

Rescuing Men:

The New Television Masculinity

In Rescue Me, Nip/Tuck, The Shield, Boston Legal, & Dexter

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
BY

Pamela Hill Nettleton

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Mary Vavrus, Ph.D, Adviser

November 2009

© Pamela Hill Nettleton, November/2009

Acknowledgements

I have had the extreme good fortune of benefitting from the guidance, insight, wit, and wisdom of a committee of exceptional and accomplished scholars. First, I wish to thank my advisor, Mary Vavrus, whose insightful work in feminist media studies and political economy is widely respected and admired. She has been an inspiring teacher, an astute critic, and a thoughtful pilot for me through this process, and I attempt to channel her dignity and competence daily. Thank you to my committee chair, Gilbert Rodman, for his unfailing encouragement and support and for his perceptive insights; he has a rare gift for challenging students while simultaneously imbuing them with confidence. Donald Browne honored me with his advice and participation even as he prepared to ease his way out of active teaching, and I learned from him as his student, as his teaching assistant, and as a listener to what must be only a tiny part of his considerable collection of modern symphonic music. Jacqueline Zita's combination of theoretical acumen and pragmatic activism is the very definition of a feminist scholar, and my days in her classroom were memorable. Laurie Ouellette is a polished and flawless extemporaneous speaker and teacher, and her writing on television is illuminating; I have learned much from her.

My gratitude extends to the entire department of Communication Studies at the University of Minnesota—Twin Cities. My intellectual life there has been challenging and deeply rewarding, and the commitment of the faculty to each graduate student is sincere and valued. I am also grateful to the University's department of Gender,

Women, & Sexuality Studies, where I earned a minor and where I worked with extraordinary women.

I thank my colleagues who assiduously read sections of this work and offered valuable insights and reflections, including, in particular, Julie Wilson and Jessica Prody. I am also indebted to the entire body of my graduate cohort, whose insights and comments sharpened my thinking in every course.

My deep personal gratitude and admiration go to my three best teachers, my children: Gretchen Nettleton, Christopher Nettleton, and Ian Anderson. And thank you to my husband, William Schrickel, for bringing many cups of tea along with unfailing encouragement.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	i
List of Tables	iv
Chapter One	
Introduction.....	1
Chapter Two	
Look! Up in the Sky! Heroes, Not-Quite-Heroes, and the Common Man.....	52
Chapter Three	
The Boys' Clubhouse As Wedding Chapel: Marrying My Best Friend.....	125
Chapter Four	
Undoing the Dichotomy: The Emergence of the Transgendered Figure in Male- Centered Television.....	178
Chapter Five	
The Towers Come Down, Viagra Goes Up: Male Sexual Anxiety as Plot Device.....	205
Chapter Six	
Conclusion.....	238
References	274

List of Tables

Table 1: Commercials During Two <i>Rescue Me</i> Reruns Broadcast in March 2007.....	12
Table 2: 9/11 Deaths by Location.....	65
Table 3: 9/11 Deaths by Occupation, Method, and Location.....	65

Chapter One

Introduction

I grew up in a household of women, with five sisters and no brothers. Even the dogs were female.

In those pre-Title IX years, professional and school- and community-sponsored women's sports were limited to cheerleading, dance line, and gymnastics. I grew up knowing nothing of sticks, mitts, jock straps, and scorekeeping, and little of the strange male creatures that played such games.

Years later, after I had a daughter, I had a son. When he was six and wise well beyond his years, he sat his single mother down and in a serious voice delivered a well-prepared presentation on the importance of sport to a young man. He wanted to play hockey, and he wanted me to enroll him in a PeeWee league. He carefully traced his proclivity for the sport, reminding me that he enjoyed watching it on television, that he liked banging a puck into the garage door, that he thought he might even be pretty good at it, if he practiced. He recognized that I might have heard it was violent, and he reassured me that he would not let himself be hurt nor would he intentionally pound on others. He would need equipment and he knew it would cost money, and if forfeiting his allowance would help bridge the gap, he was willing to offer that up for the cause. His Uncle John was going to coach; he would join Uncle John's team, and surely I trusted Uncle John. And then he said, with great dignity and with his chubby little hand on my knee, "This is what men do."

At his first practice, I stood knee-deep in snow watching him attempt to skate

inside a fenced-in outdoor rink on a freezing Minnesota night. Within minutes, the moment I dreaded occurred: he built up speed, struggled to reach the puck, teetered off balance, and with a colossal crash, slammed into two other skaters. A pile of yelping boys slid across the ice and into the boards with a great crunch, arms, legs, and sticks tangled. I was certain he had been dismembered. Just as I leaned over the fence to ask in a quavering voice, “Sweetie, are you all right?” he popped up with an ear-to-ear grin and yelled, “Did you see that? Wasn’t that *great*?”

I didn’t understand, and that was just fine—it was his world, not mine.

Thus began his 25-year stint as a hockey goalie (he is now a television sportscaster), and my education at his hands of what it can mean to grow up male in modern America. He realized, even at that tender age, that there were lessons that he could not learn at his mother’s knee, and he sought out mentors, brothers, and uncles who could teach him what he wanted to learn. He understood that there were codes and values for boys and he wanted to learn them from men—and for this to happen, he politely asked me to please step out of the way.

I cannot claim to have immediately comprehended the importance of this in his life, but I came to see, in ways both small and large, how he was nurtured by the company of men. Today he is a husband, about to become a father, a compassionate and thoughtful feminist who can stop a 90-mile-an-hour puck flying straight at his head.

In turn, he mentored his younger brother, who also grew up a hockey goalie, and driving to and from ice rinks nine months a year with sweaty leather perfuming the interior of my car, I grew thoughtful about the yin-and-yang conflicts of being single and being a parent, being a woman and raising sons, and being a heterosexual feminist.

My eldest child is a daughter, and while I cannot completely side with essentialist evaluations of gender, my sons asked for and occupied a different sort of space than she did—and if I asked the world to respect hers, then I realized that I needed to ask myself to respect theirs.

Masculinity

During my children's childhood, I began to develop deep and troubling concerns about how media—the field in which I worked as a journalist, editor, and scholar—formed expectations and constructions of gender in America. I was both intrigued and uneasy about what media made of femininity and women, and also of how media represented what masculinity could and could not be in this country.

As a feminist media scholar, my early scholarly work centered on representations of women in magazine advertisements, a body of texts rich in opportunities to analyze objectification, sexism, and misogyny. Much valuable feminist work exists and remains to be done in this field, but I began to think that little would shift in conceptions of masculinity and femininity while “female” was studied as if it were the only gender. I began to think through gender in the media—still in feminist terms, but now thinking of men as gendered beings, too.

How is masculinity constructed in the media? How do media naturalize masculinity? What is rendered visible and invisible in these representations? Which masculinities are foreclosed and which are nurtured? What is at stake culturally in this process? These issues are of critical importance to me, and what I can observe in how they work in the lives of the men I care for is fascinating, troubling, and only

infrequently hopeful. It seems to me that patriarchy can be delegitimized most effectively and feminism advanced most successfully if men, as well as women, are treated as being gendered and being affected by cultural representations of gender. And to do that, it is necessary to study their representations as women's have been studied, to apply feminist theory and cultural studies and media studies approaches to how American media construct masculinity.

The events of 9/11

The morning of September 11, 2001, I was editorial director of a lifestyle magazine in my metropolitan area. As the work day in the Midwest began and as my staff arrived at the office, news reports from New York and Washington, D. C., from Pennsylvania and around the world, trickled in. One of my young editors came into my office wide-eyed at the television coverage of the towers being hit and asked, "What did we do?" His immediate conclusion was that U.S. foreign policy had been administered in ways hidden from the public, and that 9/11 was payback. He was not the only one to think this way. As journalists, the staff gathered around the television set, and between breaking newscasts and heartbreaking images, asked each other questions that the American media would, for the most part, fail to take up. What American foreign policy decisions might have led to this? What U.S. actions were being retaliated against? How could nations around the globe come together to effectively combat terrorism? Why did the towers fall so quickly? Where were the rescuers and the tales of heroism? Why had so many firefighters perished? What kind of retaliation would America make? And more importantly, what type of retaliation might be wise?

My staff did not consider their initial questions, generated as the towers collapsed and the news broke on 9/11, to be uniquely insightful, but they were surprised to discover over the coming days that these questions were rarely if ever raised in the media. In addition to the shock and human tragedy of the day, American confidence had been dealt a serious blow, made visible by the near-immediate and almost hysterical call to patriotic arms that was symbolized, not by an icon of peace or of international understanding, but by an icon of a single nation. American flag decals appeared overnight everywhere, bumper stickers bloomed like dandelions, and citizens wore tiny flag stickpins as jewelry, as though only one nation had ever been terrorized, as though only one nation suffered from the events of 9/11, as though only one nation should be indignant, grieving, outraged, vengeful. And questions about American responsibility, United States foreign policy, and how events at Ground Zero had transpired went underground, to be asked around kitchen tables, in coffee houses, and around water coolers. Firefighters were canonized as heroes but 9/11 also appeared to forge and widen fissures in American cockiness—and American masculinity.

A new television genre emerges

Two television writers and producers were in New York City that day, shooting a program about police officers. One of them, Denis Leary, told the other, Peter Tobin, that they ought to develop a dramatic series about 9/11 and New York City firefighters. The FX network's groundbreaking series, *Rescue Me*, was born. But from the outset—and consider the name alone—*Rescue Me* was not a flag-waving celebration of patriotism uncomplicated by uncertainty and practiced by heroes who never doubted

themselves or their country. From the beginning, *Rescue Me* was about American masculinity wrestling with amorphous issues of modernity, and it never fell in line with White House politics of the Middle East or monolithic, hegemonic masculinity.

Rescue Me has that in common with a number of television series launched since 9/11 that feature male leads who are anxious, uneasy, dysfunctional, flawed, and yet likable and compelling. Post-9/11, a distinctive television genre with a particular discourse emerged. These male-centered dramas, airing primarily on cable, include *The Shield* (FX, 2002-2007), *Nip/Tuck* (FX, 2003-), *Rescue Me* (FX, 2004-), *Dexter* (Showtime, 2006-), and *Mad Men* (A&E, 2007-), and ABC's *Boston Legal* (2004-2008). These dramas feature a distinctive discourse about the experience of modern American manhood that departs from previous programming in its reflection of post-backlash feminism and post-9/11 masculinity. These dramas explore traditional and contrary gender behaviors around roles as father, friend, lover, son, and present male behavior as contested and uncertain. The "masculinity crisis" in these dramas is a narrative shift away from earlier masculinity crises blamed on various social changes and then-emerging feminism.

In the wake of 9/11, male-centered cable dramas offer what was previously infrequently seen on television: intense and intimate engagement with men's anxieties, failures, and contradictions, amid sometimes regressive gender politics. Television's post-9/11 masculinity is part reinscription of male hegemony, part resistance to traditional masculinity, and part something new—a depiction of men grappling directly with what it is to be a man, and inventing a myriad of possibilities rather than a single hegemonic icon. These male-centered dramas are commercially and critically

successful, earning Emmys, Golden Globes, and large market shares; clearly these narratives emerging at this time reflect important cultural shifts and resonate with audiences and industry critics.

These dramas come into being at this moment due to specific economic conditions, which I explore in a political economy analysis of *Rescue Me* and FX, and also because a certain type of masculinity can now be front and center, given the new vulnerability of American domestic soil and the revised conceptions of American heroism that 9/11 makes possible. At the end of the last century, the 1996 Telecommunications Act created conditions that allowed cable stations to create new niche markets. Networks no longer needed to please a large, general audience, and could survive and thrive on attracting a narrow but desirable audience. This gave networks the freedom to develop edgier content and more provocative programming. The events of 9/11 also make visible masculine fragility. The country was symbolically castrated, and the first responders who ran into the towers turned out to be just as mortal as the white-collar workers on the 22nd floor. Throughout this work, these two central narratives emerge and intertwine: Masculinity is changing in the post-9/11 U.S., and male-centered television dramas offering new images and discourses of masculinity are proliferating since 9/11.

Literature review

Examinations of representations of women in the media are a chief feminist project, from the earliest part of the Second Wave. In the sixties, Betty Friedan begins her research for *The Feminine Mystique* (Friedan, 1963) with a content analysis of

women's magazines, finding articles that positioned women firmly in the kitchen and as subservient to men. In the seventies, feminist Gaye Tuchman writes her germinal piece on the absence of women in mainstream media reportage, calling the dearth of female representation "symbolic annihilation" (Tuchman, 1978, p. 7). Liesbet van Zoonen's book-length literature review, *Feminist Media Studies* (1994), reveals the breadth and depth of how feminist theory has been applied to media representations of women over the past decades. Under-representation is a key issue, but the nature of the representations is also of critical importance. The large majority of the studies van Zoonen catalogs are of the sexual objectification and demeaning treatment of women in magazine and newspaper advertisements. Jean Kilbourne "outs" the sexualization of women in television commercials and print advertisements in her videos and books, "Killing Us Softly" (1979), "Still Killing Us Softly" (1994), "Killing Us Softly 3" (2000), and *Can't Buy My Love* (2000). Jane Caputi characterizes the daily bombardment of billboard and advertising images of scantily dressed and provocatively posed women as "everyday pornography" (Caputi, 2003, p. 436). Erving Goffman (1979) breaks down print advertisements according to the pose of the woman in relationship to the man (usually subservient and physically below him) and in relationship to the product (she often sensually strokes deodorant, liquor, etc.). He also found meaning in the way in which a woman's gaze in advertising is often "checked out," vacant, staring off into space as though the man in the ad or the viewer might do as he wishes with her. From these roots, feminist examinations of representations of women in media emerged over the decades into a rich and broad category, encompassing print and electronic media.

However, analogous roots of media studies concerning representations of men do not exist. Feminist media studies research tends to focus on female characters and female representations, and has concerned itself with underrepresentation and the lack of diversity and how media constructed social and cultural attitudes and beliefs about women's roles (Lotz, 2007). Leaving men out of gender discussions reflects and reinforces conceptions of men as universal humans and of women as the only gendered beings. By dichotomous logic, studies of women in the media are, in some sense, also studies of men. And because representations of men are more dominant and more diverse than those of women, media studies that are not focused on gender are basically about men. Still, media studies that consider men as gendered beings are recent phenomena, first trickling into the literature in the 1980s and building momentum in the 1990s into the new century (Connell, 1983, 1990, 1995; Fracher and Kimmel, 1995; MacInnes, 1998; Vavrus, 2002).

As men began to be seen as gendered, masculinity media studies began to emerge. This is now a lively field, although peopled by a handful of scholars. Australian R. W. Connell, a pioneering gender writer and the theorist behind "hegemonic masculinity," works in education. Historian Harry Brod examines ethnic masculinities in the media, focusing on Jewish men; Mark Anthony Neal, Herman Gray, and Darnell Hunt write on African-American men in media. Judith "Jack" Halberstam theorizes female masculinity. Susan Jeffords examines Vietnam media representation in *The Remasculinization of America* and the Reagan presidency years in *Hard Bodies*. Mary Vavrus writes on news media's take on men, including Mr. Moms and NASCAR dads.

Still, much less work has been done on men in the media than has been done on women. Most of that work has analyzed media representations in terms of what resists and what reinscribes hegemonic masculinity (Hanke, 1990, 1998b; Connell, 1990; Trujillo, 1991; Vavrus, 2002), or in terms of a “masculinity crisis” (MacInnes, 1998; Fracher and Kimmel, 1995; Jeffords, 1994; Bly, 1990; Faludi, 1991). Each approach has come under increasing criticism, and additional ways to evaluate and analyze media representations of masculinity are needed.

Amanda Lotz argues there is a “waning usefulness” in applying hegemony theory to television masculinity (2007). I agree with Lotz that hegemony theory is problematic—I outline why in the next section—but I disagree with Lotz’s reasoning. She finds hegemony limiting as an analytic tool when applied to media representations of men because she feels that feminist and gender theory have managed to obliterate hegemonic masculinity (Lotz, 2007). Would that this were true! As with her buoyant take on post-feminism, Lotz is far too optimistic here. While hegemonic masculinity as represented on television may have sprung a great many leaks, it remains firmly in place. The evidence is visible when these leaks are presented and received as fresh, bold, edgy messages—if hegemony were not in place to push against, they could not be considered edgy messages.

In her paper delivered to the 2007 ICA conference, Lotz specifically takes up the male-centered television dramas that I study here. She claims that the contentiousness and uncertainty regarding masculinity in these shows and many others provide an increasing preponderance of masculinities that erodes the ability of a singular construct—no matter how it adapts—to maintain a dominant status and singularly

define what it is to be a man in the manner previously suggested by the term (Lotz, pp. 5-6). I agree with Lotz that this new genre of male-centered television dramas reflects important shifts in conceptions about masculinity, and that progressive work can be observed here. Patriarchy, however, is far from conquered. While I am not starry-eyed at the charm of these new television masculinities, I can go some distance with Lotz and see positive shifts in representations of masculinity, if not shifts in the tectonic plates of patriarchy. She concludes that

these shows...interrogate the feelings lurking underneath the reconstructed masculinity of male drama characters. These series make explicit the contestation involved in the struggle over hegemonic masculinity required by post-second-wave gender politics. These series depict the crises that result for men—importantly not as tool for containment of women's gains in the manner suggested by previous narratives or as may be suggested by gender discourses in other television forms. The characters at the center of these dramas present conflicted figures upon which the difficult process of negotiating contrary gender norms are mapped (Lotz, 2007, pp. 9-10).

Here, I agree. These characters are conflicted, and in important ways. These narratives are not drawn as hegemonic masculinity versus feminist politics. These narratives wrestle with the internal struggles of individual men attempting to make sense of shifting and contradictory gender ground, political correctness, patriarchal history, and feminist futures.

There is nothing simple and straightforward in their struggle; it is all a mess, and so feels both real and human. This new post-9/11 television masculinity seems to be inching away from full-on patriarchy over to an intriguing borderland. It seems more tolerant, it seems to have room for varieties of masculinities, it seems to welcome real men, human men, every man, with more dignity and less standoffish disdain than did representations of masculinity in earlier television eras.

In addition to the literature discussed above, to better connect relevant literature to each topic, I weave additional references to the literature through each chapter.

Theoretical framework

Hegemonic masculinity

The concept of hegemonic masculinity is useful, albeit problematic, in this exploration of post-9/11 male-centered television dramas.

R. W. Connell (credited with coining the concept of hegemonic masculinity) and James Messerschmidt (2005) trace the origin of hegemonic masculinity, how it has influenced gender studies, and how it has been applied to men's studies. They find the research concept was useful as a way to locate masculinity that is "certainly normative. It embodied the currently most honored way of being a man, it required all other men to position themselves in relation to it, and it ideologically legitimated the global subordination of women to men" (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 832). However, the concept has met with critiques along four specific lines. One, the underlying concept of masculinity itself is contested; masculinities are multiple, not singular, and the concept itself can be essentializing. Two, it is difficult to locate representatives of hegemonic masculinity that are not contradictory. Powerful men do not necessarily present as particularly athletic, for example. Some athletes abstain from "masculine" activities of drinking and fighting, for another. Hence, the concept becomes applied inconsistently, sometimes as a fixed masculinity type and at other times as a particular manifestation of one kind of masculinity. Three, the concept is criticized as reifying negative aspects of masculinity, such as violence, aggressiveness, and criminal activity.

“Men’s behavior is reified in a concept of masculinity that then, in a circular argument, becomes the explanation (and the excuse) for the behavior)” (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 840). And finally, the theory of the subject in hegemonic masculinity is at issue: without clear embodiments of masculinity, how are men supposed to be conforming or resisting an “ideal” masculinity? Connell and Messerschmidt conclude that the plurality and hierarchy of masculinities implicit in the term remain useful, but Connell concedes that her initial location of all masculinities and all femininities in a single, global pattern of power should now be discarded. They call for better understandings of gender hierarchy, pointing to the challenges to hegemonic masculinity from both “protest masculinities” of marginalized male groups and women who appropriate aspects of hegemonic masculinity (p. 847). They reject using the term to imply a fixed character type, or an assemblage of “toxic traits” but argue that the term has a “growing relevance” amid newly developing global coalitions of powerful men (p. 854). “In the global arenas of transnational corporations, media, and security systems, new patterns of hegemony are being forged. The making and contestation of hegemony in historically changing gender orders is a process of enormous importance for which we continue to need conceptual tools” (p. 854).

While acknowledging the criticisms that Connell and Messerschmidt identify and consider, and agreeing that these critiques limit and bound applications and usefulness of the term, I do use “hegemonic masculinity” in this work. Regarding the four criticisms that Connell and Messerschmidt take up, on one, I agree that masculinity is not a singular concept and that there are myriad masculinities; however, I do think that being able to refer to hegemonic, subversive, and alternative masculinities is a

helpful construct, even if the precise definitions of each category are contested and arguable. Two, although it is difficult—if not impossible—to locate a human male who embodies all the qualities of hegemonic masculinity, my male students can, nonetheless, rattle off the identifying characteristics: tough, strong, capable, unflappable, physically dominant, tall, handsome, rugged, sexually confident, successful, etc. This tells me there is a commonsense notion of what hegemonic masculinity is, even if in reality it may be thin on the ground. Three, I take issue with the idea that the term “hegemonic masculinity” reifies negative aspects of masculinity all by itself—it may point to negative aspects, it at least points to prevalent and mainstream ideas of masculinity, but I am willing to risk whatever reification might occur in order to have the conversational shorthand of being able to point to hegemonic versus other masculinities. And four, MacInnes argues that masculinity has always been an ideal that feels unattainable to most men (1998), but nonetheless, they have at least a generalized sense of what it is. Thoughtful examination of this term is worthwhile, and with a nod to what is limiting and prejudicial about it, I use it respectfully, intentionally, and, I hope, clearly.

Performative gender and female masculinity

The way Judith Butler and Judith “Jack” Halberstam challenge the seeming naturalness of gender definition and difference is also useful in thinking through these constructions of masculinity on post-9/11 television.

Butler’s argument that gender is performative and non-essential assists in “de-essentializing” (my invented word) ideas of hegemonic masculinity, and in opening a space in which human characteristics can be explored free from the polarizing action of

gender. Butler sets the stage for the argument that the transgendered figure proves gender and sexuality to be fluid—something that the heterosexual matrix of power works to contain and constrain. Anything other than straight-up heterosexuality becomes some variant of what Butler calls “abject homosexuality,” and is denied acceptance as normative. Other types of labels appear: deviant, subversive, aberrant, unnatural. To recognize masculinity as performative allows conceptualizing it as fluid and influenced by historical movements, which aids here in exploring what is shifting on post-9/11 television and why (Butler, 1999).

Halberstam finds female masculinity to be as freeing as the transgendered figure when it comes to matters of understanding sexuality and engaging feminism. She argues that female rather than male masculinity offers a more helpful and complete comprehension of masculinity. One reason, according to Halberstam: more performance options exist within female masculinity than within male. Butler agrees, arguing there are more ways for women to be butch than for men to be masculine. Butler’s and Halberstam’s unhooking of gender from masculine and feminine behaviors and from particular sexualities offers an opportunity to ignore male/female dichotomies and to consider gendered behavior free from biologically gendered bodies (Halberstam, 1998).

Halberstam analyzes film depictions of female masculinity (Demi Moore in *G.I. Jane*, Signourney Weaver in *Alien*) as presenting strength, confidence, aggression, and even violence without the attendant (arguably male) attributes of dominance and arrogance (Halberstam, 1998). Halberstam does not necessarily position female masculinity *versus* male; she offers it as an additional prism through which to view masculinity, an overlooked and undervalued perspective and option. Halberstam uses

examples from television and film to illustrate female characters who possessed and demonstrated specific types of masculinity, usually without being recognized as having done so. There is a female tradition and practice of performing masculinity, Halberstam argues, and it does not neatly sort itself into lesbian categories, nor does it elide heterosexual ones. Women can embrace, practice, embroider upon, try out, and demonstrate masculinity, without trying to imitate or masquerade as one of the boys. Halberstam argues there's a difference between passing and dragging, between masculinity and being a man. Like the transgendered figure, female masculinity renders gender boundaries amorphous and pliable. Using Butler and Halberstam, gender boundaries become permeable, allowing standpoints other than the single and firmly centered male one for the discussion of masculinity.

Representations in media

Stuart Hall's theories of exploring and studying the silences and absences in media representations offers a way to imagine gender and masculinity outside of common media imagery. Although Hall speaks and writes primarily about race here (1992), writing those ideas onto gender illuminates the ways in which hegemony and the Other—be it racial or sexual—works.

Its capacity to punctuate the universe into two great opposites masks something else; it masks the complexes of feelings and attitudes, beliefs and conceptions, that are always refusing to be so neatly stabilized and fixed. The great divisions of racism as a structure of knowledge and representation are also, it now seems to me, a deep system of defense. They are the outworks, the trenches, the defensive positions around something that refuses to be tamed and contained by this system of representation. All that symbolic and narrative energy and work is directed to secure us "over here" and them "over there," to fix each in its appointed species place. It is a way of marking how deeply our histories actually

intertwine and interpenetrate; how necessary “the Other” is to our own sense of identity; how even the dominant, colonizing, imperializing power only know who and what it is and can only experience the pleasure of its own power of domination in and through the construction of the other. The two are the two sides of the same coin. And the Other is not out there but in here (Hall, 1992, p. 16).

Masculinity is defined and practiced in terms of what it is not. It is not feminine, it is not womanly, it does not wear pink, it does not cry. Hall’s understanding of the Other as being “not out there but in here” offers an empathetic and insightful model for conceptualizing how the changing roles of women in the Second Wave and beyond proved threatening to some men and to ideas of masculinity.

Additionally, Hall’s theory of media consumption being a site of the production of meaning is useful in considering new representations of masculinity in light of a particular historic context (1980b). These representations at this post-9/11 moment are being consumed by American audiences structure meaning in particular ways. However, I ground this in a political economy of the production of these programs, because I articulate meaning making of a text to the circumstances of the text’s ownership and control.

A masculinity manual for the new millennium

Laurie Ouellette uses Nikolas Rose to situate “television within a larger history of social and cultural technologies that have been called upon to create citizens ‘who do not need to be governed by others, but will govern themselves, master themselves, care for themselves’” (Ouellette, 2008, p. 13). Ouellette applies this to reality television, which is much more obviously self-improvement-oriented than are cable dramas.

However, Rose's argument that certain cultural technologies assist the State in teaching citizens to govern themselves appropriately may help answer why the rise in male-centered cable dramas appears at this historic moment. The work that those dramas perform may include a self-policing of male (and female) citizens into "new" roles—some feminist, some reified patriarchy, some amalgams of the two.

In these ways, male heroes in network dramas further the governmentality function of television: they model ways in which viewers might become better, more productive citizens (Rose, 2003). Television works to promote certain ethics and behaviors through, as Ouellette and Hay argue, reality and self-help television (2008). Television dramas, presenting lead characters with whom viewers may identify, may work in a similar, though less direct, manner. Exposure to fictional characters is a vicarious experience, but may still be a meaningful one that supports or helps form certain attitudes. In this way, television may work as one of the "devices" that Rose argues relieves the government of performing certain tasks: "Liberal strategies of government thus become dependent upon devices (schooling, the domesticated family, the lunatic asylum, the reformatory prison) that promise to create individuals who do not need to be governed by others, but will govern themselves, master themselves, care for themselves" (Rose and Miller, 2008, p. 45).

I do not wish to move into an audience effects discussion, nor do I wish to claim that there is an intentional effort on the part of FOX and FX to educate American men in progressive gender politics. In fact, I highly doubt the latter. But what can be teased out here is a type of "manual" of acceptable masculine anxiety, struggle, and contestation with patriarchy, hegemonic masculinity, and feminist ideals. The characters

in these programs struggle with all of the above, and the characters in these programs by their nature as leading men function as exemplars. At this post-9/11 moment, audiences and television producers allow and in many cases embrace a masculinity that is openly wrestling with gender and sexual issues within modernity.

Methodology

My methodology is a cultural studies approach: a blend of feminist theory, political economy, cultural criticism, masculinity studies, and narrative analysis. I explore the interconnections and relationships between a fresh crop of male-centered television dramas arising after 9/11—my body of texts—and patriarchy, feminism, American masculinity, and gender. Although from time to time I comment on audience ratings and reaction, these comments are generally garnered from fan sites and news reports; this is not a media effects or audience reception study. It is primarily an examination of new narratives on masculinity arising at and because of a critical cultural and historical moment, an exploration of and search for meaningful ways in which to conceptualize post-9/11 television masculinity.

To familiarize the reader with each text, I use thick description of central characters, production techniques, and plots. Although each of the cable dramas I've selected is critically acclaimed and commercially successful, some of them are new and most of them require cable service or DVD rental to experience. Therefore, I do not assume these texts are immediately familiar and accessible to readers. For each of the television programs I reference, I viewed every episode of every season; surveyed the trade press for production news, ratings and award news, and interviews with producers

and directors; culled the popular press for reviews and articles; visited fan sites and read blogs and posts from fans about multiple aspects of each program, and screened documentaries produced about each program's production.

I consider the masculinity of post-9/11 male-centered television dramas in light of historic television masculinities and contextualize both within the masculinity studies work of Connell, Kimmel, and others. Seeing and analyzing men on television as gendered, rather than universal, beings is central to this work.

To ground this feminist analysis in real world considerations, I conduct a political economy analysis of one program—*Rescue Me*—to reveal and explore the connections between the ownership of the production side of the programming, ownership of the channel on which it airs, subsidiaries and partner organizations of involved corporations, and the sponsorship and advertisement present on the program. The latter includes commercials, product placement, synergistic advertisements, and linked promotions between programs. This supports an analysis of how these representations of masculinity come to exist in particular cultural, social, economic, and market conditions.

Research questions

This study of the masculinities in 21st-century male-centered cable dramas charts some of the terrain and explores the interstitial spaces at the intersections of hegemony and resistance, patriarchy and feminism. This work was organized around these central research questions:

First, is television masculinity changing in the post-9/11 context? How might revised conceptions of heroism that emerged from 9/11 and other 9/11-related factors be influencing this?

Second, how is this television masculinity operating in sync with national masculinity in response to 9/11 and in response to post-Second Wave pressures?

Third, what is being yearned for at this moment, in terms of masculinity and its relationship to feminism? Is this new masculinity progressive, regressive, or an amalgam of both?

Chapter introductions

Chapter Two: Look! Up in the Sky! Heroes, Not-Quite-Heroes, and the Common Man

In chapter two, I trace the origins of the literary and dramatic concept of hero, beginning with the Greek and Latin origins and meanings of the word. In its earliest incarnations, the word “hero” meant a hybrid of part-god, part-man. Although the gods placed the heroes in service to humanity, heroes were originally not expected to be perfect (and neither were the gods, for that matter). In the advent of modernity, the concept of hero became a narrative one; heroes became central characters of dramas, overcoming hardships that were physical and/or moral. If a hero was indestructible and perfect in every way, there would be no death to defy, and so heroes were flawed. The dual identity of hero—of weak and strong, light and dark—can be traced from early

Greek heroes, but in early American television, heroes became sanitized and desexualized. Love interests became chaste (Superman and Lois Lane) or nonexistent. Similarly, American media coverage scrubbed modern war heroes free of drinking, womanizing, and dark—or even merely human—qualities. The push to sanctify and sanitize heroes rendered heroism unattainable to mere mortals, and magazine articles and books began to bemoan the lack of heroes in American culture. Masculinity scholars now link encroaching modernity with complaints that masculinity is in crisis and on the wane, and each decade, as modern life shifted and changed, the media claimed that heroes were disappearing from the American landscape. When heroism is articulated onto the fluid construct of masculinity, heroism becomes fluid, as well, and definitions are changeable and slippery. The attacks of September 11, 2001 regenerates the fears of dominance and invasion that spark masculinity crises, and from the ashes of Ground Zero rose a new type of hero.

I follow the interpretation of “hero” through the early years of American television. I do not construct a complete history of television masculinity nor of television heroes, but instead discuss key historic periods and the television hero types that arise in them. The cowboys, lawmen, secret agents, and space explorers of the late 1900s give way, post-9/11, to a new type of television hero—one so confusing, some call him “anti-hero.” The characters in these dramas are not perplexed by masculinities that are fluid, shifting, reconstituted, and intentionally constructed; they openly reveal the wires and controls behind social performances. The masculinity presented in these contemporary dramas does not worry about being acceptable to women, and it claims its own kind of feminism regardless of whether feminists would agree. This masculinity is

reclaimed through the use of class, gender, anger, and self-deprecating reflexivity that reveals the performance of masculinity and the male characters' awareness of it. In its provocative plotlines and frank language, this new genre of male-centered drama airs out the room and unveils the contradictions that have always been there. It does not pretend that modern life, modern love, or modern masculinity is easy. The events of 9/11 work to revise conceptions of heroism and to shift articulations between heroism and masculinity. I find that male-centered television dramas are proliferating in the years since 9/11, and that these dramas offer new images and discourses of masculinity. Employing discourse analysis, semiotic analysis, and thick description, I describe the new heroes visible in four of the primary texts of this study: *Dexter*, *Rescue Me*, *Nip/Tuck*, and *The Shield*. Then, I explore trends in media coverage of 9/11, focusing on the construction of New York City firefighters as mythic heroes. I conclude that the idea of constructions of masculinity altering in response to social and cultural change, which is central to masculinity studies, is clearly illustrated in the proliferation of and characterizations within post-9/11 male-centered television dramas.

Chapter Three: The Boys' Clubhouse As Wedding Chapel: Marrying My

Best Friend

One prevalent theme in post-9/11 male-centered television dramas is that of a clubhouse that is only for men. These boys' clubs are physical spaces—a room in *The Shield*, the OR in *Nip/Tuck*, the firehouse in *Rescue Me*, the balcony in *Boston Legal*—but also ideological ones, providing a kind of homosocial network not readily accessible to the modern American man. These closely bonded male-only families offer empathy,

understanding, and temporary existence free of feminist and politically sensitive constraints. These new millennium buddy relationships flirt with homosexual romance, and occasionally evolve into intense asexual couplings, including, in one series, literal marriage between heterosexual men. I consider these boys' clubs in light of Jacquelyn Zita's theorizing of how the heterosexual male identity requires homosexual men and heterosexual women, and Judith Halberstam's theories of the light female masculinity sheds on masculinity in general. I trace ratings and audience data and consider what these televised homosocial networks might offer to male viewers. These "bromances" may be a rejection of the transfer of boyhood bonds into adult relationships. They may also reclaim certain masculine rites and practices that went underground in response to feminism and the Second Wave. I consider what may have been lost to men in that post-Second Wave sublimation and what may be positive and negative for both men and women in what seems to be a post-9/11 rescue and retrieval of those rites and practices. Additionally, I consider the echo of acceptance of same-sex marriage that reverberates through these male partners and male family relationships.

Chapter Four: Undoing the Dichotomy: The Emergence of the Transgendered

Figure in Male-Centered Television

In chapter four, hegemonic masculinity becomes complicated by the transgendered figure. Post-9/11 male-centered television dramas include many transgendered or transvestite characters who may work to disrupt a gender dichotomy and naturalize a sexuality continuum. I build on ideas of representation of marginalized groups put forward by Bogle, Tuchman, and Sarikakis to contextualize the importance

of the arrival of the GLBTI—and especially transgendered—characters on the post-9/11 television scene. I factor in Vavrus’ argument that even progressive representations can work to naturalize traditional structures, and compare contemporary representations of GLBTI characters with traditional tragic depictions in Hollywood. The existence of the transgendered figure blurs boundaries and complicates the defending, staking, and mapping of gender categories, even as the yearning of transgendered persons to “change genders” reifies the dichotomy’s existence. These characters work to broaden the range of acceptable masculinities, but they may also work to obliterate and negate the presence and value of women.

Chapter Five: The Towers Come Down, Viagra Goes Up: Male Sexual Anxiety as Plot Device

In chapter five, I draw connections between the crumbling towers and the rise of Viagra, the erection of skyscrapers and national pride and might, and the outing of male sexual anxiety and the sidelining of female sexual pleasure in male-centered television dramas. I trace coverage of the world’s tallest buildings and coverage of the collapse of the towers, comparing discourse about skyscrapers and drawing connections to international power and prestige. I historicize the entrance of Viagra and similar drugs as commercial and product placement sponsors in post-9/11 male-centered television programs, and offer examples of the frequency with which sexual anxiety occurs as a narrative. I trace the political economy of erectile enhancement drugs in relation to television sponsorship, and make a political economy analysis of one post-9/11 male-centered television drama, *Rescue Me*, and its network, FX.

Since 9/11, sexual anxiety has moved from the shadows to the forefront of public discussion, not due because of the emergence of erectile dysfunction drugs in the very late 1990s but perhaps also because of the emergence of new and possibly more mature notions of what it means to be heroic and masculine in America. American men did not and could not save the day on September 11, 2001, and that, combined with reactions to Second Wave feminism, may have brought American masculinity to Ground Zero— fertile ground on which to build new masculinities that allow anxiety to coexist with swagger.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

In the conclusion, I find that there is a reclaiming of certain aspects of masculinity, but it is conducted with an awareness (if not always a respect for) feminism and modernity. This may reify hegemonic masculinity while it challenges it, in a complicated, disorganized, back-and-forth action that is both hopeful and troubling. In these dramas, it is okay to be a man, it is okay to be masculine, and it is okay if those two categories defy description and definition. This is a narrative shift away from earlier television masculinities that ignored these internal and external complexities. These dramas offer an intense and intimate engagement with men's anxieties, failures, and contradictions, amid sometime-regressive gender politics. As the characters in these dramas grapple with what it means to be a man, a myriad of realistic possibilities is suggested rather than a single hegemonic and unattainable icon. That these male-centered dramas are proliferating and are commercially and critically successful in this

post-9/11 moment indicates that they resonate with audiences at this particular point in time and that something worth evaluation and exploring is being articulated.

In her analysis of Foucault, Sawicki (1991) writes that “learning to live and struggle with many of our differences may be one of the keys to disarming the power of the white, male, middle-class norms which we have all internalized to varying degrees” (p. 18). These dramas are fraught with messy tensions, and the lack of resolution of them does not spell despair. The admission of the tension—just the admission of it—was once politically incorrect and insensitive. Now the tension is outed, and the narratives outing it allow men to be conflicted, fragile, and aiming for the heroic.

The political economy of male-centered television

The emergence of these particular narratives at this particular historic moment are far from accidental. The economic conditions that allow—and foster—these narratives can be revealed in an examination of the political economy of male-centered programming. As a genre, the post-9/11 male-centered television drama seems to work to appeal to the desirable 18-49 adult viewer demographic. Each program does so through a symbiosis of content and institutional synergies that produce ratings that ultimately attract advertisers. This particular genre offers viewers edgy content rife with complicated, messy tensions and ethical quandaries. The producers of this genre generally appear to be unmoved by parental viewer protests—if they offend with sex, violence, and graphic scenes, they seem to feel they have hit their mark. In creating these types of dramas, producers behave less like a network (in the case of ABC) or

basic cable (in the case of FX) and more as a big studio, competing directly with premium cable giants and movie studios.

What follows is a detailed political economy analysis of one FX program, *Rescue Me*. In chapter three on the boys' clubhouse atmosphere on some of these programs, an analysis of the ratings and critical success of other programs is presented. This *Rescue Me* study makes clear that every opportunity to realize corporate synergies, product placements, and collaborations is mined and exploited to the fullest by all corporations and companies involved in production. It is reasonable to extrapolate that a similar study of the other dramas also on FX—*The Shield* and *Nip/Tuck*—might yield similar results. In this study, an analysis of commercials aired during *Rescue Me* indicates that the network and producers spend their revenue-generating opportunities wisely, never squandering a chance to keep dollars in-house and within the same corporation.

Three male-centered dramas exist on FX: *Rescue Me*, *The Shield*, and *Nip/Tuck*. *Dexter* is on Showtime; *Boston Legal* on ABC. *Rescue Me* was the only series discussed here that was studied and researched as it was being broadcast. Therefore, this is the only series for which there is information on commercial sponsorships. The other series were viewed in DVD format with no commercials. The *Rescue Me* analysis can thus delve into sponsor-production relationships, while I must leave this aspect of the other programs unexamined at this time.

An examination of the political economy of these programs reveals interconnectedness and synergies realized within and between media corporations.

Additionally, a political economy perspective reveals clear intention, values, and goals of the corporations at work in producing these shows.

Rescue Me

Institutional context, production, and network roots

Rescue Me is broadcast on a basic cable network, FX, which premiered *The Shield* in 2002 and *Nip/Tuck* in 2003. FX was already committed to the male-centered drama format and had already realized some commercial and critical successes in that genre. *Rescue Me* premiered on the FX network in 2004. *Rescue Me* ad revenues in 2005 were \$11.56 million and the FX average total day CPM was \$5.38, reported in TNS Media Intelligence and by Kagan Research (Moss, 2006). It is co-written by Denis Leary, who also stars as Tommy Gavin, and Peter Tolan, who also directs. Leary, Tolan, and Jim Serpico are executive producers. The series is produced by Leary's and Serpico's production company Apostle, The Cloudland Company, and DreamWorks Television in association with Sony Pictures Television.

Apostle Productions, a New York City film and television production company, was established in 1995 by Denis Leary and Jim Serpico. The irreverent personality of this company is made clear on its official website. The description of founder Leary reads, in part: "Denis Leary thinks the New York Yankees really suck, as well as the Montreal Canadians. And ABC-TV. And aluminum baseball bats, his cousin Fred, and France. Also, wine sucks. A lot. As does Claude Lemieux" (apostle.com). Jim Serpico is President of Production, and serves as Executive Producer for *Rescue Me*. Serpico also develops films and television for Warner Bros., Twentieth Century FOX,

DreamWorks, Comedy Central, and The Independent Film Channel (apostlenyc.com).

Tom Selliti has been with Apostle since Leary and Serpico founded it, and is a producer on *Rescue Me* and on the Comedy Channel's "Roast" series. Apostle is not a public company, and as such, reports of its annual revenues are not available.

The Cloudland Company, while being mentioned in film and television credits and in production credits and press releases for *Rescue Me*, does not appear to have its own website. In credits and press releases, Cloudland is linked to Sony and DreamWorks, but it does not appear on either of those Web sites. Cloudland is also not listed on "who owns what?" sites or in business library industry resources. It appears most often linked to DreamWorks and sometimes to Sony.

DreamWorks Television became part of the Paramount Motion Picture Group in December 2005 as part of a \$1.6 billion dollar deal. Paramount Pictures Corporation, a motion picture company, began in 1912 with Adolph Zukor. Over the years, it has produced such films as *The Ten Commandments*, *White Christmas*, *Braveheart*, *Forrest Gump*, and the *Star Trek* films. Gulf+Western acquired Paramount on March 24, 1966; on June 5, 1989 G+W was renamed Paramount Communications, and on March 11, 1994 Paramount merged with Viacom Inc., led by Sumner Redstone, executive chairman of the board and founder. Jonathan Dolgen was then chairman and Sherry Lansing president; they led PPC through an unparalleled series of box office and critical successes and created six of the company's 10 highest grossing films. In January of 2006, Viacom split into CBS Corporation and Viacom; Paramount Motion Picture Group remained part of Viacom, which also includes MTV Networks, BET Networks, and Famous Music, and Dolgen and Lansing were replaced by Brad Grey and Gail

Berman, two former television executives. PPC is a global company that produces and distributes films, and Paramount Pictures and DreamWorks are a part of PPC. The company's labels also include Paramount Pictures, Paramount Vantage, Paramount Classics, DreamWorks, MTV Films and Nickelodeon Movies, plus Paramount Digital Entertainment, Paramount Home Entertainment, Paramount Pictures International, Paramount Licensing, Paramount Studios, and Worldwide Television Distribution (Paramount Pictures, 2009). Viacom's media networks earnings in the first quarter of 2009 were \$629 million (Atkinson, 2009).

Sony Pictures Television is an American television production and distribution company. In earlier incarnations, it was called Screen Gems, Columbia Pictures Television, and TriStar Television; its name became Sony in 2002. SPT owns and distributes shows created by Tandem Productions, ELP Communications, Merv Griffin Entertainment, and others. It is a subsidiary of Sony Pictures Entertainment, which is part of the Japanese company Sony. Since 2004, SPE has been run by Chairman and CEO Michael Lynton, who was previously President of Time Warner International, President of AOL International and AOL Europe, and ran Putnam and Penguin publishing. He also worked at Disney Company and in Disney Publishing. Lynton reports to Howard Stringer, chairman and CEO of Sony Corporation of American and vice president of Sony Corporation (Sony Pictures, 2009; Sony Pictures Television, 2009). The Sony executive who appears to be most involved with *Rescue Me* is Zack Van Amburg, co-president of programming and production, who is sometimes quoted talking about the production team of the show (Ellis, 2009). Sony Pictures reported group sales for the fiscal year ending March 2009 as \$7.2 billion (Sonymovies.com).

Viacom is a global entertainment company including television, motion pictures, and digital media. It reports \$11.47 billion in US dollars in annual revenue for 2006 (Viacom, 2007). Its worldwide advertising revenues were \$4.29 billion; acquisitions contributed \$125 million to Media Networks. An increase of 46 percent revenues in Filmed Entertainment revenues from 2005 “principally reflected the acquisition of DreamWorks...which contributed \$1.36 billion to 2006 revenues” (Viacom, 2007, p. 2).

FX, launched in June of 1994, is Fox’s general entertainment basic cable network and is carried in more than 84 million homes. FX features original series and films (such as *Rescue Me*, *Nip/Tuck*, *The Riches*), a film library from 20th Century FOX and other major studios, a lineup of syndicated series acquired from other networks and various production companies (series such as *Married...With Children*, *King of the Hill*, *That ’70s Show*, and *Dharma and Greg*), and sports such as NASCAR (FXNetwork.com). In 2001, FX net ad revenue was \$102.5 million, and in 2006 was expected to hit \$271.2 million, up from \$236.8 million last year, according to Kagan Research, quoted in *Variety’s* MultiChannel. In 2006, News Corporation reported that FX had double digit revenue growth during the third quarter (Moss, 2006). FX license fee revenue from affiliates has increased from \$214.3 million in 2001 to projected \$374.7 million 2006, \$353 million 2005, Kagan (Moss, 2006). FX is part of the cable and satellite television division of FOX. On *Advertising Age’s* guide to programs advertisers might consider sponsoring, FX is described as a “top-tier cable network top 5 among key adult demos in prime time,” with a median age that is desirable because at age 35 it is younger than almost all other measured adult cable networks. The audience

for FX original shows such as *The Shield*, *Rescue Me*, and *Nip/Tuck* is described as “affluent” with income greater than \$125,000. Advertisers with *Rescue Me* are promised “innovative brand enhancement” because the program delivers “engaged, attentive audiences” and have achieved “unprecedented critical acclaim.” Ads in conjunction with internal product placement “pay off with top-performing brand recall and favorable brand opinion” (Advertising Age, 2009).

FOX is one of the “Big Four” broadcasting networks. On its Web site, FOX describes itself as “rising from a daring concept in 1986 to rank as today’s most popular programmer for teens and young adults.” FOX Entertainment Group is a producer and distributor of films and television, with group division in broadcast television, cable and satellite television, film, television production, and sports broadcasting. FOX cable networks include FX, FOX Sports Net, FOX Movie Channel, FOX Sports en Espanol, FOX Sports World, and the National Geographic Channel, among others (FOX.com, 2008). FOX’s parent corporation is **News Corporation**, which reported 2008 operating income of \$5.4 billion and \$32.9 billion in revenues (News Corporation, 2008). News Corporation owns companies and subsidiaries in film, television, cable network programming, direct broadcast satellite television, magazines and inserts, newspapers including the *Wall Street Journal*, and book publishing, and operates mainly in the U.S., Europe, the UK, Australia, Asia, and the Pacific Basin. (News Corporation, 2009).

With these production and network roots, *Rescue Me* has three “parents” in what McChesney calls the “first tier” of media conglomerates: News Corporation, Viacom, and Sony, with other additional overlapping connections within those organizations (McChesney, 2000, p. 19).

Rescue Me target audience: young men, women, and protesters

A picture of *Rescue Me*'s target audience can be gleaned from analyzing the show's commercials and product placement, its dramatic content and story lines, and its ratings and demographic information.

I dissected two representative episodes of the show for commercials and product placement, including where each commercial fell in the program. I traced each product back to its parent corporation to check for evidence of commodity flow and synergies.

During each hour-long show, there are five commercial breaks. The show typically opens and runs for six to seven minutes, including the opening credits, before taking the first commercial break, which lasts three minutes. The second break is at minute 18 and runs three minutes; the third break is around minute 30 or 33 and runs three minutes; the fourth break begins at 45 or 47 minutes and runs three minutes; the show closes with two minutes of commercials followed by credits on a split screen with an advertisement. During the three-minute commercial breaks, 8, 9, or 10 commercials were featured. Of the 60 minutes, about 14-15 minutes are commercials. One show contained 43 commercials, the other 39, for a total of 82 commercials being sampled.

Each commercial break opened with an advertisement for one of the FX Network's original series: *The Riches*, *Dirt*, or *The Shield*. Interestingly, the one FX Network's original series left off this list is *Nip/Tuck*. It may be that the network does not find a shared audience between the two shows, but all FX original series share pushing at the boundaries of sex, violence, and language, so it seems there would be some shared audience.

Each show concluded with the split screen credits, and that commercial was always for an FX original show. Following is an analysis of the 82 commercials in the two episodes, broken down by product, frequency of that commercial, and notes about the relationships between that product and the show's producers.

Table 1: Commercials During Two *Rescue Me* Reruns Broadcast in March 2007

# of Ads	% of Total Ads	Product Category	Specific Products	Ownership and Synergies
16	18.3%	Other cable shows	<i>The Riches</i> , <i>The Shield</i> , <i>Dirt</i> , <i>Driver</i> (all FX Networks) <i>Blood Ties</i> (Lifetime, Hearst) <i>Gene Simmons Family Jewels</i> (A&E) <i>Pinks car racing</i> (Speed.com, News Corp)	-15 of these are all for the same FX family as is <i>Rescue Me</i> -A&E is a private company and also owns the Biography channel and the History channel
14	17%	Films & DVDs	<i>The Lookout</i> (Miramax, News Corp) <i>Eragon</i> DVD (20 th Century FOX, News Corp) <i>The Shooter</i> (Paramount) <i>Perfect Stranger</i> (Sony) <i>Blood Diamond</i> (Warner Bros, Time Warner)	7 of these are under the News Corp umbrella
11	13.4%	Beer & Liquor & Beverages	Guinness Bailey's Corona beer Sam Adams beer Absolut vodka Red Bull	-- <i>Rescue Me's</i> lead character, Tommy Gavin, is an alcoholic and keeps his vodka in the freezer, but to my recollection, no label has been shown in the show -The show's characters frequently drink beer, although they cover the label with their hands
9	11%	Internet, Cable Service, Phone Service, Direct TV	DirecTV (News Corp) Comcast (cable, phone, internet)	-News Corp is parent corporation of FX Networks and DirecTV -Comcast owns 21% of Time-Warner
6	7.3%	Dating & Sex	Match.com Night Exchange phone sex line	
6	7.3%	Car & Car Repair	Midas (5) Subaru (1)	A woman drives the car in the Midas ad
3	3.7%	Clothing	Gap, Victoria's Secret	-Victoria's Secret is a sponsor of Sony Television-produced <i>Rescue Me</i> , and is featured in the Sony Pictures-film <i>Perfect Stranger</i> , which also advertises on <i>Recue Me</i> -The clip used in the ad features the Victoria's Secret backdrop from the film
3	3.7%	Video Games	<i>Ghost Recon</i> (Tom Clancy war game)	This Ubisoft PlayStation game is owned by Sony
2	2.4%	Furniture	<i>HOM</i>	Ads for furniture styled and priced to appeal to a working class audience
2	2.4%	Food	<i>DQ</i>	The ads are not for ice cream but for extra-spicy sandwiches, so appear aimed at adults rather than children
1	1.2%	Travel/ Entertainment	<i>Universal Orlando</i> (Universal, GE)	Owned by Universal and GE
1	1.2%	Legal	<i>Local: Personal Injury attorneys Siben, Grose, Von Holten</i>	
1	1.2%	Hunting	<i>Local: Northwest Sports Show</i>	

Although viewership of *Rescue Me* is reported as split by gender 50/50 (Becker, 2007), the commercials appear to be pitched toward young men: 17% of the commercials are for films, and those are primarily action films; 13.4% of the commercials are for beer, liquor, and Red Bull energy drink; 7.3% of the commercials are for telephone sex and dating; 7.3% for automobile-related products; 3.7% for video games, specifically war games, and half of the local ads are for the Northwest Sports Show for hunting and fishing.

The highest percentage of commercials, 18.3%, is for other cable shows, and almost all of those are other FX Network shows. These are, according to reports on the FX Network site, watched equally by men and women (FX Network, 2009).

Commodity flow across channels is evident in the 18.3% of commercials for other cable television shows, for the 17% of commercials for films and DVDs, and the 11% of commercials for cable, direct TV, and internet related services. Synergies are realized in the advertising of other News Corp and Sony products being advertised on *Rescue Me* (which airs on FX, a division of News Corp, and which is produced by Sony Television), in the cross-promotion of other Sony products such as film and games, and also in other FX Network original series on this FX Network original series—FX uses its like-minded shows as platforms to advertise similar types of programming. The FX Networks Web site opens like a slick, music video, with edgy images, pounding bass beats, flashes of light, arty type faces. Images fade in and out, coordinated to the music. This week's show is summarized; cast and crew bios and pics run across the bottom of the Web page. Visitors can hang in the Music Lounge to see videos and hear music

from the show, obtain free MP3 downloads or buy singles, such as the show's theme song by The Von Bondies, "C'mon, C'mon." Visitors can download past episodes or email one to a friend, get wallpapers, borrow AIM icons for iChat, and collect screensavers of Leary going up in flames. Fans message each other about plots, actors, and action, and links between each area encourage shifting between each and funnel visitors to purchase DVDs and music. On every page, fans are also given options to connect with fans of other FX shows on other sites.

Additional conclusions might be drawn about the audience based on certain class markers in the products featured in commercials. The HOM furniture line is affordable and coupons and sales were stressed, which might indicate marketing to middle-level rather than upscale economic strata. The alcoholic beverages advertised strongly favor beer over the pricier vodka. There are no luxury car ads, and Midas ads for repairing brakes and mufflers are numerous (5 out of a total of 82 ads). The local sports show ad is certainly aimed at hunters and sportsmen. While these elements do not appeal solely to working class viewers, or solely to men, considered together, they seem to point in that direction.

Product placement does not appear to be as prevalent in *Rescue Me* as in other programs (say, *Gilmore Girls* on the WB Network). In the two programs content-analyzed for commercials, product placement was not present; in fact, attempts were made to avoid showing a particular branded product. Bottles, cans, and boxes in kitchens are turned label-side toward the wall. Neon bar signs don't include brand names. When actors hold beer bottles, their hands cover the labels or the labels are missing. However, one instance does stand out. In the third season, Sheila (Callie

Thorne) buys her son a Cadillac truck, then thinks better of giving such a vehicle to a 16-year-old, and gives it to Gavin (Leary). Whatever type of truck Gavin drove in seasons one and two was never remarked upon.

FX leadership is on the record as saying they want to reach younger TV viewers and they aim to do so through edgy, alternative content (Moss, 2006). Ratings and demographics point to a target audience for *Rescue Me* of viewers aged 18-49, which is not unusual—this is the audience aimed at by most networks. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, in 2009, the program averaged 2.8 million viewers between ages 18 and 49 (Martin, 2009). This is a continuation of a high ratings pattern. Season one premiered with the third highest adult 18-49 audience in basic cable history, and increased FX's Wednesday 10 p.m. time period by 183 percent in HH rating, 196 percent in total viewers, and 272 percent among adults 18-49 (FX Network, 2009). BBB When the season two finale aired, it was basic cable's #1 delivery of adults between the ages of 18-49 on Tuesday night. It delivered 3.6 million total viewers and 2.4 adults between 18-49. Season Three averaged 2.9 million total viewers, an increase of more than 10 percent over Season Two. It also averaged 1.8 million adults between the ages of 18-49, an increase of 8 percent over the previous year. The show's four-run CUME is 3.5 million adults 18-49, and 5.6 million total viewers. Once viewed by slightly more men (55%) than women (45%), in 2006, viewership by gender was measured as 50/50 (FX Network, 2009).

Peter Liguori, who began his career in consumer marketing and advertising at Ogilvy & Mather and Saatchi & Saatchi, was head of FX Networks until April 2005, when he was promoted to FOX Entertainment president—at least in part because,

during his tenure at FX, he launched *Nip/Tuck*, *The Shield*, and *Rescue Me*, which “made FX a top-five basic cable network” (Benson, 2007).¹

Ratings and demographics reported above indicated that viewership of *Rescue Me* is nearly half female. Why might so many women tune in to a program about hyper—albeit conflicted—masculinity? I consider the pleasures female viewers may find on the show in chapter five. But here, it may be helpful to consider Eileen Meehan’s political economy work that reveals how the business behind the show works in television.

If television were organized as a liberal market, viewers would exert demand in the marketplace, directly to television networks and cable channels, telling those organizations what programs they wanted, liked, or hated. Viewers would haggle with networks and channels over prices, thus becoming the sole source of revenues and of potential profits. Networks and cable channels would abound and be independently owned as individual companies. Each firm would be focused on its single operation in television and would compete with every other firm to satisfy our demands. Ratings would be unnecessary, for two reasons. First, viewers and program providers would communicate directly; second, providers would want to know not what channels people were tuned to but what they actually liked (Meehan, 2005, p. 22).

Instead, argues Meehan, our television system is organized as three markets that “exclude viewers” (p. 23). First, advertisers pay networks for access to particular consumers with money to spend on certain categories of products—typically, an 18-to-49-year-old European American male in an upscale household that subscribes to cable. What other types of viewers watch, even large numbers of viewers, is not a priority. Even if programs are popular, if they are not popular with the right demographic, they may not be renewed. Second, programs are created to attract advertisers, not viewers.

¹ In March, 2009, Peter Liguori was replaced as CEO of Fox Broadcasting by Peter Rice, who had been president of Fox Searchlight. Reportedly, Rupert Murdoch made the shift because he was personally closer to Rice and “was never very close” to Liguori (Lewis, 2009).

Advertisers themselves help develop programs and intricate schemes of product placement and one network show promoting another occur. These practices do not help viewers and are not designed to improve the television product. Third, only one firm produces television ratings, the A.C. Nielsen company, and these reports are the ones on which advertising decisions are based. Nielsen uses the same group of homes to meter for ratings, and that group of homes is used for years. This narrow niche of viewers allows the network to readily predict which shows will succeed (usually shows that are very similar to previous shows that already succeeded). “The television industry is not composed of competitive markets, and television viewers exert no demand in the market...any claim about television that assumes a fully free, competitive market is untenable” (Meehan, 2005, p. 23). Meehan argues that television is not a reflection of popular culture or a comment on our modern world, and that television is not our fault. Programming is not the result of consumers making choices in a free economy. With that in mind, ratings reported by networks and Nielsen must be received with a grain of salt and tempered with the understanding that programs that are truly popular may be cancelled, while programs that appeal only to young men in a certain class group may go on and on.

How content, institutional context, and target audience work together to maximize profit

Rescue Me achieves its financial success through a blend of content (developed by Leary and Tobin of Apostle) that includes the four themes identified here; institutional context (produced by DreamWorks and Sony Television, aired by FX Networks, supported and “synergized” by News Corporation, Sony, and Viacom); and

shrewd marketing and positioning aimed at a valuable target audience. Although it may have seemed like a dark horse when it was launched as an FX series, *Rescue Me* is now financially successful. It is one of basic cable's top 10 shows at delivering an audience to advertisers of adults who are between the ages of 18 and 49 (FX Network, July 12, 2006). In an article in *Variety's* online publication MutiChannel, Linda Moss reports that FX "developed quality, out of the box, original hour-long dramas to serve a specific audience segment: younger TV viewers. Such viewers, typically the hardest-to-reach segment of the viewing audience, want an alternative to the formulaic fare that the broadcast networks serve up." She quotes Landgraf as saying, "We've created a market segment that didn't exist" (Moss, 2006).

Although early FX shows were "frat boy humor," Moss reports that FX "picked up a lesson from HBO" and now airs shows with strong language, nudity, violence, and real character development. FX is not trying to attract an audience that wants timid television. In the article, Landgraf says, "Palatable is not what our audience looks for from us...the reason that they are so wildly devoted to these shows—that they are definitional appointment television—is because they are highly original, because they go places other shows don't go" (Moss, 2006). Rather than offering the audience formulaic single-note narratives of fatherhood akin to family sit-coms, for example, *Rescue Me* problematizes those themes with real-life grit and messiness. Working class life is not simplified and jollied-up—the financial strains are real, along with the palpable joy (and recognizable irritation) of fathering. Heteronormativity is maintained and enforced—except when it is not (at one point, Gavin says of the newly out-of-the-closet gay Probie: "He may be a homo, but he's our homo").

Rescue Me is the third original drama series launched by FX, following *The Shield* and *Nip/Tuck*, which have won Emmys and Golden Globes—prestigious awards rarely given to cable shows. *Rescue Me* is only the second basic cable series to ever receive Outstanding Writing and Directing nominations. Of the only three Emmy nominations for writing that have ever been awarded to cable, all went to FX; the same is true for the directing nominations. FX is the only basic cable network to have three series nominated for Outstanding Directing for a Drama Series and the only one to have two series nominated for Outstanding Writing for a Drama Series. *People* magazine has called Leary's performance of Gavin "riveting." *USA Today* says, "Given the best role of his career so far, he has responded with his best performance." *San Francisco Chronicle's* Tim Goodwin writes, "Now, we're getting weekly doses of some of TV's best writing, most authentic character representations and quirky comedy...all of a sudden two of the funniest guys in all of television are helming one of the medium's most unflinching dramas" (Goodwin, 2006). Leary has been nominated for an Emmy as a writer and for a Golden Globe as an actor. Writer Peter Tolan was Emmy-nominated with Leary for Outstanding Writing for a Drama Series and for Outstanding Directing for a Drama Series. The Producer's Guild of America recognized Leary, along with fellow producers Tolan, Jim Serpico, and Kerry Orent, with a 2005 Visionary Award, which acknowledges producers whose work demonstrates a unique or uplifting quality (FX Network, 2009). The *New York Times* argued that "rough as its humor can be, raw as its language often is, there is also a tact and delicacy here [on *Rescue Me*] that provides a better measure of the 9/11 in our blood than anything that has come before it on television" (*New York Times*, 2004). FX has made much of these cable "firsts" in

press releases and on its Web sites and in its fan materials, as well as in its reports to stockholders—for FX, critical acclaim is part of the package it is trying to create (FX Network, 2009).

Broadcasting & Cable hails the critical and ratings successes of FX's set of edgy original series and claims they are "yet more proof that the basic-cable network is HBO with commercials." It continues with its analysis:

Back in 2002...naysayers predicted FX would fail by wading into programming waters that were strictly the province of premium cable. Maybe HBO could reinvigorate itself with original, transgressive stuff like *Oz* and *The Sopranos*, they said. But an ad-supported network couldn't build a brand on basic cable...Just as HBO series *The Wire*, *Sex and the City* and *Six Feet Under* raised the bar for its pay-cable competitor Showtime, currently in the midst of a creative upswing, FX has changed the game for networks beholden to Madison Avenue...(Robins, 2007).

Robins also cites FX's marketing savvy (the network spends between \$8 and \$10 million to open its drama series). He calls FX "an It network" which launches "noble ventures" that uphold the FX brand (Robins, 2007).

In a *Business Week* article in September of 2005, the headline read: "FX aims for HBO's cachet." The short story briefly analyzes the "HBO envy" of 2002 and the impression that the News Corporation-owned FX channel was "just another rerun outlet in the 400-channel TV universe." The story attributes then-FX CEO Peter Liguori with believing that FX could follow HBO's risky success formula by creating "programming that pushed buttons and boundaries"—and led to Emmy Awards. Liguori felt certain that advertisers would support these edgy shows (*Business Week*, 2005).

In March 2007, FX launched its newest drama series, *The Riches*, starring the self-labeled "executive transvestite" comic Edie Izzard and Minnie Driver. It follows the recipe for what is now the FX brand and what is now what FX viewers have come to

expect: soft-core porn, outrageous plots, rough language, and adult themes. Clearly, FX has found a formula that brings it both the audience and the advertisers it seeks. And its a formula that is symbiotic with parent company FOX Broadcasting, which describes itself as having risen from a “daring concept in 1986 to rank as today’s most popular programmer for teens and young adults. Its constant innovation and reinvention of television’s creative landscape enthralls 15 hours of primetime, top sports events and Sunday morning news programs”(FOX Network, 2009).

These efforts deliver the target market to advertisers. A Jupiter Research report by analyst Derek Baine calls FX “FOX’s \$5 billion dollar baby.” Despite News Corporation’s “largely flat growth at FOX News,” there is “surprisingly strong growth at FX, which we project to grow ad revenue 13% for 2006. Formerly criticized by MSOs as being foisted upon them by News Corp., FX is now valued at \$5 bil” (Baine).

The content and institutional context with resultant synergies work together to attract a target audience of both men and women that, in turn, draws advertisers. Though FX’s formula for success begins with innovative, alternative content, it is this content-context-audience recipe that is truly the success.

Nip/Tuck and *The Shield* are also on FX, so much of the above *Rescue Me* information pertains to those programs, as well. Ratings and critical acclaim statistics are presented in the “clubhouse” chapter for ABC’s *Boston Legal*. A brief look at the political economy of Showtime’s *Dexter* might prove helpful here.

Dexter

The Showtime male-centered crime drama, *Dexter*, is described in detail in chapter two. Its first season aired in 2006, its second in 2007, its third in 2008, and at

least two additional seasons are planned. On October 21, 2008, Showtime commissioned the fourth and fifth seasons; filming is scheduled to begin in June 2009 and premiere in September 2009 (Ahlborn, 2008).

Dexter ratings

Dexter has a history of breaking and setting ratings records for Showtime. According to *TV Guide*, the pilot episode attracted more than a million viewers and delivered Showtime's highest ratings in two years (Mitovich, 2006); season one's finale had 1.1 million viewers (Zap2It, 2006). The first season averaged 2 million viewers per episode (Nordyke and Gough, 2007). The opening of season two attracted 1.09 million viewers, another Showtime record for a season premiere, according to *TV Week* (Lafayette, 2007). Ratings held all season; the finale pulled 1.4 million viewers and the season average, including digital video recorder usage, was 2.4 million viewers per episode (Nordyke and Gough, 2007). In its third season, *Dexter* only built on its previous successes: the premiere was Showtime's highest rated ever and it was bested only by the program's finale, which pulled 1.5 million viewers; season three earned an average of 1.1 million viewers per week (Frankel, 2008; Mitovich, 2007).

Showtime history

Showtime, originally owned by Viacom, went on the air on July 1, 1976 and moved to the national market to compete with HBO in 1978. In 1979, Viacom sold half of Showtime to TelePrompTer; a year after Westinghouse acquired TelePrompTer in 1982, it sold its share of Showtime back to Viacom. In 1983, Viacom and Warner-Amex Satellite Entertainment merged Showtime and The Movie Channel into Showtime/The

Movie Channel, Inc., which later became Showtime Networks, Inc. Two years later, Viacom bought back Warner's share of Showtime/TMC and again solely owned Showtime. In the early 2000s, Showtime launched additional channels: Showtime Too, Showcase, Showtime Beyond, Showtime Extreme, Showtime Family Zone, Showtime Next, Showtime Women, and Showtime On Demand, which airs original series, boxing, movies, and adult programming. Showtime Networks also owns The Movie Channel, The Movie Channel Xtra, and Flix. In 2005, CBS/Viacom split, and Showtime became a subsidiary of the newly renamed CBS Corporation (*Variety*, 2001). CBS owns Showtime, CSTV, and is part owner of The CW. It owns 30 television stations across the country, 165 radio stations, and CBS Outdoor, as well as numerous publishing interests, including Simon & Schuster Adult Publishing Group, Pocket Books, Scribner, Simon & Schuster, Aladdin Paperbacks, Atheneum Books for Young Readers Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, Simon & Schuster New Media, Simon & Schuster Online, and MTV Books (Columbia Journalism Review, 2009).

Dexter critical acclaim

Hall and the series were nominated for Golden Globes for the first season. Between its first airing in 2006 and March of 2009, *Dexter* was nominated for more than 50 awards and won 16 of them, including two Primetime Emmy Awards, six Satellite Awards, two Saturn Awards, and one TCA Award. It has been nominated for four Golden Globes, four Screen Actors Guild Awards, and a Peabody. It was chosen twice by the American Film Institute as one of the top ten best television programs of the year (Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, 2007; O'Neil, 2009; Golden Globe

Nominations and Winners, 2007, 2008, 2009; McCarthy, 2007; Screen Actors Guild Awards Nominations, 2007, 2009; Writers Guild of America, 2008; Ryan, 2008b).

Synergies and return on investment

The first three seasons of *Dexter* did not feature noticeable product placement, and the fourth and fifth seasons remain unaired at this date, so it is not possible to comment on them here. However, Showtime embraced a unique corporate synergistic move that, if it succeeds, may be just the first of a string of ways in which the large media conglomerates capitalize on their investments. Showtime and CBS are owned by the same corporate parent, Viacom and CBS (once joined, now split). In 2005, Showtime became a subsidiary of the newly renamed CBS Corporation after the CBS/Viacom split of that year (CBS Corporation/Viacom, 2006a). In January, 2008, CBS and Showtime announced that *Dexter* episodes would begin airing on CBS. In a CBS press release to the media on the announcement, a Showtime executive revealed that several Showtime programs are taped with alternate, network-friendly versions featuring less sex, violence, and adult language, which would seem to indicate that this will be a common practice in the future (CBS, May 15, 2008). “We’re thrilled to have the chance to expose *Dexter* to a wider audience on CBS,” Robert Greenblatt, Showtime’s president of entertainment was quoted in the *Chicago Tribune*. “I think it will be very compatible with their lineup as well as be a great opportunity to promote our brand on a platform that reaches every home in America” (Ryan, 2008a). Precisely. CBS, wanting in on the ratings and the cachet of the program’s critical success, re-broadcast *Dexter* episodes, making *Dexter* the first program in 20 years to air on broadcast after premiering on cable, according to the *New York Times* (Stelter, 2008).

Dexter strategy

While actors and writers discuss the motivations of characters, Showtime Executives are clear that *Dexter* is meant to drive revenues. Len Fogge, Showtime Executive VP, Creative & Marketing, says that the cable network's programs are marketed in "innovative and groundbreaking ways ... We must find new and creative ways to generate consumer awareness and to continually distinguish ourselves in an increasingly crowded marketplace" (Bags, 2008). These ways include such odd efforts as sponsoring a designer show house to include a room modeled after one in which *Dexter* once murdered a character (all proceeds going to the Happy Hearts Fund), and a publicity stunt of setting up faux newsstands in 13 major cities, "selling" issues of fake magazines with Dexter on the cover of mock copies of *Vanity Fair* and *The New Yorker*. The launch of season three was celebrated by placing customized fountains that spout "bloody" water (Bags, 2008; BizBash New York, 2008).

These aggressive and odd-sounding strategies feel necessary to industry executives who feel the hot breath of competitors on their necks. In the same article in which Fogge from Showtime was interviewed, a television critic wrote: "Even HBO is falling behind on shows worth watching. Since 'The Sopranos' and 'The Wire' went off the air, there haven't been any defining shows on HBO that would warrant a premium subscription" (Bags, 2008).

Political economies

The programming, product placement, advertising, and production decisions around male-centered television dramas are not accidental. They are deliberate business

decisions driven by the promise of revenues from advertisers. The creativity, skill, and art of the writers, actors, and production personnel are clear, but those are encouraged because they are part of a strategy: to create edgy programming that pushes boundaries and attracts the right audience (or seems to, in ratings) that then pulls in advertisers.

While the creativity and artistry of these programs may indeed reflect culture and attitudes of the post-9/11 moment, such arguments must be balanced with the knowledge that such creativity and artistry are allowed only inasmuch as they fit into the strategy of gaining revenues for the media corporations that own the networks.

It is no accident that several of the most groundbreaking male-centered dramas are found on FX. It is that network's mission to compete with the big cable networks by pushing boundaries and offending conservative viewers. If the most desirable demographic for advertisers was 75-year-old grandmothers, the programming would be designed with what those advertisers wanted to sell to that demographic.

Chapter Two

Look! Up in the Sky! Heroes, Not-Quite-Heroes, and the Common Man

The idea of “hero” has its roots in the gods.

The word was born in ancient Greece, where heroes were half god/half human and products of passion or trickery between a god or goddess and an earthbound mortal. Heroes possessed godlike qualities mixed with humanlike frailties; heroes were, at their inception, essentially and fatally flawed in the Aristotelian tradition and made of fractured stuff. Mythic Greek heroes wrestled with their twinned natures, achieved great things, and performed great tasks, but ultimately succumbed to the characteristics of their half-human natures: vanity, pride, madness, mortality.

The classical meaning of “hero” referred to an age, not a man. For Greeks, the age of heroes was a middle epoch, following the age when gods and monsters dominated the earth and preceding the age of humans. Heroes were a bridge, a hybrid, a fusing of and a connection between god and man (Hansen, 2009). Heroes made the gods appear more human and made superhuman achievement appear possible. Heroes were not gods of perfection. They were crossbreeds, and they were venerated because they reached for the heavens with merely human hands.

Heroes often stood between fantastic dangers—monsters, angry gods, earthquakes, massive armies—and the rest of humanity. The word itself, *Hērōs* in Greek and *servāre* in Latin,, means “to safeguard” (Partridge, 1988). Other sources trace it to the Latin verb *servo*, to preserve or to serve, and to the Indo-European root *ser*, to protect (Liddell and Scott, 1940). Heroes take care of the non-heroes.

Hero cults were a central concept of ancient Greek religion. Specific heroes were imagined with local roots, and the town or city claimed the hero as its own and citizens emulated the hero's characteristics. Heroes still fulfill similar functions in modern times, claim Drucker and Cathcart in *American Heroes in a Media Age* (1994). The hero embodies desirable characteristics of a society, and "in acclaiming a hero, people achieve their social order...heroes become unifying devices to promote social cohesiveness" (Drucker and Cathcart, 1994, p.113). Joseph Campbell calls a hero "a vehicle for the imaginings of thousands, who are transformed by imputation and abstraction more and more into what people want of a public figure" (Campbell, 1949, p. 14). In this way, heroes function to assist in disciplining audiences to behave in acceptable, socially ordered ways. Audiences are drawn to heroes because they feel consoled "for a recognized lack of what the hero represents" (Campbell, 1949, p. ix). The hero fills this void and also symbolizes "what people think they ought to be but aren't" (Campbell, 1949, p. 192). In the classic, *On Heroes and Hero-Worship*, Thomas Carlyle writes that the creation and worship of heroes is "the most solacing fact one sees in the world at present" (1841).

Had all traditions, arrangements, creeds, societies that men ever instituted, sunk away, this would remain. The certainty of Heroes being sent us; our faculty, our necessity, to reverence Heroes when sent; it shines like a polestar through smoke-cloud, dust-clouds, and all manner of down-rushing and conflagration (Carlyle, 1841, p. 265).

As the modern world developed, the concept of hero settled on the central character of a narrative or drama, almost regardless of what actions that character performed. It might especially apply if that character made some gesture of personal surrender and sacrificed his or her own interests or lives for the good of others. Heroes

triumphed over adversity or endured significant hardships. They were physically strong or morally upstanding; they were paragons of virtue (Raglan, 1936; Campbell, 1949; Kerenyi, 1959). The term came to have particular application in times of war. Heroes were those who achieved military goals and/or sacrificed themselves to save or protect others, possibly while slaying the enemy. One side's hero is another side's villain, and the same characteristics that made one a hero on one side of No Man's Land made one a demon on the other.

In 1938, heroes became mass-produced in comic books. The first comic book superhero, Superman, was created by Sigel & Shuster and published by Action Comics (Stern, 2006). Superman sparked an onslaught of über-beings with dual identities as less capable, meeker humans. Superman was both mild-mannered Clark Kent and stalwart Man of Steel. Spider-Man was both bookworm teenager Peter Parker and the acrobatic spidey-sensed criminal thrasher. Batman was both philanthropist Bruce Wayne and the vigilante summoned by the Commish via Bat-Signal. The Amazonian Wonder Woman had a rather secretarial-looking career in the military as Diane Prince. At their day jobs, these crime fighters pretended to possess no special abilities to rise above the mortal coil and leap tall buildings, or even stick to them with spidey gunk. But once disaster loomed, they slipped into phone booths or bat caves, shed their pretense of being average folk, and stepped into the spotlight in super drag, able to perform near-impossible tasks that left entire police forces and national militaries stumped.

By their very nature, heroes cannot be perfect. If a hero is immortal and incapable of making errors, where is the drama in the myth telling? A god who cannot perish has nothing to risk by attempting death-defying deeds—there would be no death

to defy. Potential peril must loom over the head of a hero; something must menace him, be it arch-nemesis or Kryptonite, Hera or Zeus, fate or mortality. Heroes are courageous in the face of seven-headed hydras, Lex Luthor, or the Nazis, and courage is not courage if you are not scared to death but fight on, anyway. Carlyle, in his nineteenth century *On Heroes and Hero Worship* (1841), locates heroism apart from perfection. Personal and character failings did not unmake a hero, to Carlyle, who was critical of worthy and apparently too-perfect public figures.

They are very noble men, these; step along in their stately way, with their measured euphemisms, philosophies, parliamentary eloquences...a most constitutional, unblamable, dignified set of men. But the heart remains cold before them...what man's heart does, in reality, break-forth into any fire of brotherly love for these men? They are become dreadfully dull men!...[Carlyle looked to Cromwell as a historical figure] in whom one still finds human stuff...he stood bare, not cased in euphemistic coat-of-mail; he grappled like a giant, face to face, heart to heart, with the naked truth of things! That, after all, is the sort of man for one. I plead guilty to valuing such a man beyond all other sorts of men (Carlyle, 1841, p. 274).

The tradition of heroes is that of dual identity, of weak and strong, and originally, even of light and dark. Heracles—Hercules to the Romans—murdered his children in a paroxysm of madness, slaughtered his enemies cruelly and mercilessly, and cross-dressed as a female slave for a woman he later married. He was married four times and Plutarch writes that Heracles' male lovers were too numerous to count (Lord Raglan, 1936; Liddell and Scott, 1940). Sexual prowess and peccadilloes were common among Greek heroes, but American notions of heroism are often scrubbed clean of sexuality, prissy about sex and pretending ignorance of homosexuality. Superman liked from afar but never even screwed up the courage to date Lois Lane until the comic book became a movie. Spider-Man, as Peter Parker, courted and married, but was no swinger.

Batman seemed to have a thing for Catwoman, and as Bruce Wayne, pretended interest in various socialites, but actual sex was never drawn into the frame. Intriguingly, in a 1954 Batman panel, Bruce Wayne and Dick Grayson awake in the same bed, dressed in full pajamas and talking of getting themselves a “cold shower and a big breakfast” (Moldoff and Paris, 1954)—yet no direct comment on a romantic relationship between the two men is made. Once American superheroes moved to television, they observed the moral code that hampered most media production of the times. Love interests are chaste and either develop along conservative dating protocols or do not develop at all. It is not until superheroes hit the silver screen that Superman loses his virginity and Batman gets lucky.

American heroes were often similarly sanitized in the media, incarnated as possessing, not just a single heroic virtue, but all of them, and as being essentially flawless. Sergeant Alvin York, often described as the greatest hero of WWI, earned the Distinguished Service Cross, the Croix de Guerre, the badge of nobility, and the Congressional Medal of Honor. He was from a poor Tennessee mountain family and one of eleven children. The breathless prose of the time describes him as a “church elder and champion turkey shooter” who was “clear-cut and strong of feature, kindly of disposition but positive and resolute,” and quickly glosses over his early years of drinking and womanizing. Although his religious beliefs made him a conscientious objector, he went to war and managed to kill 25 Germans, capture 132 prisoners, and de-commission 35 machine guns (Hughes, 1920). The iconic WWII hero, Audie Murphy, was born to poor Texas sharecroppers and was one of twelve children. Short and slight, he enlisted while underage, and went on to earn the Congressional Medal of

Honor, the Distinguished Service Cross, the Silver Star, the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star, a Purple Heart, and the cover of *Life* magazine. The film of his war exploits, *To Hell and Back*, was the highest-grossing film ever until *Jaws*; the action stops short of Murphy's failed marriage to a Hollywood actress, his bouts of post-traumatic stress disorder and depression, and his addiction to sleeping pills (Murphy, 1949; Gossett, 1996). Overlooking the heroic actions during the entire first world war, *Time* magazine calls Charles Lindbergh, the solo pilot of the first non-stop flight from New York to Paris in 1927, the "first hero of the century" (Lindbergh, 1999), who became even more venerated when his eldest son was kidnapped and found dead. His anti-Semitism, pro-Germany stance before and during WWII, and his affairs with two German sisters and their friend, which resulted in seven children and three "extra" families, were ignored or downplayed in media accounts until after his death, and even then met with wide criticism and outrage. It seems that once a man becomes a hero, media begin to paint his every characteristic as virtuous—an odd reaction that flies in the face of the nature of heroism, which is courage and self-sacrifice in the face of daunting odds. It is the likelihood of failure that makes the hero's act sublime and inspiring. The failure is most likely to originate with the hero's human weaknesses. Take away the weakness, and you take away what makes a hero a hero.

When efforts are made to cleanse a hero of human frailties, the hero becomes too saintly to be believed—and the fall from grace in the media soon follows. No sooner is a new film star or professional athlete raised up as a modern-day "hero" than he is dashed to rock bottom, his all-too-human foibles revealed: he gained weight, he used a body double, he cheated on his wife, he was mean to his children, he has financial

trouble, he was arrested for drugs/driving while drunk/soliciting a prostitute/hitting a member of the paparazzi. “Hero” now indicates someone who has performed a single uplifting action or lived his or her life while facing a challenge. Sometimes, “hero” stands in for “inspiring,” “encouraging,” or “helpful.” The hero is now just like the rest of us—flawed and only occasionally, sporadically, momentarily heroic. We mortals face a lonely truth: there are no more heroes. The media label sports stars heroes, yet these professionals often seem to conduct their lives off the court and away from the field in less-than-admirable ways. In a fifteen-year survey of schoolchildren in Indiana, David Gallahue found that more than 50 percent of them named a sports figure, such as Michael Jordan, as their personal hero (McIlveen, 2009). Gallahue defines hero in his study as “someone you look up to,” and finds it troubling that children consider “hang time to be heroic” (McIlveen, 2009). Being a hero should mean something more than looking sexy in a close-up or throwing a no-hitter—and when it does not, that must be the fault of the heroes.

In fact, this lament is neither new nor modern. “We’ve seen the last of the great heroes” is, in fact, a rather long-standing complaint. Since the rise of the bourgeoisie in the 19th century, the concept of hero has been compromised (Whannel, 2002). G.K. Chesterton wrote the poem “The Last Hero” in 1901; Leslie Charteris wrote the novel “The Last Hero” in 1930; from 1983 to the present, author Terry Pratchett has published a series of books about Discworld starring his character, “The Last Hero.” Wild Bill Donovan, Charles Lindbergh, Gary Cooper, John Wayne, Mickey Mantle, Joe DiMaggio, the astronauts, and Obama have each been called “the last hero” by some arm of the media (Ross, 1968; Allen, 1975; Wolfe, 1979; Swindell, 1980; Brown, 1984;

Falker, 1995; ddjango, 2009). Modern dramatic and literary heroes seem to be anything but: the ever-depressed characters of Kafka, the impotent whiners of Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller, the apathetic, drifting, semi-suicidal Yossarian in *Catch 22* and Holden Caulfield in *Catcher in the Rye* (Whannel, 2002).

A parallel complaint to “there are no more heroes” is that masculinity is in crisis. In his cultural history of American manhood, Kimmel argues that men contend with social, economic, and cultural shifts by labeling them a “masculinity crisis” and then employing a predictable series of behaviors to address the “crisis”: self-control, exclusion, and escape (Kimmel, 2006, p. 221). He begins in pre-Revolutionary War times and traces the responses of American men to historic shifts in economic independence, geographic frontiers, domestic dominance, the decline of the skilled worker, and downward mobility. Encroaching modernity and the tides of cultural and social change threaten men and make them anxious, argues Kimmel. Frequently, various masculinity “crises” are declared, often blamed on mothers (for raising “sissy” boys) and women (for emasculating men). American men respond by exercising rigorous self-control in the guise of bodybuilding, nutritional regimes, and physical challenges; enforcing the exclusion of women and of non-hegemonic masculinities from definitions of “masculinity,” and escaping to and isolating themselves in male-only spaces such as uncharted frontiers and fraternal lodges.

Putting manhood in historical context presents it differently, as a constantly changing collection of meanings that we construct through our relationships with ourselves, with each other, and with our world. Manhood is neither static nor timeless. Manhood is not the manifestation of an inner essence; it’s socially constructed. Manhood does not bubble up to consciousness from our biological constitution; it is created in our culture (Kimmel, 2006, p. 3).

For Kimmel, masculinity and ideals of manhood (and it is a short extension to add on “ideals of heroism”) are direct products of specific moments in time, created by social, cultural, and historic forces. Particular ideas of masculinity arise from particular moments, yet most of these ideas ultimately reinforce hegemonic masculine responses to modern life.

John MacInnes also points a finger at modernity as a formative force in the creation of masculine ideals. He defines masculinity as “an ideology produced by men as a result of the threat posed to the survival of the patriarchal sexual division of labour by the rise of modernity,” but identifies modernity as the force that constantly undermines the ability of men to sustain a coherent public ideology of what masculinity comprises (MacInnes, 1998, p. 46).

What were once claimed to be manly virtues (heroism, independence, courage, strength, rationality, will, backbone, virility) have become masculine vices (abuse, destructive aggression, coldness, emotional inarticulacy, detachment, isolation, an inability to be flexible, to communicate, to empathize, to be soft, supportive or life affirming) (MacInnes, 1998, p. 46).

“Men” and “heroes” are looked upon nostalgically as if they were once easily defined and readily achieved. Yet Kimmel argues that it never was, and MacInnes argues that whatever it is to be masculine, it is so amorphous as to be unattainable. The consistent response of American men to modernity would seem to define masculinity as an apparently tender, easily bruised thing. It is cowed by the emergence of American independence, the arrival of the industrial revolution, the development of the consumer culture, the rise of feminism, while somehow, women and children manage to weather these social, cultural, and historic storms without foundering on the rocks and declaring themselves to be “in crisis” and in need of shoring up. Overlooked in these various

crises is any identification of just what is so essential about masculinity that it ought to be saved, first and foremost, over women, children, and modern advances. If masculinity is so crisis-prone, it does appear to be resistant to such crises; masculinity successfully survives, despite near-constant crises. Although the alarm is often sounded for an impending masculinity crisis, precisely what might be at stake is rarely articulated. Perhaps the hue and cry, “A crisis! A crisis!”, offers good cover and justification for reinscribing patriarchal attitudes and ideals. It seems less about identifying what is about to be lost and more about making sure the power and privilege stays in the “right” hands.

There is no constant masculinity. There is no single way in which to be heroic. Although media wind nostalgic language around both of these concepts, masculinity scholars such as Kimmel and MacInnes fail to locate even one historical period in which masculinity was secure and attained easily by most men. Perfect heroes and perfectly masculine men are ephemeral notions; when pursued, they cannot be found.

When heroism is articulated onto a construct as fluid as is masculinity, heroism also becomes fluid. The actions that constitute heroism and the persons who are labeled “hero”—and those who are not—become changeable, and definitions slippery. The catastrophic attack on American soil on September 11, 2001 regenerates fears of dominance and invasion, fears that are identified by Kimmel as having been threatening to masculinity since the country was born. Heroes did not disappear. Masculinity is not in crisis.

Perhaps Americans are more confused than abandoned. Americans conflate celebrity and being well known with being heroic, and then grumble because famous

sports stars and film actors—men who are supposed to epitomize masculinity—do not act very noble (Whannel, 2002). Fame is mistaken for heroism, and humanity is thought of as being less-than-heroic.

But heroes were ever flawed.

A brief history of television heroes

The following is not intended to be a comprehensive history of television heroes in dramatic programming, but instead offers observations of key moments in the development of television hero characterizations.

Early television heroes: Cowboys & lawmen, 1950s & 1960s

Modern media have not consistently delivered to audiences layered, nuanced, and complicated characters. Although Shakespeare trusted his uneducated groundlings to understand the thorny, intricate complexity and variability of human character, network television has not necessarily followed suit. Over-simplified archetypes and stereotypes define most of television, especially in its early years.

The heroes of television in the 1950s and 1960s were often so rigid in their perfection and confidence they might have been played by cardboard cutouts rather than live actors. They were certain of themselves, unshakable, unerring, consistently occupying the moral high ground and being forces for good where ere they tread. If they were cowboys, they reached for their guns only reluctantly and when pushed beyond endurance; if they shot, they always hit their mark; if they killed, they never doubted that they were on the side of God and right. If they were lawmen, they always got their

man and often seemed to magically know where to search for him; the gray areas of the justice system never tickled their consciences. Mid-century television heroes reflected virtuous, modest, American masculinity. They did the right thing, but more importantly, they always knew what the right thing was without wrestling with inner demons or outer ambiguities.

Lone drifter heroes populated the television westerns of the period, and they were enormously popular. *Cheyenne* (Warner Brothers, 1955-1963), played by Clint Walker, ran for eight years as Cheyenne Bodie, a former Army scout, drifted from ranch to cattle drive, drinking water out of his hat and bringing order to the lawless west. *Bronco* (Warner Brothers, 1958-1962) ran for four years and featured Ty Hardin as a disillusioned former Confederate captain who roamed the west, seeking out injustice and righting it. *Have Gun, Will Travel* (CBS, 1957-1963) starred Richard Boone as Paladin, a former Army officer and gunfighter for hire who had a wide-ranging education and could quote Greek classics at moments of dispute with outlaws. *The Rifleman* (ABC, 1958-1963), starred Chuck Connors as Lucas McCain, a Civil War veteran and single father living on a New Mexico ranch. All these heroes were proponents of fair play and gentlemanly conduct, involving themselves in defending underdogs and promoting neighborly attitudes. They were all also excellent shots, and when wise talk and strong virtue did not make a villain disappear, they ran him off or killed him off with skillful dispatch. The moral lessons were strong and crisply delivered with equivocation: the strong did not hurt the weak, a man protected his land and his family, neighbors stood up for one another, and a man neither seeks out a fight nor runs from one (Sharrett, 2005). It would have been impossible to mistake a hero for

a villain or to feel compassion for a bad guy: if the ominous musical score did not tell you right from wrong, the black and white hats did.

The clear-cut dichotomy of good and bad ran through every episode of what *The New York Times*' Craig Tomashoff calls “the most recognized police series in the history of television” and “the godfather of all police procedural shows” (Tomashoff, 2003). The police drama *Dragnet* (NBC, 1953-1959; 1965-1970) created a new genre: the police show. It also created a new phrase: “The names have been changed to protect the innocent,” which opened each show during the assurance that the story we were about to see was true and pulled from the files of the LAPD. The staccato-style dialogue and dramatic theme music of *Dragnet* became so iconic that many newspaper and magazine writers aped the script style when they wrote their reviews, and even typed out “dum-de-dum-dum” in their headlines and copy. Story after story about Jack Webb the actor and *Dragnet* the show began as did each program: “This is the city, Los Angeles. Population 2,479,015; some good, some evil. I carry a badge...” (Moser and Webb, 1951).

Police Sergeant Joe Friday, played by Jack Webb, narrated the action and was the central character of the show; his partner from 1953-1959 was Fred Smith, played by Ben Alexander, and from 1967-1970 Officer Bill Gannon was played by Harry Morgan. The cast was always small: one or two witnesses and a criminal, plus the two police officers. The storyline was rigidly chronological: a crime occurred, a plodding investigation followed, an arrest was inevitable. The conclusions of each show were identical: the captured suspect faced the camera (unless he—and it was almost always “he”—perished during the show) and took his legal, corrective medicine. Every suspect

was caught, every perpetrator was found guilty, every criminal was sentenced and punished, every viewer felt a little bit safer.

Over the years of the show's on-and-off run, the lead characters' MO (*modus operandi*, a term the show was responsible for introducing to the general public) shifted not one iota: Friday and his partners were rigid, deadpan, and unflappable. They were also unerringly polite, even to criminals—a pattern that only altered in the 1960s when they clearly grew annoyed with longhaired, pot-smoking teenagers. Friday and his partners also appeared to have little if any home life. They seemed to exist only on the job, on the day shift, downtown. There were no scenes with mothers, wives, children, or friends, no scenes in bars or restaurants unless they were settings for interviewing witnesses or apprehending criminals. The *Dragnet* law enforcers were examples of a masculinity so rigid one reviewer dubbed it “rigor mortis.”

Camera angles and techniques were straightforward and formal, a practice only rarely ruptured by a flashy move such as Webb slugging the camera as a straight-on shot of him hitting a prisoner (Moser and Webb, 1951b). The photography is flat and badly lit, unflattering shadows tint the scenes, and sets are as artificial-looking as a senior class play. Where *Dragnet* attempted to approach realism was in its language. It was the first television show to feature actual police jargon, and it was hailed as a move toward reality TV. In his essay, “From *Dragnet* to *Survivor*: Historical and Cultural Perspectives on Reality Television,” Sean Baker traces the historical precedents of reality TV and classifies *Dragnet* as an example of a reality show of the type “artificial person in ordinary setting;” a docu-drama based on real events and reenactments of

events, focusing on criminal justice by highlighting the normal activities of solving crimes (Baker, 2003, p. 59).

Dragnet contained a level of “civic training” of the type Ouellette and Hay find in reality television (2008). During the Cold War era, television programs “were considered tantamount to citizenship, civil society, democracy, and the health of the nation” (Ouellette and Hay, p. 25). *Dragnet* taught viewers how to watch police shows, but also taught them how to respectfully respond to officers when reporting crimes, acting as witnesses, or being arrested. Polite and dutiful subservience was the rule with very rare exceptions. Friday and Smith interrogated witnesses and criminals alike with matter-of-fact, staccato questions—never writing anything down, curiously. Friday interrupted only briefly with an occasional “um-hm” or “yessir,” and steered digressing witnesses back to the point with his signature “just the facts, ma’am.” The relentless chronological order of both the show and the interrogations made orderly sense and rhythm out of chaos and reinforced the authority of the state and its rescuers.

The jargon also helped position police work as technical and competent. In “The LSD Story” (Webb, 1967), one officer tells Friday about a new law in nearly unintelligible blather: “In the California book, you’ll find it on page thirty-eight, division ten-point-five, chapter one, section eleven-nine-oh-one.” While this may be accurate, so much detail kills the pacing, and it is hard to believe that police officers—even crew-cut, suit-wearing ones in 1967—actually spoke to each other this way on a casual basis.

It was impossibly easy for Friday and his partner to swiftly locate stolen cars, identify suspects, and track down criminals; *Dragnet* taught potential criminals that

crime would never pay. Decades before *CSI*, the *Dragnet* detectives seemed to have magical powers of discernment. On a small-time robbery case (Moser and Webb, 1951b), Friday arrests a suspect based on his signature that “our handwriting man” identified, as though all citizens’ signatures are on file with the police. In another episode, within minutes of a shooting, Friday is suddenly in position of a lengthy list of all the suspect’s “known associates” (Moser and Webb, 1951c). The police and the state appear omnipotent and inescapable, regularly and intuitively knowing facts they could not possibly know; authority always finds out what you did.

Often on *Dragnet*, it is a rather gentlemanly activity to be arrested. Friday and Smith take one serial killer out to lunch at Helga’s Health Shop. The killer bypasses the beets (“they repeat on me”) and orders molasses bread, a veggie burger, and yogurt. They pass the salt and pepper and socialize as the killer begins to detail where he has buried the bodies. The killer claims that he murders for no good reason, scoffing at detective magazines that depict murderers as being motivated by money or sex. “Some people just kill,” he says, between mouthfuls of molasses bread. It is frightening that he is so ordinary, and it is frightening that the police are breaking bread calmly with such a monster. But Friday reasserts order and the state’s authority with one of his one-liners that so often sound like they should be cross-stitched into a sampler and framed on the wall. “Killing isn’t hard to do,” says the murderer. “It’s cheap.” Friday’s comeback: “You got it wrong, Henry. Wait’ll they read you the bill” (Moser and Webb, 1951a). When a teen commits suicide, a bystander asks, “How could he make such a mistake?” Quips Friday, “He had the best excuse in the world, miss. He was 17” (Moser and Webb, 1951d). Civics lessons and morality plays are worked into *Dragnet* and no real

effort is made to weave them seamlessly into the fabric of dramatic action. Sometimes these lessons just lie there, obvious and glaring.

While the actor Jack Webb hyped L&M cigarettes during commercial breaks, the character Joe Friday ranted about juvenile delinquency during the program. In one reefer madness script, a group of kids tear up a movie theater “for no reason at all,” according to the theater owner. When Friday calls on one teen’s family living in a “two story colonial frame house in a better-than-average section of the city,” he scolds the father: “I think maybe you’d better keep a closer check on your son, sir.” Dad says, “A good home, good training, [drugs are] the last thing in the world I thought could happen. We never even worried about it.” Friday escalates the anxieties of every parent watching: “Maybe that’s why it happened” (Webb, 1967).

A recurring theme, especially in the 1960s, was errant middle-class “good kid” teenagers on drugs. Friday delivered stern anti-drug lectures to the teens (if they survived) and the parents. In “The LSD Story” episode (Webb, 1967), a “doped up” teen with his face painted half-blue gnaws the bark off a tree. Friday and Gannon find him in a vacant lot with his head buried in a hole in the ground. They pull him out to discover his face is painted half-blue, half-yellow. The teen mumbles “Reality, man, reality—I could see the center of the earth” and is certain he has spotted the “pilot light” of creation. As Gannon frisks him and finds a fistful of sugar cubes, the camera lingers on Friday inspecting the boy’s shirt, which reads: “Live and let live, down with fuzz” (not even “the fuzz,” just generic “fuzz”). Friday is quick on the uptake: “I’ll make ya book he’s been dropping that acid we’ve been hearing about.” When the boy says, “My hair is green and I’m a tree,” the partners decide to take him in. Even faced with

situations that were outrageous, funny, or tragic, Friday and Gannon were unflappable.

“When you die your mind lives on,” the teen tells Gannon. “Yeah, I know,” he says flatly as he reaches for the cuffs.

At the station, Friday asks the boy, “You’re pretty high and far out, aren’t ya? What kinda kick are you on, son?” While the teen hallucinates that he’s a chair and a train, Webb and Gannon eye him with obvious distaste. A scene with a police lab technician is a barely disguised lecture about LSD’s dangers, including its ability to be slipped into the water supply to poison millions. When Friday and Gannon say they have arrested the boy for “drug intoxication,” the crisply dressed mother looks right at her half-blue-, half-yellow-faced son and says “Why, that’s impossible.” She explains the drugs away as boys “always doing some silly thing or other, letting their hair grow long or dressing up like those English singers” (presumably the Beatles).

LSD was not illegal at the time, and Gannon grumbles that he wishes they could arrest kids for possession. “How long’s it take to mix up a batch of acid—a coupla days?” asks Friday. “Takes a little longer to stir up a law, doesn’t it?” The good cops are thwarted by a bad law. They are forced to book the young man on a lesser charge of “being in danger of leading a dissolute or immoral life” (!) but he is quickly released.

The teen becomes an “acid pusher” known as “Blue Boy” and two girls and another stoned client rat him out. “Picked this one up in the third street tunnel, didn’t wanna leave,” the cop who brings in the client tells Gannon. “Thought he was a mole.” The next time the officers see Blue Boy’s mother, she apologizes for her earlier resistant behavior and parental disbelief. She now sees the wisdom in the paternalism of the state and sees the error of a mere parent’s ways. “I wonder if you’d do me a favor

when you find him?" she tearfully asks Gannon. "What's that, Mrs. Carver?" he replies. She sighs. "Tell him we still love him."

The camera zooms in on Friday smiling ruefully.

Gannon and Friday head for the Sunset Strip in search of Blue Boy, where young people are, weirdly, protesting in the middle of the night. Large crowds of them power walk swiftly down the sidewalk carrying signs: "Live and Let Live!" (It does not seem like a dangerous sentiment, but it's attributed to LSD proponent Timothy Leary). Other signs read "We Protest!" but exactly what is being protested is not mentioned. One of the two girls to whom Blue Boy sold LSD sees the police officers and cheerfully hails them, although this seems unlikely behavior for a teenager hanging out on Sunset Strip in 1967 during a protest march. Friday actually says, "Hey, Edna May, what's happening?" but surely this is funnier now than it must have been then. The sweet-faced girls volunteer that they have been invited to an acid party that night, but good girls that they are, they turned down the offer and are on their way home. "You gonna break up the party?" asks Edna May. Says Friday, "About time somebody tried, don'tcha think?" echoing the sentiments of many a baffled parent in the '60s.

Friday and Gannon arrive at the acid party house in Hollywood Hills; the door is ajar and an ominous red glow emanates from inside. "They must be 'way out' to leave the door unlocked," says Gannon. Friday sniffs the air. "That's weed." Inside, a group of conservatively, well-dressed teens are in private worlds. One tries to climb up the wall. Another, eyes closed, snaps and wiggles her fingers. One is collapsed on a sofa, another dances alone. A bearded young artist at a mural dips his brush into a can and

then tastes the paint. Gannon raises an eyebrow. A bowl of LSD capsules and a handful of hand-rolled marijuana cigarettes have conveniently been left unattended on a table.

“Sober up and try to listen to this!” yells Friday, who seems angrier with these kids than he was with criminals in 1951. The teens are sullen and appear annoyed but not frightened. Faced with such firm authority, they do, in fact, defy physiology and sober up. They complain to the police: “You’re not gonna search me!” and “Keep your hands out of my purse!” but are otherwise passive and do not resist. The purse is a Chanel bag; a symbol that might not have been readily understood by working class viewers in 1967 (status bags were not as well-advertised then as they are now) so appears to signal a warning to upper-middle-class parents of the danger when large allowances collide with the drug culture. The partygoers are booked by plainclothesmen, thanks to the new anti-acid law, but regrettably, Blue Boy is still on the lam.

Friday and Gannon mystically know where to find him, in a friend’s tidy (for a drug fiend) apartment. The stoned friend crouches in a corner and wonders aloud why Blue Boy, sitting in the lotus position and staring up at the ceiling, has not moved for a while. Friday checks for a pulse and finds none. Blue Boy is inexplicably dead (LSD is not fatal, unless it is accompanied by hallucinations that flying off a building would be a good idea, but apparently yoga is not good for you, either). His death is sanitized, involving no vomiting or aspiration, as are common in drug overdoses. Although Friday seems to have hated this kid since the beginning of the show, he emotes sadness by leaning on the furniture.

Sgt. Friday never doubted his mission, his instincts, or himself. The bad guys were bad, the good guys always caught them, and the courts unwaveringly convicted them for maximum sentences in California prisons. There were no shadowy, haunted corners in Friday's ethics or life. Friday was a buttoned-down professional who knew right from wrong and never saw any grey. He was a product of his times. Friday's hegemonic "tough guy" masculinity had its roots in the Cold War era and existed in response to anxieties about post-WWII American masculinity.

Cold War Times and American Masculinity

During World War II, nearly one-third of the American work force was made up of women. Some 18 million of them went to work while the men went off to war, and the country fretted over what would happen when the boys came home. What actually happened was a drop-off in numbers of employed women, followed by a resurgence back into the workplace; by the end of the decade, the numbers of employed women had actually increased (Chopra-Gant, 2000). This upset in gender roles had its roots in the Depression and occurred alongside changes in industrialization, urbanization, feminism, and new family arrangements, culminating in a Cold War era domesticity that was viewed as suspicious, at least where masculinity was concerned. In his examination of books and magazines produced during the end stages of the war and the immediate post-war years, WWII scholar Mike Chopra-Gant finds ample evidence that concerns about masculinity were far from hidden. In 1954, *Life* magazine published an article entitled "The New American Domesticated Male" and *Look* magazine ran an entire series on "the decline of the American male."

Far from being invisible in the culture, there was actually an enormous amount of discussion about masculinity, focused around anxieties over the return of ex-servicemen to civilian life, and raising questions about the relative positions and roles of men and women in society and what it meant to be a man at that time...[some of this] reaffirms traditional patriarchal values. But a substantial amount of it also reflects more liberal positions and introduces the notion of a gentler, more domesticated man” (Chopra-Gant, 2000, p. 2).

Chopra-Gant reports that certain publications were “almost hysterical” in their enforcement of narrowly defined, hegemonic masculinity. Dr. William H. Sheldon’s *Varieties of Delinquent Youth* (1949) lists deviations as the “DAMP RAT syndrome: Dilettante, Arty, Monotophobic (non-resistant to monotony), Perverse, Restive, Affected, Theatrical.” Merely enjoying classical music, according to Sheldon, moves a man from the masculine category into DAMP RAT (Chopra-Gant, 2000). The new interest in studying social character made men the default objects. “Raising the question of what it meant to be an American (at the heart of the newly institutionalized American studies movement) easily slipped into the question of how to be a man in the mass society that the U.S. had become” (Mickenberg, 2006, p. 540). James Gilbert calls the domestication of the male “a defining mark of the American experience (2006, p. 217):

It might be argued that beneath the surface of very loud complaints about men and masculinity, and laments about decline, the real issue was mass society itself and the widespread hesitations about what it meant to be a man in the consumer world where women had already staked a claim (Gilbert, 2006, p. 80).

“This shift,” Chopra-Gant argues, “together with the anxieties provoked by the discourse of the domesticated male, offer an explanation for the reassertion in some 1950s films of a tougher, more traditional masculinity; one which reasserts male power and denies domestication” (2000, p. 4). In particular historic moments, anxiety around masculinity is escalated by social forces and the meaning of masculinity is under

pressure. At these times, the culture requires “a patriarchy which conceals the specificity of masculinities in order to present a particular model of masculinity as coherent and unified” (2000, p. 1-2)—and in media the figure of the tough guy can become a strategy for dealing with the pressure, “asserting masculinity as a tough essence and denying that it could ever be pressured or threatened (2000, p. 9).

Enter television’s lone cowboy drifters and the likes of Sgt. Joe Friday into the imperiled masculinity of the 1950s. Bosley Crowther at *The New York Times* called Friday “a super-man cop” who “knows all and sees everything...a pretty insufferable Joe. He is ostentatious and egotistic in his elaborately hard-boiled attitude...He is a pretty brutal and ruthless sort.” Crowther worried about that. “If that’s what the TV audience worships, it’s a frightening and unfortunate thing” (1954, p. 10-11). *The Saturday Evening Post*: “This new legal beagle is also a very different type, both physically and mentally. And yet in his streamlined way, he is the Sherlock Holmes of the atom age...This modern gumshoe...has rapidly achieved the status of a great American hero” (Tregaskis, 1953, p. 24). *The Saturday Evening Post* gushes on for a six-page spread, going to great lengths to establish Friday as a tough guy and Webb as hegemonically male.

Joe, in the grim TV course of tracking down the criminal, rarely cracks even a slight smile. When this wonderful event does occur, female viewers from Maine to California write in and ask why he can’t smile just a little more often, the effect is so charming. In between smiles, Sergeant Friday gets letters admiring such widely diverse personal qualities as his deep, rich voice, his mild crew haircut, his button-down-collar shirts, his dark brown eyes, even his ears, which all but the most blindly enamored fans will agree are of a size more suitable for flying than for listening...his intent, earnest look, the gleam of understanding in his level gaze and the deep, vibrant voice...are the qualities which endear him to the women listeners and viewers, who are astoundingly numerous for a program in which there is never any romance (Tregaskis, 1953, p. 24-25).

In an article about television sports coverage and masculinity, Morse accuses television of “bringing with it a considerable impoverishment of the culturally-shared idea of what it means to be a man” (Morse, 1983, p. 393). Such limited scope is readily seen in *Dragnet*. In *Dragnet*, everyone is White, clean, and fairly well dressed, although it is common for criminals to not wear hats, a sartorial detail which surely aided in their speedy capture. Friday and Smith and Gannon are upstanding citizens with high moral values they would be happy to share with anyone (and certainly expected everyone else to uphold without question); crooks are weak, shifty, pathetic, and fairly well mannered. The police are invulnerable, untouched by the complexities and difficulties of life; the criminals possess all the vulnerability.

Television Heroism in the 1970s

In the early 1970s, the television cowboy hero rode off into the sunset and the police officer hero developed a split personality: he or she was either a with-it hipster (*The Mod Squad*, *Police Woman*, *Starsky & Hutch*, Michael Douglas’s half of *The Streets of San Francisco*) or an old-school enforcer and gumshoe (*Police Story*, *Hawaii 5-0*, Karl Malden’s half of *The Streets of San Francisco*). The private eye emerged as a sort of cop-plus-quirky-personality: *Mannix*, *Columbo*, *Kojak*, *Baretta*, *Charlie’s Angels* (the quiriness was that they were women!).

The Vietnam War, the Watergate scandal, advances in civil and women’s rights, a growing disillusionment with government, and the mainstreaming into the culture of once radical ideas formed the 1970s. Looking backward into history became a more affectionate and less adventurous activity. *The Waltons* (1972-1981) reprised the

Depression in rural Virginia with rosy recollections of warm family life infused with solid American values of hard work, loyalty, and family love. *Little House on the Prairie* (1974-1983) roughly followed the famed Laura Ingalls Wilder books of family life on the midwestern prairie in the late 19th century. Pa Wilder and Daddy Walton were patriarch heroes: poor in economic resources, rich in progeny and virtues. These family patriarchs bestowed wisdom and instilled character in morality lessons with their children: do not cheat at school, pull your weight at home, stand for something you believe in. These were values viewers would likely have felt as traditionally American and no doubt were comforting to those baffled by social shifts and eruptions of the times.

A category of television hero matured as the decade rolled over from the 1960s to the 1970s: the physician. During the same five year period, 1961-1966, NBC and ABC had each produced a series starring a young, handsome doctor, *Dr. Kildare* and *Ben Casey*, respectively. In the 1970s, network house calls were made by *Marcus Welby, M.D.* (ABC, 1969-1976) and Joe Gannon of *Medical Center* (CBS, 1969-1976). Marcus Welby was an aging family physician who relied on understanding his patients in order to diagnose them; he dispensed medical advice and attention with a tender bedside manner and was much-beloved among his patients. Failing health forced him to add a young upstart physician with radical, scientific ideas to his practice: Dr. Steven Kiley, played by James Brolin. At the *Medical Center*, grizzled Dr. Paul Lochner grumbled and grouched while dashing Dr. Joe Gannon, played by Chad Everett, romanced patients and nurses and healed the sick with bold new ideas.

The young man/older man, youth/experience, radical/orthodox, liberal/conservative dichotomy personified the television “buddy narratives” of the time. An example of this at work within the police drama genre is this era’s *Streets of San Francisco* (ABC, 1972-1977). Veteran cop Mike Stone, played by Karl Malden, brought more than two decades of experience to the streets; his young partner, played by Michael Douglas, had a too-long haircut and a college education. As with the medical spring/autumn buddy pairings, the cop couple worked its way through political and other tensions to eventually resemble a father-son relationship. Writing about reality and self-help television, Ouellette and Hay argue that viewers are being instructed in how to better manage themselves so they may become better citizens.

Since its cultural explosion in the late 1990s, popular reality TV has presented an array of techniques for diagnosing personal problems and transforming so-called needy and “at-risk individuals into successful managers of their lives and futures...with their steady supply of therapeutic experts and lifestyle managers, these programs have brought about what might be called the neoliberalization of social work through reality TV (Ouellette and Hay, 2008, p. 63-64).

Reality television acts as a sort of social worker, assisting viewers in gaining knowledge, skills, and experience vicariously that may improve their lives. In less direct and obvious ways than does reality TV, television drama may teach, too, by exposing viewers to situations and reactions that may be more measured, tolerant, or insightful than—or simply different from—their own.

The Mod Squad (ABC, 1968-1973), was a well-drawn example of this. Experienced police captain Adam Greer, played by Tige Andrews, offers three hippie-type minor criminals an alternative to incarceration: work as a “mod” squad of undercover police officers. “One white, one black, one blonde” was the tagline of the

show: the White youthful officer wore love beads and John Lennon wire-rims, the Black officer wore an Afro and always looked angry, and the long-haired blonde wore mini-skirts and slouched in go-go boots. Captain Greer was forever educating his young charges in the ways of the streets and in the positive aspects of what “pigs” (police officers) did on a daily basis; the squad of mods educated him in counterculture ways, racial politics, and “keepin’ it cool, man.”

The generation gap in the television audience was not a small rift. At the turn of the decade, the September 1969 *Mad Magazine*’s cover positions an aged version of its iconic Alfred character (the “What? Me, worry?” redheaded, freckled guy) alongside a hippie version of Alfred. The old Alfred wears a button proclaiming “My Country: Right or Wrong,” an echo of bumper stickers popular at the time. The hippie Alfred wears a “Make Love, Not War” button, a sentiment popular on protest signs, bumper stickers, and jewelry. Tensions between the generations existed on racial, political, and sexual fronts, and the hippie counterculture challenged the Vietnam War, militarization, government, and big business, while promoting ecological concerns, relaxed sexual mores, and advances in civil and gender rights. The politics, values, and sexual revolution of the younger generation puzzled and alarmed their WWII-era parents.

Television heroes from both age groups who found ways to bridge the generation gap offered constructive ways to view differences and suggested collaborative ways to live alongside one another. Television heroes like the young men of the *Mod Squad* also demonstrated relatively productive and peaceful racial co-existence. In these ways, male heroes in network dramas furthered the governmentality

function of television: they modeled ways in which viewers might become better, more productive citizens (Rose, 2003).

Viewers were beginning to see heroes on two sides of an issue, but each was still unquestionably heroic, each still embodied classical hero-like virtues and goodness. Television heroes of the 1970s were not complicated by shades of grey in their moral, personal, or professional lives. New and old thinking were each venerated and honored in young and old characters, but neither age on either side of the generation gap waffled when it came to matters of villainy and heroism. Right was still quite distinct from wrong, whatever the age of its defender.

Television Heroism in the 1980s

In the 1980s, the hippies became yuppies: young upwardly-mobile professionals who were socially liberal and fiscally conservative. Yuppies had both ideals and money, but the money produced guilt about whether or not the ideals might have been compromised. Successful lawyers on *L.A. Law* (NBC, 1986-1994) took pro bono cases to assuage their anxieties over practicing corporate law for Beverly Hills clients and owning luxury cars and stylish condos. Taking cases from headlines in the real world, lawyers occasionally wrestled with current cultural and social controversies, including gay rights, AIDS, and domestic violence, along with advising wealthy clients how to skirt taxes, shelter revenue, and structure ironclad pre-nups. An ensemble cast precluded any single character from reading as the show's hero, but leading men included young lawyer Michael Kuzak (Harry Hamlin), womanizer Arnie Becker (Corbin Bernsen), Victor Sifuentes (Jimmy Smits), and Stuart Markowitz (Michael Tucker), who received

much media notice for being short, chubby, balding, and still being a babe magnet. Another long-lived lawyer-hero show was born in the Eighties: *Matlock* (1986-1995), starring Andy Griffith. Matlock was more detective than client, less likely to write briefs or prepare a defense than he was likely to hunt down guilty criminals on his own, vigilante style. Matlock offered a country-style, down-home, simply served-up sense of justice. He never lost a case and his clients were always innocent and often victimized by evildoers and a distrustful justice system. Matlock's position as a sure-of-himself defender of innocents and pursuer of criminals never wavered; he was never wrong, his instincts were always right, and even if his client looked guilty as charged, Matlock rescued the underdog. It was still easy to tell the heroes from the villains in the Eighties.

In this decade, Clinton Democrats rode the conservative wake of the Reagan-Bush administration firmly toward the right to form a national consensus on many issues, including criminal justice (Rapping, 2003). Elayne Rapping identifies a shift early in the decade from lawyer heroes (with the exception of *L. A. Law*) on television to cop heroes. *Cagney and Lacey* and *Hill Street Blues* began a new trend of cop characters who were complex and involved in negotiating the trickier aspects of street justice.

[This] signaled a subtle, contradictory shift in social consciousness; a transitional ideological moment. Liberalism was not yet dead...the producers of these series were sixties-bred liberals themselves. But already you could sense in these series—in their very choice of law enforcers as heroes—the kind of subtly conservative ‘law and order’ mentality...the folks who had boldly sung along with Bob Dylan when he insisted that ‘to live outside the law you must be honest’ were no longer so sure. In fact, as they got older and more ‘established’ themselves, their sympathies—while still ostensibly liberal, even leftist—were subtly shifting away from those who broke the law to those who protected an increasingly fearful middle class against ‘those people’ (Rapping, 2003, p. 3)

Hill Street Blues (NBC, 1981-1987) pioneered production techniques and writing styles that changed and influenced police and other dramas into the next century. Gone were the single-story scripts and the one-crime-at-a-time approach of *Dragnet*. In *Hill Street Blues*, the camera moved through the chaos, racket, half-missed conversations, and interrupted work flow of a police station, bouncing from an arrest of a prostitute to a wailing mugging victim to cops joking in the john. *Hill Street* scripts mixed private and professional life stresses and challenges, following police officers home to see who slept with whom and who drank too much. The show also incorporated a rolling story line; each week's episode included plotlines that did not neatly resolve at the end of an hour, reflecting the ongoing nature of real life. The "Hill" was a poverty- and crime-stricken neighborhood, and the heartbreaking circumstances of many of its residents were unflinchingly knit into the fabric of the program and complicated the representations of certain criminal behaviors, such as drug addiction and prostitution, by depicting the desperation of the people committing those acts.

An ensemble cast and multiple storylines created several leading male characters, among them Captain Furillo, played by Daniel Travanti. Furillo was unambiguously "good," but he was plagued by a complicated personal life. He was a recovering alcoholic who slipped in one episode; his ex-wife, Fay, frequently showed up at the station to complain (and later to work as a community advocate), and he had to work professionally with a public defender, Joyce, who was secretly his girlfriend. His boss was politically ambitious and difficult, and the officers under him were often in conflict with one another. In the space of just a few on-camera minutes, Furillo might call one misbehaving officer on the carpet, be interrupted by two feuding officers who

do not want to be partnered on a call, get a phone call from the Chief demanding he do something he did not want to do, and be forced to take an interview with a community newspaper reporter. Some of the officers on the Hill were annoying, petty, and self-involved; others were none-too-bright or prone to dumb decision-making. One or two were downright contentious with each other, and Furillo managed the lot of them. *Hill Street Blues* did not explore the ambiguity of being a hero, but it did offer a fairly realistic sense of a demanding and disruptive workplace and the toll it might take on its workers. In *Hill Street*, fissures can begin to be seen in the depiction of a cop hero. None are on the take or villainous, but some are arrogant and others dim-witted—and in the act of following the characters home, the police hero becomes humanized as a complicated character juggling many aspects of life, not just a radar gun and a ticket-writing pad.

Perhaps the consummate yuppie television drama, *thirtysomething* (ABC, 1987-1991), was born in the Eighties. Seven baby boomers who grew up together through 1960s counterculture find themselves in their thirties in the Eighties, with mortgages and babies (or notably without), wondering at the meaning of life. Another ensemble drama with a half-dozen central characters, *thirtysomething* had a handful of male leads, perhaps most notably Michael, played by Ken Olin. Michael and Hope (Mel Harris) are married with children; Michael's partner in the advertising business is his old friend Elliot, married to Nancy. Michael has a best friend who is single, Gary; Hope has a best friend who is single, Ellyn. Michael's single cousin Melissa shares Ellyn's ambiguity around marriage and the single life. Michael does not perform heroic deeds; he is just a husband, father, and provider. His attempt to make sense of that in relation to his

younger, idealistic years is central to the storylines. The show was characterized in the media as often whiny and self-involved, with characters wrestling with little more than the annoyances of married life and the responsibilities of being a parent. Again, the heroic qualities, if you can call them that, of its leading men were not complicated—they were essentially good guys who did no real evil and who struggled to understand and cope with middle-class life. But *thirtysomething* did present the irritations of balancing home and work life, the frustrations of being in a relationship, the fears of living a single life, and the disappointments of living a married one, a step toward the complicated heroes of the next century.

While *thirtysomething* offered a representation of what Hanke calls the “new man”—a feminist-friendly husband who is active in domestic tasks, supports his wife in her work, and is more in touch with his inner life and feelings than, say, Sgt. Friday in *Dragnet*—Hanke argues that it also reinscribes hegemonic masculinity and patriarchy. Michael supports Hope’s career, but only inasmuch as it does not disrupt traditional patriarchal family life. Elliott’s wife, Nancy, explores a career as a children’s book author but “pays” for her burgeoning independence by contracting cancer and reverting to domestic life. The singles on the series long for married, heterosexual, domestic bliss and feel diminished because they are not living that life. Discussions of and storylines about feminist subjects appear to be resistant to hegemonic masculinity, but Hanke argues that *thirtysomething* uses “counter and oppositional discourse for its own purposes”. In the portrayals of “new men,” “patriarchal ideology is voiced and effaced” and hegemony works by being “able to express and contain elements of liberal feminist

ideology while remaining complicit with dominant gender ideology” (Hanke, 1990, pp. 231-232).

Television Heroes of the 1990s

The Nineties was the decade of the dot com boom. Explosive growth in development and usage of computers and the internet spurred equity market expansion and what Alan Greenspan called an “irrational exuberance” in the stock market (Greenspan, 1996). The six months of the Gulf War (August 1990 to February 1991) were characterized by televised missile attacks and bombings, bringing the war “live” into American living rooms. Rather than getting highlights of information in brief synopses during evening news broadcasts, Americans could now watch coverage 24/7. The fall of the Soviet Union was symbolized by the (also live) broadcast of the fall of the Berlin Wall, which had separated East and West Germany for more than 25 years. And then there is the obvious: one millenium was coming to an end and a new one was about to begin, a changeover that threatened to render all computerized equipment useless at midnight (and possibly spark an apocalypse). It was a good decade for television to investigate spooky stuff and anxieties about scary governments, and it did.

The X Files (FOX, 1993-2002) featured two FBI agents, Scully (a woman) and Mulder, who tracked cases of psychic phenomena, paranormal activity, and bizarre murders. As the seasons rolled on, a theme developed: the government had conspired with extra-terrestrials and humans were infected with an alien virus. Scully and Mulder have to handle downright nutty cases inside an organization known for ridigity and a certain enforced normalcy. Mulder is certain that “the truth is out there” and he

doggedly tracks evidence of alien abductions and invasion, even as Scully doubts him.

Eventually, they must navigate treacherous waters of internal corruption and external politics. As they explore how to search for the truth within the ranks and outside the lines,

...Mulder and Scully provide us with models of democratic political behavior. Democracy has always depended on the willingness, indeed eagerness, of persons to act as responsible individuals in the face of large organizations... This is one message of *The 9/11 Commission Report*, and it was corroborated by the trial of the executives at Enron. Officials of public and corporate institutions need to be loyal to the larger democratic mission of their organizations if our society is going to work well. In another case of art imitating life...Deep Throat tells Mulder that sometimes the truth needs to be kept from the public...Mulder, democratic hero that he is, investigates anyway...Real or pretended dangers prompt secrecy and restrictions on publicity. If we intend to keep our democracy safe from consortiums of corporate and government leaders who undermine it to suit their convenience and their power, then we all need to model our behavior after Skinner, Scully, and Mulder...they are the heroes of our time. The truth is out there. Our task as democratic citizens is to find it and make it public. In this way, we can resist becoming a postdemocratic society (Flannery and Louzecky, 2007, p. 71).

The 1990s also launched *Law & Order* (NBC, 1990-present), a long-running program which problematized law enforcement with increasingly edgy content.

Criminals sometimes eluded arrest, got off on legal technicalities, or pled out in legal wheeling and dealing. Here, the tensions between “right” and “wrong” began to be explored in a network drama. Criminals are not arrested and then immediately “sentenced” at the end of the program, a la *Dragnet*. Instead, the first half of each episode depicts the criminal investigation, and the second half, the prosecution and results (unique among lawyer shows, which typically present defense attorneys as heroes). The young pup/old silverback theme of the 1970s medical shows is reprised here in the relationship between the district attorney and an up and coming prosecutor.

The scripts rarely “go home” with the characters, and most of the action occurs on the streets, in police or law offices, and in courtrooms and chambers. However, there is no single lead character who could be called a hero in the program; the casts of *Law & Order* and its various spin-offs are rolling casts. Characters transfer, move, and die off; they arrive and leave and the show goes on. Still, the inclusion of the everyday frustrations of prosecutors and police officers into plotlines works to pave the way for later, more conflicted heroes in the new millennium.

Rather than resolving plotlines in sixty minutes of programming or delivering neatly wrapped morality lessons with the subtlety of a jackhammer, television dramas were shifting away from clean-cut goodness and wading more deeply into complicated human nature. Plots were beginning to get messier, in imitation of life.

The Creation of a New Kind of Hero

Back in 1951, Sgt. Friday knew what to wear (a suit), knew how to cut his hair (a crew cut), knew how to act (tough and confident). He could afford to see the world as bad guys v. good guys because most of his world agreed with him. Even in the 1960s, when teenagers grew long hair and took drugs, Friday felt supreme and unchallenged in registering his judgment and disapproval. Friday could rescue us because he was tougher and stronger and more sure of himself than we were.

Not so after 2001. New heroes appear in a new type of television. Almost all of them are on cable networks, appearing in what Amanda Lotz calls “male-centered cable dramas” (Lotz, 2007).

The 1990s was the last decade in which television programming could only originate on the three big networks. As the decade drew to a close and a new millennium began, expanding opportunities for cable networks launched networks like FOX, WB, UPN, and FX, and niche market-driven programming exploded. Television drama no longer needed to worry about offending portions of a wide, general audience. It could appeal to a narrow viewership and still succeed financially because it could deliver to advertisers precisely what they wanted: an identifiable, narrow demographic wedge.

A convergence of the opening up of formats and niches for original television programming and one other essential event created a space in which television heroes could play in very adult ways. Now, television heroes do not need to be sanitized for the kiddies and for delicate moral sensibilities. Now, heroes can be complicated. More than complicated—they can be deeply flawed.

That event was 9/11: The attacks on the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, on the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, and the thwarted attack and crash in Pennsylvania.

But first, it is time to meet a few of the new television heroes.

Cable Television Heroes: Post 9/11

Dexter's Serial Killer

Dexter (*Dexter*, Showtime, 2006-present) is based on the series of novels by Jeff about Dexter, a Miami Metro Police Department blood spatter analyst by day and a serial killer by night—but one who only kills bad guys. Each week, Dexter Morgan (played by Michael C. Hall) injects victims with a paralyzing drug, duct-tapes them to

an operating-style table, and then perforates them with ice picks and power drills and hacks them with meat cleavers and chainsaws before dumping them into the ocean off his pleasant little powerboat. Dexter's all Miami and South Beach: handsome, fit, and dressed in loose Hawaiian shirts and khakis. He lives on the beach in a hip, Mid-Century retro apartment where he stores one blood sample from each victim preserved on a slide, neatly filed in a small box and tucked into his air conditioner unit. He is precise, tidy, and organized. He possesses a gallows (of course) sense of humor. He brings donuts to work because, sociopath that he is, he has observed that humans like other humans who bring donuts, and so he tries to fit in.

Dexter is all about the blood. Over the episodes, the details of his childhood are sketched in. His mother was a police informer, and the drug dealer she ratted out imprisoned her and her two sons in a metal shipping container. She was chain-sawed into bits in front of her young boys, who were abandoned to starve sitting in an inches-deep pool of her blood. The police officer who found them adopted Dexter, the youngest of the boys, as his foster son. Dexter's brother was slightly older and for some reason written off instantly as being indelibly scarred; he grew up to be an evil serial killer who killed even good guys, so eventually Dexter had to administer permanent justice to his brother.

Dexter's foster father observed Dexter killing neighborhood animals and otherwise behaving oddly and diagnosed him as a sociopathic killer. But he loved his murderer-in-the-making son, so he taught him how to hunt and trained him in "The Code:" never get caught, only kill bad guys, and never get caught. The not-getting-caught is the biggest rule. His father died young, and Dexter grew up to become a blood

spatter analyst for the Miami Police Department. His sister is a cop in the same precinct, and together, they solve cases. On the side, when the moon is full and the mood is on him, Dexter hunts down predators and does them in.

Being sociopathic, Dexter has no real friends, but he does work alongside other men who bring their own semi-heroic characteristics to the series. Forensics expert Vince Masuka (played by South Korean C.S. Lee) makes relentlessly frequent sexual innuendos. “Hey wanna see something swell?” he asks Dexter’s sister, Debra. “Come a little closer.” Debra is not rattled, and quips “The token has spoken” (Manos, 2007). Sgt. James Doakes (played by Erik King) is an ex-Special Forces operative who suspects Dexter is not quite right; this casts him as the exuberantly muscled villain who resorts to violence at the slightest provocation. Doakes ought to be the good guy because he is on the trail of a serial killer, but because his prey is Dexter, his lawful single-mindedness is represented as twisted.

In its earliest episodes and in the novels by Jeff Lindsay from which the series springs, Dexter’s sociopathic characteristics follow science: he does not understand how people behave, he does not “get” feelings, sex seems messy and odd to him, and he consciously makes an effort to act like a human being, ever-nervous that he’s going to laugh at the wrong joke or miss important social cues. Although he finds sex messy and unappealing, he realizes that to pass as a non-serial killer he must pretend to have some interest in it. He makes a beard of a traumatized, fragile single mother, Rita, who is also reluctant to have a physical relationship. By season three, this “I hate sex” storyline is abandoned and the couple are having apparently satisfying sex and discussing marriage. Rita, none too swift on the uptake, suspects Dexter of having an addiction and requires

him to attend Narcotics Anonymous meetings. Dexter discovers a share of relief at meetings, admitting he has dark secrets (although not admitting which ones). In most episodes, Dexter hunts down and slaughters some as-yet-unpunished criminal transgressor in an improvised tent of plastic drop cloths and duct-tape. As the episodes roll on, the rough edges of life as a sociopath are rubbed off in unlikely ways: he allows Rita into his life, he bonds with her children, he begins to like sex, he becomes less socially inept. Not a realistic depiction of a sociopath, but helpful character development if you want an audience to stay with your character.

The opening credits of the program work to establish the argument that a psychotic killer can be seen as an empathetic hero. Over funky strains of klezmer-Cubano-honky tonk music occasionally ruptured by an out-of-place squawk or twerp, the camera zooms in on an extreme close-up of a blood-sucking mosquito dining on a hairy arm. Swat! Dexter's first kill of the day. He performs his morning ablutions with an everyman's ritual (see? He is just like us—he shaves!) but the camera is too close and the perspective is too skewed. Fingernails scrape against morning stubble, shaving cream slicks over an Adam's apple like semen, the razor nicks, and drops of violent red spot the porcelain sink and head toward the drain. A knife slices ham like flesh, Tabasco hits the eggs like blood-on-fat, and out comes the floss like a garrote. The shoelaces sliding through the eyelets of leather shoes evoke pierced and constrained flesh, and when the too-tight and nearly sheer white t-shirt is stretched over Dexter's features like a shroud, we get it: Dexter's humanity is a daily performance, and there is a little monster in all of us (Colleton, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009).

Rescue Me's firefighters

Tommy Gavin is literally a man on fire. In the opening credits of the FX series about New York City firefighters, *Rescue Me* (2004-present), Gavin (played by Denis Leary) stalks through piles of firehouse paraphernalia, past uniformed firefighters strapping on equipment, down streets scattered with debris and snaked with hoses, wearing his iconic black-and-yellow firefighter suit, ablaze. Fire licks his legs, his chest, his arms. He looks like a stunt man just pulled from a burning wreck, but he does not run or even flinch. He walks in the fire, of the fire, at home with the fire. Fire is his element. He burns with rage, struggling to right his world after the loss of firefighting “brothers” and actual family in 9/11. He burns with anger, fighting to piece his fractured marriage back together and raise children he loves but cannot connect with unless he is shouting. He burns to a crisp, a scathingly sarcastic misanthrope who drinks too much, lusts too indiscriminately, and loves too erratically. He walks to the driving rock beat of the theme song, “C’mon, C’mon” by the Von Bondies: “A thousand men who have come and gone/Now we grieve ’cause now is gone/Things were good when we were young...” (Von Bondies, 2004). Gavin is consumed by fire and fed by it. And he wears it on his sleeve.

In one episode, Gavin has a flashback of being in the burning towers, and when he “comes to” we see he has been daydreaming at a stop sign while sitting in his truck. A driver behind him in a sedan honks the horn: “Move it, asshole! I’ve got a life to live!” Gavin gets out of his truck, beats the guy up with his own car door, throws the guy’s car keys into the storm drain, and then sees a bumper sticker laying on the guy’s dashboard: “9/11 heroes: we will never forget.” He tears it up, saying “Jerk-off!” and

throws the pieces on the downed driver (Belber and Fortenberry, 2004). In another episode, Gavin becomes furious when he sees souvenir hawkers selling Twin Tower cookies, snowglobes, and trinkets. In a scene reminiscent of Christ and the moneychangers outside the temple, Gavin goes on a rampage, overturning tables and screaming obscenities (Tolan and Leary, 2004). Gavin is the main character but just one of a fistful of the show's misogynist and yet strangely lovable characters, burly über-heroes who lost 343 comrades in 9/11 (www.firehouse.com), who dress up in uniforms and suspenders and boots, strap on ropes and halogens and helmets, ride around in big, shiny trucks pushing other traffic out of the way, and carry grateful women and children out from burning buildings to the applause of bystanders. The *Rescue Me* men are traumatized from 9/11 and react destructively. Lou writes bad poetry about dying comrades and his marriage falls apart. Gavin drinks too much and imagines he is followed around by ghosts of fire victims he failed to save over the course of his career. Franco is addicted to pain killers for a Twin Towers back injury, tries to duck responsibility for a daughter he fathered, and is unrelentingly randy. They all have a lot of sex. A lot of sex. Gavin has sex with his nephew's schoolteacher, a girl the age of his daughter, his ex-wife, and his brother's girlfriend; Lou has an affair with a nun and a prostitute (two different women, thankfully), and the youngest firefighter, Probie, has oral sex with his male roommate while each assures the other that neither of them are gay, later moves on to a threesome with a brother-sister couple, and eventually comes out of the closet.

In the first scene of the series, Gavin opens the door to his teal-tiled bathroom with the grubby blue tub and its rumpled blue plastic curtain, where the lid on the aqua-

colored toilet is always up and where the newspaper is always stacked. He stands in front of the toilet, sighs, and unzips. Standing to pee is at once an act of power and of weakness, an act of biological necessity and a pose that sends the message that a man is in the room. Gavin is both a firefighter and a mere mortal. On those days when he is carrying a rescued child out of a burning tenement, he is heroic and mythic. But sometimes, he's just gotta take a leak. He is also setting the ground rules of the show: beyond here, there be uncomfortable truths that might make one a bit twitchy. He is liberating his audience from Bakhtin's "snares of false seriousness," he is peeling away illusions. In facing the bathroom wall, he makes viewers face the television conventions that none of us pees, that our bathrooms are always tidy, that our nobility—when we can achieve it—overrides our animal biology and our utter humanness.

The cocky position is also a pose. When the bathroom begins to fill with smoke, Gavin loses his cool and pounds on the door yelling for help. But this is not real, it is a nightmare, the kind of nightmare firefighters have, and Gavin suddenly awakens on the sofa, a guy who lives alone—an abandoned game of solitaire on the coffee table, goalie pads leaning against crushed curtains, lamp shades at rakish tilts, his family driven away by his fire (Tolan and Leary, 2004).

Nip/Tuck's *Plastic Surgeons*

"Tell me what you don't like about yourself," say the plastic surgeon team of FX network's *Nip/Tuck* (2003-present) series to each new (usually female) patient. That bit of judgmental negativity opens each episode of the program. Not "What would you like to improve about yourself?" or "How do you see yourself?" but a little self-loathing

questionnaire, administered by two plastic surgeons on one side of a desk (inexplicably in front of a fish tank), facing off against one nervous potential patient on the other. Sean McNamara (played by Dylan Walsh) and Christian Troy (played by Julian McMahon) are plastic surgeons in practice together in South Beach, Miami, where how one looks in a bikini is essential social collateral. They have been friends since college, and do nearly everything side-by-side. They interview each patient jointly. They operate as a team, a highly unlikely (and pricey) medical event in surgeries as relatively low-key as liposuction and blepharoplasty (eyelid lifts).

Surgeries appear as vicious and violent, with blood splattering, suctioned fat spewing, and surgeons ramming liposuction rods into exposed buttocks and hammering away on noses with mallets. In a way, the two doctors “gang bang” each patient, operating on her together while she is prone and inert, incapable of defending herself. They rank women on numeric scales, make sexist jokes during surgeries (Sean sometimes feebly protests), and tell women to their faces that their asses are sagging or their breasts need perking up. Christian tosses women out of his apartment the moment after he beds them, calls women “honey” and “sweetheart” with an acid tongue, and treats women’s bodies on the operating table like meat. Women are shared and traded like baseball cards: Christian’s girlfriend becomes Sean’s girlfriend and ultimately and weirdly marries Sean’s young son, Matt. Before women are traded, they are usually surgically improved.

Sean is a “family man” and often miserable about it; he has one daughter (who rarely appears on episodes), a teenaged son, Matt, and an unhappy wife, Julia, who blames him for all she gave up (school, a career) to raise the children. Julia criticizes

Sean for being emotionally distant, and his interactions with his children are stiff and inappropriate. Trying to connect with his teenage son, he says, “Vanessa’s a little hard body, Matt. It looks like you’re dating a future prom queen. Congratulations” (Levine, 2003). When he is with Christian, however, Sean appears more relaxed and at ease. Sean shares everything with Christian, so often tells him “this is your family, too”—which turns out to be the literal truth. In Season Two, it is revealed that Christian is Matt’s biological father. Sean responds by hitting Christian in the face and yelling “I loved you the most!” (Hm...). It takes Sean several seasons to realize that he is envious of Christian’s luck with the ladies and bachelor lifestyle (not to mention his lemon-yellow Lamborghini). Even though he is envious of Christian’s freedom, Sean cares deeply about his family and now and then corrects Christian for his thoughtless behavior with women. Sean takes on pro bono cases, volunteers his services, and is the first one to melt when a needy patient requires above-and-beyond regular care. Over the seasons of the program, Sean loosens up sexually, engaging in a three-way with Christian (hm...), having sex with a blow-up doll modeled after Christian’s girlfriend (hm...), having sex with Christian’s girlfriend (hm...), and moving on to sex with the high school-aged daughter of Julia’s new lesbian girlfriend.

Christian is the pretty one: tall, dark, handsome, conscious of his beauty, and willing to flaunt it: “Kiss my tan, waxed ass,” is his mantra (Murphy and Trilling, 2003). He swaggers into singles bars and picks up women episode after episode by using the clever line, “Hi, I’m a plastic surgeon” (Murphy and Trilling, 2003). He often pairs that pick-up maneuver with a frank and unflattering assessment of the woman’s features and faults. After sex with an actress, he takes a marker to her portrait hanging

in her bedroom and draws circles and slashes around all the areas he recommends that she reconstruct. When he cannot get an erection with another woman, he tells her she has a “badly carved” face and ass and “the worst tit job I’ve ever seen” (Murphy and Murphy, 2003b). He tells a stunning woman who thinks she is a “ten” that she’s really an “eight.” “Am I really that ugly?” she asks. “I was homecoming queen.” He operates on her and makes her “the perfect 10”—and then begins to date her (Murphy and Murphy, 2003a). Whenever he wants to break up with one woman, he brings home another and arranges to be “accidentally” caught, which usually works. He is no better father than is Sean; he takes his biological son, Matt, to a porno industry party, encourages him to have sex there, and later, when his lab test results are favorable, says “Congratulations, kid, you dodged your first STD” (Murphy and Murphy, 2003b). His comments about women, both under and away from the knife, are misogynist and focused on appearances. During a lap dance, he tells the talkative dancer to be quiet. “Honey, everything I need to know about you is bouncing in front of my face.” When Sean’s girlfriend gains weight, Christian tells him, “No one wants a girlfriend with a fat ass.” He jokes about her to the anesthesiologist, “The only whale he saw this morning was between the sheets.” When he becomes angry at his fiancée, Christian calls her vagina “the black hole of hell.” In his worst and least punished bit of behavior, he murders one ex by having sex with her as a way of pushing her off a skyscraper. Yet Christian has, somewhat bizarrely, his tender moments. After a frequent patient suffers a stroke, Christian visits her, lies to her that she looks beautiful, and gently applies her lipstick onto her contorted mouth. When a one-night stand tells him he has made her pregnant, he uncharacteristically warms to his soon-to-be-fatherhood, buying baby

furniture and stuffed animals. “I’m more of a man now than I’d ever thought I’d be,” he confesses to Sean (Levine, 2003). When the baby is born, half African American and obviously not Christian’s son, Christian says, “I protected him before he was born...I put together his crib...he’s my son. It kinda sucks, though.” He ultimately decides “I’m not going to leave because of dumb stuff like DNA” (Murphy and Murphy, 2003c), commits to raising the boy, and when the boy’s mother becomes unfit, raises him alone. When the child’s biological father comes to reluctantly claim the baby, Christian clearly suffers and grieves; when the child is returned to him, he is overjoyed.

They each suffer sins of the father: Sean’s father abandoned him as a child, and Christian was sexually abused by a foster father. The two men form a tight unit, professional partners and life partners of a sort, yet they each deeply value and share the family of Sean’s wife and children (which later includes Christian’s adopted son). Each episode opens with necrophilia, naked white manikins with closed eyes posed with and without arms, some of them dismembered and in boxes. They might be dead, they might be dying, they might be anesthetized, they might be human but as phony as plastic manikins. A woman’s voice sings slowly in a breathy, airy voice: “Make me beautiful/make me beautiful/a perfect soul/a perfect mind/a perfect face/a perfect lie” (The Engine Room, 2003). At the end of a line of lyrics, one manikin slightly twitches; at the end of another line, one manikin opens a blue eye. The song ends on a close-up of the lower half of a white-on-white manikin face; its lips begin to pink. Across the images, a surgical marking pen draws a dotted red line: blueprints, reconstruction, blood. The lyrics say that surgical beauty is a lie, but that is a lie, too, because Sean and Christian are confident they can “improve” whatever beauty occurs naturally.

The Shield's *police officers*

Detective Vic Mackey (played by Michael Chicklis) does not walk, he swaggers. Stocky, muscled, and bandy-legged, he wears his uniform of t-shirt, jeans, and a leather jacket like an aging James Dean without the hair. He does have a cause, though: enforcing his own kind of street justice without benefit of judge, jury, or civil liberties. Mackey heads an anti-gang Strike Squad of bad boy cops, a barely fictionalized version of the Los Angeles Police Department's Community Resources Against Street Hoodlums (CRASH) program, which became infamous in 2000 for extreme police misconduct (Feldman, 2000). When Captain Acevada (played by Benito Martinez) reprimands Mackey, Acevada often speaks to him from a second-level loft overlooking the ground floor bull pen where lower-ranking officers work, and Mackey glares up at him as the Captain's word is delivered from on high.

Acevada is a star minority administrator in the department, and Mackey's snide cracks from the lower ranks, are both figuratively and literally a working class sneer at affirmative action and authority. "I don't answer to you, even on Cinco de Mayo," taunts Mackey (Ryan, 2002).

Mackey and his Strike Squad are mistrusted and yet envied by their colleagues and bosses. Squad members play by their own rules, invent their own assignments, and get results—usually by breaking the law or violating the rights of witnesses and suspects. Like ten-year-old boys, they call their room in the station "The Clubhouse," keep it stocked with baseball bats and sporting gear (which they never actually use), and demand that the other detectives who wear suits and do not beat up suspects must knock and ask permission before entering. When the Squad prepares to hit the road for a drug

bust, they lock, load, strap on, and tuck in gear and weapons to booming, raspy, atonal heavy metal music. One squad member, “Lemonhead” (whose hair defies gravity and who spends most episodes looking like a stoned surfer dude) plays his rifle like an air guitar; in a crowded police station, he turns a loaded gun horizontally and handles it like a rock ’n roll toy (Ryan, 2002). Kicking open the door of the Clubhouse, the Squad struts through the station like the football team down a high school hallway, and Dutch (played by Jay Karnes), a chump of a detective who gets his desk chair stolen daily and dog doo-doo hidden in his desk drawers, gazes wistfully/scornfully after them, clearly wishing he could go play with Mackey and the Big Boys.

And the big boys play rough, especially Mackey. They protect and supply drug dealers, batter and harass criminals, lie constantly to their families and bosses, and speak like ignorant sexist bigots. When Mackey photographs an arrested Mexican, he aims the camera at the guy and cracks, “Say ‘quesadilla’!” When members of the squad refer to women’s genitalia (and they do so often) they use so many degrading and arcane terms that some scriptwriter’s desk drawer must hold a special thesaurus for vaginas only. They kick down doors without warrants, shoot snitches and dealers and cover their tracks, and then plant evidence that makes their cases. In the first episode of the program, Mackey shoots a fellow cop for being a snitch, and blames the kill on a drug lord (Ryan, 2002b). Mackey does not exactly have a heart of gold, but he loves his kids (yet rarely sees them), hates to see a woman get beat up by a man, and attempts to shield innocents on the streets. He is rather sweet and protective to Connie, a hooker with whom he never has sex, giving her money to help support her infant son and trying to help her kick her crack habit. But when her friend approaches Mackey in Season

Three, he is inexplicably cold and downright nasty to her. She is a pathetic, skinny, bruised little thing, all ribs and sharp edges, and something about her pleas for protection just set Mackey's teeth on edge. After she begs to stop working as Mackey's stooge, Mackey manhandles her in a side street, shoves her roughly up against a wall, growls that she should be more afraid of him than she is of her pimp, and shoves his revolver in her mouth, saying "Take it!" She does. Ignoring her whimpers, he explains that she is his "bottom bitch" and that she needs to go back to her pimp and help Mackey break his case. "Or I swear I will hurt you like you have never been goddamned hurt before. You understand?" Then he calls her a "good girl," strokes her face gently, and tells her to go make him happy. The two of them gaze almost lovingly at each other (Ryan, 2004a). He uses the shove-it-in-your-mouth and "Take it!" maneuver again with a bong-smoking crack head (Ryan, 2004b). It is hard to spin Mackey as a misunderstood cop stretching the law to get a little street justice; the guy is one self-satisfied, judgmental, arrogant, racist thief with a badge.

The most charm Mackey demonstrates is opening his blue eyes wider while he lies. His grumbling superiors let him run amok because he gets results and gives them positive headlines in the poorest, most drug-riddled wasteland of L.A.; his tactics would never fly in a White or upper class neighborhood. He is where no one wants to be, facing the most challenging problems of gang violence, poverty, negligence, and drugs, and the powers that be do not question as long as he and his team are kicking the right sort of ass and taking names.

Locations for the show are shot in impoverished neighborhoods are chosen for their ugly architecture, broken screens, and abandoned cars, communicating that a cop's

world (at least on *The Shield*) is a grubby, gritty world of peeling paint, filthy kitchens, soiled mattresses, overweight suspects in dirty underwear, and emaciated hookers with bad skin.

The Shield's opening credits are barely distinguishable from the rest of the show. The show has a "cold open," which is industry slang for starting the action before the theme song and the credits roll. An everyday scene is shot in gritty, handheld camera, documentary style, interrupted by flashes of blank screen with a scrawled credit. Then, flash back to the action. All episodes are filmed in the docudrama stedicam style, of sudden, jerky zooms and bumpy rides in cars. The camera pulls in, pulls out, peeks around corners, bounces back and forth between speakers in a conversation. Like the viewers, the camera discovers what is happening a beat or two after it happens. The camera runs to catch up to the sound of action and takes a moment to respond to abrupt shifts in light. As the action moves from the dark interior of a porn shop into the blinding afternoon light of the street, the camera is temporarily blinded, the scene goes white, and viewers struggle to guess what is going on from the screaming music and the snippets of half-audible conversation. Like the cops, the camera cannot quite see the truth, cannot quite make out the whole picture, cannot stand back and get enough perspective to tell right from wrong.

The making of heroes

The attacks were brutal and the losses were tragic and overwhelming.

In her book *Terror Dream*, Susan Faludi presents meticulous research of the media response to 9/11, and argues that the media and the country labored to fit the

disaster into a narrative that could make sense of the unthinkable and rushed to select and construct particular heroes. She argues that, to comfort itself, the country returned to an outdated, less-than-useful, (and, in the case of 9/11, inaccurate) narrative of heroic men rescuing swooning women from invaders.

Of the sixteen to eighteen thousand occupants of the World Trade Center that day, 95 percent of those who died were on the upper floors, beyond reach of rescue, and most of those on the lower floors rescued themselves without uniformed help. The grim truth is that the human toll would have been significantly lower had the firefighters never entered the building (about three times more firefighters than office workers died on the floors below the impact of the planes) (Faludi, *Terror Dream*, p. 66).

Although the media and the country struggled mightily to transform the facts of 9/11 into a tale of heroic rescue, events could not quite be made to fit. “Women figured largely as vulnerable maidens,” writes Faludi (2007, p. 5). “Never mind that the fatalities that day were three-to-one male-to-female and that most of the female office workers at the World Trade Center (like their male counterparts) rescued themselves by walking down the stairs on their own two feet.”

Following 9/11, the media scabbled to locate and venerate heroes. But heroes, at least in the classical sense, were thin on the ground. Those the media eventually canonized as heroes were firefighters who entered the Towers (the Pentagon and the other crashed plane are written out of much of the narrative) to rescue civilians, but who, instead, were crushed by the collapsing buildings. Brave actions, absolutely. But sadly on 9/11, there was no footage of heroes carrying survivors out on their shoulders.

Most people who survived rescued themselves by slowly descending down the crowded, darkened stairwells and out onto the streets. Those survivors were not labeled “heroes” by the media, but we can certainly imagine many moments of human

kindness, caretaking, and bravery that no doubt occurred among them and that qualify as selfless and life-saving acts to those who benefitted. However, these office workers, cleaners, chefs, waiters, and executives have not been glorified as heroes. That glory belongs almost exclusively, according to media coverage and political statements, to the firefighters first and the police officers second, with Port Authority officers, rescue workers, chaplains, and other medical personnel occasionally mentioned (Jenkins, 2001; National Commission on Terrorist Acts, 2004; Hendra, 2001).

The casualty numbers of the attacks of 9/11 reveal staggering losses among several groups of workers, and yet only the firefighters of New York—not the military officers of the Pentagon, the Port Authority officers of New York, or the office worker civilians—are singled out for heroism on that date. References to 9/11 often center on the attacks on the Twin Towers in New York and skip over the Pentagon attack—which killed 125 people, 55 of them military personnel—and fail to mention the crash of United Airlines Flight 93. In naming only firefighters as the heroes of 9/11, and naming only New York City firefighters, rescue personnel at other sites, and other types of rescue personnel, are excised from the record. Their labor and sacrifice is apparently counted as being less than that of the NYFD. The losses of one group and one group only, the NYFD, is venerated to hero status. Again, I am not arguing that the New York city firefighters were not heroic—I am arguing, however, that when only one of several groups of victims is singled out as being “heroes,” that sorting process is worth examination and evaluation.

I compiled various sources of statistics about 9/11 and created a chart that lists and ranks casualties by certain descriptions. I am limited to using the descriptions as

organized by various media and civic sources, and those sources are limited in some cases to best estimates, since they are working from bone fragments, eyewitness accounts, and in some cases, imperfect records. For example, even an exact count of how many civilians were in the towers that day is elusive and can only be estimated, and the turnstile estimates and those of NIST vary by 3,000. Additionally, these categories are not exclusive and some of them overlap with one another. For example, Cantor Fitzgerald investment bank lost 658 employees and 600 people were estimated to have been killed instantly by the collisions. No doubt many Cantor Fitzgerald employees were also tragically killed instantly. But even given the limitations of what statistics are available, it is clear that the staggering losses of the NYFD made up only 11.46% of the total deaths of the day. The designation of “hero” was not awarded on 9/11 to the groups sustaining the losses in the greatest number. Americans do not identify the 1,128 employees of Cantor Fitzgerald, Marsh, Inc., and Aon corporation as having been heroes, although these tower workers on the floors at and above the impact of the planes made up the largest group of casualties.

Some of the male passengers of the diverted United Airlines Flight 93 are called heroes, but that title is not awarded to the female flight attendant who phoned the ground saying they were boiling coffee and water to throw onto the hijackers. Less than a month after 9/11, the *Chicago Tribune* printed “Heroes stand up even in the hour of their deaths” (Barker, Kiernan, and Mills, 2001), a story of passengers and crew on Flight 93 who fought the hijackers. The story includes an account of hero Sandra Bradshaw, who phoned her husband in Greensboro, NC, identified three of the hijackers, and reported that she was working with other passengers on a plan to rush

their captors with water she was boiling at the back of the plane. However, when the story is retold on the website September11news.com, only photographs of five male passengers are shown as being the heroes of the flight (September11News.com, 2001). Media accounts made famous the “let’s roll” comment by passenger Todd Beamer [who is also sometimes identified as David Beamer], an account manager for Oracle, a software company, who phoned a stranger on his mobile phone to tell her what was happening on the flight, and they overlook the efforts of women on the flight. The hero stories focus on the young, handsome men who stormed the cockpit and perhaps caused the plane to crash (and on this website and others, families raise questions about whether or not the plane might have been shot down by U.S. military, which might further qualify the civilian passengers as national heroes).

In military engagements—and this was a military action of a type of army acting against a nation—military casualties become heroes. Yet the 55 military personnel who died on duty at the Pentagon are not commonly lauded in the media as heroic. After the Dec. 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, 14 servicemen were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, most of them posthumously (U.S. Army Center for Military History, 2009). Actions that were recognized as heroic included helping others to safety and holding a flashlight so others could exit a sinking ship. Yet at the Pentagon on 9/11, Staff Sgt. Christopher D. Braman, a sous chef, sprinted *into* the burning building, crawled through debris searching for survivors, and returned repeatedly to carry out injured survivors (Gilmore, 2002). While Braman received press mentions in the armed forces press, his is not a household name. Soldier’s Medals and Purple Hearts were given to 25 soldiers for what they did at the Pentagon that day, but no Congressional

Medals of Honor, and no major stories on CNN or in the *New York Times*. This is a striking omission. Why were the military heroes of the day overlooked in the media rush to canonize New York firefighters?

Perhaps as a military target, the Pentagon under attack generates less public outrage than does a collapsing office tower. An attack on the headquarters of the United States Department of Defense, while horrific, is a legitimate military target. Yet the Pentagon was not even discussed in the media in this military sense. Overwhelmingly, media coverage of and reference to 9/11, from 2001 until today, is of New York alone.

One by one, the categories of the casualties are foreclosed from being heroes until only the firefighters are left. First responders are police, paramedics, emergency medical technicians, and others who are specially trained to respond to emergency calls and often be first on the scene of an accident. The first responders of 9/11 are not recognized in the media as having been the heroic equals of firefighters.

Additionally, the first responders who were women are overlooked and ignored. Women died at the Pentagon, on each flight, and in New York in the Towers; six women first responders perished in New York, among them Captain Kathy Mazza of the Port Authority, Moira Smith of the New York Police Department, and Yamel Merino, an EMT. The recognition of 9/11 heroes and the media images of them was gender-specific; although three female rescue workers died at 9/11 and countless others responded and assisted the injured, the 9/11 firefighter in the media was always pictured as a male. Lt. Brenda Berkman, a NYFD officer and founder of United Women Firefighters in New York, is dismayed that media coverage was all-male and argues that “women were down there from the time that the first plane hit the first tower. Women

were trapped in the rubble. Three women rescue workers were killed that day” (Miller, 2002). Berkman’s class-action lawsuit in 1982 forced New York to hire female firefighters, and she was the first hired. In November of 2001, six female rescue workers of 9/11 were honored with the Liberty Award of Valor, including a police lieutenant who dug people out of the rubble and led 100 people out of an unstable apt building, despite a chunk of cement embedded in her skull, a chunk of windowpane in her back, and a broken ankle; an EMT who was one of the first to charge into the South Tower and drag out office workers, including a person with multiple sclerosis, and an off-duty firefighter who came in from Brooklyn, borrowed gear and a van, and dug for survivors (Hagen and Carouba, 2002). Yet, undoing years of gender-neutral language policies, media suddenly told stories of “firemen,” excising the labor and bravery of these women and others like them from the record. Media images of 9/11 were of men in uniform. The many images of women in operating room scrubs, EMT uniforms, and police department jackets are available on websites and books that present photographs taken by citizens who were on the street (Peress, 2002; HereIsNewYork.org). Such images did not appear on the front page of the *Washington Post* or the *New York Times*. Media images insisted female victims were rescued by male heroes, and yet three times as many men as women were killed in the attack (*9/11 by the numbers*, 2009). Faludi argues that this sexism reveals a need to cast men as heroes and women as victims. I argue that it also reveals a determined effort to select men and only men as heroes, but also only certain men—only the firefighters. Why?

The firefighters, and secondarily the police officers, echo military practices and rituals. They are in uniform . They employ rituals and rites around the death of a fallen

comrade, whereas paramedics, for example, do not. They are run in a military fashion: firefighters live in a type of barracks, live communally, rise up through the ranks, have titles like “Chief” and “lieutenant” and “captain,” are almost exclusively male, and wear uniforms, both combat fatigues and dress blues. The firefighter funerals televised after 9/11 display the rites clearly: flags, brass instruments, uniforms, processions, marching, and salutes are employed in echoes of military organizations. On these terms, the police qualify as well, and yet they, too, are generally omitted from being canonized. On the ground, at Ground Zero, firefighters were the closest thing American had to an army. Perhaps because having firefighter “troops” to visualize allows Americans to imagine there was a defense against this attack. Even when an attack blindsides the nation, even when protective measures fail to protect, even when a mundane Tuesday morning at the office erupts into unimaginable disaster, Americans can breathe a sigh of relief because heroes in uniform are there to take action.

Were the lives of the firefighters worth more than everyone else, or is there another reason they were canonized? The 9/11 rescuers could not seek out and punish the enemy—the enemy had already done that for them. In the events of 9/11, the “rescuers” did not rescue many members of the public. The rescue efforts failed and, in fact, led even more people—the rescuers themselves—to injury and death. But to characterize the first responders to 9/11 as workers who were hobbled by faulty equipment, badly informed, and even doomed only adds further insult to the attack on home soil and renders America even more impotent against stealthy enemies. Whether or not heroes actually rescued anybody on 9/11, the nation needed to have heroes to visualize, needed to believe that an attack would be met with a counterattack. The

firefighters and other responders became cast in the role of pseudo-soldiers. There were no actual soldiers responding to the Twin Towers attack, so the nation made the firefighters into its soldiers and made the firefighter uniform into a nationalist symbol. NYFD uniforms and uniform-styled clothing suddenly became fashionable. Brick and mortar and online stores such as New York Heroes opened, selling firefighter-inspired clothing to the public (NewYorkHeroesGiftShop.com) and high fashion runway shows included actual firefighters, firefighting-uniform-clad male models, and even women's fashions inspired by reflector-tape jackets, suspenders, and boots.

It was unthinkable that the country was attacked and there was no armed forces response. Because one of the targets was a civilian office building, it was not guarded night and day by military forces. The attack was a surprise. Citizens nationwide left work immediately and wondered if they were safe returning in the morning. The workplaces of America had just become military targets, and citizens felt unsafe. Yet it was essential to keep the economic wheels of the country turning, and citizens needed to return to work. It could not be argued that some fighting or at least uniformed force of men was on the ground fighting the enemy, but perhaps if it could be made to seem that heroes on the ground were attempting to save civilians, then some semblance of national safety was being maintained. Americans could still go to work in skyscrapers and feel protected from enemies without.

Although many details about who died and how remain uncertain, this list of available information breaks down the victims into particular categories and allows a ranking of losses by numbers.

Table 2: 9/11 Deaths by Location

In Pentagon	125
In New York City	2603
Passengers on the four planes, excluding hijackers	246

Table 3: 9/11 Deaths by Occupation, Method, and Location

Cantor Fitzgerald investment bank employees	658
People likely killed instantly by the collisions	600
New York City firefighters	341
Marsh Inc. employees	295
People who jumped to their deaths in NYC	200
Aon Corporation employees	175
Others killed at the Pentagon	70
Military personnel killed at the Pentagon	55
New York Port Authority Police officers	37
Listed as missing and presumed dead	24
New York City Police officers	23
Hijackers	19
Private EMTs and paramedics	8
New York City firefighter paramedics	2
People known to have been killed by falling jumpers ²	At least 2; some estimates higher
Total number of dead, excluding hijackers	2974

(Compiled from: Averill, 2005; BBC, 2006; Associated Press, August 19, 2002; Siegel, 2007; Cauchon and Moore, 2002; CNN, May 16, 2006).

Missing tales of heroes

² This number is disputed in media accounts. For example, an early account of the first NYFD fatality, the department's chaplain, stated he was struck and killed by a falling body. Later reports excised this claim. "On the ground" reports of witnesses, some of which are documented in the *USA Today* article, claim that higher numbers of people were killed by the falling bodies of people who jumped to escape smoke and fire or people who fell or were blown out of the buildings.

Perhaps somewhat wishfully, Marvel and DC Comics rushed to print with commemorative comic books of firefighting heroes in imagined poses and situations (because no one survived to tell the tales of what really happened, or did not have a chance to happen) with “real” superheroes, Superman and Spider-Man, standing by idly in awe of the NYFD (Faludi, 2007, pp. 50-51). Tales of actual heroism did not survive because there was no one left alive to tell them. The survivors walked out, and as the firefighters entered, they were killed within minutes. There was no time for rescue.

More than 36,000 units of blood were donated to the New York Blood Center, but only 258 units were actually used (*9/11 by the numbers*, 2009). There was, simply, no one to save. In a World Trade Center Task Force interview for *The Sept. 11 Records*, firefighter James Murphy said, “We were just victims, too. Basically the only difference between us and the victims is we had flashlights” (Murphy, J., 2001).

The media and authorities (primarily in New York and Washington) claimed the day for New York City firefighters. The loss of New York City firefighters is indeed tragic, but media and other reports curiously focused on that loss and that loss almost exclusively, overlooking the innocents caught in the attack, those killed at the Pentagon, and those killed in the four planes. Office workers, cleaners, chefs, waiters, and executives died in fires, explosions, and the collapse of the towers and of a section of the Pentagon. Innocents, non-military people, died in the crash and its aftermath.

Why were Americans so intent on finding heroes that a blind eye was turned to the facts? In part, because some of those facts were particularly ugly. The firefighter’s radios had not functioned properly in the first attack on the World Trade Center in 1993, Faludi reports, and eight years later, the equipment inadequacies remained uncorrected.

Bad radios and lack of communication resulted in deaths that would have likely been prevented; a police helicopter seeing the first tower begin to collapse could not communicate with firefighters inside the buildings. Faludi points out how Major Giuliani and other city officials hid this information behind the guise of heroism. Giuliani said the firefighters “heard” the mayday, but chose to enter the buildings and attempt a rescue anyway. When men and women at the public hearing of the 9/11 Commission report protested that it was, in fact, faulty radios, they were shushed by commission chairman Thomas Kean (Faludi, 2007, p. 68).

The American execution of heroism on 9/11 was flawed. Equipment did not function. A spate of city, state, national, and international organizations, such as the FBI, CIA, police and fire departments, failed to coordinate, collaborate, and share information (Faludi). Firefighters climbing the stairwells were undoubtedly brave, and though they offered direction (stay to the right, keep walking), there was little rescue possible. Ladders were impotent against the skyscrapers, hoses could not carry water to the towering floors, and water was impotent against jet fuel. Rigging and cherry pickers could not lift rescuers high enough to save those who leapt and fell to their deaths—in some cases, killing those they fell upon and adding to the casualty—rather than die of smoke inhalation and fire (Faludi, 2007; National Commission on Terrorist Attacks, 2004). Yet, in the face of administrative incompetence, failed systems, equipment budgets slashed at the expense of firefighters and the public, and the utter helplessness of a nation faced with terrorists willing to commit suicide, the media chose to recast firefighters who walked into doomed buildings without a ghost of a chance to save anyone as heroes.

Calling the victim firefighters of 9/11 heroes is a strategic move in several ways for several groups. Casting the NYFD as national heroes transforms them into a type of national military. By osmosis, the NYFD becomes a symbol of patriotism and is aligned with the then-Republican administration, regardless of individual firefighter's politics. If New York Republican Mayor Rudy Giuliani and Republican President George W. Bush call the NYFD heroes, that accolade claims the firefighters for the Republicans and aligns Bush and his administration with the men in uniforms who walked into the fray. Bush, of course, avoided the fray and lingered in a kindergarten classroom while the towers fell, but he articulated himself to an iconic American figure, the firefighter. New York City Mayor Rudolph Guiliani, sounding like a war general, reinforced the nobility of the sacrifice of Americans in uniform (albeit Port Authority, Police Department, and Fire Department uniforms). By casting the firefighters as too heroic to leave the towers, Giuliani neatly sidestepped the issue of the faulty radios that had not been replaced after the first terrorist attack on the World Trade Center and did not address the likelihood that the firefighters stayed in the tower because they could not hear the orders to get out (Curtis, 2006). By canonizing the firefighters as heroes, the media had a story that turned terror into old-fashioned American tenacity in the face of danger (never mind how inspiring the real stories of office workers walking together into the light might have been to the general public). By focusing on the marvelous new American hero, the fireman (for all the women had magically disappeared), any incisive investigation by the media into the U.S foreign policies and the American terrorism conducted in the shadows that may have contributed to the attacks was avoided. And, heroes help countries militarize actions. If there is a hero, then there is a

villain (even if the villain is an earthquake or a tornado), and a useful dichotomy of right/wrong is created. When the world is so clearly delineated, a host of decisions become much less nuanced and much easier to make. The decision to go to war, for example. The decision to block out understanding the motives of the attackers. Certainly the decision to avoid evaluating United States foreign policies and worldwide actions that fostered anti-American sentiments and actions. The country turned away from examining the complexity of all that led to the attacks and turned toward a familiar dichotomy: hero and villain.

Imperfect heroes

Creating heroes to comfort, educate, and sway the masses is a time-honored practice—as is creating them out of whole cloth. Raglan, in *The Hero: A Study in Tradition, Myth, and Drama* (1936), explores the nature of heroes in myth. He characterizes heroes as part of “ritual narratives” which link the present with the ritual of the past “in which superhuman figures devote themselves to the performance of acts which are the prototypes of the ritual” (p. 131). Mythic tales from many cultures bear a strong resemblance to one another and are riddled with “coincidences, the sort of thing that might happen to or be readily invented about any hero” (Raglan, 1936, p. 177). Crucial to the development and retention of hero, myth, and ritual is the political and economic environment of the times (Raglan, 1936, p. 151). Whether or not these figures actually performed heroic deeds or even actually existed is secondary and even unimportant.

I took a succession of well-known heroes of tradition, and attempted to show that there is no justification for believing that any of these heroes were real persons, or that any of the stories of their exploits had any historical foundation...the stories were accounts not of fact but of ritual, that is, myths (Raglan, 1936, p. 177).

Though only rare victims survived to tell only limited tales, it is a reasonable assumption that the firefighters that day entered the towers doing what they did every day on the job: help people survive catastrophic events. Whether or not the NYFD performed heroic deeds or not is not contested and not at issue. But by embracing fallen firefighters as mythic heroes, America obfuscates issues that might have otherwise moved front and center. In locating a group of men to canonize on 9/11, a tidy dichotomy was established which shifted the attention away from exploring such questions as “What might have provoked this response?” and “How can the planet effectively face down terrorists?” While building and enforcing the mythic hero tale of 9/11, the media failed to adequately interrogate the forces in post-9/11 America that benefit from that myth-making.

Yet many Americans understand that crisply cut dichotomies rarely, if ever, reflect reality. While media coverage of 9/11 and political responses to the attacks reinforced jingoistic patriotic messages of Us (and U.S.) vs. Them, television programming arose that embraced and explored the imperfect nature of heroes. Kerényi defines heroes as “both less and more than the ordinary existence of human beings” (p. 1) and writes

The mythology of Greek heroes...is characterised by the fact that its emphasis, its peculiar stress, is laid on the side of the human...the stress is laid rather on the human side in all its manifestations, not least in the burden of destiny and suffering which the heroes endure (Kerényi, 1959, p. 13).

Heroes are heroic because they are not perfect. “Originally, heroes were not necessarily good, but they were always extraordinary; to be a hero was to expand people’s sense of what was possible for a human being,” writes Scott LaBarge, who claims that heroes offer humans a link to what is possible.

We are cynical because so often our ideals have been betrayed. Washington and Jefferson held slaves, Martin Luther King is accused of philandering and plagiarizing, just about everybody had sex with someone they shouldn’t...we need to separate out the things that make our heroes noteworthy, and forgive the shortcomings that blemish their heroic perfection...the false steps and frailties of heroic people make them more like us, and since most of us are not particularly heroic, that may seem to reduce the heroes’ stature. But this dynamic pulls in the other direction as well: these magnificent spirits, these noble souls, amazingly...are like us, they are human too. And perhaps, then, what was possible for them is possible for us. They stumbled, they wavered, they made fools of themselves—but nonetheless they rose and accomplished deeds of triumphant beauty. Perhaps we might do so, too (LaBarge, 2005).

America might have come out of 9/11 as less jingoistic. America might have decided to band together world wide, all nations and peoples, to work against terrorism and violence. This might have forced the citizenry to take a close and painful look at the actions of the United States in the international political arena, and to realize that one nation’s “policing” is another nation’s “terrorism.” Instead of uniting as a world in recognition of what can be noble in human nature, Americans splintered, separating themselves from the rest of the world and using its national flag as a symbol of good—the evil being everyone who was not American. Amid shared international horror at the attacks on 9/11 and the lowering of national flags worldwide to half-mast, American rescue workers raised the flag on the site and drew nationalistic boundaries around what might have been addressed as an international problem. In international news, images of empathy and shared outrage emerged: In Moscow, a small boy adding flowers to a

memorial outside the U.S. Embassy while women wept; in Bangladesh, residents holding candles and banners of support; in Berlin, thousands marched near the Brandenburg Gate; in Palestine, schoolgirls prayed in silence (Associated Press, September 11, 2001; September 11 News.com). Instead of pasting American flag decals on police car windows (which was done in support of fallen comrades in a profession where such demonstrations are part of its heritage and culture), officers might have pasted decals of the globe. Americans might have joined with the rest of the world, rather than splinter off in isolation and demonize the Middle East. September 11, 2001, might have been the catalyst for international militaries, cultures, and intellects to redesign the way in which worldwide policies are crafted and carried out and to work together to create social networks that reveal, oust, and prevent terrorism. The events of September 11, 2001, provided an extraordinary opportunity for the United States to lead the world in working together in a world-wide effort to seek out and discipline the dangerous bullies of the planet.

But it was an opportunity that the United States did not seize. Instead, America positioned itself as isolated in its attack (alienating and insulting the many nations that have long suffered terrorism, some of it at the hands of the U.S.), pointed its outrage at a single villain, Iraq, and cast professional rescue workers as military-style heroes. Citizens who dared ask questions about 9/11 (among them, the firefighters themselves who wondered what went wrong) and United States international terrorism became characterized as unpatriotic.

Instead of self-critically considering what policies and actions on the international stage might have led to the events of 9/11, Americans forced events to fit a

recognizable shape: the uncomplicated, all-is-well, outdated American hero. But another type of hero was being born from the ashes of 9/11.

Rascals, rascallions, and thieves

It is a remarkable type of human heroism: there are those who work to save its citizens from catastrophe, who elect to run into the fire and the chaos and the gunfire in order to save their fellow citizens. That every “man” type of heroism is woven into the fabric of the new male-centered cable dramas. Even rascals, rascallions, thieves, and murderers are depicted as able to dig down deep and find some essentially human response that can be read as heroic. These new television heroes are not antiheroes. Antiheroes are unsympathetic, unheroic characters, and these men are utterly, sometimes disturbingly, sympathetic. They are complicated heroes, part-villain, part-hero, and very human.

In her exploration of male film stars in the late 1910s through the 1920s, Gaylyn Studlar examines the careers and stardom of Douglas Fairbanks, John Barrymore, Rudolph Valentino, and Lon Chaney and considers their particular representations of masculinity in light of their economic, political, and cultural times. Studlar finds that the roles these stars played reveal “significant tensions that underscored American notions of masculinity” (1996, p. 249). Each star negotiates that masculinity differently. Fairbanks is known for his athleticism and gymnastic ability, which his films showcased. As a cowboy, pirate, or Zorro, he does chin-ups on fence posts, swings on chandeliers, slides down bannisters, and flings himself off rooftops (all before stuntmen became common practice)—a boyish depiction of masculinity that Studlar argues “many American men in routine-driven, sedentary, bureaucratized jobs yearned for. He

affirmed the release of childishness reasserted in the ‘instinctual’ male activities of hunting, fighting, and seeking adventure in the wilds” (1996, p. 85). Although he was a wildly successful actor, Fairbanks’ “grown up schoolboy” type of masculinity was seen as limited in its power, especially when it came to women, Studlar contends.

Questions were beginning to be raised about the childish man’s ability to meet contemporary demands of women’s disturbing sociosexual evolution...the Fairbanks ideal was no longer sufficient to handle the country’s women, who were “totally out of hand,” power-mongering, and therefore, nothing less than “male women.” Notably, the masculine type Fairbanks represented was being dismissed as merely more evidence of the modern woman’s influence...The feminization of culture, the devitalizing effect of modern labor, and the urban environs of the cities had done their work. Childish men were no longer trusted to stave off cultural disaster. Women’s values had perverted masculinity so that even the character-builders’ most manly man [Fairbanks] was no match for the modern age (Studlar, 1996, p. 87).

Studlar argues that the film roles for these male stars reveal significant tensions in American masculinity in the early part of the 20th century. “The various guises of masculinity revealed in these stars may indicate just how reactive notions of masculine identity were to perceived social upheaval, especially to that associated with women” and also reveal “the underlying assumption that men were made—not born” (1996, p. 249). In similar fashion, the new heroes of male-centered television dramas are revealing early 21st century notions of masculinity in a post-9/11 America where swaggering, perfect heroes are now out of place.

The idea of constructions of masculinity altering in response to social and cultural change is central to masculinity studies. In *The End of Masculinity*, John MacInnes defines masculinity as an ideology produced by men to protect patriarchy from the rise of modernity (1998). Modernity threatens patriarchy because it brings changing ideas about the gendered division of labor, argues MacInnes. Virtues that were

once regarded as “manly”—virility, heroism, strength, independence—become seen as the vices of abuse, destructive aggression, coldness, detachment, and the inability to communicate.

In *Stiffed*, Susan Faludi (1999) writes that the male role has diminished in the late 20th century to the point where men serve no singularly useful role in public life. Displays of masculinity that appeared to be “correct” in the 1950s are now stigmatized. Men may wish to perform and valid masculinity through conquering frontiers and performing feats of bravery and daring, but there is no longer an American frontier, and, although modern life may require bravery to live, it offers few opportunities to demonstrate daring in a public showcase. Many men no longer have “automatic” access to earning a decent wage, find little appreciation at home for their contributions (which can be easily duplicated by women), earn little respect in the culture, and therefore feel driven to act out in domineering ways (Faludi, 1999).

In his history of American masculinity from the Revolutionary War on, Michael Kimmel (2006) traces periods of domestic change and finds that whenever patriarchy is threatened by social or cultural change, American men react with regimes of physical discipline (such as body building), exclusion (such as drawing boundaries around what is and is not acceptable masculinity), and escape (going West, young man, to conquer new frontiers). Kimmel situates conflict and rage among modern American man as emanating from the erosion of America’s economic independence, geographical frontiers, and domestic dominance. The structural mechanisms that once allowed the self-made man to become a successful breadwinner—minimum wage laws, the GI bill, high wages, and powerful unions—no longer exist. Global market competition and the

decline of the skilled worker, combined with the rise in numbers of women in the workplace, force men to confront the unsatisfactory nature of using the marketplace to define the measure of a man. In modern life, it takes two incomes to survive, and American men are now the first generation that will likely leave their children economically less well off than themselves (Kimmel, 2006).

Post 9/11 television heroes are men living in current times. They are not iconized lone drifters on the Western frontier. They are not surgically altered with bionics to be six million dollar men. They do not dwell in fantasy space ships. They are utterly ordinary. There is nothing of the superhero about them. Post-9/11 rescuers do not wear the capes and leotards, or even suits and crew cuts, of their media ancestors. Post-9/11 victims are not rescued by supermen. They are rescued by ordinary guys, which makes it all the more extraordinary. Many post-9/11 rescuers have not gone to college and are working class stiffs, struggling to pay the rent and buy the groceries. They have money woes, wives who annoy them, and children who misbehave. They are deeply anxious, intensely troubled, part misogynistic, and part reluctant feminist. They act in sexist and racist ways and there is no question that they know better—yet they misbehave like young boys. They are disappointing husbands, straying lovers, fumbling parents, struggling addicts, and significantly flawed. On a daily basis, they cross the line between good and bad, making judgment calls they later regret, dancing on the thin edge of the law, and sometimes plowing right into criminal activity with a certain relish. They are both ordinary, in the amount of everyday grit they deal with and never fully resolve, and dangerous, because they are not scrubbed clean of the dark side of testosterone and the murky ambiguities of life.

The single-natured male chauvinist pigs are gone, replaced by charming, suave, metrosexuals (or hunkily dressed working class guys with lean bellies and muscled forearms)—guys who admit to their flaws with wit and humor and then go on being sexist in an almost cute way. Chauvinism is now offered up as a sort of flirtatious aside—“shucks, we can’t help it, guys just *are* this way”—bereft of any political danger or cultural retardation that might be caused by such sexism. This is dangerous. These men may not be pigs, but they are still patriarchs; the fact that they feel guilty and embarrassed does not eliminate the patriarchy. They know it is wrong but they do it anyway—and supposedly they remain lovable because they know in their hearts that it is wrong.

Rather than modeling post-9/11 masculinity after the Sgt. Friday-style rigidity that used strictly policed boundaries of masculinity to ease cultural and social anxieties, new heroes reclaim aspects of hegemonic masculinity that are crass, crude, and sometimes objectionable, and then blend them with the heroicness of a cultural rescuer: firefighters, police officers, lawyers, doctors. The firm competence of Friday is combined with the fractured confidence of 21st century men.

The new, everyman-hero offers the guy sitting in front of the television a way into heroism. Modern men cannot be a John Wayne cowboy or a Bruce Wayne superhero in a Batmobile. Modern men have very human flaws. But few modern men are *quite* as flawed as the heroes of the post-9/11 male-centered cable dramas, and if the good-and-half-bad guys on the small screen can still achieve admirable degrees of heroism, then so can the Doritos-munching fellow in the Barcalounger watching them do it. Viewers can identify with firefighters who have heroic jobs but then go home to

wives they cannot understand and kids they cannot control. Viewers can identify with cops who are so frustrated with criminals that they act like criminals themselves.

Viewers can identify with a serial killer—a really *nice* serial killer—because, hey, who hasn't had a moment or two of wishing some nasty individual would just vanish off the face of the earth?

Along with offering a new type of hero who shares the everyday frustrations, challenges, and limitations of every man, post-9/11 male-centered television dramas also offer a way into close and intimate homosocial networks that he may feel outside of and apart from in his real life. In chapter three, the boys' clubs of these television dramas are visited and explored, and the bro-mance of brotherly love is taken to the next step.

Chapter Three

The Boys' Clubhouse As Wedding Chapel: Marrying My Best Friend

They call it “the clubhouse.” They call each other “brother, “buddy,” and “my boys.” In the first episode of the FX series *The Shield*, unashamedly titled “Our Gang,” only the brothers, the buddies, and the boys—the coolest cops of the coolest special Strike Team—are allowed inside a special meeting room inside the police station (Ryan and Johnson, 2002b). *The Shield's* clubhouse is only one of several boys' clubs visible in male-centered television dramas. *Boston Legal*, *Nip/Tuck*, *Mad Men*, and *Rescue Me* also prominently feature specific buildings, rooms, or spaces in which men keep company with other men and where women rarely, if ever, dare to tread. This chapter examines examples of this trend in post-9/11 television narratives and explore its possible roots in soil composed of several elements, among them the modern paucity of opportunities for men to socialize with other men, as explored by Sean Nixon, and the entrée these television dramas offer to male viewers to vicariously join the club, as discussed by Lance Strate. The male “buddy” relationship so prevalent in particular eras of film and television is discussed, as explored by Jeffords (1989 and 1994) and Faludi (1999), and considered in light of how this might have shifted, post-9/11, into a relationship of a male-only family. Occasionally, the new millennium buddies and buddy relationships take an evolutionary turn into an intense asexual coupling that is akin to—and in one case, literally becomes—marriage. I argue that, while this may signify a rejection of the transfer of boyhood bonds into adult relationships, as Adelman argues about the male bonding in Shakespearean comedies (1985), it may also signal a

frank reclaiming of certain masculine rites and practices that went underground (well, at least publicly and at a depth of about half an inch) in response to feminism and the Second Wave. I explore what may have been lost to men in that post-Second Wave silencing and what may be positive and negative for both men and women in what seems to be a post-9/11 rescue and retrieval of those rites and practices. Additionally, I consider the echo of acceptance of same-sex marriage that reverberates through these male partners and male family relationships.

Visiting the boys' clubs

In *The Shield*, although the clubhouse is in a workplace, there is a poker table in the center of the room and sporting gear piled in the corner. Every now and then, one of the cops of the Strike Team—the only men allowed into the clubhouse—swings a bat or tosses a football into the air during a conversation. Apparently, even when daily duties are life-and-death confrontations with gangs and murderers, you never know when a crime-fighting man might need a baseball mitt. When other police officers—and even their bosses—want to talk to a member of the Strike Team, they must knock on the locked door of the clubhouse to request entry. This adult boys' clubhouse has everything except a secret password.

Everything about the boys in the club is cool. The Strike Team drives cooler cars than the other cops, cruising around town in a BMW with black-tinted windows rather than a dull gray, unmarked squad car. The Strike Team dresses cooler than the other cops, never wearing “unis” (their word for street officer garb) or the cheap suits of detectives. They have their own uniform: tight jeans, black jackets, wrap-around shades,

tattoos, bulging biceps. When one of them is in trouble, they talk like the Three Musketeers, minus the elegant diction: “We survive it together or not at all” (Ryan, 2005), “I’ve got your back, you’ve got mine” (Ryan, 2003), “Tell you what—next time, *you save my ass*” (Ryan, 2003).

Vic Mackey, head of the team, is father of his “boys”; when two of them, Lem and Shane, come to blows, he delivers lectures about sticking together and putting their “family” first. Despite the animosity between Lem and Shane, when Lem is nearly done in by three bad guys, it is Shane who first rushes to Lem’s side. As an adrenaline-pumped Lem fights off shock, Shane holds onto his arm and repeats over and over, “Okay, man, okay” (Ryan, 2004c). When a new officer, an African American, joins the Strike Team, a jealous Shane competes for the affection and loyalty of daddy Vic. “Vic and I started this,” Shane yells at Tavon. “He would never throw me over for some darky.” (The program is rife with racist one-liners). Tavon retaliates: “Vic has plans for me!” Shane throws a punch and yells, “Vic is my best friend!” (Ryan, 2004b). Shane and Vic are the central couple of the Strike Team, something Marla, Shane’s girlfriend, immediately recognizes and tries vainly to break up. When Shane marries, it is seen as a rupture of the clubhouse boys’ club, and Marla is painted as a scheming threat, resented and mistrusted by the Strike Team. She dares to violate the sacred space of the room once, but is quickly ejected by Vic who tells her to “stop whining in my face” (Ryan, 2003). Vic is no saint, but outside of the clubhouse and even on the street, he tends to treat women—especially wives of fellow officers—with civility if not deference. But in the boys’ clubhouse, the rules are different, and men can discipline women harshly and fiercely.

In *Boston Legal* (ABC, 2004-2008), the boys' club is a balcony of the skyscraper offices of law practice Crane, Poole & Schmidt. Denny Crane (William Shatner) is a founding partner and legal superstar who is slowly losing his mind and his inhibitions to Alzheimer's. Alan Shore (James Spader) is a younger lawyer at the firm who is known for bizarre yet successful tactics in the courtroom. The two men bond over their courtroom successes, mutual womanizing, and shared social peculiarities. Crane occasionally asks total strangers to sleep with him, dresses in bizarre costumes for holidays and vacations, and claims to be suffering from mad cow disease. Shore rates the sexiness of his secretary's sweaters each day (to her face), sleeps with many clients and colleagues, and concludes most trials with lengthy diatribes against the then-Republican administration and conservative politics. The pair vacation together at dude ranches (in matching sequined cowboy shirts) and at a swank fishing resort in Canada (outfitted in coordinated waders and wicker creels), and simultaneously join the volunteer Coast Guard so they can wear matching white uniforms and motor around the bay talking up bikini-clad women on boats. Sometimes they have sleepovers, sharing the same bed but dressed in buttoned-down pajamas. At the end of each episode, Denny and Alan sit outside on the balcony, smoking cigars and drinking scotch. Their conversations at day's end are often intimate and reveal their individual vulnerabilities; occasionally, they confess their platonic love for each other and even hold hands. One evening, after Alan's girlfriend has left him, they lift a glass. "You still have me," Denny says. Alan says, "It's not quite the same. But you know what, Denny? Sometimes it comes remarkably close... it's not lost on me how lucky I am to have somebody in my life who can—" He chokes up. "I don't know what I'd do without

you.” Denny puffs on his cigar and responds, “I especially can’t imagine being alone now” (Kelley, 2008a). As Denny’s Alzheimer’s progresses, they hatch plans to stay together, Alan taking care of Denny, until death does them part. Another evening on the terrace, Denny tells Alan, “the thing you have to realize, and someday you will, a person only has one true love in his life. Like it or not, your true love—tada-dada!—is me. We may not have sex, but ours is an affair of the heart. And we do spoon well. And I make you smile.” Alan says, “Yes, you do.” Denny laughs, and Alan suggests, “Sleepover?” (Kelley, 2008b). Sitting in postmodern interpretations of armchairs rendered in plastic on the terrace of a glass-and-steel example of postmodern architecture, the couple engages in a kind of postmodern, heterosexual masculine love for each other with little embarrassment and much candor.

In *Rescue Me*, the New York City firefighters work at a station they call “the house,” they call each other “brother,” and they call fellow firefighters “the family.” Lead character Tommy Gavin (Denis Leary) tells the crew a story about a firefighter who committed suicide the day after he retired because he missed seeing his family every day—his “other family” at the stationhouse (Tolan, Leary, and Alexander, 2004a). The stationhouse is itself a clubhouse, and the sanctum sanctorum within it is the kitchen, where the firefighters cook for each other, eat together, and play gags on each other. Around the kitchen table, problems are solved as they are in parents-and-children households. In fact, senior firefighters take on parental roles with junior men and especially with “probies,” the newest-of-the-new to the ranks. Senior men are expected to “bust the chops” of probies with practical jokes, confrontational behaviors, and teasing language that can become quite harsh, yet this is explained as a type of

training and team building that all young firefighters must endure and all senior firefighters must dish out. Kitchen table topics are far ranging and often intimate, including issues of romantic relationships, sexual dysfunction, and personal crises. These are generally resolved with a sort of gritty, guy wisdom that dispenses justice with sincerity but without much eloquence. “Don’t call him ‘homo’,” says Gavin of one probie. “He may be a homo, but he’s our homo” (Tolan, Leary, and Tolan, 2006).

When wives or girlfriends visit the firehouse, they stand on the sidewalk or hover in the entrance at the big door where the trucks enter and exit. They seem to recognize the testosterone force field and hesitate to trespass. On one or two occasions, a woman enters as far as the front tire of a truck, but never violates the boys’ clubhouse space further than that. Except for once.

For a brief flash, *Rescue Me* experiments with having a female firefighter in the cast. Late in Season One (Tolan, Leary, Stabile, and Fortenberry, 2004), Laura (Diane Farr) replaces a male firefighter who was killed in action. Warned of her impending arrival, the crew plans to “freeze her out” until she quits, but when Laura arrives in a midriff-baring tank top and tight, low-slung jeans, various crewmembers volunteer to break the silence and “pretend” to be her friend. Much is made of the difference between the crew’s male bodies and Laura’s female one. Before she arrives, there is discussion of whether or not her female body will be able to do the work; once they meet her and like her body, the crew immediately begins to view her as a sexual object. She bends over to fetch food out of the refrigerator, and as the men gaze but pretend to discuss football, Laura says, without turning around, “I know you guys are talking about my tits and my ass. Just in case you were wondering, I’m a 34 C cup. My nipples are

slightly larger than average and stand up like top hats when aroused. My ass is as tight as a snare drum and still soft to the touch. Any other questions?” Then she makes Gavin a sandwich that he says is the best one he has ever had in his life (Tolan, Leary, and Alexander, 2004a). Although this may be interpreted as a demonstration of some agency on Laura’s part, it also plays directly into the fantasies of her male co-workers. Sassy but still subservient, she serves one of them food after she makes a speech that, at least metaphorically, disrobes her. She may be in the workplace, but she is established as a sexual object, at home in the kitchen. At one point, Gavin tells Laura, “Let me tell you something, sister. You serve two purposes in this house. You can give me a blow job or make me a sandwich” (Tolan, Leary, and Alexander, 2004c). She assists in a symbolic sort of violation here: she offers up her body for viewing, and fills in the details the men cannot see for themselves with her own commentary that lays her naked before them. She might have offered her saucy comments in a “so knock it off, fellas” manner, and moved on to be a professional colleague, but instead, in a parting of her domestic thighs, she makes them food. Her spunky resistance is fatally flawed and ultimately, she assists them by being compliant. In following episodes, Laura fails on the job—she is too weak to open a heavy door (how did she pass training?) and does not have the stamina to keep up with the men climbing staircases while hauling heavy gear. Eventually, she earns their respect by “talking down” panicked victims and treating the public with sensitivity—an only slightly tweaked version of traditional female roles. In this way, *Rescue Me* solidifies the link between masculinity and male bodies—masculine traits are for men only, as is the firehouse, by extension. Predictably, Laura

strikes up a romantic liaison with one of the firefighters, and when it goes bad, she leaves the firehouse and the series.

Jacquelyn Zita argues that

For the sake of this heteromasculine identity, heterowomen and queers must be kept in their place: women in the home and in the brothel...straight repulsion [of the female body and the queer body] is a viscerally cogent response, *making sense* in the heteromasculinized body: protecting its orifices, armoring its skin, disciplining its behavior, and policing its aggrandized body boundaries of family, religion, culture, and nation state against the threat of queer desire and passive surrender to the erotics of men. Receptivity and the fluidly open male body are the problems: a semantically and physically closed body and a hyperaggressive, armored, and possessive heteromascularity are the solutions...Heterowomen are paradigmatically situated in relation to men. They are *to be there for men*: sexually available, institutionally loyal, and emotionally present (Zita, 1998, p. 47).

But when Laura violates the male-only dictum of the firehouse boys' club, she disrupts this arrangement. She is an odd thing: a female body in a masculine role, that of rescuer and hero. She is shut out and challenged by her male colleagues because her presence redraws the boundaries of who and what *they* are. Zita writes that a lesbian threaten the borders of masculinity differently: "she 'emasculates' by *not being there* as a sexually available woman, as instead she offers a possibility of exit for other women" (1998, p. 48). The firefighters were worried that the woman assigned to their firehouse might be lesbian, perhaps because that situation would do as Zita describes as emasculate and displace the men more soundly than could Laura, with her odd mix of sexual talk and purported desire to be taken seriously in the workplace.

Judith Halberstam writes, "the butch resists the position of becoming an object of scrutiny and returns the stare with a hard resolve" (1998, p. 277); not with a description of the headgear her nipples resemble when erect. Halberstam writes that

“many of these ‘heroic masculinities’ depend absolutely on the subordination of alternative masculinities” (1998, p. 1)—including those masculinities constructed and performed by women. Masculinity, she argues, is “produced by and across both male and female bodies” (1998, p. 2) and female masculinity is not a weak imitation of the “real” masculinity of males. Considering masculinity as women enact it offers an illuminating perspective from which to examine the nature of masculinity disarticulated from the male body.

Widespread indifference to female masculinity, I suggest, has clearly ideological motivations and has sustained the complex social structures that wed masculinity to maleness and to power and domination (Halberstam, 1998, p. 2).

For Halberstam, female masculinity is punished as “misidentification and maladjustment, as a longing to be and to have a power that is always just out of reach” (1998, p. 9). In attempting to use her own physical strength and cunning to rescue others, Laura is overreaching her heteronormative role. She had to be slapped down, and she was: by the firehouse crew shutting her out, harassing her, and foreclosing her entrée into the collegiality of the boys’ club, and also by firefighter Franco, who becomes her lover, thereby reclassifying Laura as a “real woman” and not a firefighting woman. Once that move occurs, Laura’s days as a firefighter are numbered.

But there may be reasons other than Cro-Magnon sexist idiocy at work in the way the crew pushes back against the presence of a woman in their clubhouse. When the chief begins to break it to the crew that a replacement is coming for Billy, who has just died in a fire, the chief begins his talk by swearing. “God damn bastards,” he says, signaling that something terrible, something ominous, something disastrous is on its way. “We’re getting’ a dame,” he says, expecting a maelstrom. He gets one. The

firefighters are aghast: “Are you serious?” “What, are you kidding?” “Is this some kinda joke?” Franco is firmly opposed: “No way, Chief, no goddamn way!” “Over. My. Dead. Body,” says Lou, decisively. But the mayor’s office wants to make “four part time girls” into firefighters, and the Chief promises “we’re gonna get this broad by the next setta tours.”

Lou argues and Franco nods solemnly in agreement. “It’s not gonna work, okay? I mean, having a woman in the firehouse. It—it’s destructive. It’s, it’s disruptive. I mean, look, we got a dynamic going on here, you can’t mess with that. Don’t tell me to calm down, okay!” Perhaps suddenly recalling sexual discrimination laws, Lou switches gears. “I mean, it’s not even about having a woman in the firehouse. They can’t pass the physical!” (Tolan, Leary, Stabile, and Fortenberry, 2004).

But it *is* all about having a woman in the firehouse. The men are grieving the loss of their clubhouse and the loss of something that is of deep importance to them: their familial closeness to other men. Faludi describes the reaction of male cadets at the Citadel in Charleston, South Carolina, when the first female cadet, Shannon Faulkner, was admitted. The male cadets persisted in a pattern of abuse, obscenities, threats, and harassment until Faulkner left the school within the week. Faludi traces similar abuse aimed at Citadel female teachers, and offers some explanations. One is that male students had come to the campus for decades because “they saw the school as a refuge from the social and economic changes in the world outside. Chief among those changes was the one that had brought women into every aspect of public life” (Faludi, 1999, p. 115). The unanimity of identical uniforms and the bonding experience of being young men in an all-male school is ruptured and disrupted by even a single female presence.

Cadets told Faludi that the female student and the media that followed her progress would embarrass and expose the school. “The boys came to the Citadel to escape the prying eye of a punitive world. They could not, they felt, be themselves as long as they were exposed to the female gaze” (Faludi, 1999, p. 124). The high school students of the Citadel conflated the media, women, and ridicule into the same threat and met that threat with expressions of violent rage.

In Minnesota, there are several colleges and universities that, until relatively recently, were all male or all female. I interviewed a member of the faculty of what was in the recent past a men’s university in Minnesota³. A “sister” college less than five miles away was once devoted to educating only women. Both campuses are now co-educational, something this professor supports—and yet, he feels that something valuable is lost in integrating the once all-male space. “This gets complicated in the academy and when you try for political correctness and sensitivity,” he says. “But it feels like an imbalance. Women moved into the male spaces, but men didn’t move into women spaces, and this is coming from a man who worked as a male nurse in 1971.” He argues that modern life offers few if any safe spaces where men “do not feel the pressure of females, where men are free of preening, performing, and expectations that they have to be the capable ones” (Personal Interview #1, 2009).

The lack of male company is something men feel acutely. Even an old fuddy-duddy like C.S. Lewis—and I don’t think there was anything homoerotic about C.S. Lewis—said the most beautiful sound in the world is adult male laughter. Affiliation with other men is something men like. There are different masculine/feminine ways of showing intimacy. Women tell each other secrets. Men show intimacy by knowing when not to ask. Men use a highly complex

³ I protect this source’s privacy by not offering more details about his position and not giving his name, but I have the interview notes on file and have his permission to furnish both if requested.

system of respect, nuance, and boundary consciousness; you learn not to ask and offer that as friendship (Personal Interview #1, 2009).

That system, he argues, is not only compromised when women enter the scene—it virtually disappears. “I can think of no spaces where male companionship can happen [without women],” he says. “Talking about sports is just an excuse to talk to each other” (Personal Interview #1, 2009).

I also interviewed a male violinist with the Minnesota Orchestra. Professional orchestras have long been male-only organizations. It was not until 1923 that the Cleveland Orchestra first employed a female player, and even during WWII, when fewer men were at home, most U.S. orchestras had fewer than 10 female players (most orchestras are made up of about 110 musicians). In 1965, the percentage of women among American orchestra musicians was 18.3 percent (American Symphony Orchestra League, 1976). The Berlin Philharmonic did not admit a woman to its ranks until 1982 (Oestreich, 2007). The violinist’s parents are also professional musicians, and the long years of male-only and almost-male-only workplaces is family history. “You might find this offensive,” says the violinist, “but sometimes we [other male musicians] say to each other, ‘wouldn’t it be nice if we didn’t have to work with women? There would be fewer problems.’ Society would fall apart without women—women communicate, tell everyone what’s going on. But it’s a double-edged sword. Sometimes some of them tell too much, are indiscreet, at least in men’s terms. Men don’t get as involved in the personal lives of their co-workers” (Personal Interview #2, 2009). He makes a similar connection to the one made by the academic I interviewed: he links women in the workplace with losing opportunities for male companionship.

At different times when I've been in a group of men, I've thought, "this is so fun, why don't we do it more often?" Being with other men helps when I'm hurting, it makes me feel more whole inside. When women are around, there is pressure. You don't know how you stand in women's eyes. Masculinity is about being responsible, dependable, able to handle situations. Women expect that, and I feel that's the right way to be a man. But when there aren't women around, the pressure is off (Personal Interview #2, 2009).

In another echo of my interview with the academic, the violinist says, "Hunting is just an excuse for men to hang out" (Personal Interview #2, 2009).

These two personal interviews are not offered as even remotely scientific surveys; they are simply two conversations about having male-only workspaces "invaded" by women. Although both men are well-educated professionals, there is 20 years difference in their ages and one is unmarried and the other married. They are not men with much in common, and yet they offer similar perspectives on sharing the workplace with women.

Robert Bly, a founder of the men's movement, writes in *Iron John* of the longing in men for mentorship and the ways in which modern life works to deny such relationships. "The grief in men has been increasing steadily since the Industrial Revolution," (p. x) he claims, identifying the wounds as boys being separated from fathers who now left home for work, and boys being compulsorily sent to school where they were taught by mostly female teachers. In myths, stories, and poetry, Bly argues for more mentorship among men and for spiritual rituals that are exclusively male. When he attempts to locate male feelings of powerlessness, he places them in partnership with the presence of women and the absence of male-only spaces. "When we walk into a contemporary house, it is often the mother who comes forward confidently. The father is somewhere else in the back, being inarticulate" (Bly, 1990, p.

21). Sam Keen, another leader in the mythopoetic men's movement, claims that "to grow from man-child into man, in the second stage, he must take leave of WOMAN and wander for a long time in the wild and sweet world of men" (1992, p. 16). The female is so frightening that she requires expression in dominating upper case.

More importantly, the very presence of the female somehow renders men incapable of being men. To be fully male, men must avoid women and seek out the "sweet world of men." More accurately, in Bly's and Keen's arguments, men must hope that women somehow avoid them, leaving them free to enjoy a haplessly achieved male-only space. Although it seems reasonable that men could seek out and create opportunities for companionship for themselves, it also seems that they don't tend to do so. Men long wistfully for the company of other men, but they do little to achieve this other than hope that the women will all go home.

Such is the case in *Rescue Me*. If the addition of a female firefighter changes the chemistry of the firehouse to the point that the men miss each other's company, the lads could all grab a beer and hang out. They could join a softball league. They could go to lunch. But instead, they want her to just go away—and are willing to hassle and harass her until she does, all in the name of preserving male camaraderie. Men could address the rupture of homosocial socialization presented by the presence of a woman by simply seeking out each other's company in other ways and other locales. However, there is something else at work here, as well.

Kimmel writes:

Other men. We are under the constant careful scrutiny of other men. Other men watch us, rank us, grant our acceptance into the realm of manhood. Manhood is demonstrated for other men's approval. It is other men who evaluate the

performance...think of how men boast to one another of their accomplishments—from their latest sexual conquest to the size of the fish they caught—and how we constantly parade the markers of manhood—wealth, power, status, sexy women—in front of other men, desperate for their approval (Kimmel, 2005, p. 275).

The *Rescue Me* firefighters posture all they like for one another, and feel the warmth of rough-edged male acceptance, along with the considerable value of fellow men who “have your back” in life-threatening situations. But add a real, live woman to the day-to-day mix, and the firehouse crew are suddenly able to personally observe each man’s actual interactions with a woman. Posturing no longer develops and maintains the reputations; men can see for themselves whether or not the swagger is justified. Kimmel claims that “The nightmare from which we never seem to awaken is that those other men will see that sense of inadequacy, they will see that in our own eyes we are not who we are pretending to be. What we call masculinity is often a hedge against being revealed as a fraud...a frenzied effort to keep at bay those fears within ourselves” (Kimmel, 2005, p. 277).

Each time Laura enters the kitchen, the easy, free-flowing male conversation grinds to a halt while the men scramble to clean up their language and back away from offensive topics. The men begin to pose and strut in ways they do not employ when it is just the guys, and getting one’s chops busted becomes especially painful when it happens in front of “a girl.” Eventually, Laura earns a level of their respect (although one of them is still “banging” her and the others ask plenty of pointed questions about that), but it is only to a point and it comes with a loss. The camaraderie of the men is gone, the fondness they feel for each other is missing, the connection between them has gone silent and underground. With the loss of those elements, the television series itself

became less interesting and less compelling; for economic reasons, audience development, and sponsorship alone, Laura had to go.

With a woman in the room, everything shifts, and that everything, which might be mistaken for sexual politics, may actually be the sheer pleasure men take in each other's company. It may be that the firefighter characters of *Rescue Me* are retro anti-feminists who find women unsuitable in the work place, but it is also possible that those arguments, on and off the screen, in firehouses and in office buildings, have long concealed the male desire to enjoy the fraternal company of other men. A boys' clubhouse is a rare thing in a modern world, and with the appearance of a woman in it, the male-only family falls apart. In a modern society where the pleasure men take in each other's company is disguised, hidden, and subverted, it becomes nearly impossible to articulate—or even clearly identify—such desires. Instead, it becomes easier to grumble and growl in outdated mid-century arguments about keeping women barefoot and pregnant.

In *Nip/Tuck*, two male characters share the lead as plastic surgeons in practice together. Christian Troy (Julian McMahon) and Sean McNamara (Dylan Walsh) have boys' clubs both at home and work: they practice together during the day, and as best friends since college, hang out together at night. Sean is married for parts of the series, but when he's single, the two men live together in what their anesthesiologist, Liz, calls the "male bonding clubhouse." Work is a sort of clubhouse, too; the doctors interview patients together, operate on them together (oddly), eat together in the kitchen, and call on recovering patients together. Liz is the sole female at work, and Liz is a lesbian, so occupies an interstitial space between heterosexual male and heterosexual female that

seems far from accidental. The two surgeons are so driven to have sex with every female patient, client, neighbor, and visitor that Liz had to somehow be marked “off bounds” for narrative reasons alone. From her unique position, Liz can also act as the conscience of the program, carrying more moral and intellectual weight than the female patient D-cups who populate most episodes but less libido than the sex-obsessed men at the center of the show. The two men are joined at the hip professionally and personally, and multiple flashbacks over several seasons reveal their original *ménage a trois*: they were both in love with the same woman, Julia, in college. Sean married her, Christian impregnated her, they call the resulting son and subsequent children “our family,” and the son, Matt, calls them both “my two dads.” The surgeons share a second virtual *ménage a trois* with Christian’s fiancée; they take turns dating her, Sean becomes addicted to sex with a blow-up doll made to look like her, and eventually, Sean’s son marries her. Sean’s son also has two affairs with transvestites, one of whom Christian also slept with; gender slippage is employed to allow intimate relationships between men to exist. Women are passed around like dessert (and the diners are bonding with each other; the dessert is incidental), and it becomes obvious why Liz had to be gay to survive. Series creator Ryan Murphy agrees: “Christian and Sean will always choose each other over everyone else” (Levine, 2003). Ryan says he always wanted to write a love story between men, but the odd exaggerations and sideways twists he employs betray a certain embarrassment over the simple truth: these two men love each other, although creator Ryan persists in having them love through others.

One *Nip/Tuck* storyline about a serial rapist/killer culminates with the killer threatening Sean’s life unless Christian cuts off his own hand—and Christian nearly

does it, before a policewoman suddenly shoots the killer in the operating room (but he does not really die, the police woman was really the killer's sister; it was, obviously, sweeps week). Before he dies, the killer manages to tell the two surgeons, "This is really beautiful, you two really love each other" (Murphy, 2005). To celebrate their 5,000th surgery together, Sean gives Christian a golden scalpel with a note "Get over here, I'm lonely." They lift a champagne toast to "5,000 more" and Christian quips, "and they said it wouldn't last." Sean asks Christian for "some alone time with you this week," and Christian says he would rather celebrate with a nice "slice of hair pie," thereby safely reasserting everyone's heterosexual and gutter-mouthed masculinity (Murphy, 2006). To celebrate this tender anniversary, Christian picks up an over-collagened mother-daughter duo and takes them home to the hot tub for disappointing sex. Sean goes home to attempt sex with his pregnant wife, but is frustrated when her swollen abdomen gets in the way. The two men end their evenings unhappy and moody, and later, Christian's therapist (Brooke Shields) asks him, "Ever consider the possibility you're in love with your partner?" Oh, you think?

The possibility that they are in love romantically is finally directly explored in Season Four. Christian does not mention his therapist's question to Sean, but there are many moments where we see Christian look thoughtful or puzzled. He fantasizes about taking Sean to a gay vacation resort where they wear matching Speedos and lounge in a cabana drinking umbrella drinks. Back in "reality," when Sean discovers his unborn son has a physical deformity, he weeps in Christian's arms and there is a one-beat-too-long moment before they pull apart. Worried that his sleek apartment looks too gay, Christian hires a decorator to "butch it up." To prove—well, something—Christian has

sex with his therapist on her desk, from behind, which she analyzes as signifying that he is either gay or emotionally committed elsewhere. One night, Christian surprises himself by turning down sex with a stranger at a bar; we are left to think he is dreaming of Sean. The music fades from the scene revealing just the noises of a bar closing in the wee hours, the lonesome sounds of single and closeted life. Meanwhile, Sean is preoccupied with jealous thoughts of Christian's romantic interest in a female patient and lays awake at night, mulling, next to his oblivious wife, Julia. Sean becomes angry when Christian gets engaged to be married: "She's taking him away from me right now, when I really need him," and then thinks, "Jesus—you'd think we were gay." To clear things up, Sean visits Christian for a face-to-face confrontation: "I love you, Christian, I always will, but we're brothers, we're best friends. But not like that." Christian pretends a romantic thought about their relationship has never crossed his mind, and frets, "Have I been doing something different lately, walking weird or something? Is it my eyebrows? Because I tell you, if I don't wax, I get this whole uni-brow thing and it looks ugly. But just because I groom, doesn't mean I've gone Brokeback." Ultimately, the pair summarizes what happened in a half-hetero sort of way:

Christian: I liked thinking about having feelings for you. I never thought I was gay. I just think I have intimacy issues with anyone in my life that I love. (beat) That sounded really gay, didn't it?

Sean: Yeah.

Christian: Well, screw you. (beat) Seriously, I love you.

Sean: I know. I love you, too.

(Murphy, Jablonski, and Haid, 2006).

There. That's solved. Men can love each other and still remain heterosexual.

You can almost see the show's writers wiping their brows in relief. And yet, at the end of the season, Sean announces his plans to leave the practice. The camera makes much of the two men's almost-touching hands as Sean ends the conversation with a sentence most men in America will live their entire lives without ever saying: "I don't know who I am without you and I need to leave to find out" (Murphy, Salt, and Robin, 2006). The yearning between the two men in *Nip/Tuck* is awkwardly misplaced in a variety of bizarre sexual relationships in which the two men share partners, wives, and children—but to avoid what, exactly? It seems the truly ground-breaking content here might not be sex with transgendered folks but instead the simple truth that men long for intimate friendships with other men, but are so terrified of homo-erotic associations that they engage in all manner of contortions and repression to prevent them.

Masculinity theory argues that the repression of gayness reaffirms the compulsory heterosexual claim on masculinity.

Kimmel claims that Freud missed "a piece of the puzzle... [a boy] sees his father as his mother sees his father, with a combination of awe, wonder, terror, *and desire*" (2005, p. 275). This early homoerotic desire becomes suppressed into homophobia. "Homophobic flight from intimacy with other men is the repudiation of the homosexual within—never completely successful and hence constantly reenacted in every homosocial relationship... this, then, is the great secret of American manhood: *We are afraid of other men*" (Kimmel, 2005, p. 277-8) [Italics are Kimmel's]. Fear of being shamed by other men allows patriarchy to go unchallenged and gives harassing behavior a safe space. "Homophobia, the fear of being perceived as gay, as not a real

man, keeps men exaggerating all the traditional rules of masculinity...homophobia and sexism go hand in hand” (Kimmel, 2005, p. 279). In his history of American masculinity, Kimmel writes that men historically greet changing modernity with a cocktail of behaviors that include fleeing to a frontier (“Go West, young man”), challenging and attempting to strengthen their bodies through rigorous physical and nutritional crazes, and excluding and oppressing “lesser” masculinities in order to build up the one, true, heterosexual, hegemonic masculinity.

Connell argues that the subordination and oppression of gay men by heterosexual men reveals that “gayness, in patriarchal ideology, is the repository of whatever is symbolically expelled from hegemonic masculinity...gayness is easily assimilated to femininity” (2005, p. 40). And when masculinity is defined as that which is not feminine, then all that is feminine must be obliterated, avoided, and shunned if masculinity is to be awarded. For hegemonic masculinity to exist, other masculinities must be repressed, shunned, and excised. Gay masculinities are chief among these. To be gay is to be unmanly and non-masculine in the eyes of the most important judges: other men.

To prevent the possibility of this border-crossing into queerness, male straight repulsion requires “the closet” (the abjected queer body) as it requires “woman” (the objectified and open body). The phallus grounds a semiotics of sexual suppression and women’s oppression. In this scheme, the only body to possess the real phallus is the heteromasculine body, and for the sake of this heteromasculine identity, heterowomen and queers must be kept in their place (Zita, 1998, p. 47).

For masculinity to be constructed, there must be clarity (if not accuracy) about that which is not masculine—in life and in media representations of it. Yet media inclusions of non-hegemonic masculinities are not necessary signals of acceptance,

warns Halberstam: “While mainstream media acknowledge the existence of queer masculinities, they do so only to reassert the hegemony of white male masculinities” (1998, p. 345).

In *Mad Men* (AMC), the boys’ clubhouse is a Madison Avenue ad agency office circa 1960. *Mad Men* reactivates the gender-segregated workplace, where women are secretaries who press shirts, fetch coffee, and are single, available eye candy and men are executives who make all the decisions and have all the autonomy. The office is a men’s club, where the boys drink and smoke at breakfast, at meetings, at breaks, at meetings, at dinner, at meetings—there is a lot of drinking and smoking going on, all the time. Misogynist conversations happen unselfconsciously, round the clock, and the secretaries leave the room or pretend not to hear. “What do women want?” asks Don Draper (Jon Hamm). His boss, Roger Sterling (John Slattery), answers, “Who cares?” (Weiner and Taylor, 2007c). Men keep fresh shirts in their desk drawers and sometimes sleep in their offices overnight; it is a long train ride back to Connecticut, where their wives are trading recipes and anxieties with the neighbors, coffee klatching, and decorating living rooms in Danish modern teak furniture. Secretaries function as office “wives” who care for the men’s eating, sleeping, dressing, and organizing needs, and men close ranks when women attempt to rise to a higher-level job. When office manager Joan puts in extra hours analyzing an account and dazzles the client with her insights, the agency uses her information but awards the job to an inexperienced, clueless man—and Joan is asked to help train him (Weiner, Veith, Weiner, and Glatter, 2008). Ambitious secretary Peggy manages to rise to the level of copywriter, but we see the men handling this awkwardly. They either expect her to deal unflinchingly with

their misogynist comments and their ogling, or they shift uncomfortably in their chairs around the conference table, trying to discuss how to sell women's underwear with an actual live woman in the room.

Ultimately, the culture of the office clubhouse is one of cynical disregard for marriage and romantic relationships between men and women (there is a story line of one ad designer who is gay, but he soon marries and his conflict fades away). Don, who continually cheats on his wife and barely knows his children, pontificates to the delight of the team of men who work for him: "What you call love was invented by guys like me to sell nylons."

In *Mad Men*, wives occasionally violate the office boys' clubhouse to meet their husbands for lunch, and the interactions are generally false, stilted, and crisp. This is often because the men are sleeping with the secretaries or with clients; in this way, the office becomes a clubhouse where behavior wives find aberrant or objectionable is rendered acceptable by male peers. At the agency, talking about sex and having sex occupy almost more time than does actual work, and much of the sex happens during client meetings or in the office itself. In one episode, Roger and Don interview models for a television commercial, choose twins, and later, Roger literally rides one like a horse around the office in a drunken stupor, until he has a heart attack and nearly dies. Just another day at the office, dear.

Again, what is made visible is the discomfiture of a group of men in the presence of even a single woman. Just the one pair of ovaries tips the scales and makes demands for different social behaviors and an altered social script. Gone are the off-hand remarks about "getting some" and "the rack on that one," yet the yearning of the

men to continue to make those cracks to each other is expressed in their raised eyebrows and smirking glances. Are they yearning to say sexist things or are they yearning to talk amongst themselves? And why is it not possible for them to talk amongst themselves sometimes and meet with women at others? A strain of social ineptness emerges when male television characters rebuff women in the workplace: apparently, men cannot take responsibility for crafting their own meaningful social interactions with each other. They happen upon these clubhouses at work, and they rejoice in them, but when the clubhouse is violated, they seem utterly devoid of imagination as to how they might recreate that rich and supportive experience. Meeting the guys for lunch is apparently outside their ken.

Men like me

These television boys' clubs seem designed to not only keep female Others out, but also draw clear lines between "us" and "them" in terms of race and class.

In *Mad Men*, Roger asks, "Have we hired any Jews?" And Don replies, "Not on my watch!" (Weiner and Taylor, 2007a). The ad men are climbing up from working class into the newly expanding post-war middle class, and they position themselves carefully, wearing the right suits, drinking the right Scotch, and going to the right clubs. It is clear that there is an "us" and a "them," and the "us" is made up of affluent White guys.

In *The Shield*, the gang bangers and drug dealers are African American, Korean, Chinese, Latino, or Armenian; their actions are characterized as those of "bastards" and "cop killers." The cops are White (with two exceptions in all of six seasons) and,

although they sell drugs, steal money, and slap people around just like the bastard cop killers, the cops are working outside the law to do good, and the audience is guided to understand the conflicts and pressures that lead them to do what they do. The poverty and despair in the lives of the bastard cop killers is depicted with grim clarity, but with little compassion. After breaking down the door of a squalid apartment, Vic looks at a middle-aged man on a battered sofa with a needle stuck in his arm and says to his team, “Great. Dad’s busy mainlinin’ and Junior’s a cop killer. I doubt Mom’s Betty Crocker” (Ryan and Brazil, 2002). Photographing a jailed criminal Latino, Vic points the camera at him and says, “Say quesadilla!” (Ryan and Brazil, 2002). Snap. It takes a few seasons before an African American officer joins the Strike Team, and within episodes, he is off the show. In the last season, the only African American uniformed officer, Julian, is promoted to the team but does not play a major role. Vic’s Latino boss, David Aceveda (Benito Martinez), is a complex character and, like Vic, weaves back and forth over the line between right, wrong, and really, really wrong. Aceveda’s relationship to and representation of his Latino community is a constant storyline, but Vic is far from respectful—and gets away with it. In the first episode, Vic sarcastically tells Captain Aceveda that he does not answer to him, “even on Cinco de Mayo” (Ryan and Johnson, 2002a). The Strike Team is solidly working class, and each man feels pressure to provide (part of Vic’s justification for what he steals is his need to provide for his two autistic children).

Boston Legal is an upper crust law firm filled with privileged White folks, but is occasionally infiltrated by a rare Other. An African American lawyer first joins the firm as a cross-dressing client, and after a season of guest appearances becomes more or less

a regular; not a regular with much dignity, but a regular. When race and class issues are taken up, the causes tend to be fought by brave White lawyers who speak up for the downtrodden Others. This clearly delineates class and race boundaries. The distinctions extend to the small boys' clubhouse of the terrace balcony, which has only two members, both of them White and affluent.

Nip/Tuck's two-man club is similarly White and affluent, with the surgeons "saving" various minorities and lower class patients with their skills and wisdom. Christian becomes engaged to an African American woman, and her race is never mentioned, but we also never see an African American man in a position of equal power to Christian and Sean.

Rescue Me is racially integrated, but class distinctions are crisply maintained. The ethnic slurs are gritty and prodigious, but the relationships between characters are numerous and ultimately fond. Characters make ethnic slurs about themselves (Gavin jokes about his "skinny White Irish ass," for example). Much is made of the differences between Irish, Italian, Polish, and Jewish firefighters, for example, as demonstrated when the crew tries to come up with a fresh nickname for the new probie, Mike.

Gavin: (meeting Mike for the first time) Jesus Christ, this is what they're sending us? You gotta be kidding me. What's your name?

Probie: Mike?

Gavin: You askin' me or tellin' me?

Probie: Mike. (Puts out his hand to shake; Gavin ignores it).

Gavin: Naw, there's too many Mikes around here. Polish Mike, Irish Mike...

Sean: Mike the Mick.

Lou: Big Mike. Little Mike.

Gavin: Jewish?

Probie: No, why?

Gavin: Then you'd be Mike the Kike.

Probie: I'm Italian.

Sean: Forget it. There's already a Guinea Mike over at Ladder 12.

Gavin: Not to mention Mike the Wop over on the Upper East Side.

Lou: You know what? Screw it. New Mike.

Gavin: New Mike it is.

Probie: What if I'm here for, like, ten years?

Gavin: (Snorts). I don't think that's gonna be a problem, kid, don't worry about it (Tolan, Leary, and Tolan, 2004a).

The firefighters regularly date interracially, and almost always, no comment is ever made about this. The victims they save in fires, the extras on the set, the other firefighters in the background are diverse and again, no special attention is drawn to this. Yet race is not ignored, nor is it treated as taboo. Race is wrestled with out in the open, in ways that are sometimes startling for television. When an epithet is used, it does not become the moral lesson of a particular episode and characters on either side of the epithet do not react in shock. Race is kicked around at the firehouse's kitchen table and out in the streets, and its presence, even its irreverent presence, may be in

some ways a positive thing, as it at least foregrounds the issue and admits to the frequency with which it arises in America. One of *Rescue Me*'s main characters, Franco, is Puerto Rican. On the street, a young man with Turrette's Syndrome calls Franco a name. An African American passerby says, "He just calls you a nigger and that's cool? What kinda stupid-ass nigger are you?" Franco explains, "I'm Puerto Rican, man," and the passerby walks off, saying, "God damn Spic" (Tolan, Leary, and Alexander, 2006a).

On the other hand, sometimes the characters voice attitudes and reactions that are far from tolerant. These moments in the narratives could be moments of outing ugly sentiments that should be aired and discussed. *Rescue Me*'s overall attitude seems to lean toward this interpretation. Unlike *The Shield*, where racial slurs are tossed around like admirable *bon mots*, on *Rescue Me* racial intolerance often seems to be aimed at revealing a character's weaknesses. Gavin, who vibrates dangerously on the thin line of breaking down over 9/11, confronts New York cab driver. "So what are you? You a Muslim?" he asks. "So you believe in what? Like, you die and you go to heaven and you get, what? Seventy-seven virgins?" The cabbie corrects his figure and says, "72."

Gavin: 72, right. I mean, what's the point of that, really? When you think about it, I mean, virgins? I mean, wouldn't you think when you go to heaven wouldn't you rather have, y'know, like...72 whores? Chicks who know something? Chicks who know how to blow ya, how to—chicks who know tricks?

Cabbie: Let me ask you something. What are you, religion-wise?

Gavin: I'm nuthin', I'm a lapsed Catholic. But if I were—

Cabbie: Well, my friend, you are going to hell, okay?

Gavin: I'd rather go to hell with 77—

Cabbie: 72!

Gavin: Two thousand whores! If I'm gonna go I wanna have two—three!—thousand whores! (Tolan, Leary, Reilly, and Alexander, 2006a).

This scene occurs in a succession of scenes in one episode demonstrating how Gavin is losing control and increasingly acting out his anxieties and terrors. Gavin is also literally haunted by the ghosts of victims he failed to save as well as persistently accompanied around town by the ghost of his cousin who died in 9/11. His descent into a race confrontation is additional evidence that his emotional health is in jeopardy.

In all the boys' clubhouses in post-9/11 television, the members enforce the boundaries of who can and who cannot enter with language that draws clear divides along gender, race, and class lines. If the men of *The Shield* disappoint or fail, they become "bitches" and "pussies," and no one is making a good-natured joke. In *Rescue Me*, "homo," "sissy," and "pussy" are used, usually humorously, to discipline men into adhering to certain masculine behaviors; the humor opens the possibility that even the characters realize that rigid rules about what is and is not masculine make little sense. The racial one-liners of *The Shield* make it perfectly clear that the criminals are usually not White, unlike the "good guys" making the wisecracks. *Rescue Me's* treatment of race appears more inclusive and that boundary of its particular boys' club is not drawn. The class distinctions of each boys' club are marked. *Boston Legal's* club of two is only open to men who can afford Class A office space, top-shelf Scotch, and have the

connections to buy Cuban cigars. *Nip/Tuck's* boys' club requires enough economic privilege to have acquired a medical diploma and enough class privilege to live in South Beach, Miami or on the coast of Malibu. The workingmen of both *Rescue Me* and *The Shield* distrust authority, mock any guy wearing a suit, and foreground the economic challenges of a working class life.

The boys' clubhouses of post-9/11 male-centered television dramas are not only actual physical spaces, but they are spaces of the imaginary, bounded and defined by Other and Us rules of class, race, and gender.

Join the club

The boys' clubhouse is clearly an idea to which audiences and sponsors respond. These programs all have received both significant critical acclaim and ratings success.

The Shield, the oldest series on FX, is its most awarded. In its first season in 2002, it was nominated for three Television Critics Association awards and two Emmys, and won one of each. Its second season earned it nominations from the Television Critics Association for outstanding drama, from the Screen Actors Guild and from the Golden Satellite Awards; CCH Pounder won for Golden Satellite Best Actress, and Chiklis was nominated for an Emmy, a Golden Globe, and a SAG award. Pounder won again in Season Three, along with Michael Chiklis, and the entire series won Best Drama. The show was again nominated for a Golden Globe. In Season Four, the show and its cast earned two Emmy, one Golden Globe, and one Golden Satellite nominations. In Season Five, nominations included the Golden Satellite and a Golden Globe, and the series won a prestigious Peabody Award. In addition, Glenn Close was

nominated for an Emmy and a Golden Globe; Pounder was nominated for an Emmy. *The Shield* was named one of the Top 10 Returning Series of 2007 by *Time* magazine (Poniewozik, 2007). It won an American Film Institute award in 2008 (*AFI awards: 2008 official selections announced*, 2008). Many of these awards were firsts for a basic cable program. In its fifth season, *The Shield* averaged 2/8 million total viewers and 1.8 million adult viewers between the ages of 18 and 49. This is significant, as it indicates a greater appreciation for the form and the genre, from a critic's perspective.

Nip/Tuck has been awarded 15 Emmy and five Golden Globe nominations since its inception in 2004; it won an Emmy in 2004, a Golden Globe in 2005, and two Hollywood Foreign Press Association awards in 2003. The Academy of Television Arts and Sciences awarded Oliver Platt Outstanding Guest Actor in a Drama Series and Sharon Gless Outstanding Guest Actress, both in 2008. It drew large market shares, and the finale of its third season attracted 5.7 million viewers, 3.9 million of whom were in the desirable 18-49 age group demographic. This represents the largest demographic number for any single telecast in FX's history (Zap2It) and furthers FX's history of earning notable basic cable firsts in categories usually dominated by premium cable.

Rescue Me has won four Emmy nominations (through 2008), a Golden Globe nomination, four SAG nominations, and two Television Critics Association nominations (FX Network, 2009). *People* magazine has called Leary's performance of Gavin "riveting." *USA Today* says, "Given the best role of his career so far, he has responded with his best performance." *San Francisco Chronicle's* Tim Goodwin writes, "Now, we're getting weekly doses of some of TV's best writing, most authentic character representations and quirky comedy...all of a sudden two of the funniest guys

in all of television are helming one of the medium's most unflinching dramas.”

(RescueMe.com). Leary has been nominated for an Emmy as a writer and for a Golden Globe as an actor. Writer Peter Tolan was Emmy-nominated with Leary for Outstanding Writing for a Drama Series and for Outstanding Directing for a Drama Series. The Producer's Guild of America recognized Leary, along with fellow producers Tolan, Jim Serpico, and Kerry Orent, with a 2005 Visionary Award, which acknowledges producers whose work demonstrates a unique or uplifting quality (FX Network, 2009). The *New York Times* argued that *Rescue Me* “provides a better measure of the 9/11 in our blood than anything that has come before it on television” (*New York Times*, 2004). FX has made much of these cable “firsts” in press releases and on its Web sites and in its fan materials, as well as in its reports to stockholders—for FX, critical acclaim is part of the package it is trying to create (FX Network, 2009). Season one premiered with the third highest adult 18-49 audience in basic cable history, and increased FX's Wednesday 10 p.m. time period by 183 percent in HH rating, 196 percent in total viewers, and 272 percent among adults 18-49 (FX Network, 2009). When the season two finale aired, it was basic cable's #1 delivery of adults between the ages of 18-49 on Tuesday night. It delivered 3.6 million total viewers and 2.4 adults between 18-49. Season Three averaged 2.9 million total viewers, an increase of more than 10 percent over Season Two. It also averaged 1.8 million adults between the ages of 18-49, an increase of 8 percent over the previous year. The show's four-run CUME is 3.5 million adults 18-49, and 5.6 million total viewers.

Mad Men won an Emmy for Best Drama in 2008, and a Peabody Award in 2007. It was the most-nominated drama series at the 2008 Emmys, receiving 16

nominations and much press considering the distinction. In 2009 and 2008, it won the Golden Globe Award for best dramatic television series. In 2008, Jon Hamm won a Golden Globe; in 2007, he was nominated for a SAG award, and the entire cast was nominated as an ensemble from SAG and also from Golden Satellite. The Writer's Guild of America named it Best New Series, and Variety announced it as "a critical fave and fans are rabid about the series" (Learmonth, 2007).

Boston Legal has earned 21 Emmy nominations (through 2008) and won eight. William Shatner was nominated for a Golden Globe in 2005, and the show has also received three Golden Globe and six SAG awards. The show earned James Spader an Emmy in 2005 and in 2007 (Emmy Awards, 2009). As a network show, it does not bear the distinction of having earned "firsts" for basic cable. However, it has received much critical acclaim. Jacques Steinberg writes in the *New York Times*, "*Boston Legal* has drawn attention for plumbing ethically tangled issues like assisted suicide, the execution of the mentally impaired and the neglect of military veterans, with a leavening of theater-of-the-absurd moments. Less noticed is that the series has also sought to explore the contours and complexities of male friendship in a way that few, if any, other shows have ever attempted" (Steinberg, 2008).

The Shield, *Nip/Tuck*, and *Rescue Me* are all series on the FX Network. FX leadership is on the record as saying they want to reach younger TV viewers and they aim to do so through edgy, alternative content (Moss, 2006). The heavy doses of scatological humor and lower body humor mix with story lines that deal realistically and often angrily or unpleasantly with matters such as divorce, alternative sexualities, drugs, alcohol, infidelity, rape, parenting, gambling, addictions, and economic stress.

These may indicate that the target audience—or at least the audience of advertisers—is not seeking fantasy and escape but is willing to engage with edgy, real-life scenarios presented with less-than-tidy conclusions.

FX President Landgraf says his network’s audience “wants programming of that kind of boldness” (Moss, 2006). It is a strategy that has worked. In 2004, FX ranked in the top 10 among all 58 Nielsen-measure basic cable networks in primetime and also among adults aged 18-49 for the calendar year (FX Network, December 17, 2004). At the end of 2004, based on its many critical and financial successes, FX announced that it was “ramping up” its new program development (FX Network, December 17, 2004). FX averaged a 1.00 HH rating in primetime, a 13 percent increase over the previous year. Laura Caraccioli-Davis, executive vice president and director at media services agency Starcom Entertainment, says that, in general, movie studios are “big supporters of this content” because they use shows like *Rescue Me* to promote the weekend premieres of the movies they produce (Moss, 2006). And, because *Rescue Me* appears at 10 p.m., it offers a good fit for liquor companies, which must reach audiences over 21 primarily after 10 p.m.

AMC, the network of *Mad Men*, was obviously paying attention to the FX network strategy when it mounted its series, and the influence of how FX has stretched the boundaries of basic cable is no doubt felt in the narratives of network programming such as *Boston Legal*. FX took its early lessons from HBO (Moss, 2006). *Broadcasting & Cable* hails the critical and ratings successes of FX’s set of edgy original series and claims they are “yet more proof that the basic-cable network is HBO with commercials.” It continues with its analysis:

Back in 2002...naysayers predicted FX would fail by wading into programming waters that were strictly the province of premium cable. Maybe HBO could reinvigorate itself with original, transgressive stuff like *Oz* and *The Sopranos*, they said. But an ad-supported network couldn't build a brand on basic cable...Just as HBO series *The Wire*, *Sex and the City* and *Six Feet Under* raised the bar for its pay-cable competitor Showtime, currently in the midst of a creative upswing, FX has changed the game for networks beholden to Madison Avenue...(Robins, 2007).

The headline for a *BusinessWeekOnline* article in September of 2005 read: "FX aims for HBO's cachet." The short story briefly analyzes the "HBO envy" of 2002 and the impression that the News Corporation-owned FX channel was "just another rerun outlet in the 400-channel TV universe." The story attributes then-FX CEO Peter Liguori with believing that FX could follow HBO's risky success formula by creating "programming that pushed buttons and boundaries"—and led to Emmy Awards. Liguori felt certain that advertisers would support these edgy shows (Business Week, 2005).

In March 2007, FX launched its newest drama series, *The Riches*, starring the self-labeled "executive transvestite" comic Edie Izzard and Minnie Driver. It follows the recipe for what is now the FX brand and what is now what FX viewers have come to expect: soft-core porn, outrageous plots, rough language, and adult themes. Clearly, FX has found a formula that brings it both the audience and the advertisers it seeks. And it is a formula that is symbiotic with parent company FOX Broadcasting, which describes itself as having risen from a "daring concept in 1986 to rank as today's most popular programmer for teens and young adults. Its constant innovation and reinvention of television's creative landscape entices 15 hours of primetime, top sports events and Sunday morning news programs"(FOX Network, 2009).

These efforts deliver the target market to advertisers. A Jupiter Research report by analyst Derek Baine calls FX “FOX’s \$5 billion dollar baby.” Despite News Corporation’s “largely flat growth at FOX News,” there is “surprisingly strong growth at FX, which we project to grow ad revenue 13% for 2006. Formerly criticized by MSOs as being foisted upon them by News Corp., FX is now valued at \$5 bil” (Baine, 2006). The documented popularity of these series seems to indicate that something is speaking to audiences. Or rather, something has been constructed to specifically deliver ratings—and ratings, Eileen Meehan argues, reflect only certain audiences some of the time. Since 1986, Meehan has analyzed the political economy of television ratings. Over more than two decades, she concludes that the assumptions that the viewing patterns are measures for all audiences, and that they are measured with accuracy and integrity, are not upheld in reality. For networks, audiences are a commodity to sell to advertisers, and some audiences sell better and for more dollars than others. Therefore, if an audience that is unattractive to advertisers finds a program wildly popular, that program may still be cancelled. Ratings are not, in fact, true ratings.

...all television viewers are not in television’s commodity audience and...some parts of the commodity audience are more valuable than others. This implies that networks as well as cable channels will cancel programs that do a poor job of attracting the most valuable subgroups in the commodity audience regardless of a program’s overall popularity with the commodity audience (Meehan, 2007, p. 164).

These practices, Meehan argues, assure that

ratings are governed by the market, not by social science. While an unreliable indicator of popular tastes, commodity ratings are a reasonable measure of commercial tastes—of the genres, narrative forms, character types, and iconic elements that advertisers and program providers identify as viable environments for advertisements and as reliable bait for the most valuable subgroups in the commodity audience (Meehan, 2007, p. 165).

Therefore, ratings alone—although they are marketed to reflect “accurate” measures of viewership—do not truly reflect the viewing habits of *all* of the audiences. These programs are not necessarily the most popular programs on all of television, but they are popular with the types of audiences that FX advertisers want.

However, another measure Meehan recognizes, that of creating online communities of fellow viewers, can indicate a much more engaged audience—and FX’s male-centered dramas have lively groups of both network-sponsored chat rooms (a less reliable indicator of true popularity) and independent blogs and forums run by die-hard fans. Although Meehan writes that “the symbolic cohesion necessary for each program to be a vehicle for advertising sets up a worldview that celebrates commercialism, consumerism, and ultimately contemporary capitalism” (2007, p. 168), she draws a distinction between influence and control and credits engaged viewers with a “critical consciousness that does contest, challenge, and struggle with its visions” (2007, p. 168).

A member of the club

Audiences are responding to FX’s male-centered dramas, but it may be that at least one of those audiences is an unexpected one. Roughly half these audiences are calculated as being female (Martin, 2006), and that will be discussed in a moment. But first, the focus is on what the men might be getting out of watching these series. Perhaps among the reasons audiences flock to these male-centered television dramas is this: temporarily and vicariously, viewing grants them entrée to a modern-era boys’ club. These post-9/11 television dramas centered on male characters contain the common

thread of presenting spaces in which men—and exclusively men—work and play. The brotherhood, the close relationships with other men or another man, offers connection and camaraderie to the modern male spectator—connection and camaraderie that may feel otherwise elusive in the circumstances of modern life.

Hanging with guys who have got your back, who would take a bullet for you, who face stress with wisecracks and bravado, and who offer acceptance and understanding has its appeals. The characters in these programs are not socializing together the way men have historically socialized in dramatic narratives: at a bar, in front of the television, or at a sports event. Instead, the new men cook together, nosh together, try to figure out what their teenagers are up to together. They write their own social rules and dispense with political correctness. They never try to pretend that women do not have breasts, that sex is not what is on their minds, or that they actually care about putting the seat up. It is a guy's world, it looks like fun, and it celebrates the sheer joy of being with other men. Some measure of these shows' attraction for men may be the witnessing of this sort of "running in a pack" masculinity.

For modern men, hanging in a man pack is available in limited supply.

MacInnes writes,

Fifty years ago there were still many institutions that were male bastions where women were either legally barred or totally absent. Although men still monopolize public power, hardly any such institutions survive today, aside from gentlemen's clubs and the Catholic priesthood. Significantly neither has a good reputation (MacInnes, 1998, p. 47).

Time was, men could expect to be exclusively with other men when they were away from home, war, or at work, in the literal or figurative trenches. They could advance (or retreat) into spaces constructed exclusively for men, spaces in which the

boys' clubs manners of the belching-burping-scatological-sleeping around kind prevailed. Beyond tree houses, once upon a time there were boys' clubs in boardrooms, factories, police stations, union halls, fire stations, doctor's lounges, physics classrooms, seminaries, capitol buildings, and military barracks. But then the world changed.

Modern American life offers diminished chances to be with other men without the presence of at least some women—to hang in a pack, as it were, which many of them seem to find joy in doing from time to time. Perhaps one (subconscious or conscious) piece of what looks like sexist “closing of the ranks” and enforcing of a glass ceiling, or various version of a male-only workplace, may be the fact that men like the company of other men and are attempting to protect the few places where that might still occur. War and work have become gender-integrated, women's presence in bars and men's clubs is acceptable and even encouraged, and as a result, “naturally occurring” boys' clubs are thin on the ground. In 1950, women made up about a third of the labor force; by 1998, women were approaching double that (Fullerton, 1999). The first paid female firefighter, Judith Livers, was hired in 1974 in Arlington County, Virginia (Firefighter Central, 2009). In 2007, there are 14,000 women firefighters and 94,000 female police officers (Information Please, 2009). In 1950, women composed less than 2 percent of the armed forces; in 2007, that percentage was 7 times as large at 14 percent (Burrelli, 1996; Information Please, 2009). In 2007, there were 198,400 women in active military duty (Information Please, 2009). Women infiltrated both foxhole and cubicle, and an unintended result of the diminishment of opportunities for men to socialize with one another occurred. This does not mean that men do not close ranks in the workplace or in other settings, no matter how ostensibly integrated. For a

boys' club atmosphere to exist, a men-only physical space is not necessarily required.

However, when men are alone with men, the segregating activities that shut down possibilities for women to infiltrate the club need not be performed and those boundaries need not be policed. Undoubtedly, boys' club atmospheres can exist in places where there are women; it may be easier for men to nurture and join these sorts of "clubs" when women are not around to point out the inequities of doing so. Having only men in a workplace allows a certain guilt-free involvement in boys' clubs; after all, there are no people but boys in the room.

Rituals of war, sport, and sport spectatorship do offer men opportunities for a certain type of socialization, but the gender integration of workplaces, military service, and society in general leaves few remaining places for such gender-specific socialization. Some of the fondness men have in telling literal war stories may be that they hail from a time of true camaraderie—albeit accompanied by violence and hardship. Not that any man or woman would wish for war so that the boys could one again form their play group—but the possibility exists that, despite the horrors of such times, there are also the bonds forged in "finest hours." Thankfully, going to war is an "opportunity" not presented to or seized by many modern men. Therefore, a certain method of earning one's manhood stripes is closed. Other methods must open.

On one hand, it is a little challenging to feel sorry for men who had their sole-sex run at international politics and commerce for quite some time, and arguably made less than a smashing success of it. On the other, there is an opportunity here to recognize that the male-only environs may have granted men social rewards that were not necessarily recognized or articulated. One might intelligently argue that surely men

could then have gone out and found fresh socializing opportunities, but this does not seem to have occurred, at least on a widespread basis. In part, this may perhaps be because of the advancements brought about by Second Wave feminism, which placed under a microscope organizations and institutions that support sex-specific activities. Another factor, already discussed, may be that men may sometimes find it difficult to create and maintain socializing experiences for themselves. In youth, high school, and college years, men socialize in groups through academic and sport activities, but once adulthood begins, these opportunities dwindle. For a host of reasons, men often seem to find it difficult to make and maintain friendships with other men in modern adult life (Strate, 1992; Kimmel, 2005).

Why is this men-only socialization of critical importance? Hegemonic versions of masculinity are sustained by the exclusion of and dominance over femininity (Roper, 1991). For better or worse, masculinity, it seems, is often defined by first defining femininity and then saying, "It's not that." By extension, participation in an activity in which many other men are also participating (a boys' club, for instance), offers a certain relief from the tension of proving one's manhood or wondering if one possesses the right type of masculinity. If all these other fellows are doing the same thing, well, it *must* qualify as a manly activity. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick argues that it is crucial to the success of patriarchy that a tension exist between homosocial and homoerotic desires in men, with homosocial mandates "ever on guard against erotic possibilities. While women might negotiate homosocial and homosexual, moving fluidly and unreservedly through bonds of friendship, co-worker, lover, sister, friend, such fluidity seems much less accessible to men." In her examination of the 1980s television program *Evening*

Shade, she observes that the male friendships in the show may help “viewers in tune with patriarchy keep their gaze within bounds while allowing them the pleasure of its experience” (Sedgwick, 1985, p. 213). Michael Kimmel writes that “images of gender in the media become texts on normative behavior, one of many cultural shards we use to construct notions of masculinity” (Kimmel, 1987, p. 20). On some level, male viewers of male-centered television dramas may be participating in and feel welcomed inside the boys’ club narratives of the programs; although viewers may lack intimate homosocial friendships in their own lives, through viewing such friendships on television they may experience a connection, vicariously.

This experience may closely align with the experiences of men watching televised sports. Sabo, Gray, and Moore (2000) interviewed women about how their men (the study uses this term and does not specify whether it refers to husbands, partners, spouses, sons, brothers, or fathers) related to televised sporting events. Most of the study participants described televised sports as a “man’s world” or “manly activities” that “allowed men to shore up or express masculinity.” One participant said, “I like sports, but women can watch them sensibly. It’s just a game. For men, it’s the world.” Another reported, “He puts himself into what the athletes do. He becomes the stars he admires. If they do badly, he feels terribly frustrated, as if it’s happening to him.” Watching sports, the authors conclude, may help “define their manhood for them” (Sabo, Gray, and Moore, 2000, p. 137). In this study, we hear from women, not men, and from the female partners of men who have committed acts of domestic violence. Therefore, extrapolations to include some men or even other men must be cautiously drawn. Still, it is not an overstatement to observe anecdotally that many men enjoy

watching sporting events on television, some of them feel deeply involved in the outcomes of those competitions, and some of them also feel a kinship with fellow fans and with other men who are watching or performing in those events. In this case and for some men, at least, being a spectator of a “male” television experience aligns in some ways with actually socializing with, identifying with, and feeling part of a group with other men.

In his examination of beer commercials as a sort of manual for modern masculinity, Lance Strate suggests that watching and reading about sports, and watching the ads for beer and other products for men that punctuate televised sporting events, offer a virtual form of hanging out with the guys. “Collectively the commercials provide a clear and consistent image of the masculine role; in a sense, they constitute a guide for becoming a man, a rulebook for appropriate male behavior, in short, a manual on masculinity,” he writes (Strate, 1992, p. 78). He characterizes some of his observations about the “manual’s” instructions:

In the workplace, mutual respect is exhibited, but respect must be earned through ability and attitude. In leisure situations, humor is a major element in male interactions. Conversations among men emphasize joking, bragging, storytelling, and good-natured insults. The insults are a form of symbolic challenge; taking a ribbing in good spirit is a demonstration of emotional strength and self-mastery. By providing a controlled social context for the exchange of challenges and demonstrations of ego strength and self-control, the group provides continuous reinforcement of the members’ masculinity. Moreover, gathering in groups provides men with the freedom to act irresponsibly; that is, it allows men to act like boys. This is particularly the case in the Miller Lite ads that feature retired sports stars, comedians, and other celebrities (Strate, 1992, p. 87).

The masculine behaviors and attributes Strate finds in beer ads align closely with the behaviors of central characters in the post-9/11 male-centered television

dramas—even in more outrageous characteristics. Strate notes that in the bars in beer commercials, no man ever pays for his alcohol, literally or figuratively. No money changes hands, no bar tender ever asks the drinker to pay up. There are no consequences for drinking. “The bar is shown as a self-contained environment, one that, like the outdoors, frees men from the constraints of civilization, allowing them to behave irresponsibly” (Strate, 1992, p. 85). Perhaps this is another aspect of television boys’ clubs, as well. And perhaps television series such as *Rescue Me* and *The Shield*, with their scenes of male-only firehouses and male-gang friendships, offers a homosocial connection for some viewers, as well.

In her study comparing real male friendships to representations of male friendships in over 40 years of prime-time television programming, Lynn Spangler found “it is the lament of the decline of intimate, nonsexual male friendships that is of immediate concern” (1992, p. 95).

Men bond in war zones, on playing fields, and in bars; however, most research indicates that men are not emotionally intimate with each other, an aspect of friendship that is characteristic among women friends... (Spangler, 1992, p. 93).

Spangler argues that there have been intimate male friendships during the more than forty years of television—the Lone Ranger and Tonto (ABC 1949-1956), Ralph Kramden and Ed Norton on *The Honeymooners* (1955-1956), Dobie Gillis and Maynard G. Krebs (1959-1963)—but those intimacies have not been abundant, and in large part were replaced by the nuclear family comedies of the 1950s and 1960s (*Father Knows Best*, *My Three Sons*, *The Ozzie and Harriet Show*). Eventually, exceptions such as the men from U.N.C.L.E., *Magnum P.I.*, and the *A Team* came into existence, but Fiske argues that in large part, these were not intimate relationships.

The excription of women leads to a male bonding which is a close relationship protected from the threat of intimacy. The bond of the A-Team, of Magnum and his co-heroes, is goal-oriented, not relationship-oriented. The relationship is there to serve a common goal, not the needs of the relationship itself; it depends on action not on feeling (Fiske, 1987, p. 212).

Spangler finds a difference between bonding over shared tasks at a workplace and bonding that attempts some level of intimacy. “Both Westerns and action/adventure series are typical of the ‘masculine’ programs Fiske describes, where male relationships are goal-oriented, depicting men doing together, rather than being together,” she writes, noting that “working class comedies depicted the most intimate male friendships” (Spangler, 1992, p. 109), a link with intimacy and class that is visible in post-9/11 *The Shield* and *Rescue Me*.

During the conservative Reagan years, television returned to representations of men bonding most intimately with their families, rather than their buddies (*Thirtysomething*), but Spangler notes the failure of a series devoted to men and their friendships, called *Men*.

The failure of *Men*, a short-lived network series in 1989 that focused on the intimate friendship of several males, may be an indication that American culture is not ready for such depictions except, perhaps, in comedy. The portrayal of male friendships on television will change as the representation of masculinity changes and large audiences find it acceptable (Spangler, 1992, p. 110).

Perhaps Spangler’s prediction has come true in the arrival of the post-9/11 male-centered dramas. In many of these dramas, the boys’ club is not only an ideological space but a physical one, a room or building occupied by only men, where men hang out, where men construct and foster friendships, where men clearly enjoy the company of other men. Watching these dramas is a way to participate in these friendships, a way

to hang out with other men. But why might these virtual boys' clubhouses have increased in frequency and importance on television since the events of 9/11? What allows them to proliferate and flourish at this particular historic moment?

The rules of war change when war becomes terrorism. The front is not entrenched foxholes facing off over no-man's-land but an ever-moving threat of anywhere, any country, any space, with any casualties being acceptable losses to the terrorists. Terrorism is an unsettling amalgam of war and not-war, with enemies who look like civilians and civilians who look like enemies. The War Against Terrorism and even the Iraq War have a non-warlike feeling to much of the American public. In WWII, national unity was fostered by efforts to conserve and ration resources, bond drives, constant propaganda in film and media, and drives to recruit men as fighters and women as WAC, WAV, and USO supporters. The War Against Terrorism and the Iraq War can feel ephemeral and shapeless to all but the soldiers who are in Iraq and their families. Exactly who the enemy is and where the enemy might be found becomes difficult to pin down; and in response, it becomes difficult to join together as a group of men fighting a common enemy.

In *Terror Dream*, Susan Faludi does a masterful job of describing the masculine unease with the collapse of the Twin Towers. She aligns the attack of 9/11 on "our own" soil with the battles with Native Americans waged by settlers, pioneers, and, essentially, invaders from Western Europe. She argues that the vulnerability to attack from Indians on "our own" soil formed a distinctively American wound that was dressed with lionizing cowboys and inventing an American myth of winning the West through male rescue of imperiled females. The country's injuries could be healed by

cementing the status of men as saviors of women and children. In the media coverage of 9/11, Faludi finds echoes of that myth: despite the fact that most survivors rescued themselves by simply walking out of the towers, media narratives and images consistently focused on male heroes (usually firefighters) and female victims who were unable to help themselves. The tragic fact is, of course, that few people were literally saved at all, and the firefighters the media calls “heroes” were brave enough to walk into the towers, but had little to no opportunity to rescue anyone, even themselves.

The “nobody was saved” aspect of 9/11 creates an uneasiness among men. The military and national, state, and city emergency agencies and forces failed to prevent the death of civilians who had not signed up to fight. Firefighters, Port Authority officers, First Responders, and police officers failed to protect each other and themselves from dying during rescue efforts. This, combined with the media narrative that 9/11 was peopled with “heroes,” forces the category “hero” open to include men who failed at what they intended to do (though not of their own fault, of course). Men are now called “heroes” for finding themselves in bewildering circumstances facing odds no one could have surmounted. That firefighters, police, and other rescuers perished in their sincere, admirable, and devoted attempt to save others’ lives even at their own risk is undisputed. That they failed is shameful to Americans who are used to winning wars, swaggering into danger to emerge victorious and only lightly scathed. That is the American story; failure is not. And yet 9/11 (and Hurricane Katrina, although that is another story altogether) wrote a new ending to that typical American tale of heroism. This time, the heroes lost. This time, the heroes were utterly human. This time, even the agencies in place to protect heroes failed us. This time, there is shame and loss mixed

with an amorphous enemy in a war with no clearly defined front. This time, we do not know what to do.

This enlargement of the category of “hero” makes room for interesting shifts to occur. It makes heroes of those who try and fail, and it makes clear the frailty and vulnerability of champions. There are cracks in the armor of the knights on horseback. Larger than life gods are cut down to size. Now, we can allow our heroes to be not just near-perfect icons of manhood but merely men. A hero can now be *The Shield’s* Vic Mackey, a hard-working, well-intentioned guy who wanders on and off the line between criminal and cop and who sleeps around only occasionally. A hero can now be *Rescue Me’s* Tommy Gavin, who cannot quite stay sober, cannot get his wife to love him, cannot get his kids to behave, and cannot save every victim he tries to rescue, including himself. A hero can now be *Nip/Tuck’s* Christian, a vain, metrosexual who waxes his eyebrows, visits tanning booths, does Pilates every morning, and now and then eyes his best friend with lust. A hero can now be a regular guy with a fistful of flaws who makes an effort, now and then, to do something extraordinary. That is enough. Suddenly, there seems to have been a place made at the table in the boys’ clubhouse for the nerds, outcasts, uncool guys, and just plain regular Joes who cannot see themselves as Hercules but might be able to picture themselves as Vic or Tommy or Sean or Christian.

And why are women watching? Perhaps because these male-centered dramas are well-written, witty, well-acted, and well-produced television. Despite their misogynist moments (or in some cases, entire seasons), these series enjoy high production values and intelligent story telling, and those are likely attractive to any viewer. But I might hypothesize about other reasons women sit in the audiences for these programs. Some

of these male characters are downright unlikable, but many of them have struck a sort of peace between their hard-boiled and softhearted masculinities, and that balance is disarming and charming to watch in action. In certain media narratives of feminism since the 1960s, it may be that masculinity was tossed out like the proverbial baby with the bathwater. But it was never masculinity that was the feminist problem, any more than femininity was to blame. The culprit was and is patriarchy. A man at home in his own masculine skin while also being an empathetic human being is a lovely thing to behold, and there is female pleasure to be had in the beholding of it.

Now that I love you, let's get married

In what seems a rather bizarre twist, once these male-centered dramas establish intimate homosocial relationships, they seem at a loss as to what to do with them. What do you do, as a writer for a male-centered television show, with men who are best friends? Send them to the bar to drink together (as has been done in multitudes of movies and television shows throughout media history)? Send them to a strip club to watch women together (ditto)? Get them into a fistfight after which they go to a strip club and then get drunk together?

We know the typical dramatic arc of heterosexual love in the media: boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy gets girl back, boy marries girl. We do not really have a typical dramatic arc of female homosocial love in the media, because most female main characters have a best friend and sidekick (that is where Best Supporting Actresses come from, after all) and nothing much ever comes of that. Films of the history of a deep female friendship are very rare (*Beaches* and *Julia* might be about it). But what is

the dramatic arc of a male homosocial love affair? Now that the lads love each other, what do we *do* with them?

Strangely, one of these dramas flirts with and the other consummates an odd plot twist: the heterosexual men marry each other. *Nip/Tuck* is the flirt, containing many moments of tenderness between Sean and Christian. The men are the central couple of the narrative. The women come and go with much less drama than is afforded the moments when the men are feuding. In one fistfight because Christian slept with Sean's wife, Sean slugs Christian, then cries and hugs him and says "I loved you most." Not "why did you sleep with my wife?" or even "I trusted you" but "I loved you most." When Christian prepares for his wedding, his bride cannot attend the cake tasting or the invitation ordering, so Sean stands in for her. They sample frostings and fillings, examine typefaces and floral arrangements, and when they are mistaken for a gay couple ("One of the most loving couples I've ever seen," gushes the cake lady) they unhesitatingly play along with it, holding hands and making eyes at each other. And, as described earlier, for several episodes, Christian wonders if he is, in fact, romantically in love with Sean and plays out a number of fantasies about that. At one point, Christian tells Sean, "I don't want Julia, I always wanted you." And later, after Christian is left standing at the altar by his bride and all the guests have gone home, it is the two men, dressed in wedding tuxedos, who sit together amid ornate flowers on the church steps. Sean comforts Christian and holds him. When Christian weeps that he will always be alone, Sean tells him he was never alone. Then Sean announces he will return to the practice and be a team with Christian once again. Christian, cheering up a bit, asks, "You mean that?" Sean answers (of course): "I do." This mimicking of the marital vows

is obvious, deliberate, and telling. When the reality is that many men find it extremely difficult if not impossible to make and maintain even mildly intimate friendships, television dramas are centered on deeply fulfilling, decades long committed “marriages” between men (Greene, Levine, and Jablonski, 2003-2008).

Boston Legal not only flirts with the idea of heterosexual male marriage; in the finale of its final season, Alan Shore and Denny Crane actually go to Massachusetts, where same-sex marriage was legal at the time the show was written, and marry each other. Denny, descending into advanced Alzheimer’s, asks Alan to marry him to give Alan the right to make Denny’s medical decisions and to allow Denny to pass on his wealth to Alan. People have married for worse reasons. “I’ve always wanted to remarry before I die,” says Denny. “And like it or not, you’re the man I love” (cite). It is a double wedding, with Denny’s ex, Shirley (Candice Bergen) also marrying Carl (John Larroquette). Denny’s passion for Shirley has lasted decades, so perhaps the double wedding offers a comforting heterosexual reassurance that if Shirley were available, Denny would choose, sensibly, a woman. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia (Jack Shearer) marries them under some duress. Together on the balcony in the final scene of the program, the tuxedo-clad men slow dance together. Denny Crane utters the final line of the program: “It’s our wedding night” (Kelly, Kelly, and D’Elia, 2008c).

Heterosexual male marriage on television: what might it signify? If it is a celebration of the joys of deep emotional involvement between men, it is not a satisfying one. Making it marriage may cast both marriage and male friendship in a somewhat disparaging light. The boys’ clubhouses of all these dramas exclude women; is male-male marriage a simple extension of that move?

In her examination of early Shakespeare comedies that feature men masquerading as women and falling in love with one another, Janet Adelman identifies a concern with “a male identity that locates itself via bonding with another man and recognizes in women a disturbance to the bond and to the identity so constituted” (Adelman, 1985, p. 73). Michael Friedman describes this as the Shakespearean characters’ “animosity towards women as a threat to their masculine identity and male camaraderie” and admits that “men must eventually overcome this resentment and enter into the male-female union of marriage if they expect to perpetuate society through legitimate reproduction” (Friedman, 1995, p. 231). The male-male marriage and near-marriages of these dramas may honor marriage and all committed relationships—or, they may be cementing the men-will-be-boys resistance to growing up by celebrating the man-bond and the refusal to transfer male allegiance to a woman and a nuclear family. In these dramas, the boys’ clubhouses offer no shelter for women; if a man joins with a woman, his membership in the club may be compromised or even ended. A choice between the meaningful friendships in the company of men and marriage to a woman seems to be set up clearly, and a set up it also seems to be. Perhaps some male viewers are attracted to these shows as hungry children are to bakery shop windows, noses pressed against the glass or plasma screen, wanting something they cannot have but at least reveling in the sight and scent of it.

The *Boston Legal* marriage and the *Nip/Tuck* near-marriage may imply an approving nod to real-life same-sex marriages. It does seem that this narrative arc is at least conversing with the politics of gay marriage, without directly taking up the issue in character interactions. If viewers understand and empathize with the male friendships of

the shows, then perhaps their empathy can be encouraged to extend to the “other kinds of guys” getting married to each other. Or, perhaps this might be read as mocking same-sex marriage by not honoring actual homosexual romance. As Helene Shugart argues about *Will & Grace* and other television shows with gay characters, what appear to be subversive and gender-bending relationships on camera can actually be reinforcement of traditional patriarchal attitudes and privilege (Shugart, 2003). The marriages between men may be a statement that only men understand other men fully and may be a minimizing and trivializing of the marriages and relationships between men and women. These television marriages may draw a line in the sand about just how intimate a man will and can be with a female partner, contrasting those hetero unions with lifetime commitments between soul buddies.

Media pundits call the *Boston Legal* relationship a “bromance,” coining a term that has since been applied to most of television’s male couples. The word emphasizes the discomfort many people continue to have with emotional intimacy between men. Some might call it friendship.

In chapter four, the post-9/11 television bromance becomes complicated by the transgendered figure. Post-9/11 male-centered television dramas frequently include at least one character that is transgendered or transvestite. These characters may work to naturalize a gender and sexuality continuum rather than a dichotomy, but may also work to reinforce unaccepting attitudes and misconceptions.

Chapter Four

Undoing the Dichotomy: The Emergence of the Transgendered Figure in Male-Centered Television

Heroes have moved from being near-perfect supermen to being flawed and anxiety-riddled common men who have their heroic moments. In the long tradition of buddy films and heroes with sidekicks, post-9/11 television heroes enjoy male-only “clubhouse” spaces and privilege man-to-man friendships over family and friends. In some cases, the bromances are even legitimized by wedding vows. Now, an intriguing figure enters the picture: the transgendered or transvestite character. Narratives with transgendered individuals are common, perhaps even universal, in male-centered dramas, post-9/11. This new prevalence serves to broaden definitions of masculinity and naturalize the idea of a gender and sexuality continuum rather than a dichotomy.

In his history of African Americans in American film, Donald Bogle (2001) traces the evolution of representations of marginalized groups. First, a minority group is simply absent from media texts, underrepresented to the point of invisibility. Then, when a minority eventually does appear in the media, it is often in the role of buffoon. Examples include the slow-witted, lazy character of Stepin Fetchit played by Lincoln Perry in films of the 1920s and 1930s; several of the histrionic regular characters in the radio and television programs of *Amos 'n' Andy* in the 1920s through the 1950s; “Farina,” and “Buckwheat” in *The Little Rascals* in the 1920s, 1930s, and early 1940s, and the character “J.J.” played by James Walker in the CBS sitcom *Good Times* (1974-

1979)⁴. As social attitudes shift, the possibility of another representation emerges: that of villain and criminal, often appearing on detective or mystery programs that feature law enforcers and crime-solvers played by White actors. Once the criminal role in the media becomes naturalized and even criticized, a minority begins to see itself represented as crime fighters and as some of the good guys, on the side of right and justice—possibly even a hero. Ultimately, representations of a minority may come to resemble hegemonic representations of wholly developed characters that hold any one of a host of occupations, which may be foolish or wise, who may be good or evil.

Feminist Gaye Tuchman argues that the absence from the media of any single group can be regarded as “symbolic annihilation” (1978, p. 7). Tuchman discusses the paucity of representation of women in roles other than homemaker in early and mid-20th century television. She divides symbolic annihilation into three categories: omission (similar to Bogle’s first evolutionary stage of invisibility), trivialization (akin to Bogle’s buffoonery), and condemnation (which might be aligned with representation as a criminal or bad guy). Being present in media imagery signals that a group is culturally and socially recognized and valued, says Tuchman—and she finds that women were underrepresented or represented in silly or negative roles (1978).

⁴ It is important to note that audience reception of these characters has shifted over time. Initially intended to be comedic and generally received as such, these characters came to be considered as racist depictions and examples of negative stereotypes. Some newer interpretations explore the possibilities of the performances of many of these African American actors as subversive and resistant, and recognize the important ground-breaking nature of these pioneer media actors.

Media political economist Katherine Sarikakis underscores the critical relationship between the nature of a group's media representation and the nature of its perception socially.

If the media are contemporary storytellers, then the exclusion of women, and any marginalized group, from them legitimises their exclusion from the public sphere, while it also denies them the recognition of their social presence as equal citizens. The trivialisation of women's political and cultural claims and stereotyping of women, when present in the media, contribute to their unequal treatment in the cultural and political domain, effectively marginalising them further in society. The media of course provide one version of the public sphere, where public debate on issues of common concern takes place (2006, pp. 11-12).

Bogle, Tuchman, and Sarikakis argue that the character of media representation bears significant consequences for the marginalized group portrayed. The social and cultural expectations of a group are greatly dependent upon the media representations that group receives, and this works in an intertwined, interdependent, which-came-first relationship. Subtle shifts in media characterizations may both signal changes that are occurring in the real world and reinforce and support those social and cultural changes. The absence of a marginalized group from mainstream media sends a potent message about that group's social and cultural position and value. When that group begins to appear in media, even in trivialized roles, that representation may signal a positive—even slightly positive—development. Being seen as silly is one step up from not being seen at all, and only one or two steps away from being seen as fully drawn, fully realized human characters. When the customary absence of a group is ruptured, and representations—even less than flattering or accurate ones—appear in the media, that signals a shift worth examining.

Enter the GLBTI television character, post-9/11

In the male-centered television dramas that have proliferated since the events of 9/11, a new type of character appears that challenges the hegemonic gender and sexuality dichotomy. In these dramas, gay, bi-sexual, transvestite, and transgendered figures appear with increasingly regularity, a striking departure from pre-9/11 television when these types of characters were most often absent, rare or one-dimensional. Even if their arrival is sometimes greeted with varying degrees of tolerance and empathy, they are appearing in media in rising numbers. They are no longer invisible, and when they are visible, they are frequently drawn as nuanced, fully human characters. And that signals a critical shift.

With regularity, characters who are GLBTI (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or intersexed) appear in the post-9/11 male-centered television dramas included in this study, and their presence and their complex characterizations are drawn may reflect and support an increasing social acceptance and understanding of GLBTI life and politics. However, the meaning of the proliferation of these types of characters may not be quite so straightforward. Mary Vavrus (2002) argues that progressive representations can actually work to reinscribe traditional roles and patriarchy. In her examination of televised news stories about stay-at-home dads that aired between 1995 and 1999, she found both a positive challenge to traditional masculine roles in the home as well as a reinforcement of the nuclear, heterosexual family. These stories did “nudge nurturance ever closer to incorporation within an ideal of hegemonic masculinity” (Vavrus, 2002, p. 368), but in ways that posed “little threat to traditional representations of masculinity” (Vavrus, 2002, p. 369).

Television news accounts of stay-at-home fathers (typically referred to as “Mr. Moms”) represent a challenge to more traditional masculine identities depicted in media. While offering a nominal challenge, however, these representations reinscribe significant aspects of patriarchal privilege within domestic space. Through a combination of discursive strategies compatible with the commercial needs of contemporary media organizations, television news programs’ Mr. Moms operate ideologically to legitimate domesticity and nurturance as appropriately masculine. In so doing, they challenge some traditional notions about men while further solidifying a connection between these men and heterosexuality in the context of mainstream television news representations of middle-class family life in the contemporary United States (Vavrus, 2002, p. 358).

Vavrus argues that even though the Mr. Mom stories support certain feminist ideals, “while claiming the status of a counter-stereotypical (and ostensibly progressive) discourse, these news stories naturalize the nuclear family and paternal dominance within it” and act to “naturalize and signify the ubiquity of middle-class, heterosexual, nuclear family households” (Vavrus, 2002, p. 358).

Contemporary male-centered dramas may open a space for a subtle but meaningful shift from Vavrus’ observations of news media in the late 1990s. To wit: the post-9/11, male-centered television dramas turn their backs on the middle class, consistently repudiate the nuclear family, and depict in increasing numbers households, couples, and lives that are decidedly not heterosexual—at least in the most traditional and hegemonic sense.

First, the class of these dramas is polarized, stratifying at opposite ends of the spectrum and leaving the middle class essentially abandoned. Programs such as *Rescue Me* and *The Shield* are firmly rooted in the working class. Characters struggle to pay the rent, live in modest homes in mixed neighborhoods, and drive used Chevrolets and Fords (except for a bizarre product placement departure in Season Five of *Rescue Me* in

which Tommy Gavin inexplicably traded in his beat up Ford truck for a Cadillac pickup). While *Dexter* owns his own speedboat (to better dispose of the bodies of the evildoers he serially murders), he lives in an apartment, not a house. His girlfriend, single mom Rita, rents an extremely modest home and struggles to pay the bills and put food on the table for her two children. Program such as *Boston Legal* and *Nip/Tuck* are decidedly upper class. Characters drive Lamborghinis and vacation at a \$60,000 a week Canadian fishing hideaway where guests must be flown in by helicopter to be served champagne while fly casting in salmon streams. Post-9/11 male-centered dramas naturalize a dichotomy of either working class or upper class households.

Second, the very regularity of the appearance of gay, transsexual, and transvestite characters in these dramas challenge heteronormativity. While the Mr. Moms of the 1990s were role reversals—she works, he nurtures the kids—the post-9/11 male-centered drama casts often include main or recurring characters who are bi-sexual, have same-sex lovers, struggle with their sexual identity, cross-dress, or are engaged in surgical sexual reassignment.

In *Nip/Tuck*, a transgendered male-to-female patient presents, and the surgeons balk at working on her/him/her (they have trouble with the pronouns, among other things). Eventually, Sean comes to know and admire this character, and the character reappears over several episodes. Ultimately, Sean shuts down the practice of an alcoholic plastic surgeon who is operating on transsexuals unsafely, so becomes a hero to the transgender community. The sex lives of all *Nip/Tuck* characters are far from heteronormative. Sean's son, Matt, has a gay girlfriend so submits to three-ways so she can have sex with other women. Matt falls in love with and moves in with an older

male-to-female transsexual, who Sean also sees as “hot;” she has an adoptive son in a decidedly non-nuclear family template. Matt beats up, then befriends, and then dates another transsexual, this one pre-operative. The program can be lauded for clearly educating its viewers on the distinctions between transvestite and transgendered, and between the various surgical distinctions on the way to sexual reassignment. The *Nip/Tuck* anesthesiologist is a lesbian, and Sean’s wife has a serious love affair with a woman. Heteronormativity is not the norm on *Nip/Tuck*.

In *The Shield*, an African American police officer, Julien Lowe, struggles to “contain” his homosexuality, and tries religion and heterosexual marriage as methods of containment. Other officers, including the über-macho members of the special strike team, actually encourage him to accept himself and urge him to reconsider his choice to marry a woman in an attempt to shut down his homosexuality. In every show, the jail cell in the center of the police station is filled with cross-dressing hookers, transsexuals, and gay men. Cruel jokes are made at their expense, and AIDS is mentioned as something “these people” put the police at risk for—yet several story lines develop with one or more of these characters at the center. One is of a love affair between a gay burglar and Officer Lowe reveals tenderness and deep affection between the two men, along with Officer Lowe’s self-loathing about his own homosexuality.

In *Mad Men*, the 1960s ad agency includes a gay art director who is deeply closeted and two other young “creatives” who are gay. One comes out to the sole female copywriter, and then administers to her a much-needed fashion makeover. Because the series is set in a period before gay rights and gay pride gained much media attention (the Stonewall Riots were in 1969) the closeted nature of the gay characters

makes dramatic and historic sense. The series could even ignore issues of gender and sexuality, but instead, it makes clear that these characters are present in the workplace, and reveals some of the closeted behaviors that were more prevalent at that time..

In *Boston Legal*, a cross-dressing client sues for sex discrimination when his boss objects to his wearing women's clothes and assuming a female identity at work. The client, Clarence, seems to have been so well received by the audience that his part was eventually restructured and expanded and he was revealed to be a lawyer who was at his best only when wearing a skirt. Another client, Gil Furnald, is defended when he loses his department store Santa Claus job for admitting he was a transvestite (Kelley, Kelley, Shapiro, and Swarc, 2004). The main characters of the series, Denny Crane and Alan Shore, occasionally cross-dress as cheerleaders, fifties lounge singers, and other female characters for parties or just for fun. While Crane and Shore are also established as confirmed womanizers, thereby reinscribing traditional masculinity, their almost uncommented-upon mutual acceptance of cross-dressing as just another thing to do on a Saturday night does challenge heteronormative ideals.

Third, the nuclear family ideal is no longer upheld in the post-9/11 male-centered dramas. The families are extended, fractured, and filled with exes and steps and convoluted interconnections that defy definition. In *Boston Legal*, the two leading male characters literally marry each other, although they are both heterosexual.

The Shield's central character, Vic Mackey, shares single-parenting duties with his wife, and each of them has serious flaws as parents. Not much is ideal about their family: there isn't enough money, two of the three children are autistic and require high levels of medical and educational services, and the eldest child is recalcitrant and balky.

At one point, his wife steals the children and runs away, a maneuver duplicated by Tommy Gavin's wife on *Rescue Me*. Clearly, nuclear family life leaves something to be desired if the adults keep running away from home. Family life on *Nip/Tuck* is an odd pastiche that is anything but traditional. Sean and Julia are married, but Christian fathered their eldest son, is in love with Julia, and heads the family in a *ménage à trois* of sorts. The son, Matt, marries a woman who was once Sean's lover and Christian's fiancé. Julia moves in with a woman and acquires a stepdaughter (who also, incidentally, attempts to kill her). Sean and Christian have a strong emotional attachment to each other, as well as a possible physical attraction. A foster father raised *Dexter* after "business" enemies slaughtered his drug-dealing mother; his family life consists of receiving ongoing, practical instruction from his foster father about how to be a serial killer and not get caught. Rather than the father-and-son morality tales of, say, *The Andy Griffith Show*, in which Opie was taught right from wrong or perhaps how to catch a fish, *Dexter's* father taught him how to efficiently kill animals and then humans without getting caught.

Post-9/11 male-centered dramas are not about nice, nuclear families living in middle-class neighborhoods. These dramas dismantle traditional notions of family and challenge definitions of masculinity. This movement away from middle-class heteronormativity and the reverence for nuclear family structure may have, in some cases, strengthened the modest nudge that Vavrus observes in the late 1990s into a definite and sometimes defiant post-9/11 push.

Post-9/11 male-centered drama GLBTI characters are less safe and more real

The co-creator of the sitcom *Will and Grace*, Max Mutchnick, is criticized for creating a gay central character that exists for eight seasons without a love interest. Mutchnick's response is that overt sexualization of the character might have gotten the series bumped off of television. "I always got a lot of heat that we didn't take the character far enough," says Mutchnick. "That we didn't see the character sexualize himself enough. And my thinking was always let's just keep the guy on television. Let's just show people that this man can exist and that he can be your neighbor, he can be your doctor or he can be your son and we can learn to live with that" (Mutchnick, 2009).

But in Hollywood and in television, being gay more often means leading lives of despair and self-loathing (*The Boys in the Band*, 1970) or being attacked or murdered (*Brokeback Mountain*, 2006). In his analysis of the reasons why *Brokeback Mountain* does not represent a move forward in media depictions of gays, Johann Hari writes:

The film is tender and sensitive and (most important) tragic. And that's why, far from being a radical break, it actually fits into a long pattern of Hollywood's very constrained acceptance of gay people. The rules are simple, and stretch back to the first back lot MGM ever built. There are two types of Acceptable Gay Man: you can be a sexless sissy who is fairly happy with his female friends and waspish one-liners, or you can be masculine and actually have a sex drive—in which case you will die... if the film was part of a balanced diet of gay movies—some ending happily, some badly—I would champion it with a megaphone... if you want an cinematic excuse for a party, wait until you finally see a Hollywood movie where the boy gets the boy and they live happily ever after (Hari, 2006).

To varying degrees, post-9/11 male-centered television dramas are producing representations of gay people and gay life that is less sensational and doomed than past depictions. The characters of post-9/11 male-centered television dramas regularly include homosexuals, lesbians, transvestites, and transgendered individuals—but then

the storyline moves on. This is an important shift: the most interesting thing about these characters is not, as it turns out, their gender or their sexuality. There are other dramatic arcs to be explored, and off these programs go, on paths other than the predictable “oh no, he’s gay, whatever shall we do?” type of storyline. While it is true that sometimes the reactions of Vic Mackey on *The Shield* or Sean Garrity on *Rescue Me* to characters who have alternative and transgressive masculinities are far from enlightened and progressive, those reactions tend to be *more* enlightened and *more* progressive than, say, the way in which the townsfolk literally tear homosexual character Sebastian to shreds in the 1959 film *Suddenly Last Summer* (Mankiewicz, 1959). The GLBTI characters in post-9/11 male-centered television dramas are not asexual eunuchs. They have sex, but they also have lives. The poignant, annoying, delightful, and powerful aspects of their personalities are part of the story, too. This moves the depictions from Bogle’s buffoon stage into (perhaps still early) stages of deep, full characterizations of human beings with a variety of facets, flaws, and assets. The GLBTI characters in these new dramas are not suicidal, ashamed of themselves, or resigned to lives of hopelessness. They do not automatically flounce or mince, and do not identify themselves with acidic witticisms delivered with droll mannerisms. Some of them are jerks and some of them are likable, some of them are serial killers and some of them are self-sacrificing parents. They are being depicted as being real people.

In the first season of *Rescue Me*, the fire crew happens upon an unusual situation. “You’re not gonna believe this one, boys,” says the Chief to the fire and rescue crew as they climb out of the truck. The Chief says “boys” although one of the firefighters, a new transfer, is Laura.

Laura, standing back from the clot of male firefighters, follows their gaze up into the trees of the New York City park. The camera looks high into the trees, too. A 17-year-old man wearing only briefs clasps a high branch with his legs. Above him, in a higher Y of the branches, perches an older man with long red hair, dressed in a black bra and thong.

The boy on the bottom, the Chief tells the crew, ran away from home with the man on the top, “his boyfriend-slash-girlfriend.” The firefighters stand gape-mouthed and amazed. “Got a fake pair of tits,” says the Chief. “And saving up to buy a vagina.”

Gavin cracks, “Who isn’t?”

“They’ve been up there for about an hour, gropin’ and blowin’ each other,” says the Chief. The male firefighters make various sounds and faces, communicating disgust. “Traumatized a coupla skateboarders. Problem is, when the cop got brave enough to go up there, the two lovebirds keep on climbin’ higher and higher.”

Firefighter Franco says, “Two fags in a tree.”

Lou, another firefighter, says, “It’s a treesome.” The men all laugh. Laura does not. The transsexual up in the tree gleefully raises his arms and yells “Woo-hoo! We just want to be together!” Why they chose the tree for this activity remains unexplained.

A policeman on the ground confronts the firefighters. “Who’s goin’ up? You know the one in the thong’s afraid of heights. So you know, uh, he/she/it’s gonna be a real hugger on the way back down.”

The men consider this, and look uneasy. Someone asks, “Who’s goin’ up?” “Probie?” Probie, a new, gay, but not yet out of the closet recruit, blanches. “Aw, please, guys, no.”

Laura volunteers. This silences the men, and the Chief sends her up on a motorized ladder. While she climbs, the men make bets on whether or not she'll get the pair rescued without injury. The men cannot imagine any other way to get the "lovebirds" to descend other than to muscle them to the ground. Laura says a few quiet words, the men climb onto her ladder, and she passes them down to safety.

The man with long red hair in a black bra and thong pumps the air. "Be what you wanna be!" he yells.

Puzzled, the Chief asks Laura how she did it. She says she told them, "Look, I know one of you is lookin' to get a vagina, and I already have one, so why don't you come down on the ground and we'll talk about this like girlfriends" (Tolan, Leary, and Alexander, 2004a).

At the scene of the tree bound lovers, the firefighter crew is clear about their feelings regarding homosexuality, transvestism, and transgenderism. They are disgusted by it all, and yet they are neither shocked nor angry. They employ humor to deal with the situation, and when one of them, Laura, figures out a way to gracefully deal with the unusual circumstances, they offer her grudging admiration. They do not extend unconditional acceptance toward the male lovers, but they are amused; there is no shred of anger, fear, or violence. They do express some hesitancy about who specifically would rescue the couple, but not about whether or not the rescue would happen. As much as it mines the situation of two men in underwear up a tree for humor, the scene mines the reactions of the firefighters, poking fun at their "manly" posturing and their knee-jerk reactions, which are ultimately displayed as silly. The heroic firefighters who charge into burning buildings are stopped in their tracks by the problem of dealing with

two men up a tree and in love, but a “mere woman” (as they have treated Laura in earlier episodes) easily dispenses with the ominous danger of touching a transvestite. Once the lovers are on the ground, they are not treated brutally or mocked by the firefighters. Admittedly, the reception of the pre-op transgendered individual is not warm and understanding, and there is a judgment that what is going on here between these two male lovers is bizarre and funny. And yet, the television program mocks the male reactions as much as the male lovers, and that the hegemonic pushback is at least a bit tongue-in-cheek.

In the next season, the crew rescues smoke inhalation victims from a fire at a sex club. One of the “women” they pull from the flames is revealed to be one of their own crew, Sully, a “firefighter’s firefighter” who is brave in the field, cooks spectacular firehouse meals, and gives a heckuva neck massage. Sean administers mouth-to-mouth when Lou notices something amiss.

Lou: (*shocked*) All the angels and saints!

Franco: Holy shit.

Probie: Is that Sully? (*Sean checks, sees that it is, and jumps up and away from him instantly*)

Chief: Blessed screaming Jesus on a whole-wheat goddamn cracker.

Sean: Okay, I think I'm gonna puke.

Sully: Wait, guys let me explain.

Lou: Go ahead, man. We're all ears.

Sully (*laughs*): Oh, who am I kiddin', right? I like to dress up like a chick, okay? I like to wear panties and high heels. (Tolan, Leary, and Fortenberry, 2005).

In the sex club rescue scene, after applying mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to Sully, Sean talks about gagging and puking. Up to this point, they've all liked Sully, but now that he is exposed as a transvestite, their acceptance is revoked. Yet Sully is relentlessly cheerful in announcing that he likes to wear women's underwear, and if his co-workers can't cope, so what? The firefighters remain physically close to him and don't leave the scene; they are surprised, but not repulsed. Again, much of the humor in the scene comes from the reactions of the men in the crew, from their surprise and their silly curses. What is notable here is that Sully himself does not appear to feel threatened. He briefly considers lying his way out of this, and then he decides to own his cross-dressing with apparent good cheer. His body language and tone of voice display no fear of reprisal from his colleagues. They don't beat him up, they don't push him around, they don't deny him rescue or emergency care. He does not feel physically threatened, he's just been outed—and he doesn't sound too tense about that. In the next episode, Sully transfers out of the house, neatly dispensing with any difficulties for the show's writers of resolving the crew's reactions to working alongside a transvestite. But Sully was present for a moment, he was well liked before his outing, and he was not rejected violently by the crew. He existed, he was a fully formed character, he was not demonized, and he was not stripped of his admirable qualities in order to be portrayed as GLBTI. Admittedly, Sean saying he wanted to "puke" following administering mouth-to-mouth to Sully signals a masculine rejection of the alternative masculinity

present in the transvestite, but in the scene, the person exhibiting adult behavior with integrity is Sully, not Sean. Sully faces the music; Sean acts like an idiot.

He's gay—so what?

There is often a matter-of-factness to encounters with fire victims, family members, and colleagues who are GLBTI in *Rescue Me* as well as in other post-9/11 male-centered television dramas. When Sean unwittingly dates a transvestite and discovers his date is “packing pork *and* beans” in his panties, Sean delays any confrontation until after the oral sex is finished. Later, Sean reflects thoughtfully, “it would’ve seemed rude to interrupt” (Caleo and Bernstein, 2004). He tells this tale to the firehouse crew without much embarrassment. The crew enjoys the joke on Sean, but there is also a sense in the air in the firehouse that, well, a blowjob is a blowjob—no matter who is administering it. When Gavin’s daughter takes a female lover, Gavin not only accepts her lesbianism but also celebrates that he no longer has to worry about boys making her pregnant. Probie, the youngest recruit in the crew, comes out as homosexual after a series of triangles and bisexual affairs. “He may be a homo, but he’s our homo,” says Tommy Gavin, and that’s that.

In *Nip/Tuck*, some patients and doctors are gay and some are straight, and sexual proclivities, while a major part of the script for most characters, are not always the point of each character’s presence. Richard Chamberlain makes a cameo appearance as the wealthy partner of a young man he’d like to see surgically improved. Julia separates from Sean and develops a romantic liaison with acupuncturist Olivia Lord, played by Portia de Rossi. Her son, Matt, becomes lovers with an older woman who is revealed to

be a sexual reassignment surgery patient of an orchid-loving legendary plastic surgeon, played by Alec Baldwin. She does turn out to be somewhat psycho, but for a while, she appeared to be a pretty average person, and her psychosis is not particularly linked to her gender identity. Matt also forms a friendship with a pre-op transgendered woman (after he beats her up, but they work all that out).

In *Boston Legal*, cross-dressing attorney Clarence is welcome to dress up as his alter ego “Clarice” in the office, and even to channel her during tricky court trials, because Clarice is one self-actualized, no-nonsense lady. Newcomers may cast a glance askance, but then the plot keeps moving, and familiarizes audiences with both Clarice and Clarence, encouraging empathy with both of them.

In *The Shield*, homosexual officer Julien Lowe struggles to accept his homosexuality. His relationship with a cross-dressing gay man who is arrested and incarcerated at the police station is revealed to have flirtatious, tender moments as well as passion. Julian’s on-again, off-again partner is a burglar, but he is also kind, deeply attracted to Julian, and in possession of more self-acceptance and agency than is Julian. The particular challenges of being out as a police officer are not glossed over, and Julian endures hazing and worse at the hands of some of his fellow officers. Others defend and support him, even when he tries to use religion to “convert” to heterosexuality and then marries a woman. Vic Mackey, far from a sensitive confidant, seeks Julian out before his wedding and counsels him that he can’t change his fundamental self and that he shouldn’t try. Julian’s partner, Danny, also advises Julian to accept his homosexuality. It appears that at least some of his fellow officers would respect him more for accepting himself and coming out than for living a lie.

In these male-centered dramas, GLBTI characters may experience prejudice initially, but eventually friendships of one sort or another generally ensue. The heroes of these dramas appear more at ease with and accepting of male behavior that lies outside of heteronormativity. There may be some snickering, but the sympathy of most scenes lies with the character being snickered at, while the snicker-er is cast as being in the wrong. While this is not a wholly formed GLBTI gaze, it is one moved slightly off-focus from dead center, spot-on heteronormativity.

Post-9/11 male-centered dramas do not treat GLBTI persons with unabashed enlightenment and tenderness—or even always intelligently and fairly—but these dramas are taking steps that appear to represent a shift from the past. First, there are more GLBTI characters. Second, these characters get more airtime, returning as repeat characters or becoming regular cast members. Third, the main characters of these dramas are called upon to grow up and develop increased sensitivity and tolerance for GLBTI persons, and generally, they manage to accomplish that. Fourth, characterizations of GLBTI persons are more fully drawn: we get to go home with some of them, meet their parents, watch them feed their cats, see that they lead fairly ordinary lives. Fifth, GLBTI characters are not automatically admirable martyrs nor evil nasty people (although apparently the serial killer on *Nip/Tuck* did turn to crime because he was born without a penis); some are criminals and some are crime fighters, some are bad guys and some are good gals. And sixth, generally GLBTI characters do not just “happen” to be something other than straight—they are fully sexualized beings who flirt, seduce, and make love.

The twisted sexual plots are, of course, excellent devices to reel in audiences and, ultimately, sponsors and revenue. There is a political economy component to putting sexual titillation on the air, and what particularly titillates is anything that seems to fall, at least for the moment, outside of what might be considered mainstream. What becomes ultimately redeeming about all the sexuality issues that male-centered television dramas air is that once they've waved them like red flags during sweeps week, they move on and treat GLTBI characters as human beings. The sexual relationships and activities may sometimes be bizarre (as in *Nip/Tuck's* various sexual triangles in which biological father, legal father, and son share, over time, the same lovers), played for shock value (as in *Nip/Tuck's* penis-less serial killer), or played for laughs (as in *Rescue Me's* lovers up a tree), but ultimately they become humane and very human, as well.

What the transgendered figure offers

Bogle, Tuchman, Sarikakis, and Vavrus argue that the character of media representation bears consequences for marginalized groups portrayed. The presence of transgendered, transvestite, and transgressive masculinities challenge the cultural insistence on a limited dichotomy of gender. The transgendered figure approaches body and gender with fluidity, dwelling within a body that reads biologically as one gender and living an interior life that wishes to (and eventually may) express itself and live as another. The transgendered figure disrupts the placement of "Other," moving it from an opposite gender to something that cannot be opposite, because position cannot be fixed. The transgendered figure offers feminism new vistas, replacing feminisms anchored to

nonambiguous female bodies with the possibilities of multiple perspectives. The transgendered figure also reconstructs masculinity, rendering the non-masculine others ambiguous, amorphous, and ever changeable. Suddenly, masculinity cannot be defined as that which is not female, when some types of masculinity include performing femininity, or at least trying it on. The existence of the transgendered figure blurs boundaries and complicates the defending, staking, and mapping of gender categories.

Exploring what these possibilities mean for ideas of contemporary masculinity requires the uncovering of a deep contradiction inherent within the transgendered figure's journey toward another gender. It is that word, "another." In "The Empire Strikes Back," Sandy Stone (1991) writes that the pursuit of a gender transformation in itself indicates a deep belief in the dichotomy of gender on the part of the transgendered person—otherwise, one might dwell comfortably in the land of multiple genders within one body and not seek to identify with one gender at the expense of another. Stone problematizes a phrase that surfaces frequently and is acceptable and understood in the transgendered community: "being in the wrong body." She argues that this term forecloses possibilities of analyzing more free-floating types of desire, and it anchors particular types of desire to specific anatomies. By saying one feels to be in the "wrong body," there is an automatic admission that body is linked to gender—precisely the sort of automatic articulation Judith Butler argues vehemently against. Stone wants to consider desire as being less anchored to one gender category, to open up the possibilities of desire outside of boundaries, and the idea of being in the wrong body works against this. The phrase "wrong body" also supports the hegemonic constraints of dichotomous genders, and indicates that appropriate attraction works in only one

direction between only those two groups. Stone argues that these one-way streets of desire are neither realistic nor positive, and calls for an acceptance of a multitude of gazes: the trans-gaze and the poly-gaze. Without these gazes, possibilities for more multifarious attractions and ways of being in the world are shut down. While making claims of how the transgendered figure may work to draw less distinct and more free-flowing boundaries around masculinity, it is necessary to acknowledge that the very existence of transgendered persons is in some ways testimony to the rigidity of social ideas about the dichotomy of gender.

Additionally, this suggests that GLBTI labels and other labels meant to define and categorize sexuality and gender identification are also problematic. In *Female Masculinity*, Judith Halberstam (1998) argues against using the labels “butch” and “femme,” among others, finding these labels limiting and unhelpful. Some of the labels, such as “queer,” are so inclusive as to be imprecise and virtually meaningless. Precise definitions for certain labels are not universally agreed upon among the GLBTI community and are not readily understood in heteronormative society. Halberstam offers up a detailed list of additional labels, but admits that the moment a label is coined, another one emerges in need of another name. The notion of labels being able to accurately categorize sexuality and gender implies that there are knowable limits to what gender and sexuality can be. It also implies that these qualities are fixed and immovable, and forecloses the possibility that gender and sexuality may be fluid, changeable, and evolving. The “transgender” and GLBTI labels are used here with the intention of being both inclusive and fluid, with the acknowledgment that labels can also work to exclude and create rigidity.

Halberstam argues that disassociating masculinity from an exclusive articulation to the male anatomy and allowing masculinity to be a free-floating concept that can be interpreted and performed by women offers a fresh perspective from which to view masculinity. The transgendered figure offers a similar perspective. Gay men, butch women, men who dress as women, women who are surgically altered to be men, men who are surgically altered to be women—all offer alternative lenses through which to view and consider what masculinity means.

Halberstam is not positioning female masculinity as being in competition with male masculinity—she offers it as an additional prism through which to view masculinity, an overlooked and undervalued perspective and option. Halberstam uses examples from television and film to illustrate female characters that possess and demonstrate specific types of masculinity, usually without being recognized as having done so. For example, in film depictions of female masculinity (Demi Moore in *G.I. Jane*, Signourney Weaver in *Alien*), strength, confidence, aggression, and even violence are presented without the attendant (and arguably male) attributes of dominance and arrogance. There is a female tradition and practice of performing masculinity, Halberstam argues, and it does not neatly sort itself into lesbian categories, nor does it elide heterosexual ones. Women can embrace, practice, embroider upon, try out, and demonstrate masculinity, without trying to imitate or masquerade as one of the boys. Halberstam argues that there is a difference between passing and dragging, and a difference between masculinity and being a man. Like the transgendered figure, female masculinity renders gender boundaries amorphous and pliable (Halberstam, 1998).

Judith Butler argues that gender-sex-sexuality are not automatically articulated (1999). The body does not have an automatic connection to gender or sexuality. Gender is performative. It congeals and constrains in ways that make it appear naturalized, but it is, in fact, constructed in particular historical, cultural, and social moments and by those forces. Discourse constructs gender, as well—and the transgendered figure offers a discourse of example as well as language to trouble the gender waters further.

Although gender is performative to Butler, she makes it clear that there is no such thing as a pre-determined subject. No one of us can stand outside of gender, without gender, staring in at a wardrobe of gender options, making our choice. Already, our options are constrained, our choices limited and pre-ordained within certain boundaries. Still, to see gender as a performance, though not of the Shakespearean kind, is helpful in conceiving how gender politics might be reconstituted and reimagined. Butler paraphrases Gloria Anzaldúa in defining feminism, and points to how it opens possibilities for us to learn to speak each other's languages, to respect each other's cultures, to speak across boundaries, and to even give boundaries a different meaning that the limiting and policing one they often now possess.

It is this sort of freedom from boundaries that the transgendered figure offers to masculinity, as well as to gender and on to feminist politics. The constraints of essentialist arguments of female v. male sensibilities and abilities become permeable when confronted with the transgressive figure. In fact, it becomes well nigh impossible to define essentialist if you can't...quite...define...gender. This refusal of categorization and transgression of categorization makes all manner of additional categories possible—while eloquently raising the question, “Why have categories at

all?” Like the Other who is not out there but in here, always internal, according to Stuart Hall, so the transgendered figure is also internalized in each of us. And there is it both freed and freeing.

What is the transgendered figure doing here?

What work is the transgendered and transgressive figure doing in post-9/11 male-centered television dramas?

In some ways, these characters may work to broaden images of acceptable masculinities. If Vic Mackey on *The Shield* thinks the gay guy on the police force is an asset to his special strike team, then perhaps audience members feel more amenable to collaborating with gay or lesbian co-workers and colleagues. If the guys in the firehouse of *Rescue Me* work with, rescue, and date gay men, lesbian women, transvestites, and transgendered people, then perhaps the world outside of heteronormativity need not feel quite so foreign. Making a space on television that embraces a continuum of sexualities may increase the comfort and decrease the anxiety of some audiences. Following the observations of Bogle and the arguments of Tuchman, Sarikakis, and Vavrus, being represented is good, and being represented in better-than-stereotypical ways is better, therefore the transgendered and GLBTI characters of these dramas work to expand what feels familiar to audiences.

Yet in other ways, these characters may work to replace and obliterate women in an extension of the boys’ clubhouse culture. In her examination of the film *Three Men and a Baby*, Tonia Modleski warns that the apparently feminist media texts that present single fatherhood may also allow male appropriation of women’s work, relegating

women to the margins (Modleski, 1991, pp. 79-80). In this way seemingly feminist ideas and actions can work to silence and even eliminate women. What appear to be alternative or resistant masculinities can then work to reinscribe and reinstate patriarchy. It is therefore important to avoid being enthusiastically celebratory of progressive masculinities without carefully examining the hegemonic, heteronormative, and patriarchal tenants these “new” masculinities may be shielding and supporting.

For example, when the two heterosexual male leads of *Boston Legal* decide to marry each other, this may be a supportive gesture toward same-sex marriage, an acknowledgement and honoring of deep friendship, and/or an excising of the role of women. The two heterosexual male leads of *Nip/Tuck* abandon in various ways and at various times their children, their wives, and female lovers in order to consistently prioritize their friendship. This may be another touching tribute to friendship, but it also contains a scathing message about the relevance of wives, female partners, and children in the lives of contemporary men. In *Rescue Me*, Gavin tells a story of a firefighter who retired to spend more time with his family, but shortly killed himself because he missed his “other family”—his fellow firefighters. While this is a moving statement about the fondness men have for the company of other men, it also leaves room for interpretation as a message that women and children can get in the way of the truly essential relationships for a man: his friendships with other men. If a man’s most meaningful relationship is with his co-workers, then the feminist objectives of shared parenting responsibilities, of family-friendly workplaces, of social and legal equality for all genders, begins to lose footing. Such shaky ground is not the most desirable foundation on which to build an expanded, progressive, fluid construction of masculinity.

The transgendered and transgressive figure may be at work in a third way, as well. Perhaps the widened definition of what it is to be masculine, and the slippage of the social construction of masculinity to include a wide variety of expressions in the lives of women and GLBTI individuals, allows the male characters of the post-9/11 television dramas to redraw the boundaries of what being male means to them. The transgendered/transvestite figure may work to make certain television audiences feel secure in their own, heteronormative identity. Some audience members may feel their masculinity, even an anxious or fragile masculinity, is strengthened when confronted with outlier characters that lie even further outside hegemonic masculinity. However, those are not the reactions of the heroes of these television dramas. The male characters of *Nip/Tuck*, *The Shield*, *Rescue Me*, and *Boston Legal* do not shore up their traditional masculinity by distancing themselves from the transgressive masculinities so prevalent on these television programs. Instead, they seem to recognize in themselves a rather silly aversion to transgressive masculinities. They make fun of themselves or others who are startled or threatened by transgressive masculinities. This may be reinscribing dopey male behavior, but it reinscribes it with a major footnote: this behavior is dopey. And there is some hope in that. For the most part, when encountering transgressive masculinities, the men of the post-9/11 male-centered television dramas confront their own limited understandings, adjust their conceptions of what it means to be a man, and move over to make room for a wider, sloppier, more human definition of masculinity. Ultimately, they make themselves into better humans.

Chapter five draws connections between the falling towers and the rise of Viagra, the outing of male sexual anxiety, and the sidelining of female sexual pleasure in male-centered television dramas. Post 9-11 television heroes are flawed and far from potent, yet they are held up as admirable, amusing, and charming. Men can be impotent and still attract Hollywood actresses, men can be sexual failures and still be financially successful, men can be sexual liars and still be delightful characters. Modern television heroes are a lot like the average Joes watching the shows: great at some things, bad at others, confident about a few skills, uncertain and ill at ease about other abilities. This treatment opens a space for viewers to accept and voice sexual anxieties, amid the shaming, hazing, teasing, and practical joking of men in a clubhouse.

Sexual anxiety has moved from the shadows of public discussion to the forefront since the events of 9/11. This is due not only to the emergence of erectile dysfunction drugs in the very late 1990s but to the emergence of new and possibly more mature notions of what it means to be heroic and masculine in America. American men did not and could not save the day on September 11, 2001. They tried, and died, but they could not save the country nor could they save many victims. They could not save themselves. American technology could not save them, either, and their failed radios contributed to their deaths. American economic prowess saved no one and in fact attracted the enemy. The American heroic capability to rescue, to fight, and to win is at stake and under fire, and it is losing. American masculinity has been brought to Ground Zero, fertile ground on which to build new masculinities that allow anxiety to coexist with swagger.

Chapter Five

The Towers Come Down, Viagra Goes Up: Male Sexual Anxiety as Plot Device

Even cowboys get the blues, and heroes are not always intact and functioning.

The men of the post-9/11 male-centered television dramas are often uneasy and anxious about their masculinity, and the scripts take this anxiety directly into the bedroom. These heroes are not created in the style of the always-confident and ever-sexual secret agents, like the men from U.N.C.L.E. or Captain James T. Kirk. The post-9/11 heroes don't always have the right gadget for the job or even know how the gadgets work, can't solve every problem (much less save the world or universe from certain destruction), and aren't necessarily up for sex with every Russian spy or alien scientist they encounter. These post-9/11 heroes aren't always sure how to get into the bedroom, and once they are there, aren't certain that the equipment is going to work.

The boys' clubhouses offer reassurance and provide a safe haven to either explore or ignore those anxieties alongside other men. The transgendered figure, so common in these television dramas, offers a fresh way to view the continuums of gender and sexuality and works to broaden understandings of masculinity. And through this all runs a common chord: a deep-seated, abiding unease about making the grade as a masculine man.

Phallic skyscrapers

The Twin Towers stand as a set of national twin phalluses, symbolizing strength and power in international economic matters. Certainly the towers symbolized

capitalism, world dominion, and financial influence, or the terrorists would not have identified them as meaningful targets.

In the UK, the BBC offered its own post-9/11 male-centered series, *Cracker*. Its hero is a brilliant and witty but deeply flawed private investigator named Fitz (Robbie Coltrane) who is a compulsive gambler, an alcoholic, morbidly obese, and personally haunted. He defines himself: “I drink too much, I smoke too much, I gamble too much, I *am* too much” (McGovern, 1995). His family life is far from placid, and at his daughter’s wedding, he picks a fight with a wedding guest over the fall of the towers in the United States. “Americans like to terrorize, fund terrorism around the world, but when it comes home to roost, they don’t like it much,” he says. “What do you think of Bush? People hate him so much they fly planes into his country. Some people might ask why, but Bush just lashes out.” Interspersed with the shots of the wedding are clips of international news coverage of the events of 9/11: Bush, Blair, protests in the streets of London, military announcements, Middle East war scenes. “They meant money, didn’t they?” asks Fitz, although everyone wishes he’d just shut up. “The Twin Towers meant money. Never was a target better chosen” (McDougall, et. al., 2006).

Even if it has not yet been commonly described in this country as an emasculating act, the attack on the Twin Towers is seen by the character Fitz, the writers of *Cracker*, and likely more than a handful of Europeans as an act meant to bring down American arrogance and swagger. It might be considered a direct assault on the know-it-all American cowboy, a clear statement that there are new gunfighters at the end of Main Street and that the outcome at high noon may not always be as predictable in the future as Americans have believed it to be in the past. America is getting its

comeuppance, and it is a comeuppance that is seen by some as long overdue. On *Cracker*, Fitz says it is tragic that innocent cleaners and cooks—who were the “collateral damage” of the attacks—sustained the consequences, but he clearly sees American self-importance and egotism as deserving of being knocked down a peg—or even 110 stories.

There is evidence that size matters.

Cities and the countries that house them are proud of their tallest structures. They symbolize economic prowess, technological acumen, and a leading presence in the world economy and marketplace. Tall buildings attract tourists, and they also signify economic clout, technical acumen, and prowess and importance on the world stage. The Burj Dubai in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, which is scheduled for completion in late 2009, will be the tallest free-standing structure on Earth and is heralded as returning this “title” to the Middle East for the first time since 1311, when the Great Pyramid of Giza bowed to the Lincoln Cathedral of England. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum “wanted to put Dubai on the map with something really sensational,” according to Jaqui Josephson of Nakheel Properties (Stack, 2005). There are economic advantages—in a renowned and extra-tall skyscraper, developers can charge much higher rents. Mohamed Ali Alabbar, the CEO of Emaar Properties, claims that the price of office space at Burj Dubai is \$4,000 per square foot (Zawya, 2008). But tall buildings work to position nations as powerful and modern; like chess pieces on a board, they work to position a nation as a world-class player.

Of the 200 tallest skyscrapers in 2009, 99 of them were standing in 2001. Of those 99, 47 were in the United States (including the Twin Towers). Several of those—

the Empire State Building, the Chrysler Building, the Trump Building, the GE Building among them—had made that list since the 1930s. Nearly half of the world’s tallest buildings in 2001 were in the United States. Compared to America’s 45 leading skyscrapers, China had 18; Japan 7; Australia 6; Malaysia, Singapore, and Canada 4; the United Arab Emirates 3; Germany 2, and Indonesia, Korea, Saudi Arabia, the Philippines, and Russia each 1. The United States had twice as many tall skyscrapers as did the country in second place, which was China, and no other country even came close (Emporis, 2009).

Then the towers fell.

Since 9/11, China has built 46 skyscrapers that now make the “Top 100 World’s Tallest Skyscrapers” list. The United Arab Emirates, chiefly Dubai, have built 17. The United States has built an additional 9. Russia and Korea have added 4, Japan and Australia 3, Singapore and Spain 2, and Israel, Thailand, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Qatar, Turkey, and Kuwait, each 1 (Emporis, 2009).

In 2009, China and the United States together have 108 of the 200 world’s tallest skyscrapers; China has 64, the United States, 54. The United Arab Emirates has 20 (Emporis, 2009).

Whose is biggest is a matter of argument, measurement, and category. Buildings move up and down the charts based on whether or not towers and various electrical and weather appendages at the top can or cannot be counted; whether all space measured must be habitable; whether one starts to measure at the base platform or on top of it. The parallels between measuring other objects shaped like skyscrapers are obvious. Size and rank are discussed in terms of being “overtaken,” “dethroned” and “displaced”—

not to mention “erected”—and cities brag about these landmarks using terms such as “towering,” “impressive,” and “looming” (Associated Press, 2004; Central Plaza Hong Kong, 2009; About.com: Architecture; CBC News, September 12, 2007). Being tallest is a “distinction” (Petronas Towers, 2009). Being tall makes the CN Tower in Ontario the “icon of Toronto’s skyline and a symbol of Canada” (CBC News, 2007); no longer being the tallest creates sadness in the land: “CN tower dethroned by Dubai building” (CBC News, 2007). As the Dubai building reaches for the stars, the Canadian Broadcasting Company reported sadly that the CN Tower would no longer be the world’s tallest building. It describes the tower’s reputation as being “at risk,” quotes one Toronto citizen as saying “we had a lot of pride” and a Winnipeg resident as sniping, “They’ll just have to get a big box of Kleenex and get used to it” (CBC News, 2007).

The connection of a people to a tall structure is emotional and economic. In his social history of the skyscraper in America, George Douglas (2004) describes a tall building as “a symbol that this once struggling and diminutive community has arrived...the skyscraper is ensign of style and substance and prosperity” (p. 3)—a symbol with origins in American soil that is “largely the product of American dreams and aspirations” (p. viii).

Skyscrapers...are a distinctly modern style of architecture, and an American style in their origin. Since they are office buildings rather than churches, palaces, residences, or monuments to the dead, skyscrapers are often taken to be purely utilitarian products of modern technology—occupied, some may think, by faceless drones, computers or calculating machines (Douglas, 2004, p. 1).

Douglas points to the skyscrapers of New York City as international symbols of national attitudes.

The skyline of New York is a monument, an outward symbol of an aggressive and once confident people, a technological achievement that is matchless in the history of the human race. In the private opinion of the typical European visitor and world traveler, the United States is a land of materialists, and indeed it may be that the vast and lofty buildings are a symbol of a shallow and money-grasping people (Douglas, 2004, p. 2).

Skyscrapers have always represented power, Douglas argues, and there was never subtlety in the symbolism.

The skyscraper would become a symbol of collective and corporate power, and many a great financier or industrialist sought to have a high building bear his name, even if only as a flamboyant gesture of public relations and advertising...there are those who find them vulgar, pretentious and vainglorious (Douglas, 2004, p. 4).

Size is an achievement to be celebrated and a distinction to be mourned if surrendered. Buildings are not as lauded, nor do tourists flock to see them, because they are particularly safe or green or designed to ensure that form does indeed follow function. What puts a city on the map, what ranks a state amid its peers, what makes a nation appear powerful, what really counts, is size.

Size is also a competition between cities, cultures, and nations. Kimmel writes, "Manhood is less about the drive for domination and more about the fear of others dominating us" (2006, p. 4). It does not seem to be an exaggeration to consider the attacks on and subsequent collapse of the Twin Towers as a metaphoric castration of the nation. It was a diminishment of national arrogance, and it seems to have shaken the American position as world leader in tall buildings. The blow that was struck did more than topple the towers. It weakened and eventually seriously threatened the economic system of the country, and, to varying degrees, the world.

The emasculation of the nation left at Ground Zero a literal and figurative hole, an emptiness, a thing to be filled rather than towering twin edifices challenging the planet to “top this.” Following 9/11, debates ensued about whether to erect fresh skyscrapers or leave the hollow, empty cavern as a symbol—to choose phallus or femininity, power or vulnerability. As the towers fell and the country struggled to come to terms with at least a small portion of what the attacks might have meant to the nation, television began to explore ideas of masculinities that were run-through with fragility and weaknesses. Something new arose in male-centered television.

Viagra: a response to castration

Post 9/11, erectile dysfunction drugs emerge on television as frequent plot devices in scripts—and in order for them to function, the male anatomy of their characters cannot. This in turn creates heroes who contemplate and openly discuss their sexual anxieties and offer either free or funded product placement to pharmaceutical companies by talking about, sharing, and using Viagra and similar medications in weekly episodes.

In *Big Love*, HBO’s male-centered drama about polygamists, the lead character Bill uses Viagra to keep up with his three wives. *Nip/Tuck*’s plastic surgeon Sean is shown being frustrated by suffering periods of impotence. Sean’s business partner, Christian, has trouble getting an erection with a hooker, so he blames her low-quality breast implants. One of their patients seeks reconstructive facial surgery to correct the results of a stroke brought on by Viagra. *Boston Legal*’s Denny Crane takes Viagra so often that it makes his penis buzz during trial (a fictional side-effect, I hope). *Rescue*

Me's characters—Tommy Gavin, Franco, and the Chief among them—swap Viagra and Cialis with each other, take little blue pills casually before dates, and recommend the drug to each other whenever a fellow appears a bit anxious about a romance. Anxious about his ability to perform, Tommy asks ladies' man Franco for Viagra. Franco brings him "the longer lasting one" (which would make it Cialis, not Viagra, but Viagra still gets the plug) (Tolan, Leary, and Tolan, 2005).

Erectile dysfunction is discussed without explanation, and medications to treat it are referenced with the assumption that all the characters and all the audience viewers will automatically know what is being discussed. After a bout of sex on *Rescue Me*, a woman asks Tommy, "You still hard?" "A little," he admits. She looks down. "That's a little? Did you take something?" He did, but he won't admit it. "No, that's just you, that's all natural," he reassures her (Tolan, Leary, and Girotti, 2006). The Chief is in bed with his new lady friend. "I am very impressed with your stamina," she says. He replies, "Me and Mr. Wonderful here, we had a little help" (Tolan, Leary, and Girotti, 2006). Without naming names, she can say "something" and the Chief can say "a little help" and the show's writers and producers can feel reasonably confident that the audience will pick up on the reference. One-liners about performance-enhancing drugs riddle the scripts of all these programs. In conversation with Alan Shore on *Boston Legal*, a reporter makes an off-hand reference: "—any man who takes Viagra, and trust me, I have been with a bunch—" In a *Nip/Tuck* episode set in the future, an aging but still cavorting Christian explains his double dating practices: "They only love me for my money, but they don't quit until the super-Viagra wears off so who gives a shit" (Murphy, Salt, Chilton, and McKee, 2006). Tommy Gavin yells, "Jesus! Mary Tyler

Moore and Eartha Kitt? I'd need a blindfold, four Viagra, and a strap-on to do either one of them" (Tolan, Leary, and Scurti, 2006).

The potential consequences of erectile dysfunction drugs are also out in the open, and probably over-dramatized. Television characters have strokes and heart attacks from using Viagra and similar medications; now and then, they even perish. Still, characters share each other's pills and pop them like M&Ms, blissfully unconcerned about such consequences when the night (or the partner) is young and romance is in the air. *Boston Legal's* Denny Crane collapses from mixing too many drugs, including Viagra, and nearly dies. *Big Love's* Bill ends up in the emergency room after taking too many Viagra for his too many wives. *Rescue Me's* Chief suffers a heart attack after Viagra-assisted sex. A *Nip/Tuck* character has a stroke after he takes Viagra with wine before sex with his wife.

In post-9/11 male-centered television dramas, performance anxiety is rife, and anatomy comparisons are fodder for humor and unease. The penis size of both *Rescue Me's* Franco and *Nip/Tuck's* Christian are legendary, which goes hand-in-hand with their indiscriminate womanizing and the envy they inspire on both counts among their fellow male characters. In the "Inches" episode of *Rescue Me*, the firefighters argue over which matters most, length or width. A chart is drawn up and posted, and each man retires to the washroom with a measuring tape and returns to post his results. In what may perhaps be a nod to the average viewer sitting in his Barcalounger, it is the middle-aged and slightly dumpy Lou who wins the contest, not the swaggering and criminally handsome Franco. *Nip/Tuck's* Sean is envious of the womanizing Christian and compares himself unfavorably with Christian in terms of numbers of lovers, the

exotic nature of the pairings, and Christian's legendary size. While scrubbing for surgery on twins, Sean asks, "You ever done twins?" Christian grins. "Mother and daughter once, never twins." Before the young women leave recovery, he can no longer make that statement (Murphy, 2003b). When several wealthy women are interested in hiring a new plastic surgeon (as if they are going to share the services of a gardener or cleaning lady), they interview Christian. The competition is fierce—so he stands up during a dinner party, drops his pants, and asks if "these 10 inches" will cinch the argument (Murphy and Falchuk, 2008). Sean's jealousy of his business partner leads to his own temporary impotence, and Christian's sexual prowess is idolized by many men in the show (overlooking the empty life Christian himself admits to leading). On *Rescue Me*, Tommy Gavin is a fireman's fireman, a hero to many other characters, a guy with enough hubris and swagger to intimidate men twice his size—but half the time in the sack he disappoints his female partners. He's too fast, he doesn't follow directions, he's unsure of himself, he's baffled. Women bark orders at him and are demanding. After sex, one lover informs him, "I'm gonna need you to go again, once I finish this cigarette...if you're gonna fill in for your nephew, you gotta raise your game. Dammy [Damien] can go three, four times in an hour. Can you keep up the pace or not?" (Tolan, Leary, Alexander, 2006b).

In these male-centered dramas, penises are sometimes treated as independent objects that are not necessarily linked to a man's feelings and that can be switched on or off with chemistry (on *Nip/Tuck*, an angry drug lord injects Christian's penis with Botox to turn it off; Christian pops Viagra like candy for evenings with multiple partners and many other program characters regularly take erectile dysfunction medication to order

their penises into action). In perhaps the most graphic representation of this, on *Nip/Tuck*, Sean's teenaged son Matt tries to perform a circumcision on himself with no anesthesia. He seizes a scalpel and follows directions he found online for how to give yourself a circumcision, staring down at his penis as if it is unconnected to his own nerve endings. He expects to be able to competently perform this self-surgery without being interrupted by anything as annoying as searing pain or a queasy reaction to watching himself bleed. Characters treat their penises as equipment rather than anatomy, with on-off switches and little connection to heart, soul, and mind.

Much is often made of female body parts being treated as objects and marketable ones at that, and this treatment of the male penis may be along those lines; but something else is at work, here, as well. The frequency of discussions of Viagra and its like drugs, the frankness of the anxiety over size and performance, and the offhand and even callous manner in which penises are treated signals a relationship between man and organ that is far from integrated. Matt wants his penis to be circumcised to please a woman, not himself, signaling performance anxiety and anxieties about his own appearance. He is either so divorced from a connection to what that part of his anatomy is feeling or he so privileges the appearance over the experience that he is willing to take a knife to himself without much thought of the physical pain and danger involved. In these dramas, the penis seems to be a tool to gaining homosocial regard, indirectly through the admiration of women regarding performance (which will get back to other men and increase status) and through the admiration of men regarding size.

Although the results of using Viagra and similar drugs certainly affect the sexual partners in the lives of these television heroes, what seems possibly even more

important to them is how their erections and sexual performance position them homosocially. It appears important that the other guys believe a man's sexual performance is top-notch, and perhaps less important that women think so—a woman's opinion seems to matter because it can sway the opinion of other men. There are no scenes of a man tenderly asking his partner if it was good for her or him or if the new drugs are enhancing the couples' romantic lives. Instead, there are scenes of men reporting to other men how things went last night. If one measure of a man is his sexual performance, in these television dramas it is measured by how his sexual performance is reported to other men rather than experienced by his sexual partners. The conversations about sexual anxieties and Viagra are intimate and revealing; the real intimacy here is between the men discussing these issues and not between the couples having sex. There is an intimacy extended to the viewer, as well. Male viewers experience television heroes who lead lives that are enviable in some fashion (successful, exciting, adventurous, etc.)

In these dramas, Viagra also becomes a weapon in the hands of the female partners of men. Women sometimes rape and kill with Viagra. In a modern twist on an old entrapment theme, in *Rescue Me*, Sheila uses both a date-rape drug and Viagra on Tommy Gavin to simultaneously sedate him and make him her boy toy for the evening. She becomes pregnant and convinces him he cannot remember having sex because he was having an alcoholic blackout (Tolan, Leary, and Girotti, 2006). In one episode of *Nip/Tuck*, patient Landau (Larry Hagman) requests reconstructive surgery for his face after a stroke caused by Viagra—and there's a suspicion that his wife gave him the drug in an attempt to trigger his heart condition and kill him (Murphy, Falchuk, and Haid,

2006). The *Boston Legal* attorneys defend another young wife of a rich man against charges that she murdered him by giving him Viagra when she knew he had a weak heart (Kelley and Sanford, 2005).

In these ways, the drug meant to strengthen a man's influence and position with other men is used against him, making him vulnerable and even injuring or killing him. Women use men's vanity and desire for sexual prowess against them, using their bodies or killing them. The *Boston Legal* episode is even entitled "Black Widow" reinforcing the idea of the female of the species that kills the male after sex.

In none of these dramas do the Viagra-enforced characters report of their own intense sexual pleasure, either. The one pay-off for using these drugs seems to (again) be about enhancing only homosocial relationships. The use of Viagra among television heroes appears to deliver little shared pleasure with one's partner, no particular personal pleasure, and in some cases, even death.

The heroes of post-9/11 male-centered television dramas wear their sexual insecurities quite openly. It is impossible to imagine *Dragnet's* Sgt. Friday confessing to Sgt. Gannon that he can't quite get it up the way he used to, and yet this conversation occurs repeatedly on *Rescue Me*, *Boston Legal*, and *Nip/Tuck*. The events of 9/11 opened a space for the creation of a new type of American television hero—one who reassures the average Joe viewer that his particular sexual anxieties are the anxieties of even heroic figures on the screen. The new heroes are heroic because they are not flawless and confident. They are troubled and uncertain, they bumble and they fail, and yet they strive to achieve something noble with their days: they rescue people from fire in *Rescue Me*, they champion nearly lost causes on *Boston Legal*, they save scarred

victims and rebuild their anatomies on *Nip/Tuck*. The nobility is all the more striking and perhaps admirable because it arises in common men. When the towers fell on 9/11, the iron-hard confidence of America in the international arena collapsed, as well.

At the close of the first season of *Rescue Me*, the firefighting crew is standing together, looking at the New York City skyline:

Sean: It's a nice view, huh?

Tommy: Yeah. It'll never be the same for me.

Franco: Yeah, me either.

Laura: Even when they put up whatever it is that they're putting up.

Franco: It's like they're trying to erase what happened, you know?

Chief: It's insulting. Remember when they had those spotlights right after 9/11? I couldn't take that. I like it like this...empty.

Just the way those scumbags left it. No spotlights, no new buildings, just empty.

Tommy: Yeah. That's the thing about the spotlight, you know.

Walk out into it and at first everybody thinks they see a good-lookin' all-American hero. But then you stay out there long enough and you know, they start to notice certain things. Maybe your nose is a little crooked, you know, maybe your teeth are too crooked. Maybe you got a little scar on your upper lip. Your hair's not right. One eye's bigger than the other. Next thing you

know they think they're looking at some kinda goddamn monster.

Like they're lookin' at *King Kong*. Then they start throwin' shit at ya (Tolan, Leary, and Tolan, 2004b).

Enter Viagra

For television, erections are big business.

Viagra, or sildenafil citrate, was originally intended to treat high blood pressure and heart disease. Early clinical trials in the 1990s indicated the drug was not as effective on these conditions as had been hoped, but did document that it induced erections by inhibiting an enzyme that regulates blood flow to the penis (Terrett, et. al., 1996). The drug was patented in 1996 and received FDA approval in 1998 (Kling, 1998). In the most profitable industry in the country, pharmaceuticals, grossing 400 billion dollars worldwide, Viagra became the fastest-selling drug in history, grossing over a billion dollars its first year (Loe, 2004, p. 8).

The first ads for Viagra were launched by Pfizer in 1998, using former United States Senator Bob Dole's testimonials about erectile dysfunction. In 2002, Pfizer spent \$87.3 million to advertise Viagra in the United States alone (the drug is also marketed internationally). By 2003, sales had reached nearly \$2 billion. It was first marketed in 1998. Shortly thereafter, the drug vardenafil was marketed as Levitra. Levitra, a Viagra-type competitor, is produced by GlaxoSmithKline PLC and Bayer. Marketing focused on using professional athletes and presented Levitra as a lifestyle drug. That approach worked. According to IMS Health Inc., a market research company, two months into

the advertising campaign, doctors reported that many men asked for Levitra by name (Is Viagra vulnerable?, October 27, 2003).

In mid-2001, Indianapolis pharmaceutical company Eli Lilly lost its patent on Prozac; for three years, its earnings plummeted and its stocks dropped 21 percent. Lilly needed a savior. Enter Lilly's version of Viagra, the drug tadalafil marketed as Cialis (based on the French word *ciel* which means, interestingly, "sky," as in scraper). Cialis is bigger and taller than Viagra and other similar drugs—it lasts for up to 36 compared to four hours. Global sales of Cialis—just Cialis, the other Viagra brands are not included in this number—were predicted to reach \$300 million in 2004 (Is Viagra vulnerable?, October 27, 2003). The launch of Cialis was planned as an invasion. "You won't be able to turn on your TV without seeing ads," said Leonard Blum, ICOS vice-president for sales and marketing (Is Viagra vulnerable?, October 27, 2003).

Loe argues that advertising has "succeeded in keeping male sexual problems and potency in the spotlight" (2004, p. 3) and notes that "today, Viagra continues to enjoy high visibility in the mainstream media. The little blue pill has appeared in numerous popular television shows such as *Sex in the City*, *Law & Order*, *Mad About You*, and *Ally McBeal*, each of which has featured storylines about Viagra" (Loe, 2004, p. 18). In her interviews with men who used Viagra, the first prescription drug marketed directly to consumers, Loe finds:

Most male consumers I spoke with told me that they made appointments with doctors for an annual exam after seeing or hearing ads for Viagra and wanting to try the product. Many hadn't visited their doctors for some time. Usually as the doctor was leaving, the patients would ask to try Viagra. Doctors corroborated these stories, agreeing that the discomfort of asking for an erection pill led patients to wait until the last possible minute (2004, p. 23).

That shy patient pattern is a critical one when it comes to the political economy of the FX and male-centered dramas. If drug companies could convince American men—television viewing men—that Viagra and similar drugs were in common use among the heroic, tough, and wealthy men featured in television dramas, then the drugs might receive more widespread acceptance. Of course, the efforts were not wasted on the women in the audience, either, who might provide further impetus and acceptance to a man asking his physician about help with erectile dysfunction. Television commercials were important and helpful—however, getting drugs “placed” within scripts and conversation on television programming added additional cachet and power to the message. There was another reason that product placement might work as well as or better than commercials.

After the initial blitz and success of impotence-treating medications, drug makers found sales dropping off. At the same time, the FDA became very interested in tempering pharmaceutical advertising, at least on network television. A congressional bill was introduced to give the FDA more power over ads, and then Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn) argued for greater restraint in drug pitches, and U.S. Rep Jim Moran of Virginia contacted Pfizer, Eli Lilly and GlaxoSmithKline requesting they “tone down” their erectile dysfunction ads on television (Gallagher, 2009). It seemed that additional federal constraints would eventually be placed on drug advertising on television. In response, and no doubt in hopes that it might head off at the pass more stringent constraints, the industry’s trade group, the Pharmaceutical Research & Manufacturers of America (PhRMA), announced its own new code for advertising, including targeting age-appropriate audiences and presenting risks and benefits in ads.

In January 2009, pharmaceutical giant GlaxoSmithKline PLC announced it would cut back on its future television ads. The drug industry spent more than \$5.2 billion on U.S. ads in 2007. This announcement is linked to the mounting criticism of drug advertising from Democrats in Congress. In the first half of 2008, Glaxo spent \$279.1 million on advertising in the U.S. and Pfizer spent \$462.5 million, according to the Nielsen Company (Whalen, 2009).

For sponsors, advertisements on network television cost more. For drug companies, network commercials are more likely than cable to attract concern from Congress, family groups, and the FDA. Network television ad market niches are wider than those on cable, as well. Cable channels, attracting a narrower and more focused slice of the market niche, need not attempt to attract a wide audience. These factors combine to push television advertising and marketing of drugs from network television to cable programming. By early 2005, Cialis, Viagra, and Levitra drug makers cut their advertising spending because TV ads weren't delivering. Indeed, despite a combined \$400 million spent on consumer ads for those drugs in 2004, U.S. sales were up only about \$100 million, according to market research firm IMS Health Inc. That market had become saturated, with most of the people who were willing to consider treatment already trying these medications, says SG Cowen & Co. analyst Stephen M. Scala (Barrett, et. al., 2005).

As drug makers labor to develop more educational and balanced pitches, they're also trying to better target their messages. Companies wishing to reach female audiences, for example, are placing more ads on cable outlets such as Lifetime and Oxygen. Consultants say that's one reason cable-TV spending has jumped 35%, to \$335 million, in the first five months of this year. Cable is also a big draw because it's less pricey than the networks, based on the number of people

reached per ad, says Thomas H. Chetrick, vice-president for advertising and **marketing** services at Bristol-Myers Squibb Co. (Barrett, et. al., 2005).

Political pressure to limit approaches and messages in television advertising may move some advertisers over to cable. It may also encourage drug makers to look for more opportunities for product placement and mentions of drugs in scripts of television dramas, where political demands are less likely to color the message. This approach also helps distinguish one drug from its competitors, since only one drug is likely to be named. It is awkward enough to work the word “Viagra” into a dramatic script. Getting a character to say, “Viagra, Levitra, and Cialis” is just about impossible.

In 2007, the *Indianapolis Star* ran a story reporting pharmaceutical company Eli Lilly demurring any involvement in the noticeable increase of by-name mentions of drugs on television.

When he feels his life is spinning out of control, TV mobster Tony Soprano reaches for Prozac, an antidepressant developed by Lilly. When trauma doctors on “ER” need to treat a heart patient, they shout for ReoPro, a blood-clot buster co-marketed by Lilly. When a character in the situation comedy “30 Rock” wants to get ready for Valentine’s Day, he takes Cialis, an erectile-dysfunction pill made by Lilly. In the first half of this year, Lilly products were mentioned 48 times on broadcast and cable TV shows, nearly triple the amount from the same period a year ago, according to Nielsen Product Placement. But Lilly says it’s not paying for those plugs, unlike consumer-product giants such as Coca-Cola, Toyota and BlackBerry, which shell out hundreds of millions of dollars to TV and movie studios to mention their products in story lines. “We see these when we’re at home, sitting on the couch, just like everyone else,” said Lilly spokeswoman Judy Kay Moore. “We’re not in cahoots with scriptwriters. We don’t pay them. If it happens, it’s by happenstance” (Russell, 2007).

Yet, when *Indianapolis Star* reporter Russell asked for a quote on the subject from PhRMA, the organization declined to comment. *Brandweek* reports that in 2006, there were 337 visual or audio mentions of prescriptions drugs on television, an increase from 231 in 2005; length of those messages increase from 607 seconds in 2005 to more

than twice that at 1,548 in 1006.. Product placement is an established marketing maneuver (Edwards, 2007). In 2006, companies including Nike and Hewlett-Packard, as well as drug companies, paid \$3.36 billion for product placement in media, a rise of 37 percent over the previous year (Edwards, 2007). In commercials and print advertisements, the FDA can weigh in on what is said and how information is presented; in television scripts, it has no say whatsoever.

Information can be presented so awkwardly that it reads like a drug ad. On *Boston Legal*, a schoolboy died because a teacher failed to inject him with a product called an EpiPen. The boy's father sounds like he works for the pen's producer, a company named Dey, when he testifies, "Anaphylactic shock can come on suddenly...airways can become clogged in less than 30 seconds. If the EpiPen isn't administered, it can be fatal" (Kelley, Kreisberg, et. al., 2007).

Some drug companies willingly own up to product placement. Organon Pharmaceuticals USA brand director Lisa Barkowski says that health care professionals notice when drug brands appear in posters, supplies, and conversation on television medical shows. "They mention it to (our) reps, 'Wow, I saw that poster.' It reinforces in their mind; it makes them think of the product," she says (Edwards, 2007).

When placing drugs by name becomes awkward, pharmaceutical companies find value in placing "disease awareness" messages into television shows (Edwards, 2007). Even non-branded discussion of erectile dysfunction helps support Viagra sales.

Whether or not pharmaceutical companies are paying networks and producers to work drug references into the scripts of male-centered television dramas—and drug companies are reluctant to go on the record about this—these dramas are supporting

sales of these drugs by mentioning them so often, working them into plotlines, and normalizing a “reality” in which viewers see erectile dysfunction as ubiquitous and drug use to treat it as casual. TV male-centered dramas are at once peddling Viagra and shaming men for needing it, but the shaming is often the beginning of the narrative arc, culminating in acceptance and support from buddies who admit they, too, once had a “little problem” that was temporary fixed with the little blue pill. It’s a brilliant marketing device. Characters can joke about Viagra and recommend or disparage Cialis, yet they use these drugs persistently. It both allows resistance against the drugs and reinforces the use of them—all without an obvious commercial message.

Is it hot in here or is it just me?

As male sexual anxiety becomes centralized, certain female health and sexual issues, as well as some feminist issues, become marginalized. The ease with which television heroes deal with issues of erectile dysfunction is in marked contrast with issues of female reproductive health on television. Ally McBeal does not discuss how her OB/Gyn is treating her dysmenorrhoea (painful menstrual cramps), Pamela Anderson doesn’t educate *Baywatch* co-stars on the perils of breast implants, and the *Desperate Housewives* don’t trade quips about the onset of peri-menopause. Women’s health remains in the closet, and men’s “health”—and this is reduced solely to the ability to get an erection, which ignores major health issues for men and which is certainly not life-threatening—is front and center.

The potential physical risks to men of using performance enhancing drugs are well-aired in these male-centered dramas. The chance for stroke or heart attack among

men with certain predispositions is clearly discussed. In *Nip/Tuck*, the threat of Viagra to a patient with heart disease is repeatedly overstated, yet the scores of women who literally go under the knife during this program to have breast implants never speak of the side-effects and possible health dangers.

Since sexual activity is categorized as a health issue for men, another area overlooked regarding women's "health" is female sexual satisfaction. Sex in these male-centered dramas is often graphic to the point of being soft core pornography. Sex focuses on odd positions and unusual situations (the firefighters of *Rescue Me* bed a nun, a brother-sister couple, a child's schoolteacher, and women the ages of their daughters; the sexual partners of the lawyers on *Boston Legal* include a woman who is a dwarf and discussions of sex with amputees; *Nip/Tuck* characters pass around sexual partners like nachos and have sex with rubber dolls, transgendered individuals, and immediate family members), and the men talking together about it afterward. Sex is never about female satisfaction. In fact, a woman is rarely depicted as having an orgasm. The closest a program comes to dealing with this is *Rescue Me's* sexually aggressive women who are downright frightening and vocally critical of the performance of the men. Even so, these women do not achieve satisfaction. By creating a "reality" in which women cannot and will not be satisfied, men are forgiven for not achieving this goal and are absolved of any responsibility to even attempt it. Sex is about what happens to men. Women become incidental.

Kimmel's Freudian perspective may illuminate this in part. "After pulling away from his mother, the boy comes to see her not as a source of nurturance and love, but as an insatiably infantilizing creature, capable of humiliating him in front of his peers"

(Kimmel, 2005, p. 273). The repudiation of the mother is the way to acquire masculinity. “His life becomes a lifelong project to demonstrate that he possesses none of his mother’s traits. Masculine identity is born in the renunciation of the feminine, not in the direct affirmation of the masculine, which leaves masculine gender identity tenuous and fragile” (Kimmel, 2005, p. 274). Acquiring even tenuous gender identity requires the often rage-filled and disdainful rejection and distancing of any other gender; nor can the other gender be respected and honored. When being masculine demands possessing no feminine traits, then it becomes necessary to define women as having no traits desirable to men, among them the ability to receive (and even request) sexual pleasure.

Here Halberstam’s theories of female masculinity offer prescriptive assistance. If masculinity is not automatically articulated onto only male bodies, but is instead recognized as a “dynamic between embodiment, identification, social privilege, racial and class formation, and desire” (2002, p. 355), then the expressions of masculinity become multifarious and room is made for female masculinity. Such a definition moves masculinity away from “everything that is not female” and makes room for men to treat women’s sexuality with respect and honor without feeling they have given essential gender identity ground.

In these male-centered dramas, men are not concerned with the female sexual experience because that is the stuff of “chick flicks” and not the stuff of balls-to-the-wall cable programming. Recognition of female sexuality is what happens in films made for women, not in television made for men. Yet much is made of the woman’s ability to humiliate a man sexually by commenting on his poor performance, odd

behavior, or substandard anatomy. These narrative arcs follow Kimmel's arguments that men perform for other men, men seek the approval of other men, men are afraid that other men will judge them and find them wanting (Kimmel, 2005). Nowhere in that list of what drives men is anything about sharing sexual pleasure with women or about women, period. Sex in post-9/11 male-centered television dramas exists so that the male characters have something to talk to each other about, and to demonstrate each man's fragility and vulnerability, which works as a device to curry audience sympathy and empathy, even among female viewers. By constructing female characters that cannot be satisfied, men are let off the hook. It is the woman's failure to receive satisfaction that is at fault, not the man's failure to deliver it.

The female problem

Turning now to considering what pleasures female viewers may find in *Rescue Me*, despite its misogyny, one answer is that the show is cast with a half dozen good looking men who spend time in front of the camera lifting weights, walking around shirtless, and making love half (or totally) nude. Men are not the only viewers who can enjoy the scenery. Another attraction to female viewers may be the heroism and mythic allure of firefighting itself: the alarm sounds in the firehouse and it's as though Commissioner Gordon just dialed up the Batphone. Like superheroes in a comic book, the men hit the ground running, strap on the gear, and rush to the scene of danger to rescue victims. Then there is the underlying message that the big, strong rescuers need rescuing themselves—ostensibly to self-medicate the stress of the job and the grief of 9/11, the crew battles drugs, alcohol, gambling, and sexual addiction—the stuff of

romance novels and B movies for decades. In addition, the writing is sharp, smart, and funny, and the storylines are adult and wildly unexpected for television (even cable). But I argue there is something else at stake here. In *Rescue Me*, the masculinity is unapologetic. It is admittedly sexist—it doesn't screen it or sugarcoat it, it's right out there in public for all to see and some to criticize (and some characters do take that on). It is admittedly homophobic, yet homosexuality is far from ignored and is present in almost every episode. It is admittedly quick to rage and sorrowful at the consequences of that rage. It is even admittedly and frequently just plain dumb. The crew of *Rescue Me* performs this masculinity with charm, if that can be imagined. The frank way in which they embrace masculinity as conflicted and the up-front way they wear their masculinity on their sleeves is not often found in modern media. This is a representation of masculinity that men may admire in some ways, and, I would argue, some women may miss or wish for—at least when it is safely kept on the screen. Balancing political correctness and gender sensitivity is not always a straightforward process, and what once appeared to be clear masculine roles in the media and in life have been upset, challenged, and tossed out in many ways. *Rescue Me* works to reclaim aspects of that abandoned masculinity and this may be attractive to viewers of both sexes. This dual audience can only be good news to FX.

In addition, desire is not necessarily politically correct. Though female viewers might espouse politics that are diametrically opposed to those of the firefighter characters, the characters are disarming and engaging. Consider romance novels: while most women don't really want a patronizing sexist pirate to knock at the front door, that

guy can be fun to read about. In her exploration of women readers' pleasures in reading romance novels, Janice Radway writes

The romance, which is never simply a love story, is also an exploration of the meaning of patriarchy for women. As a result, it is concerned with the fact that men possess and regularly exercise power over them in all sorts of circumstances. By picturing the heroine in relative positions of weakness, romances are not necessarily endorsing her situation, but examining an all-to—common state of affairs in order to display possible strategies for coping with it (Radway, 1991, p. 75).

In this way, romance novels instruct women in the meaning of patriarchy, argues Radway, and “its meaning for them as women” (1991, p. 149).

Romance novels also allow the heroine to reap the benefits and blessings of successfully negotiating patriarchal systems. She often begins as a young virgin, mistaken by the hero as a whore. He has his way with her, later he learns she is of noble birth or otherwise more pure than he first took her for, and he is often stuck with her for a long sea voyage or some other type of road trip. By the end of their adventures, he has learned to respect and care for her, and rewards her with protection, resources, and social standing—as well as more tender expressions of physical love than the initial slam and bam. Many readers identify with some aspect of the misunderstood, taken-for-granted, badly handled, and even physical harmed side of patriarchy; fewer have received material rewards and a deep emotional connection to help them recover and heal. Romance novels and post-9/11 male-centered television dramas have this in common. Men behaving badly are recognizable. Resolutions that are loving, good-humored, and ultimately not too painful are less so, but make enjoyable escapist entertainment. And, as Radway argues, such narratives may offer women instruction and support in their own resistance. Additionally, Radway finds that readers of these

novels read into and rework in their individual imaginations certain objectionable parts of the narrative. In these ways, readers exercise agency and claim a more empowered female story they discover (or create) inside the traditional romance novel narrative.

Complicating these possible explanations for women's interest as an audience in these male-centered dramas is Connell's contention that "men's interest in patriarchy is further sustained by *women's* investment in patriarchy, as expressed in loyalty to patriarchal religions, in narratives of and romance, in enforcing difference/dominance in the lives of children, not to mention women's activism against abortion rights and homosexuality [italics in original]" (Connell, 2005, p. 242). Yes, resistance is possible in romance narratives as Radway argues, and yes, resistance is possible within each of these structures Connell lists. Still, the female shoring up of patriarchy exists, unsatisfactorily justified.

The rough-edged masculinities of *Rescue Me* are also a wink at the audience. The characters know their masculinity is being protested and faulted. They know they are wrong. They know they are being dumb or prejudiced or homophobic or sexist. They roll their eyes and squirm when they are caught, and that becomes part of participating in the homosocial group: we're the guys who say and do the sexist stuff that gets us in trouble.

The content themes in male-centered television dramas offer something for women viewers, as well. Working class resistance and celebration may particularly appeal to working class women who see family life (somewhat) as they know it reflected in the show's content: money is tight, female characters don't wear designer clothes, and homes are modest. Fatherhood is depicted as central to many of the male

characters, a characteristic many female viewers might appreciate. Homosocial bonding allows women a voyeuristic view into what “men only” social groups might be like. And the conflicted normativity theme may allow women to feel slightly superior to the male television characters who appear so easily threatened by aggressive women and gay men.

This depiction of life aligns in limited ways with Judith Stacey’s observations in 1990 of what she labels the new “postmodern family.” The breadwinner-homemaker family model, which she labels the “modern family,” is becoming less common as postmodern families emerge. Postmodern families include two-career families, single parents, blended families, gay and lesbian families, and unmarried couples. Stacey characterizes modern families as patriarchal and stable, and postmodern families as non-patriarchal and unstable, characterizations with which I disagree. In my view, this characterization oversimplifies the sometimes sophisticated and subtle ways in which patriarchy operates. A dual career family can still be a patriarchal one, and a patriarchal family can certainly be unstable. In *Brave New Families* (1998), Stacey offers detailed accounts of postmodern families struggling to make ends meet and keep some semblance of family life together. The particular families Stacey interviewed tend to lack a strong fatherly presence, but the post-9/11 male-centered dramas feature fathers as caring—although sometimes erring—parents. Where Stacey’s families and these television programs do align is in the expansion of the idea of “family” to include models that are not nuclear families of the 1950s. The male heroes of these television dramas are single parents, are actively involved with the children of their girlfriends, hope to adopt babies with their boyfriends, juggle work with parenting responsibilities,

and struggle to get dinner on the table for the kids in the midst of financial woes and messy housekeeping.

Sociologist Arlie Hochschild identifies the importance placed on fatherhood as situated in particular class structures. “There is a social-class pattern here. The new ideal of the nurturant father seems to be spreading from the middle class *down*, while the economic insecurity familiar to the lower class and undermining stable family ties seems to be spreading *up*,” (Hochschild, 2003, p. 170). This is reflected in the male-centered television dramas since 9/11. Working class firefighters and cops are featured in significant and recurring narratives about the challenges, struggles, and rewards of fatherhood, and though these men are flawed and sometimes unconventional fathers (*Rescue Me*’s Gavin pays his children to spy on his ex-wife’s boyfriends) they are utterly loving. When Gavin’s young son is playing in the street and suddenly struck and killed by a drunk driver, Gavin scoops him up and runs to the hospital in panic, terror, and tears. When his son is pronounced dead, Gavin’s heartbreak is palpable, and the hole in his life left by his son is acknowledged for many episodes. The upper middle class fathers of *Nip/Tuck* are more clueless. Sean’s teenage son openly dislikes his father, and when they ultimately bond uneasily, it is over shared lust over the same young woman. But whatever the class, the families in these television dramas find family dynamics, child discipline, fidelity, housekeeping, and financial matters challenging and tension-provoking.

For female viewers of these dramas, there may be a pleasure in seeing fathers involved at home with the children and in the kitchen—and, a female pleasure may also be located in seeing romance narratives between characters unfold against a decidedly

working class background. The men of these dramas do the dishes, sometimes without being asked. Hochschild writes, “men who shared [work] at home shared a certain psychological predisposition...they have sufficiently identified with some male, and can thus feel safe empathizing with their mothers without fear of becoming ‘too feminine’ (Hochschild, 2003, p. 228). Hochschild acknowledges the exhaustion and tension present in two career families.

Now we have another challenge [to the family]—the entrance of most women into the labor force. To stabilize the family, both the workplace and the family need to change. To start with, we can work out a way of thinking about the family that both honors our diversity and also strengthens bonds between parents and children, and parents with each other, whoever they are...we might turn to one major trend of our time that has indeed disturbed many nests and acknowledge that we are living in a time of a stalled revolution, a time in which women have changed much faster than the men they live with or the institutions in which both sexes work. ...to resolve this tension, we could renew a feminism that has been there quietly all along, and that calls for honoring the work of nurturance and getting men into the act (Hochschild, 2003).

In 2003, when Hochschild wrote this, she envisioned increased collaborations between corporations and organizations to facilitate a more productive and less destructive blend of family and work life. In 2009, such corporate interests in helping employees balance work and life has become a bargaining chip in recruiting and retaining workers. As a journalist, I accepted an assignment in 2008 to write a magazine story on Minnesota corporations that had been named to the *Working Mother* magazine annual list of best places to work for families. Corporations compete for this honor because it helps them attract high quality employees. The companies I visited and interviewed included General Mills, Carlson Companies, and Best Buy. These national and international organizations believe that to compete effectively for the top business talent, they must aggressively promote an attractive package of family-friendly services

and benefits. These include on-site “main streets” of convenience stores, grocery stores, post offices, dry cleaners, day cares, car repair services, and restaurants. Employees can call down to an on-campus restaurant and order dinner to go, hang their dry cleaning outside their office door and have it back and cleaned by 5:00; bring their sick child to the minute clinic and then to the sick child day care on site, and so on. Top on the list of desirable benefits is flex time, allowing parents to set their own schedule of work time to allow for day care hours, school holidays, and doctor visits. Key benefits also include maternity/paternity leave, adoptive parent leave, and corporate-sponsored support groups and “communities” for employees with special interests, such as parents of autistic children or gay couples raising children. While juggling parenting and work remains a challenge, the employees of these companies told me over and over again that help with even simple household errands was a welcome assist to them that they strongly valued. It is likely that most working class families represented in post-9/11 male-centered television dramas and the working class viewers of those programs do not have such luxuries offered them in the workplace. Still, the increasing willingness of large corporations to devote dollars and resources to providing these benefits points to the productive collaboration between work and life Hochschild envisioned. By providing these benefits, these corporations recognize that balancing work and life is a difficult challenge. And by developing narratives that wrestle with the issues of the busy, disorganized, and stressful days of parents, the post-9/11 television dramas recognize this, as well. This recognition may be part of the attraction of these programs to female audiences.

Unhappy families

Rescue Me's provocative story lines and FX's bold programming have not been welcomed by all viewers. The show and the network are targets of various self-proclaimed parent-interest groups, including the Parents Television Council and the American Family Association. Following the food chain from *Rescue Me* right up to Rupert Murdoch, PTC chair Leon Weil addressed pointed comments to Murdoch: "News Corp. has clearly carved out a niche for itself by specializing in smutty, vulgar and violent entertainment all in the pursuit of profit: You should be ashamed" (Moss, 2006). The PTC claims to speak for 1.1 million members in its requests for FCC enforcement of indecency rules, lobbies for a la carte cable, and complaints to the FCC and networks. PTC staff watches every hour of primetime network programming and present scripts of obscenity and lewd behavior on their Web site (Moss, 2006).

There is evidence of who *Rescue Me*'s target audience is in FX president John Landgraf's response. "Each of the network's original series have [sic] achieved 100% sellout at some of the highest CPMs for basic cable" and complaints have had "no economic impact on FX's advertising revenue, which has increased significantly each of the last four years," he says (Moss, 2006). Landgraf also argues that any company electing to remove advertising from *Rescue Me* generally simply moves those ads to another FX program, so revenues are rarely lost and only transferred.

Laura Caraccioli-Davis, executive vice president and director at media services agency Starcom Entertainment, says that, in general, movie studios are "big supporters of this content" because they use shows like *Rescue Me* to promote the weekend premieres of the movies they produce (Moss, 2006). And, since *Rescue Me* appears at

10 p.m., it offers a good fit for liquor companies that must reach audiences over 21 primarily after 10 p.m.

Making television pay post-9/11

Post 9-11 television heroes are flawed and far from potent, yet they are held up as admirable, amusing, and charming. Men can be impotent and still attract Hollywood actresses, men can be sexual failures and still be financially successful, men can be sexual liars and still be delightful characters. Modern television heroes are a lot like the average Joes watching the shows: great at some things, bad at others, confident about a few skills, uncertain and ill at ease about other abilities. This treatment opens a space for viewers to accept and voice sexual anxieties, amid the shaming, hazing, teasing, and practical joking of men in a clubhouse.

Sexual anxiety has moved from the shadows of public discussion to the forefront since the events of 9/11. This is due not only to the emergence of erectile dysfunction drugs in the very late 1990s but to the emergence of new and possibly more mature notions of what it means to be heroic and masculine in America. American men did not and could not save the day on September 11, 2001. They tried, and died, but they could not save the country nor could they save many victims. They could not save themselves. American technology could not save them, either, and their failed radios contributed to their deaths. American economic prowess saved no one and in fact attracted the enemy. The American heroic capability to rescue, to fight, and to win is at stake and under fire, and it is losing. American masculinity has been brought to Ground Zero, fertile ground on which to build new masculinities that allow anxiety to coexist with swagger.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

This work was triggered by my nagging sense that there was something different and new about the masculinity emerging in post-9/11 male-centered television dramas. After closely watching season after season of most of these programs, comparing and contrasting them with historic television masculinities and existing work in feminist media studies and in masculinity studies, and looking exhaustively at content, production, and the political economy of these various series, I can say with confidence that there is a widespread post-9/11 masculinity on television that is unlike television masculinities that have come before. These dramas are wildly popular and enjoy significant critical and commercial success. FX network has built its reputation and future on proliferating these programs, and *The Shield*, *Rescue Me*, and *NipTuck* have built FX into a giant. In the preceding chapters, I explored themes I find in this new masculinity and consider them in light of the post-9/11 moment in which they occur.

Summary of chapters

Heroes for a new millennium

There are new kinds of heroes. Gone are the constantly self-assured, never-erring crimefighters and rescuers of recent decades who always caught the bad guys, never crossed the line themselves, and saved the world while wearing tuxedos and playing black jack. Gone are the perfect fathers who provided well, had all the answers, and raised perfect children. Post-9/11 television is peopled with a different sort of leading man. He has money woes and struggles to make rent payments and write the

day care checks. His marriage is floundering or dead and he is only dimly aware of why his ex-wife is so angry with him. He loves his children but is bewildered by them; he makes bad judgment calls, loses his temper, and drives them away. His ex is dating a guy with more money, classier suits, and a better job. If he is heterosexual, he is both terrified of and drawn to women. He sleeps around indiscriminately but maintains that he loves his wife. He wonders if he is gay, is gay, or is straight with gay friends, transgendered colleagues, and a lesbian daughter. He is not very good in bed. Or, some nights he thinks he is pretty good but in the morning he is not sure what he did right. Women complain that he is unsatisfying. He tries to solve that problem with Viagra and Cialis, bypassing conversation, love, and foreplay. He drinks too much, pops the wrong pills, and likes his pornography. He is a volatile mix of misogynist and feminist. He is a thief, a liar, a cheat, and one of them is even a sociopathic serial killer.

His life may be a mess, but he puts it on the line for threatened innocents and wounded victims. He is absolutely aware of his own myriad imperfections, and some of them stunners, yet he swoops in with swagger and panache to try to save the day. Sometimes he fails, and his failures haunt him, drive him to drink, send him over the edge. He is lost and needs rescuing, but instead he rescues everyone else. Somehow, he manages to be charming, lovable, and endearing.

There is a certain danger to this. Owning up to practicing sexism is not the same thing as working to abolish it. Making sexists into delightful dates doesn't make patriarchy palatable, and there is no clear road map of whether this mix of charm and chauvanism is sexism headed toward feminism or feminism headed the wrong way.

These television heroes who are deeply flawed yet deeply heroic are modeled in the manner of the ancient heroes: imperfect humans who reach for and achieve moments—but not complete lifetimes—of greatness. In the post-9/11 era, there is room for and need for this type of hero: a hero who often fails. From the events of 9/11, the media made heroes of a handful of men, New York City firefighters. Yet few if any people were rescued that day by the NYFD. Faulty equipment, bad communication, architecture, and the nature of the disaster doomed firefighters to death before rescue was possible. And although heroic acts occurred and heroes came in all uniforms and genders, only one group was lifted to iconic status. The nation venerated brave men who had hoped to be heroes but who had not succeeded. They were the closest thing the country had to a military force on the ground during the attacks—if the Pentagon was overlooked, and in many media cases, it was—and the NYFD became the military casualties for a battle that was never fought. In this environment, the nation made space for flawed and uncertain heroes and venerated the attempts at greatness made by mere mortals. Although occasional television heroes had been flawed, never in such numbers had anxiety ridden semi- and demi-heroes arisen on television as they did after September 11, 2001.

Tommy Gavin, the alcoholic womanizer of *Rescue Me*, adores his children, still loves his ex-wife, is loyal to his firehouse “brothers,” and risks his life daily to save fire victims in Harlem. *Dexter*, the serial killer, only slays bad guys, works for the cops to help catch the *really* bad guys, and saves his emotionally fragile girlfriend and her emotionally wounded children by taking them under his wing. Christian, the narcissistic playboy of *Nip/Tuck*, is single father to another man’s baby, co-fathers his biological

son with his best friend, and so loves his partner, Sean, that he thoughtfully considers whether or not he might be gay. Sean, Christian's partner, is cold to his wife, unresponsive to his children, recoils at treating a transgender patient, and then becomes the poster surgeon for the trans community by performing gratis surgeries and defending its right to high quality health care. *The Shield's* Vic Mackey, a murdering, stealing, scheming cop who believes he is only crossing the line when it is too blurry to tell bad guys from good. Alan Shore, *Boston Legal's* politically incorrect and sexually harassing attorney, defends the poor little guy and takes on impossible cases because they are just and right. Denny Crane, a partner in Shore's law firm, keeps a handgun in his desk drawer, asks every female he meets to sleep with him, and loves Shore so sweetly that the two heterosexual men marry so they can take care of each other.

Even after my research for this project concluded, television programming continues to introduce the odd, troubled, and deeply anxious heroes, providing further evidence of the pattern I identify, analyze, and illustrate. HBO's *Big Love* features a Mormon-styled hero with three wives who is shopping for a fourth, who raises his children with concern and treats his wives with love and compassion. Another HBO program, *Hung*, debuted in the summer of 2009. Its premise is a suburban man who is a failure as a husband, a father, and a businessman. His wife leaves him for an unglamorous orthodontist, his kids are nerdy and overweight, his son wears lipstick and nail polish, he camps out in the yard behind his burned-down house, and everything around him is falling apart. He decides to market his one attribute and become a gigolo. (If he were a woman, he'd be a prostitute, of course). He attends a seminar in learning how to market your "tools," and tells the seminar leader: "I've got no money, no future,

I'm pretty much at the precipice, here. I used to be something. My big dick is what I've got" (Burson, Lipkin, and Payne, 2009). These heroes are presented, warts and all, and still come across as charming and engaging. Heroes have become complicated and very human, been problematized and allowed to display their every insecurity. But the new heroes do not stand alone.

Men in boys' clubs and marrying my best friend

The new heroes do not operate in solitude. They are in a club, they call each other "brother," they hang with their best buddy rather than head home to a wife and a family. Together, the men in post-9/11 television celebrate homosocial life and offer a way for the viewer to join the club—a club that the viewer may find only rarely in real life, given the paucity of opportunities for men to enjoy fraternity and mentorship in modern life. In an extension of the classic "buddy movie," post-9/11 television buddies enter into "bromances" and some of them into faux or real marriage.

The male joy of being with other men may be enjoying a reclamation here. Throughout the cultural history of America, the loss of male-only spaces and male-specific rites and rituals have been mourned, according to Kimmel, when in fact there never was a bucolic moment when such rites and rituals existed unchallenged and wholly accessible to all men. The male longing for the company and friendship of other men seems to be something that men find difficult to satisfy on their own, according to Kimmel, Strate, and a small number of personal interviews. The rituals of sport and fraternal organizations bolster these attempts, but perhaps a percentage of push-back on women in the workplace and women in "male spaces" is more a protection of the

fraternity than a rejection of women's rights. Yet this is an indistinct and murky nostalgia for something that Kimmel and MacInnes claim never existed, and it is a dangerous yearning because it can be used to support the foreclosure of female inclusion. This foreclosure is carried to its ultimate conclusion in boys' clubs that extend into same-sex but asexual marriage, as in the Alan Shore-Denny Crane wedding in *Boston Legal* and the flirtations with life partner coupling between Christian and Sean in *Nip/Tuck*.

The boys' clubs of television take several forms: the firehouse of *Rescue Me*, the special forces meeting room of *The Shield*, the operating room of *Nip/Tuck*, the balcony with Scotch, armchairs, and cigars in *Boston Legal*. In these boys' clubs, male camaraderie is celebrated and palpably enjoyed. As a female viewer, it is hard *not* to want this for men; they seem to receive so much pleasure from each other's company. The men in these post-9/11 television dramas have greater access to each other and to leisure time with each other than actual men might commonly find. Watching the programs offers membership in the club and friendship with these men in a virtual yet likely quite valuable sense. But as a feminist, it is hard to understand why men protect these spaces with anger and rage at women (when a woman firefighter was assigned to the *Rescue Me* firehouse, the men hassled and harassed her openly). Why don't they simply find other spaces in which to gather? Why don't they enjoy each other's company in other ways?

Men can't go to lunch on man-dates because of their fear of homoeroticism; their fear of being attracted to one another keeps them apart yet yearning for company. Heterosexual men keep heterosexual women and gay men subordinate in order to define

and shore up their own heterosexuality (Zita, 1998). Yet they refer to each other intimately as “brothers” (*Rescue Me*) and “family” (*Rescue Me*, *The Shield*, *Nip/Tuck*) and sometimes, they even marry each other (*Boston Legal*). The men in these television dramas are not afraid to use the word “love” with each other and hold hands, hug, and even exchange vows. This challenges the theory that men avoid one another because of homophobia; perhaps they avoid one another because they just don’t know how to make and maintain friendships, or have a space in which to do it comfortably, or feel willing to expend the effort. When the workplace constructs a ready-made boys’ club—the firehouse of *Rescue Me*, the courtroom of *Boston Legal*, the operating rooms of the surgeons in *Nip/Tuck*—television heroes revel in it and viewers embrace it. However, the possibility of moving the camaraderie out of the workplace and into social situations other than drinking in bars or playing softball seems to be out of the question.

When masculinity is defined in terms of what it forecloses, such as femininity or alternative masculinities, then maintaining masculinity becomes a process of enforcing boundaries and limitations rather than a creative process of open discovery and exploration. Kimmel argues that men are afraid of being shamed by other men, which may work to deepen male joy at being in one another’s company when that company is accepting, good-natured, and even loving.

Although here I do not attempt an audience effects study at any level, the documented popularity of these programs does indicate that a powerful connection is being made between the new male heroes in their boys’ clubs and the viewing audiences for these post-9/11 television dramas. In these programs, a boys’ club is not only an ideological space but a physical one. Watching these dramas is a way into the

clubhouse. And that may be particularly attractive in post-9/11 America. Atop a foundation of few social spaces for homosocialization, the attack on the towers followed by the war on terror creates a wartime level of fear and unease without the wartime camaraderie and feeling part of a team working together toward a common goal. Those American men and women deployed in the Middle East are certainly involved, but those troop numbers do not approach those of, say, WWII. For the great number of Americans at home, the war feels “fought” in airports and through security level warnings against enemies who are without uniforms and difficult to identify.

When two members of a boys’ club develop into an intimate couple, some of the male-centered post-9/11 dramas take that couple to a more-or-less romantic conclusion and marry them off. This may signify increasingly positive attitudes toward gay marriage. However, if it is meant as such, it neither honors romantic commitment between men (by transforming it into two “acceptable” heterosexual men) nor does it honor the joys of male friendship (by joking that if men are friends, they must want to be married to one another). If it is support of gay marriage, its character is dubious: gay marriage is acceptable as long as it is between two men we know are not really gay. Heterosexual male-male marriage emasculates gay marriage and cancels out the romance and desire present there. Casting deep emotional involvement between men as an improbable marriage diminishes both types of relationships—gay marriage and heterosexual friendship—and intimates that men are capable of only one important relationship in their lives and must choose between a best friend and a wife, rather than enjoy both. This casts both marriage and friendship in an aberrant light: if a man

chooses a wife, he has rejected male companionship, and if he chooses a friend, he has rejected the possibility of a wife.

Additionally, the heterosexual couples of post-9/11 television dramas extend the exclusion of women already present in the boys' clubs beyond the workplace and into the home. If a man joins with a woman, he is out of the club. The only way to remain connected with other men is to disavow women, even at the altar. These television heterosexual male marriages and near-marriages support the idea that men are Peter Pan boys, never to grow up into adulthood and family life.

The boys' clubhouses of post-9/11 male-centered television dramas offer men something they apparently crave: the company of other men. Vicariously, viewers can join the club and be mentored and befriended. But making bromances and heterosexual male marriage the "logical" outcome of male friendship diminishes the significance of gay marital commitment and male friendship and judges male-female marriage as being less than central to a man's life.

Transgendered figures: Complicating gender

In post-9/11 male-centered television dramas, narratives that include transgendered, transvestite, and Intersexed characters are common. This new prevalence broadens definitions of masculinity and naturalizes the idea of a gender and sexuality continuum. These dramas regularly and prominently feature main or recurring characters who are bi-sexual, struggle with their sexual identity, cross-dress, have same-sex lovers, or are engaged in surgical sexual reassignment.

First, the very presence of transgendered and intersexed characters in these television narratives is a step up from never having been seen at all. Invisibility and utter lack of representation in the media is “annihilation,” according to Tuchman (1978, p. 7) and the least evolved and most castigatory, according to Bogle (2001). Then, although the narratives often milk the storylines for shock value and humor at the expense of the transgendered or transvestite characters, the narratives move on to engage in issues, conflicts, and joys in the lives of those characters—in short, move on to treat these characters like any other character in the program. This indicates a swift movement through the stages of evolution of underrepresented groups in the media, as outlined by Bogle (2001). Often, but not always, the male-centered television drama characters who are transgendered, transvestite, or intersexed are drawn with complexity and nuance in compelling and empathetic storylines.

But progressive representations can be a double-edge sword, both reflecting acceptance and working to reinscribe traditional attitudes. These characters present a positive challenge to the gender dichotomy, but when their narratives are treated as highly unusual and bizarre, they serve to naturalize the gender dichotomy.

These characters can also help naturalize family structures that might otherwise appear to fall outside the boundaries of typical American families. In *Nip/Tuck*, the various ménage a trois involving members of Sean’s family plus Christian and his many lovers is naturalized as a loving family when Sean and Christian are called upon to treat patients with rare physical abnormalities (a man born without a penis) and patients who desire sex-change surgery. In *The Shield*, the lying/cheating/stealing husband Vic looks

almost tame and loving when compared to the cross-dressing, heroin-addled prostitutes he arrests.

These characters sometimes unite the other characters in banter or harassment against them, as when the *Rescue Me* firefighters wonder how to get the transgendered lovers down out of a tree. That mocking tone is one of Bogle's lower levels of evolution in the representation of minorities: making them into buffoons. But *Rescue Me* does not stop there, and soon the firefighters look like buffoons and louts because they can't deal gracefully with the situation. This elevates the evolutionary level of the representation up a notch. Regular characters receive lessons in tolerance, dignity, and acceptance in their dealings with transgressive masculinities.

The transgendered figure in these television programs disrupts both the placement of Other and the definitions of masculinity. By refusing to be fixed as either male or female, the transgendered figure renders gender into a sliding, even circular, continuum, rather than an either-or dichotomy. By refusing to be either male or female, the transgendered figure renders masculinity fluid. Masculinity requires a firm "other" in order to define itself as what it is not. If the other possesses both masculine and feminine aspects, traits, and physicality, defining masculinity becomes impossible to pin down. Men who dress as women, butch women, women who are surgically altered to be men, men who are surgically altered to be women—all offer alternative perspectives on masculinity. As the transgendered figure disrupts ideas of what is masculine, the threat to masculinity presented by the wearing of a pink shirt or a fondness for ballroom dancing is significantly diminished. The anxious and fragile post-

9/11 television masculinities are shored up and strengthened by not being other, more extravagantly transgressive masculinities.

Towers fall, Viagra rises, and heroes suffer sexual anxiety

The attacks on the twin towers in New York City were a figurative castration of American and a literal one in an architectural sense. The terrorism was aimed at the international symbols of American economic and political power: the White House, the Pentagon, the World Trade Center. It brought down American swagger, collapsed American confidence, and challenged American dominance of the skies in planes and in the buildings that scraped the clouds. As symbols of economic prowess, technological acumen, and leadership in world economic and trade matters, skyscrapers—and size—matters. At the time of 9/11, the United States dominated the world in super-tall structures. Post-9/11, skyscraper building booms flourished in the Middle East and China, but not in America. The towers, once a source of national pride and international acclaim, collapsed, leaving a gaping hole, a wound, a female emptiness waiting to be filled. American cockiness had been struck down, and American television began to explore fragile, anxious, everyman masculinities.

The towers fell just as Viagra was on the rise. Drug sponsors bought ads and product placement, and scripts of television dramas included constant and off-handed references to Viagra and its brother drugs. To hear the new heroes of post-9/11 television tell it, guys take Viagra often, without worry, and share the little blue pills with one another like lunch money. Television heroes fret about their performance and are often criticized sharply by their lovers. Impotence and inadequacy in the bedroom

are common narratives and do not diminish the heroic nature of those character's accomplishments. Erectile dysfunction does not tarnish a television hero's rep. It can't; Viagra is a sponsor.

Masculinity in these television dramas is both attached to and detached from the penis. Sexual prowess is valued among colleagues and the other guys in the boys' club, so *Nip/Tuck's* Christian and *Rescue Me's* Franco are esteemed by their co-workers as lady killers. Penis size and performance count. However, there is also disassociation from anatomy. Penises are treated as non-feeling, independent objects that can be medicated, injected, or circumcised without having much effect on the men who own them. What the penis does (or doesn't do) is presented as having little connection to the heart and mind of the man; the relationship between man and organ is not integrated. Additionally, sex—which is central to narratives in these dramas—is frequently depicted but rarely seems to satisfy the women. Viagra is used, not to improve intimacy in relationships, but to position a man more powerfully in his homosocial network. The real intimacy is between the men discussing erectile dysfunction, not between the man and woman having sex.

Viagra is not used to enhance a man's sexual pleasure; no comment is made in these television dramas of intense sexual experiences. Instead, statistics are reported like baseball: hours, repeat performances, previous errors. Common narratives also include women using Viagra to kill their lovers. In these programs, Viagra does not improve romantic relationships, does not bring increased sexual pleasure for the man or woman, and is sometimes used as a weapon of death. The main gain to the heroes of

post-9/11 dramas is that Viagra gives them bragging rights in their boys' clubs—and sponsors their television programs in product placement and commercials.

Male sexual anxiety is centralized in these dramas and concerns about female health are marginalized or eliminated altogether. Men's health issues are condensed down to fretting over erections, and women's health issues of breast cancer and menopause (to name just two) are glossed over.

The political economy of these television dramas is crucial to this and other content. FX openly discusses in the trade press its goals of reaching sponsors by shocking viewers and attracting a desirable demographic with sex, more sex, strong language, nudity, and violence. FX, FOX, and their parent News Corporation realize profitable synergies in product placement and cross-promotion. FX courts and wins critical acclaim for witty scripts and nuanced character development. Institutional relationships between production, promotion, and programming make it possible to create boundary-pushing content without fear of reprisal or cancellation. Showtime follows in FX's footsteps in the ways in which it develops and promotes *Dexter* and *Tudors*. The programming decisions that allow male-centered dramas to thrive are not accidental; they are deliberate business decisions driven by the promise of revenues.

When the towers fell, the narrative arc of Viagra-enhanced sex arose in male-centered television drama. Male sexual anxiety became a common plot device and Viagra and Cialis became common sponsors. On television, women cannot be satisfied and erections cannot be maintained. The castration of the country, the loss of its tallest buildings is an attack on the hubris of American economic, military, and political policies. Eight years later, the towers are not yet rebuilt and the construction of

skyscrapers in the U.S. has dropped off. Conversely, record-breaking structures reach for the heavens in China and the Middle East. The American swagger of certainty that assaults will not be made on its shores has vanished, and the sexual anxiety of American men is outed in programming and advertising. The American pretense of power and unshakable confidence is shattered. The national virility is gone.

Reinscription, resistance, and masculinity, in theory

When Stuart Hall considers the relationship between representations of race in media and race relations outside of media, he wonders if media representations are a distortion of reality. When he watches American television, Hall admits he has to “remind myself that these narratives are not a somewhat distorted reflection of the real state of race relations in American cities” (1992, p. 15). Instead of being distortions of reality, Hall argues these narratives operate as myths “that represent in narrative form the resolution of things that cannot be resolved in real life” (1992, p.15).

Hall writes about race, but the same lens could be applied to gender. In post-9/11 male-centered television dramas, the representations of masculinity may be offering a resolution that does not occur easily or naturally in real life. On television, misogynistic swagger, masculine charm, and a limited feminist sensibility co-exist in leading men who shift gears back and forth between these aspects of themselves without apparent inner turmoil. These television heroes *are* conflicted, but those conflicts center on their own security/insecurity, confidence/lack of confidence as men. They seem to experience no conflict between patriarchal impulses and feminist awareness: they possess and execute both with an off-handed naturalness. In *The Shield*,

Vic Mackey calls one woman a “skank” and in moments lectures his men on protecting wives and family. In *Nip/Tuck*, Christian calls one woman’s vagina a “black hole” but is also a loving single father. While hardly being paragons of full-blown feminism, most of these male characters do operate within narratives of being nurturing fathers of daughters, husbands of women with careers, and men who care about social and gender justice. They erupt in bursts of stunningly blatant sexism and reverse themselves so abruptly there could be skid marks on the television screen. This unlikely blend of philosophies co-existing peacefully in the same character works in two diametrically opposed manners. It may work to naturalize feminism and make feminist principles feel more acceptable: see, even a character who is a man’s man still respects and supports feminism! Or, more disturbingly, it may work to conflate patriarchy and masculinity, making sexism seem a natural part of masculinity: see, even feminist characters have sexist moments, they can’t help themselves, they are men and men just are that way! Vavrus finds that progressive representations of televised news stories of stay-at-home dads can also work to reinscribe traditional family roles and patriarchal beliefs and attitudes (2002).

I repeat this quotation from Hall that I use in the Introduction:

Its capacity to punctuate the universe into two great opposites masks something else; it masks the complexes of feelings and attitudes, beliefs and conceptions, that are always refusing to be so neatly stabilized and fixed. The great divisions of racism as a structure of knowledge and representation are also, it now seems to me, a deep system of defense. They are the outworks, the trenches, the defensive positions around something that refuses to be tamed and contained by this system of representation. All that symbolic and narrative energy and work is directed to secure us “over here” and them “over there,” to fix each in its appointed species place. It is a way of marking how deeply our histories actually intertwine and interpenetrate; how necessary “the Other” is to our own sense of identity; how even the dominant, colonizing, imperializing power only know

who and what it is and can only experience the pleasure of its own power of domination in and through the construction of the other. The two are the two sides of the same coin. And the Other is not out there but in here (Hall, 1992, p. 16).

The common definition of masculinity is that which is not feminine. The borders of heterosexual masculinity are drawn, as Zita argues, by relationship with gay men and heterosexual women (1998). To know masculinity, it is necessary to know what it is not, what it is the opposite of, what it opposes.

Masculinity and femininity are inherently relational concepts, which have meaning in relation to each other, as a social demarcation and a cultural opposition. This holds regardless of the changing content of the demarcation in different societies and periods of history. Masculinity as an object of knowledge is always masculinity-in-relation (Connell, 2005, pp. 43-44).

Masculinity is defined in terms of its Other. And yet, here is where gender politics and gender science get sticky, for that seems to demand an essentialist approach. Masculinity scholars walk a thin line here, an echo of the early Second Wave essentialism that presumed there was some single entity of “women” on whose behalf politics and practices could be argued. That early Second Wave lack of differentiation within the classification of “women” for race, class, sexuality, and nationality now informs masculinity scholars, who attempt to situate their arguments without the pitfalls of either identity politics or essentialism. Michael Kimmel argues there are differences between men and women, but they are no greater than the differences among men and among women (Kimmel, 2000, p. 4). However, “virtually every single society differentiates people on the basis of gender...[and] virtually every known society is also based on male dominance” (Kimmel, 2000, p. 2). Yet, Kimmel also argues

Domination is not a trait carried on the Y chromosome; it is the outcome of the different cultural valuing of men’s and women’s experiences. Thus, the adoption

of masculinity and femininity implies the adoption of “political” ideas that what women do is not as culturally important as what men do (Kimmel, 2000, p. 3).

Even so, masculinity and femininity are inextricably bound together in a back-and-forth process of definition by knowing what the other is. Connell would add that hegemonic masculinities are bound to non-hegemonic, subversive, and marginalized masculinities in the same back-and-forth dance. One way that femininity and non-hegemonic masculinities recognize hegemonic masculinity, and one way hegemonic masculinity recognizes its others, is the imbalance of power.

Gay theory and feminist theory share a perception of mainstream masculinity as being (in the advanced capitalist countries, at least) fundamentally linked to power, organized for domination, and resistant to change because of power relations. In some formulations, masculinity is virtually equated with the exercise of power in its most naked forms (Connell, 2005, p. 42).

Physical differences in bodies, gendered division of labor, and differently valued labor act in concert with cultural factors and power relations to create a gender dichotomy and create masculinity and femininity, “us” and “Other.” A weighty part of this cultural myth-making is the media and its representations of masculinity and femininity, part of what Connell calls the “cultural machinery that exalts hegemonic masculinity” (2005, p. 241). Within this hegemonic masculinity, patriarchy is situated and defended, “institutionalized in the state; enforced by violence, intimidation and ridicule in the lives of straight men” (Connell, 2005, p. 241). If patriarchy is situated in hegemonic masculinity, as Connell argues, strands of it also run through complicit, subordinated, and marginalized masculinities. It is also contradictory and fissured, riddled with tensions and resistant to analysis as a unified and homogenous patriarchy.

These tensions are well-represented in the masculinities in post-9/11 male-centered television dramas.

Although Connell argues that patriarchy cannot be ousted as if it were a uni-dimensional, homogeneous structure, it can be identified, exposed, minimized, and potentially moved beyond. As patriarchy is delegitimized, “men’s relational interests in the welfare of women and girls can displace the same men’s gender-specific interests in supremacy. A heterosexual sensibility can be formed without homophobia, so alliances of straight men with gay politics become possible...the familiar array of masculinities will continue to be produced and institutionalized, but a cultural reconfiguration of their elements has become possible” (Connell, 2005, p. 242). Such a cultural reconfiguration of elements is visible through the testosterone fog in post-9/11 male-centered television dramas. What is going on in these dramas that is fresh is Connell’s hope for a future in which patriarchy is increasingly delegitimized. Patriarchal attitudes on these television dramas are called out, mocked, and reversed—*sometimes*. This is not a happy land of well-adjusted feminist men secure in their masculinity, and sexism, racism, and ageism (especially directed at women) remains rampant. Hall writes, “We found that racism expresses itself through displacement, through denial, through the capacity to say two contradictory things at the same time” (1992, p. 15). If “racism” is replaced with “sexism,” such contradictions are rife in post-9/11 male-centered television dramas.

These contradictions are due to a combination of factors. Creating nuanced, complex characters makes for good drama and contributes to earning critical acclaim and awards. Racist slurs and sexist cracks add shock value and draw audiences, some of which enjoy feeling outraged (like the parental groups that monitor television

programming) and some of which enjoy witnessing the outrageous behavior.

Hegemonic heterosexuality and masculinity is subconsciously and consciously enforced by the actions and attitudes of characters. Perhaps the resistance is more conscious, given the modern context of political correctness and awareness of various ethnic, class, gender, sex, and national identities.

When Hall explains that early cultural studies work had to be done by investigating not the representations but the *lack* of representations of marginalized groups, he writes

It was the silences that told us something; it was what wasn't there. It was what was invisible, what couldn't be put into frame, what was apparently unsayable that we needed to attend to (1992, p. 15).

What is silent, what isn't present in post-9/11 male-centered television dramas, is unquestioned patriarchy, uncomplicated patriarchy, unchallenged patriarchy. Patriarchy is under criticism and under fire, and its critiques come from other men—albeit, other men under pressure and scrutiny from women, marginalized groups, and the occasional sexual harassment officer in the workplace. However, the dangers of how these characterizations act to reinscribe patriarchy are troubling and not necessarily comfortably offset by the resistance present.

In attempts to define masculinity, sociologists such as Connell and Kimmel open the boundaries to include masculinities, marginalized and subversive masculinities, minority masculinities, non-hegemonic masculinities. Still, masculinity and the male body remain articulated to one another.

In *Female Masculinity*, however, Judith Halberstam disconnects these two and denaturalizes the connection (1998). Masculinity, she argues, is not and has never been

“owned” by men. Like femininity, it can be performed, and those performances and expressions can take many forms. There is no singular male masculinity and no singular female one. The more that masculinity as a concept can be taken up, shaken, turned over, examined, played with, and explored, the better masculinity can be understood and patriarchy, which is mistakenly articulated to masculinity, can be upset.

Halberstam offers queer, alternative, and female masculinities in fiction and in film as examples of historic female masculinity that has been swept under the carpet. She considers female masculinity in all its forms to be its own gender, and does not find it to be derivative of male masculinity. Masculine females, their sexual practices, and even female sexual desire are myriad and defy classification, she argues: a stone butch who is sexually untouchable, a femme lesbian, a female-to-male transgendered person. Halberstam’s dis-articulating of masculinity from the male body and her refusal to think through female masculinity as monolithic helps complicate masculinity and render it multifarious. Halberstam’s project includes de-pathologizing these genders.

Female masculinity...allows for the disruption of even flows between gender and anatomy, sexuality and identity, sexual practice and performativity. It reveals a variety of queer genders...that challenge once and for all the stability and accuracy of binary sex-gender systems (Halberstam, 1998, p. 139).

When patriarchy is justified in terms of the male body that is “automatically” considered masculine, it claims its “inherent” power in terms that disqualify the female body from owning masculine qualities. Female and alternative masculinities become subordinated (Zita, 1998). In *Rescue Me*, when female firefighter Laura joins the crew, the validity of her claim to masculine performance, employment, and privilege is openly challenged with hostility. Ultimately, she is “conquered” sexually by a male firefighter,

placing her back in her acceptable role as sexual partner in an undisputably female body.

These non-binary genders and non-hegemonic and male masculinities detach masculinity from male and allow it to be seen and examined on its own. This, in turn, allows maleness to exist separately from masculinity, and offers an array of masculinities for males and females to perform and express. In post-9/11 male-centered television dramas, this array is persistently present in characters and in narrative arcs. This separation opens a safe space in which men can be male (and even patriarchal) while allowing masculinity to be practiced by marginalized masculinities and by women. The dis-articulation of masculinity from male supports the dis-articulation of patriarchy from masculinity.

The resistance to patriarchy seen in these post-9/11 dramas may serve to reinforce traditional and patriarchal values, and yet it also offers some meaningful resistance. By allowing leaks in hegemonic masculinity, these dramas act as a pressure valve to allow hegemonic masculinity to survive; however, these leaks also may widen into fissures, cracks, and rifts that successfully disrupt and destabilize aspects of patriarchy. The articulation of masculinity solely to the heterosexual male body is disrupted by characters such as *Rescue Me's* Solly, a muscled and heroic “fireman’s fireman” who also cross-dresses, and *The Shield's* Julien, a muscled and upstanding police officer who is gay, as well as by a spate of transgendered and transvestite characters. This suggestion that masculinity can survive independent of the heterosexual male body allows further disruption to patriarchy and offers wider interpretations of what it is to be a man and what it is to be human.

Conclusions

Television heroes were once near-perfect supermen.

Since 9/11, they are increasingly portrayed as severely flawed common men who wear their flaws on their sleeves and who rise above their natures to achieve heroic moments. Post-9/11 television heroes gather in male-only boys' club spaces and privilege their man-to-man friendships over those with wives and family. Among their friends, colleagues, clients, and patients are transgendered, transvestite, and intersexed individuals whose existence disrupts the gender dichotomy and broadens definitions of what it means to be masculine. The new television heroes confess sexual anxieties to one another, but do not share these fears in intimate relationships with women. Instead, some of them “marry” each other platonically and others focus on hydraulics at the expense of emotional connection in the bedroom. The post-9/11 television hero demonstrates a deep-seated unease about whether or not his own masculinity makes the grade, simultaneously fearing and longing for the company of and approval from other men. There is swagger, but it is swagger with a limp.

A recovered, reclaimed, and restructured masculinity

Post-9/11 male-centered television dramas feature representations of a masculinity that has been rescued and reclaimed, but it has also been restructured to openly (and in large part, unashamedly) include vulnerability, anxieties, and failures. Since 9/11, television has erupted with a burgeoning movement and men performing a certain type of masculinity—a fresh media masculinity, a hero who is not everyman, but

more flawed than most any man. Serial killers, thieves, and scoundrels are not the sidekick or the anti-hero with a heart of gold; they are offered up as true heroes.

What makes this type of hero so attractive and prevalent in the post-9/11 era? The fragility of these heroes echoes the fragility of the fallen firefighters and failed rescuers of 9/11. The anxiety and uncertainty heroes demonstrate is shared by viewers: uncertain economic times, amorphous terrorist threats, and a government that claims to safeguard security but cannot provide it. The international dominance of the United States is diminished, as is its ability to reassure citizens at home that they are safe. These things affect all Americans, and the television heroes reflect this. The tragic events of 9/11, brought about by arrogance and intolerance, expose human fallibility and frailty. Although media coverage of 9/11 engaged in myth-making that obscured truths, cloaked realities, and side-stepped responsibility (Faludi, 2007), the events of 9/11 also present possibilities to communicate honestly, domestically and internationally. America is not impregnable, men are not all-powerful, masculinity does not equal omnipotence. The new men of television in this study transmute the crisis of 9/11 into a positive change for masculinity. Rather than retreating from modernity into the time-honored male behaviors of escapism and blaming women that Kimmel chronicles as occurring throughout American history (2006), the post-9/11 television heroes of these dramas deal directly with modernity's threats on a professional level as police officers, firefighters, and members of the legal system, with no special omnipotence and while sharing the same fears and bewilderment demonstrated by the general public. On the personal level, they wrestle the changes modernity brings to the family—stepfamilies, single parenting, blended families, isolation, and economic woes.

No one escapes to the final frontier to boldly go where no man has gone before (Roddenberry, 1966). They grapple with modernity on the streets in urban centers where the only protection is what they provide to the public.

Faludi painstakingly documents the jingoism and the mythologizing of firefighters and American masculinity characteristic in the media following the events of 9/11 (Faludi, 2007). Yet post-9/11 male-centered television narratives do much to resist this, and this is particularly evident in *Rescue Me*. Since the program is about firefighters in New York and the effects on them of 9/11, and its network is owned by the conservative Rupert Murdoch, one might expect episodes to include patriotic speeches, flag-waving, and pro-American ideology. At least the fire stations might be swagged with bunting and Old Glory. However, not only is all this absent, but it is actively subverted.

Earlier, I quote a scene from the close of the first season of *Rescue Me*. The firefighters are standing together, looking at the New York City skyline. I repeat it here:

Sean: It's a nice view, huh?

Tommy: Yeah. It'll never be the same for me.

Franco: Yeah, me either.

Laura: Even when they put up whatever it is that they're putting up.

Franco: It's like they're trying to erase what happened, you know?

Chief: It's insulting. Remember when they had those spotlights right after 9/11? I couldn't take that. I like it like this...empty. Just the way those scumbags left it. No spotlights, no new buildings, just empty.

Tommy: Yeah. That's the thing about the spotlight, you know. Walk out into it

and at first everybody thinks they see a good-lookin' all-American hero. But then you stay out there long enough and you know, they start to notice certain things. Maybe your nose is a little crooked, you know, maybe your teeth are too crooked. Maybe you got a little scar on your upper lip. Your hair's not right. One eye's bigger than the other. Next thing you know they think they're looking at some kinda goddamn monster. Like they're lookin' at *King Kong*. Then they start throwin' shit at ya (Tolan, Leary, Tolan, 2004b).

This exchange positions the firefighters not as patriotic American heroes but as resisting and mocking the myth-making of firefighters and the decision-making of the city. In other episodes, as I've described in detail in earlier chapters, narratives are decidedly not supportive of the noble firefighter mythology. The narratives of *Rescue Me* subvert the idea of patriotic New York City firefighters who willingly represent all that is noble about America. They are guys who lost colleagues on the job and they persistently resist being claimed as national heroes or national property of any kind. Their losses were intensely personal and they don't want them shared with the nation or by the nation. Narratives are also cheeky and irreverent. In the pilot episode, ladies' man Franco complains to Gavin that women no longer swoon when they find out he is a firefighter. "Remember all that pussy we were getting' after 9/11?" he asks. "People forget, man" (Tolan, Leary, Tolan, 2004a).

In these dramas, masculinity is rescued from being superhuman and is claimed as human, fraught with fault lines and fragilities. What becomes possible if men are portrayed as flawed, fickle, foolish, and yet, still masculine? With less pressure on men to achieve an impossible state of omnipotence and perform with unshakable confidence,

perhaps they might more readily extend and perceive acceptance of one another. They might work less violently to estrange themselves from the Others of women and gay men. They might feel in crisis less often and to a lesser degree.

The tension in these dramas between reinscribing patriarchy and resisting it is a three-steps-forward, two-back dance, and it is not obvious which action is gaining. It is clear that the pot is being stirred. Representations of heroes and of masculinities that embrace human qualities and honestly own up to flaws and politically incorrect attitudes are positive, although the politically incorrect attitudes are not. Boys' clubs can work as a reinscription of patriarchy, a not-too-distant echo of glass-ceilinged old boys' clubs in the workplace, but they do reveal the male joy of being in the company of men; that is not the same thing as patriarchy, and that seems supportive and encouraging of men. The increasing presence of GLBTI characters is positive, but although the snickering at these characters is exposed as incorrect throwback attitudes, that snickering might be read by some audiences as reinscribing and allowing discrimination. In the openly paraded sexual anxieties of these heroes, men abandon the artifice to reveal the little man behind the curtain, anxiously cranking bars and levers and hoping desperately that the audience will buy the fiction; although these anxieties are uncomfortable, it seems that this is a move in a positive direction, and that expressing the anxieties is the first step toward resolution (perhaps next will be magazine articles in *Maxim* headlined "How to Actually Please a Woman," but that may be too optimistic). However, these television narratives focus on the penis as an object independent of a man's emotion and intellect, and on the anxieties as something that needs to be resolved, not to improve a relationship or heighten personal pleasure, but to

raise one man's standing in the eyes of another. Occasionally, these television representations seem to write a hall pass for bad male behavior: sure, he's misogynistic and sexist, but isn't he charming? And the moments of insight in which these television characters come to realize their attitudes are flawed and foolish may be too subtle for some audiences, in the way that Archie Bunker in *All in the Family* seemed scathing satire to some and welcome corroboration to others. This new masculinity is a rejection of the sensitive, New Age guy, and if that rejection is read in an uncomplicated way without nuance, it might appear to reinforce patriarchal attitudes.

I believe that there is another reason this new television hero emerges in the post-9/11 historical moment, and this reason has its roots in the Second Wave women's movement. At times, the rhetoric and the media conflated masculinity and patriarchy, until it seemed to become politically incorrect to be masculine. The opposite of "feminist" is not "masculine," it is "sexist." However, rather than being called "sexism-haters," feminists were characterized as "man-haters." In this way, masculinity became articulating to patriarchy. Men, as the subjects of my personal interviews claim, became uncertain about who they were supposed to be, in relationship to each other, to women, and in the world. Masculinity and femininity are expressions of gender, sexuality, and desire, and as Halberstam argues, females may express and demonstrate masculinity, and men can do the same with femininity (1998).

Masculinity is not patriarchy.

Masculinity is often conflated with patriarchy, and these post-9/11 television dramas peel the two concepts apart and set them at some distance from one another. Patriarchy has not been banished nor is it in retreat. But an unabashed claiming of the

positive aspects and manifestations of masculinity seems to have been in hiding, and now has re-emerged.

This masculinity is not monolithic. There is no single way in which it is represented. It is myriad and these dramas express it as such, and in so doing, restructure masculinity to include the cower along with the swagger, the failure along with the success, the uncertainty along with the confidence, the frailty along with the strength. These dramas also expand and soften the boundaries of masculinity, and include GLBTI persons.

These post-9/11 television dramas reclaim a proud masculinity but restructure it to include frank ownership of deep anxieties, internal contradictions, and multiple expressions that move beyond heterosexuality. As a feminist, I see a troubling potential here to reclaim regressive sexist attitudes and label them charming. But as a heterosexual woman, and as a mother of sons, I see representations of men who are not ashamed of who and what they are, and who feel joy in the company of other men. I want to argue for a space for that reclaimed, restructured, and rescued masculinity. There are qualities and aspects of masculinity to be celebrated and enjoyed, and that is not a negation of feminism nor an embracing of patriarchy. This celebration is occurring in post-9/11 television dramas.

Michael Kimmel writes:

We need a new definition of masculinity in this new century: a definition that is more about the character of men's hearts and the depths of their souls than about the size of their biceps, wallets, or penises; a definition that is capable of embracing differences among men and enabling other men to feel secure and confident rather than marginalized and excluded; a definition that is capable of friendships based on more than common activities...a definition that centers on standing up for justice and equality instead of running away from commitment

and engagement... We need men who are secure enough in their convictions to recognize a mistake, courageous enough to be compassionate, fiercely egalitarian, powerful enough to empower others, strong enough to acknowledge that real strength comes from holding others up rather than pushing them down and that real freedom is not to be found in the loneliness of the log cabin but in the daily compromises of life in a community (Kimmel, 2006, pp. 254-5).

The masculinities in post-9/11 television dramas do not retreat in crisis but are grittily grounded in messy, complicated reality. In these dramas, masculinity is rescued and recognized as being human, vulnerable, and worth saving and celebrating.

Rescue

The perfect, infallible hero is gone. He no longer works, he is no longer needed. In the post-9/11 world, he cannot save anyone. The new heroes need liberation and salvation as much as they promise to deliver it. *The Shield's* Vic Mackey fights City Hall to save innocents on the street, but his own soul is lost; he can no longer tell right from wrong and he too often crosses the line into illegal activity that harms others. The surgeons of *Nip/Tuck* ask every patient at each episode's opening: "Tell us what it is you don't like about yourself" as if they could administer a sense of self-worth along with the anesthetic. Yet both surgeons, Sean and Christian, struggle mightily to like themselves, feel successful, choose loving partners, and connect with their children. *Boston Legal's* brilliant trial lawyer, Alan Shore, has an incisive and penetrating insight in the courtroom and is absolutely oblivious about why he makes the harmful choices he makes in his personal life. And on *Rescue Me*, the program with the name that characterizes all the post-9/11 male-centered television dramas in this study, the

firefighters put their lives on the line daily for strangers, yet struggle to save themselves from addictions and self-destruction.

Who will rescue the rescuers?

Interestingly, it is not women, as it often is in film and fiction. The love of a good woman is hardly ever held up in these dramas as being redemptive. Here, women are frustrating and incomprehensible, but still loved and protected. “This is about my wife, this is about my family,” says Vic Mackey, and the entire Strike Team of *The Shield* does whatever he asks without question. Protecting one’s family is an inviolate convention. *Rescue Me*’s firefighters abide by stringent, self-administered codes of responsible and caring behavior toward wives and children, but when a wife demands more money or time with her husband, she is “busting my balls.” Women always want something: new houses, clothes, better schools for the kids, shots for the dog, help with the housework. Women need to have men’s work stresses explained to them (and these men do it badly) but still do not respect all that he has to deal with in life. Women are desirable. They are generally good mothers. But they are not companions, solace, and support. One exception is *Dexter*, with significant qualification. In *Dexter*, the fragile single mother Rita magically manages to love serial killer Dexter out of his psychosis and into family man behavior—but only when he’s not duct taping people’s mouths shut before drilling into their skulls. He is not truly saved by Rita; he has just learned how to perform suburban husbandry for and with her.

Who will rescue the rescuers?

Not their lovers. Not their wives or their children. Rescuers are rescued by each other. The post-9/11 male-centered dramas sound a new millennial call from man to

man: mentor me and I will mentor you. No one understands us the way we understand each other. Women are pains in the asses. Kids misbehave and misunderstand. Only brothers, brothers-in-arms, brothers in fraternity, brothers in the clubhouse, brothers under the skin, are asked to provide redemption and successfully deliver it.

Contributions

This original research considers post-9/11 male-centered television dramas as texts reflecting and perhaps producing modern masculinities.

This work adds to the body of masculinity research in these ways. It considers how the post-9/11 historical moment impacts representations of masculinities on television. It investigates how and why the notion of hero in these dramas is fresh and different from previous television heroes. It explores what the importance and meaning of the male-only spaces and the male-male “marriages” in these dramas might be. It notes the increased presence of GLBTI characters on television in these dramas and teases out how this broadens and softens the borders of definitions of masculinity. It grounds these observations and discussions in an examination of the practical political economy in the industry that spawns and supports this programming. It concludes that these representations, while being complicated, messy, and far from monolithic, ultimately reject the sensitive New Age guy of post-Second Wave feminism, reclaim aspects of a retrograde masculinity, and restructure it into what Kimmel calls for when he imagines “a new definition of masculinity in this new century” (2006, p. 254)—a masculinity that reduces marginalization, values brotherhood, and recognizes its own fragility and need.

This work adds to the body of feminist research in three ways. One, it combines a feminist media analysis with a political economy analysis, anchoring feminist media analysis in the economics of media corporations and helping to illuminate some of the reasons why this brand of masculinity emerges when it does. Two, it helps to complicate masculinity in feminist scholarship. The idea of fluidity in gender presents both strengths and drawbacks, and this work foregrounds the complexity and messiness of those notions. Additionally, the representations of masculinity in these post-9/11 male-centered television dramas are far from monolithic or simplistic. They both reinscribe and resist patriarchy, they are both misogynistic and feminist. Three, it argues that masculinity and patriarchy have often been conflated and that care should be taken to prevent those concepts from being automatically articulated to each other. Sexism and patriarchy, not masculinity, are the enemies of feminism.

Studies of media images of women have been a central feminist project from the earliest Second Wave. However, feminist media studies examining men as gendered beings are rare. Just as it is essential to social justice efforts that Whiteness be examined and critiqued, it is essential to the feminist project to do the same for masculinity. Women are not the only possessors of gender; men must be studied as a gender, too. This dissertation seeks to add to the body of knowledge of how media representations of men contribute to our understanding of what it means to be male and female.

“When we study men, we study them as political leaders, military heroes, scientists, writers, artists. Men, themselves, are invisible *as men*,” writes Kimmel (2000, p. 5). This work adds to both masculinity studies and feminist media studies by recognizing male characters in these post-9/11 television dramas as gendered beings.

Their masculinity is not invisible and they are not rendered universal beings. They represent specific attitudes, values, and conflicts that are in part created by their ethnicity, class, and historic time, and are also created by their gender as males.

Limitations

While this research involved exhaustive analysis of hundreds of hours of male-centered television dramas, it was not possible to include all television created since 9/11. The conclusions reached here are based on the shows named and described in chapter two; future research of additional programming might yield different results.

The programming included in this research is limited to episodes that aired before 2009. For practicality's sake, I terminated episode analysis in late 2008.

The political economy analysis is limited to only one program, *Rescue Me*, again due to practical constraints of time and resources. The conclusions drawn here, I believe, can be extended to the other FX programs, but a broader political economy analysis of all these programs would yield deeper and more nuanced results. Also, I viewed *Rescue Me* from recorded broadcast episodes, and this was the only program for which I had captured commercials. The remaining episodes of all other programs were viewed in DVD format, so my assessment of these programs was made without benefit of seeing their commercial sponsors.

My personal interviews with men were quite limited and not meant to be any type of scientific sample. Those views expressed cannot be interpreted as anything other than the opinions of a handful of particular men. Still, their inclusion was valuable to

my extrapolation of how some men think and feel about the company of other men—something I am the wrong gender to speak authoritatively about.

My perspective as a heterosexual woman is both helpful, as an outsider on the margins looking into masculinity, and limiting, because obviously I am not a man and cannot comment on the masculinity as personal lived experience. However, masculinity studies, just as feminist studies, benefits from the viewpoints and observations of both female and male scholars. Gender is a continuum, not a dichotomy, and the study of gender issues in media can only be enhanced by perspectives of scholars at all points on that continuum.

Implications for future research

It is my hope that this research contributes to feminist media studies and to masculinity studies in the ways named above, and that it supports additional research that moves beyond the constraints of this study. This work would be enhanced by a focused exploration of the historic representations of masculinity in television that place these representations within the contexts of historic masculinity, along the lines of what Susan Jeffords did with film and the Reagan era. A comparison between the media coverage of the rescuers of 9/11 and media coverage of the rescuers Pearl Harbor, the other attack on American soil, may prove productive in examining media myth-making in times of national crisis. A fruitful study might be drawn of American media response to the various “crises” in masculinity over the decades. And, this same type of study might be extended to non-American television representations of masculinity and to

ongoing American male-centered television dramas, to trace the arc of masculinity representations and see where this trend might lead.

If the feminist objective of diminishing patriarchy is to be realized, future research in masculinity media studies is essential. Feminist media studies, initially focused on representation frequency and the roles of women in advertising and media, have made dramatic and significant contributions to the feminist project, to media studies, and to feminist studies. But it is time to look at the media representations of men as gendered beings. For too long and in too many ways, representations of men have been considered to be representations of the universal human, while representations of women have been considered to be gendered. Male representations are gendered, as well, and when men are thought of as gendered and masculinity is commonly thought of as constructed and mediated, then patriarchy can be more strongly and more fruitfully opposed.

References

- 11th annual Satellite awards. (2006, December 17). International Press Academy. Retrieved from <http://pressacademy.com/>
- 12th annual Satellite awards. (2007, December 16). International Press Academy. Retrieved from <http://pressacademy.com/>
- 13th annual Satellite awards. (2008, December 14). International Press Academy. Retrieved from <http://pressacademy.com/>
- 13th annual Screen Actors Guild awards nominations. (2007, January 4). Screen Actors Guild. Retrieved from <http://www.sag.org/>
- 14th annual Satellite awards. (2009, December 20). International Press Academy. Retrieved from <http://pressacademy.com/>
- 28th annual winners and nominees. (2007). Young Artist Awards. Retrieved from <http://www.youngartistawards.org/>
- 29th annual winners and nominees. (2008). Young Artist Awards. Retrieve on February 28, 2009, from <http://www.youngartistawards.org/>
- 60th primetime Emmy Awards nominations summary. (2008). Academy of Television Arts & Sciences. Retrieved from <http://cdn.emmys.tv/awards>
- 2007 ALMA award nominees. (2007). National Council of La Raza. Retrieved from <http://www.almaawards.com>
- 2007 dramatic episode casting. (2007). Casting Society of America. Retrieved from <http://www.castingsociety.com>
- 2007 Imagen awards nominees list. (2007). Imagen Foundation. Retrieved from <https://www.imagen.org>
- 2007-2008 season Emmy nominations. (2009). Dexter Official Site. Showtime. Retrieved from <http://www.sho.com/site/dexter/home.do>
- 2008 ALMA award nominees. (2008). National Council of La Raza. Retrieved from <http://www.almaawards.com>
- 2008 Golden Reel award nominees: television. (2008). Motion Picture Sound Editors. Retrieved from <http://www.mpse.org/>
- 2008 Writers Guild Awards television & radio nominees announced. (2007, December 13). Writers Guild of America. Retrieved from <http://wga.org>
- 2009 nominees announced. (2009, January 5). Producers Guild of America. Retrieved from <http://www.producersguild.org/2009/01/05/2009-nominees-announced/>
- 2009 Writers Guild Awards television, radio, news, promotional writing, and graphic animation nominees announced. (2008). Writers Guild of America. Retrieved from <http://wga.org>
- 9/11 by the numbers: Death, destruction, charity, salvation, war, money, real estate, spouses, babies, and other September 11 statistics. (2009). *New York Magazine*. Retrieved from <http://nymag.com/news/articles/wtc/1year/numbers.htm>
- ABC press release. (2004, November 11). *Candace Bergen joins the cast of ABC's "Boston Legal."* The Futon Critic. Retrieved from <http://www.thefutoncritic.com/news.aspx?id=20041130abc01>

- About.com: Architecture. (2009). Skyscrapers and world's tallest building. Retrieved from http://architecture.about.com/od/skyscrapers/Skyscrapers_and_Worlds_Tallest_Building.htm
- Academy of Television Arts & Sciences. (2007). The 59th primetime Emmy awards and creative arts Emmy awards nominees are... Retrieved from <http://www.emmys.tv>
- Advertising Age custom programs. (2009). FX Network network profile. Retrieved from <http://brandedcontent.adage.com/cableguide09/network.php?id=15>
- Adelman, J. (1985). Male bonding in Shakespeare's comedies. In P. Erickson & C. Kahn (Eds.) *Shakespeare's "rough magic": Renaissance essays in honor of C. L. Barber* (pp. 73-103, 73). Newark: University of Delaware Press.
- AFI awards 2007 official selections announced. (2007, December 16). American Film Institute. Retrieved from <http://www.afi.com/Docs/about/press/2007/afiawards2007a.pdf>
- AFI awards: 2008 official selections announced. (2008). American Film Institute. Retrieved from <http://www.afi.com/tvevents/afiawards/>
- AFT TV programs of the year 2006, official selections. (2006). American Film Institute. Retrieved from <http://www.afi.com/>
- AFT TV programs of the year 2007, official selections. (2007). American Film Institute. Retrieved from <http://www.afi.com/>
- Ahlborn, K. (2008, October 24). Q&A: Dexter executive producer Sara Colleton. *Vanity Fair*. Retrieved on March 21, 2009. <http://www.vanityfair.com/>
- Akash, R., Akash, R., Hrishikesh, D., Smith, P., & Sabah, S. (2005). Case report: Association of combined nonarteritic anterior ischemic optic neuropathy (NAION) and obstruction of cilioretinal artery with overdose of Viagra. *Journal of Ocular Pharmacology and Therapeutics*, 24 (4): 315–7. doi:10.1089/jop.2005.21.315. PMID 16117695
- Allen, M. (1975). *Where have you gone, Joe DiMaggio? The story of America's last hero*. New York, NY: E. P. Dutton.
- American Symphony Orchestra League. (1976). Women in American symphony orchestras: An American Symphony Orchestra League staff report prepared for The National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year 1975. *Symphony News*, 27, No. 2.
- Art directors guild (ADG) announces winners of its 2007 excellence in production design awards. (2007, February 16). Art Directors Guild. Retrieved from <http://www.artdirectors.org>
- Associated Press. (2001, September 11). International reaction to September 11, 2001. September 11 News.com. Retrieved from <http://www.september11news.com/InternationalImages.htm>
- Associated Press. (2002, August 19). Post-9/11 report recommends police, fire response changes. *USA Today*. Retrieved from http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2002-08-19-nypd-nyfd-report_x.htm
- Associated Press. (2004, October 8). Taipei skyscraper deemed tallest. *USA Today*. Retrieved from http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2004-10-08-taiwan_x.htm

- Associated Press. (2008, April 2). List of 2007 Peabody Award winners. *USA Today*. Retrieved from http://www.usatoday.com/life/television/news/2008-04-02-peabody-list_N.htm
- Associated Press (2008, September 22). *Mad Men, 30 Rock* take home top Emmys. MSNBC. Retrieved from <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/26820512/>
- Atkinson, C. (2009, April 30). Viacom revenue down 7% in Q1: Domestic ad revenue down 9% media networks reporting similar drop in operating income. *Broadcasting & Cable*. Retrieved from http://www.broadcastingcable.com/article/230831-Viacom_Revenue_Down_7_in_Q1.php
- Averill, J. (2005). Final reports of the Federal Building and fire investigation of the World Trade Center disaster. National Institute of Standards and Technology. Retrieved from <http://wtc.nist.gov/NCSTAR1/>
- Bags. (2008, September 8). Showtime house: The Tudors, Weeds, Dexter, Californication, The L-Word, United States of Tara. Retrieved from <http://www.buzzfocus.com/2008/09/08/showtime-house-the-tudors-weeds-dexter-californication-the-l-word-united-states-of-tara/>
- Baily, A., and Zita, J. N. (2007). The reproduction of Whiteness: Race and the regulation of the gendered body. *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy*, 22 (2), vii-xv.
- Baine, D. (2006). FOX's \$5 billion dollar baby. Jupiter Research report. Retrieved from <http://web2.forrester.com/forr/reg/jupiterlogin.jsp>
- Baker, S. (2003). From Dagnet to Survivor: Historical and cultural perspectives on reality television. In A. F. Matthew J. Smith (Ed.), *Survivor lessons: Essays on communication and reality television* (pp. 57-72). Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland.
- Bakhtin, M. (1984). *Rabelais and His World*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Barker, K., Kiernan, L., and Mills, S. (2001, October 1). Heroes stand up even in the hour of their deaths. *Chicago Tribune*. Retrieved from <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/sns-worldtrade-flight93-ct,0,4814435.story?page=1>
- Barrett, A., Weintraub, A., & Arndt, M. (2005, August 15). Drugmakers are changing channels. *BusinessWeek*. Retrieved from http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/05_33/b3947055_mz011.htm
- BBC. (2006, September 4). Cantor rebuilds after 9/11 losses. BBC. Retrieved from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/5282060.stm?lsf>
- Becker, A. (2007, March 1). *The Riches* premiere on FX scores solid ratings. *Broadcasting & Cable*. Retrieved from www.broadcastingcable.com
- Belber, S. (Writer) & Fortenberry, J. (Director). (2004). Inches [Television series episode]. In P. Tolan, D. Leary, and J. Serpico (Executive Producers), *Rescue me*. New York: FX Network.
- Bellafante, G. (2007, November 23). Sympathy for the devil: The nice-guy serial killer next door. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/23/arts/television/23dext.html?_r=2

- Bellis, M. (2009). Viagra, the patenting of an aphrodisiac. *About.com*. Retrieved from <http://inventors.about.com/od/uvstartinventions/a/Viagra.htm>
- Benson, J. (2007, July 9). Fox promotes Liguori, names Reilly president. *Broadcasting & Cable*. Retrieved from http://www.broadcastingcable.com/article/109517-Fox_Promotes_Liguori_Names_Reilly_President.php
- Berenson, A. (2005, December 4). Sales of impotence drugs fall, defying expectations. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/12/04/business/yourmoney/04impotence.html>
- Best TV shows of 2007. (2007). Metacritic. Retrieved from <http://www.metacritic.com/tv/bests/2007/>
- Bianco, R. (2003, January 31). "Dragnet" can't catch the original. *USA Today*, p. 15D.
- Bianco, R. (2004, July 20). FX's *Rescue Me* is a series on fire. *USA Today*. Retrieved from http://www.usatoday.com/life/television/news/2004-07-20-rescue-me_x.htm
- Bierly, M. (2008, December 9). *Boston Legal* finale: I now pronounce you Denny and Alan. Retrieved from [EW.com popwatch.ew.com/popwatch/2008/12 boston-legal](http://www.ew.com/popwatch.ew.com/popwatch/2008/12_boston-legal)
- Biskind, P., & Ehrenreich, B. (1987). Machismo and Hollywood's working class. In D. Lazere (Ed.), *American media and mass culture: Left perspectives* (pp. 201-215). Berkeley, California: University of California Press.
- BizBash New York. (2008, September 26). Showtime publicizes Dexter premier with faux newsstands. BizBash New York. Retrieved from <http://www.bizbash.com/newyork/archive.php?t=Showtime>
- Bly, R. (1990). *Iron John: a book about men*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Boddy, W. (1990). *Fifties television: The industry and its critics*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Bogle, D. (2001). *Prime time blues: African Americans on network television*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.
- Boolell, M., Allen, M.J., Ballard, S.A., Gepi-Attee, S., Muirhead, G. J., Naylor, A.M., Osterloh, I.H., & Gingell, C. (1996, June). Sildenafil: an orally active type 5 cyclic GMP-specific phosphodiesterase inhibitor for the treatment of penile erectile dysfunction. *International Journal of Impotence Research* 8 (2): 47-52.
- Broadcast News/canada.com. (2006, June 26). CN Tower celebrates 30th birthday. Retrieved from <http://www.canada.com/topics/travel/story.html?id=057d78dc-4964-422f-ba85-361425ea8126&k=3499>
- Brown, A. C. (1984). The last hero: Wild Bill Donovan. New York, NY: Vintage.
- Browne, D. (1999). *Electronic media and industrialized nations*. Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press.
- Browne, N. (1984). The political economy of the television (super) text. *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, 9(3), 174-182.
- Bruzzi, S. (2005). *Bringing up daddy: Fatherhood and masculinity in post war Hollywood*. London: British Film Institute.
- Buck, S. (Writer), & Dahl, J. (Director). (2008). The lion sleeps tonight [Television series episode]. In S. Colleton (Executive Producer), *Dexter*, New York: Showtime.

- Burkert, W. (1985). *The dead, heroes and chthonic gods*. Greek Religion. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Burrelli, D. F. (1996, December 12). 92008: Women in the armed forces. Foreign Affairs and National Defense Division. Retrieved from www.fas.org/man/crs/92-008.htm
- Burson, C. (Creator and Writer), Lipkin, D. (Creator and Writer), and Payne, A. (Director). (2009). Pilot [Television series episode]. In C. Burson and N. Halpern (Executive Producers) *Hung* [Television series]. U.S.: HBO.
- Business Week. (2005, September 19). FX aims for HBO's cachet. *Business Week*. Retrieved from http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/05_38/b3951112.htm
- Butler, J. (1999). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Caldwell, J. (1995). *Televisuality: Style, crisis and authority in American television*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Caldwell, J. (2004). Convergence television: Aggregating form and repurposing content
- Caleo, M. (Writer) & Bernstein, A. (Director). (2004). Revenge [Television series episode]. In P. Tolan, D. Leary, and J. Serpico (Executive Producers), *Rescue me*. New York: FX Network.
- Campbell, J. (1949). *The hero with a thousand faces*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Caputi, J. (2003). Everyday pornography. In G. Dines and J. M. Humez (Eds.), *Gender, Race, and Class in Media, 2nd ed.* (pp. 434-450). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Carlyle, T. (1841). *On heroes, hero worship and the heroic in history*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Carson, A. J. (2006). *Rescue Me: The complete first season*. Retrieved from TV DVD Reviews: Tvdvdreviews.com
- Casting Society of America. (2008). The casting society of America announces the 24th annual Artios award nominations for outstanding achievement in casting. Retrieved from <http://www.castingsociety.com>
- Cauchon, D., and Moore, M. (2002, September 2). Desperation forced a horrific decision. *USA Today*. Retrieved from http://www.usatoday.com/news/sept11/2002-09-02-jumper_x.htm
- CBS. (2006a). Certain Federal income tax information regarding the separation of Viacom, Inc. CBS Corporation. Retrieved from <http://www.cbscorporation.com/media/pdf/CleanShareholderletterS.pdf>
- CBS. (2006b). Showtime shareholder letter. CBS Corporation/Viacom memo. Retrieved from <http://www.cbscorporation.com/media/pdf/CleanShareholderletterS.pdf>
- CBS. (2007, February 7). CBS corporation to sell local TV stations in four markets to Cerberus Capital Management, L.P. CBS Corporation. Retrieved from http://www.redorbit.com/news/technology/831591/cbs_corporation_to_sell_local_tv_stations_in_four_markets/index.html

- CBS. (2008, May 15). CBS Corporation to acquire CNET Networks, Inc., CBS Press Release. Retrieved from <http://www.cbscorporation.com/news/prdetails.php?id=3263>
- CBS. (2008, July 2). *CNET's content to boost CBS coverage*. CBS Corporation. New York: cbs3.com. Retrieved from <http://cbs3.com/consumer/cbs.cnet.purchase.2.761897.html>
- Central Plaza Hong Kong. (2009). Retrieved from <http://www.arch.hku.hk/teaching/cases/centplaz/centplaz.htm>
- Cerone, D., and Phillips, C. (Executive Producers). (2006). *Dexter* [Television series]. New York: Showtime.
- Cerone, D., and Phillips, C. (Executive Producers). (2007). *Dexter* [Television series]. New York: Showtime.
- Chaney, J. (2008, July 1). Good “men” with more than a few extras. *Washington Post*. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/artsandliving/movies/features/bonus-points/070108.html>
- Cheitlin, M.D., Hutter, A.M. Jr., Brindis, R.G., Ganz, P., Kaul, S., Russell, R.O. Jr., & Zusman, R.M. (1999). ACC/AHA expert consensus document. Use of sildenafil (Viagra) in patients with cardiovascular disease. American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association. *Journal of the American College of Cardiology* 33 (1): 273–82. doi:10.1016/S0735-1097(98)00656-1
- Chodorow, N. (1978). *The reproduction of mother: Psychoanalysis and the sociology of gender*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Chopra-Gant, M. (2000). Tough talk, hard knocks and fear of feminization: Reclaiming patriarchal authority for 1950s masculinity in “Dragnet.” *Proceedings of Point blank: tough guy film and culture*. Tucson: University of Arizona.
- Chopra-Gant, M. (2007). The law of the father, the law of the land: Power, gender and race in *The Shield*. *Journal of American Studies*, 41 (3), 659-673.
- Church, G. (2007, June 11). Freedom! *Time* magazine, Retrieved from www.time.com
- Cinema Audio Society Awards. (2009). The winners and nominees for the cinema audio society awards for outstanding achievement in sound mixing for 2009. Cinema Audio Society Awards. Retrieved from <http://www.org/casawards/cas2009nominees.php>
- Claustro, L. (2008, February 17). *CBS welcomes Dexter tonight*. BuddyTV. Retrieved from <http://www.buddytv.com/articles/dexter/cbs-welcomes-dexter-tonight-16698.aspx?pollid=360&answer=1444#poll360>
- CBC News. (2007, September 12). *CN tower dethroned by Dubai building*. CBC News (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation). Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2007/09/12/cntower-surpassed.html>
- CNN. (2006, May 16). First video of Pentagon 9/11 attack released. Retrieved from <http://www.cnn.com/2006/US/05/16/pentagon.video/index.html>
- CNN. (2006, September 7). September 11: Chronology of terror. CNN.com. Retrieved from <http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/09/11/chronology.attack/index.html>
- Cohan, S. (Ed.). (1993). *Screening the male: Exploring masculinities in the Hollywood cinema*. New York: Routledge.

- Cohen, D. S. (2008, June 24). Saturn awards are “Enchanted.” *Variety*. Retrieved from http://www.variety.com/awardcentral_article/VR1117988041.html?nav=news&categoryid=1983&cs=1
- Colleton, S. (Executive Producer). (2006). *Dexter* [Television series]. New York: Showtime.
- Colleton, S. (Executive Producer). (2007). *Dexter* [Television series]. New York: Showtime.
- Colleton, S. (Executive Producer). (2008). *Dexter* [Television series]. New York: Showtime.
- Colleton, S., Goldwyn, J., and Manos, J., Jr. (Executive Producers). (2009). *Dexter* [Television series]. New York: Showtime.
- Columbia Journalism Review. (2009). Who owns what. Retrieved from <http://www.cjr.org/resources/index.php?c=cbs>
- Comcast. (2007). Financial information. Comcast. Retrieved from www.cmcsk.com
- Complete 2008 nominations list. (2008, July 17). Academy of Television Arts & Sciences. Retrieved from http://cdn.emmys.tv/awards/2008pte/60thpte_noms.php
- Complete list of nominations for 15th annual Screen Actors Guild awards. (2008, December 18). E! Online. Retrieved from http://www.eonline.com/uberblog/b73969_complete_list_of_nominations_15th.html
- Connell, R. W. (1983). *Which way is up? Essays on class, sex, and culture*. Sydney: George Allen & Unwin.
- Connell, R. W. (1990). An iron man: The body and some contradictions of hegemonic masculinity. In M. A. Messner & D. F. Sabo (Eds.), *Sport, men, and the gender order: Critical perspectives* (pp. 83-96). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetic Books.
- Connell, R. W. (1995). *Masculinities*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Connell, R. W. (2000). *The men and the boys*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Connell, R.W. (2005a). The social organization of masculinity. In S. Whitehead & F. Barrett (Eds.), *The Masculinities Reader*, pp. 30-50. Malden, MA: Polity Press.
- Connell, R. W. & Messerschmidt, J. (2005). Hegemonic masculinity. *Gender & Society*, 19(6), 829-859. DOI: 10.1177/0891243205278639
- Consalvo, M. (2003). The monsters next door: Media constructions of boys and masculinity. *Feminist Media Studies*, 3 (1), 27-45.
- Cortez, C. (2007, February 20). Award news: The librarian and flyboys nab Saturn award nominations for 33rd annual event. *IFMagazine.com*. Retrieved from <http://www.ifmagazine.com/new.asp?article=4135>
- Creeber, G. (2002). Old sleuth or new man? Investigations into rape, murder and masculinity in *Cracker* (1993-1996). *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, 16 (2), 169-83.
- Crowther, B. (1954, August 21). “Dragnet” has debut at Victoria Theatre. *New York Times*, p. 10.
- Cunningham A. V., & Smith, K.H. (2001). Anterior ischemic optic neuropathy associated with Viagra. *Journal of Neuro-Ophthalmology*, 21, 22-25.

- Curtin, M. (1996). On edge: Culture industries in the neo-network era. In R. Ohmann, G. Averill, M. Curtin, D. Shumway & E. Traube (Eds.), *Making and selling culture* (pp. 181-202). Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press.
- Curtis, P. (2006, December 28). Guiliani's 9/11 myth begins to take on water. *The Daily Gotham*. Retrieved from http://www.dailygotham.com/blog/paul/giulianis_9_11_myth_begins_to_take_on_water
- Django. (2009, February 25). The last hero. Retrieved from <http://ddjango.blogspot.com/2009/02/last-hero.html>
- Deggans, E. (2007, December 15). Dexter thrills and wraps up dexterously. *St. Petersburg Times*. Retrieved from http://www.sptimes.com/2007/12/15/Tv/_Dexter_thrills_and.shtml
- Dehnart, A. (2007, December 14). Dexter is poised for a graceful, conflicted finale. MSNBC. Retrieved from <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/22248626/>
- Denis Leary. (2009). Apostle NYC. Retrieved from apostlennyc.com
- Dexter. (2009). Metacritic. Retrieved from <http://www.metacritic.com/tv/shows/dexter>
- Donnelly, G. J. (2007, October 15). Keith Carradine: From serial killer to *Dexter* nemesis. *TV Guide*. Retrieved from <http://www.tvguide.com/news/keith-carradine-dexter-38140.aspx>
- Douglas, G. H. (2004). *Skyscrapers: A social history in America*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company.
- Dow, B. J. (2006). The traffic in men and the *Fatal Attraction* of postfeminist masculinity. *Women's Studies in Communication*, 29 (1), 113-31.
- Drucker, S. J. & Cathcart, R. S. (1994). *American heroes in a media age*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Dundes, A., Rank, O., & Lord Raglan. (1990). *In quest of the hero*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Dwyer, J., & O'Donnell, M. (2005, September 9). 9/11 firefighters told of isolation amid disaster. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/09/09/nyregion/nyregionspecial3/09records.html>
- Edwards, J. (2007, March 12). The Tracker: This is your show on drugs: Rx brands injected into action. *Brandweek*. Retrieved from http://www.brandweek.com/bw/eseach/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1003556675
- Eggerton, J. (2008, May 1). PTC pushes CBS affiliates to drop *Dexter*. *Broadcasting & Cable*. Retrieved from http://www.broadcastingcable.com/article/113541-PTC_Pushes_CBS_Affiliates_to_Drop_Dexter.php
- Ehrenreich, B. (1983). *The hearts of men: American dreams and the flight from commitment*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Elfman, D. (2007, July 19). "Men" behaving badly—and honestly. *Chicago Sun-Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.suntimes.com/entertainment/474824,CST-FTR-elf19.article>
- Elliott, S. (2008, June 30). Madison Avenue likes what it sees in the mirror. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from

- <http://www.nytimes.com/glogin?URI=http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/23/business/media/23adcol.html>
- Ellis, R. (2009, February 12). FX orders sixth season of "Rescue Me." *Milwaukee Examiner*. Retrieved from <http://www.examiner.com/x-668-TV-Examiner~y2009m2d12-FX-orders-sixth-season-of-Rescue-Me>
- Emerson, J. (2007, October 20). *Dexter*: putting it together. *Chicago Sun Times*. Retrieved from http://blogs.suntimes.com/scanners/2007/10/dexter_putting_it_together.html
- Emmy Awards. (2009). Academy of Television Arts and Science. Retrieved from <http://www.emmys.tv/>
- Emporis. (2009, June). Tallest buildings. Retrieved from <http://www.emporis.com/en/bu/sk/st/tp/wo/>
- Enchanted runs rings around Saturn Awards. (2008, June 24). *The Hollywood Reporter*. Retrieved from http://login.vnuemedia.com/hr/login/login_subscribe.jsp?id=2
- Engine Room, The. (2003). A perfect lie. In Gabriel & Dresden (Producers) *Nip/Tuck Soundtrack*. U.S.: Nettwerk Records.
- Entman, R. & Rojecki, A. (2000). *The Black image in the White mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Erikson, C. (2007, August 27). Remembering the days when a business lunch came in a highball glass. *New York Post*. Retrieved from http://www.nypost.com/p/vice_presidents_iLyPbsAQA5W6u122AUu2GJ
- Falker, D. (1995). *The last hero: The life of Mickey Mantle*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Faludi, S. (1991). *Backlash: The undeclared war against women*. New York, NY: Crown Books.
- Faludi, S. (1999). *Stiffed: The betrayal of the American man*. New York, NY: W. Morrow.
- Faludi, S. (2007). *The terror dream: Fear and fantasy in post-9/11 America*. New York, NY: Holt & Company.
- FDA announces revisions to labels for Cialis, Levitra and Viagra. (2007, October 18). United States Food and Drug Administration. Retrieved from <http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/default.htm>
- Feld, R., Oppenheimer, J., & Stasukevich, I. (2008, March). Tantalizing television. *American Cinematographer* 89 (3). Retrieved from http://www.ascmag.com/magazine_dynamic/March2008/Television/page1.php
- Feldman, C. (2000, March 13). Anti-gang units a casualty of Los Angeles police scandal. CNN.com. Retrieved from <http://transcripts.cnn.com/2000/US/03/13/lapd.crash/>
- Fernandez, M. E. (2008, August 24). The Shield: As the FX show enters its seventh and final season, producer Shawn Ryan talks about sacrifices along the way. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/la-ca-ryan24-2008aug24,0,3100875.story>
- Feuer, J. (1983). The concept of live television: ontology as ideology. In E. A. Kaplan (Ed.), *Regarding television* (pp. 12-22). Los Angeles: American Film Institute.

- Firefighter Central. (2009). Female firefighter. Retrieved from http://www.firefightercentral.com/history/first_woman
- Firehouse.com*. (2002). Retrieved July 2006, from www.firehouse.com/lodd/2002services/iaff/0920.html
- Fiske, J. (1987). *Television culture*. London: Methuen.
- Fiske, J. (1992). British cultural studies. In R. C. Allen (Ed.), *Channels of discourse, reassembled: Television and contemporary criticism* (pp. 284-323). Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
- Flannery, R., & Louzecky, D. (2007). Postdemocratic society and the truth out there. In Kowalski, D. (Ed.), *The philosophy of the X-files* (pp. 55-76). Lexington-Fayette, KY: University Press of Kentucky.
- Foster, D. (2009, February 18). *Dexter* Season 2 in March. *DVD Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.dvdtimes.co.uk/content.php?contentid=70098>
- FOX.com. (2008). Fox Television. News Corporation. Retrieved from <http://fxnetwork.com/shows.php>
- FOX Network. (2009). Fox.com. Retrieved from <http://www.fox.com/>
- Fox television. (2009). Retrieved from <http://www.newscorp.com/operations/television.html>
- Frankel, D. (2008, December 16). *Dexter* kills for Showtime. *Variety*. Retrieved from <http://www.variety.com/article/VR1117997513.html?categoryid=1275&cs=1>
- Friedman, M. D. (1995, March 22). Male bonds and marriage in *All's Well* and *Much Ado*. *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 35 (2), 231-250.
- Freidman, W. (2006). Traditional TV pressure groups losing ground. Retrieved from TV Watch, Full Frontal Television: www.mediapost.com
- Friedan, B. (1963). *The feminine mystique*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co.
- Fracher, J., & Kimmel, M.S. (1995). Hard issues and soft sports: Counseling men about sexuality. In M.S. Kimmel & M.A. Messner (Eds.) *Men's Lives*, 365-374. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Fullerton, H.N. (1999, December). Labor force participation: 75 years of change, 1950-98 and 1998-2025. *Monthly Labor Review Online*. Retrieved from <http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/1999/12/art1abs.htm>
- FX Network. (2004, December 17). Nielsen rankings. Retrieved from <http://fxnetwork.com/>
- FX Network. (2006, July 12). Rescue Me. Retrieved from <http://fxnetwork.com/>
- FX Network. (2009). FX Shows. FXNetwork.com. Retrieved from <http://www.newscorp.com/operations/television.html>
- FX Network. (2009). FXNetwork. Retrieved from <http://fxnetwork.com/>
- FX picks up eight Emmy Award nominations*. (2005, July 14). FX Networks. Retrieved from <http://www.fxnetwork.com> <http://www.fxnetworks.com>
- Gallagher, D. (2009, June 9). U.S. rep calls for cold showers on male enhancement ads. TV Squad. Retrieved from <http://www.tvsquad.com/2009/06/09/u-s-rep-calls-for-cold-showers-on-male-enhancement-ads/>
- Giardina, C. (2008, January 12). Editors unveil their Eddie noms. *The Hollywood Reporter*. Retrieved from http://login.vnuemedia.com/hr/login/login_subscribe.jsp?id=2

- Gilbert, J. (2006). *Men in the middle: Searching for masculinity in the 1950s*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Gilmore, G. J. (2002, March 13). Army hero recalls Pentagon 9-11 rescue-recovery efforts. American Forces Press Service. Retrieved from <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=44252>
- Goffman, E. (1979). *Gender advertisement*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Golden Globe nominations and winners 2007. (2007). Hollywood Foreign Press Association. Retrieved from <http://www.goldenglobes.org/nominations/year/2006>
- Golden Globe nominations and winners 2008. (2008). Hollywood Foreign Press Association. Retrieved from <http://www.goldenglobes.org/nominations/year/2007>
- Golden Globe nominations and winners 2009. (2009). Hollywood Foreign Press Association. Retrieved from <http://www.goldenglobes.org/nominations/year/2008>
- Goldman, E. (2007, March 8). Paley fest: *Dexter*. IGN. Retrieved from <http://thetvaddict.com/2007/03/08/2007-paley-festival-recap-dexter/>
- Goldman, E. (2008, October 21). *Dexter* keeps killing: Showtime has big plans for the serial killer favorite. IGN.com TV UK. Retrieved from <http://uk.tv.ign.com/articles/921/921985p1.html>
- Goodman, T. (2005, June 22). They steal, they cheat, they lie, and we wouldn't want it any other way: The timeless appeal of the anti-hero. *San Francisco Chronicle*, p. E1.
- Goodman, T. (2007, July 18) New York in 1960, when the "Mad Men" were in charge—and everything was about to change. *San Francisco Chronicle*. Retrieved from <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2007/07/18/DDGLNR0JHA1.DTL&hw=mad+men&sn=001&sc=1000>
- Goodwin, T. (2006). *San Francisco Chronicle*. Retrieved from www.rescueme.com/xml/siteData.xml
- Gossett, S. (1996). *The films and career of Audie Murphy*. Madison, N.C.: Empire Publishing.
- Grady, D. and Revkin, A. C. (2002, September 10). Threats and responses: Rescuer's health; lung ailments may force 500 firefighters off job. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/09/10/us/threats-responses-rescuer-s-health-lung-ailments-may-force-500-firefighters-off.html>
- Graham, D. (1989). *No name on the bullet*. New York: Viking.
- Gray, H. (1995). *Watching race: television and the struggle for "Blackness."* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Gray, H. (2005). *Cultural moves; African Americans and the politics of representation*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Greene, L., Levine, R. Jablonski, S., (Executive Producers). (2003-2008). *Nip/tuck* [Television series]. Hollywood, CA: FX Network.
- Greene, L., Levine, R. Jablonski, S., Murphy, R. (Executive Producers). (2005). *Nip/tuck* [Television series]. Hollywood, CA: FX Network.

- Greene, L., Levine, R. Jablonski, S., Murphy, R. (Executive Producers). (2006). *Nip/tuck* [Television series]. Hollywood, CA: FX Network.
- Greene, L., Levine, R. Jablonski, S., Murphy, R. (Executive Producers). (2007). *Nip/tuck* [Television series]. Hollywood, CA: FX Network.
- Greene, L., Levine, R. Jablonski, S., Murphy, R. (Executive Producers). (2008). *Nip/tuck* [Television series]. Hollywood, CA: FX Network.
- Greene, L., Levine, R. Jablonski, S., Murphy, R. (Executive Producers). (2009). *Nip/tuck* [Television series]. Hollywood, CA: FX Network.
- Greenspan, A. (1996, December 5). The challenge of central banking in a democratic society. Speech by former Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan to the American Enterprise Institute.
- Gripsrud, J. (1998). Television, broadcasting, flow: key metaphors in TV theory. In C. Geraghty & D. Lusted (Eds.), *The television studies book*. London: Arnold.
- Hadas, M. & Smith, M. (1965). *Heroes and gods*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Hagen, S. & Carouba, M. (2002). *Women at Ground Zero: stories of courage and compassion*. New York: Alpha Pearson Education.
- Halberstam, J. (1998). *Female masculinity*. London: Duke University Press.
- Halberstam, J. (2002). The good, the bad and the ugly: men, women, and masculinity. In J. K. Gardiner (Ed.), *Masculinity Studies and Feminist Theory*, pp. 344-367. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Hall, S. (1980). Cultural studies: Two paradigms. *Media, Culture and Society*, 2, 57-72.
- Hall, S. (1980b). Encoding/decoding. In S. Hall, et. al., (Eds.), *Culture, media, language*, pp. 128-138. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hall, S. (1992). Race, culture, and communications: looking backward and forward at cultural studies. *Rethinking Marxism*, 5, 1.
- Hall, S. (1997). *Representation: cultural representations and signifying practices*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Handel, J. (2009, February 8). WGA awards fete *Slumdog*, *Milk*, *Mad Men*, *30 Rock*. *The Huffington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jonathan-handel/wga-awards-fete-slumdog-m_b_164966.html
- Hanke, R. (1990). Hegemonic masculinity in *thirtysomething*. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 7, 231-48.
- Hanke, R. (1992). Redesigning men: Hegemonic masculinity in television. In S. Craig, *Men, Masculinity and the Media* (pp. 185-98). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hanke, R. (1998a). Theorizing masculinity with/in the media. *Communication Theory*, 8 (2), 183-203.
- Hanke, R. (1998b). The “mock-macho” situation comedy: Hegemonic masculinity and its reiteration. *Western Journal of Communication*, 62 (1), 74-93.
- Hansen, W. (2009). What is a hero? Indiana University. Retrieved from www.iuinfo.indiana.edu/homepages/022699.
- Haralovich, M. B. (1992). Sitcoms and suburbs: Positioning the 1950s homemaker. In L. S. Mann (Ed.), *Private screenings: Television and the female consumer* (pp. 111-141). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Hari, J. (2006, January 3). To Hollywood, gays must be tragic or sissy. *The Independent*. Retrieved from

- <http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/johann-hari/johann-hari-to-hollywood-gays-must-be-tragic-or-sissy-521464.html>.
- Haugsted, L. (2007, June 25). AMC mad about VOD, HD push for *Mad Men*. Multichannel News. Retrieved from http://www.multichannel.com/article/129501-AMC_Mad_About_VOD_HD_Push_for_Mad_Men.php
- Havens, T. (2007, October 27). Guy-coms and the hegemony of juvenile masculinity. Flow TV. Retrieved from <http://flowtv.org>.
- HBO tops 2008 creative arts Emmys, ABC & PBS lead nets, show airs September 20 on E! (2008-09-13). Academy of Television Arts & Sciences. Retrieved from http://cdn.emmys.tv/awards/2008pte/CTA08_wrap.php
- HBO tops WGA list with five noms. (2007). *The Hollywood Reporter*. Retrieved from http://login.vnuemedia.com/hr/login/login_subscribe.jsp?id=2
- Heartfield, J. (2002). *The death of the subject explained*. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Hallam University Press.
- Hein, D. (1993). The death of heroes, the recovery of the heroic. *Christian Century* 110, 1298-1303. Retrieved from http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1058/is_n37_v110/ai_14739320 or <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5000242002>
- Hendra, T. (2001). *Brotherhood*. New York: American Express Publishing.
- Here is New York. (2001). A democracy of photographs. Retrieved from <http://hereisnewyork.org/index2.asp>
- Hochschild, A. R. (2003). *The commercialization of intimate life: notes from home and work*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hollywood Foreign Press Association 2008 Golden Globe awards for the year ended December 31, 2007. (2007). HFPA. Retrieved from <http://www.goldenglobes.org/news/id/81>
- Hudson, P. (1969). Jack Webb's *Dragnet* tells it like it is. In P. Hudson, *TV 70*. New York, New York, USA: Scholastic Book Services.
- Hughes, R. (1920). Introduction. In E. A. Barron (Ed.), *Deeds of heroism and bravery: the book of heroes and personal daring* (pp. 13-18). New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers.
- Hunt, D. (2005). *Channeling Blackness: studies on television and race in America*. (D. Hunt, Ed.) New York: Oxford University Press.
- Information Please. (2009). Women firefighters and police officers. Retrieved from <http://www.informationplease.com>
- Is Viagra vulnerable? (2003, October 27). *Business Week*. Retrieved from http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/03_43/b3855120.htm
- Jeffords, S. (1989). *The remasculinization of America: Gender and the Vietnam war*. Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Jeffords, S. (1994). *Hard bodies: Hollywood masculinity in the Reagan era*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Jenkins, S. (2001, September 20). Company of Heroes. *Washington Post*, page C01.
- John Wayne as the Last Hero. (1969, August 8). *Time*. Retrieved from <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,941296,00.html>

- Johnson, V. (1998). *Heartland TV*. New York: New York University Press.
- Jones, G. (2004). *Men of tomorrow: Geeks, gangsters and the birth of the comic book*. New York: Basic Books.
- Keen, S. (1992). *Fire in the belly: on being a man*. New York: Bantam.
- Keith, A. (2000). The economics of Viagra. *Health Affairs*, 19 (2): 147–157.
- Kelley, D. and D'Elia, B. (Executive Producers). (2004-2008). *Boston Legal*. U.S.: ABC.
- Kelley, D. (Creator), Kelley, D. (Writer), Shapiro, J. (Writer), and Szwarc, J. (Director). (2004). Loose lips [Television series episode]. In B. D'Elia (Executive Producer) *Boston Legal*. U.S.: ABC.
- Kelley, D. (Creator), Kelley, D. (Writer), and Sanford, A. (Director). (2005). Schadenfreude [Television series episode]. In B. D'Elia (Executive Producer) *Boston Legal*. U.S.: ABC.
- Kelley, D. (Creator), Kreisberg, A. (Writer), Leahy, J. (Writer), Kelley (Writer), and Arkin, A. (Director). (2007). Nuts [Television series episode]. In B. D'Elia (Executive Producer) *Boston Legal*. U.S.: ABC.
- Kelley, D. (Creator), Kelley, D. (Writer), and D'Elia, B. (Director). (2008a). Smoke signals [Television series episode]. In B. D'Elia (Executive Producer) *Boston Legal*. U.S.: ABC.
- Kelley, D. (Creator), Kelley, D. (Writer), and Robin, S. (Director). (2008b). True love [Television series episode]. In B. D'Elia (Executive Producer) *Boston Legal*. U.S.: ABC.
- Kelley, D. (Creator), Kelley, D. (Writer), and D'Elia, B. (Director). (2008c). Last call [Television series episode]. In B. D'Elia (Executive Producer) *Boston Legal*. U.S.: ABC.
- Kerenyi, C. (1959). *Myth and man: The heroes of the Greeks*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Kerenyi, K. (1959). *The heroes of the Greeks*. London: Thames & Hudson.
- Kilbourne, J. (Creator). (1979). *Killing us softly* [video]. United States: Cambridge Documentary Films.
- Kilbourne, J. (1994). Still killing us softly: Advertising and the obsession with thinness. In P. Fallon, M.A. Katzman, & S. C. Wooley (Eds.), *Feminist perspectives on eating disorders* (pp.395-418). New York: Guilford Press.
- Kilbourne, J. (1999a). *Can't Buy My Love: How Advertising Changes the Way We Think and Feel*. New York: Touchstone.
- Kilbourne, J. (1999b). *Deadly Persuasion: Why Women and Girls Must Fight the Addictive Power of Advertising*. New York: Free Press.
- Kilbourne, J. (1999c). *Killing us softly 3* [video]. United States: Media Education Foundation.
- Kimmel, M. (2005). Masculinity as homophobia. In S. Whitehead & F. Barrett (Eds.), *The Masculinities Reader*, pp. 266-287. Malden, MA: Polity Press.
- Kimmel, M. (2006). *Manhood in America: A cultural history* (2nd ed.) New York: Oxford University Press.

- Kipnis, L. (1992). (Male) desire and (female) disgust: reading Hustler. In L. Grossberg, C. Nelson & P. Treichler (Eds.), *Cultural studies* (pp. 373-391). London: Routledge.
- Klein, P. (1971). Why you watch what you watch when you watch, (originally printed in *TV Guide*, July 1971), reprinted in Harris, J. S. (Ed.) (1978) *TV Guide: The first 25 years* (pp. 186-88). New York: New American Library.
- Kling, J. (1998). From hypertension to angina to Viagra. *Modern Drug Discovery 1*, 31-38.
- Kloner, R. A. (2005). Pharmacology and drug interaction effects of the phosphodiesterase 5 inhibitors: focus on alpha-blocker interactions. *American Journal of Cardiology*, 96 (12B): 42M–46M.
doi:10.1016/j.amjcard.2005.07.011. PMID 16387566.
- LaBarge, S. (2005). Heroism: Why heroes are important. Markkula Center for Applied Ethics, Santa Clara University. Retrieved from <http://www.scu.edu/ethics/publications/ethicsoutlook/2005/heroes.html>
- Lafayette, J. (2007, October 2). *Dexter* debut is Showtime's first to draw 1 million viewers. *TV Week*. Retrieved from <http://www.tvweek.com/campaign/index.html>
- LAPD's anti-gang unit is disbanded following widespread corruption scandal. (2000, March 12). *CNN.com*. Retrieved from CNN.com, <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0003/12/sm.01.html>.
- Learmonth, M. (2007, October 19). Ad execs bristle at AMC's "Mad Men": Snappy series draws ire of Madison Avenue. *Variety*. Retrieved from Variety.com.
- Lehman, P. (Ed.). (2001). *Masculinity: Bodies, movies, culture*. New York: Routledge.
- Lewis, H. (2009, March 16). Why Rupert Murdoch fired Peter Liguori. *Business Insider*. Retrieved from <http://www.businessinsider.com/palace-intrigue-behind-news-corp-shakeup-2009-3>
- Levin, G. (2004, October 4). "Housewives" lifts ABC's spirits—and ratings. *USA Today*. Retrieved from http://www.usatoday.com/life/television/news/2004-10-04-desperate-wives-abc-comeback_x.htm
- Levine, R. (Executive Producer). (2003). *Nip/tuck* [Television series]. Hollywood, CA: FX Network.
- Liddell, H. & Scott, R. (1940). *A Greek-English lexicon*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Lindbergh, R. (1999, June 14). *Time* 100 hero & icon: Reeve Lindbergh discusses her father, aviator legend Charles Lindbergh. *Time*. Retrieved from <http://www.time.com/time/community/transcripts/1999/061099lindberghtime100.html>
- Lindsay, J. (2004). *Darkly dreaming Dexter*. New York: Doubleday.
- Lindsay, J. (2005). *Dearlly devoted Dexter*. New York: Random House.
- Lindsay, J. (2007). *Dexter in the dark*. New York: Random House.
- Littleton, C. (2009, May 4). "Mad Men" to return in August. *Variety*. Retrieved from <http://www.variety.com/article/VR1118003157.html?categoryid=14&cs=1&nid=2562>
- Loe, M. (2004). *The Rise of Viagra: How the little blue pill changed America*. New York: New York University Press.

- Lord Raglan. (1936). *The hero: a study in tradition, myth, and drama*. London: Watts & Co.
- Lotz, A. (2006). *Redesigning women: Television after the network era*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Lotz, A. (2007, May). Neither hero nor antihero: the contest of hegemonic masculinity in U.S. cable dramas. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, San Francisco, CA. Unpublished.
- Lowlights from Rescue Me*. (2006). Parents TV. Retrieved from <http://www.parentstv.org/ptc/campaigns/rescueme/summaries.html>.
- Lowry, B. (2007, July 11). Recently reviewed: "Mad men." *Variety*. Retrieved from <http://www.variety.com/review/VE1117934162.html?categoryid=32&cs=1>
- Lowry, B. (2008, July 17). Emmys fond of dear "John": Cable scores with "Damages," "Mad Men." *Variety*. Retrieved from <http://www.variety.com/index.asp?layout=awardcentral&jump=emmys09&articleid=VR1117989081&cs=1>
- MacDougall, C. (Director). (2006). *Cracker: A New Terror* [Motion picture]. United States: Acorn Media Release Date: September 25, 2007.
- MacInnes, J. (1998). *The end of masculinity*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Mad men—cast & crew—Alan Taylor. (2007). AMC. Retrieved from <http://www.amctv.com/originals/madmen/cast/ataylor>
- Madmen: about the show*. (2009). Mad Men. Retrieved on August 18, 2008, from <http://www.amctv.com/originals/madmen/about/>
- Magna Global. (2006). Cable network profiles "FX." New York: Magna Global.
- Mankiewicz, J. (Director). (1959). *Suddenly, last summer* [Motion picture]. United States: Horizon Pictures.
- Manos, J., Jr. (Writer), & Cuesta, M. (Director). (2006). Dexter [Television series episode]. In S. York: Showtime.
- Manos, J., Jr. (Writer), & Goldwyn, T. (Director). (2007). It's alive! [Television series episode]. In S. Colleton (Executive Producer), *Dexter*, New York: Showtime.
- Marc Ecko, Showtime partnering for *Dexter* game. (2008, March 4). Retrieved from http://www.gamasutra.com/php-bin/news_index.php?story=17721
- Martell, E. (2006, February 20). "Lost" receives seven Saturn award nominations. TV Squad. Retrieved from <http://www.tvsquad.com/2007/02/20/lost-receives-seven-saturn-award-nominations/>
- Martell, E. (2008, February 20). "Lost" leads the pack with seven Saturn nominations. TV Squad. Retrieved from <http://www.tvsquad.com/2008/02/20/lost-leads-the-pack-with-seven-saturn-nominations/>
- Martin, D. (2006, June 4). FX struggles as latest launches lost their edge: cabler's new crop has trouble finding auds. *Variety*. Retrieved from <http://www.variety.com/article/VR1117944512.html?cs=1&s=h&p=0>
- Martin, D. (2008, December 16). "Dexter" finale makes off with killer ratings. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/showtracker/2008/12/page/2/>

- Martin, D. (2009, February 12). FX slates April 7 return for “Rescue Me,” picks up sixth season. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/showtracker/2009/02/fixs-rescue-me-r.html>
- masculinity. *Reviews in American History*, 34, 529-536.
- Maxwell, E. (2007, December 17a). Satellite award winners announced. *Variety*. Retrieved from http://www.variety.com/awardcentral_article/VR1117977840.html
- Maxwell, E. (2007, December 17b). Satellites fall for “Juno.” *Variety*. Retrieved from http://www.variety.com/awardcentral_article/VR1117977837.html?nav=news&categoryid=1983&cs=1
- McAllister, M. P. & Giglio, J. M. (2005). The commodity flow of U.S. children's television. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 22 (1), 26-44.
- McCarthy, L. (2007, November 30). Satellite nominations announced. *Variety*. Retrieved from http://www.variety.com/awardcentral_article/VR1117976747.html
- McChesney, R. (2000). *Rich media, poor democracy: communication politics in dubious times*. New York: The New Press.
- McCorry, K. (2004). The dream that died: The late 1980s reunion movies. Retrieved from <http://www.kevinmccorrytv.com/reunion.html>.
- McDougall, C., Stewart, J., Winterbottom, M., Standeven, R., Jones, S. (Directors). (2006). *Cracker: A new terror* [Motion picture]. U.K.: Acorn Media.
- McGinnis, R. (2008, September 16). Metro—Mad Men’s product placement museum. *Metronews*. Retrieved from <http://www.metronews.ca/toronto/entertainment/article/112671>
- McGovern, J. (Writer) and Battersby, R. (1995). Brotherly love [Television series episode]. In H. B. Jones (Producer) *Cracker*, UK: ITV.
- McGuire, S. (2007, January 1). Cialis gaining market share worldwide. *Medical Marketing & Media*. Retrieved from <http://www.allbusiness.com/marketing-advertising/marketing-advertising-measures/10557040-1.html>
- McIlveen, R. (2009). Someone to look up to: Whom do our children choose? Indiana University. Retrieved from <http://www.iuinfo.indiana.edu/HomePages/022699/text/gallahue.htm>
- McKay, J., Messner, M. A. & Sabo, D. F. (2000). *Masculinities, gender relations, and sport*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- McKeown, B., & Meyer, J. (2002). All in a day’s work: Many firefighters say they’re not heroes. *Firehouse*. Retrieved from www.firehouse.com/lodd/2002services/iaff/0920.html
- Meehan, E. (2002). Gendering the commodity audience: critical media research, feminism, and political economy. In E. Meehan & E. Riorden (Eds.), *Sex & money: feminism and political economy in the media* (pp. 209-222). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Meehan, E. R. (2005). *Why TV is not our fault*. Oxford, UK: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Meehan, E. R. (2007). Understanding how the popular becomes popular: The role of political economy in the study of popular communication. *Popular Communication*, 5(3), June 2007, pp. 161–170.

- Mellencamp, P. (1990). *Women and situation comedy*. Bloomington, IL: Indiana University Press.
- Mesger, R. (2007-09-08). 59th annual primetime Emmy awards. Academy of Television Arts & Sciences. Retrieved from <http://www.emmys.tv/downloads/2007/CTA59themywinners.pdf>
- Mickenberg, J. L. (2006). Men on the suburban frontier: Rethinking midcentury in the culture of conglomeration. In L. Spigel & J. Olsson (Eds.), *Television after TV: essays on a medium in transition* (pp. 41-74). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Miller, K. (2002, January 13). The invisible women firefighters of Ground Zero. *StarTribune*. Retrieved from <http://www.startribune.com/stories/389/1026817.html>.
- Miller, M. (2007, June 6). FX's drama king: John Landgraf thinks awards are great—though for him the nominations work too. *LA Times*. Retrieved from <http://theenvelope.latimes.com/awards/emmys/2007/la-env-corner6jun06,0,5493653.story>
- Mitovich, M. (2006, October 4). Short cuts: *Dexter* slays the ratings, and more! *TV Guide*. Retrieved from <http://www.tvguide.com/news/Short-Cuts-Dexter-15508.aspx>
- Mitovich, M. (2007, October 3). *Dexter's* ratings are bloody good. *TV Guide*. Retrieved from <http://www.tvguide.com/news/Dexters-Ratings-Bloody-12335.aspx>
- Mitovich, M. (2008, October 2). Ratings: *Dexter* slays last season's premiere. *TV Guide*. Retrieved from <http://www.tvguide.com/news/Ratings-Dexter-Slays-19373.aspx>
- Modleski, T. (1982). *Loving with a vengeance*. New York: Routledge.
- Modleski, T. (1983). The rhythms of reception: Daytime television and women's work. In E. A. Kaplan (Ed.), *Regarding television: Critical approaches* (pp. 67-74). Los Angeles, California: American Film Institute.
- Modleski, T. (1991). *Feminism without women: Culture and criticism in a postfeminist age*. New York: Routledge.
- Moldoff, S., & Paris, C. (1954, June). Ten nights of fear! *Batman* #84, 24, panel 1. New York: DC Comics.
- Mondaini, N., Ponchiotti, R., Muir, G. H., Montorsi, F., Di Loro, F., Lombardi, G. & Rizzo, M. (2003). Sildenafil does not improve sexual function in men without erectile dysfunction but does reduce the postorgasmic refractory time. *International Journal of Impotence Research* 15, 225–228. doi:10.1038/sj.ijir.3901005
- Morse, M. (1983). Sport on television: Replay and display. In E. A. Kaplan (Ed.), *Regarding television: Critical approaches* (pp. 44-66). Los Angeles, California: American Film Institute.
- Morse, M. (1990). An ontology of everyday distraction: the freeway, the mall, and television. In P. Mellencamp (Ed.), *Logics of television: articles in cultural criticism* (pp. 193-221). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Moser, J. (Writer), & Webb, J. (Director). (1951a). The big break [Television series episode]. In J. Webb (Producer), *Dragnet*. Los Angeles: NBC.

- Moser, J. (Writer), & Webb, J. (Director). (1951b). The big cast [Television series episode]. In J. Webb (Producer), *Dragnet*. Los Angeles: NBC.
- Moser, J. (Writer), & Webb, J. (Director). (1951c). The big Frank [Television series episode]. In J. Webb (Producer), *Dragnet*. Los Angeles: NBC.
- Moser, J. (Writer), & Webb, J. (Director). (1951d). The big seventeen [Television series episode]. In J. Webb (Producer), *Dragnet*. Los Angeles: NBC.
- Moss, L. (2006, November 19). Profitable, not “palatable”: How FX keeps advertisers on board when its shows are under attack. Multichannel News. Retrieved from http://www.multichannel.com/article/126141-Profitable_Not_Palatable_.php
- Mullin, R. (2005, June 20). Viagra. *Chemical & Engineering News*, 83(25). Retrieved from <http://pubs.acs.org/cen/coverstory/83/8325/8325viagra.html>
- Murphy, A. (1949). *To hell and back*. New York, NY: Holt.
- Murphy, J. (2001). World Trade Center Task Force interview, firefighter James Murphy. The Sept. 11 Records. Retrieved from http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/html/nyregion/20050812_wtc_graphic/m et_wtc_histories_full_01.html
- Murphy, R. (Writer) & Trilling, L. (Director). (2003). Nanette Babcock [Television series episode]. In Levine, R. (Executive Producer), *Nip/tuck*. Hollywood, CA: FX Network.
- Murphy, R. (Writer) & Murphy, R. (Director). (2003a). Pilot [Television series episode]. In Levine, R. (Executive Producer), *Nip/tuck*. Hollywood, CA: FX Network.
- Murphy, R. (Writer) & Murphy, R. (Director). (2003b). Mandi/Randi [Television series episode]. In Levine, R. (Executive Producer), *Nip/tuck*. Hollywood, CA: FX Network.
- Murphy, R. (Writer) & Murphy, R. (Director). (2003c). Escobar Gallardo [Television series episode]. In Levine, R. (Executive Producer), *Nip/tuck*. Hollywood, CA: FX Network.
- Murphy, R. (Creator), Murphy, R. (Writer), and Murphy, R. (Director). (2005). Quentin Costa [Television series episode]. In Levine, R. (Executive Producer), *Nip/tuck*. Hollywood, CA: FX Network.
- Murphy, R. (Creator), Jablonski, S. (Writer), and Haid, C. (Director). (2006). Diana Lubey [Television series episode]. In Levine, R. (Executive Producer), *Nip/tuck*. Hollywood, CA: FX Network.
- Murphy, R. (Creator), Salt, J. (Writer), and Robin, M. (Director). (2006). Willy Ward [Television series episode]. In Levine, R. (Executive Producer), *Nip/tuck*. Hollywood, CA: FX Network.
- Murphy, R. (Creator), Murphy, R. (Writer), and Murphy, R. (Director). (2006). Cindy Plumb [Television series episode]. In Levine, R. (Executive Producer), *Nip/tuck*. Hollywood, CA: FX Network.
- Murphy, R. (Creator), Salt, J. (Writer), Chilton, H. (Writer), and McKee, P. (Director). (2006). Conor McNamara. In Levine, R. (Executive Producer), *Nip/tuck*. Hollywood, CA: FX Network.

- Murphy, R. (Creator), Murphy, R. (Writer), Falchuk, B. (Writer), and Haid, C. (Director). (2006). Burt Landau. In Levine, R. (Executive Producer), *Nip/tuck*. Hollywood, CA: FX Network.
- Murphy, R. (Creator), Falchuk, B. (Writer), and Falchuk, B. (Director). (2008). Lulu Grandiron. In Levine, R. (Executive Producer), *Nip/tuck*. Hollywood, CA: FX Network.
- Murray, S. (2005). Lessons from Uncle Miltie: Ethnic masculinity and the vaudeo star. In S. Murray (Ed.), *Hitch your antenna to the stars* (pp. 65-93). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Mutchnik, M. (2009, February 10). Max Mutchnik on *Will & Grace*. WNET New York. Retrieved from <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/makeemlaugh/episodes/tributes/max-mutchnick-on-will-grace/117/>
- NAMIC vision awards 2007. (2007). National Association for Multi-Ethnicity in Communications. Retrieved from <http://www.namic.com/>
- National Commission on Terrorist Attacks. (2004). *The 9/11 commission report*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- National EMS Memorial Service. (2007, September 11). 2001 notices of line of duty death. Retrieved from <http://nemsms.org/notices01.htm>
- Network profiles: FX. (2006). Cable Advertising Bureau. Retrieved from <http://www.onetvworld.org/tmpls/network/06profiles/297.pdf>
- Neuweiler, R. (1967, January 8). Dum-De-Dum-Dum revisited. *New York Times*, p. 109.
- New York Heroes Gift Shop. (2001). Retrieved from <http://www.newyorkheroesgiftshop.com/>
- New York Times. (2004, July 25). 62 truck. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/07/25/opinion/62-truck.html>
- News Corporation annual report 2007. (2007). Selected historical financial data of News Corporation. Retrieved from <http://www.newscorp.com/Report2007/AnnualReport2007/HTML1/default.htm>
- News Corporation annual report 2008. (2008). Selected historical financial data of News Corporation. Retrieved from <http://www.newscorp.com/Report2008/AnnualReport2007/HTML1/default.htm>
- News Corporation investor relations. (2009). Corporate profile. Retrieved from <http://www.newscorp.com/investor/index.html>
- Newton, J. (2005). *From Panthers to Promise Keepers: Rethinking the men's movement*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Nissen, B. (2002, July 21). Police back on day-to-day beat after 9/11 nightmare. CNN. Retrieved from <http://archives.cnn.com/2002/US/07/20/wtc.police/index.html>
- Nixon, S. (1996). *Hard looks, masculinities, spectatorship and contemporary consumption*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Nixon, S. (1997). Exhibiting masculinity. In S. Hall, (Ed.), *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices* (pp. 291-336). London: Sage.
- Nordyke, K. (2007, July 20). AMC "mad" about ratings for series bow. Reuters/*Hollywood Reporter*. Retrieved from <http://www.reuters.com/article/televisionNews/idUSN2023729420070721>

- Nordyke, K. & Gough, P. (2007, December 17). *Dexter* kills in second-season finale. Reuters/*Hollywood Reporter*. Retrieved from <http://www.reuters.com/>
- Nurnberg, H. G., Hensley, P. L., Gelenberg, A. J., Fava, M., Lauriello, J. & Paine, S. (2003, January). Treatment of antidepressant-associated sexual dysfunction with Sildenafil: a randomized controlled trial. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 289(1): 56–64. doi:10.1001/jama.289.1.56
- Occupant behavior, egress, and emergency communications. (2004). *Final Reports of the Federal Building and Fire Investigation of the World Trade Center Disaster*. National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). Retrieved from <http://wtc.nist.gov/NISTNCSTAR1-7.pdf>
- Oestreich, J. (2007, November 16). Berlin in lights: The woman question. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://artsbeat.blogs.nytimes.com/2007/11/16/berlin-in-lights-the-woman-question/>
- Oh, S. S., Zou, P., Low, M. Y. & Koh, H. L. (2006). Detection of Sildenafil analogues in herbal products for erectile dysfunction. *Journal of Toxicology and Environmental Health*, 69(21):1951-1958.
- O’Neil, T. (2009, September 19). Who will win Emmys and why. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from http://goldderby.latimes.com/awards_goldderby/2009/09/emmy-awards-predictions-win-tv-entertainment-news-story-article-9.html
- Orlick, P. (No date). Have gun, will travel. The Museum of Broadcast Communications Encyclopedia of Television. Retrieved from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Have_Gun_%E2%80%9A%C3%84%C3%AC_Will_Travel_-_cite_ref-1, Will Travel by Peter Orlick
- Ouellette, L. & Hay, J. (2008). *Better living through reality TV: Television and post-welfare citizenship*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Owen, R. (2008, December 7). “Boston Legal’s” Kelley delivers parting shots. *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. Retrieved from <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/08342/932829-67.stm>
- Paramount Pictures. (2009). About Paramount Pictures. Retrieved from <http://www.paramount.com/paramount.php>
- Partridge, E. (1988). *Origins: A short etymological dictionary of modern English*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Past Saturn awards: Best actor. (2006). The Academy of Science Fiction Fantasy & Horror Films. Retrieved from <http://www.saturnawards.org/past.html#tvactor>
- Penley, C. & Willis, S. (Eds.). (1993). *Male trouble*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Peress, G., Shulan, M., Traub, C., and George, A.R. (2002). *Here is New York: A democracy of photographs*. New York: Scalo Publishers.
- Pergament, A. (2004, July 19). Marketing, legal factors influence TV’s name game. *The Buffalo News*. Retrieved from http://nl.newsbank.com/nl-search/we/Archives?p_product=BN&p_theme=bn&p_action=search&p_maxdocs=200&p_topdoc=1&p_text_direct-0=103F981A0C6BE0BA&p_field_direct-0=document_id&p_perpage=10&p_sort=YMD_date:D&s_trackval=GooglePM

- Perry, B. (2007, December 12). WGA announce TV, radio nominees. *Variety*. Retrieved from http://www.variety.com/awardcentral_article/VR1117977607.html#TheWireHBO
- Personal interview #1. (2009, July 7). Interview between Pamela Hill Nettleton and Subject #1.
- Personal interview #2. (2009, July 8). Interview between Pamela Hill Nettleton and Subject #2.
- Peterson, K. (2001, March 21). Young men add Viagra to their drug arsenal. *USA Today*. Retrieved from <http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/2001-03-21-viagra-abuse.htm>
- Petronas towers. (2009). Wonders of the world databank. Retrieved from http://architecture.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?zi=1/XJ&sdn=architecture&cdn=homegarden&tm=16&f=21&tt=33&bt=0&bts=1&zu=http%3A//www.pbs.org/wgbh/buildingbig/wonder/structure/petronas_towers.html
- Pfizer, Inc. (2005, June 6). FDA approves Pfizer's Revatio as treatment for pulmonary arterial hypertension. Pfizer. Retrieved from <http://www.pfizer.com/news/>
- Phillips, C. (Writer), & Cuesta, M. (Director). (2006). Crocodile [Television series episode]. In S. Colleton (Executive Producer), *Dexter*, New York: Showtime.
- Plummer, K. (2007, September 4). The CN tower is dead. Long live the CN tower! *The Torontoist*. Retrieved from http://torontoist.com/2007/09/the_cn_tower_is.php
- Pomerance, M. & Gateward, F. (Eds.). (2005). *Where the boys are: Cinemas of masculinity and youth*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.
- Poniewozik, J. (2003, February 3). The next Friday. *Time*, 59-60.
- Poniewozik, J. (2007, July 20). "Mad Men" watch: Lucky strike. *Time*. Retrieved from http://tunedin.blogs.time.com/2007/07/20/mad_men_watch_lucky_strike/
- Poniewozik, J. (2007). Top 10 new TV series. *Time*. Retrieved from http://www.time.com/time/specials/2007/top10/article/0,30583,1686204_1686244_1691409,00.html
- Pradnya, J. (2005, September 8). Port Authority workers to be honored. *Newsday*. Retrieved from www.newsday.com
- Radway, J. (1991). *Reading the romance: Women, patriarchy, and popular literature*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
- Rapping, E. (2003). *Law and justice as seen on TV*. New York: New York University Press.
- RescueMe.com. (2009). Retrieved from <http://www.rescueme.com>
- Rice, L. (2005, January 10). Legal aid. *Entertainment Weekly*. Retrieved from <http://www.ew.com/ew/article/0,,1014936,00.html>
- Rich, J. (2008, January 14). Oscar favorites land PGA noms. *Entertainment Weekly*. Retrieved from <http://www.ew.com/ew/article/0,,20171671,00.html>
- Robins, J. M. (2007, January 7). The FX effect. *Broadcasting & Cable*. Retrieved from http://www.broadcastingcable.com/article/92227-The_FX_Effect.php
- Roddenberry, G. (Creator), Roddenberry, G. (Writer), and Butler, R. (Director). (1966). The cage. In G. Roddenberry (Executive Producer), *Star Trek*, U.S.: NBC.

- Rodman, G. (2006). Race . . . and other four letter words: Eminem and the cultural politics of authenticity. *Popular Communication*, 4(2), 95-121.
- Roper, M. (1991). *Manful assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1880*. London: Routledge.
- Rose, N. (1999). *Governing the soul: the shaping of the private self, wnd ed*. London: Free Association Books.
- Rose, N. (2003). Governing “advanced” democracies. In A. Barry, T. Osborne & Nikolas Rose (Ed.) *Foucault and political reason: Liberalism, neoliberalism, and rationalities of government* (pp. 37-64). Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press.
- Rose, N., & Miller, P. (2008). *Governing the present: Administering economic, social and personal life*. Cambridge, UK, and Malden, MA: Polity Press.
- Ross, W. S. (1968). *The last hero: Charles A. Lindbergh*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.
- Russell, J. (2007). New stars of TV: Brand-name drugs. *Indianapolis Star*, Commercial Alert.org. Retrieved from <http://www.commercialalert.org/news/archive/2007/07/new-stars-of-tv-brand-name-drugs>
- Ryan, M. (2008a, January 7). *Chicago Tribune*. Retrieved from http://featuresblogs.chicagotribune.com/entertainment_tv/2008/04/mad-men-project.html
- Ryan, M. (2008b, April 2). Mad Men, Project Runway, Dexter honored with Peabodys. *Chicago Tribune*. Retrieved from http://featuresblogs.chicagotribune.com/entertainment_tv/2008/04/mad-men-project.html
- Ryan, M. (2008c, October 21). *Dexter's* renewal: A bad idea? *Chicago Tribune*. Retrieved from http://featuresblogs.chicagotribune.com/entertainment_tv/2008/10/dexter-seasons.html
- Ryan, S. (Writer) & Johnson, C. (Director). (2002a). Pilot [Television series episode]. In S. Brazil (Executive Producer) *The Shield*. Los Angeles, CA: FX Network.
- Ryan, S. (Writer) & Johnson, C. (Director). (2002b). Our gang [Television series episode]. In S. Brazil (Executive Producer) *The Shield*. Los Angeles, CA: FX Network.
- Ryan, S. (Writer) & Brazil, S. (Director). (2002). Circles [Television series episode]. In S. Brazil (Executive Producer) *The Shield*. Los Angeles, CA: FX Network.
- Ryan, S. (Creator), Steiner, R. (Writer), and Horton, P. (Director). (2003). Carte blanche. [Television series episode]. In S. Brazil (Executive Producer) *The Shield*. Los Angeles, CA: FX Network.
- Ryan, S. (Creator), Rosebaum, S. (Writer), Fierro, A. (Writer), & Brazil, S. (Director). (2004a). Bottom bitch [Television series episode]. In S. Brazil (Executive Producer) *The Shield*. Los Angeles, CA: FX Network.
- Ryan, S. (Creator), Mazzara, G. (Writer), & Brazil, S. (Director). (2004b). Streaks and tips [Television series episode]. In S. Brazil (Executive Producer) *The Shield*. Los Angeles, CA: FX Network.

- Ryan, S. (Creator), Rosenbaum, S. (Writer,) and Kay, Stephen (Director). (2004c). All in. [Television series episode]. In S. Brazil (Executive Producer) *The Shield*. Los Angeles, CA: FX Network.
- Ryan, S. (Story), Fierro, A. (Writer), & Kay, S. (Director). (2005). A thousand deaths [Television series episode]. In S. Ryan and G. Mazzara (Executive Producers) *The Shield*. Los Angeles, CA: FX Network.
- Sabo, D., Gray, P. M. & Moore, L. A. (2000). Domestic violence and televised athletic events: "It's a man thing." In J. McKay, M. A. Messner & D. Sabo. (Eds.) *Masculinities, Gender Relations, and Sport*, (pp 127-146). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Salem, R. (2007, July 19). Lost in the '60s with Mad Men. *Toronto Star*. Retrieved from <http://www.thestar.com/entertainment/article/237469>
- Sarikakis, K. (2006). "Making" security: citizenship, public sphere and the condition of symbolic annihilation. Presentation in Challenge: Liberty & Security, transparency, accountability and responsibility in an enlarged Europe. University of Leeds, UK, Jean Monnet European Centre of Excellence, Institute of Communications Studies, F6 programme, workpackage 6. Retrieved from http://www.alternativesecurity.org/auteur577.html?debut_auteurs=640
- Sawicki, J. (1991). *Disciplining Foucault*. New York: Routledge.
- Schneider, M. (2008, May 11). *Boston Legal* set for fifth season. *Variety*. Retrieved from <http://variety.com/article/VR1117985459.html?categoryid=14&cs=1>
- Schwartz, M. (2008, May 30). "Mad Men": Inside summer TV's no. 1 hidden gem. *Entertainment Weekly*. Retrieved from http://www.ew.com/ew/article/0,,20203313_3,00.html
- Screen Actors Guild (2007, December 20). Nominations announced for the 14th annual Screen Actors Guild awards. Retrieved from <http://www.sagawards.org/nominations>
- Screen Actors Guild (2008). Nominations announced for the 15th annual Screen Actors Guild awards. Retrieved from <http://www.sagawards.org/nominations>
- Seidman, R. (2009, June 4). Television critics association announces 2009 award nominees. Television Critics Association. TVbytheNumbers.com. Retrieved from <http://tvbythenumbers.com/2009/06/04/television-critics-association-announces-2009-award-nominees/20074>
- September11News.com. (2001). The story of flight 93. Retrieved from <http://www.september11news.com/Flight93.htm>
- Shales, T. (2007, July 19). AMC's "Mad Men": A bunch of cutthroats without an edge. *Washington Post*. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/07/18/AR2007071802733.html>
- Sharrett, C. (2005). *The Rifleman* (TV Milestones Series). Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press.
- Sheldon, W. (1949). *Delinquent youth: An introduction to constitutional psychiatry*. New York: Harper & Bros.
- Shugart, H. (2003). Reinventing privilege: The new (gay) man in contemporary popular media. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 20(1), March 2003, 67-91.

- Siegel-Itzkovich, J. (1999). Viagra makes flowers stand up straight. *British Medical Journal* (9) 274-319. Retrieved from <http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/extract/319/7205/274/a>
- Siegel, A. (2007, September 11). Industry honors fallen on 9/11 anniversary. *Investment News*. Retrieved from <http://www.investmentnews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070911/REG/70911011>
- Smith, L. (2007, June 21). "Mad Men" and Jack Daniel's: Bad mix? *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from <http://articles.latimes.com/2007/jun/21/business/ft-jack21>
- Smith, L. (2008, July 20). The women of "Mad Men." *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from <http://articles.latimes.com/2008/jul/20/entertainment/ca-madmen20>
- Sony Pictures. (2009). About Sony pictures: Corporate fact sheet. Retrieved from <http://www.sonypictures.com/corp/aboutsonypictures.html>
- Sony Pictures Television. (2009). Sony Pictures: Television. Retrieved from <http://www.sonypictures.com/tv/>
- Spangler, L. C. (1992). Buddies and pals: A history of male friendships on prime-time television. In S. Craig, (Ed.), *Men, Masculinity, and the Media* (pp. 93-110). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Spector, A. (2007, December 18). September 11, 2001 Victims. Retrieved from <http://web.archive.org/web/20071218170906/http://www.september11victims.com/september11victims/STATISTIC.asp>
- Spigel, L. (1992a). Introduction. In R. Williams, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (pp. xv-xvi). Hanover, NH, and London: Wesleyan University Press.
- Spigel, L. (1992b). *Make room for TV: Television and the family ideal in postwar America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Spigel, L. (2001). Media homes: Then and now. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 4 (4), 385-411.
- Stabile, C. (1995). Resistance, recuperation, and reflexivity: the limits of a paradigm. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 12 (4), 403-422.
- Stabile, C. (2006). *White victims, Black villains: gender, race, and crime news in U.S. culture*. London: Routledge.
- Stacey, J. (1998). *Brave new families: Stories of domestic upheaval in late-twentieth-century America*. Berkely, CA: University of California Press.
- Stack, M. (2005, October 13). In Dubai, the sky's no limit. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from <http://articles.latimes.com/2005/oct/13/world/fg-dubai13>
- Stanley, A. (2006, February 14). The TV Watch: Beneath the quirks, there's always a message for the masses. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9C00E1DA123EF937A25751C0A9609C8B63>
- Stanley, A. (2007, July 19). "Mad Men": smoking, drinking, cheating and selling. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/19/arts/television/19stan.html>
- Steinberg, J. (2007, July 18). In act 2, the TV hit man becomes a pitch man. *New York Times*. Retrieved from

- <http://query.nytimes.com/search/sitesearch?query=in+act+2+the+tv+hit+man+b+comes+a+pitch+man&x=0&y=0&type=nyt>
- Steinberg, J., (2008, September 19). Boston lawyers get a few more days in court. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/21/arts/television/21stei.html>
- Stelter, B. (2008, February 20). *Dexter* gains a wider audience. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://mediadecoder.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/02/20/dexter-gains-a-wider-audience/>
- Stern, R. (2006). *Superman: Sunday classics: 1939-1943*. New York, NY: DC Comics/Kitchen Sink Press, Inc./Sterling Publishing.
- Sterne, J. (2003). Television under construction: American television and the problem of distribution, 1926-62. In T. Miller (Ed.), *Television: Critical Concepts, Vol. 1* (pp. 38-65). London: Routledge.
- Stone, S. (1991). The "empire" strikes back: A posttranssexual manifesto. In K. Straub and J. Epstein (Eds.), *Body guards: The cultural politics of gender ambiguity*, New York: Routledge.
- Strate, L. (1992). Beer commercials: A manual on masculinity. In S. Craig, (Ed.), *Men, Masculinity, and the Media*, (pp 78-92). London: Sage.
- Studlar, G. (1996). *This mad masquerade: Stardom and masculinity in the Jazz Age*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Swindell, L. (1980). *The last hero: Biography of Gary Cooper*. London: Robson Books.
- Television Critics Association (TCA) award winners through 2007. (2007). TV by the numbers. Retrieved from <http://tvbythenumbers.com/2009/08/02/battlestar-galactica-true-blood-the-big-bang-theory-and-mad-men-grab-top-honors-at-2009-tca-awards/24016>
- Television Critics Association. (2008, July 19). AMC scores first-ever TCA awards with top honors. Retrieved from tvcriticsassociation.com
- Terrett, N.K., Bell, A. S., Brown, D., Ellis, P. (1996). Sildenafil (Viagra), a potent and selective inhibitor of type 5 cGMP phosphodiesterase with utility for the treatment of male erectile dysfunction. *Bioorganic & Medicinal Chemistry Letters*, 6(15), 1819-1824.
- The Edgar award winners and nominees database. (2008). Mystery Writers of America. Retrieved from <http://www.theedgars.com/edgarsDB/index.php>
- The straight goods: The facts at a glance: CN tower. (2005). Retrieved from http://www.civl.port.ac.uk/comp_prog/cntower/Facts.html
- Thompson, T., Red, C., O'Keeffe, M., & Vinton, N. (2008, June 10). Roger Clemens, host of athletes pop Viagra to help onfield performance. *Daily News*. Retrieved from http://www.nydailynews.com/sports/baseball/yankees/2008/06/09/2008-06-09_source_roger_clemens_host_of_athletes_po.html
- Tolan, P., Leary, D., and Serpico, J. (Executive Producers). (2004). *Rescue me* [Television series]. New York: FX Network.
- Tolan, P., Leary, D., and Serpico, J. (Executive Producers). (2005). *Rescue me* [Television series]. New York: FX Network.
- Tolan, P., Leary, D., and Serpico, J. (Executive Producers). (2006). *Rescue me* [Television series]. New York: FX Network.

- Tolan, P., Leary, D., and Serpico, J. (Executive Producers). (2007). *Rescue me* [Television series]. New York: FX Network.
- Tolan, P. (Writer), Leary, D. (Writer) and Tolán, P. (Director). (2004a). Guts [Television series episode]. In P. Tolán, D. Leary, and J. Serpico (Executive Producers), *Rescue me*. New York: FX Network.
- Tolan, P., & Leary, D. (Writers) & Tolán, P. (Director). (2004b). Sanctuary [Television series episode]. In P. Tolán, D. Leary, and J. Serpico (Executive Producers), *Rescue me*. New York: FX Network.
- Tolan, P., & Leary, D. (Writers) & Alexander, J. (Director). (2004a). Immortal [Television series episode]. In P. Tolán, D. Leary, and J. Serpico (Executive Producers), *Rescue me*. New York: FX Network.
- Tolan, P., & Leary, D. (Writers) & Alexander, J. (Director). (2004b). Voicemail [Television series episode]. In P. Tolán, D. Leary, and J. Serpico (Executive Producers), *Rescue me*. New York: FX Network.
- Tolan, P., & Leary, D. (Writers) & Alexander, J. (Director). (2004c). Mom [Television series episode]. In P. Tolán, D. Leary, and J. Serpico (Executive Producers), *Rescue me*. New York: FX Network.
- Tolan, P. (creator), Leary, D. (creator), Stabile, S. (Writer), and Fortenberry, J. (Director). (2004). Alarm [Television series episode]. In P. Tolán, D. Leary, and J. Serpico (Executive Producers), *Rescue me*. New York: FX Network.
- Tolan, P., & Leary, D. (Writers) & Fortenberry, J. (Director). (2005). Balls [Television series episode]. In P. Tolán, D. Leary, and J. Serpico (Executive Producers), *Rescue me*. New York: FX Network.
- Tolan, P., & Leary, D. (Writers) & Tolán, P. (Director). (2005). Sensitivity [Television series episode]. In P. Tolán, D. Leary, and J. Serpico (Executive Producers), *Rescue me*. New York: FX Network.
- Tolan, P., & Leary, D. (Writers) & Tolán, P. (Director). (2006). Hell [Television series episode]. In P. Tolán, D. Leary, and J. Serpico (Executive Producers), *Rescue me*. New York: FX Network.
- Tolan, P., & Leary, D. (Writers) & Alexander, J. (Director). (2006a). Pieces [Television series episode]. In P. Tolán, D. Leary, and J. Serpico (Executive Producers), *Rescue me*. New York: FX Network.
- Tolan, P., & Leary, D. (Writers) & Alexander, J. (Director). (2006b). Torture [Television series episode]. In P. Tolán, D. Leary, and J. Serpico (Executive Producers), *Rescue me*. New York: FX Network.
- Tolan, P., (Writer), Leary, D. (Writer), Reilly, Evan (Writer), & Alexander, J. (Director). (2006). Retards [Television series episode]. In P. Tolán, D. Leary, and J. Serpico (Executive Producers), *Rescue me*. New York: FX Network.
- Tolan, P., (Writer), Leary, D. (Writer) & Girotti, K. (Director). (2006). Satisfaction [Television series episode]. In P. Tolán, D. Leary, and J. Serpico (Executive Producers), *Rescue me*. New York: FX Network.
- Tolan, P., (Writer), Leary, D. (Writers) & Scurti, J. (Director). (2006). Twilight [Television series episode]. In P. Tolán, D. Leary, and J. Serpico (Executive Producers), *Rescue me*. New York: FX Network.

- Tomashoff, C. (2003, February 2). The name is Friday, the stories are new. *New York Times*, p. 30.
- Torres, S. (1993). Melodrama, masculinity, and the family: thirtysomething as therapy. In C. Penley & S. Willis (Eds.), *Male Trouble* (pp. 283-304). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Tregaskis, R. (1953, September 26). The cops' favorite make-believe cop. *Saturday Evening Post*, 226 (13), pp. 24-109.
- Trice, A. D., & Holland, S. A. (2001). *Heroes, antiheroes and dolts: Portrayals of masculinity in American popular films, 1921-1999*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company.
- Trujillo, N. (1991). Hegemonic masculinity on the mound: Media representations of Nolan Ryan and American sports culture. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 8, 290-308.
- Tuchman, G., Kaplan, D.A., & Benet, J. (Eds.) (1978). *Hearth and home: images of women in the mass media*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Tucker, K. (2007, July 13). Mad Men. *Entertainment Weekly*. Retrieved from <http://www.ew.com/ew/article/0,,20046314,00.html>
- United States Army Center for Military History. (2009). Medal of honor recipients, World War II. Retrieved from <http://www.history.army.mil/html/moh/wwII-m-s.html>
- Uricchio, W. (2004). Television's next generation. In L. Spigel & J. Olsson (Eds.), *Television after TV: Essays on a Medium in Transition* (pp. 163-182). Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- van Zoonen, L. (1994). *Feminist media studies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Vardi, M. & Nini, A. (2007). Phosphodiesterase inhibitors for erectile dysfunction in patients with diabetes mellitus. *Cochrane Database System Review* (1): CD002187. doi:10.1002/14651858.CD002187.pub3. PMID 17253475.
- Variety. (2001, June 7). 25 memorable moments in Showtime's 25-year history. Variety.com. Retrieved from <http://www.variety.com>
- Vavrus, M. (2002). Domesticating patriarchy: hegemonic masculinity and television's "Mr. Mom." *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 19 (3), 352-375.
- Venhuis, B. J., Blok-Tip, L. & de Kaste, D. (2008, May 20). Designer drugs in herbal aphrodisiacs. *Forensic Science International*, 177(2-3):e25-7. PMID 18178354
- Viacom. (2007). Viacom annual report, 2006. Retrieved from <http://www.pnnewswire.com/cgi-bin/stories.pl?ACCT=104&STORY=/www/story/03-01-2007/0004537155&EDATE=>
- Viacom. (2009). Investor relations. Viacom.com. Retrieved from <http://www.viacom.com/investorrelations/Pages/default.aspx>
- Von Bondies. (2004). C'mon, c'mon. In J. Harrison and J. Stollsteimer (Producers) *Pawn Shoppe Heart* [album]. U.S.: Sire Records.
- Wall Street Journal. (2009, April 3). *Wall Street Journal*. CBS, execs sued over disclosures before \$14B charge. Retrieved from http://www.docstoc.com/docs/6155362/CBS_Radio

- Webb, D. J., Freestone, S., Allen, M. J. & Muirhead, G. J. (1999, March 4). Sildenafil citrate and blood-pressure-lowering drugs: results of drug interaction studies with an organic nitrate and a calcium antagonist. *American Journal of Cardiology*, 83 (5A): 21C–28C. doi:10.1016/S0002-9149(99)00044-2. PMID 10078539
- Webb, J. (Director). (1954). *Dragnet* [Motion picture]. Hollywood: Universal Studios.
- Webb, J. (Writer), & Webb, J. (Director). (1967). The LSD story [Television series episode]. In J. Webb (Producer), *Dragnet* [Television Show]. Los Angeles: NBC.
- Weiner, M. (Writer) & Taylor, A. (Director). (2007a). Smoke gets in your eyes [Television series episode]. In L. Albert (Executive Producer), *Mad Men*, New York: AMC.
- Weiner, M., et al. (2007b). The Making of Mad Men [Documentary]. New York: AMC.
- Weiner, M. (Writer) & Taylor, A. (Director). (2007c). Ladies room [Television series episode]. In L. Albert (Executive Producer), *Mad Men*, New York: AMC.
- Weiner, M. (Creator), Veith, R. (Writer), Weiner, M. (Writer), & Glatter, L. (Director). (2008). A night to remember [Television series episode]. In L. Albert (Executive Producer), *Mad Men*, New York: AMC.
- Weinraub, B. (2002, April 3). In FX's hit "The Shield," means justify ends. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.criminology.fsu.edu/crimefilm/Shield.htm>
- Whalen, J. (2009, January 9). Glaxo to pare ads on U.S. television. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <http://www.forums.pharmamkting.com/showthread.php?p=10107>
- Whannel, G. (2002). *Media sport stars: Masculinities and moralities*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- White, M. (2003). Flows and other close encounters with television. In L. Parks (Ed.), *Planet TV* (pp. 94-110). New York: New York University Press.
- Williams, D. (2008, December 11). Golden Globes: "True Blood," "Mad Men" among nominees. BuddyTV. Retrieved from <http://www.buddytv.com/articles/true-blood/golden-globes-true-bloodmad-me-25190.aspx?pollid=3001406&answer=3004694#poll3001406>
- Williams, R. (1974). *Television: Technology and cultural form*. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England.
- Witchel, A. (2008, June 22). "Mad Men" has its moment. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/22/magazine/22madmen-t.html?_r=2
- Wolfe, T. (1979). *The right stuff*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux.
- Writers Guild of America. (2008, February 9). 2008 Writers Guild Awards Winners Announced. Retrieved from http://www.wga.org/subpage_newsevents.aspx?id=2764
- Wyatt, E. (2008, September 22). Newcomers and veterans share the hardware at the Emmy Awards. *The New York Times*, A21. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/22/arts/television/22emmys.html?_r=1

- Zap2It. (2005, December 21). "Nip/Tuck" finale carves out ratings records for FX. Retrieved from http://tv.zap2it.com/tveditorial/tve_main/1,1002,27119921011,00.html
- Zap2It. (2006, December 20). "Dexter" slays Showtime records. Tribune Media Services. Retrieved from <http://www.zap2it.com/tv/news/zap-dexterfinalratings,0,126770.story>
- Zawya. (2008, March 5). Burj Dubai offices to top \$4,000 per sq. ft. Zawya.com. Retrieved from <http://zawya.com/marketing.cfm?zp&p=/story.cfm/sidZAWYA20080305042540?cc>
- Zita, J. N. (1998). *Body talk: Philosophical reflections on sex and gender*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Zita, J. N. (Ed.) (1997). Special issue: Third-wave feminism. *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy*, Vol. 12, No. 3.