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Green Berets and Gay Deceivers: The New Left, The Vietnam Draft and American Masculinity

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in History

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GREEN BERETS AND GAY DECEIVERS: THE NEW LEFT, THE
VIETNAM DRAFT AND AMERICAN MASCULINITY

(Thesis Format: Monograph)

by

Anna L. Zuschlag

Graduate Program in History

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
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Abstract

When masculinity is predicated on violence and military service is a man's civic duty, then draft resistance becomes a doubly radical act. Men who refuse to take up arms for their nation threaten, at least potentially, both its political and gender order. This dissertation explores American masculinity during and after the Vietnam War, by analyzing cultural representations of, and responses to, the U.S. Selective Service System. At a time when mainstream Hollywood would not touch the Vietnam War, a generation of independent filmmakers, artists and agitators produced a number of remarkable films and documents dealing with the war, the draft and the meaning of masculinity. How did draft resisters, draft avoiders and men in the New Left generally understand and practice their own manhood? How was their masculinity perceived? And how did masculinity shape the New Left generally?

Historians have hardly ignored the men of the New Left, but their maleness has rarely been the axis of exploration. Examining the masculinity of the male New Left, and understanding masculinity as a historically-constituted process and performance, reveals the inadequacy of the traditional declension narrative used to describe the history of the New Left. The New Left never made an ill-advised turn from "hard" issues of politics and war to "soft" issues of identity and gender. Instead, the New Left was always deeply preoccupied with questions of culture, sexuality and identity. One of its first projects was an attempt to rethink and redefine American masculinity. Pushing back against the gender order of the early Cold War, the male New Left opened space for new masculinities. Yet many of those willing to explore new masculine terrain were not able to renounce violence as a male prerogative or divest themselves of the male privilege secured by that

violence. By the 1980s, many members of the male New Left had rejected and recanted their own efforts to expand the meaning of American masculinity. These recanters colluded with more conservative writers to legitimate the public regeneration of a heteronormative, pro-war masculinity, the very definition of American manhood that the New Left had once challenged. This helped to mark all radical politics, particularly those of draft resistance, as unmanly for decades to come.

Keywords: Cold War, Vietnam War, masculinity, manhood, sexuality, gender, violence, film, New Left, counterculture, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., John F. Kennedy, Richard Nixon, Jerry Rubin, Tom Hayden, Abbie Hoffman, Norman Mailer, Todd Gitlin, draft resistance, draft resisters, draft avoidance, draft avoiders, Selective Service System, the draft, Vietnam veterans, John Wayne, Cary Grant, Alan Alda, Jack Nicholson, *The Green Berets*, *Greetings*, *The Gay Deceivers*, *Summertree*, *Drive*, *He Said*, *Alice's Restaurant*, *Explosion*, *Jenny*, *Coming Home*, *Big Wednesday*, *Platoon*, *84 Charlie MoPic*

Acknowledgments

The best way out is always through.
—Robert Frost

Spending my childhood less than half an hour from the Canada–U.S. border meant that I grew up exposed to a lot of American media. I soaked it up like a sponge. I can recall hearing about “Vietnam” in those formative years, and thinking it must have been important since it inspired so much music and so many movies. My interest in history, film and the Vietnam War grew from there. I watched films such as *Platoon* and *The Deer Hunter*, and wanted to know more. I listened intently when my parents talked about friends who were “draft dodgers,” and wanted to know more. Whenever my studies allowed it, I worked on topics related to the Vietnam War. While researching those projects, I came across brief mentions of fiction films featuring the Vietnam-era Selective Service System, but there was a dearth in analysis. While I had seen the classic Vietnam War films numerous times, these “draft films” were mysterious, intriguing entities. I wanted to know more. The decision to start a Ph.D. was not an easy one; the decision to write my dissertation on the Vietnam War and the “draft films” was.

Many people have assisted in the completion of this project. First, I would like to express sincere gratitude to my supervisors, Dr. Robert MacDougall and Dr. Joseph Wlodarz, both of whom joined me on this voyage when it was already underway. Dr. MacDougall’s generosity of spirit, mind and time helped me to see that this project was worthwhile. His faith in my abilities as an academic and my capacity to complete this journey was unfailing, even in the toughest of times. I am deeply grateful for his patience, enthusiasm and mentorship. Dr. Wlodarz’s keen interest and perfectly-timed words of encouragement kept me motivated and gave me invaluable insight when it seemed as

though my “history” and “film” worlds were on a collision course. I would also like to thank the thesis examination board: Dr. Tim Blackmore, Dr. Monda Halpern, Dr. Andrew Hunt and Dr. Aldona Sendzikas. Their discerning comments and thought-provoking questions added new dimensions to my understanding of this project’s subject area.

This was a journey of more than a thousand steps, and I could not have taken a single one of them without my family and friends. My family rallied around me when it seemed all was lost. They showed me what true support, encouragement and love is. My father, who introduced me to the cinema as a child, was always willing to talk things out, for hours if necessary. He read multiple versions of this dissertation—all with eagerness. His steadfast support, sage counsel and red pen were invaluable. My mother is a quiet force of nature. Her strength gave me strength when it felt as though I had nothing left to give. Both my parents listened when I needed to be heard. My brother provided humour, hugs and lunch breaks—all getting me through some tough days. I am so grateful to have my sister by my side. She helped me see the light on many things, not the least being the one at the end of the tunnel. My aunt gave me pep talks and sent positive thoughts, even from a continent away. Kelly, Stacey, Steph and Christine became my personal cheerleading squad. They all have broad shoulders and were sounding boards when I needed them most. I would also like to thank Nadia, who kept the spark alive; and especially Liz, who showed me that it wasn’t that I couldn’t do it.

F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote “there are no second acts,” which has been interpreted to mean there are no second chances. His words invoke a bitterness that would be easy to embrace after long, arduous journeys such as this one. I write this not in bitterness, but in gratitude for the journey, the discoveries along the way and for the uncharted territory that waits ahead.

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Introduction

Beat the Draft *and* Be a Man

A brawny Special Forces colonel and a young Vietnamese boy stand at the edge of the South China Sea. Weeping, Hamchunk (Craig Jue) wonders what will happen to him now that Sergeant Petersen (Jim Hutton), his American protector, has died in battle. Colonel Kirby (John Wayne) gently places “Peter-san’s” green beret on Hamchunk’s head. Kirby says solemnly, “You let me worry about that, Green Beret. You’re what this is all about.” Kirby takes the child by the hand. The two walk down the beach, as the sun sets slowly—in the east. So ends *The Green Berets* (Ray Kellogg and John Wayne, 1968), the only combat film to be produced during the Vietnam War, with a continuity gaffe that has become Hollywood legend. Adding to the film’s lore is its other dubious distinction: being unapologetically pro-war at a time when numerous Americans were questioning the Vietnam War’s morality and its winnability after the Tet Offensive.¹ Many critics considered *The Green Berets* to be a mistake. The geographically challenged final scene has become an apotheosis of sorts, encapsulating perfectly the film’s flaws. *The Green Berets* follows the exploits of a heroic Special Forces unit in South Vietnam, led by the icon of red-blooded American manhood, John Wayne. The movie is practically a

¹ Though the Tet Offensive, launched in January 1968 by North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces, was a military failure, it was an unexpected manoeuvre and shocked many Americans out of complacency. Among them was highly trusted news anchor Walter Cronkite, who expressed the nation’s confusion, when he said, “What the hell is going on? I thought we were winning the war!” Walter Cronkite, as quoted in James Wright, *Those Who Have Borne the Battle: A History of America’s Wars and Those Who Fought Them* (New York: Public Affairs, 2012), 181. For more on the consequences of the Tet Offensive on the American war effort, see Ronald H. Spector, *After Tet: The Bloodiest Year in Vietnam* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993).

recruitment film—it plays like a game of brave cowboys versus vicious Indians. All doubts about the morality of the war are discredited and swept aside.

Although successful at the box office, *The Green Berets* was thrashed by critics. Reviewers described the film as “childishly sleazy,” “rotten and false in every detail... It is vile and insane.”² Wayne had made dozens of films with the same template over the years. Whether set in the Wild West, World War II or even the Mongol Empire, John Wayne movies delivered a predictable and dependable formula of rugged masculinity and righteous violence. Yet in 1968, the Duke’s formula failed. Critics and audiences balked at Wayne’s attempt to force the bloody, messy conflict in Vietnam into a simple tale of good guys and bad guys, particularly in the increasingly charged climate of 1968. Wayne was savaged for his simplistic approach to the war.³ The film was even picketed by anti-war protesters in the U.S. and Europe.⁴ The controversy spoke louder to Hollywood than the film’s profits. The major studios would make no more pictures about Vietnam until well after the war’s end.

As John Wayne was releasing *The Green Berets*, director Brian De Palma released his feature film, *Greetings*. *Greetings* was an ultra-low budget independent film made outside the mainstream Hollywood matrix.⁵ The movie is a comedy, following three

² Frank D. Martarella, “Letter to the Editor: Childishly Sleazy,” *New York Times*, July 14, 1968, D18; Renata Adler, “Screen: *Green Berets* as Viewed by John Wayne,” *New York Times*, June 20, 1968, 49.

³ Adler, “*Green Berets*,” 49; Kevin Thomas, “*Green Berets* in Multiples; Review of *Green Berets*,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 3, 1968, G1.

⁴ See “150 Picket Opening of *Green Berets*; Signs Score Wayne,” *New York Times*, June 20, 1968, 49; “200 Picket London Opening of Wayne’s *Green Berets*,” *New York Times*, August 16, 1968, 17; and “Italians Protest *Green Berets*,” *Washington Post*, September 22, 1968, A19.

⁵ William Wolf, “Movies: De Palma Plots Rematch with Hollywood,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 30, 1972, D20.

young and libidinous countercultural types as they chase girls and avoid the draft in New York City. The offbeat, underground *Greetings* presents a very different image of American masculinity than the tough, stoic commandos of *The Green Berets*.⁶ De Palma's film is preoccupied with sex, voyeurism and homosexuality, real and feigned. *Greetings* is hardly progressive in its gender politics, but the film is and was subversive in its approach to U.S. foreign policy, sexuality, masculinity and violence. Film critics called it "wonderfully imaginative and irreverent," and praised its fresh approach to the issues of the day.⁷ De Palma was feted at the Berlin Film Festival, where *Greetings* won a Silver Bear for "the unconventional and spontaneous work of the director and his actors."⁸

In 1968, *The Green Berets* seemed like a relic of another era—not just antiquated but objectionable given the growing anti-war mood—while *Greetings* seemed of its moment, even avant-garde. *Greetings* was soon joined by several other films featuring draft avoiders and provocative portrayals of American manhood, sexuality and the war: films like *The Gay Deceivers* (Bruce Kessler, 1969), *Alice's Restaurant* (Arthur Penn, 1969), *Summertime* (Anthony Newley, 1971), *Drive, He Said* (Jack Nicholson, 1971) and more. Many of those involved in making these films, including Brian De Palma, Jack Nicholson, Robert De Niro and the influential production company BBS Productions,

⁶ See the "Misfortune and Men's Eyes: Three Early De Palma Comedies" chapter in David Greven, *Psycho-Sexual: Male Desire in Hitchcock, De Palma, Scorsese, and Friedkin* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013), 109–44.

⁷ Kevin Thomas, "Movie Review: *Greetings* at the Granada," *Los Angeles Times*, May 21, 1969, D12.

⁸ "A Yugoslav Film, Satire on Protest, Wins Berlin Prize," *New York Times*, July 7, 1969, 28; Thomas Grubisich, "Producers' ...," *Washington Post*, March 30, 1969, I59; Dick Adler, "Hi, Mom, *Greetings*, It's Brian—In Hollywood," *New York Times*, December 27, 1970, 64.

would become leading lights of the Hollywood Renaissance—the serious, stylish movement that rejuvenated American filmmaking in the seventies.

Today, however, the reverse is true. *The Green Berets* has enjoyed a long and profitable afterlife. It is standard viewing on cable television, especially on military- and history-themed channels, where its gung ho defense of America’s war in Vietnam raises few objections.⁹ Hollywood has long since made its peace with Vietnam. *The Green Berets* is now the elder statesman of a canon of “classic” Vietnam War films such as *Apocalypse Now* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1979), *Platoon* (Oliver Stone, 1986), *First Blood* (Ted Kotcheff, 1982) and *Full Metal Jacket* (Stanley Kubrick, 1987). Its over-the-top political pronouncements, along with the Duke’s presence, have been ensconced as part of the film’s historical currency and curiosity. *The Green Berets*, like the war itself, has been largely reintegrated into master narratives of American virtue and triumph, particularly in conservative circles.

In the year 2015, it is *Greetings*, not *The Green Berets*, that seems like a relic from some strange filmic past. When seen by modern audiences—which, generally, it isn’t—it comes across as campy, awkward, even offensive. The film is only remembered, if at all, for being one of Brian De Palma’s first films and one of actor Robert De Niro’s first roles. De Palma, De Niro and other members of the Hollywood Renaissance would go on to make their own films about Vietnam soldiers and veterans: among them Coppola’s *Apocalypse Now*; *The Deer Hunter* (Michael Cimino, 1978); *Coming Home* (Hal Ashby, 1978); and *Casualties of War* (Brian De Palma, 1989).¹⁰ Yet *Greetings* and the other draft

⁹ “The Must List: 10 Political Movies We Love,” *Entertainment Weekly*, September 26, 2008, 102.

¹⁰ The Hollywood Renaissance is the term used by many film scholars to describe the emergence of a seemingly new movement in American film. Most simply, the Hollywood Renaissance is identified largely

films have largely been forgotten—a case of cultural amnesia that mirrors the culture’s larger erasure of real-life draft resistance. Draft resistance has taken on a patina of shame. It is a reminder of the war’s home front devastation and another example of national wounds that have been determined to be best forgotten rather than exorcized, even if it means silencing voices that could be heard in the service of casting (i.e., working) out decades’ old hurt and misapprehension.

Masculinity and the Draft

This dissertation analyzes the draft films of the Vietnam era and cultural representations of draft avoidance more broadly. It examines images of the draft avoider (meaning young men who evaded the draft without specific political or moral motivation), in popular culture, both mainstream and countercultural, across a variety of media. The story spans the war years of the late 1960s and early 1970s, when the New Left and counterculture were most visible and at the apex of their influence, through to the early 1980s, a time when conservatives worked to rehabilitate the war, repairing the damage Vietnam had done to the American consensus, re-making Vietnam as a noble cause. In particular, this dissertation interrogates the intersection of ideas about masculinity and violence in political and socio-cultural debates about the Selective Service System and the Vietnam War. At the intersection of these seemingly divergent discourses, the draft films, other media representations of draft avoiders and the general culture of draft avoidance present a window on the gender ideology of Cold War

by stylistic and generic experimentation influenced by European cinema and anti-Establishment ethos. Steve Neale, “‘The Last Good Time We Ever Had?’ Revising the Hollywood Renaissance,” in *Contemporary American Cinema*, ed. Linda Ruth Williams and Michael Hammond (Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press, 2006), 91.

America, particularly the changing and challenged meaning of masculinity for many in the male New Left.

The history and meaning of American manhood has been taken up by masculinity studies. An outgrowth of feminist and gender studies, masculinity studies has emerged as a field of study for the investigation of men's roles in the patriarchal system, their relationships with women and between themselves.¹¹ Historians such as Michael S. Kimmel and E. Anthony Rotundo have worked to provide a history of "men as men," contemplating the gendered nature of American history and revealing a hegemonic masculinity that in its prescriptive nature separated men through struggles to prove their manliness.¹² Sociologist R.W. Connell also approaches masculinity as a hegemonic construction. She argues that hegemonic masculinity does not inhabit a fixed location. It takes up the apex position in a particular configuration of gender relations. Hegemonic masculinity is a matrix of gender practices that are able to stabilize patriarchal legitimacy, thus reinforcing (or is believed to reinforce) male dominance and female subordination.¹³

In its early conception as a discipline, there was a tendency for masculinity studies to focus narrowly on certain male demographics. It appeared that the field's subjects were exclusively "straight, white, middle class, native-born."¹⁴ R.W. Connell identifies, and calls out, the subordination of marginalized groups, such as gay men and ethnic minorities, by the heteronormative, white manhood prioritized by scholars like Kimmel

¹¹ Rachel Adams and David Savran, introduction to *The Masculinity Studies Reader*, ed. Rachel Adams and David Savran (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 3–4, 6.

¹² Michael S. Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), ix, 333–35; E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 1.

¹³ R.W. Connell, *Masculinities*, 2d ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 76–77.

¹⁴ Kimmel, 6.

and Rotundo.¹⁵ Scholars such as Gail Bederman and Kristin L. Hoganson probed the limitations of heteronormative histories of white males in their studies of late nineteenth century American manhood, expanding the parameters of their examinations to include racial and class components.¹⁶ K.A. Cuordileone, Robert D. Dean and Robert J. Corber also broadened the scope of masculinity studies in their analyses of Cold War manhood, scrutinizing the era's gender politics and intense need for conformity.¹⁷ Much of this scholarship has included interrogations of social and popular culture representations of masculine identities, paving the way for projects, including this dissertation, which seek to continue questioning the veracity of hegemonic masculinity and its "great accomplishments and nagging anxieties."¹⁸

Scholars interested in probing the manifestation of American male identities have coined the term "masculinism" as an apparatus for exploring how traditional modes of authority connected to manhood have been used to gain political, social and economic

¹⁵ R.W. Connell, *The Men and the Boys* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2000), 30.

¹⁶ Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880–1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); and Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998). Scholars across a variety of disciplines, notably critic Paul Hoch, a pioneer in masculinity studies, and film scholar Richard Dyer, have examined the intersection of masculinity, race, class and sexuality as well. See Paul Hoch, *White Hero, Black Beast: Racism, Sexism, and the Mask of Masculinity* (London: Pluto Press, 1979); and Richard Dyer, *The Matter of Images: Essays on Representation*, 2d ed. (London: Routledge, 2002).

¹⁷ K.A. Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2005); Robert D. Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood: Gender and the Making of Cold War Foreign Policy* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001); and Robert J. Corber, *Homosexuality in Cold War America: Resistance and the Crisis of Masculinity* (Charlotte: Duke University Press, 1997).

¹⁸ Kimmel, 6.

status.¹⁹ “Masculinism” is, basically, the belief that men are superior to women, and that men should have the ultimate power over themselves and others. Masculinism uses conformist and conventional notions of masculinity to grow support and smear political, economic and cultural rivals as effeminate and forceless. Masculinist rhetoric and behaviour often obscure other issues, especially structural issues like economics and social justice that are often dealt with obliquely rather than concretely, and thus are easily obfuscated. In a masculinist society, the primary motivation for action comes to revolve around what makes a man a man. Steve Estes’ *I Am a Man!* (2005) argues that masculinism was particularly toxic in race relations during the Civil Rights movement, paving the way for African-American militancy and influencing the rise of Black Power.²⁰ In the tumult of the 1960s, Black Power participants used a re-inflected and re-directed masculinism as a political and cultural strategy that communicated different things to different populations, i.e., whites and African Americans. Masculinism provides an example of how different masculine populations use and abuse their manhood for punishment and gain, and in rare instances, enlightenment: a trajectory that shares elements with many participants of the male New Left.

¹⁹ See Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880–1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); K.A. Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2005) and “‘Politics in an Age of Anxiety’: Cold War Political Culture and the Crisis in American Masculinity, 1949–1960,” *Journal of American History*, 87:2 (September 2000): 515–45; Robert D. Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood: Gender and the Making of Cold War Foreign Policy* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001); Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); and Toby L. Ditz, “The New Men’s History and the Peculiar Absence of Gendered Power: Some Remedies from Early American Gender History,” *Gender & History* 16:1 (April 2001): 1–35.

²⁰ Steve Estes, *I Am a Man! Race, Manhood and the Civil Rights Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 7–8.

Masculinity in America has long been predicated on, and closely associated with, violence. Scholars like Richard Slotkin have traced the violent aspects of American masculinity, and American culture more generally, back to the nation's colonial origins, through the Civil War and the so-called winning of the West, and forward into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.²¹ Tom Engelhardt continues with a similar thread, investigating the intricate web between violence and the U.S. historical narrative during the Cold War era. He focuses on cultural assertions of an American manhood assembled on violence, or the capacity for violence, identifying these articulations at both the individual and geopolitical levels. Engelhardt explores the impact of this prescribed masculinity on the generation of young men growing up under the Cold War's cloud. These were the young men who heard heroic stories of manly victories in the "Good War." These were the young men facing the decision whether to participate in a not so "good" war.²²

When masculinity is predicated on violence and military service is a man's civic duty, then draft resistance becomes a doubly radical act. Men who refuse to take up arms for their nation threaten both the political and gender order. The Selective Service System and draft resistance are valuable sites for studying American masculinity because they marked the intersection of geopolitical violence, state authority and personal identity.

²¹ Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600–1860* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1973) and *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Atheneum, 1992). See also Leo Braudy, *From Chivalry to Terrorism: War and the Changing Nature of Masculinity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003).

²² Tom Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusionment of a Generation* (New York: Basic Books, 1995). See also Lynda E. Boose, "Techno-Muscularity and the 'Boy Eternal': From the Quagmire to the Gulf," in *Gendering War Talk*, ed. Miriam Cooke and Angela Woollacott (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 67–106.

Choosing not to fight, whether for noble reasons or base ones, challenged what it meant to be a citizen, an American and a man. Opposition to the Vietnam War, and the spectacle of draft resistance and draft avoidance on a massive scale, called into question not only U.S. foreign policy, but also the American gender order. The cultural turmoil of the era opened spaces, at least potentially, for new visions of American masculinity to be explored.

A qualification: refusing to fight is a potentially political act, but only potentially. This is where draft resistance and draft avoidance diverge. Something that is striking about the draft films, and the popular culture of draft avoidance more generally, is how rarely they confronted or even spoke of the Vietnam War in concrete political terms. *Greetings* does not offer a sustained critique of U.S. foreign policy, or make a deep intellectual or moral case for collective draft resistance. The film simply takes for granted that its protagonists do not want to go to war, and that they will do whatever it takes to avoid it. On the surface, the draft films of the 1960s and 1970s seem surprisingly uninterested in large-scale political questions like the morality of modern warfare or the purpose of U.S. military action in Vietnam. What the draft films are interested in is the meaning of masculinity. Sexual conquests, sexual hang-ups, what it means to be macho, a pervert or gay: these are the real preoccupations of the draft films. Still, the threat of the draft, and the war, lies behind and frames all these escapades. Rather than trying to separate “real” political issues from matters of culture, sexuality and gender, we must see the draft films as part of a larger enterprise of the New Left, in particular the male New Left in the Vietnam era: young American men were exploring and redefining what it meant to be a man. This project was both political and cultural. Its possibilities and limitations are the subject of this dissertation.

The Male New Left

The historiography of the 1960s and 1970s in America, and the social and political protests and upheavals of those years, has been almost as contested as the era itself. Fifty years later, the era is still a kind of political litmus test. What you think of “the Sixties” probably indicates whether you are conservative or liberal in your politics, and what you think of the Sixties probably depends on what you think of the New Left.

Even the definition of “the New Left” is contentious. For some, the term refers to a relatively narrow political movement led by mostly white, mostly male, university students. Though inspired by the Civil Rights movement as well as free speech movements on American university campuses, this movement’s defining struggle was against America’s war in Vietnam. Others see the New Left as a much broader coalition of grass-roots groups and movements, including opposition to the Vietnam War but also movements for civil rights, Black Power, women’s rights and other causes. Some draw a bright line between the political activism of the New Left and the cultural upheavals of the era. Others conflate the New Left with Hippies, Yippies and the counterculture writ large.

The first phase of historical writing on the New Left generally centered on the institutional history of the organization Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), founded at the University of Michigan in 1960.²³ Many chroniclers of an SDS-centred New Left, in particular those who belonged to the organization, have constructed a narrative of declension that typically divides the so-called Sixties into a good period (roughly coinciding with the actual 1960s) and a bad period (coinciding with the 1970s). While the

²³ One of the earliest examinations of SDS is Kirkpatrick Sale’s *SDS* (New York: Random House, 1973).

exact periodization may vary, the trajectory is generally the same: optimistic “Years of Hope” give way to pessimistic “Days of Rage.”²⁴ Writing in the 1980s, former SDS members and leaders like Todd Gitlin, James Miller and Maurice Isserman all valorized the potential and promise of the early New Left and lamented its later failure or decline.²⁵ The Movement’s original goals, they argued, got lost in intra-organizational conflicts and fragmentation, marked most obviously by the breakdown of SDS in the summer of 1969. Frustrated radicals turned to violence and militancy. Others simply turned away. The move toward insularity resulted in the alienation of the demographics that should have been ensconced as New Left allies, such as African Americans, the white working class and Old Left.²⁶ In this splintering, it is often asserted, the New Left lost its way, turning from “real” political issues—that is, economic and geopolitical issues, in particular the war in Vietnam—to more diffuse cultural concerns—including feminism and gay rights, consciousness raising and identity politics. As Todd Gitlin lamented in *The Sixties*, “The crucial fact is that, once SDS imploded, there was no national organization to keep the student movement boiling... The women’s movement was alive, but there was no

²⁴ On the actual “Days of Rage,” see Jeremy Varon, *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 74–112.

²⁵ Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam, 1987); Maurice Isserman, *If I Had a Hammer: The Death of the Old Left and the Birth of the New Left* (New York: Basic Books, 1987); James Miller, *“Democracy is in the Streets”: From Port Huron to the Siege of Chicago* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987). See also Michael Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion: An American History* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 195–220.

²⁶ Todd Gitlin, *The Twilight of Common Dreams: Why America is Wracked by Culture Wars* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1995), 72.

intellectual [my italics] center for a more general politics which was at once radical and practical.”²⁷

This declension narrative has a number of problematic aspects. There is an element of self-flagellation in most of these participant-observer works. That the New Left failed, and that its failure was its own fault, is almost taken for granted. The question to be answered is always, “where did we go wrong?” Indeed, there are many points of agreement between the New Left’s declension narrative and hostile conservative versions of the same history.²⁸ Both blame the New Left for its own failure; both focus on the alleged excesses or missteps of the Movement; both consistently describe the era using metaphors of splintering, unraveling or breaking down. It is also troubling that many white, male members of the New Left see its alleged turn towards identity and gender politics as a mistake, or that the decline of the New Left coincides so precisely, in their version of history, with the moment when many of its white, male leaders were pushed aside.²⁹ In his rueful reflection on the Movement’s fracture, Todd Gitlin observed, “a good many New Left veterans, especially stranded men, went into retreat.”³⁰ These men were in flight partly because of the exhaustion of being in the Movement’s so-called trenches, but also because of what Gitlin believed to be the decidedly insular shift in the post-SDS New Left: “From ‘the personal is political’ it is an easy glide to ‘only the personal is really political’—that is, only what I and people like me experience ought to

²⁷ Gitlin, *The Sixties*, 417.

²⁸ See Allen J. Matusow, *The Unraveling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984), xiv, 324–25; Gertrude Himmelfarb, *One Nation, Two Cultures* (New York: Knopf, 1999); and David Horowitz, *Radical Son: A Generational Odyssey* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998).

²⁹ Nikhil Pal Singh, “Culture/Wars: Recoding Empire in an Age of Democracy,” *American Quarterly* 50:3 (1998), 475.

³⁰ Gitlin, *The Sixties*, 424.

be the object of my interest... The universalism of the early women's movement... yielded to a preoccupation with the inner life of feminism and the distinct needs of feminists."³¹

Finally, the idea that the New Left lost its way by turning from “hard” political issues to “soft” cultural ones rests on a set of dubious, and clearly gendered, dichotomies—that military and economic issues are hard, masculine and real, while issues of identity, race and gender are soft, feminine and imaginary—and the equally dubious proposition that political and cultural issues can ever be distinct. It is ironic that former members of the New Left would construct its history in this way. It is only by denying the reality of cultural or identity politics that the progress made since 1969 by feminism and also the movement for gay rights—arguably, two of the most successful legacies of the era—can be written out of the history of the New Left, and the radicalism of “the Sixties” can be presented as a total failure.³²

More recent scholarship on the politics of the 1960s and 1970s has critiqued the declension model and loosened the assumed centrality of SDS to Movement histories. The first scholars to shift away from SDS-centric histories published examinations of the anti-war movement.³³ These studies probed the span of the organization's monopoly on

³¹ Gitlin, *Twilight*, 152–53.

³² See Andrew E. Hunt, “‘When Did the Sixties Happen?’ Searching for New Directions,” *Journal of Social History* 33:1 (fall 1999): 147–61; James Penner, *Pinks, Pansies and Punks: The Rhetoric of Masculinity in American Literary Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011); and Van Gosse, *Rethinking the New Left: An Interpretive History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

³³ See Nancy Zaroulis and Gerald Sullivan, *Who Spoke Up?: American Protest Against the War in Vietnam, 1963–1975* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984); Charles DeBenedetti, *An American Ordeal: The Antiwar Movement of the Vietnam Era* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1990); and Tom Wells, *The War Within: America's Battle Over Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

protest movements, opening up the scholarly landscape to investigations of protests taking place in the early 1970s, well after SDS's demise and the death knell ascribed to the New Left.³⁴ New histories of the New Left have moved away from hermetic analyses of the white, heterosexual male student radicals who dominated (and produced) much of the early historiography. Scholars like Winifred Breines, Douglas C. Rossinow and Van Gosse have begun writing the history of a much broader, more complex New Left—a “Movement of Movements”³⁵ that included groups like SDS but also feminists, gays and lesbians, Black Power and civil rights activists, as well as transnational movements for freedom and social justice.³⁶ This historiography highlights and defends the intricate

³⁴ See Alice Echols, *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America, 1967–1975* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989); and Kenneth J. Heineman, *Campus Wars: The Peace Movement at American State Universities in the Vietnam Era* (New York: New York University Press, 1993). The study of constituencies involved in anti-war activities has continued to expand. Recent works have focused on anti-war veterans, and the often contentious intersection of the gay liberation and anti-war movements. See Richard Moser, *The New Winter Soldiers: GI and Veteran Dissent During the Vietnam Era* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1996); Andrew E. Hunt, *The Turning: A History of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War* (New York: New York University Press, 2001); and Justin David Suran, “Coming Out Against the War: Antimilitarism and the Politicization of Homosexuality in the Era of Vietnam,” *American Quarterly* 53:3 (September 2001): 452–88.

³⁵ Van Gosse, “A Movement of Movements: The Definition and Periodization of the New Left,” in *A Companion to Post-1945 America*, ed. Roy Rosenzweig and Jean-Christophe Agnew (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002), 27, 292, 296.

³⁶ See Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979); Winifred Breines, “Whose New Left?,” *Journal of American History* 75:2 (1988): 528–45 and “Sixties Stories' Silences: White Feminism, Black Feminism, Black Power,” *NWSA Journal* 8:3 (fall 1996): 101–21; Douglas C. Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity and the New Left in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); and Van Gosse, *Rethinking the New Left: An Interpretive History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). See also Sohnya Sayres et al., *The 60s Without Apology* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984); and Terry H. Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties: Protest in America from Greensboro to Wounded Knee* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

relationship between identity politics and “real” politics. It also extends the chronology of the New Left backward and forward in time, and complicates simple judgments about when and whether radicalism failed or ended.

This dissertation builds on and contributes to this new history of the New Left in what might seem a peculiar way. It focuses once again on the kinds of men who dominated the first wave of New Left scholarship: white college radicals, including the leaders of SDS, and similar activists and agitators. Tempering this reinstatement, however, is my keen awareness that politics, culture and gender are inextricably intertwined. Historians have hardly ignored the male New Left, but the maleness of the male New Left has rarely been the axis of exploration. This dissertation investigates how men in the New Left understood and practiced their own masculinity. It asks how this masculinity differed from and cleaved to earlier articulations of manhood. And it asks how the male New Left dealt with the deep relationship between masculinity and violence—a subject the Vietnam War and the Selective Service System forced every young American man to confront.

Examining the masculinity of the male New Left, and understanding masculinity as a historically-constituted process and performance, reveals the inadequacy of the old declension narrative. For it shows that the New Left never made an ill-advised turn from “hard” issues of politics and war to “soft” issues of identity and gender. Instead, the New Left was always deeply preoccupied with questions of culture, sexuality and identity—and none more so than its first generation of white, male leaders. The political and cultural projects of the New Left were never separate. And one of those projects, a project close to the hearts of the white male New Left, was an existential attempt to rethink and redefine American masculinity. There could be no devolution from real politics to

identity politics because gender and identity had been a defining preoccupation of the Movement all along.

On the surface, at least, the young men who identified themselves as part of the New Left and the counterculture rejected their fathers' definitions of masculinity. They looked for new ways to live their lives as men. Their critique of American society was also a critique of America's gender order. At the heart of this critique was the question of violence, forced by the issue of Vietnam and the draft. Young men who refused to fight in Vietnam rejected the violence of the American military-industrial complex, and at least potentially challenged their culture's close association of citizenship, masculinity and violence. Yet many of the figures appearing in this dissertation ultimately could not or would not repudiate violence as a central component of their male identity. They may have rejected the Vietnam War as a symbol of traditional American martial manhood; yet these same young men compensated for their disavowal of state violence by embracing violence in other ways and forms.

This dissertation does not present the cultural upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s as a crisis in American masculinity, but rather as a moment of missed opportunity. The New Left did not take a wrong turn, nor did its excesses undo it. Instead, this dissertation argues, the male New Left did not go far enough. Pushing back against the gender order of the early Cold War, the male New Left opened space for new masculinities. But many of those willing to explore new masculine terrain were not able to let go of violence, or the prerogative to violence, as an essential element of their own masculine identity. Nor were they prepared to wholly divest themselves of the male privilege secured by that violence. In the end, this gendered crossroads created the void in which the male New Left tried to rectify what was perceived in the years after Vietnam as a masculine drift.

By the 1980s, many members of the male New Left had rejected and recanted their own efforts to expand the meaning of American masculinity. This explains the gendered overtones of their eulogies for the New Left, the self-flagellation in which they blamed questions of culture and identity politics for the Movement's demise. The recanters colluded with more conservative writers to legitimate the public regeneration of a heteronormative, pro-war masculinity, the very definition of American manhood that the New Left had once challenged.

The New Left's diminishing status paralleled the integration of the Vietnam War into the American narrative of triumphalism. This project of narrational erasure has a historical antecedent. Civil War scholar David Blight contends that the years after that tragic war were shrouded in an ideological and socio-cultural fog as well. Diffusing the miasma became a national imperative and manufacturing a narrative for public remembrance the method to achieve it. The urgency behind the configuration and preservation of public memory was based on the exigencies of reconciliation and national reunion. The mechanism for entrenching a post-Civil War narrative was the active abandonment, mainly by whites, of the conflict's racial threads. Thus the "deflections and evasions, careful remembering and necessary forgetting, and embittered and irreconcilable versions of experience" in post-bellum America marked how such a grievous national event would be remembered—and forgotten.³⁷ Reconciliation after Vietnam seemed to be about silence and a dialogue structured around whispers and determined absences as well. In order to recuperate a military defeat into a national history of triumphant acquisition and subjugation, the Vietnam story required finessing.

³⁷ David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2001), 2, 5.

The experiences of Southeast Asians and questions of American morality receded along with the veracity of the draft resistance and anti-war movements, and the voices of their members.

Terms, Labels and Scope

Terms and labels are particularly important when it comes to the history of the Sixties. Public memory of the era, with the help of popular culture, has confused and conflated individual organizations, ideologies and participants, creating a heady mix of countercultural capers and colourful characters that stand for the entirety of the Sixties. Participant-observer Todd Gitlin bemoaned the distillation of baby boomers, rock ‘n’ rollers, drugs and sex, and Hippie tomfoolery into the easily dismissed “lifestyle” that came to define his generation. Further, Gitlin believed the frippery attached to the Sixties being remembered “like a set of discarded clothes or a groovy nostalgia trip” was detrimental to the socio-political history of the New Left.³⁸ Thus, following from Gitlin’s lament, it is necessary to disentangle Hippies from political radicals; to recognize that not all political radicals were draft dodgers—and that draft resisters were not draft avoiders.

Between 1964 and 1973, 27 million American men came of draft age. There were millions of potential draftees, yet only 2.5 million went to Vietnam—a number that equates to less than 10 percent of the male baby boom generation.³⁹ A small number of young American men may have experienced combat in Southeast Asia, but the spectre of Vietnam shadowed the lives of millions of men. The labels “draft resistance” and “draft resister” are full of meaning, connoting a sense of politics and active protest. Draft

³⁸ Gitlin, *The Sixties*, 421.

³⁹ Christian G. Appy, *Working Class War: American Combat Soldiers and Vietnam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 18.

resisters made political decisions, confronted the “war machine” and anticipated the legal consequences.⁴⁰ Draft resisters operated on their moral, ideological and religious beliefs, participating in anti-draft activities such as blocking troop transports, picketing draft boards, marching in protests and publically burning their draft cards. They also contributed in much quieter and private ways, refusing induction, but accepting jail sentences and participating in alternative service programs. Draft resisters were the anti-war movement’s “Freedom Riders,” acting on their consciences out of civic duty, using civil disobedience as a mode of expression, fully prepared to risk prosecution and persecution.⁴¹

The central thread in this dissertation is an examination of draft avoidance, a phenomenon that has been left largely invisible in scholarly literature on the Sixties. Beyond the draft resistance and anti-war movements was a much broader demographic of young American men who did not want to go to Vietnam, and took steps to avoid it. These men did not participate in the collective, political struggle against the draft or the war. This dissertation uses the terms “draft avoider” and “draft avoidance” to describe this significant population. These young men used student deferments, feigned illnesses and trumped-up injuries to duck the Selective Service System. Their actions were not contingent upon moralistic impulses, but self-preservation and not a little indifference. “George,” a pseudonym-cloaked draft avoider, explained his attitude on the draft bluntly in an interview:

⁴⁰ Michael S. Foley, *Confronting the War Machine: Draft Resistance During the Vietnam War* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina University Press, 2003), 24.

⁴¹ Melvin Small, *Antiwarriors: The Vietnam War and the Battle for America’s Hearts and Minds* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Books, 2002), 33; DeBenedetti, 64–65; Foley, 9, 13.

No, I don't think about it [that blacks and poor whites were drafted in high numbers] worth a damn. When you're focusing on yourself, your own problems, you're not thinking about anyone else's... I believe in civil rights, equality, and all, I just didn't want to get my ass shot. I could tell you that my consciousness was torn by that—but I'm not going to lie. It was not my plan to go and die. I didn't attach any great metaphysical thing to it. I just *wasn't gonna go*.⁴²

The conflation that Todd Gitlin opined has enmeshed the draft resister with the draft avoider. Popular culture and public memory routinely meld resisters and avoiders into a single category of duplicity. Scholars studying the Selective Service System as early as the late 1970s understood the long-term consequences of placing Vietnam War draft resisters in such a box: “the most severe punishment suffered by draft resisters... has been the condemnation and misunderstanding of their fellow citizens.”⁴³ Observing the distinction between resistance and avoidance matters. Principled and dangerous acts of political defiance have been collapsed with bogus medical conditions, pretending to be gay, all construed as self-centred cowardice.⁴⁴ To further acknowledge the dissimilarity, I avoid the term “draft dodger,” an oft-used and usually derogatory label, in the dissertation. I am also selective in the use of “draft evader,” which (like “draft dodger”) elides the important ideological differences between draft resistance and draft avoidance.⁴⁵

“The New Left” and “the Movement” refer in these pages to the affiliation of interconnected social organizations, such as Students for a Democratic Society, that advanced agendas for democratic change and social justice causes. New Left groups were

⁴² Myra MacPherson, *Long Time Passing: Vietnam and the Haunted Generation* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1984), 131. Italics in original.

⁴³ Lawrence M. Baskir and William A. Strauss, *Chance and Circumstance: The Draft, the War and the Vietnam Generation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), xvii.

⁴⁴ Foley, 9.

⁴⁵ Baskir and Strauss, 12.

largely established, staffed and joined by young Americans, most of whom were students.⁴⁶ I use the term “male New Left” to mean precisely that, young men who identified themselves as participants in the New Left. The term is not meant to imply that there was no female New Left—there were of course thousands of women actively involved in the movements of the day—but it draws attention to my subject, the maleness of the men in the New Left. “The counterculture” is an even more diffuse concept: a youth-oriented cultural movement that was closely associated with bohemian and artistic expression, raising spiritual consciousness, “flower power,” Hippies and other forms of cultural experimentation.⁴⁷

The majority of this dissertation’s subjects are white. Other scholars have examined the meaning of masculinity to African Americans in this era, and to the Civil Rights and Black Power movements in particular.⁴⁸ I do not foreground the whiteness of the male New Left in the same way I foreground its maleness, but, as what follows will show, gender and race are always co-constructed and intertwined.⁴⁹ Notably, when men of the

⁴⁶ Van Gosse, “Movement of Movements,” 277.

⁴⁷ Tim Hodgdon, *Manhood in the Age of Aquarius: Masculinity in Two Countercultural Communities, 1965–83* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), xxxvii–xxxviii.

⁴⁸ See Michele Wallace, *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman* (New York: Dial Press, 1979); Steve Estes, *I Am a Man! Race, Manhood and the Civil Rights Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Jeffrey O.G. Ogbar, *Black Power: Radical Politics and African American Identity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004); and Simon Wendt, *The Spirit and the Shotgun: Armed Resistance and the Struggle for Civil Rights* (Gainesville: University of Florida, 2007)

⁴⁹ See Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880–1917* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995); Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); Vivian Sobchak, ed., *The Persistence of History: Cinema, Television, and the Modern Event* (New York: Routledge, 1996); and Sylvia Shin Huey Chong, *The Oriental Obscene: Violence and Racial Fantasies in the Vietnam Era* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012).

male New Left sought alternative models of masculinity, they often turned to African-American men and men of colour in nationalist liberation movements as sites of masculine “authenticity.”⁵⁰ Yet, this certainly did not mean they were prepared to give up white privilege.

Besides being white, a remarkable number of the men in this story are Jewish, including Norman Mailer, Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin. I do not foreground their Jewish identity in this dissertation, but it unquestionably played a role in shaping their individuality, their masculinity and their relationship to the dominant modes of WASP and Catholic masculinity in the United States. Scholars such as Jon Stratton and Warren Rosenberg have examined this subject.⁵¹ This deeply rich area certainly bears further study.

It is important to be precise about labels, but not to imagine that all of these categories were distinct or self-contained. Some scholarship on the Sixties tries to draw a clear line between the political radicalism of the New Left and the cultural radicalism of the counterculture. I am skeptical that politics and culture can be so neatly divided. This dissertation describes a male New Left engaged in both political and cultural projects.

⁵⁰ See Van Gosse, *Where the Boys Are: Cuba, Cold War America and the Making of the New Left* (London: Verso, 1993); Leerom Medevoi, “A Yippie-Panther Pipe Dream: Rethinking Sex, Race, and the Sexual Revolution,” in *Swinging Single: Representing Sexuality in the 1960s*, ed. Hilary Radner and Moya Lockett (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1999), 133–80; and Estes, 153–77.

⁵¹ See Jon Stratton, *Jewish Identity in Western Pop Culture: The Holocaust and Trauma Through Modernity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); and Warren Rosenberg, *Legacy of Rage: Jewish Masculinity, Violence, and Culture* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001). See also Andrea Levine, “The (Jewish) White Negro: Mailer’s Racial Bodies,” *MELUS* 28:2 (summer 2003): 59–81; Sanford Pinsker, *Jewish-American Fiction, 1917–1987* (New York: Twayne, 1992); and the chapter entitled “Jewish-American Masculine Identities,” in Herbert L. Sussman, *Masculine Identities: The History and Meaning of Manliness* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2012).

Therefore it examines political actors like presidents and activists next to cultural figures like authors and actors. Considerable attention is paid to agitators like Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman, attention-seeking provocateurs who clearly combined political and personal agendas in their theatrical performances and pranks. Their private lives and public personas are analyzed along with their political statements and beliefs. Abbie Hoffman's vasectomy or the cross-dressing antics of the draft films may not seem, to some, to be part of the serious political history of the New Left. This dissertation argues otherwise. Once again, the distinction between "serious" politics and "superficial" culture, and the gendered connotations so often projected onto that division, are among the key points at issue here.

Film as History

This softening of dividing lines applies to this dissertation's sources as well. At first gloss, the primary sources used in this dissertation may not appear to be deeply archival. They are not the personal papers or government files of traditionally defined archival materials. The films, magazines, interviews and memoirs cited in the pages that follow are public documents that thoroughly fit the greater tenor of this project—an examination of the very public discourse surrounding the Vietnam War. The debates over the war, and the working through process in the years after, took place in very public spaces, whether on the streets, in published personal recollections or on screens big and small. The primary documents used call attention to the communal and imminently accessible communication Americans engaged in in their efforts to understand the war, and its impact on the national political and socio-cultural landscape.

This dissertation uses film as a historical document. Writing in 1979, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. lamented the reticence of historians to look at film as a source of potential insight. Schlesinger was disappointed by the historical profession's neglect of film as a window onto the social and intellectual ideals of its audience: a culture's "inner most thoughts of a moment in time" and the reservoir of "deep if enigmatic truths."⁵²

Historians have since deliberated on whether film should be included in the pantheon of worthy historical evidence. Historians and film scholars have championed the use of film in history.⁵³ Their work brings historical methodologies together with the tools used by cultural and film scholars, bridging the gap between seemingly disparate fields so that all involved are enriched by the incorporation of film as an historical artifact. Whether used as an archival source or merely to further a point, film is capable of performing as any other document, as a way to establish facts, and reveal social, political and cultural values.⁵⁴

Taken as a site of memory, film has an important status in the construction of the historical Vietnam narrative. Film, as a "textual resource" and "cultural tool," mediates

⁵² Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., foreword to *American History/American Film: Interpreting the Hollywood Image*, ed. John E. O'Connor and Martin A. Jackson (New York: Continuum, [1979] 1988), xi, xii.

⁵³ See Robert A. Rosenstone, *History on Film/Film on History*, 2d ed. (New York: Pearson, 2012) and Steven Mintz and Randy Roberts, ed., *Hollywood's America: Twentieth-Century America Through Film* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010); Marcia Landy, ed., *The Historical Film: History and Memory in the Media* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001); and John E. O'Connor, ed., *Image as Artifact: The Historical Analysis of Film and Television* (Malabar, FL: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Co., 1990).

⁵⁴ John E. O'Connor, introduction to *Image as Artifact: The Historical Analysis of Film and Television*, ed. John E. O'Connor (Malabar, FL: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Co., 1990), ix-x, 3-4.

our understanding of events, and in the process comes to be part of the event's narrative.⁵⁵ Scholars have approached visual mass media as integral components of the public memory of the Vietnam era, with many, including Susan Jeffords, Marita Sturken and Sylvia Shin Huey Chong, arguing that this collective memory encompasses the war and the socio-cultural movements that took shape around, and because of, Vietnam.⁵⁶ This "cultural memory" involves the looping of images and ideas through the public conscience and unconscious, melding and absorbing into one contentious narrative.⁵⁷ Mediated imageries cannot be held down by official discourse and thus, cultural products like film become part of the "technology of memory," amalgamating individual recollections with history.⁵⁸

Chapter Outline

The first chapter of this dissertation examines the reigning forms of masculinity that many in the male New Left would come to rebel against. Cold War masculinity in the 1950s came in at least two significant strains: a coarse, pugnacious style of manhood embraced by an increasingly conservative white working class; and a more refined, privileged style of masculinity adopted by many liberal elites.⁵⁹ Conservative and liberal manhoods worked hard to become naturalized as *the* authentic masculinity of the Cold

⁵⁵ James V. Wertsch, *Voices of Collective Remembering* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 6.

⁵⁶ Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic and the Politics of Remembering* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Susan Jeffords, *The Remasculinization of America: Gender and the Vietnam War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989); and Sylvia Shin Huey Chong, *The Oriental Obscene: Violence and Racial Fantasies in the Vietnam Era* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012).

⁵⁷ Sturken, 1–7.

⁵⁸ Sturken, 9–12.

⁵⁹ Dean, 5–6, 37–62.

War era. In reality, these masculinities were not so different. In particular, each form of Cold War masculinity was predicated on the equation of masculinity and violence, or at least the right to violence.

By the mid-1960s, the New Left was sounding a noisy critique of the liberal Establishment. Chapter Two introduces the New Left's rejection of Cold War masculinity and its search for new models of male identity. Young voices of disenchantment and disillusion grew as the Movement flourished across the United States. Having apparently rejected both modes of Cold War masculinity, men in the New Left set about confronting traditional gender roles, exploring different articulations of American manhood. This chapter looks closer at two of the potential paths open to the men of the New Left. The Civil Rights movement inspired the first path. The struggle for racial equality was inspired by the philosophy of nonviolence, which offered a critique of violence and in so doing, challenged gender norms. This pathway found voice in the anti-war and draft resistance movements. It also provided the New Left with the possibility of radically interrogating gender ideology. The second path involved the men of the New Left who were not willing to renounce violence or masculinism, superficially rejecting their fathers' masculinity but ultimately embracing old views about gender and the prerogative of male violence. As anti-war and draft resistance participants, these men decried militarism, but embraced compensatory violence as the "natural" expression of male aggression and virility.

Chapter Three examines portrayals of draft avoiders on film. After the disaster of *The Green Berets*, Hollywood retreated from overtly addressing the Vietnam War. Yet independently-made films from outside the studio system broached the subject of the war and the Selective Service System in ways mainstream filmmakers would not. These draft

films are at the heart of Chapter Three. The films oppose the Selective Service System and endorse draft avoidance, but have surprisingly little to say about the war in Vietnam, or the anti-war and draft resistance movements. In the draft films, the decision to avoid the draft is presented as individual, not collective. This sidestepping of politics puts the focus squarely on issues of gender and masculinity. Indeed, the draft films are best seen not as a critique of the Vietnam War, but as an extension of the male New Left's project to explore different definitions of masculinity. These films had the opportunity to be radical in their pronouncements because they celebrate a man's choice not to fight and challenge traditional gender identities. Nonetheless most of the films undercut their own radical potential by embracing compensatory violence, heteronormativity, homophobia and misogyny. This self-limitation places the draft films firmly on a continuum with the old Cold War masculinity.

In the years after the Vietnam War, the New Left found itself in a state of flux. This dissertation's final chapter follows the New Left as it entered a period of reflection and decline in the late 1970s and the early 1980s. These years saw much introspection and indeed self-flagellation, a fixation on picking at flaws and a peevish luxuriation in the Movement's perceived failures. This can be seen in the mea culpa memoirs of Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman, and in "Vietnam Guilt Chic," a genre of non-fiction that emerged in the late seventies. "Vietnam Guilt Chic" was a vehicle through which draft avoiders could lament lost opportunities to prove their manhood through martial means. In the memoirs, and in "Vietnam Guilt Chic," true political and ideological confrontations are shunted to make way for easy self-recriminations based on masculine lack. More often than not, former members of the male New Left castigated themselves not for opposing the war or the draft, but for the ways they had strayed from the gender

orthodoxy of their fathers. “Vietnam Guilt Chic” indirectly exalted the masculinity and heroism of Vietnam veterans, which served to authenticate the veteran’s experience over that of draft avoiders and resisters in the collective memory of the war. Once again, an opportunity to radically interrogate American conceptions of masculinity was thwarted by hegemonic, heteronormative expectations of manhood. Though it may have appeared by the 1980s that the remnants of the New Left were under siege from the New Right, in reality, the Movement had been dismantling itself for much of the decade.

At its widest scope, this dissertation contends that the New Left provided a legitimate opportunity to rethink American masculinity. This project required contemplation and action. Some men in the New Left were open to the possibilities presented; others were not. Those who chose to live the alternatives were not enough in number to sustain the necessary changes. In the end, the venture did not go far enough. Instead the Movement turned on itself, sublimating the promise of inclusive enlightenment to achieving individual nirvana. Unable to unshackle draft resistance from draft avoidance (and thus marked by the same taint of cowardice and emasculation), all radical politics, even that of centre-left liberalism, were impugned as unmanly for at least a generation. This discrediting would find voice in the culture wars of the 1990s. It would impact directly how the Vietnam War would be remembered, who decided on the construction of those recollections and for what ends those memories would be used.

Chapter One

Cold War Masculinities: Lace Hankies and Gray Worsted Suits

“There are multiplying signs,” historian Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. wrote in 1958, “that something has gone badly wrong with the American male’s conception of himself.”¹ American men, Schlesinger believed, were not “psychologically prepared” to deal with the increasing independence of American women. This had dangerous implications for the American family and for American society as a whole. American women were growing masculine; American men were becoming feminine. The result, Schlesinger said, was a “crisis in American masculinity.” Only by embracing and policing the differences between the genders, Schlesinger argued, could the “lineaments of [the male] personality grow.”² Only a “virile political life,” “definite and hard-hitting,” would restore vitality to American manhood and to the nation.³

Schlesinger was not alone in his fears. In the first two decades of the Cold War, claims that American masculinity was somehow imperiled—whether by feminism, conformity, affluence, domineering mothers, communism or corporate control—circulated widely in both popular culture and social science discourse. Schlesinger’s “The Crisis of American Masculinity” joined a host of anxious studies, including *Generation of Vipers* (1942), Philip Wylie’s lurid attack on overprotective mothers; *The Lonely Crowd* (1950), David Riesman’s sociological study of “other-directed” personalities; *White*

¹ Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., “The Crisis in American Masculinity (1958),” in *The Politics of Hope and The Bitter Heritage: American Liberalism in the 1960s* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 292.

² Schlesinger noted that women needed individual identities as well and were equally caught in the trap of conformity. Schlesinger, “The Crisis of American Masculinity,” 296, 298, 303.

³ Schlesinger, “The Crisis in American Masculinity,” 303.

Collar (1951), C. Wright Mills' examination of the devolution of white-collar work; *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (1955), Sloan Wilson's novel of corporate conformity and ennui; and *The Organization Man* (1956), journalist William H. White's lament for the decline of American individualism.⁴ "Momism," "The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit" and "The Organization Man" all became common phrases in the 1950s, bywords for widespread anxiety about the changing meaning of manhood and individuality in the modern world, particularly for white American men.⁵

Yet one of these phrases would be more long-lived than the others. Scholars today would scoff at talk of "Momism," but we are still using Schlesinger's label, finding and dissecting crisis after crisis in American masculinity. The crisis of masculinity has become a familiar trope in the history of gender. Cold War historians like K.A. Cuordileone and Robert D. Dean have used the notion of American masculinity in crisis

⁴ See Philip Wylie, *Generation of Vipers* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1942); David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953); C. Wright Mills, *White Collar: The American Middle Classes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956); Sloan Wilson, *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, [1953] 1983); and William H. White, Jr., *The Organization Man* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956). Wilson's novel was released as a film starring Gregory Peck in 1956.

⁵ See K.A. Cuordileone, "Politics in an Age of Anxiety": Cold War Political Culture and the Crisis in American Masculinity, 1949–1960," *Journal of American History* 87:2 (September 2000): 515–45; Steven Cohan, *Masked Men: Masculinity and the Movies in the Fifties* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997); Barbara Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press Doubleday, 1983); Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (New York: Basic Books, 2000); Jane Sherron De Hart, "Containment at Home: Gender, Sexuality, and National Identity in Cold War America," in *Rethinking Cold War Culture*, ed. Peter J. Kuznick and James Gilbert (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 124–55; and Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 2008).

as an access point for analyzing Cold War politics, national security decisions and the country's international endeavours.⁶ Another set of historians have persuasively described the late nineteenth century as an era of masculine crisis. In fact, scholars have located crises of masculinity in so many periods of American history—including, but not limited to the 1850s, the 1860s, the 1890s, the 1910s, the 1930s, the 1950s, the 1960s, the 1970s, the 1990s and the present day—that one must begin to question the utility of the concept.⁷

These individual works may all be useful, for the light each one shines on shifting

⁶ Robert D. Dean, "Masculinity as Ideology: John F. Kennedy and the Domestic Politics of Foreign Policy," *Diplomatic History* 22:1 (January 1998): 29–62; Robert D. Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood: Gender and the Making of Cold War Foreign Policy* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001); K.A. Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2005); and Cuordileone, "Politics in an Age of Anxiety." See also Emily S. Rosenberg, "'Foreign Affairs' After World War II: Connecting Sexual and International Politics," *Diplomatic History* 18 (winter 1994): 59–71.

⁷ See David G. Pugh, *Sons of Liberty: The Masculine Mind in Nineteenth-Century America* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983); E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993); Michael S. Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: The Free Press, 1996); Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880–1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and the Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); Robert J. Corber, *In the Name of National Security: Hitchcock, Homophobia and the Political Construction of Gender in Postwar America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993) and *Homosexuality in Cold War America: Resistance and the Crisis of Masculinity* (Charlotte: Duke University Press, 1997); Steven Cohan, *Masked Men: Masculinity and the Movies in the Fifties* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997); James Gilbert, *Men in the Middle: Searching for Masculinity in the 1950s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Joseph H. Pleck, *The Myth of Masculinity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981); R.W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); David Savran, *Taking It Like a Man: White Masculinity, Masochism, and Contemporary American Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998); Susan Faludi, *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man* (New York: W. Morrow and Co., 1999); Sally Robinson, *Marked Men: White Masculinity in Crisis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); and Brenton J. Malin, *American Masculinity under Clinton: Popular Media and the Nineties "Crisis of Masculinity"* (New York: P. Lang, 2005).

historical constructions of maleness and gender. Is a crisis that lasts for centuries, yet leaves male dominance thoroughly intact, really a crisis? As literary scholar Bryce Traister has argued, a historiography of American masculinity as endless crisis, though originally meant to emphasize the instability of male identity, ends up doing the opposite, producing a picture of masculinity that is “surprisingly unchanging and fixed.”⁸ By moving away from crisis as the sole organizing metaphor, we may discover other stories about the changing nature of American masculinity: periods of evolution and periods of stasis, competing modes of masculinity, even moments of possibility, where change was not necessarily perceived as an existential threat.

This chapter describes two important modes of masculinity that competed for dominance in the 1950s and early 1960s: the confident, elite masculinity of the American liberal Establishment; and a coarser, more working-class masculinity that attached itself in this era to more conservative political views. These competing styles of masculinity and the contest between them coloured the politics of the early Cold War and fuelled the ferocity of partisan politics in those years. Cold War liberals and conservatives not only disagreed with one another’s politics, they also frequently disputed and attacked their opponents’ manhood. Thus masculinity and sexuality became central to Cold War politics, from the Red Scare of the early 1950s through John F. Kennedy’s ascendancy to the White House and beyond. Yet this contest need not be seen as a “crisis” of masculinity. The differences between elite and working-class, or liberal and conservative, masculinities were differences of style more than essence. The continued dominance of

⁸ Bryce Traister, “Academic Viagra: The Rise of American Masculinity Studies,” *American Quarterly* 52:2 (June 2000): 276.

masculinity and heterosexuality was never deeply in doubt. Nor, in the first decades of the Cold War, was the fundamental fusion of masculinity and violence.

Conservatives seized the initiative in the early years of the Cold War, and attacked both the politics and the manhood of their liberal opponents. Caught off guard, American liberals had to regroup and reassert their masculine authority. “Hard” elite, liberal masculinity was held up as an alternative to gray suits, other-directedness and being “soft” on Communism.⁹ The task of liberal re-imagination began with works like Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.’s *The Vital Center* (1949), which set out guidelines for both ideological and sexual rebirth. Schlesinger continued to keep pressure on his liberal brothers in essays such as “The Crisis in American Masculinity,” urging his comrades to see virility and aggression as the cornerstones of the American liberal renaissance. The new liberal manhood would be personified, for Schlesinger and others, by President John F. Kennedy. Returning the Democrats to the White House, Kennedy put liberals back in power and represented the dominance of elite, liberal masculinity. Kennedy exemplified a cool, confident manliness at the zenith of Cold War liberalism. He warned Americans about the dangers of Soviet aggression, promising that he had the vigour and would employ violence, when required, to defend the nation. This chapter closes with a consideration of the actor Cary Grant as a symbol of the same liberal masculinity in

⁹ The term “other-directed” comes from sociologist David Riesman’s study of conformity, *The Lonely Crowd*, in which he argued that the consequence of a post-World War II affluent lifestyle left Americans bereft of individual initiative and impossibly weighed down by the escalating requirements of societal conformity. Scholars such as Barbara Ehrenreich have read Riesman’s assessment, particularly his comparison of other-direction versus inner-direction (individualistic, non-conformist), as a warning with regard to the state of American masculinity. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Vital Center: The Politics of Freedom*, 2d ed. (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1962), 36; Ehrenreich, 34.

popular culture. In his public persona, and in particular the film *North By Northwest* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1959), Grant embodied the same cool, elite masculinity—but may have also suggested a way of transcending it, pointing to a moment of possibility for Cold War manhood, and a way of thinking about masculinity beyond crisis.

The time period this chapter traverses includes the childhoods of many of the members of the white male New Left and of those who would decide not to go to Vietnam. Their fathers' generation provided them with the social and political system some would push against, and others would work to tear down. This included the liberal and conservative strands of Cold War American masculinity many in the male New Left would revise, refurbish and reject. The Establishment and the masculinities it employed would be in a state of collapse by the mid-sixties. However, the New Left did not repudiate every tenet of Cold War masculinity. Sexism and the hegemony of heterosexuality would survive. Moreover, many men in the New Left would struggle to define the place of violence in their conception of American manhood.

Conservative Cold Warriors

In the early days of the Cold War, conservatives discovered the domestic utility of anti-communism. Liberal and leftist positions on postwar problems could be powerfully discredited by associating them with the feared philosophy of the brutal Soviet regime.¹⁰

¹⁰ Peter J. Kuznick and James Gilbert, "Introduction: U.S. Culture and the Cold War," in *Rethinking Cold War Culture*, ed. Peter J. Kuznick and James Gilbert (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 4, 8. Alan M. Wald states that while American anti-communism may have peaked in Cold War era, particularly during the Korean War years, it continues to circulate in political and cultural discourse. See Alan M. Wald, *Writing from the Left: New Essays on Radical Culture and Politics* (New York: Verso, 1994), 88.

The GOP ardently worked to connect the New Deal to Communism, to diminish the power of the nation's labour movement and increase their own political position.

Republicans had swept Congress in 1946; however, their loss in the 1948 election prompted them to put more energy into anti-communism, calling out alleged communists in the federal government, and labeling President Harry Truman and other American liberals as "soft" on Communism.¹¹

Senator Joseph McCarthy was not the first, the most powerful or the longest-lived conservative anti-communist, but he was for a time the best known, and he embodied better than anyone else the pugnacious conservative masculinity of the era, and its assault on the masculinity of liberal elites. The junior senator from Wisconsin honed red-baiting and communist-hunting to an art in the early 1950s, with his keen sense for publicity and his disregard for fair play. When McCarthy announced, in February 1950, that he had documented evidence of 205—or perhaps it was 57—known communists working in the State Department, he seized the nation's attention and took control of a national conversation about security, loyalty and manhood. McCarthy and his Republican colleagues worked to forge a link in the American mind between New Deal liberalism and Soviet communism.¹² An early master of the sound bite, McCarthy decried Truman's

¹¹ M.J. Heale, *McCarthy's Americans: Red Scare Politics in State and Nation, 1935–1965* (London: MacMillan Press, 1998), 104; Ellen Schrecker, *Many Are The Crimes: McCarthyism in America* (Boston: Little Brown, 1998), 155–56; May, 12.

¹² McCarthy's partisan allegations made him the target of heavy Democratic and liberal attack. For Republicans, it became clear that if the senator were discredited, anti-communism as a GOP bulwark issue would suffer as well. Therefore, in his first years combating Communism, McCarthy expected and received sustained support from his party. Heale, 104; David M. Oshinsky, *A Conspiracy So Immense: The World of*

presidency, and Franklin Roosevelt's before it, as "twenty years of treason."¹³ He fed, and profited from, deep anxieties about national security and identity. Even if McCarthy never turned the American public completely against the memory of the New Deal, Red Scare anti-communism in the 1950s brought left wing and liberal reform politics to a virtual halt.

McCarthy also used the politics of gender and masculinity to great effect, instinctively constructing a political identity that conformed to traditional (and equally manufactured) definitions of American manhood, especially working-class manhood, as rugged, aggressive and always capable of violence. McCarthy described himself as a "rough-and-tumble... slugger" who would deal with "Commies via the fist."¹⁴ When his performance required it, he played up his humble origins—he left school at the age of 14 to take up chicken farming—and his wartime experience in the Marine Corps. He embraced the stereotypes associated with his Irish heritage and was not concerned when

Joe McCarthy (New York: Free Press, 1983), 130; Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1991), 15; Reeves, 103; Schrecker, 241–42; May, 12.

¹³ Whitfield, 38; Schrecker, 241–42; Andrea Friedman, "The Smearing of Joe McCarthy: The Lavender Scare, Gossip and Cold War Politics," *American Quarterly* 57:4 (December 2005): 1107; Richard H. Rovere, *Senator Joe McCarthy* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1959), xii, 6, 12; Oshinsky, 111, 166, 172. For President Truman, the situation was complicated by the outbreak of hostilities in Korea. Not helping matters was Truman's contentious relationship with the revered General Douglas MacArthur, a staunch Republican and ardent anti-communist who led the United Nations Command in Korea. Truman's recall of MacArthur after several military missteps played into conservative claims that the president was soft on Communism. See David Halberstam, *The Coldest Winter: America and the Korean War* (New York: Hyperion, 2007); and John Bodnar, *The "Good War" in American Memory* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 73–77.

¹⁴ Friedman, 1108; Schrecker, 242; Jack Anderson and Ronald M. May, *McCarthy: The Man, The Senator, The "Ism"* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1952), 207.

the press reported on his gambling, drinking, fighting or womanizing.¹⁵ Far from apologizing for his inelegant style, McCarthy made the most of it. “I will have to blame some of the roughness in fighting the enemy,” he said, “to my training in the Marine Corps.”¹⁶

Much of the venom McCarthy and the GOP aimed at Truman’s government was directed at one man, Secretary of State Dean Acheson. Acheson personified not only the New Deal liberalism that the senator argued was incompatible with anti-communism, but also an elite, privileged style of masculinity that McCarthy believed was no masculinity at all.¹⁷ Acheson was born into a well-to-do family of die-hard Democrats. He attended Groton and Yale, was pompous, elegant and arrogant, and did not suffer fools.¹⁸ Acheson’s imperious style earned him many enemies, and the insults hurled at him, such as “striped pants diplomat” and “overdressed, overeducated wise guy,” often had gendered overtones.¹⁹ The secretary of state was, even according to his own son, “a dude, a fashion plate,” whose penchant for fine tailoring and impeccable personal grooming (he

¹⁵ Friedman, 1108; Jack Alexander, “The Senate’s Remarkable Upstart,” *Saturday Evening Post*, August 8, 1947, 15.

¹⁶ Reeves, 325. Despite his “action-packed” nickname, “Tail Gunner Joe,” McCarthy did not see much action in the Marine Corps. Serving in the Pacific as an intelligence officer, McCarthy dealt with the intelligence gathered on reconnaissance missions and debriefed pilots. Rovere, 100; Friedman, 1108.

¹⁷ McCarthy’s attacks on Secretary of State Acheson were a “safer” strategy than directly going after President Truman. The senator had been roundly criticized for comments he’d made to the press before a speech in April 1951 in which he’d intimated that Truman was a drunkard and under the influence of the “Acheson group.” However, the Office of the Secretary of State was seen as a bastion of privilege; appointed by the president, with no opportunity for re-election should things go wrong. Oshinsky, 194, 196.

¹⁸ Robert L. Beisner, *Dean Acheson: A Life in the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 8–9, 95.

¹⁹ Oshinsky, 105.

proudly maintained a formidable mustache) opened him to charges of effeminacy and perhaps homosexuality.²⁰ Joe McCarthy famously called Acheson “a pompous diplomat in striped pants with a phony British accent.”²¹ In measuring Acheson’s anti-communism, his role in the creation of NATO, the Marshall Plan, the Truman Doctrine and the strategy of containment apparently counted for less than the stripes in his pants—and his ill-advised support of disgraced State Department official Alger Hiss. Phyllis Schlafly did not mince her meaning when she said, “only a Republican victory this year will end the striped-pants diplomacy of the New Deal, including the vertical stripes worn by Dean Acheson and the horizontal stripes now worn in jail by his good friend, Alger Hiss.”²² By the height of the Alger Hiss affair, gendered attacks on Acheson had become bipartisan. Democratic congressman Maury Maverick conjured up a remarkable conjunction of sex and violence when he told Acheson, “I’m tired of hearing about you and Harvard and Yale and that you’re witty... If Harold Ickes got caught in a whorehouse at three A.M. killing a woman, a lot of people would bail him out. But not you, you’ve got no friends.”²³ McCarthy upped the ante well past striped pants, saying, “we weren’t taught to wear lace panties and fight with lace hankies in the Marine Corps.”²⁴

²⁰ David Acheson, *Acheson Country: A Memoir* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1993), 108–9. One critic scoffed in the *New York Times* that the secretary was “an austere, tall, slim, long-legged, and outrageously mustached fashion plate, a parody of diplomatic virtues.” Another detractor, a Republican member of the House, sneered that “No man with a mustache can serve in public office.” Beisner, *Dean Acheson*, 90, 94, 320, 308–9.

²¹ Beisner, *Dean Acheson*, 306.

²² Whitfield, 30. Schlafly’s observations were made during the 1952 election, an example of the political hay Republicans made from Acheson’s blunder.

²³ Harold Ickes was the secretary of the interior under Franklin Roosevelt. Oshinsky, 105, 163.

²⁴ Reeves, 325.

McCarthy's liberal opponents and targets, many of them Establishment elites, turned up their noses at his coarse style. Soon after McCarthy's death in 1957, liberal journalist Richard Rovere offered this critical autopsy of the senator's "ugly" masculinity:

McCarthy's particular style ... owed a great deal to that of a certain kind of American athlete: the kind who earns and revels in such sobriquets as Killer and Slugger; who looks ugly and talks ugly and wants to deceive no one on this score; who attaches enough importance to winning the Goddamned game to throw spitballs and rabbit punches and do a little Indian Charlie work with elbows and knees in the clinches and pileups.²⁵

Still McCarthy's supporters understood where he was coming from and embraced both his politics and his style of rugged, pugnacious masculinity. "It don't take no college degree to know that Joe is doin' good," said one Wisconsin farmer. "Joe fights bare knuckles. He don't pull no punches... He is the worst thing ever happened to them Communists."²⁶

Though Senator McCarthy became the popular symbol of American anti-communism, he was just one part of a much larger political and cultural movement. While McCarthy hunted communists in Washington, his colleagues on the House Committee on Un-American Activities investigated communist infiltration of the film industry in Hollywood. Several Hollywood conservatives joined in the fight, including Walt Disney, Ronald Reagan and director Sam Wood (*Goodbye, Mr. Chips*, 1939), but few embodied the ideal image of anti-communist masculinity so well as John Wayne. In 1948, Wayne joined the executive board of the Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals (MPAPAI), an organization formed "to fight... any

²⁵ A rabbit punch is a strike to the neck or base of the skull. The move is illegal in boxing. Indian Charlie is a character in *The Lone Ranger* with a tendency toward unsportsman-like conduct. Rovere, 64.

²⁶ Friedman, 1109; Anderson and May, 243.

effort of any group or individual, to divert the loyalty of the screen from the free America that gave it birth.”²⁷ He was elected president of the MPAPAI the following year.

Even before taking up the anti-communist crusade, John Wayne’s leading roles in Westerns and war films had made him an icon of American masculinity. Wayne’s origin story echoed McCarthy’s in that Wayne came from humble roots and survived a difficult childhood.²⁸ Wayne’s hardscrabble early years laid the foundation for the narrative of a self-made Hollywood tough guy. With films like *They Were Expendable* (John Ford, 1945) and *Sands of Iwo Jima* (Allan Dwan, 1949), Wayne became the filmic hero of World War II. This was something of a paradox, because Wayne owed much of his stardom to the fact that he did not serve in the military. In 1941, Republic Studios secured Wayne a hardship deferment to keep him out of the army. This allowed him to make war movies while other actors of his generation were serving overseas.²⁹ Though few

²⁷ HUAC had been organized in 1938 by Rep. Martin Dies, Jr. (D-TX) to investigate subversive and fascist activities in the U.S. The Dies Committee first headed to California in 1939. When HUAC turned its attention back to Hollywood in 1947 it was under the direction of Rep. J. Parnell Thomas (R-NJ), who was later replaced by Rep. John S. Wood (D-GA) after being convicted of fraud. Gary Wills, *John Wayne’s America: The Politics of Celebrity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997), 193; Bonnie S. Jefferson, “John Wayne: American Icon, Patriotic Zealot and Cold War Ideologue,” in *War and Film in America: Historical and Critical Essays*, ed. Marilyn J. Matelski and Nancy Lynch Street (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2003), 27–28; Randy Roberts and James S. Olson, *John Wayne: American* (New York: The Free Press, 1995), 329–30, 341.

²⁸ Wayne’s parents divorced when he was a boy, and his father was a well-known ne’er-do-well. Michael Anderegg, “Hollywood and Vietnam: John Wayne and Jane Fonda as Discourse,” in *Inventing Vietnam: The War in Film and Television*, ed. Michael Anderegg (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), 19–20.

²⁹ John Wayne was 34 in 1941, and was married with four small children, a suitable reason for exemption. However, many other stars who were his age or older, and had children, enlisted, including Clark Gable (41), Henry Fonda (37) and Jimmy Stewart (33). Despite much pressure to join up, particularly from

questioned Wayne's patriotism or his manhood, that paradox exemplifies the artifice and ambiguity of movie masculinity. Wayne came to stand for martial sacrifice as perhaps the defining feature of authentic American manhood, though it was a commitment he had never made.³⁰

By the early 1950s, Wayne's on- and off-screen swagger and machismo, even as they cloaked their own construction, had made him an archetypal symbol of the rough and tumble American male. And Wayne's politics were never separate from his masculinity or his stardom. Audiences attending one of the Duke's films knew what to expect from their leading man in terms of gender ideals and political ideology. As Gary Wills put it:

There is no better demonstration of the power of movies than Wayne's impact on American life... Wayne did not just have political opinions. He embodied a politics: or his screen image did. It was a politics of large meaning, not of little policies—a politics of gender (masculine), ideology (patriotism), character (self-reliance, and responsibility).³¹

In 1952, Wayne brought the anti-communist crusade to the screen, and solidified his association with Joseph McCarthy, by producing and starring in *Big Jim McLain*. Wayne's project joined a cycle of films with anti-communist themes, often heavy-handed in their tropes. Produced in the late 1940s and early 1950s, these Red Scare films included *The Red Menace* (R.G. Springsteen, 1949), *I Was a Communist for the FBI*

director John Ford (who would be in the thick of the Battle of Midway), Wayne visited the troops, but never saw real action. The studio requested numerous deferments on his behalf, even after he was declared 1-A (fit for service) in 1944. Wills, 107–9, note 13, p. 331.

³⁰ Anderegg, 28.

³¹ Wills, 29.

(Gordon Douglas, 1951) and *My Son John* (Leo McCarey, 1952). No less than a dozen anti-communist films were released in the election year of 1952.³²

Big Jim McClain was a vehicle for Wayne's anti-communist views, his highly-masculinized persona and his conservative brand of Cold War manhood. Based roughly on a *Saturday Evening Post* article entitled "We Almost Lost Hawaii to the Reds," the film starred Wayne as HUAC investigator Jim McLain, working to break up a ring of Communist Party spies in Hawaii.³³ In the film, Jim and his partner, Mal Baxter (James Arness), are average Joes, former soldiers now fighting on the home front. Military service and sacrifice figure prominently: the agents stop at the wreck of the USS *Arizona* to toss remembrance flowers into the sea; ex-Marine Mal hates the Commies because "they shot at him in Korea;" love interest Nancy Vallon's (Nancy Olson) husband never returned from Saipan; and the film ends with a troop ship full of smiling soldiers ready to take on the Red Menace. These moments of overt reference to American martial might foreground the sacrifice necessary to fight communism. They also highlight the masculinist drive behind anti-communism and the film's male embodiments of that mission. As the film's title makes clear, Jim McLain is a big man; he is referred to as a "tall, ugly fellow," whose face shows the scars of his time in battle, and possibly in

³² *Big Jim McClain* was distributed by Warner Bros and produced by Wayne-Fellows Productions, which would become Batjac Productions, the production company behind *The Green Berets* in 1968. Roberts and Olson, 1; Jefferson, 29–32. Though released in the mid-1950s, *Kiss Me Deadly* (Robert Aldrich, 1955) is another film of note in the anti-communist cycle. For more on anti-communism and Cold War cinema, see "Kiss Me Deadly: Communism, Motherhood, and Cold War Movies," in Michael Paul Rogin, *Ronald Reagan, the Movie and Other Episodes in Political Demonology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 236–71; and Frank Krutnik, Steve Neale, Brian Neve and Peter Stanfield, ed., "Un-American" *Hollywood: Politics and Film in the Blacklist Era* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007).

³³ Roberts and Olson, 358.

brawls: “It seems as though you’ve been struck a blow on your nose at one time or another, and you have a slight scar over your left eye.” Jim may not be handsome, but good looks are not required for hunting communists, just the skills to detect them and swing a right hook. One of Jim’s virtues is his understanding that violence is often the only way to deal with treacherous enemies. When Jim finds the communists at their lair, he confronts one of their leaders, a weak man, saying, “I wanted to hit you one punch... but now I find I can’t do it because you’re too small. That’s the difference between you people and us, I guess. We don’t hit the little guy.” Moments later, Jim is called an “East Texas cotton pickin’ jerk” by Poke (Hal Baylor), a communist bully, and Jim knocks him down with a blow to the jaw.

If *Big Jim McClain* presents HUAC investigators as paragons of manhood, it portrays communists as the opposite. *Big Jim McLain*’s communists are duplicitous and slippery characters, who, other than their oafish muscle, use intellect and psychological manipulation to do their dirty deeds. Head spy Sturak (Alan Napier) is a tall, thin, humourless mustachioed egghead type; Dr. Gelster (Gayne Whitman) is a small nebbish who lacks humour and personality. Henchman Poke is a cardboard goon, though he is also, significantly, from a higher social station, part of the “country club set.” When Nancy asks Jim why Americans become communists, his reply has nothing to do with politics and everything to do with masculinity (and, not incidentally, women): “This one’s a Commie because momma didn’t tuck him in at night. That one because girls wouldn’t welcome him with open arms.”

Reviews of *Big Jim McLain* split along class and partisan lines, recapitulating the divide over styles of masculinity that ran through the Red Scare. Conservative-minded

critics were apt to praise the film's message and its manliness, saying it would succeed in making audiences "boiling mad."³⁴ Liberal-leaning critics were not so kind. The *New York Times*' Bosley Crowther found the "mixing of cheap fiction with contemporary crisis in American life" to be "irresponsible and unforgivable." Wayne, he said, was a "manly hero... representative of the attitude that is painful to think too deeply and the fist is mightier than the brain."³⁵ The film's mixed reviews did not turn off the Duke's fans. *Big Jim McLain* was a big hit, taking in nearly \$3 million in domestic rentals.³⁶

Rebuilding Liberal Masculinity

The conservative attack on liberalism in the early Cold War deployed a number of deeply gendered assumptions and associations. Liberals were held to be "soft" on communism, and thus not "man enough" to be trusted with the country's security interests. Left-wing politics were strongly associated with effeminacy, homosexuality or sexual deviance. It did not matter that the principal architects of Cold War anti-communism—and, indeed, of many gendered constructs like being "hard" or "soft" on communism—were often liberals like George Marshall, Dean Acheson and George Kennan.³⁷ By the early 1950s, conservatives had seized the initiative in the Cold War

³⁴ Kathleen Proctor, Review of *Big Jim McLain*, *Los Angeles Examiner*, August 30, 1952, as quoted in Roberts and Olson, 378.

³⁵ Bosley Crowther, "The Screen in Review: *Big Jim McLain*, a Film Study of Congressional Work Against Communism, at Paramount," *New York Times*, September 18, 1952, 35.

³⁶ Roberts and Olson, 360.

³⁷ In February 1946, George Kennan, a key architect of the Cold War and a liberal, used gendered language in the Long Telegram, his assessment of the Soviet Union for the State Department. Using terms that would become integral to Cold War discourse, Kennan argued for a concerted assertion of hard-line U.S. foreign policy based on the essentializing of a manhood based on "courage, detachment, [and] objectivity" to steel

culture war, and liberals scrambled to catch up. Anti-communist discourse from both liberals and conservatives assumed a deep connection between a strong stance against communism abroad and a strong, male-dominated, society at home. As historian Elaine Tyler May argues, the Cold War strategy of containment had corollaries on the home front. “Domestic containment” imposed heterosexuality as a powerful norm in political and cultural discourse.³⁸ In this charged environment, issues of gender and sexuality were not confined to a private sphere, but were integral to public and foreign policy decisions.

Liberalism and liberal masculinity underwent an ideological re-design in the postwar years. Reeling from the criticism of conservative anti-communists and their none-too-subtle attacks on the masculinity of New Deal figures like Dean Acheson and Adlai Stevenson, liberal men in the 1950s worked to reassert their own masculinity and rebuild a manly liberalism. Nine years before publishing “The Crisis of American Masculinity,” historian and liberal ideologue Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. painted a portrait of this manly liberalism in his influential book, *The Vital Center* (1949). *The Vital Center* was a spirited defense of New Deal liberalism, critical of both conservatism on the right and socialism on the left. “The center is vital,” Schlesinger wrote. “The center must hold.”³⁹ In retrospect, however, what is remarkable about the book is its preoccupation

against becoming “emotionally provoked.” Kennan used graphically sexualized and violent language to describe the Soviet-style of governance. Observing that Moscow maintained a “monstrous masculinity,” Kennan alluded to the Soviet government’s “rape” and repeated “penetration” of its citizens. See Frank Costigliola, “‘Unceasing Pressure for Penetration’: Gender, Pathology, and Emotion in George Kennan’s Formation of the Cold War,” *Journal of American History* 83:4 (March 1997): 1309–39.

³⁸ May, 12–13.

³⁹ Schlesinger, *The Vital Center*, 256.

with manhood and masculinity. Schlesinger called for a “new virility” in liberal politics.⁴⁰ Liberal men must be “hard” and not “soft,” in order to stand up to communists on the one hand and conservatives on the other.

A manly liberalism, it almost went without saying, was an anti-communist liberalism. Schlesinger called for the American left to purge itself of socialist and communist elements. He was dismayed by what he considered the inability of the interwar liberal generation to recognize the true danger of communism.⁴¹ He and like-minded liberals attacked the Popular Front and former fellow travellers, calling them undemocratic and disloyal to the United States.⁴² Senator Hubert Humphrey, a rising talent in the Democratic Party, championed the Communist Control Act, which declared membership in the Communist Party illegal and punishable by jail. The postwar labour movement similarly distanced itself from socialists and radicals. “Vital Center” liberals remade liberalism as a fiercely anti-communist faith.⁴³

⁴⁰ Schlesinger, *The Vital Center*, 40–41.

⁴¹ Schlesinger’s parents were committed liberals. His father, Arthur Sr. was a noted historian; his mother, Elizabeth Bancroft Schlesinger was a feminist. Both parents supported causes such as the League of Nations, religious tolerance and women’s rights. Thus, it’s not surprising that Schlesinger considered himself to be an impassioned New Dealer. Schlesinger, *A Life in the Twentieth Century*, 122–23; John Morton Blum, “Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.: Tory Democrat,” in *The Liberal Persuasion: Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. and the Challenge of the American Past*, ed. John Patrick Diggins (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 67–68.

⁴² The Popular Front was a coalition of reform-minded groups, including the American Communist Party, labour unions and liberals, coming together for many reasons, including social justice and racial equality. The Popular Front was particularly active in the late 1930s and during World War II. Schlesinger argued that the fellow travelling by intellectuals in the 1930s had been seriously detrimental to the American liberal tradition. Schlesinger, *The Vital Center*, ix, 3–4; Corber, 1–2; Wald 109.

⁴³ Douglas C. Rossinow, *Visions of Progress: The Left-Liberal Tradition in America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2008), 144–47, 197; Kuznick and Gilbert, 4.

Some of the most memorable passages of *The Vital Center* focus on the danger of communist subversion in America, and here the book's preoccupation with gender and masculinity is most clear. Communism, Schlesinger famously wrote, "perverts politics into something secret, sweaty and furtive." It was "like nothing so much... as homosexuality in a boys' school: many practicing it, but all those caught to be caned by the headmaster."⁴⁴ The danger from both communists and homosexuals, according to Schlesinger, lay in their anonymous existences, which enabled them to mingle with unsuspecting citizens. Communists, Schlesinger claimed, "can identify each other... on casual meetings by the use of certain phrases, the names of certain friends, by certain enthusiasms and certain silences." Here again, he made the link in his own mind between communism and homosexuality explicit: "It is reminiscent of nothing so much as the famous scene in Proust where the Baron Charlus and the tailor Jupien suddenly recognize their common corruption."⁴⁵

Schlesinger's "vice and virtue" language located communism beyond the bounds of sanctioned politics where it co-existed with homosexuality, outside the bounds of legitimate sexuality.⁴⁶ According to Schlesinger, liberal men could only reassert their masculinity and their authority by identifying and rejecting all paths that led to life on the fringes, be it communist or homosexual. Elsewhere in the book, Schlesinger attacked the State Department, Joseph McCarthy's favourite target, as "a refuge for effete and conventional men who adored countesses, pushed cookies and wore handkerchiefs in

⁴⁴ Schlesinger, *The Vital Center*, 148–49, 151.

⁴⁵ Schlesinger, *The Vital Center*, 127. The Baron de Charlus and Jupien are homosexual characters in Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* (7 vols., 1922–31).

⁴⁶ Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood*, 69.

their sleeves.”⁴⁷ This language could have come directly from McCarthy, if it had not predated the senator’s notoriety. Scapegoating effeminacy or homosexuality were not only tactics of McCarthy and the Right. They were a critical step in the rebuilding of elite liberal masculinity.⁴⁸

This enmeshing of public and private gender standards in the name of anti-communism made it very difficult for those seemingly positioned outside these boundaries. These spaces were seen as “alien” territory, liminal zones where “softness” proliferated, and loyalty and morality became increasingly suspect.⁴⁹ The primary inhabitants of these coded spaces were homosexuals, whose inherent “softness,” according to staunch anti-communists, made them easy grift for blackmailers and perfect conduits for communist infiltration. The deep suspicion and intolerance of gays and lesbians already circulating in the postwar zeitgeist made these Americans ideal targets for anti-communists searching for scapegoats or subversives. In the *New York Daily Mirror*, right-wing ideologue Lee Mortimer ranted about “10,000 faggots” hiding in a government that was “honeycombed in high places with people you wouldn’t let in your garbage wagons.”⁵⁰ A Senate investigating committee published a report entitled

⁴⁷ Schlesinger, *The Vital Center*, 169.

⁴⁸ Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood*, 69; Corber, 20–21.

⁴⁹ May, 16; Rosenberg, 68; Michelle Mart, “Tough Guys and American Cold War Policy: Images of Israel, 1948-1960,” *Diplomatic History* 20:3 (summer 1996): 358; and Nancy C. M. Hartsock, “Masculinity, Heroism, and the Making of War,” in *Rocking the Ship of State: Toward a Feminist Peace Politics*, ed. Adrienne Harris and Ynestra King (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989), 147. See also Joanne Meyerowitz, “Sex, Gender, and the Cold War Language of Reform,” in *Rethinking Cold War Culture*, ed. Peter J. Kuznick and James Gilbert (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 106–23.

⁵⁰ John D’Emilio, “The Homosexual Menace: The Politics of Sexuality in Cold War America,” in *Passion and Power: Sexuality in History*, ed. Kathy Peiss and Christina Simmons (Philadelphia: Temple University

Employment of Homosexuals and Other Sexual Perverts in Government, which stated, for the record, “one homosexual can pollute a Government office.”⁵¹ Cast as devious and dangerous, anyone with suspected ties to the gay and lesbian community might be purged in this “Lavender Scare.” Indeed, more Americans were fired in this period for suspected homosexuality than for connections to communism.⁵² The purges occurred at the state and federal level in a myriad of sectors. By coding homosexual males as undesirable citizens and “half-men,” whose feminization of the federal government threatened national security, conservative rhetoric bound homosexuality to the denigration of traditional American manhood and the liberals’ supposed impotence as Cold Warriors.⁵³

Liberals and Democrats practised their own version of anti-communism in the immediate postwar years, and they were not above using the sexual smear tactics employed by Joe McCarthy and his ilk. Indeed, McCarthy himself became an ironic victim of “lavender baiting” smears. As McCarthy’s power and notoriety grew, gossip about the senator’s own sexuality wound its way through the Washington cocktail circuit,

Press, 1989), 228. See also John D’Emilio, “The Bonds of Oppression: Gay Life in the 1950s,” *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, ed. John D’Emilio (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1983), 41–46; David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecutions of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); and Robert J. Corber, *In the Name of National Security: Hitchcock, Homophobia and the Political Construction of Gender in Postwar America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993). Mortimer published a “*Confidential*” book series capitalizing on the “homosexual problem” that included volumes such as *Washington Confidential Today* (1952).

⁵¹ D’Emilio, 228.

⁵² In 1953, President Dwight Eisenhower issued Executive Order 10450, effectively banning gays and lesbians from working in any federal agency.

⁵³ May, 12–13; De Hart, 125; D’Emilio, 232. For discussion of homosexuality as a “disease,” see Geoffrey S. Smith, “National Security and Personal Isolation: Sex, Gender and Disease in the Cold War United States,” *International History Review* 14 (May 1992): 221–40.

especially in elite liberal circles. Generally, these rumours did not make it into print, but the ostentatious and sometimes buffoonish behaviour of the senator's assistant, Roy Cohn, and his friend and consultant, G. David Schine, attracted critical attention. During a 1953 tour of Europe, the European press dubbed Cohn and Schine "The Two London Lovers."⁵⁴ Gossip swirled around McCarthy's relationship with Cohn and Cohn's relationship with Schine. It would diminish McCarthy's Cold Warrior persona, showing the seams of its construction, and linking the senator with men of frivolous, decadent privilege, not political authority.⁵⁵

McCarthy's masculine image did not inoculate him, in the end, against sexualized innuendo or accusations. The senator became a target of gay-baiting tactics when he moved against the U.S. Army. One devastating example of this can be found in television journalist Edward R. Murrow's famous 1954 *See It Now* episode for CBS News, "A Report on Senator Joseph R. McCarthy." Using carefully chosen film of the senator, Murrow highlighted McCarthy's boorish and bullying behaviour. The program also subtly undermined McCarthy's carefully constructed, gendered performance of rugged manliness, by showing the senator on the verge of tears after being introduced by a fawning male supporter who toasted him with maudlin and flowery verse.⁵⁶ Suddenly, McCarthy's swaggering machismo and political rabble-rousing were gone, replaced by a man caught in a moment of emotion, accepting a love poem from another man. As historian Andrea Friedman puts it, McCarthy himself was "queered." In this candid

⁵⁴ Friedman, 1114.

⁵⁵ Friedman, 1105.

⁵⁶ Friedman, 1109, 1112–15.

moment McCarthy was “not quite masculine.”⁵⁷ His gender performance slipping on sentiment, the camera captured him standing in stark contrast to what liberal and conservative Cold Warriors determined was masculine behaviour. Murrow’s calculated editing is just one example of the ways in which liberals would adopt conservative tactics in order to reassert their masculine authority in the mid-to-late fifties.⁵⁸

Kennedy and the New Liberal Masculinity

Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. and other like-minded liberals suffered through the McCarthy years, and undoubtedly took pleasure in the senator’s rapid fall from grace after 1954. Schlesinger supported Adlai Stevenson, the Democratic candidate for president in 1952 and 1956, but the balding, weak-chinned Stevenson—famously and unshakeably dubbed an “egghead” by Richard Nixon—could never be the manly liberal of Schlesinger’s dreams.⁵⁹ Those dreams would lie unfulfilled until 1960, when, in John F. Kennedy, Schlesinger and American liberals found the embodiment of their new masculine ideal.

More than anyone else, Kennedy personified the new liberal masculinity. It was an elite, privileged masculinity, the masculinity of yachting and football at Harvard, to

⁵⁷ Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 42.

⁵⁸ Friedman, 1116.

⁵⁹ Conservative writer Louis Bromfield defined the “egghead” as “a certain shady element of our American population... a person of intellectual pretensions... superficial in approach to any problem... feminine... supercilious... surfeited with conceit... a doctrinaire supporter of middle-European socialism... a self-conscious prig... a bleeding heart.” Louis Bromfield, “The Triumph of the Egghead,” *The Freeman*, 3 (December 1, 1952), 158; Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., “The Highbrow in American Politics (1953),” in *The Politics of Hope and The Bitter Heritage: American Liberalism in the 1960s* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 275.

counter the coarser, sometimes boorish masculinity of the conservative Cold Warriors. The bounty of scholarship, both critical and popular, that has plumbed Kennedy's life and legacy has consistently accentuated his youthful vigour, his charm, his urban savoir faire, his wealth and his abundant confidence. Kennedy was "cool," a word that came into its own in the Kennedy years, and which historian K.A. Cuordileone reads as a common thread across the Kennedy historiography.⁶⁰

These traits worked for Kennedy and for American liberalism in the early sixties. Containing echoes of Stevenson's New America and Roosevelt's New Deal, Kennedy's New Frontier was a liberal call to action for Americans wanting to shake off the complacency of the Eisenhower years. Kennedy's rhetoric played on the fears that the United States was in danger of losing its fighting spirit and drive for self-reliance. American vigour was slipping, but the New Frontier would usher in an era of not just vitality, but virility. The New Frontier pushed to regain the ground apparently lost by men tainted by the "softness" that proliferated as a consequence of suburban subservience and corporate group think of the fifties. As Kennedy said in 1960, by choosing between "national greatness and national decline; between the fresh air of progress and the stale, dank atmosphere of 'normalcy,'" not only could the United States re-assert its global purpose, it could throw back the disconcerting trend toward feminization and conformity, returning masculine authority to culture and politics.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture*, 169.

⁶¹ "John F. Kennedy Accepts the Democratic Nomination for President, Los Angeles, July 14, 1960," in *Live From the Campaign Trail: The Greatest Presidential Campaign Speeches of the Twentieth Century and How They Shaped Modern America*, ed. Michael A. Cohen (New York: Walker Publishing Co., 2008), 260.

Schlesinger switched allegiance from Stevenson to Kennedy during the presidential election of 1960. At the Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles that July, Schlesinger compared the two men, swooning over Kennedy's will to power:

There is no 'we happy few' nonsense about the Kennedy camp. And this is part of a more decisive difference—the difference in their attitude toward power. The thought of power induces in Stevenson doubt, reluctance, even guilt... The exercise of power does present a problem for him. Kennedy, on the other hand, is like FDR. The thought of power neither rattles nor discomposes him. He takes power in his stride... In Jack Kennedy the will to victory and the will to command are both plain and visible.⁶²

Soon after, Schlesinger published his first paean to Kennedy, a treatise entitled *Kennedy or Nixon: Does It Make Any Difference?* To Schlesinger, it did. Kennedy was a man of conviction, with an intuition based on individual integrity, not group consensus or conformity, and he had a fierce internal drive keeping him faithful to his ideals. This effort, argued Schlesinger, could be seen in Kennedy's consistent political record, which voters appreciated for its alignment with specific positions and policies.⁶³ He was a man of inquiry and intelligence, with a mind that Schlesinger called "a first-class instrument, strong, supple, disciplined."⁶⁴

A large part of *Kennedy or Nixon?* was devoted not to celebrating Kennedy and his masculinity, but to tearing down his opponent's. Schlesinger saw Richard Nixon as a "soft" man, a political "chameleon," an "other-directed" man who lived by the group

⁶² Though he endorsed Kennedy, Schlesinger remained a Stevenson fan, noting in his journal upon his one-time mentor's death in July 1965 that he was responsible for turning the Democrats onto a new path in the fifties and ushered in a new generation of American liberals. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *Journals: 1952–2000*, ed. Andrew Schlesinger and Stephen Schlesinger (New York: Penguin Press, 2007), 78, 239.

⁶³ Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *Kennedy or Nixon?: Does It Make Any Difference?* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1960), 18–19.

⁶⁴ Schlesinger, *Kennedy or Nixon?*, 22–25.

rather than his own intuition.⁶⁵ He mocked Nixon's lack of culture yet at the same time sneered at his attempts to portray himself as "a regular guy."⁶⁶ Schlesinger even complained that when Nixon gave his nomination acceptance speech, he mentioned his wife, Pat, in the second line. In fact, many of Nixon's speeches began with "Pat and I," an attempt by Nixon, Schlesinger believed, to "humanize" himself. Schlesinger was scornful of this "other-directedness." Nixon's frequent references to his wife and daughters, Schlesinger maintained, degraded political debate with "irrelevant emotions," turning it into "a form of soap opera." Schlesinger's use of the term soap opera in his reproof, a product created specifically for female audiences to be consumed in the home, cemented his bottom line on Richard Nixon. A real man, Schlesinger implied, would not feminize politics in this way.⁶⁷

Kennedy himself understood, and clearly capitalized on, his own masculinity and its appeal. Running against the record of Dwight Eisenhower's two presidential terms, the Kennedy campaign emphasized their candidate's youth and good looks as a contrast to both his jowly opponent and the elderly incumbent. When Harry Truman, now a

⁶⁵ According to Schlesinger, Kennedy was "inner-directed," i.e., motivated by an internal, individualistic drive not peer pressure. Schlesinger, *Kennedy or Nixon?*, 4, 18; Mart, 371; Ehrenreich, 34.

⁶⁶ Nixon often spoke about having little appetite for the finer things in life, not "even California champagne." His efforts at being a regular guy included remarking to reporters (after a steak dinner) that he preferred hamburgers, noting later that he had ground hamburger in his father's small grocery store, an allusion to his lean childhood. Schlesinger, *Kennedy or Nixon?*, 16–17.

⁶⁷ The implication being that Nixon's dependence on his wife impeded his ability to be a fully functioning Cold Warrior. Schlesinger, *Kennedy or Nixon?*, 12–13. For a discussion of gendered language and national security discourse, see Carol Cohn, "Wars, Wimps, and Women: Talking Gender and Thinking War," in *Gendering War Talk*, ed. Miriam Cooke and Angela Woollacott (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 227–46.

Democratic elder statesman, questioned Kennedy's lack of experience, it gave the candidate a perfect opportunity to cement his association with vitality and youth. "This is still a young country, founded by young men... and still young in heart," Kennedy said. "The strength and health and vigor of these young men is equally needed in the White House."⁶⁸ Kennedy noted that presidents could be at the national helm for eight years, and the nation deserved a leader whose "strength and vigor" would help him serve out that time. This was, perhaps, reaching, because Kennedy suffered from serious health issues, coming close to death on several occasions.⁶⁹ Yet his image was clearly one of youth, virility and physical fortitude.⁷⁰

Immediately after his election, in December 1960, Kennedy published a call for physical fitness and virility in the pages of *Sports Illustrated* magazine. What better vehicle to expound the image of liberal masculinity than the country's premier magazine on the sporting life? Kennedy's article, "The Soft American," repurposed Theodore Roosevelt celebration of "the strenuous life" for the Cold War era, warning that "slothful ease" (Roosevelt's words) had sapped the national strength of Americans, perpetuating a

⁶⁸ "Transcript of Senator Kennedy's News Conference Replying to Truman Attack," *New York Times*, 5 July 1960, 1; Bill Ogersby, *Playboys in Paradise: Masculinity, Youth, and Leisure in Modern America* (New York: Berg, 2001), 89.

⁶⁹ One example of Kennedy's maladies purportedly impacting his political life was his absence from the Senate vote to censure Joseph McCarthy in 1954. Kennedy was hospitalized at the time of the Senate vote. While there were rumblings that his hospital stay was politically motivated (McCarthy was a family friend and fellow Irish Catholic), Kennedy was actually in a coma and feared to be near death. Herbert S. Parmet, *Jack: The Struggles of J.F.K.* (New York: Dial House, 1980), 307–10. For more information on Kennedy's ill health, see Joan Blair and Clay Blair, Jr., *The Search for J.F.K.* (New York: G.P. Putnam and Sons, 1974); Nigel Hamilton, *J.F.K.: Reckless Youth* (New York: Random House, 1992); and Robert Dallek, *An Unfinished Life: John F. Kennedy, 1917–1963* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 2003).

⁷⁰ Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood*, 48.

physical “softness” that Kennedy called “a menace to our national security.”⁷¹ Kennedy cited studies of American children falling behind their European counterparts in physical fitness tests and high numbers of young men rejected by the Selective Service for being mentally, morally or physically unfit. Like Roosevelt, Kennedy insisted that the vigour and vitality of the entire nation’s activities were based on the physical well being of its citizens. Conjuring the image of Teddy Roosevelt made sense for Kennedy. The two presidents had much in common. Both had been sickly children who longed for brawn. Both took up a muscular life that brought them the physicality and corresponding manhood they desired; both trumpeted the benefits of physical activity; and both explicitly tied exercise and physical strength to military preparedness.⁷² Teddy Roosevelt made progressivism manly; Kennedy did the same for Cold War liberalism.

Manliness meant strength, and that meant readiness for violence. Kennedy reminded Americans that the Soviet Union was a “powerful and implacable adversary.” Only “stamina and strength” could provide the defense democracy required. The New Frontier would not tolerate softness, yet “young Americans [were] neglecting their bodies... getting soft.”⁷³ Once a word indicating an individual’s susceptibility to communism, “softness” became more literal in its definition for Kennedy, though it retained its gendered connotations. Americans, Kennedy insisted, had to “work for the physical toughness on which the courage and intelligence and skill of man so largely

⁷¹ John F. Kennedy, “The Soft American,” *Sports Illustrated*, 26 December 1960, 16.

⁷² Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture*, 202–3. For more discussion of Roosevelt’s perspectives on masculinity, see Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880–1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

⁷³ Kennedy, “The Soft American,” 16.

depend.”⁷⁴ Here Kennedy underscored a key tenet of elite liberal masculinity, the importance of physical potency in combination with intellectual strength. “Hardy spirits and tough minds usually inhabit sound bodies,” he wrote.⁷⁵ The irony being, of course, that Kennedy suffered terribly from numerous physical ailments, took multiple pharmaceuticals to ease his daily pain and often walked with crutches. The American public knew very little of Kennedy’s ill health because of an intense cloak of what has been called politically motivated deception. Perhaps this secrecy can be viewed from a perspective of honour rather than fraud. That through strength of character and mental fortitude, Kennedy mustered through the Addison’s disease, colitis, recurrent urinary tract infections, steroid injections, etc., to fully inhabit (even if just for the cameras) the physical expectations of Cold Warrior masculinity.⁷⁶

To show that he was a keen “participant in the vigorous life,” Kennedy graced the cover of the *Sports Illustrated* in which “The Soft American” appeared. Together with his fashionable, yet athletic, wife, Jackie, Kennedy was photographed onboard the Kennedy clan’s sloop, *Victura*.⁷⁷ With his hand clearly on the rudder, a windswept Kennedy was “practicing the fitness that he preaches.”⁷⁸ A short photographic feature accompanying Kennedy’s article played up the Kennedy family as “large, vigorous and fiercely competitive,” and described Jack as an active participant in the family’s often raucous

⁷⁴ Kennedy, “The Soft American,” 17; Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture*, 202–3.

⁷⁵ Kennedy, “The Soft American,” 16.

⁷⁶ Robert Dallek, “The Medical Ordeals of J.F.K.,” *The Atlantic Monthly* 290:5 (December 2002): 49–61.

⁷⁷ Jackie Kennedy also participated in family sporting events, *SI* reported, even breaking her ankle in one of the clan’s infamous touch football games. “Jack Kennedy Practices the Fitness that He Preaches,” *Sports Illustrated*, December 26, 1960, 23.

⁷⁸ “Kennedy Practices the Fitness,” 23.

sporting events. According to the article, Kennedy's swimming prowess (he was a member of the Harvard swim team) saved not only his life, but those of his torpedo boat crew in World War II. Reinforcing the need to be well-rounded and physically prepared, it was Kennedy's "hardiness of body and toughness of spirit," honed during rough play with his brothers, that gave him the instinct and skills required to rescue his men and swim, despite his own injury, to safety.

The *Sports Illustrated* feature succeeded in highlighting Kennedy's physicality as being bounded by the virtues of elite masculinity.⁷⁹ This was done in the service of not only valorizing elite masculinity, but also continuing its heterosexualization. Foregrounding his athleticism called attention to the ways in which elite masculinity had become a more body-focused ethos as a way to mitigate obvious indicators of class privilege and elitist intellectualism. Kennedy's vigour, vitality and virility were all connected to an activity that most Americans could not afford. Kennedy was not relaxing on the water in a row boat metres out from a public beach, but in a yacht on the open ocean, and a championship yacht at that. Leisurely sailing or competitive yachting (Kennedy had participated in and won several sailing races, and was on the Harvard sail team) were not the pursuits of the average American. That the sailing was competitive and that he himself was responsible for the lion's share of the physical labour that scored him multiple trophies, tempered the impact this clearly class and wealth-based pursuit

⁷⁹ Robert D. Dean uses the term "elite masculinity" to describe the "ideology of masculinity" specifically constructed by white liberal politicians and policy makers during the Cold War time period. This term encapsulates the political and socio-cultural categories that demarcated Cold War liberal masculinity, imbuing it with power, privilege and legitimacy. See Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood*, 5–6, 37–62, 199.

may have had. Jackie Kennedy accompanied her husband in the piece's photographs and on the magazine's cover. Both were sporty-looking and casually dressed. This created the impression that despite being engaged in an exclusive sport, the president's love of the outdoors, and its attendant manliness, could be appreciated and attained by American men.

The seeming accessibility of Kennedy's formula for manhood was further underscored by discussion of Kennedy's wartime service and the supposed injury he sustained during the rescue of his motor torpedo boat crew. As an American fortunate son, Kennedy followed what Robert Dean calls the "recurrent motif" of "upper-class volunteer wartime service."⁸⁰ Dean argues the experience of battle was so crucial to "patrician masculine ideology" that in some cases, including Kennedy's, schemes were hatched to enable those not up to the military's physical standards to serve the nation. Kennedy's long history of severe illness should have kept him from active duty in World War II, but his health problems were kept secret from navy doctors. With his father's help, Kennedy was able to appeal to influential family friends such as David I. Walsh, chair of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee, who allowed him to transfer from a position with the Office of Naval Intelligence to combat duty in Motor Torpedo Boats.⁸¹ Thereafter, Kennedy's purported combat injuries would mark him as a warrior, effectively concealing the congenital nature of his illnesses and ill health. Citing Kennedy's war injury in *Sports Illustrated* may also have mitigated the air of privilege

⁸⁰ Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood*, 43.

⁸¹ Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood*, 43–44; Blair and Blair, 150–53; Hamilton, 515–16.

that marked the president's athletic prowess because he had sacrificed his body, while reinforcing his manhood, in the defense of liberty.

Two years later, Kennedy returned to the pages of *Sports Illustrated* with "The Vigor We Need," a reiteration of "The Soft American"'s call to action. Again, sport and masculinity were intertwined, and this time the connection to Cold War conflicts was even more explicit. The issue's cover showed a Russian long jumper under the headline, "The New Russian Assault." Kennedy's 1962 article argued that while some progress had been made, Americans were still falling short of the "vigorous" life. The president chided Americans, reminding them "physical vigor and health are essential accompaniments to the qualities of intellect and spirit on which the nation is built."⁸² Kennedy reiterated the need for healthy bodies and vitality in the exercise of peace and war. He said that "physical hardihood" had helped the nation defeat tenacious foes in the two world wars, and "a new group of vigorous young Americans" was helping to maintain "the peace of the world and our security as a nation" in "the jungles of Asia"—an ominous note.⁸³

Kennedy's image as the "stoic warrior-intellectual," and all that held for his Cold Warrior masculinity, translated to the geopolitical level.⁸⁴ The Democratic presidential hopeful campaigned for the White House on a platform that called Dwight Eisenhower's record on communism into question. He linked Eisenhower to the national decline he railed against and promised to reverse. This included accusations of a missile and space gap with the Soviets, raised the nuclear menace and a berating for Republicans after Cuba

⁸² John F. Kennedy, "The Vigor We Need," *Sports Illustrated*, July 16, 1962, 12.

⁸³ Kennedy, "The Vigor We Need," 14.

⁸⁴ Dean, "Masculinity as Ideology," 29.

was lost to Castro. This line of attack invoked the spectre of softness, putting the Democrats on the anti-communist high ground, claiming a position of hyper-vigilance and battle preparedness. With Nixon as Eisenhower's stand-in (Ike was still a very popular president), Kennedy went after the vice president as an "organization man," who debated Soviet Premier Khrushchev in a mock-up kitchen "pointing out that while we might be behind in space, we were certainly ahead in color television."⁸⁵ Kennedy, meanwhile, was stressing "hard facts," not household appliances, in the fight against the Kremlin. He dismissed the perks of material abundance for national security: "I would rather take my television black and white and have the largest rockets in the world."⁸⁶

Kennedy set out the United States as the defender of the free world in his January 1961 inaugural address. Foreign nations, friends or enemies, should be confident that Kennedy had "guts," that as president he would see the nation "pay any price... oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty."⁸⁷ This sentiment merged seamlessly with the warrior manhood embraced by the "best and brightest" in Kennedy's inner circle national security advisers, creating a "cult of toughness."⁸⁸ This band of hawkish brothers understood gender to be intrinsic to the policy-making process. Masculinity was an indivisible element in strategizing plans to thwart the dangers of communist infiltration abroad, cooking up counterinsurgency measures in Latin America

⁸⁵ Dean, "Masculinity as Ideology," 45.

⁸⁶ Smith, 330–31; Dean, "Masculinity as Ideology," 46.

⁸⁷ Dean, "Masculinity as Ideology," 62; "President Kennedy's Inaugural Address, January 20, 1961," *John F. Kennedy Library and Museum*, accessed February 20, 2015, <http://www.jfklibrary.org/Research/Research-Aids/Ready-Reference/JFK-Quotations/Inaugural-Address.aspx>.

⁸⁸ Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture*, 201.

and Vietnam, and establishing the Green Berets, the president's "Hot Weapon in the Cold War."⁸⁹ The embarrassment of the bungled Bay of Pigs incident cemented the Kennedy administration's determination that the next clash of superpowers would not mar the nation's status as the West's Cold War colossus of freedom, but would re-up the White House's commitment to martial manhood and its geopolitical trappings. Thus Kennedy, his masculinity and the U.S. would be redeemed in the nuclear brinkmanship of the Cuban Missile Crisis. In the end, it would be, in large part, the strength and vigour Kennedy exhorted in speeches, in the pages of *Sports Illustrated* and from the steps of the Capitol Building that breathed life and sustained the hawkish foreign policy initiatives that put American boots on the ground in Vietnam, turning up the temperature on the Cold War.

"Superman Comes to the Supermart"

While Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. was switching teams for Kennedy at the 1960 Democratic National Convention, another writer covering the convention was equally captivated by Kennedy's image and charm. The leftist author, journalist and essayist Norman Mailer covered the convention for *Esquire* magazine. Mailer's essay on the convention, "Superman Comes to the Supermart," hits many of the same notes as Schlesinger's paeans to Kennedy, filled with New Frontier language and shot through with "hard"/"soft" clichés.⁹⁰ Yet Mailer's musings were more pointed than Schlesinger's.

⁸⁹ Tom Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusionment of a Generation*, rev. ed. (New York: Basic Books, 1995), 163.

⁹⁰ Norman Mailer, "Superman Comes to the Supermart," *Esquire* (November 1960), accessed June 14, 2010, <http://www.esquire.com/news-politics/a3858/superman-supermarket/>.

His essay did much more to expose the constructed artifice of Kennedy's masculinity, even as Mailer embraced it. Mailer would go on to play an important role in inspiring the masculinity of the male New Left. In "Superman Comes to the Supermart," he laid bare the interconnection of sex, violence and war in Kennedy's public image, Mailer's own psyche and Cold War masculinity writ large.

"Superman Comes to the Supermart" is not a straightforward love letter to Kennedy. Mailer subtly probes the manufacturing of Kennedy's image. In several passages, he associates Kennedy with acting and Hollywood. Mailer describes Kennedy as a "matinee idol," and predicts that with the Kennedys in the White House, myth will blossom, making the ins and outs of politics "America's favorite movie, America's first soap opera, America's best-seller." Indeed, Mailer could not quite make up his mind about whether Kennedy was real:

He was like an actor who had been cast as the candidate, a good actor, but not a great one—you were aware all the time that the role was one thing and the man another—they did not coincide, the actor seemed a touch too aloof... Yet one had little sense of whether to value this elusiveness, or to beware of it. One could be witnessing the fortitude of a superior sensitivity or the detachment of a man who was not quite real to himself.

At the same time, Mailer was clearly drawn to Kennedy, and accepted the same sexualized reading of the 1960 election as Schlesinger and other "vital center" men. "Superman Comes to the Supermart" compares Kennedy and Eisenhower, in language considerably more blunt than Schlesinger would have used. Eisenhower, for Mailer, was a doddering old man, who had unleashed "an incredible dullness... upon the American landscape." Eight years of Eisenhower had resulted in a state of "sexlessness." Eisenhower, Mailer wrote, was the "small town"—"rooted, narrow, cautious," while

Kennedy was the “city”—“dynamic, orgiastic ... unsettling, explosive.”⁹¹ To Mailer, Eisenhower represented the loss of the male sexual drive and the ascension of the contemptuous organization man, stamping out the nation’s natural urges as the price for security.⁹²

Only a hero, Mailer argued, could reawaken the nation’s drive for expansion and exploration. Kennedy was that hero, the “Superman” of Mailer’s title. Even as he observed the artifice in Kennedy’s persona, Mailer participated in it, celebrating the candidate’s manhood and masculinity. If Eisenhower represented impotence, Kennedy was virility. “He carried himself... with a cool grace that seemed indifferent to applause,” Mailer wrote, echoing Schlesinger’s contempt for “other-directed” applause-seekers. Kennedy was a specimen of superior liberal maleness, who would not just renew America’s pioneer spirit but its “pioneer lust.” He was not just a movie idol but a “football hero, the campus king.”⁹³

Mailer emphasized Kennedy’s alleged athleticism, comparing politics to football and boxing. He compared Kennedy’s self-assurance in press conferences to “the poise of a fine boxer, quick with his hands, neat with his timing.” Boxing is, of course, a violent and masculine sport, but Mailer’s descriptions emphasized Kennedy’s cool and finesse, an important distinction between the liberal and conservative strains of Cold War masculinity.⁹⁴ Mailer projected some of the coarser aspects of sport and privilege onto

⁹¹ Mailer, “Superman Comes to the Supermart.”

⁹² Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture*, 192.

⁹³ Mailer, “Superman Comes to the Supermart.”

⁹⁴ For more analysis of the relationship between violence, masculinity and sport, see Varda Burstyn, *The Rites of Men: Manhood, Politics, and the Culture of Sport* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

Kennedy's brother, Robert. Mixing his football and boxing analogies, Mailer surmised that Robert Kennedy was the enforcer of the Kennedy clan, the one to use cheap shots and take things too far:

Bobby Kennedy looked like a West Point cadet, or, better, one of those reconstructed Irishmen from Kirkland House one always used to have to face in the line in Harvard house football games. 'Hello,' you would say to the ones who looked like him as you lined up for the scrimmage after the kickoff, and his type would nod and look away, one rock glint of recognition your due for living across the hall from one another through Freshman year, and then bang, as the ball was passed back, you'd get a bony king-hell knee in the crotch. He was the kind of man never to put on the gloves with if you wanted to do some social boxing, because after two minutes it would be war, and ego-bastards last long in a war.⁹⁵

Comparing Robert to an imperious upperclassman at Harvard or West Point, Mailer hinted at the baser elements of privilege, the underhanded tactics sometimes employed by those who can get away with them—but he refused to besmirch Jack Kennedy's masculine bona fides.⁹⁶

Kennedy's athleticism came second only to his military service in Mailer's exposition of the future president's mystique. By the time he ran for president, Kennedy's wartime exploits were well known. Robert Dean notes that even before the war's end, the "warrior-hero" narrative had become part of Kennedy's public persona. The story of young Lieutenant Kennedy's actions to save his crew after the sinking of *PT-109* appeared in both the *New Yorker* and *Reader's Digest* in the late summer of 1944. This tale of warrior manhood, aptly titled "Survival," branded Kennedy with "citizen-soldier-

⁹⁵ Mailer, "Superman Comes to the Supermart."

⁹⁶ Mailer also attended Harvard, graduating in 1943 with a degree in engineering. Eight years after the *Esquire* piece, Mailer stood in Robert Kennedy's funeral honour guard at the Kennedy family's request. J. Michael Lennon, *Norman Mailer: A Double Life* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013), 55, 411–12.

statesman heroism,” and was widely distributed with Kennedy’s campaign materials in 1946 and 1952. The story of *PT-109* even made it to the big screen in *PT-109* (Leslie H. Martinson, 1963), with Cliff Robertson starring as Kennedy.⁹⁷

Although Mailer qualified his discussion of Kennedy’s wartime heroism by saying that “physical bravery does not of course guarantee a man’s abilities in the White House,” his referencing of Kennedy’s military service was reverential. Mailer had also served in the war, and saw action in the Philippines. He had, it would be fair to say, a complex relationship with war, masculinity and violence. For Mailer, “violence was locked with creativity,” and with manly identity. Men, Mailer believed, were “born to be free...to have adventure and to grow on the waves of the violent.”⁹⁸ What makes Mailer’s reading of Kennedy’s time on the battlefield and injuries different from Schlesinger’s is that Mailer saw them as the marks of a man who was not content with his corporeal reality and thus, embraced danger and violence to prove himself. For Mailer, Kennedy’s war was “therapy,” for a man who “washed out of Freshman year at Princeton by a prolonged trough of yellow jaundice, [was] sick for a year at Harvard, [and was] weak already in the back from an injury at football.” Kennedy, Mailer said, had a “self-hatred... resentment and ambition... too large for his body.” The “rage” within Kennedy drove him to be a hero, or risk falling “back into that death which is already within [his] cells.” War had not injured Kennedy’s health, Mailer believed, it had healed him, making him a whole man.

⁹⁷ Kennedy and his father, Joseph, Sr., employed this warrior-hero narrative to great effect, using the young politician’s battlefield experience as evidence of his self-sacrifice, and the moral and physical mettle he called upon to perform his martial duties. Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood*, 48.

⁹⁸ Mailer, “Superman Comes to the Supermart.” The intersection of violence and masculinity, particularly in Mailer’s World War II novel, *The Naked and the Dead* (1948) and essay, “The White Negro: Superficial Reflections on the Hipster” (1957), will be further explored in the next chapter.

This aspect of Mailer's essay may tell us more about Mailer than Kennedy, but it points to the deep-rooted association between violence and manhood in Cold War masculinity.

Historian K.A. Cuordileone posits that Mailer, like many American intellectuals at the time, "longed for a leader who could reconcile intellect, muscularity and sexual will."⁹⁹ While "Superman Comes to the Supermart" can be read as an ego-filled propaganda piece—Mailer later believed the essay had directly influenced the election's outcome—it echoed the thoughts and desires of many Cold War liberals who saw Kennedy as the saviour of liberal manhood.¹⁰⁰ By identifying Kennedy's manufactured image, Mailer succeeded in calling out the hallmarks of white liberal masculinity and its privileged trappings. Even as Mailer became enthralled with Kennedy's image, even as he took part in its own construction, he came closest to declaring what Schlesinger could not: that Cold War masculinity was a performance, a construction, an invention fashioned to fight the political contests of the day.¹⁰¹

The Man in the Gray Worsted Suit

Another site where one can observe the constructed edifice of Cold War masculinity is in the popular culture figure of Cary Grant, particularly in the Cold War thriller, *North by Northwest* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1959).¹⁰² The actor and movie star Cary Grant, still near the height of his fame in the Kennedy years, was no less a symbol of elite, liberal masculinity than the president. Suave, handsome, cool and "self-contained,"

⁹⁹ Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture*, 194.

¹⁰⁰ Norman Mailer, *The Presidential Papers* (New York: Putnam, 1963), 63–69.

¹⁰¹ Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture*, 194.

¹⁰² Grant had worked previously with Hitchcock in *To Catch a Thief* (1955), *Notorious* (1946) and *Suspicion* (1941).

Grant seemed to embody all the same qualities that Cold War liberal men wanted to see in themselves.¹⁰³ Indeed, John Kennedy said that Cary Grant “was his ideal screen alter ego.”¹⁰⁴ Some scholars have claimed Cary Grant, and *North by Northwest*, as illustrations of the Cold War’s alleged crisis in masculinity. The malleability of Cary Grant’s masculinity *could* be read as crisis, but if so, one would have to say that Grant made crisis look pretty good. There is some difference, after all, between the gray flannel suits feared by Schlesinger and others as symbols of a deadening postwar conformity and the iconic gray worsted-wool suit Grant wears in *North by Northwest*. Put another way, Grant’s persona might point towards a reading of masculinity in the early Cold War that is bigger and more fluid than the frame of “crisis” admits. Grant’s career and public image affirmed what Mailer suspected at the Democratic National Convention: that masculinity had to be continually manufactured or performed. And Grant recognized his own performativity. The fluidity of Grant’s characterization of an elite, liberal masculinity came from the actor’s own self-awareness of that construction. As he famously put it, “Everybody wants to be Cary Grant. Even I want to be Cary Grant.”¹⁰⁵ This acceptance establishes a baseline for the acknowledgment of the gendered gaps and fissures at play in any articulation of gendered identity. It reveals a moment in which elite masculinity had the opportunity to embrace greater fluidity, to challenge binaries (hard/soft,

¹⁰³ Trent Watts, “Cary Grant,” *American Masculinities: A Historical Encyclopedia*, ed. Bret E. Carroll (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2003), 193.

¹⁰⁴ Nancy Nelson, *Evenings with Cary Grant: Recollections in His Own Words and by Those Who Knew Him Best* (New York: William Morrow, 1991), 43.

¹⁰⁵ Graham McCann, *Cary Grant: A Class Apart* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), xi.

masculine/feminine) that had become intractable and to show itself as transformable.¹⁰⁶

This was, perhaps, a moment in which a broader definition of manhood could emerge—one that did not circle back into violence, crisis or masculine lack.

By the time of *North by Northwest*'s release in 1959, the film-going public knew what to expect from Cary Grant the movie star: a handsome grace inflected with style and wit. As film scholar Richard Dyer explains in his pioneering work on star images, a star's involvement in a film "is a promise of a certain kind of thing that you would see if you went to see the film." Dyer defines the "star image" or persona as an "extensive, multimedia, intertextual" construction pulled together from multiple sources that include biographical details, film roles and publicity.¹⁰⁷ When film scholar Steven Cohan refers to Cary Grant's persona as a "mask" and "a masquerade," he is entirely correct. Cohan uses these terms to explore Grant's gender as a performance, yet they are also descriptors of the star image itself.¹⁰⁸ Cary Grant, the sophisticated hero of postwar Hollywood, was not really the same man as Archie Leach, the working class prole from Bristol, England—except that he was. Grant changed his name on arriving in Hollywood and adopted his famously clipped style of speaking in order to shed a Cockney accent. Just as Norman Mailer noted the careful crafting of John Kennedy's image, Cary Grant took great care to manage his own. Cohan notes that Grant was one of the few actors of the studio era to gain independence from the studios, achieving control over his own image. This helped

¹⁰⁶ Butler, 216.

¹⁰⁷ Richard Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society* (London: Routledge, 1986), 3, 5.

¹⁰⁸ Cohan, "Cary Grant in the Fifties," 394–96; Cohan, *Masked Men*, 27.

him to consolidate the Cary Grant persona.¹⁰⁹ After taking control of his career, Grant was never under exclusive contract to any studio and was personally involved in the selection of his roles as well as details such as his characters' appearance and costuming. Moreover, as Dyer notes, it is not merely the physical or material that can be changed up in the construction of the star image. "Personality is no less malleable," Dyer writes.¹¹⁰ By consciously embracing the construction of his own persona, Grant was able to regulate his star image for decades.¹¹¹ While other actors of his generation, like Humphrey Bogart and James Stewart, stretched their screen personas by playing psychos and neurotics, Grant almost invariably played the romantic lead. Grant's persona became more appealing in the 1950s; and he looked more and more like an "authentic American hero."¹¹²

Grant's careful cultivation of his image meant that it was not out of place to see the 54-year-old actor pictured in a pool alongside photos of the younger Tony Curtis and Rock Hudson in a *Photoplay* spread on Hollywood heartthrobs in 1958. Film critic Richard Schickel highlights the importance of Grant's youthful appearance:

¹⁰⁹ The studio system refers to the vertical integration of the American film industry, which spanned the twenties into the fifties. Studios such as Paramount, RKO and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer owned all levels of production, distribution and exhibition. For more information on the studio system and its impact on actors, see Jeanine Basinger, *The Star Machine* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2007); and R. Barton Palmer, ed., *Larger Than Life: Movie Stars of the 1950s* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2010).

¹¹⁰ Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies*, 5.

¹¹¹ Cohan, "Cary Grant in the Fifties," 394; Andrew Britton, "Cary Grant: Comedy and Male Desire," *CineAction* 7 (1986): 37.

¹¹² Peter Biskind, *Seeing Is Believing: How Hollywood Made Us Stop Worrying and Love the Fifties* (New York: Pantheon, 1983), 252. See also, William Rothman's chapter "North by Northwest: Hitchcock's Monuments to the Hitchcock Film," in his collection *The "I" of the Camera: Essays in Film Criticism, History and Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 177.

For something singular, something entirely without precedent in movie history, in any kind of history, for that matter, happened in the life of Cary Grant, therefore in our perception of him and our relationship with him. That is, very simply, that some time in his fifties, while he still looked as if he were in his forties—happily combining an elegant and easeful maturity with an undiminished capacity for playfulness—he simply ceased to age. Just plain stopped. As far as we in the audience could see.¹¹³

Through repetition, Grant's persona became iconic. The cliché rang true: men wanted to be him and women wanted to be with him. Grant's image took on greater import in the late 1950s when a mid-life career resurgence, in films such as *To Catch a Thief* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1955), *An Affair to Remember* (Leo McCarey, 1957) and *Indiscreet* (Stanley Donen, 1958), placed his screen persona in alignment with the revitalization of Cold War liberalism. Cary Grant came to represent a certain ideal of manhood—suave, sophisticated and urbane—that seemed the liberal alternative to John Wayne's coarse conservative physicality.¹¹⁴

The power of Grant's persona permitted him to finesse one of the binaries that had caused post-World War II liberals much frustration: blue blood snobbery vs. milquetoast mediocrity. Grant's postwar films found the medium that prevented him from coming across as an Acheson-esque sissy or snob. The air of privilege was most certainly there, but it was far from alienating. By the late 1950s, as one of Grant's biographers put it, the actor's "classless and stateless" personage helped him appear as a "democratic gentleman, one of us rather than one of them, the fine urbanity still sheltering the old mass allegiances."¹¹⁵ The British-born Grant had the good looks and charm to seem at once

¹¹³ Richard Schickel, *Cary Grant: A Celebration* (Boston: Little Brown, 1983), 9.

¹¹⁴ Steven Cohan, "Cary Grant in the Fifties: Indiscretions of the Bachelor's Masquerade," *Screen* 33:4 (winter 1992): 394.

¹¹⁵ McCann, 187–88.

American and aristocratic, virile and cultured, approachable and elite. Though he was criticized by some for lacking range, Grant managed to be “at once civilized and anarchic, subtle and broad, verbal and physical, elitist and popular.”¹¹⁶

The most remarkable binary that Grant finessed was the one between heterosexuality and homosexuality. It has long been rumoured that Grant was bisexual. He lived with, and was allegedly in a romantic relationship with, the actor Randolph Scott. He was also said to be fond of wearing ladies’ undergarments. Some scholarly interpretations of Grant’s masculinity have seized on these rumours as evidence for its instability, particularly as a by-product of anxiety surrounding the status of American manhood in the fifties.¹¹⁷ However, because he offered such a “rare dialectical combination” of down-to-earth elegance and masculine physicality, American audiences seemed to have embraced rather than turned on his supposed transgressions, accepting the malleable nature of Grant’s articulation of elite masculinity.¹¹⁸ As Richard Dyer states, the most popular stars can “produce an effect akin to drag” because they are granted the capacity to cross certain gender boundaries. Further, star images can work to smooth over or solve contradictions between binaries.¹¹⁹ Less a symbol of crisis than of possibility, Cary Grant’s seeming gender slippages were elided by the fluid construction of his star image.

¹¹⁶ Film scholar Richard Dyer makes the point that a star’s “sameness” can be exactly what audiences want and value. Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies*, 9–10; Britton, 50; Cohan, “Cary Grant in the Fifties,” 399.

¹¹⁷ Cohan, “Cary Grant in the Fifties,” 394–96; Cohan, *Masked Men*, 27.

¹¹⁸ McCann, 90, 92–93.

¹¹⁹ Richard Dyer, *Stars* (London: BFI Publishing, 1998), 38.

North by Northwest has been the subject of considerable scholarly attention. Most scholarship analyzes the film from the perspective of crisis: crises of national identity, domesticity, and most especially masculinity. Two key pieces on the film, chapters in Steven Cohan's *Masked Men* (1997) and Robert J. Corber's *In the Name of National Security* (1993) approach their analyses from the crisis platform.¹²⁰ Both describe Roger Thornhill, Grant's character in the film, as an other-directed, gray-flannel suit-wearing symbol of postwar conformity. Roger suffers from "Momism" and falls for the wiles of a sexually aggressive woman, Eve Kendall (Eva Marie Saint). Roger's seeming powerlessness in the face of domineering women is said to parallel the plight of American men in the 1950s, whose loss of prestige and place in the household left them weak. Cohan's examination of *North by Northwest* strongly takes up the question of Roger's masculinity, particularly in reference to his assumption of fake spy George Kaplan's identity. Cohan also interrogates Cary Grant's star image and how his gender performance underscored the instability of heterosexual masculinity in the fifties. Corber's interest in gender is more ideologically based, as his project works to uncover the spread of a Cold War consensus that established a hegemonic masculinity to keep Communism and feminization at bay.¹²¹ *North by Northwest*'s narrative ultimately rehabilitates Roger into Cold War masculinity by having him participate in the action, win and wed Eve, and defeat the spies Leonard (Martin Landau) and Vandamm (James Mason).

¹²⁰ Cohan, *Masked Men*, 1–33; Corber, *In the Name of National Security*, 192–201.

¹²¹ Cohan, 4–6; Corber, *In the Name of National Security*, 197.

Cohan and Corber rightly call attention to the constructive and performative nature of the masculinity on display by Cary Grant and *North by Northwest*. But are they right to see only crisis, instability and chaos in the malleability of Roger Thornhill's (and therefore Grant's) manhood? By reading the character, the actor and the film as artifacts of crisis, they leave no space to explore the ways Grant and the film understand performance as a positive function. The film celebrates performance. At first a victim of mistaken identity, it is only by cleverly shifting identities that Roger survives his kidnapping ordeal and multiple run-ins with Vandamm and his henchmen. Roger takes on multiple roles throughout the film, including the fictitious spy George Kaplan, a short-panted train porter and an obnoxious art auction bidder. His most daring performance is as the victim of a cafeteria-based assassination attempt, which requires timing and acting aplomb. Roger's success in each of these roles brings him closer to defeating the spies and protecting Eve. The film seems to be saying that some gender flexibility, however overt or subtle, is necessary for victory in the Cold War itself.

North by Northwest is one of the most extratextual of Cary Grant's films.¹²²

Descriptions of Roger Thornhill in reviews of *North by Northwest* use exactly the same language that was usually applied to Grant. The term "debonair" appears repeatedly with regard to Roger, the "successful, handsome Madison Avenue executive," portrayed, of course, by "the urbane and witty Cary Grant."¹²³ Roger Thornhill's "exemplary capitalist

¹²² Cohan, *Masked Men*, 22.

¹²³ Mae Tinee, "Cary at Best in *North by Northwest*," *Chicago Tribune*, July 2, 1959, C8; John L. Scott, "*North by Northwest* Intriguing Spy Movie," *Los Angeles Times*, July 25, 1959, A6; A.H. Weiler, "Screen: Hitchcock Takes Suspenseful Cook's Tour," *New York Times*, August 7, 1959, 28.

male, successful, urbane and cynic[al] confiden[ce]” was Cary Grant.¹²⁴ The incidents that befall Roger, such as being kidnapped, stuffed into a train berth and outrunning a crop duster, could only be handled with such assurance by a Cary Grant-type. The film winks at Grant’s persona, drawing attention to the aspects of his image that make him Cary Grant. One clear extratextual parallel between Roger and Grant is Roger’s flawless style. Audiences would have been keenly aware of Grant’s impeccable grooming. And Roger may be wearing a gray suit, but it isn’t flannel and certainly did not come off a department store rack. In 2014 *Esquire* named the bespoke, single-breasted suit Grant wears in *North By Northwest* to be “the greatest suit in film.”¹²⁵ This makes the scene in which Roger emerges filthy from his tussle with a crop duster a nod to Grant’s off screen fashion sense. So is a scene in which Roger dons ill-fitting clothes while waiting for said gray suit to be cleaned.

Athletic prowess and physical vigour were important attributes of elite masculinity. An extension of these characteristics was the understanding that, though a calculated last resort, violence could be a strategy to deal with geopolitical problems. Cary Grant’s persona does not lend readily to the sort of martial violence that inspired and cohered privileged men to one another. Cary Grant did not serve in World War II. He was stuck in Hollywood, told by the British ambassador to “stay put and carry on.”¹²⁶ This does not

¹²⁴ Britton, 46.

¹²⁵ Will Hersy, “The Greatest Suits in Film,” *Esquire UK*, September 11, 2014, accessed February 21, 2015, <http://www.esquire.co.uk/style/fashion/5353/film-suits/>. For an analysis of Grant’s style and the role of Roger’s indestructible suit, see Cohan, *Masked Men*, 17–19.

¹²⁶ Grant was disappointed that he could not serve Great Britain in battle. In a situation somewhat similar to John Wayne’s (though Wayne never attempted to enlist), Grant volunteered for the Royal Navy, but was turned down by the Foreign Office. It is not clear whether Grant would have been accepted; he would have

mean that violence was not part of his make-up, but it happened infrequently in his films. In *North by Northwest*, situations in which Grant's physicality is used for non-sexual ends and his clever use of violence step in for overt displays of masculine aggression. Neither Cary Grant nor Roger need violence in the exact way elite masculinity prescribes. For much of the film, Roger finds himself in situations that require mental and physical acuity to escape. Still, when his life and masculinity is threatened, Roger Thornhill is capable of violent action. There is one moment, in *North by Northwest*'s final showdown on Mount Rushmore, in which Roger is finally driven to overt violence. Roger is confronted on a narrow ledge by Vandamm's henchman, Valerian (Adam Williams). The two men wrestle precariously close to the edge. Roger's survival instinct surges and he pushes Valerian over the cliff. In an instance of unadulterated danger in which both he and Eve are at dire risk, Roger has no other option but to use violence. In this moment, Roger aligns with the ultimate tenet of liberal masculinity's philosophy on manhood and necessary violence, the ability to kill when required.

Cary Grant was a signpost for what liberal masculinity could have become. We can read his 1950s persona, not as a sign of crisis, but as pointing to a moment of possibility in which an American male could be aware of his gender identity, and its fluidity, without a corresponding loss of virility or sexual prowess. Yet the malleability that Grant accepted could not wholly be squared with the demands of Cold War masculinity. When

been considered mature for military work at 36. Grant campaigned tirelessly for the British War Relief Society and starred in *Destination Tokyo* (Delmer Daves, 1943) as the captain of an American submarine in enemy waters. Grant faced considerable criticism from the British press for not returning to England to join the war effort, in whatever capacity, which his compatriot actors like Lt. David Niven had. McCann, 134–35.

performance strayed too far beyond the bounds of heteronormativity, as in the case of Dean Acheson and the later stages of Joseph McCarthy's career, the iron-fisted models of Cold War masculinity worked to remove the source of aberration. This would give violence a cleansing effect in Cold War liberalism and conservatism, serving to empower and consolidate the hegemonic ideals they shared.

Conclusion

Cary Grant's exemplary performance as the popular culture iteration of elite masculinity was that, a composite representing the ideal liberal man. Cary Grant and John Wayne (aka Marion Morrison to Grant's Archibald Leach) stood in for two versions of Cold War masculinity at play in the 1950s and 1960s, as did John Kennedy and Joseph McCarthy. These masculinities and their various avatars were all performances, all constructed, yet there was a great effort to conceal their constructedness and present them as the natural state for American manhood. Of them all, Grant's incarnation cannot so easily be elided. His construct comes closest to a semblance of equilibrium in the openness of his performance and star-image infrastructure. He remains a marker for ways of thinking about the Cold War era and its attendant masculinities that go beyond a crisis narrative.

In the years to come, Arthur M. Schlesinger's "vital center" would be torn apart, and both Cold War liberalism and liberal masculinity would come under sustained assault. Within six years of *North by Northwest's* release, John Kennedy, the ultimate figure of Cold War liberal elite masculinity, was dead, and his self-professed alter ego, Cary Grant, was no longer, as they say, "in pictures." By the mid-1960s, Grant could no

longer be the satisfying romantic hero for an audience of younger filmgoers, who craved less stylized, more realistic performances from their stars. Though Grant could have transitioned into roles that suited his age and comportment, he chose instead to retire after *Walk, Don't Run* (Charles Walters, 1966), in which he played matchmaker for a twenty-something couple. By then, Kennedy's "new group of vigorous young Americans" were running into real trouble "in the jungles of Asia," as the Vietnam War was rapidly becoming the touchstone for all that was wrong with liberalism and the American system. Soon, a generation of young men would be looking for new models of masculinity. The next chapter describes that search.

Chapter Two

New Left Masculinities: Influences, Opportunities and Barricades

In *Greetings* (Brian De Palma, 1968), twenty-something Lloyd Clay (Gerrit Graham) is a Kennedy assassination enthusiast who also happens to be a hippie and draft avoider. He spends his days pouring over photographs of Dealey Plaza and analyzing the Zapruder film. Lloyd is obsessed with proving the “second gunman” conspiracy theory correct. In a scene meant to be funny, he charts the coroner’s description of the president’s fatal wounds onto his sleeping girlfriend. She is turned into a living diagram of Kennedy’s gruesome death, a memento mori of sorts, as Lloyd painstakingly copies the markers of the president’s murder on to her naked body. Speaking directly to the camera, he talks the audience through his “autopsy,” explaining how bullet trajectories and carefully measured entrance wounds prove that Lee Harvey Oswald could not have acted alone.

What Lloyd does not do in these scenes is speak of the dead president as anything other than that, a dead president—John F. Kennedy’s persona is excised. The question of why Lloyd is obsessed with Kennedy’s assassination is never answered. In *Greetings*, Kennedy exists in Lloyd’s paranoiac realm, where the president’s violent death extinguishes all other discourse on the man and what he may have represented to the nation and, most especially, Lloyd’s generation. There is no reference to the president’s politics, no talk of the New Frontier or the Peace Corps; and there is no mention, or allusion to, Kennedy’s position as the exemplar of Cold War masculinity and early hero of the New Left. Kennedy’s association with American youth, particularly with young

men, is effectively disconnected in a film aimed at New Left and countercultural audiences.

This gulf between the young New Left and the liberal leaders of only a few years gone by is echoed in the thoughts of Students for a Democrat Society (SDS) president Tom Hayden. Recalling he first met Kennedy at an impromptu speech for students in Ann Arbor, Michigan, Hayden remembers the then-presidential candidate talked of community-mindedness and the powerful potential of youth in creating national change.¹ Hayden was intrigued by the Peace Corps, and hopeful about Kennedy's presidential campaign.² In the early 1960s, Kennedy and his circle were supportive of the burgeoning student movement, giving it legitimacy via the New Frontier, the Peace Corps and the National Student Association (NSA). Yet for Hayden and many of his Movement comrades, disenchantment set in when it was discovered the CIA underwrote the NSA. Hayden came to believe the president and his advisers had had an ulterior motive: "what he was doing, or the forces around him were doing, was trying to take advantage of the discontent of youth and channel it into certain directions that could be beneficial to the image of the U.S."³ The young activist was not persuaded by Kennedy's call to action for American youth as a method for checking Soviet advances. The disillusion was so complete that when Hayden heard of the president's death, he was not crushed by the news. "The reason I wasn't so shattered by the killing of Kennedy himself," Hayden said

¹ Tim Findley, "Tom Hayden: *Rolling Stone* Interview, Part 1," *Rolling Stone*, October 26, 1972, 38.

² Tom Hayden, *Rebellion and Repression: Testimony by Tom Hayden before the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, and the House Un-American Activities Committee* (New York: Meridian Books, 1969), 22.

³ Findley, 38; Hayden, *Rebellion and Repression*, 29.

in 1972, “is that a certain distance had set in between a lot of us and Kennedy that came from the experience from 1960 to 1963.”⁴

Coming of age in an era of liberal ascendancy, young men of the New Left like Tom Hayden were exposed to the triumph of liberal elite masculinity and were a party to its consequences. For Hayden and his cohort, the Vietnam War would quickly become the touchstone for all that was wrong with liberalism, the American system—and American manhood. Along with the war, the nation’s socio-cultural and political climate concretized the fault lines between Cold War liberals and their New Left sons. These sons took up the project of challenging their fathers’ Cold Warrior ideals. The New Left—male and female—philosophized on the nation’s ills and established a countrywide movement that worked to see their methods, and hopes, come to fruition.

This chapter focuses on the male New Left’s apparent rejection of the prevailing models of Cold War masculinity. The New Left’s pursuit of authenticity sparked a challenge to traditional gender roles. The generational and ideological foment which emerged in the 1960s provided an opportunity to explore different articulations of American masculinity.⁵ These new masculine narratives created at least two possible paths. The Civil Rights movement inspired the first route. The embrace of nonviolence by the Civil Rights movement was a powerful inspiration for New Leftists, both in strategy and philosophy. Concomitant to Civil Rights activism, the pacifist stance of the anti-war movement provided the structure for a general critique of violence. In this convergence

⁴ Findley, 40.

⁵ Linda E. Boose, “Techno-Muscularity and the ‘Boy Eternal’: From the Quagmire to the Gulf,” in *Gendering War Talk*, ed. Miriam Cooke and Angela Woollacott (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 91.

lay the possibility for a truly radical interrogation of gender ideology. A second path for the male New Left narrative was equally viable. Not all men in the New Left affirmed the legitimacy of nonviolence, and not all were prepared to renounce violence as a component of their desired definition of New Left manhood. These men often shared the Cold War liberal view of gender relations and the necessity of violence. This constancy was based on a need to prove or maintain a foothold in the traditions of American manhood via compensatory violence. It was also seen as the ostensibly “natural” expression of a masculinity that thrived on aggression and virility. This path was strongly influenced by the men some in the male New Left chose as their hero-mentors, including radical, Left-leaning writer Norman Mailer, as well as militant, hypermasculine voices coming from the Black Power movement such as Eldridge Cleaver.

The chapter begins by briefly considering the Civil Rights, anti-war and draft resistance movements. The Civil Rights movement’s articulation of nonviolence inspired many New Leftists to action. It foregrounded the connectedness of violence, power and, in particular, white manhood by calling attention to the racialized masculinism emboldening the cruel and inhumane treatment of Civil Rights protesters. The anti-war movement and its critique of violence are avenues to identify the ways in which some males in the New Left considered new masculine narratives. This includes a short overview of the draft resistance movement as a place where anti-violence sentiment and the challenge of confronting traditional masculine identities often clashed. This reveals the sexism and heteronormativity that undergirded the Movement even as new definitions of New Left manhood were sought.

Several case studies will follow the thread of the liberal-New Left gender-violence continuum. Author-journalist Norman Mailer was a controversial but important figure in radical and mainstream circles. Investigating Mailer's interaction with young radicals and some of his works, especially *The Armies of the Night* (1968), shows the centrality of violence and virile masculinity as vital themes that connected with a number of New Left males.⁶ The second case study follows the first, in that it looks to the writings of New Left leaders such as Tom Hayden (*Rebellion and Repression*, 1969), Abbie Hoffman (*Revolution for the Hell of It*, 1968) and Jerry Rubin (*Do It!*, 1970).⁷ Reading their contemporary words against the grain will lay bare these men's thoughts on violence, their own gender and sexuality, and the character of their interactions with women. The chapter concludes by revisiting *Greetings*. The film will be considered from the point of view of its intended audience: New Left and countercultural youth. As a reflection of its audience, *Greetings* represents the casualness of the era's sexism and the place of violence in the life of many young American males.

The Male New Left and Masculinity

In 1966, actor-turned-Republican-gubernatorial-candidate Ronald Reagan quipped to a crowd in Milwaukee: "We have some hippies in California. For those of you who don't know what a hippie is, he's a fellow who has hair like Tarzan, walks like Jane and smells like Cheetah."⁸ This is exactly how much of "straight" America sized up the men

⁶ Norman Mailer, *Armies of the Night: History as Novel, The Novel as History* (New York: Plume, [1968] 1994).

⁷ Abbie Hoffman, *Revolution for the Hell of It* (New York: Dial Press, 1968); Jerry Rubin, *Do It: Scenarios of the Revolution* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970).

⁸ "Republicans: Reagan's Road Show," *Time*, October 13, 1967, 28.

in the New Left and counterculture.⁹ Long hair, love beads and non-traditional, colourful apparel were the hallmarks of the youth movement in the 1960s—for women and men alike. These cosmetic alterations from the staid Establishment norm of crew cuts, sports jackets and button-downs were enough for one contemporary cultural critic to be concerned for the “dubious masculinity” of those young men wearing “frilly Edwardian clothes,” and warnings of the possibility of widespread societal turmoil from the “depolarization of sex roles.”¹⁰ Indeed, the daisy-bedecked Love Child seems to have become the vainglorious avatar for the Movement in public memory and popular culture, usurping, to a certain degree, the historical narrative of anti-war/peace activists and radicals—each with their own influences and couture.

Many in the male New Left looked nothing like the debonair figures cut by John F. Kennedy and Cary Grant only a few years before. These young men were more Tarzan than Roger Thornhill, and they knew it. Long hair was revolutionary, argued Jerry Rubin, a New Left and Youth International Party leader: “Long hair is the beginning of our liberation from the sexual oppression that underlies this whole military society.”¹¹ Adopting longer hair lengths, paisley prints and billowy clothes was one of the easiest ways to repudiate the Establishment’s unbending association of manliness with

⁹ In a 1968 *Chicago Tribune* piece, members of several of the city’s psychedelic rock groups discuss their eccentric, countercultural clothing styles, noting that their masculinity is not determined by their attire, but that strange looks from the public were not outside the norm. Sel Erder Yackley, “Sure, They’re Colorful—But, Why Not?,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 14, 1968, E1.

¹⁰ David Allyn, *Make Love Not War, The Sexual Revolution: An Unfettered History* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 2000), 159.

¹¹ Rubin, *Do It!*, 96.

“whiteness and suburban respectability.”¹² Androgynous styles were a powerful expression of this rejection, an obvious challenge to gender roles and the deeply ingrained heteronormativity of mainstream U.S.A.¹³

The unmistakable act of participating in the Movement’s ideological fashion revolution raised the possibility of a deeper confrontation with masculinity and the violence inherent in American manliness. However, in many respects, the “transcendence” androgyny offered could be marred by what for many in the male New Left and counterculture were attendant fears of emasculation. This could be especially worrisome for young men whose refusal to follow their fathers’ martial journey to manhood left their manliness and patriotism in limbo.¹⁴ Thus, while dressing the part was the simplest way to challenge gender norms, it was also the most obvious and superficial, and not always the most sincere.¹⁵

The quest for racial equality in the post-World War II United States proved to be a wellspring of inspiration for a host of other groups and movements, each fighting for their own version of social and political justice. Having been restricted from traditional avenues of voicing dissent at the political and legislative levels, African Americans developed alternative strategies to fight for racial equality. At the heart of the Civil Rights

¹² Tom Hodgdon’s *Manhood in the Age of Aquarius: Masculinity in Two Countercultural Communities, 1965–83* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 40.

¹³ Barbara Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1983), 107; David Savran, *Taking It Like A Man: White Masculinity, Masochism and Contemporary American Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 124.

¹⁴ Savran, 124; Allyn, 159.

¹⁵ The contradictions between the male New Left’s articulation of masculinity and the masculinity many in the male New Left “practiced” will be discussed later in this chapter.

movement's ideology and methodology was an "egalitarian individualism" based on nonviolence and direct action.¹⁶ Pacifists like A.J. Muste and Bayard Rustin had used non-violent direct action to contest segregation during World War II and carried this strategy forward into the Civil Rights movement of the sixties. Much of the philosophy behind nonviolence was influenced by the teachings of Mohandas Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and bolstered by a growing literature on nonviolent direct action, which by the mid-1960s included instructions for direct action in Civil Rights protest and for nonviolent demonstrations in general.¹⁷ Non-violent direct action was put into practice through boycotts, civil disobedience, mass marches and sit-ins, all of which would be adopted by the New Left, and utilized by the anti-war and draft resistance movements in the mid-to-late sixties.¹⁸

Many early members of the New Left, like Tom Hayden and his wife, Casey Hayden, cut their activist teeth working with Civil Rights organizations and had first hand knowledge of the philosophical tenets embraced by key groups such as the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), a founding institution in the student movement and New Left, was clearly

¹⁶ Van Gosse, *Rethinking the New Left: An Interpretative History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 28.

¹⁷ Charles DeBenedetti, *An American Ordeal: The Antiwar Movement of the Vietnam Era* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1990), 42; Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam Books, 1987), 86. See Martin Oppenheimer and George Lakey, *A Manual for Direct Action: Strategy and Tactics for Civil Rights and All Other Nonviolent Protest Movements* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1964).

¹⁸ DeBenedetti, 23; Melvin Small, *Antiwarriors: The Vietnam War and the Battle for America's Hearts and Minds* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Books, 2002), 5; Gosse, *Rethinking the New Left*, 21.

influenced by the Civil Rights movement. This was reflected in SDS's Port Huron Statement, written by Hayden in 1962. The organization's manifesto advocated for "participatory democracy" based on equality, nonviolence and community.¹⁹

The New Left had a particularly close bond with SNCC. As the youth wing of the Civil Rights movement, SNCC heavily influenced its white student counterparts. Founded in 1960 as an offshoot of the SCLC, SNCC's Statement of Purpose underscored the group's adherence to nonviolence in its work towards a "social order of justice:"

Through nonviolence, courage displaces fear; love transforms hate... Peace dominates war... Love is the central motif of nonviolence... love goes to the extreme; it remains loving and forgiving even in the midst of hostility. It matches the capacity of evil to inflict suffering with an even more enduring capacity to absorb evil, all the while persisting in love.²⁰

Hayden understood that African-American SNCC members had, and would continue to, face more peril than any white student activist, and that this fact must be remembered: "[T]hose Negroes are down there digging in, and in more danger than nearly any student in this American generation has faced..."²¹ The ties binding SNCC and the New Left were moral and strategic. The white New Left looked to their African-American associates for guidance and affirmation. This meant heading off to do nonviolent battle in the South under the leadership of SNCC organizer Stokely Carmichael. Yet, it also meant

¹⁹ Savran, 111; Gitlin, 128; Maurice Isserman and Michael Kazin, *America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s*, 3d ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 177–79.

²⁰ Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, Statement of Purpose (1960), National Humanities Center Resource Toolbox, *The Making of African American Identity*, vol. 3 (1917–68). Accessed September 22, 2014. nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/maai3/protest/text2/snccstatementofpurpose.pdf.

²¹ Tom Hayden, as quoted in Gitlin, 128.

many would assent to SNCC's new direction in 1966 when Carmichael announced the group's strategy in Northern urban ghettos: armed self-defense.²²

Self-defense as a revolutionary strategy for Black activists did not gain traction until the late 1960s when government foot-dragging and increasingly violent pushback tested activists' tolerance and patience. Until that time, nonviolence held potent moral capital on the world stage. Nonviolent direct action put brutal scenes of white hatred on display in such a way that the moral dilemma for white America was how it could ignore the viciousness launched at innocent protesters. Fire hoses and police dogs showed that "black innocence [was] at the mercy of white violence."²³ For African-American men entering their adult years during the days of the Southern Civil Rights campaigns, nonviolent activism turned into a rite of passage into manhood. Working to overcome a vilified and diminished definition of black manliness, African-American male activists looked beyond traditional markers of masculinity, like power and control, to embrace the tenets of participatory democracy and nonviolent action. Reverberating in the words of SNCC's Statement of Purpose (and echoed in the Port Huron Statement), manhood could be tolerant and humanist, open to "love thine enemy" and sharing leadership duties with female participants. Nonviolence was not passivity—it took fortitude. Frustrating the

²² Isserman and Kazin, 182. Soon after his championing of armed self-defense, Carmichael argued for the removal of whites from SNCC's ranks.

²³ Laura Browder, *Her Best Shot: Women and Guns in America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 144.

violence that was the hallmark of white masculinity, so essentialized by Southern segregationists like Bull Connor and Orval Faubus, was courageous and manly.²⁴

Pacifism, the refusal to engage in violence for any reason, was the lifeblood of the Civil Rights movement and it informed the anti-war movement as well. The pacifist tradition in the United States has long roots, going back as far as Quaker conscientious objection during the American Revolution.²⁵ With such a deep-rooted history, it is not surprising that the anti-war movement during the Vietnam War era was really a broad coalition connecting a wide array of groups and demographics—from Catholic Workers, Old Left communists and New Left radicals, to anti-war veterans and liberal doves. The breadth of the Vietnam War made it an issue with tendrils that reached into every American's life. The war's length and scale impacted the organization of the anti-war movement; indeed, it virtually guaranteed its disorganization. By the end of the decade there were nearly 20,000 groups considered to be part of what was essentially a nebulous national anti-war movement.²⁶

Early activities in the anti-Vietnam War movement can be traced to the mid-1950s, when pacifists began pushing for disarmament after the Geneva Accords. The first real

²⁴ Steve Estes, *I Am a Man! Race, Manhood, and the Civil Rights Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 62–63.

²⁵ Gosse, *Rethinking the New Left*, 27.

²⁶ Douglas C. Rossinow, *Visions of Progress: The Left-Liberal Tradition in America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 249; Penny Lewis, *Hard Hats, Hippies and Hawks: The Vietnam Antiwar Movement as Myth and Memory* (Ithaca, NY: ILR Press, 2013), 93; Isserman and Kazin, 192; Small, 3. The Civil Rights Movement had a politically-fraught relationship with the anti-war movement, and Vietnam became a divisive issue across the African American community. See Daniel S. Lucks, *Selma to Saigon: The Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2014).

organized public actions against the war began with a series of teach-ins that started at the University of Michigan in 1965. These teach-ins were followed by one of the first massive anti-war demonstrations, organized by SDS, in Washington, D.C., on April 17, 1965.²⁷ Such protests grew larger and larger as more and more Americans of various colours and credos turned against the war. Another watershed in the anti-war movement was the March on the Pentagon in October 1967. Organized by the National Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam, or the Mobe (one of the few ‘national’ anti-war groups), the event drew nearly 100,000 participants. As the decade came to a close, and the war continued millions of Americans counted themselves as participants in the anti-war movement.²⁸

The sheer number of anti-war protesters made the movement unwieldy and ripe for disintegration. Though large-scale demonstrations continued into the early 1970s, by 1969 the anti-war movement had peaked. Like the Civil Rights movement before it, the anti-war movement fractured in part over violence vs. nonviolence debates, which became increasingly recalcitrant as doctrinaire radicals, pacifists and militant revolutionaries vied for control of the movement’s guiding philosophy and tactical pursuits.²⁹

²⁷ Small, 28; Lewis, 58; Gosse, *Rethinking the New Left*, 86.

²⁸ Simon Hall, *Rethinking the American Anti-War Movement* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 28–29. Jerry Rubin was one of Mobe’s chief organizers. Norman Mailer participated in the March on the Pentagon. His experiences at the demonstration (and observances of his New Left protégés) will be discussed later in this chapter.

²⁹ Small, 119, 139, 142; Gosse, *Rethinking the New Left*, 90–93; Sylvia Shin Huey Chong, *The Oriental Obscene: Violence and Racial Fantasies in the Vietnam Era* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 46.

The draft resistance movement was intricately intertwined with the anti-war movement, yet remains a neglected aspect of the Vietnam War era's history. Scholars such as Michael S. Foley have attempted to give the movement, and its participants, a space in the Vietnam literature. To imbue the draft resistance with the veneration it deserves, Foley connects the activities of the draft resistance movement to the nation's historical tradition of protest and hands-on democracy, going back to abolitionism and the deep faith placed in acting on one's conscience rather than at a government's behest. Draft resistance also took inspiration from renowned pacifists such as Mohandas Gandhi and philosophers like Albert Camus who held to the ideal that all human life is sacred. Foley extends the draft resistance movement's inspiration to its forbearers in the Civil Rights movement. He explicitly turns this association into genuine parity, citing equivalencies in each movement's motivations: morality, the duties of active citizenship and the concept of freedom. Indeed, Foley describes draft resisters as the anti-war movement's own "Freedom Riders and lunch-counter sit-in participants."³⁰

Public instances of draft resistance began before a formal draft resistance movement was organized. On October 15, 1965, thousands marched in anti-draft demonstrations in Berkeley and Oakland, California. On the same day in New York City, pacifist David J. Miller set his draft card alight on the steps of an army induction centre in one of the first public acts of draft card destruction (it was captured by television news cameras). What made Miller's moment of dissent against the Selective Service System significant was

³⁰ Michael S. Foley, *Confronting the War Machine: Draft Resistance During the Vietnam War* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 9, 13. Draft resisters, as a term, applies here to young men who actively participated in the draft resistance movement in the United States, not to those who evaded the draft by going underground or into exile.

that it was the first violation of a new law criminalizing the “willful destruction” of draft cards. Draft card burnings were potent acts of civil disobedience.³¹ Pacifists in the movement likened the burnings to acts of “moral witness” and an exercise that forced the government to react. The punishment for breaking the draft card law was five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine. By early 1968, when the draft resistance movement had grown into a national phenomenon, approximately 25,000 men had been indicted on draft offenses, of which roughly 9,000 were convicted and 4,000 sentenced to prison terms.³²

In April 1967 the announcement of a countrywide draft resistance movement, known as the Resistance, was made in San Francisco. Resistance leader and former Stanford University student body president David Harris called on his fellow draft-age male colleagues to turn in their draft cards en masse and refuse to take part in the wanton violence in Vietnam because

As people who are confronted with the choice of being in that war or not, we have an obligation to speak to this country, and that statement has to be made this way: that this war will not be made in our names, that this war will not be made with our hands, that we will not carry the rifles to butcher the Vietnamese people, and that the prisons of the United States will be full of young people who will not honor the orders of murder.³³

Harris informed the crowd of his decision to refuse induction and accept a prison sentence instead—he would serve nearly two years. His plan was in accordance with the

³¹ Small, 33.

³² By 1968, draft card burnings were largely replaced with draft card turn-ins (of which there were nearly 5,000 public turn-ins) and refusing to accept delivery of draft cards. Foley, *War Machine*, 24; Lewis, 87; Gitlin, 291.

³³ David Harris, as quoted in Foley, *War Machine*, 76–77. Harris later married anti-war activist and folk singer Joan Baez.

Resistance's promise of total noncompliance, a strategy inspired by SNCC's civil disobedience in the South.³⁴

Nonviolent civil disobedience, as practiced in the Civil Rights movement, was a key tenet in the Resistance's platform, particularly in the New England Resistance, the largest chapter of the national draft resistance movement: where anti-draft sentiments were born of both the region's religious foundations and an articulation of Gandhian nonviolence. Moreover, many of the NER's participants and mentors had worked in the Civil Rights movement, fully embracing Martin Luther King, Jr.'s doctrine of nonviolent civil disobedience. Though many draft resisters in New England understood that their physical persons were at risk (indeed, draft resisters were attacked and injured at demonstrations), there was an implicit acknowledgment that the draft resistance movement should be nonviolent—that challenging violence was its whole purpose.³⁵

This nonviolence was based on the main thrust behind the Resistance's plan to "clog the system" with bodies as a measure of conscience and as project to confront the war machine (a tactic very similar to SNCC's "jail-in" activities in 1962).³⁶ The hope was that thousands of draft resisting middle and upper-class men heading off to prison for refusing induction or turning in their draft cards would increase the glare on the government by making the draft a public relations nightmare. As more and more privileged young men became draft card "criminals," their family and friends would turn against the war. This would also call attention to the inequities in the Selective Service

³⁴ Foley, *War Machine*, 77.

³⁵ Foley, *War Machine*, 85; DeBenedetti, 64–65.

³⁶ DeBenedetti, 64–65.

System, forcing the government to reform its classist and racist call-up protocols and deferments.³⁷

The Resistance was the largest organization in the draft resistance movement, but it was not the only voice for anti-draft sentiment. Other groups, such as the Boston Draft Resistance Group (BRDG) and individual activists like radical priest Philip Berrigan, were not so wedded to the sanctity of nonviolence, seeing protest marches, draft card turn-ins and prison sentences as staid or ineffective methods. These anti-draft participants were proponents of more provocative and often aggressive actions, such as the “Early Morning Shows” put on by the BRDG at induction centres in the Boston area, providing draft-counselling literature and an anti-war message to the young men arriving for their induction physicals. The hope was to gain new recruits to the BRDG and broaden the anti-war movement. Philip Berrigan and his brother, Daniel, also a priest, were fiercely committed to the anti-war effort. In October 1967, Philip and several colleagues entered the Baltimore Customs House and poured blood over draft files while reading from the Bible. In 1969, the Berrigan brothers broke into a draft board office in Catonsville, Maryland, and set fire to nearly 400 draft files with homemade napalm.³⁸ The different meanings attached to “draft resistance” would have gendered consequences for the movement’s participants, both male and female. These repercussions will be discussed later in this chapter.³⁹

³⁷ Foley, *War Machine*, 78–79, 126.

³⁸ Small, 71–72; George Q. Flynn, *The Draft, 1940–1973* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1993), 176; Foley, *War Machine*, 69, 85–87; Gitlin, 292; Lewis, 89.

³⁹ Foley, *War Machine*, 69, 85–87; Gitlin, 292; Lewis, 89; Flynn, 176.

The Civil Rights movement reinvigorated the conception of American citizenship for many of the country's youth, which carried over into the anti-war and draft resistance movements. Nonviolence was an entrée for many white, middle-class men and women into political and social activism, and eventually set many of them on the quest for personal authenticity. For quite a few young men in the New Left, visions of racial justice, community and participatory democracy were joined by the desire for a revitalized manhood cleared of the trappings of conformist Cold Warrior stereotypes and liberal elite masculinity. What many in the male New Left failed to recognize, however, was that while they may have expressed nonviolence, and preached tolerance and inclusion, their alternative male identities were “not as rebellious as they believed.” The “unbuttoned male identity” of New Left men could be a real challenge to sexual and gender stereotypes—but it could also be the old masculinism in long hair and bell bottoms.⁴⁰

The Male New Left's Radical Uncle

Having turned away from the Cold War liberal Establishment, the male New Leftist looked to other male figures whose social critiques and radical pronouncements spoke to this next generation of activists. Some chose to go the route of nonviolence and pacifism. Others did not. Whatever the path, the New Left's discovery of kindred minds in the ranks of older leftists and radicals reminds us that the New Left was never wholly new. Scholars such as historian Van Gosse view the New Left as a continuation, not an

⁴⁰ Douglas C. Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 339; Sara M. Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 119.

usurpation, of the radical-leftist tradition in American politics and culture. Proclaiming the need for a longer, broader outlook on American radicalism, Gosse argues that the emergence of the New Left had deep connections to the “surviving battalions of the existing Old Left,” and that a “reshaped, decentered ‘old’ left” combined with radical liberalism “to become *a new left*.”⁴¹ The 1950s were not the vacuum they appeared to be, thus radicalism’s risorgimento in the 1960s was less a combustive game-changer and more about the progressive course of American radicalism.

The socio-political rebellion fomenting in the early 1960s was cross-generational, drawing in Old acolytes and the vanguard of the New Left. My focus here is the value, and reality, of the older generation’s influence on the New Left mindset—a perspective that included gender and violence within its purview.⁴² A singular example of all these threads is the writer Norman Mailer. Gaining notoriety for his incisive, acerbic observances and his egotistical swagger, Norman Mailer is an example of the leftist figures linking the Old Left to the New Left.⁴³ Mailer influenced young radicals, such as Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman, while cutting a problematic figure for the Old Left, whose economic-working class focus was losing ground to the cultural politics of the

⁴¹ Gosse, *Rethinking the New Left*, ix–x; Van Gosse, *Where the Boys Are: Cuba, Cold War America and the Making of the New Left* (London: Verso, 1993), 2, 6, 8. Gosse’s central example of an Old Left/New Left bond is the action taken by those on the American Left in response to the Kennedy administration’s diplomatic strategy after the Cuban Revolution. Italics in original. See also, Maurice Isserman, *If I Had a Hammer...The Death of the Old Left and the Birth of the New Left* (New York: Basic Books, 1987).

⁴² Isserman, 214, 219.

⁴³ Alan Wald, *Writing from the Left: New Essays in Radical Culture and Politics* (New York: Verso, 1994), 4, 116; Norman Podhoretz, *Breaking Ranks: A Political Memoir* (London: Harper & Row, 1979), 362. Podhoretz includes writer Paul Goodman and classicist Norman O. Brown in his trio of New Left-influencing, radical “prophets.”

New Left. Mailer's vivid depictions of violence and unabashed sexism—much of which the author exalted while declaring his support for the anti-war movement—were absorbed by his pupils in the male New Left. The fact that Mailer lived his violence could only be a further draw. The stage was set for a mutual fascination.

A World War II veteran and an amateur pugilist, Norman Mailer was well acquainted with violence. A celebrated author by the 1950s, Mailer achieved a new level of notoriety in 1960 when he stabbed his second wife, Adele, during a drunken rage.⁴⁴ Mailer's public and page-bound personas are complicated creatures involving a symbiotic relationship between sex, violence and masculinity. So frequent was the assertion of this interrelation, one scholarly anthology grandly states that the association of sex and violence in the male mind is clearer in Mailer's work "than in any other source in the English language."⁴⁵

Mailer's essay-cum-manifesto, "The White Negro: Superficial Reflections on the Hipster" (1957), represents the author's most intricate exploration of the need for violence in post-World War II American society, advancing his celebration of "the fist and the knife."⁴⁶ "The White Negro" expands on the themes of violence and masculinity first presented in Mailer's debut novel, *The Naked and the Dead* (1948), a graphic case

⁴⁴ Hilary Mills, *Mailer: A Biography* (New York: Empire Books, 1982), 231–32; Michael Glenday, *Modern Novelists: Norman Mailer* (London: Macmillan Press, 1995), 23; Peter Manso, *Mailer: His Life and Times* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985), 27.

⁴⁵ Deborah S. David and Robert Brannon, introduction to Kate Millett, "Sex, War, and Violence in the Novels of Norman Mailer," *The Forty-Nine Percent Majority: The Male Sex Role*, ed. Deborah S. David and Robert Brannon (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1976), 219.

⁴⁶ Sanford Pinsker, *Jewish-American Fiction, 1917–1987* (New York: Twayne, 1992), 107. "The White Negro" was first published in *Dissent* in 1957. It gained notoriety as a selection in Mailer's *Advertisements for Myself* (New York: Putnam, 1959), 331–75.

study of violence on a Pacific theatre battlefield.⁴⁷ But it is “The White Negro,” described by *Dissent*’s editor Irving Howe as Mailer’s “endorsement of violence,” that truly enshrines violence in the author’s literary repertoire, marking him as an “outlaw” in the literary Establishment.⁴⁸ On its title alone, Mailer’s essay is racist and primitivist.⁴⁹ When read with an eye to interrogating the essay’s appeal for the New Left, Mailer’s definition of “Hip” reminds us what generations of “hipsters” have forgotten: that the concept of “hipness,” and its eventual derivatives “hippie,” and “hipster” are rooted in violence and sexuality. Mailer described the “Hipster,” aka the “white Negro,” as a new type of hero who coveted the existential experiences of African-American men forced to inhabit the liminal zones of American society and culture, and who anticipated violence and lived

⁴⁷ Norman Mailer, *The Naked and the Dead* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1948). *The Naked and the Dead* is based on Mailer’s personal experience serving with an infantry outfit during the American invasion of Luzon, and as part of a reconnaissance platoon fighting in the Philippine mountains. The novel has been noted for its authentic, unadorned portrayal of life on the front lines in the Pacific, made deeply oppressive via the suffocating environs, both natural and military-made. Philip H. Bufithis, *Norman Mailer* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1978), 6–7, 15, 29; Michael Sherry, *In the Shadow of War: The United States Since the 1930s* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 162–63.

⁴⁸ Indeed, in an interview in *The Realist* with leftist journalist Paul Krassner in 1962, Mailer admits to being obsessed with violence during this time. Norman Mailer, *The Presidential Papers* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1963), 136; Glenday, 23; Manso, 268.

⁴⁹ “The White Negro” is a polarizing piece that has drawn much criticism and discussion since its publication, most notably James Baldwin’s rejoinder in *Esquire* (1961). See James Baldwin, “The Black Boy Looks at the White Boy,” *The Price of the Ticket: Collected Non-Fiction, 1948–1985* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1985), 289–303; Andrea Levine, “The (Jewish) White Negro: Mailer’s Racial Bodies,” *MELUS* 28:2 (summer 2003): 59–81; and Andrew Ross, *No Respect: Intellectuals and Popular Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1989). Feminist scholar Michelle Wallace offers an African-American woman’s analysis of “The White Negro” in *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman* (New York: The Dial Press, 1978), 38–50.

with danger because he knew “that life was war.”⁵⁰ Mailer writes with the implicit understanding that this new hero is male and white, slipping into the appropriated—and deeply racialized and romanticized—domain of “the wise primitive in a giant jungle.” Being Hip was “still beyond the civilized man,” so the Hipster immersed himself in the African-American lifestyle which included “relinquishing the pleasures of the mind for the more obligatory pleasures of the body.”⁵¹ This racial profiling represented a backhanded appreciation, on Mailer’s part, for the (alleged) qualities of black masculinity: its apparent aggression, presumed authenticity and hypersexuality.⁵² Violence was the essence of the Hipster’s existence, with the explicit understanding that the brutality implicit in all things Establishment necessitated an equally brutal response from the Hipster. Mailer defined the term Hipster for a generation of young radicals who embraced the “literary tough guy’s” quasi-nihilistic and violent philosophy as a cornerstone in their “hippie” maxims.⁵³ The Hipster was the primogenitor, the revolutionary “godfather,” of the New Left and its own scions, the liberation movements of the late 1960s, ensuring that this next generation would be a “time of violence, new hysteria, confusion and rebellion.”⁵⁴

Norman Mailer’s participation in the anti-war movement was well documented, particularly through his own written record. In October 1967, Mailer joined the March on

⁵⁰ Mailer, *Advertisements*, 340–41.

⁵¹ Mailer, *Advertisements*, 343.

⁵² Mailer, *Advertisements*, 341, 343; Robert J. Corber, *Homosexuality in Cold War America: Resistance and the Crisis of Masculinity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 44–49.

⁵³ Manso, 60.

⁵⁴ David Savran includes the Black Panthers as heirs to Mailer’s Hipster. Savran, 4, 52; Mailer, *Advertisements*, 356.

the Pentagon, later publishing his account of the weekend's events in the Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Armies of the Night*. Asked to participate in the march by author and anti-draft activist Mitchell Goodman, Mailer agreed to become involved in the anti-war weekend.⁵⁵ *The Armies of the Night* continues Mailer's vivisection of the post-World War II condition of the United States, which includes "Superman Comes to the Supermart" (1960) discussed in the previous chapter. The importance of *The Armies of the Night* rests in its recording of Mailer's thoughts on the New Left, and the continuity of sexism and chauvinism in supposedly anti-war discourse.

One of the most interesting aspects of Mailer's discussion of Vietnam in *The Armies of the Night* is the projection of his conflicted thoughts about the war on to Beverly Bentley, his fourth wife. An extended analogy between Beverly and America transforms into a misogynistic fantasy. Mailer describes arguing with Beverly about Vietnam, and turns her—a beautiful, blonde actress-model—into a stand-in for everything he loves and hates about America.⁵⁶ Mailer's observations on the war let loose his thoughts on violence, invoked through powerful images shot through with sexism.⁵⁷ The possibility of violence between Mailer and Beverly was not merely a plot device or fantasy—friends of the couple often witnessed their frequently physical fights. As an actress, Beverly had learned to hide her Georgia accent; at home, however, in the midst of their legendary fights, her drawl emerged, reminding Mailer of the "raucous ball-your-

⁵⁵ Mailer, *Armies*, 9.

⁵⁶ Bentley married Mailer in 1963; divorcing in 1980, it was the oft-married author's second longest union.

⁵⁷ Mailer, *Armies*, 170. See Peter Manso, *Mailer: His Life and Times* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985); and Carl Rollyson, *The Lives of Norman Mailer: A Biography* (New York: Paragon House, 1991).

fists hollering of a Georgia jackass.”⁵⁸ Mailer congratulates himself for *not* beating Beverly, saying her “First Sergeant’s tones” made him “dare a stroke in order to keep himself from beating up on her beautiful white Southern girl face.” From the aggressive and demeaning imagery of a “Georgia jackass” to Mailer’s self-congratulation for restraining himself and not belting his wife, Mailer’s discussion of the American condition and Vietnam is, from the outset, couched in terms of gendered, domestic violence.⁵⁹

Mailer’s inability to read his wife infuriated him and mirrored similar anxieties in his inability to understand his nation, and how the U.S. could be so out of control in Southeast Asia. Not knowing whether Beverly’s essential nature was “good or evil” drove Mailer mad—just as his inadequacy at pinning down his feelings on the American condition frustrated him.⁶⁰ Mailer went on to describe his wife in terms that no woman would want applied to her, but that the author clearly intended to include the U.S. as well:

It was not inconceivable to him that if he finally came to believe his wife was not nearly so magical as he would make her, but was in fact petty, stingy, small-minded, and evilly stubborn (which is what he told her in many a quarrel) why then he would finally lose some part of his love affair with America...⁶¹

Mailer’s inner battle to accept that his wife might not be the wondrous being he envisioned was heightened by his awareness that the scales had fallen from his eyes. He

⁵⁸ Mailer, *Armies*, 170. Manso’s book of interviews with Mailer’s colleagues and friends includes recollections of numerous arguments between Mailer and Beverly (377, 413, 415, 505–7).

⁵⁹ Manso, 426–27; Rollyson, 206–7.

⁶⁰ Part of Mailer’s bedevilment over sussing out Beverly’s essence was that it upended his view of himself as an expert on the female psyche because “he (like all novelists) prided himself on his knowledge of women” (*Armies*, 171).

⁶¹ Mailer, *Armies*, 171.

could not ignore the shards of Beverly's "true" self just as he could not see past the "unspeakable barbarities [the U.S. had] invented with every corporation day."⁶²

A further example of Mailer turning his observations in *The Armies of the Night* into a stage for his views on American womanhood is his invective against female participants at the March on the Pentagon. Mailer was initially reluctant to join the march because, he said, he had soured on the Left. Mailer's critique of what he considered a state of ennui in the Left is especially interesting for the gendered nature of the swipe taken at his fellow female activists, who are targets of Mailer's violent and masculinist language. This forms a pattern of sexualized violence in Mailer's anti-war discourse in *The Armies of the Night*. The "girls" of the march, as Mailer called them, "conducted their own war," a seemingly separate enterprise from that of their male comrades.⁶³ The idea of women waging "war" has double meaning here. The martial meaning of the word rises at first gloss, though gender is in play as well. In recounting the women's actions, Mailer injected the words with his flair for casual sexism. There were the iconic flowers in gun barrels and demure smiles directed at the soldiers by "gentle and sweet, true flower girls." Other women showed more guile in their demeanour. These protest veterans, according to Mailer, sexualized themselves, taunting the soldiers with suggestively unbuttoned blouses and slick grins. As their coup de grâce, the women brutalized the soldiers with "a devil laugh, then a bitch belly laugh." This emasculating female humour was directed "at the impotence of the man's position in a uniform, helpless to reach out and take her." What Mailer implied, however, was that these women walked a fine line by toying with men's

⁶² Mailer, *Armies*, 171.

⁶³ Mailer, *Armies*, 271.

potency. This trickery could result in an aggressive sexual violation, escaped only because of the discipline of the uniform. The empathy Mailer had for the soldiers in this moment echoed the frustration he voiced towards his wife. Beverly's two-faced femininity was marked by the possibility of violence just like that of the women at the march. Under the guise of worrying about the women's virtue, Mailer maligned, and threatened, their sex.⁶⁴

The sexualization of female participants also emanates from Mailer's New Left protégés. Mailer recounted taunts lobbed by male protesters towards their military counterparts: "We have everything. Look. We are free. We have pot, we have food we share, we have girls. Come over to us, and share our girls."⁶⁵ The overture of bawdy communalism is an example of sexism on the ground, specifically at anti-war protests and in the anti-war movement itself. This also marks the casual sexism amongst male demonstrators (including Mailer himself) that participant-observers Sara Evans and Barrie Thorne detail in their analyses of sexism in the New Left.⁶⁶ Intercourse was a dangling carrot used to change male opponents' minds. Women were the literal vehicles

⁶⁴ To be fair, Mailer's sexism does not preclude him from being angered by the violence directed toward women at the march. He notes it appeared that soldiers were targeting women, with many witnesses corroborating this. Indeed, Mailer writes that Dagmar Wilson, leader of Women Strike for Peace, was more brutally treated than any of her male counterparts. Mailer argues that women were the focus of such aggression as a method to put male activists off their game, and humiliate them for sticking to "the old passive disobedience of the helpless sit-in" when they really wanted to give in to the militants among them calling for retaliation. Mailer, *Armies*, 271–77.

⁶⁵ Mailer, *Armies*, 270.

⁶⁶ Sara M. Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979); and Barrie Thorne, "Women in the Draft Resistance Movement: A Case Study of Sex Roles and Social Movements," *Sex Roles* 1:2 (1975): 179–95.

transporting new recruits into the anti-war fold because, as one anti-war slogan promised, “Girls Say Yes to Men Who Say No.”⁶⁷ Mailer believed the soldiers were most likely bewildered by such offers because their working class upbringing made them up question just what kind of man “gives his girl away.” The answer, Mailer insisted, was: “a fag!” This is not Mailer’s knocking his young anti-war comrades’ sexuality. It was about potency.

Finally, Mailer does more than graft sexualized aggression onto his narrative; he records himself participating in it. Whipping up the crowd at a rally on the eve of the march, Mailer shouted, “We’re going to try to stick it up the government’s ass, right into the sphincter of the Pentagon.”⁶⁸ Mailer’s call to action simplifies the demonstration’s primary goal to one of feminization, achieved through aggressive, and presumably emasculating, gay sex.⁶⁹ This may also be read as a sexualized taunt directed towards the Establishment, and a twisted reassurance of the demonstrators own virility—success over a feminized enemy could be achieved through sexual domination via violence.

Among those influenced by Mailer’s larger-than-life radical persona were New Left males like Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman.⁷⁰ Inspired by Mailer’s outlaw status, Rubin

⁶⁷ The slogan adorned a poster featuring folk singer and anti-war activist Joan Baez. Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, *Peace Now!: American Society and the Ending of the Vietnam War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 154.

⁶⁸ Mailer, *Armies*, 38.

⁶⁹ This type of analogy echoed the language used by liberals and conservatives in the mid-sixties. Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater was quoted as saying he “wanted to lob one into the men’s room in the Kremlin.” With the Cold War association between homosexuality and Communism, Goldwater’s statement connotes more than elementary school shenanigans. Michael Sherry notes that personal public emasculation and homosexual aggression was a fear for politicians as well. Sherry, 302.

⁷⁰ Carl Rollyson, *The Lives of Norman Mailer: A Biography* (New York: Paragon House, 1991), 185.

asked Mailer to address demonstrators at the Vietnam Protest Day in May 1965. The teach-in's Old Left organizers were reluctant to provide a platform for someone they believed to be less than savvy in his politics, but Rubin threatened to resign as coordinator if Mailer could not speak.⁷¹

Mailer's appearance at the rally marked his status as a sought-after figure for the New Left. Addressing the Berkeley crowd, Mailer's speech carried forward his usual themes of violence and its place in American manhood. To this end, Mailer's ostensibly anti-war statement was rife with militaristic images and masculinized language. According to Mailer, the U.S. was heavily advantaged over the "poor peasants" in Vietnam, resulting in an unfair fight.⁷² Mailer's solution for the imbalance would be hand-to-hand, or as he described it, "man-to-man" combat. In other words, Mailer did not oppose war, only war from a distance. He challenged President Lyndon Johnson and his advisers to "Fight like men. Go in man-to-man against the Vietcong. Call off the Air Force... Let us win man-to-man or lose man-to-man..." By specifically naming Lyndon Johnson and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, Mailer connected their masculinity to what he called the cowardice of long distance aerial combat: "State Department experts" in their "little bow ties," were, he said, the "most advanced monsters of civilization, pulverizing instinct with our detonations." The ironic thrust behind Mailer's anti-war speech was his call for more violence as a means to ending the war.

⁷¹ Manso, 406; Mills, 290.

⁷² Transcript of "Norman Mailer: Teach-In on the War in Vietnam, UC Berkeley, May 21-23, 1965," *The Pacifica Radio/ UC Berkeley Social Activism Sound Recording Project*. Accessed November 4, 2011. <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/MRC/pacificviet/mailertranscript.html>

Mailer's embrace of aggression, even in the anti-war movement, continued in *The Armies of the Night*. Early in his narrative, Mailer broke down his beef with the Left through a female-centric denunciation of its Pentagon March participation. This gendered nose thumbing was compounded by Mailer's disdain for the names of certain New Left associations. WSP (Women Strike for Peace) and SANE (National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy) were, he said, boring Leftist names, unsexy, with no brand appeal. Mailer had more respect for SNCC (Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee) or SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) because, he said, "now and again, remarkable young men sprang out of these alphabet soups."⁷³ But he encouraged these groups to jazz up their noms de guerre with names more like those found amongst the paragons of manhood—motorcycle clubs and athletic clubs: "George Street Jumpers... Gasoline Ghosts... Purple Raiders, Silver Dragons, Bughouse Beasts."⁷⁴ This manly renaming would provide immediate recognition of the groups' relevance and fortitude.

Mailer recognized the risks taken by some of the male New Left's March participants.⁷⁵ He championed this sense of danger and bestowed his respect upon those he perceived to have the fighting spirit. Mailer detailed the centrality of violence in the New Left's anti-war plan in his book's final section, "The Battle of the Pentagon." Jerry Rubin's involvement as project director signalled the anti-war movement's entrance into a gray zone in which the traditional avenues of dissent accepted by average Americans

⁷³ Mailer, *Armies*, 96.

⁷⁴ Mailer, *Armies*, 95.

⁷⁵ Mailer was arrested rather early in the march, before the crowds reached the Pentagon. He was slightly manhandled, but was not hurt by the police—possibly because, as Mailer described himself, he looked like "a banker gone ape" in his business suit. Mailer, *Armies*, 130–31.

would have to find footing alongside “incalculable acts of revolution.”⁷⁶ Rubin’s push for volatile, even violent, acts of rebellion made him in Mailer’s opinion, “the most militant, unpredictable, creative—therefore dangerous—hippie-oriented leader” in the New Left. For Mailer, this was high praise indeed.

Mailer described the young male radicals of *The Armies of the Night* using his familiar militarized, violent and sexualized images. Starting out with the crowd from the Washington Monument, the author was reminded of going into battle for the first time: “He realized that he had not taken in precisely this thin high sensuous breath of pleasure in close to twenty-four years... and found to his surprise that the walk toward the fire fight was one of the more agreeable... moments of his life.”⁷⁷ This militaristic bliss recalled for Mailer his long-held wish to lead an army; this was his day to revel in that desire. As “the sweetness of war came back,” Mailer walked amongst the crowd describing their movements like a military strategist, mapping out the placement of his “troops.” With a “sense of mass collective danger” fuelling participants, Mailer recognized they were preparing for a fight.⁷⁸ The potential for violence and thus, authentic, manly combat was sketched through an amped young protester anxious to get to the final destination so he could “get those soldiers at the Pentagon” because “that’s what we’re here for.”⁷⁹ A battle at the Pentagon was just what the protesters—and Mailer—wanted.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Mailer, *Armies*, 224–25.

⁷⁷ Mailer, *Armies*, 90.

⁷⁸ In a continuation of his critique of the Old Left, Mailer makes sure to note that the danger includes “the damnable mediocre middle of the Left.” Mailer, *Armies*, 97.

⁷⁹ Mailer, *Armies*, 110–11.

⁸⁰ Mailer, *Armies*, 247.

Feminist author Kate Millett was one of the first critics to castigate Norman Mailer for his misogyny and obsession with violence.⁸¹ “No one has done so much to explain, yet justify violence,” she wrote.⁸² Millett’s systematic breakdown of Mailer’s work in *Sexual Politics* (1971) outlines how Mailer’s words are “based on a set of values... blatantly and comically chauvinist” and a linkage of sex and violence.⁸³ Bemused by a militarist writer penning “quasi-pacifist books,” Millett argues that Mailer’s project is to convince readers, and the culture at large, that the violence in his mind merely represents the violent potential amongst all humans.⁸⁴ She contends that Mailer’s service in “the men’s-house culture” of the military ensured his response to women, strong in their politics and sexuality, would emerge through his words as “patriarchal warfare.”⁸⁵ Tempering violence, for Mailer, is folly because only violence bestows its possessor with “sufficient stature to claim he is a man.”⁸⁶ This authentication of manhood through

⁸¹ For other critiques, see Sanford Pinsker, *Jewish-American Literature, 1917–1987* (New York: Twayne, 1992); Alfred Kazin, *Bright Book of Life: American Storytellers from Hemingway to Mailer* (Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1973); and Warren Rosenberg’s chapter on Mailer, “White Negroes and Protestant Jews: Norman Mailer’s Hybrid Heroes and Jewish Male Violence,” in his *Legacy of Rage: Jewish Masculinity, Violence, and Culture* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), 115–52.

⁸² Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (New York: Avon Books, 1971), 314.

⁸³ Mailer rebuts Millett’s critique in *The Prisoner of Sex* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971), which includes his thoughts on women’s liberation. In *The Prisoner of Sex*, Mailer proposes that “the prime responsibility of a woman is to be on earth enough to find the best mate for herself, and conceive children who will improve the species.” The clash between Mailer and feminists resulted in a now-notorious public debate at the Town Hall in New York City. Mailer moderated a panel discussion that included feminist scholar Germaine Greer, radical feminist and *Village Voice* columnist Jill Johnson, literary critic Diana Trilling and Jackie Ceballos, president of the National Organization of Women (NOW). Rollyson, 234–43; Manso, 520–26.

⁸⁴ Millett, 314, 321.

⁸⁵ Millett, 315.

⁸⁶ Mailer, *The Presidential Papers*, 23.

violence links to a central grievance for Millett: Mailer's assertion that violence is required not just for manliness, but for the creative process. Ergo Mailer claims the creative process as a male domain.

Millett was concerned that Mailer had grown too comfortable with violence on an intimate level, taking it on as "a personal and sexual style."⁸⁷ She sees echoes of Mailer's machismo in many New Left males whom she surmises were introduced to the author in their teens and "continued to confuse Che Guevara with the brassy cliché of the Westerns."⁸⁸ Her unease over the New Left's infatuation with Mailer was based in reality; there was a deep connection between many of the young male radicals and their macho elder statesman. Using language not unlike his mentor, Abbie Hoffman recalled his fascination with seeing Mailer debate conservative writer William F. Buckley in 1959—he "was challenging the empire [Buckley] as a hip, ethnic street fighter. That was extremely appealing to me."⁸⁹ Jerry Rubin acknowledged Mailer as the New Left's father figure, saying, "we were the children of Norman Mailer's writings."⁹⁰ The author's participation in Vietnam Day signified his approval of New Left's efforts. Rubin understood *The Armies of the Night* to be a further statement of Mailer's acceptance: "the father says, 'Hey, these people have something to say, they're going to influence the future of our country.'" Mailer supported his protégés, Jerry Rubin and Hoffman, at their

⁸⁷ Millett, 317.

⁸⁸ Millett, 317. Abbie Hoffman stated that, indeed, he had first read Mailer in high school. Interestingly, Hoffman's introduction to Mailer was *The Naked and the Dead* (Mills, 290).

⁸⁹ Mills, 292.

⁹⁰ Manso, 517.

fall 1969 “Chicago Seven” trial.⁹¹ Rubin remembered that Mailer’s testimony echoed *The Armies of the Night* in that it showed an astute awareness of what the Movement stood for.⁹² However, not all young male radicals accepted Mailer as a father figure and this, Jack Newfield, a leftist journalist, could not understand: “How could they not dig Mailer?... Mailer, who was calling LBJ a monster while slide rule liberals were still writing speeches for him. Mailer, who was into Negroes, pot, Cuba, violence, existentialism... and hipsters while the New Left was still a twinkle in C. Wright Mills’ eye.”⁹³ His declaration of Mailer’s preeminent status (and the ranking of violence as part of the author’s appeal) was clear.

Many men in the New Left were drawn to Norman Mailer for the same reasons critics were—Mailer’s obsession with violence and its interplay with gender were prime components of the author’s literary, cultural and personal identity during the post-World War II and Vietnam era. This is the Norman Mailer who, though against the war himself, labelled pacifists as unmanly and urged New Left organizations to take up more aggressive monikers. This is the man who posited that real change could only come if those with anti-war sentiments served on the front lines, reinforcing the idea that military

⁹¹ Originally the “Chicago Eight,” until Black Panther Bobby Seale was removed from the trial, Rubin, Hoffman and five other radicals, including Tom Hayden and Rennie Davis, were arrested at the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago. They were charged with conspiracy to incite a riot.

⁹² Mailer continued to support his New Left comrades well into the post-Vietnam years. Though he had a falling out with Rubin, Mailer was the chairman of Hoffman’s defense committee against a drug charge in the late seventies (Manso, 621). He also wrote the introduction to Hoffman’s autobiography, *Soon To Be a Major Motion Picture* (1980). For more on Mailer’s relationship with Hoffman, see Jack Hoffman and Daniel Simon, *Run, Run, Run: The Lives of Abbie Hoffman* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1994).

⁹³ Jack Newfield, quoted in Mills, 234.

service was a requisite for American manhood.⁹⁴ This Mailer prescribed a “violent far-reaching purgative” as therapy for the numbing years of the Cold War, whose influential concept of Hip required physical and sexual aggression, and whose call for man-to-man combat underscored the continuing allegiance he felt for the military.⁹⁵ Violence, and its contingent sexism, was essential in Mailer’s self-identity and for that of his characters.⁹⁶ Anticipating, and even wanting, violence to break out at the March on the Pentagon, Mailer identified/encouraged the same desires in the young men with whom he marched and was arrested with. This is Norman Mailer, mentor of the New Left, patron of a radical manhood achieved through violence—whether on the battlefield or in the streets, yet anxiously traditional when faced with overt challenges to gender norms.

The Male New Left, Sexism and Draft Resistance

In February 1970, Robin Morgan, a founding member of the radical feminist group Women’s International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell (WITCH), wrote a scathing essay on the issue of sexism and male ignorance in the New Left. Morgan’s “Goodbye to All That” is an angry tabulation of the wrongs done to female New Leftists by their seemingly enlightened male cohorts whose “liberal cooptative masks” concealed “face[s]

⁹⁴ Mailer wrestles with the idea that those with the deepest “anomie” toward the war, generally university students, would best serve their cause by being “the first in line at the recruitment centre,” re-energizing the army with their ideas. Mailer vacillates, wondering if it is in the interest of a combat unit to have a comrade head into battle who will not fire his weapon. He was not sure he would burn his draft card if he were young again and pondered whether he could counsel others to destroy their cards. Mailer, *Armies*, 20.

⁹⁵ Mailer, *The Presidential Papers*, 134.

⁹⁶ Mailer was not alone in his musings on violence; he just seemed to relish it more than liberal-leaning colleagues like Richard Hofstadter and full-on liberal Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. See Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Crisis of Confidence: Ideas, Power, and Violence in America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969); and Richard Hofstadter, *American Violence: A Documentary History* (New York: Knopf, 1970).

of sexist hate and fear.”⁹⁷ Published in the *Rat Subterranean News*, Morgan’s piece proclaims: “We have met the enemy and he’s our friend. And dangerous.”⁹⁸ In what became one of the key radical texts in the women’s liberation movement, Morgan makes clear connections between the sexism and chauvinism experienced by women in the New Left and the emergence of women’s liberation. Not mincing her words, Morgan blasts New Left men for their disloyalty and close-mindedness:

That’s what I want to write about—the friends, brothers, lovers in the counterfeit male-dominated Left. The good guys who think they know what Women’s Lib, as they so chummily call it, is all about—who then proceed to degrade and destroy women by almost everything they say and do... The pussy power or clit militancy articles. The snide descriptions of women staffers on the masthead. The little jokes, the personal ads, the smile, the snarl... No more well-meaning ignorance, no more cooptation, no more assuming that this thing we’re all fighting for is the same; one revolution under *man*, with liberty and justice for all. No more.⁹⁹

Indeed, Morgan believes the true essence of the New Left has been squandered by the men at its helm. The fight for equality and freedom cannot be prioritized according to who has it worse, or categorize suffering as “irrelevant or titillating.” Above all, for Morgan, the New Left should not be a reflection of “the capitalist economy, with men competing for power and status at the top, and women doing all the work at the bottom

⁹⁷ Robin Morgan, “Goodbye to All That,” in *Masculine/Feminine: Readings in Sexual Mythology and the Liberation of Women*, ed. Betty Roszak and Theodore Roszak (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1969), 241. *Rat* was one of the major underground newspapers in New York City. Morgan’s essay was published in the paper’s “women-only” edition—a concession of sorts to female staffers who had complained about under-representation and sexism. Indeed, Morgan imagines one of the reasons for allowing the special edition was “... let the chicks do an issue; maybe it’ll satisfy ‘em for awhile, it’s good controversy, and it’ll maybe sell papers.” *Rat* has a cameo in *Greetings*. Paul has a conversation with a young man selling the paper on a street corner.

⁹⁸ Morgan, 241.

⁹⁹ Morgan, 242. Italics in original.

(and functioning as objectified prizes or coin as well).”¹⁰⁰ Morgan’s essay denounces New Left men for not living up to the Movement’s core beliefs. She argues that the new generation of men is no better than the old, laying bare an intergenerational continuum of “male supremacy” by listing interactions between them: “Goodbye to the Conspiracy, who, when lunching with fellow sexist bastards Norman Mailer and Terry Southern in a Bunny-style club in Chicago found Judge Hoffman at the neighboring table—no surprise: *in the light they are all the same.*”¹⁰¹

“The Conspiracy” refers to the defendants in the Chicago Seven Conspiracy Trial, including Jerry Rubin, Abbie Hoffman and Tom Hayden. Judge Julius Hoffman was the presiding judge in the case. Linking some of the most prominent New Left men to bastions of sexism like Mailer and the anti-Left conservatism of Hoffman, all gathered in an environment established for male pleasure. Morgan makes the case that men are all the same, no matter the age or political persuasion.

Studies of New Left masculinity have not fully inquired into the place, or acceptance, of masculinism, and its trappings in the Movement and its anti-war subsidiaries. Often absent from these studies is a significant examination of contemporary male New Left voices. In their own words, these men maintained violence and sexism as core values in New Left masculinity even as they railed against the older generation’s marriage of liberalism and warfare, conformity and straight-laced parochialism. Many men in the New Left saw violence as a necessity in their own arsenal against the

¹⁰⁰ Morgan, 242.

¹⁰¹ Hollywood screenwriter Terry Southern was a friend of Mailer’s. His work included the screenplays for *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (Stanley Kubrick, 1964) and *Easy Rider* (Dennis Hopper, 1969). Morgan, 244. Italics in original.

Establishment. Echoing Norman Mailer, they attacked a system purported to be violent and destructive by calling for more hostility and damage, often communicated through aggressively masculinist and heterosexist language.¹⁰² Examples of this swagger towards aggression and coarse sexism in the Movement can be found in the writings of Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin, co-founders of the Youth International Party (Yippies) with media presence and multiple publications. While these men did represent extremes of New Left ideology and action, their notoriety made them figures in the public consciousness of what the New Left was and stood for, wrong or right.¹⁰³ Another example of a New Left male speaking about violence in the Movement is Tom Hayden. A key figure in Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and co-drafter of the Port Huron Statement, Hayden was a foundational Movement figure. In Hoffman, Rubin and Hayden's writing, it is clear that violence was valued by a contingent of the male New Left. Even as their words were intended to take down the system and denounce American violence in Vietnam, many in the male New Left employed the sexism and aggression used by radical mentors like Norman Mailer, and their one-time liberal heroes.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Leerom Medovoi, "A Yippie-Panther Pipe Dream: Rethinking Sex, Race, and the Sexual Revolution," in *Swinging Single: Representing Sexuality in the 1960s*, ed. Hilary Radner and Moya Luckett (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 168. Todd Gitlin's *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam, 1987) is a good example of the scholarship highlighting violence in the Movement as a key reason for its fragmentation and eventual decline. See also, Jeremy Varon, *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and the Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

¹⁰³ Rubin and Hoffman's infamy was the result of their frequent interaction with the media (mainstream and radical). Gitlin notes that the men actively courted the press and became celebrities. Gitlin, 235.

¹⁰⁴ Corporate liberalism was a derisive term used by the New Left to describe the liberal's reform program, which would become inextricably linked with the war in Vietnam. Rossinow, *Visions of Progress*, 240.

Though the fact that the New Left was sexist is no longer a surprising discovery, a short assessment of the scholarship on the era will aid in understanding the almost celebratory approach to aggression taken up by some Movement men, and how it fit into New Left masculinity. The issue of sexism and gender discrimination in the New Left, brought to the fore by women like Robin Morgan, has been the object of scholarly study. One of the first substantive studies of the emergence of the women's movement in the 1960s and 1970s is *Personal Politics* (1979). In *Personal Politics*, historian Sara M. Evans argues that the sexism and gender bias women encountered, and combated, in the Civil Rights movement and New Left spurred on Second Wave feminism.¹⁰⁵ Working for causes under the New Left umbrella garnered women the skills they needed to organize their own liberation movement, eventually expanding to take on sexism in American society as a whole.¹⁰⁶

Later scholars such as Michael S. Foley, Douglas C. Rossinow and Milton J. Bates agree there is truth to Evans' thesis, building consensus in some areas she addresses, while attempting to qualify others.¹⁰⁷ Many men engaged in the New Left did not view

¹⁰⁵ Sara M. Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979).

¹⁰⁶ Evans, 23. Much of Evans' focus is on the experiences of southern white women in the Civil Rights movement. She argues that these women faced a dual form of discrimination—being female and being white women in the South working with African Americans, particularly black men (53–57). For discussion of New Left men, women and the gender tension that emerged during the tenure of the Economic Research and Action Project, see Evans, 127–55. A second study, *Tidal Wave*, picks up where *Personal Politics* left off, the beginnings of the women's liberation movement tracing its trajectory into the early 2000s. Sara M. Evans, *Tidal Wave: How Women Changed America at Century's End* (New York: The Free Press, 2003).

¹⁰⁷ See Michael S. Foley, "The 'Point of Ultimate Indignity' or a 'Beloved Community'? The Draft Resistance Movement and New Left Gender Dynamics," in *The New Left Revisited*, ed. John McMillan and Paul Buhle (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003), 178–98; Douglas C. Rossinow, *The Politics of*

the activism they pursued against socio-cultural and political injustices, and eventually the war machine, as having equivalents in the lives of their female (or gay) colleagues. Fighting against government or capitalist-sponsored oppression did not compel these men to see their own culpability in the gendered suppression of co-activists. The oft-conjured image of men making the decisions and women doing dreary office-based organizing is concomitant with Foley, Bates and Rossinow's conclusions. Keeping women locked into "go-for" work and shutting the majority of them out of the intellectual heavy-lifting, New Left men sutured their female colleagues into the nurturing-secretarial stereotype, a perpetuation of the Cold War's preoccupation with strictly defined gender roles and domesticity.¹⁰⁸ The male New Left's disposition toward accepting these confines for women reveals the intrinsic sexism in the Movement.¹⁰⁹

Contributing to this atmosphere was the compensatory edge to the New Left's gender relations. Foley, Rossinow and Bates acknowledge that some of the motivation behind the New Left's sexism and discrimination was born of the men's need to re-establish a connection with hallmarks of American manhood, such as patriarchal superiority and sexual prowess. In particular, Rossinow views the initiation of "free love"

Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America (1998); and see the chapter entitled "Sex Wars," in Milton J. Bates, *The Wars We Took to Vietnam: Cultural Conflict and Storytelling* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

¹⁰⁸ Judith Clavir Albert and Stewart Edward Albert, "Considering the 1960s," in *The Sixties Papers: Documents of a Rebellious Decade*, ed. Judith Clavir Albert and Stewart Edward Albert (New York: Praeger, 1984), 48.

¹⁰⁹ This argument has a similar line of inquiry in Tom Hodgdon's *Manhood in the Age of Aquarius: Masculinity in Two Countercultural Communities, 1965–83* (2008). Hodgdon's focus is on masculinity in the Diggers and the Farm, two countercultural groups. He finds sexism to be integral in the relations between countercultural men and women in these groups.

and its impact on the New Left's view of women as a corollary to the Movement's underlying motivator—the search for authenticity.¹¹⁰ Finding authenticity often meant finding physical pleasure, and for those involved in activism, particularly in the Civil Rights and anti-war movements where bodies were put on the line, the merging of sex and danger proved to be a potent addition to the search for life's meaning.¹¹¹ For men, achieving authenticity meant actualizing an authentic masculinity, a “virility [that] equalled true citizenship.”¹¹² Thus, one New Left male could describe SDS women as “let's admit it, friends, dogs;” and after a campus tour tryst, another could graphically state, “The movement hangs together on the head of a penis.”¹¹³ Rossinow sees the overt sexualization and objectification of women as constant, even as the “free love” sexuality of the counterculture turned women into “‘natural’ sex objects.”¹¹⁴ When a group of young conservatives thanked Abbie Hoffman for bringing Movement girls to a meeting, saying, “We're glad you brought your girl friends. They're a lot prettier than ours,” he replied, “Of course they are, they are beautiful women, we are beautiful men. You guys are fags, machines.”¹¹⁵ Hoffman claimed superiority for the New Left by objectifying his female comrades, and delegitimized conservative manhood with a homophobic slur.

¹¹⁰ Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity*, 264–69.

¹¹¹ Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity*, 299.

¹¹² Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity*, 333.

¹¹³ Gitlin, 108; Dotson Rader, *I Ain't Marchin' Anymore!* (New York: Van Rees Press, 1969), 102.

¹¹⁴ Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity*, 267. “Natural” refers to the image of countercultural and New Left women as unadulterated by the commercial and capitalist expectations (read demands) on female beauty. See also, Douglas C. Rossinow, “The Revolution is About Our Lives: The New Left's Counterculture,” in *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960s and '70s*, ed. Peter Braunstein and Michael William Doyle (New York: Routledge, 2002), 116–17.

¹¹⁵ Abbie Hoffman, *Revolution for the Hell of It* (New York: Dial Press, 1968), 34–35.

Evans notes one avenue for “male self-assertion” was the time-honoured collection of bedpost notches, with many New Left men believing their female counterparts would accept and join the quest for acquisitions.¹¹⁶ Some women did revel in the new sexual freedom; others happily discarded sexual norms, but struggled with what should replace them.¹¹⁷ Evans argues that the Movement’s inability to constructively discuss gender relations permitted suppression and male dominance to persist. She presents a telling observation made by one female activist describing the power New Left male leaders wielded, based primarily on their sexual whims, with real consequences for women in the Movement:

Fucking a staff into existence is only the extreme form of what passes for common practice in many places. A man can bring a woman into an organization by sleeping with her and remove her by ceasing to do so. A man can purge a woman for no other reason than that he has tired of her, knocked her up, or is after someone else; and that purge is accepted without a ripple...¹¹⁸

This bad behaviour and sometimes wilful ignorance of women’s issues stemmed from many men’s concerns that alienation from traditional vestiges of manliness would breed emasculation. This reaction against emasculation is evidenced in the response of male anti-war protestors to female speakers at a Mobe rally in January 1969. Going beyond cat calls, their reactions included graphic threats of sexual violence. They shouted, “Take her off the stage and fuck her! Take her down a dark alley.”¹¹⁹ The irony of this sexist spectacle is the invocation of violence as a silencing strategy at a protest to stop state-

¹¹⁶ Evans, *Personal Politics*, 152.

¹¹⁷ Evans, *Personal Politics*, 151–55.

¹¹⁸ Evans, *Personal Politics*, 178.

¹¹⁹ Gitlin, 362–63.

sanctioned violence with similar goals in Vietnam. It also marks a point of parallel between violence in the New Left and the liberal “enemy.”

Foley and Bates cover similar territory to Evans and Rossinow arguing that New Left men needed to find ways to assert their manhood on the home front.¹²⁰ Foley is careful to separate draft resisters from the broader New Left. Indeed, his separation is quite specific in that he also excludes draft dodgers because they did not seek to clash with the war machine. In their confrontations with authorities, Foley argues, draft resisters engaged in potentially dangerous situations, thus “cut[ting] for themselves an image of daring risk takers.”¹²¹ As an offshoot of the larger anti-war movement, draft resistance was an area in which men’s and women’s places were fraught with gendered tension. By its very nature, the Selective Service System was a masculinized organization. It was men who were called to the draft board, men who faced the induction process, and men who went off to fight in Vietnam. It would appear then, that men had more at stake. In such a movement, having women once again be the nurturing secretaries might appear to make sense. Indeed, in a popular book on draft resistance co-written by Michael Ferber, a leader in the Boston Draft Resistance Group (the highest-profile draft resistance organization in the country), and published in 1971, only a solitary paragraph was devoted to women’s work in the movement.¹²² However, as Gloria Steinem noted in her treatise on women’s rights, “After Black Power, Women’s Liberation” (1969), women had put their bodies on the line for activism before.¹²³ Women faced risks

¹²⁰ Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity*, 267, 298; Foley, 180; Bates, 137.

¹²¹ Foley, “Point of Ultimate Indignity,” 181.

¹²² Michael Ferber and Staughton Lynd, *The Resistance* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 159–60.

¹²³ Gloria Steinem, “After Black Power, Women’s Liberation,” *New York Magazine*, April 4, 1969.

participating in the Resistance. For example, Nan Stone took part in a draft card burning ceremony in October 1967. The Boston University theology student argued with the male leaders of the New England Resistance that she should be allowed to take part fully in the event. She wanted to prove herself their equal and show them her deep-seated beliefs were just as passionate. However, she recalled that the men “sort of dismissed that... they looked at me as not having the risk that they had, ‘cause I didn’t have a draft card, wouldn’t be drafted.”¹²⁴ At the ceremony, one of the draftees gave Stone his card to burn. The sentiments of her fellow Resistance members shifted once the FBI began investigating Stone for burning the card. Only then was she permitted to call herself a “resister.”

Stone’s story is an exception, and the evidence appears to confirm that the subordination of women in the draft resistance movement was the most severe in the New Left as a whole. In part, this was because women’s full participation in draft resistance groups was embargoed because the tactics and strategies employed methodically divided male and female participants. The sex exclusiveness accorded to the terms of draft protest allowed men to hold on to traditional definitions of gender roles. By binding their manhood to the ideology and structure of the Resistance, men made their anti-draft stance a fight to prove their masculine worthiness. As Bill Hunt, a founder of the New England Resistance, acknowledges, draft resisters often wondered if their actions were based on fear—fear of fighting on the battlefield. Hunt recalls the difficulty he and his comrades had answering this personal query. Hunt’s answer is of note because it refers to the issue of military service, the “justness” of World War II and manhood:

¹²⁴ Nan Stone, as quoted in Foley, “Point of Ultimate Indignity,” 183.

We could never be certain. We were clear enough about our arguments against the war, but what this... did not do was to answer the question: would we have the guts to fight in a war that we did believe was just. We *said* we would, but that's easy to say because this wasn't 1941. So there was always that question about masculinity.¹²⁵

Observing the draft as a mechanism for killing upstart youth like him, Jerry Rubin continued Hunt's sentiment, referencing his comrades' desire to be recognized as heroes and lamenting missed opportunities for military experience: "We want to be heroes, like those we read about in the history books. We missed the First Amerikan Revolution. We missed World War II. We missed the Chinese and Cuban Revolutions. Are we supposed to spend our futures grinning and watching TV all the time?"¹²⁶

The gendering of draft resistance effectively shut women out of the fight male leadership claimed for themselves. As participant-observer and sociologist Barrie Thorne observed in 1975, this was the "point of ultimate indignity."¹²⁷ Thorne's study, "Women in the Draft Resistance Movement," in combination with Evans' work, created a consensus that sexism existed across the spectrum of New Left organs, with the Resistance an especially bad apple. Resistance-based sexism was, in part, a reaction to the stereotype of resisters as cowards, avoiders and dodgers, which served as a reminder that the public (and the mainstream media) ultimately perceived draft refusal as a manhood issue. Fighting the implied emasculation and feminization behind insults such as "yellow belly," "faggot" and "fool," resisters sought to define draft resistance as manly. Thus, resisters saw the ideological framework for draft resistance as necessitating a traditional

¹²⁵ Bill Hunt, as quoted in Foley, "'Point of Ultimate Indignity,'" 182. Italics in original.

¹²⁶ Jerry Rubin, *Do It*, 87.

¹²⁷ Thorne, 180.

gender dynamic and traditional male sexual identity so that the virility and vigour required to resist the draft could not be impugned.¹²⁸

The Male New Left Goes Macho

The possible motivation behind New Left male blindness on the women's issue was a concern over the emasculating effects of draft resistance and proving that a fight against the system required guts akin to heading into battle. This resulted in an embrace of machismo by some New Left men as part of their masculine identity and overall attitude. Michael S. Foley points to machismo in draft resisters as part of the movement's architecture responsible for separating male and female experiences. Taking on what resister Bill Hunt describes as a "tough, macho style" and seeking perilous situations in which to engage authorities provided opportunities to confirm manhood, permitting resisters to claim their sacrifice was "laying down their bod[ies] on the line" and that fighting the draft was "worth my life."¹²⁹ Douglas C. Rossinow also identifies machismo in New Left men in general. He marks it as a component of the post-World War II union of authenticity and aggressive male sexuality.¹³⁰ Milton J. Bates briefly discusses

¹²⁸ Thorne, 183.

¹²⁹ Foley, "Point of Ultimate Indignity," 181; Thorne, 183. Gloria Steinem recognized machismo as a component of American masculinity as well; however, she argued it was a problem for American gender relations in general rather than tying it specifically to the New Left. Gloria Steinem, "The Machismo Factor," *New York Times*, October 6, 1971, 47.

¹³⁰ While Foley and Rossinow agree that machismo was present in New Left masculinity, they disagree over the long-term consequences of risk-taking behaviour and the creation of the draft resistance movement. Rossinow defines it as a component of the search for authenticity. Foley argues that the origins of draft resistance may have had the "existential and Judeo-Christian traditions" Rossinow identifies, but, by the late 1960s, ending the Vietnam War took priority over finding a "fuller life." Foley, "Point of Ultimate Indignity," 181; Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity*, 299; Thorne, 183. See also Tom

machismo in *The Wars We Took to Vietnam*. Along with Bates' analysis, it is interesting to point out the use of militaristic language in his chapter on New Left gender relations. Entitled "The Sex War," Bates employs terminology closely associated with violence to describe his analysis of New Left masculinity and the emergence of the women's liberation movement: "the sexual revolution... often pit male against female. This produced the sex war... a war fought on several fronts..."¹³¹ Though it is not entirely clear if Bates chooses these terms as a self-conscious reference to gender and violence, and his inquiry into the issues is more synthesis than critique, his word choice certainly does highlight the enduring connection between masculinity, violence and narratives of the New Left.

Much of the male New Left's braggadocio stemmed from dedication to a macho sensibility. This attention to machismo was present in the New Left early on, and connected to the bracing masculine personas lived by Third World revolutionaries such as Fidel Castro and Ernesto "Che" Guevara, whose unflinching battles against stagnant, orthodox regimes the New Left hoped to emulate on U.S. soil.¹³² Castro, leader of the Cuban Revolution, proved to be a figure of great interest for American youth, especially those fostering left-leaning tendencies in the late 1950s (soon to be the first generation of New Left activists). The appeal of Third World revolutionaries to the American Left, its young male members especially, sharpened the growing tension between the Left and the

Hodgdon's *Manhood in the Age of Aquarius: Masculinity in Two Countercultural Communities, 1965–1983* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008) and Van Gosse, *Where the Boys Are: Cuba, Cold War America and the Making of the New Left* (London: Verso, 1993).

¹³¹ Bates, 137.

¹³² Douglas C. Rossinow identifies the New Left's attraction to revolutionaries as a parallel to the Old Left's idealization of Lenin and the Bolsheviks. Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity*, 222.

liberal Establishment.¹³³ Staunch liberal Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. remarked rather flippantly on this attraction, using Norman Mailer's lingo, after Castro visited Harvard in April 1959: "The undergraduates were delighted. They saw in him, I think, the hipster who in an era of the Organization Man had joyfully defied the system, summoned a dozen friends and overturned a government of wicked old men."¹³⁴ In his study of the Cuban Revolution's impact on the American social and political landscape, Van Gosse takes exception with Schlesinger's use of "hip" to define Castro, particularly with regard to the term's connotation of nihilism. Instead, Gosse believes young Americans saw Castro as a man of action who faced down tyranny and achieved results.¹³⁵ Castro's greatest foe was John F. Kennedy. The contest between these two men creates an appealing line of analysis because Kennedy was a figure of masculine influence for the New Left as well. His appeals for American renewal and virility were also an inspiration to the young New Left. According to Gosse, Castro represented nearly the same things as his American rival—the battlefield tales and rakish demeanour—without the need for conciliation and with all the promise of adventure intact.¹³⁶ Moreover, figures like Castro and Guevara portrayed a manhood that was extreme, but got results. Fidelismo (Castro's ideological system for a new Cuba) embraced a tough-minded, physical masculinity that offered New Left men a hero "who could outtalk, outthink, and outfight any rival."¹³⁷ This "guerrilla-

¹³³ Rossinow, *Visions of Progress*, 250.

¹³⁴ Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), 220.

¹³⁵ Gosse, *Where the Boys Are*, 36.

¹³⁶ Gosse, *Where the Boys Are*, 198.

¹³⁷ Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity*, 224.

as-supermale” provided a model for New Left men who believed American manliness required a revival, but wanted to move beyond the liberal call for “staid” vitality.¹³⁸

Images of risk and romanticized violence weave through Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin’s discussion of Third World revolutionaries. Hoffman is particularly graphic in his description of Fidel Castro in his aptly named book, *Revolution for the Hell of It*. Hoffman combines Castro’s martial identity with fidelismo’s potent sexuality. Using Castro as an example for Yippie and Movement followers wanting to execute a revolution, Hoffman describes the leader’s entrance into Havana riding on a tank. Cradling his rifle “like a feather,” Castro is rushed by girls tossing flowers at the tank, wanting to tug on his beard, a cheeky double entendre.¹³⁹ In good spirits, the leader “pinches a few rumps” because it is his prerogative to do so. The real action begins when the tank reaches a city square. Dropping his weapon, Hoffman writes, Castro “stands erect. He is like the mighty penis coming to life.” Hoffman literally turns Castro into the principal biological instrument of manhood, marking it as key to his power. The essence of Castro’s standing as a great leader and the manifestation of his power is his masculinity. Hoffman also makes sure to note that not only does Castro pat some backsides, but that “making love” is on his agenda for building a new Cuba.¹⁴⁰

Hoffman continues his admiration for Fidel’s manliness later in *Revolution for the Hell of It* when he interviews himself. Asking himself what he thinks of Andy Warhol, Hoffman compares the artist to Castro. Stating that he likes Warhol’s style, Hoffman

¹³⁸ Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity*, 224; Rossinow, “The Revolution is About Our Lives,” 116–17.

¹³⁹ Hoffman, *Revolution for the Hell of It*, 13.

¹⁴⁰ Hoffman, *Revolution for the Hell of It*, 14.

muses that he would like to combine the artist's knowledge of the media with the revolutionary's passion for social change. Hoffman admits this would not be an easy feat "one's a fag and the other is the epitome of virility."¹⁴¹ While he acknowledges the current state of the nation permits both Warhol and Castro's styles to be used as strategies against the system, Hoffman qualifies his statement, saying that if the U.S. should become more repressive, "we must become Castros." More tolerance would result in "becom[ing] Warhols." This equivocation underscores the connection between Castro's masculinity as equipped to fight the aggression that accompanies tyranny and gives a glimpse of Hoffman's unease with Warhol's homosexuality, equating his artistry and intellect as, perhaps, "soft" skills not useful in a violent showdown with the state.

In *Do It!*, Jerry Rubin is not quite so explicit in his admiration of Che Guevara—Che's genitals are not included in Rubin's description of awe.¹⁴² Under a photo of the iconic South American revolutionary, Rubin writes of traveling to Cuba with a student contingent to meet Guevara. Listening to Che talk, Rubin is drawn in. He does not merely fantasize about taking up the cause, but also of taking up arms. Wanting to "grow beards. [Go] into the hills as guerrillas" and "join Che to create revolutions throughout Latin America," Rubin desires a physical transformation for himself and fellow students.¹⁴³ It is the romance of the gun and the garb that draws his attention: the full facial hair bucking the liberal clean-shaven visage and standing as a mark of manhood (in solidarity with

¹⁴¹ Hoffman, *Revolution for the Hell of It*, 59.

¹⁴² *Do It!* had worldwide sales of 250,000. The title became a slogan for militants and radicals. Judith Clavir Albert and Stewart Edward Albert, "The Counterculture," in *The Sixties Papers: Documents of a Rebellious Decade*, ed. Judith Clavir Albert and Stewart Edward Albert (New York: Praeger, 1984), 402.

¹⁴³ Rubin, *Do It!*, 20.

comrade-in-arms, Fidel). That Che encourages his visitors to intensify their own fight, observing that his young visitors “...live in the middle of the beast. You are fighting the most important fight of all, in the center of the battle,” makes the encounter particularly heady.

Rubin’s discussion of Che continues later in *Do It!* and concerns the leader’s death. Comparing Che to the late John F. Kennedy (also felled by bullets in an equally violent and bloody death) Rubin notes that the revolutionary got his experience on the ground: “Che did not sign a bureaucratic memo in an air-conditioned office ordering others to fight in Bolivia; he went right to Bolivia and put *his* own life on the line.”¹⁴⁴ In Rubin’s estimation, Che is a “bigger hero to Amerikan youth” than either Jack or Bobby Kennedy.¹⁴⁵ With their deaths, Jack and Bobby lost their mythic status, but Rubin sees Che’s life as eternal. Alluding to class, money and liberal privilege, Rubin states that, “you gotta be born a Kennedy,” but “anybody can become a Che.” The everlasting reach of Guevara is further underscored by the inclusion of the infamous photo of the leader’s dead body—a black-and-white close up of glassy eyes and bloodied beard. The end game of violence, for Rubin, is not its cessation; it is the call for remembrance and continuation of the fight.

¹⁴⁴ Rubin, *Do It!*, 130. Italics in original.

¹⁴⁵ For more on cross-racial identifications in the New Left, see Sylvia Shin Huey Chong, *The Oriental Obscene: Violence and Racial Fantasies in the Vietnam Era* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012). The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense and other Black radicals also looked to Third World revolutionaries like Guevara for ideological inspiration. Amy Abugo Ongiri, *Spectacular Blackness: The Cultural Politics of the Black Power Movement and the Search for a Black Aesthetic* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), 30; Simon Wendt, *The Spirit and the Shotgun: Armed Resistance and the Struggle for Civil Rights* (Gainesville: University of Florida, 2007), 155.

Rubin's comparison between Guevara and John F. Kennedy was likely meant to shock and disturb an American public still reeling from the Kennedy assassinations. The disrespect Rubin directs towards the brothers Kennedy is an indicator of his negative opinion of the liberal Establishment as a whole. It also shows the integration of violence in not only the Kennedy narrative, where John Kennedy himself had firmly ensconced it through tales of *PT-109* heroism and staring down the Soviets, but also the place of violence in New Left dialogue on liberals. Rubin's reaction to Kennedy's death is presented in *Do It!* as tongue-in-cheek. Under the subtitle "Are the Kennedys Assassination-Prone?" Rubin recalls being in the midst of "freaked out" students in a London hostel, thinking: "'Kennedy—the jewel of Amerika: one bullet and the beauty, money, fame, power, a family dynasty are all gone.' *Far out!*"¹⁴⁶

Though his perspective on the Kennedys is less antagonistic than Rubin's, Tom Hayden's "embitter[ment]" would have been no less provocative to the average American.¹⁴⁷ While Hayden was unhappy with the conservative approach the Kennedy administration took with civil rights, Kennedy's expansion of the U.S. role in Southeast Asia was the first on his list of grievances, namely "sending all these tall, blue-eyed blond Special Forces in to manipulate and sabotage a legitimate independence movement." Hayden's statement rebuked the racist and colonialist overtones of the American mission, but it also included a subtle, distinctly gendered jab at the first wave of military the president sent to Vietnam. These officer-types were not the largely working class and minority-based army grunts drafted later, who were tasked with carrying out the relentless

¹⁴⁶ Rubin, *Do It!*, 149. Italics in original.

¹⁴⁷ Findley, 40.

ground war. They were the upper echelon, the West Point grads, echoing the privilege that Kennedy and his ilk symbolized. They represented the liberal decadence and fraud that Hayden and Rubin despised.¹⁴⁸

Hayden writes that it was not Kennedy's violent death that pushed him towards a more radical sphere of thought and activism, but the federal government's alleged obfuscation of the facts surrounding the event: "It may not have been so much the killing of Kennedy that was radicalizing as the way they covered up the assassination through the Warren Commission."¹⁴⁹ Hayden says it was partly the ugliness of Kennedy's death and the assassinations of his brother and Martin Luther King, Jr. five years later that opened his eyes to the role of violence in liberal policies and strategies. Hayden shares his thoughts on the assassinations being orchestrated, purposely violent events, political conspiracies used by those who controlled the system to shut down all dissent:

I think all the assassinations of the Sixties were political conspiracies, not isolated acts. If some of our officials use violence everywhere else in the world, there's no doubt they would use it here. But this point is very, very frightening, perhaps, to everyone, even those who are most verbally committed to revolution—very frightening to draw that conclusion in absolute terms, that there is no residue of hope within regular channels, only violence awaiting you.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ It could also be a swipe at traditional representations of American male attractiveness. Hayden had dark hair, a large nose and a severely pockmarked face—clearly evident in the photo accompanying his *Rolling Stone* interview, and noted in many descriptions of him. See Rader, 150; Grace Elizabeth Hale, *A Nation of Outsiders: How the White Middle Class Fell in Love with Rebellion in Postwar America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 168; Joel Kotkin, "Tom Hayden's Manifest Destiny," *Esquire* 93:5 (May 1980), 40; and Patricia Bosworth, *Jane Fonda: The Private Life of a Public Woman* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011), 421.

¹⁴⁹ Findley, 40.

¹⁵⁰ Findley, 50.

Hayden's reaction to, and interpretation of, the assassination comes very close to that of Lloyd's in *Greetings*.

The unease between radicalism and bureaucratic liberalism continued to grow in the mid-sixties. Despite Johnson's enthusiasm for Great Society legislation and his embrace of domestic change with a greater energy and at a faster pace than his predecessor, the authorized violence in Vietnam seemed inseparable from the violence breaking out in the U.S.¹⁵¹ Much of Tom Hayden's writing in the late 1960s deals with state-sanctioned violence. In *Rebellion in Newark* (1967), he identified this type of violence as taking place in Northern urban centres, particularly during the weeklong July 1967 riot in Newark, New Jersey.¹⁵² The ease with which official violence overtakes communication and negotiation, leading to destruction and death, is particularly dismaying for Hayden. In *Rolling Stone*, Hayden describes the police action-chaos in Newark as "straight out of Vietnam."¹⁵³ The city turned into a war zone. For Hayden, the "introduction of violence as the final form of power couldn't have been made clearer."¹⁵⁴ As with the assassinations, the riot in Newark reiterated that "liberals would do it," which for Hayden

¹⁵¹ Gitlin, 150, 242, 245.

¹⁵² Writing of his activism in a Newark ghetto, Hayden describes the state of life for African Americans in the city, and the lack of political will to meet this community's demands for betterment in *Rebellion in Newark*. The book is a treatise on race relations in Northern urban centres, focusing on the inability and failure of white officials to fully comprehend the history and issues at play in African-American neighbourhoods. For Hayden, extreme government reaction to urban unrest was another measure of how far liberals would go to gain total control. Tom Hayden, *Rebellion in Newark: Official Violence and Ghetto Response* (New York: Random House, 1967), 3. For more information on Hayden's role in ending the Newark riot, see James Miller, *"Democracy is in the Streets": From Port Huron to the Siege of Chicago* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 273–76.

¹⁵³ Findley, 44, 46.

¹⁵⁴ Findley, 46.

meant utilizing violence. This further cemented his radicalization and his acceptance of violence as a means of defense for those under attack by the state.

Rebellion in Newark announces Hayden's philosophy on the use of violence as a strategy to effect social change. He observes that the locus of this transformation will be in poor neighbourhoods populated by the nation's forgotten (mainly African-American) people.¹⁵⁵ In riots Hayden sees the seeds of "an American form of guerrilla warfare."¹⁵⁶ He argues that liberals have difficulty dealing with riots because they struggle to hold two views of what such action represents, vacillating between seeing a riot as "an expression of helpless frustration" and "a form of lawless, mob behavior."¹⁵⁷ On the latter point, liberal and conservative minds agree: riots are destructive to property and political

¹⁵⁵ Hayden's contemplation of the place of violence in combatting state aggression shows his affinity with similar arguments circulating in the Black Power era of the late sixties and early seventies. In June 1967, Bobby Seale, chair of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, stated "the time has come for Black people to arm themselves against this terror [state repression and aggression] before it is too late" (40). This position was clarified in a March 1968 issue of the Party's newspaper, in which the Black Panthers rejected the "right to indiscriminate violence" in armed resistance, echoing Hayden's understanding that violence employed in the name of liberation must be selective (19). The Black Panthers advocated, and a central plank in their philosophy on urban warfare was, "revolutionary violence of the people... Black people picking up the gun for self-defense is the only basis in America for a revolutionary offensive against Imperialist state power" (19). "'In Defense of Self-Defense: Executive Mandate Number One,' *The Black Panther*, June 2, 1967," in *The Black Panthers Speak*, ed. Philip S. Foner (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1970), 40; "*The Black Panther*, March 23, 1968" and "*The Black Panther*, April 25, 1970," in Foner, 19.

¹⁵⁶ Hayden, *Rebellion in Newark*, 69. Indeed, riots in American urban centres, particularly the August 1965 riot in Watts, a poor, largely African-American neighbourhood in Los Angeles, had a marked impact on Black radicals. The Black Panthers saw the unified uprising in Watts as an antithesis to the Civil Rights movement's nonviolent protocols, and it sparked what would be a sea change in the Party's ideology (and that of the larger Black nationalist movement), from self-defense to guerrilla warfare. Ongiri, 39. See also Donna Jean Murch, *Living for the City: Migration, Education and the Rise of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

¹⁵⁷ Hayden, *Rebellion in Newark*, 69.

morale. However, while the conservative is unreceptive to addressing or acknowledging issues behind the uprising and views it as “essentially revolution against civilization,” the liberal holds a certain degree of understanding with regard to the issues, and therefore projects some generosity toward participants. Hayden sees this flickering liberal benevolence as a problem because when propriety cannot end the disturbance, “the liberal will turn conservative,” and officially sanctioned violence ensues.¹⁵⁸ This aligns with Hayden’s concerns over the liberal’s increasing use of force and increasing ‘conservative’ outlook on issues facing poor urban enclaves. This turn in liberal tactics necessitates a more organized form of violent resistance, i.e., guerrilla warfare. For Hayden, organized violence directed against official forces engaged in their own versions of disorder can be effective, with guerrillas actively diverting police away from looters and bringing the uprising to new areas: “He [the guerrilla] can carry the torch, if not all the people, to white neighbourhoods and downtown business districts. If necessary, he can successfully shoot to kill.”¹⁵⁹ Hayden’s organized (apparently males-only) guerrilla warfare is meant to spread chaos through violence and transport that aggression to the heart of the white liberal and capitalist Establishment outside the slums. He advocates the employment of violence in “peace” as well, suggesting that guerrillas use “paint or bullets” to attack symbols of racial oppression in the “suburbs or slums.” Hayden’s call for violence, and

¹⁵⁸ This point is illustrated when Hayden points out the Johnson administration seemed more interested in ending riots rather than addressing the underlying racial and economic problems. Further, Hayden quotes Johnson’s national address on Newark: ““Explanations may be offered, but nothing can excuse what [the rioters] have done... when violence strikes, then those in public responsibility have an immediate and a very different job: *not to analyze but to end disorder* [Hayden’s italics].”” Hayden, *Rebellion in Newark*, 63–64, 69.

¹⁵⁹ Hayden, *Rebellion in Newark*, 70–71.

indeed, murder, as a vehicle for not just change, but as a weapon against liberal violence, is clear in the idea of shooting to kill and the manly courage required to do it. Hayden acknowledges his prescription will be labelled “criminal anarchy” and that it is risky, perhaps even reckless. However, he stands firm in his belief that “violence can contribute to shattering the status quo,” as long as, Hayden qualifies, there are politics and organizations ready to transform it into authentic, permanent positive change for the community.¹⁶⁰

Rebellion and Repression is the published excerpts of Hayden’s testimony before the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence and HUAC.¹⁶¹ In his introduction to the volume, Hayden repeats his philosophy on violence and his continued denunciation of corporate liberalism. He strikes out at the capitalist system, arguing that its mode for progress is based on exploitation and mass violence. For Hayden, denunciation of “violence of the Left” by the blood-soaked Establishment, whose history of exploitation and “genocidal policies” has left millions dead, is pure hypocrisy because “Our total violence over the last five years has not reached that of a single B-52 raid in Vietnam.”¹⁶² To end the mass violence, break through the duplicity and tear down the “democratic and stable image” the U.S. projects to the world, the Movement must become more international, joining forces with any group fighting repression—namely Third World liberationists—fighting to “remove American capitalists and militarists from

¹⁶⁰ Hayden is referring to community-based decision-making powers in areas such as urban renewal, policing, housing and taxation. Hayden, *Rebellion in Newark*, 71, 72.

¹⁶¹ Hayden spoke about his riot experience and about the violence that took place during the Democratic National Convention in Chicago.

¹⁶² Hayden, *Rebellion and Repression*, 13.

their soil.”¹⁶³ Hayden’s statement is in line with Rubin and Hoffman’s support for Third World revolutionaries; and it factors in another point of distance between the New Left and liberals, whose anti-Communist program targeted these revolutions.¹⁶⁴ Hayden’s words here recall the disgust he speaks of in *Rolling Stone* with the Kennedy administration’s manipulation of the student movement for “image reasons.”¹⁶⁵ Faced with government manipulation and misinformation, striking back at the Establishment is the only way to battle repression: “If we keep a fighting spirit, and define the issues over and over, the people will support us as their warriors.”¹⁶⁶ Hayden concludes that traditional (peaceful) methods for change are no longer effective. The martial language he uses to describe he and his comrades (they are “warriors”), and his belief in this categorization as something they must become to take on the American system, emphasizes violence as a key tactic for permanent social change in the New Left’s arsenal.

The New Left’s repudiation of state-sanctioned violence comprised a call to arms and the employment of more violence. The officially authorized violence occurring in Vietnam, Chicago and Newark represented a point of contention and denunciation

¹⁶³ Hayden, *Rebellion and Repression*, 15. Hayden’s Third Worldist sentiments were concurrently voiced in Black Power and Black nationalist circles. See Robin D.G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), particularly the chapter entitled “Roaring from the East: Third World Dreaming.”

¹⁶⁴ Rossinow, *Visions of Progress*, 243.

¹⁶⁵ In his testimony before the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, Hayden takes aim at the Peace Corps’ identification of “the most creative volunteers” as “misfits” who were hassled or sent home as well as its enmeshment with propagating American foreign policy goals in the Third World. Hayden, *Rebellion and Repression*, 22–23.

¹⁶⁶ Hayden, *Rebellion and Repression*, 17.

between the New Left and their opponents. It is an avenue of New Left discourse that showcases the Movement's issues with liberals. Yet in the solutions advanced by participant-observers like Tom Hayden, Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman, there is an invitation to compare them with the policies of their Establishment foes, and ponder the place of violence in New Left philosophies. That the New Left's employment of violence gained traction in the anti-war movement and escalated in scale alongside the Vietnam War is paradoxical. Liberals were targeted because, as participant-observer Dotson Rader's radical friend informed him, "Well, baby, it's a *liberal* government and a *liberal* war and those are *liberals* in Congress who pass war appropriations and increase the draft. You have to radicalize the liberals, wake the bastards up. And only violence can do that."¹⁶⁷ Bringing the war home necessitated that Movement-originated violence be an essential tactic against government violence. This positioned many New Leftists on the ideological spectrum not too far from the liberal Establishment and its reasons for unleashing military violence in Vietnam.

Shaking up the Establishment was part of the New Left's mission. Actual violence was one method of delivering on the promise of chaos. Another vehicle was the language the Movement used to broadcast its dissent and its plans for radically overhauling the System. As evidence in the writings of Rubin and Hoffman, capturing attention was not difficult—salty language and sexual images purposely courted the labels of immorality and immodesty. When it came to the language of violence, the mainstream was quick to react. During his HUAC testimony, Tom Hayden argued with committee members over

¹⁶⁷ Rader, 92. Italics in original.

the meaning of terms like “urban guerrilla,” “militancy” and “attack.”¹⁶⁸ In *Trial* (1970), Hayden argues the government’s weaponizing of the defendants’ purportedly “obscene and provocative” language (turning it into an indictment of New Left intentions for the National Democratic Convention in Chicago) is a sign of cultural conflict between the generations.¹⁶⁹ He rails against the hypocrisy of the Establishment’s own words: “When ‘love’ is used in advertising, ‘peace’ in foreign policy, ‘freedom’ in private enterprise, then these words have been stolen from their humanist origins, and new words become vital...” The mainstream cannot comprehend these “new” words, such as “cool” and “freaky.” The new language becomes part of the Movement’s arsenal because it is “mysterious, threatening to conventional power: ‘We’re gonna off the pig; ‘We’re gonna freak the delegates...’” He concludes his argument by stating that the New Left’s language has been manipulated by the Establishment to create evidence of its criminality “because it shows us to be outside the system.”

Hayden’s assessment is based in truth, but it is also bound in irony. While the New Left’s language gave birth to new argot of sorts (“right on,” “outta sight”), much of its discourse on violence and its articulation of masculinity within that realm, is a mirror of the Establishment’s vocabulary on the same thing.¹⁷⁰ Liberals used gendered, highly sexualized and often homophobic language to describe many situations, including proclamations of urgency, of superiority over rivals or to vocalize frustration. Liberal

¹⁶⁸ Hayden, *Rebellion and Repression*, 73–74, 94–97.

¹⁶⁹ Tom Hayden, “The Trial,” in *Takin’ It to the Streets: A Sixties Reader*, ed. Alexander Bloom and Wini Breines, 3d ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 381. Jerry Rubin discusses the optics of “dirty” words used against the defendants in *We Are Everywhere* (New York: Harper Collins, 1971), 124–25.

¹⁷⁰ These New Left/countercultural idioms were in large part “borrowed” from African-American vernacular, in some ways similar to Norman Mailer’s cultural appropriations in “The White Negro.”

Cold Warriors had to have “balls” to make bold, aggressive foreign policy decisions and live virile lives.¹⁷¹ The call to action in the Kennedy White House was “Let’s grab our balls and go;” and any man “grabbing [his] nuts” was showing fear.¹⁷² Texan Lyndon Johnson was notorious for his masculinized parlance and great admiration for machismo.¹⁷³ The language was intended to assert Johnson’s power and reassure his own sense of manhood through questioning that status in other men, such that “affairs of state appeared to be conducted as much with [Johnson’s] genitals as with political genius.”¹⁷⁴ Thus anti-war opponents were “Nervous Nellies;” and Johnson could control someone if he had them “by the short hairs.”¹⁷⁵ An infamous example of the president’s graphically gendered language invokes the image of sexual violence: “I didn’t just screw Ho Chi Minh,” he said. ‘I cut his pecker off.’¹⁷⁶ A similar theme is found in Johnson’s response to bad television press. Calling CBS president, Frank Stanton, to express his dismay at the network’s war coverage, Johnson began the conversation by asking him, “Frank, are you trying to fuck me?;” thus linking his displeasure to an homosexual assault.¹⁷⁷ Johnson continued to associate difficulties in Vietnam with his own sexual violation. Pondering

¹⁷¹ K.A. Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 201.

¹⁷² Cuordileone, 201.

¹⁷³ David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest* (New York: Random House, 1972), 531.

¹⁷⁴ Michael S. Kimmel, “The Cult of Masculinity: American Social Character and the Legacy of the Cowboy,” in *Beyond Patriarchy: Essays by Men on Pleasure, Power, and Change*, ed. Michael Kaufman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 247.

¹⁷⁵ Melvin Small, *Johnson, Nixon, and the Doves* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1988), 21; Halberstam, 627.

¹⁷⁶ Halberstam, 414. Along the lines of Abbie Hoffman’s description of Fidel Castro as a penis, Johnson described his genitalia as “part rattlesnake” (436).

¹⁷⁷ Small, *Johnson, Nixon*, 65.

the decision to increase bomb strikes, Johnson anticipated trouble in Congress if he did not move forward: “They won’t be talking about my civil rights bill, or education or beautification. No sir, they’ll push Vietnam up my ass every time... Right up my ass.”¹⁷⁸

The machismo as communicated through the idioms of the cult of toughness that emerged in the Kennedy administration and ramped up during Johnson’s presidency projected the vital masculinity liberals believed they required to do battle with the Soviets (and conservatives).¹⁷⁹

The same macho language, with the same intended meanings, is prevalent in New Left writing. Abbie Hoffman recalls an encounter at an SDS meeting that included a diatribe from one attendee complaining that the organization was too complacent, and could not go “full revolution.” “Take off your ties, they are chains around your necks. You haven’t got the balls to go mad. You’re gonna make a revolution?—you’ll piss your pants when the violence erupts.”¹⁸⁰ That he starts his rant by calling all the men “fags” serves to reiterate the message of masculine lack. In *Do It!*, Jerry Rubin describes the response to a student strike at the University of California at Oakland. Having taken over the campus, the students had the upper hand, but off campus “the politicians, courts and cops were hollering for our balls.”¹⁸¹ The image of threatened emasculation continues, Rubin states that the government’s aim “was to castrate students.”¹⁸² Male-oriented sexual violence emerges in Abbie Hoffman’s blunt statement about Lyndon Johnson,

¹⁷⁸ Halberstam, 530.

¹⁷⁹ Of course, as discussed in the first chapter, Cold War masculinity could be fraught as well.

¹⁸⁰ Hoffman, *Revolution for the Hell of It*, 35.

¹⁸¹ Rubin, *Do It!*, 23.

¹⁸² Rubin, *Do It!*, 28.

saying, “He really fucked us.”¹⁸³ The irony of this gendered language is that it paints the New Left (and Cold War liberalism) as not just a male-dominated enterprise, but one ruled by “ultra-masculine persona[e].”¹⁸⁴ These “profoundly heterosexist” positions marked those who apparently did not have the “balls” or were deemed “fags” to be in the possession of a failed masculinity and, by extension, a weak male (hetero)sexuality. Women are described as passive sexual receptacles or erased entirely from the scene. A particularly sexually violent and phallocentric example of this is Rubin’s explanation for the U.S. venture in Southeast Asia: “Amerika has a frustrated penis, trying to drive itself into Vietnam’s tiny slit to prove it is The Man.”¹⁸⁵ Rubin insults the Establishment male’s sexual potency and turns the war into a rape. While this is meant to impugn the System and American imperialism, Rubin’s feminization of Vietnam diminishes its citizenry’s agency.¹⁸⁶ Though he is condemning Establishment injustice, Rubin’s gendered prose calls attention to his own biases and discrimination. In a perfect illustration of how New Left diction mirrored liberal language in the exaltation of sexual potency and bold aggression in its men, Abbie Hoffman pays the utmost compliment to John Sinclair, founder of the White Panthers, in another of his treatises, *Woodstock Nation* (1969): “John is a mountain of a man. He can fuck twenty times a day and fight like a wild boar.”¹⁸⁷

¹⁸³ Hoffman, *Revolution for the Hell of It*, 103.

¹⁸⁴ Terence Kissack, “Freaking Fag Revolutionaries: New York’s Gay Liberation Front, 1969–1971,” *Radical History Review* 62 (1995): 111.

¹⁸⁵ Rubin, *Do It!*, 111.

¹⁸⁶ Medovoi, 155.

¹⁸⁷ Abbie Hoffman, *Woodstock Nation* in *The Best of Abbie Hoffman*, ed. David Simon and Abbie Hoffman (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1989), 136. The White Panthers, founded in homage to the Black

The New Left and the Black Panther Party

Abbie Hoffman's cocky tribute to John Sinclair's sexual stamina and animalistic aggression carried with it a coded racial discourse that draws attention to the New Left's association with, and affinity for, the Black Power movement. The Black Power movement emerged in the mid-1960s, growing out of impatience felt by SNCC and CORE activists frustrated by the lack of progress in the Civil Rights movement. This dissatisfaction accompanied calls for white participants to be removed from leadership positions in groups such as SNCC. This paralleled a reinvigorated racial justice discourse based on black power, nationalism and separation.¹⁸⁸ The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense was a central organization in the Black Power era. Founded by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale in 1966, the Black Panther Party very quickly captured mainstream attention with public parade drills, paramilitary dress and the potent image of openly armed young African-American men committed to revolution in the streets. The Black Panther look was consciously formalized, masculinist to the extreme and infused with a militaristic machismo.¹⁸⁹ In the Party's early years, the crux of its revolutionary/self-determination discourse was anchored on the requisite that African-American men reclaim their masculinity via revolutionary action. This heady mix of restoring the

Panther Party, were a far-left organization dedicated to total cultural revolution. For more information on the White Panthers, see Jeff A. Hale, "The White Panthers' 'Total Assault on the Culture,'" in *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960s and '70s*, ed. Peter Braunstein and Michael William Doyle (New York: Routledge, 2002), 125–56.

¹⁸⁸ DeBenedetti, 157. For more on the history of Black nationalism in the U.S., see Peniel E. Joseph, *Waiting 'til The Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2006).

¹⁸⁹ Gitlin, 348; Ongiri, 21.

“hyper” to masculinity through armed self-defense and revolutionary rhetoric drew admirers from male-dominated New Left groups like the Weather Underground and the Youth International Party (Yippies). As the New Left became increasingly radicalized many of its organizations expressed similarly gendered, pro-violence tropes.¹⁹⁰

The Yippie-Black Panther association emerged from a relationship between Panther Minister of Information Eldridge Cleaver and Yippie leaders Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman. Cleaver’s ascent as the Party’s mouthpiece in the late 1960s corresponded with the Yippies’ rise as the New Left’s contingent of media-savvy and raffish bohemians. The Yippies, in Cleaver’s estimation, were the “vanguard” of the revolution; their injection of surrealist frivolity into radical ideology represented, for him, the tools of real change. The connection was cemented via several events: Abbie Hoffman joined Cleaver on a speaking tour; Jerry Rubin ran with Cleaver on the Peace and Freedom Party’s presidential ticket; and Cleaver wrote the introduction to Rubin’s *Do It!* The 1968 *Berkeley Barb* publication “Yippie Panther Pact: Pipe Dream #2,” co-authored by Hoffman, Rubin and Stew Albert, and Cleaver, sealed the collaboration.¹⁹¹

In his examination of the Yippie-Panther alliance, scholar Leerom Medovoi observes that the relationship revolved around both groups’ essentialization of a deeply gendered sexual radicalism articulated through shared notions of a “heteronormative model of masculinized libido.”¹⁹² Hoffman and Rubin’s heteronormativity and attendant gendering of their anti-Establishment discourse has been discussed at length in this

¹⁹⁰ Estes, 155, 166; Ongiri, 62.

¹⁹¹ Rubin was selected over long-time Civil Rights activist Dick Gregory. Medovoi, 137–39. *Do It!* includes a chapter entitled “We Are All Eldridge Cleaver!”

¹⁹² Medovoi, 135.

chapter. Much of Eldridge Cleaver's exposition on the revitalizing course for aggressive, heterosexual masculine privilege can be found in his compilation of political, historical and autobiographical essays, *Soul on Ice* (1968), which was hugely influential in New Left circles. For Cleaver, those engaged in the struggle for liberation must have the superior traits of the masculine—"Strength, brute power, force, virility"—therefore, freedom is the reclamation of Black heterosexual manhood.¹⁹³ Cleaver understood that many young white males were on similar rehabilitative journeys, having experienced the primal combination of sex and peril on the front lines of demonstrations, as well as having their minds opened via drugs, the sexual revolution, and rock and roll.¹⁹⁴ This male-empowerment-through-sexual-experience was also voiced in Yippie literature (concomitant with the merging of phallogentric sexual and political activity) and, of course, in Norman Mailer's treatises on American masculinity.¹⁹⁵

Violence was part of the New Left's journey to liberation. Violence was ever present.¹⁹⁶ It was part of the New Left's image—literally—as represented by its most

¹⁹³ Eldridge Cleaver, *Soul on Ice* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), 167. Homophobia was pervasive in the Black Power movement, particularly during Cleaver's tenure with the Panthers. The New Left/Yippie stance on homosexuality and its concomitant fears of emasculation were discussed earlier in the chapter. Wendt, 176; Estes, 162. In 1970, Black Panther founder Huey Newton issued a statement acknowledging feminists and gay and lesbians were "oppressed groups," pledging support and hoping for collective action in the future. Huey Newton, "The Women's Liberation and Gay Liberation Movements," as quoted in Murch, 211.

¹⁹⁴ Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity*, 299; Medovoi, 152..

¹⁹⁵ Medovoi, 155. Mailer was a fan of *Soul on Ice*. Kathleen Rout, *Eldridge Cleaver* (Boston: Twayne, 1991), 4.

¹⁹⁶ In 1970, Joe Flaherty of the *Village Voice* noted the irony that the Yippie's manifesto of sex, pot and music included "telling kids to get guns—all in the name of Love, of course." Joe Flaherty, "Give Me Anything But Love, Baby," *The Village Voice*, September 24, 1970, 48.

widely recognized faces. Both of Rubin's books are dedicated to violence. *Do It!* is dedicated to "Violent Revolution!;" *We Are Everywhere* is dedicated to the Weather Underground, a radical faction of SDS advocating the violent overthrow of the U.S. government. The cover of *Revolution for the Hell of It* has a smiling Abbie Hoffman holding a shotgun. Tom Hayden's *Rolling Stone* interview begins with a photograph of a burning streetscape (indeed, it is larger than his portrait). *Do It!* and *We Are Everywhere* have a number of images of young men and women posing with firearms, which include a gun-toting Rubin.¹⁹⁷ In a particularly arresting example of violent imagery, a Movement couple pose with weapons in *Do It!* The man's chest is crisscrossed with ammunition; the woman aims a gun at the camera with one hand and holds a baby with the other. The photograph is an homage to Depression-era criminals Bonnie and Clyde. The image is made all the more compelling with Rubin's proclamation of the duo as "the leaders of the New Youth."¹⁹⁸ Abbie Hoffman subscribes to the cult of Bonnie and Clyde too.¹⁹⁹ He and his wife embody the long dead criminals (killed by authorities in a spectacular hail of bullets) in passages in *Revolution for the Hell of It*. Abbie and Anita are just playing shoot 'em up, but the point for Hoffman is that "if it were a real gun and a cop walked in, I would have shot him dead. BANG!"²⁰⁰ The real point is these photographs and the shocking prose that accompanied them was intended to rankle square America and raise the Establishment's ire. However, under the outrageousness of *Revolution for the Hell of*

¹⁹⁷ Jerry Rubin, *We Are Everywhere*, 120–21, 219, 224–25; Rubin, *Do It!*, 122, 205.

¹⁹⁸ Rubin, *Do It!*, 122, 205, 238–39

¹⁹⁹ SDS leader Todd Gitlin discusses this affinity for Bonnie and Clyde (via the 1967 film) in *The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 197–99.

²⁰⁰ Hoffman, *Revolution for the Hell of It*, 10.

It and Do It!, and even the relatively calm eloquence of *Rebellion in Newark*, the fact remains that New Left masculinity, with its subtle compensatory tones and ties to liberal articulations of manhood, is constant and consistent.

Equivocation in the Male New Left: The Way of Sex and Violence

There were, of course, men in the New Left who did question the chauvinism and attraction to violence that seemingly took over the Movement in the late sixties. The writer Dotson Rader detailed his experiences with, and changing views on, violence in *I Ain't Marchin' Anymore* (1969). Much of Rader's deliberation on the topic revolves around an evaluation of his own masculinity and what role he believes violence plays in his personal masculine identity. Rader is no stranger to aggression. His participation in protests, particularly the March on the Pentagon in October 1967, puts him in the middle of the action, and on several occasions he is wounded. What frustrates Rader is his inability—not unwillingness—to follow his fellow New Leftist into battle.²⁰¹ In one instance, Rader escapes into a bathroom during a clash between police and students during the occupation of Columbia University in April 1968. He is overcome by shame, a shame he describes in gendered terms. “Absolutely pissed scared,” Rader crouches in a washroom stall. “If I could have found an old lady's costume, dress, wig, falsies, friend, I would have put it on,” he writes.²⁰² This gendering is interesting because the inner dialogues Rader has with himself over what he sees as his failure to truly be part of the action are often precipitated by his interactions with a woman. After a demonstration in which he failed to intervene in the beating of a fellow protestor, in front of Rebecca, a

²⁰¹ Rader, 106–9.

²⁰² Rader, 160.

female companion who does attempt to aid their fallen comrade, Rader thinks she sees him as a coward: “I had lost. I knew it and it angered me... I was once more made aware of my vulnerability to violence and my impotency before it...”²⁰³ He connects his inaction to his manhood, and makes it a sexual failing. Still, Rader writes that he continues to believe in violence both as a New Left tactic and as part of his masculine make-up. When Rosalie, another New Left woman, challenges his commitment to the anti-war movement, she strikes at the heart of Rader’s internal debate. Rosalie takes aim at Rader’s manhood, saying, “You’re supposed to be the *man*, the one with the balls between the legs...”²⁰⁴ Though upset, Rader understands why Rosalie disparages his manliness. She will not let his image of himself “as a nascent revolutionary” rest on intentions and words; she wants action. Rader wonders how he can change his status with her, and with his comrades. Should one “wear your sex exposed? Carry a gun?” In the end, and using a term that echoes his New Left brethren and liberal foes, Rader concludes that he has been “deballied.” With his masculinity requiring fortification, Rader sees violence as a solution. He resolves to act. He will embrace violence; and to prove himself a man, he must fight in front of “my chick.” His opportunity to follow through on his mission comes during a protest in New York City. When the police start breaking up the rally, Rader and Rosalie are caught in the crush. Rosalie falls near the barricades. Rader turns to see she is down. He ponders rescuing her from the gathering authorities—but instead, he leaves her behind, and says, “I enjoyed my guilt.” Rader offers no satisfying explanation for his change of heart. Though he describes an urge to protect Rosalie, Rader partially explains

²⁰³ Rader, 108.

²⁰⁴ Rader, 172. Italics in original.

the desertion by cataloguing the ways she has hurt him: rejecting him as a lover; and announcing she is a lesbian.²⁰⁵ He is weak, he says, and his sexist inclinations overwhelm his battle-readiness. Throughout *I Ain't Marchin' Anymore!*, Rader essentializes violence in the Movement, in New Left masculinity and in his own manhood, even as he foregrounds the ambivalence in this relationship. Despite his vacillation on directly participating in violence, Rader's exposition on it represents one of the few examples of a New Left man openly writing about its importance to the Movement and its central place in New Left masculinity.

At first gloss, SDS leader Todd Gitlin's perspective on violence is unequivocal, but he too is pulled in by the allure of aggression. His historical survey of the decade, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (1987) laments the Movement's turn away from nonviolence as playing a large role in the New Left's eventual disintegration and failure.²⁰⁶ On the surface, Gitlin appears to be writing in opposition to the position taken up by colleagues like Hoffman, Rubin, Hayden and Rader. In *The Sixties*, Gitlin writes that the violence of the era troubled him and other New Leftists: "We—and I mean not every individual in the New Left, but a critical mass that included parts of people like me who still cherished nonviolence and felt a terror of real bloodshed—we felt the violence in the world like a sharp instrument on our psychic skin."²⁰⁷ Later, recounting his reaction to the Detroit riot in 1967, he remarks on possibilities for dealing with the authorities in

²⁰⁵ Rader's own sexuality is rather ambiguous in *I Ain't Marchin' Anymore!* In his second autobiography, *Blood Dues* (New York: Knopf, 1973), he writes of homosexual encounters, but does not explicitly define his sexual preferences.

²⁰⁶ Gitlin, 218–19.

²⁰⁷ Gitlin, 317.

Chicago, should the black community there riot too: “Relatively sober soul that I was, haunted and horrified by the violence, I mentioned having gotten together with a few others to ‘make crazy plans’ to distract the Chicago police in case the black ghetto erupted.”²⁰⁸ Acknowledging his “desperation and bravado,” Gitlin is distressed by the violence, but is willing to participate and engage authorities on the streets. He neither says what the “distraction” would have been nor mentions the prospect that his actions could have aided the fomenting of violence elsewhere. Gitlin knowingly put himself in the midst of the action and was excited to be there. After a clash between students and police in Berkeley, Gitlin hides out in an apartment “feeling exhilarated, awkward, stagy all at once.”²⁰⁹ Gitlin’s concern over the violence in the New Left cannot completely erase the allure of that same aggression. In the closing of a letter he recalls writing, Gitlin reminds a friend to “wear a flower in your gun belt.”²¹⁰ This juxtaposition of pacifist and militaristic imagery, consistent across Rubin, Hoffman, Hayden and Rader’s writing, and used perhaps partly in irony by Gitlin, underscores the intimate and intricate relationship between the New Left and violence—even a proponent of nonviolence proponent cannot fully escape its influence.

Greetings: The Male New Left in a Theatre Near You

Publications like *Do It!* and *Revolution for the Hell of It* insured that, on some level, the New Left recognized themselves on the printed page. Young radicals could also look to film as a locus of recognition and celebration. Films such as *Bonnie and Clyde*

²⁰⁸ Gitlin, 244.

²⁰⁹ Gitlin, 315.

²¹⁰ Gitlin, 244.

(Arthur Penn, 1967) and *Easy Rider* (Dennis Hopper, 1969) commented on the sixties' zeitgeist from a largely leftist-liberal vantage point, but were still, ultimately, largely mainstream Hollywood productions.²¹¹ Brian De Palma's *Greetings*, by contrast, reflected the New Left and countercultural lifestyles from a position in the trenches. While *Greetings* hit similar countercultural notes as *Bonnie and Clyde* and *Easy Rider*, it was a truly independent film, made off the grid for less than \$45,000 by a director and producer still learning the ropes of feature film production.²¹² As with the works of Rubin, Hoffman and Hayden, the film is an important portrait and document of New Left masculinism.

Greetings depicts three young men living in New York City, who are dealing with current events such as the draft, John F. Kennedy's assassination and the Vietnam War.* The film is a comedy, meant to be political satire in the style of more well-known films of the era like *One, Two, Three* (Billy Wilder, 1961) and *Dr. Strangelove: Or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (Stanley Kubrick, 1964).²¹³ *Greetings* gleefully skewers the liberal Establishment, particularly President Lyndon Johnson.

²¹¹ Murray Pomerance, "1967: Movies and the Specter of Rebellion," in *American Cinema of the 1960s: Themes and Variations*, ed. Barry Keith Grant (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 172–92; Christie Milliken, "1969: Movies and the Counterculture," in *American Cinema of the 1960s: Themes and Variations*, ed. Barry Keith Grant (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 217–38. See also, Peter Biskind, *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls: How the Sex-Drugs-and-Rock'n'Roll Generation Saved Hollywood* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998).

²¹² Brian De Palma had directed a number of short films in the early sixties. His first feature, *The Wedding Party*, was shot in 1964, but was not released until after *Greetings* in 1969. Joseph Gelmis, *The Film Director as Superstar* (New York: Doubleday, 1970), 25.

* The next chapter will explore more fully the role of the draft in New Left movies such as *Greetings*.

²¹³ For a detailed analysis of *Dr. Strangelove* as liberal political satire, see Stephen E. Kercher, *Revel With a Cause: Liberal Satire in Postwar America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

Johnson's image hangs on the wall of Paul's (Jonathan Warden) apartment—not a dignified presidential portrait, but a caricature of Johnson on the cover of *Time*, all big head, ears and even larger nose. Nearby is a decorative plate festooned with the same exaggerated visage.

Greetings' opening and closing scenes strike hardest at the president. The film's introductory shot has the camera trained on a television set. A news anchor details the latest events in Vietnam, including an enemy death count, before reporting on President Johnson's speech before a labour association. The news footage cuts to Johnson dismissing the war's critics and proclaiming that Americans "have never had it so good." This clip of the president's sentiments is repeated at the end of the film, and much of what happens between these bookends is intended to poke holes in his words.

The friends around whom the narrative revolves are presented in situ: a day in the life of young New York bohemians. Aside from the characters' personal proclivities, which take up the majority of the film's socio-political commentary, the more ideologically-driven narrative style of contemporary counterculture films like *Easy Rider* or *The Strawberry Statement* (Stuart Hagmann, 1970) is largely absent from *Greetings*. Lloyd, Paul and Jon (Robert De Niro) are countercultural types, but they are not blissed-out Hollywood hippies or the tunnel-visioned radicals often seen in film and television in the late sixties and early seventies.²¹⁴ There is no transcendence, incense, self-praise or philosophical browbeating.

²¹⁴ The stereotypical Hollywood "hippie" can be seen in films such as Walt Disney's *The Love Bug* (Robert Stevenson, 1968), *The Party* (Blake Edwards, 1968) and *Sweet Charity* (Bob Fosse, 1969). The hard-core radical often appeared on television programs such as *The Mod Squad* (1968–73) and *Hawaii Five-O* (1968–80) as troubled individuals in need of straightening out, or as villains of the week.

The friends are far more interested in sex than politics. Discussing women, watching women and sleeping with women are central occupations for these young men. For the most part, their lives revolve around coming up with ways to avoid the draft and trawling for girls. *Greetings* spends a good deal of its screen time following Paul on a series of computer-arranged dates. Over the course of four dates, the audience is introduced to four “types” of American women, all of whom Paul tries goal to sleep with. His first date is with a nameless “Bronx Secretary” (Ashley Oliver), who does not have a name, merely a title. She immediately dismisses Paul’s cheapness (he eats before arriving), appearance in a sweater and his expectation of sex without some material effort. Her Bronx accent is grating as she tells Paul how much she paid for each piece in her designer ensemble—women’s independence via the credit card. This permits the camera to linger over her sequined chest and stocking-clad legs. When she abruptly gets up from the couch, Paul thinks the date is over, but when he goes to her bedroom door, we see she is naked on the bed waiting for him. Right next to the secretary’s head is a book, *The Boston Strangler*, with two menacing eyes on the cover. This is one of the film’s many intertextual cues. Audiences would have been aware of the book.²¹⁵ The audience would also have been aware of the nature of the Boston Strangler’s crimes, that is, murdering women in their apartments. Thus, the film is not only commenting on the Bronx Secretary’s shrewish materialism and easy virtue, but hinting at the dangers lurking for women who invite strange men into their homes. That many of the Strangler’s victims were single females adds weight to the book’s inclusion as part of the film’s observation

²¹⁵ A film based on Gerold Frank’s 1966 true-crime book, *The Boston Strangler* (Richard Fleischer, 1968), starring Henry Fonda and Tony Curtis, was released in 1968.

that women's liberation could provoke male violence. The secretary's "hard-to-get" harangue and quick loss of clothes mark her as a tease, and a potential victim of sexual violence. This is further underscored when Paul's phones Lloyd, telling his friend that even though he is not into her, Lloyd should come and take advantage of the opportunity.

Paul's third date is with a mystic.²¹⁶ Her apartment is filled with beads and countercultural knick-knacks. The Mystic (Mona Feit), again nameless, yet labelled, is clearly willing to have sex with Paul. The only hang up is her insistence that her sexual philosophy of "one rhythm, one music" must be achieved before coitus can begin. She seductively moves herself against Paul as she explains the importance of aligning energies. Once she feels that Paul is on her level, she pulls him to the ground. Alas, by this time, Paul's "source" has been prematurely drained. The Mystic is a liberated woman. However, her pretentious approach to sex and strict adherence to her rules about it literally deflate Paul's desire. It is not a failure of Paul's manhood that he cannot control his ejaculation, but the "liberated" woman's determination to create "one great beautiful energy" that foils nature, i.e., the male's sexual satisfaction. That the actualization of this "energy" might result in a more fulfilling sexual experience for Paul, let alone his female partner, is not up for discussion.

Paul's fourth date, with a "Nymphomaniac" (Sara-Jo Edlin), should be any young man's dream, but in Paul's case she is a homely, older and larger woman. The scene is titled "The Dirty Movie or Paul's Last Stand." Its subtitle is "The Delivery Boy and the Bored Housewife" and the encounter is presented as a pornographic film. Shot like a

²¹⁶ Paul's second date is fruitless in that he goes to the wrong apartment, but at least the "Gay Divorcee" has a name: Judy Cavendish.

silent film through a peephole, with sped up film and tinkling piano music, the sequence has the Bored Housewife aka Nymphomaniac (as she is listed in *Greetings*' credits) as the sexual aggressor. She bites and squeezes too hard. Paul winces and struggles, clearly in discomfort. In the end, Paul is literally trapped underneath her body, wriggling to get free before falling off the bed. Paul's pornographic debut follows a scene in which Jon is approached by a smut peddler who tries to sell him a bestiality short, and succeeds in forcing him to buy what is later revealed to be Paul's film. Paul's dirty movie is a nod to the increasing availability of pornography (particularly with the rise of theatres showing X-rated films in big cities like New York).²¹⁷ On each of Paul's dates the women are the initiators. This does not mean Paul is weak (his inability to get out from under the Nymphomaniac notwithstanding). It implies that independent women have increased appetites for sexual encounters. Paul is merely reaping the rewards. This aligns with the mindset of *Greetings*' producer and director. In an interview with film critic Joseph Gelmis, Charles Hirsch, the film's producer, made it clear that *Greetings*' subject matter mirrored his and director Brian De Palma's own lives: "We both like to screw girls, so the girl-chasing part of the three guys' obsession in *Greetings* was easy enough."²¹⁸ Hirsch's sexist language, which is echoed in Paul's dates and in the film's lascivious side stories such as Lloyd's tale of a threesome with two Barnard College girls and a can of whipped cream, portends the stereotypical treatment of women in *Greetings*. It divulges the film's casual sexism, and that of its characters and creators. This marks a point where the New

²¹⁷ *Greetings* received an X rating when it was released. Richard W. Haines, *The Moviegoing Experience, 1968–2001* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Co., 2003), 34.

²¹⁸ Gelmis, 26.

Left-countercultural masculinity on display in *Greetings* intersects with liberal manhood. The two generations were, film critic Wilfrid Sheed wrote, equally “low-down and dirty,” but the *Greetings* crowd was more unabashedly boastful of their sexual exploits, purported sexual liberation and appreciation of the female form.²¹⁹

Paul may get the most action, but it is Jon who is truly on the prowl. Jon is a peeping tom, and this aspect of his character also derives from the lives of the film’s creators. Hirsch admits he is a voyeur, but says, “Brian [De Palma] is the real voyeur—so that element was Brian’s contribution.”²²⁰ Indeed, voyeurism has been a key theme of De Palma’s work. Much of Jon’s time is spent following and watching women. After surreptitiously watching a young woman named Linda (Rutanya Alda) shoplift at his bookstore, the next scene shows Jon reading the definition of the term “peeper” from a psychology book of some kind, which could be a statement on self-diagnosis and the popularity of pop psychology. His reading includes a graphically detailed case study of voyeuristic behaviour. This sets up Jon’s encounter with Linda, making the audience aware of Jon’s motivations and expectations. Meeting Linda at a bus stop, he slyly manipulates her into taking part in his “peep art” project. As Jon describes how he would like her to participate, a woman in an apartment behind them begins to undress, essentially acting out Jon’s project. With Linda believing she is taking part in an art installation for the Whitney Museum, Jon talks her through his voyeuristic fantasy. Linda

²¹⁹ Wilfrid Sheed, Review of *Greetings*, *Esquire* 71:4 (April 1969): 42.

²²⁰ Gelmis, 26. Voyeurism, along with De Palma’s problematic portrayals of women, has been the subject of much critical debate. See, “Brian De Palma: The Politics of Castration” in Robin Woods, *Hollywood from Vietnam to Reagan—and Beyond*, rev. ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 120–43; and Kenneth MacKinnon, *Misogyny in the Movies: The Brian De Palma Question* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1990).

slowly removes her clothes, following Jon's off screen instructions. Jon is filming her, and the scene is shot so that it appears as though Linda is being watched from outside her apartment, like a vertical letterbox. Jon is anxious that Linda not rush her part in his fantasy. When Jon is satisfied that his vision has been achieved, and Linda is nearly naked, he returns to the shot and joins her on the bed. It is implied that the two sleep together.

Jon's interlude with Linda is only a lead up to the real articulation of his fantasy. The only one of the trio to be caught in the draft net, Jon is sent to Vietnam. Once there, he is interviewed on a search and destroy mission by a suit-jacketed television reporter. Jon spots "the enemy ahead" of them. It is a young Vietnamese woman (Tisa Chiang) doing laundry. Jon, who urges the camera crew to follow him, makes his way to her. Once beside the woman, he tells the crew to keep the camera on her and again begins his peep art routine. While he tells the woman to smile and take her clothes off, the film cuts back and forth to images of Linda doing the same thing. Jon's voyeurism is an obsession. Even in a war zone he sees opportunities to enact his fantasies. Even though the scenes are meant to be comical, there is a hint of sexual danger in Jon's interaction with these women, who really are his victims: one of her own naiveté and his manipulations; and the other of her gender, geography and ethnicity.²²¹ His proclivities may reflect De Palma's desires and the filmic fulfillment of his fantasies through Jon. Another more literal

²²¹ One of the few times Jon appears vulnerable is during a scene in which he is getting a passport photo taken. The photographer is a spirited young woman scantily dressed in red, white and blue. As she snaps his picture, the woman asks Jon about his life, and he tells her about trying to get to Canada to avoid the draft. The scene is a reverse seduction for Jon, as the photographer puts the move on him. This scene will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

interpretation of *Greetings*' take on peeping refers back to the place of television and film in the Vietnam War. Jon's "art" and the pathology it represents parallel the Vietnam peep shows broadcast on the nightly news across the nation. This is the content the audience desires; and whether the camera lens captures sex or violence, the voyeur cannot look away.

If Paul and Jon are obsessed, in their own ways, with sex, then Lloyd's fascination is with violence. Lloyd's obsession with President Kennedy's murder and his dogged pursuit of the truth behind the conspiracies is central to his character. Art Simon argues that De Palma was ahead of his time with *Greetings*' incorporation of the assassination's discourse in a film narrative. Simon states that the film was the first in a long line of conspiracy films featuring Kennedy-esque killings—though De Palma plays the subject primarily for laughs.²²² Lloyd's preoccupation with the assassination presents the film with another opportunity for intertextuality on several levels. First, Lloyd's encyclopaedic knowledge of the assassination, its players and the numerous conspiracy theories would be relatively common knowledge for audiences. He surrounds himself with the publications available to the audience. Though his ardent passion for the subject is parodic and exaggerated, Lloyd's pastime would not seem completely out of place in 1968. Second, the methodology behind Lloyd's investigation permits De Palma to share his admiration of another filmmaker, Michelangelo Antonioni, and his conspiracy film, *Blow-Up* (1966). Lloyd enlarges pictures of the grassy knoll at Dealey Plaza hoping to

²²² Art Simon, *Dangerous Knowledge: The JFK Assassination in Art and Film* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996), 165. Films that followed *Greetings*' lead in the years after its release include *Klute* (Alan J. Pakula, 1971), *The Parallax View* (Alan J. Pakula, 1974) and *Three Days of the Condor* (Sydney Pollack, 1975).

find answers in large black dots and splotches. Audiences would be aware that Lloyd's turn to photography for the truth was a nod to Antonioni's lead character, Thomas (David Hemmings), who does the same. Lloyd's query references the volatility of the investigatory gaze, which Antonioni mined in *Blow-Up*.

The key scene depicting Lloyd's obsession is his macabre re-enactment of the president's autopsy on the body of his sleeping female model. Throughout the scene, Lloyd breaks the fourth wall and speaks directly to the audience. He talks out loud, his voice becoming impassioned and the tone more determined, as if he is trying to convince himself and the audience of the truth behind the wounds. In this scene De Palma intimately connects assassination discourse with pornographic imagery.²²³ Lloyd's careful reconstruction of Kennedy's wounds on the girl's naked body draws links between sex and violence (links that De Palma would return to in many of his later films). Lloyd tackles his project in a serious manner, but that deliberation plays to the film's overarching satirical approach to its characters and themes. The scene's opening shot is particularly bracing because it is a close up of a magazine cover. The *Film Comment* cover is itself a close up, of a bullet under the title "JFK Assassination: Two Controversial Films."²²⁴ The camera pulls back to show the magazine is covering the sleeping woman's pubic area. The large bullet is an overt phallic symbol, the source for an easy, intellectual laugh. But it also foreshadows Lloyd's death. Later in the film, Lloyd is assassinated, felled by an assassin's bullet for getting too close to the "truth." He dies a

²²³ Simon, 165.

²²⁴ The magazine is a mock up. The issue was not in circulation (Simon, 165). *Film Comment* would have been a wink at the serious cinephiles in the audience.

rather dramatic death in a parking lot in a scene that echoes the Zapruder footage. While Lloyd's character is played for comedy, his assassination allows *Greetings* to hint at the possibility that the conspiracy theorists may have it right.

For an independent film, *Greetings* did very good business. In his interview with Joseph Gelmis, Hirsch states that the film brought in nearly \$130,000 in New York alone. Gelmis himself notes in his introduction that *Greetings* was projected for a \$1 million gross by 1969, quite an achievement for a "no frills" film.²²⁵ The film received mixed reviews, but garnered international recognition, winning the Silver Bear at the Berlin Film Festival in 1969.²²⁶ The film's financial success opened doors in Hollywood for Brian De Palma. Considered his breakout picture, *Greetings* led to a production deal with a major studio that resulted in a *Greetings* sequel, *Hi, Mom!* (Brian De Palma, 1970).²²⁷ Released at a time when the major movie studios were losing their grip on production and distribution systems, *Greetings* explored risky and risqué subject matter that Hollywood was hesitant to touch. Through its focus on the war, Kennedy's assassination and countercultural characters, with a dash of nudity, *Greetings* depicts the casual sexism and casual violence of the young American leftist male; and the connections between sex and violence in the broader U.S. culture. As such, it is a representational document of the New Left and counterculture in the same mode as *Do It!* and *Revolution for the Hell of It*, even as it mocks that very demographic.

²²⁵ Gelmis, 21, 26.

²²⁶ Sheed, 42; Howard Thompson, Review of *Greetings*, *New York Times*, 16 December, 1968, 61; P.J. McNerney and J. L. Anderson, "Prize Winners: Selected Listings of Awards Given at Three Major European Film Festivals and by Five American Motion Picture Organizations," *Journal of the University Film Association* 22:3 (1970): 69.

²²⁷ Adam Smith, "The *Empire* Interview: In Conversation with Brian De Palma," *Empire* (April 2008): 122.

Conclusion

Two paths presented themselves to the males of the New Left. One forsook violence and embraced pacifism. Early influence and inspiration from the Civil Rights movement informed the consciousness, and the actions, of some in the male New Left. These young men chose to interrogate the place of violence in American society and in their personal definitions of manhood via nonviolent participation in the anti-war and draft resistance movements. This decision also provided the space in which like-minded New Leftists could question the gender paradigm and heteronormativity of the liberal Establishment and Old Left. The other path represented a continuation of their fathers' gender ideology, a journey entwined with violence and masculinism.

Yet the path walked by many of the male New Left led to the installation of violence as an integral facet of the Movement's blueprint for dissent. To guide them through the traditional discourse on violence and sexism, and their interplay with American manhood, the New Left found older male role models. Norman Mailer's radical persona and provocative writing made him a perfect New Left mentor. Chauvinism, sexism and a fascination with violence are central themes that run the gamut of Mailer's work. Mailer's "White Negro" had a profound impact on many young men searching for meaning in the calcifying landscape of 'corporation land.' To be hip was to truly live—and to embrace violence. This lesson continued in *The Armies of the Night*. *The Armies of the Night* plumbs the author's relationship with the New Left, and through it enables the recognition of similarities between mentor and protégés. Mailer's words are often sexist and militarist. He spoils for a fight. The veteran in him holds back respect until he learns his young comrades have seen "action." Mailer applauds battle scars and denigrates

female protestors even as he aims to save them with his gallantry. His anti-war pronunciations generally conclude with gauntlets thrown and more aggression as a means to end the war in Southeast Asia. A number of the New Left's most popular playbooks—*Do It!*, *Revolution For the Hell of It* and *Rebellion and Repression*—reflect Mailer's turn to violence (and co-optation of black masculinity) as a strategy for ending Establishment aggression. Hayden's *Rebellion in Newark* and *Rebellion and Repression* subscribe to violence as a strategy for combating oppression. Both Rubin and Hoffman give their readers instructions for how to attack authorities, including suggestions for how to “trash” (committing general property destruction), street fighting, growing and maintaining one's arsenal, and constructing bombs (with helpful illustrations).²²⁸ Mailer's graphic sexualized and gendered language is mirrored too. Hoffman and Rubin's use of male genitalia in their description of Castro and America respectively, recall Mailer's roar for an assault on the Pentagon's sphincter. It was their interaction and respect for older masculinist radicals like Mailer that ensured violence and sexism remained part of the American Left's legacy for its young male cohort.

Though mutual derision characterized many of the exchanges between the New Left and liberals, the two were linked in ways that made these foes different sides of the same coin. The New Left's love-hate view of John F. Kennedy is an example of how liberalism and its highly masculinist, aggressive accoutrements drew in young rebels, even as it repelled them. Kennedy was an important figure in the New Left's conception of itself.

²²⁸ Rubin, *We Are Everywhere*, 125–29; Abbie Hoffman, *Steal This Book* (1971), in *The Best of Abbie Hoffman*, ed. David Simon and Abbie Hoffman (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1989), 290–305.

For a time, New Left activists “were all Jack’s children.”²²⁹ His administration’s Janus-faced approach to youth activism was a point of contention for participant-observers like Tom Hayden. Kennedy’s apparent vitality drew young Americans to him, but the CIA’s infiltration of student organizations, his government’s slow response to Civil Rights, Cold War brinkmanship politics and deepening involvement in Vietnam pushed many youth to the Left, and beyond. As Hayden recalled in 1972, such machinations led him further into radicalism and away from the liberal idealism of the New Frontier. Kennedy’s diminished status in some New Left circles is evidenced in Hayden and Rubin’s invocation of the late president as a symbol of liberal privilege and fraud. His violent death did not cement his legacy in unbounded respect.

Kennedy’s impact on the New Left, however, went beyond spurring participation in American radicalism. It was also an example of the continuum between liberal and New Left masculinity. The president’s call to action, discussed in the previous chapter, was couched in terms of vitality and virility. His image was imbued with heterosexuality, an overt sexuality that was long part of the liberal arsenal against charges of softness. This can be seen in liberal idioms. Liberal conversations were peppered with analogies meshing sex and violence to describe success and defeat; having the “balls” to carry through tough policy decisions and “screwing” opponents were trademarks of liberal Cold War dialect. These masculinist themes and sexualized tone carried forward into the discussion of New Left men. Kennedy and the liberals may have been dismissed as the Establishment—the enemy—but New Left men like Hayden, Rubin, Hoffman and Rader did repeat the same “bad” words and profanely gendered turns of phrase in the same ways

²²⁹ Rader, 12.

to invoke the same meanings. Norman Mailer did not draw the only bead on influencing the New Left with his aggressive chauvinism. Kennedy may not have been the New Left's hero for long, but the cool figure he cut, the mixing of sexuality and violence in liberal lingo, did have a bearing on their outlook. Perhaps while not as significant as Mailer, Castro or Guevara, liberal discourse on sex and violence can be glimpsed in New Left self-commentaries, and the wider annunciation of their ideologies.

Often, it is the simplest of statements that best capture the essence of an issue. An anonymous Movement female, with the pseudonym "A Berkeley Sister," sums up the contradictory nature of New Left masculinity: "The tenderness and warmth that you suppress are as much your loss as mine. And you really seem tough and for this I dislike you; you are truly the John Wayne of the radical set."²³⁰ Even as they railed against the manhood of previous generations, many New Left men ironically strived for and ended up living some version of the very same gender "norm" Berkeley Sister laments. These young male activists employed the same language and ideological motivations that their liberal fathers did. After all, battling softness and Communism could easily be substituted for combatting softness and the liberal Establishment. Ultimately, New Left tough talk affirmed the road taken, including a hard masculinity that accepted violence as a means to an end. As Jerry Rubin states in *Do It!*, "Goals are irrelevant. The tactics, the actions, are critical."²³¹

²³⁰ A Berkeley Sister, "To a White Male Radical," in *The Sixties Papers: Documents of a Rebellious Decade*, ed. Judith Clavir Albert and Stewart Edward Albert (New York: Praeger, 1984), 517. The influence of John Wayne's star persona on the Vietnam generation will be further examined in the next chapter.

²³¹ Rubin, *Do It!*, 125.

Just as the writing and statements by Rubin, Hoffman and Hayden illustrate the path chosen by many in the male New Left, so too does *Greetings* reflect the connection between Cold War liberal masculinity and the male New Left/counterculture. The next chapter will focus on the Selective Service System and the filmic image of draft avoiders like Lloyd, Paul and Jon.

Chapter Three

The Draft on Film: Sissies, Sickos and Psychopaths

In the summer of 1968, Hollywood realized it had a Vietnam problem. *The Green Berets* (Ray Kellogg and John Wayne, 1968), a John Wayne vanity project celebrating the heroic exploits of the U.S. Special Forces, debuted in movie theatres.¹ Released five months after the Tet Offensive, the film attempted to court an audience increasingly unsure of American military intervention in Southeast Asia. It is not surprising that *The Green Berets* drew criticism for its pro-war stance and ham-fisted efforts to makeover Vietnam for the big screen. As film critic William Rice noted in the *Washington Post*, “The public has as much or more firsthand knowledge about the Vietnam conflict as do the makers of the movie. Their attempts at blowing it up larger than life won’t work.”² In a letter to the *New York Times*, Frank D. Martarella, a critic for *Cinema Magazine*, denounced the film as “so wretched... it is embarrassing to criticize its pretentiousness and banality.”³

For John Wayne, the politically-oriented criticism of *The Green Berets* was much ado about nothing. In an interview with entertainment-trade paper *Variety*, his son, Michael, the film’s producer, stated that Batjac Productions (his father’s production company) was “not making a political picture; we’re making a picture about a bunch of

¹ *The Green Berets* was produced by Wayne’s production company, Batjac Productions. Wayne purchased the rights to journalist Robin Moore’s bestselling book of short stories, *The Green Berets* (Concord, MA: Moore Hill, Publishing, 1965). Gary Wills, *John Wayne’s America: The Politics of Celebrity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997), 228–29.

² William Rice, “Wayne Leads Green Beret into Vietnam,” *Washington Post*, June 27, 1968, 53.

³ Frank D. Martarella, “Letter to the Editor: Childishly Sleazy,” *New York Times*, July 14, 1968, D18.

right guys...”⁴ Speaking to journalist Joan Barthel in a 1967 *New York Times* feature on *The Green Berets*, John Wayne insisted that the film was purely about “entertainment value” albeit “naturally from the hawk’s point of view.”⁵ In a 1971 *Playboy* interview, Wayne told Richard Warren Lewis that *The Green Berets* “was an American film about American boys who were heroes over there.”⁶ Yet, Wayne’s anti-communism and “archconservative” politics—also front-and-centre in *Big Jim McLain* (1952)—are clearly on display.⁷

John Wayne’s immensely popular persona triumphed over *The Green Berets*’ critics, both in the press and in public. Protests were organized outside domestic and foreign theatres. In countries like Italy, Australia and France, anti-*Green Berets* demonstrations, organized by anti-war groups, ended in clashes with authorities. After the film prompted leftist demonstrations there, the film was banned in Beirut.⁸ Still, it was not

⁴ As quoted in Julian Smith, *Looking Away: Hollywood and Vietnam* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1975), 129.

⁵ Joan Barthel, “‘This Picture is Naturally from the Hawk’s Point of View,’ Says John Wayne, Superhawk,” *New York Times*, December 24, 1967, 133.

⁶ Richard Warren Lewis, “The *Playboy* Interview: John Wayne,” *Playboy* 18:5 (May 1971): 88.

⁷ Lewis, 76.

⁸ In protests outside a New York City theatre, young male demonstrators chanted, “Hell, no we won’t go,” with their female counterparts responding, “John Wayne will.” Australia faced its own anti-war and draft resistance movements, having sent advisers and thousands of troops to fight alongside U.S. forces. Italian protests against *The Green Berets* spoke to the country’s difficulty with the Vietnam War in general. The national government was centre-left and faced opposition from a strong Communist Party. The war resulted in strained U.S.-Italian relations. In France, communist newspapers and leftist student organizations published treatises against the film. The anti-*Green Berets* sentiment was particularly sensitive in Paris—the peace talks were being held in the city. “150 Picket Opening of *Green Berets*; Signs Score Wayne,” *New York Times*, June 20, 1968, 49; “*Berets* Triggers Sydney Protest,” *Washington Post*, August 3, 1968, A3, “*Green Berets* Film Banned in Beirut,” *Washington Post*, September 27, 1968, B4; “Film on *Green*

box office poison, and there would be no quick dispatch to cinematic oblivion. Despite being critically eviscerated and internationally protested, *The Green Berets* was a hit, taking in \$11 million.⁹

Politics were never the film's main draw. The Duke's stature as Hollywood's legendary tough guy hero was.¹⁰ But there was only one John Wayne in Hollywood and the political firestorm around Vietnam proved too corrosive for mainstream American film makers. Journalist Joan Barthel noted in her feature on *The Green Berets* that three film makers, including respected and politically-engaged director Stanley Kramer (*Judgement at Nuremberg*, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*), had abandoned Vietnam War projects around the time of *The Green Berets*' production.¹¹ The controversy over

Berets is Protested by Italians," *New York Times*, October 6, 1968, 15; and "John Wayne's *Green Berets* Under Leftist Attack in Paris," *New York Times*, August 2, 1969, 14. For more on how the Vietnam War impacted nations around the world, see Andreas W. Daum, Lloyd C. Gardner and Wilfried Mausbach, ed., *America, The Vietnam War and the World: Comparative and International Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). In particular, see the following chapters: Peter Edwards, "The Strategic Concerns of a Regional Power: Australia's Involvement in the Vietnam War (221–36); and Leopoldo Nuti, "The Center-Left in Italy and the Escalation of the Vietnam War" (259–78).

⁹ "John Wayne's *Green Berets* a Box-Office Triumph," *New York Times*, January 3, 1969, 20.

¹⁰ Smith, 135; Gilbert Adair, *Hollywood's Vietnam* (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1989), 36.

¹¹ Barthel, 133. A particularly telling example of such bypassing can be found in the Lucille Ball/Henry Fonda family comedy *Yours, Mine and Ours* (Melville Shavelson, 1968). In the film the eldest son receives his draft notice. There is no discussion of Vietnam, of the draft or of the possibility of draft evasion. There is no anti-war movement inside the film's cinematic bubble (but there are kooky hippies). By 1968, draft call-ups had been dramatically increased and there were nearly 35,000 American casualties. The silence on the war in *Yours, Mine and Ours* marks it as an example of contemporary Hollywood's inability and unwillingness to acknowledge and depict Vietnam (and all of its burdens) on screen. It could be argued that Vietnam has no place in a family film. However, for a film released in 1968 to feature the draft and wholly ignore the war is perhaps as disingenuous as John Wayne's conservative overkill in *The Green Berets*, released the same year. George Q. Flynn, *The Draft, 1940–1973* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of

the film served to deepen Hollywood's reticence to engage with a filmic Vietnam. Thus, *The Green Berets* earned the distinction of being the first and only Hollywood Vietnam War combat film to attempt to put the conflict on screen while the United States was still engaged in Southeast Asia.¹²

All was not silent on Vietnam in American film. Voices were coming from the fringes of the film industry. It was in the margins, where big budgets and big stars rarely tread, that the Vietnam War was approached as cinematic material. Younger and more radical film makers were tackling the Selective Service System and the war, attempting to do what Hollywood was not. A number of these directors and actors would go on to shake up the established American film industry in the 1970s, including Brian De Palma, Robert De Niro and Jack Nicholson. Some of these movies from the periphery include *Greetings* (Brian De Palma, 1968), *The Gay Deceivers* (Bruce Kessler, 1968) and *Drive, He Said* (Jack Nicholson, 1971). Spanning the years 1968 to 1972, these films coincide with the height of the war and the anti-war movement, and they highlight the period in which the draft and draft avoider were most visible on screen. While Hollywood dodged the issue, these draft films probed what the war meant to the nation and to the young men being called up by the Selective Service System.

Kansas, 1993), 170, 189; Beth Bailey, *America's Army: Making the All-Volunteer Force* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2009), 15.

¹² *The Green Berets* was the only mainstream Hollywood film to take on Vietnam, but there were other films that tackled the subject head-on as well: the documentaries *In the Year of the Pig* (Emile de Antonio, 1968) and *Hearts and Minds* (Peter Davis, 1974); and the French film *Loin du Viêt Nam* (Joris Ivens et al, 1967). Michael Anderegg, "Hollywood and Vietnam: John Wayne and Jane Fonda as Discourse," in *Inventing Vietnam: The War in Film and Television*, ed. Michael Anderegg (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), 15.

Draft films are pieces of the Vietnam puzzle, just like *The Green Berets*. Films like *Greetings* and *The Gay Deceivers* are anti-draft in that they endorse the decision to avoid the draft—indeed, it is taken as a given. They emerged from, and reflected, New Left and countercultural sensibilities, yet none voiced strong ideological positions on either draft resistance or the anti-war movement. Instead, draft avoidance is presented as an individual choice rather than a political decision.

If the draft films devote surprisingly little attention to the anti-war movement or the reality of the war, they are fixated on issues of gender and masculinity. At their core, the films are really about different ways to be a man, and exploring and redefining American masculinity. The films' narratives do not wholly engage in revealing the characters' own consciences or motivations for avoiding the draft. Rather than dig for conscientious values, the films take up the project of constructing a masculinity able to beat the Selective Service System. The draft films all reject or critique militarism, but often compensate with other forms of violence. They play with homosexuality—indeed, the films are replete with it as text and subtext—yet also recoil from it. The films appear to argue that draft avoidance requires a finessed definition of manhood that permits gender transgressions, such as pretending to be homosexual, in the name of draft avoidance. Yet they double down on expressions of heterosexuality and aggression as essential elements of manliness for many of the men in the New Left.

The draft films occupy a potentially radical and destabilizing space, which is opened up by their celebrating a man's choice not to fight. This sets up a serious challenge to traditional American gender ideology. Yet, the films pull back from the task, thus undercutting and undermining their own political significance in all sorts of ways.

This is particularly pronounced in the draft films' enunciation of a version of New Left masculinity that revolves around the hallmarks of white, liberal elite manhood. Just as in the writings of New Left leaders like Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin, the draft films reflect older models of American masculinity even as they work to construct new options for their avoider heroes. Michael Wayne's comment about *The Green Berets* not being about politics, just a bunch of guys, could also apply to the draft films. Both draft films and *The Green Berets* make moves to address Vietnam, but end up holding too tightly to traditional vehicles of masculine expression to be able to present truly informed statements on either the war or its socio-cultural impact on the United States.

This chapter will begin with a brief description of the draft films, including their roots outside mainstream Hollywood film. It will then analyze the ideological and political markers that are present in the draft films, calling attention to contradictions and lost opportunities in films like *Greetings, Alice's Restaurant* (Arthur Penn, 1968), *Jenny* (George Bloomfield, 1970) and *Summertree* (Anthony Newley, 1971). Following this is an examination of the intersection of masculinity and violence in the draft films, particularly in *Drive, He Said* and *Explosion* (Jules Bricken, 1969). The final section investigates the draft films' use and abuse of homosexuality, completing this chapter's scrutiny of the draft films' attempt to redefine traditional American manhood while keeping a direct line of affiliation with heteronormative masculinity intact. This includes a detailed exploration of the gender politics at play in *The Gay Deceivers* and a troubling of the waters around the film's depiction of gay men.

Draft Films: Origins

The Selective Service System was a looming presence in the lives of young American men for much of the nation's military involvement in Southeast Asia. The five-year span between 1968 and 1972 marked the escalation of the anti-war and draft resistance movements on the heels of, among other things, the Johnson administration's failure to reverse the increasingly negative press coverage of the war and the fallout from the Tet Offensive in the winter of 1968. It also coincided with a surge in call-ups—thousands of young American men received their draft notices during these years. As of June 1969, the U.S. army had nearly 40,000 casualties, of whom approximately 12,000 were draftees. The loss of undergraduate student deferments in 1970 increased the pressure on young men.¹³ Mainstream Hollywood film makers did not respond by flooding theatres with Vietnam films. Instead, major studios backed away from any overt embroilment with the tricky subject matter after *The Green Berets* debacle.

There were films that addressed some of the controversial issues mainstream films shied away from during this period. These independent “zeitgeist” films tackled subjects like the counterculture and socio-cultural upheaval.¹⁴ They covered such topics as student radicalism (*The Strawberry Statement*, 1970) and disaffection with the Establishment (*Medium Cool*, 1969; *Getting Straight*, 1970), but did not specifically address the Selective Service System. Independently-made draft films did what Hollywood and their

¹³ Christian G. Appy, *Working Class War: American Combat Soldiers and Vietnam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 28; Flynn, 180, 235.

¹⁴ Smith, 141–44.

filmic contemporaries on the fringes did not: give narrative space to the Vietnam draft and present characters dealing with the Selective Service System.

The draft films were created by younger and more counterculturally-minded film makers willing to engage with controversial topics like the draft and its implications for young men, the very demographic they hoped to lure into theatres. The draft films released between 1968 and 1972 include *Greetings*, *The Gay Deceivers*, *Alice's Restaurant*, *Explosion*, *Summertree*, *Jenny* and *Drive, He Said*. Many of the film makers involved in these films were either experienced at working outside the bounds of Hollywood, like Bruce Kessler, Arthur Penn and actor-director Jack Nicholson, or they were breaking into the film business like Brian De Palma. Some of the actors involved in the draft films were relative newcomers to film such as Robert De Niro (*Greetings*), Alan Alda (*Jenny*), Karen Black (*Drive, He Said*) and Michael Douglas (*Summertree*). Others were veterans of exploitation films, like Jack Starrett (*The Gay Deceivers*) and Bruce Dern (*Drive, He Said*).

Much of the talent involved in the draft films, from behind and in front of the camera, would go on to become the lifeblood of the revitalization of the American film industry in the seventies. The studio system, which had been in place virtually from the silent era, was entering a state of collapse in the late sixties.¹⁵ The emergence of the Hollywood Renaissance represented a significant change in American film. The Hollywood Renaissance would separate itself from the constraints and conformity of the

¹⁵ For more on the studio system, see Douglas Gomery, *The Hollywood Studio System: A History* (London: BFI Publishing, 2005); and Thomas Schatz, *The Genius of the System: Hollywood Filmmaking in the Studio Era* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988).

studio system. It embraced more independent and auteur-centric film making that was inspired artistically by European cinema and thematically by the ideological foment created by Vietnam and the liberation movements of the sixties.¹⁶

The Hollywood Renaissance was imbued with many of the values and philosophies of the New Left and countercultural lifestyles first cinematically addressed in the zeitgeist and draft films. The draft films' location on the film industry's periphery, and as proto-Hollywood Renaissance productions, imparted many of the films with a certain New Left-youth culture caché that major Hollywood studios lacked. Several of the draft films are representations of the independent, pre-Hollywood Renaissance film making milieu of late sixties and early seventies. *Alice's Restaurant* was based on the lyrics to Arlo Guthrie's 1967 musical monologue, "Alice's Restaurant Massacre." *Alice's Restaurant* was distributed by United Artists, a big-name studio; and it made nearly \$6.5 million at the box office.¹⁷ Despite the mainstream connections, the film had serious countercultural credibility. The son of renowned folk singer Woody Guthrie, Arlo Guthrie had a strong following in folk and New Left music circles. Millions of copies of "Alice's Restaurant Massacre" were sold.¹⁸ The film was directed by Arthur Penn, a film maker who did not

¹⁶ The film movement has also been referred to as the New American Cinema and New Hollywood. See James Bernardoni, *The New Hollywood: What the Movies Did with the New Freedoms of the Seventies* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1991); Geoff King, *New Hollywood Cinema: An Introduction* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002); Steve Neale, "'The Last Good Time We Ever Had?' Revising the Hollywood Renaissance," in *Contemporary American Cinema*, ed. Linda Ruth Williams and Michael Hammond (Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press, 2006), 90–108; and Peter Biskind, *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls: How the Sex-Drugs-and-Rock-N-Roll Generation Saved Hollywood* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998).

¹⁷ "Box Office/Business for: *Alice's Restaurant*," *Internet Movie Database*.
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0064002/business>. Accessed November 21, 2012.

¹⁸ Stephen Birnbaum, "Alice's Restaurant—One More Time," *New York Times*, July 8, 1973, 337.

shy away from provocative material, and was well-known for the violent, counterculture-approved hit *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967).

Drive, He Said was one of actor Jack Nicholson's first directorial efforts.¹⁹

Nicholson was known on the exploitation film circuit for starring in cheap thrillers (*The Cry Baby Killer*, 1958), schlocky horror (*The Little Shop of Horrors*, 1960) and youth pics (*Psych-Out*, 1968). His star-making role was as doomed lawyer George Hanson in 1969's anti-Establishment masterpiece *Easy Rider* (directed by countercultural icon Dennis Hopper). Nicholson was closely associated with *Easy Rider*'s producers, BBS Productions. BBS was an up-and-coming production company and a key voice championing innovation in the creative business of producing movies in Hollywood. Indeed, BBS was on the "hip" vanguard of Hollywood Renaissance film making.²⁰ Nicholson was a key player in several of BBS Productions' early features, including the celebrated film *Five Easy Pieces* (Bob Rafelson, 1970). *Drive, He Said* was based on Jeremy Larner's 1964 novel about college-age angst. Despite Nicholson's countercultural appeal, and distribution through a major studio, Columbia Pictures, *Drive, He Said* only brought in approximately \$800,000 at the box office.²¹

¹⁹ Nicholson was one of the five directors working on the low-budget horror flick, *The Terror* (Roger Corman, 1963), but he did not receive credit.

²⁰ At the time of *Easy Rider*'s release, BBS was known as Raybert Productions. Biskind, 52–53. For more on the history of BBS, see Andrew Schroeder, "The Movement Inside: BBS Films and the Cultural Left in the New Hollywood," in *The World the Sixties Made: Politics and Culture in Recent America*, ed. Van Gosse and Richard Moser (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003), 114–37.

²¹ "Box Office/Business for: *Drive, He Said*," *Internet Movie Database*.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0068509/business>. Accessed November 21, 2012.

The Gay Deceivers was almost as low profile as a film can get, produced and distributed by a little known film company, Fanfare Films. Director Bruce Kessler had helmed a number of episodes of *The Monkees* (1966–68), a youth-oriented pop music television program, and had several exploitation pictures like *Angels from Hell* (1968) and *Killers Three* (1968) to his credit. The film's stars were all relative unknowns: Kevin Coughlin had bounced around in television roles; and Larry Casey was third-lead in the television series *The Rat Patrol*. Jack Starrett was one of the most experienced members of the cast, having appeared in the youth/exploitation film *Hells Angels on Wheels* (Richard Rush, 1967); and he had worked previously with Kessler on *Angels from Hell*.²²

Made on a shoestring budget of approximately \$43,000, *Greetings* was truly an independent film. Brian De Palma and Charles Hirsch, two twenty-something friends influenced by the French New Wave, made *Greetings* on the fly over two weeks in New York City.²³ It was released by a smaller distribution company, Sigma III Corps, and took in over \$1 million in revenue. The film's success, which included the Silver Bear at the Berlin Film Festival, enabled De Palma to continue making films (including a 1970 sequel, *Hi, Mom!*, focusing on De Niro's character).²⁴ *Greetings*' breakout star was Robert De Niro, who, along with Jack Nicholson, is one of the actors most closely associated with the emergence of the Hollywood Renaissance. Movies like *Mean Streets* (Martin Scorsese, 1973), *The Godfather, Part II* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1974) and *Taxi*

²² Starrett appeared alongside Jack Nicholson in *Hells Angels on Wheels* (Richard Rush, 1967).

²³ Joseph Gelmis, *The Film Director as Superstar* (New York: Doubleday, 1970), 25.

²⁴ Gelmis, 25, 28–30; Kevin Thomas, "Movie Review: *Greetings* at the Granada," *Los Angeles Times*, May 21, 1969, D12; Dick Adler, "Hi, Mom, Greetings, It's Brian—In Hollywood," *New York Times*, December 27, 1970, 64; Adam Smith, "The *Empire* Interview: In Conversation with Brian De Palma," *Empire* (April 2008): 119–24.

Driver (Martin Scorsese, 1976) would be quintessential examples of Hollywood Renaissance film making and acting methods.

Draft Films and the Draft

The draft films' overt depiction of the Selective Service System set the movies in a distinct category separate from other youth-oriented, zeitgeist pictures being released in the late sixties and early seventies.²⁵ The draft figures importantly in all the draft films. In every film, major characters have received their induction notices. The character might be the film's protagonist, as in *Alice's Restaurant*, *Summertime* and the trio of buddies in *Greetings*, or the hero's best friend as in *Drive, He Said*. Across the draft films, each character faced with military service chooses avoidance. No one major character willingly goes to war. The tone of the draft films vary. Some draft films, like *Greetings*, take the Selective Service System on for humour, others plumb it for drama. In *Alice's Restaurant*, Arlo Guthrie's time at the Whitehall St. induction centre in New York City is presented as a farcical montage set to the "induction" verse of his hit song.²⁶ Guthrie is a college dropout without the protection of a student deferment. He is saved from induction by a conviction for illegal dumping (that it is for disposing of the remnants of Thanksgiving dinner at a dump closed for the holiday adds to the absurdity). The drama in *Jenny* stems

²⁵ By the late 1960s and early 1970s, mainstream studios, recognizing the profitability in the countercultural milieu after *Easy Rider* and *Bonnie and Clyde*'s box office success, were producing films in an effort to capture a share of the youth market by taking on "edgy" material. These films include *Midnight Cowboy* (John Schlesinger, 1969) and *Zabriskie Point* (Michaelangelo Antonioni, 1969). David E. James, "'The Movies Are a Revolution': Film and the Counterculture," in *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960s and '70s*, ed. Peter Braunstein and Michael William Doyle (New York: Routledge, 2002), 298–300.

²⁶ Guthrie is "playing" himself in the film.

partially from the heroine's unwed motherhood. Though her child isn't his, draft avoider Delano (Alan Alda) considers a shotgun marriage to Jenny (Marlo Thomas) as his ticket out of serving in the military.²⁷ When Delano's deferment is denied and he is classified 1-A (fit for duty), he must choose whether to stay with Jenny and her newborn, or leave for Canada—he heads north.

The draft films present a myriad of potential schemes for avoiding the draft. The story lines follow the avoiders as they contemplate their options and put plans in action. In *Drive, He Said*, the film's lead character, college basket ball star Hector (William Tepper), watches as his best friend and roommate, Gabriel (Michael Margotta), puts his corporeal and psychological well-being at stake by deciding the best way to flunk the induction physical is to go without sleep for a week (with the help of pharmaceuticals).²⁸ Gabriel slowly loses his grip and ends up in the back of an ambulance on the way to a mental institution. Danny Devlin (Kevin Coughlin) and Elliot Crane (Larry Casey) are best friends who have received their induction notices in *The Gay Deceivers*. The film's

²⁷ Delano's belief that marriage and a baby would keep him safe from induction was correct. While President Lyndon Johnson withdrew John F. Kennedy's order that married men be placed at the bottom of induction lists in August 1965, being married *with children* was enough to keep men off the frontlines. However, there was a condition with fatherhood deferments, they were restricted to those men who had not been prior recipients of student deferments. Flynn, 172, 180; Baskir and Strauss, 22–23.

²⁸ In the discussions Hector and Gabriel have about the latter's efforts to flunk his induction physical, Hector's own draft status is never mentioned. It is as if his athletic position protects him (he ruminates for most of the film on whether or not to leave college and join the NBA). There actually may be some truth to this. *Life* magazine's feature on the draft in 1966 includes an article on the NFL's seeming "immunity" with regard to the Selective Service System. Many teams have "military affairs specialists" responsible for getting players signed up for National Guard memberships. Some players, like Joe Namath, fail draft physicals and receive deferments, but their 4-F injuries do not keep them off the field. "Bald Case in Point: Pro Football's Magical Immunity," *Life*, December 9, 1966, 44–45; Baskir and Strauss, 443.

title is apt. The duo pretend to be a homosexual couple to avoid the draft, going so far as to move into an apartment complex with predominantly gay tenants to complete the ruse and satisfy a suspicious army officer, Colonel Dixon (Jack Starrett).

Finally, all of the draft films have their potential inductees choose—avoidance, not resistance. Every character the draft tries to avoid the draft, though not all are successful. In *Greetings*, Lloyd and Paul escape the army by pretending to be gay. They are victorious in that aspect, but as noted in Chapter Two, their fates are not particularly worthy of envy: Lloyd is felled by an assassin's bullet; and a naked Paul is last seen trapped beneath a large woman in a pornographic film. In *The Gay Deceivers*, Danny and Elliot succeed in avoiding the draft despite their charade being discovered. The recruiting officer, Colonel Dixon, is himself gay, and is disappointed that the men are straight; thus, he does not want them in his hand-picked army of gay men. Draft avoidance ends in tragedy for Jerry McAdams (Michael Douglas) in *Summertime*. Having gambled and lost his student deferment by failing to get into music school, Jerry's attempt to flee to Canada is derailed by his pro-military father, Herb (Jack Warden). Jerry ends up on the frontlines in Vietnam. *Summertime* ends with Jerry's body being loaded into a helicopter in a rice paddy. The tragic moment has been captured by television cameras and plays out on the eleven o'clock news.

Subtleties and Silences

In their ideology and politics, the draft films are left-leaning and anti-draft. Indeed, draft evasion is heartedly endorsed. What is peculiar and intriguing about the draft films' potentially radical anti-draft framework is its weak representation and the films' largely laconic approach to what, in essence, is a deeply moral and political choice. The decision

to evade the draft is put forward as a practical, if not defensible, decision in all of the films. Yet, the determination to evade is always presented as an individual choice, cleansed of politics. In this moment, draft evasion becomes draft avoidance and thus, apolitical. This collective silence across the draft films is particularly felt because not one of the characters is truly a draft resister or conscientious objector. They do not attend anti-draft protests or discuss the draft resistance movement. Nor do the filmic avoiders even voice strong opinions about the draft or the Vietnam War. For a number of the characters facing induction, avoiding the draft is taken as a given, representing not a political act, but simply a strategy for continuing their bohemian existences.

The absence of overt politics is curious because the draft films do court young film goers with New Left and countercultural tendencies. The characters across the films are college age, young adults, either in school (*Drive, He Said; Summertree*), just out on their own (*Greetings*) or early in their careers (*Jenny*). Many of the characters inhabit countercultural spaces and use countercultural argot. They dress and move in ways that place them in these same circles. Moreover, most of the draft films either take umbrage with or seek to poke holes in the perceived banality and hypocrisy of the Establishment. Still, none of the draft films voice strong political positions, or align themselves with either the draft resistance or anti-war movements.

None of the friends in *Greetings* appear to be in a state of ideological turmoil when deciding what they will do with regard to their induction notices. As a film made by and starring young men, one could assume that the friends' political perspectives, particularly on the Selective Service System, would be enlightening. Director Brian De Palma admitted in a 1970 interview that the cast and crew were sensitive about filming the draft

sequences because many of them were in the midst of dealing with inductions themselves. Given this intimacy with the subject, the lack of any concrete, politically-oriented discussion on the draft is surprising.²⁹ The film does have several opportunities to provide some insight into the characters' ideological mindsets. Lloyd's (Gerrit Graham) very character seems loaded with ideological potential. His obsession with the Kennedy assassination could make him a radical figure. However, some of that radical patina is removed to allow De Palma to set up Lloyd for comedy. While Lloyd's beliefs are extreme, they are not wholly out of the ordinary when Americans of all stripes had similar notions about the president's death.³⁰ Apart from the Kennedy conspiracy scenes, there is a sequence in which Lloyd could have shared his thoughts on Vietnam and the draft. Lloyd and Jon (Robert De Niro) take an exhausted Paul (Jonathan Warden) on a long walk to keep him awake before his induction physical. While traipsing through the streets of Manhattan, Lloyd regales his friends with a raunchy story about his three-way with college girls. Rather than discuss the reasons why Paul should evade the draft or the horrors that await him should he be inducted, Lloyd manages to lull his friend to sleep with a tale of heterosexual hedonism.

Paul's opportunity for ideological enlighten comes during his conversation with a young newsie selling *Rat*, "New York's new revolutionary newspaper" (an actual underground paper), a scene in which *Greetings* satirizes the Movement and its acolytes. Before we see the newsie, we hear his voice calling out to passers-by, touting the benefits

²⁹ Gelmis, 28.

³⁰ Indeed, as noted in Chapter Two, Lloyd is an early filmic example of the conspiracy nut that would go on to inhabit films in the 1970s such as *The Conversation* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1974) and *The Parallax View* (Alan J. Pakula, 1974).

of reading *Rat* from where to get guns or an an abortion, how to dodge the draft, desert the army and sneak onto the subway—all anti-social, illegal and right out of *Do It!* or *Revolution for the Hell of It*. Interest piqued, Paul stops; and the newsie shows him the paper’s “inverted ads” in which images of napalmed babies and African American men with guns have been superimposed onto advertisements for Chanel and men’s cologne. These ads are “showing it the way it is,” the newsie tells Paul. This way happens to involve weapons and violence. He continues, saying there will be a war starting in the U.S., a pronouncement that takes Paul aback:

Newsie: Yeah, man. A revolution, right here!

Paul: Really!?

The newsie is slightly incredulous that Paul appears not to be aware of what is going on around him. He tells Paul the United States is ruled by a corporate-capitalist power elite that also happens to control the world. Paul is skeptical: “Don’t they have that in every country?,” he asks.

Paul’s interaction with the radical shows he is not particularly invested in being enlightened, or adhering to the mindset of fellow New Leftists. His questioning is based partly in skepticism, with a hint of naivety. The hook of the scene comes at its end when the newsie informs a gathering crowd that the paper can be found at newsstands and purchased for 15 cents—the *Rat* is not wholly anti-capitalism.

Jon comes closest to articulating anxiety over being drafted. His plan is to present himself to the draft board as an incredibly enthusiastic, indeed, fascistic inductee, ready to bring mayhem to the jungle. He plays up his ultra-violent ruse, appearing at the White Hall St. induction centre goose-stepping in army boots and giving strangers sharp salutes.

His tactic falls short and he is drafted. He decides that he needs to leave the United States. Recounting his induction exam experience for a pretty female photographer, Jon's incredulity at failing is tinged with apprehension about what is ahead for him: "I'm trying to get out of the country. I'm not going to stay here."³¹ The photographer's response is a wink at the clichéd insult so often levied at draft avoiders and draft resisters by Vietnam War hawks: "You're not feeling too patriotic are you?" However, Jon does not follow her quasi-indictment with an explanation of why he needs to leave the country. There is no allusion to any political or philosophical motivations behind his decision to go. "Listen, it's not going to be as bad as all that over there," the photographer coos. She is scantily clad, costumed to look like a dishevelled Uncle Sam of sorts—a hippie Lady Liberty. Her attire and flakey attitude mark her as another avatar for the film's anti-Establishment humour. Jon and the photographer end up in bed together. She is the initiator. The young man anxious about going to war is seduced and mollified into accepting his fate by a star-spangled temptress.

In *Drive, He Said* and *Alice's Restaurant*, Gabriel and Arlo Guthrie share vague thoughts on what they see as liberal hypocrisy, the sad state of the nation and the war's injustice. Gabriel is the most "radical" draft avoider in the draft films. Clad in faded denim and leather, with wild, unruly hair and even wilder eyes, Gabriel lives in a clandestine bed-sit under the college gym, the requisite Che Guevara poster on his wall. His drama class puts on a guerrilla theatre protest during one of Hector's basketball

³¹ Part of Jon's anxiety may be located in his lack of control over the situation. As a voyeur, he is usually the one behind the camera, not the object of its gaze—especially in the hands of a female photographer. The roles have uncomfortably reversed for the peeping tom.

games.³² After being arrested at the game, Gabriel voices anti-Establishment mantras. He tells the detention centre officer that the protestors are not in jail, the guards are, and later informs Hector they are all “living in a diseased culture.” The one outwardly radical character in the draft films chooses insomnia and uppers as his gateway to avoidance and thus, freedom. When Gabriel tells Hector why he’s “setting a no sleep record before the draft,” he rejects broader political explanations: “This is no game, you understand? This is death. This is army, war, shoot, blood, fear, kill... I’m taking a stand right here. That’s all there is to it. For me, it is strictly about survival... I’m out to save myself. That’s all.” The outlines of leftist radicalism in Gabriel’s dialogue are really only glimpses. Any true, meaningful action to change more than just his individual situation is missing. Gabriel talks about anti-war sentiments in terms of abstraction, not as personal accomplishments or because of meaningful participation in concrete political feats. Of course, personal survival is not to be dismissed. It is an unspoken component for every filmic draft avoider. Yet, the personal choice to avoid the draft obscures, and overtakes, Gabriel’s radical politics.

Delano’s motive for draft avoidance in *Jenny* echoes Gabriel’s stand for self-preservation. While Gabriel’s speech opened a tiny window on his philosophy (and mental disintegration), Del’s is so tinged with self-absorption that it comes off as selfish and hollow. Delano’s monologue about his decision to avoid the draft is part of his

³² Guerrilla theatre was a popular form of protest across the spectrum of New Left and countercultural organizations in the attempt to bring attention to a myriad of issues from the war, poverty and the universal “squareness” of the materialistic Establishment. Military recruiters were often met with student-led guerrilla performances on college campuses. Flynn, 176. For more on guerrilla theatre as a general protest/communication strategy, see Tim Hodgdon, *Manhood in the Age of Aquarius: Masculinity in Two Countercultural Communities, 1965–83* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

marriage proposal to Jenny, the unwed soon-to-be mother he meets in Central Park. He sees Jenny and her pregnancy as a solution to his induction problem. He says, “I have this problem... I just think this is something we can share. I’ve been inducted into the army and I don’t want to go. I don’t see why my personal freedom should be taken away from me for something I don’t even believe in.” Delano’s reasons for avoiding the draft are really about career and lifestyle. He is an up-and-coming commercial director and would-be writer in New York City who holds court while spouting Jean-Luc Godard to his bohemian friends. Unlike Gabriel, Del’s words do not hold the hint of any true ethical or political undercurrent. After their quickie wedding, Delano treats Jenny abominably, ignoring her entreaties that they behave as a married couple and prepare for the impending birth. The fraudulent marriage does not pass muster with the draft board. Delano is stuck with his 1-A status, and decides to leave Jenny and her newborn for the safety of Canada.

The muddled voices continue in *Alice’s Restaurant* and *Explosion*. In *Alice’s Restaurant*, Arlo Guthrie is rejected by the Selective Service System due to his illegal dumping conviction. Guthrie points out the hypocrisy of being denied access to the killing fields because the state considers littering an “immoral act,” but he does not mount a case to clear his name (this would only put him back in line for induction). He does find it hard to contain his incredulosity at the situation. By the time Guthrie finds his voice, he’s already sitting on the “Group W” bench with the other “morally deficient” rejects, denied the chance to “kill women and children, and burn down villages.”³³

³³ Arlo Guthrie’s actual induction physical took place in 1965, when the Vietnam War draft was just beginning to loom over young American males and minor criminal offences would have meant rejection.

Explosion tells the story of Richie Kovacs and Alan Evans, two draft dodgers in Canada who become fugitives from the law after a botched robbery. Richie (Don Stroud) is a hippie hiding out in British Columbia until Vietnam blows over; and Alan (Gordon Thomson) is a privileged young man who heads to Canada after his brother's death in Vietnam. The film does not have a straightforward political perspective. As Ray Loynd of the *Los Angeles Times* observed, the film "stresses the draft dodger colony in Vancouver without committing itself to a viewpoint."³⁴ *Explosion's* murky political orientation would appear to be intentional. Director Jules Bricken told Loynd he expected "audiences [to] draw their own conclusions."³⁵ In the film, Alan does not so much articulate a thoughtful ideological stance on the war, so much as he parrots his brother, Peter's (Robin Ward) own patchwork of quasi-political statements about resisting the draft. In a flashback, Peter tells Alan that he will be heading to Canada, that leaving will be his "passport to freedom" from induction (and their naval officer father). His explanation for leaving is pat and simplistic, echoing director Bricken's non-committal on *Explosion's* politics: "I'd rather be in exile than a murderer." Later, after Peter's death in Vietnam, Alan accuses Peter's girlfriend, Doris (Michèle Chicoine), of helping their father quash Peter's attempt to avoid the draft. Alan tells her that he has dropped out of college, but losing his student deferment is not a problem because he is "going to do what Peter

Viewed in 1968, Guthrie's littering arrest would have been laughable, especially when such "easy-out" loopholes were quickly closing. Further illustrating this shift in perspective of the draft on film is *The Young Lovers* (Samuel Goldwyn, Jr., 1964). In the film, college student Tarragoo (Nick Adams) receives his draft notice and leaves school to serve. His only real quandary is whether or not to marry his girlfriend before he goes to basic training. There is no discussion of Vietnam and no consideration of evasion.

³⁴ Ray Loynd, "Waikiki Beach Boy: Don Stroud Lands 2 Roles," *Los Angeles Times*, July 11, 1969, D15.

³⁵ Loynd, D15.

wanted to do.” Alan spouts Peter’s faux philosophy, never his own. He is driven to avoid not by some passionate anti-war or anti-draft impulse, but by his increasingly erratic obsession with his brother’s death.

Richie’s political motivations are equally fuzzy. The moments in which Richie talks “politics” are meant for humour, not the character’s ideological development. His first conversation with Alan is loaded with draft resister clichés: “Well, what did you do with it? Burn it? Turn it in? They call you a traitor? Your mother think you’re a Red?” Richie peppers Alan with questions, but, interestingly, Richie does not share what he did with his own draft card. Richie is shown at an anti-draft demonstration, yet this brief scene appears to be the extent of his political activities. When the boarding house manager asks him if he has been working (a requirement for staying there), Richie says that he has been demonstrating and does not want to work at a car wash. Threatened with eviction, Richie demurs, but protests the job offered to him—working on the docks—because of his bad back. Richie’s “true believer” status takes another hit when he informs Alan that being a draft dodger makes it easier to score with the ladies: “Up here, we’ve got it made. It’s the college girls. They’re soft on ideals. We go over big. Political exiles... romantic as hell.” In a film about a two “draft dodgers,” the draft and Vietnam are thrown over for sex and violence.³⁶

It is *Summertree*’s Jerry who comes closest to taking a conscientious stand against the draft and thus, the war, even if it is mainly artifice. Jerry has dropped out of his

³⁶ That the film uses “draft dodgers” to describe its main characters also points to its equivocation with regards to a firm political stance. In and of itself, the term connotes a negative image of the young men saddled with it.

“sensible” college program (Sociology) in the hopes of attending a music conservatory. His father, Herb, is incredibly disappointed, wondering how Jerry will make a living with a silly guitar. Jerry’s risky venture voids his student deferment. His birthday puts his number higher in the draft lottery; his call-up is a near certainty.³⁷ Jerry does not think his ethical issues with the war will be enough to get him exempted through conscientious objection. He argues that, “[the draft board is] not interested in moral reasons. They’re only interested in old time religion.” His moral reasons go unspoken, but registering as a conscientious objector (CO) is an option. In order to qualify as a CO (1-O), Jerry is correct in that he would have to satisfy the draft board that his objection to military service is based on religious belief.³⁸ Forging ahead, Jerry and his friend, and fellow avoider, Bennie (who maintains his 2-S student deferment), meet with a draft counsellor. The counsellor supports Jerry’s plan to pursue CO status. When he tells the counsellor he has already received his notice and induction physical date, the counsellor makes it clear

³⁷ President Lyndon Johnson moved to reform student deferments in 1967, providing blanket deferments for undergraduates, limiting automatic deferments for graduate students and all but eliminating them for graduate students in the social sciences and humanities. The draft lottery began in late 1969. In part, the lottery was based on the hopes that random selection from a “pot” of 19 year olds would improve the Selective Service System’s flawed equity record. Eliot A. Cohen, *Citizens and Soldiers: The Dilemmas of Military Service* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), 165; James M. Gerhardt, *The Draft and Public Policy: Issues in Military Manpower Procurement, 1945–1970* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1971), 342–43; Melvin Small, *Antiwarriors: The Vietnam War and the Battle for America’s Hearts and Minds* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 2002), 63; Flynn, 197, 248.

³⁸ What made obtaining CO status difficult was that the registrant had to claim opposition to all wars, not just Vietnam. During World War II there were 72,000 claims for conscientious objection. Over the course of the Vietnam War, there were more than 170,000 CO registrations granted, and over 300,000 rejections. In 1970-71, the year *Summertime* was released, over 121,000 CO claims were filed. Flynn, 179; Cohen, 165; Gerhardt, 300–03; Small, 63; and Donald Jackson, “Evading the Draft: Who, How and Why,” *Life*, December 9, 1966, 42.

that waiting to register as a CO has put the odds against him. Just as Jerry miscalculated by dropping out of college to audition for music school, he has left dealing with the draft board too late. The counsellor informs him that registering as a CO now could result in a jail term.³⁹ Canada becomes Jerry's next option. The next day he meets a just-returned Vietnam veteran who chides him for leaving the safety of school. He reinforces Jerry's decision to go north, saying, through gritted teeth, "It's bad over there, but wait till you get back, that's the best part." With his induction physical mere hours away, Jerry stops to say goodbye to his parents on the way out of town, but the trip to Canada is routed too when Herb intervenes and makes sure his son gets to the induction centre.⁴⁰ Jerry is as invested in preserving his bohemian lifestyle as the friends in *Greetings* and his anxiety is as palpable as Gabriel's. It is Jerry's articulation of his fears that sets him apart from most of the other filmic avoiders. While he says very little about the war or the draft, his steps toward CO status do stake out a bit of a political, if not ideological, grounding for his character. This stake is very similar to Gabriel's, minus the aggression and mental break. Neither young man believes in the war. Gabriel voices this more clearly than Jerry, but

³⁹ Jerry may have assumed that the draft counsellor was referencing "noncooperation" (1-W), an option for evaders refusing to have anything to do with military service or any alternate form of national service. Noncooperators faced steep fines and up to five years in prison. Jackson, 42; Gerhardt, 300.

⁴⁰ In June 1970, President Richard Nixon issued Executive Order 11537 amending the Selective Service System, so that any draftee failing to appear for a physical examination could be ordered to report for immediate induction, bypassing the examination protocols. If Jerry had missed his physical, his options would again have been severely limited. He would have been left most likely choosing a life in exile or jail. "Information Concerning Pre-Induction Physical Examination Procedures," *Counterdraft* 3:2 (September–October 1970): 19, in Bloom (AC 1966) Alternative Press Collection [Box C32], Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst College Library; Flynn, 183.

the sentiment is there. Both want to live and see avoidance as the course to make that happen. This is about as deep as the draft films' critique of Vietnam runs.

Other aspects of the draft films' socio-political climate are also left unexplored. Issues of class and race are largely ignored in the draft films. All of the main characters are young white men. Whether it be Jerry's comfortable life in college, the *Greetings*' friends' relatively carefree bohemian existence in New York, Alan and Peter enjoying a silver service luncheon in *Explosion*, or Delano's successful directing career in *Jenny*, the draft films' avoiders live privileged lives. Colour, class and the intertwining of the two with Vietnam are only hinted at and glimpsed in the margins. African-American youth wait in line at New York City's White Hall St. induction centre with Arlo Guthrie, and lay in wait for Paul at the "spade" bar where he hopes to get a good enough beating to flunk his draft physical. A drug-addled Gabriel taunts a young black military policeman at his induction physical.

The collision of class, colour and Vietnam are in sharpest relief in *Summertree*. Jerry's volunteer work with a Big Brothers-like organization puts him in contact with Marvis (Kirk Callaway), a 10-year-old African American boy whose brother, Ray, is serving in Vietnam. The film comments little on the racial dynamics between Jerry and Marvis—the snippets that are presented come from Marvis. The young boy offers wry observations on the differences between Ray and Jerry. During their first meeting, Marvis is skeptical over his need for a Big Brother, especially one who is white and smaller than Ray: "I got [a big brother]. He can take you." The scenes in Marvis' neighbourhood are a stark contrast to the McAdams' middle class suburban existence and the safety of Jerry's college campus. Marvis lives an urban life, downtown, with empty store fronts and

football games in alleys. He and Jerry come to an understanding, over money. Marvis finagles a quarter from the naive white boy for a “long distance phone call.” When Marvis sees that Jerry is on to his trick, he says, “Hey, Peckerhead, come and get it.” Marvis’ salty language—he regularly uses the words “shit” and “man”—further mark the circumstances separating Jerry and him. Marvis’ mastery of blue language comes from spending too much time on the streets and having a father who has “cut out.” Jerry’s involvement with the young boy calls to mind the work done by New Left groups such as the Economic Research and Action Project (ERAP, organized by leaders like Tom Hayden and Todd Gitlin) in urban centres. The film only touches on this parallel, but Vanetta (Brenda Vaccaro), Jerry’s girlfriend and a nurse in an urban medical clinic, does wonder out loud if Jerry is with Marvis because he is writing a term paper on “urban problems.” Vanetta also voices a common contemporary complaint about organizations such as ERAP, which is “You do-gooders do more harm than good.”

However, *Summertime* is too concerned with Jerry’s draft predicament to deeply explore Marvis and Ray’s situation. Ray’s death in combat resonates within the film’s world as little more than a clichéd plot point. It aids in cementing Jerry’s decision to avoid the draft, a choice that Ray would not have had. It also ends Jerry’s relationship with Marvis. While lashing out at Jerry, who has come to comfort him, Marvis’ cold attitude toward Jerry points out that there is no way Jerry can understand what Ray’s loss represents. Marvis spits a mouthful of soda at Jerry and then throws the bottle at him. Marvis cries, “What do you want with me, Whitey? Well, screw you, Big Brother!” It comes across in the filmic world as a simple statement of grief and anger. The implications for Marvis’ family, and for Marvis as an African-American youth, go

unspoken, but its resonance with the reality of so many real-world “Marvis” is profound. To a certain extent, Marvis and Ray represented a glimpse of the other and their narratives. Unfortunately, Ray’s death underscores the ultimate absence of the other in so many of the draft films. In the end, Jerry has no words of comfort for Marvis. His relationship with his “little brother” was always fragile; the racial and class dynamics making up this separation remain virtually undisturbed (and unresolved). Jerry calls after Marvis, but the grief-stricken boy silently walks away into the urban landscape that *Summertree* has constructed to define him.

For films revolving around issues like the draft and the Vietnam War, the draft films are light on political pronouncements. There is little debate in the films over why avoidance is the right choice for each avoider. Comedy and drama stem from the “how,” rarely the “why.” In making draft avoidance an easy, if not predictable, decision, the draft films are free to concentrate on the schemes, rather than examine the heavy topics of conscientious objection and the legitimacy of the Vietnam War itself. In a review of *Greetings* for *Esquire*, Wilfred Sheed observed the sport-like essence of the friends’ avoidance strategies. Sheed eschews the war and the draft just like the film does: “Never mind the holiness of their cause—they are willing to wear women’s underwear, lisp, break their legs, anything to keep out of uniform. They do not reject the United States, they try to outwit it.”⁴¹ The *Chicago Defender*’s piece on *Explosion*’s premiere described the film as another “drama probing the restless youth movement.”⁴² There is no mention

⁴¹ Wilfred Sheed, Review of *Greetings*, *Esquire* 71:4 (April 1969), 42.

⁴² “*Explosion* Premieres at the McVickers Theatre,” *Chicago Daily Defender*, April 1, 1970, 13. Other reviews were just as dismissive, see review of *Explosion*, *Variety*, December 24, 1969, 20; Martin Knelman, “Canada’s *Explosion*: More Like a Fizzle,” *Globe and Mail*, December 27, 1969, 22.

that *Explosion* focuses on the criminal exploits of two draft “dodgers.” Instead, the article works to tie the film’s title to the seeming au courant use of explosives as political protest: “explosives are the topic of the moment for those who are at conflict with current headlines.”

Another example of this shift away from the draft can be found in *Greetings*’ promotional materials. The first posters for the film had Uncle Sam as the featured graphic, with a nude girl popping out of his hat.⁴³ Several months later, the advertising campaign had been revised for the film’s bookings at colleges and in Greenwich Village. Now, the scantily clad girl replaced Uncle Sam entirely. As *Variety*’s title on a piece about the changes made clear, “From Draft to Sex Sells for *Greetings*.”⁴⁴ For a film that featured photos of self-immolated monks and LBJ cartoons, it was the live nude girls that proved to be the selling point. In the draft films, hard politics are fragmented and diluted into lifestyle dynamics and individual choice. Collective action through avenues like draft resistance or the anti-war movement appears to have no foothold.

Draft Films, Masculinity and Violence

The draft films’ silence on the subject of war and is supplanted by an intense convergence around preserving the masculinity of their draft avoider heroes. Leaving geopolitics behind, the films wade into gender and sexuality in the task of exploring

⁴³ “Greetings Balks at Second Ad Copy Fix,” *Variety*, December 18, 1968, 18. The *Berkeley Barb*, a leftist newspaper in California, published the Uncle Sam-centric posters in several of its issues in December 1968. See *Greetings* Advertisement, *Berkeley Barb*, December 20–25, 1968, 28; and *Greetings* Advertisement, *Berkeley Barb*, December 27–January 2, 1969, 23, in Bloom (AC 1966), Alternative Press Collection [Box 024], Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst College Library.

⁴⁴ “From Draft to Sex Sells for *Greetings*,” *Variety*, January 22, 1969, 22.

alternative manhood identities for men committed to avoiding the Selective Service System. As discussed in Chapter Two, for many in the male New Left, masculinity was not so easily separated from the ideals of American manhood upheld by the generation of liberal and conservative men whose values they were working to upend. This continuum between the generations was markedly evident in the intersection of masculinity and violence. In their writing, New Left leaders Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin and Tom Hayden made space for violence in their definitions of manliness, advocating for it as an armament against the Establishment. Violence is equally present in the draft films, tightly bound up with the films' configuration of the avoiders' positions on the spectrum of New Left masculinity. Aggression maintains its role as a counterweight to mainstream America's perception of the effeminacy and softness of New Left males. The avoiders may be attempting to shirk military service, something the Establishment holds as a civic, manly duty, but few of the filmic avoiders escape some run-in with violence (actual or philosophical). Through their project of constructing masculine options for avoiders, draft films display a manhood that constantly compensates for rejecting military service with the endorsement of violence at an individual level.

In *Greetings*, Paul's draft avoidance journey demonstrates the charged relationship between masculinity and violence. Paul picks a fight at what he calls a "spade bar," so that he will be physically unable to complete his induction exam. The camera does not follow Paul into the bar, but the audience hears him say: "Which one of you niggers is man enough to take me on?" A scuffle is audible as are Paul's whimpers. This action is wrapped in irony. In one line of dialogue, Paul uses a racial epithet and maligns African-American manhood. Paul is attempting to avoid proving his own masculinity through

combat in Vietnam, while giving the bar patrons the opportunity to prove theirs.⁴⁵ There is more than a whisper of Norman Mailer's "White Negro" here. The film's evocation of African American male aggression is just as stereotypical and racialized as the images in Mailer's essay. De Palma may have intended the scene to be comedic in tone. It is only *Greetings'* opening sequence and sets the comedy for the rest of the film. Paul does not succeed in being incapacitated. He moves on to take up Lloyd's suggestion of pretending to be gay. However, his confrontation in the bar marks Paul's view that violence is the first step required in claiming his individual masculinity.

Across the draft films there is the intimation that the Establishment's embrace of violence is what begot the Vietnam War. This link between political ideology and violence is what Jon hopes will get him out of the draft.⁴⁶ The induction examination routine he rehearses for his friends includes physical and linguistic clues, and stereotypes, just like Lloyd and Paul's homosexual ruse does, but Jon's are tied to the image of an extreme right-wing fascist. Jon goes ultra-militaristic with a black suit, hair slicked back with pomade and army boots he snaps together with a tight salute. He tells them he wants to kill and maim "niggers, Spicks and Jews" serving in the U.S. lines as well as Viet Cong. He conjures a secret, right wing organization that supports his endeavours. He hopes that his over-the-top ultra-extreme performance will have the Selective Service

⁴⁵ Failed bar imbroglio aside, Paul's heterosexuality is on display via the multiple sexual encounters he has throughout the film.

⁴⁶ Jon decision to choose violent tendencies as an evasion strategy is interesting. It could be argued that Jon's sexual proclivities—voyeurism—are extreme, with the threat of sexual violence hanging over all his encounters with women. The possible shift from voyeur to rapist is not to be dismissed.

System showing him the door. The joke is that the army deems “fascist” Jon an ideal candidate for induction: the perfect American army recruit.

A similar ploy is attempted in *Alice’s Restaurant*. When Arlo Guthrie speaks to the Group W sergeant (M. Emmet Walsh), his lines mirror Jon’s: “I want to kill, kill, kill.” Guthrie and the sergeant embrace, jumping around the examination room, a look of elation on the sergeant’s face. Both *Alice’s Restaurant* and *Greetings* push the extreme violence for dark comedy. The idea being that any sane, rational organization (and nation) would and should shun views like Jon’s. However, with Vietnam, the United States has lost control of itself, permitting and sanctioning the extreme behaviour that Jon details in his avoidance rehearsal. The irony is that Jon is trying to avoid joining up with the U.S. military (De Palma’s quintessential secret, violent organization) by calling forth tales of shadowy paramilitary groups. This is doubly apparent when Lloyd’s conspiracy theories and mysterious parking lot assassination are factored in. The black humour is complete at *Greetings*’s conclusion when, in the middle of a Vietnamese rice paddy, a news reporter asks Jon what he is doing there. Jon replies that he does not know what he’s doing in Vietnam. But, he does know what he has to do. Jon has been given orders to “shoot everything.” Jon’s instructions for wholesale violence recall the American military’s “search and destroy” strategy in Vietnam, of measuring progress with body counts over territorial victories. The virulent racism and extreme aggression Jon articulates are also constituent of the U.S. military’s Southeast Asian operations and of American manhood.

By pretending to be a psychopath, Jon inadvertently becomes just what the army wants him to be.⁴⁷

Summertree's Jerry also ends up on the front lines. Jerry's journey to Southeast Asia is precipitated by his own mistakes and his father's intervention. Jerry's relationship with his father, Herb, is central to the film. It represents the generation gap that widened over New Left values and the contentious issues revolving around the Selective Service System. Moreover, the strain in this father-son relationship underscores the importance of military service in certain definitions of American manhood. Herb's views on Jerry's cohort are made clear from the start. His opinions are typical for a man his age, and are meant to reflect the frustration and bewilderment many older Americans felt toward the New Left and the counterculture. When Jerry comes home from college for an unexpected visit, Herb asks if it is because his roommate has "finally [made] a pass" at him. Jerry asks if his father is referring to Bennie (Jeff Siggins), who has long hair. Herb responds, "Yeah, Bennie—the faggoty one." Herb's presumption of Bennie's sexuality is played for humour; however, it also displays the sort of man Herb is, and what his expectations are for the manhood his son should possess. To drive the point home, Herb utters these lines while dressed in full hunting gear, with a rifle in his hand and a brace of dead ducks slung over his shoulder. It is clear where Herb stands—a man with long hair cannot possibly possess the skills to be a hunter or a "real" man.

This tension between countercultural and Establishment masculinity continues with Herb's increasing disappointment with, and disapproval of, Jerry's education. Early in

⁴⁷ Huebner, 172, 176; David Greven, "Misfortune and Men's Eyes: Voyeurism, Sorrow and the Homosocial in Three Early Brian De Palma Films," *Genders: Online Journal* 49 (2009): 20.

Summertree, Herb is not convinced that Jerry's major in Sociology will guarantee him any sort of future employment. Later, when Jerry informs his parents that he wants to focus on music, Herb sees his son's plan to drop out of college for the music conservatory as the folly it is. He is concerned it will open Jerry up to the Selective Service System, and that playing guitar is not a career for a man. Music will make him soft. This concern over Jerry's ability to make his mark on the world as a man puts in motion the events that will see Jerry in Vietnam.

Through Jerry we learn that Herb's position on the war appears to have shifted: "Three years ago, you were hawking it up," Jerry says. In the chronology of the war, this would have been the start of the American expansion in Southeast Asia. Now, however, Vietnam has bogged down 'in country' and on the home front. "The war and interest rates are hurting the economy," Herb complains. He does not support the war—but this does not mean he will let his son flee the draft. As Jerry's plans fall apart, putting him closer to induction, Herb's hawkish nature returns, highlighted through more scenes of hunting. He sees Jerry's decisions as unmanly and unpatriotic. Herb's anxiety over his son's life is overshadowed by fear for his masculinity. Herb believes Jerry's girlfriend is manipulating him. The final straw for Herb is Jerry's decision to go to Canada. When Herb balks, his wife, and Jerry's mother, Ruth (Barbara Bel Geddes), reminds him "that my father came to this country fifty years ago to avoid the draft in Poland." That it is Jerry's maternal grandfather who renounced his citizenship is significant. Ruth does not come from American stock. Evasion and avoidance runs in her blood. To Herb, citizenship, no matter

the reason for its renunciation (like fleeing the Russians or Americans), is sacred.⁴⁸

Jerry's increasing softness comes from his mother. Ruth is not a viper in the Philip Wylie sense, but she has coddled Jerry and Herb blames her too for his decision to avoid the draft.

Herb's own military service is not mentioned in the film. But Jerry's easy dismissal of his citizenship shocks Herb as deeply unpatriotic. Herb's disgust turns into betrayal when he makes sure that Jerry's car will not be road-ready for the trip north to Canada, thus forcing Jerry to attend his induction examination. Herb's desire to see his son "act like a man" leaves him no other route but to send him overseas for the ultimate test. *Summertree* is the only draft film to openly address conscientious objection, which is ironic. Herb is not aware of Jerry's attempt to register as a CO, nor is he aware of his son's appearance on the 11 o'clock news at the end of the film. Herb and Ruth are in bed when the news begins. They talk about the day's events, completely oblivious to the images of war and eventually their son on the television screen in front of them. As Jerry's face is in close up, Herb and Ruth begin to make love. So invested in Jerry's manhood (and his own), Herb pushes his son towards violence. Jerry's death is, in part,

⁴⁸ Renouncing citizenship was an option for young men wanting to resist the draft. One young man contemplating doing just that wrote to *Playboy* for advice on how to go about doing it. *Playboy* suggested that the young man would be better to resist the draft with his citizenship intact and "go to the polls and vote your feelings," i.e., use his rights as a citizen before "discarding" them. In *Summertree*, Jerry's admission that he would be okay with renouncing his citizenship is presented rather matter-of-factly, lacking the weight such a decision would have. There is no real conviction in his voice or evidence that he has put much thought into what it would mean. *Playboy's* warning to the draft resister would be well to be considered by Jerry as well: "the penalties in some instances maybe more severe than losing your citizenship." "The *Playboy* Advisor," *Playboy* 19:10 (October 1972): 49.

due to his father's belief in the necessity of violence in masculinity. Something Herb saw as lacking in the counterculture and, ultimately, in his son.

In *Explosion*, Alan and Peter's father is also of Herb's generation and shares many of his views when it comes to Peter's draft avoidance. In the film's flashback sequences, Mr. Evans (Cec Linder) blasts Peter's avoidance plans, proclaiming his patriarchal right to quash his son's hopes at a life in Canada: "I won't allow it, do you hear me? I won't allow it!" He is incredulous at what he perceives as his son's cowardice. Mr. Evans is also concerned that his son's dereliction of military duty will reflect poorly on his reputation: "Running away with your tail between your legs. What do you expect me to say when they find out my oldest son is a draft dodger?" Mr. Evans is, of course, a veteran—a navy man. Though his rank is not revealed, a grand portrait of Mr. Evans in his oak-paneled study shows him in full uniform, chest gleaming with medals. He declares Peter's lukewarm pacifism a cover for spinelessness: "You're no pacifist. You're not against war. You're against this one because you don't want to be killed... [You're] pretending you don't want to kill women and children in rice paddies. The truth is you don't want to be killed in a rice paddy." Peter hits back, saying Mr. Evans must think him "a coward." His father's retort is meant to sting: "What's so special about you? You won't be the only scared soldier in Uncle Sam's army!" Mr. Evans wins the argument, and Peter heads to his death in Vietnam.

Later in the film, college-dropout Alan ruefully observes that now he is the "bad investment" in his father's eyes, not Peter. His older brother "is a hero" for losing his life and gaining his manhood on the battlefield. Just as Herb feared that Jerry's masculinity would suffer if he dodged the draft, Mr. Evans' need to see Peter in uniform (in part for

the sanctity of his personal desire to conform) hooks into the type of manhood his own military experience prescribed. By insisting that their sons follow the paths of what Mr. Evans and Herb believed to be righteous manliness, both fathers can claim their sons as heroes, but with their lives as the cost.

Gabriel in *Drive, He Said* is a case study in the bond between certain articulations of New Left masculinity and violence. He is the most radical character in the draft films. Gabriel is not a hippie like the countercultural archetypes in *Alice's Restaurant* or the harmless kooky conspiracy fanatics Lloyd embodies in *Greetings*. Gabriel is a personification of the aggression and instability that marked the chaotic later years of the New Left. Gabriel's introduction in the film sets him up to be interpreted this way. As Gabriel's friend, Hector and his team play a basketball game in front of a packed arena, Gabriel and other young radicals prepare to stage a takeover. They emerge amongst the spectators, waving rifles and wearing ammunition belts. As a young Asian woman is held down with a gun pointed at her head at centre court, a voice on the loud speaker announces that the game "has been interrupted for national security." Campus guards and local constabulary enter the gym ending what turns out to be only an exercise in guerrilla theatre put on by the college's drama class. This pretend violence at a sporting event (which itself celebrates masculine competition and aggression) strikes at the tradition of communal events. The radicals are transgressing the sanctity of a national pastime, using terror to explode shared expectations of security.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ In a way, *Drive, He Said* is ahead of the curve, just as *Greetings* was in terms of presenting Kennedy assassination conspiracy theorists. The theme of terrorism at a sporting event plays out in *Black Sunday* (John Frankenheimer, 1977) in which terrorists plot to detonate the Goodyear Blimp over the Super Bowl.

This mantle of aggression never leaves Gabriel. From the tone of his voice to his style of dress, he is the embodiment of the New Left's so-called "Days of Rage."⁵⁰ Gabriel's efforts to avoid the draft through pharmaceutically-induced insomnia increase the level of instability and violence that surrounds his character. Gabriel's violent outbursts are highly sexualized. He aims a toy rifle at his naked girlfriend, shining a flashlight in her face. Pulling the trigger, he tells her "You have really nice tits, baby." She responds with, "Boy, you really, really make me feel awful." With a snarl, Gabriel says, "I don't make you feel anything!" Gabriel voices the nihilism and emptiness that will take over his life. He casually "shoots" his girlfriend with the toy weapon, objectifying her naked body with the flash light, the beam carving her into disjointed parts. This parallels Lloyd's similar objectionable exploitation of his naked girlfriend in *Greetings'* "autopsy" scene. The actions of both men suggest a connection between sex and violence, and the easy sexism of the New Left. Moreover, as both men, to varying degrees, contemplate avoidance strategies that could impact their masculinity (Lloyd via his homosexual fraud and Gabriel through his use of pharmaceuticals), the films give them scenes that display a certain celebration of, or see a kind of titillation, in misogyny.

The brains behind the bomb is a disgruntled Vietnam veteran played by Bruce Dern, who appears in *Drive, He Said* as Coach Bullion.

⁵⁰ "Days of Rage" refers to participant-observer Todd Gitlin's key work on the New Left, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (1987) and the actual Days of Rage, a three-day violence-fuelled protest in October 1969. In an effort to "bring the war home," the Weather Underground (a pro-violence faction of SDS) virtually shut down Chicago, committing acts of vandalism and assaults on authorities. See the chapter "The Importance of Being Militant: The Days of Rage and Their Critics," in Jeremy Varon, *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 74–112.

Gabriel's ennui continues throughout *Drive, He Said* and appears to be driven by the women he encounters. He is particularly rankled by Hector's involvement with Olive (Karen Black), a dance student at the college who is involved with both his best friend and a professor. Gabriel believes Hector's identity crisis—does he really want to play basketball for the rest of his life?—is because he has “been done in by a bitch.” As the insomnia and pharmaceuticals take their toll, Gabriel's mental disintegration is matched by a surge in aggression. He loses control of his life even though his violence-laden performance at the draft board appears to have succeeded. Olive becomes the object of his now hyper-sexualized violence. Having experienced some sexual dysfunction with his girlfriend (he tells Hector that he “came too soon”), Gabriel believes taking complete physical and sexual control over Olive will redeem his manhood and save Hector's.⁵¹ He breaks into Olive's home with a knife and attempts to rape her. Gabriel's behaviour verges on animalistic, an impression enhanced by the oversized raccoon skin hat pulled down over his head. Olive manages to escape the house with Gabriel on her heels. He yells at Hector, who has arrived via taxi in time to be Olive's saviour: “She's a bitch... turns you on then leaves you cold.” The idea that a modern woman of the counterculture has no desire to sleep with a radical bad boy like him leaves Gabriel even more on edge. The next morning, he is nude running through campus. He enters a biology classroom, setting all the animals free. As ambulance attendants come to take him away, Gabriel

⁵¹ Gabriel's belief that the core of his manhood comes down, in part, to sex reflect Elliot's same concern in *The Gay Deceivers*. Elliot thinks that pretending to be gay for too long will change his sexual preferences, thus he must have intercourse with a woman to stop the transformation.

chants, “I’m sane. I am sane. I’ve straightened out.” Whether this means the medication has worn off or that he has completely lost reality, violence has brought him to this place.

Also lost to violence is *Explosion*’s Alan. Even before he heads to Vancouver, it is clear that Alan is an unstable young man. On first appearance, Alan seems to be thoughtful and sensitive. He walks around an empty industrial park, long abandoned and overgrown. Alan’s inner monologue tells the audience he is visiting the places where he and Peter used to play as children. But it is soon apparent that Alan is not what he seems. The first act of violence he commits is brutal and sexual. Alan believes that Doris, Peter’s girlfriend, had a hand in his brother’s death because she refused to go to Canada with him. Alan attacks Doris. Wild-eyed, he breathlessly proclaims, “I could kill you for Peter!” As he begins to rip at her clothes, Alan screams, “You killed Peter, you bitch!” Alan’s fury is blunted by Doris’ insistence that he should violate her because “That’s what you wanted all along—what I gave Peter! Come on... Come on... Come and take it!” Her taunts are powerful and stop Alan. That he wanted to rape and possibly kill Doris is clear, but was it based on some sort of violently misguided attempt at avenging his brother? An even darker impulse for Alan’s violence would be that Doris, a woman, had the power to break down his brother, leading him away from his “pacifism.” This echoes not only Gabriel’s perception of Olive as the spark for Hector’s crisis of conscience in *Drive, He Said*, but also Gabriel’s twisted belief that Olive’s rape and murder would set his best friend on the right path in life. In Alan’s eyes, Doris’ death is a step toward setting Peter’s lost soul free.

In a conversation with Doris, Alan’s psychiatrist, Dr. Neal (Richard Conte), admits he is well aware that Alan is “dangerous.” Appealing for Doris’ patience, Dr. Neal

declares that at this stage in his treatment, Alan “must be allowed to act out his problems.” This entreaty dismisses Doris’ sexual assault and Alan’s expressed desire to kill her. It also clumsily attempts to diminish Alan’s violent behaviour as a necessary element in overcoming Peter’s death. Flashbacks to Doris and his father spur Alan to choose violence. He kills two police officers during a botched theft, forcing him and Richie to go on the run. Yet, the film continues to absolve Alan of responsibility by revealing that he is not a draft dodger, but has been rejected from service, as his psychiatrist says, because the Selective Service System has found him “mentally and emotionally disturbed.”⁵² With Alan’s mental state exposed, he is free to continue “acting out his problems.” He kills a mechanic who refuses to rent a car to the fugitives, and contemplates killing the owners of a logging camp where the two hide out.

Alan’s deepening embrace of violence makes him a stronger presence in the film. His “soft,” privileged appearance hardens, toughens until there are no second thoughts on what to do to any obstacles (meaning people) in his path. Richie is able to temper Alan’s murderous impulse at the camp, persuading him to leave. An armed search party and police helicopter chase the two into the mountainous forest. Alan is almost gleeful at making it to the mountain top: “We’re going to win. We know how to get to the other side.” Richie ruefully points out “the other side is still Canada.” In his final hallucination, Alan sees Viet Cong taking aim at him from the forest. He opens fire, yelling, “You killed

⁵² Dr. Neal describes Alan’s 1-Y classification as an exemption for being “mentally and emotionally disturbed.” The official Selective Service definition for 1-Y is “unqualified for duty except in time of a declared war or national emergency.” Flynn, 172–73; “Military Classifications for Draftees,” *Swarthmore Peace Collection*, www.swarthmore.edu/library/peace/conscientiousobjection/MilitaryClassifications.htm. Accessed October 16, 2014.

Peter! You killed Peter!” In reality, the “Viet Cong” are the search party who mortally wound Alan. Richie cradles his dying friend. This tableau is reminiscent of death scenes in war films—the fallen hero tenderly held in the arms of a grieving comrade. *Explosion* presents Alan as a sympathetic character, his mental break, and all the crimes issuing from it, connect to a strict father and dead brother. Alan uses Peter’s callow anti-war dialogue to explain his own aggression. What Alan loses sight of, or becomes psychologically numb to, is that even while Peter’s philosophical protestations were weak, he saw Canada as a place of freedom where he could work to end the war. Peter would not want his legacy tied to wanton mayhem and bloodshed.

Violence comes to mean different things in different draft films. At the simplest level, for Alan, violence is the outlet for his grief. In *Greetings*, Lloyd’s life devolves until he cares only about the Kennedy assassination (an individual act of violence). Gabriel’s existence in *Drive, He Said* narrows until it is only about sex and aggression. Alan, Lloyd and Gabriel have chosen avoidance strategies that could impact their individual masculinity. While Lloyd’s heterosexuality is perhaps recuperated by his ménage à trois story, Alan’s sexuality is usurped by his violent obsession with fulfilling his brother’s avoidance plans and Gabriel has put his sexuality under intense pressure. Gabriel’s sexual dysfunction grows as the pharmaceuticals that are supposed to save him from military service take a physical and psychological toll. *Greetings* and *Drive, He Said* poke more overtly at the avoiders’ masculinity than *Explosion*. The films provide Lloyd and Gabriel with scenes that display a certain celebration of, or see a kind of titillation in, misogyny. For Lloyd, it is play-acting and comes from comedy, but for Gabriel, his attempt to rape Olive permits violence to consume his radical persona. To a large extent,

Alan's mental deterioration elides his violence, but his crimes reflect the ease with which brutality could become an outlet for youth frustration. The individualized violence perpetrated against Lloyd in the parking lot and perpetrated by Gabriel and Alan, harken to the psychopathic violence haunting American manhood in Mailer's "White Negro" and the fascistic masculinity that Jon draws upon in his failed avoidance attempt. In *Explosion*, *Greetings* and *Drive, He Said*, this pathologized manhood obscures and replaces critiques of the larger collective violence in Vietnam.

Draft Films and the Homosexual Hoax

Nowhere is the draft films' preoccupation with masculinity and sex more obvious than in their treatment of homosexuality. Homosexuality is referenced in every one of the draft films, and in many of the films, takes centre stage. In particular, the draft films return again and again to the idea that, by pretending to be gay, a straight man might escape the draft. Obviously, this trope linked draft evasion with homosexuality in the public mind. But the draft films lavish so much time and attention on the spectacle of straight men acting gay that one must wonder exactly which way that link went. Did the draft provide straight men with an opportunity to act gay, or imagine themselves as gay?

The official Department of Defense policy was to exclude homosexuals from serving in the armed forces; thus, claiming to be a homosexual was believed to be grounds for a psychiatric exemption.⁵³ As the Vietnam draft ramped up, "queering out" became part of the retinue of methods draft counselling centres suggested for avoiding

⁵³ Randy Shilts, *Conduct Unbecoming: Gays and Lesbians in the U.S. Military* (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1994), 65; Baskir and Strauss, 45.

induction.⁵⁴ *The Realist*, a radical magazine, proclaimed “hoaxosexual[ity]” the perfect duck out: “Trick knees, bad backs, migraines, etc. are so hackneyed by now that they’re generally ignored altogether... Homosexuality is the bomb that unhinges the escape hatch for any and all disgruntled draftees...”⁵⁵

The use of homosexuality as a method for avoiding the draft should not be overestimated. The statistics for specific Selective Service exemption categories are spotty, and “hoaxosexual narratives” rest on anecdotal evidence from draft avoiders/resisters and draft counsellors. Journalist Randy Shilts reports that five million men were exempted during the Vietnam War because of their draft physicals, but only one percent of those deferrals was because of “moral defect,” the broad category in which homosexuals were included. Sherry Gershon Gottlieb states that no numbers are available as to how many men who ducked the draft by claiming to be homosexual were actually gay—but believes the numbers to be very low.⁵⁶ The homosexual hoax was certainly on the anti-draft radar, and appeared in draft evasion instruction pamphlets.⁵⁷ Because the armed forces did not have a clear definition of homosexuality, local draft boards were not governed by national criteria for dealing with homosexual draftees.⁵⁸ To combat

⁵⁴ Justin David Suran, “Coming Out Against the War: Antimilitarism and the Politicization of Homosexuality in the Era of Vietnam,” *American Quarterly* 53:3 (September 2001): 461.

⁵⁵ Shilts, 67.

⁵⁶ Shilts, 68; Sherry Gershon Gottlieb, *Hell No, We Won't Go: Resisting the Draft During the Vietnam War* (New York: Viking, 1991), 104.

⁵⁷ Melvin Small, *Antiwarriors: The Vietnam War and the Battle for America's Hearts and Minds* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Books, 2002), 63.

⁵⁸ Suran, 461–62. The definition of homosexuality used by the military, which Suran quotes, is quite broad: “Character and behavior disorders, as evidenced by overt homosexuality or other forms of sexual deviant practices [sic] such as exhibitionism, transvestism, voyeurism, etc.” (462).

fraudulent claims of homosexuality (and in a subtle acknowledgment that in times of war bodies are bodies no matter their sexual orientation), the Pentagon put out a directive in 1966 that instructed local draft boards to require proof of homosexual acts. Though the Defense Department denies such an instruction existed, in 1966 many draft boards did begin to insist on testimonials, affidavits from sexual partners and letters from psychiatrists confirming a potential draftee's homosexuality.⁵⁹ With the war seemingly never ending and more bodies needed to supply the war machine, it did become more challenging to claim homosexuality for deferment. The irony being that gay men seeking deferments had great difficulty assuring draft boards that they were indeed the real deal.

But if draft deferrals on the grounds of homosexuality appear to be rare in real life, on film they were extremely common. The whole plot of *The Gay Deceivers* centres around the homosexual hoax, playing gay is an important part of *Greetings* and factors in in *Alice's Restaurant*, *Summertime*, *Drive*, *He Said* and *Explosion*. Popular culture and the counterculture of draft avoidance were plainly preoccupied with the subject to a degree that had little to do with its real life frequency. The phenomenon's mythic status has been conferred upon it by popular culture imaginings of draft avoidance (including every single draft film) lavishing attention on the gendered hijinks manufactured by straight men pretending to be gay.

Literary scholar David Greven argues that *Greetings*, and several of Brian De Palma's early films, anticipate queer theorist Judith Butler's work on gender as performance. The same could be said of *The Gay Deceivers* and the other draft films. A central thread in Butler's analyses of heterosexuality, homosexuality and gender is that

⁵⁹ Shilts, 65; Suran 461.

heterosexuality requires that homosexuality be abjected as a location for gender performance.⁶⁰ This debasement occurs so that heterosexuality becomes a unifying norm, residing in a place of consistency and dominance. Thus, in trying to communicate a New Left manhood ideal that accepts—even embraces—homosexual role-playing by heterosexual men, the draft films must denigrate the “real” homosexuality as the position that heterosexuality defines itself against and ultimately excludes. Put another way, the essentialized heterosexuality practiced in the draft films is constructed to be “the original, the true, the authentic,” the default for what expectations of straight, i.e., “real” men must be.⁶¹

Greetings features an extended conversation revolving around homosexuality and the draft. In fact, it could be categorized as a how-to lesson for any young man hoping to trick the draft board by pretending to be gay. Lloyd, with Jon’s help, counsels Paul on how to pretend to be gay for the draft board. Lloyd has already been successful using the ploy and he puts Paul through the paces. The “paces” are meticulous and include every homosexual stereotype. It is all played for laughs. The lengthy sequence begins with a montage of shots in a clothing store where a male customer is admiring the merchandise at a display case next to the action. The customer is clothed in colourful, feminized attire, and his body language intimates that he is most likely gay. Declaring that “fags are really

⁶⁰ Greven, 5–6. Greven argues that *Greetings, Hi, Mom!* (1970) and *Get to Know Your Rabbit* (1972), De Palma’s first three feature films, anticipate Butler’s work in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990) and *Bodies That Matter: On The Discursive Limits of “Sex”* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

⁶¹ Judith Butler, “Imitation and Gender Insubordination,” in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, ed. Henry Abelove, Michèle Aina Barale and David M. Halperin (New York: Routledge, 1993), 312; Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 206–9.

blatant,” Lloyd walks Paul through potential outfits. Hiking up Paul’s pants, Lloyd tells him to accentuate his genitals. Lloyd and Jon suggest he wear black lace panties, stuffed with a sock, so that the “focus will be on the crucial area.” As David Greven points out, the process of “making a fag” out of Paul involves a level of physical intimacy amongst the friends that in other situations would be suspect.⁶² Lloyd and Jon touch Paul’s clothing and advise he wear sexualized clothing like lace panties and mesh shirts. Lloyd implores Paul to remove his body hair with Nair—a hair removal product for women—particularly if he wears a knit shirt. In the next scene, Lloyd and Jon help Paul with the physical aspects of his performance. Lloyd re-enacts his own induction routine, walking with a wiggle, a limp wrist and a coy look on his face. He tells Paul to acknowledge the other inductees in the room. Prescribing the greeting, “Hi, fellas,” Lloyd’s instruction includes the finer points of homosexual “speak”—a slight lisp in a higher, softer octave. Calling himself “Geranium,” Paul rehearses, earning enthusiastic kudos from Lloyd. The physical and linguistic lesson in homosexual stereotypes comes together with the clichéd sexually-insatiable nature of the gay male. Jon, playing the army recruiter, asks Paul where he lives. When Paul hesitates, Lloyd suggests saying that he lives “around” because “You know, you want to live around with *him*.” This intimation of Paul being a homosexual man with a sexual appetite hits his heterosexual fears (and pride) too hard. Paul registers his objection to the ruse: “Aw, they’re going to stick me in the front lines with the rest of the fags... You know, to give them their honour back.” Both Paul and Don voice the opinion (out of apprehension for one and humour for the other) that homosexuals are lesser men whose masculine honour requires restoration, preferably via

⁶² Greven, 16.

the strict discipline of the army and by extension, combat. Throughout the sequence homosexuality is abjected. This derision smooths and soothes the gender issues presented by Lloyd's confident knowledge of gay culture and personal success at assuming a gay identity.⁶³ *Greetings* makes sure to leave no doubt that Paul and Lloyd are secure in their manhoods. To counterbalance their self-preserving sexual transgression, the draft discussion is followed by Lloyd's long and graphic tale of a threesome with randy girls from Barnard College, and Paul spends the rest of the film making a case for heterosexual male promiscuity in his bedding of a series of blind dates.

As in *Greetings*, pretending to be gay in the other draft films was intended to have audiences in stitches. While Gabriel's radical countenance in *Drive, He Said* is as a rather humourless radical, there is a moment of intended humour during his induction physical. Initially refusing to comply with instructions for a rectal exam, Gabriel suddenly kisses the doctor, happily bends over and says, "Get to work." In *Alice's Restaurant*, when Guthrie registers with the Whitehall St. draft board, the young man behind him is knitting. The man sashays up to the counter when his name is called. Later, an underwear-clad Guthrie is led to the Group W benches, which the song lyrics playing over the scenes tells the audience is a room full of "mother rapers... father stabbers," i.e., all-round violent sexual deviants that the camera captures as young men in full make-up and earrings. Guthrie may have been tagged as a fringe element in Montana, but the real freaks are at Whitehall St., and he's not one of them.⁶⁴ In *Summertree*, Jerry contemplates

⁶³ Greven, 16.

⁶⁴ These young men are playing parts as well, dressing and behaving in ways they think sexual deviants might. The assumption, of course, just as in *Greetings* and *The Gay Deceivers*, is that gay men wear make-up, earrings and have a flamboyant fashion sense.

his avoidance options with his friends over beers. They joke about his plans. It does not take long for the humour to turn sexual. One tells him he should inform the draft board he has syphilis, a nod to promiscuity and immoral behaviour, but also multiple bedpost notches. His former roommate, Don (Rob Reiner) takes the sexual subterfuge further. He tells Jerry he should “play gay... tell them you’re a queer.” It should work because “in Texas, there’s a platoon just for faggots”—as if homosexuality was something that could be turned on and off, and required segregation from the general military population. Jerry laughs it off and gives his older girlfriend a look and a squeeze, as if to say, no worries, you know I’m not like that.

In *Explosion*, Alan, privileged and square, does not fit in with the countercultural types at the draft dodger boarding house. He “escapes” to Canada with hair above the collar, dressed in a buttoned-down shirt with a camel-hair overcoat complete with paisley-print silk scarf. His appearance piques bell-bottomed Richie’s interest. Richie might see Alan as an easy grift, but the first question he asks is: “Hey, you’re not a queer are you?” Only after Alan assures Richie that he is not, does Richie invite him to be his roommate. Later, after the pair has stolen the sports car and holed up in a resort, they joke around with the car owner’s luggage. Richie dances around the room wearing a woman’s blonde wig. He then holds up an evening gown in front of Alan, who admires himself in the mirror. Alan affects a fey voice and a limp wrist, proclaiming he looks “mah-vellous,” while pulling on a long black opera glove. They fall onto the beds, laughing. The sequence devolves into an emotional Richie describing his “slob” of a mother. Alan acts out a cadet drill that he learned in military school with the rifle from the sports car’s trunk. The lapse into cross-dressing and stereotypical feminine posturing is mitigated by

the scene's comedic intent, which serves as a sloppy segue into the friends sharing stories of miserable childhoods. The rifle is a reminder that violence and mental instability are never far from Alan.

The draft films infuse the homosexual hoax with gender-coded levity, but the humour has a dark ancillary that undercuts the jocularity. On screen and off, outside the walls of induction centres and beyond the draft board, homosexuality is maligned. It is weaponized in an attempt to impugn the masculinity of its target. In *Alice's Restaurant*, Arlo Guthrie has been attending college in Montana (he later drops out). He is menaced in a pizza shop by a couple of cowboys. One inquires of him, "Hey Honey, where's your long-haired girlfriend? I was thinking of asking you two for a date." This is clearly meant to show the small-mindedness and intolerance of small-town toughs who cannot abide a "long hair" in their midst. Their go-to insult jabs at Guthrie's supposed femininity, marking him as soft and thus, queer. It takes an attempt at stealing his foppish hat to spur him to action, but Guthrie takes a swing at them. Anticipating Guthrie to be the meek and weak man his hairstyle and floppy hat have projected (and stereotypically expected of a gay man), the punks are surprised by his reaction. Though he is repaid with a toss through the restaurant window, Guthrie's manhood is reanimated by engaging in the manly art of fisticuffs.

The filmic avoiders are not always on the receiving end of a sexualized taunt. Draft films are New Left-oriented. However, the fact that their characters are the originators of dialogue with homophobic connotations, underscores the point that draft films often present notions of homosexuality that are not all that different from those of the un-enlightened denizens of mainstream America and all too common in many New Left

circles. *Drive, He Said's* Gabriel is the picture of this New Left masculinity and his sexualized language serves to complete the image. After Gabriel's release from the detention centre, he tells Hector about his time in jail. Gabriel laughs, recalling that he really "freaked out" the cops at the detention centre by saying their hostility towards him was based on their "projected homosexual fears." Gabriel continues this line of homophobic attack during his induction physical when he yells at the military police officer keeping the draftees in line: "You're a fag. You're just a fag, man." When the MP, who is no older than Gabriel, threatens to rearrange his face, Gabriel's tirade intensifies. Again affronting the soldier's sexuality, he leaps on a chair, yelling, "What do you do? Do you stand in here and dig on all these little boys' lizards?" Gabriel's pseudo-psychological sexual observations bring to mind Abbie Hoffman's use of "fag" and similar sexualized brickbats in his indictment of the authorities' sexuality (and the buttressing of his own) in *Revolution for the Hell of It*.⁶⁵ It is clear from Gabriel's behaviour throughout the induction physical sequence that, while the goal is to unhinge the staff, his performance registers as increasingly unhinged. Gabriel hits out at easy targets. The easiest place to strike is at an opponent's sexuality, particularly when that opponent's status is based on militarism—something many in the male New Left countered with machismo and masculinism. Michael S. Foley discusses an example of just such masculinism and its damaging impact on the culture of the New Left, specifically with regard to draft resistance, in *Confronting the War Machine*. He tells the

⁶⁵ Abbie Hoffman, *Revolution for the Hell of It* (New York: Dial Press, 1968), 96–97. Terence Kissack notes that this heterosexist line of attack was a way for New Leftists and radicals whose manhood was under siege to claim the "masculine high ground." Terence Kissack, "Freaking Fag Revolutionaries: New York's Gay Liberation Front, 1969–1971," *Radical History Review* 62 (1995): 112.

story of Peter Schenck, a gay Boston University student, who believed that turning in his draft card would give him the opportunity to be part of a community of draft resisters with shared experiences and goals.⁶⁶ Schenck soon realized that the Resistance was not inclusive at all, but quite the opposite. Seeking advice after being contacted by the FBI, Schenck visited the Resistance's office. There he was faced with a group of draft resisters "telling fag jokes," and whose conversation was liberally peppered with "faggot" and "cocksucker."⁶⁷ Disillusioned, Schenck left and never returned. While Foley acknowledges that it is difficult to know how common Schenck's story was, he notes that in his analysis of the Boston Resistance (the most highly organized draft resistance group in the U.S.), there were no openly gay men (or women) actively participating in its programs.

The Draft and the Vietnam War, a 1966 book that analyses the draft and collected information on how to evade induction, includes feigning homosexuality as a possible method. The book's description on how to do it is remarkably similar to Lloyd's recipe for turning Paul into a "fag," right down to the requisite digs at homosexuality as effeminate and abject: "There are more homosexuals these days than homosexuality, and the draft scare will do nothing to settle the dispute over whether the deviants are more numerous or just more talkative. Some of the popular prescriptions for deferment seem a little far-fetched: 'Wear lace panties to your physical.' 'Give the psychiatrist a great big kiss.'"⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Michael S. Foley, *Confronting the War Machine: Draft Resistance during the Vietnam War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 184.

⁶⁷ Peter Schenck, as quoted in Foley, 101.

⁶⁸ Jaquin Sanders, *The Draft and the Vietnam War* (New York: Walker and Company, 1966), 85.

The trick was to “perform” homosexuality in a way that aligned with how army medical personnel psychologized gay men and their “aberrant” behaviour, i.e., “ful[fil] the heterosexual fantasies of homosexuality.”⁶⁹ In other words, the men performed the stereotypes that were bound up in effeminacy and flamboyance, just as in the draft films. David Greven reads this performance through a lens that reflects back on the socio-cultural position of the men who feigned homosexuality for avoidance. Heterosexual men’s “uncanny familiarity with social and aesthetic capacities of ‘fagdom,’” as Greven sees it, marks them as an “endangered” species of sorts.⁷⁰ The friends in *Greetings* and real-life avoiders hoping to avoid service through a gay masquerade are themselves, as New Left males, on the edges of “straight male culture.” They gain benefits from cloaking themselves in homosexuality identities, but concomitantly disparage that safe haven as a consolatory measure to lock down any concerns that the performance might fail. If the performance faltered, avoiders would be forced into a different sort of role playing, that of the compulsory masculinity required on the battlefield.⁷¹

The Gay Deceivers

The central assumption behind the homosexual ploy performed by draft avoiders was that claims of homosexuality would proffer protection from entanglement with the

⁶⁹ Suran, 462. Randy Shilts observes the irony of the situation for many gay men who declared their sexual orientation on their draft registration and before their draft boards (67–68). These men were more likely to be drafted than heterosexual men “playing” gay because they did not conform to the army physicians’ stereotypical conceptions of homosexual behaviour. Indeed, Shilts argues that heterosexual men were more likely to “confess” their homosexuality than gay men because they were largely ignorant of the prejudice and intolerance shouldered by openly gay American males.

⁷⁰ Greven, 15.

⁷¹ Greven, 16.

Selective Service System both on and off the screen.⁷² This was rooted in the belief that homosexual men were somehow lesser than their heterosexual counterparts, and that heterosexuality was a naturalized state.⁷³ *The Gay Deceivers* takes this avoidance trope and turns it into a sex comedy. The film is an oddity. It contains stereotypes and misinformation about homosexuality, but it does so in a way that is simultaneously bigoted, unintentionally enlightened and tongue-in-cheek.

The Gay Deceivers takes the form of a classic sex comedy fuelled by mistaken identities and misinformation. Danny Devlin, a soon-to-be law school student, and Elliot Crane, a heartthrob lifeguard at Danny's parents' country club, need to get out of the draft. Like Paul and Lloyd in *Greetings*, these heterosexual young men choose a homosexual ruse. Danny and Elliot go to the induction centre together, as a "couple," and claim that they want to join the army, but only if they can serve together. They could not bear to be separated. They hold hands and gaze at each other adoringly in front of Colonel Dixon, the recruiting officer. Danny and Elliot are bombarded with questions about their sexuality by the induction centre's psychiatrist (Mike Kopcha). The psychiatrist's examination strikes the typical gay misidentifications and conventions. He quizzes the young men about their predilections for pedophilia, asks them to critique a pin-up shot

⁷² Though homosexuality was grounds for a psychiatric exemption, there were instances of the army inducting men who claimed to be homosexuals. The *Berkeley Barb* (under a rather ignominious title) and *Playboy* published short pieces about such incidences, citing the Committee to Fight Exclusion of Homosexuals from the Armed Forces. The Committee demanded that the Department of Defense make a public statement that all homosexuals would be either accepted or rejected, no exceptions. "Playboy Forum Newsfront," *Playboy*, 16:8 (August 1969): 42; "Peace Porridge: Homos In," *Berkeley Barb*, March 8–14, 1968, 2 in Bloom (AC 1966) Alternative Press Collection [Box 024], Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst College Library. Shilts, 66.

⁷³ Butler, "Imitation and Gender," 307.

(they admire the female model's jewelry, but tisk at her hairstyle) and elicits glowing approvals for a beef cake photo.

This inquisition pokes fun at the military's induction process and, like *Greetings*, lavishes attention on the little "details" that supposedly distinguish queer from straight. How the friends come by their knowledge of gay "behaviour" is not divulged. In the end, the doctor is exasperatedly bemused. The boys get their reclassification, avoiding induction, but leaving Dixon remains suspicious. To sustain the ruse, Danny and Elliot must move in together, in an apartment complex populated with gay men.

The Gay Deceivers most important and compelling character is Malcolm Dijon (Michael Greer), the landlord of the apartment complex where Danny and Elliot take up residence.⁷⁴ The friends move to the apartment complex, known for tenants of a certain "faith," as their real estate agent puts it, when it is clear that Dixon is watching them. There they meet Malcolm—*The Gay Deceivers*' central homosexual character. Malcolm is overtly and utterly feminine with perfectly coiffed hair, eye make-up and colourful clothes, including short, denim cut-offs and a shirt tied at the waist. Right down to his name, Malcolm Dijon is a bundle of the American stereotypes of a homosexual man (just as *Drive, He Said*'s Gabriel is the typical radical). Malcolm is responsible for the interior design of the boys' apartment (and his own). His taste in a pink palette is formulaic, as is the boys' apartment's rococo-meets-debauchery ornamentation and the abundance of phalluses in Malcolm's own abode. He is soft and effete; his moods flitting between flakey and fussy, always with a flare for melodrama.

⁷⁴ Danny realizes that their performance must continue, indeed ramped up, when Dixon nearly catches him and Elliot in flagrante with two young ladies.

Malcolm is meant to spoof homosexuals; he is certainly drawn in clichés. Yet, the film's portrayal of Malcolm is oddly sympathetic. At first, Danny and Elliot are abashed at Malcolm's over-the-top flamboyance, but their interactions with him become more natural over the course of the film. Malcolm believes the friends are a couple. He tells them that he too is in a long-term relationship, which he refers to as a "marriage." Malcolm has many of the same anxieties about his marriage that heterosexuals do. He worries that his husband, Craig (Sebastian Brook), is bored with their staid lives in the apartment complex. He commiserates with Elliot, left in the apartment while Danny goes off to work, over the difficulties of relationships and feeling taken for granted by one's partner. That Elliot (the promiscuous Casanova) has slipped into a housewife role similar to Malcolm's adds to the farce. It also suggests, maybe without intent, that gay and straight couples are not that different. It also reaffirms the gender roles prescribed in the heterosexual community. Malcolm is the more feminine partner in his relationship. He is connected to housework, cooking and décor. Craig, wears a suit (with a cravat) and is dismissive of Malcolm's interior design pursuits, but pays for them to keep Malcolm happy and quiet.

The domestic relationship between Malcolm and Craig, and the evolution of Danny and Elliott's relationship into something similar, reflect Judith Butler's ideas on the naturalistic effects of heterosexualized genders. Butler argues that heterosexualized genders are produced through "imitative strategies" that simulate the "ideal of heterosexual identity."⁷⁵ Heterosexuality is in a constant state of construction to authenticate its own ideation. Butler believes that heterosexuality's continuous state of

⁷⁵ Butler, "Imitation and Gender," 313.

play is a losing game. Its failure permits the “parodic or imitative effect of” homosexuality to become a vehicle for exposing heterosexuality’s incessant attempts to reproduce its own supposed naturalization.⁷⁶ In the filmic world, Malcolm and Craig’s marriage is meant to be a laughable imitation of heterosexual normalcy. The ridicule of homosexuality throughout the rest of the film attempts to keep the marriage on the level of abjection, sanctifying heterosexual relationships. However, interpreted from outside the film, Malcolm and Craig’s union can be read as parodic, offering a commentary on how the definition of heterosexual marriage has not only prescribed restrictive gender roles to women, but has relegated committed gay relationships to the realm of unreality and impossibility.

Malcolm Dijon is a window on gay archetypes that persist even today, over 40 years since *The Gay Deceiver*’s theatrical release. Michael Greer, a popular nightclub performer and stage actor in San Francisco, played Malcolm. Greer’s skill as an actor transcends some of the film’s more unseemly, exploitation-lite aspects. His performance was lauded by noted film scholar Andrew Sarris in his list of the best performances of 1969.⁷⁷ He was also singled out in the *New York Times* review of *The Gay Deceivers*. But the *Berkeley Barb*’s review of *The Gay Deceivers* was harshly critical. Leo Laurence dismissed the film outright as nothing more than profiteering exploitation full of “stereotyped trashy ideas” and ignorant of the realities of homosexual life. Laurence held Greer in particular contempt. Presumably a member of the area’s gay community, Laurence accused Greer of selling out: “Knowing *Gay Deceivers* didn’t tell the truth

⁷⁶ Butler, “Imitation and Gender,” 314.

⁷⁷ Andrew Sarris, “Films in Focus,” *The Village Voice*, January 15, 1970, 49.

about the gay community, I can't understand why he sold out... but a Hollywood career and \$\$\$ are powerful attractions to some."⁷⁸

Criticism and contempt notwithstanding, Greer succeeds in taking some of the intolerant bite out of the film's homophobic dialogue, plot points and stereotypes. He was able to make some changes in the screenplay, tamping down some of the film's overt homophobia into kinder humour.⁷⁹ And the film as a whole has a little more sensitivity than one might expect. Upon meeting Malcolm, Danny's mother (Eloise Hardt) is utterly charmed, but his conservative father (Richard Webb) is not pleased to see who populates his son's apartment complex. Still, he shows Malcolm grudging respect. Believing that Danny is gay, Mr. Devlin tells his son that he is concerned about his future. His concern is real, and he is almost sensitive to the difficulties facing gay Americans: "Did your fairy friends tell you what it's like to live with a stigma over them?" he asks. He alludes to the deep-rooted suspicion of homosexuals when he warns that Danny "will never be able to hold a job requiring security clearance." Mr. Devlin's observations are couched with slurs, keeping his conservatism intact. Danny's father's attitude sums up Malcolm's presence in the film and *The Gay Deceivers'* approach to homosexuality: stereotypical with a slight bead on cultivating tolerance.

⁷⁸ Leo E. Laurence, "One-Word Critique—'Shucks,'" *Berkeley Barb*, July 4–10, 1969, 12, in Bloom (AC 1966) Alternative Press Collection [Box 024], Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Amherst College Library.

⁷⁹ Interviewed for film historian Vito Russo's trailblazing study of gay cinema, *The Celluloid Closet*, Greer observed that *The Gay Deceivers* "was... one of the few films in which the gays didn't end in suicide or insanity. Vito Russo, *The Celluloid Closet: Homosexuality in the Movies* (New York: Harper & Row, 1981), 186; "Actor Michael Greer Dies at 64," *The Advocate*, October 1, 2002. www.advocate.com/arts-entertainment/entertainment-news/2002/10/01/actor-michael-greer-dies-64-6388. Accessed October 22, 2014.

Seeing the ruse through to the end becomes a burden for Elliot, impacting his gender self-identification. He believes his success and standing as a heterosexual male is defined by his sexual performance with women: “If I don’t get at least two kisses a day, I get a complex,” he says. Elliot’s frustration is compounded by Danny’s refusal to stop seeing his girlfriend. Elliot’s “complex” does emerge as he becomes increasingly fed up with the ploy: “If I don’t start getting any, I’m going to be a basket case.” Connecting sexual intercourse to his mental health, a return to promiscuity is what Elliot believes will cure him of his perceived homosexual ills.

Elliot’s need to prove his manhood pushes him to become more volatile. Invited to Malcolm’s costume party, he arrives wearing nothing but a cape and a strategically placed fig leaf. Setting his sights on Jacki (Trigg Kelly), a pretty blonde in a blue mini-dress, Elliot talks her into “get[ting] away from these queens.” Upstairs in a bedroom, they begin to get intimate. As the action advances, Elliot is surprised to find Jacki is a man. As Elliot pushes her away and leaves the room, a wigless Jacki yells after him, “What did you expect? Ann-Margret?” The costume party ends with Elliot involved in a confrontation with Jacki’s boyfriend. Elliot, having spent much of the film concerned that the homosexual hoax will be detrimental to his heterosexual skills, throws punches to prove his straight manhood. Being “duped” into bed by a man is Elliot’s breaking point.

The fight at the costume party—witnessed by Colonel Dixon—exposes the boys’ ruse. The twist ending is that, now that he knows they are straight, Dixon does not want them in his army of gay men. Dixon and Sergeant Kravits (Joe Tornatore) are revealed to be a couple. Danny and Elliot are deemed “unsuitable for military service.” These “gays-only” military units are homosexual larks in *Greetings* and *Summertree* as well. In

Greetings, Paul fears his homosexual hoax will result in him being “with the rest of the fags” trying to get their “honour back” on point duty; and in *Summertree*, Jerry’s friends taunt him with the idea that he could very well end up in the special outfit in Texas created especially for “faggots.” In the end, Elliot admits that being thought of as a homosexual is “better than getting your butt shot off in Vietnam”—one of the few direct references to the war in *The Gay Deceivers*.

As New Left men, draft avoiders were already located on the outer rings of what was perceived to be “authentic” American heterosexual manhood. Sharing that same location were homosexual American men—who were pushing ever more publicly to act on their desire for identity and recognition.⁸⁰ The New Left project to re-design masculinity included a rejection of homosexuality, even as it took its benefits for granted to avoid the draft. The architects of New Left masculine identities could not see the similarities between the struggles they faced and the challenges homosexuals encountered in gaining socio-cultural acceptance. Thus, it is understandable that young gay men like Peter Schenck experienced exclusion. However, the two spheres were not separate. Both gay men and New Left men were dismissed from the wider heterosexual (male) community and represented, to certain degrees, oppositional positions from which to carve new options in understanding, and performing, American manhood.⁸¹

Performance is central to draft avoidance in the films. The characters take on roles as part of their avoidance strategies. These intratextual performances are, in a sense, evasions themselves. The attempts at homosexual masquerade (fascistic violence can be

⁸⁰ The Stonewall Riots, one of the first gay rights protests, occurred in New York City on June 27, 1969.

⁸¹ Greven, 18.

included here too) in films like *Greetings* and *The Gay Deceivers* can be read back to Roger Thornhill (Cary Grant) and his multiple changes of attire, from business suit to train porter, etc., in *North By Northwest*.⁸² With each of Roger's new outfits comes a shift in masculine performativity, right down to his appearance in just a towel. Even though the expectations on Roger's masculinity change with each ensemble, the fundamentals of Cold War liberal masculinity are left intact, just as the masculinity of the draft avoiders is carefully preserved in the draft films. The draft avoiders embrace masculinism and sexism as did their forefathers. The derogatory dialogue on homosexuality in draft films is very reminiscent of the attacks on Dean Acheson and the rabid intolerance permeating the Lavender Scare. In replicating an older generation's manifestation of sex, violence, and gender and sexual discrimination, the draft films cannot wholly remove themselves from that same space, even as they work to present viable options for it.

Conclusion

The draft films' attention to the Selective Service System acknowledged the draft and the war as important cinematic subjects at a time when mainstream Hollywood films would not overtly address them.⁸³ In draft films young American men caught up in

⁸² Greven, 8.

⁸³ Overt is a particularly germane term because there were films being made that, if the curtain was pulled back, were about Vietnam. The majority of Vietnam-in-absentia films *Kelly's Heroes* (Brian G. Hutton, 1970), *Soldier Blue* (Ralph Nelson, 1970) and *M*A*S*H* (Robert Altman, 1970), through which the Vietnam parable subtly wound, were released towards the end of the draft films' five-year span. The "absentia" films generally approach Vietnam under the guise of another genre—whether it be as war films as in *Kelly's Heroes* and *M*A*S*H*, which depict World War II and the Korean War respectively, or Westerns like *Soldier Blue*, or as far out as the horror flick *Night of the Living Dead* (George Romero, 1968). Indeed, Westerns were a favourite disguise for Hollywood's early discourse on Vietnam, including films such as *Cheyenne Autumn* (John Ford, 1964), *Little Big Man* (Arthur Penn, 1970) and *Ulzana's Raid*

negotiating labyrinthine deferment regulations and inconsistent draft boards could see these worrying aspects of their lives reflected openly on screen. Most of the draft films were not great artistic achievements (*Greetings*' Silver Bear at the Berlin Film Festival notwithstanding). They roused some critical interest and a smattering of box office dollars. *Alice's Restaurant* and *Greetings* were the biggest draws and remain, somewhat, in the public mind. Most seem to have faded into the midnight television wasteland before going on to virtual oblivion like *Explosion*.⁸⁴

Yet, the draft films are important, representative of a time and place in which American manhood was under intense scrutiny. Films such as *Greetings* and *The Gay Deceivers* winked at, and very much celebrated draft avoidance—in one way or another, draft films endorsed avoiding the draft and military service. But this sanctioning evaded engaging with the anti-war and draft resistance movements, shifting certain issues to the edges while privileging others. The draft films were part of a project reimagining masculinity, opening space for new styles of manhood. The films were more committed to this gendered enterprise than voicing any serious critique of violence or the Vietnam War.

The clearest example of this re-ordering is in the draft films' focus on manliness and masculine identities. While the films were potentially radical in their critique of gender roles, this exploration of radical alternatives was blunted. The films rejected war

(Robert Aldrich, 1972). Huebner, 241; Anderegg, 15; Sylvia Shin Huey Chong, *The Oriental Obscene: Violence and Racial Fantasies in the Vietnam Era* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 128.

⁸⁴ I came across my copy of *Greetings* in a discount DVD bin at Walmart, and stumbled across *Explosion* on a cult movie website dedicated to obscure titles from the 1960s and 1970s, *Modcinema* (www.modcinema.com).

and militarism, but compensated by claiming other forms of violence, heteronormativity and gender repression as part of their masculinist mien. This gendered blueprint encompassed the films' recommendation for the use of performance and sexual subterfuge as part of draft avoidance, all in the name of self-preservation. The draft films flirted with and were even drawn to homosexuality, yet recoiled from it with predictable forays into humour and homophobic hostility. What draft films did was cleave to a New Left prescription for a masculinity that approved of heterosexual male promiscuity, sexism and violence, not so far off from the gender-defining project followed by their elitist Cold Warrior nemeses. In the draft films, one can see both the potential for and limitations of changes to American masculinity.

Many of the filmic avoiders are left with uncertain fates. From Jon in *Greetings* to Gabriel in *Drive, He Said* and a deceased Jerry in *Summertree*, draft avoidance did not necessarily result in happy endings. This underlying current of negativity links to a similar sentiment emerging in the New Left by the end of the Vietnam War. The next chapter will assess this turn toward declension in representations of the New Left and draft avoidance amongst its own members and in American popular culture at large.

Chapter Four

The New Left's New Man: Digging Holes and Mending Fences

Abbie Hoffman was, he said, “putting my balls where my mouth was.” When, in 1973, the Yippie co-founder and radical activist decided to get a vasectomy, he turned it into a political statement and an agitprop happening. The surgery, he claimed, symbolized his growing identification with the feminist cause. Never one to let a moment go unpublicized, Hoffman enlisted the artist and filmmaker Larry Rivers to film his operation and release it to the public.¹ Hoffman described the vasectomy and film as expressions of a new philosophy he called “macho feminism.” This was actually an appropriate label for Hoffman’s rather convoluted take on gender politics: a “sacrifice” that meant he could have consequence-free sex, and a form of “feminism” that kept the camera focused on his genitals. Hoffman managed to make his vasectomy an act of feminist awakening and of male chauvinism. As such, it makes a good symbol for the state of New Left masculinity in the mid-to-late seventies. When the knives came out, the male New Left turned them on itself.

The New Left was in flux by the mid-seventies. On June 28, 1972, President Richard Nixon announced that no more draftees would be sent to Vietnam. After 32 years, the American military draft came to an end in 1973.² With the Paris Peace Accords,

¹ Hoffman’s younger brother, Jack, wrote that Abbie kept the biological “proof” of his feminist commitment, or as the elder Hoffman called it, “my manhood,” in a glass jar on his mantel. The initial impetus behind Hoffman’s decision to get a vasectomy was the gynaecological issues his wife, Anita, was experiencing with an IUD. Abbie Hoffman, *The Autobiography of Abbie Hoffman*, 2d ed. (New York: Da Capo Press, 2000), 280; Jack Hoffman and Daniel Simon, *Run, Run, Run: The Lives of Abbie Hoffman* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1994), 207–9.

² Beth Bailey, *America’s Army: Making the All-Volunteer Force* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2009), 4.

and the Nixon administration's announcement of troop withdrawals that same year, the New Left had effectively won its greatest battle—and at the same time seemed to lose its vital centre.³ Without the anti-war movement to unite it, the New Left fractured. SDS, of course, had fallen apart in 1969. But by the middle of the 1970s, almost all sense of the Movement as a coherent whole, even as a diverse “Movement of Movements” had disappeared. Some branches of the New Left were thriving—most notably, the women's movement—but as they did so, they moved away from the New Left framework, and the older male leaders of the no-longer New Left. At a moment when they might have been declaring victory, many members of the male New Left entered a period of introspection, bordering on self-flagellation.

In the mid-1970s and after, several New Left leaders wrote memoirs and autobiographies. In books like Jerry Rubin's *Growing (Up) at 37* (1976), Abbie Hoffman's *Soon To Be a Major Motion Picture* (1980) and Tom Hayden's *Reunion* (1988), important figures from the male New Left responded to the advance of feminism and continued to explore the question of American masculinity after the war in Vietnam.⁴ Unlike the bold manifestoes of only a few years earlier, these works were introspective, and often pessimistic and self-critical. These were the first drafts of what would soon become a consensus narrative of the New Left's decline. The self-criticism deepened, and the declension narrative came into sharper focus, in a wave of non-fiction mea culpas that

³ Natasha Zaretsky, *No Direction Home: The American Family and the Fear of National Decline, 1968–1980* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 15.

⁴ The title of Hoffman's changed from *Soon To Be a Major Motion Picture* to *The Autobiography of Abbie Hoffman* for its second edition. Jerry Rubin, *Growing (Up) at 37* (New York: Evans and Co., 1976); Tom Hayden, *Reunion: A Memoir* (New York: Random House, 1988).

became known as “Vietnam Guilt Chic.”⁵ In pieces like James Fallows’ “What Did You Do in the Class War, Daddy?” (1975) and Michael Blumenthal’s “Of Arms and Men” (1981), American men who had avoided the draft apologized for their choices, and lamented their lost opportunity to achieve “true” manhood through violence. These works often conflated draft resistance and draft avoidance, and retroactively delegitimized opposition to the war. At the same time, the once-maligned Vietnam veteran was enjoying a cultural rehabilitation in film, literature and political discourse. By the 1980s and 1990s, it would seem that only those who had fought in Vietnam were entitled to speak with any authority on the morality or lessons of the war.

Masculinity is complicated. As David Savran puts it, manhood does not possess an “unchanging essence,” but is a “continual, dynamic process.”⁶ This process results in men accruing certain types of authority and privilege; that power is always acted upon and through gender, class and race.⁷ It is at these intersections that masculine identities are constructed. Incongruities in the construction of masculinity are certainly possible.⁸ For example, self-identified “macho” or “manly” men may express admiration for other men they have labelled soft, and vice versa. Middle- and upper-class men may look enviously at the more rough-and-tumble manhood of the working class—a relationship often also

⁵ Journalist Myra MacPherson first used the term in her study of the Vietnam cohort, *Long Time Passing: Vietnam and the Haunted Generation* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1984), 156.

⁶ David Savran, *Taking It Like a Man: White Masculinity, Masochism and Contemporary American Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 7–8; Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880–1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 6, 10.

⁷ Bederman, 10.

⁸ James Penner, *Pinks, Pansies and Punks: The Rhetoric of Masculinity in American Literary Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 20–21.

rife with racial overtones, as in Mailer's "The White Negro."⁹ These seeming disruptions of the class-gender-race matrix are of note because they demonstrate that masculine identities always exist on a spectrum, which creates space for variations on, and alternatives vastly different from, hegemonic American manhood. These incongruities also suggest that the apparently unyielding representations of masculinity circulating before Second Wave feminism and gay liberation, which revelled in machismo and hardness, required that such gender flexibility be disavowed. The supposedly "hard" masculinity of Cold Warriors like John Wayne and John F. Kennedy profoundly influenced the gender attitudes held by many men of the New Left. Despite the New Left's denunciation of the Establishment, and the older generation's dismissal of the younger generation as "soft" or unmanly, these American males often represented two sides of the same coin. Any simple interpretation of the "hard" and "soft" binary can trap and elide important variations in masculine identity.¹⁰ This is important in understanding New Left masculinity and the supposedly New Man of the seventies.

This chapter examines the state of the male New Left in the 1970s, and American masculinity more broadly, through several case studies taken from New Left memoirs, "Vietnam Guilt Chic" and the films of the Hollywood Renaissance era. Though the specifics vary—from Abbie Hoffman's "macho feminism" to Tom Hayden's being "born again" in the political mainstream, from Jack Nicholson's post-feminist machismo to Alan Alda's incarnation of the sensitive Seventies man—in every case we see the attempt to explore alternative models of manhood constrained by the desire to hold on to the

⁹ Bederman, 17; Savran, 8.

¹⁰ Penner, 21.

privileges and prerogatives of the old hegemonic masculinity. This conflict had lasting implications for American gender politics, but also for politics in general. To a remarkable extent, the critical narrative of the New Left that has become conventional wisdom was written first by its participants, not by its opponents. And what the men of the New Left blamed themselves for, it seems, was not opposing the war in Vietnam, but straying from traditional models of masculinity.

Abbie Hoffman and Macho Feminism

Abbie Hoffman's audacious surgical gesture of pro-feminist good will, along with its slanted version of empathy, typifies much of the writing of New Left leaders like Hoffman and Jerry Rubin in the seventies. Hoffman and Rubin were media darlings in the sixties and they continued to be present in seventies' popular and political culture. They made frequent appearances in newspapers like the *New York Times* and *Chicago Tribune* as well as potentially less accessible texts: Hoffman did an interview with *Playboy*; Rubin with *Hustler*. Their memoirs, *Soon To Be a Major Motion Picture* and *Growing (Up) at 37* respectively, and statements in the press, do not represent New Left men or New Left conceptions of masculinity in their entirety; however, Hoffman and Rubin's writing during this decade represents an ongoing working-through process for New Left masculinity. Both men sought to experience and define alternative masculinities. Abbie Hoffman attempted to co-align hard and soft masculinity (with an emphasis on the macho); and Rubin threw himself into the New Consciousness movement, an Eastern philosophy-influenced self-awareness enterprise striving to promote a new spiritually-oriented Western value system, wherein men would be free to hunt down their own

consciousness-raising.¹¹ This move away from traditional modes of masculinity, in part, paralleled Hoffman and Rubin's recently found support for the women's movement and gay liberation. However, this apparent self-awareness was not wholly transformative for either man. In many ways, Hoffman and Rubin's memoirs reveal limited and even contradictory trajectories in New Left masculinity. Their apologies for former bad behaviour would be undercut by remedies that belied the continuing importance of traditional models of masculinity and class privilege.

Hoffman's description of his vasectomy in *Soon To Be a Major Motion Picture* is a rich document detailing the blurred lines between male progressivism and a seemingly static sexism. In a passage preceding his surgical discussion, Hoffman mentions women's liberation rather swiftly and dismissively as part of a lamentation over the disintegration of the Movement. Indeed, he blames the Movement's internal fragmentation on the emergence of women's liberation: "There was a great deal of neurosis in the movement, and repeated gut-checking on the woman question drove people away." Demands for female equality, which Hoffman disparaged as complaints about "seating order," set off resistance to change within the Movement. According to Hoffman, these conflicts exacerbated the divisions which ultimately fractured the Movement.¹² He concludes with a pronouncement that no one can be liberated overnight.

¹¹ Rubin, 200–01; Alice Echols, *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America, 1967–1975* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 4, 83–91. The irony of New Left men's use of consciousness-raising being that this "tool" was one of radical feminism's (a movement born out of intra-New Left sexism and chauvinism) most effective organizing strategies. Designed principally by the New York Radical Women, consciousness-raising was meant to "awaken the latent consciousness that... all women have about our oppression" (83).

¹² Hoffman, 267–68.

The vasectomy chapter—colourfully titled “Sex, Women, Getting a Vasectomy, and All That Sticky Stuff”—outlines Hoffman’s conversion to “macho feminism,” a new avenue for male involvement in women’s rights built on male sexuality and anxiety.¹³ Hoffman wants to be seen as a feminist and claims the title through his surgery. Macho feminism essentially combines masculinist, “hard” language with an unimaginative understanding of feminist discourse. Hoffman writes: “Guys and gals that cling to the old roles, I see as ‘sissies’ afraid to meet the challenge and adventure of a new attitude. When it comes time to clear away the dishes only cowards stay seated at the table.”¹⁴ Women’s liberation was, of course, about much more than help with the dishes. But in order to clear the table, Hoffman had to tell himself he was performing an act of courage. Hoffman’s use of words like “cowards,” and particularly “sissies,” to describe those not willing to embrace new gender roles called back to the vocabulary employed by Cold War liberals, conservatives and the Old Left. As literary scholar James Penner has argued, Hoffman’s “macho feminism” is rife with contradictions.¹⁵ His discussion of the surgery marks his body as the site of his personal politics, a move that mirrors the central focus of many emergent feminists.¹⁶ Yet long-held gender notions run deep, and Hoffman checks his embrace of feminism through specific and intentional use of masculinist language. His macho parlance throughout the passage girds against any attacks levied at him for accepting a progressive concept like feminism. Penner rightly points out that Hoffman’s

¹³ Hoffman, 281.

¹⁴ Hoffman, 281.

¹⁵ Penner, 237–38.

¹⁶ Penner, 238–39; Sara M. Evans, “Sons, Daughters, and Patriarchy: Gender and the 1968 Generation,” *American Historical Review* 114:3 (April 2009): 344.

model of feminism, so charged with “hardness,” seeks to reject the softness and effeminacy linked with it. Inserting “macho” into his new feminism keeps his phallus central.

The vasectomy monologue becomes more telling when the gendered baggage Hoffman leaves between the lines is teased out. The dance between machismo and feminism is further accentuated by the topics that Hoffman chooses to engage with as a means to reinforce his pro-woman perspective. Indeed, Hoffman’s attempt at consciousness-raising is at times more of an homage to his genitals and exaltation in his considerable sexual appetite.¹⁷ “It’s fair to say I balled my way through the movement,” Hoffman writes. His relationship with his wife, Anita, was, he says, an open one in which “my end [was] considerably more open than hers. (Much more!)”¹⁸ Hoffman’s extramarital sexual encounters are, for him, a continuation of the New Left’s contempt for traditional patterns of relational commitment.¹⁹ While Hoffman presents the vasectomy as an act of solidarity with women, his real focus is on his own sexual needs and fears. Hoffman says that women would sleep with him in order to get pregnant, and that he “hated the idea” of “unknowingly sir[ing] a little yippela.” In a 1976 interview with *Playboy*, Hoffman talks less equivocally about the reasons behind his vasectomy; he does not mention macho feminism. He does refer to the surgery as a “political act,” but again ties it to his sexual encounters with devious women: “There were a lot of celebrity fuckers—not fucking for fucking, just fucking to have a drop of the revolution in them—

¹⁷ Hoffman, 280.

¹⁸ The couple divorced in 1980. Hoffman, 280, 282; Hoffman and Simon, 301.

¹⁹ Evans, 342.

to get pregnant.”²⁰ He goes on to describe himself as a “sexual maniac,” who, could not, because of his need to be in the sexual moment, ask, “Did you take your pill today?” Through his vasectomy, Abbie Hoffman is able to maintain his “unconstrained sexual access” to female Movement acolytes while preserving the New Left’s rupturing of traditional male responsibilities tied to monogamous relationships and sexual intercourse.²¹

Hoffman’s relief that the vasectomy would not impact his sexual function or desire is obvious, and he emphasizes this fact to assure other men that the procedure is safe. At the chapter’s end, Hoffman admits that he still “tends to see women as sex objects first”—a strange sort of feminism.²² Indeed, the majority of the chapter remains highly personal and sexist. There is no discussion of women’s rights outside sex (or KP duty); no talk of equality in the workforce or in public policy. The possibility of following this line of inquiry is dismissed in Hoffman’s final words on the subject: “Right now I enjoy [sex] too much for extended dissection.” With the slipperiness of Hoffman’s approach to feminism, it is hard not to interpret his vasectomy as an expedient rationalization for his extramarital activities.

There was always a certain selfishness in Hoffman’s perspective on women’s rights and gender roles. This attitude was apparent before his autobiography was published, in articles and interviews given while he was a fugitive from drug charges.²³ When Hoffman

²⁰ Ken Kelley, “*Playboy* Interview: Abbie Hoffman,” *Playboy* 23:5 (May 1976): 80.

²¹ Evans, 342.

²² Hoffman, 281.

²³ Hoffman was arrested in 1973 with three pounds of cocaine, and was charged with attempting to sell it to police. He maintained that he was set up. Facing 25 years in prison, he decided to go underground in 1974

decided to go underground in 1974, he left his wife and young son, while still expecting her to support him in exile. Hoffman and Anita communicated by mail during their separation. Some of the letters the couple exchanged were published in *Esquire* in April 1976.²⁴ Their correspondence underscores the glibness of Hoffman's public pro-feminist pronouncements. Hoffman begins by describing his lonely life on the road, and how much he misses his son. Soon, however, the letters refer to the women he meets, and his lament that he cannot be fully with them. "Everyone I meet falls in love with me," he tells Anita. "Can you dig that! I'm not bragging, really. It's a problem because I can't give myself totally."²⁵ He tells his wife, in detail, of his extramarital encounters, describing how good it feels to be with other women. In 1974, Hoffman began a committed relationship with another woman which he likened to a marriage.²⁶ Hoffman told Anita of the deepening feelings he had for Johanna Lawrenson. Many of the passages read like love letters to Lawrenson, even though they were written for his wife's eyes.

The hollowness of Hoffman's "feminism" is particularly apparent in his reaction to Anita's decision not to meet with him underground. He admonishes her for refusing to go

(after having plastic surgery). Hoffman lived an incredibly varied life as a fugitive, maintaining his political activism under multiple pseudonyms. After a television interview with Barbara Walters, Hoffman turned himself in to authorities in September 1980. He was incarcerated for one year. Hoffman and Simon, 210, 286–87; Hoffman, 283.

²⁴ Anita Hoffman compiled the letters in a book. america is the name of the Hoffmans' son. *To america with Love: Letters from the Underground* (New York: Stonehill Publishing Co., 1976).

²⁵ Anita Hoffman and Abbie Hoffman, "Love Letters from the Underground," *Esquire* 85:4 (April 1976): 107.

²⁶ Lawrenson became Hoffman's underground and life partner. A December 1974 letter to Anita announces Hoffman will be marrying Lawrenson. She was in Hoffman's life until his suicide in 1989. Hoffman and Simon, 353–54.

along with the complex and convoluted travel plans required to physically be in each others' presence. In doing so, Hoffman uses gendered clichés of financial woes and oedipal issues as a scorned woman's weapons. He accuses Anita of making him feel guilty for their separation and dismisses the difficulties his decision to flee has caused in her life (and their son's): "The money talk and letters to my mamma are a traditional way to make divorced husbands feel guilty. Someday I'll write a list of suggestions for ex-husbands to make their ex-wives feel guilty."²⁷ Anita's life when Hoffman was a fugitive was particularly difficult. Hoffman left his wife to deal with the media spotlight and authorities—the FBI frequently questioned her and raided her apartment.²⁸

Despite being extremely open with his thoughts on sex, the dynamics of male-female relationships and women's liberation, Abbie Hoffman held on to traditional, even retrograde, modes of thinking about these very same things. The emergence of supposedly liberated men in the 1960s did not initiate a radical transformation in many in the male New Left's understanding of, or approach to, the everyday structures of gender relations.²⁹ As Hoffman's writing shows, many in the male New Left did little to change the way they connected with the women in their own lives. While Hoffman enjoyed his wild life underground with a new woman, indeed, in a committed relationship he called a marriage, his wife had to take up the role of provider, not just for their child, but for him as well. Anita Hoffman was a big part in arranging her husband's flight from the law, and

²⁷ Hoffman and Hoffman, 154.

²⁸ Anita wrote of not being able to afford childcare and household bills. In June 1974, she lamented having to sign up for welfare. Hoffman and Hoffman, 154.

²⁹ Penner, 226.

the risks she took to communicate with him were real and serious. Hoffman could not see that he was straddling a line between pro-feminism and Cold War caveman.

Critiques of Hoffman's autobiography derided him as a sixties' radical left behind while the rest of the country managed to move beyond Vietnam and the New Left. Robert Dawidoff's review of Hoffman's autobiography in the *Los Angeles Times* hinted at the idea that changing times had left the one-time revolutionary adrift: "[Hoffman] has written his book out of the frustration of the passing of that moment [of change] and his fading into mere notoriety."³⁰ John Leonard's assessment was more biting: "[Hoffman] would like to be perceived as a cap of cyanide; he is thought of, instead, as a bag of pistachios."³¹ The mainstream media's portrait of Hoffman was quite in line with the drubbing the remains of the Movement was taking at the time his autobiography was published in 1979. Indeed, the volume's title, *Soon To Be a Major Motion Picture*, carried the weight of Hoffman's belief in his own standing in the Movement, and the Movement's place in American history, as something worthy of being committed to celluloid.³²

Jack Nicholson and the Hollywood Renaissance

In the 1970s, big changes in Hollywood provided the opportunity for masculinities to be examined from a more left-leaning perspective, with an influx of new male actors

³⁰ Robert Dawidoff, "Abbott Hoffman: Hippie, Yippie, Radical Star," *Los Angeles Times*, December 7, 1980, R16.

³¹ John Leonard, "Books of The *Times*: Likes Almost Everything," *New York Times*, September 1, 1980, C13.

³² Hoffman sold the rights to his life story to Universal Pictures in 1979. Hoffman and Simon, 275. A film was made about Hoffman's life—*Steal This Movie* (Robert Greenwald, 2000), based on the Hoffmans' book of letters, *To America with Love*.

that reflected the seeming shift in American manliness. Independent film makers working in exploitation cinema in the 1960s, including the creative forces behind the draft films, played important roles in the American film industry in the 1970s with the collapse of the studio system and Production Code. The so-called Hollywood Renaissance drew its inspiration and themes from a variety of sources, including the ideological turmoil created by Vietnam and the Civil Rights movement, the decline of Hollywood mainstays like westerns and musicals, and the desire of younger film makers to emulate European art cinema.³³

The Hollywood Renaissance also continued the project of exploring new masculinities. This interest was marked by a change in the physicality and comportment of many male actors, also taking place in other areas of popular culture. In the music industry, “glam rock” artists like David Bowie, Iggy Pop and Lou Reed shocked audiences with androgynous appearances that suggested flexible sexual identities and feminized masculinity beyond the simple softness of countercultural longhairs in paisley bellbottoms. Glam rockers used their bodies, ornamentation (glittery costumes and make-up) and transgressive stage personae to storm the boundaries of hegemonic masculinity.³⁴

³³ Dennis Bingham, *Acting Male: Masculinities in the Films of James Stewart, Jack Nicholson, and Clint Eastwood* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994), 106; and Steve Neale, “‘The Last Good Time We Had Ever Had?’ Revising the Hollywood Renaissance,” in *Contemporary American Cinema*, ed. Linda Ruth Williams and Michael Hammond (Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press, 2006), 91, 97.

³⁴ Philip Auslander, *Performing Glam Rock: Gender and Theatricality in Popular Music* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 61–62. “Glam rock” was known for its androgynous imagery. This androgyny, particularly with Bowie’s self-presentation in the early 1970s as Ziggy Stardust, challenged hegemonic gender expectations for performers and audiences alike. Brian DePalma, a Hollywood Renaissance director and draft film creator, had a Glam rock character in his horror-musical, *The Phantom of the Paradise* (1974). For more discussion of Glam rock, see Esther Zaplana, “Breaking the Mold: Male

The changes represented in the Hollywood Renaissance's masculinities were not so overtly transgressive, but included a move away from the brawn of stars like John Wayne and the charming sophistication of Cary Grant. The Hollywood Renaissance's leading men were smaller, darker and willing to portray more emotionally- and psychologically-ambivalent characters.³⁵ The early careers of Dustin Hoffman, Al Pacino and Robert De Niro, in films like *Straw Dogs* (Sam Peckinpah, 1971), *The Godfather* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1972) and *Taxi Driver* (Martin Scorsese, 1976) respectively, can all be seen as cinematic examples of the exploration of alternative versions of post-Vietnam American masculinity.³⁶ Sociologist Paul Starr's 1978 *New York Times* essay touting the "more mature and less troubled" heroes in mid-to-late seventies' "post-feminist romance[s]," such as *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore* (Martin Scorsese, 1974) and *An Unmarried Woman* (Paul Mazursky, 1978), noted Hollywood Renaissance "anti-heroes" like Hoffman and Nicholson were "small, estranged, in Nicholson's case often cynical and debauched."³⁷ While the characters these actors portrayed had vulnerabilities quite frequently linked to ambiguities around gender and sexuality, such as Hoffman's

Rock Performance, Glam, and the (Re-)Imagination of the Male Body in the 1960s and 1970s," in *Embodying Masculinities: Towards a History of the Male Body in U.S. Culture and Literature*, ed. Josep M. Armengol (New York: Peter Lang, 2013), 63–82; and Dave Thompson, *Your Pretty Face is Going to Hell: The Dangerous Glitter of David Bowie, Iggy Pop and Lou Reed* (New York: Backbeat Books, 2009).

³⁵ Or as 35-year-old producer Richard D. Zanuck (*The Sting*, *Jaws*) mused in 1970, "We're hiring the uglies." "The New Cinema," *Newsweek*, December 7, 1970, 63.

³⁶ Joan Mellen, *Big Bad Wolves: Masculinity in the American Film* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977), 9; Lynda E. Boose, "Techno-Muscularity and the 'Boy Eternal': From the Quagmire to the Gulf," in *Gendering War Talk*, ed. Miriam Cooke and Angela Woollacott (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 73.

³⁷ Paul Starr, "Hollywood's New Ideal of Masculinity: The New Masculine Hero," *New York Times*, July 16, 1978, D1.

character, Ratso Rizzo, in *Midnight Cowboy* (John Schlesinger, 1969) and Al Pacino's turn as Sonny Wortziki in *Dog Day Afternoon* (Sidney Lumet, 1975), their seeming masculine sensitivity was often connected to expressions of violence and self-destruction.³⁸ As film scholar Joan Mellen observed in her 1977 survey of masculinity in American film (including Hollywood Renaissance productions), films of the 1970s "champion male superiority and glorify the brutal domination of men over women."³⁹ Thus, it would seem the project of New Left alternative masculinities would remain within the matrix of hegemonic American manhood.

The apparent vacillation between vulnerability and aggression is particularly visible in the films Jack Nicholson starred in during the seventies. A bit player in exploitation films dating back to the late 1950s, Jack Nicholson's rise to stardom in the late 1960s and early 1970s put him in the vanguard of Hollywood Renaissance leading men.⁴⁰ His small role in *Easy Rider* (1969), as a lawyer disillusioned with the Establishment, indelibly connected him to countercultural audiences and his directorial debut, *Drive, He Said* (1971), was a textually-rich draft film (discussed in the previous chapter).⁴¹ Scholars have described Nicholson as the most representative actor of the decade, with one biographer, Dennis McDougall, calling him "the American film actor who seemed to express the very

³⁸ Mellen, 287; Graham McCann, *Rebel Males: Clift, Brando and Dean* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1991), 176.

³⁹ Mellen, 325.

⁴⁰ Some of Nicholson's early low-budget and exploitation films include *Little Shop of Horrors* (Roger Corman, 1960), *The Raven* (Roger Corman, 1963) and *Hells Angels on Wheels* (Richard Rush, 1967). He was one of the screenwriters on the Monkees' feature film, *Head* (Bob Rafelson, 1968).

⁴¹ Rex Reed, "The Man Who Walked Off with *Easy Rider*," *New York Times*, March 1, 1970, 103; Mary Blume, "Best-Actor Nominee Nicholson Knows How to Play the Game," *Los Angeles Times*, April 4, 1970.

essence of what it meant to be a man of his time.”⁴² The defiance Nicholson embodied on screen proved to be what many Hollywood Renaissance directors and screenwriters utilized to mount their own interrogation of the Establishment.⁴³ Nicholson’s screen persona harkened back to the anti-heroes played in the 1950s by Marlon Brando, Montgomery Clift and James Dean. His roles in films such as *Five Easy Pieces* (Bob Rafelson, 1970), *Carnal Knowledge* (Mike Nichols, 1971), *The Last Detail* (Hal Ashby, 1973), *Chinatown* (Roman Polanski, 1974) and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* (Milos Forman, 1975) all pushed against the masculine limits set in place by the Establishment and expressed anti-authoritarianism through misogyny.⁴⁴ These films echo Hoffman’s “macho feminism” and Rubin’s self-help memoir, leaving a trail of pro-sensitivity bread crumbs leading not to a new or improved New Left masculinity, but only a retrenched position for patriarchy and masculinism.

In the 1970s, Jack Nicholson was an example of the physical transformation of male stars on film and of the Hollywood Renaissance’s exploration of masculine identity. Physically, Nicholson was “frail” and “baldish.”⁴⁵ Film critic Rex Reed described him, in 1970, as “a slightly seedy Eagle Scout,” with “surprisingly tiny features, soft hands and

⁴² Dennis McDougall, as quoted in Shaun R. Karli, *Becoming Jack Nicholson: The Masculine Persona from Easy Rider to The Shining* (Toronto: Scarecrow Press, 2012), 3. See also, Bingham, 5, 106.

⁴³ Karli, 3.

⁴⁴ Bingham, 109. *Chinatown* is a particularly of note in this regard because of the way the film interrogates the masculinism of Nicholson’s character, Private Detective Jake Gittes, and its indictment of more entrenched forms of patriarchal power. *Chinatown*’s setting in Depression-era Los Angeles does distance it from more contemporary portrayals of seventies’ masculinity. Karli, 105–22. See also, Philippa Gates, *Detecting Men: Masculinity and the Hollywood Detective Films* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006).

⁴⁵ “The New Movies,” *Newsweek*, December 7, 1970, 62.

thinning hair.”⁴⁶ But Nicholson’s films did not dwell on this seeming “softness.” Instead, they revelled in what Joan Mellen labelled Nicholson’s “unrelieved macho sensibility,” reinforcing white heterosexual manhood and essentializing a masculinity built on a long-established pattern of the oppression of marginalized figures.⁴⁷ Film scholars Steven Cohan and Ina Rae Hark’s observations are particularly salient on the notion of systemic male dominance, even in times of seeming flux: “The suspicion lingers that the more things change in outward appearance, the more they have thus far stayed the same in their fundamental political structure, with the game fixed so as always to produce a white heterosexual male winner, who routinely overcomes the other—the Indians, the aliens, the feminine.”⁴⁸ *Five Easy Pieces* and *The Last Detail* enable their lead male characters, Bobby Dupea, a talented but troubled pianist-turned-oil-rig worker, and Billy Buddusky, a swaggering petty officer in the navy, a period of self-examination, pitting them against highly-masculinized Establishment figures like Bobby’s father and the U.S. Navy for Billy. The patriarchal system that has ensnared and alienated Nicholson’s characters is rarely questioned. Indeed, the films are male-centric and quite often misogynistic, with female characters generally meant for the protagonist’s sexual release and then to be escaped from or abandoned. Masculine self-awareness emerges on some level for both Bobby and Billy, but it comes at the price of reproducing women, and anyone with

⁴⁶ Reed, 103.

⁴⁷ Mellen, 283.

⁴⁸ Steven Cohan and Ina Rae Hark, introduction to *Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood Cinema*, ed. Steven Cohan and Ina Rae Hark (London: Routledge, 1993), 8.

perceived weaknesses (be they physical, racial, class or sexual), as lesser Others, thus perpetuating the patriarchal order that the men are rebelling against.⁴⁹

Jerry Rubin's Me Decade

While Abbie Hoffman lived a fugitive's life in the 1970s, his Yippie co-conspirator Jerry Rubin spent much of the decade looking inward. In his memoir, *Growing (Up) at 37*, Rubin candidly discusses the multiple therapeutic avenues he has taken in his extended journey to self-awareness, including yoga, massage and sex therapy, all in the pursuit of masculine redemption.⁵⁰ Rubin's commentary is similar to Hoffman's in his professed new-found respect for feminism. It is Rubin's frank confession of intrapersonal anxieties, particularly in the sexual realm, which pushes *Growing (Up)* beyond the cheek of *Soon To Be a Major Motion Picture*, marking some real differences between the two. Yet Rubin still remains trapped in gendered language and tired stereotypes, in ways not dissimilar to his radical comrade.

Rubin's odyssey was precipitated by the end of a long-term relationship and his realization that "it was getting tough to be a hero."⁵¹ The failure of his relationship mirrored the Movement's failure to sustain itself. Aging out of his leadership role and facing criticism from younger members, Rubin describes the Movement's internal fragmentation as "being eaten for breakfast by our own." Unlike Hoffman, Rubin does not blame specific groups for the Movement's decline. He writes that once the Movement had gathered real power in the late 1960s, the backbiting began, continuing until its

⁴⁹ Bingham, 114, 120.

⁵⁰ Penner, 240.

⁵¹ Rubin, 2, 8.

leaders were destroyed. Rubin does not necessarily lament the Movement's end. Indeed, he offers a positive description of what it was able to accomplish: exposing social hypocrisy and inequality, and diminishing American involvement in Vietnam. He acknowledges that the goal of perpetual protest could never be achieved. Movement participants needed to live lives beyond the barricades, Rubin writes, and this required entering the Establishment to some degree.⁵² This may have seemed hypocritical to some of the Movement's younger blood, but Rubin believes it would lead to the birth of the "Inner Revolution" of consciousness, a new revolution to which he was fully committed.⁵³

"[I] need to kill Jerry Rubin to become me," Rubin wrote. By "killing Jerry Rubin," Rubin meant shedding his public persona.⁵⁴ This could also be interpreted as an attempt to shed both Cold War and New Left masculine identities. In a 1976 *Hustler* interview, Rubin states that many of the Movement's leaders replicated a traditional Establishment manhood which valued competition and ego-boosting.⁵⁵ This desire for male control marred Movement cohesion and turned male radicals into versions of the men they were opposing. Rubin believes that the New Left's employment of similar strategies for domination left no real distinction between Establishment and New Left masculinity. Recognition of the destructive nature of this association, Rubin observes, forced him to seek a "new model of what it means to be human," or more authentically, what it meant

⁵² Echols, 9.

⁵³ Rubin, 8, 90–91.

⁵⁴ Rubin, 17.

⁵⁵ Bruce David, "Hustler Interview: Jerry Rubin, Rebel Without a Cock?," *Hustler* (April 1976): 43.

for him to be a man.⁵⁶ In a sense, this makes his memoir a men's guide to the New Consciousness, or personal growth, movement.

At first gloss, Jerry Rubin seems more enlightened than Abbie Hoffman on matters of sex and gender. Much of *Growing (Up)* revolves around Rubin's interaction with women, dissecting two lengthy relationships and casual encounters. Unlike Hoffman, Rubin does not celebrate infidelity or promiscuity as political acts; he prefers monogamy. He does appear to support women's liberation. He rejects his parents' conventional gender roles, even as he admits to harbouring traditional "housewife" expectations of his long-time "movement sweetheart."⁵⁷ He acknowledges that women in the Movement were treated as "second class citizens."⁵⁸ He gives credit to the women's movement for sparking his own self-examination, and seeks a masculinity with room for consciousness and vulnerability: "My women friends and lovers have given me space to be less of a 'man' and more me."⁵⁹

It is clear, however, that Rubin's new consciousness retained old gender biases. Asked by *Hustler* about anti-male tendencies in the women's movement, Rubin's answer is telling and probably reveals more than he intends about his perception of feminism. He states that the women's movement did go through a period of blaming men, and that he was a target: "Just being Jerry Rubin, I was considered to be a male chauvinist."⁶⁰ He goes on to say that women are now more "sensitive," and that both men and women are

⁵⁶ David, 50.

⁵⁷ Rubin, 2–3, 62.

⁵⁸ David, 43.

⁵⁹ Rubin, 115.

⁶⁰ David, 43.

victims. There is a sense of equivocation in Rubin's response. His fame becomes the reason for feminist acrimony; it is, in a sense, a shield behind which any possible misogyny or chauvinism he harbours can hide—the public image of a chauvinist conceals the “real,” feminist Jerry. Also noteworthy is Rubin's claim that he, and all men, are “victims.” That women have become more “sensitive,” presumably to men's feelings, marks Rubin's belief that feminists in the early days of their movement were acting like apathetic men and have returned in some capacity to behaving like the empathizers their gender implies they are meant to be.

Rubin's statements in *Hustler* promoting his memoir's publication suggest that he saw the women's movement as a vehicle for personal growth akin to the New Consciousness, rather than a project for social justice.⁶¹ The interview also reveals the extent to which Rubin appropriated aspects of feminist discourse for his own male journey to self-awareness. Rubin openly admits that women's liberation inspired his desire to seek out new ways of approaching his masculinity. This is apparent in his writing style. Where Hoffman's autobiography slyly cloaks a grudging acceptance of feminism and quasi-atonement for past sins in his usual rascalion style, Rubin's concessions are out in the open, unadorned. The daring in Rubin's writing comes in his intensely personal disclosures. He shares the anguish he felt over the end of his romantic relationships and his parents' deaths, his sexual hang-ups and the desire to be a househusband.⁶² Rubin says he wants his bold declarations to set an example for other

⁶¹ Sally Robinson, “Men's Liberation, Men's Wounds: Emotion, Sexuality, and the Reconstruction of Masculinity in the 1970s,” in *Boys Don't Cry? Rethinking Narratives of Masculinity and Emotion in the U.S.*, ed. Milette Shamir and Jennifer Travis (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 206.

⁶² Rubin, 2–3, 46–48, 109–22, 135–56.

men.⁶³ Rubin connects his revealing prose to the New Consciousness movement and to new avenues of enlightenment he believes are available to men. He deploys this argument in gendered terms: “The consciousness revolution is climaxing with the liberation of women and the feminization of men. All definitions of what ‘men’ and ‘women’ do are up for grabs.”⁶⁴ Using the term “climax” in conjunction with women’s liberation speaks to Rubin’s acknowledgement of the women’s movement and its broad parameters. His description notes the importance of sexual liberation in women’s consciousness and the apparent power of the female orgasm as part of it—though he also states that “liberated women” who expect men to satisfy them in bed are “male chauvinists.”⁶⁵

For Rubin, the “feminization” of men would mean a softening of rigid gender expectations that would allow for more mutability, signified by the quotation marks he places around “men” and “women.” His theory is more plainly stated in *Hustler*: “We all have feminine qualities—softness, vulnerability—and as a man, I want the freedom to be vulnerable, the freedom to let go.”⁶⁶ Yet Rubin’s hopeful elision of gender expectations dilutes the concept of “liberation” as understood by the groups that demanded it before privileged white middle/upper-middle class men dreamed of a guilt-free version for themselves.⁶⁷ For Rubin and his comrades oppression came in the guise of a monolithic patriarchy that awarded them privilege and power, but left them emotionally repressed. Thus, just as Hoffman’s vasectomy represented his stunted foray into personal politics,

⁶³ Rubin, 109.

⁶⁴ Rubin, 200.

⁶⁵ Rubin, 119.

⁶⁶ David, 43.

⁶⁷ Sally Robinson notes that the personal and psychological are always tied to the social and political in feminist discourse. Robinson, “Men’s Liberation,” note 3–4, 226.

Rubin's embrace of individual consciousness-raising replaces the political with the personal, but foregoes deeper illumination by avoiding the link between them.⁶⁸ Rubin presents himself as a chastened male, acknowledging his white, gendered privilege—then expects commendation for disclosing his personal “wounds.”⁶⁹

The substitution of the personal for the political continues in the most revealing chapter of *Growing (Up)*. It details Rubin's sex life, the inadequacies he has felt as a man in the bedroom and his uneasy relationship with homosexuality. Rubin's language is frank and profane, peppered with words like “cock” and “fuck.”⁷⁰ Perhaps the most revealing aspect of the chapter is the wall Rubin's consciousness raising seems to hit when it comes to homosexuality. Rubin talks the talk of inclusion and understanding. He describes touching other men and having intimate (but not sexual) moments with them. He chides his *Hustler* interviewer, Bruce David, for equating feminization with homosexuality, and homosexuality with “sickness.”⁷¹ However, just as in his discussion on the women's movement, Rubin's language reveals a certain caginess. In an interview with *The Advocate*, a well-known publication of the gay and lesbian community, published around the same time as the *Hustler* Q&A, Rubin acknowledges the Movement's attitudes towards homosexuals was “ignorant and hostile,” in part because “the whole hetero-macho image was part of the early movement.”⁷² In *Hustler*, he admits that “our fears of homosexuality are irrational,” and in his memoir he says that

⁶⁸ Robinson, “Men's Liberation,” 207.

⁶⁹ Sally Robinson, *Marked Men: White Masculinity in Crisis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 11.

⁷⁰ Rubin, 102–22.

⁷¹ David, 48.

⁷² Vito Russo, “Jerry Rubin Grows Up,” *The Advocate*, July 28, 1976, 35.

intercourse between same-sex couples is “as human as male-female sex.” Yet, Rubin also agrees with *Hustler*’s Bruce David that there is a “growing chic nature [to] homosexuality.” “I do oppose the faddishness attached to homosexuality,” Rubin said. “These days, if you’re heterosexual, you’re on the defensive. You have to feel guilty.”⁷³ Again Rubin perceives himself as a victim, this time of the “American sexual lie against homosexuality.”⁷⁴

Even as he touts acceptance, it seems that he has bought into this lie. Rubin frequently uses derogatory language to describe his thoughts on homosexual intercourse. After acknowledging the humanity of homosexual sex in *Growing (Up)*, he is quick to add, “the thought of two men fucking still scares me.”⁷⁵ In *Hustler*, he states, “the idea of making out with a man on a certain level horrifies me. It horrifies me because of primal memories I had as a child about how bad it is.”⁷⁶ When asked by *The Advocate*’s Vito Russo if he aspires to becoming more open to male sexuality, Rubin replied, “I’m conditioned to fear genital contact between men. If I could break that fear, O.K., but it’s not a criteria. It’s O.K. if I don’t also.”⁷⁷ Finally, Rubin tells Bruce David that because sex is just an exchange of feelings between two people, he *has* had homosexual relationships, in a sense: “I’ve expressed a lot to other men. It was just expressed on another level than making it in bed.”⁷⁸ In essence, while professing his enlightenment, Rubin has approached homosexuality (and by extension, gay liberation) in the same way

⁷³ David, 48.

⁷⁴ Rubin, 121.

⁷⁵ Rubin, 121.

⁷⁶ David, 48.

⁷⁷ Russo, 36.

⁷⁸ David, 50.

he does the women's movement. He stakes a highly inner-oriented and individualistic position, distilling homosexuality down to the sexual act, which in effect dismisses the aggregate life experiences of gay men in the United States.

Rubin's personal revelations made him a target for attacks on his masculinity, not dissimilar to those he faced in the late sixties. Critiques directed at him after *Growing (Up)*'s publication often included gendered barbs, calling attention to his support for women's liberation and his personal desire for a more fulfilling emotional and sexual existence. *New York Times* literary critic John Leonard was not impressed by the "the new Rubin," complaining that "most of the old irreverence is missing... He is Jimmy Connors deciding to be Chrissie Evert."⁷⁹ *Hustler* was, predictably, more graphic. Bruce David's interview with Rubin was published under the title, "Jerry Rubin, Rebel Without a Cock?" The title castrated Rubin, while a large portion of the article discussed Rubin's sexual deficiencies and even the size of his genitals.⁸⁰ When Rubin published a sexual self-help book, *The War Between the Sheets* (1980), it served only to enhance his image as a media-hungry, self-centred Yippie-turned-Yuppie (Rubin had become a Wall Street securities analyst) intent on saving men from liberated women.⁸¹ Critics pounced on the book's "cockamamie theories," "rarefied experiences" and "excruciatingly

⁷⁹ John Leonard, "A New Jerry Rubin: Grown Up, Reflective," *New York Times*, February 11, 1976, 34.

⁸⁰ David, 42.

⁸¹ Rubin's genitals play a central role in *The War Between the Sheets: What's Happening with Men in Bed and What Women and Men Are Doing About It* (New York: Putnam Group, 1980). The book covers much the same ground as *Growing (Up) at 37*'s detailed discussions of Rubin's issues with sexual intimacy. It was co-authored with Rubin's then-wife New York socialite Mimi Leonard. That same year, Rubin announced in a *New York Times* op-ed that he had taken a securities job on Wall Street. Jerry Rubin, "Guess Who's Coming to Wall Street," *New York Times*, July 30, 1980, A21

embarrassing... hilariously absurd” navel-gazing.⁸² This was how popular culture rewarded a radical who pushed against gender roles.

Alan Alda’s Seventies Feminism

Another supposed symbol of alternative masculinity in the years after Vietnam was the actor Alan Alda. Alda became a star in his role as army surgeon “Hawkeye” Pierce on the long-running sitcom *M*A*S*H* (1972–83).⁸³ Though set during the Korean War, *M*A*S*H*’s critique of foreign policy and military strategy clearly referenced U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia. The program brought anti-war sentiments into American living rooms each week, capturing the nation’s supposed shift away from intervention and aggression. Alda’s progressive liberal politics easily aligned with those promulgated on *M*A*S*H*, and as a frequent writer-director on the series, he had a highly visible platform from which to espouse his thoughts on feminism and the state of American manhood.⁸⁴ Yet Alda’s support of the women’s movement resembled Jerry Rubin’s, in that he always spoke of women’s rights and masculinity in limited terms, eliding tougher issues of patriarchal power and social justice reforms. Also like Rubin, Alda faced fiercely-gendered criticism for even his limited feminist advocacy, becoming the signifier for men’s alleged “feminization” by the end of the seventies. The dilution and elision of

⁸² Ed Bruske, “Rubin Relations,” *Washington Post*, December 12, 1980, E13; Steven Gaines, “Jerry Rubin, His Penis and Me: A Very Short Story,” *New York Observer*, November 28, 2014, accessed January 22, 2015. <http://observer.com/2014/11/jerry-rubin-his-penis-and-me-a-very-short-story/>.

⁸³ In addition to his television career as a surgeon, Alda portrayed a sexist draft avoider in the draft film *Jenny* (George Bloomfield, 1970) and a psychotic Vietnam veteran in *To Kill a Clown* (George Bloomfield, 1972).

⁸⁴ James H. Wittebols, *Watching M*A*S*H, Watching America: A Social History of the 1972–1983 Television Series* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2003), 20–21.

Alda's own political persona coincided with *M*A*S*H*'s devolution from a cogent critique of Vietnam to a fairly toothless sitcom attuned to the conservative values of Ronald Reagan's America.⁸⁵

*M*A*S*H* debuted on CBS in September 1972, when Vietnam was still an active conflict.⁸⁶ The comedy was set during the Korean War. Sitcoms based in past wars were not unknown on American television; *F Troop* (1965–67) and *Hogan's Heroes* (1965–71) took place in the Civil War West and World War II respectively. But neither of those programs had anything to say about Vietnam. *M*A*S*H* broke this pattern, satirizing military and government strategies in the Vietnam era, and representing anti-war sentiments through the experiences of a group of misfit military doctors in Korea.⁸⁷ The series' developer, Larry Gelbart, joined the project because he saw it as an opportunity to bring Vietnam to the small screen at a time when Hollywood was still reticent to address the war.⁸⁸ Gelbart's overarching aim was to present war itself as the foe: "We wanted to say that war was futile, to represent it as a failure on everybody's part... We wanted to make war the enemy without really saying who was fighting."⁸⁹ *M*A*S*H*'s critique of

⁸⁵ Wittebols, 81.

⁸⁶ The television series was based on both the 1968 novel *MASH*, by Dr. Richard Hornberger (under the pen name Richard Hooker), and its loose film adaptation, *M*A*S*H*, directed by Robert Altman and released in 1970.

⁸⁷ Wittebols, 9, 11, 20.

⁸⁸ Hollywood had begun to address the war in subtle, analogy-heavy films such as *Soldier Blue* (Ralph Nelson, 1970) and *Little Big Man* (Arthur Penn, 1970); however, there had yet to be a Vietnam War combat film in the vein of *The Green Berets*. It could be argued that *M*A*S*H* was really not so different from Hollywood's approach to Vietnam, with its setting in Korea and generalized anti-war themes. Wittebols, 11, 16.

⁸⁹ Wittebols, 18.

the war in Vietnam was most pointed in the program's early seasons, when Gelbart was a central writer, and the program directly took on issues like friendly fire, or an incompetent officer corps. After the Vietnam War ended, the series' articulation of anti-war themes became more and more abstract. "All war is hell"—but no war in particular—became the series' mantra.⁹⁰

Alan Alda was *M*A*S*H*'s breakout star. As the show's popularity grew, so too did Alda's star power. The intertextual web surrounding Alda marked him as a symbol of the potential for alternatives to hegemonic masculinity in the seventies. The actor's central role in *M*A*S*H* was part of his emerging star persona to the point that Hawkeye's politics and values would become virtually identical to Alda's. As Alda became more vocal about his "feminist masculinity" off screen, Hawkeye's roguish, sexist behaviour was modulated (though not erased). The Alda/Hawkeye matrix became even more inextricable as the actor took on a greater role behind the camera.⁹¹ Alda represented an amiable option to the violence-prone, still-mired-in-masculinism protagonists embodied by Jack Nicholson and other actors. His sensitivity, intelligence, mischievous humour and lanky physicality established him as the embodiment of non-threatening, non-aggressive masculinity—the New Man of post-Vietnam America.⁹²

In 1974, at the height of *M*A*S*H*'s popularity and his own star power, Alda declared himself an "ardent feminist" and endorsed the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA).

⁹⁰ Mike Budd and Clay Steinman, "*M*A*S*H* Mystified: Capitalization, Dematerialization, Idealization," *Cultural Critique* No. 10 (autumn 1988): 69–70.

⁹¹ David Scott Diffrient, *M*A*S*H*, TV Milestones Series (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008), 97–99.

⁹² Diffrient, 93–95.

He campaigned for its passage on the talk show circuit and in states yet to ratify it like Florida and Illinois. President Gerald Ford appointed Alda to the National Commission on the Observance of the International Women's Year.⁹³ As chairperson of Men for ERA, Alda's support for the amendment was passionate: "This so-called protection women enjoy now is a basic minimum. A scrap of food on the table and a cot in the corner. The husband can live in luxury and throw the wife a bone in the corner and still live within the law."⁹⁴

Yet Alda's feminism had its limits. His conception of feminism revolved around the home and traditional marriage arrangements, i.e., heterosexual nuclear families. Much of his advocacy seemed to be about reassuring men that the ERA and feminism in general were not out to strip away their manliness, but would bolster it, making men better men.⁹⁵ Alda's article in *Ms*, "Alan Alda on the ERA: Why Should Men Care?" (1976), devotes much space to the benefits passage of the ERA would have for men.⁹⁶ Instead of women's liberation, Alda called for "human liberation," inviting men to see themselves as victims too. "Those women who have spent years fulfilling the approved submissive role can make men pay for that dependence," Alda wrote. "The clinging vine can be a Venus's-fly trap... Women's independence will set those men free."⁹⁷ For Alda, fulfilment and

⁹³ Kathleen Hendrix, "Taking a Look at Human Liberation: SMASHing Those Male Chauvinism Barriers," *Los Angeles Times*, September 5, 1975, G1.

⁹⁴ Diffrient, 95; Hendrix, G1.

⁹⁵ Alan Alda, "Alan Alda on the ERA: Why Should Men Care?," in *Against the Tide: Pro-Feminist Men in the United States, 1776–1990*, ed. Michael S. Kimmel and Thomas E. Mosmiller (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 412.

⁹⁶ Alda, "ERA," 408–10.

⁹⁷ Alda, "ERA," 412.

transformation could be achieved by increasing intimacy between men and women, and also between men (though only within a homosocial, not homosexual, context).⁹⁸ He did not examine his own privilege or power, and minimized any need for deeper socio-cultural or political change on behalf of women and other marginalized groups. Alda's feminism was blithe and safe, asking men and women to "get along." "How much closer might the moon have seemed," he mused, "if all of us were reaching it together?"⁹⁹

Like Jerry Rubin, Alda was derided for his pro-feminist declarations and activism; like Rubin's critics, Alda's critics took aim at his manhood. Despite being a sex symbol to many women, Alda soon came to connote the "softness" and "feminization" that some saw threatening American masculinity in the post-Vietnam years.¹⁰⁰ Alda's very name became cultural shorthand as an insult meant to ostracize any man attempting to question traditional masculinity. A short humour piece in the *New York Times* from 1981 invoked that American powerhouse of hegemonic manhood, John Wayne, as Alda's opposite, and made the association between Alda and masculine lack clear: "The end of macho marks the end of the meat-and-potatoes man. You know, the John Wayne type who eats whatever it is so rare that it's still running... What we've got now is your Alan Alda type. Your Baryshnikov type. Your Phil Donahue type—the vulnerable. Strictly fish and chicken people."¹⁰¹ This oddly food-oriented impugning of Alda's masculinity continued in humourist Bruce Feirstein's best-selling book, *Real Men Don't Eat Quiche: A*

⁹⁸ Boose, 72; Peter Alilunas, "'They Can't Do This to Us!': Alan Alda as (Anti)Feminist Signifier," *Camera Obscura* 78, 26:3 (2011): 47.

⁹⁹ Alda, "ERA," 412.

¹⁰⁰ Hendrix, G1; Alilunas, 51.

¹⁰¹ "Getting Rarer," *New York Times*, August 17, 1981, A14.

Guidebook to All That is Truly Masculine (1982). Reviewing Feirstein in the *Chicago Tribune*, columnist Bob Greene put together a list of “quiche-eaters” versus “real men” (among the latter is also Jack Nicholson). Alan Alda is mentioned in the first sentence: “Rejoice, all you American men who are sick of having Alan Alda held up as your role model, racquetball held up as your sports model and quiche held up as your food model.”¹⁰² Greene, Feirstein and the *New York Times* all tied Alda to “feminizing” pursuits. Perhaps connecting Alda to bland, easily digestible food helped to cement his position as the new symbol of the late 20th century’s “domesticated male,” an extension of the other-directed, gray-flannel-suit bedecked egghead of the Cold War.¹⁰³

As the 1970s came to a close and the Reagan era began in earnest, both *M*A*S*H* and Alan Alda went through changes that paralleled and informed each other. On *M*A*S*H*, maudlin sentiment increasingly replaced pointed anti-war critique. Instead of being a place for working through the lessons of Vietnam, the program became a way of forgetting, of leaving the morality and the costs of the war unquestioned. Alda did much the same by backing away from his association with women’s rights and other forms of identity politics.¹⁰⁴ Popular culture scholars Mike Budd and Clay Steinman succinctly articulate *M*A*S*H*’s obfuscation of the war’s long-term impact: “Korea was the perfect mechanism of disavowal: for opponents of the war the resemblance to Vietnam was obvious, while for supporters of the war the differences would be crucial. Like bigots and

¹⁰² Bob Greene, “Real Men Will Avoid the Quiche of Death,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 1, 1982, C1.

¹⁰³ Diffrient, 94.

¹⁰⁴ Budd and Steinman, 69.

liberals alike consuming *All in the Family*, those divided over Vietnam could enjoy *M*A*S*H*.”¹⁰⁵

As Reaganite conservatives and neo-conservatives, many among them former liberals, worked to rehabilitate an aggressive, interventionist foreign policy—and by extension a kind of Cold War machismo—*M*A*S*H* and Alda no longer commanded the audience share or pop culture caché necessary for provocative anti-war and/or New Man discourse.¹⁰⁶ Indeed, Alda moved away from his feminism and political activism. He has since written two memoirs, neither of which goes into great detail about his 1970s advocacy. The section on Alda’s participation in the campaign to pass the ERA in *Never Have Your Dog Stuffed* (2005) is less than 10 pages in length, glossing over the same arguments from his press musings in the seventies.¹⁰⁷ In the same memoir, Alda denies that *M*A*S*H* was a specific critique of the war in Vietnam: “I thought of the show as about *all* war, and especially about Korea.”¹⁰⁸ In the end, 30 years after *M*A*S*H* ended, Alda’s star text still calls to mind the image that was created around his persona in the 1970s (and perpetuated in ubiquitous reruns) as at once a signifier of “failed masculinity” and the requisite bulwarking of traditional American manhood.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ Budd and Steinman, 68. *All in the Family* had its own representation of New Left aka feminized masculinity in Mike “Meathead” Stivic, Archie Bunker’s hippie son-in-law.

¹⁰⁶ Wittebols, 147.

¹⁰⁷ Alan Alda, *Never Have Your Dog Stuffed and Other Things I’ve Learned* (New York: Random House, 2005), 174–79. His second memoir, *Things I Overhead While Talking to Myself* (New York: Random House, 2007), details his post-*M*A*S*H* life.

¹⁰⁸ Alda, *Never Have Your Dog Stuffed*, 157. Italics in original.

¹⁰⁹ Alilunas, 55–57.

The project of practicing new masculinities in the 1970s was laudable, particularly as a path to coming to terms with the socio-cultural consequences of the Vietnam War. While this mission of male self-awareness provided the infrastructure for the much-discussed Me Decade, it was both exclusive and solipsistic. This movement was not necessarily driven by crisis, but was a conscious attempt by its advocates to become “new” men, and its appearance in many popular culture sectors reflects this. However, the project was short-circuited, and thus limited, by the not-so-authentic articulation of pro-identity politics stances and a half-hearted understanding of their concomitant social justice requirements in public policy. The retreat from political issues that may have had real consequences for New Left masculinity represents a through-line from the draft films discussed in Chapter Three.

Tom Hayden: “Born Again” Middle American

Another prominent member of the New Left would take stock of his life publically in the years after the Vietnam War. Tom Hayden, author of the Port Huron Statement and the founding president of Students for a Democratic Society, spoke openly with the media in the late 1970s and 1980s to discuss the trajectory of his life after the New Left’s fragmentation. The threads running through Hayden’s interactions with the press are very similar to those of Jerry Rubin or Abbie Hoffman. Yet the tenor of his words and recollections differ from his comrades. Hayden joined a commune in Berkeley, California, not to “drop out” or for “internal therapy,” but to establish a base for political action, and he continued to cherish the potential of New Left activism even after the

Vietnam War ended and the Movement stalled.¹¹⁰ In his memoir, *Reunion* (1988), Hayden described himself as the New Left's "straight man." Though he supported the Yippies, Hayden was wary of what he called "absurdity masquerading as revolutionary politics." Hayden presented himself as wholly committed to political revolution, but socially and culturally restrained. The countercultural scene, including recreational drugs and music, was never really his bag. For his square-ness, the Yippies rewarded Hayden with the label of being "dangerously uptight [and] power-driven."¹¹¹ By the late 1970s, Hayden had decided to become a mainstream politician, and needed to transform his image from that of radical activist to what he called "a 'born-again' Middle American."¹¹² This shift required a more modulated tone than Hoffman's macho feminism or Rubin's New Consciousness. Still, Hayden's memoirs trod some similar ground.

Masculinity had not been a central theme in the two books Hayden published in the late 1960s, *Rebellion in Newark* (1967) and *Rebellion and Repression* (1969).¹¹³ This dimmed spotlight on gender and sexuality carried forward into his writing and press statements in the following decades. Interrogating his own masculine identity was not on Hayden's agenda. He admits to his "blindness" when using "man" as the universal term in the Port Huron Statement, the New Left's founding document, arguing in his defense

¹¹⁰ Joel Kotkin, "Tom Hayden's Manifest Destiny," *Esquire* 93:5 (May 1980): 40; Hayden, 422.

¹¹¹ Hayden, 203–4.

¹¹² Hayden, 465. Hayden was elected to the California State Assembly in 1982. He served until 1992 when he was elected to the State Senate.

¹¹³ See Tom Hayden, *Rebellion in Newark: Official Violence and Ghetto Response* (New York: Random House, 1967) and *Rebellion and Repression: Testimony by Tom Hayden before the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, and the House Un-American Activities Committee* (New York: Meridian Books, 1969).

that the women's movement had yet to come together at that time.¹¹⁴ He acknowledges the sexism in the Movement, and writes of his marriage to activist Casey Hayden—who, along with Mary King, famously brought attention to the rampant discrimination women faced in the Civil Rights Movement. The end of Hayden's first marriage came about, he said, because of the Movement's "male-dominated permissiveness" and the couple's difficult childhoods.¹¹⁵ In a 1980 *Esquire* piece, Hayden intimated that his intense dedication to the nascent New Left doomed their relationship because his wife's needs "conflicted with where I was going."¹¹⁶ Eight years later, in *Reunion*, the marriage's end was no longer about personal failure on Hayden's part, his infidelity or his "massive ambition," but was "another example of how society dehumanized and atomized us all."¹¹⁷

The closest Hayden comes to professing any sort of masculine lack, or bewilderment at the changing matrix of gender relations, is in the descriptions of the time he spent with the Red Family, the California commune he helped organize. The commune was to be an experiment on radical living, peopled with those willing to embrace women's liberation, anti-imperialism and other fashionable revolutionary trends of the day. While Hayden enjoyed the camaraderie with fellow radicals and the opportunity to continue to bring the New Left's ideological mandate to life, he had difficulty coming to terms with the Red Family's increasingly fraught gender dynamics. One of the group's main goals was to "shed male chauvinism," which meant that while the women were in

¹¹⁴ Hayden, 96.

¹¹⁵ Hayden, 107–8.

¹¹⁶ Kotkin, 43.

¹¹⁷ Hayden, 108; Kotkin, 43.

consciousness-raising meetings, the men attended “morbid meetings” to determine why they were so controlling and enjoyed “appalling ‘ego trips.’”¹¹⁸ Recalling these sessions in *Reunion*, Hayden writes of being perplexed and disheartened by the spiralling acrimony between the sexes. He found the men’s discussions unpleasant and self-critical. “Anything said in one’s own defense,” he writes, “whether about washing the dishes, exhibiting macho attitudes... was probably a self-serving and defensive alibi.”¹¹⁹ Here Hayden positions himself as the victim, not unlike Jerry Rubin. Hayden felt he became the primary target for vitriol from both sides because of his notoriety in the outside world.¹²⁰ In the end, the Red Family unceremoniously purged Hayden for his “oppressive male chauvinist” tendencies and hunger for power. Hayden left, he said, “humiliated” and grief-stricken.¹²¹ He headed for Los Angeles, changed his name to Emmett Garity and revelled in the obscurity of being “the notorious New Left leader... alone in a world of hurt.”¹²² But his partner at the time, radical feminist Anne Weills, remembered the event differently. She and the Red Family’s other feminists, she told *Esquire*, could no longer stomach her lover’s need for public attention. “He manipulated everyone—me, the men, the women, in the collective,” she insisted. “He is the most manipulative, power-conscious person—obsessed with it—I have ever known.”¹²³

Hayden’s own recollections in *Esquire* continue the thread of martyrdom which runs through *Reunion*. Like Rubin, he lamented the Movement’s destruction of its own

¹¹⁸ Hayden, 420–21.

¹¹⁹ Hayden, 421.

¹²⁰ Hayden, 424.

¹²¹ Hayden, 425.

¹²² Hayden, 426.

¹²³ Kotkin, 44.

keen-minded leaders. And he situated himself as the Red Family's paternalistic shepherd: "The resolution of the competitive rivalry between myself and Anne, with everyone else participating in the ritual killing of the father figure. What humiliation and what loss. The jackals of the movement, all those who lived to see idols destroyed, were out spreading the word."¹²⁴ Hayden confesses to being "particularly ill-suited for becoming a 'new man,'" but he is not comfortable with exploring or articulating the reasons why.¹²⁵

Throughout these years Hayden continued to work in the anti-war movement. He met his second wife, the actress Jane Fonda, at an anti-war meeting. The high-profile couple was a magnet for controversy: a leading radical of the 1960s and the privileged Oscar-winning scion of Hollywood royalty. The Hayden-Fonda marriage represents an extension of Hayden's trials and tribulations with gender relations. On the surface the relationship seemed to be what Hayden was searching for, enabling an equality that was not possible in his previous romantic attachments. "It was important that Jane was a woman who could not be eclipsed or diminished in my shadow," he wrote, "and I was a man who was not threatened by her greater fame and power."¹²⁶ Yet behind the image of the New Left's new power couple were the familiar refrains of Hayden's sense of victimhood, his drive to be a leader and shadows of patriarchy. Hayden came to see Fonda as "a troubled, sensitive woman seeking the support of a strong man," and said that she soon saw him as "an authority figure," setting the stage for murmurs of Oedipal issues.¹²⁷ The couple married before the imminent birth of their son, not to support the

¹²⁴ Kotkin, 44.

¹²⁵ Hayden, 424.

¹²⁶ Hayden, 447.

¹²⁷ Kotkin, 44, 46.

institution, they explained to *Playboy* in 1974, but because they were concerned that “unreasonable criticism” of their personal choices would take attention away from their political work.¹²⁸ Their domestic situation was, to hear them tell it, a feminist’s dream of shared duties, achieved because Hayden had been hen-pecked by New Left women. According to Fonda, an outspoken feminist at the time, “with Tom’s consciousness, because of his years working with and being criticized by women in the movement, we just automatically share responsibilities on every level—taking care of children, shopping, cleaning house, whatever.”¹²⁹

By the mid-1970s, Hayden’s aspirations for political office merged with the pull he felt to step out from “a strong woman’s shadow.”¹³⁰ He ran, unsuccessfully, for the Democratic nomination for the U.S. Senate seat in 1976, with Fonda campaigning door-to-door on his behalf. She would do it again in 1982, when Hayden won election to the California State Assembly—a campaign largely funded by her *Workout* empire. The two political dynamos divorced in 1988 after Hayden admitted he had begun a relationship with another woman, an event that did not make the pages of *Reunion*.¹³¹ In her own 2005

¹²⁸ Leroy F. Aarons and Ron Ridenour, “*Playboy* Interview: Jane Fonda and Tom Hayden,” *Playboy* 21:4 (April 1974): 180.

¹²⁹ Aarons and Ridenour, 182.

¹³⁰ Kotkin, 46.

¹³¹ Hayden and Fonda founded the Campaign for Economic Democracy (CED) in 1976. The CED championed renewable energy sources, environmental causes and housing rights. It provided financial support to progressive candidates in California, including Hayden himself. Profits made from the Jane Fonda *Workout* (including videos, books and fitness centres) were put back into the CED. “Political Bedfellows,” *People*, May 24, 1982. <http://www.people.com/people/archive/article/0,,20082212,00.html>. Accessed November 30, 2014; Hilton Als, “Queen Jane, Approximately,” *The New Yorker*, May 9, 2011. <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/05/09/queen-jane-approximately>. Accessed November 30, 2014.

memoir, Fonda offered some insight into the real dynamic of their relationship, casting shade on Hayden's reminiscences: "I simply didn't think my ideas or feelings were as important or credible as his."¹³²

Hayden's understanding of gender relations includes his views on homosexuality, which are articulated in silences and absence. In *Reunion*, homosexuality is represented in the person of Carl Wittman, a fellow SDS activist. Hayden describes retreating from his friend after learning he was gay, unable to communicate to Wittman (or to the reader) why he felt compelled to withdraw his friendship.¹³³ The silence appeared to be habitual. Jane Fonda would speak on Hayden's behalf in a 1976 interview with *The Advocate*. Conducted when Hayden was spinning his "born-again" image into support for his run for the Democratic Senate nomination, *The Advocate* interview provided a venue for the long-time civil rights proponent to share his thoughts on gay rights. Instead, his wife, who requested the interview, and whose celebrity could make it happen, spoke in his stead, stating, ironically, that Hayden had a lot to say to the gay community.¹³⁴ The interview reads as it is intended to, as something close to campaign literature perched on a celebrity profile. As her husband's representative—she uses "we" and "Tom believes" frequently—Fonda could be lauded for tackling gay rights in terms of policy change and

¹³² Jane Fonda, *My Life So Far* (New York: Random House, 2005), 403. Biographer Patricia Bosworth writes that many people in the Fonda-Hayden circle were concerned Hayden was merely using his wife's celebrity (and money) to get ahead. Patricia Bosworth, *Jane Fonda: The Private Life of a Public Woman* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011), 412.

¹³³ Hayden, 130, 421. Carl Wittman would be among the vanguard of gay rights activists in the late sixties. His "A Gay Manifesto" (1970) was a groundbreaking work in gay liberation literature. Hayden does acknowledge Wittman's gay rights activism in *Reunion* (160).

¹³⁴ Richard Kelly, "Interview: Jane Fonda," *The Advocate*, June 2, 1976, 47.

civil rights. She argues for legislation to end discrimination based on sexual preference in housing, employment practices and public service as well as in the military and civil service. Fonda delicately addresses identity politics by calling for a return to collective activism: “We’re not saying groups should lose their identity or soften their issues. We want to create a new political movement combining all groups who want to battle economic and social inequality.”¹³⁵ These progressive, social justice-oriented initiatives are something neither Rubin or Hoffman give voice to—both were too preoccupied with the mechanics of homosexuality. Yet one wonders how much of this is truly Hayden’s point of view. When Jerry Rubin was asked a month later by *The Advocate* whether he believed Hayden would sponsor a gay rights bill, he vacillated, pulling back the curtain for a moment on the Movement’s homophobia and Hayden’s political rapaciousness. “I think he’d do it for political reasons,” Rubin said, “but the Tom Hayden I knew wouldn’t sponsor a gay rights bill. He was just where everyone else was back in the ‘60s. But who knows? I can’t answer issues for him.”¹³⁶ Hayden’s real views on homosexuality remained, in his own veiled words, “all very unspoken.”¹³⁷

Tom Hayden’s “Middle American” political aspirations were not welcomed by everyone. Hayden’s desire to hold public office was portrayed as a continuation of delusions of grandeur and intense hunger for power held over since his days at the top of SDS. His unflattering portrayal in *Esquire*’s 1980 piece about his election campaign paints him as a spotlight seeker, in the shadow and under the thumb of his feminist,

¹³⁵ Kelly, 48.

¹³⁶ Russo, 36.

¹³⁷ Hayden, 130.

movie-star wife. “Tom’s basic problem is he can’t be an up-front politician,” *Esquire* wrote. “He’ll never look good on television, he doesn’t work crowds well. He wants to be a star more than anything else, more than Jane.”¹³⁸ At the end of the day, indeed, literally at the end of a campaign meeting, Hayden is under the thumb of his feminist, movie star wife: “Jane’s complaining she can’t sleep with the noise,’ [Hayden] said, looking sheepish. ‘Sorry guys.’ He shrugged, and the good soldier marched up the steps to his wife... and to dreams of national power.”¹³⁹

Atoning for Opting-Out: “Vietnam Guilt Chic”

Much of the reorganization of the Vietnam War discourse in the mid-1970s and early 1980s took place in the realm of popular culture. “Vietnam Guilt Chic” was a genre of largely non-fiction writing, in which draft dodgers, resisters and avoiders confessed a deep sense of guilt for not serving in the war. Journalist Myra MacPherson coined the term “Vietnam Guilt Chic” in her survey of the Vietnam generation, *Long Time Passing* (1984).¹⁴⁰ MacPherson’s use of “chic” demonstrated her opinion that these pieces were a fad, exposing the authors’ singular belief that not going to Vietnam was the only guilt requiring assuaging. In a host of essays and editorials written after the war, men who had in one way or another avoided the draft now lamented missing their chance to prove their manhood in combat. “Vietnam Guilt Chic” authors such as James Fallows, Christopher Buckley, Bob Greene and Michael Blumenthal inhabited different points on the political spectrum. Yet whether New Left or neo-conservative, the common thread between the

¹³⁸ Kotkin, 51.

¹³⁹ Kotkin, 52.

¹⁴⁰ MacPherson, 156.

pieces is the guilt associated with missing out on the violence of the battlefield, and the consequence that had for the author's masculine identity.

Like the draft films discussed in Chapter Three, "Vietnam Guilt Chic's" myopic focus on masculinity, especially heterosexual masculinism, obscured difficult questions about the reasons for the war, and its terrible consequences for the Vietnamese, to focus largely on what the war did or did not do to American men. As men who had avoided or even resisted the draft lined up to apologize for what they now called their cowardice, they helped to delegitimize criticism of the war, and contributed to the rehabilitation and even exaltation of the Vietnam veteran as the only figure qualified to voice opinions on the morality or meaning of the war. In the face of an ideological imperative to expunge and forget, the New Left would step back from the struggle of keeping alive a wholly inclusive public memory.

The first piece to receive the "Vietnam Guilt Chic" label, James Fallows' "What Did You Do in the Class War, Daddy?" was published in 1975, only six months after the last U.S. helicopter left Saigon. Fallows' essay shows that the initial aim of the "Vietnam Guilt Chic" genre was not to castigate New Left, countercultural and draft-avoider masculinity. Class privilege underpinned Fallows' regret and guilt. He begins his essay by saying that the legacy of Vietnam is "rich in possibilities for class warfare."¹⁴¹ Fallows criticizes the class hierarchy that protected college students like him and his Harvard buddies from the Selective Service System.¹⁴² He describes how he and his classmates

¹⁴¹ James Fallows, "What Did You Do in the Class War, Daddy?," *Washington Monthly* 6 (October 1975): 5. Fallows would go on to be President Jimmy Carter's chief speechwriter between 1977 and 1978.

¹⁴² Milton J. Bates, *The Wars We Took to Vietnam: Cultural Conflict and Storytelling* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 146.

made use of the Selective Service System's class-oriented loopholes, taking advantage of this "most brutal form of class discrimination," and letting the "boys from Chelsea be sent off to die."¹⁴³ Fallows marvels at how easy it was to avoid the draft, and predicts brewing class hatred, caused by "the behavior of the upper classes... so deftly avoiding the war's pain."¹⁴⁴

Fallows' essay offers an unflinching indictment of his peers' and "class"-mates' lack of political action. His class and political consciousness separates "What Did You Do in the Class War, Daddy?" from later entries in the "Vietnam Guilt Chic" oeuvre.¹⁴⁵ Fallows says he attended anti-war rallies, but that taking part in actual draft resistance would have meant jail or exile for him. He confesses to not wanting to deal with the repercussions of being a resister. He says that he and his colleagues did a huge disservice to the anti-war effort, and by extension, to the working-class boys sent off to war. By not resisting their draft inductions in large numbers; by not filling the jails; and by not pressing their parents to political action, Fallows says, he and his "anti-war" friends only helped prolong the war. When Fallows sees injured veterans returning from Vietnam, he wonders how he can reconcile his guilt feelings with the understanding that going to jail for more active resistance could have ruined his life.¹⁴⁶ What Fallows does not do is associate his decision to avoid the draft with a lack of manhood. He castigates his own choices, but not his masculinity; he praises the veteran's mettle, but not his manhood.

¹⁴³ Chelsea is a working-class neighbourhood in Boston. Fallows, 6–7.

¹⁴⁴ Fallows, 14.

¹⁴⁵ Fallows, 7; Bates, *The Wars We Took*, 146.

¹⁴⁶ Fallows, 17.

Indeed, gender plays little obvious part in Fallows' essay. That would change in the parade of "Vietnam Guilt Chic" pieces which followed.

Gendering "Vietnam Guilt Chic"

By the early 1980s, "Vietnam Guilt Chic" had become a bona fide trend. The direction the genre would take is apparent in poet Michael Blumenthal's *New York Times* essay "Of Arms and Men" (1981). In Blumenthal's piece, and many that followed, Vietnam guilt turned inward. Moral questions plaguing avoiders and veterans alike become distant intrusions. Class and racial issues were pushed aside by laments for lost manhood, apparently achievable only through war. Blumenthal's essay represents what would become the genre's bleeding-heart contingency: the maligning of draft avoider masculinity.¹⁴⁷ Where Fallows focused on the working-class victims of the draft, Blumenthal meditated on what avoiding the war had cost *him*. Blumenthal claims that his generation of "hypersensitive, 'untainted' men" are missing something, and it cannot be brushed off as simply a dearth of machismo.¹⁴⁸ He says he feels "cheated" out of the great masculine rite of passage. Because Vietnam was not a "better war," Blumenthal told Myra MacPherson, avoiders and veterans alike were "all cheated out of having a meaningful experience in the military."¹⁴⁹

Blumenthal describes avoiding the draft by breathing in canvas dust at a tent factory for three weeks, inducing a relapse of his childhood asthma. In the one instance where Blumenthal mentions class, he recalls that he and his educated, middle-class friends "first

¹⁴⁷ Blumenthal was also special assistant to the chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Michael Blumenthal, "Of Arms and Men," *New York Times*, January 11, 1981, E23.

¹⁴⁸ Blumenthal, E23.

¹⁴⁹ Bates, *The Wars We Took*, 146; MacPherson, 162.

decided that we wanted out, then why.” The “why” for Blumenthal is nebulous. He says is thankful that he did not go to Vietnam and that he would not change his decision if he had the chance to live 1969 again, but he hopes his reasons would be grounded in a greater sense of “moral integrity.” He claims to envy men who served in Vietnam. “They have something that we haven’t got,” Blumenthal writes—and that “something” clearly involves masculinity. “We [draft avoiders] may have turned out to be better dancers, choreographers, and painters (though not necessarily), but I’m not at all sure that they [veterans] didn’t turn out to be better *men*, in the best sense of the word.”¹⁵⁰ Blumenthal sees the virtues of those who fought in Vietnam as the complete opposite of feminized draft avoiders. Vietnam veterans are resilient, tenacious, resourceful and have a sense of realism. Draft avoiders apparently excel at dancing and choreography. Blumenthal wonders if he even has the capacity to do such manly things as have a family, understand sacrifice or simply grow up. The sense of flippancy that pervades “Of Arms and Men” peaks with its conclusion: “Maybe, short of violating one’s most deeply held moral principles, serving in the armed forces or, for that matter, being in a war, isn’t the greatest tragedy that can occur in life... ‘fun’ and safety are hardly what we’re here for.” Here Blumenthal collapses any distinction between resisting war for “deeply held moral principles” and dodging the draft for “fun and safety.” Neither, he concludes, are the actions of a real man.

The sense of lost opportunity and masculine lack in “Vietnam Guilt Chic” only expanded in the early 1980s as the “noble cause” paradigm took greater hold in memories of Vietnam. Conservative author Christopher Buckley shepherded this intensified

¹⁵⁰ Blumenthal, E23. Italics in original.

deconstruction of avoider masculinity, taking it a step further to censure the draft resistance and anti-war movements. In “Viet Guilt” (1983), Buckley, the son of renowned conservative William F. Buckley, congratulates James Fallows for indicting the class system that sent working class youth to Vietnam and for criticizing the anti-war movement’s reluctance to truly jam the gears of the war machine.¹⁵¹ Buckley takes a swipe at stories from the trenches of anti-war protests: “I think some of the stories we’ve all heard about getting out of the draft or about anti-war demonstrations have a kind of wistful quality to them, as if those telling them are trying to relate ersatz war experiences.”¹⁵² He notes, as well, that stories of draft avoidance escapades have disappeared, at least “at the cocktail party level.”¹⁵³ Buckley too admits to being a draft avoider—he got a doctor to disqualify him because of childhood asthma—though as he told Myra MacPherson, he was always “*quietly* for the war.”¹⁵⁴ It was not until Buckley attended the dedication ceremony for the Vietnam War Memorial that he recognized his shame and guilt—and envy. He and his fellow draft avoiders, he says, had “forfeited” their chance “for a test of manhood, a chance to prove [our]selves under circumstances far more grueling than the challenges civilian, peacetime life throws our way.”¹⁵⁵ He includes violence as part of his missed rite of masculine passage. He quotes a friend’s bitterness at not having been gassed at a demonstration because that act of aggression,

¹⁵¹ Christopher Buckley, “Viet Guilt,” *Esquire* (September 1983): 70.

¹⁵² Buckley, 71.

¹⁵³ MacPherson, 158.

¹⁵⁴ Buckley, 68; MacPherson, 157. Italics in MacPherson.

¹⁵⁵ Buckley, 72.

even acted upon him, “would have [made it] my war too.”¹⁵⁶ Buckley says he feels incomplete, ashamed at never having truly committed to a cause. Again, though, it is the absence of violence that he regrets: “It’s guilt at not having participated. At not having done anything. I blew up neither physics labs in Ann Arbor nor Viet Cong installations.”¹⁵⁷ Only by blowing things up would Buckley know his political convictions were real.

Conservative columnist Bob Greene doubled down on the masculine guilt attached to “Vietnam Guilt Chic.” Greene’s “Men Who Didn’t Go Now Fight Viet Guilt,” also published in 1983, dismisses all the political and moral questions around the Vietnam War, stating simply that the reason American men did not want to go was because they did not want to die. The moral superiority of the anti-war movement was, Greene says, a “sham.” “By not going, they”—and Greene, another draft avoider, includes himself in that they—“may have proved something about their own lack of courage—their own lack of manhood.”¹⁵⁸ Now cognizant that he has lost his chance to learn what “only men who’ve been to war will know,” Greene laments the man he could have been. When he meets a Vietnam veteran, Greene says he feels “less of a man,” even wondering “whether he is able to read my mind.” Wallowing in guilt may well have been cathartic for Greene, but it had the added benefit of delegitimizing draft resistance and opposition to the war.

¹⁵⁶ Buckley, 71.

¹⁵⁷ Buckley, 72.

¹⁵⁸ Bob Greene, “Men Who Didn’t Go Now Fight Viet Guilt,” *Chicago Tribune*, August 15, 1983, B1. Greene’s reason for avoiding the draft is slightly different from the reason he gave a year earlier—he didn’t know how to shave with a razor blade and there is no electricity in a foxhole. Bob Greene, “No Blades Nick the Shadow of His Smile,” *Chicago Tribune*, December 5, 1982, 11.

When Myra MacPherson gave “Vietnam Guilt Chic” its name, she was not particularly impressed with the outpouring of remorse.¹⁵⁹ Nor did the “orgy of confession” impress the *Washington Post*’s Susan Jacoby.¹⁶⁰ Jacoby participated in her newspaper’s 1980 Vietnam symposium, which gathered veterans and resisters together for a day-long rap session. She pondered the “mythic nonsense of the conscience-stricken young man who made the agonizing choice to say home in the classroom while his brothers fought in the jungles of Southeast Asia.”¹⁶¹ Jacoby wondered “whether the millions of men my age who avoided the draft may feel ‘unmanned’ in a way that no woman can truly understand.”¹⁶² Her concluding remarks reflected the gendered tenor of what “Vietnam Guilt Chic” would be for its participants, a mea culpa based in fears of masculine inadequacy and reverence for the war-tested manhood of the veteran.

The public response to “Vietnam Guilt Chic” was varied. Some draft avoiders shared their own regrets at not going to Vietnam, echoing their sense of masculine lack; some welcomed the public acknowledgment the war had inflicted hurt on everyone involved, at home and in country; and still others saw the essays as a first step in bridging the emotional gap between veterans and the nation.¹⁶³ Yet many who shared their

¹⁵⁹Bob Greene, “Viet Nam Chic is Starting to Escalate,” *Chicago Tribune*, May 9, 1979, B1; MacPherson, 156.

¹⁶⁰Bates, *The Wars We Took*, 101.

¹⁶¹Susan Jacoby, “Women and the War,” *The Wounded Generation: America After Vietnam*, ed. A.D. Horne (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1981), 199.

¹⁶²Jacoby, 199.

¹⁶³MacPherson, 160–61; Jeff Ryan, “Letter to the Editor: Vietnam War—The Men Who Didn’t Go,” *Chicago Tribune*, September 12, 1983, 26; Edward D. Depew, “Letter to the Editor: Coping with Vietnam,” *New York Times*, February 17, 1985, SM102; and Andrew S. Berman, “Letter to the Editor: Coping with Vietnam,” *New York Times*, February 17, 1985, SM102.

reactions to “Vietnam Guilt Chic” held little truck with what they saw as whitewashed self-pity. World War II veteran John L. Hess’s letter to the *Wall Street Journal* made it painfully clear that he had no time for repentant draft avoiders like Christopher Buckley and James Fallows. Hess, whose nephew was killed in Vietnam, suggested that if the guilt was too much and the allure of battle so strong, the avoiders could head to Cambodia (then engaged in a genocidal civil war) to work out their issues. “But don’t send other boys to war just to prove your manhood,” he concluded.¹⁶⁴ Murray Polner, the author of *No Victory Parades* (1971), one of the earliest studies of returning Vietnam veterans, and *When Can I Come Home?* (1972) about the draft amnesty debates, had choice words for Michael Blumenthal’s counseling of the younger generation to sign up for duty: “Aside from his chutzpah and hypocrisy, Blumenthal can resolve his personal mid-life crisis by enlisting immediately... They’ll take him until the age of thirty-five.”¹⁶⁵ Bob Greene received criticism as well. In a letter to the *Chicago Tribune*, Ralph W. Schusler told the columnist his avoider guilt was maudlin and unhelpful, doing nothing more than sustaining the myth that only combat can test men’s limits and make them whole. Schusler accused Greene of patronizing Vietnam veterans, and said that he himself did “not envy them their experience. I admire them for having survived... but I don’t feel

¹⁶⁴ John L. Hess, “Letters to the Editor: The Emerging Pride of Vietnam Vets,” *Wall Street Journal*, September 27, 1983, 35.

¹⁶⁵ Murray Polner, as quoted in MacPherson, 159. See Murray Polner, *No Victory Parades: The Return of the Vietnam Veterans* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971); and Murray Polner, ed., *When Can I Come Home? A Debate on Amnesty for Exiles, Antiwar Prisoners, and Others* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1972).

they hold any secret formula for living.”¹⁶⁶ But another letter to the editor impugning Schusler’s response to Greene brought the critique of “Vietnam Guilt Chic” back to a question of the New Left’s gender identity. Schusler, the writer said, “is simply a typical impractical do-gooder type who is sabotaging this country and has proved he is actually a coward at heart.”¹⁶⁷

By the late 1970s, “Vietnam Guilt Chic” had already become enough of a phenomenon in pop culture that the humour magazine *National Lampoon* could satirize it, presenting readers with a “Vietnam Combat Veterans Simulator Kit” as a “patriotic service.”¹⁶⁸ The article, entitled “Born Again on the 4th of July” (1978), ostensibly provided “everything you need to turn yourself into a genuine-looking, authentic sounding veteran of the war in Vietnam.” The piece captures the essence of “Vietnam Guilt Chic,” the way that veterans had become figures of envy rather than pity. It conveys the growing prestige accorded to Vietnam veterans in the public’s memory of the war, and the importance assigned to combat experience in proving the veteran’s authority and his manhood. Indeed, the *Lampoon* piece boils the “Vietnam experience” down to two elements: violence and sex. The experience of violence, in a combat situation, is the point of division between veterans and avoiders. Even in jest, that separation is infused with gender, a masculine lack. The *Lampoon* article mocks the anti-war movement and the New Left in general, and ironically confirms the fetishization of authentic wartime

¹⁶⁶ Ralph W. Schusler, “Letter to the Editor: Vietnam War—‘Men Who Didn’t Go,’” *Chicago Tribune*, August 27, 1983, 8.

¹⁶⁷ Carl John Sterner, “Letter to the Editor: Pride in Service in Vietnam War,” *Chicago Tribune*, September 8, 1983, 18.

¹⁶⁸ Tod Carroll and P.J. O’Rourke, “Born Again on the 4th of July Vietnam Combat Veterans Simulator Kit,” *National Lampoon* 1:100 (July 1978): 65–70, 96.

experience with its “kit” for simulating an ersatz veteran-ness. An avoider’s Vietnam-era manliness is based on faked injuries, “tell[ing] ‘em you were queer” and “ha[ving] some wild times around the frat house”—but then, “you don’t feel like less of a man, do you?” All points of difference between draft avoiders, dodgers, resisters and anti-war protestors are collapsed into the Hippie. Throughout the article, the wannabe vet is portrayed as a privileged white male, with references to college education, campus demonstrations and a white-collar career. The Vietnam veteran is also white; he is tough, muscular and war-hardened, laden with weaponry and ready for hand-to-hand combat. The avoider is caricatured in stereotypical hippie garb, wearing a peace symbol (the “footprint of the American chicken”), with “hair like a girl” and “crabs the size of your thumb” in his bell-bottom jeans. In his wallet is a “Homosexual 1-Y” card, money from his parents and an autographed copy of Jane Fonda’s headshot.¹⁶⁹ That said, excepting the obligatory dismissal of the North Vietnamese as faceless, savage brutes and Vietnamese women as prostitutes, there are no people of ethnicity represented in the piece. This could be read as a deliberate jeering of the largely Caucasian demographic of draft avoiders, satirizing the white-washed version of Vietnam being memorialized in the “Vietnam Guilt Chic” oeuvre. Even as it indulges in every gendered stereotype, the simulator kit manages to do what few serious “Guilt Chic” pieces after Fallows accomplished, acknowledging class and race as part of the terrain dividing those who went and those who avoided serving in Vietnam.

¹⁶⁹ Jane Fonda’s photograph also appears in the pocket of a VC soldier—it is autographed too. Carroll and O’Rourke, 66.

Embracing the Veteran on Film

“Vietnam Guilt Chic’s” mission of privileging the veteran at the expense of draft resistance, draft avoidance and the anti-war movement’s place in the Vietnam narrative paralleled a concomitant campaign in Hollywood. Having avoided dealing directly with Vietnam for most of the war, by the late 1970s Hollywood was prepared to put the war back on screen. Studio releases such as *Coming Home* (Hal Ashby, 1978), *The Deer Hunter* (Michael Cimino, 1978) and *Apocalypse Now* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1979) explored the war and veteran experiences, following a similar thematic trajectory to “Vietnam Guilt Chic’s” non-fiction material.¹⁷⁰ Hollywood’s veterans quickly became a portal through which public attitudes on the war, and on the personage of the veteran, could be accessed and around which the Vietnam narrative could unite. Taken together as cultural texts, “Vietnam Guilt Chic’s” non-fiction and corresponding Hollywood films helped make the war more accessible to Americans, underscoring the power of the media in communicating and directing the Vietnam narrative for the nation.¹⁷¹ Indeed, many Americans began their “working through” process in the movie theatre. Cultural scholar Marita Sturken argues that film is a method “through which uncomfortable histories of traumatic events can be smoothed over, retold, and ascribed new meanings.”¹⁷² Film played a key role in the construction of the Vietnam narrative and the diminishing of the draft resister and avoider. Film aided in the removal of the American brutalization of

¹⁷⁰ *Coming Home* and *The Deer Hunter* were among the early films to focus on returning Vietnam veterans and their postwar lives. Later films include *In Country* (Norman Jewison, 1989) and *Born on the Fourth of July* (Oliver Stone, 1989).

¹⁷¹ Milton J. Bates, “Men, Women, and Vietnam,” in *American Rediscovered: Critical Essays on Literature and Film of the Vietnam War*, ed. Owen W. Gilman, Jr. and Lorrie Smith (New York: Garland, 1990), 40.

¹⁷² Sturken, 85.

Southeast Asia and the urgency in questioning the country's ideological imperative for conquest, replacing it with the stories of soldiers and national war wounds.¹⁷³

At the time of “Vietnam War Guilt Chic’s” debut with Fallows’ essay in 1975, the filmic Vietnam veteran was a figure pushed to violence by his struggle to gain social acceptance. In the late 1960s, returning soldiers were demonized by Hollywood’s manufactured “psycho” Vietnam veteran archetype. Depicted as marauding villains, cinematic veterans rode with motorcycle gangs in exploitation flicks like *Motorpsycho!* (Russ Meyer, 1965) and *Angels from Hell* (Bruce Kessler, 1968); were deranged killers in *Targets* (Peter Bogdanovich, 1968) and *To Kill A Clown* (George Bloomfield, 1972); and wrecked havoc on hometowns and wholesome families in films such as *Welcome Home, Soldier Boys* (Richard Compton, 1972), *The Visitors* (Elia Kazan, 1972) and *The Stone Killer* (Michael Winner, 1973). These films, in essence, brought the war home via violent veterans.¹⁷⁴ This began to shift in the late 1970s. The screen veteran became a mirror of the American sense of Vietnam, and indicated the presence of a nascent consensus-building around the war. Films such as *Billy Jack* (Tom Laughlin, 1971), *Taxi Driver* (Martin Scorsese, 1976) and *Rolling Thunder* (John Flynn, 1977) took up the veteran’s memories and experiences of the war. These veterans were anti-heroes, but still protagonists.¹⁷⁵ It was not until the end of the decade that scenes of Vietnam War combat

¹⁷³ Jerry Lembcke, *The Spitting Image: Myth, Memory and the Legacy of Vietnam* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 148.

¹⁷⁴ Bruce Kessler would go on to direct *The Gay Deceivers* in 1969. Bogdanovich would be an important director in the Hollywood Renaissance (*The Last Picture Show*, 1971; *Paper Moon*, 1973).

¹⁷⁵ Michael Clark, “Remembering Vietnam,” in *The Vietnam War and American Culture*, ed. John Carlos Rowe and Rick Berg (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 180–81. Jason Katzman, “From Outcast to Cliché: How Film Shaped, Warped and Developed the Image of the Vietnam Veteran, 1967–

returned to the screen. As the Vietnam consensus coalesced around the veteran, Americans became more comfortable with the war as part of the national discourse. Thus, Hollywood had a profit motive in recreating the war in films such as *Go Tell the Spartans* (Ted Post, 1978), *The Deer Hunter* (1978) and *Apocalypse Now* (1979).

The Vietnam War's "revival" on film in the late 1970s often involved vilifying the draft resistance and anti-war movements. One avenue to accomplish this was in depicting the anti-war movement as vehemently anti-veteran, creating animosity where little had actually existed.¹⁷⁶ In his analysis of the relationship between the anti-war movement and Vietnam veterans, sociologist (and Vietnam veteran) Jerry Lembcke argues that the Nixon administration manufactured the notion of an anti-veteran anti-war movement to set up the movement as the reason for American failure in Southeast Asia.¹⁷⁷ The oft-cited apotheosis of the anti-war movement's treachery, which Lembcke debunks in *The Spitting Image* (1998), is the image of a Vietnam veteran being spit upon by a "countercultural" type. Though this happened rarely, if ever, in reality, this primal scene was depicted in films such as *Tracks* (Henry Jaglom, 1977) and recounted in one of John

1990," *Journal of American Culture* 16 (spring 1993): 8. The Billy Jack character was first featured in *The Born Losers* (Tom Laughlin, 1967), a youth exploitation picture featuring Vietnam veteran Billy Jack saving a teenage girl from a motorcycle gang.

¹⁷⁶ This is not to say there wasn't tension between the groups. For example, when anti-war veterans began to organize in the late 1960s, there was some hostility and dispassion from the anti-war movement—a position that shifted from aloofness to one of enthusiasm and esteem as the veterans reinvigorated a flagging anti-war movement in the early seventies. Andrew E. Hunt, *The Turning: A History of Vietnam Veterans Against the War* (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 3, 21, 53, 115.

¹⁷⁷ Lembcke, 66.

Rambo's (Sylvester Stallone) monologues in *First Blood* (Ted Kotcheff, 1982), and became cemented in collective memories of the war.¹⁷⁸

A key film in Vietnam's screen return in 1978, and in the fabrication of the veteran as a victim of anti-war movement harassment, is *Coming Home*. The film's plot revolves around the relationship between Sally (Jane Fonda), an army wife, and a wheelchair bound Vietnam vet, Luke (John Voight). When Sally's husband, Bob (Bruce Dern) returns from his tour of duty, he ends up in a confrontation with a war protester at the military base's gate. The interaction is not especially aggressive, but it helps reinforce the film's conception of hostilities between veterans and anti-war demonstrators. The "flowerheads" waiting at the base gate for Bob, and the animosities they represent, are the source of Bob's troubles. His eventual suicide, preceded by paranoia, aggression toward Sally and generally disturbed behaviour, is meant to be catalyzed by Bob's brief encounter at the base, not by any horrors he may have witnessed or committed in Vietnam.¹⁷⁹ This easy third-party responsibility for Bob's self-destruction does a huge disservice to the history *Coming Home* works hard to elide. The draft resistance and anti-war movements did not harass returning veterans, as depicted in Bob's fateful exit from his base, but groups did demonstrate and disrupt the transportation of draftees to bases

¹⁷⁸ "Viet Guilt Chic" contributor *Chicago Tribune* columnist Bob Greene kept the spitting imagery alive in his collection of letters from returning Vietnam veterans, *Homecoming: When the Soldiers Returned from Vietnam* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1989). Greene asked his readers: "Were you spat upon when you returned from Vietnam?" Sixty-three stories appear in the book, and Greene had no doubt the incidents took place (11, 18–85).

¹⁷⁹ Lembcke, 147–48.

and soldiers to depots.¹⁸⁰ The depiction of seemingly anti-veteran war protestors facilitates and codifies how audiences perceive the war and veterans. It directs viewers to think negatively about the anti-war movement and any group connected to dissent against the war. The push for an exclusionary, hegemonic lens through which to view veterans and dissenters is not so separate from the New Left's own project of self-disavowal with regard to Vietnam, much of which emanated from works of "Vietnam Guilt Chic."

Coming Home also works to erase the very real experience of anti-war veterans in organizations such as Vietnam Veterans Against the War.¹⁸¹ This elision is even more apparent through the imagery associated with Luke and his comrades at the VA hospital. The hospital conditions are a nightmare, showing the maltreatment of seriously injured veterans. Luke gains his voice and agency through fighting for respect on that front, rather than claiming any real political position against the war. In this way, *Coming Home*

¹⁸⁰ This aberration in the film is interesting because Jane Fonda was a vocal anti-war activist and had a travelling anti-war revue in the early 1970s that visited military bases encouraging anti-war sentiments amongst soldiers. "It's Not Just 'Fonda and Company,'" *New York Times*, March 21, 1971, D1.

¹⁸¹ Vietnam Veterans Against the Vietnam War (VVAW) was no pop-up organization. It was established in June 1967 in New York. VVAW was a highly active and visible group spearheading much of the anti-war work being done in the early 1970s, particularly after Nixon sent troops in Cambodia in May 1970. Led by military veterans (like future Secretary of State John Kerry) who had fought in the war the nation was still entangled in, members of VVAW could not be as easily cast aside by the public or policymakers, which was often the case with hippies and radical college students. The veterans had been there, seen and done things they wanted on the record to shame the government. To that end, in 1971, the VVAW organized the Winter Soldier Investigation, a "tribunal" during which 150 veterans testified about the war crimes they had witnessed and participated in. The hearings were filmed and released as a documentary, *Winter Soldier* (1972). *Winter Soldier* was re-released in 2005 amidst heated debates over American conduct during the Iraq War. Patrick Hagopian, *The Vietnam War in American Memory: Veterans, Memorials and the Politics of Healing* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2009), 50–53. See Andrew E. Hunt, *The Turning: A History of Vietnam Veterans Against the War* (New York: New York University Press, 2001) for a detailed history of the organization.

was a critical text in solidifying key themes in America's memory of the Vietnam War: that the story of Vietnam was about individual soldiers, and how deplorably those soldiers were dealt with once back on "friendly" soil. The film helped authenticate the idea that veterans had to fight both in the war zone and on the home front.¹⁸²

Recognition of the veteran's amelioration, indeed, the public's desire to accept the Vietnam veteran's positioning as the locus for the war's remembered history, was in part driven by what Marita Sturken identifies as a yearning for "veteranness."¹⁸³ This phenomenon of veteranness invested Vietnam veterans with markers of an unrivalled remembrance, one that included "the catharsis of survival, the right to be angry, and what many perceive[d] to be the wisdom gained from difficult experience."¹⁸⁴ Sturken argues that Vietnam War film audiences are situated to aspire to veteranness by the increasing importance of realism in Hollywood's Vietnam. Films such as *Platoon* (Oliver Stone, 1986) and *84 Charlie MoPic* (Patrick Sheane Duncan, 1989) claim to capture the "real" Vietnam, thus demanding the authority to construct historical narratives that serve to entrench the veteran as the ultimate possessor of truth and knowledge. Audiences then, by watching these docudramas, can see themselves as "having had an authentic experience of war" and achieving some degree of veteranness.¹⁸⁵ The films Sturken categorizes as imbued with the opportunity for veteranness-transference are the Vietnam War films of the late 1980s (*Platoon*, *Full Metal Jacket*, *Casualties of War*) which carried the cachet of

¹⁸² This idea of fighting on two fronts was carried forward in over-the-top violent and hypermasculine Vietnam War films such as the *Missing in Action* and *Rambo* series. Lembcke, 162, 174.

¹⁸³ Sturken, 96.

¹⁸⁴ Sturken, 96.

¹⁸⁵ Sturken, 86, 99.

having veteran involvement in their production and therefore, stronger claims of authenticity and recuperative power.¹⁸⁶ However, the threads of veteranness can be read back into the early years of the Vietnam War genre, in films such as *Coming Home*, *Rolling Thunder*, *Who'll Stop the Rain* (Karel Reisz, 1978) and *Cutter's Way* (Ivan Passer, 1981). Though all these films suggest that Vietnam damaged soldiers in some way, and many of the veterans depicted are anti-heroes, their characterizations imbue the cinematic veteran with a keen awareness of the war in country and at home.¹⁸⁷ A yearning for veteranness became part of the popular culture superstructure producing Vietnam War films and “Vietnam Guilt Chic” before the genre’s requirement of scrupulous verisimilitude in the 1980s.

Conclusion

A January 1977 short feature in the *Chicago Tribune* aimed to make it abundantly clear that the New Left was no longer relevant to American life. Detailing a Yippie press conference attended by Jerry Rubin, journalist Marilyn Preston scoffed: “Today, two Presidents, one Watergate, and a missing Abbie Hoffman later, every point they made has been won, except one: The Yippies just aren’t news anymore.”¹⁸⁸ The Yippies’ media stature is measured by the complete lack of television news cameras and smattering of

¹⁸⁶ *Platoon* was written and directed by Vietnam veteran Oliver Stone; one of *Full Metal Jacket*’s (Stanley Kubrick, 1987) screenwriters was renowned Vietnam War correspondent Michael Herr; and *Casualties of War* (Brian De Palma, 1989) was based on a true story.

¹⁸⁷ This is not to say that there wasn’t criticism about how veterans were portrayed in these films. Vietnam veteran and noted author Tim O’Brien (*If I Die in a Combat Zone*, *Box Me Up and Ship Me Home*, 1973) laments Hollywood’s representation of damaged veterans in a 1979 essay for *Esquire*. Tim O’Brien, “The Violent Vet,” *Esquire* (December 1979): 96–104.

¹⁸⁸ Marilyn Preston, “And Still Yelling: Yippies Not Dead—Just Nonevents,” *Chicago Tribune*, January 22, 1977, W11.

newspaper writers. “It was the greatest news media non-event of the week,” Preston laughed. “The Lipizzan stallions drew more cameras.” Particularly interesting is the photograph accompanying the article. It is a photo of Rubin, circa 1968, shirtless with bushy hair and beard, holding an AK-47. The caption reads, “Jerry Rubin in 1968: As always, comic relief.” The photo is meant to recall for the reader the Yippies’ adoration of Third World machismo and the violence intrinsic in that influence. However, the caption turns that memory on its head by connecting the clear representation of a hard New Left masculinity and aggression with irrelevancy and public derision.

The mainstream media’s portrait of the New Left as something that could be caricatured and re-packaged as *passé* was not far off the mark from what was happening within the remnants of the Movement. Jerry Rubin, Abbie Hoffman and Tom Hayden did not so much transform in the 1970s and 1980s as move sideways. Their residence on “new” planes of existence appeared to hold out the perception of enlightenment, but they remained tethered to aspects of hegemonic, heteronormative masculine ideals, whether it was systemic sexism or class privilege.

Hoffman, Hayden and Rubin’s dismissal as *passé* evidenced a wider movement intent on shutting out the pains of the 1960s and Vietnam, in the desire to prove that the nation had moved on. “Vietnam Guilt Chic” continued this contingency, widening the list of the outmoded to include draft avoidance, draft resistance and the anti-war movement. “Vietnam Guilt Chic” marked draft avoidance as a shame-filled burden with consequences for the avoider’s manhood. It reinforced the essentialization of violence in American manhood. Granting veterans seemingly *carte blanche* authenticity, while doubling down on feelings of guilt and masculine loss, works like “Of Arms and Men,”

“Viet Guilt” and “Men Who Didn’t Go Fight Viet Guilt” served to turn the draft resister, who chose to openly resist the draft, taking a political and ideological stand, into a shadow figure. The loudest voices in “Vietnam Guilt Chic” were conservative men like Bob Greene and Christopher Buckley, who used their apologies to strike out at the New Left, believing their tarnished manhood was tainted by association. The apparent agreement between the conservative and left-leaning writers on the failure of the New Left to do right by the young men who took their places on the front line, was really not so new. New Left leaders like Rubin and Hayden, and to a certain extent, Abbie Hoffman, had been running down the Movement’s problems and failures since the mid-seventies. These guilty narratives made the efforts to “disappear” the draft resister easier. Crossing political lines, “Vietnam Guilt Chic” was an avenue for draft avoiders to catalogue masculine short-comings and regret; for expressing a yearning for veteranness and extolling hegemonic manhood. Most tellingly, it also defined the Vietnam narrative’s “New Left” as embattled, fragmented and self-castigating, with little space for draft resisters and anti-war activists, now lumped with self-identified cowards.

In the politics of the Vietnam War’s public memory, the New Left participated in the privileging of the veteran’s experience. The privileging process, clearly decipherable in “Vietnam Guilt Chic” and Hollywood’s creation of a Vietnam War film genre, necessitated a lockdown of the alternative masculinities that had circulated in the post-war culture. These alternatives were celebrated and embodied by men such as Jerry Rubin and Alan Alda. The very presence of anti-war, anti-violence masculine modalities marked a shift in the American post-Vietnam zeitgeist, one that appeared to appreciate choices for men outside traditional articulations of manliness. However, as gender scholar Lynda E.

Boose points out, the area allotted to these alternatives was distinctly feminine. The feminization of masculinity became more unsupportable as the drive toward a consolidated Vietnam consensus gained traction in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the height of the “Vietnam Guilt Chic” phenomenon. This untenability became especially so in light of the humiliating, and interpreted as emasculating, Iran hostage crisis in 1979.¹⁸⁹

The accession of hegemonic masculinity and thus a surging patriarchy in these years was welcomed by the Right and conceded by liberals and progressives, who, despite advocating what were considered feminine attributes for men (emotional openness and self-reflexivity), stood to benefit from the change’s deleterious impact on identity politics.¹⁹⁰ Milton J. Bates’ observation with regard to the consequence of “Vietnam Guilt Chic” is particularly apt, pointing out the paradox in the genre’s main, overtly gendered, thrust: “In some cases, ironically, it was those who had opposed the Vietnam War who contrived to negate its lessons for American manhood.”¹⁹¹ The New Left’s engagement in the formulation of the Vietnam consensus did not necessarily render it mute, but voices from the margins were pushed farther into the political liminal zone. Sidestepping class (and race) removed much of the scrutiny from the Selective Service System’s lop-sided draft policies, which favoured white college students and the wealthy. The irony of that microscope’s destruction is that “Vietnam Guilt Chic,” as a vehicle for the Vietnam consensus, succeeded in silencing privileged white men who had escaped the draft, not the class and racial minorities who had taken their place.

¹⁸⁹ Boose, 71.

¹⁹⁰ Boose, 72.

¹⁹¹ Bates, *The Wars We Took*, 145.

The New Left chose to recast its voice in the American narrative on Vietnam, which had real consequences for the status of the Left in the United States. The civil liberty aims of identity politics became mired in backlash as the nation moved away from the hopes of the Great Society and the Movement, going forward into an era of conservative ascendancy. The lasting outcome of “Vietnam Guilt Chic,” and the New Left’s place in it, “was to put to rest the legacy of resistant sons.”¹⁹² The resurgence of militarism and retrenching of hegemonic masculinity in the 1980s was, in part, about disconnecting anti-war discourse to enable the resurrection of American exceptionalism, thus unbinding the U.S. from defeat in Vietnam. Veterans did have to “struggle through a burden of Viet Guilt far more profound than the masculinized angst of Buckley and Green.”¹⁹³ However, by embracing the veteran (and his manhood) to the exclusion of all others, the Vietnam consensus “won” its battle to segregate—if not silence—the draft resister/avoider, which resulted in deriding the political and masculine virtues of New Left men. In the end, the concentration on gender and guilt in the creation of a monolithic Vietnam narrative carried forward the “noble cause” shibboleth, making the compilation of accurate and inclusive historical public memories difficult in the era of the New Right.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² Though Boose ascribes the legacy to the decade before the Persian Gulf crisis, her argument about the revival of U.S. militarism and birth of what she calls the “techno-muscularity” of hypermasculine Hollywood stars such as Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger, are salient in the earlier time frame of “Vietnam Guilt Chic” and the establishment of Reagan’s America. Boose, 68.

¹⁹³ Deirdre English, “Backstage: Why Are We Still in Vietnam?” *Mother Jones* 8:9 (November 1983): 5.

¹⁹⁴ Howell Raines, “Reagan Calls Arms Race Essential to Avoid a ‘Surrender’ or ‘Defeat,’” *New York Times*, August 19, 1980, A1; Jacoby, 194.

Conclusion

No Guts, No Glory, No Voice

The cultural distance between 1968 and 1986 can be measured with three films. Nineteen sixty-eight was the year of *Greetings* and *The Green Berets*, two films that marked the sides of a great gulf dividing American views on the war in Vietnam—and on the meaning of masculinity. Nineteen eighty-six was the year of Oliver Stone’s *Platoon*, a single film that seemed capable of bridging those divides. The first major Vietnam War film to be written and directed by a veteran of the war, *Platoon* won praise from former hawks and doves alike, and it taught Hollywood exactly how to make a movie about the Vietnam War, creating a template that would be much imitated in the years to come. *New York Times* film critic Vincent Canby proclaimed the film “a singular achievement,” not just the best Vietnam War movie ever, but “the best work of any kind about the Vietnam War since Michael Herr’s vigorous and hallucinatory *Dispatches*.”¹ *Chicago Sun-Times* critic Roger Ebert declared *Platoon* the best film of the year, also ranking it above the likes of *Apocalypse Now*, *The Deer Hunter* and *Coming Home*:

Now here is a film that, in a curious way, should have been made before any of the others. A film that says—as the Vietnam Memorial in Washington says—that before you can make any vast, sweeping statements about Vietnam, you have to begin by understanding the bottom line, which is that a lot of people went over there and got killed, dead, and that is what the war meant for them.²

It mattered greatly to the reception of the film that Stone was a Vietnam veteran, decorated for heroism in combat.³ Many veterans praised the film for its authenticity. A

¹ Vincent Canby, “Film: The Vietnam War in Stone’s *Platoon*,” *New York Times*, December 19, 1986, C12.

² Roger Ebert, Review of *Platoon*, *Chicago Sun-Times*, December 30, 1986.

³ Stone earned a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart. James Michael Walsh and Donald M. Whaley, *The Oliver Stone Encyclopedia* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2012), 282.

cover story in *Time* magazine declared that *Platoon* showed “Vietnam as it really was.”⁴ Stone was showered with awards and plaudits, including the Academy Awards for Best Director and Best Picture of 1986.

Platoon, and the rapturous reception it received, signaled Hollywood’s escape from the shadow of *The Green Berets*. Commercially successful yet critically reviled, *The Green Berets* had left studios quaking over Vietnam films for the next decade at least. In the late 1970s, important Vietnam films like *Apocalypse Now*, *The Deer Hunter* and *Coming Home* did the heavy ideological lifting for a Hollywood ready to be back in the Vietnam game. However, these were Hollywood Renaissance films, emotionally challenging and often experimental in form, that seemed to foreground the difficulty in making sense of the war. With *Platoon*, Stone managed to make a film that felt authentic and was just challenging enough to be cathartic—a film that satisfied almost everyone.

Platoon was quickly followed by similar pictures. Along with *Platoon*, *Full Metal Jacket* and *Hamburger Hill* (John Irvin, 1987) solidified the conventions of the post-*Platoon* Vietnam War film. Such films almost invariably focused on young infantrymen, small companies of soldiers patrolling the nightmarish jungles of cinematic Vietnam. They signaled their authenticity through frank portrayals of drug use, coarse language and above all graphic violence of a sort that appeared more real than what appeared in *The Green Berets*. Yet by focusing on low-ranking, ground-level “grunts” with no connection to, or power in, policy-making decisions, the Vietnam War movies of the 1980s and 1990s could evade hard questions about the larger purpose or morality of the war. They even evaded large aspects of the war: America’s massive air war and the CIA’s covert

⁴ Richard Corliss, “*Platoon*: Vietnam as It Really Was,” *Time*, January 26, 1987.

war in Vietnam still await their *Platoon*. Race and class divisions could also be eclipsed by the cinematically manufactured brotherhood of combat.⁵ Thus the politics of the war and its consequences for every sort of participant—military and civilian, American and Vietnamese—receded to permit the enlisted soldier, and thus the combat veteran, to become the principal player in the Vietnam War story in America’s collective memory.

The generic nature of Vietnam War films had become apparent as early as 1989. In a review of *84 Charlie MoPic*, film critic Dave Kehr wrote, “Where once there was only silence, the Vietnam film has become so common and codified that any new effort needs a gimmick to distinguish itself from the pack.”⁶ *84 Charlie MoPic*’s gimmick was the conceit that the film was actually raw footage taken by an amateur military cameraman making a training film for the army’s motion picture division—a conceit that only underscored the centrality of the ordinary infantryman’s point-of-view to all of the new Vietnam films. The film’s writer-director, another Vietnam veteran named Patrick Sheane Duncan, said he tried “to put the audience down on the grunt level where I, a blue-collar kid without politics, spent some time.” This, then, was Hollywood’s new recipe for remembering Vietnam: a minimum of politics and a “grunt’s-eye view.”⁷

Hollywood’s successful genrification of the Vietnam War film also diminished the significance of the draft. The Selective Service System did not vanish wholly from view, but its presence shifted in the move toward formulization. It came to be observed through

⁵ Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, The AIDS Epidemic and the Politics of Remembering* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 86, 113–14.

⁶ Dave Kehr, “Movies: *84 Charlie MoPic* Resourceful With Its Experiment,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 28, 1989, NC32A.

⁷ Gene Siskel, “Down and Dirty: *MoPic* Gives a Grunt’s-Eye View of Vietnam,” *Chicago Tribune*, May 7, 1989, K12.

a kaleidoscope of a tempered nostalgia, often inflected with humour, making safe the life-and-potentially-death question imposed by induction notices. Removed to the distant shores of memory, fear and anxiety were replaced by the mechanics of draft avoidance once employed purposefully, and to a certain extent, instructionally, in the draft films.

One such example of this twist in the draft trope is *Big Wednesday* (John Milius, 1978), the coming-of-age story of a group of California surfers, whose true-blue American manhood seems tied to catching the next wave.⁸ In *Big Wednesday*'s draft sequence, the rat-a-tat-tat of a military drumline plays as three friends emerge from their VW Bug convertible, ready to do battle with the Selective Service System. Organizing themselves in a parking lot, they pull out all the stops to avoid the draft. Matt (Jan-Michael Vincent) clips on a leg brace and has a friend strike his knee with the cane he will use to limp into the induction centre. Leroy (Gary Busey) dresses in tattered clothes, rubs motor oil on his face, dumps red wine over his head, and stuffs a dead fish in his pocket. In the next scene, he tells a military psychiatrist that he eats light bulbs and loves sharks. Waxer (Darrell Fetty) primps in a mirror, dressed in tight, orange satin pants and a light pink satin cowboy shirt. He sweeps rouge over his cheeks like a warrior anointing himself, then spritzes perfume liberally over his body and combs his hair into a pompadour. Another draftee in the parking lot puts on jackboots, a Nazi officer's cap and an SS greatcoat borrowed from Waxer—spoils of his father's service in World War II.

⁸ John Milius co-wrote *Apocalypse Now* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1979), released the year after *Big Wednesday*. He would go on to write and direct *Red Dawn* (1984), which followed a group of All American mid-western teens taking on an invading force of Soviets.

Still accompanied by the drumbeat, the friends march to the head of a long line of inductees.

All the draft films' tropes of draft avoidance are present in this short sequence: the infirm, the psychotic, the Nazi, the "hoaxasexual."⁹ The draft board sequence in *Big Wednesday* is played for humour, just like similar scenes in *Greetings*, *The Gay Deceivers* and *Alice's Restaurant* are. Yet this is not a draft film. With the Selective Service System no longer a threat to its audience, *Big Wednesday* can play the draft off entirely for laughs (unlike the draft films' nod to the all too contemporary situation of many of their male viewers). Leroy, Matt, and Waxer's efforts to avoid the draft—there is no real talk of political reasons, just that the war would interfere with their ability to "hang ten"—are presented in such a way as to evoke a certain wistfulness. *Big Wednesday* remembers the draft, and encourages its audience to remember the draft, with a sort of wink, as if to say, remember the time we pretended to be gay, physically challenged or mentally ill to get out of the draft? Wasn't that a gas? The nostalgia for the jest creates a distance between the filmic material and the reality of the time, not long past, in which young men really did face the very serious decision of whether go to war, lie to avoid military service, or resist the draft by taking a conscientious stand. The film's comical approach to draft avoidance functions to negate the actual politics of draft resistance. Perhaps tellingly, in *Big Wednesday* it is not the fake Nazi but the fake homosexual who ends up paying the ultimate price. While Leroy and Matt return to the safety of their beach, Waxer's ruse fails. He is drafted, and dies in the jungles of Vietnam.

⁹ Randy Shilts, *Conduct Unbecoming: Gays and Lesbians in the U.S. Military* (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1994), 67.

Later in the film, Waxer's friends gather at his grave to ponder his sacrifice and whether it meant anything. Matt and Leroy question their own bravery, sharing remembrances of Waxer's way with the ladies. This is only a quick sequence before the action returns to the beach. Still, the hint that the friends bear some burden of shame for not serving is very much in line with the "Vietnam Guilt Chic" phenomenon so popular at the end of the seventies.

Big Wednesday was one of several films released in the late 1970s and early 1980s to look back at the Sixties, the counterculture and conflicts of that era. Others of this kind include *Return of the Secaucus Seven* (John Sayles, 1979), *A Small Circle of Friends* (Rob Cohen, 1980) and *The Big Chill* (Lawrence Kasdan, 1983). It is remarkable how quickly this divisive time period could be converted into nostalgia—but of course that is the work performed by nostalgia, making what once was dangerous or transgressive quite benign. Softened with humour and wrapped in the beloved music of the era, this kind of nostalgia re-remembered a searing struggle for America's conscience as little more than "draft dodgers" and their harebrained schemes. This is brought into sharper focus when films released around the same time, such as *Platoon* and *84 Charlie MoPic*, were clearly grappling with the war and its traumas. Drained of its political and moral pretext, draft resistance became indistinguishable in popular memory from mere draft avoidance. This conflation helped guarantee that the draft resister would be delegitimized and the Vietnam veteran would become, in time, the only legitimate spokesperson on the war.

Remembering the Veteran, Forgetting Draft Resistance

We remember the past in ways that fulfill the needs of the present. In the late 1970s and 1980s, conservatives spearheaded the construction of a new consensus on the

Vietnam War in ways that bolstered calls for a re-embrace of militarism and an interventionist foreign policy to combat a supposedly reanimated Soviet menace. If this consensus highlighted the failures of past Democratic presidents, so much the better. At the centre of this new consensus was the figure of the Vietnam veteran. The image of the Vietnam vet was carefully reconstructed, from psychopath to hero, from outcast to paragon. In time, only veterans were deemed qualified to speak on the meaning or lessons of the war in Vietnam.

Of course there were precedents for this embrace of the veteran as a way to heal deep political divides. After the Civil War, as David Blight and others make plain, the collective memorializing of soldiers by both the North and South helped to ease the strain of reuniting and reconciling the nation. In celebrating the bravery of veterans and in mourning the dead, white Americans could avoid harder questions about the reasons for the war, and what it had or had not accomplished.¹⁰ As Robert Penn Warren solemnly noted in *The Legacy of the Civil War*, “When one is happy in forgetfulness, facts get forgotten.”¹¹

Forging a collective memory of the Vietnam War also required selection and omission. Some threads were cut and certain voices silenced, or at the very least muffled to the point of existing in the margins.¹² As the story of the veteran came to stand for the whole history of the war, the draft resistance and anti-war movements were largely

¹⁰ David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2001), 3.

¹¹ Robert Penn Warren, as quoted in Blight, 1.

¹² Robert J. McMahon, “SHAFR Presidential Address: Contested Memory: The Vietnam War and American Society, 1975-2001) *Diplomatic History* 26:2 (spring 2002): 162–63.

excised from memory, or saved only as examples of treachery, cowardice and the ugly side of democracy. Both conservatives and liberals have come to accept a therapeutic paradigm, in which veterans and the nation were traumatized and victimized by the war. Whatever truth this paradigm contains, it permits and indeed encourages the skirting of moral and political questions about the American enterprise in Vietnam.¹³ The war's traumatic impact on the American psyche—"what Vietnam did to *us*"—can be endlessly debated, while what America did to itself and others can be virtually ignored.

This twisting of memory, narrative and nostalgia makes it challenging to evaluate the Vietnam consensus. If philosopher Milan Kundera is correct that "the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting," then remembering the draft resister and the draft avoider is essential to remembering America's war in Vietnam.¹⁴ Yet, the success of such a project has proven difficult to achieve. Scholars have noted the absence of the draft resister or avoider in many Vietnam narratives. Still their stories must fight for space with the vaunted veteran, embraced by both conservatives and liberals as the authentic symbol of the war. The result has been a lop-sided struggle for control of public memories on the war, squeezing the war's critics onto ever-smaller soapboxes. The draft resister and draft avoider are thus in a double bind. Those who do not fit the dominant discourse's model of recuperated triumphalism find themselves looking for ways to crack the code.

¹³ McMahon, 169; Patrick Hagopian, *The Vietnam War in American Memory: Veterans, Memorials and the Politics of Healing* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2009), 16–17.

¹⁴ Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, trans. Michael Henry Heim (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1981), 3.

The bestowal of authority upon Vietnam veterans' experiences, and the delegitimizing of draft resistance, inevitably had implications for masculinity and gender. The project's success depended on the contraction of anti-war discourse, shutting down its seeming anti-violence stance, anti-militarism, self-awareness and emotion. Opponents of anti-war discourse put anti-war men in a feminized zone. The veteran could assert authentic, battle-tested American masculinity and become its symbol, particularly when the explanation for Vietnam being a "bad" war shifted to an over-simplification—i.e., Vietnam was "bad" because the United States lost. That loss would now conveniently stem from a lack of militarism (often articulated as "fighting with one hand tied behind our backs"), reflecting a failure of the populous and government to support its soldiers. This iteration in the Vietnam narrative fortified the veteran's masculinity with patriotism, something draft resisters, avoiders and anti-war activists had difficulty claiming from their feminized space.¹⁵ Moreover, it served to brand the manhood of draft resisters and avoiders as deficient and available for demolition.

The Amnesty Debate

One site for constructing the nation's collective memory of draft resistance was the long controversy over granting amnesty to draft resisters and deserters. The debate began in 1968, when anti-war Democrat Eugene McCarthy endorsed some form of amnesty. It took off in 1972 when George McGovern, who also supported amnesty, became the Democratic presidential nominee. (Hubert Humphrey, McGovern's main opponent in the

¹⁵ Lynda E. Boose, "Techno-Muscularity and the 'Boy Eternal': From the Quagmire to the Gulf," in *Gendering War Talk*, ed. Miriam Cooke and Angela Woollacott (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 70–72.

Democratic primary that year, lambasted McGovern’s platform as “Amnesty, Acid and Abortion”—after the primary, Republicans took up the phrase.)¹⁶ President Nixon’s termination of the draft in 1973 and the start of American troop withdrawal that year escalated the amnesty debate, opening another front in the fight to control discourse on the war.¹⁷ The pro-amnesty contingent argued that amnesty was a method to force questions of the war’s morality into the light, and to have the government acknowledge that the Vietnam War had been wrong. Conservatives and anti-amnesty forces rose to this challenge, insisting that amnesty would be an insult to American veterans of all wars.¹⁸ “I can think of no greater insult to the memories of those who have fought and died,” Nixon said, “than . . . to say to them that we are now going to provide amnesty for those who deserted the country.”¹⁹ Thus, the debate over amnesty became a debate about the larger morality of the war.

In 1974, President Gerald Ford did offer a sort of conditional amnesty, inaugurating a program promising clemency and alternative service options for fugitive draft resisters and military offenders who turned themselves in. Amnesty advocates, angry at the double

¹⁶ The amnesty debates were another area in which the reality of the class and racial make-up of the men who had avoided the draft without the aid of student deferrals and wealthy parents was left largely out of the contentious discourse. The draft resister diaspora conjured in the public’s mind were middle-upper class whites, the children of privilege. In reality, this demographic was few in number compared to the poor and ethnic young men who made up the bulk of draft violators, generally crossing the Selective Service System by not registering (and living tenuous lives thereafter in the U.S. because they could not afford to go into exile). Lawrence M. Baskir and William A. Strauss, *Chance and Circumstance: The Draft, The War, and The Vietnam Generation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), 6, 204, 209; Robert O. Self, *All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy Since the 1960s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012), 70.

¹⁷ Baskir and Strauss, 204–5.

¹⁸ Self, 70; Baskir and Strauss, 206–7.

¹⁹ Hagopian, 33; Baskir and Strauss, 208.

standard Ford seemed to establish by pardoning the disgraced Richard Nixon, called for a boycott of the board.²⁰ The program was declared a failure after only about 27,000 out of 350,000 potential eligible candidates applied.²¹

The amnesty debate continued into the late seventies. President Jimmy Carter attempted to end the controversy in 1977 by announcing a “blanket pardon,” rather than amnesty, for all civilians who had evaded the draft. Amnesty implies that no real offence has occurred; a pardon indicates that a real offence has occurred, but been forgiven. In the name of “healing . . . wounds,” Carter’s blanket pardon excused the majority of those who had evaded the draft (though it did little for deserters).²² Veterans’ groups and Republicans, who saw no difference between amnesty and pardon, savaged the President’s program. Many veterans interpreted Carter’s position as a de-valorization of military service; conservatives turned it into further evidence of Carter’s “soft” approach to foreign policy and the nation’s defense. Whether it was done for national reconciliation or to underscore a political position, amnesty and the blanket pardon haunted Democrats well into the 1980s, setting up the Right to take full advantage of perceived liberal “permissiveness” and the virtually unassailable figure of the Vietnam veteran.²³

²⁰ Baskir and Strauss, 211–13.

²¹ Self, 72. See also, Lawrence M. Baskir and William A. Strauss, *Reconciliation After Vietnam: A Program of Relief for Vietnam Era Draft and Military Offenders* (Notre Dame, OH: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977).

²² Myra MacPherson, *Long Time Passing: Vietnam and the Haunted Generation* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1981), 350; Hagopian, 35.

²³ Baskir and Strauss, 227; Hagopian, 36; Self, 72–73.

The Ironies of Declension

The embrace of the veteran and the eclipse of the draft resister were reflected in the larger political and ideological currents of the decades after Vietnam. The New Right of the 1970s, 1980s and since is sometimes thought to have its origins in a backlash against the alleged excesses of the New Left. But American conservatism has deep roots, and the project to rebuild it had been underway for years. To frame the rise of the New Right as a backlash against the New Left, or against the Sixties writ large, ignores the surprising similarities between much New Left and New Right discourse, and the extent to which members of the male New Left capitulated to, and even assisted, the conservative capture of popular discourse over Vietnam, the draft and masculinity.²⁴

In the aftermath of Vietnam, conservatives strove to restore what they believed to be the nation's lost manhood and prestige. The New Right struck a pose of "righteous victimhood," the perfect vehicle to strike back at liberal and leftist condemnations of the war.²⁵ As liberal men retreated from identity and gender politics, declaring them a fateful wrong turn away from "hard" economic issues, conservatives rushed in to embrace the politics of family, gender and sexuality. "The family will be to the decade of the 1980s... what the Vietnam war was to the 1960s," wrote Paul Weyrich, co-founder of the Heritage Foundation and the Moral Majority, in 1979.²⁶

²⁴ Grace Elizabeth Hale, *A Nation of Outsiders: How the White Middle Class Fell in Love with Rebellion in Postwar America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 7, 134; Michael Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion: An American History* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 225; Self, 369, 398, 400.

²⁵ Zaretsky, 18.

²⁶ Paul Weyrich, "Building the Moral Majority," in *The Rise of Conservatism in America, 1945–2000: A Brief History with Documents*, ed. Ronald Story and Bruce Laurie (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008), 115.

Still liberals and leftists could not evade questions of gender. Coming to terms with the Vietnam War and the culture war it provoked would inevitably involve some rethinking or rebuilding of American masculinity.²⁷ The question was what sort of manhood that would be. This was a battle over interpretation: a fight to construct the narrative and determine whose space in that narrative would either be privileged or silenced.²⁸ To cure America's "Vietnam syndrome," the draft resister and avoider had to publicly atone for their rupturing of martial masculinity. In the literature of "Vietnam Guilt Chic" and in self-flagellating memoirs of declension and "how we lost our way," New Left men wrote the script for a conservative capture of both masculinity and the memory of Vietnam. The mea culpas continued from the apologetic memoirs of the late 1970s through the culture wars of the 1990s and beyond. In books like *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (1987) and *The Twilight of Common Dreams: Why America is Wracked by Culture Wars* (1995), former SDS president Todd Gitlin expounded the declension narrative, lamenting the New Left's alleged turn, sometime in the late 1960s or early 1970s, from "real" political issues to issues of culture and identity. "My generation of the New Left," Gitlin wrote in 2003, "relinquished any title to patriotism without much sense of loss... The much-mocked 'political correctness' of the next academic generations was a consolation prize. We lost—we squandered the politics—but won the textbooks."²⁹ Other New Left activists—James Miller, Maurice Isserman, Michael Kazin—joined the chorus of dismay.

²⁷ Self, 73.

²⁸ Zaretsky, 224–25.

²⁹ Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam, 1987); Todd Gitlin, *The Twilight of Common Dreams: Why America is Wracked by Culture Wars* (New York: Metropolitan Books,

The irony of this declension narrative is that the New Left never made a “turn” from “hard” questions of war or labour to “soft” questions of identity and sexuality. The Movement was always about both. Even before the New Left, Cold War politics were deeply inflected with issues of sexuality and gender. From the Lavender Scare of the early 1950s to the quiche-rejecting “Real Men” of the Reagan years, the personal and the political were never distinct; identity politics and the meaning of manhood were always in some state of play.

What would the history of the male New Left, and indeed the whole history of Cold War masculinity, look like if we set aside frames of declension and crises of masculinity? What if we saw moments of possibility instead, even if they did not come to fruition? What if we interpreted struggles over the meaning of masculinity not as continual crises, but as opportunities for change and growth? We might find an exemplar of liberal masculine potentiality, not in the tanned visage of John F. Kennedy, but in the equally bronzed countenance of actor Cary Grant. Grant was a signpost for what American masculinity could have become. The actor’s masculinity was a construction that he recognized as such. He did not hide from gender fluidity or performance, yet he seemed to demonstrate that such flexibility could be embraced without the loss of virility or sexual prowess. We might also try to remember draft resistance as an act of courage and conscience, rather than unmanly cowardice. And we might see the draft films of the 1960s, as juvenile and problematic as they could often be, as part of a great, incomplete experiment—filmic laboratories for working out a new kind of American masculinity,

1995); and Todd Gitlin, “Varieties of Patriotic Experience,” in *The Fight is For Democracy: Winning the War of Ideas in America and the World*, ed. George Packer (New York: Perennial, 2003), 120.

one that at least contemplated a rejection of violence at both the national and the individual scale.

We might, but we might not. Influenced by the pacifist tradition of the Civil Rights movement, some men in the male New Left did choose to contemplate their own manhood from inside a discourse critiquing violence and challenging gender norms. Yet many others, while willing to challenge certain symbols of Cold War masculinity, either would not or could not renounce the male prerogative for violence. New Left leaders like Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin remained prisoners of what Kate Millett called “the virility cult,” trapped in masculinist iterations of what was supposed to be a universalist, humanist ideology.³⁰ They protested against militarism in the geopolitical sphere, but embraced compensatory forms of bravado and aggression as a “natural” expression of their masculinity. Others, like Tom Hayden or Todd Gitlin, castigated themselves for “turning” to questions of identity and gender, reinterpreting some of the Movement’s greatest successes, including its part in launching Second Wave feminism, as its downfall. In the post-Vietnam years, their own ambivalence about the incomplete experiment they had begun was used to discredit their whole movement—indeed to discredit leftist politics and even liberalism for a generation.

Onward, Soldier

Forty years after the fall of Saigon, the shadow of the Vietnam War still looms over the United States. Though President George H.W. Bush claimed at the end of the Persian Gulf War to have “kicked the Vietnam syndrome once and for all,” his remark really only underscored the extent to which Americans were still gripped by the memory of the

³⁰ Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (New York: Avon Books, 1971), 325.

war.³¹ “Its ghosts still haunt the American psyche like fragments of a twisted nightmare,” wrote conservative policy analyst Ernest Lefever in 1997.³² “The war keeps coming back, it’s forever,” said liberal anti-war activist Brendan Walsh in 2001.³³ Indeed, Americans keep fighting the war in Vietnam, and fighting over it, in different ways. Every male politician of the baby boom generation, it seems, must account for what he did during the draft years as a prerequisite for seeking elected office. Hollywood continues to produce Vietnam War movies, with recent films like *We Were Soldiers* (Randall Wallace, 2002) or *Rescue Dawn* (Werner Herzog, 2006) made all the more poignant by their commentaries on America’s new wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.³⁴ In 2014, the *New York Times* reported on the phenomenon of Vietnam re-enactments, akin to Civil War re-enactments, in which Vietnam, Iraq and Afghan War veterans converged in the forests of Oregon to reconstruct jungle battles, “creat[ing] a fascinating space where real emotions and memories mix with history and fantasy.”³⁵ Documentary filmmaker Rory Kennedy, daughter of Robert Kennedy, niece of JFK, released *Last Days in Vietnam* (2014), which tells the harrowing story of the frenetic exit of American personnel from Saigon in April 1975. The film continues the tradition of focusing on American experiences, largely

³¹ George H.W. Bush, “Remarks to the American Legislative Exchange Council,” March 1, 1991, Government Printing Office.

³² Ernest W. Lefever, “Vietnam’s Ghosts,” *Wall Street Journal*, May 21, 1997, A14.

³³ Brendan Walsh, as quoted in Francis X. Clines, “Catonsville Journal: Keeping Alive the Spirit of Vietnam War Protest,” *New York Times*, May 3, 2001, A12.

³⁴ For commentary on American war films after 9/11, see Guy Westwell, *Parallel Lines: Post-9/11 American Cinema* (London: Wallflower Press, 2014); and Martin Barker, *A “Toxic Genre”: The Iraq War Films* (London: Pluto Press, 2011).

³⁵ Mike Attie and Meghan O’Hara, “Op-Docs: Re-enacting the Vietnam War,” *New York Times*, November 11, 2014.

leaving the Vietnamese perspective, as articulated by Vietnamese participant-observers, in the margins. The Vietnam War remains very much in popular circulation, a constant national companion ready to resuscitate old resentments and traumas, no matter the decade.

Interrogations of the manhood-violence matrix and the employment of state violence as geopolitical policy have only gained more relevance in the post-Vietnam War years. Yet today we rarely see the same kind of searching examinations about war, citizenship, manhood and violence that were precipitated by the war in Vietnam. Because there is no draft, there is no visible draft resistance. The termination of the Selective Service System has, perhaps ironically, made it easier for the state to send its citizens to war. The conscripted soldier of yesteryear has been replaced by the “professional” warrior in what is described as a volunteer army, populated by both men and women.³⁶ Because enlistment is held to be an individual’s choice—economic, educational and racial imperatives aside—many of the most charged debates of the Vietnam era have been defused. The threat of service in Afghanistan, Iraq or some future war no longer looms over the lives of all of America’s young men; thus, they and their parents are less motivated to question or to act. As discriminatory and mishandled as the Vietnam-era draft was, it provoked a deep debate about the purpose and morality of American intervention in Vietnam, and catalyzed an exploration of masculine identities not contingent upon military service and war.

³⁶ See Gary Gerstle, “In the Shadow of Vietnam: Liberal Nationalism and the Problem of War,” in *Americanism: New Perspectives on the History of an Ideal*, ed. Michael Kazin and Joseph A. McCartin (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

David Blight's reminder is ominous: "All memory is prelude."³⁷ America's collective memory of the Vietnam War remains a muddy synthesis of trauma, rapprochement, privilege and absence. It is not too late to broaden the scope of the Vietnam narrative. One hundred and fifty years after the American Civil War, its meaning is still being contested. The memory of Vietnam will be with Americans for a long time. The draft resister and draft avoider can be more thoroughly and thoughtfully incorporated, along with a more dynamic understanding of the New Left's trajectory, its accomplishments and its defeats. Theirs does not have to be inscribed continually as a history of failure, or gendered crises never overcome. If America's reckoning with Vietnam still lies on the horizon, then more radical memories can still be created in the acknowledgement of paths not yet taken and voices not yet heard.

³⁷ Blight, 397.

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“How to Spot a Yellow Belly: Vietnam Draft Resisters, Film and Masculinity,” Annual Conference, Canadian Association of American Studies, London, Ontario, November 2009.

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