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## THE HEGEMONIC AESTHETIC

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### Abstract

*A psycho-historical exploration of gay men's body image in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries is a story of change. As demonstrated in academic narratives of idealised bodies in those periods, and demonstrated in the popular art of those times, the 'perfect' gay body of the 1960s to 1980s is strikingly different from the body many young gay men of the late 1990s and early 2000s find most attractive. Moreover, this shift has had implications across sexual orientations. While the gay ideal of the 1970s might be best described as a 'straight body' the ideal straight body of today may actually coincide with the new gay ideal.*

*Stemming from Connell's (1995) application of Gramsci's concept of hegemony, and a sensibility toward the queerness inherent to discussions of bodies and sex, this article will examine the concept of body image and its historical shift across time and sexual orientations. Ultimately, we hope to demonstrate that a body type can become hegemonic in a given historical moment, as witnessed by that body type's prevalence in both actual persons and in art. We call this hegemony of body image the 'hegemonic aesthetic' of the period.*

### Hegemonic Masculinity: Homophobia in Hard Bodies

Masculinity, and, in particular, the notion of multiple 'masculinities', has emerged as an area of increased research attention over the past twenty years. Though a number of accounts of masculinity exist, Connell's (1995) "hegemonic masculinity" has become one of the most commonly used in the academic press.

The concept of hegemonic masculinity draws upon and extends Gramsci's notion of hegemony. Simply put, hegemony theory suggests that within any power system, one class of individuals will be held in highest regard and, accordingly, wield power and control. The capacity for the dominant class to maintain control is enabled by that group's ability to dictate the terms and ideals by which lower classes interpret power and the broader world. This dominance is accomplished by controlling the social institutions, particularly the media,

which disseminate ideals and knowledge. Accordingly, the marginalised classes come to see the ruling group's domination as 'natural', and believe in the natural right of the upper class to wield power. Donaldson (1993, p. 645) summarises hegemony by saying it "involves persuasion of the greater part of the population, particularly through the media, and the organisation of social institutions in ways that appear 'natural', 'ordinary', 'normal'". Through this persuasion of the lower classes as to the upper class' natural right to rule, marginalised segments of society actually become complicit in their own marginalisation by believing there is no other way. Hegemony thus imposes power without the use of brute force.

Although Gramsci's model was originally used to model economic class (and has accordingly influenced neo-Marxist ideology), Connell (1992; 1995) extended the theory to interpret gender relations. She suggests that at any one time multiple masculinities are in competition with one another, but only one is held in highest regard, and that dominant position is discursively enabled by reference to 'nature'. At the time of Connell's writing, and the publication of a plethora of subsequent analyses and critiques, the dominant form of masculinity within Western society included a number of mental characteristics. These traits included mental resiliency and stoicism, control of one's self and others, a lack of concern for appearances, daring and risk taking, as well as aggression (Connell, 1995; Donaldson, 1993; Kimmel, 1994).<sup>1</sup>

Central to the mental attributes of the described hegemonic masculinity is a repudiation of femininity. Indeed, this form of masculinity may be thought of as a flight from being seen as feminine and a constant struggle for a man to re-enforce and constantly demonstrate his rejection of femininity (Kimmel, 1994; Curry, 1991). This rejection is accomplished in two fashions. One such method is the sexual

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<sup>1</sup> It may also be the case that hegemonic masculinity depends on a number of demographic traits, such as race and age. However, less research has been conducted in those areas than on sexual orientation and the body, signaling an important gap in the current state of research knowledge surrounding hegemony and masculinity.

objectification of women, and the attitude that women exist solely for men's erotic pleasure (Donaldson, 1993; Pharr, 1988).

The other method by which men who occupy hegemonic positions can demonstrate their lack of femininity is through homophobia (Curry, 1991; Donaldson, 1993; Lehne, 1998; Pharr, 1988). Kimmel (1994) asserts "homoerotic desire is cast as feminine desire, desire for other men. Homophobia is the effort to suppress that desire, to purify all relationships with other men, with women, with children of its taint, and to ensure that no one could possibly ever mistake one for a homosexual" (p. 130). Through the inclusion of homophobia as integral to hegemonic masculinity, a gay masculinity is established as a marginalised form of masculinity, and gay men are *a priori* excluded from the hegemony. Indeed, Donaldson (1993) Kimmel (1993) and Lehne (1998) all assert that homophobia is the defining characteristic of a hegemonically masculine man.

In addition to the attitudinal – and especially homophobic – basis of hegemonic masculinity, various somatic characteristics also factor into a man's embodiment of the hegemonic ideals. Indeed, Connell (1995) asserts the body is an integral part of the masculine hegemony. A growing research literature demonstrates that Western men perceive a large, muscular body as being emblematic of masculinity (Bordo, 1999; Drummond, 2002; Grogan & Richards, 2002). Drummond (1996) suggests that men are culturally expected to be muscular and have bodies that occupy space. Not surprisingly, then, many men express a desire to be more muscular (e.g. Thompson & Cafri, 2007) a trend coined "The Adonis Complex" (Pope, Phillips, & Olivardia, 2000). Thus, hegemonic masculinity, as envisioned by Connell, includes both attitude and somatotype. Possession of both the right frame of mind, and the right body, enables a man to access power and privilege. Lack of either trait subsequently places the man in a marginalised position, without access to power, and without a privileged position within the society.

### **Hegemonic Masculinity and the (Queer) Phenomenology of Men: Toward the Hegemonic Aesthetic**

Based on Connell's notion of hegemonic masculinity, only men who possess both the

right attitude and the right 'look' have access to power. Those men who are found to be lacking in either dimension are therefore thought to be marginalised. If that proposition is accurate, then it should be that some men – those in power – are hegemonic in that they have both the look and the attitude.

Yet, it appears as though few men, in lived experience, actually possess the right combination of attitude and aesthetic so as to be considered hegemonic. Indeed, Donaldson (1993) and Kimmel (1994) both question if any men actually possess the special combination indicative of hegemonic masculinity. This reality of hegemonic masculinity proves problematic from a variety of standpoints. From a practical perspective, the utility of a social theory that describes the social reality of, potentially, nobody, seems futile. Moreover, the seeming inability of hegemonic masculinity to describe the lives of real men is awkward from a phenomenological vantage point.

Phenomenology is the study of lived experiences. It seeks to understand the essence of meaning people make of their lives, so as to understand what their lives are like (Seidman, 1998). Accordingly, from a phenomenological perspective, good social theory should attempt to capture the lived experience of individuals. If, however, Donaldson and Kimmel are right, and no men fully exhibit the complete collection of hegemonic traits, then it may be the case, at least for phenomenological researchers, that hegemonic masculinity, as an umbrella concept, should be deconstructed to components that actually *do* reflect the essence of individuals' experiences.

The most obvious way to deconstruct hegemonic masculinity may be to break it down to its two component parts described above: attitude and somatotype. A man may gain prestige and power by exhibiting either the right kind of attitudes – namely, a stoic homophobia (however paradoxical that may seem), or by having the right kind of body – big, hard, and muscular. Thus, there is both a hegemonic attitude and a hegemonic somatotype.

This de-construction of hegemonic masculinity is essentially queer in nature, with particular relevance to Ahmed's (2006; 2007) concept of 'queer phenomenology'. To borrow from Ahmed's lexicon, if we consider the hegemonic

attitude and the hegemonic somatotype as 'lines' on which one navigates gender, body, and sexuality, then hegemonic masculinity is the special case (or non-existent case) when the hegemonic attitude and hegemonic somatotype overlap – that is, both the stoic, misogynistic homophobia of the attitude, and the bulky muscularity of the somatotype are present in the same person. In contrast, it is possible that a person's life 'line' may not be congruent with the hegemonic attitude, but still in line with the hegemonic aesthetic. Thus, on the surface, an individual may appear to be in accord with hegemonic masculinity, when, in reality, he is not. It is these instances when lines that are supposed to travel in the same direction actually veer from each other that a situation is rendered queer.

This deconstruction of hegemonic masculinity, via the hegemonic somatotype, and the essential queerness of that distinction, is critical for the study of men's lives and men's body image. Much research on male body image has assumed a 1-to-1 relationship between body type and one's construction of gender and sexuality (e.g. Andersen, Cohn, & Holbrook, 2000). In other words, it has mistakenly assumed that the hegemonic attitude always lines up with the hegemonic somatotype, and accordingly, has not allowed room for the queer. Within the realm of a phenomenological analysis of body image, this de-queering of body image, via the meshing of attitude and somatotype, essentially flattens the phenomenological meaning of the body to the individual by not leaving room for an appreciation of the moments when lines go astray. It is, as suggested above, a phenomenologically flawed concept.

Therefore, we suggest that an examination of men's lives and men's bodies may be best studied under the rubric of a hegemonic masculinity that recognises how power and privilege can be attained not only in the special case of lines overlapping, but in the more tangible cases in which one navigates the line either of attitude or somatotype successfully. In that sense, the word somatotype may not even be the most accurate term to describe this concept. From anthropometry, somatotype refers simply to the ratio of an individual's body measurements. It is a rather medical term. Instead, the word *aesthetic* may be more useful, as an aesthetic can be thought of as a body with meaning. Certainly, the somatotype is important,

in that it must be mesomorphic to be hegemonic. But on top of that mesomorphic build is inscribed the social attribute of power and control that comes from being hegemonic. It is when meaning is traced on to a body, due to the body's build, that somatotype becomes an aesthetic. From this it may be suggested that there exists a hegemonic aesthetic, and it is described as being big and muscular (e.g. Drummond, 1996, 2002; Grogan & Richards, 2002).

### Examplifying the Hegemonic Aesthetic

Donaldson (1993) notes that a critical aspect to a hegemony is that its ideal type should be glorified in media, and demonstrated as superior to marginalised groups in that media. Therefore, if a hegemonic aesthetic exists, it should be exemplified in media. For a demonstration of a hegemonic aesthetic, three traits should be evident in that media: (1) a male body type is idealised; (2) if other body types are presented in the media, they are marginalised; (3) aesthetic and attitude do not necessarily need to overlap, but those with the correct attitude or aesthetic are demonstrated as being powerful.

A particularly potent form of media that can be used in such an investigation are comics, drawings, and cartoons. Indeed, Padva (2005) argues those texts, including erotic comics, can be useful in discerning social values and attitudes, as "erotic gay comic strips are concerned with a wide spectrum of social, cultural, *and* political issues" (p. 588, emphasis in original). Padva also asserts that comics are ideal for examining true fantasies and ideals, as they are not bound by physical reality. That facet of comics is particularly important for an investigation of ideal bodies: If an artist's pen, and not physiology, is the limit, then in what manner will an ideal body be portrayed? What is the nature of our somatic ideal? Comics can provide the answers to those questions.

In addition to using media to demonstrate the concept of a hegemonic aesthetic, phenomenology would argue that the break between aesthetic and attitude needs to be present in the lives of individuals. Therefore, accounts of men's lives must also demonstrate not only an idealised body type, but the break between aesthetic and attitude.

Given the centrality of the media in evidencing/supporting a hegemony, and the unique nature of comics in representing bodies, we now examine two sets of comics from two epochs of contemporary gay history: Those of Tom of Finland and those of Joe Phillips. In so doing, we will attempt to address the three aspects of the hegemonic aesthetic that should be present in media. Furthermore, we hope to demonstrate the existence of a hegemonic aesthetic, and its lack of connection to attitude, in the lives of men.

### Circuit Clones

#### *The Macho Man Look*

As suggested earlier, an historical shift can be noted in the idealised gay bodies of the 1960s to those revered today, and this dichotomy is evident both in academic narratives and in gay erotic comics from both periods.

In the 1960s and 1970s, particularly in post-Stonewall United States, the 'gay ghettos' of many major cities began to flourish, with the creation of extensive circles of cafes, bookshops, night clubs, bars, and sex clubs available for gay men to frequent, collectively called 'The Circuit' (Levine, 1997; Marcus, 2002; Scagliotti, 1999; Tattleman, 2005).

Appearances mattered in gaining entry to Circuit locales; failure to look the right way would result in denied entry (Tattleman, 2005). Therefore, access to gay sex depended upon achieving and maintaining the proper 'look'; that is, achievement of the 'ideal body' for this subculture served as an entry mechanism to the spaces and places of the Circuit. Indeed, this specific look was so ubiquitous as to become known as 'The Clone' (Levine, 1997; Levine & Kimmel, 1998; Cole, 2000). Specifically, Clone men needed to look masculine and play up their masculinity and appear butch (Cole, 2000; Levine, 1997; Tattleman, 2005)

Central to the Clone look and masculine appearance was a mesomorphic body type, with V-shaped torso with noticeable pectoral muscles and defined arms (Levine, 1997; Levine & Kimmel, 1998; Tattleman, 2005). Body hair was accepted, and indeed expected as part of this look – a fuzzy chest, abdominal muscles, and facial hair were the look *du jour*. Likewise, penis size was emphasised, as men with large genitals

('hung') were put on a pedestal. This sense of raw masculinity was demonstrated not only in the body, but in how these men adorned their body. Cole (2000) describes Clone fashion as reflecting a working class, rugged, masculine sensibility. Denim, leather, flannel and work boots were the vogue; further, clothing was tight fitting so as to accentuate the (hopefully muscular and hung) body beneath.

#### *Clones in Pop Culture*

While the Clones were on the dance floors of the 1970s, the artwork of Tom of Finland would likely have been on the coffee tables of these men. 'Tom' was a Finnish cartoonist whose artwork openly depicted homosexuality and men's bodies; his work featured men enjoying their sexuality and the bodies of other men. In that sense, Tom's canon of work was groundbreaking as it was some of the first overt, positive imagery of male homosexuality post-Stonewall.

Tom of Finland's work depicts the Clone look. Accordingly, as suggested above, the erotic cartoons of an era demonstrate the ideal body of that time. Furthermore, the cartoons represent fantastic (that is, of fantasy) Clone bodies. The men in his cartoons are hyper-muscular, have massive pelvic bulges, wear working class clothes (at least, when they are wearing their clothes), and demonstrate a raw, rough sense of sexuality.

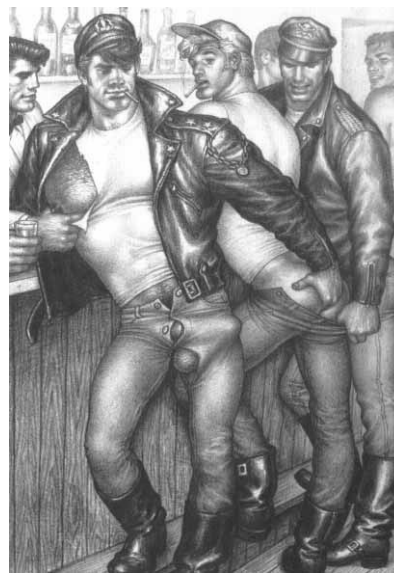


Figure 1

Figure 1 depicts one of Tom of Finland's cartoons.<sup>2</sup> These men *are* Clones. In the comic the men are drawn as extremely muscular, with large shoulders, enormous arms, toned pecs, and big biceps. In that sense, these men are emblematic of the ideal body type described in the academic literature: large, muscular, and taking up space. Furthermore, there is a sense of power evident in this comic, as demonstrated not only by the men groping one of the other men, but also by the fact that only Clones are shown at this bar. Those without the right body were, presumably, denied access. In having the right body, the Clones are able to access gay sex and control the gay scene.

A superficial interpretation of this comic would suggest a gay complicity with hegemonic masculinity. These images celebrate male strength and muscularity, un-restrained sexual prowess, body hair, and working class symbols such as work boots. If it were a woman that was being groped in figure one, it may be argued that Tom of Finland's cartoons are representative of 'full' or 'mainstream' hegemonic masculinity. Yet, what is troublesome for the hegemony is that it is a *man* whose backside is being pinched. These men, who on the surface seem in accord with the tenets of the hegemonic masculinity, are gay, and thus simultaneously in contrast with the hegemony at the same time they are upholding it. Remembering that these images are reflective of the actual gender/sexual milieu of many gay men of the period, it becomes evident that a number of gay men lived in a manner teetering between hegemony and anti-hegemony by meshing the exalted hegemonic masculinity with the marginalised gay masculinity. In that sense, the Clones represent a queer challenge to hegemonic masculinity by meshing the aesthetic aspects of hegemonic masculinity with man-on-man sex. That challenge is overcome, however, if we are to suggest that these men's bodies were hegemonic, and, therefore, powerful, while their attitudes, through same-sex sex, were marginalised.

It may be argued, as does Bersani (1983), that despite having gay erotic attractions, Clones were still misogynistic, and therefore emblematic of what is now termed hegemonic masculinity. That stance, however, elides the point that

within the attitudinal portion of hegemonic masculinity, homophobia and misogyny are inextricably linked (Kimmel, 1993; Pharr, 1988). Even if Clones held negative views of women, the Clones still could not access full hegemonic masculinity because *gay men, by definition, are excluded from hegemonic masculinity*, especially since *homophobia is the watermark of hegemonically masculine attitudes*. No matter what their attitude, Clones could not access hegemonic power via attitudes due to their sexuality.

These men could, however, access power via their bodies. Indeed, Cole (2000) Levine (1997), and Tattleman (1995) all suggest Clones' hyper-muscular body types were an attempt to *look* masculine. In other words, the Clones had an appreciation that if their bodies appeared the right way, they may still be able to access the power and privilege of masculinity, even though they were gay. If nothing else, this desire to appear the right way, even in the absence of the right attitude, suggests power may be attained through having the hegemonic aesthetic of a given period.

### **Rise of the Twinks**

Since the 1980s, the ideal gay body has moved on from the Clones. Levine (1997) and Cole (2000) attribute this change to the impact of HIV and AIDS on Western gay society. Simply, not only did many Clone men fall ill, but the appearance of a Clone was associated with illness itself. Not surprisingly then, the Clone appearance lost its appeal within the gay world as those who were Clones were no longer on the scene, and younger generations were tentative to emulate a body type that was seen as indicative of illness. Quite simply, the Clone look lost its appeal. More so, through illness, the Clones lost whatever power they may have had within the gay world.

By the late 1990s and early 2000s, a new body type was idealised by Western gay men. In qualitative interviews with young gay men Drummond (2005) and Bergling (2007) found that a thin, yet slightly muscled body type was revered; those findings are supported by quantitative research (Yelland & Tiggemann, 2004). Further, a smooth body, with little to no body hair, is thought to be most attractive (Bergling, 2007; Drummond, 2005) and the importance of penis size is less explicit for

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<sup>2</sup> Images are courtesy of the Tom of Finland Foundation, [www.tomoffinlandfoundation.org](http://www.tomoffinlandfoundation.org)

younger gay men (Drummond & Filiault, 2007). The importance of clothing has shifted, from the working class sensibility of the Clones, to a high fashion sensibility of the Twinks, who tend to be 'label conscious'. Furthermore, youth is emphasised in this context, as aging is seen to not only be related to the deterioration of the body, but perhaps also with the HIV epidemic itself (Berling, 2007; Drummond, 2006; Levine, 1997). In sum, this new, youthful, smooth, toned gay male was termed the 'Twink' look. In a sense, Twinks are the contemporary counterpart of the Clones, in that the Twink look is omni-present within many Westernised gay social circles.

*Joe Bois*

Just as Tom of Finland captured the Clone look within his art, Joe Phillips has done the same for the Twinks. Phillips is a California-based cartoonist whose colorful, playful rendering of contemporary gay life has made his cartoons – often referred to as 'Joe Bois' – iconic within mainstream gay culture.

Figure 2 (below) depicts one of Phillip's comics and, simultaneously, the Twink body.<sup>3</sup> The young man in the comic has clear muscular definition and little noticeable body fat, clearly embodying the gay somatic ideals described in the interviews conducted by Drummond (2005) and Bergling (2007). While the Clone image also placed importance on muscularity, there is a discernable difference between the level of musculature depicted in figure 1 and that in figure 2. In figure 1, the level of musculature is bulging, with massive shoulders, biceps, and pectoral muscles; the entire physique suggests use of supplements or steroids. By contrast, the musculature of figure 2, while certainly present, is not as defined as the Clone image; it may be better termed as 'toned' than 'bulging'. It is a subdued muscularity, indicative more of a swimmer's type of body than a weight lifter's physique. Keeping in mind that comics represent the limits of fantasy, it becomes apparent that while the Clone image desired an over-the-top level of muscularity, the Twink image idealises a much smaller frame. In that sense, the idealised masculine form for contemporary gay men features a still-muscular, though not massive,

male body. The Twink image hence represents a clean break from their Clone forefathers.



Figure 2

This break, and indeed seeming outright rejection, is made evident in figure 3 (below), which is the final panel of one of Phillip's comics entitled 'emale'. In the cartoon, the two young men set up blind dates online; they agree to wear a black tank top in one case, and a white t-shirt with a blue overshirt in the other case. The two men arrive, and meet each other, before realising that they are not each other's dates – it is merely a coincidence they are in the right clothing. Instead, their dates are the older men in the window: a hairy, muscular individual in black, and a chubby man in blue. The two younger men see their correct dates, and find more interest in each other, and while they recognise their body-based rejection is 'shallow', that shallowness is acceptable to them. Their rejection of the two men in the window is a symbolic rejection of not only age, but also of the hyper-muscular, hairy bodies of Clones, and the rotund bodies of those with excess body fat. Instead, there is only one sort of acceptable body in the contemporary Twink world: Young, toned, and smooth. Such bodies are hegemonic; all others are marginalised, and the object of Twink ridicule and laughter.

<sup>3</sup> Images used with permission from Joe Phillips, and accessed from [www.joePhillips.com](http://www.joePhillips.com)



Figure 3

*Straight Joe Bois?*

The Twink image, as demonstrated both through interviews (Bergling, 2007; Drummond, 2005; Drummond & Filiault, 2007) and the exposition above, emphasises muscle, but it also emphasises thinness. Indeed, none of the Joe Bois are large men, as was the case for the Clones.

Traditionally, straight men's body image coincided more with the Clone image than the Twink image. Past research (Pope, Phillips & Olivardia, 2000; Thompson & Cafri, 2007) has demonstrated straight men traditionally are concerned with overall muscle mass, and desire large, muscular bodies that occupy space (Drummond, 1996). Thinness was not a concern commonly mentioned by straight men, and muscle was seen as the normative discontent within that community. Recent research challenges that notion. In quantitative work with straight men, using the Somatomorphic Matrix (Filiault, 2007), results demonstrated not only a sizable number of men who wished they were thinner, regardless of BMI, but that discontent

with body fat was related to dampened self esteem. Those findings were groundbreaking, in that they challenged the traditional notion that straight men simply desire large muscular bodies. Other recent publications (Frederick, et al., 2007) have corroborated Filiault's findings, as undergraduate men routinely expressed a desire for a thinner body, as assessed by the Fat Silhouette Measure (FSM). Thus, not only have different research teams found a male desire for thinness, but those similar findings were attained using different instrumentation. Clearly, times are changing in terms of both heterosexual and gay men's body image.

These findings lead to a truly ironic, and strikingly queer conclusion: Ideal body image has reversed. The Clones of decades past emulated a 'straight' body image by idealising large, muscular bodies that occupied space. It was a hegemonic way of being gay, 'a very straight gay' to use Connell's (1992, 1995) terminology. By contrast, straight men of today seem to be turning in the direction of the Twink, by desiring muscular, yet thin bodies. If the Clones were a 'straight gay', we would argue that contemporary straight men are going in the opposite direction - 'a very gay straight' - through their emulation of the Twink body type. Moreover, this aesthetic is gaining power within the straight world. Football players – traditionally the archetype of masculinity – are demonstrating a break from the hegemonic masculinity described by Connell, as evidenced by stars like Beckham (Cashmore & Parker, 2003), Henson (Harris & Clayton, 2007) and Ljungberg (Coad, 2005) who espouse a toned, smooth, fashion-conscious aesthetics. Furthermore, articles in the popular (Hill, 2003) and academic (Olivardia, Pope, Borowiecki, & Cohane, 2004) presses suggest many heterosexual women are finding this toned, smooth male body type as being more sexually attractive than an overly-muscled man.

**Implications of A Very Gay Straight: A New Hegemonic Aesthetic**

Within contemporary gay culture, embodying the Twink aesthetic is viewed as important for accessing gay clubs and being accepted within many gay social networks. Social isolation awaits those who do not maintain the look (Atkins, 1997; Bergling, 2007; Dotson, 1999). Similarly, the Twink aesthetic has gained in-roads with many straight men, as powerfully exemplified by



Beckham, Henson, and Ljungberg. Accordingly, it can be argued that within gay culture the Twink look has come into a position of power, and is hegemonic; the body expectations for straight men does not seem far behind. The Twink body is the hegemonic aesthetic for many gay men, and increasing numbers of straight men.

Yet, there is little evidence for a change in hegemonic attitudes, such as strength, stoicism, misogyny, and homophobia within most straight men (c.f. Anderson, 2004). Accordingly, another mis-match is occurring. In the same vein that the Clones emulated the hegemonic aesthetic, but not the hegemonic attitude, contemporary straight men may be emulating the new hegemonic (Twink) aesthetic, without concomitant changes in the old hegemonic attitude. A disconnect exists between body and behavior, and this disconnect is not one that can be adequately discussed or theorised under the umbrella of hegemonic masculinity, without making changes to that concept.

Connell (1995) notes that hegemonic masculinity evolves in response to new social ideals and situations; that which was hegemonic in generations past may fall behind a new hegemonic ideal. If we break hegemonic masculinity into two components, attitude and aesthetic, then the same may be true. Historical shifts can change the aesthetics that are hegemonic, without changing the attitudes, and vice versa. As demonstrated, an historical change has occurred in regard to the body – from Clone to Twink – though attitudes remain largely the same.

Truly, then, in heterosexual men appearing as 'a very gay straight' we are reminded that the phenomenological lines we navigate are not always easy to discern. Appearance and behavior are separate lines, and should be not be conflated with one another. It is only through this separate consideration of lives and lines that the essential queerness of gender, sexuality, and the body is able to be recognised, and the phenomenological complexity of those entities is truly appreciated on its own terms.

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