathologized as a sick and dangerous emotion (Mullen, 1991). As numerous self-help books on jealousy imply, jealousy often signifies emotional immaturity, over-dependency and a refusal to respect the territorial space of one's partner.⁴ At worst, male jealousy has become associated with the excesses of chauvinistic possessiveness, and violent misogyny (Mathes, 1992). Arguably, this diminished figure of the modern-day jealous man can be seen as iconic for the anxieties about masculinity and contemporary cultural change. However, it is possible now to point to the emergence of more positive representations of

male jealousy within contemporary culture. One can link this to the 'emotionalization' of masculine identities (Lupton, 1998), and by way of a backlash against feminism, to jealousy's popular cultural appeal as a signifier of old-fashioned manly passion in the face of an increasingly feminized world. As this book explores, the depiction of masculine jealousy in mainstream cinema reflects these contradictions, where hegemonic meanings of masculinity and emotions such as jealousy are continually contested, negotiated and remade.

Masculinities in popular culture and Hollywood cinema

Hollywood has long dominated mainstream film and can be seen as 'dominant cinema'.⁵ As such, it acts as a useful barometer of popular attitudes and values, including those surrounding emotion. This book uses this assumption to explore the link between masculinity and jealousy and its representations in popular culture. Hollywood cinema continues to be commercially, politically and psychosocially significant as a popular cultural site of mass entertainment and pleasure and there are many more diverse images of masculinity available than previously. Films both affect and reflect society and provide a means through which to analyse the relationship between subjectivity and culture. The meanings of a film are created in the interface between the audience and the film text. From the perspective of the viewer, the reading of the film is derived from their positioning; first, as an unconscious spectator, and second, as part of a broader social audience, where socio-cultural influences come into play, and shape the meaning of the text (Austin, 2002; Kuhn, 1994). Thus films act as a meeting point where cultural myths and ideologies, unconscious fantasies and desires are expressed and played out (Lebeau, 2001).

Since the 1970s, and in particular since the pioneering work of Laura Mulvey (1975), film has been a key site of psychoanalytic theorizing about gender and culture. Following the approach taken by psychoanalytic feminists in film and cultural studies, the view is that Hollywood cinema contributes to the 'ubiquitous and routine testing of masculinity by means of which patriarchal masculinity continues to maintain itself' (Radstone, 1995a: 115). However, recent research suggests that cultural spaces of male ambiguity that have a potential for something new and different may be emerging within mainstream cinema (Kirkham and Thumim, 1995; Lehman, 2001). One can apply Winnicott's (1971) description of 'transitional space' to these cultural forms to suggest that they point to a shift in the representation of masculinity and the

kinds of identifications that are being opened up for audiences (Bainbridge and Yates, 2005). In contrast to the rigid narratives of the fetishized and voyeuristic 'looks' that have hitherto characterized much of the dominant Hollywood cinema, new representations of men have emerged over the last decade that suggest modes of masculinity that are less narcissistic, more nuanced and complex (Bainbridge and Yates, 2005). Such images point to more fluid spaces being opened up for audiences and the imaginative work that that can take place in relation to film.

Representations of male jealousy have always played a central role in Hollywood narratives and this continues to be the case in contemporary cinema. A number of films in mainstream cinema over the last two decades have used the cultural trope of 'masculinity in crisis' and male jealousy has played a significant role in the narrative: *Basic Instinct* (1992), *The English Patient* (1996), *Nil By Mouth* (1997), *Boogie Nights* (1997), *Lolita* (1997), *High Fidelity* (2000), *Memento* (2000), *Closer* (2004), *Brokeback Mountain* (2005), *Basic Instinct 2* (2006). Images of jealousy in films such as these arguably reflect the cultural lack of faith in the traditional fictions and narratives of masculinity more generally (Butler, 2000). Perhaps the possessive gaze of the hero and the emotional and moral outcomes of jealous triangles are less certain than in previous years; the object of jealousy is less passive and more able to challenge the power and possession of the masculine jealous subject.

The film *A Perfect Murder* (1998) provides an example of this.⁶ The film stars Michael Douglas as the cuckolded husband and his interpretation of the role recalls the ruthless masculinity of his earlier role 'Ghekkō' in the film *Wall Street* (1987). Yet his vulnerability is also signalled visually through the depiction of his aging and emotionally expressive jealous body. His character decides to punish his wife (played by Gwyneth Paltrow) for having an affair by teaming up with her lover and planning her murder. But the plan goes wrong and when she finally discovers her husband's murderous plot, she kills him and escapes punishment, thus signalling a shift in law as a symbol of patriarchal masculinity. The film is a remake of Hitchcock's *Dial M for Murder* (1954), when the desires of the wife (played by Grace Kelly) were given less narrative expression than in the 1998 film, in which the wife has both a career and a sexual identity, thus reflecting the cultural changes that have occurred since the 1950s. Yet in the contemporary version, the agency of the wife as the object of jealousy is counteracted by her passive positioning in relation to contemporary strategies of narrative and *mise-en-scène*.⁷ Thus, hegemonic masculinity

is reasserted, counteracting the symbolic depletion of the husband's masculine status as cuckold in relation to the revenge of the trophy wife.

One of the main comparisons between *A Perfect Murder* and *Dial M For Murder* is the heightened emotionalism of the jealous protagonist in the contemporary film. Douglas's high-octane performance relates, perhaps, to the emotionalization of cultural masculinities more generally (Lupton, 1998). The powerful depiction of male jealousy and its relationship to issues of rivalry and sexual difference can be found in films such as *Closer* (2004), in which the rivalry of the two leading male protagonists (played by Jude Law and Clive Owen) is central to the jealous narrative. At the beginning of the film the hostility between the two men is interwoven with their (unintentional) desire that comes about as a result of their internet correspondence using false names (and genders). However, this desire then turns to jealous antagonism and a desire to possess the independent and often elusive female characters (played by Julia Roberts and Natalie Portman). Films such as these show how masculinity is largely shaped in relation to difference and the impossible desire to possess the (feminine) other. Yet the 'other' in this context of male jealousy does not only refer to the otherness of Woman; it also refers to the difficulty of tolerating the differences of masculinity and the rivalries which may arise as a defence against the possibilities of homoerotic desire.

This book takes up these themes by examining five case studies of films released over the last two decades, where the depiction of male jealousy plays a central role in the narrative and where the male star represents a culturally significant and historically salient type of masculinity. The case studies are of the following films: *Taxi Driver* (M. Scorsese, USA, 1976/1996); *A Perfect Murder* (A. Davis, USA, 1998); *The End of The Affair* (N. Jordan, UK/USA, 1999); *The Piano* (J. Campion, Australia/New Zealand/France, 1993) and *Unfaithful* (A. Lyne, USA, 2002). Whilst they cannot be defined as popular 'blockbuster' hits, these films were all commercially successful in the United Kingdom and the United States. *Taxi Driver*, *The Piano* and *The End Of The Affair* were also critically acclaimed.⁸ Using these films, their stars and related publicity, this book analyses these representations of masculine jealousy to explore the possibilities of, and for, more fluid and less narcissistic formations of masculinity within contemporary culture. The book moves beyond a discussion of the jealous sensibility of some men to explore the overly defended and jealous nature of masculinity itself as a cultural formation and how that defensiveness is symbolized in certain films today.

There are of course, different forms of male jealousy and the professional jealousies between men in work settings have been a recurring theme of the cinema in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. In films such as *Wall Street* (1987), *In The Company of Men* (1997) and *Boiler Room* (2000), the dog-eat-dog culture of the executive world provides the ruthless setting for male rivalry and the narcissistic struggle for masculine dominance. Epitomized perhaps in the film *American Psycho* (2000), such jealousies often appear to be rooted more in narcissism and the envy of material possessions than in the rivalrous desire with another man for the possession of a woman. Yet it is often the case that even in films where women are not immediately visible as the focus of antagonism, the violent struggles between men also contain misogyny when, as in *In The Company Of Men*, a vulnerable female character is caught up as an unwitting object of rivalrous exchange between two ruthless male colleagues.

The erotic possession of women is often a feature of 'rescue' narratives where the hero 'saves' the woman from an evil rival. This scenario can be found in 'action' films such as *Mission Impossible II* (2000) where the hero 'Ethan' (Tom Cruise) fights his 'evil' rival 'Sean Ambrose' (Dougray Scott) to rescue both the woman, 'Nyhal' (Thandi Newton), and the world from a deadly chemical virus, or as in *Taxi Driver* (1976/1996), where 'Travis Bickle' (Robert De Niro) wants to save both the prostitute, 'Iris' (Jodie Foster), and New York from the 'evil' of vice and corruption.⁹

Of course, the boundaries between different forms of male jealousy often overlap. However, this book focuses mainly on formations of male sexual jealousy, defined as 'reactions to intrusions upon a sexual attachment' (Van Sommers, 1988: 1).¹⁰ The terms *male* and *masculine* jealousy are by necessity sometimes used interchangeably, however, the term *masculine* jealousy is preferred, as it highlights the relationship between masculinity and jealousy as a psychosocial and cultural construction that changes over time.¹¹ The theoretical model used in this book is 'psycho-cultural', as it focuses on the interrelations among social, cultural and psychical spheres of analysis, in which masculine jealousy is seen as the outcome of social, cultural and unconscious forces. The different aspects of this approach to subjectivity and culture are outlined below.

Masculinity, jealousy and the unconscious

Psychoanalytic theory provides a rich language to explore the complexities of gendered subjectivities and their relationship to culture and

the production of fantasy. It allows space for the contradictions and paradoxes that arise in relation to unconscious psychic processes that other theories of culture and identity ignore. Using a psychoanalytic perspective, one can argue that the shaping of gendered subjectivities is always de-centred by the psychic forces of the unconscious (Minsky, 1996). The workings of the unconscious can be traced back to the earliest years of life and shape our early relationships to objects in our internal and external worlds. The unconscious finds symbolic expression individually and culturally through the fantasies, projections and identifications which continually mediate the discourses, representations and practices of everyday life (Bainbridge, Radstone, Rustin and Yates, 2007). The acquisition of a gender identity plays a central role in this process. The subject's psychic entry into the symbolic sphere of culture and relations of sexual difference means that its cultural identity is also a gendered identity (Benvenuto and Kennedy, 1986).

Psychoanalysis can help us understand the psychic forces that underpin the binary cultural construction of gender, where femininity becomes the psychic and cultural other of masculinity. Psychoanalytic explanations of sexual difference point to a powerful psychic investment in maintaining this opposition.¹² Psychoanalytic theories of masculinity relate such anxieties to the defensive psychic processes that influence the shaping of masculinities. This work implies that psychologically, male subjectivities are shaped defensively and reactively in relation to a series of Oedipal struggles and anxieties related to parental figures. These psychoanalytic accounts often reinforce a negative picture of men and masculinities in contemporary culture as being overly defended and precarious.¹³ Such explanations of masculinity also have pessimistic implications for the kind of male jealousies that may be experienced as a result, with the suggestion that these are likely to be narcissistic and overly possessive.

However, I apply the language of the British psychoanalyst D. W. Winnicott to present the possibility of less 'reactionary' psychic formations of what I term 'a good enough' masculinity.¹⁴ This model acknowledges the potential ambiguities and complexities of masculinity and uses the term 'good enough' to mean a non-idealizing acceptance of masculinity and its limits in the face of uncertainty and cultural change. This less defensive model of masculinity also has implications for the kind of jealousies that may accompany it. Such a model presents a more positive picture of masculinity that suggests the possibility of tolerating the complexity of social relations and the triangular dilemmas of jealousy and its related fantasies.

Hegemonic masculinities, jealousy and cultural change

Alongside the unconscious psychic forces that shape masculinities, there are also socio-political and cultural dimensions. Gendered subjectivities are not fixed, but subject to contestation and change; they are shaped in a complex interrelation of social, cultural and psychological forces, and historically specific social and cultural discourses (Segal, 1990; Yates, 2000). Following the model of patriarchal masculinity first developed by the sociologist R. W. Connell (1995), one can argue that gender constitutes a site of struggle, and is always in process and subject to change at conscious and unconscious levels of experience. Within everyday discourses, competing definitions of gender jostle for position within a number of discursive sites, within the patriarchal hierarchy of what Connell names the 'gender order'. Connell argues that gendered struggle not only occurs between men and women, but also between men as they compete for dominance, a struggle that is played out in the cultural sphere for definitions of masculinity.

Hegemonic gender struggles take place in different areas of life within the Western developed world. Connell argues that ideological discourses and practices interact to reproduce, in historically specific ways, the gender order, which in turn contribute to the ongoing formation of other social structures such as class, race and ethnicity (1995: 74). The hegemonic values associated with patriarchal masculinity have a social and political reality, because they legitimate real relations of power between men and women, as represented by the discourses of our everyday lives. These discourses operate and are constantly negotiated in the stories we tell and the narratives by which we make sense of our world (Yates and Day Sclater, 2000). In the past, these narratives often reinforced cultural binary divisions of gender and the cultural marginalization of femininity, including the omission of alternative heroes embodying less narcissistic and more 'feminized' visions of masculinity.

Yet the shifting social and economic realities, together with the challenges presented by feminism, have challenged those boundaries and divisions. Against this backdrop, the figure of the jealous man may be viewed as emblematic of the cuckolded status of masculinity more generally. However, in order to provide a context for that discussion of the male cuckold as symbolized in film, it is necessary to set the scene for the discussion of masculine jealousy by turning to the relationship between masculinities, the alleged feminization of Western societies and popular culture.

The crisis of masculinities and the feminization of culture and society

It is often argued that recent changes in Western masculinities are related to the 'feminization' of society and its values (Segal, 1999; Wilkinson and Mulgan, 1995). How this process of feminization is defined, and whether or not it is viewed as a good thing, depends upon the political perspective and theoretical framework of the writer. Broadly speaking, the argument refers to an increased blurring of boundaries between masculinity and femininity, in which the values, practices and traits associated with the signifier 'femininity' have now extended to men and have become increasingly dominant throughout contemporary Western societies. Cultural commentators point to the relationship between the feminization of culture and a postmodern scepticism towards the old patriarchal grand narratives as having contributed to the undermining of authority (Owens, 1985) and having found widespread representation in popular culture more generally (Bainbridge and Yates, 2005). Thus, cinematic images depicting the loss of male authority and the unreliability of masculine narratives have been a recurrent cinematic theme of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. For example, the depiction of psychological trauma and male confusion were foregrounded in films such as *Forrest Gump* (1994), *The Game* (1997), *Fight Club* (1999), *Magnolia* (1999), *Memento* (2000), *Mystic River* (2003) and *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (2004). In these films, the fallibility of memory and history as recorded through the personal narratives of the male protagonists were highlighted, thus emphasizing the instability of masculinity and its fictions more generally.

The feminization of masculinity is also associated with the 'emotionalization' of society and popular culture and the greater propensity of men to express their emotions (Lupton, 1998; Yates, 2001). Men have always expressed 'emotions', but now it is argued that the traditional division of emotional labour, in which women have traditionally been perceived as the caring, nurturing sex, is being challenged (Hochschild, 1983; Lupton, 1998). Gill, Henwood and McLean argue that second-wave feminism with its critique of masculinity and patriarchal social relations was a key influence in the emergence of 'new masculinities' (2000: 210), and the feminist notion of 'the personal is political' was also enormously influential in highlighting the value of subjective, emotional experience. Today, for example, sociologists argue that men are adopting more feminized modes of relating and (following women) are more likely to adopt a 'reflexive' narrative of the 'emotional self' to express themselves

(Giddens, 1992; Lupton, 1998). Throughout the 1990s, confessional first-person narratives of men were used in films to convey an authentic sense of masculinity and its emotional dilemmas. Comedies starring Hugh Grant in films such as *Notting Hill* (1999) and *About a Boy* (2002) which used his voice-over to chart a particular (English) version of confused masculinity were an example of this genre, and also historical dramas such as *The End Of The Affair* (1999), included a (male) first-person diary narrative, which began with Ralph Fiennes's character telling us 'I am a jealous man'.

From a sociological perspective, the feminization of society refers to the changes in family patterns that have accompanied the expansion of the female workforce (Day Sclater, 2000; Muncie and Wetherell, 1995). Sociologists point to the increase in lone-parent families, usually headed by women, and men are taking on many of the family tasks traditionally associated with 'mothering' (Bainham, Day Sclater and Richards, 1999). These dilemmas about fatherhood and the family have been a recurring theme in popular culture and there have been a number of popular novels about the joys and problems of new-man fatherhood; for example, Parsons's *Man and Boy* (1999) and Hornby's *About a Boy* (2000). Hornby's book was adapted and released as a film and the importance of fatherhood has been a constant theme of the mainstream cinema (Bruzzi, 2005). Films such as *Shine* (1996), *Quiz Show* (1994), *The Full Monty* (1997), *Magnolia* (1999), *Billy Elliott* (2000), *The Weather Man* (2005) and *The Ballad of Jack and Rose* (2005) are good examples of films where the poignant relationship between fathers and their children were central to the narrative.¹⁵

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the absence or inadequacy of 'career' mothers was also a strong theme in films such as *Three Men and a Baby* (1987) and *Three Men and A Little Lady* (1990). The backlash against mothers and feminism articulates, perhaps, a particular narcissistic fantasy which engages with the possibility of families without mothers, and possibly points to an envious colonization of the maternal role and the creativity it represents. A more overt example of this envious hostility towards mothers and their legal parental rights, are the campaigning rightwing 'pro-family' men's groups in the United States and the United Kingdom (Collier, 1996: 26).¹⁶ More recently, however, a new kind of fatherhood has been portrayed through the films *Brokeback Mountain* (2005) and *Broken Flowers* (2005), where the fallibility and vulnerability of fatherhood is acknowledged. The character played by Bill Murray in *Broken Flowers* depicts an aging Lothario coming to terms with loss in relation to his life as a single man living without children. One day he

receives an unsigned letter from an old girl-friend who tells him that he has a son who is looking for him. After an initial reluctance, the film shows his journey searching for this lost son and, in doing so, discovering that he has a desire for fatherhood after all. The film's representation of masculinity and the frustrated desire and curiosity regarding his son, point to a mode of masculinity that acknowledges the ambivalence of desire and the fallibility of fatherhood which contrasts with the manic discourses of fatherhood as articulated though certain sections of the men's movement.

Consumer culture, the objectification of male bodies and a backlash to feminization and change

Commentators often relate the feminization of society to the practices and values of consumer culture (Bocock, 1993; Lury, 1996). The spectacle and adornment of the male body in contemporary consumer culture has been seen as a contributory factor in the feminization of men. Just as women have traditionally been targeted by advertisers as objects of the 'look', men are now increasingly invited to identify narcissistically with the images in consumer culture (Faludi, 1999; Gill, Henwood and Richards, 2000).¹⁷ However, the cultural preoccupation with the body in consumer culture has arguably created new sets of insecurities about measuring up to the male body images on offer. As Faludi argues: 'The gaze that hounds men is the very gaze that women have been trying to escape' (1999: 5).¹⁸ Faludi believes that these anxieties about the persecutory female gaze were symbolically played out in the United Kingdom and the United States particularly on the pages of the 'lad' magazines of the 1990s (1999: 528). Faludi argues that it is easier for men to believe they are being belittled by the recognizable scapegoat of demanding women and the female gaze than by the less tangible, impersonal forces of late-modern capitalism and the broader social changes associated with corporate culture.

Researchers have highlighted the anxieties of those men who feel threatened by the feminization of society and the socio-economic changes associated with it (Collier, 1996). Such anxiety provides the context for what Faludi (1991) has described as a 'backlash' against feminism, in cultural, social and political spheres of life. This point has relevance for the later discussions of film case studies. As those chapters explore, the negative 'backlash' response to cultural change was a recurring theme of the dominant cinema of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries (Creed, 1993; Harwood, 1997). Glenn Close's

portrayal of the psychotically jealous mistress in the film *Fatal Attraction* (1987) is often cited as a good example of this (Coward: 1999b: 11). As we have seen, representations of fathers replacing neglectful career mothers also provide an example of this cultural backlash. Annette Bening's performance as the neurotic and materialist career-driven wife and mother in *American Beauty* (1999) is apt here. The implication was that while her husband's mid-life crisis was an appropriate emotional response to the alienating and false world of consumer capitalism, she remained greedily seduced by its vacuous aspirations, thus reinforcing the perception of the close relationship between femininity and the superficiality of consumerism.

A different cultural response: the new 'emotional man' and the plurality of masculinities

However, it is not the case that the feminization of culture is always linked negatively to a male 'crisis of identity'. As Segal argues, 'Men can and do change' (1990: xii). She reminds us that many men have also welcomed the less polarized visions of masculinity and femininity associated with the feminization of society and she cautions against placing all men together in the same reactionary grouping. Segal argues that just as there are different femininities, there are also different masculinities, which challenge each other, including more progressive voices which struggle to be heard in the face of more defensive narratives of what it means to be a man.

Certain contemporary male journalists have spoken out against those who complain about the plight of men today and have emphasized the benefits men experience from a more feminized society. Drawing on a study of British men by a communications agency, it was reported that 'most (British) men are "overwhelmingly optimistic" about life and are happy to be on an equal footing with women' (Summerskill, 2002: 6). Subordinate and marginalized masculinities that challenge more traditional forms are now finding new voices in popular culture and examples of more sensitive, feelingful masculinities can also be found in Hollywood cinema, where since the early 1990s, there are many more diverse representations of masculine subjectivities than in previous decades (Bainbridge and Yates, 2005). As Jeffords has argued in relation to representations of Hollywood masculinities and the male body:

More film time is devoted to explorations of their ethical dilemmas, emotional traumas, and psychological goals, and less to their skill

with weapons, their athletic abilities, or their gutsy showdowns of opponents.

(1993: 245)

Such men are often portrayed as having so-called 'feminine' qualities associated with sensitive soul-searching, emotional vulnerability, or even personal confusion. These qualities are often embodied in the particular style of male film stars, who bring a particular set of meanings to the roles they play as a consequence of their star personas and the publicity that surrounds them more generally (Dyer, 1998a; Kirkham and Thumim, 1995). The images of masculinity embodied by these male stars, often portray the complex ambiguities of masculinity and what it means to be a man. One can cite examples here of male stars who are portrayed as having deep and complex interior lives, as for instance, Ralph Fiennes in *The End Of the Affair*, (1999) and *The Constant Gardener* (2005), or Robert Downey Jr. and Sean Penn who, on and off screen, appear prone to suffer from melodramatic bouts of neurotic vulnerability. Press reports tell us of Denzel Washington's 'huge capacity to feel. Everything he does is filled with raw emotion' (Lley, 2006: 15), and Brad Pitt, whose scarred body in *Fight Club* (1999) conveys a scarred and tortured soul underneath. Pitt's most recent public incarnation as the father to Angelina Jolie's children, represents perhaps a new development in the shaping of his public image as a sensitive masculine heart-throb. It is arguably significant that Daniel Craig's interpretation of James Bond in *Casino Royale* (2006) conveys a more psychologically complex personality than previous Bonds, whose machismo is matched by a capacity for wounded vulnerability and a history of disappointed love.

It is important to emphasize that the representation of emotional masculinities in Hollywood (and popular culture more generally) is nothing new. Male melodramas of the 1950s, such as *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955) and *East of Eden* (1955) provide examples of this, where the intensely emotional roles played by James Dean exemplify images of tortured masculinity. Representations of emotional masculinities are specific to the broader socio-political and cultural context of their consumption and provide clues about the shaping of male subjectivities in that setting. In the past, Hollywood representations of masculinity have invoked narcissistic modes of identification to defend the male psyche against the unpleasures of loss (Mulvey, 1975). However, contemporary cinematic images of masculinity now invite a more diverse set of identifications and represent a different set of losses and risks for male audiences.

Feminist debates about emotional masculinities and cinema

These changing images of masculinity, which potentially facilitate new modes of male fantasy and masculine spectatorship, also have implications for the destabilization of masculinity within contemporary culture and the breakdown of cultural binary oppositions more generally. However, some argue that the 'pathos' of new masculinities in contemporary films is often achieved at the expense of women and the female protagonists in the films themselves (Rowe, 1995). Citing actors such as Woody Allen, Rowe argues that in such films, male protagonists often adopt emotional traits culturally associated with femininity, so as to appear twice as sensitive as the female (1995: 185).¹⁹ In particular, Rowe cites the genre of melodrama as an ideological narrative form that has traditionally 'spoken' to women, but which is now increasingly being appropriated by men to articulate the suffering of male protagonists.²⁰ Rowe argues that the 'melancholic man' takes on aspects of loss and lack associated with femininity, and that these aspects are used to signify the suffering and unhappiness of men at the expense of representations of women, in which sensitive men are portrayed as noble victims of powerful phallic women (1995: 186). Thus, from this sceptical perspective, images of the sensitive, feminized man do not mean that patriarchal masculinity is now being divested of power. Instead, it suggests that the opposite is the case, as images of the sensitive, emotional man can reinforce male narcissism.²¹

The depiction of the boyfriend 'Nate' (Adrian Grenier) in the film *The Devil Wears Prada* (2006) provides a case in point. In that film, and in contrast to his girlfriend 'Andy' (Anne Hathaway), he takes on the traditional feminine role of the nurturing, sensitive partner who cooks for a living and who is linked symbolically to a domestic sphere of social relations, rather than the phallic corporate sphere of fashion, celebrity and money. The film's heroine 'Andy' (who has to sell her soul in order to 'make it' in the fashion world) becomes aligned with ambition, superficiality and excess, whilst he inherits the values once associated with 'caring' femininity.

Radstone (1995a: 155) takes up the theme of emotional masculinities at the cinema in her analysis of Al Pacino and the particular qualities of vulnerability he exudes. She argues that the blurring of gender boundaries exemplified by feminized images of men in popular cinema may signify 'patriarchy adapting itself to incorporate the feminine'. Here, Radstone reminds us that popular culture constitutes a site of

hegemonic struggle, where definitions of masculinity are fought out. She argues that it is through this process that 'cracks' in masculinity are discovered and 'mended'. But as she goes on to say, 'cracks do not necessarily imply collapse' (Radstone, 1995a).

Debates about the representation of emotional masculinities are significant when applied to the representation of jealousy at the movies, where throughout the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, the 'plight' of the jealous man has often been depicted in melodramatic and tragic terms. For example, one can cite Jeremy Irons's interpretation of Humbert Humbert in the recent version of *Lolita* (1997), whose jealousy is depicted as tragic, if foolish; or Sam Neill as the sensitive husband in *The Piano* (1993), whose sexual jealousy nearly destroys him and his wife. Richard Gere's portrayal of the jealous husband in *Unfaithful* (2002) also provides an interesting take on the theme of tragic male jealousy and its consequences. In that film, the sense of tragedy is articulated less in relation to the violent murder of the youthful lover (Oliver Martinez), and more in terms of the emotional catastrophe of marital infidelity and the disillusionment of coming to terms with an unfaithful wife.

The 1995 film adaptation of *Othello* is also interesting to explore in this context. In contrast to previous cinematic versions, it emphasizes the 'tragedy' of Othello's jealous predicament, rather than Desdemona's tragic end at the hands of her jealous husband.²² *Othello* provides a useful case study to examine the ways in which representations of jealousy may be used defensively to shore up notions of hegemonic masculinity and its hierarchies. Interestingly, in that film, Othello's jealousy is depicted as being part of a medical condition of epilepsy. Fishburne is the first black actor to play the role of Othello in a major big-budget film and as a number of critics argue, he is represented as more emotionally vulnerable and naive than previous cinematic interpretations of the role.²³ His performance has clear implications for images of black masculinity as defined as a wounded condition. Fishburne's tearful and naive Othello also appears less culpable for his actions (and by implication less bad) than the character of Iago played by Kenneth Branagh. Branagh's performance emphasizes the misogyny of Iago and he also conveys a strong homoerotic component to his love and hatred of Othello.

Thus, in this instance, the otherness of jealousy as a deviant and uncivilized passion is conveyed less through Fishburne's interpretation of Othello's tearful vulnerability, than through Iago's ambiguous sexuality, invoking the traditional defences in Hollywood cinema against homoerotic desire (Neale, 1983).²⁴ This link was made in the press reviews of *Othello*, when the terms 'cuckoldry' and 'sexual jealousy' were mostly

applied not to Fishburne's Othello, but to Branagh's Iago: 'Iago's sexual jealousy is stung by the Moor's success in bed' (Curtis, 1996: 13).²⁵

This brief analysis of *Othello* shows that whilst the experience of jealousy may be an intensely personal emotion, it is also shaped historically by social and cultural practices, and the fantasy settings of cinema, stardom and related popular texts also contribute to this process.

These themes are revisited throughout the course of the book, which is divided into two parts. Part I discusses the psycho-cultural shaping of masculine jealousy and its relationship to issues of representation of masculinity in film, male fantasy and film spectatorship. Chapter 2 includes an extensive discussion of psychoanalytic accounts of masculinity and jealousy and Chapters 3 and 4 develop the psycho-cultural studies methodology used in this book. Such an approach combines theories of culture, society and the unconscious to explore the nuances of film narratives as emotional texts and also issues related to the processes of affective spectatorship, masculinities and the male gaze.

The analysis of film reviews is an under-utilized resource in film and cultural studies and the book presents an interdisciplinary method through which to explore the psycho-cultural meanings of the film texts as well as those of the reviews and related publicity. In contrast to film studies methodologies which in the past have tended to ignore the role of emotion or which have only focused on the film text or audience response, I argue that the fantasies of male jealousy evoked by the film's mode of address are also present in the film reviews and can be seen as an indication of broader socio-cultural anxieties about masculinity. The psycho-cultural method taken here suggests that reviewers occupy a liminal space between the viewing public and the film institution and points to the interrelatedness of the fantasies of masculine jealousy across those spheres of cultural analysis.

Part II (Chapters 5 to 9) examines the five films mentioned earlier by means of case studies: *Taxi Driver* (1976/1996), *A Perfect Murder* (1998); *The End of The Affair* (1999); *The Piano* (1993) and *Unfaithful* (2002). There are synopses for each of these films in the appendices at the end of the book. Synopses and related images and reviews for these, and all other films cited, can be accessed at <http://www.imdb.com/>.²⁶ Chapter 10 concludes by reflecting on the implications of the case studies, returning to the questions of masculine jealousy and cinema, and the possibilities for 'good enough' masculinities in contemporary culture.

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